

## STRENNA - 2004

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### **Let us propose wholeheartedly to all young people joy in the call to holiness as the high standard of ordinary Christian living (NMI, 31)**

Seizing the grace of this jubilee to send an invitation to the whole Salesian Family to re-present to young people their call to holiness, on the 50th anniversary of the canonization of Saint Dominic Savio

*Pastoral proposal for Salesians*

### **Background:**

In this article

- [Pastoral proposal for Salesians](#)
- [Suggestions](#)

*Pope John Paul II* is always proposing to the whole Church and particularly to young people the prospect of holiness, as the foundation and at the heart of the pastoral programme for the new millennium: The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living: the whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead in this direction. (NMI, 31). Young people of every continent, do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium! Be contemplative, love prayer; be coherent with your faith and generous in the service of your brothers and sisters, be active members of the Church and builders of peace (Message for the XV World Youth Day 2000).

'Dear Salesians ... Be saints! As you well know, holiness is your principal task'. This was also the Pope's exhortation to our General Chapter, which ended with the gift of three new Blessed to the Salesian Family. *The Rector Major* in his closing address to GC25 said: 'Holiness is the demanding way that together we want to follow in our communities; it is 'the most precious gift we can offer to the young' (C. 25); it is the highest goal that, with courage, we can set for all. Only in an atmosphere of holiness that is lived and experienced will the young people have the possibility of making courageous life choices, of discovering God's plan for their future, of appreciating and welcoming the gift of vocations of special consecration.' (CG25, 196).

It is a matter therefore of:

**Making explicit our educational and evangelising aim, proposing to *everyone, wholeheartedly, a high standard of ordinary Christian living, holiness:***

- going beyond a certain apostolic timidity (limited to activities and entertainment) with an apostolic approach that is really missionary, offering everyone (those who are seeking, those already committed, the leaders, but also those set apart, the uninterested, the superficial ones)
- a clear and radical proclamation from the One who is the centre of our faith, the person Jesus Christ;
- leading them to a personal relationship with Him;

### **Re-launching *the journey of education to the faith* proposed by GC23 (97-111):**

- A journey that begins with a *presence among the young*, a welcoming presence, selfless and significant (cf. CG25, 46);
- A journey that *puts in the first place the lowliest and the poorest*, that adapts itself to those who need to begin, and at the same time encourages and accompanies the vocational development of *the more committed youngsters* to the threshold of holiness. (cf. CG25, 48);
- A journey that takes place in community with adults and youngsters together fostering the creation of an oratorian atmosphere with a *strong spiritual character* and one of selfless service (cf. CG25, 47)..

### **Making the *Salesian Youth Movement* the privileged setting in which the *active leadership role of the young* in given scope in evangelisation and education to the faith for all the young, *in communion and collaboration* with groups and movements in the Church and in the Salesian Family:**

- developing *groups* as the main elements in the Movement, in which the youngsters can meet and help each other in their faith journey;
- ensuring a *variety* of groups, with different levels and rhythms of involvement and commitment, always open to all youngsters especially the poorest;
- promoting, in the various youth groups, a *positive atmosphere* of support in their spiritual journey and alternative models of Christian life, that can represent a specially suitable place for vocational proposal and discernment;
- caring for the basic elements of Salesian Youth Spirituality in the leaders through a process of systematic formation and personal guidance.

NB. Cf. The Final Document of Forum SYM 2000.

#### *Some suggestions:*

- To give the *annual educative and pastoral programme* in the Provinces this emphasis.
- To foster in the Province, as far as possible:
- a systematic and practical opportunity for participation in '*a school of prayer*' in a salesian style for the young;
- concrete initiatives for *personal guidance* of the young, to help them, above all, to reach a mature decision about their vocation in life; this implies making available, people, time, places, training etc.
- *salesian group activities*, of different kinds, giving priority to spiritual formation and apostolic activity for young people;
- suggesting to young people that they make a *personal plan of life*, as a practical help along the way of growing to maturity and making a motivated decision about their vocation.
- Directing along these same lines *meetings of the Salesian Youth Movement* at provincial and also regional or continental level.
- For the animation of the religious communities and also the educative and pastoral communities making good use of *the particular contributions of the Rector Major*: the comment on the Strenna for 2004, the letter in the AGC, the message to the SYM for 31 January 2004
- Providing material to help *rediscover Dominic Savio*, as a model of a salesian animator, and of other young models of holiness of the past and present. (Look up the articles by the Rector Major in the Italian *Bollettino Salesiano*; encourage support for the special commitment of the groups of 'Friends of Dominic Savio')
- Making effective use of the *centres for youth spirituality* already present in the provinces, ensuring that they have an animating team, a regular programme, a certain continuity, a clear vocational direction.

