

## Spirituality

### **Art. 22. Horizons of the apostolic spirituality of the Salesian Family**

Apostolic spirituality is the centre that inspires and animates the life of communion in and for the mission of the Salesian Family. It is, in fact, a communion which does not arise from human planning, nor does it coincide with an organisation no matter how perfect, nor with refined techniques for bringing people together, but flows from that pastoral charity which, having been evoked by the Spirit in the heart of Don Bosco, inspired him even to the heights of holiness.

Spirituality means that our life is being guided by the Spirit, who graces with his charisms the various groups belonging to the one Family. Apostolic means an inner force which spurs on to donation and service, giving salvific effectiveness to the educative and evangelising activity and uniting the whole of life around this centre of inspiration.

Moved by faith, hope and charity, the members of the Salesian Family share in the action of God, who is always working to communicate His merciful love to every individual, and they feel themselves to be fully a part of the communion and apostolate of the Church.

### **Art. 23. Collaborating with God the Father**

Putting God as the unifying centre of one's life, the source of fraternal communion and the inspiration for one's activity, presupposes a certain image of God – not the distant God, totally immersed in His solitary state and imperturbable silence with no interest in the earth, but God-Love (see 1 Jn. 4:16) who gives Himself totally to humanity, a "Father who goes on working" (Jn. 5:17), sharing the life of His children, engaged in responding in practical ways and with infinite love to people's expectations; a God so involved in our history as to lay Himself open to human freedom, accepting the risk of rejection, always giving Himself as love which forgives (*agape*).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See DCE 10.

Silently but effectively working within history, this God associates with Himself active and busy co-workers, who in the practical circumstances of life devote all their energies to proclaiming His love and undertaking good works, drawing from Him the strength to love, give and serve.

For the Salesian Family and its members, "living in the presence of God" means cultivating an intense and constant loving relationship with Him ("union with God"); feeling oneself therefore filled with a love similar to His, that which gives itself in a loving and selfless way and freely spends itself for the special beneficiaries of the mission; it also means knowing how to see and to respond to the signs of his mysterious presence in the expectations and the requests of the men and women of our day.

It is to this God, the merciful Father, that Don Bosco addressed his heartfelt prayer: "*Da mihi animas, cetera tolle*". To all his disciples, men and women, Don Bosco repeats: "The most divine of all divine things is to cooperate with God in the salvation of souls, and it is a sure path to the highest holiness".

#### **Art. 24. Living with the sentiments of Christ**

Don Bosco placed at the centre of his spiritual life and apostolic action a convinced devotion to Jesus present in the Eucharist, *the Master of the house* – as he often used to say – and to the Divine Saviour, whose gestures of salvation he wanted to imitate.

Grafted onto Christ by virtue of our Baptism, we allow ourselves to be assimilated to Him, docile to the action of the Spirit, so as to be able to say with Saint Paul: "Life to me is Christ" (Phil. 1:21), "I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20); but also hearing the other exhortation of the Apostle: "In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

This means: an attentive awareness of being the One sent by God guided in everything by the Spirit; unconditional obedience to the will of the Father in carrying out the mission entrusted to Him; facing with courage difficulties and contradictions (see Jn. 5:17-18); the continuous and generous commitment to freeing people from all kinds of death

and communicating to everyone life and joy; a passionate concern for the little ones and the poor with the solicitude of the Good Shepherd; love which always forgives even to becoming a victim on the cross; the promise of being the travelling companion of His disciples as He was with the two on the way to Emmaus.

It is the image of the Good Shepherd, in particular, which inspires our activity, indicating two valuable aspects of Salesian apostolic spirituality.

The *first*: The apostle of the Lord puts at the centre of his or her attention individuals as such, and loves them just as they are, without prejudice or exception, precisely as the Good Shepherd does, even with the lost sheep.

The *second*: the apostle does not put himself forward but always and only the Lord Jesus, the only one who can liberate from all forms of slavery, the only one who can lead to the pastures of eternal life (see Jn. 10:1-15), the only one who never abandons the lost sheep but makes His own the weakness, and full of confidence and hope, goes in search of the lost, retrieves and leads the lost back so that the lost might have life to the full.

Rooted in Christ and conformed to Him is the deepest joy for a son or daughter of Don Bosco. From this comes love for the Word and the desire to live the mystery of Christ re-presented by the liturgy of the Church; the careful celebration of the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, which educate to Christian freedom, to conversion of heart and to the spirit of sharing and service; participation in the Paschal mystery of the Lord, which opens the way to a new understanding of life and of its meaning, personal and communitarian, interior and social.

### **Art. 25. Being docile to the Spirit**

The Christian life is, of its very nature, life in the Spirit. Caught up in the process of renewal promoted by Vatican Council II, the Salesian Family has tried to deepen its relationship with the Spirit of the Risen Lord, defining its own identity in terms of Don Bosco's charism, a true gift of the Spirit and source of the spirituality that animated his apostolic Family.

The features of the person of the Holy Spirit taken from the revealed Word, are particularly illuminating for the spiritual-apostolic life of those belonging to the various groups of the Salesian Family: the Spirit is the Creator and gives life; the Spirit is the One sent by the Father and by the Risen Lord in order to extend in history the work of salvation; it is the Spirit who introduces believers to the Truth/Christ so that they may live in Him and of Him; the Spirit is the voice who speaks to the conscience of people to open them to the light of truth and prepare them for the gift of love;<sup>22</sup> the Spirit is a presence particularly alive and active in Christians communities, uniting them in communion and service, instilling in the faithful the spirit of the mission; the Spirit is the One who anticipates, assists and accompanies those who are engaged in the work of evangelisation.<sup>23</sup>

The attitudes that the members of the Salesian Family are called to assume in regard to this Spirit are: serenity and trust in the certainty that we are always supported by the power of the Spirit; docility to the secret inspirations; wise discernment of the presence in human events, both personal and communitarian; intelligent and courageous collaboration in the work for the coming of the Kingdom of God in people's lives, in the Church and in society; gratitude for the charism of Don Bosco and generosity in putting into practice his educational and apostolic plan.

### **Art. 26. Communion and mission in the Church**

Don Bosco had a great love for the Church, which he showed in his sense of belonging to the ecclesial community. At the same time, aware of having received a particular charism for the education of youth, he developed it so as to build up the Church in various cultural contexts. Don Bosco's Family has among its family treasures a rich tradition of filial fidelity to the Successor of Peter, and of communion and collaboration with the local Churches: "No effort should be spared when the Church and the Pope are at stake".<sup>24</sup> "The counsels and even their (the Popes') wishes must be a command for us".<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See AA 29c; GS 22e.

<sup>23</sup> See AG 4.

<sup>24</sup> Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, *BM V (New Rochelle: Salesiana, 1969)*, 383; *C SDB art. 13*.

<sup>25</sup> See *BM V*, 380

This unconditional devotion to the Pope was in Don Bosco an expression of his passion for the Church. And it is an inheritance that we accept and by which we live.

The Church, in fact, is the visible presence of the Risen Christ in the history of humanity; it is the communion of brothers and sisters in the unity of the faith and in the variety of charisms and ministries; it is charity which urges us to make the love of God known by proclaiming the Gospel; it is a service offered to humanity in order to build a world that corresponds to God's plan; it is a family which finds the centre of its unity in Christ the Lord and the servant of unity in the Successor of Peter.

The spirituality inherited from Don Bosco is eminently ecclesial: it expresses and nourishes the communion of the Church, building up within Christian communities a network of fraternal relationships and active collaboration; it is an educational spirituality that sets out to help young people and the poor feel at ease in the Church, and to become builders of the Church and participators in her mission; it is a spirituality which enriches the whole Church with the gift of the holiness of so many of his sons and daughters.

### **Art. 27. Everyday spirituality**

Don Bosco drew inspiration from Saint Francis de Sales, recognising him as the teacher of a spirituality that was simple because based on essentials, popular because open to all, attractive because full of human values, and therefore particularly suitable in the work of education. In his fundamental work (*Treatise on the Love of God*, or *Theotimus*), the holy bishop of Geneva speaks about "ecstasy". This word does not so much indicate extraordinary spiritual phenomena as, according to the etymology of the word, going out from oneself and being inclined towards the other; it is the experience of someone who allows oneself to be attracted, convinced and conquered by God, entering ever more deeply His mystery. For Saint Francis de Sales there are three kinds of ecstasy:

- **intellectual ecstasy:** this is wonder at what God is, but also amazement at the great things God has done in creation and continues to do in the life of individuals and in the history of humanity; it is a gaze which grows clearer if we use it in

meditating on the Word: it is the Word, in fact, which opens our eyes so that we can see things as God sees them;

- ***affective ecstasy***: this is having a personal experience of the love of God for us, so that the desire to correspond to it grows, and, nourished by such a love, we are ready to give our talents and our lives for God's glory and the cause of the Kingdom; it presupposes constant vigilance, purification of the heart, the practice of prayer;
- ***ecstasy of action and of life***: for Saint Francis de Sales, it is this which crowns the other two, because intellectual ecstasy could become pure speculation, and affective ecstasy simple sentiment. Ecstasy of action, on the other hand, reveals a generosity and a selflessness that can come only from God; and it is transformed into practical and effective dedication to people's good in various forms of charity.

The Salesian Family, in its reflection on Don Bosco the Founder, has translated the nature of the spirituality and the mysticism of Saint Francis de Sales into a simple and challenging formula: *everyday spirituality*.

### **Art. 28. Don Bosco's "contemplation in action"**

The mysticism of Don Bosco finds its expression in his motto *Da mihi animas, cetera tolle*, and is identified with the "ecstasy of action" of Saint Francis de Sales. It is the mysticism of daily work in harmony of thought, feeling and will with God; in such a way that the needs of one's brothers and sisters, especially the young, and apostolic concerns are an invitation to prayer, while constant prayer nourishes the generous and self-sacrificing working with God for the good of one's brothers and sisters.

It is the mysticism of "contemplation in action" described as follows by Blessed Fr. Philip Rinaldi, who knew Don Bosco's inner life very well: "Don Bosco *combined* to the highest degree exterior activity, tireless, totally absorbing, on a vast scale, full of responsibility, with an interior life which was based on a sense of the presence of God, and which little by little, became habitual, constant and vital so as to be *perfect*

*union* with God. In this way he came to that state of perfection which is *contemplation in action*, the ecstasy of action, in which he was totally absorbed until the very end, with ecstatic serenity, in the salvation of souls".<sup>26</sup>

The Salesian Family takes up this mysticism, lived so intensely by Don Bosco, and left by him as a precious heritage to all his spiritual disciples.

### **Art. 29. Dynamic apostolic charity**

Dynamic apostolic charity represents the heart of Don Bosco's spirit, the essence of Salesian life, as well as the force behind the apostolic commitment of the members of the Salesian Family.

**Charity/Love** is the very name of God (see I Jn. 4:16). It does not indicate merely the powers of the human heart but is participation in the anticipatory mercy of the Father, in the compassionate heart of Christ and the indescribable love of the Holy Spirit. This is the distinguishing feature of the disciples of the Lord: loving one another with the same love with which God loves.

**Apostolic.** Apostolic charity is participation in the infinite love of the Father, who sends Jesus so that we may have life to the full; it is a sharing in the solicitude of the Good Shepherd for the salvation of all; it is openness to the flow of love with which the Spirit works in consciences and in people's life-history.

**Dynamic.** Apostolic charity expresses lively activity, a capacity for innovation, not being satisfied with what has been done already, not giving way to habit, avoiding all kinds of mediocrity and the comfortable, but rather with passion and creativity seeking the most necessary and effective way of responding in practical terms to the expectations of the world of youth and of the working classes.

For Don Bosco all this implied an *oratorian heart*: it is fervour, zeal, making all possible resources available, seeking new paths, a capacity to resist under trial, the will to start again after defeats, an optimism that is nurtured and cultivated and spread abroad; it is that concern, full of faith and of charity, which finds in Mary a shining example of self-giving.

<sup>26</sup> Filippo Rinaldi, *Conferenze e scritti* (Turin: LDC, 1990), p. 144.

In the groups in which Salesian service is directed towards infants and children, dynamic apostolic charity becomes evangelical tenderness; in the groups which educate adolescents and young people it becomes acceptance, participation and guidance in the goals of growth and development; in the groups dedicated to the care of people affected by various forms of poverty it has a tone of merciful and providential love; in the groups whose apostolate is among the sick and the elderly it becomes compassionate charity; in the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts it shows itself in oblatinal love, especially towards the lepers; in the groups engaged in a Salesian apostolate among simple people scattered in far-distant villages or immersed in urban slums, it becomes a humble love that offers solidarity and oneself.

### **Art. 30. The grace of unity**

Expressions used in Salesian circles to refer to the source of this apostolic charity are the grace of unity, apostolic interior life, the contemplative dimension of life, a vital synthesis, a single movement of love for God and for the young, the liturgy of life.

*Evangelising by educating and educating by evangelising* is a formula well known by now to express the interior unity of the members of the Salesian Family, since it refers not only to a method of education but also to the spirituality of individuals and of the groups: when one allows oneself to be guided by the Spirit, life and the apostolate form a single whole, just like prayer and action, love for God and one's neighbour, attention to oneself and dedication to others, education in human values and the proclamation of the Gospel, belonging to a group and being part of the Church.

Everything leads to unity; and it is the vital synthesis which is holiness. From this comes an incredible force for action and witness, by the power of the Spirit, who has taken possession of all the people to make them free and joyful instruments of his action.

Apostolic charity constitutes for everyone belonging to the Salesian Family the inner principle and force capable of unifying the many different daily activities and preoccupations. It fosters the fusion in

a single inner movement of the two inseparable poles of apostolic charity: passion for God and passion for one's neighbour.

### **Art. 31. Preferential love for the young and dedication to ordinary people**

To carry out the mission to the young and the working classes effectively, all the disciples of Don Bosco cultivate a genuine predilection for the young and devote themselves to the working classes. They are convinced that they have an experience of God precisely through those to whom they are sent: young people and the ordinary people, in particular the poor.

*Boys and girls* are recognised as a gift from God to the Salesian Family; they are the field shown to Don Bosco by the Lord and by Mary in which to carry out his work; for all of us they are the objects of the Salesian vocation and mission.

Being dedicated to the young means having one's heart constantly turned towards them, picking up their aspirations and desires, problems and needs. It also means meeting them at the point where they are in their process of maturing – not just to be in their company, but rather to lead them to where they are called; for this reason educators recognise the power for good that the young have within them and support them in their growing pains both human and Christian, identifying with them and for them possible educational opportunities. In the heart of educators and evangelisers full of passion always resound the words of Paul: "The love of Christ overwhelms us" (II Cor. 5:14).

*The world of the working classes* is the natural and ordinary context in which we encounter the young, especially those most in need of help. The commitment of Don Bosco's Family is addressed to ordinary people, supporting them in their efforts for human development and growth in their faith, indicating and promoting the human and Gospel values it stands for, such as the meaning of life, hope for a better future and the exercise of solidarity.

Don Bosco traced out also with the Association of the Salesian Cooperators and the Association of Mary Help of Christians a path of

education to the Faith for the people, making good use of the contents of popular religious devotions.

In addition, he dedicated himself to the promotion of the means of communication, so as to reach as many people as possible for the purposes of education and evangelisation.

### **Art. 32. Salesian loving-kindness**

The loving-kindness of Don Bosco is without doubt a characteristic trait of his pedagogical method considered still valid today, both in contexts still Christian and in those in which young people belonging to other religions are living.

It cannot, however, be reduced to simply being a pedagogical principle; it needs to be recognised as an essential element of our spirituality. It is, in fact, authentic love because it draws its strength from God; it is love which shows itself in the language of simplicity, cordiality and fidelity; it is love which gives rise to a desire to correspond; it is love which calls forth trust, opening the way to confidence and profound communication ("education is a matter of the heart"); it is love which spreads out and in this way creates a family atmosphere, where being together is beautiful and enriching.

For the educator, it is a love which demands a strong spiritual effort: the willingness to be there and stay there; self-renunciation and sacrifice; chastity in affections and self-control in attitudes; participation in dialogue and patient waiting in order to identify the most appropriate moment and the best ways; the capacity to forgive and renew contacts; the meekness of the one who sometimes knows how to lose, but continues to believe with unlimited hope. There is no real love without asceticism, and there is no asceticism without an encounter with God in prayer.

Loving-kindness is the fruit of pastoral charity. Don Bosco used to say: "On what is this reciprocal affection based? ... On the desire I have to save your souls, which were redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and you love me because I try to lead you on the paths of eternal

salvation. Therefore, the good of our souls is the foundation of our affection.<sup>27</sup>

In this way loving-kindness becomes a *sign* of the love of God, and a means of reawakening God's presence in the hearts of those who are reached by Don Bosco's goodness; it is a way of evangelisation. From this comes the conviction that the apostolic spirituality of the Salesian Family is characterised not by a generic kind of love, but by the ability to *love and make oneself loved*.

### **Art. 33. Optimism and joy in hope**

In Jesus of Nazareth God reveals Himself as the "God of joy",<sup>28</sup> and the Gospel is "good news" that begins with the "Beatitudes": men and women sharing in the blessedness of God Himself. It is a question of a not insignificant but profound gift, since joy, rather than being a passing sentiment, is an interior power that is able to resist in the face of the difficulties of life. Saint Paul says, "In all our hardship, I am filled with encouragement and overflowing with joy" (II Cor. 7:4). In this sense the joy we experience here below is an Easter gift, a foretaste of that full joy we will possess in eternity.

Don Bosco took the desire for happiness the boys had and translated their joy of life into the language of cheerfulness, of the playground, of celebration; but he never stopped pointing out to them that God was the source of true joy. Some of his writings, such as *The Companion of Youth*, the biography of Dominic Savio, the explanation contained in the story of Valentine, are a demonstration of the connection that he established between grace and happiness. And his insistence on the "rewards of heaven" projected the joys of here below into the perspective of their completion and fullness.

At the school of Don Bosco, the person belonging to the Salesian Family cultivates some attitudes that encourage joy and communicates them to others.

<sup>27</sup> *Giovanni Bosco, Letter to Fr. Joseph Lazzero and the community of the artisans at Valdocco, Rome, 20 January 1874, in Epistolario, ed. Francesco Motto, vol. IV (Rome: LAS, 2003), p. 208.*

<sup>28</sup> *Saint Francis de Sales, Letter to President Brulart, Annecy, 18 February 1605, in Oeuvres, vol. XIII, 16.*

1. *Confidence in the victory of good*: «Even the most callous boys have a soft spot”, Don Bosco writes. “The first duty of the educator is to locate that sensitive spot, that responsive chord in the boy’s heart, and take advantage of it».<sup>29</sup>

2. *Appreciation of human values*: The disciple of Don Bosco is able to make one’s own what is good in the world and does not bewail one’s own times; the disciple accepts all that is good, especially if it appeals to the young and the people.

3. *Education to the joys of every day*: a patient effort of education is needed in order to learn or to re-learn, to enjoy, with simplicity, the many human joys that the Creator puts in our path every day.

Since they entrust themselves every day totally to the “God of joy” and bear witness in words and works to the “Gospel of joy”, all the disciples of Don Bosco are always joyful. They spread this joy and know how to educate to the happiness of Christian life and to a sense of celebration, remembering Saint Paul’s exhortation, “I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord” (Phil. 4:4). .

#### **Art. 34. Work and temperance**

The exercise of apostolic charity includes the need for conversion and purification, in other words, the death of the old man/woman so that the new man/woman may be born, live and grow, who in the image of Jesus, the Apostle of the Father, is ready to sacrifice himself/herself every day in apostolic work. Giving oneself means emptying oneself and allowing oneself to be filled by God so as to give Him to others. Detachment, renunciation, sacrifice are essential elements, not only because of any taste for ascetism, but fundamentally by the logic of love. There is no apostolate without ascetism and there is no asceticism without mysticism. Whoever puts his whole self at the service of the mission has no need for extraordinary penances; the difficulties of life and the fatigue of apostolic work are sufficient if they are accepted with faith and offered with love.

<sup>29</sup> *BM V, p. 237.*

The asceticism recommended by Don Bosco has various aspects: *the asceticism of humility*, so as not to feel like anything other than servants before God; *the asceticism of mortification*, so as to be in control of oneself, guarding one's senses and one's heart and taking care that seeking after comfort does not cause generosity to dry up; *the asceticism of courage and patience*, so as to be able to persevere with one's actions when confronted by hard reality; *the asceticism of abandonment*, when events take us closer to the cross of Christ.

### **Art. 35. Initiative and adaptability**

The desire to do good means looking for the best ways to put it into practice. At stake are the correct interpretation of needs and practical possibilities, spiritual discernment in the light of the Word of God, the courage to take the initiative, creativity in identifying untried solutions, adaptation to changing circumstances, the ability to collaborate, and the willingness to evaluate.

Fr. Philip Rinaldi reminds the Salesians – and what he says applies to all the groups of the Salesian Family: “This flexibility in adapting to every form of good continually arising among humanity is the spirit proper to our Constitutions: the day in which a variation contrary to this spirit should be introduced would be the end of our Society”.<sup>30</sup>

There are many words of Don Bosco recommending a spirit of initiative: “I do not hesitate to take a risk in projects which may benefit endangered youth or help lead souls to God”.<sup>31</sup> “Let us always . . . strive to meet their wishes as best as we can, adjusting to modern requirements, local customs and traditions as far as our conscience allows us”.<sup>32</sup>

It is not only a question of strategy, but also a spiritual matter, since it implies a constant renewal of themselves and of their actions in obedience to the Spirit and in the light of the signs of the times.

The coming into being of numerous groups of the Salesian Family which began in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the fruit of the spirit of initiative

<sup>30</sup> Egidio Viganò, “Don Philip Rinaldi, Authentic Witness and Interpreter of the ‘Salesian Spirit’”, in AGC no. 332, Rome, 5 December 1989.

<sup>31</sup> Letter to Charles Vespignani, *Epistolario*, ed. Eugenio Ceria, vol. III (Turin: SEI, 1958), 166-167; cf. Eugenio Ceria, *BM XIV (New Rochelle: Salesiana, 1985)*, 536.

<sup>32</sup> Eugenio Ceria, *BM XIII (New Rochelle: Salesiana, 1983)*, 210.

and of the flexibility of the respective founders, faithful and creative sons of Don Bosco.

### **Art. 36. The spirit of Salesian prayer**

Salesian prayer is *apostolic prayer*; it is a movement that starts from action in order to reach God, and it is a movement that, from God, leads back to action with Him, since mind and heart are filled with His love.

Don Bosco did not devote long hours to prayer, nor did he use any particular methods or forms (for him the “practices of the good Christian” were enough), because in him action and prayer were all one. The extraordinary work in which he was engaged from morning until night did not disturb his prayer; rather, it gave rise to it and guided it. The prayer cultivated in the depth of his heart nourished in him renewed energies of charity to dedicate himself with everything he had for the benefit of his poor boys.

The very name *oratory* given to his first institution is meant to convey that everything in that place was prayer or could become prayer; and that whatever good was done in that house was the fruit of prayer: that of Don Bosco, his collaborators and his boys.

Prayer expands and therefore is typical of those who live Don Bosco’s spirituality and carry out his mission. Not, however, to the neglect of those moments of explicit prayer, nourished by listening to the Word of God and a loving response, which transform life into prayer, prayer into life.

### **Art. 37. Mary Help of Christians, teacher of apostolic spirituality**

Devotion to Mary has been one of the three devotions (together with that to Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and to the Pope) which marked the spiritual and apostolic life of Don Bosco. The whole Salesian Family is and feels itself to be a *Marian Family*, which came into being through the motherly care of the Immaculate Help of Christians. All the groups, in fact, express this conviction in their own Constitutions.

For the Salesians, Mary Help of Christians is the model and guide in their educational and apostolic activity,<sup>33</sup> mother and teacher in their formative experience,<sup>34</sup> particularly invoked in their prayer.<sup>35</sup>

For the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Mary the Virgin Mother, the humble handmaid, Mother of the Saviour, is mother and teacher of every Salesian vocation and the “real superior of the Institute”.<sup>36</sup> She is the model of faith, hope, charity, and union with God, of motherly care and tenderness, of consecrated life, prayer, openness, listening, docility, collaboration, and apostolic charity.<sup>37</sup>

The Salesian Cooperators “in the Immaculate Virgin and Help of Christians discover the deepest elements of their vocation: being true ‘Cooperators of God’ in the realisation of his salvific plan”.<sup>38</sup>

For those belonging to the Association of Mary Help of Christians, entrustment to Mary means “living a daily spirituality with evangelical attitudes, especially with thanksgiving to God for the wonders he continually works, and with fidelity to him even in times of difficulty and grace, following Mary’s example”.<sup>39</sup>

According to the Sisters of the Charity of Jesus, Mary helps them to live animated by the Holy Spirit, to put Jesus Christ at the centre of their lives, to nourish a sincere love and great confidence in her in their relationships with people, to imitate the example of the woman of faith who seeks the will of God in ordinary daily life, of the loving mother concerned about others, of the disciple of the Son who listens to the Word, of the consoler of the afflicted, of the help of Christians and the mother of humanity.<sup>40</sup>

The Damas Salesianas in their *Ideario* put it this way: “Mary is the first committed laywoman who in the giving of herself faithfully accepts the plan of God, brings to life his word, as woman, spouse and mother, teacher and witness, the first to be evangelised and to evangelise. She is the inspiration and the model to be followed by the Dama Salesiana,

<sup>33</sup> See *Const SDB art. 20 34 92.*

<sup>34</sup> See *Ibid art. 98.*

<sup>35</sup> See *Ibid art. 84 87 92.*

<sup>36</sup> See *Cost FMA art. 17 18 44 79 114.*

<sup>37</sup> See *Ibid art. 4 7 11 14 37 39 44 79 71.*

<sup>38</sup> *SPAL art. 20.*

<sup>39</sup> *New Regulations of ADMA art. 4.*

<sup>40</sup> See *Cost SCG art.12.*

and all this leads us to declare her to be the First Dama Salesiana, the norm, the guide, the inspiration, mother, sister and faithful companion in our mission".<sup>41</sup>

Daily entrustment to Mary therefore is a characteristic of our spirituality. Entrustment has an upward action: it is a giving of oneself in order to respond generously to a mission to be accomplished; but there is also a downward motion: accepting with trust and gratitude the help of her who guided Don Bosco and continues to guide the spiritual Family which has its origin in him.

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<sup>41</sup> See *Ideario DS* art. 14.