**THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE PERSON**

 **AND**

 **HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

 **IN COMMUNICATION**

**Dear friends!**

**Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, in the Rector Major‘s Road Map for the Salesian Congregation after General Chapter 28** invites us to take up communication together as a living experience of the “Salesian sacrament” of presence in the youth culture of our times.

**What does this recommendation mean for us, as educators and communicators, in our work with the young** in our works, communication sectors like Radio, the Salesian Bulletin, Web Sites, Social Networks, Publishing Houses, Newspapers and the other initiatives we carry out in the field of communication?

**The word ‘sacrament’ refers to the dimension of the sacred, the sign of an invisible reality**. Our presence as a sacrament of communication harks back to the Incarnation of the Word who became the visible presence of God among us.

**God manifests his love in a concrete way through the incarnation of his Son:** And the word became flesh and lived among us. ( Jn 1:14).

**Communication finds its vital roots in the Word, the Communicator of God**. The Word is the source of life, visibly integrated into the history of salvation.

**Communication is fundamentally the presence of the divine person in human history:** the Word is love, relationship, word, language, symbol, listening, encounter and fraternity/fellowship.

**Through the incarnation of the Word of God, we have received the gift of freedom to communicate**, to create, innovate, to continue the project of creation that is God’s communication.

**As co-authors of the communication of God’s project, we have the responsibility of building relationships that generate life,** promote freedom, to be people who are committed to the concrete reality of people in their communities.

**The verb ‘to live among’ has a very important significance at the heart of the Salesian proposal:** being present to, being welcoming to, and journeying together with the young.

**Our cheerful and gratuitous presence among the young poses a fundamental question for us:**  Who is the person who is present, and communicated with and for them?

**The Salesian, with his consecrated identity, as a disciple of the Lord, is the communicator of cheerfulness and optimism** because he follows and loves Jesus Christ, the Communicator of the Father.

**The identity of the Salesian, of the communicator and educator of the young, gives us our reference and authority** for communicating with the heart of the good shepherd.

**The identity of the Salesian communicator finds its source in the spiritual fatherhood of Don Bosco** as he lived that at Valdocco.

**Like Don Bosco, we communicate in a Salesian style**, with kindness, an open heart, respectfully, simply and cheerfully.

**To live a “Salesian sacrament” of presence in communication is a constant attitude of pastoral conversion** and discernment, of dialogue and keeping up to date with the language and world of the young.

**Thus, communicating in a youthful habitat means listening, dialoguing, discerning personally and as a community,** so that communication becomes a way of being for the educative community and the family.

**Being the Salesian sacrament of presence in communication means having a better understanding of the youthful ecosystem**, its languages, its symbols, its interactive, instantaneous and proactive way of communicating.

**Communication is a way of living the Salesian spirituality through relationships that are educational, through accompaniment**, formation, seeking the meaning of life, and through commitment to building a more empathetic and human society.

**Pope Francis, in his letter to the Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández, for the bicentenary of the birth of Saint John Bosco**, 24 June 2015, presented this challenge brilliantly:

*“*Educate in accordance with Christian anthropology, to the language of new communications media and social networks*that profoundly shape the cultural codes of the young, and thus the outlook of the human and religious reality.”*

**The cultural codes of the young are a language** and a way of communicating and living.

**These communicative codes are associated with life’s ordinary rituals:** studying, eating, coming together as a family, relating with friends, interacting online, playing sports, listening to music, praying, celebrating rituals of pain (suffering, loss, sickness, death) and happiness (health, friends, work, entertainment, serving others, Christian life).

**The rituals of the young take place in ordinary life, in the borderless environment of human relationships, in day-to-day cultural ecosystems,** giving them new languages, transforming them into new codes and immersing their lives in new communicative settings, in interactive and digital networks.

**So, let us live and educate in youthful ecosystems,** in integrated human and cultural settings, where the living experience of the “Salesian sacrament” of presence is manifested by communicating the central role of the person and of human and Christian relationships.

**We are always educators and communicators in this educational relationship** because we journey with and love our young people where they meet, and await us with our heart of the good shepherd.

With fraternal affection,

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**Councillor for Social Communication**

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