

# YOUTH MINISTRY

and FAMILY

## ACTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

MADRID, 27th November - 1st December, 2017

SALESIAN  
YOUTH MINISTRY  
DEPARTMENT



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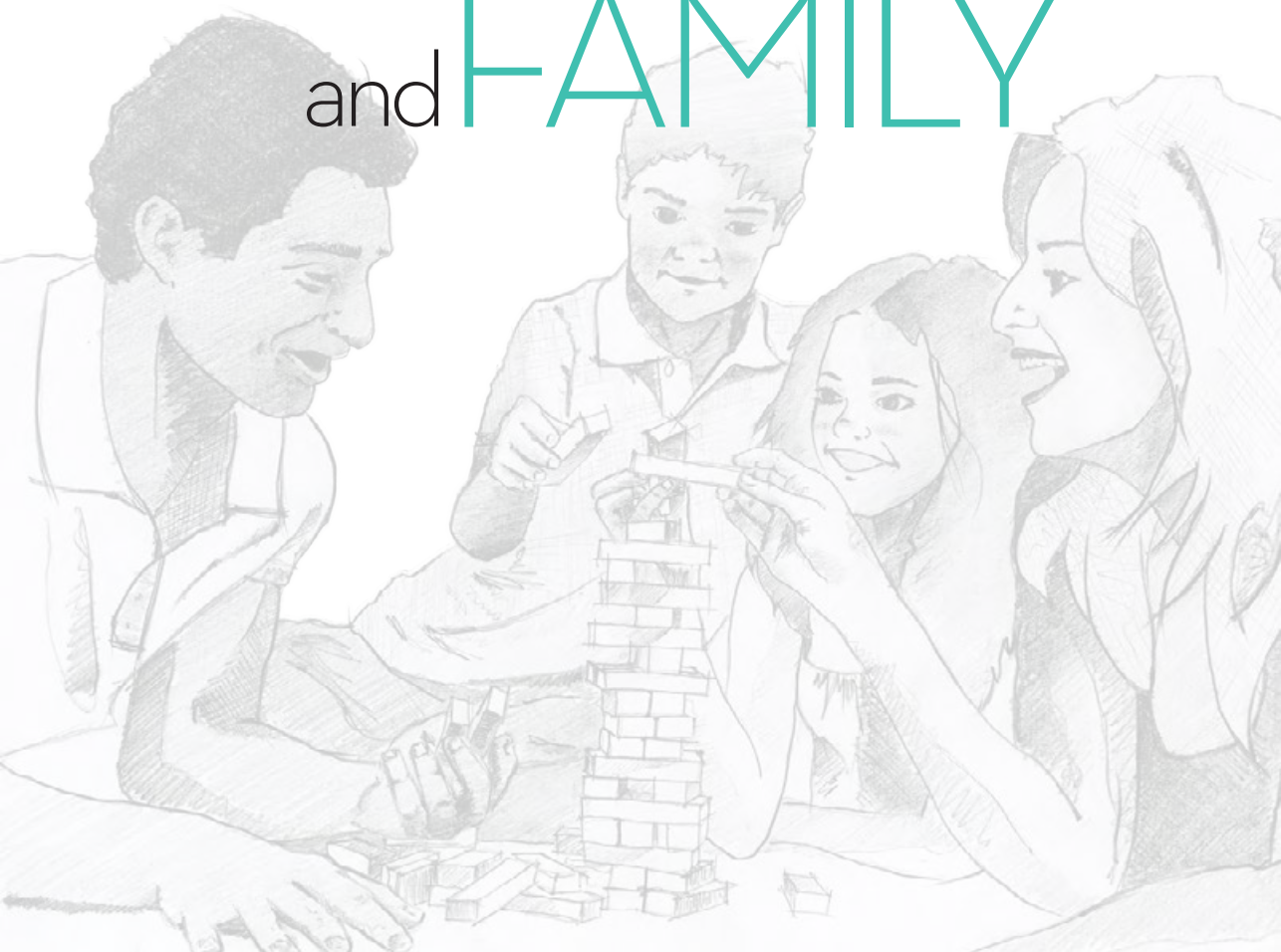
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# YOUTH MINISTRY

and FAMILY



# PRESENTATION

 **FR. ÁNGEL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME**  
*X Successor of Don Bosco.*


I am pleased to present the Acts of the International Congress on Youth Ministry and Family that was held in Madrid from 27th November to 1st December, 2017.

The reflection on Youth Ministry and the Family has been part of our journey as a Congregation in the preceding General Chapters. The idea of an International Congress was born in 2014, in response to the two Synods of Bishops convened by Pope Francis on the pastoral challenges of the family (2014 -2015), and the General Chapter 27 of the Salesians of Don Bosco (2014).

Therefore, in 2014, the Department for Salesian Youth Ministry initiated a program of study and continuous reflection with a vision of the future, which consisted of a series of stages in view of the Congress: the study of family contexts in the seven Regions of the world in which the Salesian Congregation is present, the creation of an internal study group, the analysis of the provincial and local context through a questionnaire.

In this Congress, through the presence of some 300 participants from around the Salesian world, the gift of the Salesian charism was deepened in the four conferences that were offered, in the various workshops and in the presentation of 21 good practices; all this offered us a 'photography' of the commitment of the Congregation in favor of the family in the various educative and pastoral processes.

I found a true family atmosphere, and a great willingness to learn and share. I trust that this spirit and this experience will be repeated in the different local



contexts so that the richness lived and shared in this Congress will come alive at the local level.

I also take this opportunity to thank Father Fabio Attard, General Councilor for Youth Ministry, who has guided this journey. A special word of thanks to the members of the Department for Youth Ministry in Rome and to the members of the General Council of the Salesians of Don Bosco who participated.

I also thank the Provincial and the members of the Salesian Provincial Council of the Province of Madrid, Spain, 'Santiago el Mayor' for all the availability and facilities given. I am grateful for the representation of the Province of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Spain, and the participation of members of the Salesian Family and many others, favoring the success of the Congress.

I would like to conclude by reminding you that the Congress is not the culminating event of this journey. In fact, it is part of a long journey and process in which we will continue to open spaces for discernment on Youth Ministry and the Family. To this end, common strategies will be established in order to increase the impact of our actions, and the construction of an educative-pastoral action with families will be materialized, in more incisive and fruitful ways, always within the framework of Salesian Youth Ministry. I am sure that these 'Acts of Congress' will be an effective instrument in our journey of Youth Ministry and Family.

With my affection and desire for all blessings from the Lord.

# INTRODUCTION

## YOUTH MINISTRY AND FAMILY REFLECT, SHARE, BUILD

FABIO ATTARD SDB

General Councillor for Youth Ministry of Salesians  
of Don Bosco

### THE HEART OF THE MATTER: the family, a rich and complex reality

The Salesians of Don Bosco, through their *Youth Ministry Department*, have chosen **to focus their efforts in the 2015-2018 triennial session** to the theme of the family, in keeping with the Church's **two recent Synods on this topic**. In its **27th General Chapter, held in 2014**, the Salesian Congregation insisted on the family's key role in society and in the education of the next generation. The fundamental physiognomy of the family, because of the numerous economic, social, juridical and political transformations it has undergone, has been dramatically changed. At the root of all these changes is the emergence of a new culture of family, and with it, the need to develop a new approach to the pastoral accompaniment of families. For Salesians, the family is an active protagonist in our pastoral outreach, a subject with its own identity and unique mission, actively involved in the building up of the Church and society. In fact, it can rightly be said that *the family is a unifying focus of our pastoral work*.

For this reason, the Youth Ministry Department wishes this reflection to be a process that is collaborative, a *process that proceeds in stages and which offers*

*concrete action steps*, a process which brings together the various contexts of the world-wide reality. In order for this process to be truly collaborative, **a number of phases** have been set forth, which will be addressed in turn.

In each of the phases, **various experts with different areas of competence will be invited to address the theme of the family**. In so doing, we hope this process will produce concrete results which will be useful to each Provincial and Local community in making their own choices on how to approach family ministry, but which will also support the decisions we must all take by providing a useful framework built on the thorough analysis of this multifaceted question. The first three phases represent the premises and the foundations on which the International Congress will stand, with the goal of making it a conclusion of sorts to this extended process of reflection.

- » *A multifaceted international snapshot (September 2015 - February 2016)*
- » *Towards a realistic and detailed synthesis of the world of the family (March 2016)*
- » *Study of the local Salesian context to prepare an action plan (June 2016 – February 2017)*
- » *Facing the facts and planning for the future (November 2017)*



# PHASE 01

## A multifaceted international snapshot

From September 2015 to February 2016, the family was examined through a sociological and educative lens at the regional level (Table 1). These study days examined, under the leadership of qualified experts from the various geographical regions around which our Congregation is organized, the multiple dimensions of the reality of the family. Six speakers presented their documented field research, offering us valuable insights from the perspective of sociology and politics, with their implications on pastoral ministry and pedagogy, thus laying the foundation for an attentive reflection on the constitutive elements of the modern family and on the challenges to be addressed.

Drawing conclusions from such a multifaceted snapshot of the family in the world today is no easy task. Nonetheless, the conclusions from this encounter allowed us to identify a number of assumptions which provide a robust platform for further study, as well as a positive balance sheet regarding the substantive importance of the family. Among the most urgent observations are the following:

- » *on the one hand, **the threats which destabilize the family** are not only of an economic nature, but are above all of a symbolic nature, namely, cultural and anthropological, as they call into question the family's very identity and function (the threat of gender ideology, the portrayal of the family in some media, the increased instability of spousal commitment and the fragility of the family as an institution, and issues of a sociocultural nature);*
- » *on the other hand, there is a heightened value attached to **personal freedom**, and greater importance attached to **the quality of interpersonal relationships** within marriage, the promotion of the role of women, responsible procreation, and child-raising.*

The participants of these six encounters were the provincial delegates for youth ministry from all the regions worldwide. From their observations and the reflections we shared with them, a double challenge emerged:

- » ***to create and promote a new culture of the family**, with both social and educative implications. Where the family is perceived and*

*valued as it truly is, namely, a social entity in its own right, with an extraordinary function that is not only economic and nurturing, but also cultural and educative, the family can be a life-giving source of solidarity between one generation and the next, and a source of various forms of community life;*

» *at the same time, it is necessary **to promote effective pastoral-educative strategies** to support the family in its role as the fundamental building block of society and as the primary educator of each new generation.*

## PHASE 02

### Towards a realistic and detailed synthesis of the world of the family

**On March 19 and 20, 2016**, a study group was convened. Participants were: Marcelo Faran (Equator), Alberto Martelli (Italy), Hubert Pinto (India), Miquel Angel Garcia (Youth Ministry Department Team), Fabio Attard (General Councillor and Youth Ministry Department Team leader), Gustavo Cavagnari (Argentina), Rossano Sala (Italia), Mario Olmos (Youth Ministry Department Team), Renato Cursi (Youth Ministry Department Team), Daniel Garcia (Youth Ministry Department Team) and Virginia Cagigal (Spain).

This international team, having studied the reality on the family in various contexts outlined in Phase I, identified the *major questions* currently challenging the family. The group's reflection was guided by structural and cultural criteria:

» *the first dealt with the **critical issues and with the dimensions of the crisis** – economic, demographic and socio-cultural (on this point, the presenters revisited some of the themes that had been proposed at the world level in Phase I, in particular, the socio-cultural context, the educative and anthropological question, the lengths to which families must go to nurture into their own children the desire to establish their own families, the family as portrayed in the media, the delicate and pressing question of education in affectivity and sexuality);*

- » *the second dealt with the **need to develop and implement new resources** to support more effective family ministry, including how to welcome and accompany people in their lived reality, realizing that the family is not a separate category but an integral dimension of youth ministry.*

The next step was to identify and prioritize some operative educative and pastoral choices. Among the top priorities were:

- » *accompanying couples in their affective life;*
- » *educating parents to their duty as educators;*
- » *developing in educators a holistic view of the young, which must include their families;*
- » *tending to the entire cycle of family life, that is, educating to the transitions of adult life and to the relationship between parents and their adolescent children;*
- » *the urgency of a specific formation (on the family and not only on marriage) that is specialized (because the perspective of a theologian is not the same as the perspective of a psychologist, and each discipline can make a valid contribution), integrated (because the different perspectives cannot proceed on parallel tracks) and shared (including consecrated persons and laity to promote reciprocal appreciation of all vocations);*
- » *harmonize the remote, proximate and immediate preparation for marriage.*

## **PHASE 03**

### Study of the local Salesian context to prepare an action plan

**In June 2016**, every Salesian Province was asked to complete a survey. This research tool required all 86 provincial councils to document their observations on the reality of the family within their Province by responding to three questions:

- » *What challenges does the family present to youth ministry in your Province?*
- » *In the various provincial plans, what choices has the Province made or what choices does the Province intend to make in regards to youth ministry and family?*
- » *What are the Province's best practices in terms of innovation and positive impact on the new challenges facing youth and family ministry?*

The compilation of this research (Table 2), will indicate the diverse educative-pastoral approaches currently practiced in the local realities throughout the Congregation in response to the need to accompany families and to educate them as protagonists. Therefore, this third phase will lay out our field research results, creating a profile of those families who come within the pastoral care of the Salesians world-wide. The abundant data from this research will have a direct impact on identifying, describing and understanding the Salesian mission today.

## PHASE 04

### Facing the facts and planning for the future

Having concluded this process of sharing and of active listening to the Congregation by means of the Regional consultations and Provincial reflections, this fourth phase is tasked with the following three goals: *deepening our response to the current guidelines of the Church and the Congregation* on the family, *sharing the pastoral-educative challenges and opportunities* regarding the family and *creating experiences* for reflection and action within the Educative-Pastoral Community. The Youth Ministry Department, in response to these priorities, proposes an **International Congress on Youth Ministry and Family**, which will be held from November 27 to December 1, 2017, in Madrid.

This international gathering will offer **three specific components**:

- » **A proactive reading on the family today:** starting from the current experience of the Congregation, we will gather the challenges and the opportunities which this moment in history offers us.

- » **An ecclesial and spiritual reading on the family:** in the light of the Church's recent synodal journey and the Apostolic Exhortation, "*Amoris Laetitia*". This will surface ideas and inspiration for personal and community reflection: family and evangelization; youth and the vocation of marriage; education to love; formative itineraries for engaged and married couples; particular situations faced by couples and families; family and youth.
- » **A Salesian pastoral-educative reading:** propose, strengthen and integrate Salesian pastoral work in regards to the family within the Salesian Educative-Pastoral Plan.

The Congress' methodology will be **a series of exchanges aimed at promoting and sharing** our efforts to reach out to families. Each day, participants will be involved in the following activities:

- » *Introductory reflection*, elaborated and presented by an expert, which sets the parameters for the day's work.
- » *Testimonials and best practices* in the area of Salesian Youth and Family Ministry, which are tried and true, from various parts of the world, to encourage experiential learning and small group sharing.
- » *Group work* by continent, for more contextualized listening and sharing.
- » *Workshops*: practical and experiential activities on specific themes guided by international experts, to help develop strategies for pastoral accompaniment of youth at various ages, by acquiring new learning, skills and attitudes around different aspects of family life.

The Congress will welcome **400 active participants, lay and consecrated**, representing the 89 Provinces of the Congregation of the Salesians of Don Bosco, which is present in 132 countries around the world. Each Province will be asked to form a delegation of *experts or persons engaged in pastoral ministry to families*.

## LOGO

«Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flows the springs of life”.  
Proverbs 4:23

The icon presents the multi-faceted joy of families: “To grow from the heart” (this speaks of welcoming, encountering, fragility, mercy, confidence...).



## ILLUSTRATION

“And Jesus grew in wisdom, stature and grace before God and man.” (Lk 2:52)

In “Amoris Laetitia”, Pope Francis recognizes that “the Synodal process proved both impressive and illuminating.” (AL4) and “the various interventions of the Synod Fathers, to which I paid close heed, made up, as it were, a multifaceted gem reflecting many legitimate concerns and honest questions.” (AL 4).

On the first level: a family, in its intimacy, in their daily efforts (“the toil of your hands”, says the Pope), that builds a united family, without individualism. Each member has a role: it’s about removing pieces without the structure collapsing. The members have happy and realistic outlooks, avoiding viewing things as only black and white, in order to see a wide range of shades of grey, possibilities and nuances. (behind each family, joys, tragedies, and dreams). On the second level: youth ministry. Children and youths have a special color, it is not an idealized or naive image. It is an image of play that is passionate and dynamic because to develop this, it requires attention and effort. Children are the hope that build and open to the future. The same happens with the family, each member has a place in the building of the structure, from those who form the structure to those who help to create it.

On the third level: the image of the environment that is quiet and peaceful. It develops and is built with finesse and beauty. Those who look for clear and decisive

rules will be disappointed. Creation has its rhythm, process, gradualness, a reflexion of the divine Glory and the light of the resurrection. The heart of Jesus surrounds us, inspires us and enables our encounter and dialogue. In a moving and simple way, he invites us to look to heaven.

Illustration: **Javier Carabaño**  
Commentary: **Miguel Angel García**





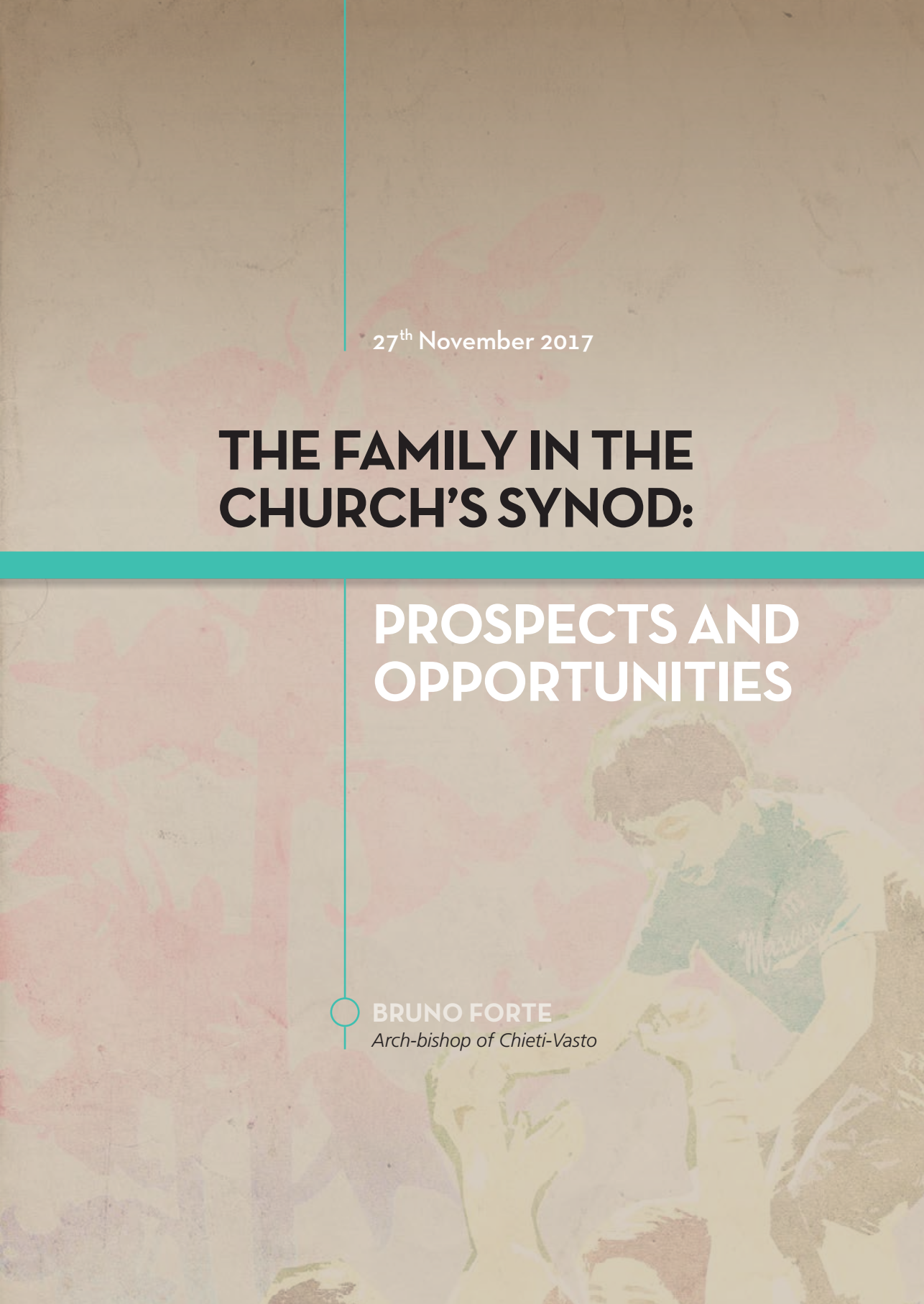
27<sup>th</sup> November 2017

# THE FAMILY IN THE CHURCH'S SYNOD:

## PROSPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

BRUNO FORTE

*Arch-bishop of Chieti-Vasto*





**F**amily and youth ministry is vitally important for the whole Church, and particularly so for the followers of Don Bosco. In his dream at the age of nine, Mary indicated youth as the field in which he ought to work, or, more likely, in the language of the peasant culture to which young John belonged, as the field to be “ploughed”. With this mandate, perceived as the source and inspiration of every future choice in his life, Don Bosco did not hesitate to say: “In matters which are for the benefit of young people at risk, or which serve to gain souls for God, I go forward to the point of temerity.”<sup>1</sup> I will structure my reflection around these words. I would like first to examine the reality of the family today as a living environment in which there are challenges, opportunities and dangers for the new generation. Then I would like to outline the fundamental features of the Church’s approach to the family that has been developing in recent years in order to draw “benefit” from it for the young and to “earn souls for God”. Finally, I want to indicate some priority lines for pastoral action, especially from a Salesian perspective.

For this latter part, I will refer to the directives drawn from the two synodal assemblies of the Bishops dedicated to the family, presented to the whole people of God in the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis “*Amoris Laetitia*”, in order to clarify which points I feel it is necessary to “go forward to the point of temerity” in the spirit of Don Bosco. In this context, I will also try to answer the question of how the Church is now inviting believers engaged in education to live their call as a gift for young people, trying to put together the indications that could enlighten and accompany the charismatic experience of the Salesian family and make it ever more ecclesial. At the same time, I will try to highlight the fundamental aspects that should be studied to encourage an experience of Church where the family finds a welcoming space and a reason to strengthen its identity, not only as the recipient of pastoral activity but also and especially as its subject and agent. I also want to emphasize how this attention to the family and to young people is in harmony with the decision made by Pope Francis to devote the next Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to be held in 2018, to the theme of “Young people, Faith and Vocation Discernment”.<sup>2</sup>

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1 *Memorie biografiche* XIV, Cap. XXVIII, 662.

2 This is the title of the *Preparatory Document for the Fifteenth Ordinary General Assembly*. It was published 13 January 2017 and sent to all the Bishops’ Conferences of the world, with a large questionnaire attached. The answers are expected to contextualize the reflections of the synod in the present and in the concrete situation. The Third Part of the Document is dedicated to *Pastoral Action*. After a section titled “Walking with Young People”, developed around three verbs “Go out”, “See” and “Call”, it presents the subjects, places, and tools of youth ministry with insights and stimuli in close harmony with what is proposed in these reflections.

This choice of theme is presented in the *Preparatory Document* of the forthcoming Synod as follows: “The Church has decided to examine herself on how she can lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love, and to ask young people to help her in identifying the most effective ways to announce the Good News today. By listening to young people, the Church will once again hear the Lord speaking in today’s world. As in the days of Samuel (cf. *1 Sam* 3:1-21) and Jeremiah (cf. *Jer* 1:4-10), young people know how to discern the signs of our times, indicated by the Spirit. Listening to their aspirations, the Church can glimpse the world which lies ahead and the paths the Church is called to follow.”<sup>3</sup> It is significant that the Pope wanted to involve young people from the outset. They are not only the subject of reflection on how to deepen the ways of transmitting the gift of faith, and helping them to discern their response to the Lord’s personal call to each one. They must be protagonists and important participants capable of helping pastors and the entire Church to recognize and interpret better the signs of the times and to respond to them with faith and love. This is a decision and a method that seems to me in complete harmony with the words of Don Bosco I quoted and in general with the Salesian charism.

## 1 THE REALITY OF THE FAMILY TODAY

In *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Council on the Church in the Modern World, among the challenges that require more attention and commitment, the first one identified is the family which is the basis of human beings living together: “Thus the family, in which the various generations come together and help one another grow wiser and harmonize personal rights with the other requirements of social life, is the foundation of society.”<sup>4</sup> This attention to the family was particularly evident in the magisterium of John Paul II, who chose the Christian Family as the theme of the Fifth Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (26 September - 25 October 1980) and dedicated *Familiaris Consortio*, the Apostolic Exhortation which followed

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3 *Preparatory Document Introduction.*

4 Second Vatican Council: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 52.

it, to the family.<sup>5</sup> Among other things, it states: “The future of humanity passes by way of the family!... Christians also have the mission of proclaiming with joy and conviction the Good News about the family, for the family absolutely needs to hear ever anew and to understand ever more deeply the authentic words that reveal its identity, its inner resources and the importance of its mission in the City of God and in that of man.”<sup>6</sup>

The reasons for this importance of the family are recognizable in their very nature and mission, according to the divine plan for mankind: “The family finds in the plan of God the Creator and Redeemer not only its identity, what it is, but also its mission, what it can and should do. The role that God calls the family to perform in history derives from what the family is; its role represents the dynamic and existential development of what it is. Each family finds within itself a summons that cannot be ignored, and that specifies both its dignity and its responsibility: family, become what you are.”<sup>7</sup>

In this light, we can understand why the family should be at the centre of the pastoral activity of the Church and, therefore, at the centre of the projects and initiatives taken at all levels by different ecclesial agents in the field of evangelization and catechesis. For this combined effort to be realized, we have to start with a clear and absolutely realistic look at the real situation of the family today, in the variety and complexity of the cultural contexts in which it is found.

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis writes: “The family is experiencing a profound cultural crisis, as are all communities and social bonds. In the case of the family, the weakening of these bonds is particularly serious because the family is the fundamental cell of society, where we learn to live with others despite our differences and to belong to one another; it is also the place where parents pass on the faith to their children. Marriage now tends to be viewed as a form of mere emotional satisfaction that can be constructed in any way or modified at will.”<sup>8</sup> At the root of these negative phenomena there frequently lies a corruption of the idea and the experience of freedom, conceived not as a capacity for realizing the truth of God’s plan for marriage and the family, but as an autonomous power of self-affirmation,

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5 John Paol II, *Familiaris Consortio. Apostolic Exhortation, the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, 22 November 1981.

6 *Ib.* 86.

7 *Ib.* 17.

8 *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 66.

often against others, for one's own selfish well-being.<sup>9</sup> The conditioning that weighs upon the family situation in different contexts must also be considered: Worthy of our attention also is the fact that, in the countries of the so-called Third World, families often lack both the means necessary for survival, such as food, work, housing and medicine, and the most elementary freedoms. In the richer countries, on the contrary, excessive prosperity and the consumer mentality, paradoxically joined to a certain anguish and uncertainty about the future, deprive married couples of the generosity and courage needed for raising up new human life: thus life is often perceived not as a blessing, but as a danger from which to defend oneself."<sup>10</sup>

There are, of course, positive aspects in the current situation of the family. The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* was signed by Pope Francis on 19 March 2016 and published on 8 April. In the second chapter dedicated to "The Experiences and Challenges of Families", Pope Francis notes the growing appreciation of the dignity and active participation of each of the components of family life, with due attention to the changed socio-cultural contexts where "individuals, in personal and family life... receive less support from social structures than in the past."<sup>11</sup> On the one hand individualism and the fear of permanent commitment are on the increase in a widespread 'culture of the provisory'. On the other hand, there is also a desire for greater authenticity in interpersonal relations, challenging believers to a more responsible and generous effort to present the reasons and motivations for choosing marriage and the family, and in this way to help men and women better to respond to the grace that God offers them."<sup>12</sup>

With realism and concreteness, the Exhortation recalls the objective conditioning that affects the formation and life of families, due to the lack of work or the demands of work, housing problems, the phenomenon of migration, the needs of the elderly and the disabled, difficulties related to poverty, both material and moral, which often have a strong impact on the family and on its real possibilities of life. In such difficult situations "the Church must be particularly concerned to offer understanding, comfort and acceptance, rather than imposing straightaway a set of rules that only lead people to feel judged and abandoned by the very Mother called to show them God's mercy."<sup>13</sup> With great sincerity, the

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9 Cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, cit., 6.

10 *Ib.*

11 *Amoris Laetitia* 32.

12 *Ivi* 35.

13 *Ib.* 49.

Pope observes that “no union that is temporary or closed to the transmission of life can ensure the future of society.” He goes on to ask: “But nowadays who is making an effort to strengthen marriages, to help married couples overcome their problems, to assist them in the work of raising children and, in general, to encourage the stability of the marriage bond?”<sup>14</sup> In particular, Pope Francis defends the role and dignity of women which are fundamental to the life of family and society but are often devalued or trampled upon.

## 2

## THE CENTRAL POINTS OF THE CHURCH’S TEACHING ON THE FAMILY

The third chapter of *Amoris Laetitia* presents the vocation of the family in the light of the Gospel message. Pope Francis says: “The mystery of the Christian family can be fully understood only in the light of the Father’s infinite love revealed in Christ, who gave himself up for our sake and who continues to dwell in our midst. I now wish to turn my gaze to the living Christ, who is at the heart of so many love stories, and to invoke the fire of the Spirit upon all the world’s families.”<sup>15</sup> The Pope gives a rapid presentation of the Church’s teaching on marriage and the family. Indissolubility “should not be viewed as a ‘yoke’ imposed on humanity, but as a ‘gift’ granted to those who are joined in marriage.”<sup>16</sup> Pope Francis also points out that “the sacrament of marriage is not a social convention, an empty ritual or merely the outward sign of a commitment. The sacrament is a gift given for the sanctification and salvation of the spouses, since “their mutual belonging is a real representation, through the sacramental sign, of the relationship between Christ and the Church. The married couple are therefore a permanent reminder for the Church of what took place on the cross; they are for one another and for their children witnesses of the salvation in which they share through the sacrament”. Marriage is a vocation, inasmuch as it is a response to a specific call to experience conjugal love as an imperfect sign of the love between Christ and the Church. Consequently, the decision

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14 Ib. 52.

15 Ib. 59.

16 Ib. 62.

to marry and to have a family ought to be the fruit of a process of vocational discernment.<sup>17</sup> This discernment is illuminated by the conviction that “Christian marriage is a sign of how much Christ loved his Church in the covenant sealed on the cross, yet it also makes that love present in the communion of the spouses. By becoming one flesh, they embody the espousal of our human nature by the Son of God.”<sup>18</sup>

We can therefore speak of a “gospel of the family” to be proclaimed. This good news, according to the faith and the experience of the Church, embraces four key aspects which should always be present and proposed as a unity. The family is the school of mankind, of social life, of the life of the Church and holiness. The family is first of all a *school of humanity*, that is, a school of love for the life and growth of the person.<sup>19</sup> This happens especially in the relationship that marriage demands and establishes between spouses: “This love is an eminently human one since it is directed from one person to another through an affection of the will; it involves the good of the whole person, and therefore can enrich the expressions of body and mind with a unique dignity, ennobling these expressions as special ingredients and signs of the friendship distinctive of marriage. This love God has judged worthy of special gifts, healing, perfecting and exalting gifts of grace and of charity.”<sup>20</sup> *Familiaris Consortio* rightly placed the bond of love at the centre of family life: “Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being... The institution of marriage is not an undue interference by society or authority, nor the extrinsic imposition of a form. Rather it is an interior requirement of the covenant of conjugal love which is publicly affirmed as unique and exclusive, in order to live in complete fidelity to the plan of God, the Creator.”<sup>21</sup>

It is an essential task of believers to recognize the value of conjugal love and to insist continually on its necessity: “To bear witness to the inestimable value of the indissolubility and fidelity of marriage is one of the most precious and most urgent tasks of Christian couples in our time.”<sup>22</sup> Benedict XVI devoted his Encyclical *Deus caritas est* to the love that is born from above and is at the basis of every true love, especially that of the family. In the distinction that he makes between ‘eros’ and ‘agape’, between passionate love and love of self-giving,

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17 Ib. 72.

18 Ib. 73.

19 Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 52: “The family is a kind of school of deeper humanity.”

20 Ib. 49.

21 *Familiaris Consortio*, 11.

22 Ib. 20.

there is an echo of the twentieth-century debate which started in the research done by Anders Nygren.<sup>23</sup> Pope Benedict states that Christian love “far from rejecting or ‘poisoning’ eros, ... heals it and restores its true grandeur.”<sup>24</sup> This happens through a greater love given from above. It is the experience of God who is Love that makes possible the completely gratuitous gift of self to one other and to others. “Love is indeed ‘ecstasy’, not in the sense of a moment of intoxication, but rather as a journey, an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward-looking self towards its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God.”<sup>25</sup> This is an inescapable programme if family life is to be authentic and humanizing, moulded by the model of eternal love: “Marriage based on exclusive and definitive love becomes the icon of the relationship between God and his people and vice versa. God’s way of loving becomes the measure of human love.”<sup>26</sup> Through love, enlightened and nourished by faith, the family can thus become a genuine, healthy, happy school of humanity.<sup>27</sup>

Because it is a unique school of love, the family is also a *school of social living*. It enables the person to grow in his or her capacity for the skills of socialization and in building society. *Familiaris Consortio* says: “The family is the first and fundamental school of social living: as a community of love, it finds in self-giving the law that guides it and makes it grow. The self-giving that inspires the love of husband and wife for each other is the model and norm for the self-giving that must be practised in the relationships between brothers and sisters and the different generations living together in the family. And the communion and sharing that are part of everyday life in the home at times of joy and at times of difficulty are the most concrete and effective pedagogy for the active, responsible and fruitful inclusion of the children in the wider horizon of society.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, “In matrimony and in the family a complex of interpersonal relationships is set up —married life, fatherhood and motherhood, filiation and fraternity— through which each human person is introduced into the “human family” and

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23 Cf. A. Nygren, *Eros e agape. La nozione cristiana dell’amore e le sue trasformazioni*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1971 (Original Swedish Edition Stockholm 1930).

24 Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus caritas est* (25 Dicembre 2005), 5.

25 *Ib.* 6.

26 *Ib.* 11.

27 For a further study of the motive of love that makes life fruitful, see the fourth chapter of *Amoris Laetitia*, which offers a wonderful application to family life of the exhortation to charity of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 13: especially vv 4-7).

28 *Familiaris Consortio*, 37.

into the “family of God,” which is the Church”<sup>29</sup> and learns to establish fruitful relationships with parents and grandparents, as well as with brothers and sisters.

Similarly, the family becomes the *womb of ecclesial life*, where the members learn to live in communion with the Church: “Christian marriage and the Christian family build up the Church: for in the family the human person is not only brought into being and progressively introduced by means of education into the human community, but by means of the rebirth of baptism and education in the faith the child is also introduced into God’s family, which is the Church”<sup>30</sup> Here we find the idea of the family as a ‘small-scale church’: In *Familiaris Consortio* we read: “Insofar as it is a ‘small-scale Church’, the Christian family is called upon, like the ‘large-scale Church’, to be a sign of unity for the world and in this way to exercise its prophetic role by bearing witness to the Kingdom and peace of Christ, towards which the whole world is journeying.”<sup>31</sup> In this way, the active participation of the family in the life of the Church is highlighted: “The Christian family is called upon to take part actively and responsibly in the mission of the Church in a way that is original and specific, by placing itself, in what it is and what it does ‘as an intimate community of life and love’, at the service of the Church and of society.”<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, the Church can look to the family as a model from which to draw inspiration: “Thanks to love within the family, the Church can and ought to take on a more homelike or family dimension, developing a more human and fraternal style of relationships.”<sup>33</sup>

The family is also called to be a *school of faith and holiness* in which the path of holiness of spouses and children is lived and nourished: “Christian spouses have a special sacrament by which they are fortified and receive a kind of consecration in the duties and dignity of their state. By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfil their conjugal and family obligation, they are penetrated with the spirit of Christ, which suffuses their whole lives with faith, hope and charity. Thus they increasingly advance the perfection of their own personalities, as well as their mutual sanctification, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God.”<sup>34</sup> The sacrament of marriage is the specific source and original means of sanctification for Christian married couples and families.<sup>35</sup> The realization of

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29 Ib. 15.

30 Ib.

31 Ib. 48.

32 Ib. 50.

33 Ib. 64.

34 *Gaudium et Spes*, 48.

35 Cf. *Familiaris consortio*, 56.



this call to marital and family holiness is nourished by the sacramental gifts of the Lord and by docile and prayerful correspondence to them: “The baptismal priesthood of the faithful, exercised in the sacrament of marriage, constitutes the basis of a priestly vocation and mission for the spouses and family by which their daily lives are transformed into “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” This transformation is achieved not only by celebrating the Eucharist and the other sacraments and through offering themselves to the glory of God, but also through a life of prayer, through prayerful dialogue with the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>36</sup>

## LINES OF ACTION IN THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD,

### 3 in relation to the Salesian charism and the growth of ecclesial life

In the light of this, we understand the centrality of the family in the life of the Church, and thus also in the apostolic service of the Salesian family. This centrality has two aspects. Firstly, the family is a privileged agent in the transmission of faith, and therefore in the education of children and young people to Christian life and in the aid to be offered to them in vocational discernment. Secondly, the family has prior place in the pastoral care of the Church and of the followers of Don Bosco.

- A) As the *Frame of Reference of Salesian Youth Ministry* observes: “human life falls under the sign of vocation, which calls for great openness of spirit and responsibility in taking on a faithful commitment: responsibility means literally taking on the beauty of responding”.<sup>37</sup> Thus the question arises as to how the Church today is inviting believers involved in education to accept their call as a gift for the younger generation, their growth in faith, and their vocational discernment. The answer proposed in the preparation for the Synod on the Fam-

<sup>36</sup> Ib. 59.

<sup>37</sup> *Salesian Youth Ministry Frame of Reference*, Rome, 2014.

ily and in the subsequent Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* can be summarized in the notion of *the decisive role of the family in education to faith*:<sup>38</sup> “In the view of the Christian community, the family remains the first and indispensable educative community. For parents, education is an essential task because it is connected to the transmission of life. Their task is original and primary compared to the educational task of other subjects. It is irreplaceable and inalienable, in the sense that it cannot be delegated or replaced.”<sup>39</sup> This task must be undertaken with courage and foresight: “It is more important to start processes than to dominate spaces. If parents are obsessed with always knowing where their children are and controlling all their movements, they will seek only to dominate space. But this is no way to educate, strengthen and prepare their children to face challenges. What is most important is the ability lovingly to help them grow in freedom, maturity, overall discipline and real autonomy.”<sup>40</sup> A prudent gradual approach is recommended here: “In proposing values, we have to proceed slowly, taking into consideration the child’s age and abilities, without presuming to apply rigid and inflexible methods. The valuable contributions of psychology and the educational sciences have shown that changing a child’s behaviour involves a gradual process, but also that freedom needs to be channelled and stimulated, since by itself it does not ensure growth in maturity.”<sup>41</sup>

The family is valued as a primary and fundamental agent of education: “The family is the primary setting for socialization, since it is where we first learn to relate to others, to listen and share, to be patient and show respect, to help one another and live as one. The task of education is to make us sense that the world and society are also our home; it trains us how to live together in this greater home. In the family, we learn closeness, care and respect for others. We break out of our fatal self-absorption and come to realize that we are living with and alongside others who are worthy of our concern, our kindness and our affection.”<sup>42</sup> This conviction cannot ignore the difficulties the family encounters in meeting its educational responsibility: “Family education is a very difficult art today. Many parents suffer, in fact, a sense of solitude, inadequacy, and even

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38 This is one of the central aspects of the statement of the Italian Bishops in the document *Educare alla vita buona del Vangelo* (2010), which affirms clearly the primacy of the family in the field of education.

39 *Educare alla vita buona del Vangelo* cit. n. 36.

40 *Amoris Laetitia*, n. 261.

41 *Ib.*, n.273.

42 *Ib.*, n. 276.

impotence. It is a social isolation first, because society privileges individuals and does not consider the family as its core cell. Fathers and mothers struggle to propose with passion deep reasons to live and, above all, to say 'no' with the necessary authority. The bond with the children is likely to oscillate between poor care and possessive attitudes that tend to suffocate creativity and perpetuate dependence."<sup>43</sup>

Faced with their educational responsibilities and the difficulties confronting it today, the family is *endowed* at one and the same time *with strength and fragility*: "The family, is at one and the same time, both strong and fragile. Its weakness does not derive only from the internal motivation of the spouses and the relationship between parents and children. External influences are of far greater significance. These include inadequate support for the desire of parents to have children, despite the serious demographic problem; the difficulty of balancing the demands of work with family life; insufficient care for the weaker members of society; and difficulty in building happy relationships due to unfavourable housing in urban environments. To these can be added the growing number of those who live together without being married as well as the number of marital separations and divorces, together with the economic, fiscal and social obstacles that make it hard for parents to have children."<sup>44</sup> Among the destabilizing factors, particular attention should be given to the diffusion of lifestyles inspired by the culture of the provisional and the reluctance to establish stable ties. Despite these aspects of fragility, the family remains the primary subject for the transmission of faith and education in vocational discernment. The many educational agencies operating in the Church, beginning with Salesian works, need to bear in mind that the family is not only an agent of education but that it has unique quality and influence that it alone can bring. It is incumbent on the Christian community to assist parents in their role as educators, offering formation and mutual support.

The *original and natural environment* for education to faith is the family because it is there that it can be accomplished in a concrete and continuous way within the context of everyday relationships, which, especially in the first years of life, make the greatest impact on the formation of personality. Hence the importance of encouraging parents to reflect on their educational responsibility in terms of faith. Every pastoral effort therefore needs to be made in order to enhance the role of the family as the principal agent in the transmission of faith and catechesis of its members, and in particular of the children. Priests,

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43 Ib.

44 *Educare alla vita buona del Vangelo*, cit.

catechists and pastoral animators must always refer to the family with a view to close collaboration, particularly in the journey of Christian initiation and the vocational journey of young people. It is, however, the duty of the whole Christian community to *educate the family and to support it* in carrying out its task of education and catechesis. To this end, preparation for marriage must be offered as a journey of rediscovery of faith and inclusion in the life of the ecclesial community. The care of young couples is also important. This means accompanying them in the initial stages of married life and laying the foundations for a journey of lifelong learning.

- B) The family is to be recognized as the primary recipient of the pastoral care of the Christian community: “The family must be loved, supported and enabled to become an active agent of education not only for their children, but for the whole community. There needs to be a growing awareness of the ministerial role that comes from the sacrament of marriage and the calling of man and woman to be a sign of the love of God who takes care of all his children. It is the task of the entire community to support the family, with appropriate political and economic choices, paying particular attention to individual families.<sup>45</sup> How then do we accompany families so that they become fully agents of evangelization and catechesis for their children and for the entire Christian community? “To evangelize does not mean simply to teach a doctrine, but to proclaim Jesus Christ by one’s words and actions, that is, to make oneself an instrument of his presence and action in the world.”<sup>46</sup> Evangelizing families means accompanying them in the living experience of ecclesial faith, knowing that “evangelization is the result of a combined journey, a mission where consecrated and lay people are active subjects, agents of the evangelization of individuals and cultures.”<sup>47</sup>

What are the fundamental aspects that need to be studied in order to promote an experience of Church in which the family feels accepted and finds a reason to strengthen its identity and its mission as a Christian family? The sixth chapter of the Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*—dealing with “Some Pastoral Perspectives”—examines exactly how to “proclaim the Gospel of the Family today”. Among other things, it says: “Pastoral care for families needs to make it clear that the Gospel

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45 *Ib.*, n. 38.

46 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Doctrinal note on some aspects of evangelization*, 3 December 2007, No.2.

47 Cf. *Christifideles Laici* 55-56; 24th General Chapter of Salesians of Don Bosco n.96.

of the family responds to the deepest expectations of the human person: a response to each one's dignity and fulfilment in reciprocity, communion and fruitfulness. This consists not merely in presenting a set of rules, but in proposing values that are clearly needed today, even in the most secularized of countries. The Synod Fathers also highlighted the fact that evangelization needs unambiguously to denounce cultural, social, political and economic factors —such as the excessive importance given to market logic— that prevent authentic family life and lead to discrimination, poverty, exclusion, and violence."<sup>48</sup> To get families involved in pastoral activity, they must be trained for it even before they prepare for marriage. "Both short-term and long-term marriage preparation should ensure that the couple do not view the wedding ceremony as the end of the road, but instead embark upon marriage as a lifelong calling based on a firm and realistic decision to face all trials and difficult moments together."<sup>49</sup>

An examination of the various causes of crisis in family life enriches this reflection on family ministry by highlighting that even in the most critical times there are positive developments to be valued: "When crises come, they are unafraid to get to the root of it, to renegotiate basic terms, to achieve a new equilibrium and to move forward together to a new stage."<sup>50</sup> The attitude of pastors towards families in crisis or those whose marriage has broken down must always be welcoming and accepting: "It is important that the divorced who have entered a new union should be made to feel part of the Church. They are not excommunicated and they should not be treated as such, since they remain part of the ecclesial community. These situations require careful discernment and respectful accompaniment. Language or conduct that might lead them to feel discriminated against should be avoided, and they should be encouraged to participate in the life of the community. The Christian community's care of such persons is not to be considered a weakening of its faith and testimony to the indissolubility of marriage; rather, such care is a particular expression of its charity." (n. 243) Welcoming, accompanying, discerning, and *integrating* are four words that summarize the pastoral attitude required by the Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* towards all families, especially those wounded by failure in love.<sup>51</sup>

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48 *Amoris Laetitia*, n. 201.

49 *Ib.*, n. 211.

50 *Ib.*, n. 238.

51 *Cf. ib.*, nn. 247 ff. Chapter 8 is entitled precisely: "Accompanying, discerning and integrating weakness".

Pope Francis says: “The Church must accompany with attention and care the weakest of her children, who show signs of a wounded and troubled love, by restoring in them hope and confidence, like the beacon of a lighthouse in a port or a torch carried among the people to enlighten those who have lost their way or who are in the midst of a storm. Let us not forget that the Church’s task is often like that of a field hospital.”<sup>52</sup> Referring to cohabitation and *de facto* unions, the Exhortation clearly reaffirms Christ’s call upon married couples to be firmly united in the marriage bond. “All these situations require a constructive response seeking to transform them into opportunities that can lead to the full reality of marriage and family in conformity with the Gospel. These couples need to be welcomed and guided patiently and discreetly”.<sup>53</sup> In this line, Pope Francis relies on St John Paul II’s teaching about the “Law of Gradualness”, which “is not a “gradualness of law” but rather a gradualness in the prudential exercise of free acts on the part of subjects who are not in a position to understand, appreciate, or fully carry out the objective demands of the law.”<sup>54</sup> Concerning the discernment of these “irregular” situations, the Exhortation proposes a choice between the logic of marginalization and the logic of integration, the only one that conforms to the mercy revealed in Christ: “It is a matter of reaching out to everyone, of needing to help each person find his or her proper way of participating in the ecclesial community and thus to experience being touched by an “unmerited, unconditional and gratuitous” mercy. No one can be condemned for ever, because that is not the logic of the Gospel!”<sup>55</sup> And this —Pope Francis insists— applies not only to divorced people who are in a new union, but to everyone, in whatever situation they find themselves.

Welcoming, accompanying and discerning in view of the appropriate integration of each one in the life of the ecclesial community is the pastoral choice that the Exhortation proposes for the whole Church. Rather than offering a new general canonical norm —which would be impossible in the face of the variety and complexity of situations— Pope Francis encourages a responsible personal and pastoral discernment of special cases inspired by mercy. There is here a singular correspondence between what Francis tells the Church and what Don Bosco recommended to his Salesians: “The preventive system is really ours. No hurtful punishments! No humiliating words! No serious correction in the presence of others! Rather kindness, charity, and patience... Make sure that those who are corrected become our friends more than they were before, and

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52 *Ib.*, n. 291.

53 *Ib.*, n. 294.

54 *Ib.*, n. 295.

55 *Ib.*, n. 297.

never let them leave us feeling hurt.”<sup>56</sup> This kind of pastoral approach will also be careful to recognize that the degree of responsibility is not the same in all cases, and the consequences or effects of a rule do not necessarily have to be the same for all. Discernment is especially the task of pastors. It must combine fidelity to the Church’s doctrine and attention to the concrete situations and the weight of the attenuating circumstances: “Discernment must help to find possible ways of responding to God and growing in the midst of limits. By thinking that everything is black and white, we sometimes close off the way of grace and of growth, and discourage paths of sanctification which give glory to God. Let us remember that “a small step, in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order, but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties”. The practical pastoral care of ministers and of communities must not fail to embrace this reality.”<sup>57</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This talk is a good occasion to highlight three characteristics that sum up the fundamental inspiration of the pastoral action of Pope Francis, as expressed in particular in the two synodal assemblies on the family: first of all, marked attention to pluralism and inculturation of the faith, with a view to overcoming any form of Eurocentrism or “Roman centralism”. Right from the beginning of the Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, Francis affirms: “Unity of teaching and practice is certainly necessary in the Church, but this does not preclude various ways of interpreting some aspects of that teaching or drawing certain consequences from it. This will always be the case as the Spirit guides us towards the entire truth (cf. *Jn* 16:13), until he leads us fully into the mystery of Christ and enables us to see all things as he does. Each country or region, moreover, can seek solutions better suited to its culture and sensitive to its traditions and local needs.”<sup>58</sup> Secondly, in the whole journey of the synod and in the indications offered by the Apostolic Exhortation that followed it, we are struck by the constant combining of realism in the understanding of problems and of mercy in the directives for dealing with them and overcoming them: “Our contemplation

<sup>56</sup> Letter of Don Bosco to Don Giacomo Costamagna, 10 August 1885.

<sup>57</sup> *Amoris Laetitia*, n. 305.

<sup>58</sup> *Ib.* n. 3.

of the fulfilment which we have yet to attain also allows us to see in proper perspective the historical journey which we make as families, and in this way to stop demanding of our interpersonal relationships a perfection, a purity of intentions and a consistency which we will only encounter in the Kingdom to come. It also keeps us from judging harshly those who live in situations of frailty. All of us are called to keep striving towards something greater than ourselves and our families, and every family must feel this constant impulse."<sup>59</sup>

Finally, I think it is right to draw attention to the language used by Pope Francis. It is concrete and colloquial, and can also be evocative and poetic, as in the words he uses to speak about love. He uses literary quotes such as those of Jorge Luis Borges,<sup>60</sup> and Mario Benedetti.<sup>61</sup>

In *Amoris Laetitia* we find a mixture of realism and imagination, concreteness and evocation. We get a sense of Francis as the pastor who has been speaking for years about love and with love to people who needed to love and be loved. "Here let me say a word to fiancés. Have the courage to be different. Don't let yourselves get swallowed up by a society of consumption and empty appearances. What is important is the love you share, strengthened and sanctified by grace."<sup>62</sup>

The word of the Pastor is interspersed with examples from daily life, which is the only place where love is properly expressed: "Young married couples should be encouraged to develop a routine that gives a healthy sense of closeness and stability through shared daily rituals. These could include a morning kiss, an evening blessing, waiting at the door to welcome each other home, taking trips together and sharing household chores."<sup>63</sup> The voice that is speaking here is one of great experience, illuminated by living faith and tender caring love for young people and for families, the womb where they are formed and grow.

This is the kind of charity that inspired Don Bosco to devote himself entirely to

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59 *Ib.*, n. 325.

60 In n. 8 of the Exhortation: "every home is a lampstand": in "Calle desconocida", *Fervor de Buenos Aires*, Buenos Aires 2011, 23: tr. it. *Fervore di Buenos Aires*, Adelphi, Milano 2010, 29.

61 In n. 181 of *Amoris Laetitia*: "Te quiero", in *Poemas de otros*, Buenos Aires 1993, 316: "Your hands are my caress, The harmony that fills my days. I love you because your hands Work for justice. If I love you, it is because you are My love, my companion and my all, And on the street, side by side, We are much more than just two".

62 *Amoris Laetitia*, n. 212.

63 *Ib.*, 226.



young people as summarized in the words: “It is enough that you are young for me to love you very much... It would be hard to find anyone who loves you more than I do in Jesus Christ and who desires your happiness more.”<sup>64</sup>

In family ministry, from marriage preparation to support for families in difficulty, we seek to have this kind of love alive and working in us.

I conclude my reflection by asking the whole Salesian family some questions that will help in reviewing their life in the footsteps of Don Bosco. In our pastoral ministry to the young and to families, do we pay proper attention to their experience of faith and to cultural sensitivity to the context in which we operate? Do we try to combine realism in understanding the problems with mercy in the way we face them, following the example of charity that burned in the heart of the Saint of the Young? Is our language such that the young can understand us and they and their families can feel touched by our sympathy and our love? May Don Bosco intercede for us, that we may respond to these questions with eloquence of life and ardour of charity. May Mary Help of Christians accompany us on our journey. May she obtain for us an increase in enthusiasm in serving families and young people wherever we meet them, spending ourselves totally in love for them and, together with them, building the city of God among men, the sign and foretaste of the new Jerusalem in heaven.

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64 *Il giovane provveduto*, (Companion of Youth) Introduction “To the Young” first edition Paravia, Torino 1847, 7.

28<sup>th</sup> November 2017

# YOUTH MINISTRY AND FAMILY

## THE JOURNEY OF THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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**Y**outh Ministry and Family is at the centre of our reflection as it is at the heart of our Salesian charism. From this statement we let ourselves be guided in the following reflection that has as its main purpose to make a reading of the journey that the Salesian Congregation has embarked on over the last decades around this theme. A reflection that finds its starting point in the experience of Vatican Council II that has given the whole Church the opportunity to deepen its mission in today's world. In the light of the mystery and the Word, we contemplate our calling to be a Church today, that is to be a mirror of Christ's light for humanity, in the contemporary world with its joys and hopes.

That the family is at the heart of our Salesian mission is clearly and simply stated within our *Constitutions* and *Regulations*. There are two articles that are like two solid and eloquent indicators:

#### **Constitutions, article 47**

The educative community and lay people associated with our work. We bring about in our works the educative and pastoral community which involves young people and adults, parents and educators, in a family atmosphere, so that it can become a living experience of Church and a revelation of God's plan for us.

In this community lay people associated with our work make a contribution all their own, because of their experience and pattern of life.

We welcome and encourage their collaboration, and we give them the opportunity to get a deeper knowledge of the Salesian spirit and the practice of the preventive system.

We foster the spiritual growth of each of them, and to those who may be so inclined we suggest a closer sharing of our mission in the Salesian Family.

#### **Regulations, article 5**

The application of the plan requires that in all our works and settings we establish the educative and pastoral community, whose animating nucleus is the Salesian community.

Let all the Salesians play an active part in the drawing up, realization and subsequent revision of the plan, and let them see to it that in a family spirit the young people, their parents and other collaborators also take part, according to their different roles.

At the end of this paper, I hope that the scope of what these two articles contain will be clearer. That we discover that behind these few lines we have a wealth that confirms the protagonism of the family – the subject and object of the Salesian Youth Ministry.

# 1 POST-CONCILIAR JOURNEY OF THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

In this first part we take a look at the firm points that emerge within the Congregation's journey in the immediate post-Council period. But to do this we have to start from a central point we need as a compass. It is the compass around the theme of the family that the Conciliar Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (GS, 1965) left us. The two parts of GS are, first, the Church and the vocation of the human person (Part I), while the second addresses some urgent problems (Part II). At this point it is helpful to grasp the prophetic scope of the first theme covered in Part II since it bears the title: *Fostering the nobility of marriage and the family*.

At a distance of more than 50 years, we realize that the Council Fathers had foreseen the ground where the Church would be called upon to invest much of its pastoral energies. The post-Conciliar Church's journey is nourished and strengthened by all the freshness we find in the GS, how it presents the family and the marriage: the family that is not perceived as a patient to be cured, but an active subject; the family who has a mission to accomplish; the family being helped and promoted by all the members of society.

## A THE GENERAL CHAPTERS

This very brief statement is obligatory, as already in the first instance of reflection that the Congregation had, the **Special General Chapter** (SGC 20, Rome, 10 June 1971 - 5 January 1972), the theme of the family emerges with the same force and vision.

It begins with a **first affirmation on the family as the place where the first education takes place**, convinced of the fact that **responsibility for younger generations needs to be largely assumed by a wider group**: that of the adult educators in the first place, but not only. The SGC indicates a responsibility that goes beyond the walls of the family as well as beyond the buildings where the pastoral proposal takes place:

Since education begins in the family and in many cases the human development of the child depends on this initial education, Salesians will do everything possible, by writing and lectures, to help parents in the Christian and human education of their children. Lay people who are directly responsible for the young have also a great influence on the evolution of youth. Hence we should increase our contact with them. We may also have the care of many other people who are on a higher socio-cultural plane. With their social and political responsibilities and their scientific and pastoral skill, they can have a great influence on the education of youth (SGC n.55).

From this premise, that time has largely confirmed its relevance, we meet two focal points around the family. The first point is offered from the perspective of a sound setting of the educative-pastoral project, where the family as a subject within the educative and pastoral community and together with it there is a sound collaboration together in the service of youth growth.

The second statement addresses the theme of **evangelization and catechesis**, paths of education to faith, within the parish. A first reference is found in *Document no. 4* that carries the title *Pastoral Renewal of Salesian Action among Youth*. Within this document we find a paragraph about the characteristics of our pastoral service where “relationships with the family” are considered and lived in relation to the fact that youth are at the main concern:

Salesian activity should take the young *in relation to the family*, in order to integrate, supplement and rectify its educative influence. **It is the task of the communities to maintain collaboration and a deep understanding with parents in their shared responsibility and action.** There are various forms of this collaboration. The importance of this union between the family and ourselves in the formation of the young should spur us on to a renewal. (SGC n. 356).

That these relationships do not only remain simply on the level of good intentions, they are further commented and deepened when it comes to the educative and pastoral project that the *Educative and Pastoral Community* (EPC) assumes (it should be noted here that the SGC refers to the EPC with the term *educative community*):

The renewal of pastoral work in the Congregation and in each province will be obtained, in the opinion of the Special General Chapter, if the following points in the doctrine of an EDUCATIVE COMMUNITY are put into practice: a) **co-responsibility** in the running of affairs on the part of the religious and lay *educators*, of the *pupils*, and their families; b) the **programming** and periodic revision of all the educative work of the community; c) the **creation of a real family atmosphere** in which the active and fraternal presence of the educator is indispensable; d) the division of the boys into **groups according to age and degree of preparation** (SGC n. 395).

This is the language that immediately after the Council the Congregation has matured in the SGC. **Collaboration with the family is an indispensable choice, a solid and central choice towards a genuine pastoral renewal.** A path of pastoral renewal that is based on *co-responsibility, planning, family atmosphere, and proposals for age groups* overcoming the model of a unique proposal for everyone without paying attention to a diversified pastoral proposal for children and youth.

A second reference, found in *Document no. 5, Salesian work in parishes*, deals with the theme of the family in relation to evangelization and catechesis, but this time within the experience of the parish. The SGC in a very clear and prophetic way primarily emphasizes the **need to be aware that the scenario we are living in is constantly changing**. In this context, the family has a unique role as a protagonist:

We are in touch with the child throughout the whole period of his education till he reaches maturity, and at the same time we have a **direct and continuous relationship with his family**. Such a relationship is all the more necessary at the present day, because when young people live in a **de-Christianized social milieu**, education is of little avail unless at the same time we try to re-evangelize the family and the society of which they form part (SGC n.401).

**Evangelization cannot be said to be complete if one does not assume the relationship with the family as an irreplaceable partner:** for its need to be evangelized, and also for its importance, capacity, and opportunity to strengthen long-term processes. In this manner the danger of ‘educating with little avail’ is averted.

From the awareness of this clear pastoral vision, there follows an invitation we often encounter today in the documents of the Church’s Magisterium, and also that of the Congregation. I think it is useful to find out that **already in the SGC we reached the understanding that “the family is not only subject but subject of pastoral action”:**

The renewed role of catechetics and its effective organization in the adult and youth sectors **must converge and meet in the family, considered not only as the object but more especially as the subject of pastoral action.** The family must be brought to fulfil its Christian duties as a means of educating the young in the faith, since it is precisely through the family that the young are brought into civic partnership with their fellow men and into the people of God (SGC n.422).

In addition, the SGC suggests **concrete steps** that, after decades, they still retain their pastoral validity and timeliness. Realizing that the family is the object and the subject of pastoral action, the EPC needs to engage in pastoral planning so as to render this belief operational. The concrete steps offered by the SGC have a **double binary**:

- a) **the first is that of the couple**, that is, how to help and accompany her. Offering ways to promote a journey of mutual support and mutual growth, human and spiritual, within the same couple;
- b) the second is the logical pastoral consequence of the first: to offer the opportunity of **family spirituality groups**, groups where the **growth is outward-looking**, thus avoiding the trap of a group centered on itself. Let these groups be a space where real spirituality become courage and dynamism in order to assume pastoral commitment, in other words, to become prophets:

Parents should be the **first preachers of the faith** to their children, and the first catechists. Similarly each

married person will become an educator and help for the other partner in the course of their Christian life.

Finally, if the Christian family is the place where the faith really accepted, it follows that the whole family will bear witness to the Gospel. To this end, groups to intensify family spirituality should be encouraged. Parents who are willing to be trained to **undertake pastoral action in the community**, especially by preparing those who are engaged (and young people in general) to be married. In this way the family will become a 'domestic church', a 'first seminary', an 'open community', and will thereby rediscover in the faith a new dimension of love, of liberty, and of service with and for others (SGC n.422).

We note the language used by the SGC in the quotations: it captures the foresight of how in the immediate aftermath of the Council the Congregation had intuited:

- » *family, considered not only as an object, but especially as a subject of pastoral action;*
- » *parents are therefore prepared to be the first to announce faith, the first catechists for their children;*
- » *the Christian family... the place where faith is welcomed... gives witness to the Gospel;*
- » *the spouses are willing to engage in pastoral commitment in the community;*
- » *the family becomes a domestic Church, the first seminary, an open community.*

At this point we realize that by studying the journey of the Congregation, we are endowed with a heritage that avoids the unnecessary fatigue of inventing new formulas. Instead, we do well to renew our memory, to keep alive this rich and hope-filled process that this **Special General Chapter** has transmitted to us.

For various reasons, the prospects and the lines generated by the SGC had not generated similar reflections in the following General Chapters. We know that the efforts of the Congregation in the *General Chapters 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25* have been very focused on the subject of education and evangelization, the renewal of the *Constitutions*, the education of young people to faith, Sale-



sians and lay people, communion and sharing in the spirit and mission of Don Bosco, and the Salesian community today. This focus somehow left no room to deal more specifically with the family, even though at this time the Church was engaged in the Synod on the family which gave the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*.

We note that the theme of the family within these General Chapters is always in relation to the central themes the Congregation was studying. Let's review these references that have been quoted several times in various publications and writings:

In times past “piety” was expressed in forms pedagogically suited to the conditions of contemporary youth. **Today there is an urgent need for a rethinking of the best times and forms of initiation to it, beginning from the family itself** (GC 23, n. 139).

In this family situation, the question put by Fr Egidio Viganò makes us think: **“We have to ask ourselves: can an educator at the present day form the person of his youngsters without the deepening, clarifying and reliving of family values?”** (Letter published in AGC n. 349, Rome, 10th June 1994, quoted in GC 24, n. 10).

**Collaboration with youngsters’ families should be intensified, since parents are the primary educators of their sons and daughters.** To this end they should be offered in our works an educative climate rich in family values, and in particular an educational team with a harmonious integration of men and women components. (GC 24, n. 177).

In recent years action and reflection have given rise to vocational planning at both local and provincial levels; greater attention has been given to methods of formation; there has been a greater involvement of young people in groups and in the Salesian Youth Movement. **We have not always known how to involve the family as the primary setting for vocational growth** (GC 25, n. 41).

**General Chapter 26** (CG 26, 2008): there is a clear and forceful reappearance of the theme of the family into a General Chapter whose intention was *starting*

*afresh from Don Bosco*. During this General Chapter there are two particular moments where the theme of the family is explicitly dealt with: the first, within the same Chapter's scheme; the second is within the two interventions of Pope Benedict XVI – one at the beginning of GC 26, through the letter written to the Salesians of Don Bosco by Pope Benedict XVI<sup>65</sup>, and the other is the speech towards the end of the General Chapter.<sup>66</sup>

It is important to refer to the aforementioned letter before commenting on how GC 26 reflected on the family theme. It is a letter that enlightens and highlights the already proposed agenda for the General Chapter. It is a letter that must be read in the light of the Pope's commitment, as is also the case today of Pope Francis, on the theme of the family and its educational mission. Some key points serve as indicators for the future:

- » the family as a domestic church,
- » the family is the first educational hearth of faith,
- » the invitation to the Salesians of Don Bosco has a dual importance:
  - » within the journey of the same Congregation because of our mission, that of being educators and evangelizers of young people with special attention to the family;
  - » ecclesial importance since the Salesian charism and the family are a gift to be shared with the Church;
- » finally, an invitation to deepen this singular convergence: youth ministry and family.

Pope Benedict XVI writes:

It is indispensable to help the young to make the most of their inner resources, such as dynamism and positive aspirations; to put before them proposals that are rich in humanity and Gospel values; to urge them to integrate themselves into society as an active part of it through work and participation and commitment to the common good. This requires those who guide them to expand the areas of educational commitment with attention to the new forms

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65 Letter of His Holiness Benedict XVI on the occasion of the General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/letters/2008/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_let\\_20080301\\_capitolo-salesiani.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/letters/2008/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20080301_capitolo-salesiani.html)

66 Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Members of the 26<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/march/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20080331\\_salesiani.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/march/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080331_salesiani.html)

of poverty among young people, to advanced education and to immigration; **it also requires attention to the family and its involvement.** I reflected on this most important aspect in the Letter on the educational emergency that I recently addressed to the faithful of Rome, and that I now present in spirit to all Salesians.<sup>67</sup>

A keyword all along is the word “**involvement**”. Pope Benedict puts together “attention to the family” and the focus on the “involvement” of the family, namely the family as the object and subject of pastoral action. For, this is a call to shared responsibility, to an overall project within our educative and pastoral communities, but also a call who hold ecclesial, political and social responsibilities which Pope Benedict expresses in the terms in the letter *Urgent Task of Educating Young People*:

Responsibility is in the first place personal, but there is also a responsibility which we share as citizens in the same city and of one nation, as members of the human family and, if we are believers, as children of the one God and members of the Church.<sup>68</sup>

Following this *Letter*, CG 26 as anticipated in the preparatory work, offers a renewed vigour to some *New Frontiers*: Family, Social Communication, Europe. On the theme of the family we encounter a language that has now become common heritage: ours and the Church:

Special attention needs to be given to the current situation of **the family, originally responsible for education and the first place for evangelisation.** The entire Church has become aware of the serious difficulties the family finds itself in and warns of the need to offer extraordinary assistance for its formation, development and the responsible exercising of its educative role. **This is why we are also called to act in such a way that youth ministry is ever more open to family ministry.** (GC 26, n. 99).

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67 Letter of His Holiness Benedict XVI on the occasion of the General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco.

68 Letter of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Faithful of the Diocese and City of Rome on the *Urgent Task of Educating Young People*, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2008.

GC 26 is open about the fact that there is still a long way to go: “attention has grown in provinces to the family which is the essential point of reference for education, but the efforts we have made so far are still insufficient” (GC 26, n. 102). For this reason, it affirms and encourages a pastoral direction that has given positive signs of hope in these last years. We need to strengthen our attention to the family which goes beyond considering it only as object of our pastoral concern, as if it was a “patient” in need of our sympathy. We are called to move on from “a youth ministry insufficiently attentive to family contexts, to one of greater investment of energies on behalf of the family” (GC 26, n. 104), taking on board the commitment “to give privileged attention to the family in youth ministry (GC 26, n. 108).

In a more specific manner GC 26 offers some lines of action that are very much in line with the pastoral vision proposed in SGC:

*Let the community:*

- » *involve and form parents in the educative and evangelising activity they carry out for their children;*
- » *develop curricula for affective education especially during adolescence and accompany young people during their time of engagement for marriage, making good use of the contribution of parents, lay people who share this responsibility and members of the Salesian Family;*
- » *foster new forms of evangelisation and catechesis of families and by means of families (CG 26, n. 109).*

**A summary note:** I believe that GC 26 in this field has offered a platform that leaves two positive consequences: the first is that of strengthening the theme of the family not only as a proposal enclosed in our walls, but as an **ecclesial journey**. In fact, the two Synods on the family that followed are a confirmation of this pastoral choice. It is also to be noted that in recent years the theme of the family as subject of the educative and pastoral community is gathering interest, reflection and concrete proposals in several **Salesian Provinces**. These two aspects, the ecclesial and the congregational ones, offer hope for the future as we can see later.

In **General Chapter 27** (CG 27) we witness the continuation and strengthening of the process launched by the GC 26. Here we have an even more focused

reflection on the family theme together with Pope Francis's intervention towards the end of the General Chapter. The two strengths on which this General Chapter insists are the following: a) **the involvement of the family**; and b) formation: **the pastoral journey and formation**. Here too, we see the convergence of the Church's journey: the preparation for the two Synods on the family and the work of the General Chapter.

As already mentioned, GC 27 insists on the **protagonism** of the family. The terms used have a clarity that enlightens, guides, and strengthens our journeys of pastoral planning. In the part that has as a title *Available for planning and cooperation*, we read:

An emerging apostolic front that we have begun to take better care of is **family ministry**, and not only in parish or adult formation contexts. **It needs to be reconsidered in close connection with youth ministry** (GC 27, n. 20).

This statement in its brevity should be taken as a light and as an indispensable indication for our pastoral and educative communities. Family ministry, first of all, is not just a call for certain environments, it is not exclusive and much less excluding. Here we have a danger, a trap that we must be pastorally alert in avoiding. The family is a subject in all the places where we are called to be servants and pilgrims for the young. The family is there to the extent that we accept to meet young people with all their history, in its complexity, but also in its potential.

Family ministry is not a separate sector. Family ministry is not a responsibility of somebody who organizes activities, whatever these activities may be. "Family ministry (is) to be reconsidered in close association with youth ministry." This is a belief that makes us reflect. It is a perspective that helps us to avoid the fragmentation of small personal pastoral realms. It is a call that has to strengthen a community that educates the family through involvement, offers the chance to the family to become an educative and pastoral active agent and protagonist.

Again, this point is taken up by GC 27 in the section entitled *Experiencing fraternal life, as at Valdocco, available for planning and cooperation*:

In the Church, which is the People of God on the march and a communion of individuals with different charisms and roles, **we share the service of building the Kingdom of God with the laity**. It is charismatic to see to the involvement

and shared responsibility of all the members of the *animating core of the EPC* (cf. C 47), Salesians and lay people, **foster a planning mentality and common action on behalf of the young, families and adults amongst the ordinary people** (GC 27, n. 20).

GC 27 provides us with the processes and concrete steps that while giving weight to this pastoral insistence can put together a) the **involvement** of the family and b) the formation, that is, the **pastoral journey and formation**:

Integrating family ministry into the Provincial and local SEPP, providing for the formation and involvement of lay leadership [CG 26, 99, 102, 104] (GC 27, n. 71, 5);  
Ensuring attention is given to family ministry and lay formation at all levels and encouraging coordination of reflection and intervention by the Sectors for the Salesian Mission and for Formation (GC 27, n. 71, 7).

Pope Francis in his speech to members of the GC 27, reiterated the theme of the family with the same insistence of the discussions during the Chapter. The Pope, starting from the vocational perspective, insists on the fundamental choice of involving the family within the vocational youth ministry:

Apostolic vocations are ordinarily the result of good youth ministry. Caring for vocations requires specific attention: first prayer, then activities, personalized programmes, courage in making the proposal, guidance and **family involvement**.<sup>69</sup>

## **B** LETTERS OF THE RECTOR MAJORS

This presentation of the Congregation's journey through the General Chapters obviously needs to be completed with a reference to the three letters written by our Rector Majors, Don Egidio Viganò, Don Pascual Chávez and Don Angel Fernandez Artime on the theme of the Family.

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69 Address of Pope Francis to Participants in the General Chapter of the Salesian Society of Saint John Bosco (Salesians), 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014; [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/march/documents/papa-francesco\\_20140331\\_capitolo-generale-salesiani.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/march/documents/papa-francesco_20140331_capitolo-generale-salesiani.html)

**The letter by Fr Egidio Viganò**, *In the Year of the Family* (1994), addresses the pastoral challenges regarding the family from the standpoint of the new evangelization. Then he continues to widen the horizon, social, political and cultural, pointing out some pastoral orientation that connect with the Congregation's journey at the time: the involvement of lay people that was going to be the theme of GC 24.

Fr Viganò starts with a statement that touches on the heart of the challenge that remains valid even for us today:

It is opportune therefore that we consider seriously how this theme of the family impinges deeply on our process of renewal. It will help us to feel ourselves more deeply «at the heart of the Church» and more solidly united «with the world and its history». The Holy Spirit has raised us up among the People of God with a **specific task of pastoral work for the young**. We know very well, and we have said it on several occasions, **that no authentic pastoral work for the young is possible without a practical and interrelated pastoral work for the family**.

Fr Viganò was convinced that “the family is certainly one of the *new frontiers* of evangelization and is deeply linked (...) with the mission to the young and the poor inherent in our charism.” And for this he insists that “the theme of the family is of the greatest importance for all, and is so in a particular way for educators in the faith.”

Passing on to offer a broad theological and anthropological reading, Fr Viganò points out “on three aspects linked with pastoral work for the family,” which reflect the same ones matured during the previous General Chapters: **pastoral protagonism, formation** and **accompaniment**. We note that the understand-

ing left by Fr Viganò is that of a synthesis between youth ministry and family, that is a path that needs to be strengthened, never fragmented.<sup>70</sup>

The point on which we need to insist, for a practical renewal in a **greater exchange between pastoral work for youth and for the family**, is to place firmly at the centre of educational planning a program for continued initiatives for the development and strengthening of self-donation, linked with the demands of sexual and vocational differences. Hence once again the **urgent need to incorporate in all educative activity an authentic youth spirituality**, including also an adequate ascetical pedagogy and a practical sense of personal resilience and of reconciliation with God.

**Fr Pascual Chávez's letter**, *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years and in favour with God and man* (Lk 2,52) (2006), begins with a reading of the risks and threats weighing on the family today. He then offers a very rich theological and charismatic reflection, giving space to the figure of Mamma Margherita. Finally he focuses on renewing the mission of the family by pointing out some pastoral and pedagogical applications.

We pause for a moment to focus on this latter part to emphasize those lines that are in full accord with the journey of the General Chapters. As a prelude to these lines, Fr Pascual Chávez writes:

For us, members of the Salesian Family, living as a family is not just a pastoral option so urgently needed nowadays, but a **way of living our charism and an objective to be given**

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70 Here are the texts that may serve for further insight:

- **Formation and animation of the marriage covenant:** to be concerned with the evangelization of various groups of married couples;
- **Sexual education:** experience shows that this will not be effective without a youth spirituality: love, sexuality, spirituality are all intimately united in the process of education to the faith. And here must necessarily be included education to vocation which, in whatever state of life, is precisely a concrete formation to love as self-giving;
- **Preparation for marriage:** the formation of the person to love, which is the essence of all education, should be a guiding factor in the educative plan for a good preparation for marriage. Since marriage is the ordinary vocation of the majority of our young people, this is an aspect of vocational pastoral work to be considered alongside vocation to the consecrated life, even though in a different way and with different emphasis.
- And so in youth pastoral work there are specific values to be developed by intensifying the daily spirituality so much recommended by the GC23.



**preference in our apostolic mission.** As a characteristic charismatic trait we Salesians and members of the Salesian Family live the family spirit; as a **primary objective we share with the families who entrust their children to us the task of educating and evangelising them;** as an educative and methodological option, we work to recreate in our environments the family spirit.

It is within this logic of “sharing the educational and evangelizing task” that the following pastoral and pedagogical applications need to be read:

- » **guarantee a special commitment to education to love** within Salesian educational practice and in the journey of education to the faith proposed to our young people;
- » **follow-up and support of parents in their educational responsibilities,** by fully involving them in the implementation of the Salesian pastoral and educational plan.
- » **foster and prepare the Salesian style of the family:** in individual families, in the Salesian community, in the educative and pastoral community.
- » **involve the families in the process of education and evangelisation.**

The vocabulary of Fr Pascual Chávez enriches and focuses more and more on those key points that are getting clearer in these years.

**In the letter of Fr Angel Fernandez Artime,** this year’s Strenna 2017, *We are Family! Every home, a School of Life and Love*, we encounter the theme of the family against the background of Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (AL), by Pope Francis. After a Salesian reading of the 9 chapters of AL, the Rector Major reads the family situation in the light of the Salesian charism and the qualities of **empathy and accompaniment that are the signs of our specific pastoral educational contribution.**

And it is the **theme of the accompaniment that serves as the silver** thread that links the various proposals contained in the letter. Three key questions follow:

- » How to accompany parents, spouses, and those who have the responsibility of the family?
- » How to accompany the children, especially those in the Salesian environments, so many boys and girls around the world?

- » How to accompany through our youth ministry, family and parish ministry our young people who are maturing a project of life in marriage and the formation of a family?

The various indications that follow, which are not meant only as a response but also as operational lines, can be summed up in the following synthesis. These are points that open a wide network of actions and processes for all the protagonists of the Salesian mission:

- I. to risk on the family, **attention to families as an educational and pastoral priority**. We need to convince ourselves that it is not enough for us to have as a priority young people as recipients of our mission. Today, more than ever, this educational and evangelizing task is inseparable from the family;
- II. to make a **priority the choice of accompaniment**:
  - » **accompaniment as a way that aims at a proposal for spirituality and faith**;
  - » **vocational accompaniment** of young people aimed at helping them towards maturing their life project;
  - » **accompaniment and support to parents in their educative mission, involving them as much as possible**.

## SYNTHESIS

At the end of this journey, one should begin by recalling, **first of all, the prophetic force of the *Special General Chapter***. In the light of Vatican Council II, the SGC has captured the Council's right spirit and laid the foundations for a pastoral vision. It is a gift we do well to keep alive. The study and reflection of all that happened at this particular moment is a heritage for all of us who cannot and should not miss.

**Second**, we note that **for some decades the theme of the family has been recalled in other topics** that the Congregation was dealing with at this particular time: how to educate and evangelize young people, the Constitutions, reflection on the journeys of faith with young people, as well as the effort still in place to strengthen the shared educative and pastoral experience with lay people. As we have seen the theme of the family was not entirely forgotten, but treated within a broader vision. Although the letter by Fr Viganò in 1994 is not reflected in the GCs at that time, we can say that if we are facing and working on the theme of the family today as it deserves, we also owe it to this reflection.

**Third**, we note **a path that is being strengthened in its attention to the family**: the family as an educative and pastoral subject, in keeping with the path of the Synods; the family in the light of the new evangelization (*Evangelii Gaudium*) and in the light of the invitation for the next Synod on *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*.

**Fourth**: The theme of the family asks from us **a continuous effort of reflection, study and sharing**. The effort is growing in rethinking the theme of the educative and pastoral community in the light of the family's involvement. As we have seen both in the GGs and in the letters of the Rector Majors, as well as in letters and speeches of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis to the Salesians, there is a clear sign that does not allow superficial or mediocre attitudes.

**Fifth**: I believe that a **synthesis** of the main nuclei that results from this study is the following:

- I. **Involvement**: this term has appeared several times as a primary necessity, as a call we must follow not at a mechanical level, but as a response to a silent and hidden cry by the family that is inviting us to a response that expresses a sense of welcome, of 'feeling at home';
- II. **Protagonism**: family as a subject. This is a recurring phrase that as time goes on is making itself more present. It is not enough to offer a space for involvement unless it goes on to be a true and real shared experience. Here we are challenged on our pastoral ability and creativity, regarding how are we proposing, living and accompanying the EPC and how does all this matures into the *Salesian Educative and Pastoral Project (SEPP)*;
- III. **Accompaniment**: Chapter 8 of *AL* is a synthesis and a map. Synthesis of some of the suggestions made during our GCs and in the letters of the Rector Majors. It is also a map in situations that socially and culturally are presenting us with new pastoral challenges. Here the family is asking more and more to be helped through accompaniment, discernment and integration. Our presences and educative and pastoral experiences are an extraordinary opportunity where convergence can happen together with holistic proposals;
- IV. **Formation**: finally, we note in these decades the frequent call for formation. The family is seen as a resource in the processes of evangelisation. Today more than ever, faced with such big challenges, this call has a strong prophetic value added to it.

The part that follows is a snapshot on how the Congregation is at this historic

moment dealing with the theme of the family. At the beginning of 2016, the Rector Major sent a letter to all the Provinces of the Congregation inviting them to make an educative and pastoral reading about the family. Here we offer the synthesis of this work that has been studied in the various regional meetings of Youth Ministry Delegates in the last two years.

## 2 ANATOMY OF THE CHALLENGE

The first question that was given to every Province was to identify the challenges that the family presents to Salesian Youth Ministry in the Province. We collect the responses into five categories; the reality we encounter, the understanding of marriage and the family, the challenge of faith, pedagogical processes, the proposal of Youth Ministry, and ultimately the urgency and the need for accompaniment.

### A REALTY

In this field, we recognize the call to be more willing to know the situation of young people and the environment of their families. There is a certain distance between the family and our surroundings. Families can greatly benefit from what we profess to offer: proximity to their children who feel alone and not well accompanied, support to materially poor families and people who are poor in their ability to offer their children the necessary attention. We also notice a marginal growth in solidarity as an antidote to the culture of waste.

Another aspect of this reality speaks of cultural, religious, social, ethnic and sexual pluralism that most of the time we are unable to decipher, and much less manage. In this area there are also the challenges of the various family models we necessarily encounter in our various educational and pastoral courtyards: single-parent families, families with same-sex parents, parents and children who are experiencing a new family situation.

In this *scenario* we hear the call to assess the growing participation of women in various pastoral processes, their specific contribution as women, and many times as mothers at all levels in all sectors of society.

Finally, we realize that we need to deepen the theme of family protagonism in the integral development of the child, teenager, and young person. We see the need to deepen this call within our educative and pastoral model, as it is assumed and proposed in the experience of the educative and pastoral community, and translated into the dynamics of our projects and processes.

## B MARRIAGE - FAMILY

A second theme that came out very strongly from the replies of the Provinces is how the subject of marriage and family is perceived. The dimension of the sacredness of marriage and the family is heavily put into crisis. In the era of the global village, strongly marked by the digital culture, the values that have brought us so far, the so-called 'traditional values', values transmitted from one generation to the other, suffer from the shock of the change, fast and aggressive.

The increase in the rates of divorce, the exchange, sometimes continuous, in the family structure are signs that must be read from within a very complex social framework. The issue of migration that affects so many families moving from country to city brings with it a change in social and family relationships that makes the various subjects, foreign to each other within the same family. In light of these changes that lead to a real relational earthquake, there is the awareness that often the school, the oratory or the parish are the only example and place of belonging, stability, 'family' in the life of children, teenagers and young people.

## C FAITH

The theme of faith and religious practice is suffering a significant blow. We recognize that we are at a crossroads – even if there is a risk of losing the connection with our recipients, there is also the conviction that in this historic moment we also have a great and new opportunity.

While on the one hand we notice a diminished participation in the various proposals, along with a weakening of the practice of faith, and a life less marked by moral values, on the other we realize that young people are looking for new reference points, significant adults.

The theme of the processes of faith, catechesis, human and spiritual formation must be taken seriously, that is, they must be revisited, since 'today's' the con-

text is not 'yesterday's'. We note the temptation of repeating the same pattern processes in what we say and do: 'we have always done so'. We realize that the itineraries of faith, the group proposals many times are not connecting with the new language, they look like old answers to new questions.

The perception and image of the Church in society in general, what is communicated through our presences—school, oratory, parish, reception centers—we generally recognize that these perceptions and images have drastically changed. If the family is no longer close to our proposal, we must have the courage to check if we are away from the family, and not vice versa.

## D PEDAGOGY

If for us the combination of evangelization and education is fundamental, we must say that the symptoms we have presented in the field of faith (evangelization) have a relapse on the dimension of pedagogy (education).

The transition to postmodern and globalized culture challenges us to find new pedagogical languages. We are called to discover those convergent spaces that are typical of our educational proposal. These presuppose the family spirit as an integral existential category: human, pedagogical, and spiritual. We directly feel that this challenge asks us to examine ourselves whether the relationship with the family has simply and gradually been reduced to a 'supply and demand' relationship, a 'provider and a consumer'.

Generally speaking, it is clear from the Provinces that we are questioned by the challenge that brings with it the loss of the father and mother figures in our young people's lives. The same applies to the theme of the real crisis of authority, the absence of significant figures because of their authenticity. This is very evident in those moments where we are pilgrims to our youth. When they open their hearts in search of landmarks, experiences, and listening spaces.

The same search that young people are going through is present also in their parents. In their own way, the latter respond well when we take the initiative to offer spaces of belonging, they are grateful when they see educators wanting the good of their children. This attitude invites us to strengthen our availability, to be more present and open.

Here we meet families that are experiencing moments of crisis and permanent poverty. Family ministry, and so many Provinces express it, cannot be limited

to an activity that is performed. It needs to be a witness that becomes visible and permanent within a pastoral project that reaches those who are seeking support and accompaniment.

A theme that came out very often is that of marriage preparation, together with love education. Here too we recognize that the path ahead is as big as much as it is demanding.

## E SALESIAN YOUTH MINISTRY

There is an increasing insistence and awareness on the part of the Provinces is that the theme of the family cannot be considered as a work or a separate activity. We must reflect on the family within the *Provincial Salesian Educational and Pastoral Project* (Province SEPP). If this step is not done, the family will never be integrated neither as an object nor as a subject of pastoral care.

For this reason, we realize that our work with and for the family, will be based on number of criteria: overcome a ministry which is solely based on activities, follow a long-term project and as a result of this get committed to create a pastoral culture for the family.

A disturbing point is the following: from the responses of the Provinces one can notice that this challenge at times meets resistance, whether desired or not, by those who have pastoral responsibility in the various environments and sectors. Some are burdened with a responsibility that frequently puts them in a situation that renders tedious the culture of encounter and engagement in listening.

## F ACCOMPANIMENT

Lastly, the theme of accompaniment has been mentioned very frequently. The configuration of family models is changing and with this change, must also follow a change in the way we communicate our pastoral proposals. Here the reference is directly made to children, teenagers and young people living in a single-parent family, a new union, parents of the same sex. This involves the challenge of a new set of values derived from a reality other than the dominant one of the traditional family that we have known so far. In this reality, accompanying people and their stories asks us to explore new frontiers with new languages. It necessarily requires some preparation.

In the responses received, one can see the conviction that even within this new scenario, the 'family spirit', our way of communicating with everyone, without distinction, without prejudice, remains the most appreciated experience of the people we meet.

That is why the theme of accompaniment, as a clear proposition of compassion, welcome, and proposal, is a unique pastoral opportunity that has wide-ranging consequences. It is a proposal that helps people discern their personal choices. Accompaniment is a path that opens a window on those values that the educational and pastoral presence promotes, while at the same time encouraging adults to participate in various educational processes.

Accompanying is also offered to young people who are preparing to take their life project: preparation for marriage, discernment of their vocation. In this area we have a call that, with the passage of time, gains ever greater clarity within the youth ministry processes. In the wake of a poor preparation for the sacrament of marriage, in various provinces we are questioning what opportunities are to be considered and explored.

Finally, another point mentioned in the various answers is that of the formation and preparation of pastoral agents. The theme of formation, which has been present in recent years both in the CGs and in the letters of the Rector Majors, has come out many times in this reflection. Here we reconfirm the urgency of a formation plan that many Provinces are taking very seriously: the accompaniment and formation of the educative and pastoral community.

## **3 THE CURRENT RESPONSE TO THE FAMILY**

As Provinces, we have also wondered what are those experiences and choices in the field of Youth Ministry and Family that are currently present within the projects of the Province, such as the *Overall Provincial Project (OPP)*, the *Salesian Educative and Pastoral Project of the Province (Province SEPP)* and other pastoral orientations?



## A PROPOSALS

The synthesis of the answers received indicates, first of all, a remarkable commitment in this field, Youth Ministry and Family. But it also highlights some of the limitations that can serve as indicators for a clearer pastoral engagement and more solid processes. The various pastoral proposals in this field can be presented in three categories: **spiritual proposal**, **formative proposal** and **pastoral collaboration**.

The first, **spiritual proposal**: consists in offering days of retreats, camps, or other moments and events of a spiritual nature devoted to families, such as family *lectio divina* and family catechesis. In this proposal, there are also experiences that are inspired by Salesian spirituality.

A second category is that of the **formative proposal**: a formative proposal around the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* to the Salesians, organization of seminars and study conferences on the theme of family.

In many Provinces there are experiences for teenagers on the theme of education to love. This is a very common proposal within the local SEPPs. Close to this proposal is also the preparation of young couples for the sacrament of marriage and the possibility of various accompaniment experiences for couples.

An experience that is growing is that of the school for parents in various Salesian presences and that is not limited to the school sector. The same growth is noted in the number of counselling centres, listening and spiritual accompaniment centres.

A third category is that of a genuine **pastoral collaboration** structured between families and Salesians in youth ministry. Here we notice, how in some Provinces for some years there is a good and solid reflection together with pastoral processes that are giving good results. The growing involvement of the family in animating various youth ministry proposals is becoming more and more present and strong: for example, accompanying youth in faith groups, marriage formation groups, missionary animation groups, attention, accompaniment and welcome to unaccompanied boys, unwedded mothers.

## B LIMITS

The limits we find in this field can be seen on the level of **preparation**—of the Salesians and lay collaborators—, **pastoral projects** and **pastoral structures**.

We note how the growth of pastoral engagement around the family is not reflected in a similar focus on the **preparation of properly prepared staff**. We all recognize that the family is asking us for more attention and more energy, but we have not yet come to the point of preparing enough and sufficiently pastoral agents for these new frontiers. In the absence of prepared people, some pastoral resistances have more strength in stopping or preventing innovative pastoral processes of which importance and opportunity are clearly perceived.

We also note the need to clearly take on the theme of the family, subject and object of Salesian Youth Ministry, within our **pastoral projects**. This is a call to strengthen a pastoral mentality that avoids pastoral fragmentation on the one hand, and pastoral individualism on the other. In this fragmented *scenario* any pastoral response to the family is likely to walk on a parallel track.

A third level is that of **pastoral structures**. Basically here the Provinces have indicated that there needs to be **protagonism of the family in the EPC**. In the light of the *Salesian Youth Ministry. Frame of Reference (FoR)*, “the EPC is a centre that welcomes the greatest possible number of people interested in the human and religious aspects of the area. One clearly identified pastoral challenge is to achieve a fuller sharing with the family, which is the primary and indispensable educational community” (FoR, p.119). in the light of this goal, a limit is recognized which has to be recognized and dealt with. The following point seeks to suggest lines that avoid the danger of being stuck with an attitude that looks at the family just as an object, as a patient who needs our care.

## C OPPORTUNITIES - POSITIVE POINTS

Along with the pastoral proposals and the limits already mentioned by the Provinces, there follow a set of goals that serve as guidelines for the future.

First of all, the importance of being clear and explicit in our pastoral programs: **SEPP of the Province, local SEPP and the EPC of each presence**. The positive experiences in some Provinces indicate the way forward. They are experiences that have a common thread: this is a serious reflection that overcomes the danger of a Salesian Youth Ministry parallel to a family ministry.

A second opportunity is to **accompany the young couples** who have been part of our pastoral experiences. In some Provinces there is collaboration with various groups of the Salesian Family in offering accompaniment journeys to-

wards marriage to young couples who have lived the experience of animators in the Salesian Youth Movement.

A third experience is that of many Provinces that strengthen the commitment of the local EPC in **being close to families, especially those who are living in discomfort and poverty**. The visits to the families of our students, listening and counselling centres, parents' programs, are all experiences that open up a very urgent frontier to a world that is very close, yet it can be very far away because it is not known.

Finally, there are also projects for the **formation of pastoral agents for the family**, for Salesians and lay people. There are some formative proposals that need to be known because they are the result of a collective pastoral effort of the whole of the Province, the Provincial Council, the Youth Ministry Commission, groups of the Salesian Family Groups and the Families themselves.

## 4 HORIZONS FOR A STRONG DON BOSCO'S CHARISMATIC RESPONSE TODAY

At this point we offer some insights that serve as indicators for a stronger and significant alliance between Salesian Youth Ministry and Family.

### A YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE OF SALESIAN YOUTH MINISTRY

In the first article of the *Salesian Constitutions* we find the reason of the attention to young people and the central place they have within the Salesian mission:

*With a feeling of humble gratitude we believe that the Society of St Francis de Sales came into being not as a merely human venture but by the initiative of God. Through the motherly intervention of Mary, the Holy Spirit raised up St John Bosco to contribute to*

the salvation of youth, “that part of human society which is so exposed and yet so rich in promise.” *The Spirit formed within him the heart of a father and teacher, capable of total self-giving: “I have promised God that I would give of myself to my last breath for my poor boys”* (Cost. 1).

**Starting from this root, we grasp the true meaning of the Salesian mission.** In the first chapter of the *Salesian Youth Ministry. Frame of Reference* (FoR), we have a very clear narrative of how Don Bosco lived through transmitting this centrality of youth into the Salesian mission:

Don Bosco was the first Saint to found a Congregation not only for young people but with young people. He valued, in a way previously unheard of, the unique part that young people could play and involved them actively in the adventure of their religious and human development. This is why Salesian ministry is essentially youthful, not only because we see young people as the beneficiaries of our ministry, but because they play an active part in it (FoR, p. 33).

In this perspective, it becomes clear that this is not a populist choice, a blind protagonism without any objective. We are not dealing with an unhealthy way of looking at youth. Here we are called to grasp how the **‘family spirit’** together with the **educational responsibility of all the subjects** present on this journey are invited to give each one his/her part in this wonderful story of our young people.

*Salesian Youth Ministry* è **youthful** because at the centre of its action we find the person of the young, especially those most in need. We meet the young where they are to be found:

Imitating God’s patience, we encounter the young at their present stage of freedom. We then accompany them, so that they may develop solid convictions and gradually assume the responsibility for the delicate process of their growth as human beings and as men of faith (Cost. 38).

The goal proposed by the Salesian Youth Ministry for every young person is to achieve the integral development of one’s own personality, where Christ is the fundamental point of reference.

**In the light of this charismatic foundation, the family is called to be subject**, that is, the pastoral protagonist; protagonist in living personal moments of growth, protagonist in witnessing one's own personal choices, protagonist in accompanying young people together with all pastoral agents of the EPC. In the *Salesian Youth Ministry. Frame of Reference* (FoR) we have a synthesis that serves as light in this path that we have ahead of us:

We recognise that the family is the basic cell of society and the Church. Despite all its difficulties, the family is esteemed by the children because there they receive the affection they need and cannot do without. For parents, education is an essential duty, connected to the transmission of life. The role of the family is irreplaceable and inalienable and comes before the educational role of anyone else. It cannot be delegated or substituted [cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 36] (FoR p.119).

Only in the light of the charism as experienced and transmitted to us by Don Bosco, only in the light of the pastoral lines the Salesian Congregation proposes to us, we can live and share an **educative and pastoral proposal that is holistic and promotes wholeness**. In keeping alive the organic unity of the SEPP, provincial and local, in allowing our SEPP be a living experience of EPC, only then do we avoid the real risk that any pastoral proposal in favour of the family becomes an independent, separate, autonomous experience parallel to the journey of the province.

## **B** JOURNEYS AND PROCESSES

With great satisfaction, one can notice several experiences in various Provinces that are seriously treating the theme of the family within Salesian Youth Ministry. If there is a **common criterion**, if we have a constant choice, we can say that it is the following: **a path enriched by a reflection shared by all subjects of the EPC**.

There are no projects thought out in a detached manner. The family is the protagonist of its own growth. The family becomes the protagonist of the growth of the young by walking along with EPC members: a path enriched by the 'family spirit', a path backed by the spirit and the word of the Gospel, a path lit by the spiritual and pedagogical experience of Don Bosco:

**The EPC is committed to making parents aware of their educational responsibility**, in the face of new emerging patterns of education. It pays particular attention to accompanying young couples and actively involving them in the EPC. It is necessary for Salesians and lay people together to make a careful community discernment, in order to identify and respond to the most urgent problems of the family, making use of all the resources available. **A greater involvement of the family in the SEPP is needed** (FoR p.119).

The involvement of the family within the processes of Salesian Youth Ministry is not willing it enough. It is necessary that this goal find persons, spaces, and proposals that encourage greater involvement and participation of parents and their families. Our presence, our environments, must **promote an educative and pastoral 'ecosystem' where the theme of the family and the climate of the 'family spirit' can grow and can also generate a force of attraction.**

A reflection by the Rector Major Fr Juan Edmundo Vecchi is very appropriate in this regard: "(Don Bosco has created) a community, which was not only visible, but indeed quite unique, almost like a lantern in the darkness of night: Valdocco, the home of a novel community and a pastoral setting that was widely known, extensive and open."<sup>71</sup> Today, on the steps of our Father and Teacher Don Bosco, we are called to keep alive this pastoral culture, marked by a renewed relationships between family and educators, young people and educators, young people and families, a relationship so necessary as much as it is appreciated.

## C GOVERNMENT AND ANIMATION

Finally, at this historic moment, the **urgency of making intelligent and creative pastoral choices by those responsible for the government and animation at all levels is increasingly evident.** Pastoral processes that mark the life of a Congregation or institution, even the processes of the same Church, do not fall from the clouds. Enough to read and meditate carefully on the post-conciliar journey of the Church through the experience of the various Synods of Bishops.

**The processes that really leave an imprint on a Province are the result of a serious reflection, based on prayer, enlightened by the charism of**

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<sup>71</sup> Fr Juan Edmundo Vecchi, *Now is the Acceptable Time*, AGC 373 (2000).

**Don Bosco, and shared with all the members of the Provincial EPC.** The true government, so founded and rooted on the Gospel, on the charism and on the pastoral life as experienced by the various members, is able to listen where the Spirit of God is blowing.

Here it is not just a sociological reading and proposal, however indispensable all that is. Here it is not about offering experiences that can sell. Here it is about listening to the cry of young people, a hidden but deep cry. Here we have to read carefully and seriously and honestly contemplate the social, cultural and spiritual implications of our young people's lives: the lost hope, the lack of trust, the absence of horizons.

In the light of these challenges, **the family is not another resource, but an indispensable protagonist:** that needs accompaniment, that is seeking support, but that it also has a unique, unrepeatable, indispensable vocation.

The government has the call to "recognize", "interpret", and "choose" those ways the Lord is providentially pointing to us. The beauty of this historic moment is that we are already seeing them in some parts. What we want to happen is already taking place. All of us have to take Jesus' words seriously: *Get up and walk!*

## CONCLUSION

In these pages we have tried to present and read the path of the Salesian Congregation in recent decades. A journey that contains a remarkable commitment on the part of the Congregation. Within the general process of spiritual, charismatic and pastoral renewal it has also been able to assess the theme of the family in the wake of the attention given by the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (GS).

It is a choice that in the light of the experience proved to be pastorally prophetic. The Synods on the Family, with the two apostolic exhortations —*Familiaris Consortio* and *Amoris Laetitia*— testify to the consequences on the whole journey of the Church.

The hope is that this journey can grow in strength and courage. A journey backed by a healthy synergy between Salesian Youth Ministry and Family and a pastoral proposal that will truly be a gift for the family today.

# REFLECTIONS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

## **AFRICA - MADAGASCAR** ANGLOPHONE GROUP

Challenges from the journey of the Congregation so far:

- » Formation of the SDBs and the Lay collaborator to a clear understanding and incarnation of Salesian Charism is yet to be realized in most of our communities and provinces.
- » Involvement of families: there is need to strengthen the synergy between the SDBs and the laity especially for greater impact in the society; keeping in mind non Catholic families.
- » Salesian communities receive a lot of documents. Most of these documents are not read and assimilated by many of the confreres which need to be translated into activities and pastoral projects.
- » Need to reach out to the parents of many children who come to our schools and Centres keeping in mind that they are more than those who are in the parishes.
- » Many of our lay collaborators are not adequately prepared to work on their own without constant reference to SDBs; they take instruction each time they undertake any activities.
- » Usually the priests are perceived as experts; but they are few in comparison with the number of Young people in need, however, they can reach only few young people. This calls for the need to get more lay people involved so as to reach more young people. How can we involve lay people in proclaiming the gospel? This is the question we should be asking ourselves.
- » Where there are proper lay empowerment, a lot could be done especially in the proclamation of the gospel.



- » There is need to overcome the doubt that spiritual inputs are not attractive to the young people and their families among the SDBs and our lay collaborators.
- » When we reintegrate young people to their families and the families are not properly accompanied, the rescued, run the risk of going back to the streets. The accompaniment should be done till the person is responsible enough to take care of himself.
- » On the issue of the continuity of missions to young people and the families; there is a need to ensure that projects and missions are not driven by individuals but community as it is the community that sustains each mission. For this reason, the preparation of the Educative Pastoral Plan is important.
- » Collaboration is an important approach to sustain missions today. To achieve this, we need to understand whose mission? In God's plan, communion is collaborating together to achieve God's work. The challenge is to overcome monopolization of the mission.
- » In this discussion, it seems that the lay people and the Salesians have different understanding of the terminologies, especially in words like collaboration, autonomy, etc.
- » In all these, we have to keep in mind the Salesian Charism and the identity. Because in it we have the methodology. In our mission in collaboration with lay people, our platform should be co-responsibility. Our aim is young people and their families.
- » Overcoming the challenges of clericalism: clericalism not necessarily seen as the problem of the clergy but lay people who constantly see the priests and religious as the main point of reference for the mission. This is very strong where the clergy hold revered positions in the society.
- » Young people and families are bombarded with all sorts of information in such a way that they no longer distinguish between the Christian and secular values.

## AFRIQUE ET MADAGASCAR

### GROUPE FRANCOPHONE

Quels sont les défis qui émergent du chemin fait jusqu'à ce moment par la Congrégation?

- » Mettre en application les réflexions et conclusions du magistère de la Congrégation à tous les niveaux. Et surtout mettre en marche des mécanismes et dynamismes pour favoriser l'application des réflexions (concrétiser les grandes lignes d'interpellation)
- » Se convertir, changer de mentalité et croire en nos potentialités.
- » Chercher à contextualiser notre pastorale des jeunes : offrir une originalité de notre continent pour enrichir la réflexion de la Congrégation
- » Accorder plus d'importance aux familles et ne pas se limiter aux jeunes : considérer la pastorale des jeunes et de la famille comme un même moment de l'agir pastoral
- » Profiter des opportunités que nous offrent les jeunes (désirs de trouver des espaces pour s'exprimer, de chercher des modèles) pour mieux les écouter et les accompagner
- » Cultiver l'esprit missionnaire au niveau local dans l'intention de découvrir cette vocation chrétienne et de rompre avec la vision traditionnelle du missionnaire
- » Opter pour des itinéraires de formation qui impliquent la réalité familiale et surtout veiller à la continuité des initiatives : réflexion-programmation-évaluation
- » Veiller à ce que la réalité de la famille soit transversale dans nos œuvres
- » Créer des espaces et des structures d'échange autour de la famille et les accompagner avec les moyens nécessaires
- » Rester ouverts et apprendre des autres, tout en cultivant notre intelligence pastorale qui capte les signes des temps
- » Chercher à récupérer certaines valeurs en perte de vitesse

## INTERAMÉRICA 1

¿Cuáles son los DESAFÍOS que emergen del camino realizado hasta ahora por la Congregación?

Después de realizar la socialización de las respuestas de las Inspectorías presentes, destaco estas respuestas según cantidad de resonancias:

1. Ofrecer respuestas de acompañamiento y formación sistemática,

atrayentes y que estén acordes con las diferentes realidades que vive la familia en la región: situación económica, perspectiva de paz y también situaciones de violencia, surgimiento de otros modelos de familia, realidad religiosa – devocional (en muchas ocasiones desconectada de la realidad), distanciamiento entre padres e hijos, crisis de fe, migraciones. Las respuestas de acompañamiento, que incluyan no solo a los padres, sino también a los hijos. Prácticas articuladas con la vida.

2. Buscar estrategias para vincular a la familia a los procesos pastorales de una manera más decidida, dirigir la mirada más a ellos y procurar su protagonismo en estos procesos; pasar de convocar a comprometer.
3. Formar – capacitar a quienes apoyan los procesos pastorales y de intervención con las familias. No estamos capacitados para ello.
4. Llevar la espiritualidad Salesiana y sus características al ambiente de la familia – acogida, espíritu de familia. Hacer uso del Sistema Preventivo, una propuesta perfecta para ser asunto al trabajo con la familia.
5. Proponer modelos atractivos a las familias de hoy.

## INTERAMÉRICA 2

¿Cuáles son los desafíos que emergen del camino realizado hasta ahora en la Congregación?

- » El primer desafío es precisamente el conocer ese camino que ha hecho la congregación. Queda en evidencia la necesidad de formarnos en el acompañamiento de las familias y generar procesos donde las familias no sólo sean objeto de la pastoral, sino sujetos y protagonistas.
- » Otro desafío es atender y acompañar a los jóvenes para asumir vocacionalmente el matrimonio y también acompañar a los matrimonios jóvenes.
- » El desafío de retomar auténticamente el carisma, pues el carisma salesiano tiene en su origen la experiencia familiar de Don Bosco, el Espíritu de Familia y la dimensión vocacional.
- » Desafío de intervenir sistémicamente, de hacer una pastoral integrada

e integradora que assume la realidad en su totalidad, que no separa al joven de su familia, que no separa la formación del joven de su discernimiento vocacional, que no separa la Pastoral Juvenil de la Pastoral Familiar o Vocacional.

## AMÉRICA CONE SUL - CISBRASIL

Quais são os desafios que emergem do caminho feito até hoje na Congregação?

Desafios para: SDB, CONGREGAÇÃO SDB

- » Distância (dos SDB) afetiva e efetiva dos jovens.
- » Abrir-se e preparar-se para refletir e agir o tema “jovens e famílias”.
- » Aproveitar o fato da Congregação estar presente em 132 países: variedades de jovens e famílias; grandes possibilidades de trabalho.

Desafios para: SDB, FAMÍLIA SALESIANA, LEIGAS/LEIGOS; OBRAS SALESIANAS

- » Entender que trabalhar com/para os jovens significa trabalhar com/a família dele: não é mais possível olhar apenas para o jovem, pois ele vem de uma família e ele vai constituir uma família.
- » Estudar profundamente a realidade e os contextos em que estão inseridas as obras salesianas e onde as famílias, de fato, vivem.
- » Envolver a Família Salesiana no acompanhamento dos jovens e das famílias.
- » Aproximação e parceria entre a obra salesiana e as famílias.
- » Abertura e a acolhida: acolher e jovem e a família como são.
- » Acompanhamento:
  - > disponibilidade;
  - > tempo;
  - > foco: jovens namorados/noivos e recém-casados; novos arranjos familiares
- » Reforçar a ideia da CEP e ativar seu Conselho.
- » Fazer, de fato, pastoral de conjunto e orgânica (eficaz e sistêmica).

## AMERICA CONO SUR SEPSUR

### DESAFÍOS

**ARTICULACIÓN.** La articulación y la mirada orgánica es un desafío en nuestra acción pastoral desde estas tres dimensiones:

- » Articulación entre las diferentes propuestas pastorales para la familia, notamos que existen actividades muy significativas pero que funcionan de manera aislada.
- » Articulación entre estas propuestas para las familias con la Pastoral Juvenil para que las acciones que se lleven a cabo apunten a un mismo objetivo global.
- » Articulación entre los diferentes grupos de la Familia Salesiana, el acompañamiento a las familias es un desafío que atraviesa a todos los grupos y necesitamos articular fuerzas porque somos conscientes que solo no podemos

**ACOMPañAMIENTO.** Esta es la manera más adecuada de responder a las necesidades de los jóvenes y sus familias asumiendo de manera cada vez más comprometida el acompañamiento salesiano. Este acompañamiento debe ser ofrecido a...

- » Los animadores y los novios para que puedan transitar un proceso vocacional (antes)
- » Los matrimonios jóvenes (durante)
- » Las familias que atraviesan situaciones difíciles (pobreza, vulnerabilidad) o donde ya se ha producido un quiebre: Divorciados, etc. (después)
- » Acoger a las familias reforzando nuestra capacidad de empatía para acoger a las familias siendo creativos en generar nuevos espacios de participación.

**MIRADA DE PROYECTO PEPS:** asumir dentro del PEPS la atención a las familias de manera más propositiva.

- » desde procesos de reflexión carismática sobre las nuevas realidades emergentes.
- » Favoreciendo la presencia de los padres en los diferentes organismos

de animación de las obras salesianas: consejo de la obra, equipos pastorales, etc.

**SUJETOS.** Favorecer el cambio de paradigma: pasar de la visión de la familia como objeto y sujeto de la acción pastoral en las obras.

## EAST ASIA - OCEANIA 1

What are the challenges that result from the journey that the Congregation made so far?

- » **MINIMAL CONTACT WITH FAMILIES.** As Salesians, we see that when we do our work, it is always a direct contact with the young people. We seldom deal directly with the families of our young people and thus we lack the awareness of the reality of their families. The parents are also busy.
- » **DISTANCE.** One specific situation may also be shared by many others: in Papua New Guinea--geographical distance of the young from the families and thus, the distance of the Salesians also from the families such that family ministry would be difficult to practice. There is also the cultural distance of the Salesians from the families of the young since many of the Salesians are missionaries and therefore can be out of touch with the context of the family. The parents also entrust their children to the Salesians that they do not anymore mind how their sons are. There is little collaboration.
- » **WHEN TO BECOME A PROPHET.** There is also the challenge to strike the balance between being tolerant and being a prophet. When do we correct what is wrong?
- » **TO MOVE FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE.** We have a lot of ideas about families from the documents of the Church and the Congregation. Are all these practicable?
- » **DESIRE OF THE YOUNG TO STAY MORE IN THE SCHOOL (OR WITH FRIENDS) RATHER THAN AT HOME.** Many times, the home becomes the place in which the young people like staying the least. They prefer the school and friends.
- » **THE HETEROGENEITY OF FAMILIES.** Do we define "family" in the same way? There are different concepts around the world. We have to be clear about our definitions of "family." As a Congregation, we

cannot dictate what the nature of family should be. In family ministry, we have to bring the charismatic heritage to each local setting. One help would be: how does one feel about his family?

## EAST ASIA - OCEANIA 2

What are the challenges that result from the journey that the Congregation made so far?

- » The provinces need to have paradigm-shift particularly in involving the families as active subjects in the youth ministry of the province.
- » The provinces need to strengthen the existing EPC in the education of the young people.
- » In carrying out the family ministry, we need to prepare personnels in the area of counseling in order to have a better accompaniment of the families and young people.
- » There is a need to have synergy with other groups or sectors or professionals in carrying out the family ministry.
- » The family model being presented in the ministry most of the time is for christian family, which most of the time is not so ideal in non-christian context.
- » At times some Salesians might think that ministering to the families is the task of the parish priest. Hence, in the province, the family ministry do not receive much attention in the SEPP of the province.
- » Some families in the post-conflict countries are still fragile. The struggle for survival is more important than the education of their children. Therefore, it is difficult to involve families in the youth ministry of the province.

## SOUTH ASIA 1

The presentation by Fr. Fabio Attard was very well appreciated by all the participants. The clarity of thought right through the presentation of the Map

of the Congregation made our understanding of the Salesian Charism clearer with reference to Youth Ministry and Family.

1. The participants were able to understand that Youth Ministry and Family are not two separate ministries, but rather a single ministry! A few lay collaborators would have found the presentation a bit heavy because of the Salesian and ecclesial vocabulary that they are not used too.
2. Our Salesian formation would need to be redefined in terms of our Youth Ministry and Family. For many, our Youth Ministry and Family Ministry are seen as separate ministries. Family is still not seen as an active subject and protagonist in our Youth Ministry.
3. We realise that when Family ministry is neglected or weak, our Youth Ministry is also weak. When we get the Family in the youth ministry we get in touch with the reality of the youth. Accompaniment of the young right from early days is essential. It got to be done systematically. Accompaniment of the young must change with the passage of time.
4. Our Congregation is still 'clerical heavy'. The laity are backward. The laity are not involved in the care of the young. They are dependent on the priests and religious. We cannot function in isolation. We need to level the gap and stop promoting clericalism.
5. Role of Family in the Vocational journey of the young. Family play important role in advocacy of the young and their rights. In the formation of the Salesians, parents are called to interact with their children. Parents visit the families of the confreres or invite them for the celebration.
6. In families, faith life is weak. Departures from the church life and its liturgy is becoming common. The presence of fringe groups with extreme right views pose a severe danger to the faith of the youth and families.
7. We fail badly in the Formation of EPC. We have not yet understood the power of the EPC and its animating role in the Salesian mission.
8. We need to appreciate the Salesian Map of our Educative and Pastoral journey so far and be better involved in processes that enhance effective Youth Ministry and Family.

## **SOUTH ASIA 2**

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Challenges that result from the journey that the Congregation has taken so far?



1. An explicit Educative Pastoral Plan for family ministry is to begin.
2. We have to educate the Salesians to change their mindset about divorced parents or broken families regarding vocation to Salesian life.
3. To give attention to family as educational pastoral priority.
4. Educative Pastoral Community is to be revamped and ensure that families are involved in the process of implementation.
5. We have no plans for accompanying the spouses, parents and those who have responsibility for the family.
6. Preparing Salesians to take up the family ministry at the formation level.
7. Involvement of women in the ministry as equal partners is also important.
8. Working for the girls too is important in our ministry.
9. We can help with the vocational discernment in preparation for marriage.
10. Pastoral accompaniment of the families has been neglected and it is time to take it up.
11. We are not qualified to work with families or as animators at the Diocesan Pastoral centres and we Salesians need to be prepared.
12. We need to have continual reflection with regard to the changes taking place in our societies.

## EUROPE CENTRE NORTH

What are the challenges that result from the journey that the Congregation made so far?

- » DB's journey started with children who had no family. For DB, starting the journey meant keeping in mind the young who were disadvantaged.
- » Today, it is important to consider if the parents are themselves searching for a journey and ways to connect with their faith. Grand parents are precious. Parents are stressed as in Belgium they often feel inadequate. Interfaith dialogue is crucial.
- » The context of Germany, goes beyond the Salesians, it involves the whole church. It is a case where children are bringing their parents to Church and inspire them to ask about their faith journey.

- » In schools (UK) we might have missed opportunities to involve the parents in their faith journey. We often have stopped to formal encounters related to academic stuff only.
- » A negative past, like abuse cases from the Church, leave persons feeling discouraged to engage with the Church 'which provides services'. Conversely, it is our witness and our readiness for authentic relationships which will make the difference.
- » One of the difficulties, due to the nature of our work, is the fact that we focus too much on what we are doing at a local level. One can easily invest all the energy in his/her work without opening enough up at a Provincial and Congregational level.
- » We are not sure if the "journey" has really invested its focus on the family as protagonist. The Synod and Amoris Laetitia have helped us to move out of the old schemes. We do not really see the journey.
- » 23 years ago, Fr. Vigano had already perceived the need and we still talk of new frontiers. We need to move forward with courage.
- » The presence of parents is at times seen as intrusive and we make ourselves believe this to be something negative; we can work with the young without parents: reality shows us how this is not the case. DB himself brought significant others in the lives of his young.
- » Salesian formation puts emphasis on youth ministry. A paradigm shift is needed in the formation whereby working with families as complement to youth ministry, is not perceived as a threat but as an enrichment in our ministry.
- » Are there any studies about the relation of DB with the significant adults/role models and how it worked at Valdocco?
- » We perceive a clear challenge put forward by a fluid society, which very often promotes virtual connectivity rather than familiar connectedness. How to change this challenge into an opportunity?
- » We are used to have young people coming to us: do we go to them? Reaching out is important. It is good to enter the houses and meet them at home. It helps us encounter the background and meet them where they feel comfortable and at home.
- » ECP should consider the families as an integral part of our mission as educators. What does it mean to involve parents in the implementation of this process?
- » Working with families is wider than working only with "parents". We need to include the social area and widen our understanding of a system. We are invited to look at the wider system.
- » We need to deconstruct the meaning of "family", different meanings and forms of families that are found in different places.

- » Review our ministries in such a way that new contexts and relationships are fostered, starting from what they understand by “family”.
- » The young who live in residential care, still feel the need to connect with their families, irrespective of the fragmentation of their families. Let us turn this existential challenge into an opportunity.
- » At times we equate family ministry with dysfunctional families. Let us look at the beauty of good families who yearn to be accompanied and share in our mission.
- » Besides looking at families ad extra, (what to do for others), let us also foster a deep connection ad intra (between SDB's as consecrated and parents as married Christians).
- » Universities and SDB centers should also include family and system studies in the initial formation of SDB's. This should complement philosophical and theological studies.
- » Be also aware that some new SDB's are coming from dysfunctional backgrounds: how does this effect the Congregation's understanding of “family”?
- » Share good practice with parents, inform them what their children are receiving from us and enable them to enter in dialogue with us, instilling trust and an openness to journey.
- » Relationships should come before sacramentality. For the SDB Family, working with families should go beyond social work.
- » How to create a balance between human and religious formation? We need to be more sensible.
- » Sense of ownership expressed by our young refer to the beauty of a faith school, a faith based journey. Often we fail to appreciate that diversity does not mean confusion.
- » Muslim families present an urgent need to establish good relationships and build bridges whereby communication and dialogue are respected.
- » We need to get involved in marriage preparation and support people who want to love according to the Gospel values. We need to look out for partners.
- » Work between SDB's and FMA's: very often it is a counter witness of a family spirit which we are putting forward.

## **MEDITERRANEA 1**

### ITALIA & PORTOGALLO

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Emerge con chiarezza una fatica a mettersi realmente in ascolto e poi in cammino rispetto alle indicazioni magisteriali (attuazione di CGS, CG 21 e CG 24). Non è detto che il pensiero riguardo alle CEP alla corresponsabilità laicale e al coinvolgimento della famiglia sia stato recepito.

La sfida è quella di dare continuità ai processi avviati

La centralità della CEP come luogo di incontro tra l'attenzione ai giovani e le famiglie. Noi ribadiamo la necessità di mantenere al centro il ragazzo sia nella riflessione che nella messa in pratica del progetto educativo pastorale.

La sfida è quella di pensare e di attuare il legame tra la pastorale giovanile e le famiglie in modo approfondito e coerente con i fondamenti del nostro carisma.

Il rapporto con le famiglie a volte è strumentale: ci "serviamo di loro" quando le pensiamo. Di solito ci riferiamo solamente ai genitori: formare una famiglia si identifica con cure la loro genitorialità

Urge

- » una reciproca conversione: che loro ci percepiscano come alleati educativi, e che noi li percepiamo come principali soggetti educativi;
- » rilegittimare i genitori nel loro compito educativo

## **MEDITERRANEA 2 \_ ITALIA & MEDIO ORIENTE**

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Domanda: quali sono le sfide che emergono dal cammino fatto finora nella Congregazione?

Risposte:

1. Sfida di nomi e parole. Chiarire la terminologia che utilizziamo: pastorale

famiglie o animazione delle famiglie? Per non perdere il focus sui giovani, non “diocesanizzare” la nostra organizzazione pastorale e di uffici ispettoriali, e non dare adito a parallelismi o pastorali non collegate. Provare a far sì che la Congregazione abbia un modo unico di parlare

2. Sfida teologica: approfondire cosa intendiamo come famiglia e animazione delle famiglie e stile famigliare o ambiente di famiglia, perché la cultura contemporanea non ci aiuta a definire chiaramente la questione
3. Sfida della formazione, sia dei Salesiani sia delle famiglie: come formarci per rendere meglio conto della ragione che è in noi e delle nostre convinzioni viste le spinte avverse della cultura contemporanea
4. Sfida di come rendere protagoniste le famiglie: in modo graduale e con la possibilità di coinvolgere non solo le famiglie perfette, ma anche quelle in difficoltà.
5. Sfida della rete. Non dobbiamo fare tutto noi Salesiani, nella formazione e nelle alleanze, ci si può anche aprire all'esterno (diocesi o altro) per fare delle buone alleanze.
6. Sfida di tenere insieme famiglie e MGS: per fare dei veri percorsi di formazione per i giovani verso la famiglia e per non perdere di vista il focus giovanile della nostra pastorale.
7. La famiglia come luogo, soggetto, oggetto, percorso per unificare più parti dell'opera salesiana in un unico progetto pastorale, senza la separazione: famiglie del parroco e giovani dell'oratorio.
8. Passare dalla famiglia per coinvolgere la famiglia, innescando percorsi e occasioni di accoglienza e di relazione.
9. L'animazione delle famiglie come cambio di mentalità: non solo Salesiani e laici, ma Salesiani e famiglie; non solo formazioni dei giovani, ma formazione della famiglia e con la famiglia
10. Sfida del coinvolgimento delle famiglie con difficoltà e ferite

P.S. Don Najib segnala la situazione limite e diversa per noi del Sudan, dove la famiglia non esiste, e di Aleppo, dove l'oratorio Salesiano è rimasto come unico centro in cui si è continuato ad offrire un luogo di incontro durante la guerra.

## MEDITERRANEA 3\_ SPAGNA & PORTOGALLO

Desafíos desde el camino realizado por la congregación.

- » Tenemos la necesidad de partir de la realidad actual de la familia para después iluminarla con los criterios del evangelio, tal como hizo el Concilio Vat II (GS).
- » Estamos en un momento crucial para superar la desconexión secular de la PJ con la Familia. Los acentos teóricos están claros desde el CG21; en la práctica falta aplicarlos. La Pastoral con las familias no es novedad, la congregación ha reflexionado sobre ello, ¿por qué esta desconexión con el pensamiento de la congregación?
- » El momento actual es de redescubrimiento de la familia como sujeto pastoral. En parte nuestro camino se parece al de Emaús: ahora se nos empiezan a abrir los ojos y a entenderlo todo de manera clara. La familia pide tener su lugar como protagonista de nuestra PJ.
- » Necesitamos impostar un nuevo modo de hacer pastoral desde las claves de la "acogida" "acompañamiento", "discernimiento", "integración": cómo favorecer este trabajo en nuestras estructuras (gobierno); quién lo debe hacer (formación).
- » El trabajo con las familias debe integrarse por medio de procesos, no de acciones aisladas. El PEPS y la CEP son el lugar para hacerlo. En este sentido conviene tener presentes tres claves propias del trabajo pastoral: "la Paciencia con los tiempos", la "Pasión por lo que se hace" y la "Creatividad" para recrear esta nueva cultura.
- » Además de educar y evangelizar con las familias, debemos educar para vivir en familia.
- » Este camino pastoral con la familia solo se puede hacer en el contexto de una comunidad que se siente comunidad de fe: importancia de la experiencia creyente de los adultos de la CEP.

## MEDITERRANEA 4\_ SPAGNA & PORTOGALLO

¿Cuáles son los DESAFÍOS que emergen del camino realizado hasta ahora en la Congregación?

La Congregación ha aportado mucho en la reflexión sobre la Pastoral Juvenil. En ese discurso, siempre ha estado presente la familia de un modo implícito.

Falta, quizás una aplicación concreta de todo el pensamiento pastoral. Hemos de creernos y asimilar, toda la reflexión que está escrita.

Quizás se ha entendido mal la concepción de que nuestra pastoral esta centrada exclusivamente en los jóvenes. Hoy explicitamos mejor: La familia y los educadores no encontramos para prestar un mejor servicio a los jóvenes.

Constatamos que Las familias están muy desorientadas, pero son receptivas, a las propuestas de participación y de trabajo conjunto con los educadores y salesianos.

Es necesario enfocar desde la perspectiva familiar todos los proyectos pastorales, elaborando procesos e itinerarios bien diseñados en los diferentes ambientes pastorales.

Concretamos los siguientes desafíos:

- » Incorporar de modo explícito en toda la reflexión pastoral a las familias y a los jóvenes, que aporta criterios de realismo. Han de estar presentes en la reflexión, en el diseño de los proyectos, en la realización y en la revisión.
- » Crecer en la reflexión y formación conjunta, salesianos, familias, jóvenes, familia salesiana. Todos nos encontramos en la misión.
- » Afrontar los itinerarios y procesos desde la perspectiva vocacional, respetando los ritmos de vida de las familias. Estar atentos a no abusar de los seglares, implicándolos excesivamente en nuestros ritmos pastorales.
- » Acogida incondicional desde la misericordia. Acoger la realidad. Hacer sentir al otro que es amado y aceptado en su situación.
- » Cuidar nuestros ambientes sanos, de fiesta y de familiaridad, donde se puedan dar las necesarias condiciones en las que las familias puedan sentirse a gusto y se les puedan hacer diferentes propuestas.
- » Proponer, sin miedo, nuestro modelo antropológico cristiano. No dejarnos comer terreno por la ideología de género. Proponer el modelo de familia cristiana. No renunciar a proponer el modelo de persona y de familia creyente.
- » Educar a nuestros jóvenes en el sentido cristiano de la vida, de las relaciones, de la sexualidad. Educar en la apertura a la vida.
- » El futuro para la pastoral juvenil pasa por la familia Salesiana. Es necesario articular bien la reflexión de Pastoral Juvenil y familia salesiana. Cuanto más familia salesiana seamos, mejor pastoral juvenil haremos.

29<sup>th</sup> November 2017

# AMORIS LAETITIA:

## SOME CHALLENGES AND PROPOSALS FOR YOUTH MINISTRY IN FAMILY SPIRIT

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One of the relevant events in our recent time, at an ecclesial level, has been Pope Francis' convocation of the Synod of the Family, celebrated in two-session meetings: the Extraordinary Assembly, October 5 -19, 2014 and the Ordinary Assembly, October 4-21, 2015<sup>72</sup>. This Bishops' convocation opened, what someone called the "*Trienio de la Familia*"<sup>73</sup>, (*Family Trienium*) which was "concluded" with the publication of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, on March 19, 2016. After having listened to the Synod Fathers, the Pope set out the most adequate magisterial principles and pastoral guidelines to respond to the challenges and needs the family is facing in the current context.

Throughout the last years, a fruitful intra-ecclesial reflection has developed not only to raise awareness of the situation of the family institution in the world and different geographical places, but especially to provide a **revision of the Church's pastoral activity** in this sector. The Synod's work does not have as its priority that of judging analytically and in some way externally the situation or status of the family, but rather *to assess and revise on how and in what ways the Church, through all her agents can better carry out her evangelizing activity - with the families as central pastoral subjects. In searching for ways by which the Church can help people grow in love, contribute in building solid and happy marriages and families, and accompany people in their concrete family situations.*

This is why the Church's work for the good of the families cannot be considered concluded with the publication of *Amoris Laetitia*. On the contrary, it is now, after this intense period of reflection throughout the universal Church, that, starting from the various ecclesial realities and always maintaining their charism, renewed pastoral care initiatives must be concretized and put in place to integrate and take into account also the family dimension. This was clearly expressed at the 27th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation in 2014, by proposing a work, analysis and reflection itinerary, from the concrete geo-

72 Among the documents used during this synodal process- all available on the Vatican web- the ones of interest *Instrumentum laboris* of the Extraordinary Assembly, June 26, 2014, on *The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization*; *Relatio post disceptationem*, October 13, 2014 (11th General Congregation); *Relatio Synodi*, October 18, 2014; *Instrumentum laboris on The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and the Contemporary World*, June 23, 2015, as a result of the integration of the Lineamenta of replies to the questionnaire added to the *Relatio Synodi*, 2014; and lastly the *Relatio Finalis* of the Bishops Synod, October 24, 2015. There is a deep connection and progression in the work of both synodal assemblies, even if the comparison among the successive documents show how some relevant themes were left aside in the second part of the works.

73 F. Vidal, *El valor de la familia en la sociedad de los cuidados*, Inaugural lesson of the 2016-2017 course at the Pontifical University Comillas.

graphical presence, on the topic of *Youth Ministry and Family*. This long journey that ends in the present Congress, begins and manifests the importance of integrating the family dimension in working with young people, specific of the Salesian charism.

Indeed, the family is a relevant dimension, a challenge in the field of youth ministry from a two-fold perspective: on the one hand, because in working with young people one cannot neglect the context and environment where they live. The family is a fundamental integrating part of this vital context. On the other, where it takes on more of the “challenge” aspect, because the families of the next decades will be made up by today’s young people and children, whose human, affective and spiritual formation will significantly influence the solidity of their future. How, in what ways and to what extent can the Salesian family contribute, with its work for and with the young, in building stable and happy families, in giving life to many young people to the evangelical call to love and a life of fullness? These are some of the core questions of this Congress, with all the group work of these days, to which I would like to contribute, despite being fully aware of my limitations, with the following reflections highlighting some notable elements of *Amoris Laetitia*.

## 1 CHRISTIAN VIEWPOINT ON MATRIMONIAL AND FAMILY REALITY IN TODAY’S WORLD

Important challenges in providing pastoral support have been posed by the rapid changes to the concept of the family identified in the modern world in the last decades, as well as the different traditions and noticeable differences in conjugal and family relationships in cultural and geographical environments. The tension emerged quite clearly during the Extraordinary Synod of 2014, acknowledging the multifaceted reality of the family in different regions of the world. It has also been highlighted —related to Salesian Youth ministry— in this Congress preparatory activity, as illustrated in Table I. *Map of the social and ecclesial reality of the family in the regions and continents* (September 2015-February 2016).

One must not forget, however, that this multifaceted reality is portraying precisely the universality of the Church, that is present and acts in contexts and cultures which are profoundly different, with different issues, emergencies, and paces. It, therefore, is a sign of her richness and plurality as well as a challenge in trying to combine the Gospel's universality respecting local cultures and languages. In this sense, Pope Francis at the beginning of the apostolic exhortation sets as a criterium the need to ***inculturate the Church's responses***, following the Conference of Bishops and local Bishops, because the general principles must be applied in very diverse contexts and traditions (AL 3).

Within this vast variety of anthropological and cultural traits and sociological situations that differently affect the families, it is interesting to note the synodal concern that any pastoral initiative should be based on a proper diagnosis of the situation. Based on "a very grounded" reality description, family issues and challenges will significantly vary according to different cultures and geographical areas. In this respect, one can say that the overview of reality can provide a twofold key: on the one hand, the one we could call *prophetical*, denouncing those social and cultural dehumanizing elements and a call to a more significant commitment to justice. But also, a *hopeful and constructive* viewpoint, that from the divine pedagogy and a merciful and loving vision of God, that values the positive aspects in those less perfect realities and accompanies people in their vital concrete situations encouraging them towards a broader human and Christian fullness.

In the first prophetical dimension, the Synod focused on the socio-economic injustice, abuses and exploitation of people (situations of poverty, war, forced migration, sexual exploitation of women and children, machismo violence, unjust labour laws, persisting polygamy or fixed marriages in some cultures, etc.), which profoundly wounded families and society. It also denounced those cultural traits —hedonistic and individualistic— dangerous for family stability (uncommitted sexual relationships, abandoning the elderly, maternity refusal, addiction to pornography, fear of compromise, etc.). In the second chapter of the exhortation also the Pope denounces these situations, of extreme individualism and culture of the provisional or as he often repeats in his speeches the "culture of the throwaway".

One can also see a deep concern for the *promotion of woman dignity*, that in some culturally adverse contexts still needs to be defended. Distancing himself both from a patriarchal and machismo attitude as well as some forms of inadequate feminism, the Pope clearly stands in favour of the promotion of women in society, who he calls the "work of the Holy Spirit". Calling for the removal of unjust discrimination and all sorts of violence, defending the effective promotion

of women in society, equal job opportunities and access to managerial positions, areas where, as Pope Francis highlights there “is still a lot to be done”. Meaningfully in line with some opinions that were discussed in the synodal hall, the pope expressly says that blaming today’s family problems to feminine emancipation is itself a form of male chauvinism (AL 54). Directly related to the matrimonial and family field—that is (should be) a reflection of this equal dignity of men and women, expressed in conjugal *equality or reciprocity*—the Pope repeatedly warns against any form of submission, verbal, physical and sexual violence to women by men, and criticizes certain male chauvinistic interpretations of the Pauline texts (AL 156) and reminds that intra-matrimonial violence “contradicts the very nature of conjugal union” (AL 54).

This must also include a *reformulation and appreciation of the role man and woman have in family life*. Alongside the woman’s fundamental role in the family, the involvement of man in family life and education of the children and the evangelical call to conjugal reciprocity, mutual self-bestowal, in a respectful and reciprocal love (AL28). Establishing new relationships with the couple on an equal basis, stronger emotional ties and involvement of men in children’s education poses a challenge but is also one of the strengths of today’s family.

These critical assessments on specific family realities in the different socio-cultural contexts are not, as previously mentioned, mere external judgments, related to distant realities, but according to me, they bear a direct call to our formation and educational work with young people and our action. How can we convey in the work we carry out the importance of refusing machismo and any violence? How can we form young people to the value of commitment and long-term self-giving? How can we prevent the throwaway culture from permeating our daily choices?

However, the Church’s closeness to the family’s multifaceted reality in different contexts cannot be limited to a denunciation, nor a cold and analytical uncommitted glance, but will always be **a hopeful and constructive approach**. Based on the certainty that the Christian proposal responds to the desires and the profound good of the person, it will also be a merciful glance, the glance of the Mother Church who loves and welcomes all of her children, especially the weakest and most fragile ones. The Church tries to discover and value all the positive aspects that can occur in situations that are objectively not the ideal ones. *The beauty and truth of the ecclesial doctrine on the matrimony and family are not at odds with the mercy towards fragile and wounded families.*

Mercy is not in contrast with justice or evangelical truth or intends to reduce it, but the core itself of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.<sup>74</sup>

In this sense, the Pope in his apostolic exhortation does not shy away from addressing situations of complex marriages or families, such as the faithful joined in civil marriages or cohabitation or broken marriages<sup>75</sup>. In chapter 8 of *Amoris Laetitia* he calls for accompaniment and welcoming people in these situations, carrying out a careful discernment of the situation of each believer, always in the logic of ecclesial community integration and mercy, “to avoid judgments which do not take into account the complexity of various situations” and “to God’s unconditional, gratuitous and unmerited mercy” for all (AL 296-297).

The meaningful *positive and constructive* tenor with which the document addresses possible complex situations that might emerge, without justifying them or pretend to convert them into elements of the Christian ideal, but repeatedly encouraging to discover and value positive aspects and transform them into opportunities in the conversion journey towards a marriage and family of fullness. From the divine pedagogy in the history of Salvation, that allows to affirm a *bond between the order of nature and the order of grace* and gradual development, in following stages, of the creation of all in and for Christ, the apostolic exhortation encourages to discover the seeds of the Word latent in all the reality of human marriage, without neglecting the profound transformation produced in them by divine grace (AL 76-79).

In this sense, there is a notable synodal stress in pointing, as a way for a renewed family pastoral activity, the need to look with love, accompany and welcome with patience and tenderness people who live less perfect marital situations. They are encouraged to make a proper discernment trying to discover and value as seeds of the Word, those positive elements that can be found in civil marriages or cohabitation (stability, legally recognized unions, deep affection, responsibility for their offspring, mutual forgiveness and search for the good of the other, etc.). That carry out, in a similar and partial way, the ideal marriage, to accompany them on a path to fully reach the matrimonial

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74 Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus. Bull of the Jubilee of Mercy*, April 11, 2015. 25.

75 Chapter 6, also includes in these complex situations mixed marriages, that present great potentials for ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, but also specific difficulties, since they must be respectful of the religious freedom of each spouse and care for religious education of the offspring (AL 247-249, RS 72-74); single-parent families (AL 252) or homosexual persons (AL250-251).

sacrament, identifying those elements that favour evangelization and human and spiritual growth (AL 292-294) <sup>76</sup>.

In the same way, another increasing cultural element is *the fragility of matrimonial unions*, due to the quite relevant and practically universal increase in number of divorces or conjugal breakdowns, that not only influence the personal situation of the spouses but also the entire family life: children of divorced parents, who live alternatively with one parent or the other, or in newly created families etc. The Synod, as well as the apostolic exhortation, have firmly focused on the pastoral care of separated and divorced people, even if we have to stress that the Church's preoccupation for divorced people is by no means a resignation to the very high and increasing numbers of conjugal breakdowns, as something necessary and unavoidable. ***The primary concern of any pastoral care activity in favour of the family is to contribute to help prevent conjugal breakdowns, assisting in building sound and happy marriages and families: ultimately foster the growth of love.*** In the words of the pope, "today, more important than the pastoral care of failures is the pastoral effort to strengthen marriages and thus prevent their breakdown" (AL 307). In this regard, the apostolic exhortation insists on the importance of integral support to marriages and families, that will apply different strategies and distinct moments, many of which directly imply youth ministry.

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76 In AL 295, Francis, quoting John Paul II, remembered that he proposed the so-called "law of gradualness" in the knowledge that the human being "knows, loves and accomplishes moral good by different stages of growth". This is not a "gradualness of law", but rather a gradualness in the prudential exercise of free acts on the part of the subjects who are not in a position to understand, appreciate or fully carry out the objective demands of the law".

# A VOCATIONAL AND “POSITIVE” PRESENTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN PROPOSAL:

## 2 the marriage vocation and the family as a vocation to love

The Pope, in chapter 2 of the apostolic exhortation, calls us to rethink our way of proposing marriage and family vocation, encouraging us to do so in a vocational context open to the grace without having a defensive attitude (AL 35-38). In pastoral care, priority must not so much be centred in defending or comparing abstract family models, but on caring for a concrete person, in his/her specific situation and in presenting the evangelical proposal in an enlightening way, convinced that it responds to the human being's desires and is for his/her good.

An essential input from the Synod, also mentioned by the Pope is the importance of ***showing the beauty of marriage and family vocation***. In facing the individualistic temptations of today's society, a fundamental pastoral challenge is to render visible the beauty of the matrimonial and family vocation, that responds to the human being's deepest desires. More than elaborate doctrinal speeches, this calls for the testimony and missionary commitments of Christian families themselves, who with their own life, manifest simply and credibly this beauty, because as a Synod Father graphically explained, *“Love cannot be explained, it shows.”*

In this sense, the Catholic theology presents a very solid anthropological foundation on marriage, highlighting the value of the *natural reality of marriage*, wanted by God from the very beginning. In a vision that firmly joins the natural and super-national plan, through incarnation, it is the natural and rich human reality itself of marriage, with its specific structure, to be elevated as a sacrament among the baptized (being source of sacramental grace for the spouses and inserted in the same constitutional structure of the Church, leading to the domestic church). This elevation to the order of grace does not substantially

modify its essence, thus conferring to the matrimonial sacrament a notable specific feature compared to that of the other sacraments<sup>77</sup>.

Notwithstanding, it will be important to use a **renewed language**, allowing to develop a way to announce a *meaningful* evangelical message of family and matrimonial love for the people, and especially for the young people of today. The synodal documents consistently expressed how this would need creativity and a grounded and brave presentation of the Gospel's message. Therefore, avoid presenting the indissolubility of marriage as a "yoke imposed on humanity" or as life sentence but highlighting it as a gift granted by God irrevocably faithful to the spouses, to support and enable the profound human desire of a love that endures forever (RS 40,48); also, the importance of a language capable of conveying the beauty of conjugal love and sexuality. (RS 56) etc.

On a theological ground, a significant input is provided by **referring to the Trinity and Trinitarian love as a basic element for the theology of the family**. From Jesus' perspective, the matrimonial and family vocation is a vocation of love and tenderness. (AL 59). The focus is on *the core element of love in family and marital life*, in the image of God the Trinity, the family as an icon of God's love, of God the Trinity endless source of mutual love.

If man and woman, themselves and in the reciprocal relationship are God's image, the family, communion of love, is the excellent image of the Trinity. In this theological evaluation of the family—and not only of marriage—one can claim that despite its weaknesses and difficulties, the entire family in itself—always called to a higher fullness—as an image of God is a privileged place of love and mutual care with a sacred and inviolable feature. From a theologian perspective, this Trinitarian family foundation correctly completes the concept of family as domestic church and puts into perspective love's central role in the family reality.

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77 SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Const. ap. *Gaudium et spes*, n.48: "The intimate partnership of married life and love has been established by the Creator and qualified by His laws, and is rooted in the conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent. Hence by that human act whereby spouses mutually bestow and accept each other a relationship arises which by divine will and in the eyes of society too is a lasting one. For the good spouses and their off-springs as well as society, the existence of the sacred bond no longer depends on human decision alone. For, God Himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is the various benefits, endowed as it is with various benefits ad purposes. All of these have a very decisive bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of the individual members of a family, and on the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family itself and of human society as a whole".



In the same line, *Amoris Laetitia* strongly stresses the importance of conjugal love, but also other manifestations of family love, the role of extended families, grandparents, uncles, brothers...The special beauty of numbers 27-29 of the apostolic exhortation, dedicated to “*the tenderness of an embrace*”, where the Pope alludes to the tenderness and conscientious intimacy produced by the embrace between a mother and her weaned son (*gamul*), or the father for his sons, to exemplify this radical vocation to love and tenderness that goes beyond the spousal one.

In the same way, there has been a sort of shift produced by the Synod on the marriage focus, gradually going from a sometimes- exaggerated concept of almost unlimited right (*ius connubii*) to the promotion of **a more vocational approach to the matrimonial and family option**. Thus the Pope encourages to rediscover its sacramental value and insert it in a life of faith and ecclesial experience: “Marriage is a vocation, in as much as it is a response to a specific call to experience conjugal love as an imperfect sign of the love between Christ and the Church. Consequently, the decision to marry and to have a family ought to be the fruit of a process of vocational discernment (AL72).

In fact, already in the Synod, many proposed, in different ways, *a greater involvement in the course of Christian Initiation and preparing couples for marriage*, (RS,39), a sort of “catechumenate option of life” starting from confirmation, a catechetical process put into practice as guiding lines of the youth ministry<sup>78</sup>. It has to do with proposals that need to be deepened, and in this case, structured, but that are however heading towards a stimulating path. Proposals that Pope Francis successively repeated, in claiming the need to “design ever more effective itineraries for preparation courses to the Sacrament of Marriage, enabling the couple to grow as human beings and in their faith.” Calling for the creation of a “*new catechumenate* in marriage preparation that should become an integral part of the whole process of the Sacrament of Marriage as an antidote that would stop the multiplication of marriages that are null or inconsistent”<sup>79</sup>. In short, a clear perceived need for **a deep and creative renewed formation of the marriage sacrament and its preparation**, with an active involvement of the married couples and the entire Church community.

Within this vocational perspective of the matrimonial and family option, the

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78 Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus. Bull of the Jubilee of Mercy*, April 11, 2015. 25.

79 Current *marriage preparation courses* appear to be insufficient: as a Synod Father pointed out during the Synod, it is noteworthy how all-important choices in our life are prepared carefully with the exception of marriage.

Christian marriage seems to be a true call from God for a careful **discernment**, thus the need to insert this decision in a life of faith and ecclesial experience, and in an adequate formation and vocational path- both personal and as a couple, **to allow a mature human and religious decision** <sup>80</sup>. This will demand creativity in developing formation paths for a better ecclesial preparation to the marriage option and the creation of synergies with other pastoral fields, where the Youth Ministry perfectly fits.

Matrimonial vocation, like all the other ones, is a wonderful and enriching vocation, but also a serious and demanding one, which includes the complexity of involving two people, with their different experiences of faith, and vital moments, different paces, emotional conditions, etc. In the apostolic exhortation (AL 205-211), the Pope stresses on the need to accompany and guide the young in their engagement process, so that *they can discern well the decision to marry*, even if for “every person marriage preparation begins at birth”. It is here that the role of the family is irreplaceable. It is also important to shape a *pedagogy of love*, since “learning to love someone does not happen automatically, nor can it be taught in a workshop just prior to the celebration of marriage (AL208). Conversely any preparation or accompaniment should ensure that the young couple do not view the wedding ceremony as the end of the road, but instead embark upon marriage as a life-long calling based on a firm and realistic decision to overcome problems and difficulties” (AL 211).

In this vocational approach, it is however convenient to eliminate some confusion on the sacred bond of marriage and subject of vocational discernment in deciding to commit one’s entire life to this option. In line with renewed ecclesial understanding, expressed in Vatican Council II (*Gaudium et Spes*) and taken up in the Code of Canon Law, matrimony —that between baptized is sacramental— is the institution of *love*, defined by the Council as “intimate conjugal community of life and love.” Marriage, in its sacred and natural form, does not primarily depend on the liturgical celebration (even if the latter is necessary, in the normal circumstances of Catholics), but that the bride and groom present a valid matrimonial consent, and it is *precisely the mutual will to be joined in marriage that establishes it*.

Matrimonial consent, the decision to marry, is an essential *act of the will*, by which a man and a woman *mutually give and accept one another* other through

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80 This vocational perspective, of discernment and choice is present in the preparatory document of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, scheduled for 2018, titled “Young People, The Faith and Vocational Discernment”.

an irrevocable covenant to establish marriage (c. 1057): what the couple mutually gives and receives is not a series of rights and duties distant from their new matrimonial status, but, correctly, they give and receive one another, totally, to establish together the matrimonial essence, the irrevocable consent, transforming, therefore the relationship in the essential object of consent. What the couple *should want* in giving their consent, is not a marriage as a juridical contract, nor a matrimony as an irrevocable covenant or sacrament: they should want the *other person in conjugality*. The consent is not the object- nor is directly aimed at the matrimonial institution, but to the other as the spouse, to give and receive the other as spouse to establish the life-long covenant of marriage. This is already centred on the importance of adequately *knowing one another*- the other as well as oneself and one's own capacities- when deciding to marry.

This consent requires the couple's specific psychological ability, an ability that does not end in understanding and wanting marriage or being aware of what is being said, but due to its importance, it calls for adequate pondering and appreciation of the step that is being taken. Sufficient freedom to marital self-giving without external pressure nor internal conditionings, just like the *ability to be spouses*, the ability to take on and fulfil conjugal obligations, to establish the covenant of conjugal life. In facing the broad idea that matrimony is for everybody (or for which there is no need for a more elevated vocational option) one must stress —without going to the extreme of making marriage accessible only to a few chosen ones or people especially mature or with incredible self-sacrificing abilities— that marriage demands the couple to have the necessary personal abilities and attitudes to build and allow the intimate community of conjugal life and love that makes up marriage. If matrimony is a life-long covenant for the good of the spouses, this will at least demand a certain ability to interpersonal relationships, self-giving and giving oneself to one another in a deep way.

Additionally, considering the dense content that the Church ascribes to matrimony (with its indissolubility, fidelity, openness to offspring, order to *the good of the spouses*...notes that, according to the context, could become really counter-cultural), not all people who externally declare "they want to get married" in the Church, really have the intention of accepting a matrimony proposed by the Church, constituting grounds for consent annulment. In fact, due to the centrality of love in the matrimony and the origin that leads to take the decision, one must not forget the features and consequences of true love: as reminded by the Pope: "it is important that marriage be seen as a matter of love, that only those who freely choose and love one another may marry" (AL 217). This love is not merely physical attraction or a vague affection, and it is important to develop and deepen the conscious and free decision to belong and love one

another forever. True love is aimed at definitive self-giving, forever, fruitful and also open towards others and not enclosed in itself. Pope Francis highlights in chapters 4 and 5 of the apostolic exhortation, core chapters dedicated to conjugal love in all its forms and dimensions and to family life in its fullest meaning. In contemplating the fruitfulness as well as the openness of this love the Pope repeatedly calls the extended family<sup>81</sup>.

However, often, people formally contract canonical matrimony—for traditions, families matters, etc.—refusing, to have children or the indissolubility of their marriage or to commit to conjugal fidelity. They are consenting to a different reality from the main essence of matrimony. In other even more clear cases, what is being produced is an exploitation of the matrimonial institution, that is chosen only as a formal juridical contract, perhaps with other aims or benefits, but without accepting its intimate reality of community life and love for the good of the spouses, that invalidates the bases of the consent given.

How can we avoid this? How can we accompany and form our young people so that they can fulfil God’s invitation to love, this total and definite, unconditional mutual self-bestowal, and bring to life to real matrimony and family?

To do this, it will be fundamental on one hand to offer an *integral formation*—human, emotional, affective and spiritual—, not only for those engaged, but to all the young people, in line with the known scheme of *Familiaris Consortio*, remote, proximate and immediate preparation. Related to the remote preparation, it is necessary to highlight ***the importance of an affective and emotional development in the formation of the young and the couples***, to avoid fostering egoistic individualism or an experience that is poorly integrated and dehumanized from affections and sexuality. The deep call of all people to love, self-giving, to love and be loved, is experienced, learned and lived preferably in one’s own family, main pedagogical space. There is also a vast educational and formation work to be done on affectivity and values to help youngsters grow as people related to others; *the role of those involved in Youth Ministry—feature of the Salesian charism—in this integral formation*

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81 They are largely original chapters with regards to the Final Synod Report, that well reflect this Pope’s personality, his concerns and even his spirituality: especially noteworthy are number 90-119 AL, a commentary to 1Cor.13. In them Francis, in line with the catechesis to the new marriages during 2015, he encourages the couple, with great realism, to care for mutual love, and grow in it, to share “quality time” suggesting ways to overcome crisis, etc. One can say that in some parts of the apostolic exhortation the Pope appears, rather than a Teacher as a grandfather who gives wise, simple and realistic advice to his sons and grandsons.

*of children and young people will be very important for their growth as people and for a future creation of emotionally healthy family relationships.*

In the same way, in accessing the canonical matrimony, it will be important to **accompany the discernment process** on the ability and intention of the spouses, without rigidity or exaggerated requests, but helping the couple to acknowledge the importance of the step they are going to take and seriousness of the commitments taken. This calls for a thorough revision of pastoral care in marriage preparation, because during the discernment, in acknowledging the obligations, duties and commitments taken on in getting married, a couple of chats or meetings or a weekend are not sufficient. Even less so when the date of the matrimony is set and everything is ready for the wedding celebration, because when you reach this point it will be very difficult for the fiancés – even worse for one of them, to be free to take a step back despite serious and strong doubts might have emerged. In this sense, it would be better to anticipate this preparation allowing the couple to ponder more freely their decision to marry and the implication it entails.

In this sense, it will be important **to creatively develop new formation paths**, fostering a more continued and personalized accompaniment of the couple, mindful of the personal situation rather than carrying out the more standardized red taped requirements. In a nutshell, it is not a matter of abusively or arbitrarily limiting marital rights (*ius connubii*), but to be aware that exercising this right demands previous requirements of ability and will (aptitude and attitude), if we don't want its celebration to turn into something without any content<sup>82</sup>.

Lastly, even if it might seem something distant from the specific Youth Ministry- especially in those socio-geographical contexts where the matrimonial age is being postponed- the apostolic exhortation encourages also the **care for the liturgical celebration** (AL 212-216), exhorting the couple's active and fruitful participation during the ceremony and appreciating the meaning of the signs, focus on the Word of God, the richness of the spouses blessing etc. it

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82 In this context, already Benedict XVI had mentioned in his speech in 2011, that the right to marry is not the "right to a nuptial ceremony" but the right to celebrate an authentic marriage. The *ius connubii* would not, therefore be denied where it was evident that the fundamental requirements for its exercise were lacking, namely, if the required capacity for marriage were patently lacking or the person intended to choose something which was incompatible with the natural reality of marriage".

is, therefore, essential to care for the celebration and feast dimension of this vocational option for love.

Likewise, there is a stress on the importance of **the accompaniment of young marriages**, encouraging the spouses in discovering and developing their vocation and love. “The challenge of marriage pastoral care is to help discover that *the matrimony is not something that happens once and for all*. The union is real and irrevocable, confirmed and consecrated by the sacrament of matrimony. In getting married the spouses are the protagonists, the owners of the story... neither can expect the other to be perfect...but must accept the other as she or he is: “*an unfinished product, needing to grow, a work in progress.*” One must care and allow love to mature, accepting the other and not replacing the loving glance with criticism (AL 218). In the task of assuming matrimony as a maturity journey, where each spouse will be a source of grace and growth for the other (AL221), an important role will be played by the Christian community by accompaniment, “family of families”, journeying with the couple, in sharing their discovery of the matrimonial vocation’s beauty, helping them to overcome a possible “self-absorption” dangerous for the couple and family and supporting them in troublesome moments.

Here we have a vast educative-pastoral area where we can carry out this accompaniment to **prevent conjugal breakdowns** and protect the stability of the marriage and families, fostering paths of reconciliation, mediation and conflict resolution in the couple and family before the breakdown is irreversible; fostering action of reconciliation, focused on discovering the healing value of forgiveness, forgiving and being forgiven, etc.

## 3 FACING CONJUGAL BREAKDOWN

Notwithstanding all the efforts made, there will be cases when *conjugal separations become inevitable or even appear as morally necessary*- acknowledges the Pope- for the good of the children and of one’s dignity (AL 241). **The accompaniment of the couple and children in these moments of crisis and during their future relations** entails a crucial important pastoral challenge for all those involved in working with young people and families. The *patient and loving ac-*

*companiment* – that Pope Francis calls “the *art* of accompaniment” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the others’ intimacy<sup>83</sup> - will call for a “wisely differentiated attitude” according to the situations and circumstances: sometimes, accompaniment calls for silence; others for respectful, active and healing listening; directions, advice, support encouragement...

From an ecclesial perspective, it is fundamental to remember the ***inappropriateness of identifying conjugal breakup, divorce as an irregular situation***. The exhortation (AL 242) refers back to the synodal warnings —already mention in *Familiaris Consortio* by John Paul (FC 83)— on the need to avoid discriminating in any way *divorced people who have not remarried*, acknowledging that they are frequently “excellent witnesses of conjugal fidelity” and prevent these people from participating and receiving the sacraments, including the Eucharist, to actively participate in the catechesis and the Church’s life and take on ecclesial responsibilities... It would be a serious injustice to unfairly burden the conscience of these people merely because they are divorced.

The exhortation also stresses the need of *the divorced who have entered a new union* (AL 243) to be welcomed and accompanied. They are not excommunicated and remain part of the ecclesial community. Chapter 8 of the exhortation calls for a ***careful discernment of the different situations***, accompanying the person to an awareness of his condition before God since responsibilities of some actions or decisions are not the same in all cases. The Pope stresses that ***the negative judgement about an objective situation does not imply a decision of imputability or culpability of the person*** involved, *since the moral responsibility can be mitigated or diminished by psychological, social and other factors*, that can condition or even determine some decisions, which should be carefully assessed (AL302).

Going back to the principles already present in Saint Thomas, the Pope mentions accountability of action, with the possible form of conditioning and mitigating factors that prevent the person from acting differently or diminish his responsibility (AL 301-302). The Pope urges to better incorporate the person’s conscience in judging certain situations that do not objectively embody our understanding of marriage. He stresses the importance of a well-formed conscience, but also that “the conscience can do more than recognizing a given situation that does not correspond objectively to the overall demands of the Gospel. It can also recognize with sincerity and honesty what for now is the most generous response which can be given to God, and come to see with

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83 *Evangelium Gaudium* 169.

certain moral security that it is what God himself is asking amid the concrete complexity of one's limits, while yet not fully the objective ideal" (AL 303)<sup>84</sup>.

Even if it is impossible to develop here all the richness of chapter 8 of *Amoris Laetitia*, I would like, faithful to the pope's teachings, to highlight the importance of not interpreting this doctrine of the discernment of particular situations, already present in Saint Thomas' teachings, in a *relativistic key*. Pope Francis himself stresses that fidelity to the Gospel prevents any lukewarm attitude or an undue reticence in proposing that ideal: "to show understanding in the face of exceptional situations never implies dimming the light of the fuller ideal or proposing less than what Jesus offers to the human being." And neither from a *subjectivist key*, as if the assessment "of the internal forum" or forum of conscience, despite its undeniable importance, were the only one to be taken into consideration. The Church is a community, an assembly of the faithful, communion, and, therefore divergences between the external forum and the internal forum should be avoided as much as possible.

In this sense, it is meaningful that in the case of *divorcees who remarried*, both the Synodal documents and the exhortation, consider *possible nullity of the first marriage*: in fact, it is the way or ordinary remedy offered by the Church to her faithful, even if clearly not all broken-up marriages as null, often, unfortunately, they can be. Marriage is a beautiful but very demanding vocation, which involves "two people".

Thus, the canonical processes of marriage annulment appear as a fully ecclesial solution, a remedy that, regardless of the good faith with which the parties may have contracted it, responds to the *deep truth* of a marriage that lacked some of the requirements for validity and can become a deeply *healing* moment for the person, reconciliation with his/her past and the experience of marital failure. In this sense, it is noteworthy that already during the inter-synodal period, Pope Francis modified the procedure of matrimonial nullity to simplify and make it more accessible, encouraging a missionary conversion of the pastoral structures- including ecclesial tribunals- so that divorcees who are remarried can present

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84 The exhortation also highlights *the dynamic aspect* of discernment, always open and looking for ways to enable to fully realize the ideal (AL 303), and the limits of general rules (certainly necessary), that must provide information for the decision, but cannot include all particular situations, that should be the object of specific discernment (Al 304).



their case (to shed light on the validity or nullity of their previous marriage) and wait for the Church's decision<sup>85</sup>.

## 4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* provides a positive outlook of reality, stressing more on the possibilities and challenges of the current situations of the family and marriage than on its dangers, even if aware of them. It is an optimistic call to continue working and revising our pastoral activity, also in working with and for young people, in opening broad and varied ways of working for the good of the families. Paths that include the educational field, formation of values and affectivity, directions and family mediation in its broadest meaning. Preparing young people for marriage and the family, to a careful discernment of situations, etc. Developing with creativity, evangelical audacity and Church context courses of action that help to enact and implement synodal suggestions in our real pastoral care activity is a significant challenge, in this post-synodal period, while we wait for the next Synod of the Young in 2018.

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85 Francisco, *Motu Proprio Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus*, August 15, 2015: AAS 107 (2015) 958-970. In another *motu proprio* on the same day, *Mitis et misericors Iesus*, the Pope modifies, in similar terms, the canons that ruled the matrimonial nullity procedure in the Code of Canon law of the Oriental Churches.

# REFLECTIONS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

## **AFRICA & MADAGASCAR** ANGLOPHONE GROUP

### **PASTORAL FRONTIERS WE NEED TO REFLECT ON**

Scope: We need to widen the scope of formation and preparation for marriage and family life. Starting from early childhood till the young people get engaged and married and even continue long after marriage. This process need to be a lifelong process; covering all the stages of human development.

There is need to create stages of formation in the pastoral and catechetical plan of the Church that will cover the life cycle of a every person.

Sexual education: education to love is one of the topics that are hardly covered in most of our institutions and most of the young people grow up with wrong or distorted notion of sexuality.

There is need for accompaniment, especially the young people and their families. The Church must serve as main point of reference protagonist in this process.

There is a period we need to pay particular attention to; that is the period after confirmation to the time the young people are engaged or in courtship. In most instances, this is a forgotten stage.

We need to empower the parents through training to help to speak openly about the issues of marriage and family to their children. The culture of openness regarding the issues of marriage and sexuality need to be improved in many parts of our continent.

Pastoral agents need to be trained about sexuality so that they will be better prepared to form the younger generations.

Rediscovering of many of the African values that sustained marriages in the past, and repackage them to suit the concrete reality of our time. This process must be championed by African confreres in collaboration with the lay people.

Social teachings of the church need to be adequately presented to the young people and their families as a follow up and continuation of catechetical ongoing formation.

Pre-marriage preparation and post-marriage preparation need to be created to cater for different stages of the family life.

Some harmful cultural practices that taint the dignity of marriages, such as cohabitation, costly dowries, abductions, child marriages, etc., need to be addressed.

Issues of single parenthood that is gradually becoming a norm in many African countries need to be looked into, especially on how to accompany them towards full integration and restoration to sacramental life without any form of discrimination.

In all these we have to seek for creative ways to work with the local church to ensure that we are pulling in the same direction; bringing our unique charismatic identity to enrich the local church in which we work.

There are several opposing diversities in the practices in many of African cultures in issues of marriages and families. Africa has very diverse cultures and we need to keep this in mind.

We need to challenge the mindset that create disparity in the equal dignity of man and woman in most of the African families and marriages.

Overcoming some of the cultural barriers that affect marriage and families through evangelization of culture; for instance, some rituals and initiation for girls at the age of 10 or 11 which all the families are required to bring their daughters. After this rite, girls are taught that they are adult and such, are ready to marry. Some of the young people die while giving birth and it hinders their education etc.

In most cultures, special grooming and preparations are given to the girl child, but the man is neglected in many places. The church need to have proper care and preparation for the boys and empower the families to prepare equally the boys and the girls.

Abortion: teenage abortion is high due to early engagement to sex and pregnancy; this calls for sexual education for teenager.

We need to educate our families especially catholic families to overcome family managed abortion as a cover up to tarnishing family's image, especially among some staunch Catholics.

When a girl is pregnant, she is not allowed to receive communion, but the boy is not even considered in that.

Teenage abortion is one of the factors that cause breaking of marriages in Africa and need to be given proper attention through proper sexuality education. The point is that many teenagers engage in an unsafe abortion that destroy their uterus. So when they marry and cannot have children, the marriage collapses.

## **AFRICA & MADAGASCAR**

### GROUPE FRANCOPHONE

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#### LES FRONTIÈRES PASTORALES

Frontières pastorales comme horizons qui nous interpellent dans notre être et agir pastoraux:

- » L'éducation intégrale des jeunes
- » La réalité même de la famille aux prises avec les nouvelles idéologies
- » Le poids de la tradition et les nouvelles connotations de la dot
- » Les déviations sexuelles
- » Les familles monoparentales
- » Les pauvretés anthropologiques, économiques
- » La formation et l'éveil des consciences
- » L'accompagnement des jeunes mariés et des couples de fait

- » La récupération des valeurs traditionnelles à partir de la perspective de l'inculturation
- » La formation des parents à base d'itinéraire : considérer la fondation des familles comme une vocation
- » L'influence des sectes ésotériques
- » Les TIC (technologies de l'information et de la communication, "ICT" en anglais) et leurs défis
- » L'accueil et l'accompagnement des situations douloureuses
- » La polygamie

## INTERAMÉRICA 1

¿Cuáles son las FRONTERAS PASTORALES acerca de las cuales debemos reflexionar en nuestras Comunidades Educativo-Pastorales?

Varias de las respuestas a esta pregunta, se repiten respecto de la pregunta anterior por los DESAFÍOS. Elenco la respuesta en dos ítems, uno el de DESAFÍOS y el otro de NUEVAS FRONTERAS, para no perder información:

### DESAFÍOS

1. Vinculación de los padres y de todos nuestros grupos a los procesos pastorales, al apostolado.
2. Acompañamiento y acogida de las familias y sus situaciones con equipos capacitados para hacerlo (capacitados en psicología, doctrina eclesial, acompañamiento, vida cristiana).
3. Preparación para el matrimonio previa, durante y posterior; entendiendo la familia – matrimonio como opción vocacional, plan de Dios para la vida.
4. El trabajo a modo de preparación con los jóvenes del MJS.
5. Apoyarse en testimonios de familias que sirvan de modelos vocacionales para los jóvenes y para familias cercanas a conformarse o que ya han hecho camino.
6. Cambiar el chip en nuestras maneras de pensar y de responder a las realidades: con Don Bosco y con los tiempos. Esto implica cambio de estereotipos, de lenguaje, cultivo de una cultura del encuentro – ir no esperar.

7. Se requiere asegurar procesos y no tanto actividades.

## **NUEVAS FRONTERAS**

1. Las familias de los migrantes, constituyen un desafío para la misión en la Región, pues varios de los países que la integran, padecen este flagelo.
2. Trabajo con familias que viven situaciones como el homosexualismo: padres o hijos.
3. Trabajo con familias o jóvenes en condición de vulnerabilidad: pobreza, pandillismo, drogas.
4. La utilización de los Medios de comunicación como herramienta educativa y evangelizadora, de una manera tal que impacte, llame la atención.
5. Florecimiento de sectas, iglesias protestantes y otras opciones religiosas que hacen que las familias, incluso al interno, vivan diferentes perspectivas de fe.
6. Trabajo con familias en unión libre, pues ha sido una opción de muchos en la Región.
7. Generar propuestas que permitan acompañar a los creyentes en esa brecha de tiempo que existe entre los sacramentos como la Confirmación y el Matrimonio.

## **INTERAMÉRICA 2**

¿Cuáles son las fronteras pastorales acerca de las cuales debemos reflexionar en nuestras Comunidades Educativo-pastorales?

- » Una frontera es la de los mismos destinatarios, muchos atendemos principalmente a niños y adolescentes, no a jóvenes en edad de tomar de decisiones.
- » En general los contenidos de los programas formativos no preparan para el noviazgo ni para matrimonio. Esos temas se ven por separado u ocasionalmente.
- » Poner en el corazón de la pastoral juvenil la pastoral familiar, no verla como algo ajeno.
- » Superar la pastoral de actividades y ofrecer procesos pastorales, eso

es acompañamiento formativo.

- » Nuestra pastoral está muchas veces fragmentada, dividida
- » Necesitamos una formación multidisciplinaria para atender todas las realidades de la familia. Trabajo interdisciplinar, en red, requiere intervenciones profesionales para atender familias en dificultad. Abrirnos a la frontera, a la posibilidad de auxiliarse de las ciencias humanas.
- » En nuestra región una frontera es la realidad de la migración y la de la pobreza material y espiritual.
- » Un reto entre gestión (hacer cosas) y el liderazgo (se tiene una visión y unas estrategias)

Superar la frontera de la sacramentalidad y el clericalismo.

## AMÉRICA CONE SUL - CISBRASIL

Quais são as fronteiras pastorais em que deveria refletir as nossas Comunidades Educativo-Pastorais?

- » “Mundo” da educação superior: jovens universitários e suas famílias, educadores e suas famílias.
- » CEP como “sujeito” da Pastoral Juvenil Salesiana.
- » Novos “arranjos familiares” e “arranjos pastorais” (casais separados e divorciados, segunda união, uniões homoafetivas, etc.)
- » Inserção da família nas ações da CEP.
- » Educação dos jovens e das famílias: para o amor, à afetividade e à sexualidade; para a cidadania e a política; para a tolerância.
- » Uma pastoral vocacional (vocação à vida religiosa e/ou sacerdotal) adequada aos jovens e às famílias destes tempos.
- » Atenção às famílias migrantes: crianças exploradas, mulheres violentadas, famílias separadas, tráfico humano, trabalho escravo.
- » Potencializar a reflexão e a ação da RSB sobre a juventude e a família nas suas áreas: escolas, obras sociais, paróquias, comunicação.
- » Formação dos agentes de pastoral: SDB e Família Salesiana, leigas/leigos.
- » Bom uso das redes sociais.

## AMERICA CONO SUR - SEPSUR

Nuevas Fronteras Pastorales que debemos guardar en nuestras comunidades.

Las Nuevas Fronteras de la cultura. Respetar los contextos culturales, para acompañar necesitamos asumir las NF de la inculturación del Evangelio en las culturas donde se desarrolla la vida de las familias conociendo su realidad.

Las Nuevas Fronteras: las situaciones complejas de las familias. Estas nuevas realidades nos desafían para tener más cercanía y animarnos a acompañar, perder el miedo, aprender y prepararnos y asumir estos nuevos desafíos desde una perspectiva del acompañamiento.

- » Familias que vivan en pobreza, que no saben cómo ser padres, que no tienen posibilidades y poco acceso a la educación...
- » Jóvenes con experiencias negativas en el propio cenio familiar que perdieron el sueño de formar su propia familia.
- » Personas divorciadas. cambiar el concepto negativo que se tenemos sobre las personas divorciadas, comprender y acompañar esta realidad desde las orientaciones de las AL.

Las Nuevas Fronteras de pérdida de sentido del matrimonio. Frente a esto necesitamos presentar en positivo la vocación matrimonial generando espacios de discernimiento.

- » Animarnos a ver las experiencias positivas que se presentan en la vida de las parejas y familias que más se acercan a don del matrimonio...
- » la importancia de la gradualidad, en tanto de acompañar a las familias desde su propia situación, para todos debe haber un horizonte... aprender comprender la realidad desde los positivo de la acción de Dios que ya están sus semillas desparramas en la realidad.

Las Nuevas Fronteras de la formación.

- » Formación de los agentes de pastoral y padres sobre desafíos de la familia en la actualidad.
- » Formación sobre el acompañamiento salesiano y el discernimiento pastoral.
- » Camino formativo para los jóvenes porque se percibe que en nuestras



comunidades no hay propuesta vocacional para acompañar, sobre todo a los novios, jóvenes... brindando herramientas para el discernimiento.

- » Itinerarios de formación partiendo de la realidad de las personas. Es en el camino que se va reconociendo cómo va viviendo su ser hijo de Dios ayudando a integrar su vida desde la fe desde la acogida de las personas y su situación.
- » Transformar nuestros lenguajes para hacer cercanas y sencillas nuestras propuestas para acompañar a la realidad juvenil. Formación de formadores, implicar a las familias... acompañar a los que acompañan...

Revisar nuestra actuación pastoral en lo que hace a la propuesta vocacional de matrimonio. Esta es una Nueva Frontera: revisar nuestras prácticas desde nuestra realidad actual. Acompañamiento no solo sobre la crisis sino como procesos.

- » Revalorizar la preventividad en nuestra acción pastoral, no salir a tapar incendios sino proyectar y acompañar las familias dentro de procesos buscando actuar antes a través de propuestas concretas.. acompañar a los jóvenes para tomar es decisión. Nuevos lenguajes, integración de las familias.

Profundizar en la CEP. En camino más comunitarios y participativos para acompañar a las familias donde todos estén involucrados (consagrados, laicos, docentes, animadores, etc)

## **EAST ASIA - OCEANIA 1**

What are the Pastoral Frontiers on which the Educative and Pastoral Community should reflect?

There is so much in Amoris Laetitia that could touch Youth Ministry. What is important is to apply this in the context of our particular settings. In the EAO region, there is a diversity of contexts and this should prove the richness of the document.

### **NEEDS OF THE YOUTH MINISTERS (SALESIANS AND LAY)**

A question to ask is what are the skills needed, the values to be inculcated and education and formation that are demanded of those who work with Youth Ministry and Family.

### **SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

Here are special situations that are present in the EAO Region:

#### *1. Single Parent Families*

There are many cases in which the young people in our works belong to single-parent families.

#### *2. Teenage pregnancy*

Teenage pregnancy is becoming a reality fast in many of our settings.

#### *3. Families from same sex relationships*

A frontier that has come to the fore is that in many of our Provinces (though not in all) some of our young people may actually belong to families with same sex relationships. Some may even ask whether we should accept children from these families. There are cases where even some of our lay mission partners belong to such families. In some settings where this is not be acceptable, the Salesians close one eye in accepting employees in these situations.

In our parish settings, how do we deal with such situations as when a gay couple comes to have their child baptized? Are we going to say no?

#### *4. A Different Definition of the Family*

In PNG in particular, the dynamics of the family may be very confusing. This is a challenge for us, especially the missionaries--to know the nature and dynamics of the family in our context.

#### *5. Young People from the same father but from different mothers.*

#### *6. Mixed Marriages in EAO*

Many of the EAO settings have Catholics as the minority and the phenomenon is more on mixed marriages. Marriage in the Catholic Church has become more popular because of the solemnity that it offers. However, after the wedding, the couples disappear. Strategies can be employed to bring them back to the Church. (GIA gives an example that couples are invited for Christmas and play the Holy Family.) There is a need to make the non-Catholic party to understand Catholic marriage. Religion indeed becomes an issue.

### **REMOTE PREPARATION: THE NEED TO EMPHASIZE THAT MARRIAGE IS A SACRAMENT**

Many times we are not understood when we talk about marriage as a sacrament. This has a lot of implications: there will be no place for God and marriage is not seen as a lasting commitment. Nowadays, there is a lack of sense of the “sacrament.” Many couples do not get married in the Church because, they say, they will break up anyway. The formation for married life thus starts remotely, even in high school when we can instill in the young people the sense of sacredness in marriage, when we teach them about the sacraments. This may be done not only for Catholic settings but even in non-Catholic or non-Christian settings.

### **POST-CANA AND OTHER FORMATION PROGRAMS**

Many of our parishes do not offer Post-Cana programs (assisting newly married couples). The structure of the Basic Ecclesial Communities can actually be a good venue for the Post-Cana, for accompaniment of young married couples. Marriage counseling becomes imperative. The priests who solemnize marriages may help in this Post-Cana program, although it will be better if couples are tapped to help couples and families help families. There is, however, a consistent problem: when we give formation to families, many times, the men are not present.

## **EAST ASIA - OCEANIA 2**

What are the pastoral frontiers on which that the Educative and Pastoral Community should reflect?

- » In the youth ministry of the province at times the Salesians are dealing directly only with the youngsters without involvement of the family as protagonist of the education of young people. Hence, the pastoral frontier on which the EPC should reflect on, is family ministry particularly involving families as the important subject of youth ministry.
- » At times the Salesians are so focused on the school such that little attention is given to newly formed families which are cohabited with no regards to church wedding.
- » The migration of people from remote areas or countrysides into

the big cities to search for work and better opportunities at times create difficulties such as being marginalized and therefore in need of accompaniment.

- » The prevalence of divorce or conjugal separation somehow affects the value of forming a family.
- » Some Christians who get married to somebody from non-Christian religion experience difficulty in preserving the value of Christian marriages.
- » Facilitate the involvement of the EPC or gathering different sectors or group to think about how to put into practice the shaping of a pedagogy of love as a long term preparation for marriage.
- » There is a need to seriously consider the pre-wedding preparation as a moment to prepare the couples to have well-formed consciences and to be aware that marriage is not about the contract but as self-giving in love.
- » In our youth ministry there is a need to promote also vocation to married life.
- » There should be regular meeting and formation of EPC on how to address post modern reality we are facing in our youth ministry such as LGBT, broken families, single parents, etc.
- » There is weakening of the values of family and matrimony due to the post-modern people who are so occupied with their work than their families. The most progressive country like Japan feels that there is no sense of getting married in the Church.
- » The desire for the better academic achievement of children leads parents to focus more on the academic training of their children than passing on to them Christian values.

## **SOUTH ASIA 1**

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### Accompaniment of young couples

- » Our accompaniment of the young couples, the married couples that are in crisis, tension,
- » The young couples are under stress on account of globalization, secularization, consumerist tendency. Accompaniment of the young couples in the first five years of marriage.

- » Family counseling and couple retreats, Family counseling Centres, Offer specialized helps to people in irregular unions, cohabitation, live-in relations, mixed marriages; adult catechesis;
- » Psychological helps to people living through extra-marital affairs.
- » Organize occasions for the youngsters of marriageable age to find their potential partners.
- » Focus on the re-evangelizing of the families, deepening of faith;
- » Adopt, promote and encourage peoples movement —Neo— catechuminate, couples for Christ, Charismatic movements, BCC, SMCs, Legion of Mary, Society of Vincent de Paul;

### Marriage preparation

- » Well designed marriage preparation commensurate with age; syllabus can be chalked out.
  - > First communion
  - > Confirmation
  - > Youth and Marriage
- » Taking the vocation and guidance of Salesian Youth Ministry – vocation work primarily as life preparation.
- » Course on the theology of the body; this is a powerful tool for the marriage preparation.

### Conversion of pastoral approach

- » A change in Pastoral approach in the mix marriages; quick response towards young people who are in difficulty with regard to marriage, mixed marriage,
- » Work towards elimination of roadblocks in marriage, dowry, marriage expense, mass marriages/single marriage, irrational values on virginity;
- » Attitude of AL towards polygamous unions; incompatibility of age in marriage.
- » The provinces should prepare confreres to help the families who are in difficult situation through counselling; open centres in every province.
- » Create a new wave of change of attitude towards the new trends with regard to marriage in the mind of the people.

## SOUTH ASIA 2

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Pastoral Frontiers which the Educative Pastoral Community Should Reflect

1. Economic Problems affecting the Families
  - a. Acute poverty.
  - b. The parents unable to support the children and so they are abandoned.
  - c. Unemployment and change in job-culture and temporary Jobs.
  - d. Problems of marriage due to lack of educational qualification and job.
2. Problems affecting women's dignity and equality
  - a. Women's dignity are not upheld before or after marriage.
  - b. Violence against women are high.
  - c. The girl often embraces the faith of the husband and choices for the girls are less.
  - d. The sex ratio of girls in our catholic church is less and the marriages take place late in life. Inequality of boys and girls in our family.
  - e. Minors abused by their own family members especially the girls.
3. Parent-Children Conflict
  - a. Young people wishing to get qualified but the family unable to support.
  - b. Parental responsibilities versus young people' choice of life-partners.
  - c. Single parent problema.
  - d. Addressing the issue of parents of beneficiaries who are separated.
  - e. Young people who are detached from families.
  - f. Lack of harmony in the families.
4. Socio-cultural problems
  - a. Marriage preparation for young people.
  - b. Young people to be followed up even as young couples.
  - c. Young people not willing to get married but are living together (for reasons of economy etc.)
  - d. Too much of money is involved in marriage by way of dowry and it becomes difficult for the poor to get married.
  - e. Domination by men is very much prevalent in families in India.

- f. Inter-caste or inter-religious marriages are huge challenges in India. Many Catholics leave the religions easily (especially about bringing children in our faith)
  - g. Problem of alcoholism and the burden of families fall on the mother.
  - h. Irresponsible drinking by men in the families is a major cause of dysfunctional families particularly in the rural areas and in the slums.
  - i. Suicide in the families are also on the increase.
  - j. Abandonment of elders in our families.
  - k. Educating to Social media is a huge problema.
5. Formation of the young
- a. Vocation to married life has very little formation.
  - b. Less importance to sacraments and importance given to worldly ways.
  - c. We can use the various sodalities, associations we have to help address families.
  - d. Young people have trial marriages and if they are not happy they get easily separated.
  - e. We have unholy marriages (non-sacramental) and many marriages are rectified later.

## EUROPE CENTRE NORTH

What are the pastoral frontiers on which the educative and pastoral community should reflect?

- » How to understand and enter in dialogue with a common culture of young people who are for cohabitation or entering partnership, afraid of life long commitments who, nonetheless, are actively involved in our salesian ministry.
- » We welcome AL's guidelines but on a Congregational level, diversity is so evident that we perceive as impractical for one single, common paradigm.
- » What the unit of a family is (understood), varies from one county to another.
- » Very often we question about the commitment of our young. But we

- fail to question what our current (adult, formed) collaborators think. Celibacy, for example, is usually linked with old age and elderly people.
- » The desire for accompaniment is present in many people. Others do not ask for it but still need it. How are we to give credit to these people? How can we reach out to young people and not only Catholic young people? How are we going to be optimistic and bring people back to faith? How can we rediscover and redefine, in a post digital, fluid society, the beauty and the need for a faith journey?
  - » The category “marriage” seem to exclude people; young people are in search and young people commit themselves in several ways which do not necessarily regard marriage as a destination.
  - » How to focus our attention on those who are divorced. A call for compassion and an invitation for meaningful liturgies which accompany those who are at the periphery.
  - » Deconstruct meanings from within, starting from the EPC, not to assume that those who are already part of the process, are indeed in touch and open for the AL language.
  - » SDB communities can be regarded as one of the frontiers: The Good Shepherd should have the smell of his sheep. Very often, protecting institutions seems to be a priority. We need to ensure healthy SDB communities where “living and working together” is fundamental. Working from a different priority, we risk of killing the family spirit which is crucial in setting up an EPC. Instill courage in the SDB’s not to be afraid to risk and propose meaningful prayerful spaces, processes and journeys for the young. Address the yearning of the young and challenge, where needed, a superficial way of conducting a consecrated life.
  - » Gay unions and heterosexual marriages out of church often ask for a blessing. This puts the priest in an awkward position. How can we cater for ‘minorities’? The Church seems to be running two parallel ethical stances: a doctrinal and a pastoral one; how can we connect and converge both stances?
  - » Young people who are turning towards a traditional Church, turning back to old liturgies; a search for divinity —an elect— syndrome of the few and the rest who got it wrong? Young people are searching for an identity which risks stopping at the exterior form. A crisis of identity and immediacy of connectedness seem to be another frontier.
  - » How to address the need of fellowship of the young in a fragmented society.
  - » Catholic politicians and stakeholders who are to be formed in our value system to advocate in favor of families and young.



- » Muslim radicalism vs Catholic radicalism: extremism in both cases. How to foster unity, acceptance and openness. Openness and desire to do good. Avoid closing down. Challenges to witness Christ.

## MEDITERRANEA 1

### ITALIA & PORTOGALLO

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La sfida pastorale si gioca a livello locale nella CEP questa è la prima frontiera.

**UNA FRONTIERA CULTURALE:** l'idea di famiglia, di amore, di pieno compimento di sé è fortemente messa in discussione dalla nostra cultura. Nella CEP occorre:

- » riflettere su come rievangelizzare la nostra cultura su questo punto;
- » favorire la presenza di famiglie mature come testimonianza della bellezza della vita reciprocamente data.

#### DUE FRONTIERE PRATICHE

- » formare e accompagnare i ragazzi nei processi di maturazione affettiva e di discernimento vocazionale in vista della vocazione matrimoniale.
- » La presenza di nuovi orfani (orfani di genitori vivi) provoca le nostre realtà su come instaurare un patto educativo con loro. Non sempre le famiglie sono un alleato educativo, anzi a volte sono di ostacolo

## MEDITERRANEA 2

### ITALIA & MEDIO ORIENTE

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Domanda: quali sono le frontiere pastorali sulle quali dobbiamo riflettere nelle nostre CEP?

Risposte:

1. La frontiera del linguaggio: come ricostruire un linguaggio e quindi una realtà dicibile e bella per chi non ne ha fatto esperienza; non per la nostalgia di usare termini vecchi, ma per non perdere la ricchezza di termini e realtà che costruiscono l'uomo.
2. Come conciliare la accoglienza di tutti e la "difesa" della verità, non come spada da brandire, ma come luogo per crescere ed essere uomini. Come conciliare anche l'accoglienza di tutti senza scandalizzare quelli che ancora cercano di portare avanti la loro vita in equilibrio e fedeltà.
3. Non solo progetti per recuperare e accogliere, ma anche progetti di prevenzione, sia verso i giovani che faranno famiglia, sia verso le famiglie che devono essere sostenute nella loro fedeltà al progetto cristiano di vita.
4. Sviluppare percorsi di formazione per i giovani specifici per il matrimonio, perché spesso la formazione dà per scontato che poi uno sappia essere marito e moglie, ma non è così vero.
5. Ripensare la formazione a partire dalla realtà del matrimonio come forma antropologica di base dell'uomo e della donna. Ripensare la realtà e la formazione all'adulità attraverso la vocazione del matrimonio, come responsabilità di risposta a questa chiamata fondamentale per la vita di ognuno.
6. Formarci meglio al sacramento del matrimonio, nella sua connessione e differenza rispetto alla coppia, per saper rendere ragione di ciò che esso dà in più alla vita della coppia e della famiglia.
7. Non basta aggiungere alla PG un capitolo sulla famiglia, occorre studiare ed integrare le due cose nel focus unico della PG.
8. La CEP come l'ecosistema pastorale in grado di far respirare una formazione, una vocazione, una meta, anche al di là e al di fuori dei cammini "ufficiali".
9. Fare rete con la Famiglia Salesiana per poter offrire alle famiglie un luogo di formazione, di servizio e di vita cristiana, anche oltre l'MGS.

## **MEDITERRANEA 3 \_ SPAGNA & PORTOGALLO**

Fronteras Pastorales desde la condición actual de la familia

- » Destacamos de la ponencia de Carmen la necesidad de descubrir qué significa la vocación cristiana y cómo la familia es una vocación específica; en medio de una cultura a-vocacional que vivimos.
- » Interesante destacar la vía de la belleza de la familia, como propuesta luminosa, y nos preguntamos cómo visibilizar la belleza de la familia
- » Algunos caminos para visibilizar la belleza de la familia pueden ser:
  - Presencia de los matrimonios al lado de los jóvenes trabajando como agentes pastorales dentro de la PJ y en procesos específicos de formación para el noviazgo y matrimonio.
  - Presentar a familias auténticas, también con sus límites y problemas.
  - Hacer discursos positivos, dando oportunidad al diálogo y a despertar intereses y sueños vocacionales en los chicos/as.
  - Incluir en nuestros grupos a la pluralidad de familias que existen, visibilizando una Iglesia inclusiva, que no juzga sino que es fuente de sanación.
- » Se necesita una formación de pastores y agentes con sensibilidad para acompañar a esposos, novios.
- » Reforzar el sentido comunitario de nuestras CEPs como comunidades de referencia en donde se vive y se comparte la vida y la fe.
- » Algunos proyectos de pastoral para la familia:
  - Intuir un proyecto integral para parejas, que aborde el “antes, durante y después” del matrimonio (formación, acompañamiento, discernimiento), dando ocasión para un proyecto de vida único y compartido por la pareja.
  - Renovación de la educación en la afectividad, con presencia de matrimonios.
  - Algún proyecto extra-eclesial para generar una cultura a favor de la familia.

## MEDITERRANEA 4\_ SPAGNA & PORTOGALLO

¿Cuáles son las FRONTERAS PASTORALES acerca de las cuales debemos reflexionar en nuestras Comunidades Educativo Pastorales?

Es de agradecer una visión positiva del matrimonio sin reduccionismo. La Evangelium Gaudium un gran tesoro en el que profundizar. Encontramos las siguientes fronteras que abordar:

- » La frontera de la formación integral para la relación de pareja, para el matrimonio desde los primeros años de la vida, con procesos largos. Acompañar las relaciones prematrimoniales, los primeros años del matrimonio y la educación de los hijos.
- » Aplicar el Sistema Preventivo con toda su riqueza a los procesos de crecimiento en la afectividad, en la relación, en la sexualidad, en la educación para el amor. Prevenir las situaciones de fragilidad. Educar en el amor en querer al otro es ya una propuesta "anticultural". Ayudar a madurar en la afectividad. Educar en el respeto, en la fidelidad. Recuperar la frescura del evangelio como propuesta de vida feliz. El desafío del evangelio no puede perjudicar, sino enriquecer.
- » Nos jugamos mucho en la acogida, el respeto y cuidado a las personas en situación de especial dificultad. Diálogo constructivo con las personas que viven situaciones especiales: crisis, divorcios, separaciones, divorcios, parejas homosexuales. Compaginar la caridad y la propuesta de la verdad.
- » Educar en el respeto al otro, en la confrontación, en el diálogo, en el discernimiento. No todo vale según la propuesta cristiana. Respetar los procesos.
- » Argumentar mejor toda la propuesta desde la antropología cristiana. Definir con claridad y formar en lo que piensa la iglesia y la congregación sobre todos los temas de fragilidad. Ser conscientes que educamos en un tiempo de mucha pluralidad ideológica.
- » Convince y atrae el testimonio concreto, por lo tanto, proponer testimonios creíbles de personas y familias auténticas y felices con lo que son. Hacer notar la calidad humana y de entrega al otro que nos hace no mejores, pero si diferentes en nuestro modo de concebir la vida.
- » En nuestra propias comunidades educativas pastorales hayamos situaciones familiares muy diversas. A cada una es hay que responder de manera diversa. Escuchar a las familias en su realidad y en sus situaciones concretas.

Pero cualquier respuesta tiene que contar con las familias, los educadores y los jóvenes.



30<sup>th</sup> November 2017

# THE FAMILY IN SALESIAN PASTORAL CONTEXT

## AN EDUCATIVE AND EVANGELIZING PERSPECTIVE

FR ROSSANO SALA, SDB

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lecturer at the Salesian Pontifical University (Rome).*

In the family, faith accompanies every age of life, beginning with childhood: children learn to trust in the love of their parents. This is why it is so important that within their families parents encourage shared expressions of faith which can help children gradually to mature in their own faith. Young people in particular, who are going through a period in their lives which is so complex, rich and important for their faith, ought to feel the constant closeness and support of their families and the Church in their journey of faith.

(Francesco, *Lumen fidei*, n. 53)

## INTRODUCTION

We are in the midst of a beautiful moment in the life of the Church, where two important themes have come together in a life-giving way: the family and youth. This is reason for great joy. Indeed, we are living a powerful, albeit unplanned series of important synods of the universal Church: the “double Synod” on the family, which culminated in the post-synodal Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, and the upcoming Synod in October 2018 dealing with “Young people, the Faith and Vocational Discernment”.

All of this speaks to the timeliness of the theme of this international congress – “Youth Ministry and Family”. Youth and Family are at the heart of the Church’s concern as we begin the third millennium. It is also timely because it assures us that the Salesian congregation is in harmony with the Church’s current spiritual itinerary when it says that “family ministry is an emerging apostolic front, which we have begun to address more carefully, not only in the context of parish or young adult formation, but also in close connection to youth ministry”.<sup>86</sup>

What follows in my presentation is developed specifically in terms of the Salesian charism.

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<sup>86</sup> CAPITOLO GENERALE 27, n. 20.

From the outset, it is important to insist that our charism is and always will be inextricably linked to young people. For this reason, we speak about the family as an integral dimension of Youth Ministry and of “Youth Vocation Ministry”. This aligns us perfectly with the perspective of the upcoming Synod. In taking up this theme, we are dealing with the basic truth of every Christian family, because at the heart of the family we find the Son, and with him, every son and daughter.

Christianity, even enormous as was its revolution, did not alter [the] ancient and savage sanctity [of the family]; it merely reversed it. It did not deny the trinity of father, mother, and child. It merely read it backwards, making it run child, mother, father. This it called, not the family, but the Holy Family, for many things are made holy by being turned upside down.<sup>87</sup>

My presentation is developed in three parts which are connected and interdependent.

The first part will demonstrate how “Salesian Family Spirit”, both historically and pastorally, is the original source of the Salesian charism as well as the guarantor of its educative and evangelizing efficacy.

The second part deals with the family as the *object* of explicit pastoral care in the Salesian charism and therefore will suggest how our spirit might address the vocational needs of youth, how it might implement a methodology for family ministry, and address family needs from our charismatic framework.

The third and final part of this presentation addresses the family as a *subject* in its own right within Salesian Youth Ministry. It will demonstrate how the family could become an effective protagonist, working in communion with other individuals in the church, for the education and evangelization of the young, because of the privileged role reserved for the family within the salesian charism.

# 1

## A FAMILY CHARISM

From the historical and pastoral perspective, it is clear and incontestable that from

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87 G.K. CHESTERTON, *Eretici*, Lindau, Torino 2010, 145.



the beginning, Don Bosco's home was a "family for young people without a family" and a "parish for young people without a parish". At the founding of Valdocco, Don Bosco's priority was to create a family atmosphere and an authentic experience of Church. In our salesian tradition, every thought and action which is true to our charism flows from our "family spirit", and finds its roots in Don Bosco and the origins of his work in Valdocco<sup>88</sup>. This "family spirit" is not a compartmentalized priority reserved for a part of the work or to particular moments of the day; it is a style of life that permeates every aspect of the very existence and concrete manner of carrying out the daily reality of the entire Salesian work. "Family spirit", therefore, is not an optional element of our style of education; it is a dimension that weaves transversely across every aspect of Salesian Youth Ministry.

Our charismatic identity as Salesians remains clear: we are "signs and bearers of the love of God for the young" and our houses are places where we offer an experience of family to all the young who come to us and to all of our collaborators.

### 1.1. THE FOUNDING EXPERIENCE: "FAMILY SPIRIT"

At the birth of the salesians charism was the "family spirit", experienced as an atmosphere of affection that was shared interactively, intergenerationally, and with co-responsibility. In fact, the Oratory of Valdocco was a

veritable "workshop" where Don Bosco, together with other priests, adult laymen, youngsters and some women, with Mamma Margaret as the first among them, lived the preventive system, that original and compelling style of predilection for the young. This system, lived first at Valdocco and then at Mornese and elsewhere, became a true spirituality that united educators and pupils in a shared movement towards holiness. [...] As we revisit the beginnings of Valdocco, we appreciate not only Don Bosco's pastoral heart but also his ability to involve others. The contribution of clergy and lay people brought into being a church, living quarters and playgrounds.<sup>89</sup>

88 Cfr. A.J. LENTI, *Don Bosco: storia e spirito*. 1. *Dai Becchi alla casa dell'Oratorio* (1815-1858), LAS, Roma 2017, 530-540.

89 CAPITOLO GENERALE 24, n. 3.87.

The model, therefore, which inspires our salesian “family spirit, is the life of the Oratory in Valdocco, where Don Bosco lived in the midst of his boys and his collaborators, just as a father or mother lives surrounded by their own children. In the *Biographical Memoires* we find this noteworthy description of this reality:

In those days, the Oratory was a real family. [...] Don Bosco managed and directed the Oratory just like a father would run his own household, and the young ones who went there felt as though it was just like their own home. [...] At the Oratory, no one lived in fear, but in peace and joy. Everyone breathed the air of a happy family. Don Bosco gave the young ones every possible freedom as long as it posed no threat to discipline or morals.<sup>90</sup>

This was the style which imbued every houses established by Don Bosco, including his religious community, because his family spirit touched every aspect of the life and mission of the salesians.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, we can affirm that the family style was the golden rule of the oratory, because “ [...] when Don Bosco started a hospice at the Oratory he laid down *no rules other than those which regulate mutual relations in the family* [emphasis added]. He drafted the first house rules for each dormitory five years later. These dealt specifically with the moral and religious conduct of the pupils, as well as with the work habits that were expected of them”.<sup>92</sup>

This characteristic family spirit of the original experience of Valdocco provides the blueprint and the foundation for three essential aspects of mission, all of which can rightly be seen as fruits of the spirit: the Educative Pastoral Community (EPC), the Salesian Congregation itself, and the Salesian Family, *in that order*. The ordering presented here is bold, but it is deliberately so, because I believe it is accurate not only chronologically, but also, and more importantly, qualitatively: Family Spirit → EPC → Salesian Congregation → Salesian Family!

If we are not convinced of this, we do well to reread Constitution 16:

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90 Cfr. *Memorie biografiche di don Bosco* III,353.360-361; IV,679; VI,592.

91 Il tema appare trasversalmente lungo tutte le Costituzioni salesiane: lo spirito di famiglia nella comunità educativa (Cost. 37.38.47), nella comunità religiosa (Cost. 49.51.53.56), nella pratica dei consigli evangelici (Cost. 61), nell'autorità e nell'obbedienza (Cost. 65), nella vita di castità (Cost. 83) e nella comunità formatrice (Cost. 103).

92 Cfr. *Memorie biografiche di don Bosco* IV,542. English translation, IV, 377.

Don Bosco's desire was that in all of his houses everyone would feel "at home". The Salesian house becomes a family when there is mutual affection among its members, and all, confreres and youth alike, feel welcome and responsible for the common good. In an atmosphere of mutual trust and daily forgiveness one experiences the need and the joy of sharing everything and relationships are governed not so much by recourse to the law, but by the movement of the heart and of faith. This kind of witness will inspire in the young the desire to know and to follow the salesian vocation

Against this description of the "salesian house" we can measure the extent to which Don Bosco's family spirit has permeated our communities at every level: local, provincial, and worldwide.

## 1.2 BRINGING IT TO LIFE: THE "SALESIAN FAMILY"

Today, the "Salesian family" refers to a vast movement in the church whose purpose is to help the young live life abundantly and to the full. The very word "family" confirms the spirit and style which unites the various groups who are called to share our founder's charism.

It is beyond the scope of this presentation to reread in its entirety the "Common Identity Card of the Salesian Family of Don Bosco", promulgated on January 31, 2012. For our present purposes, Article 5 of this document will suffice:

The term *family* is used in salesian tradition to indicate in a generic manner the bonds existing between the various groups and is applied in different ways according to the nature of the relationship. This bond or relationship cannot be reduced to mere friendly rapport. It is rather the external expression of an internal and charismatic communion. It helps therefore to understand the different titles to membership of the Salesian Family.

Membership is fostered by a common spirit, which leads to a vast and complementary mission to the young and the common people; and by certain specific and original characteristics which justify official recognition, which is given through a specific title.

This family exists because its members share the apostolic passion of Don Bosco: the passion of preparing young people to make choices that are conducive to full and abundant life. This passion is expressed through three interwoven dimensions:

1. *A Mission to the young.* It was Don Bosco's explicit intention that all the member groups of the Family he founded be dedicated to youth who are poor, abandoned, at risk or, in modern terms, young males and females who are most in need because of the various situations of poverty they face: economic, affective, cultural or spiritual.
2. *A Mission to common people.* Under the guidance of the Spirit, Don Bosco was also concerned for adults, always showing preference for the poor and humble, for the working class, for immigrants and those on the margins, in short, for all who stand in need of material and spiritual assistance. [...] *He gave particular attention to the family* because he saw it as the primary place to educate the young to love and to be receptive to the gift of life. The family was the first school of solidarity between persons and peoples. Every effort was made to protect the dignity and strength of the family so that it might always be more obviously a small "domestic church".
3. *A Missionary apostolate ad gentes.* Don Bosco cultivated missionary zeal and participated concretely in the missionary work of the Church. He wanted the Salesian Society and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians, to devote themselves to the missions; and indeed, this is what both congregations have been doing since their earliest days, which explains the extraordinary expansion of their presence on every continent.<sup>93</sup>

Ours is a family which lives its mission in a spirit of communion and collaboration because

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93 Cfr. *Carta d'identità carismatica della Famiglia Salesiana*, art. 16. English translation, art. 13.

In all his activity as an educator, pastor and founder, Don Bosco showed a great ability for dialogue and for sharing responsibility with even the youngest of his collaborators; for harmonizing in apostolic and missionary work the talents of the most widely differing persons for the good of the whole enterprise; for finding each individual a work suited to his character, his skills and his formation, in such a way that each one felt happy in what he was doing.

Communion between the member groups of the Salesian Family *in and for the mission* has become increasingly necessary as we try to meet the missionary and educative tasks before us. We are already seeing an urgent need to network the various interveners, to propose new models of Christian life, and to develop collaborative ministries. If we work more collaboratively, our witness value will be stronger, our proclamation of the Gospel will be more convincing, our pastoral charity will be intensified, and the characteristic identity of both the Salesian Family and each of its groups will be clearer<sup>94</sup>.

Finally, then, our family members work co-responsibly in pursuit of commonly shared objectives. These objectives are: passion for and educational attentiveness to the specific historical context where we find ourselves; the methodology of the Preventive System, which is a spiritual and educative experience that finds its efficacy in the rich interplay of reason, religion and loving kindness; and the sharing of Salesian spirit.<sup>95</sup>

Certainly, there will be times when it will be difficult to keep the Salesian Family alive, vibrant and desirable. But the creative tension which the family offers, and our desire to live and to work together in this vast and varied movement that was desired and created by Don Bosco himself, must always be safeguarded. Our founder was deeply convinced that in order to educate properly it was necessary to coordinate the energies of many like-minded people who are committed to sharing common apostolic objectives.

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94 Ivi, art. 19.

95 Cfr. ivi, art. 21.

### 1.3 LOST AND FOUND: THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH AS FAMILY

One of the most interesting observations that has emerged from the Church's recent focus on the theme of the family has been the rediscovery of a long-neglected aspect of the Church, namely, its family style. The Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, n. 87, offers this definition of the Church:

The Church is a family of families, constantly enriched by the lives of all those domestic churches. "In virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, every family becomes, in effect, a good for the Church. From this standpoint, reflecting on the interplay between the family and the Church will prove a precious gift for the Church in our time. The Church is good for the family, and the family is good for the Church. The safeguarding of the Lord's gift in the sacrament of matrimony is a concern not only of individual families but of the entire Christian community".

This passage expresses the unity, the reciprocity, and the complementarity of family and Church which, if considered independently, would lose essential aspects of their intimate relationship: on the one hand, the family without the Church risks becoming a closed community defined by "self-referentialism", without any openness to, or enrichment from, the vast horizons offered by the Church; on the other hand, the Church without families risks becoming a dispenser of "religious services", a cold bureaucracy incapable of inspiring confidence, offering hospitality or affection, and stripped of its generative and maternal capacity.

With regards to parishes—which are the living cells of the Church, capable of bringing new members to life in the faith—the Exhortation offers this insight:

The main contribution to the pastoral care of families is offered by the parish, which is the family of families, where small communities, ecclesial movements and associations live in harmony. Along with a pastoral outreach aimed specifically at families, this shows the need for "a more adequate formation... of priests, deacons, men and women religious, catechists and other pastoral workers". In the replies given to the worldwide consultation, it became clear that ordained ministers often lack the training needed to

deal with the complex problems currently facing families. The experience of the broad oriental tradition of a married clergy could also be drawn upon<sup>96</sup>.

To acknowledge that the Church and the parish are “a family of families” is a powerful, programmatic affirmation of the style of relationships we need to nurture, the models of formation we need to develop, the educational itineraries we need to navigate, and the types of liturgical celebrations we need to experience!

- » **Relational styles.** First and foremost, the family as such provides the pattern for an experience of Church. This was the experience of Jesus himself. His preparation for public ministry took place within the family of Nazareth into which he was born, where he was raised, and where he stayed until he was ready to bring his proclamation of the Good News to the world, one family at a time.
- » **Models of formation.** Our formation cannot be based on business models that pursue efficiency and productivity at all cost. Our models strive for spiritual formation by touching the affective and converting hearts, drawing on the resources that flow from our covenant relationship with the God of love.
- » **Educative itineraries.** We are not so much interested in “courses” as we are in “processes”. Therefore, we need to engage in the difficult but energizing art of accompanying the younger generations and families as such, because they need travel companions on their journey of faith, who are capable of guiding them and who are ready to share their joys and struggles.
- » **Types of liturgical celebrations we need to experience.** Liturgy has its own strategic contribution to make. Because in and through the liturgy, the Church —convoked by God to be a family— communicates a manner of relating. This contribution cannot be taken for granted. Through sacred spaces and architecture, through the quality of the music and singing, through the dignity with which the celebration unfolds, so many possibilities lie before us!

#### Important benchmarks

- a. The family as an educative *context*: because the family is intergenerational and matures through the co-responsibility of its members, it

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96 FRANCESCO, *Amoris laetitia*, n. 202.

is a matrix for living the salesian charism and a paradigm for all the ways our charism becomes incarnate in time and in history.

- b. The Church as a *subject* in education: communion between the various states of life in the Church (lay, family, religious, clerical) can rightly be considered as the most adequate subject of education.
- c. Family spirit and Youth Ministry: it is imperative that we rethink youth ministry from the starting point of family spirit, because this spirit provides the necessary *atmosphere* for education and evangelization.

## 2 SALESIAN YOUTH MINISTRY FOR THE FAMILY

As Salesians, we do not want a “Family Ministry” that is separate from “Youth Ministry”. We are not asking, as a follow up to this international Salesian congress, that every province create a new department dedicated to family ministry that runs parallel to, or worse yet, in competition with, Youth Ministry.

What we want is, family spirit to be the hallmark of our works, vocational attentiveness to be directed to all young people, deliberate attention to be dedicated to the fragility of family life today, and finally, that these three aspects be present transversally in all of the ways we implement our educative and pastoral processes.

### 2.1 THE EDUCATIVE-PASTORAL COMMUNITY: THE EMBODIMENT OF “FAMILY SPIRIT”

From the outset, it is necessary to speak about the EPC and its animating nucleus, because *we want to minister to families first of all by presenting ourselves as a model of family and by making it obvious that we live and work together as a family* in our educative and pastoral works.

As a large family dedicated to the education and evangelization of youth in a particular territory, the EPC is the embodiment today of that family spirit that was so characteristic at the birth of our charism. In the latest Frame of Reference for Youth Ministry, the EPC is defined as follows:



- » *Community*: because it involves young people and adults, parents and educators in a family atmosphere. The thing that unites us is not work or efficiency, but a set of values of life (educational, spiritual, Salesian...) that form a shared identity willingly accepted by all;
- » *Educative*: because it gives first place, in all its projects, relationships and organisations, to concern for the integral development of young people. By this we mean the development of their potential in all aspects: physical, psychological, cultural, professional, social, religious and spiritual;
- » *Pastoral*: because it is open to evangelisation, it walks with young people on their journey to encounter Christ and creates an experience of Church where young people experience human and Christian values in communion with God and with others<sup>97</sup>.

In summary, the EPC is our way of being Church and of living a concrete experience of the Salesian charism: to be and to live as one large family where sharing, communion, and co-responsibility express our passion for the education and evangelization of the younger generations is expressed through.

The decisive factor which brought us to this point is “the new season which the Church is experiencing. There is a keen awareness of the Church as being in communion with God and with all people; this communion is the primary means for bringing about the salvation of humankind”<sup>98</sup>. The importance of this affirmation cannot be overstated, because it reverses the traditional priority between *what* we do and *how* we do it; top priority now goes to our *how we do what we do*, because the way one walks already indicates the destination one hopes to reach:

It has not been a short walk. The pre-conciliar groundwork, the reflections of the Council, all the effort to rejuvenate ecclesial and pastoral life following the Council, the doctrinal synthesis and the praxis that evolved in the years approaching the new millennium, the Synods on the laity, on ordained ministers and on consecrated life

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97 DICASTERO PER LA PASTORALE GIOVANILE, *Quadro di riferimento della Pastorale Giovanile Salesiana*, Roma, 2014, 118.

98 ATTI DEL CONSIGLIO GENERALE 363 (1998), I.3.

and the subsequent Apostolic Exhortations [on the family] have shed much light on how the *different vocations are complementary, mutually enriching and interdependent*; in fact, they have no unique identity of their own if not their mutual reinforcement within the ecclesial community<sup>99</sup>.

We can go deeper still. If the EPC is the body which unites all those who bring the salesian reality to life, it is imperative to define, so to speak, the family nucleus which animates this huge family. We speak of the “animating nucleus”, that is, of a small group of people who are tasked with the responsibility of gathering, motivating and involving all the members of the EPC. This nucleus is the driving force of the entire project, and has been described as follows:

All components of the EPC, Salesians and lay people, participate in its animation but some have the specific task of promoting the contribution of all and the responsibility of the largest possible number of members, taking care of the quality and coordination of the animation and paying particular attention to levels more immediately concerned with the salesian identity and quality of education and evangelisation. With their charismatic witness, these people constitute the “animating nucleus” of the EPC.

The human heart is a small organ compared to the rest of the body but it is capable of getting blood, and therefore life, to all parts of the body, though only if all the “valves are working in harmony to achieve this end. Similarly, the animating nucleus is a group of people composed of Salesians and lay people who identify themselves with the mission, the educational system and salesian spirituality and together assume the task of convening, motivating and engaging all who are involved in the work, in order to form with them the educational community and to realise together the plan of evangelisation and education of the young<sup>100</sup>.

What flows from all this is a pastoral trajectory that clearly assumes communion among EPC members as the foundation for the mission, and builds everything

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99 Ivi.

100 *Quadro di riferimento della pastorale giovanile salesiana*, 125-126.

around the hub of “the prophecy of fraternity” which remains the true vehicle for education and evangelization.

## 2.2 “YOUTH VOCATION MINISTRY”: FAMILY MINISTRY FROM A PREVENTIVE PERSPECTIVE

What follows is the heart of my presentation.

We collaborate primarily in family ministry, *through the charismatic Salesian approach, offering youth ministry in a way that is sound, coherent, and farsighted*. We are convinced that good Youth Ministry will contribute to the formation of young people who are strong, who stand in solidarity with others, and who are capable of love. Our goal is to lay the necessary foundations for future families that are solid, faithful, and happy.

The *Preparatory Document* for the upcoming Synod speaks in many instances of “youth vocation ministry” and asserts that vocational discernment is an age-appropriate task of youth<sup>101</sup>. Therefore, what the Church expects of us is youth ministry that is *conducive to vocational discernment* and that *expands* the scope of vocation animation to embrace the vocation of family life as well.

This ministerial vision proceeds from the foundational conviction that marriage (like all the other Christian vocations) is an authentic and unique *vocation* in the church, and as such it has something particular and unique to offer that the other vocational calls in the Church do not have:

Marriage is a vocation, inasmuch as it is a response to a *specific call to experience conjugal love as an imperfect sign of the love between Christ and the Church* [emphasis added]. Consequently, the decision to marry and to have a family ought to be the fruit of a process of vocational discernment. [...] Both short-term and long-term marriage preparation should ensure that the couple do not view the wedding ceremony as the end of the road, but instead *embark upon marriage as a life-long calling* [emphasis added] based on

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101 Cfr. R. SALA, *Pastorale giovanile vocazionale. L'invito sinodale a qualificare vocationalmente il nostro impegno educativo-pastorale* in «Note di pastorale giovanile» 3 (2017) 2-4.

a firm and realistic decision to face all trials and difficult moments together<sup>102</sup>.

In recent years, one of the Church's strongest messages has been this rediscovered appreciation of marriage as an authentic vocation that brings a unique value to —and enriches— the other states of Christian life. There is no turning back from this conviction. In the prolonged discussions on the vocation of marriage at the last two Synods on the Family, much was said about preparation for marriage —remote preparation, proximate preparation and immediate preparation— affirming that

the three stages indicated in *Familiaris Consortio* (cf. 66) need to be borne in mind: remote preparation, which treats the transmission of the faith and Christian values within the family; proximate preparation, which coincides with the various programmes of catechesis and the formative experiences lived within the ecclesial community; and immediate preparation for marriage, which is part of a broader programme, characterized by the vocation to marriage itself<sup>103</sup>.

It is very interesting to consider the three areas of attention identified here: “remote” preparation seems to focus on the family of origin; “proximate” preparation would appear connected to the Christian community and therefore to the processes offered in youth ministry; finally, “immediate” preparation is concerned with helping young adults who are preparing for sacramental marriage to deepen their appreciation of marriage as a “vocational” choice, recognizing the fact that “Christian marriage cannot be reduced to a cultural tradition or to a simple juridical arrangement: Christian marriage is a genuine call from God which demands careful discernment, constant prayer and adequate growth and development<sup>104</sup>.

In fact, the connection between these three moments (remote, proximate and immediate) provides the point of intersection, so to speak, of three distinct but necessary and related areas of pastoral care: family ministry, youth ministry and vocational ministry. All three are at the service of the person maturing through the different phases of human developmental (infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood). Too often, however, we treat these like three separate fields of ministry, whereas in reality they are grafted onto each other; they are either mutually reinforcing or mutually disempowering, growing or diminishing in

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102 FRANCESCO, *Amoris laetitia*, n. 72.211.

103 SINODO SULLA FAMIGLIA, *Relazione finale approvata dai padri sinodali*, n. 57.

104 *Ivi*.

direct proportion one to the other. Work done well in one area is the best guarantee of success in the other two as well.

With respect to *remote* preparation,

the Synod unanimously restated that the primary school of formation is the family and that the Christian community is engaged in the support and integration of this irreplaceable formative role. Places and times for families to meet need to be determined to encourage the training of parents and the sharing of experiences among families. Parents, as the first teachers and witnesses of faith for their children, need to be actively involved in their preparation for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation<sup>105</sup>.

With regards to *proximate* preparation, it is unthinkable for youth ministry to be so turned in on itself as to be disconnected from family ministry, or concerned with plans and formative processes independently of those being considered and implemented in family ministry.

There is no denying that youth ministry is a specific field of ministry, but, in addition to incorporating vocational ministry specific to the priesthood or consecrated life, it must also take into account family ministry. This is so for two reasons: because every young person comes from a family of origin, and furthermore because many of them in the future will establish new families of their own. Unfortunately, an exaggerated specialization has led us to develop “two worlds” – one of the young, and the other of the family. Unity here must be restored<sup>106</sup>.

Finally, with regards to *immediate* preparation, we must ask: what role and what tasks do we assign to youth and family ministry if the desired outcome is to have young people explore more deeply the vocational dimension of their Christian life? A prerequisite for this exploration is an initial openness to the vocational call, followed by a discernment experience and finally a commitment to pursue

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105 Ivi, n. 67.

106 DUARTE DA CUHNA (Segretario Generale del Consiglio delle Conferenze Episcopali Europee), *La pastorale giovanile in Europa in un momento di nuova evangelizzazione, relazione al XII Convegno Nazionale di Pastorale Giovanile della CEI, Roma, 10-13 ottobre 2011* (cfr. <http://giovani.chiesacattolica.it>).

the preparation process for whatever Christian vocation was discerned: priesthood, consecrated life or marriage.

Pre-matrimonial programmes seem to require additional topics to better form people in faith and love in the general process of Christian initiation. In this regard, the importance of the virtues needs to be recalled, especially chastity, which is invaluable in the genuine growth of love between persons. The formation programme should assume the structure of a journey towards vocational discernment for both the individual person and the couple, *ensuring a better synergy between the various pastoral areas* [emphasis added]. The pre-marital programme might also be given by married couples who are capable of accompanying engaged couples before their marriage and in the initial years of marriage, thereby showing the value of the ministry of married couples. Giving value to interpersonal relationships in the Church's pastoral activity will encourage the gradual opening of minds and hearts to the fullness of God's plan<sup>107</sup>.

*Marriage preparation* is an area in which many aspects must be brought together in synergy. It includes both vocation ministry —the scope of which must be broader than simply the promoting the consecrated vocations— and youth ministry - which cannot be limited to gathering large group of youths without providing adequate attention to the specific vocational decision each young person must make as they mature out of our pastoral itineraries.

In this sense, the pastoral processes we offer in marriage preparation need to pass through three different levels of depth. We have offered courses at the first level, *competency*, where the primary interveners are lawyers, psychologists, clergy, doctors, counselors. We have also moved to the second level, courses that focus on *relationships*, centred on the couple's intimacy, family networks, ancestry, conflict management and child raising. However, we have yet to offer formation at the deepest level, which is *vocational*. Here the focus would be on the call as gift, the necessity of faith and the sacraments, love, and responsibility.

What emerges as fundamental and non-negotiable is the recognition that any pastoral "reboot" must have a strong connection with the family, both as its *point of departure* and as its *goal*. As its *point of departure* because youth

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107 SINODO SULLA FAMIGLIA, *Relazione finale approvata dai padri sinodali*, 58.

ministry deals not only with youth in the strict sense, but also with infants, children and adolescents. When dealing with infants and children, the primary, if not absolute protagonist is their family and others who are in primary relationships with the youngster. With adolescence begins the period of rebellion and breaking away from family life. The family, therefore, must also be a *goal* of youth ministry because those who complete the rite of passage from youth to adulthood are generally called to live their Christian vocation by establishing a family of their own. Therefore, it stands to reason that one of the fundamental objectives of youth ministry must be to prepare young people to embrace adult responsibilities, with family responsibilities holding pride of place. This is why the question of vocation animation is so pertinent to our reflection.

### 2.3 SALESIAN PASTORAL CARE OF THE FAMILY: A SIGN OF THE TIMES

From the perspective of the Salesian charism, it is necessary to keep a specific focus on the family because our young people, in addition to managing many types of poverty (material, cultural, moral, spiritual), are also living serious forms of “family poverty”. Even on this front, our charism, and specifically the preventive system, has an important contribution to make towards a true, proper and specific “family ministry”, because “today, more important than the pastoral care of failures is the pastoral effort to strengthen marriages and thus to prevent their breakdown”<sup>108</sup>.

Pope Benedict XVI shed much light on this topic. During his audience with the members of GC26 on March 31, 2008, he shared this deep insight on the importance of family ministry in our Salesian mission:

In the education of youth it is extremely important that the family plays an active role. Families frequently have difficulty in facing the challenges of education; they are often unable to make their own contribution or are absent. *The special tenderness and commitment to young people that are characteristic of Don Bosco’s charism must be expressed in an equal commitment to the involvement and formation of families. Your youth ministry, therefore, must be decisively open to family ministry [emphasis added].* Caring for families does not mean taking people away from work for young people;

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108 *Amoris laetitia*, n. 307.

on the contrary, it means making it more permanent and effective [GC26, p. 127].

In the final GC26 document, one of the three “new frontiers” which the Congregation adopted for privileged attention was the family. Listed between “poor young people” and seeking “new models for managing our works”, family ministry is a top priority for the Congregation going forward<sup>109</sup>.

It is a fact that on the whole, *the Church has recognized the need to focus more attention on the question of the family than on youth*. This is a valid and even dutiful choice, because in doing so, the Church is not overlooking youth but rather is trying to create the conditions that are most conducive to a lasting and robust education to serve as the foundation for a renewal of society on the whole. The Church remains convinced of this, notwithstanding the difficulties facing family life today:

The family in modern culture is experiencing a profound crisis, as are all communities and social bonds. In the case of the family, the weakening of these bonds is particularly serious because the family is the fundamental cell of society, where we learn to live with others despite our differences and to belong to one another; it is also the place where parents pass on the faith to their children. [...] The individualism of our postmodern and globalized era favours a lifestyle which weakens the development and stability of personal relationships and distorts family bonds. Pastoral activity needs to bring out more clearly the fact that our relationship with the Father demands and encourages a communion which heals, promotes and reinforces interpersonal bonds.<sup>110</sup>

The essential reason for so much focus on the family is this: the family as such is particularly fragile and undergoing serious trials and therefore needs greater attention and pastoral care.

One of the distinguishing aspects of our charism is its missionary dimension: we are called to greater awareness that “nowadays, pastoral care for families

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109 Anche se sulla famiglia la prima parte del n. 99 (chiamata di Dio) e del n. 122 (situazione) offrivano più una direzione di marcia che delle proposte concrete.

110 FRANCESCO, *Amoris laetitia*, n. 230.



has to be fundamentally missionary, going out to where people are. We can no longer be like a factory, churning out courses that for the most part are poorly attended”<sup>111</sup>. For us, “going out to where people are” means meeting families in their real life situations, seeking to accompany them with patience and prudence along the many twists and turns, ups and downs of their journey, being an intelligent and wise presence in key moments of discernment and assuring them of our accompaniment especially in their struggles and sorrows.

It is therefore necessary, in every aspect of our mission, to keep a privileged and attentive gaze on the family. This means that in those typically charismatic moments when we are directly involved with the young, we are called to offer particular care to their families of origin by creating meaningful occasions of encounter, formation, accompaniment and support. Fidelity to our charism also requires us to implement pastoral activities which have a broad outreach, especially in parishes entrusted to the Congregation. This would include, for example, offering accompaniment and support to young married couples and to individuals in difficulty. These are all specific areas of pastoral care which we must not neglect.

#### Important benchmarks

- a. The Educative Pastoral Community: living and working together in a manner inspired by communion, sharing and co-responsibility is a concrete expression of “prophets of fraternity” in action;
- b. Youth vocational ministry: including a broad vocational dimension in youth ministry is no longer an option. It is a historical, ecclesial and charismatic imperative.
- c. Family ministry: “the poverty of family life” which directly confronts many of today’s youth demands a family ministry inspired by the preventive system and guided by “reason, religion and kindness”.

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<sup>111</sup> Ivi, n. 89.

# 3 THE FAMILY IS CO-RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SALESIAN MISSION

The Church's post-Conciliar journey emphasises Christian baptism as the point of access to all missionary and evangelizing initiatives. Consequently, the family, as the founding nucleus and authentic expression of the Church, must be intentionally included in this logic, as an active and enthusiastic subject in the process of spreading the Good News.

At the risk of stating the obvious, the family does not—and neither should any of the other states of Christian life— exist in isolation. The family is an integral part of the church's educative mission to which it brings its unique contribution in a spirit of co-responsibility.

It stands to reason, therefore, that within the Salesian charism the family holds pride of place as a *subject* of the educative and evangelizing mission to the younger generations.

## 3.1 WHAT IS PROPER TO THE FAMILY?

As a point of departure, we can ask ourselves: what is proper to the family? Wherein lies its originality? What unique role does the family play in relation to other civic and ecclesial subjects?

In response to these questions, let us revisit some aspects of *Amoris laetitia* and consider three important affirmations which summarize the document's three most programmatic chapters regarding the specific vocation of the family: chapters four, five, and seven.

The first unique characteristic of the family is its *vocation to love*. Chapter four clearly states that the family has the specific task of demonstrating what love is and how it can be lived in everyday life.

*Amoris laetitia* uses St. Paul's hymn to love from 1 Cor 13—which Don Bosco always used to express the essence of his educative system!— as a rich expres-

sion of what love is in concrete terms. Added to the canticle are the attitudes which people who love need to nurture daily. These pages of the Exhortation encourage us to ask our Heavenly Father not only for our daily *bread*, but also our daily *love*. If we are to understand the gospel of the family, we must first take time to speak of love.

All that has been said so far would be insufficient to express the Gospel of marriage and the family, were we not also to *speak of love*. For we cannot encourage a path of fidelity and mutual self-giving without encouraging the growth, strengthening and deepening of conjugal and family love. Indeed, the grace of the sacrament of marriage is intended before all else “to perfect to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing” (1 Cor 13:2-3). The word “love”, however, is commonly used and often misused <sup>112</sup>.

The second characteristic of the family is its *vocation to generativity*. Chapter five is entirely dedicated to this topic, and acts as a continuation of the preceding chapter, because love and generativity derive from the same verb in as much as “love always gives life” <sup>113</sup>. Love is always and absolutely fertile and generative: the very biological configuration of man and woman declares that the default position for humans is to be life-giving.

No other vocation in the Church is generative in the way a family is. Other forms of generativity, such as spiritual paternity or maternity, find in the family their privileged reference point. In Mary we see the perfect embodiment of this unity: in her, conceiving in faith and conceiving in the flesh, is one and the same.

In light of the foregoing, let us consider the genetic connectedness and dynamic unity between flesh and spirit, between love and sexuality, between body and affectivity. All of these are critical, hot-button contemporary topics: suffice it to consider “gender theory”, which denies, with brazen superficiality, the connection between objective physical embodiment and subjective self-perception by appealing to a crude Cartesian view of the body as nothing more than *res extensa*, undifferentiated matter, which is malleable to whatever likeness and image one creates for oneself.

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<sup>112</sup> *Ivi*, n. 165.

<sup>113</sup> *Ivi*, n. 188.

Contrast this with a human pregnancy, considered as the creation of a physical and spiritual space for another who wishes to live in our midst, where the female body expresses to perfection its feminine uniqueness. Or consider the reality of adoption, where a family is open to and in solidarity with a fragile life at risk and extends an invitation to trust. Or consider the reality of being a son or daughter, that basic experience of every human, about which the Apostolic Exhortation offers this reflection:

We do well to remember that each of us is a son or daughter. “Even though one becomes an adult, or an elderly person, even when one becomes a parent, or if one occupies a position of responsibility, underneath all of this is still the identity of a child. We are all sons and daughters. And this always brings us back to the fact that we did not give ourselves life but that we received it. The great gift of life is the first gift that we received” <sup>114</sup>.

The third unique aspect of the family is its *educative vocation*. This is the topic of chapter seven which affirms that the family is the privileged and primary educator of children. Neither the Church nor the state nor the school is the primary *locus* of education. The family is. While the family can rightly seek the assistance of ecclesial and civic partners in fulfilling this responsibility, it cannot delegate this task because “the family is the first school of human values, where we learn the wise use of freedom” <sup>115</sup>.

The Exhortation’s goal in terms of education is to motivate parents to set aside the logic of “delegating” or “consigning” the education of their children to “educative agencies”, and to reclaim their educative responsibility with due consideration of their family dynamics.

The Synod Fathers also wished to emphasize that “one of the fundamental challenges facing families today is undoubtedly that of raising children, made all the more difficult and complex by today’s cultural reality and the powerful influence of the media”. The Church assumes a valuable role in supporting families, starting with Christian initiation, through welcoming communities. At the same time, I feel it is important to reiterate that the overall education of children is a “most serious, but an essential and inalienable right that parents are called to defend and

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114 *Ivi*, n. 274.

115 *Ivi*, n. 84.

of which no one may claim to deprive them. The State offers educational programmes in a subsidiary way, supporting the parents in their indeclinable role; parents themselves enjoy the right to choose freely the kind of education —accessible and of good quality— which they wish to give their children in accordance with their convictions. Schools do not replace parents, but complement them. This is a basic principle: “all other participants in the process of education are only able to carry out their responsibilities in the name of the parents, with their consent and, to a certain degree, with their authorization”. Still, “a rift has opened up between the family and society, between family and the school; the educational pact today has been broken and thus the educational alliance between society and the family is in crisis”<sup>116</sup>.

In these words, the Exhortation insists that the family is always the primary place for the patient, educative accompaniment of children, throughout every phase of life: infancy, childhood, pre-adolescence, adolescence, youth, adulthood, old age! While choosing judiciously from a variety of responses and age-appropriate techniques, the goal remains the same: tending to the diverse needs and dimensions of the maturing process, by offering ongoing moral formation through a “virtuous life that builds, strengthens and shapes freedom”<sup>117</sup>. This goal can be pursued in many ways. First, through the use of properly measured consequences, corrections and stimuli to achieve human development through a sound pedagogy of common sense and patient trust. Secondly, by accompanying children through a positive and prudent sex education, that “can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving”<sup>118</sup>. Finally, but by no means less important, assuring an authentic and committed transmission of the faith, which will always be the primary task of the Christian family, a task that ecclesial groups may help families with, but which must never replace the family in this regard.

Raising children calls for an orderly process of handing on the faith. This is made difficult by current lifestyles, work schedules and the complexity of today’s world, where many people keep up a frenetic pace just to survive. Even so, the home must continue to be the place

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116 *Ivi*, n. 267.

117 *Ivi*, n. 280.

118 *Ivi*, n. 287.

where we learn to appreciate the meaning and beauty of the faith, to pray and to serve our neighbour. This begins with baptism, in which, as Saint Augustine said, mothers who bring their children “cooperate in the sacred birthing of growth in that new life. Faith is God’s gift, received in baptism, and not our own work, yet parents are the means that God uses for it to grow and develop<sup>119</sup>.

### 3.2 WHAT TYPE OF CONTRIBUTIONS? SOME PRIVILEGED POSSIBILITIES

If the deepest vocation of the family is love, then having and educating children will logically be the family’s specific and most precious contribution to the Educative Pastoral Community and its animating nucleus.

And yet, to date, we have not said much to promote this idea, nor have not done much to explore the possibility of an enriching “cross-pollination” between the salesian charism and the family.

In a nutshell, what we need to do is to weave together in a wise and prudent way the four pillars of the Salesian charism which are summarized in the oratorian criteria - a home that welcomes, a parish that evangelizes, a school that educates for life, and a playground for meeting friends<sup>120</sup> with the three dimensions that are proper to the family – love, generativity and education.

Often there are married people within the animating nucleus of the Educative Pastoral Community, but rarely do we find people who are involved as a couple, that is, as a nuclear family. And yet this could be a new and precious aspect to explore at the local, provincial and world levels of Salesian animation. It would be a concrete way to give visibility to the fullness of ecclesial communion, made up of people from all the states of life that make up the Church.

The time has come to consider seriously the idea that some families are ready to enter into an apostolic commitment, through an authentic discernment around their unique role *within* the Salesian educative-pastoral charism. True, this may not be for all families, but even those few who might be called would be a small but powerful sign of the dynamic unity that connects the family and the

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119 Cfr. *Quadro di riferimento della pastorale giovanile salesiana*, 126-131.

120 FRANCESCO, *Amoris laetitia*, n. 220.

Salesian charism. It is encouraging that in some Salesian provinces there has been, serious ongoing discernment to deepen this reflection from a theoretical and practical perspective.

Imagine the vast array of possibilities this could open up for us. Imagine if in all of our Salesian presences our pastoral work was never simply a repetition, but a new creation, the fruit of “the imagination of love” that should characterize every ecclesial project. Considering what is most “pastorally advantageous” is crucial. “Advantageous” here is used not in a business sense but in terms of what will bear most fruit: what is the best thing to do here and now so that the Salesian charism can be enriched by the concrete and visible contribution of the family and of family spirituality with its characteristic predilection for the young?

Among all the possible options we could explore in this regard, permit me to suggest three privileged areas of attention: affective education within youth groups and ministry groups; the presence of families as animators of other families and of educators, especially within a parish setting; the involvement of families together with consecrated men and women in moments of local and provincial vocation animation.

With respect to the *first area*, I would stress the *strategic contribution families could make when it comes to educating to love*: affectivity, love and mutual self-giving. Helping the young to enter the nuptial logic of love as the giving of oneself to another is definitely a specific gift that a couple can offer to the Church and to the young.

Consider the rich interplay between masculine and feminine, which brings forth so many precious realities through the threefold dimensions of love, generativity and education. In particular, the complementarity of maternal and paternal is essential for a proper education which would be impossible without maternal accompaniment and paternal transmission. It is not difficult to see how the many transitions that characterize family life as a journey, which demands more and more self-giving, can become an educative dynamic for adolescents and youths:

This process occurs in various stages that call for generosity and sacrifice. The first powerful feelings of attraction give way to the realization that the other is now a part of my life. The pleasure of belonging to one another leads to seeing life as a common project, putting the other’s happiness ahead of my own, and realizing with joy that this marriage enriches society. As love matures, it also learns to “negotiate”. Far

from anything selfish or calculating, such negotiation is an exercise of mutual love, an interplay of give and take, for the good of the family. At each new stage of married life, there is a need to sit down and renegotiate agreements, so that there will be no winners and losers, but rather two winners. In the home, decisions cannot be made unilaterally, since each spouse shares responsibility for the family; yet each home is unique and each marriage will find an arrangement that works best<sup>121</sup>.

I would like to emphasize, in the context of the family's specific duty, the presence and the necessity of families that welcome boys and girls, adolescents and youth. There are families that share in the Salesian mission by welcome young people into their homes: through adoption, short- or long-term foster plans, various forms of responsibility with Salesian works that take care of youth without families, as, for example, in group homes. This is a real way to share in the Salesian mission.

With regards to the *second area*, dealing with couples committed to the spiritual animation of groups of families, I would underline *the necessary liberation of family ministry from clerical control* which, as we all know, is always a two-edged sword: "clericalism" is always the fruit of those who want to stay on the front line (priests or religious), and those who are content to stay in the background and be passive recipients (lay people and families). Groups of families who constantly seek formation from ordained ministers or consecrated people risk compromising the true apostolic identity of the family by sliding into a sense of indebtedness to the clergy, which does not help anyone, neither priests, nor families. In short, *what is needed are families who are committed to families*.

For this reason, it is necessary that we step up our game, as couples, as Salesian provinces, as local Salesians: to create formative programmes to empower lay leaders for family ministry; to have couples as well as single people as educators; to encourage the growth of family groups that are responsible for their own formation in the Word and in Salesian spirituality so they can become animating nuclei of other families.

Together [with consecrated Salesians,], the presence of families could be a real gift for the formation of animators and educators: convinced that the commun-

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121 Cfr. SINODO DEI VESCOVI – XV ASSEMBLEA GENERALE ORDINARIA, *I giovani, la fede e il discernimento vocazionale. Documento preparatorio e questionario*, II,2.



ion shared by husband and wife is *per se* the first educative force within the family, much can be said, just with regard to spouses, about the common educative and evangelizing strategies that can be applied towards the integral formation of young people who in turn give themselves in service to other young people.

Finally, some thoughts on the third area which deals with *vocational discernment*. This area is connected to the experience of Salesian spirituality at the local and provincial levels, where it is important to show that youth ministry is entirely directed towards helping the young to make vocational choices. Think about how beautiful and close the ties are between family, consecrated men and women, and ordained ministers when a young person is working through a demanding vocational discernment: the coexistence of virginity for the kingdom and human fertility manifests the diverse forms of love that, far from being in competition with each other, share an authentic, albeit different type of fertility, that is both physical and spiritual.

This brings us to two problems that must be addressed. The first is thinking about Youth Ministry as a service that has no end, that is, without a clear and intentional vocational focus. But if it is important that youth ministry, a task inspired by the charism, have a beginning, it is even more important that it has an end. Our pastoral efforts are intended to form adults in life and in the faith. This is why we help the young to entrust themselves to people who have attained a certain level of vocational maturity in one of the various states of Christian life. The second problem deals with a style of vocational animation that is limited only to the so called “vocations of special consecration”, that is, religious life and the priesthood. No doubt these vocations have unique aspects to be carefully explored, but rather than do so in an exclusive or excluding way, it is best done within an inclusive and integrated vocational dynamic. Otherwise, vocation animation morphs into a “bonsai ministry”, rather than a destination to orient the discernment journey that every young person needs to make.

How does one live the good news of the Gospel and respond to the call which the Lord addresses to each person He encounters?: through marriage, ordained ministry, consecrated life? In what field can one’s talents be put to best use: in a profession, volunteering, service to the poorest, politics? <sup>122</sup>.

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122 Cfr. *Quadro di riferimento della pastorale giovanile salesiana*, 75-103 English translation, 86-111

### 3.3 WHAT KIND OF FORMATION? FORMATIVE ITINERARIES FOR THE SALESIAN MISSION

The final point I would like to address is, in some ways the most delicate, and perhaps the most fragile: if anything we have considered here in these days has any chance of being realized, it will only be through innovative processes of formation for each and every one of us.

Lack of pastoral planning is the mother of many disasters in many areas and at every level. Today, there is an ongoing need for formation that provides ongoing updating and a permanent capacity for life-long learning. Such formation applies not only to families, but also to every consecrated and ordained Salesian.

What we need in the first place is to implement a genuine renewal for all of us, a genuine conversion which calls us to *assimilate the style of communion, the dynamics of sharing, and the art of co-responsibility*. We speak a lot about these things, but we are still light years behind from where we could and ought to be in fulfilling them. Valuing all the vocations present in the Church, joyfully welcoming the unique contribution that each one has to offer for the good of the young, living the logic of an ongoing exchange of giftedness, outdoing each other in mutual appreciation are all goals that we have yet to achieve.

Today, it is of paramount importance that we live a *spirituality of communion*, or, to use a current expression of our Rector Major, *the prophecy of fraternity*: consecrated women and men, families and young people united by genuine apostolic co-responsibility. What needs to emerge is a specifically *relational style*. When I say “style” I mean something very specific: the concrete manner in which *our strengths and our structures*—personal, community and institutional—weave together to create a living unity, giving life to a truly functioning ecosystem.

You will recall that in 1996, GC24 dealt with Salesians and Laypeople sharing the same salesian spirit and mission. That Chapter said something that, in my opinion, was prophetic, when it spoke about a *relational spirituality* and *family spirit* that had to be sown, cultivated and brought to maturity. Three paragraphs in particular remain of vital importance today in regard to the *necessary conditions* for the renewal of our manner of living and doing. These paragraphs shed light on all we have been speaking about:

[91] *Don Bosco, man of relationships*

The first gift Don Bosco gives to his disciples is that of a serene and welcoming human relationship. His self-control allowed him to give himself to others with extraordinary efficacy, and to give gradually to relationships a pastoral and sacramental content. The quality of educative encounters was always foremost in his mind. “Let all you speak with become your friends”, he used to say, and “to be a friend of Don Bosco meant everything at Valdocco: spiritual commitment, interior happiness, collaboration in education, family joy. He was convinced that the Salesian spirit “must animate and guide all we do and say”. He is forthright about this in his letters to Don Cagliero and Don Costamagna in August 1885: “The Preventive System must be our distinguishing characteristic. (...) Charity, patience, kindness (...) This holds for the Salesians among themselves, with the pupils and others, externs or boarders”. “Study how you can make yourself loved”, he murmured to Don Rua, leaving him what seemed a final message and indicating to him the secret of the art of the Good Shepherd. At the end of his life therefore, he handed on as a deep conviction and precious legacy, the intuition he had received in his dream at the age of 9 years, and in his predilection for the ‘relational virtues’ as the bearings for educative dialogue and practical collaboration, Don Bosco proved an excellent disciple of St Francis of Sales.

[92] *A need of today’s men and women*

Today people bewail a widespread absence of relationships, and loneliness gives rise to more fear than death itself, especially among the young and the aged. The human sciences describe man as a being of relationships. He is immersed in them from the time he leaves his mother’s womb. A positive relationship builds him up and makes him happy; a negative one can depress and even destroy him. In any case rapport is at the heart of every educative approach, of every effort at collaboration, from family harmony to the efficacy of a pastoral and educative community. “We must be brothers to men at the same time that we want to be

their pastors, fathers and teachers. The right atmosphere for dialogue is friendship, or rather service” (Paul VI, *Ecclesiam suam*).

[93] *The Salesian response: loving kindness*

What we hear from the laity and from young people convinces us of the great desire there is for rapport; and that in the Congregation there are numerous experiences which provide grounds for hope that we can grow in this direction, giving full expression—together with lay people and primarily in their regard—to the rich values of Salesian loving kindness and the family spirit which stems from it.

It can run the risk of being downgraded to the level of a purely technical instrument, latching on to another person, young or adult, and manipulating his personality. For this reason, it must be so filled with charity that it becomes transformed into an expression of authentic relational spirituality. Its fruit and sign is the serene chastity, so dear to Don Bosco, which governs affective balance and oblation fidelity. Strengthened and purified in this way, educative rapport is expressed in the personal encounter, builds a formative and stimulating environment, encourages group processes, and accompanies vocational maturing.

With regards to what human *competencies* that are needed, I refer to those praiseworthy attitudes that GC24 summarized in n.103 as essential elements for the building of the EPC.

We think it is important to cultivate in such processes the following attitudes:

- » an attentive awareness of our manner of behaviour in relationships and communications;
- » patience in listening and willingness to give way to the other;
- » the deliberate giving of trust and confidence;
- » willingness to enter into the logic of exchange of gifts;

- » readiness to make the first move in welcoming others with kindness;
- » assumption of the daily discipline which gives value to being together;
- » promptness for reconciliation.

Working together co-responsibly will demand critical pastoral conversion: from “doing for the young” to “doing with the young”; from running “disconnected events” to leading “a ministry lived in everyday life”; from “large group gatherings” to “responsible individual accompaniment”; from “we’ve always done it like this” to “thinking together according to Gospel values”; from “co-responsibility in doing” to “co-responsibility in planning”; from simply “accepting” lay people and families to “valuing” their presence and contribution.

The formation we need must enhance our sense of belonging to a “vast movement”, blessed as it is with so many rich and diverse gifts. These gifts are most visible when we all work together to face the particular demands of our educative and evangelizing charism.

No doubt, there is a great need for formation in our *educational method*, the preventive system. Characterized by reason, religion and kindness, the preventive system remains our compass for living a spiritual and educative experience in all of our presences <sup>123</sup>. We do well to recall here the great pillars of Salesian youth spirituality that were so well summarized by GC23 in 1990:

1. *Spirituality of ordinary daily life*. Daily life inspired by Jesus of Nazareth (cf. C 12) is the setting in which the youngster recognizes the presence of God who is at work, and lives out his personal realization of the fact.
2. *Spirituality of joy and optimism*. Daily life is lived in joy and optimism, without prejudice to commitment and responsibility (cf. C 17.18).
3. *Spirituality of friendship with the Lord Jesus*. Daily life is recreated by the Risen Christ (cf. C 34) who gives reasons for hope and leads to a life that finds its fullest sense in Him.
4. *Spirituality of communion in the Church*. Daily life is experienced in the Church (cf. C 13.35), as the natural

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123 CAPITOLO GENERALE 23, n. 161. Cfr. *Quadro di riferimento della pastorale giovanile salesiana*, 93-99.

setting for growth in faith through the sacraments. In the Church we find Mary (cf. C 20.34) who goes in front, accompanies and inspires.

5. *Spirituality of responsible service*. Daily life is presented to the young as a setting for service (cf. C 32), both ordinary and extraordinary<sup>124</sup>.

What we need is specific formation that gives adequate attention to our particular mission, *Youth Ministry*, and each of its five key components: human development, explicit proclamation of the gospel, moral formation of conscience, co-responsibility for the mission and vocational accompaniment. All five dimensions must be deepened through solid proposals within a systematically developed project<sup>125</sup>

Finally, we need a specific formation plan for *family ministry*: formation for marriage preparation of the young, for accompaniment of newly married couples and for groups of families, for support to couples in difficult situations. For all of this, there already exists a vast array of literature and ecclesial resources in every continent, nation and diocese.

#### Important benchmarks

- a. What is proper to the family: we are called to recognize and be grateful for all that is specific to and characteristic of the family and the other states of Christian life.
- b. The contribution of the family: the internal demands of the Salesian charism call us to value the unique contribution which the family as such can make to the education and evangelization of the young generations.
- c. Adequate formation: the way out of improvisation and incompetence is formation offered to consecrated Salesians and families together, according to our Salesian charism.

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124 Mi permetto qui di rimandare a R. SALA (con A. Bozzolo, R. Carelli e P. Zini - Prefazione di G. Mari e postfazione di S. Currò), *Pastorale giovanile 1. Evangelizzazione ed educazione dei giovani. Un percorso teorico-pratico*, LAS, Roma 2017, 333-398.

125 Mi permetto qui di rimandare a R. SALA (con A. Bozzolo, R. Carelli e P. Zini - Prefazione di G. Mari e postfazione di S. Curro), *Pastorale giovanile 1. Evangelizzazione ed educazione dei giovani. Un percorso teorico-pratico*, LAS, Roma 2017, 333-398.

## CONCLUSION

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As an expression of my gratitude for your attention and patience, I would like to offer you, as a practical conclusion, three simple questions that refer to each of the three parts of my presentation.

*A charism of the family.* Rediscovering family spirit is essential if we are to reclaim the pastoral atmosphere of our founding charism. In our salesian realities, how do we make “family spirit”, which is the necessary context for our style of education, a lived reality?

*Salesian youth ministry for the family.* What commitments are we making to build a genuine “vocational youth ministry” that involves all the young who come to our houses, including the necessary accompaniment to their families of origin?

*The family as co-responsible for the salesian mission.* How and in what areas of our work are we recognizing the specific contribution that families can bring so that our Salesian mission may become more effective at the local and provincial levels? What formative itineraries have we undertaken to better prepare ourselves to do this?

# REFLECTIONS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

## **AFRICA & MADAGASCAR** ANGLOPHONE GROUP

1. A charism of the family. Rediscovering family spirit is essential if we are to reclaim the pastoral atmosphere of our founding charism. In our Salesian realities, how do we make “family spirit”, which is the necessary context for our style of education, a lived reality?
  - Sharing our charism with young people and laity and other interested individuals and groups is one of the ways we must rediscover our family spirit.
  - We need to explore ways of balancing professionalism in our institution with relationship with young people, families and all our collaborators. Less talk, more actions.
  - Need to improve relationship and collaboration with all the members of the Salesian family.
  - Urgent need to heed to the call to Return to Don Bosco and to young people by being present with the young people, not only in the classrooms but especially at the playground.
  - Rediscovering the family spirit is also inculcating in each of us the same passion that drove Don Bosco.
  - We need to understand what Salesian Spirit means; but most importantly, the emphasis should be on the ownership of the mission and sense of co-responsibility in planning and ownership of the mission of Don Bosco.
  - The animating nucleus in our Centres should not necessarily be Salesians, but the joint planning and activities of the Salesians and the collaborators.
  - There is need to orient everyone who is interested in joining the Salesian family so that the insertion becomes concrete and committed.
  - Need to rediscover Table-Fellowship as an integral part of the





- Whenever we invite the parents of the boys who are with us, we need to invite both of them so that they will show to their children through their presence the beauty of love.
- Invite role model parents from time to time to share with young people the ups and downs and beauty and joys of marriage and family life as a way of inculcating culture of openness on family and sexuality issues in our environment.
- As Salesians, we need to be courageous to let families and groups to know where we need their help, especially in catechesis, leading people to Jesus and helping the faithful to appreciate the scripture.
- Reflections and discussions on *Amoris Laetitia* in many of our communities are steps we take to prepare ourselves to understand the role of the family and the need for our collaboration for greater impact in our mission.

## **AFRICA - MADAGASCAR**

### GROUPE FRANCOPHONE

#### COMMENT NOUS NOUS ENGAGEONS DANS UNE VRAIE PASTORALE VOCATIONNELLE DES JEUNES

- » Prendre progressivement conscience que la vocation est large et susciter les vocations dans tous les secteurs de nos œuvres (vocation matrimoniale et religieuse et choix de vie).
- » Faire de la famille un grand collaborateur: fréquenter les familles des candidats à la vie salésienne ou les parents des confrères.
- » Impliquer toute la communauté éducative et pastorale dans l'accompagnement des vocations et des familles.
- » Promouvoir et accompagner la famille salésienne.
- » Présenter la pastorale vocationnelle comme partie intégrante de la pastorale des jeunes. Toute pastorale des jeunes est vocationnelle.
- » Impliquer les parents dans l'animation des activités pastorales.
- » Mettre en place des itinéraires de formation ou des plans de formation pour accompagner les familles.
- » Organiser des rencontres des familles avec les jeunes en recherche, ou soigner là où cela se fait déjà.

- » Profiter de nos plateformes de communication pour promouvoir la vocation en général.
- » Que chaque animateur ait son groupe de référence.
- » S'intéresser pour la situation des jeunes et de leurs familles.
- » Préparer les parents pour qu'ils accompagnent leurs enfants dans leur décision vocationnelle.
- » Eviter de présenter la vocation matrimoniale comme un échec.
- » Promouvoir les écoles de mariage à base d'itinéraires.
- » Mettre l'accent sur la quatrième dimension du PEPS dans nos secteurs.
- » Ouvrir nos maisons à toutes les personnes.
- » Apprendre à connaître les familles et les impliquer progressivement dans nos œuvres.

## INTERAMÉRICA 1

Carisma familiar:

Entre las Inspectorías se identifican algunas estrategias para fortalecer, favorecer este espíritu de familia, entre las cuales:

1. El proyecto de Formación Conjunta, Proyecto Laicos o Proyecto Seglares. La capacitación de laicos y salesianos en salesianidad se identifica como una de las estrategias más fuertes.
2. Los diversos encuentros, retiros, celebraciones que se realizan como iniciativas, algunas inspectoriales y otras locales, para fortalecer y favorecer este espíritu de familia. Algunas estrategias locales sencillas ayudan a este ejercicio.
3. Algunos proyectos inspectoriales o locales PEPS, propugnan por el fortalecimiento de este rasgo carismático.

Sin embargo se descubre la necesidad de seguir trabajando por salesianizar aún más las Inspectorías y obras; pero también algunas circunstancias han permitido identificar la existencia de este rasgo: terremoto en Haití, huracán en Puerto Rico, son algunos ejemplos. Se constata que la presencia de directores o núcleos "ANIMADORES", garantizan - fortalecen un espíritu de familia.

## INTERAMÉRICA 2

La pastoral juvenil salesiana para la familia. ¿Cómo nos estamos comprometiendo en una verdadera y propia "pastoral juvenil vocacional" que implique a todos los jóvenes que frecuentan nuestras casas, asegurando una atención especial a las familias de las que provienen, por medio de un adecuado acompañamiento?

- » Es importante ubicar que el paso por este congreso va a significar un "antes y un después". Es evidente que hay inspectorías que están "más adelante que otras", algunas que el tema está asumido inspeccionalmente y en otras no.
- » En algunos lugares ya no se habla de pastoral vocacional, sino de la dimensión vocacional de la pastoral juvenil.
- » Seguir asumiendo y profundizando el CRPJ ya que va en la línea de la transversalidad de la cuestión vocacional.
- » El carisma ya tiene todos los elementos necesarios para dar unidad a la pastoral juvenil, familiar y vocacional. Es necesario recuperarlos, profundizarlos, ponerlos en práctica.
- » Lo que nos falta es sistematizar, hacer evidente, resaltar... experiencias que ya tenemos.
- » Desde el PEPSAL bien hecho, tomando en cuenta a todos en una real y efectiva representación de la CEP.
- » Implicación de personas... cualificar y respetar funciones.

Desafíos que emergen del Congreso para tomar en cuenta en la Inspectoría:

- » La familia como sujeto de evangelización y de la Pastoral Juvenil. Poner a la familia en el corazón de la PJ, no son dos pastorales en paralelo.
- » Continuidad con los procesos pastorales, hacer enlace entre el MJS y las familias.
- » La familia llevarla al corazón de la PJ, decisión motivada no solamente por la gestión, sino liderar esta idea y plantear estrategias. Gestión hacer cosas, liderar llevar adelante estrategias.
- » Organizar un encuentro con los coordinadores de pastoral (salesianos y laicos) de la inspectoría para replicar los contenidos y las reflexiones.
- » Socializar la experiencia para poner a todos en contexto.
- » Crear una escuela de formación de familias, a nivel inspectorial.
- » En las inspectorías donde no está muy consiente el tema familia en la

- PJ o no está organizada a nível inspectorial. Dependendo del punto de partida donde nos encontramos.
- » Trabajo como Familia Salesiana
  - » Asegurar que se introduzca en el lenguaje pastoral....
  - » Integrarlas a los proyectos pastorales: POI. PEPSI.
  - » Si queremos llevar a la familia al corazón de la pastoral, debemos hacerlo bien, apoyarnos de las ciencias humanas, la profesionalización, para enriquecer las propuestas.
  - » Revalorar la noción de CEP (donde se supone hay familias), el mismo PEPSI, las dimensiones de la PJ... en definitiva el carisma salesiano desde el criterio oratoriano, desde el espíritu de familia.
  - » Comunicar nuestra experiencia de familia, de espíritu de familia.
  - » Familia Salesiana. (en ocasiones trabajamos disfuncionalmente...)

## AMÉRICA CONE SUL - CISBRASIL

Um carisma familiar. De que modo, em nossas realidades salesianas, procuramos realizar o “espírito de família” como clima adequado que favorece o surgimento do contexto familiar de educação, o único grau para propor o ambiente pastoral típico das nossas origens carismáticas?

- » Construindo uma ideia adequada de “casa” com identidade salesiana, sobretudo para os educandos.
- » Uma “casa salesiana” realmente aberta: seja pela disponibilidade dos SDB seja pela disponibilidade física dos espaços das obras.
- » Utilizando o indicativo do Sistema Preventivo de sempre valorizar o bom e o esperançoso da vida dos jovens e das famílias, sem desconsiderar o que precisa ser melhorado.
- » Enxergando o “todo” da acolhida e do acompanhamento dos jovens e das famílias feito pelas obras salesianas.
- » Valorizando as ações próprias do “espírito de família” —tanto com os educadores e educandos quanto com as famílias— que cria o ambiente educativo próprio do trabalho salesiano: lúdico, esportivo, cultural, celebrativo, etc.

A Pastoral Juvenil Salesiana para a família. Como é que estamos nos empenhando com convicção numa verdadeira e própria “Pastoral Juvenil Vocacional” que

envolva todos os jovens que frequentam as nossas casas, tendo também uma atenção especial à sua família de proveniência, através de um acompanhamento adequado?

- » Crescendo na consciência de que somos “Família Salesiana” tanto no que diz respeito à formação quanto nas ações organizadas em conjunto voltadas para a acolhida/acompanhamento dos jovens e das famílias.
- » Já existem trabalhos pontuais envolvendo SDB e leigos/leigas no atendimento dos jovens e das famílias... mas dificilmente organizados em forma de processo.
- » Perder o receio de entender a Pastoral Juvenil também como Vocacional: criar e/ou reforçar uma “cultura vocacional”.
- » Organização e trabalho das Comissões de Pastoral Juvenil Salesiana (inspetoriais e regionais) e dos Conselhos Nacionais da AJS/MJS (locais e inspetoriais).

A família corresponsável da missão salesiana. De que modo e em que âmbitos estamos valorizando o contributo específico da família para a eficácia da missão salesiana nas nossas Inspeções e nas nossas realidades locais?

- » Vencendo a barreira ideológica de que “envolver a família na CEP” significa apenas convidá-la para participar de reuniões e encontros.
- » Valorizando os grupos laicais, sobretudo da Família Salesiana, no seu carisma e na sua missão.
- » Abrindo espaços para o envolvimento e a participação das famílias, sobretudo na CEP e no Conselho da CEP.

E que caminhos de formação desenvolvemos para nos qualificarmos nesta tarefa?

- » Por enquanto os “caminhos” se reduzem: à reunião de pais de obras; a alguns retiros (sobretudo retiros da Família Salesiana); ao incentivo à participação em grupos (pastorais e movimentos) de casais; a algumas palestras na área da educação e da família, etc.
- » Necessidade de conscientização de que ainda há um longo caminho a ser percorrido: converter a mente e o coração dos SDB e da Família Salesiana para a causa dos jovens e das famílias; aproximar as famílias das obras salesianas; trabalhar juntos (sobretudo como Família Salesiana) e de modo projetual (com orientação e acompanhamento inspetorial) e processual (entendendo a família primeiro como

“objeto” e depois como “sujeito” da ação); constituir atividades dentro de processos (pastoral de processos e não tanto de eventos); etc.

## AMERICA CONO SUR - SEPSUR

### LA FAMILIA EN LA PROPUESTA PASTORAL SALESIANA.

#### ***a) Un carisma familiar.***

Notamos que tenemos un buen trabajo sobre este tema con los jóvenes de nuestros ambientes pero nos falta crear espacios para favorecer el clima de familia con docentes y padres.

Hay muchas actividades en nuestras obras que son significativas y que ayudan al clima de familia y sentido de pertenencia : retiros, jornadas institucionales, celebraciones, encuentros, etc.

Es significativo el clima de familia que se ha generado a partir de promover instancias de pequeñas comunidades dentro de instituciones grandes, ellos permitió un conocimiento mutuo, colaboración, fraternidad...

El clima de familia es posible cuando logramos trabajar corresponsablemente entre salesianos, laicos y otros miembros de la FS.

Notamos que espontáneamente generamos un clima de familia y confianza, los alumnos, animadores, padres entre otros se siente bien porque estamos a la mano somos cercanos... lo que a veces no logramos es dar paso a la generación de la CEP, del trabajo compartido y proyectado, de integrar esta experiencia fraterna y cordial dentro de un proceso.

#### ***b) La pastoral juvenil salesiana para la familia.***

Existe en ARS una experiencia donde el aspirantado busca ser un centro vocacional para los jóvenes en la diversidad de vocaciones.

En la universidad de Chile se pudo incorporar un espacio para que los estudiantes puedan pensar su profesión desde la perspectiva del proyecto de vida.

En el equipo de pastoral juvenil de ARN se generaron instancias para reflexionar sobre la dimensión vocacional del carisma y sumar esta reflexión —de la vocación como punto de partida y de llegada de toda acción pastoral— en todos los sectores de animación (MJS, escuelas, CFP, parroquias, directivos, etc.) tratando de dejar de lado la concepción de vocación reducida a la vida religiosa y sacerdotal.

En ARN tuvieron una buena experiencia en generar una comunidad de jóvenes para reflexionar sobre el propio proyecto de vida con un itinerario accesible y significativo de ello surgieron muchas vocaciones para los ssc y para los sdb.

### ***c) La familia corresponsable de la misión salesiana.***

Reconocemos que todavía nuestros proyectos y acciones pastorales comprenden a la familia como objeto, destinatarios pasivos. El encuentro nos está ayudando a revisar nuestras prácticas para poder dar paso a las familias como sujetos activos de la misión.

Los laicos deben hacer camino, acompañado por la comunidad religiosa, para empoderarse en los procesos de animación y gobierno de las obras salesianas.

Conversión pastoral para evitar el clericalismo muchas veces arraigado no solo en los religiosos sino también en los laicos.

En algunas inspectorías hay laicos que asumieron roles de animación de las obras enriqueciendo la reflexión y la acción pastoral desde su experiencia de vivir el carisma y la misión como padres.

## **EAST ASIA - OCEANIA 1**

The family is co-responsible for the Salesian mission. In our parish ministry, how and where are we recognizing the specific contribution that families can bring so that our Salesian mission may become more effective at the local and



provincial levels? What formative itineraries have we undertaken (or can we undertake) to better prepare ourselves to do this?

Lay empowerment is a trend in the Church. We can form the young to be apostles to the family. We can go beyond the structure of the family, involving not only the parents but also the grandparents in the formation of the youth. We need to involve the whole family in youth ministry, because it is in the family that we foster that vocation to love. If the young person does not feel loved in the family, then it would be more difficult to receive that from elsewhere. Constant communication can be done, even daily, between the parents and their children (in some settings, through the Students' Handbook).

We can and should involve the parents in planning our pastoral ministry with young people. This may not be easy because one problem is that sometimes, the parents themselves are hands off in relation to our work. We should therefore involve them even from the planning stage of our apostolate.

The parents should be aware of our charism, of the uniqueness of Salesian Youth Ministry, what distinguishes it from other ways of doing youth ministry.

There is a value in talking about Youth Ministry and Family in the Provincial level. There is a need to form all Salesians in the specific aspect of Family Ministry. Our works indeed should focus on the family and the Province can make the courses available for the Salesians and the lay people. Someone who belongs to the Province Youth Ministry Team should focus on Family Ministry.

A charism of the family. Rediscovering family spirit is essential if we are to reclaim the pastoral atmosphere of our founding charism, in our salesian realities, how do we make "family spirit", which is the necessary context for our style of education, a lived reality?

Settings with boarding schools have an advantage in instilling the Family Spirit. For students who come only during the day, this becomes more difficult. Time is indeed a factor in our contact with young people.

Family Spirit should be a mark of the Educative Pastoral Community. This is sometimes misunderstood: professionalism is sometimes sacrificed in the name of family spirit, or vice versa. However, these can actually go together: we are close together as a family, but we have a vision and a mission. Family Spirit in our ministry is built through structures, feasts, and activities. The way liturgies

and assemblies are conducted in our settings may facilitate growth in Family Spirit. There is a whole range of ways in which Family Spirit may be inculcated.

Family Spirit should begin with the Salesians and this should be imbibed in formation. We should make our communities embody Family Spirit, for conflicts in communities are discernible by lay people.

Family Spirit flows onto our lay mission partners. Even in works managed by lay people. Since these lay people in our settings have been constantly immersed in them, there may even be instances when Family Spirit is stronger than when there were Salesians! Even the language helps: Oratories, instead of classrooms, the word in the ear, etc.

Salesian Youth Ministry for the Family. What commitments are we making to build a genuine “vocational youth ministry” that involves all the young who come to our houses, including the necessary accompaniment of their families of origin?

#### **FOCUS ON VOCATION MINISTRY**

The focus of our education in the olden times was for young people to excel so that they would have a good future. Today, there is more emphasis on making life choices, about who they are and what they feel about things. This is actually vocational youth ministry. We see this in how students look at their careers, which is something positive, rather than just advising them about their career.

#### **STRENGTHEN EXISTING GOOD PRACTICES**

We carry on with the good practices that we are already doing: retreats, initiation programs, good morning/good night talks, the word in the ear, religion classes, etc. These are practices that we can maximize and that we should preserve. Our commitment then goes with the line that we need not reinvent the wheel.

#### **PLAN!**

There should be regular planning, as for example, goal setting at the beginning of the year.

#### **CONTACT WITH FAMILIES**

The Salesians or lay educators or youth ministers can visit the families of the

young people so as to get to know them better. This is one way of knowing and reaching the peripheries. This can also be done by the formators to those who are in initial formation.

## EAST ASIA - OCEANIA 2

A. In our salesian realities, how do we make family spirit, which is the necessary context for our style of education, a lived reality?

- » Living out loving-kindness in our places of apostolate is one way of making family spirit a lived reality. This means we need to have physical presence among the Young and be patient with them.
- » The rector as the main animator of the EPC should have a fatherly character in order to inspire the EPC to live as a family.
- » Sometimes generational gap becomes a challenge to family spirit becoming a lived reality. Therefore, an ongoing formation for salesians is needed in order to strengthen community life.
- » Good fraternal life of the Salesian community is a good witnessing to the lived reality of family spirit. Hence, the Salesians are encouraged to live in harmony and unity because every Salesian community is the animating nucleus of the EPC.
- » In the wider reality of the Salesian Family, the family spirit becomes a lived reality through recollection together and celebrating Salesian feast days together.

B. What commitments are we making to build a genuine vocational youth ministry that involves all the young who come to our houses, including the necessary accompaniment to their families?

- » To involve families of the young people as active subject of our youth ministry. There is a need to establish continuous dialogue between the Salesians and the families of the young people.
- » To establish friendship with families, particularly in promoting the sense of permanent commitment.
- » To draw up formation plan for adult in order to be more committed in the self-giving for accompanying the youth.

- » Empowering lay people with formation in order to take part in the vocational youth ministry particularly in accompanying the youth.

C. How and in what areas of our work are we recognizing the specific contribution that families can bring so that our Salesian mission may become more effective at the local and provincial level? What formative itineraries have we undertaken to better prepare ourselves to do this?

- » Involving families as members of the EPC.
- » A consistent studies and reflection on families.
- » Working together co-responsibly by valuing lay people's presence and contribution in our ministry for the young people.

## SOUTH ASIA 1

1. Rediscovery of the Salesian charism – family Spirit
  - » There is a family spirit permeating in our institutions.
  - » Younger Salesians seem to be losing the Salesian spirit – family spirit.
    - » In some provinces – the fraternal spirit is less visible. There are divisions, suspicion, distrust and lack of cooperation. Confreres are jealous about each other.
    - » Ethnic issues, caste differences, etc., block family spirit.
    - » There is lack of adequate human formation with regard to ability to dialogue, to give fraternal correction and to receive correction.
    - » Unity and fraternal love is sine qua non for bringing about.
2. Vocational guidance in our works
  - » Parents meet in the schools.
  - » Catechism classes, Sunday Catechism.
  - » Parents-teachers meeting with regard to the children.
  - » Self-help groups are used to teach about life.
  - » Career guidance, vocation camps and visits of the family.
  - » Community(neighbourhood, officials, police etc) is used to build the children.
  - » Orientation programme for the outgoing students.
  - » Marriage preparation of adults.
3. Family as co-responsible for the Salesian Mission

- » Young people become volunteers in Sunday school.
  - » Parents are involved in the formation of the Salesians. They are invited to visit and see what their children do in the formation houses.
  - » BCCs share in the mission of the church.
  - » Preparation of the sacrament of confirmation by the adults.
  - » Men and women's association share in the mission of the parish.
4. What formative programmes are organized for the Salesians and the lay collaborators.
- » Parents are invited to celebrate a day in the pre-novitiate and in the novitiate.
  - » There is a shift from involvement of the Salesians alone to lay people who are involved in teaching in the seminaries.
  - » Some provinces are animated to their collaborators with regard to the Salesian identity.
  - » Organize and re-energize the past pupils of schools and colleges.
  - » we, Salesians stand in need of formation, particularly with regard to conversion of the mind to take on board.

## SOUTH ASIA 2

Question number C. The Family as co-responsible for the Salesian Mission.

1. Families can help in counselling provided they are trained.
2. Families can help in all sectors of our ministry (Basic Christian Communities, preparation for First Holy Communion, Catechism classes, assistance in the boarding etc.)-
3. The families can help with marriage preparation classes.
4. Street children can live in family style within our campus.
5. Families Preaching retreat to the College and school students and teachers.
6. The children who do not have parents can be given foster care with parents from families.
7. Families can help also in finding employment opportunities for the young
8. The parents and families could be asked to meet and speak with the children in our care.
9. The parents of the seminarians could be involved in the formation of

- the brothers provided they are trained.
10. Families at the local level could adopt or financially help Salesian misión.
  11. In the mission areas families help as catechists and evangelisers.
  12. Catholic families can help with home-integration.
  13. Family members can help as members of the Provincial commissions to help in our misión.
  14. Families can also be involved in the vocation promotion and vocational discernment of young people.

Formative itineraries to better prepare ourselves!

1. Studying various documents which speak about the importance of families and these could be included in the formation plan.
2. We need to set criteria of specialization for our Salesians (for example Youth Ministry, Family Counselling) and ensure their contribution in their specialization.
3. Guidelines and training material to be prepared for the Salesians to enter into family ministry.
4. To build competencies in the Salesians in the specific training to work along with families.
5. More awareness programmes can be organized at the provincial and local level for the Salesians and the families to learn to work together for the mission.
6. To have a comprehensive data about our beneficiaries to organize more and better services.
7. To organize music and other activities which attract families to our services.
8. To manifest a witnessing life to attract families and young people.

Question number 1

Rediscovering Family Spirit in our Salesian Setting

1. By being a welcoming community in attitude and in action.
2. People-friendly campus.
3. Availability and accessibility.
4. Communion among ourselves.
5. Collaboration and co-responsibility among ourselves
6. To be faithful to the simple daily practices like praying Rosary with boys.
7. Remove the barriers in our communities (cultural, language, caste etc.).

## EUROPE CENTRE NORTH

**B. Salesian youth ministry for the family.** What commitments are we making to build a genuine “vocational youth ministry” that involves all the young who come out to our houses, including the necessary accompaniment to their families of origin?

Marriage and consecrated life go hand in hand. We are grateful for the privilege of working with many animators; we also reckon how often we have spent time asking them what to do rather than reflect on who they should be. Their plea surprises us.

Formation means an openness for a journey, a privilege way of accompanying the young, giving them the capacity to love and mirror it back.

Main challenges: invite young people to consider a discernment process of what God is asking of them, Presenting role models; consecrated and lay, journey with them.

Religious values are caught and not taught. Young people feel the sense of family and trust: a first and sure way to create a culture.

Rediscover the preventive system. Get in touch with families, share quality time.

Spirituality behind the ethos: commitment of SDB’s teaching the “why” we do what we do.

Bring the young to believe in themselves and in who they are. Some do not believe in the value of being “children of God” as opposed to seeing the difficulties or challenges. You are precious!

Friendship with Jesus; helping them to encounter Christ in the sacraments is often difficult but they are still encouraged to encounter Jesus in loving others, passing on this love.

Rediscover a new language which is common to the young: a language which enables them to encounter love.

We reckon the failure of deciding for them what they needed and what they

don't like. Direct encounters with Christ are being proposed with huge positive surprises. This bravery is speaking more of our fears rather than their failures.

Our commitment: pick experiences which speak to their feelings as a starting point to move towards God's grace.

We underestimate the Young person's needs for the spiritual and what can be done through us by God. We need to go back to Don Bosco and the Valdocco dream.

**C. The family co-responsible for the Salesian mission.** How and in what areas of our work are we recognizing the specific contribution that families can bring so that our Salesian mission may become more effective at the local and provincial levels? What formative itineraries have we undertaken to better prepare ourselves to do this?

Though "family spirit" is felt by many students, we admittedly don't have a planned strategy.

Some kindergartens are followed by salesian parishes especially round the Sunday liturgy. This might serve as a first step in bringing back families who were distant.

The need to plan and create spaces for religious encounters as a strategic way forward. Recover the Salesian "assistance" as a privileged way of being with the young.

We need to take the Congress back and translate it in an action plan.

There are some structured initiatives but not really an organic plan. A paradigm shift is needed.

The need to go back, create a space for families, in order to listen to their needs rather than prepare courses/opportunities pre-fabricated according to what I see important rather than what they actually need.

Lay people have to shake the SDB's to invest in relationships. SDB's struggle to maintain their identity, not because they are anti-lay, but because what their formation led them believe to be. It left many SDB's in a vulnerable position, lay people are entering the world of the young.



Initial formation can be enriched by considering families' encounters and testimonies as well as basic systemic training/awareness.

Wedding is only the beginning and not the end. This also applies for SDB's: the profession is not the climax but the beginning of the journey of relationships. In countries where foreign SDB's are working, one has to be sensible towards cultures. Foster a mentality of formation teams run between SDB's and couples.

An inward desire to be with the young.

Time to celebrate; time to spend time with the young.

Rediscover the letter from Rome (1884). It is reassuring to know that SDB's in DB's time had to be reminded that "family spirit" is not automatic; it is a divine gift which needs to be fostered and taken care of. We are getting in touch with the giftedness of the current milieu.

## MEDITERRANEA 1

### ITALIA & PORTOGALLO

#### Domanda 1

Alcuni aspetti che creano spirito di famiglia:

- » Lo stile di accoglienza
- » Il coinvolgimento dei ragazzi nel pensare e fare
- » Attenzione ai momenti informali e alle relazioni
- » Affidarsi a Dio per avere un cuore libero e non appesantito dalle cose e dalle urgenze rende più capaci nell'accogliere l'altro
- » Investire sulle relazioni all'interno dei consigli CEP e, a cascata, su tutta la CEP
- » La presenza di anziani sereni favorisce molto il clima di famiglia
- » La possibilità di utilizzare spazi riservati alla Comunità Salesiana
- » Pregare assieme l'uno per l'altro
- » La partecipa educativa dell'angelo custode

## Domanda 2

Il tema del profilo in uscita nelle nostre scuole: quando pensiamo all'orientamento nelle realtà scolastiche lo restringiamo solo nel campo scolastico-lavorativo e il "meta-messaggio" che passiamo è che la cosa importante per il tuo futuro è la tua professione e non la tua vocazione.

## **MEDITERRANEA 2** ITALIA & MEDIO ORIENTE

### Domande:

1. Un carisma familiare. In che modo nelle nostre realtà salesiane cerchiamo di realizzare lo "Spirito di famiglia" come clima adeguato che favorisce l'emergere del contesto familiare dell'educazione, l'unico in grado di riproporre l'ambiente pastorale tipico delle nostre origini carismatiche?
2. La PG salesiana per la famiglia. Come ci stiamo impegnando con convinzione in una vera e propria "pastorale giovanile vocazionale" che coinvolga tutti i giovani che frequentano le nostre case, avendo anche una attenzione speciale alla loro famiglia di provenienza, attraverso un accompagnamento adeguato?
3. La famiglia corresponsabile della missione salesiana. In che modo ed in quali ambiti stiamo valorizzando l'apporto specifico della famiglia per l'efficacia della missione salesiana nelle nostre ispezioni e nelle nostre realtà locali e quali cammini di formazione abbiamo intrapreso per qualificarci in questo compito?

Risposte (a partire dalla domanda numero 2 e poi dalla numero 3):

Il coinvolgimento della famiglie nella PG è un fatto diffuso sia a livello locale che a livello ispettoriale.

Alcune famiglie sono coinvolte anche in alcuni "gruppi ricerca" ispettoriali e nelle singole comunità si sviluppano gruppi di incontro per loro e di formazione per giovani famiglie, per i genitori dei ragazzi delle scuole, degli oratori, ecc.

Funziona l'opera di inclusione della comunità in clima di famiglia, per permettere l'accoglienza di tutti, a prescindere dal punto di partenza, per includere così tutti, giovani e genitori, nei vari cammini.

Il lavoro insieme di delegato di PG e all'animatore vocazionale ha stimolato a fare dei cammini vocazionali a 360° con anche la collaborazione, anche a livello progettuale, di coppie di genitori che partecipano agli incontri. Più a macchia di leopardo la realtà locale.

La PG è in genere impostata vocationalmente, ma a livello ispettoriale è meno presente il coinvolgimento della famiglie di provenienza dei ragazzi.

Sporadica, ma a volte presente, la coppia nei consigli delle CEP. Più facile la presenza di movimenti di gruppi di formazione di famiglie e di pastorale familiare.

Nelle case sono spesso coinvolte le famiglie dei ragazzi. Il problema è la progettazione di questi cammini, con anche delle coppie presenti nella progettazione stessa.

Problema del coinvolgimento dei laici "dipendenti" specie nel mondo della scuola, anche come coppie e non solo come singoli.

Esperienza della formazione affettiva dei gruppi apostolici.

Favorisce certamente l'entrata delle coppie nelle nostre pastorali il clima di famiglia della stessa comunità salesiana.

Valorizzare la Famiglia Salesiana come sinfonia di vocazioni.

Difficoltà di trovare a volte da chi formarsi perché di formazione ce n'è tanta in giro e di professionisti ed esperti ce ne sono tanti, ma chi va bene per noi?

Si accenna alla presenza di famiglie di non cristiani nelle nostre opere...

## MEDITERRANEA 3

### SPAGNA & PORTOGALLO

III- TERCERA PREGUNTA. La familia corresponsable de la misión salesiana. ¿De qué modo y en cuáles ámbitos estamos valorizando el aporte específico de la familia para la eficacia de la misión salesiana en nuestras Inspectorías y realidades locales y qué caminos de formación hemos asumido para cualificarnos en esta tarea?

- » La presencia de los seglares de la Familia Salesiana en nuestras casas ayudan a crecer en el sentido de familia y en el propio sentimiento de familia y ayuda a los SDB en transmitir mejor este sentimiento de familia.
- » Se está empezando este camino. Las Pascuas familiares, la invitación a parejas en momentos como “Campobosco” y similares, la presencia de parejas en los cursillos prematrimoniales de las parroquias salesianas.
- » Nos estamos situando bien para la carrera. Ha ayudado la Amoris laetitia y el Aguinaldo del Rector Mayor.
- » El trabajo conjunto de la Familia Salesiana nos puede ayudar ya que cada grupo nos puede aportar al carisma su especificidad.
- » La existencia del movimiento de Hogares Don Bosco y su reflexión nos puede ayudar también al resto de Familia Salesiana.
- » Cuidar la formación de formadores y los procesos formativos.
- » La experiencia de la Pascua de Somalo de hacer ver a los jóvenes que no se acaba el camino y la vida espiritual cuando se deja de ser joven.
- » Los Consejos de Familia Salesiana.
- » Mayor colaboración entre los grupos de FASA (sobre todo SDB y FMA) en todos los ámbitos (INCLUIDO EL LOCAL E INSPECTORIAL)
- » En Portugal destaca la peregrinación a Fátima de la FASA junto con el MJS.
- » En los momentos de Formación de Animadores la presencia de familias

## MEDITERRANEA 4

### SPAGNA & PORTOGALLO

Un carisma familiar. ¿De qué manera en nuestra realidad salesiana buscamos realizar el “espíritu de familia” como clima adecuado que ayude a que surja el contexto familiar de la educación que es el único capaz de recrear el ambiente pastoral típico de nuestros orígenes carismáticos?

Elementos que hay que cuidar y no darlos por supuesto. Es necesario ser conscientes de estos elementos y generar procesos que lo faciliten y lo propicien, con nuevos modos y nuevas.

Facilitar la cercanía a las familias que se acercan por primera vez

Acogida salesiana espontanea y cercana. Esto se está perdiendo. (Turnos de guardia). Asistencia activa y propositiva, tomando la iniciativa. Ruptura generacional. Muchos educadores no han visto nunca como se asiste.

Disponibilidad de los espacios. No puede estar el colegio cerrado. Espacios abiertos y atendidos. Esto requiere implicar a muchos.

Elementos que hay que seguir cuidando. Acciones que responden al Espíritu de Familia: funcionen los consejos de la CEP ( con vida eficaces, con reflexión), constancia en los PEPS, como mejorar el ambiente de familia.

Implicar dando protagonismo. Sentirse en casa porque este es mi proyecto, me pertenece de alguna manera. Protagonismo acompañado. Se cuenta con todos pero se acompaña a los grupos y a cada uno. Se requiere un proceso formativo que les ayude a integrar la experiencia. Espíritu de familia-Previsión-Revisión. La gratificación de trabajar bien genera perseverancia.

A los miembros de la CEP le interesa todo lo que afecta a los chicos.

No pastoral para la familia, sino con la familia. Descubrir en que me puede ayudar cada uno. Requiere de mucha asistencia. Hay que perder el tiempo para ganarlo. Conocer para saber que le puedo pedir.

El deporte es un ámbito de implicación primera, en la que se empiezan procesos de implicación. Las actividades artísticas. El deporte tira mucho. Más hombres

que mujeres en el deporte, incluso padres varones. Momentos de encuentro, de comida, de fiesta.

Querer a la gente, querer a todos, querer estar de corazón, proyectar juntos. El proyecto nuestro. La fiesta es pedagógico. Cuidar mucho el ambiente en valores. Casa salesiana.

Celebrar bien la liturgia. Esto crea buen ambiente. Es algo del espíritu salesiano. El gusto de lo estético: la música, el teatro,

La pastoral juvenil salesiana para la familia ¿Cómo nos estamos comprometiendo en una verdadera y propia "pastoral juvenil vocacional" que implique a todos los jóvenes que frecuentan nuestras casas, asegurando una atención especial a las familias de las que provienen, por medio de un adecuado acompañamiento?

Poner en el centro la llamada vocacional a todo ser humano, la llamada a seguir a Jesús, y la vocación específica. Campaña vocacional en la que se tenga en cuenta a las familias.. Implicar y presentar a los padres.

Implicar a las familias en la vocación de sus hijos. Jesús rompió los esquemas a sus padres a los 12 años. Ellos son los que deben estar atentos para que cada chico y chica descubra su vocación personal. La vocación viene de Dios a cada persona. El respeto de los padres a los chicos. Muchos padres que se proyectan en los hijos y quieren programarles su vocación.

Se nos note que somos capaces de compartir. Elementos que ayuden a descubrirse a si mismo: servicio, gratitud y gratuidad. Agradecer y dar gratis. Compartir experiencias de gratitud y de servicio, en este mundo en el que se fomenta todo lo contrario.

Trabajar directamente sobre la familia para recuperar la opción vocacional del matrimonio. Cuidar mucho la preparación al matrimonio.

Muy difícil desde las casas grandes. Hay familias afines al centro familias que sólo ven el servicio educativo.

Seguir implicando a la familia. El reto es acompañar a la familia para que se haga responsable. Los primeros pasos es compartir, e implicar, pero acompañar formativamente para que se crean el protagonismo. La responsabilidad es de todos.

La vida como don y como misión. Recuperar eso es una clave. Ofrecer espacios

de silencio. Esto hace sanar muchísimo. Cuando se empieza a tener sentido todo cambia. Los jóvenes más dañados sólo sobreviven. Ser valientes a la hora de proponer porque la respuesta es positiva.

Se necesita que los Equipos Locales de Pastoral Juvenil se paren a pensar y a diseñar estrategias con inteligencia pastoral en las que se formen a los educadores y ciertas familias con capacidad de proponer un mensaje atrayente.

Educar es más fácil que acompañar. Pastoral y orientación caminen de la mano. Tutorías. Intervenir con los chavales y con los padres. Vasos comunicantes. El núcleo animador de la CEP donde se toman opciones como CEP. Comunicación.

Creerse de verdad que cada miembro de la CEP (profesores, personal no educan y evangeliza. Se trata de llegar a todos, atendiendo a los diferentes ritmos y personalizando procesos. Para que se impliquen hay que escucharlos. Propuestas que contagien a mucha gente.

La familia corresponsable de la misión salesiana. ¿De qué modo y en cuáles ámbitos estamos valorizando el aporte específico de la familia para la eficacia de la misión salesiana en nuestras inspectorías y realidades locales y qué caminos de formación hemos asumido para cualificarnos en esta tarea?

Importante que la familia esté en la misión salesiana, pero que la misión salesiana no robe tiempo a la familia. No dedicar tiempo es degradar el ambiente. Abrir más puertas y dar más oportunidades a otras personas. Valorar la familia es respetar los ritmos familiares. Adaptarse a ellos. Dar gracias a Dios por las vocaciones laicales, corresponsables en la misión. La CEP es familia de familias. La responsabilidad de todas las familias con los hijos y los consagrados con las familias y las familias con los consagrados.

# FOR THE FUTURE

## AFRICA & MADAGASCAR

SOME MAJOR CHALLENGES SHARED IN THE AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR - ENGLISH GROUP:

- » CHALLENGES IN FORMATION: Formation of the SDBs and Lay collaborators to a clear understanding and incarnation of Salesian Charism is yet to be realized in most of our communities and provinces.
- » OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF CLERICALISM: Clericalism not necessarily seen as the problem of the clergy but lay people who constantly see the priests and religious as the main point of reference for the mission. We need to keep a level playing ground.
- » THE CHALLENGE OF ACCOMPANIMENT AND WORKING WITH FAMILIES: There is need for accompaniment of young people and their families: Taking care of the family spirit in the Salesian family so as to be a clear witness to young people.
- » EPC AS ANIMATING NUCLEUS: The animating nucleus in our Centres should not necessarily be Salesians, but the joint project and activities of the Salesians, the Salesian Family and all the lay collaborators, that forms EPC.
- » MEETING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR CONCRETE REALITIES: Currently most of our centres welcome young people who come to us. Now the time has come for us to go and meet the young people where they are.

Quatre grands défis pour la région FRANCOPHONE:

- » Changer la mentalité des SDB pour qu'ils rentrent dans la dynamique de considérer la famille comme sujet et objet de notre pastorale.
- » Accorder plus d'importance aux familles dans notre pastorale et ne



pas se limiter aux jeunes. Prendre en compte la réalité de la famille dans les PEPSP.

- » Soigner l'esprit de famille au niveau de la Famille Salésienne pour qu'elle soit signe crédible auprès des jeunes. Que les Salésiens impliquent davantage les familles et les laïcs et toute la Communauté Éducative et Pastorale.
- » Rejoindre les jeunes dans leurs réalités concrètes et familiales et ne pas attendre qu'ils viennent vers nous. Découvrir leurs centres d'intérêt et les accompagner. Valoriser nos jeunes et leurs potentialités dans l'avènement d'une humanité nouvelle en Afrique (Faire de la PJ une pastorale qui offre des sorties pour les jeunes : emplois).
- » Mûrir et approfondir ce qui a été dit dans ce Congrès et mettre sur pied des mécanismes de concrétisation et évaluation.

## INTERAMERICA (GRUPOS 1 Y 2)

### DESAFÍOS DE INTERAMÉRCIA

1. Socialización: Apuntando a un cambio de mentalidad que se expresa en el lenguaje (familia, acompañamiento, vocación), y a la unidad de la pastoral.
2. Formación (sdb, laicos, jóvenes y los futuros salesianos) revisar, actualizar, completar la formación que responda a la atención próxima, inmediata y remota. Formación integral sólida.
3. Organizacional: incluya la PJ y PF dentro de los proyectos inspectoriales y locales (Reestructurar la pastoral: "integrada", "vinculada", reestructurada). Trabajo en red, lo que hacemos se fortalece y se comunica.
4. Carismático: Fieles a las orientaciones de la congregación, desde la vinculación de la familia como sujeto.

## AMÉRICA CONE SUL - CISBRASIL

### EMPENHOS PARA O FUTURO: CISBRASIL

- » Estudar profundamente a realidade e os contextos em que estão inseridas as obras salesianas e onde as famílias vivem, e também os

novos arranjos familiares (casais separados e divorciados, segunda união, uniões homoafetivas, questão de gênero, etc.) e pastorais.

- » Em âmbito de Brasil produzir/distribuir material com temáticas de acompanhamento e de formação dos jovens e das famílias: para o amor, à afetividade e à sexualidade; para a cidadania e a política; para a tolerância. Servir-se da RSB e da EDEBE.
- » Entender a PJS (sobretudo a AJS) como missão de toda a CEP (SDB, Família Salesiana, leigas/leigos) e na sua dimensão missionária e vocacional, sempre adequada a real situação de vida dos jovens e das famílias.
- » Potencializar a reflexão e a ação da RSB (escolas, obras sociais, paróquias, comunicação) sobre os jovens e as famílias, integrando-os nos processos.
- » Preparar agentes de pastoral para o acompanhamento dos jovens e das famílias na área da afetividade e sexualidade e da construção dos projetos de vida.
- » Fazer, de fato, pastoral de conjunto e orgânica, sobretudo com a criação/otimização dos Conselhos da CEP.
- » Organizar a Pastoral Familiar nas obras salesianas conforme os elementos da Espiritualidade Juvenil Salesiana.
- » Entender o acompanhamento das famílias como ação missionária contínua no sentido de buscar as distantes e de aproximá-las das casas salesianas.

## **REGIÃO AMÉRICA CONE SUL** **EMPENHOS PARA O FUTURO**

1. Fortalecer la comunión y la mirada orgánica, sistémica de en nuestra acción educativo-pastoral:
  - » Articulando las diferentes propuestas pastorales para la familia.
  - » Articulando las propuestas para las familias con la Pastoral Juvenil para que las acciones que se lleven a cabo apunten a procesos comunitarios.
  - » Fortaleciendo el consejo de la obra sumando a las familias en estos espacios..
  - » Articulando los diferentes grupos de la Familia Salesiana para el acompañamiento a las familias.
2. Caminar hacia un cambio de paradigma:

- » Comprender a la familia no solamente como objeto sino como sujetos de la acción educativa pastoral dando lugar a que familias puedan comprometerse a acompañar a otras con estilo salesiano.
- 3. Fortalecer la Formación a todos los referentes de la CEP priorizando los siguientes temas:
  - » Acompañamiento salesiano reforzando la mirada preventiva.
  - » Amor, afectividad y sexualidad.
  - » Construcción del Proyecto de vida y la vocación.
  - » Ciudadanía, política y aprendizaje en el respeto y en la convivencia.

## SOUTH ASIA

### Challenges and proposals in the context of South Asia

1. Formation of Salesians and Salesian Family  
Formation of Salesians and Salesian Family members in the spirit of 'returning to Valdocco' with a renewed commitment to collaborative Educative Pastoral Communities for effective Youth and Family Ministry.
2. Addressing key issues of Youth and Family Ministry  
Integral Formation of young people and families through our various settings by addressing key issues of the families (for example gender inequality, unemployment, social unrest and crises in faith etc.) and accompanying them in their vocational journey
3. Building up reflection to improve the quality of our work  
Building up Youth and Family Ministry research and resource centres to create models, strategies and offer animation to enhance the quality of Salesian intervention in the Church and in the Society (for example by establishing Youth and Family Counselling centres, mobile apps, Journals, animation materials etc.)

## EAST ASIA - OCEANIA

### Challenges

1. To get the parents to be part of our Youth Ministry in pastoral planning and in the accompaniment of our young people.

2. To focus on Youth Vocation Ministry in our work with young people, keeping in mind that an essential task of Youth Ministry and Family is for the young to discover their vocation.
3. To include in the formation of Salesians a basic training on how to work with the families of young people.
4. To rethink our structures (timetable and spaces) and paradigms in order to facilitate working with families.
5. To embrace Family Ministry as an integral part of Youth Ministry, as a new frontier in all the Provinces, re-echoing the fruits of the Congress on Youth Ministry and Family.

## EUROPE CENTRE NORTH

1. Start a process, both at a Provincial and Regional level, to read the vision outlined in the Frame of Reference from a family/systemic perspective where the family is the subject and not only the object of Salesian ministry, ensuring equal partnerships. Be realistic in our opportunities but also be practical and prioritize.
2. Invite for a change in attitude: rediscover the courage and the wisdom to risk, to aim high and to include families. Above all, listen to the Spirit rather than to the crisis at hand. SDB's are invited to reflect if lay collaborators are working for SDB's or with the SDB's.
3. Initial formation should bring SDB's and lay together for common systemic formation and mutual understanding, sharing not only information but experiences. Shift the animators' formation from a linear approach of "doing" to a circular approach of "being and sharing", supporting their vocational call and putting forward their witness for new generations who need role models. An urgent call, calls us to focus on pre-marriage formation and the accompaniment of newly wedded couples who are invited to get used to a change of identity and new forms involvement in the Salesian Family.
4. How are we to renew the quality of Salesian (SDB) communities in a way that they truly testify a sense of family where living and working together is truly a reflection of Don Bosco's family spirit?
5. Study, at a Provincial and local level, new ways how to reach out to families, including new forms of families, who are at the periphery, being attentive to digital and new contexts, allowing us to focus less on maintaining structures which are no longer meaningful.
6. Include in our current Youth and Vocation ministries a wider

understanding of a vocational journey, one which allows several forms of Christian and Salesian lifestyles to be considered by our young. This journey of discovering one's vocation will complement our current vocation ministry to the consecrated life.

## MEDITERRANEA ITALIA & MEDIO ORIENTE

### PRIORITÀ EMERSE DAL DIBATTITO

1. Una priorità è la trasmissione e l'avvio dei processi nelle nostre realtà. Un incontro a livello italiano nello stesso stile con cui è stato fatto quello dei consigli CEP (SDB e famiglia).
2. Mettere al centro la Comunità Educativo Pastorale, dove ognuno mette a disposizione le proprie meta competenze;
3. La preparazione prossima al matrimonio con una visione integrata della persona;
4. Dove è possibile valorizzare e coinvolgere la famiglia non solo come collaboratrice ma nella fase di riflessione/visione e progettazione della casa (consigli CEP);
5. Sensibilizzare i Salesiani e aiutarci a capire meglio il cammino da compiere.
6. Vanno valorizzati e coinvolti i giovani nei nostri consigli delle CEP;
7. Fare a livello nazionale una rete e un collegamento (sito internet) dove scambiare le buone pratiche;
8. Una piccola scelta ragionata poi nel tempo porta frutti... fare con i delegati una lista di pratiche da inserire nei progetti educativi pastorali;
9. Che la pastorale familiare si ripensi con lo sguardo della pastorale giovanile e nella pastorale giovanile si favorisca la rivisitazione e aggiunta di famiglie come figure adulte che si inseriscono con i giovani con misura e ragionevolezza;
10. Un movimento di famiglie come l'MGS;
11. Vedere le parrocchie affidate ai Salesiani che fanno pastorale giovanile e pastorale familiare più che per adulti;
12. Fare una proposta alta vocationalmente orientata al mondo giovanile;
13. Nodi non risolti:
  - > quanto siamo in grado in alcuni passaggi di riuscire a farci riflettere in profondità;

- ricentrare la CEP nello stile di famiglia con la presenza di famiglie;
  - se riflettiamo in futuro riflettiamo con i giovani;
- 14. Un processo da portare avanti ma attendendo anche il Sinodo dei Vescovi su "I giovani, la fede e il discernimento vocazionale" nel ripensare l'intreccio tra PG e pastorale familiare;
- 15. Un tema forte è il discernimento per le coppie;
- 16. Un tema su cui occorre riflettere maggiormente è la questione dell'affettività;
- 17. La trasmissione dei contenuti deve essere dominante nei nostri tavoli e consulte;
- 18. Potrebbe essere interessante ritrovarsi tra un anno per vedere come i processi si sono avviati;
- 19. Verificare e rafforzare le buone pratiche già avviate;
- 20. Sostenere le CEP;
- 21. Itinerario con linguaggio, contenuto e testimonianza che trasmettano la fede in ottica vocazionale;
- 22. Studiare che apporto il Centro Nazionale Salesiano può dare per approfondire lo snodo PG e pastorale familiare e le sue implicanze;
- 23. Come integrare la Famiglia Salesiana affinché sia orientata ai giovani e quindi integrata con la pastorale giovanile;
- 24. Riflettere su come la Congregazione possa farsi carico delle famiglie in difficoltà;
- 25. Continuare a riflettere su questo argomento per arrivare a un progetto nazionale, come fu per l'animazione vocazionale;
- 26. Orientamento vocazionale per una pastorale in uscita orientata ai gruppi della Famiglia Salesiana;
- 27. Dobbiamo partire dai giovani a poco a poco perché i processi possano svilupparsi, avendo come preoccupazione il cammino delle persone con i loro slanci e battute di arresto;

#### 4 PRIORITÀ SCELTE

- a. Curare la trasmissione dei contenuti sentiti per continuare la formazione a livello sia ispettoriale che nazionale (incontri formativi, convegni);
- b. Rileggere il tema della CEP, su cui abbiamo lavorato in questi anni, in chiave di spirito di famiglia, valorizzando la vocazione famigliare sia per la CEP in quanto tale sia per i nuclei animatori;
- c. Riflettere e avviare cammini affettivi, percorsi per fidanzati e giovani famiglie in chiave vocazionale;

- d. Attivare un confronto tra i vari rami della Famiglia Salesiana su pastorale giovanile e famiglia;

## MEDITERRANEA

### SPAGNA & PORTOGALLO

#### RETOS A SEGUIR TRABAJANDO:

1. Incorporar fuertemente la propuesta de la vocación matrimonial y familiar en nuestra animación vocacional, educando para el amor, con testimonios y metas claras. Acompañar en la formación al matrimonio y en los primeros años. Establecer equipos en el que podamos trabajar integralmente los itinerarios vocacionales. Atención a la familia como objeto y como sujeto de modo transversal. Realizando itinerarios formativos. Desemboque claro del IEF.
2. Fortalecer la CEP para que se tener modelos de referencia. Familias evangelizadoras de las propias familias, creando redes de soporte. Aprender de las familias a la hora de plantear la pastoral juvenil. Comunidad Educativo Pastoral que es familia de familias. Fortalecer todo lo propiamente carismático. Llegar a las familias con más necesidades y en situaciones de mayor pobreza y fragilidad. Introducir en los PEPS locales las propuestas que recojan las ofertas pastorales a las familias. Esto necesita una participación masiva. Corresponsabilidad. Incorporar en el tejido de la comunidad educativa. Sensibilizar y formar en competencia para los padres, respetando cada uno sus espacios. ¿Qué es lo que como casa salesiana podemos hacer? Proyecto inspeccional.
3. Establecer mayor relación con la familia salesiana. La FASA presenta maneras de vivir el Evangelio. Tender puentes. Compartir la misión. Vivir con más claridad el Espíritu de familia. Pastoral Juvenil y familia salesiana.
4. No dar por supuesto el Espíritu de familia en nuestras obras. Necesitamos recuperar de modo incisivo y cuidar los elementos propios del ambiente salesiano. Que facilite la participación.
5. Continuar la reflexión a la hora de incorporar la atención a la familia. Madurar elementos de reflexión. Reflexionar y asimilar el pensamiento pastoral juvenil y familia. Se necesita una asimilación por parte de las

comunidades educativas. Dejar claro cuales son las competencias de cada uno en la CE, respetando los límites.

6. Integrar la familia en la pastoral Juvenil de modo explícito.

#### RETOS CONSENSUADOS SSM —SMX— POR A SEGUIR TRABAJANDO:

1. Incorporar fuertemente la propuesta de la vocación matrimonial y familiar en nuestra animación vocacional, educando para el amor, con testimonios y metas claras. Establecer equipos en el que podamos trabajar integralmente los itinerarios vocacionales. Desemboque claro del Itinerario de Educación en la Fe.
2. Acompañar en la formación al matrimonio y en los primeros años del mismo, realizando itinerarios formativos específicos.
3. Fortalecer la CEP donde la familia sea un modelo de referencia y dando protagonismo para que puedan ser evangelizadoras de las propias familias, e integrando en los PEPS locales las propuestas de atención a las familias.
4. Crear dentro de la CEP redes de soporte en donde se responda, de modo corresponsable, a las necesidades de las familias en situación de mayor fragilidad, contemplando la formación necesaria de los agentes.
5. Crear proyectos comunes en los que todos nos impliquemos como Familia Salesiana, desde la vivencia de nuestro espíritu de familia, recuperando elementos propios que fortalezcan nuestro estilo carismático.

Incorporar la reflexión sobre la familia y la Pastoral Juvenil en todos los ambientes pastorales de las casas y los ambientes.





# THE FOLLOWING COLLABORATED FOR THE CONGRESS

With Fr Fabio Attard, General Councillor for Youth Ministry.

Miguel Angel Garcia, Daniel Garcia Reynoso, Marcelo Farfan, Tarcizio Morais, Renato Cursi, Patrick Anthonyraj, Ángel Gudiña

Se. Mons. Bruno Forte, Arch-Bishop of Chieti-vasto, Doctor Carmen Peña García, Fr Rossano Sala.

Department for Social Communication, Rome; Filiberto Gonzales, José Luis Muñoz, Abreu Juan Pablo, Jurado Jesus, Carava Placide, Iruppakkaattu Jacob,

The Salesian Province of Madrid (SMX), Fr Juan Carlos and his councillors

National Centre, Madrid, Fr Koldo Gutiérrez and his Team

Department for Social Communication, Madrid; Fr Javier Valiente and his Team

Yolanda Sobrino, Susana de Torres

Gustavo Cavagnari, Mario Oscar Llanos, Álvaro Ginel Vielva, Francis O. Gustilo, Paul Raj Amalraj, Paulina Fernández Moreno, Ronaldo Zacharias, Virginia Cagigal de Gregorio

Clarence Watts, Nhlahla Mdlalose, Edwin Vasanthan, Jindřich Šrajcr, Kamil, Katarina Bagin, Nele Louage, Simona Carli, Tullio Lucca, Simonetta Rossi, Daniele Merlini, Lorenzo, Lucia Gheri, Emanuele De Maria, Elisabetta Preve, Riccardo Giribaldi, David Kabongo Mikombe, Donatien Banze, Francisco Cervantes, Miguel Angel Calavia, Nieves Barragán Bru, Luis Corral Prieto, Eva María Martínez, José Luis Villota, Fernanda C.M.Pereira, Salvatore, Roberta Parrino, Abraham N. Feliciano, Val Collier, Martin Burke, Eric Cachia, Savio Yeung & Team, Héctor Luis Arismende.



# MINI-COURSES

1

## LA PASTORAL JUVENIL FAMILIAR: ¿UN NUEVO PARADIGMA?

GUSTAVO CAVAGNARI

La propuesta del Mini Curso entiende ofrecer una contribución para el logro del tercer objetivo propuesto para el Congreso, es decir, proponer, reforzar e integrar en la pastoral juvenil salesiana la atención pastoral a la familia y favorecer su protagonismo. La perspectiva y los subrayados serán, sin embargo, no tanto de “pastoral familiar” cuando de “pastoral juvenil”.

*Itinerario y contenidos:*

- Siguiendo el camino metodológico de la reflexión teológico-pastoral, el curso estará articulado en cuatro momentos.
- En el primer tiempo se afrontará la situación de la pastoral juvenil actual en referencia a la familia como comunidad de origen y de destino.
- En el segundo bloque se estudiarán los criterios para una colaboración eficaz entre la pastoral juvenil y familia.
- En el tercer espacio se verán algunos modos de avanzar en sinergia entre pastoral juvenil y familia a partir de algunos modelos recientes.
- La cuarta parte se constituirá como un espacio facilitador para la conclusión y la elaboración de propuestas sobre el tema tratado.

2

## ORIENTAMENTI E PRASSI PER LA PASTORALE FAMILIARE SALESIANA

MARIO OSCAR LLANOS

*Obiettivi:*

1. Offrire i criteri sull'accompagnamento alle coppie e alle famiglie, nel campo dell'animazione familiare d'ispirazione “salesiana”.

2. Riconoscere il valore della «famiglia» negli ambienti di appartenenza.
3. Orientare un'azione pastorale rivolta alla e dalla famiglia nell'ambiente pastorale e nel territorio.
4. Indicare i lineamenti del metodo della pastorale familiare salesiana.
5. Proporre alcune tematiche e strategie in forma laboratoriale.

*Contenuto pratico:*

1. La pastorale familiare e l'accompagnamento "salesiano" delle famiglie. Orientamenti e lettura dell'esperienza
2. Metodologia dell'animazione familiare salesiana: Laboratorio sulla preparazione di un incontro di gruppo famiglia
3. Contenuti e strategie operative per l'animazione familiare secondo le fasi e le aree del ciclo vitale della famiglia.
4. Dialogo genitori-figli: il metodo del "Confronto moderato"

## 3 TRANSMITIR LA FE EN FAMILIA

### ÁLVARO GINEL VIELVA

*Contenidos prácticos:*

- > Sentido de transmitir y transmitir la fe.
- > Originalidad de la transmisión de la fe.
- > Nuestros "deseos" y la "libertad" del otro: interlocutor único ante Dios
- > Formas de transmisión cotidianas.
- > Nuestra experiencia de transmisión

*Pertinencia y relevancia a la misión salesiana:*

El hogar-familia como lugar de apertura al Dios de Jesús con la fuerza del Espíritu que se realiza en el carisma de Don Bosco. El carisma de Don Bosco no se reduce a las obras salesianas. ¡Es vivible en el hogar!

# 4

## **COUPLES FOR CHRIST: A COVENANTED COMMUNITY**

FRANCIS O. GUSTILO

*Objectives and Practical Content:*

1. To engage the participants of this Mini-Course to a process of recognizing, appreciating, and valuing the dynamic role of the Holy Spirit in the renewal of families through the faith and life experience of a Charismatic Renewal Covenanted Movement like CFC FFL.
2. To experience through personal witnessing the different stages of faith growth of the young within the ministry of promoting families and defending life.
3. To offer a hands-on treatment of the faith-and-life programs designed according to the psycho-spiritual stages of youth from childhood to adolescence into young adulthood, namely Kids for Family and Life (KFL), Youth (YFL), and Singles (SFL).
4. To experience two specific missionary endeavors of the CFC FFL community for lapsed Catholics who are adolescents and in young adulthood: LIVE PURE and LIVE THE WORD.

*Relevance and significance:*

1. Connecting Don Bosco's experience of Youth-serving-youth within the framework of Family Renewal and the Ministry of the New Evangelization.
2. Bridging the CFC FFL presence found in 66 countries (in the 5 continents of the world) and the Salesian Family.

# 5

## **DYNAMICS OF PARENT EARLY ADULT (YOUTH) CONFLICT IN FAMILY AND INTERVENTIONS**

PAULRAJ AMALRAJ

The young person's problems are not purely personal but might also have its origin and existence in the family and all the significant persons of his or her world. Addressing the Young person's issues would necessarily include the

family in the process. Resolving of conflicts in the family gives a sense of security and hope for the young adult to face the challenges of the world. On the other hand, constrained by the dysfunctionality in the family, the young person spirals into a vicious circle of problems.

*Relevance and significance:*

- Using counselling skills and Intervention techniques, the youth minister understands better, the dynamics of Parent – young adult conflict in the family.
- The awareness of dynamics helps the young and the parents to see their dysfunctional behaviour in an unemotional way and model a new behaviour.
- Resolution of the family conflicts gives the young, a sense of security and hope and the young person is empowered to become a healthy contributor for the family and for his or her future.

## 6

## **LAS FAMILIAS ACTUALES: DESAFÍOS PARA SU COMPRENSIÓN Y ACOMPañAMIENTO**

**PAULINA FERNÁNDEZ MORENO**

La siguiente propuesta, se centra en la noción de familia y sus transformaciones recientes, proponiéndose entregar una panorámica de la diversidad y complejidad que actualmente se observa en este campo. Se espera incentivar una reflexión-propositiva acerca de cómo comprender y acompañar distintas realidades familiares, considerados los cambios en las valoraciones y roles asignados al hombre y la mujer en la sociedad occidental, así como las tensiones en materia de inclusión social de determinadas cosmovisiones culturales y religiosas, orígenes étnico-raciales o nacionales, clase social y grupo etario. Se trata, por lo tanto, de una aproximación crítica a los temas de familia, que articula los enfoques de derechos,

*Pertinencia y relevancia*

El presente curso se encuentra en línea con los planteamientos de la Congregación en Pastoral Juvenil y Familia, comenzando desde la importancia y necesidad de comprender la actuales situaciones de las familias en la sociedad

y la Iglesia; para luego, desde este acercamiento a la noción de familia y sus transformaciones recientes, hacer un “atento discernimiento comunitario” y proponer caminos pertinentes de acompañamiento en las realidades locales.

7

## **OS JOVENS E AS NOVAS CONFIGURAÇÕES FAMILIARES: DESAFIOS ÉTICO-MORAIS E EDUCATIVO-PEDAGÓGICOS**

RONALDO ZACHARIAS

Ao assumirmos a família como lugar unificante da ação pastoral, precisamos ter presente a realidade concreta da maioria dos jovens pobres que não vivem numa família nuclear. Os “arranjos” e as “configurações” familiares são os mais diversos. Os desafios ético-morais e educativo-pedagógicos que derivam deste simples dado de fato são enormes e não podem ser ignorados. Se as famílias, hoje, devem lidar com uma série de ameaças que provêm dos contextos em que estão inseridas, elas não podem ignorar o fato de que uma das ameaças mais sérias provém da fragilidade da própria instituição familiar, totalmente dependente da qualidade das relações das pessoas que a compõem. É possível, hoje, falar de uma nova cultura da família? Acredito que sim, se estivermos dispostos a tratá-la não de forma abstrata e idealizada, mas como ela é: plural, situada em vários contextos, dependente da multiplicidade de formas nas quais o amor pode se encarnar, suscetível à qualidade das relações que as pessoas estabelecem entre si. Precisamos, com urgência, descobrir estratégias educativo-pastorais que não apenas apoiem as famílias, mas as sustentem na difícil missão de serem, também elas, lugar onde Deus habita e se revela.

8

## **EDUCACIÓN DE LOS HIJOS DESDE LA MADUREZ DE LOS PADRES**

VIRGINIA CAGIGAL DE GREGORIO

*Objetivos:*



- Identificar las áreas principales de desarrollo pleno de la identidad en niños y adolescentes.
- Identificar las principales dificultades actuales en el ejercicio de la parentalidad y su impacto en el desarrollo de los niños y adolescentes
- Ofrecer herramientas de acompañamiento y apoyo a los padres y familias en la educación de los hijos

*Contenidos prácticos:*

- Principales dificultades para la educación en la familia hoy día
- La conformación de vínculos seguros padres-hijos
- El control de la conducta en el hogar y su importancia en la construcción de la autoestima
- Identidad del niño y del adolescente en relación con la identidad de los padres
- Herramientas para guiar a los padres en el ejercicio de la parentalidad

*Pertinencia y relevancia*

Tanto en los colegios salesianos como en otras obras (parroquias, centros de menores, etc.) la labor educativa y de desarrollo de niños y adolescentes es eje de la misión. Los padres se acercan a los educadores pidiendo pistas y orientaciones, y es importante que éstos puedan ofrecerles una escucha con la suficiente preparación como para poder orientarles adecuadamente, contribuyendo a la madurez de los propios padres.

# BEST PRACTICES

1

## LOVE MATTERS A REMOTE MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM FOR TEENAGERS

CLARENCE WATTS  
NHLAHLA MDLALOSE (AFM)

It is a remote marriage preparation program for Teenagers, assisting them to make good choices in relationships and their sexuality and avoid the heartache of teenaged pregnancy and sexually transmitted illnesses. In the face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic of the 1990s in Southern Africa, fueled by both the prevalent disintegration of the family structure and the widespread governmental and NGO campaigns promoting the “safe-sex” mentality, the Salesian Youth Ministry Team at Bosco developed this program as an abstinence/chastity based antidote for parish and school groups

## 2

## VICTIMS TO VICTORY INTEGRATION OF YOUTH WITH HIV IN THE SOCIETY

EDWIN VASANTHAN (INM)

The work for the HIV positive children and youth began in our province in the year 2012. At present we are having a Residential care centre and a Home-based reach out programme for 300 children and youth. We now focus on 18 above youth who need our special care and attention. As this particular target group is very much in need of guidance and support (which is not provided by any other agency) we Salesians have taken up this challenge to be with them and to assist them to have serene and decent life as rest of the youth.

## 3

## YOUNG COUPLES HELPING YOUNG COUPLES TOWARDS A MATURE RELATIONSHIP

JIND ICHŘŠRAJER (CEP)

The aim of this presentation is to introduce the methodology in helping young spouses towards a mature relationship, according to the conclusions and the encouragement given by the Bishops at the Synod of the Family (2014-2015) and it was also mentioned in the document entitled *Amoris Laetitia* (2016). This presentation will introduce the methodology that has been developed by the authors in the Czech Republic and the practical experience with its implementation into practice. This practice represents a challenge for the Salesians and the Salesians' associates.

# 4

## **FAMILY GARDEN COUNSELLING CENTRE FOR FAMILIES**

**KAMIL  
KATARINA BAGIN (SLK)**

The Family Garden is a counseling centre for families, located in Bratislava, staffed by laymen —Salesian cooperators since 2014. In addition to Salesian cooperators FAMILY GARDEN collaborate with many other specialists (gynecologist, psychologist, priest, lawyer, special education professional, financial adviser), married couples and the entire Salesian family. The Family Garden brings all these Christian specialists under one roof, thus helping believers who seek high quality professional help. The Family Garden provides the assistance on two levels— counseling and prevention.

# 5

## **TRAIL OF DON BOSCO WORKING WITH FAMILIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

**NELE LOUAGE (BEN)**

In the home, we accompany 41 boys between 12 and 21 years of age. More than half of the boys is placed in our setting by the juvenile judge because of their undesirable behavior. We are inspired by the systemic theory (contextual thinking —Ivan Boszormenyi— Nagy). We believe that every youngster is a unique hub of relationships forming his identity and that problems arise in the interaction between people. Therefore we believe that involving the families in our work is very important. The purpose of our work is search for allies between youngsters and their families to tackle the problems and search for a perspective.

## 6

## GRUPPO FAMIGLIE MOVIMENTO GIOVANILE SALESIANO

SIMONA CARLI (ILE)

Il Gruppo Famiglie MGS, così come è nato 9 anni fa, consisteva in una decina di giovani sposi che hanno condiviso nell'arco di quattro anni —per una sera al mese infrasettimanale— un programma molto semplice di incontro: una cena, la preghiera insieme, un itinerario formativo e occasionalmente qualche gita. Le parole – chiave del gruppo sono: 1. Formazione 2. Servizio 3. Accompagnamento. Ogni anno il gruppo si propone di coinvolgere nuove coppie, nell'ottica dell'inclusione e della condivisione delle buone prassi maturate. L'Associazione Salesiani Cooperatori ha nel gruppo Giovani Famiglie diversi esponenti.

## 7

## ALLEANZA EDUCATIVA ACCOMPAGNARE FAMIGLIE E GIOVANI

TULLIO LUCCA  
SIMONETTA ROSSI (ILE)

Le famiglie non possono isolarsi, ma devono camminare insieme. I giovani devono sentirsi amati, accompagnati e sostenuti da reti familiari in un progetto di bene. Nell'Ispettorato del Piemonte e della Valle d'Aosta, da 25 anni, viviamo un'esperienza di apertura della pastorale familiare a quella giovanile, a partire da un cammino per giovani sposi che è maturato nell'Associazione di Maria Ausiliatrice (ADMA) e che da alcuni anni ha una significativa realtà giovanile. Stiamo comprendendo dall'esperienza che la Pastorale Familiare deve aprirsi a quella Giovanile (e viceversa). I giovani, convinti dalla testimonianza delle famiglie, hanno organizzato un gruppo (ADMA giovani) per coinvolgere gli amici nel cammino.

# 8

## PASTORALE GIOVANILE E FAMIGLIA

DANIELE MERLINI  
LORENZO  
LUCIA GHERI (ICC)

Il gruppo di studio e la Commissione "PG e Famiglia" ha iniziato a riflettere aiutata da esperti del Dicastero di PG e dell'Università Salesiana su temi come: lo specifico educativo della famiglia, il carisma salesiano e la famiglia, quale apporto specifico può dare la famiglia al carisma salesiano, quale apporto può dare il carisma salesiano alla famiglia, quale complementarietà tra la vocazione alla vita consacrata e la vocazione alla vita familiare. Al termine di un anno di studio, mentre alcuni temi sono stati messi all'ordine del giorno per un'ulteriore approfondimento, sono state elaborate delle linee di azione prioritarie su cui iniziare a coinvolgere le diverse case della Circostrizione.

# 9

## FAMIGLIE ANIMATRICE DELLA DIMENSIONE AFFETTIVA NEI GRUPPI APOSTOLICI

EMANUELE DE MARIA  
ELISABETTA PREVE  
RICCARDO GIRIBALDI (ICC)

Nel nuovo clima di attenzione dato alla famiglia a partire dal CG26 e da "Amoris laetitia", è stata avviata in Circostrizione, da una parte, una riflessione su Famiglia e Carisma salesiano e, dall'altra parte, una serie di pratiche volte a comprovare ciò che si stava andando studiando e elaborando. È sembrato che uno dei campi di impegno educativo specifico delle famiglie potesse essere quello dell'educazione all'affettività e all'amore. Alcune famiglie si sono rese disponibili ad aiutare i Salesiani in questo percorso nei Gruppi Apostolici delle diverse fasce d'età e a livello ispettoriale nei cammini di formazione degli animatori.

## 10

## SAFINA MAISON DE FORMATION CULTURELLE ET CHRÉTIENNE

DAVID KABONGO MIKOMBE  
DONATIEN BANZE (AFC)

La jeunesse lushoise évolue dans un environnement marqué par la crise sociale, politique, économique, culturelle. SAFINA est un lieu d'accompagnement des jeunes sur le chemin du mariage chrétien. Différentes activités culturelles organisées permettent de ressortir l'importance de la famille. Les thèmes de mariage sont joués comme théâtre ou animés comme récollection, par moments accompagnés comme enseignements par un groupe de parents, juste pour accompagner les jeunes ; qu'ils découvrent et réalisent que l'Évangile de la famille est une joie qui remplit le cœur et la vie toute entière.

## 11

## MAMÁS CATEQUISTAS MAMÁS SALESIANAS EDUCANDO EN LA FE

FRANCISCO CERVANTES (MEG)

Las Mamás Catequista Salesianas están constituidas como una agrupación de mujeres voluntarias en los colegios de nuestra Inspectoría, ellas son generalmente mamás o incluso abuelas de los alumnos que se implican en la formación de la fe de sus hijos, pero lo hacen como "maestras", dentro del horario escolar en el aula. La Asociación de Mamás Catequistas está presente en los 13 Colegios Salesianos de nuestra Inspectoría, en cada colegio hay de 20 a 40 mamás participando. Nace por dos motivos, el primero es de la inquietud de servicio y apostolado de las mismas mamás que conscientes de su compromiso cristiano laical y de su responsabilidad de educadoras en la fe de sus propios hijos quieren "hacer algo" y qué mejor en la escuela donde estudian sus hijos.

# 12

## **PASTORAL EN ZAPATILLAS** **EXPERIENCIAS DE VIDA CRISTIANA** **EN LA FAMILIA**

MIGUEL ANGEL CALAVIA  
NIEVES BARRAGÁN BRU (SMX)

“Pastoral en Zapatillas” nace para responder el desafío actual de la Pastoral Familiar en la Iglesia y en la Congregación. Tema presente en la reflexión de la Comisión Nacional de Parroquias/Santuarios (integrada en el Centro Nacional Salesiano de Pastoral Juvenil), La urgencia de La Pastoral Familiar aparece en los documentos eclesiales y ocupa también un lugar importante en los Proyectos educativo-pastorales inspectoriales y locales de España. “Pastoral en Zapatillas” quiere ser un material sencillo y práctico, que se ofrece a las familias de nuestras obras salesianas (parroquias, escuelas, oratorios, plataformas sociales...); para ayudarles a hacer una lectura creyente-evangélica de la propia vida y cultura.

# 13

## **VARIEDAD Y TECNOLOGÍA** **EN LA ESCUELA DE PADRES**

LUIS CORRAL PRIETO (CAM)

En CEDES Don Bosco (San José, Costa Rica), estamos convencidos de la necesidad de intensificar, el trabajo a favor de la vida, el matrimonio y la familia, porque el diagnóstico es tan pesimista como en cualquier otro lugar del mundo Occidental: personas que solo conviven, padres divorciados e hijos del divorcio, separaciones matrimoniales, familias monoparentales (madres solteras), familias reconstruidas, contracepción, alumnas embarazadas, etc. No basta la Escuela de Padres. Hay que trabajar en todos los frentes: alumnado, educadores, y padres de familia. Con más de dos mil estudiantes, y un promedio de 5 personas por familia tenemos una influencia directa sobre 10.000 personas. Esa es nuestra misión.



## 14

**GRUPO DE PADRES**

EVA MARÍA MARTÍNEZ  
 JOSÉ LUIS VILLOTA (SSM)

Nuestro “Grupo de Padres” se reúne una vez al mes, en el mismo horario en que se llevan a cabo las actividades con sus hijos en el Centro Juvenil, el Oratorio y la Catequesis de Comunión. Es importante para nosotros coincidir con los chicos en tiempo y espacio para convertir nuestra reunión también en un testimonio para ellos. Somos tres parejas de Salesianos Cooperadores que animamos/acompañamos a un grupo de unos 30 padres y madres. Tal y como los propios padres nos demandaron, no se trata de una “Escuela de padres”, sino, más bien, de un grupo de fe, de formación y de compartir vida.

## 15

**FAZER O BEM FAZ BEM**  
**EXPERIÊNCIAS DE PRÁTICAS DE PASTORAL**  
**JUVENIL E FAMILIAR**

FERNANDA C.M.PEREIRA (BMA)

Visando fortalecer o protagonismo juvenil, a formação de jovens líderes e criar redes de testemunhos cristãos e motivacional às práticas de Pastoral, o Delegado de Pastoral da Mantenedora, Padre Antonio de Assis Ribeiro, lançou o Projeto CASAIS VOLUNTÁRIOS com o objetivo de diagnosticar e promover casais que desejam fazer a experiência do Voluntariado Social a Serviço da Pastoral Juvenil Salesiana. Os casais voluntários, alguns com consistente experiência de Pastoral Juvenil Salesiana, apoiam e são parceiros nas variadas iniciativas da Pastoral Juvenil Salesiana sobretudo dando especial atenção e acompanhamento aos jovens que estão em formação no Curso de Liderança Juvenil.

# 16

## PASTORALE CIRCOLARE

SALVATORE  
ROBERTA PARRINO (ISI)

Da più di 10 anni è presente nella nostra Casa, un gruppo Famiglie, guidato da coppie animatrici secondo la metodologia dell'animazione salesiana. Le direttrici lungo le quali si muove il gruppo sono tre: **la relazione, la formazione e il servizio**. In pratica il percorso che viene proposto alle coppie è quello di una scoperta della vocazione matrimoniale, attraverso l'approfondimento di temi specifici della coppia. Già nel 2007 il gruppo individuava la necessità di operare un coinvolgimento parallelo delle famiglie accanto all'azione pastorale sui ragazzi, in quanto si rendeva conto che senza un'azione educativa "circolare" si rischiava di non dare continuità all'opera educativa intrapresa con i ragazzi.

# 17

## PARENTS OF STUDENTS THE FIRST EDUCATORS AND THE FIRST YOUTH MINISTERS

ABRAHAM N. FELICIANO (SUE)

At Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School in Takoma Park, Maryland, the Youth Ministry Team of the school consists of approximately 40-45 students and 4 adults. The team is responsible for all of the school liturgies, all student retreats, community building activities, Salesian Family events, and the service program. An orientation day is held at the building of the scholastic year and a network is established with the parents. Through this network the parents not only support the activity and work of their sons and daughters, but the parents themselves were responsible or co-responsible for a number of Youth Ministry activities and events at the school.

## 18

## REBUILDING TRUST BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS

VAL COLLIER  
MARTIN BURKE (IRL)

Don Bosco Care is a voluntary agency providing residential care and emotional support to young people who are unable to live presently with their families. Over the years it became very clear for many of our young people eventually returned to live with their family, or at least continued to have regular contact with their family even when this contact had many difficulties for them. As a result we realised that we needed to change our practice. We also know that young people, from even the most distressed and traumatic situations, have an intense desire to be deeply connected with their family. So over the years, our practice has evolved to include working with families in a more significant way, if they are open to working with us.

## 19

## MY SECOND HOME AS EXPERIENCE OF YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

ERIC CACHIA (IRL)

A meaningful Youth Ministry always goes with a sound Family Ministry. Therefore, Savio College decided to look for a common ground which brings together both the family and the young. This has been identified as “accompaniment”, of both the family and the young. Mutual respect and understanding between the Salesians (as educators) and parents/guardians (as primary care givers) is built before the student/son starts school, thus creating a strong platform in line with the Salesian preventive system. The process lived at Savio College allows a stronger ownership where faith becomes a journey to unfold rather than a service to consume.

# 20

## PARENTAL ORATORY

### SAVIO YEUNG & TEAM (CIN)

Salesian Educative Pastoral Centre for Youth and Family" is located in the district with low social-economic and new immigrant families in Macau. The center is a "Parental Center" as well as "Daily Oratory" where parents can walk-in with children and stay and play together with their children, to enjoy and enhance the parent-child relationship. From time to time the center provides different parental training courses such as "Life Skill", "Spiritual Counselling", "Play Group", "Thinking Course", "Personality Growth Training" that helps parents to have educating mind set and improve their parent-child relationship.

# 21

## PADRES EXPLORADORES

### HÉCTOR LUIS ARISMENDE (ARS)

El movimiento juvenil de los Exploradores Argentinos de Don Bosco se abre cada vez más a la participación de los padres en las actividades de sus hijos, generando espacios de encuentro, formación y colaboración con la finalidad de: integrarlos al proceso educativo del Movimiento; ofrecerles espacio de participación activa en el sostén organizativo y económico; garantizar una presencia estable de adultos durante las actividades ordinarias y extraordinarias. El movimiento EADB está presente en toda la Argentina con más de 80 centros, y cada uno posee al menos un grupo estable de Padres Exploradores.

# TABLES

## TABLE 1

### YOUTH MINISTRY & FAMILY

Map of the social and Ecclesial Reality of the family by region or continent

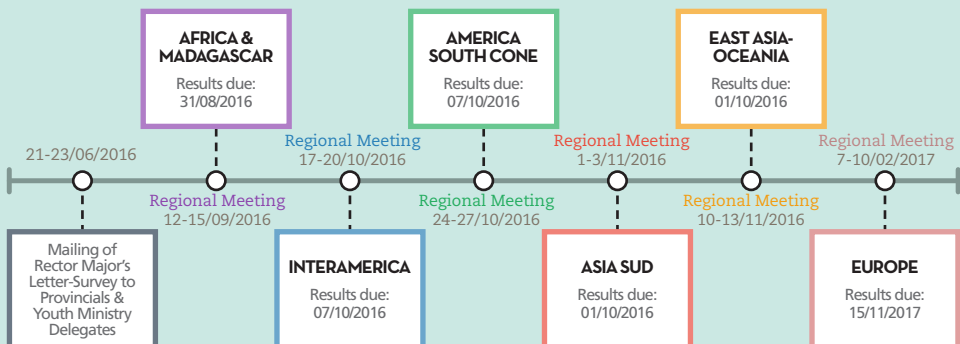
*(Presentations by 6 Speakers & Regional Teams with Provincial Delegates for Youtn Ministry)*



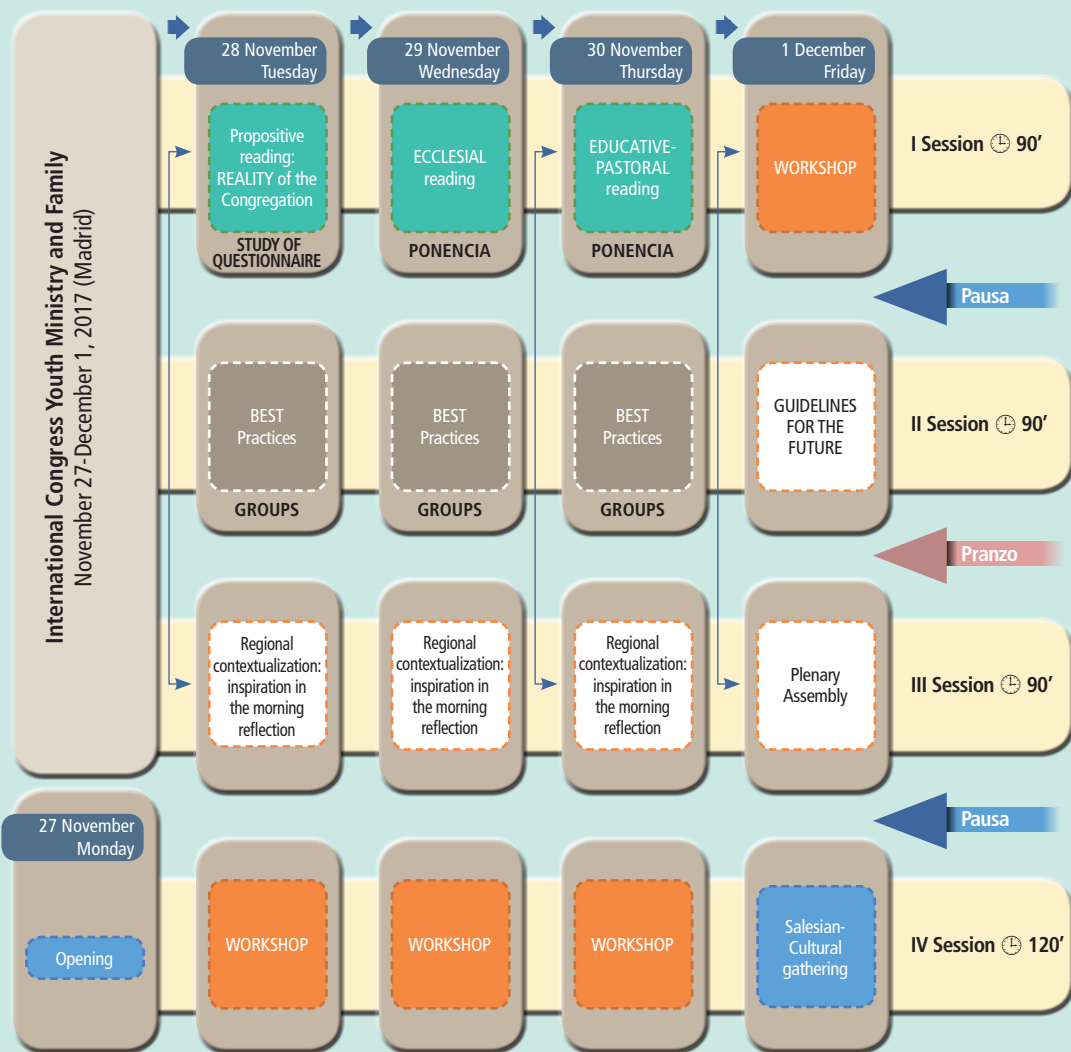
## TABLE 2

### YOUTH MINISTRY & FAMILY

Contributions from local realities



# TABLE 3



# FINAL EVALUATION

ITA (37) FRA (13) SPA (46) POR (20) ENG (49) = 165		1	2	3	4	5	Average	
OBJECTIVES AND CONTENTS	<b>CONFERENCES</b>							
	1	Bruno Forte		3	7	40	109	4.60
	2	Fabio Attard	1		5	28	133	4.74
	3	Carmen Peña	1	12	24	56	72	4.27
	4	Rossano Sala	1		2	25	133	4.79
	<b>GOOD PRACTICES</b>							
	6	1. Love Matters			5	1	3	3.77
	7	2. Integration of HIV affected				3	5	4.62
	8	3. Helping Young Couples	2	4	4	4	3	3.11
		4. Family Garden		1	1	11	8	4.23
		5. In the trail of Don Bosco			1	7	9	4.47
		6. Gruppo Famiglie MGS			5	6	10	4.23
		7. Alleanza Educativa	1	1	4	19	17	4.19
		8. PG e Famiglia		2	7	15	12	4.02
		9. Famiglie animatrici della dimensione affettiva			2	15	10	4.29
		10. Maison Safina			1	1	5	4.57
		11. Mamas Catequistas			2	1	17	4.75
		12. Pastoral en Zapatillas	1	1	4	18	18	4.21
		13. Variedad y Tecnologia			1	6	8	4.46
		14. Grupo de Padres			1	5	7	4.46
		15. Fazer o Bem Faz Bem			5	2	5	4.00
		16. Pastorale Circolare		1	3	10	7	4.19
		17. Parents of Students			2	6	1	3.88
		18. Rebuilding Trust			4	5	4	4.00
		19. You are part of my family			1	9	6	4.31
	20. Parental oratory			3	4	7	4.28	
	21. Padres Exploradores		1	2	1	3	3.85	

ITA (37) FRA (13) SPA (46) POR (20) ENG (49) = 165	1	2	3	4	5	Average
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<b>OBJECTIVES &amp; CONTENTS</b>	<b>WORKSHOP</b>							
	9	1. Francis Gustilo	1	1	2	2	5	3.81
		2. Paul Raj	1		1	10	5	4.05
		3. Virginia Cagigal				4	7	4.63
		4. Paulina Fernandez	1	2	5	5	1	3.21
		5. Alvaro Ginel			1		12	4.84
		6. Ronaldo Zacharias					14	5.00
		7. Mario Llanos	1	5	3	5	10	3.75
		8. Gustavo Cavagnari			2	6	21	4.65
		<b>GROUP WORK</b>						
	10	Group Work in regions	1	5	22	66	60	4.04
	<b>IN CONCLUSION</b>							
	11	Enriched vision and strategies		2	9	64	86	4.46
	12	Planned objectives	1		14	62	82	4.40
<b>METHOD - AMBIENT</b>	13	The methodology in general	1	3	9	66	84	4.40
	14	Active participation of the participants	1	1	14	57	87	4.48
	15	Personal involvement		1	15	70	79	4.37
	16	Personal involvement of other participants		1	15	72	78	4.36
	17	Duration	1	3	6	54	100	4.51
	18	Environmental conditions	2	6	10	47	100	4.43
	19	The accommodation	1		3	32	129	4.74
<b>GLOBAL EVALUATION</b>	20	Information-communication	3	4	30	48	75	4.17
	21	Personal formation	1	1	4	44	112	4.63
	22	Moments of celebration	4	8	24	43	86	4.20



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19	DANIEL	KANDANDJI	ANG
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35	ELIAS	ROBERTO	BCG
36	GEE	VAN DEN BERGHE	BEN
37	LOUAGE	NELE	BEN
38	VERPOEST	DIETER	BEN
39	REGINALDO	LIMA CORDEIRO	BMA
40	FERNANDA CRISTINA	MELO PEREIRA	BMA
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42	EDWIN	CESPEDES BERNAL	BOL
43	GILSON MARCOS	DA SILVA	BPA
44	RAFAEL	PEREIRA PEREIRA	BPA
45	EDUARDO ROGERIO	SCHMITZ	BPA
46	ALESSANDRA	FISTAROL SCHMITZ	BPA
47	EUDES	BARRETO FERNANDES	BRE
48	JOSEFA MADALENA	DA SILVA	BRE
49	ROQUE LUIZ	SIBIONI	BSP
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62	JUAN FRANCISCO	TRIPAILAF QUILONDRAN	CIL
63	CHO LAW SAVIO	YEUNG	CIN
64	UN HOU	CHEONG	CIN
65	YUK CHO	SHI	CIN
66	JOSE ARCADIO	RIAÑO CUIDA	COB
67	ELMA MIREYA	ARDILA DUARTE	COB
68	JULIO CESAR	HERRAN CASTILLO	COB
69	JAIME ENRIQUE	MORALES ALFONSO	COB
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71	OSCAR JOSE	HOLGUIN ORDONEZ	COM
72	IVAN	TERZE	CRO
73	JOSIP	ZELENIKA	CRO
74	JOSIPA	ZELENIKA	CRO
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76	RUBINSKY RAVINDANAT	SANCHEZ ANDRADE	ECU
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79	EDWIN	SOLIVA	FIN
80	JOANNA MARIE	OLIVA	FIN
81	ANTHONY E.GEORGE ANGELO	CORREIA	FIN
82	JORIZ	CALSA	FIS
83	ELIGIO	SANTOS	FIS
84	XAVIER	ERNST	FRB
85	JOCKIR	GENEVIÈVE	FRB
86	MICOD	ERIC	FRB
87	KATHARINA	KARL	GER
88	WIDMANN	JÖRG	GER
89	BARBARA	KLOSE	GER

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91	SHINGO	TOMITA	GIA
92	JAMES ROBERT	GARDNER	GRB
93	SUE	MCDONALD	GRB
94	HUBERT	MESIDOR	HAI
95	MARIE GLADYS	DUPUY	HAI
96	WITHNEY	JEAN BAPTISTE	HAI
97	RICCARDO	GIRIBALDI	ICC
98	DANIELE	MERLINI	ICC
99	ELISABETTA	PREVE	ICC
100	EMANUELE	DE MARIA	ICC
101	LORENZO	GHERI	ICC
102	LUCIA	SCILLA	ICC
103	CLAUDIO	BELFIORE	ICC
104	GIOVANNI	D'ANDREA	ICC
105	TULLIO	LUCCA	ICP
106	SIMONETTA	ROSSI	ICP
107	CLAUDIO	DURANDO	ICP
108	ALBERTO	MARTELLI	ICP
109	STEFANO	MONDIN	ICP
110	MICHELE	MOLINAR MIN BECIET	ICP
111	PAOLO	CAIANI	ILE
112	SIMONA ANGELA	CARLI	ILE
113	DOMENICO	MADONNA	IME
114	PIERLUIGI	LANOTTE	IME
115	TOMMASO	CELENTA	IME
116	DANIELA	GALDI	IME
117	GLENFORD CLIFTON JUDE	LOWE	INB
118	RICHARD	D'SILVA	INB
119	ANAND	CASTELINO	INB
120	PALOMA LYDIA	DSA	INB
121	ANTON	D'SOUZA	INB
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123	Don Bosco	Perianayagam	IND
124	KAISA	KAIKHO	IND

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126	Francis	Ngajokapa	IND
127	SILVIO	ZANCHETTA	INE
128	VINCENZO	RICCIO	INE
129	BARBARA CRISTINA	CASTIONI	INE
130	ANGELO SERGIO	VIANELLO	INE
131	Prueba	Prueba	INE
132	LUCIA	SEBASTIANUTTI	INE
133	LUCAS	CHAMBUGONG MARAK	ING
134	SUDHAKAR	BELLAMKONDA	INH
135	ANTHIC	JOSEPH	INH
136	JOSE THOMAS	KOYICKAL	INK
137	PAULACHAN	KANNAPPILLY	INK
138	HYACINTH	MENDEZ	INK
139	SINDHA	HYACINTH MENDEZ	INK
140	STEVEN LAWRENCE	LAWRENCE	INK
141	EDWIN VASANTHAN	THOMAS	INM
142	MURALI KRISHNAN	GOPALAN	INM
143	JOHN BOSCO	SELVARAJ	INM
144	DON BOSCO	LOURDUSAMY	INM
145	MARIA CHARLES	ANTONYSAMY	INN
146	SHILANAND	KERKETTA	INN
147	GABRIEL	KARUNARAJ	INT
148	VINCENT AROKIA XAVIER	PHILOMINRAJ	INT
149	ERIC	CACHIA	IRL
150	VAL	COLLIER	IRL
151	MARTIN	BURKE	IRL
152	ROBERT L.	GRECH	IRL
153	DOMENICO	LUVARÁ	ISI
154	GIUSEPPE	RUTA	ISI
155	ANGELO	GRASSO	ISI
156	SALVATORE	PARRINO	ISI
157	ROBERTA	NICASTRO	ISI
158	MARIANNINA	PISCIOTTA	ISI
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163	MARIE FREDELINE	RATOVOARIVELO NDRASANTSOA	MDG
164	FRANCISCO	CERVANTES	MEG
165	PABLO FEDERICO	MUJICA LOPEZ	MEG
166	MARIA DE LA SALUD RAQUEL	SERRATOS VAZQUEZ	MEG
167	JONATHAN SIMON	ORTEGA FRAIRE	MEG
168	JESUS ABRAHAM	VILLA MARTINEZ	MEG
169	PERLA	PATIÑO	MEG
170	PAULO ARMANDO	MORALES GUTIERREZ	MEM
171	MARIA ANGELICA	ALVAREZ MENDIETA	MEM
172	JUANA	LOPEZ RUEDA	MEM
173	MANUEL	GUTIERREZ MUÑOZ	MEM
174	OLGA ALBERTINA	CUCO	MOZ
175	DELIO FRANCISCO	BARREIRO PENAYO	PAR
176	DOMINGO ANTONIO	ARANDA DELGADO	PAR
177	DOMINGO RAMON	CACERES GONZALEZ	PAR
178	MARTIN	CIPRIANO SALAZAR	PER
179	HUMBERTO	CHAVEZ	PER
180	VICTORIA	BASHI ZAVALA	PER
181	SILVIA EDITH	FERNANDEZ GARCIA	PER
182	GEORGE AUFE	ISOAIMO	PGS
183	CASPA	CHARLES	PGS
184	ADAM	WEGRZYN	PLE
185	MARIA	BORAKIEWICZ	PLN
186	MAGDALENA	JAGIELSKA	PLO
187	ALICJA	BOROWIK	PLO
188	FRANCISZEK	JANYGA	PLS
189	JOÃO	CHAVES MENDES	POR
190	JUAN	FREITAS	POR
191	ALVARO	LAGO	POR
192	PAULO JORGE	VALENTE PINTO	POR

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194	MARCELO	FARFAN	RMG
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196	DANIEL	GARCIA	RMG
197	PATRICK	ANTHONYRAJ	RMG
198	FABIO	ATTARD	RMG
199	ANGEL	FERNANDEZ ARTIME	RMG
200	HORACIO	LOPEZ	RMG
201	TARCIZIO	MORAIS	RMG
202	AMERICO	CHAQUISSÉ	RMG
203	NATALE	VITALI	RMG
204	MARIA AROKIAM	KANAGA	RMG
205	TADEUSZ	ROZMUS	RMG
206	STEFANO	MARTOGLIO	RMG
207	ROSSANO	SALA	RMG
208	BRUNO	FORTE	RMG
209	GUSTAVO	CAVAGNARI	RMG
210	FRANCIS O.	GUSTILO	RMG
211	RONALDO	ZACHARIAS	RMG
212	PAULINA	FERNANDEZ	RMG
213	MARIO	LLANOS	RMG
214	PAUL	RAJ AMALRAJ	RMG
215	ALESSANDRA	CAMA	RMG
216	DOMENICO	MOLINA GUISEPPE	RMG
217	LIVIA HELENA	PITTINAU	RMG
218	JULIA	ARCINIEGAS ALVAREZ	RMG
219	ALEXANDER AWI	MELLO	RMG
220	ANGEL	GUDIÑA	RMG
221	LEONARDO	SANCHEZ	RMG
222	MARIAN	SERRANO	RMG
223	MANUEL	SERRANO	RMG
224	DANIEL	DIAZ-JIMENEZ	RMG
225	CARLOS	MARTIN	RMG
226	YOLANDA	SOBRINO POVES	RMG
227	JAYAPALAN	RAPHAEL	RMG

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229	JOAN LLUÍS	PLAYÀ MORERA	RMG
230	PAVOL	BOKA	SLK
231	KATARINA	BAGINOVA	SLK
232	KAMIL	BAGIN	SLK
233	DOMINIK	VINS	SLK
234	GASPER	OTRIN	SLO
235	SANJA	OBABA BRODNJAK	SLO
236	FRANCISCO JOSE	PEREZ CAMACHO	SMX
237	MIGUEL ANGEL	CALAVIA CALAVIA	SMX
238	JAVIER	DOMINGUEZ PARRA	SMX
239	ANA MARIA	VAQUERO PEIRO	SMX
240	MARTA	ROMAN CAMARA	SMX
241	ALEJANDRO	GUEVARA RODRIGUEZ	SMX
242	JORGE JUAN	REYES MACIAS	SMX
243	CRISTOBAL	LOPEZ	SMX
244	RAUL	FERNANDEZ ABAD	SMX
245	EVA MARIA	MARTINEZ FERNANDEZ	SSM
246	JOSE ANTONIO	HERNANDEZ GARCIA	SSM
247	AURORA	MARTIN IZQUIERDO	SSM
248	IRUNE	LOPEZ ARESTI	SSM
249	JOSÉ LUIS	GARCÍA PEÑA	SSM
250	CHARO	TEN SORIANO	SSM
251	JUAN CARLOS	PEREZ GODOY	SSM
252	SAMUEL	SEGURA VALERO	SSM
253	JOSE MANUEL	GONZALEZ DIEZ	SSM
254	JOSE MARIA	BLANCO ALONSO	SSM
255	XAVIER	CAMINO SAEZ	SSM
256	MANUEL FERNANDO	GARCIA SANCHEZ	SSM
257	FRANCISCO JAVIER	VALIENTE MORENO	SSM
258	JOSE LUIS	VILLOTA COSIO	SSM
259	JOSE MARIA	GARCIA MENDEZ	SSM
260	VIRGINIA	CAGIGAL DE GREGORIO	SSM
261	Alvaro	Ginel	SSM
262	KOLDO	GUTIERREZ CUESTA	SSM



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265	ABRAHAM	FELICIANO	SUE
266	MATTEO	MORELLI	SUE
267	NORMA	FRANCO	SUE
268	ANDREA	ZIMMERMAN	SUE
269	ALPHONSE	VU	SUO
270	GINA	ROBLES	SUO
271	PIYA	PUCHCHAN	THA
272	ANATOLIY	HETSYANYN	UKR
273	SERGIO	ALVAREZ MORA	URU
274	PEDRO	INICIO REY	URU
275	ORLANDO ELISEO	GRAMCKO RODRIGUEZ	VEN
276	NELSON RAMON	SEQUERA GIMENEZ	VEN
277	SANDILLY INMACULADA	ECHETO JORGE	VEN
278	QUOC PHONG	PHAM	VIE
279	DUY BAO	VU	VIE
280	HUY CHUONG	PHAN	VIE
281	QUANG THAI	DINH	VIE
282	CHRISTOPHER	KUNDA	ZMB
283	JENNIFER NKONDE	SIKAZWE	ZMB





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