



## Greeting and Presentation

A fraternal greeting to the Network of Ecclesiastical Assistants of the Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB) and of the Volunteers with Don Bosco (CDB), and to all those who may be interested in the splendid reality of the Salesian Secular Consecrated life.

Cardinal Braz, the president of the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life, wrote a year ago: "Secular institutes are little known, often ignored, or are confused with Lay associations and movements".

The same opinions are often expressed by the participants in the meetings of

delegates of the Salesian Family, the Assistants themselves and, in general, the Salesians and other members of the Salesian Family whom we have met.

Hence, the scope of this simple communication is to facilitate a better understanding and a positive evaluation of the reality of this consecrated secularity within the Salesian Family; to know, value and be grateful to this charism in the Church in such a way that we can give more impetus to the vocational accompaniment that we are increasingly asked to do towards the groups of the Salesian Family.

From the time in which Pius XII thought of it, **Provida Mater Ecclesia** was a revolutionary gesture in the Church of that day. Secular institutes are themselves an act of courage that the Church made at that moment; such as to give structure, to institutionalize XX secular institutes. And from that time up to now, the good you do for the Church is very great, it is done with courage; for one needs great courage to live in the world. Many of you are alone, many come and go in your apartment; some of you live in small communities. **Everyday you live the life of a person in the world, and, at the same time, retain contemplation. This contemplative dimension with the Lord and in relation to the world, to contemplate reality, to contemplate the beauty of the word as well as the great sins of society, its deviations, all these things, and always in spiritual tension....** This is why your vocation is so fascinating, because it is a vocation which is spot on, where the salvation not only of people but of the institutions are at stake. And a great many lay institutions are necessary in the world. That is why I think that *Provida Mater Ecclesia* was a truly revolutionary step for the Church! (*Address of Pope Francis in the General Assembly of Secular Institutes of the Italy. 10 may 2014*).





12<sup>th</sup> of September

## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

### Origins of the Institute

In the second half of the nineteen eighties some young men, in four different countries, moved by the Holy Spirit, without knowledge of each other, manifested the desire to consecrate themselves to God in the world. Accompanied by three SDBs and a Volunteer of Don Bosco, they began to experience this way of life; Don Egidio Viganò, Rector Major of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, informed of the journey, recognized the gift of the Spirit and encouraged the young people and their animators to continue the experience.

In December 1993, he met in Rome with the various members of the groups and those who accompanied them and again the following year, whereupon they decided to officially start the Group of Volunteers With Don Bosco, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1994, the feast of the name of Mary. On the same occasion in September 1994, the "Ad Experimentum" Constitutions were drawn up and the first professions took place and at the same time the Rector Major, Egidio Viganó, recognized the group's membership in the Salesian Family.

On May 24, 1998, at the request of the Rector Major Don Juan Edmundo Vecchi, the Archbishop of Caracas, Archbishop Ignacio Antonio Velasco García, SDB, issued the decree with which he erected the Volunteers with Don Bosco as a PUBLIC ASSOCIATION OF LAY FAITHFUL, in the particular Church of Caracas, Venezuela, bearing in mind the explicit intention of the Volunteers with Don Bosco to be later recognized as a Lay Secular Institute of diocesan law and successively of Pontifical Right. With the same decree Mons. Ignacio Antonio Velasco García approved the Constitutions. (*The preface of Constitutions CDB*)

# SCS INFO

### Course "Accompaniment and mission"

From July 23 to 27, 2018, the training conference on "Accompaniment and Mission" was held in Frascati (Rome) for the Regional Leaders, the Regional Formation Delegates and the Regional Assistants of Europe. The speaker was Don Jack Finnegan SDB and there were 50 participants in the course. It was a precious and valuable contribution to the Guides for the mission.

### VDB African Congress

The 2<sup>nd</sup> VDB Congress of Africa was held from 5 to 9 August in Kabgayi (Rwanda). 38 VDBs from 10 countries participated with their assistants. We reflected on the cultural and religious reality of the continent, on the mission and on the formation on secularity. They were days of great fraternal intensity, of mutual knowledge, of deepening our vocation and of a confident look at the future of the Institute in African countries.

### Meeting of the VDB Regional Leaders in Europe, Asia and America.

The meetings of the new Regional Leaders took place three times during the past year. Those of Europe, in Rome (February); those of Asia in Dalat-Vietnam (April); those of America, in Lima (August). They were days of formation, of fraternal coexistence, and of mutual knowledge of the life of the groups of the different countries.

### Asian Congress of Secular Institutes

From 4 to 6 September, ACSI (Asian Conference of Secular Institutes) took place in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam). There were 180 consecrated women from 37 Secular Institutes, including 9 VDBs from the Philippines.

### VDB India Visit

Those responsible for English-speaking countries, together with the assistant, visited the group in Chennai (India). They were also able to meet with different communities in the Bangalore Province to whom they presented the Institute. We hope that there would be soon more VDB vocations coming up in other parts of the country.

### Preparation of the AG8

From 18 to 28 July 2019, the eighth General Assembly of the VDB will be held in Frascati, Roma, to reflect on the theme "The mission of the VDB today". The reflections of the Volunteers from all over the world have been collected to prepare the basic document which will be the subject of discussion of the 86 delegates to the AG8. At the end of the Assembly, the new Central Council will be elected for the six-year period 2019-2025.