



Some indications for the path

Extract of the Rector Major's letter
 to the Volunteers With Don Bosco
 of the 25th anniversary of their Foundation

With this precious wealth of life strengthened in these twenty-five years, at a time when you have personally touched the blessing of God and witnessed His Love in the environments of your daily life, it seems to me opportune to share with you some indications for the journey.

The consolidation of the path you have travelled. In a few years you have developed a wonderful spiritual heritage. The Constitutions, the Formation Plan, ecclesial approval, the six assemblies you have celebrated, the

accompaniment of the assistants and other members of the Salesian Family and the generosity of your response to the Lord: all these have helped you to mature an authentic life in the Spirit based on secularity, consecration and the Salesian charism which give profound meaning to your life, to your mission and to communion among you. We must thank God for all the good that you have received and lived. For this reason, I would like to suggest to you that it must be a priority to *consolidate the journey* while you are opening yourselves up to new horizons which will be indicated to you by the Spirit of God. Your great instrument is the Constitutions. Meditate on them again, pray with them, practice them with authenticity in everyday life. They constitute your identity.

Take care of the deeper elements of your life. I am borrowing the expression of art. 26 of your Constitutions. You know the difficulties that life presents to you day by day as consecrated laity. I am pleased to see the wealth of aspects indicated in your Formation Plan. All this is geared to helping you to be ever more suitable for living total, joyful consecration to God in following Christ in the service of the mission. Draw up your personal plan of life, be faithful to the moments dedicated to the care of your interior life and to formation, knowing how to integrate reflection, prayer and action; share with your brothers and sisters all that you can so that formation can transform both your personal attitudes and those of the Association and of the secular and ecclesial mission that you carry out. The formation process seeks to bring about the maturity of the unity of the person for yourselves, for your brothers and sisters, for the Church and for the world. This is the key to the effectiveness of the witness of your life.

A lively sense of belonging to the Association/Institute, to the Church and to the Salesian Family. Our Salesian Family is a true grace of the Spirit of God who enriched it with the call to Salesian consecrated secularity. The Volunteers of Don Bosco and the Volunteers with Don Bosco are a living expression of what I am saying. It is a typical vocation, a fully ecclesial form of Christian life. Remember the message of St Paul VI some years after the conclusion of the Council: «One cannot fail to see the profound and providential coincidence between the charism of Secular Institutes and one of the most important and clear lines of the Council: the presence of the Church in the world [...] Secular Institutes, by virtue of their charism, appear to be propitious instruments for embodying this spirit and transmitting it to the whole Church». Wherever they are, they are a sign of God's love and they act in the name of the Church. You are the Church in environments or places where the Church as such cannot be present. And our Salesian spirituality offers many possibilities for this. Taking deep care of your life of communion will be of great help to you and will support you.

Disciples and missionaries with the joy of the Gospel. Salesian spirituality is essentially apostolic. The charism of consecrated secularity has been given to the Church so that she may fulfil her mission in the world. Aware that your whole life is a mission, you work together for the building of the Kingdom of God, bringing the spirit of the Beatitudes to all the places in which you live. This is what your Constitutions say in the first articles. Pope Francis, with his style of pastoral action and his ecclesial magisterium, is offering us, in these years, precious stimuli for an evangelizing action characterized by the joy of the Gospel. His entire magisterium and his very life are marked by this basic evangelical attitude. This is the Christian proposal born of the Resurrection of Christ and which I encourage you to live with full intensity, following the passionate words of Fr Egidio Viganò when, in September 1994, he spontaneously told you: «What do the Salesian Congregation and the Rector Major expect from the birth of this new Institute? A wave of Salesian enthusiasm. That is to say, to see Don Bosco's charism in a young form, without the burdens of time, a charism which interprets Don Bosco's mission with courage and enthusiasm».

From cross to Cross *Prayer of Nino Baglieri at his bed*

It has been another sleepless night, with only suffering as my companion. In the darkness, everything is silent, everyone is sleeping, my body suffers, from the slit in the shutter comes the light that lights up my bedroom.

I am crucified in my bed, fixing my gaze on Jesus Crucified, in front of me. In Him I seek comfort to overcome those hours of silence, loneliness and discouragement. What an awful thing to suffer and not have anyone to console you; I don't want to wake up anyone, disturbing them; I suffer together with You, Jesus. You, Jesus, are my companion of the night. You suffered on the Cross for me, you suffered abandonment, you were alone on the Cross with your suffering.

I look at your bleeding face, that crown of thorns stuck in your reclining head, your hands and feet pierced by big nails that keep you nailed to that Cross, your Heart torn from where Blood flows. How much suffering you have been through, to the last drop of Blood, to save all of humanity. You shed your blood on the Cross for me too. Those arms stretched out on the Cross embrace the whole world: "Come to me all you who are weary and overburdened, and I will give you rest." Yes, Jesus, I come to You, I am fatigued by the weight of the Cross and in this night I seek comfort, love, forgiveness, Light to get out of this darkness of the night that oppresses me and makes me feel more the suffering. Come to my aid, faithful friend and Companion of the way, my God and my Saviour. In You I seek refuge, in You I seek the strength to carry my cross.

Jesus, I complain about my cross getting heavier and heavier. Looking at You, I'm ashamed to complain. I lie on a soft bed and You nailed to the hard wood; my sick body does not drip blood; I just call and help comes right away. You suffer in silence, no one caresses you, no one wipes your sweat with blood. Not even your Mother can do this; she too suffers in silence at the foot of the Cross, she would like to hold you close to her grieving heart, caress you, but she cannot.

In Mary I see my mother; she doesn't understand, but in her heart, there is the sick child. She, like Mary, stands at the foot of the Cross of her beloved son...

Your Cross is my cross and my cross is your Cross. Your Cross enlightens mine and the night is no more; your Light enlightens my heart and you give me Comfort, Strength to overcome the sufferings of the night.

I live for You, with You and in You, all for Your Glory. Use me as You want, when You want and where You want. Make me docile, shape me as you like, make this body of mine an offering to you. No one sees and no one hears; it is You and I, Jesus. To You I entrust my Life, my Spirit, my Cross. Everything is Yours and I am Yours.

Jesus, I love you. Hallelujah.

Letter of the Rector Major to the Volunteers With Don Bosco

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the CDB, the Rector Major wrote the letter, "And you, who do you say I am?" The letter retraces the development of the Association/Institute throughout these years, highlights its contribution to the whole Salesian Family and offers four orientations for the future. It concludes with the recommendation to provide quality accompaniment for people, as the young people who started the group received twenty-five years ago. The letter has just been published in the Acts of the General Council, n. 431.

2 March, Anniversary of the death of Servant of God Nino Baglieri.

Modica (Sicily), his hometown, remembers the person of Nino Baglieri every year on the anniversary of his passage to the House of the Father with very moving gestures: visit to the house where he was born; visit to the building from which he fell from a height of 17 meters, remaining tetraplegic; visit to his house that preserves the memories of his life; visit and prayer at the cemetery where his mortal remains lay; celebration of the Eucharist, with many people present and adoration in the Salesian parish that preserves the cross in front of which he made his profession as CDB. The depth of his life is a strong point of reference for those who have known him.

A short message of VDB Major Responsible, inviting to pray the novena to Mary Help of Christians in the context of the epidemic surrounding us

"Dearest sisters, I send you the cordial greetings full of confidence in our Beloved and in the hope that you are in good health. We entrust all difficulties in God's hands. He guides us by making us understand how to live in a more human, simple and humble way, respecting nature and giving thanks for all the gifts we have received. At this moment of trials, experienced all over the world, we are invited to pray together with full trust in our Mother, Mary Help of Christians, the guide and protectress of Don Bosco.

Praying together is always very powerful and brings us closer to God and to others. Thank you for opening your hearts to listen to the cry of the world. May God bless each one of you, your family members, those close to you and the whole Salesian Family."

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