**The Goodnight**

The Goodnight is one of the most characteristic features of Salesian life and culture. Unfortunately, especially for us Salesians, it is a practice that runs the risk of being misrepresented or forgotten.

Here are some typical aspects of this precious moment of animation:

* **“The Goodnight is a family event in the first place”**

First of all, the Goodnight is a family event, as we can see from the fact that Don Bosco reserved this task to himself and when he was absent it was up to Father Rua to bring the day to a conclusion. Hence it is a specific task of the father of the community, the Rector or Provincial; even where there are just small communities. Hence it is the task of every Rector. Below I highlight three merits in the practice of the Goodnight.

* + **Restoring peace of heart at the end of the day**

The first merit is to restore peace of heart at the end of the day. We are accustomed to living at a very fast pace. The big risk today is hyperactivity, a new kind of idolatry that often leaves us with a sense of frustration at the end of the day – physical tiredness, psychological stress and spiritual emptiness. The Goodnight is a moment that helps the confreres restore peace to their hearts.

* + **Rediscovering the centre and unity of life**

The Goodnight helps in recovering the centre and unity of life. At the end of a day in which we have done and heard so many things, the Goodnight helps to sum things up, avoiding the scattering and fragmentation which activity leads us to when we forget the unifying centre, the one that gives meaning to the whole.

* + **Seeing the events we have experienced from a Christian perspective**

Finally, the Goodnight teaches us to see the events we have experienced from a Christian perspective. It is not just about offering a good word, providing some item of information or a good message, but interpreting life and history from the perspective of the believer. This special feature thus avoids the dichotomy between history, lived experience and spiritual life. It is very important to help the confreres entrusted to us by the Lord to have a believer’s perspective on history!

* **Promoting a Salesian culture**

These important features and the practice of the Goodnight itself, implemented consistently and faithfully, help to create a true Salesian culture, a Salesian way of looking at reality, approaching life and advancing relationships within the community.

If we let go of the practice of the Goodnight our confreres will live increasingly caught up in individualism, loneliness. We need to return to this Valdocco tradition and restore vigour and importance to the practice of the Goodnight. The Goodnight is one of the most characteristic features of the Salesians and Don Bosco’s Family, a practice that is typically ours, not found in other Congregations. It is one of the most precious things that we need to preserve!