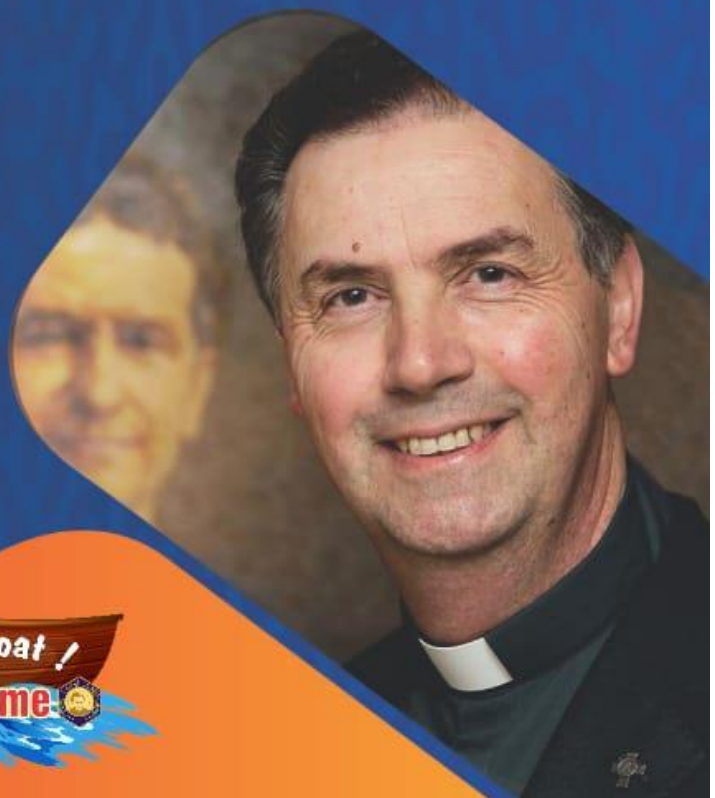


Message from the Rector Major  
to the Salesian Family  
from the Inter-American Region

*Don Ángel Fernández Artime SDB*

10th Successor of Don Bosco



## Presentation

On the path of animation carried out by the Association of Salesian Cooperators of the Inter-American Region, to accompany its members, their families, beneficiaries and other groups of the Salesian Family and within the framework of the initiative "We are in the same boat ", motivated by the world situation that the coronavirus pandemic has created during the year, to save lives and souls, by constantly promoting actions in health care, as well as family spirit , was caused this meeting between the countries of the region with the tenth successor of Don Bosco, Don Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB who accompanied us with his reflections in the light of the 28th General Chapter and the Strenna 2021: "Moved by hope: "See, I make all things new" (Rev 21,5) "

Representatives of the 13 countries that make up the region, Salesian Cooperators, Salesians, aspirants and members of other groups of the Salesian Family shared with the Rector Major their personal, family and national situations which have arisen during these months and confused them. And above all, they shared what motivates them and gives them hope in the face of this "new normal".

Don Ángel's specific invitation to the Salesian Family is to make a reality of what he allows himself to call, the Salesian sacrament of presence, and of what Pope Francis described at the 28th General Chapter of the Salesians as the 'Valdocco option. And following the lines of the Strenna 2021, he invites us from the various realities exposed, to live in hope, to rethink our responses to young people and that together and as a result a strong attitude of prayer, we can do all new things».

November 15, 2020.

## Initial greeting message: Rector Major

*I would like to tell you at the beginning that it is a great joy for me to be here and that I am really surprised and moved by what you have achieved.*

*It is with great pleasure and with great emotion that I see you appear from so many places, and from so many others that are there and that I could not greet you. It is also a beautiful expression of this time in which we live.*

*As we greet each other, I thought about the great emotion that our beloved Father Don Bosco would have, to see so much expression of his Salesian Family, of so many nations, of so many groups of his family; believe me, it's admirable to see all of our diversity.*

*I only take this opportunity to mention one point to you, and it is this: you will see that it is difficult to answer all the questions in depth, but I invite you to see the whole, it is that is, what is shared during this meeting. I think this sharing will give us a good picture of the situation. Let's not just see one question, but everything we are going to share during these two hours.*

*Merci. Thank you so much. Gracias.*

*Well, I am convinced that in everything we say we will realize that we are going through a very difficult and very painful time around the world.*

*And also, when as the Salesian Family we look at the reality of the world, we often feel caught up in a very strong secularism which neglects the meaning of life and of God, and by young people whom we see very often, from very far away. .*

*The reality we have is not what many times we would like, but it is the world we find ourselves in, and from there I believe we have to offer the best we have, as Salesian family.*

*I will tell you a first reason for continuing to hope at this time: the fact that we are a beautiful religious family within the Church, and that the world, if the Salesian charism were to disappear, would be much more impoverished. That is to say, humbly, that we offer something that helps build the world in the name of God.*

*That's why I really like to distinguish between the word "optimism" and "hope". Optimism arises from seeing that things are going well and that the data we have is positive, and that is not the reality.*

*Hope is born from this inner strength, in which we have the certainty of faith, and that is why I sincerely believe that we can say: that Don Bosco's family has so much beauty to offer in this world today. Thank you!*

## Participations

### Preamble

*As you know, the reality we live in on this side of the continent is not easy: confinement, loss of jobs, social insecurity and even the loss of the lives of loved ones, it hurts a lot. We recognize that healthcare is vital today and this is the goal of the “We are in the same boat” project.*

*To this regional fórum were invited 15 people from the countries and provinces that make up the region in order to share with you their concerns, their discouragement and especially what prompts them to hope. Dear Don Ángel, your presence among us is that of a Father and we know that your reflections in the light of the 28th General Chapter and the Strenna 2021 will resonate in our hearts; Let's get started!*

### 1. Canada

Don Angel, greetings from the Salesian Family of Canada. I am Joe Conroy, national Coordinator of the SC of Canada.

#### A) Our Concerns:

- Sharing the common mission and bringing the religious and lay persons together is at times a challenge to implement.
- In our secular society it is difficult to get in contact or approach the young.
- Attendance at meetings, events and lack of interest in the common mission.
- The importance of formation in order to fully fulfill one's vocation which can be misunderstood and underappreciated.

#### B) Our Hopes:

- The Local Salesian Family Consultas (Commissions) allow us to better know one another and to live moments of formation together. Our hope is to continue to unite with each other in the spirit of DonBosco.

✓ **Answer from Don Ángel:**

*I would like to underline in this intervention the concern that sharing the common mission and bringing together consecrated persons and lay people is a challenge.*

*Listen, my dear brothers and sisters, my dear Salesian Family: I am convinced that the greatest value and the greatest witness that we can give is that of communion among us as the family of Don Bosco.*

*The second idea that I underline is the following: faced with the difficulty of being among young people and of drawing closer to them, I asked the Salesian General Chapter, and I propose it to all our dear Salesian Family, that we do more than ever a reality of what I have allowed myself to call, in quotation marks, “the Salesian sacrament of presence”. What Pope Francis called, in his Chapter message, “the Valdocco option”, as Don Bosco did: presence, presence and presence, among the people with whom we are.*

*Thank you! Other question*

## 2. Costa Rica

Greetings Don Ángel and everyone present. My name is Marvin Amores Scott, an Salesian Cooperator aspirant from Costa Rica. As aspirants, we look forward to putting into practice what we are learning, and developing the talents Jesus has given us, in projects that respond to new patios.

In this sense, I would like to ask you for some advice: what must we do today so that these projects have a sustainability despite the changes of the SDB in charge and how, as Salesian Family, can we strengthen the common mission? Blessings.

✓ **Answer from Don Ángel:**

*My first suggestion and first wish for all of you aspiring to the precious vocation of Salesian Cooperator is that you have great enthusiasm, do not be afraid, that you fall in love with Don Bosco, as you are already in love with Jesus, and that you really want to be living forces in the Salesian Family. Before all that.*

*My second wish is that the Salesian Cooperators follow the precious path of maturity and autonomy that they take as an association, accompanied by other brothers and sisters: Salesians of Don Bosco, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, a few lay people. In other words, the Salesian mission and the project cannot depend on one person or another.*

*The best thing is that your vocation gives you all the strength to be very alive in our Salesian Family.*

*These are the times ahead. Gone are the days when they depended on the religious advisor on duty. We walk together on the path of communion.*

*Thank you!*

### **3. Cuba**

I am Ania Rabelo, national coordinator of the Salesian Cooperators of Cuba. On behalf of the 90 members who made their Promises and the 38 aspirants who make up the Association on this beautiful island, I greet you fraternally.

We still remember your visit to Cuba. Today, we continue to be a country that suffers from precariousness, division and despair; that is why we welcome and thank you for the theme of the Strenna 2021, which is filled with hope and positivism. Your words are for us a lighthouse of possibilities in the center of this sadness.

We have the challenge of being co-responsible for the Salesian mission in Cuba, although our activity is limited to the parish and aware of the small number of Salesians consecrated, but this does not mean that the charism is useless. Cuba needs Salesians and a strong laity, committed to its young people, who continues to spread the heritage of Venerable Father Vandor, and of so many members of the Salesian Family who have worked for the Kingdom, and I underline in a particular way the dear Father Bruno Roccaro who left us for heaven few days ago. Fraternally.

✓ **Answer from Don Ángel:**

*Thank you, my greetings also to you from Cuba, I remember, as in all countries, my beautiful visit and I begin by underlining what Ania has just said, that the charism is never useless. My dear brothers and sisters: the charism does not depend on who we are; we are necessary, but the charism surpasses those who try to live it.*

*And it is true that Cuba, and not only Cuba, all the nations that are here of course need the consecrated persons of our Salesian family and a strong laity like you, lay people with a great sense of God, of Church and of belonging to the charism of Don Bosco. I remind you of what I have already said: think for a moment if we weren't here; It would be a great loss for the young people of the world and for so many families, so it is already another reason to hope and we must really believe in it.*

*Finally, I make you realize or we achieve something felt but very significant in these difficult times, and it has been throughout history, there will always be people who, where they are, shine. , transmit a lot of light: laity of the Salesian Family, consecrated, consecrated, and I say this following the testimony in Cuba, for example, of the venerable missionary Vandor or of this giant figure who was until last week: Father Bruno Roccaro, a man who imitated himself, that is to say that he put himself in the shoes of the Cuban people as much as he loved them.*



*My dear brothers and sisters, of the Salesian family it is never forgotten, these testimonies of life give us more meaning and should make us more enthusiastic. Thank you.*

#### 4. El Salvador

Greetings Father Angel. My name is Ligia Martínez, Salesian Cooperator from El Salvador. The land of Monsignor Romero, a country that remembers you with affection.

We appreciate your support throughout all these years, especially in these difficult times of the pandemic, in which so many members of our families, friends, acquaintances and brothers and sisters of the Association have left us; which has led us to come closer, to show solidarity and to be more generous in love and mutual aid.

Don Ángel without losing our main attention to the young people who are our preferred recipients: How could you motivate the participation and the insertion of the Salesian Cooperators in the political and social sphere that our peoples are asking for today? Greetings.

#### ✓ Answer from Don Ángel:

*Thanks, Ligia. Let me start by emphasizing what you just said, namely that we are living as we all know very difficult times of pandemic, loss of loved ones and loss of knowledge. Even today, three Salesians have died in the world as a result of COVID, there are already almost 78 of them. Some Daughters of Mary Help of Christians have recently died and also relatives of you: brothers and sisters of various groups or associations; It is a difficult period, certainly difficult and we do not lose sight of it, we are aware of it.*

*Well, and the question you asked about insertion into the socio-political world seems very timely and look, I am already putting forward a first conviction: the first is this, as a Salesian family and you lay people, you have the perfect profile*

*for those who have in addition this socio-political vocation to serve as members of the Salesian family in public service and particularly in socio-political service. We cannot say that it belongs to others, it must also be very much to us, I am very convinced of that.*

*And the third thing is this: if we believe that something is important, we have to make it explicit, we have to put it on the table, we have to make it the ground of our dialogue and our reflection. I invite you to speak about this need also in your associations and groups; I can tell you that my experience has been very good over the past six years because in almost all the countries of the world, meeting young people, sometimes hundreds of young people, I asked them: Who among you feels the vocation to the services? public? and there were always young people who answered: "I would like to serve in this way as a Christian and as a young Salesian. I encourage you to put them in your thoughts and prayers. Thank you!*

## 5. USA - East

Sr. Denise Ann Sickinger, FMA, St. Joseph Province.

Hello, Don Angel! Good to see you again. Thank you for meeting us this way even if we still await the day when you can set foot on US soil.

We are living stressful moments due to:

- The pandemic;
- A growing, politically-promoted, secularism and atheism;
- A large exodus of the young from the Church;
- And a growing sense of isolation among the young.

Two sources of hope are:

- Our young in formation who are strong in their Faith and have zeal for saving souls.
- The growing awareness that we need the Salesian Family if we are to have a meaningful impact on the NONES and families.

✓ **Answer from Don Ángel:**

*Thank you so much Sister Denise, carissima piacere.*

*I was thinking the same thing as we are saying, thinking for example of the candidates for religious life, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, of the Sacred Hearts, of the Salesians, of the Divine Savior, all of them, where we say that the path of personalization is essential. I see everywhere that our young people in the face of faith and commitment to the poor, etc., react very well when they feel that the proposal has touched their hearts. So, I sincerely believe that we have two very beautiful instruments, as I have already said: the presence of being in the midst of young people and of being able to take up personal challenges is very good today and to involve a few young, but strongly.*

*As for what you told me about the young people who are separated, about the people who leave the church, about the very great differences in the societies, I want to answer you with an experience that I had at the Synod of Bishops on young people, and it was this: the bishops of nations who had been very Catholic and who live in secularism were very discouraged; ; on the other hand, the bishops who came from Asia, where the Christian faith is very poor, had a look full of hope and enthusiasm. What do I mean? We cannot look at reality with pessimism, we must value, for example, that even as a Salesian family we are more united, that we can offer something good to so many families and young people who are around us , and that there will always be those who feel their hearts have been touched most favorably by the testimony you give. Thank you.*

## **6. USA - West**

Hello, my name is Elena Diaz and I live in Los Angeles California, I am a Salesian Cooperator from the province of the USA-West. Where I am the secretary for the association as well as the Coordinator for the Salesian Youth Movement.

Like the rest of the world we are amid challenging times; a medical pandemic, racial inequalities and spiritual insecurities to name a few, We are living in a society where privilege and opportunity can sometimes be taken for granted, our young people (and adults) find themselves more and more every day in a sense of depression, anxiety, hopelessness and negativity.

I challenge myself to be part of a team where we get out of our comfort zones and live our Salesian Mission by our actions, not just with the young people but with each other. My hope is to use joy and optimism and a little creativity as a tool to be a bridge for the SYM and the Association of Salesian Cooperators, to help energize and animate our interactions as well as our formation.

✓ **Answer from Don Ángel:**

*Thank you Elena, for what you presented I underline a first word which is: “that you think that we have to get out of our comfort zones”; Listen, dear Salesian family, a pandemic like this is an opportunity to show the worst of the human condition and also the best of the human being.*

*I am happy, I am very happy to see all the creativity and so much initiative of our Salesian family in the world not to be locked in their own castles, but rather to say, faced with this situation, what can we do, and I can assure you that as sons and daughters of Don Bosco in this sense, we are not numb; it is already a first step, and a great testimony from Elena.*

*I am happy that you told us that you thought that your hope is your joy, your optimism and your creativity are a bridge between the young people of the Salesian Youth Movement and the Salesian Cooperators, I appreciate it, it makes me very happy, and I underline it, my dear brothers and sisters, at all times, but even more today, what convinces the most, it is not the words, but the testimony; Many of us made life choices because we met someone who impressed us because he was credible, starting with the Lord Jesus and Don Bosco; Well, I encourage you to do this, my dear brothers and sisters, that with our way of life, we are a bridge for many people; There will be many young*

*people who, seeing you, will feel challenged, it is also in response as a Salesian family in the present moment and it is the right moment to act.*

## 7. Guatemala

Don Angel, my name is Karla Hernández, in my 3rd year as aspirant with the Salesian Cooperators, from the Mama Margarita center in Guatemala.

The pandemic has caused suffering and prevents us from any physical contact that limits brotherhood.

As a society, we face great challenges, which require a strong spirituality that springs from the love of God and helps us to move forward with hope.

How should the support of a member of the Salesian Family be, to transmit confidence and not let the hope of young people vanish in these times of confinement?

Karla Mariela Hernández García, aspirant in Guatemala

### ✓ Answer from Don Ángel:

*Well, there was something I wanted to say from the start but I was waiting for a question that would allow it, my dear brothers and sisters, we are talking about a pandemic, hard times, it's almost a whole year suffering, the world is at a standstill, serious work problems, and you know it; Listen, I must tell you that the first thing that I believe that as a Salesian family we must always do and everywhere, is to pray, to pray, that is to say, we cannot think of the answer as a Salesian family, thinking of making a strategic plan of action; above all, we are believing women and men, and there are dimensions that cannot be neglected, we live life by faith and the Lord has told us to pray, and in times of difficulty, let us pray more; I strongly wanted to tell you that*

*The second and last thing I wanted to say from your question Karla is this: you said that great challenges require a strong spirituality that springs from the love of God, I totally agree, that is the key, and when you ask how to reach young*

*people so that they do not get discouraged, I was thinking of something that is also part of our Salesian family: Salesian spirituality, which is above all spirituality because it focuses on God , which is the path of faith, which also means family spirit, which is distinguished by the welcome of those who come, without condemning anyone, without excluding anyone, which is the spirituality of optimism, of joy , which has this distinctive character that I said earlier, namely the presence, wanting to be among them; I think Karla that we have all these elements of our charism which really make our mission much easier and open a lot of doors for us, I think of you Salesian Cooperators, in the Salesian Youth Movement, it is a beautiful possibility, a spirituality which leads us to live Salesian spirituality. Thanks Karla!*

## 8. Haiti

Good evening everyone!

I greet the presence of our Rector Major, Father Angel among us. Welcome Father!

In Haiti, despite efforts, the SSCCs do not always feel that they are part of the Salesian Family, mainly on the side of the FMA. We would like them to be closer to us. We also want FMAs and SDBs to have a better knowledge of our PVA to ensure that its content is applied. We feel alone in the REGION because French is not widely used.

Our wish is to one day see Father Ángel face to face in Haiti to talk more about it. Your brother, Lamy Gesner, Provincial Coordinator of Haiti.

### ✓ Answer from Don Ángel:

*ell ... I regret that the Salesian Cooperators of Haiti feel that their brothers and sisters, Salesians of Don Bosco and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians do not accompany them enough and I take this opportunity to remember something very important; my dear Salesian Family, believe me when I say that the most precious gift that we can offer in the Church and in the world is the witness of our communion as the family of Don Bosco, we can do a lot of things*

*and this is very important; but to witness that we are families and that we are united by faith in Jesus Christ and that all this strength of the Salesian charism unites us is very significant, especially in a world where everything is so individualized and where there is so much individualism.*

*And, a second aspect besides saying that I have already been in Haiti and that I would like to come back, is to invite you to something that I have done all over the world, my dear Salesian Family, we must try to get to know us better, and at least in your own nation or country, to know the reality of the groups of the Salesian Family that exist there, and to make any proposal to us so that consecrated persons know more about the Project of Apostolic Life of the Salesians Cooperators, that is to say in times of crisis, in times of isolation, in strange times, I believe that we, the Don Bosco Family, can distinguish ourselves by these aspects which are very human, the encounter, the recognition, to rejoice in the good that happens to another group of the family, the feeling that we are walking together, with autonomy, these are all values which, I think, have a very particular force today, because times are lived differently.*

## 9. Honduras

Good evening Don Ángel, I am Uvil Padilla, Salesian Cooperator and past pupil, I greet you from the center of the American continent, I greet you from the country of 5 stars, Honduras, a country where due to COVID-19 we continue to be physically isolated, with schools and patios closed, because today everything goes through virtual spaces.

Where, in addition to this pandemic, the rampage of nature comes to surprise us with heavy rains due to hurricane and tropical storm ETA. Causing sadness and feelings of helplessness and pain; where many Honduran families suffered from hunger, fear, cold and even the loss of loved ones, where on the roofs of their homes they sought refuge from the floods, waiting to be rescued.

In spite of this reality of a system which did not know how to react quickly, this limited mobility, to go to the restricted meeting, and in the light of the Strenna 2021: We are moved by hope "See, I am making all things news". What advice or next steps do you recommend so that more Salesian vocations may flourish and form in our country?

✓ **Answer from Don Ángel:**

*Thank you Uvil, first of all, I think this is a great opportunity to express our solidarity to all of you because we have closely followed everything that has generated this great tropical storm ETA, believe me, and unfortunately sometimes these disasters natural which strike hard, occur in the poorest regions, whether on the Latin American continent, or American but Latin, also in India, in Bangladesh. So above all our solidarity also as a family, which is very important, I emphasize this because I think it is something very beautiful to be able to feel that Don Bosco's family is always close to those who are hardest hit.*

*And the answer to your question, I understand Uvil that the vocation comes from God, any vocation, lay or for consecrated life, Salesian Cooperators, Salesians of Don Bosco, the vocation comes from God, it is not a strategic agreement, but I I am one of those who believe that it is transmitted by contagion, that it is transmitted by enthusiasm. The vocation is a call, it is not a strategic plan. I believe, and life confirms it to me, that it is transmitted by contagion, it is transmitted by enthusiasm by admiration. The first young boys were fascinated by Don Bosco, the first young girls were fascinated by Mother Mazzarello, and so any type of vocation and others were fascinated by some testimonies of life, therefore, I recommend taking care of the faith of our young people, living prayer, the celebration of faith cannot be neglected, social action is not enough.*

*Thirdly, we must have the courage to make a proposal, come and see, come and see who are the Salesian Cooperators in Honduras? Come and see... I*



*believe that this is the key to vocation in our whole Salesian Family, thank you very much.*

## 10. Mexico North

My name is Edna Mathey from the Mexico North Province. Thank you don Angel Fernandez, who in the person of don Bosco are here to give us encouragement and strength to continue.

One of my concerns is that in these difficult times that we are going through, is that we, young people, it would seem normal that we are indifferent to those who need us the most...But by listening you and seeing you with this generous and loving heart like that of don Bosco which leads us to Jesus, I am moved by hope and I can feel that we, the youngs, can be courageous, be evangelizers through our testimonies to continue to dream and thus change realities.

### ✓ Answer from Don Ángel:

*Thank you Edna, but first of all ... I would like ... to be more like Don Bosco, but thank you for your words, but listen, you say something very good that makes us think, it seems normal that we can be indifferent, well and there are people who are indifferent, but look, The Salesian family is not indifferent in these difficult times, you, the young people of the Salesian Youth Movement, are not at all in your comfort zone, then, a first reason that I have very strong hope for, and it is this: The Salesian family is not closed in on itself. The young people of the Salesian Youth Movement are not in the Salesian world to do party, but to find life to share, that seems very appropriate to me at this time that we are living.*

*And the second thing I wanted to say is that I really like is the reason for hope that Edna presented, saying that you can feel that young people can be courageous and evangelizers and thus change realities, watch, I think ... that I really love young people, I feel them, all my Salesian life I have felt very good*

*with young people, but I will tell you about someone passionate and in love with young people, who ' is this? Pope Francis, and he has many messages where he tells you that you young people must be apostles of young people, that you are the ones who can best convey enthusiasm, that a young person will believe you much more than I do, because he sees me already older. I therefore also underline this, which is very good, that the presence of our Salesian Family and the Movement of Young Salesians must be a whole reality that is set in motion to invite others, one to another adults to to be Salesian Cooperators, others to young and old so that you young people wish to be a Salesian Family, to say that you want to propose it to other young people, in agreement with the Pope who says with this provocation: do not be not young people on the sofa, but be missionary apostles. This is my suggestion for young people, Edna.*

## 11. Mexico South

I am Silvia Anaya Jiménez, Salesian Cooperator of the Mexico South Province. Almost a year ago, at the start of the pandemic, we were paralyzed by this world interruption, full of fear and uncertainty, just like the apostles...

Moved by the hope that leads us to action, these months have been the moment to promote communication and proximity, despite the isolation; be in solidarity with those who are in need; return to the family as a source of life and values, become aware of concern for the environment.

The meeting we have with you at this moment, Don Angel, is the product of this new era of communication and interaction that strengthens us as a "family"; part of the so-called "new normal".

We are convinced that the end of an episode in our life is actually the start of something new...we are grateful to you and appreciate your closeness.

✓ **Answer from Don Ángel:**

*Well, thank you very much Silvia it's true, it is certain that in this difficult year, a certain feeling arose, sparked a lot of creativity, pointed out possibilities, it is a gift, of great value and I think it is true that throughout the Salesian world there has been more creativity, the desire to make gestures of solidarity, to move one forward in favor of the other. So, in this first part, I underline that, as a value that, good, is part of our spirituality.*

*The good of each time, of each era and of each moment, our Salesian charism, invites us to value it, not to despise anything of the good that we have, this is a first aspect and I agree with you.*

*And the second thing that I want to share with you, my dear brothers and sisters, is this, and I was also thinking about it, while preparing the Strenna 2021), when luckily and with God's blessing this pandemic will be due past, this new normal, what shall we say? What will it consist of? I suggest that as a Salesian family we ask ourselves in all nations: where are we after covid-19? We, the Salesian Family, will we do the same thing that has always been done? Also the family? Also at the pace of travel? At the rate of consumption? Also in the recklessness of creation? Also in indifference towards your loved ones? This is the danger that the new normal will either go back to the old or better that the new situation really pushes us to want to get the best values that we have seen that we have and that we are capable of.*

*I am very confident that we will achieve this, I do not know if everyone, all of humanity will be in this same dynamic. I have the feeling that sometimes, for example, a lot of our leaders want to go back to where they were, but much more quickly to make up for lost time. This is a question that I leave to you, I ask myself it too, thank you Silvia.*

## 12. Nicaragua

Good evening don Angel, it is a great joy to share this moment with you and my brothers and sisters. I am Marvin Gutiérrez, Salesian Cooperator from Nicaragua.

Don Casti told us at Easter: *"our vocation and our mission do not go into quarantine"*. When you presented the Strenna 2021 to us, you made reference to our Father, don Bosco because, he himself throughout his life had to face the harshness of so many situations, tragedies and so much pain.

He is a teacher in showing us how the way of Faith and hope not only enlighten us but also give us the necessary strength to change unfavorable or adverse conditions, or at least to limit them as far as possible. We have received many invitations to live our faith and hope. I wonder: Do you see Don Angel that we are all in this dynamic?

### ✓ Answer from Don Ángel:

*Thank you Marvin, I find the story that you present to us very rich and I start from one of your sentences in which you say that: "the path of Faith and hope not only illuminates but gives the necessary strength to change conditions. Unfavorable or adverse or at least to limit them as much as possible. "*

*"I thought first of our Lord Jesus Christ himself who, if he did anything, it was to go through life with a deep certainty in the father, deep trust and abandonment in God the Father. , and from there try to relieve, help, transform, give reason to hope.*

*We think of Don Bosco and of so many of our saints, who did not have the easier task and instead of abandoning themselves to pessimism, on the contrary, they had that interior strength which comes from faith and which arouses hope, and this is what I wanted to emphasize to you, my dear brothers and sisters of the Salesian Family, that it is the same path for us, we cannot be*

*Salesian Family and believers, men of faith, if we do not we do not have this inner strength which leads us to look, with a look of faith and to have confidence and hope.*

*Finally, you briefly asked, is this the case in the Salesian Family? I believe Marvin that despite our poverty the Salesian family is, in this sense, in good health, I sincerely believe it, we are really animated by faith, sometimes not so much enthusiasm and hope, but yes I believe that we are on our way.*

### 13. Panamá

Don Angel, I am, Agustín Almario, Salesian Cooperator of Panama. The pandemic has been a major challenge, changing my personal, associative and pastoral daily life, causing stages of anguish and anxiety, due to the death of a Salesian Cooperator, of my father's cancer diagnosis and the illness of close friends. However, I continue to be moved by hope despite social distancing, reinventing myself in various aspects of my life, fostering closeness through social networks and technology, strengthening my vocation and developing my apostolic work with the young people of the SYM, bringing joy and hope in the style of Don Bosco.

#### ✓ Answer from Don Ángel:

Thank you Agustín, we sincerely hope that your father's health will improve. Look, what you just described, I would say, well, that's a good attitude. As the Salesian Family in order to be able to live the reality that has touched us, that is to say the difficulties of which we are aware, the point that I consider important is the following: let us think of all of us who are connected now, how we live us this moment? How do we cope with this time of isolation? How do we take care of human relationships? How do we take care of solidarity? How do we ask ourselves the question? How to reach those who are more isolated?

“When I say: hope animates us, that means, as Saint Paul says in his second letter to Timothy 1:12,“ for I know in whom I have believed ”Well, this is our case, we know who we're leaning on, in this ... new normal.

It is in this perspective, I return to the old new normal, see how we can continue to give the best that we have, either personally, each in his own vocation, as part of the Salesian Family, Family of Don Bosco, I believe it is a simple path but very relevant for today, very in tune with the Gospel and with Pope Francis himself.

#### 14. Puerto Rico

Don Angel. I am Rubén González Abreu, national coordinator of the enchanting island of Puerto Rico.

The pandemic has led us to a communal and sacramental break, but our charism has motivated us to meet our brothers and sisters, and our recipients virtually and face to face. Hope, which drives us, propels us towards a new beginning, a new dawn, a new style.

This situation leads us to reinvent ourselves, to reach out to the most abandoned, the elders, those who cannot perceive that there is community, life and hope. We have sisters and brothers on the same boat announcing that we are not alone and that Jesus Christ is with us.

#### ✓ Answer from Don Ángel:

*Thank you ... Rubén, thanks to you two, and ... listen, I hear you and ... and I find a ... an expression very similar to the one Agustín made before, that is say and ... an opportunity to reinvent yourself, an opportunity to ... to get to ... where otherwise it would not be possible, I rejoice and I hope; You've used the word new, new, many times ... I hope ... I hope we can do all things new too.*

*But listen, and ... I would also continue with a suggestion that I offer to you ... as a beloved Salesian Family and ... and this comes ... from Pope Francis himself;*

*"Look at the new Encyclical Fratelli Tutti" All Brothers ", which ... which is really also of an evangelical force ... and social and dialogue ... I could say that there are two calls among so many other things, two calls that the Holy Father addresses to us and that I think are perfect for us as the Salesian Family, it is these*

*First of all, the whole encyclical is an invitation to come out of ourselves, to come out of ourselves, an excellent program for our Salesian Family.*

*And the second, the Pope wants it to be an opportunity for dialogue. [...]*

*Listen, it's a word we don't say, we say so much, but,.*

*"We hope that the Salesian Family will be able to create a dialogue and bridges with young people and also with so many adults. It would be an extraordinary service to the Gospel and to the Church. . Well that's where I see traces of a new normal, thank you very much!*

## 15. República Dominicana

Arismendy Espinal, Dominican Republic.

The Dominican Republic is a developing country. His people live full of hope for a better future. However, many times he does not see that this better day is coming and this means that the pastoral works and proposals are not assimilated by the recipients.

The pastoral proposals of the Church, the Salesian Family, oratories and the youth center are not attractive.

How can we ensure that this spirit is inserted in the young, in the recipients so that the proposals are attractive, so that they carry this hope, this renewal that we need?

✓ **Answer from Don Ángel:**

*Well. ... thank you Arismendy. Listen, brothers and sisters, ... we are always going to encounter, ... difficulties in feeling this, that we are not able to involve the young people as we would like.*

*We have... the great orientation of our Father Don Bosco who always said: "love those whom young people love so that they too can love what is important for us"...*

*And ... I think, listen ... today, even though we may have the latest technology, or have the latest party ... young people can get it on their own. They are much more creative and capable than we are, in so many things, or even, excited about a special moment or festival, but the heart is not engaged, so I keep reminding them of something that is part of our Salesian pedagogy: creativity, sympathy, intuition to know what may interest but ...*

*"Dear brothers and sisters, let us continue to have as strength, the most important thing which is so lacking today in fatherhood and motherhood, the presence, the presence of friendship, the presence in the midst of what I have already said at the beginning,, this Salesian sacrament of presence ". [...]*

*And... that opens the doors, "I learned something a long time ago that I share with you, they say the human heart, every person's heart has a key, a key, but that key, doesn't. opens only from the inside. Only when the person feels appreciated, feels confident, the feeling that... I am here with you, because I love you ".*



## Phrases of the Rector Major at the regional forum

### The Salesian Family, a gift for the Church

#### ***Diversity as a Salesian Family***

«It's wonderful to see all of our diversity».

«The great emotion that our beloved Father Don Bosco would have, to see so much expression of his Salesian Family, of so many nations, of so many groups of his family; believe me, it is admirable to see all our diversity».

#### ***A reality in the world***

«When, as the Salesian Family, we look at the reality of the world, we often feel caught up in a very strong secularism that neglects the meaning of life and of God, and by young people whom we see very often, but from very far away».

#### ***Offer the best we have***

«"The reality we live in is not what many times we would like, but it is the world we find ourselves in, and from there I believe we have to offer the best we have, as a the Salesian Family».

#### ***With the Salesian charism***

«"We are offering something that helps build the world in the name of God».

#### ***A charism that drives us***

«Hope is born from this inner strength, in which we have the certainty of faith».

#### ***We must offer the best***

«Don Bosco's family has so much beauty to offer in this world today».

#### ***Charisma surpasses us***

«Charisma is never unnecessary. My dear brothers and sisters: the charism does not depend on who we are; we are necessary, but the charisma surpasses those who try to live it».

#### ***A gift for the Church and the world***

«The most precious gift that we can offer to the Church and to the world is the witness of our communion as the family of Don Bosco».

#### ***A family close to those in need***

«It is something wonderful to be able to feel that Don Bosco's family is always close to those who are most affected».

**Reason for hope**

«We are not a Salesian family closed between us».

**A life to share**

«The young people of the Salesian Youth Movement are not in the Salesian world to seek the feast, but to discover the life to be shared».

**Young people as apostles of other young people**

«... I'm going to tell you about a passionate and lover of young people, who is he? It is Pope Francis, and he has countless messages telling you young people that you must be apostles of the young».

**A provocation from the Pope to young people**

«Basically, the Pope says it with this provocation: do not be young people on the sofa, be missionary apostles, this is my suggestion for you young people».

**Creativity, a gift in difficult times**

«It's true that this difficult year, in a way woke up, sparked a lot of creativity, made use of possibilities, it's a gift, of great value».

**The path of hope**

«It is a simple path for today, even more in these times and very in tune with the Gospel and with Pope Francis himself».

**Extraordinary service to the Gospel and to the Church**

«We hope that the Salesian Family will be able to create a dialogue and bridges with young people and also with so many adults. It would be an extraordinary service to the Gospel and to the Church».

**Congratulations!**

«I am impressed... with everything you have prepared: congratulations! And I would add that, I think it is an expression of the good health that we have as a Salesian Family».

**Saints celebrate**

«I am really very happy, I congratulate you and I believe that our saints in heaven are also celebrating today, thanks to you. Congratulations!».

**Testimony of life****A challenge...**

« Sharing the common mission and bringing together consecrated persons and lay people is a challenge».

**Family communion**

«The greatest value and witness that we can give is that of communion among us as the family of Don Bosco».

**In these times that await us...**

«Let us walk together on the path of communion».

**Young people and the option for the poor**

«Our young people in the face of faith and commitment to the poor respond very well when they feel that the proposal has touched their hearts».

**Challenge by example**

«My dear brothers and sisters, at all times, but even more so today, what is most convincing is not the words, but the testimony».

**Let's be a bridge for many people**

«I encourage you my dear brothers and sisters, that with our way of life we are a bridge for many people».

**The force that unites us**

«Faith in Jesus Christ and all this strength of the Salesian charism that unites us is very significant, especially in a world where everything is so individualized».

**Know each other more...**

«My dear Salesian Family, we must try to get to know each other better, at least in our own nation, in our own country, and to know the reality of the groups of the Salesian Family that are present there».

**In times of crisis... let's go together!**

«In times of crisis, in times of confinement, in these strange times, I believe that we, of the Family of Don Bosco, can distinguish ourselves by these aspects which are very human, to meet, to recognize each other, to rejoice in the good that is happening to another group of the family, to feel that we are walking together».

**A reality in motion**

«Our Family and the Salesian Youth Movement in our presence must be a reality that is put into action to invite others».

**To give the best of oneself**

«See how we can continue to give the best of ourselves, in a personal capacity, each in his own vocation, also as a Salesian Family, the Family of Don Bosco»

**The perfect call for the Salesian Family**

«Look at the new Encyclical Fratelli Tutti "All Brothers", which ... which is really also of an evangelical force ... and social and dialogue ... I could say that there

are two calls among many others things, two calls that the Holy Father addresses to us and that I think are perfect for us as the Salesian Family, are:

First, the whole encyclical is an invitation to come out of ourselves, of ourselves, an excellent program for our Salesian Family. And the second, the Pope wants it to be an opportunity for dialogue».

### **The heart opens from within**

«I learned something a long time ago that I share with you, they say that the human heart, every person's heart has a key, a key, but this key, only opens from the inside and this , only when the person feels appreciated, feels confident, the feeling that... I am here with you, because I love you».

## **Moved by hope**

### ***Reasons to continue to have hope***

«I am going to tell you a first reason to continue to hope at this time: the fact that we are a beautiful religious family within the Church, and that the world, if the Salesian charism were to disappear, would be much more impoverished».

### **Called to be light in these difficult times**

«In these difficult times, and this has been the case throughout history, there have always been people who, where they are, shine a lot of light: lay people of the Salesian family, consecrated men / women, I say it taking, for example, the testimony in Cuba of the venerable missionary Vandor or of that giant figure who was with us until last week: Father Bruno Roccaro. ».

### **Will we do the same thing that has always been done?**

«When fortunately and with the blessing of God passes this pandemic, what will this new normal be,... We, of the Salesian Family, will we do the same thing that has always been done? ... This is the danger that the new normal is going back to the old or better that the new situation will really make us want to get the best values that we have seen, that we have and that we are capable of».

### **Inner strength**

«Let us think of Don Bosco and of so many of our saints, who did not have the easier task and instead of abandoning themselves to pessimism, on the contrary, they had that interior strength which comes from faith and which arouses hope».

### **Moved by hope**

«When I say: hope animates us, that means, as Saint Paul says in his second letter to Timothy 1:12, "for I know in whom I have believed" Well, it is our case, we know who we lean on, in this ... new normal».

## Our vocation

### ***The Valdocco option***

«Presence, presence and presence, among the people with whom we are».

### ***Aspirants: Do not be afraid and fall in love with Don Bosco!***

«My first suggestion and first wish for all of you aspirants to the precious vocation of Salesian Cooperator is that you have great enthusiasm, do not be afraid, that you fall in love with Don Bosco, as you already are. Jesus, and that you really want to be living forces in the Salesian Family».

### ***Salesian vocation***

«Vocation gives us all the strength to be very alive in our Salesian Family».

### **We are a united family**

«We cannot look at reality with pessimism, we must value it, for example, witness that as a Salesian family we are more united, that we can offer something good to so many families and young people who are around of us and that there will always be those who feel that their hearts have been very favorably touched by the testimony that we give them».

### **A family that goes out to meet**

«I am very happy to see all the creativity and initiative of our Salesian Family in the world which has not placed itself in isolation in their universe, and in this sense I can assure you that as sons and daughters of Don Bosco you are not numb».

### **Faith, optimism, joy, presence...**

«All these elements of our charism really make our mission much easier and open the doors to us a lot».

### ***The Salesian Cooperators in the SYM***

«I think of you Salesian Cooperators, in the Salesian Youth Movement, it is a beautiful possibility, a spirituality which leads us to live Salesian spirituality».

### **The vocation: a call**

«Vocation is NOT a strategic plan, it is a call».

### **A vocation that is transmitted**

«Vocation, I believe and life confirms it to me, is transmitted "by contagion", is transmitted by enthusiasm, by admiration».

### **We are Salesian Cooperators... come and see!**

- ★ «Take care of the faith of our young people
- ★ Live prayer, the celebration of faith, we cannot neglect them, social actions are not enough
- ★ We must have the courage to make the proposal, "come and see", come and see».

### **The Salesian Sacrament of Presence**

«Dear brothers and sisters, let us continue to have as strength the most important thing that is so lacking today in fatherhood and motherhood, that is to say the presence, the presence of friendship, the presence in the midst of , what I already said at the beginning, this Salesian sacrament of the presence».

## **Spirituality in the Salesian charism**

### **Pray always and everywhere!**

«I must tell you that the first thing that we must do always and everywhere as a Salesian Family, is to pray».

### **We live life from faith**

«Above all, we are believing men and women, and there are dimensions that cannot be absent, we live life, by faith».

### **Pray some more!**

«The Lord told us to pray, and let us pray more in these difficult times, I was very keen to tell you that too».

### **Spirituality as a seal of "presence"**

«Salesian spirituality, which is focused on God, who is a path of faith and which also signifies family spirit, which is distinguished by welcoming those who come, without condemning anyone, without excluding anyone, which is the spirituality of optimism , joy, which has its own seal of presence, that of wanting to be in the midst of... (Young people)».

### **A value of our spirituality**

«It is true that in this difficult year ... throughout the Salesian world, creativity has appeared more, the desire to make gestures of solidarity, to move in favor of others ... as a value which, I think, is quite our spirituality».

### **Force that transforms adverse realities**

«I start from one of your sentences in which you say that: "the path of faith and hope not only illuminates but gives the necessary strength to change unfavorable or adverse conditions or at least to limit them as much as possible».

### **Certainty in God the Father**

«I thought first of our Lord Jesus Christ himself who, if he did anything, it was to go through life with a deep certainty in the father, a deep trust and abandonment in God the Father, and from there try to relieve, help, transform, give reason to hope».

**Look of faith**

«We cannot be a Salesian Family and believers, men and women of faith, if we do not have this inner strength which prompts us to see, with a look of faith and therefore to trust, to hope».

**Laité engaged****Lay people in public service**

«You lay people have the profile, the perfect ideal for those who have in addition this socio-political vocation to serve as members of the Salesian family in public service and in particular at the socio-political level. We cannot say that it belongs to others, it must also be ours, I am convinced of that».

**Builders of dialogue and reflection in the public service**

«If we believe that something is important, we have to make it explicit, we have to put it on the table, we have to make it the motive of our dialogue and reflection. I invite you to also speak about this need in your associations and groups».

«Moved by hope: 'See, I am making all things new" (Rev 21.5)»

Strenna 2021

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