**THE RESPONSIBILITY TO COMMUNICATE IN THE DIGITAL CONTINENT**

**Dear friends!**

**We enter the internet universe with a click: a continent inhabited today by around 4.8 billion people,** according to the most recent sources on internet usage in the world.

**We are part of this digital continent! A continent made up of human beings from every culture*, race, religious denomination and political persuasion.***

**Navigating in the this digital continent where we are linked in with each other today**, demands much attention and responsibility.

**We are responsible for everything we write and post on the internet and on social networks**. With a list of email addresses or smartphone numbers of the people on social networks, we have the virtual ability to see that what we write and share reaches hundreds and thousands of people.

**When we write something in our personal name, we are responsible before all for what we write**.

Communicating virtually demands constant concern for our privacy, security and authority.

**When we communicate and share information in the name of the institutions we represent,** we need to be careful that we are passing on the values and mission of the institution, as well as ensuring the image, credibility and transparency of the institution.

**The digital continent is an ecosystem.** It offers us huge opportunities for establishing relationships with individuals and gaining access to the world of culture, economics, politics, education and religion.

**The digital continent challenges us today to be communicators of values of life**, truth and hope.

**The digital world challenges us to experience humanising and empathetic relationships** for building human fellowship among all peoples and nations.

**One way of expressing our ethical responsibility is to foster digital solidarity.** This means that we have the mission to work towards digital inclusion, since all people have the right to communicate, use media for their development, and as an entry point to the world of knowledge, work and human relationships in their group and community.

**Ethics in the digital world and social networks is fundamental** to ensure that we and those to whom we are sent have a communication that educates to the meaning of life, and to commitment to the other and to society.

**All communication is relationship with the other**. Communicating in the digital environment with responsibility means expressing our humanity and our cultural roots. It means experiencing the ordinary rituals of daily life, and taking on a commitment to what is around us. It is creating community, serving others and living gratuitously.

**We are responsible as educators and evangelisers of the young** for being present in this continent in a creative way and with our identity as educators.

**We inhabit this new areopagus, and build relationships as communicators and pastors with the young** in a spirit of gratuity and pastoral availability.

**In his action programme for the Salesian Congregation the Rector Major, Fr Àngel Fernàndez Artime,** presents very well the importance of our being in this continent with a Salesian style.

”**Presence today also touches on the digital world, a new real areopagus for us, a habitat for today’s young people.** Here too we need to be present with a clear Salesian identity, with the desire to bring the proclamation of the good news, and simply with the joy and simplicity of disciples of the Lord”.

**Inspired by our Father Don Bosco, let us walk with the times!**

**The digital world challenges us and invites us to be creative and innovative** in order to be in this new habitat of the young.

**Let it be a gift and responsibility for us all**, as Salesian educators and communicators!

**With fraternal affection and in communion of prayer,**

***Fr Gildásio Mendes dos Santos – SDB***

**General Councillor for Social Communication**

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