Brazília, Brazil, 21 May 2020

**Dear brothers and sisters!**

**I greet each one of you with the hope that has us journey with enthusiasm and with our eyes open to the present and the future.** This hope, that allows us to journey together, finds its source in Jesus Christ Risen, communicator of life to the full (*Jn* 10:10).

**During this time of the worldwide health crisis brought about by Covid-19,** we would like to thank you all, each of you, for your courage and creativity in communicating the power of love and solidarity through social media and many other media.

**The Social Communication team at *Sacro Cuore* in Rome, along with the Rector Major and other confreres,** have dedicated themselves zealously and in a Salesian spirit to bringing this message of hope and courage during these times of huge challenge for humanity.

**We have received many news items regarding solidarity initiatives** from around the entire Congregation!

**Through communication we create bonds, express ideas,** share our plans and promote human freedom and democracy.

**Communication is a sister to freedom and solidarity.** Hence, any kind of communication demands an ethics of commitment where human individuals are concerned, their culture, their history and their role in society.

**I would like to invite every delegate for social communication in the provinces, as well as lay people, members of the Salesian Family and young people** in communication groups in our presences to reflect, further explore and together draw up our map of social communication in the service of the evangelization and education of those to whom we are sent, in our times.

**In view of this, and in continuity with the reflection that has been carried out in meetings and consultations over recent years,** in response to the appeals of the Congregation and Church, and with the SSCS (Salesian Social Communication System) as our point of reference, we would like to continue to journey together in updating our communications plan for the Department.

**In the process of reshaping communication, we would initially like to consider a number of challenges and opportunities:**

***a) The appeals of GC28 in dialogue with guidelines from the Synod on youth.***

***b) The educative and pastoral proposals put forward in Laudato Si’ seen from the point of view of Salesian communication in these times of crisis and post-crisis resulting from Covid-19.***

***c) Ethical, political and educational questions regarding communication in the various regions and countries.***

***d) A vision of communication as an ecosystem and communications network.***

***e) The active involvement of young people in media culture.***

***f) Missionary and solidarity-based communication in our communities at the service of the poorest.***

***g) The creation of policies, processes, steps and actions through a methodology of discernment as a pastoral tool, and from the point of view of collaborative management.***

***h) The promotion of our communication inspired by the Salesian charism, based on our evangelizing and pastoral mission, in synergy with the Departments of Youth Ministry, Missions and Formation.***

***i) Strengthening of the digital aspects of communication in our communities and the establishment of communications platforms.***

***j) The importance of the communications plan in the provinces, its articulation in the regions, and networking.***

***k) The vitality of our various services through news agencies, the Salesian Bulletin, publishers, printers, web sites, radio, newspapers, social and other networks.***

***l) Collaborative management involving lay people in communication and collaboration with Salesian universities.***

**This first indication will be sent to each of you in accordance with the 2020 programme of the Communications Department.** I hope to send you the translated text by the beginning of July.

**Once the text has been received, I will also send some practical guidelines to each communications delegate** to read, delve into, share with pastoral groups, lay people and young people and then send me suggestions, questions, proposals by dates that I will indicate.

**At the beginning of the second half of 2020, we will hold some video-conferences with communications delegates** in order to listen, share and put forward proposals.

**It is our desire to work on this text with communications delegates from the regions** in a more systematic way, as well as working on the Congregations’ communications project.

**Through worldwide consultations on communications, we would like to continue this process of building up a vision of communication** in consideration of the new cultural and social realities, the demands and opportunities of new technologies and digital media, as well as our mission together and in a collaborative way.

**This work, therefore, aims at continuing, appreciating and giving visibility to the mission that every province and community is carrying out with regard to communication,** broadening and updating the SSCS, responding to the new demands of digital culture and the world of youth, and strengthening our institutional communication and collaborative work with the Congregation’s various departments and services.

**Communication is vital for every society and culture.** We are aware of the privilege and responsibility of being communicators at times of crisis and great social and cultural changes.

**In his message on 16 April last, the Rector Major expressed very well how we Catholics** can respond to the economic, social and political challenges coming from the coronavirus health crisis.

**“I hope first of all that we are learning something from what we are experiencing.”** He then raises important questions for us all:

**“Will we go back to living above our means or** will we have more human rhythms and spaces?

**And again, will we want to make up for lost time in consumption, or will we learn** that we are able to live happily and with what is necessary?

**Will we continue in our race to pollute the world** or will we give the planet some breathing space?”

**My thanks to all of you for having believed in the importance of communication that is at the service of God’s Kingdom** and for having journeyed in hope together with Don Bosco and our young people.

**May Our Lady, who communicates life and hope, protect us and guide us always.**

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



 Fr Gildásio Mendes dos Santos

**General Councillor for Social Communication**