# PRESENTATION

Dear confreres,

The Final Document that we are handing over to the Congregation today is the result of a very intense spiritual and communal experience. It was an experience that touched the hearts of each and every member of the GC29. This Final Document is the living memory of a journey guided by the Spirit, celebrated in the home of our origins, here in Valdocco, where everything began. Here we wanted to pause and listen deeply, aware that all true renewal comes from an authentic return to the sources. In this blessed place, immersed in the silent presence of Don Bosco, we experienced days of prayer, discernment and sincere dialogue. We felt guided by the maternal gaze of Mary Help of Christians, convinced that our vocation today requires a heart as ardent as hers, the clear vision she had and courageous choices she made.

The theme chosen for the Chapter, “Passionate about Jesus Christ, dedicated to young people”, was not only the backdrop to our work, but also the driving force behind every discussion and decision. This was not a theme conceived at a desk, but one that matured through listening to provinces around the world. It was the fruit of an authentic synodal process inspired by the ecclesial methodology of “Conversation in the Spirit” which profoundly marked the tone of the General Chapter. Listening to one another, humility in questioning ourselves, the desire to allow the voice of the Spirit to emerge among us, fostered an atmosphere of real communion, which made shared, honest, mature discernment possible. We joyfully acknowledge that this is the first fruit of GC29: an ecclesial experience that one again helped us discover that only when we journey together under the Spirit’s guidance can we be faithful to the gospel and meaningful to young people today.

The Final Document we are presenting is split into three main areas. The first two – “Animation and Care of the Real Life of Each Salesian” and “Salesians, Salesian Family and Lay People Together With and For Young People” – are structured according to the threefold process of listening, interpretation and choice. We recognise an intellectual and spiritual honesty in them, as they deal with the lights and shadows of our personal, community and apostolic lives. During GC29, we were not afraid to name the struggles that mark the spiritual life of many confreres, the inner fragmentation that sometimes weakens the grace of unity, the vocational crisis that profoundly questions the quality of our accompaniment in some regions, and the cultural challenges that test the consistency of our witness. But along with these shadows, we gratefully recognised the many signs of life, fidelity, generosity and hope. The choices that the Final Document proposes are not abstract norms but concrete indications, the result of shared reflections rooted in reality. They ask each of us to put Christ back at the centre of our lives, to cultivate a deeper spirituality, to live fraternity authentically, to value in particular the vocation of the Salesian Brother, and to promote an educational mission increasingly shared with lay people and the various groups of the Salesian Family.

The third core area brings together the twenty-three Chapter resolutions which represent a courageous and lucid response to the needs for government of the Congregation that is more consistent with the mission, closer to reality, more agile and transparent. Some of them amend articles of the Constitutions and General Regulations, others address key operational issues. These are concise but incisive texts. I would like to recall some of them here, to bring out their significance. The change to Article 187 of the Constitutions, which removes any ambiguity about the relationship between evangelical poverty and financial sustainability, is a significant one. The establishment of a second Region in Africa-Madagascar is a hugely important decision which not only recognises the numerical growth of the confreres, but also apostolic maturity and local planning capacity.

Even more symbolic is the resolution amending Article 30 of the Constitutions on the Salesian mission, broadening the horizons beyond first evangelisation to explicitly include “revitalisation of the faith in countries of ancient Christian tradition.” This is a lucid acknowledgement of our times and a prophetic revival of our missionary identity, precisely on the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian expedition and as the Church celebrates the Jubilee of Hope. In this context, the resolution to formally include works for young people in situations of vulnerability or exclusion in the Regulations gains even stronger meaning, by recognising them as a charismatic and prioritised response to the wounds of our time. Similarly, the commitment to safeguarding, expressed at various points and in various reflections, runs through the Final Document as an indispensable evangelical principle: the protection of the little ones and the vulnerable remains an essential criterion of evangelical authenticity and pastoral credibility.

Alongside the three main core areas, the final Document is supplemented by a section of **Appendices**, which should not be considered marginal. We treasure the Holy Father’s message, the various opening addresses, and the Rector Major’s final address along with the weekly reflections that Fr Pascual offered and which bear the title “Taking Stock”. In our journey of learning about the Final Document over the coming years, we will be helped by the contribution that I asked Fr Pascual to share with the whole Congregation. It is his concluding reflection made after GC29 came to an end. I am convinced that his accompaniment, appreciated by everyone, is further enriched by this final contribution. While it completes his weekly reflections, it will also help us to revive the memory of what we experienced in Turin and concluded in Rome.

These are pages to meditate on. They are pages that restore to us the spirit with which GC29 was conducted: a spirit of faith, searching, fraternity and love for the mission.

Dear confreres, this Final Document is now entrusted to you, the communities, provinces, lay people and young people who share Don Bosco’s dream with us. To become fruitful it needs to be read, mediated upon, discussed, internalised. Above all, it needs to be lived. Nothing we have developed will make sense unless it is reflected in the real lives of individuals and communities. GC29 did not end with the proclamation of the final vote. GC29 begins now, with the responsibility each of us takes in receiving this mandate.

We entrust this journey to Mary Help of Christians, who we felt as a discreet but very strong presence during GC29. It is She who continues to be present every day in our lives and in our homes. We entrust this journey to Mary Help of Christians, whose discreet but very strong presence during GC29 was something we felt. She continues to be present every day in our lives and in our houses. She who “continues to do everything” is the one to whom we entrust our desire to be Salesians who are truly *passionate about Jesus Christ and dedicated to young people*. And we ask Don Bosco, who tells us once more today as he did then, that “It is not enough to love young people, they must realise that they are loved,” to guide us by his intercession and example so that the flame of apostolic charity may never be extinguished in our hearts.

*Rome, 24 May 2025 - Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians*

*Fr Fabio Attard*

*Rector Major*