MESSAGE OF THE RECTOR MAJOR FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF ALL SALESIAN PRESENCES IN THE WORLD

My dear young people, dear boys and girls from all over our beautiful Salesian world. My greeting today is, first of all, for you. Naturally, I extend my affection to all my Salesian brothers, to the sisters, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, to the Salesian Cooperators, to the Past Pupils and to all the other members of our beautiful and great Salesian Family.

Dear young people, I am writing to you on this day, January 31, from Valdocco. Here it is already dawn. A few moments ago I was praying to the Lord, in the presence of our Mother Help of Christians, and especially in front of the relic of our Father Don Bosco, and of all our Saints and Blesseds who accompany us in the Basilica (St. Maria D. Mazzarello, St. Domenico Savio, Blessed Michele Rua, Blessed Filippo Rinaldi).

And I spoke to Him about you. I prayed to the Lord, through the mediation of Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco, for all of you, for all the children, adolescents and young people of the Salesian world, but also for all the young people of the world. I think, my dear young people, that praying for you is a beautiful expression of affection and love. Don Bosco did it always for his young people and among them, and this is my gift to you, on this beautiful day, in the name of our Father.

Today, as on other occasions, I reaffirm my deep desire that all of you, all the young people of the world, feel in the Salesian houses as if you were in your own homes. The doors of the Salesian houses must be, and I wish they shall always be, totally open for you. And also the doors of our hearts, those of every single member of our Salesian Family.

Today, as on other occasions, I continue to hope deep in my heart that, as Don Bosco's heart was beating for his young people, so the heart of every member of our Salesian Family continues to desire to be with you, to understand you in the depth of your being, and to be able to share your labors and your hopes, your dreams and projects. Don Bosco transformed his fondness for young people into a mission, making it the reason for his existence. I ask the same for all of us, the adults who accompany you.

Today, as on other occasions, I ask you to help us, to help each of us, and every educator in your homes, consecrated and lay persons, to renew our friendship and to walk together towards the ideals of the true project of man and woman from God's point of view. Young and old, we educate each other, giving each other the gift of who we really are. And this is not a fashionable expression; it is a profound conviction that comes from Don Bosco himself, because his boys also made Don Bosco what he was. Help us, dear young people, to give our best, to grow, to be better; help us so that we never disappoint you.

And today, as on other occasions, I repeat that the most precious thing we have and that we can offer you are not the houses and the educational presence of the Salesian Family all over the world. The most precious thing are not the schools, nor the sports facilities, nor the universities, nor the oratories, nor the reception centers. The most precious thing we have is Jesus Christ, who conquered us and made us fall in love. The most precious thing we have and that we can offer you is, like Don Bosco to his children, the encounter with God our Father, through His Son Jesus Christ. Today, as on other occasions, I dream that this becomes reality every day, in all places, in all the countries and cultures where you are. In all religions. That we can help you meet God, and in Him to discover the beauty of the Life that God has given you.

And, quoting our beloved Father Don Bosco, I wish you all, my friends, dear boys, girls, teenagers and young people, to be very happy here and in Eternity. Be happy and make your families and everyone in your little daily universe happy every day.

With affection, in the name of our Father Don Bosco, I greet you,

Ángel Fernández Artime, sdb

Rector Major

31 January 2020