**Words of Greeting to the 29th General Chapter Assembly**

**of the Salesians of Don Bosco**

**Turin, 16 February 2025**

Dear Fr Stefano, Vicar of the Rector Major,

and dear Salesian confreres,

I stand here in the name of all the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians around the world who have accompanied the life and mission of the Salesian Congregation in recent years, in a particular way with affection and prayer.

We were close by when the Rector Major - Fr Ángel Fernández Artime - was appointed Cardinal by Pope Francis, understanding everything that this appointment entailed on a concrete level. It is a choice that expresses esteem and trust in his person, honours the Salesian Family, each of you, and that has led to anticipating the celebration of this 29th General Chapter.

We are close to you now in prayer, and we assure you of this for as long as the Chapter Assembly will last.

May the Holy Spirit come down upon it in abundance, with his gifts of wisdom and discernment, and may Mary Help of Christians continue to guide your choices and “do everything”, as She has done in the life of Don Bosco and our Saints.

The theme of the 29th General Chapter is beautiful and engaging: *PASSIONATE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST, DEDICATED TO YOUNG PEOPLE. Living our Salesian vocation faithfully and prophetically*.

As Daughters of Mary Help of Christians we feel fully in tune with your need for the in-depth study expressed in the subtitle.

*Living our Salesian vocation faithfully and prophetically* is a theme that invites us to return to the essentials, to the charismatic identity centred on Christ and on the evangelising education of young people.

It is a new call of the Spirit and of the contemporary world to renew the very heart of the Salesian vocation, to revive the spiritual and apostolic fervour that distinguished the charism at its origins and that distinguishes your life and mission today on all continents.

The three priority areas you have chosen: renewing the spiritual life and formation through an authentic relationship with Christ and a deep commitment to mission; collaboration with lay people and members of the Salesian Family in the specific mission proper to the Salesian charism; and, finally, a courageous revision of the Congregation’s animation and governance structures to make them more effective and adequate to the ever new and unprecedented challenges of this contemporary world, are three great choices that will guarantee the entire Congregation renewed vitality, both at the missionary and vocational levels, and a strong commitment to the present and the future.

The future of the charism, in fact, is in the hands of each of us, as active members of the Salesian Family who share in the responsibility, but at this moment it is above all in your hands, as a world Chapter Assembly.

We know very well that the General Chapter is an event of grace and synodality of decisive importance in the Church today, an event of the Holy Spirit. He can radiate all his light, his grace in our little daily lives to make us more courageous, more prophetic, in such a complex and challenging time from so many points of view.

I am thinking of the not-so-easy social and political situations that some of you come from. I think of the situations of pain, violence, poverty and injustice, the dramatic situations caused by the various conflicts that afflict the world, and that affect your Provinces.

I am thinking of the communities in precarious, suffering circumstances where many Confreres and Sisters live and work, and who face the daily challenge of education faithfully and courageously, in order to promote the life of the young generations entrusted to them and ensure a better future for all.

The greatness and breadth that you embrace in this Chapter Assembly offers a wonderful vision of the vitality and strength of the charism, from which the mission of the Salesian Congregation takes its creative driving force.

The jubilee year we are living through propels us toward a radiant horizon of hope, rooted in the Risen and living Lord. May he support you in looking to the future with confidence without being discouraged by the uncertainties of the present, which are contradictory, complex and constantly changing in many ways.

Your journey together in deep communion is a strong sign of hope for the entire Salesian Family and for the Church. May the certainty that Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco are guiding you sustain you as you look to the future with courage and foresight. The whole Salesian world, all the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, are with you, accompanying you in prayer with affection and esteem. Personally, I take this moment to thank you for your closeness, the joy of sharing the same Salesian vocation, of experiencing the beauty of the same spirituality and mission.

I am grateful to you for the richness of your priestly ministry that you so generously offer to our communities, to young boys and girls, young people, children, and families that we meet in educational works, sometimes in easy situations and, very often, in difficult ones. I have seen this in my visits to our communities in many parts of the world. For this reason, I speak on behalf of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians to say a “collective thank you”.

I hope that this event of grace can generate a renewed charismatic vitality and new and holy vocations. I entrust this wish to our Saints and, in particular, to Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello who will not let you be lacking her intercession.

Thank you for the invitation, for the opportunity to be here with you and to participate in this important moment for the entire Salesian Family.

Good work and best wishes!

 

Sister Chiara Cazzuola

 Superior General of the FMA Institute