

Salesian Cardinals

Throughout the history of the Salesian Congregation, the popes have chosen some of its members as cardinals, that is, as his closest collaborators in the government of the Universal Church. Always a reason for joy and sadness: joy because of the appreciation of the service performed by certain Salesians, sadness because the Congregation has to do without one of its most valuable members.

The term “cardinal” comes from Latin and means “hinge”, i.e. a point around which a door usually revolves. Or perhaps it can be better understood if we recall the cardinal virtues, i.e. the virtues around which all other human virtues revolve.

Cardinals are people who have received the sacrament of Holy Orders and are called by the Pope to perform a mission alongside him in the Universal Church, either individually or collegially. They hold the most important positions in the Roman Curia.

Their importance also lies in the fact that they are the ones who have the mission of electing the new pontiff (only the electors, i.e. those who have not reached the age of 80), with the College of Cardinals gathered in Conclave, when the *Sede Vacante* occurs.

There are three groups of cardinals: Cardinal-bishops, who are the holders of the suburbicarian dioceses (outside the walls of Rome or in the city’s environs) and, by decision after the Second Vatican Council, the Eastern Patriarchs elevated to the cardinalate (who retain the title of their own patriarchal see); Cardinal-presbyters – the most numerous -, and Cardinal-deacons. The latter two orders are respectively assigned titles or deaconships (churches) in Rome. These honorary titles reflect their closeness to the Pope.

There are usually 6 Cardinal-bishops (there are 6 suburbicarian Sees), but today, by virtue of a papal dispensation, 4 more Cardinal-bishops are appointed *ad*

personam (without the cardinal title being elevated to an episcopal title) and 2 more patriarchs, in total 12, of whom 6 are electors.

There are 182 Cardinal-presbyters, of whom 97 are electors.

The Cardinal deacons are 27, of whom 16 are electors.

In total there are 221 cardinals, of whom 119 are electors.

Cardinals are usually chosen from among bishops, archbishops, metropolitans or patriarchs, but there have also been appointments among priests. Pope St John Paul II appointed 9 priests as cardinals, Pope Benedict XVI appointed 5 priests as cardinals and Pope Francis has so far appointed 8 priests as cardinals, 10 if we consider the latest announcement on 9 July.


The first Salesian to be elevated to the dignity of cardinal was Archbishop John Cagliero, on 6 December 1915. After him, 18 other Salesians received the cardinal's biretta and the 20th, Fr Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, will receive it on 30 September next. He is the first Rector Major to receive the cardinal's red hat.





For many people looking in from the outside, the first thing they see is the dignity it implies; but even if this is real, Pope Francis reminds them that it is not a privilege, but a service, and the red colour means it must be performed until the outpouring of blood. And it is an unspecified service that requires total availability. God asked Abraham to set out without specifying where he would go, to prove his faith; similarly for the new cardinals.

We wish our Rector Major, Fr Ángel many graces from the Lord to guide him in his new mission and assure him of our prayers.

In the hope of making more and more Salesian cardinals known, we present below the list of all these cardinals with the dates and the most important offices they have held or continue to hold to date.




<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	11.01.1838, Castelnuovo d'Asti, Italy
Ordained priest	14.06.1862
Consecrated Bishop	07.12.1884
Created Cardinal	06.12.1915
Coat of arms	<div></div>
Motto	Recto fixus Calli ero
Apostolic Vicar of Northern Patagonia (Argentina)	30.09.1884 – 24.03.1904
Titular Bishop of Magyddus	30.10.1884 – 24.03.1904
Titular Archbishop of Sebastia	24.03.1904 – 06.12.1915
Apostolic Delegate in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras	07.08.1908 – 06.12.1915
Cardinal Parish Priest of St. Bernard at the Baths	09.12.1915 – 16.12.1920
Cardinal-Bishop of Frascati	16.12.1920 – 28.02.1926
He was inspector for 2 years, bishop for 41 years of which 10 Cardinal	
Deceased	28.02.1926, Rome, Italy, † 88
<div></div>	
<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	05.07.1881, Brzeczkwice, Poland
Ordained priest	23.09.1905
Consecrated Bishop	03.01.1926
Created Cardinal	20.06.1927
Coat of arms	<div></div>

Motto	Da mihi animas cetera tolle
Apostolic Administrator of Upper Silesia (Poland)	07.11.1922 – 28.10.1925
Bishop of Katowice (Poland)	28.10.1925 – 24.06.1926
President of the Polish Episcopal Conference	1926 – 22.10.1948
Metropolitan Archbishop of Poznań (Poland)	24.06.1926 – 03.05.1946
Metropolitan Archbishop of Gniezno (Poland)	24.06.1926 – 22.10.1948
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Mary of Peace	22.12.1927 – 22.10.1948
Founder of the Society of Christ for Polish Immigrants	08.09.1932
Metropolitan Archbishop of Warszawa (Poland)	13.06.1946 – 22.10.1948
Cardinal and Religious of the Salesians of St. John Bosco	
Servus Dei. He was Provincial for 3 years, Apostolic Administrator for 3 years, Archbishop of Warszawa for 23 years and Cardinal Primate of Poland for 21 years. Cause for canonisation is underway	
Deceased	22.10.1948, Warsaw, Poland, † 67
<div></div>	
Born	27.09.1907, Talca, Chile
Ordained priest	03.07.1938

Consecrated Bishop	29.11.1959
Created Cardinal	19.03.1962
Coat of arms	
Motto	Caritas christi urget nos
Bishop of Valparaíso (Chile)	24.10.1959 – 14.05.1961
Metropolitan Archbishop of Santiago (Chile)	14.05.1961 – 03.05.1983
President of Caritas Internationalis	1962 – 1965
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Bernard at the Baths	22.03.1962 – 09.04.1999
President of the Episcopal Conference of Chile	1963 – 1968
President of the Episcopal Conference of Chile	1972 – 1976
He was Bishop of Valparaíso for 3 years, Archbishop of Santiago de Chile for 11 years and Cardinal for 22 years	
Deceased	09.04.1999, Santiago, Chile, † 91
	
Born	26.03.1905, Francova Lhota, Czech Republic
Ordained priest	29.06.1932
Consecrated Bishop	16.11.1947
Created Cardinal in pectore	28.04.1969
Revealed as cardinal	05.03.1973
Coat of arms	




Motto	Actio sacrificium caritas
Bishop of Litoměřice (Czech Republic)	27.09.1947 – 06.04.1974
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. John Bosco in Via Tuscolana	12.04.1973 – 06.04.1974
Was Bishop of Litoměřice (Czech Republic) for 26 years and Cardinal for 5 years	
Deceased	06.04.1974, Litoměřice, Czech Republic, † 69
<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	17.01.1929, Acarigua, Venezuela
Ordained priest	17.12.1955
Consecrated Bishop	06.01.1990
Created Cardinal	21.02.2001
Coat of arms	<div></div>
Motto	Servus Christi pro fratribus
Titular Bishop of Utimmira	23.10.1989 – 27.05.1995
Apostolic Vicar of Puerto Ayacucho (Venezuela)	23.10.1989 – 27.05.1995
Apostolic Administrator of San Fernando de Apure (Venezuela)	27.05.1992 – 12.07.1994
Metropolitan Archbishop of Caracas (Venezuela)	27.05.1995 – 06.07.2003
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Maria Domenica Mazzarello	21.02.2001 [24.05.2001] – 06.07.2003

He was Provincial for 6 years, Regional Councillor for 6 years, Bishop for 13 years, and Cardinal for 2 years	
Deceased	06.07.2003, Caracas, Venezuela, † 74
<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	23.08.1910, Neunkirchen, Austria
Ordained priest	27.03.1937
Consecrated Bishop	01.11.1983
Created Cardinal	25.05.1985
Coat of arms	<div></div>
Motto	Omnia et in omnibus Christus
Rector Magnificus of the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum	1958 – 1966
Prefect of the Vatican Apostolic Library	1971 – 07.09.1983
Titular Archbishop of Bolsena	07.09.1983 – 25.05.1985
Pro-Librarian of the Vatican Apostolic Library	07.09.1983 – 27.05.1985
Pro-Archivist of the Vatican Secret Archives	09.07.1984 – 27.05.1985
Cardinal-Deacon of S. Giorgio in Velabro	25.05.1985 – 29.01.1996
Archivist of the Vatican Secret Archives	27.05.1985 – 01.07.1988
Librarian of the Vatican Apostolic Library	27.05.1985 – 01.07.1988


Cardinal-Parish priest of S. Giorgio in Velabro	29.01.1996 – 12.12.2007
He was titular Archbishop of Bolsena for 2 years and Cardinal for 22 years	
Deceased	12.12.2007, Vatican City State, † 97
	
Born	04.09.1922, San Casimiro, Venezuela
Ordained priest	04.09.1949
Consecrated Bishop	24.05.1973
Created Cardinal	25.05.1985
Coat of arms	
Motto	Misericordia et veritas
Coadjutor Bishop of Trujillo (Venezuela)	26.03.1973 – 05.10.1981
Titular Bishop of Præcausa	26.03.1973 – 26.05.1982
Secretary of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law	12.02.1975 – 22.05.1982
President of the Disciplinary Commission of the Roman Curia	05.10.1981 – 1990
Pro-President of the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law	22.05.1982 – 18.01.1984
Titular Archbishop of Præcausa	26.05.1982 – 25.05.1985




Pro-President of the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law	18.01.1984 – 27.05.1985
Cardinal-Deacon of Our Lady of Coromoto in St. John of God	25.05.1985 – 29.01.1996
President of the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts	27.05.1985 – 06.12.1989
President of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See	06.12.1989 – 24.06.1995
President of the Pontifical Commission for Vatican City State	31.10.1990 – 14.10.1997
Cardinal-Presbyter of Our Lady of Coromoto in St. John of God	29.01.1996 – 16.10.2007
President of the Pontifical Commission for Vatican City State for 7 years	
Deceased	16.10.2007, Caracas, Venezuela, † 85
<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	02.02.1926, La Libertad, Nicaragua
Ordained priest	10.08.1958
Consecrated Bishop	31.03.1968
Created Cardinal	25.05.1985
Coat of arms	<div></div>
Motto	Omnibus omnia factus
Titular Bishop of Putia in Byzacena	18.01.1968 – 16.02.1970


Auxiliary Bishop of Matagalpa (Nicaragua)	18.01.1968 – 16.02.1970
Metropolitan Archbishop of Managua (Nicaragua)	16.02.1970 – 01.04.2005
President of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference	1971 – 1975
President of the Episcopal Secretariat of Central America and Panama	1976 – 1981
President of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference	1979 – 1983
President of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference	1985 – 1989
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. John the Evangelist in Spinaceto	25.05.1985 – 03.06.2018
President of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference	1993 – 1997
President of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference	1999 – 2005
He was Auxiliary Bishop of Matagalpa for 2 years, Bishop of Managua for 15 years, Cardinal for 15 years	
Deceased	03.06.2018, Managua, Nicaragua, † 92
<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	21.02.1921, Siétamo, Spain
Ordained priest	24.04.1949
Consecrated Bishop	29.06.1976
Created Cardinal	28.06.1988




Motto	
Motto	Ego vobiscum sum
Rector magnificus of the Pontifical Salesian University	1971 – 1974
Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education	20.05.1976 – 26.05.1988
Titular Archbishop of Meta	20.05.1976 – 28.06.1988
Cardinal-Deacon of S. Maria Liberatrice at Monte Testaccio	28.06.1988 – 09.01.1999
Archivist of the Vatican Secret Archives	01.07.1988 – 24.01.1992
Librarian of the Vatican Apostolic Library	01.07.1988 – 24.01.1992
Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments	24.01.1992 – 21.06.1996
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Maria Liberatrice at Monte Testaccio	09.01.1999 [24.04.1999] – 01.02.2007
He was titular archbishop of Meta for 12 years and Cardinal for 18 years	
Deceased	01.02.2007, Rome, Italy, † 85
Óscar Andrés RODRÍGUEZ MARADIAGA	
Born	29.12.1942, Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Ordained priest	28.06.1970
Consecrated Bishop	08.12.1978
Created Cardinal	21.02.2001
Coat of arms	



Motto	Mihi vivere Christus est
Titular Bishop of Pudentiana	28.10.1978 – 08.01.1993
Auxiliary Bishop of Tegucigalpa (Honduras)	28.10.1978 – 08.01.1993
Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Honduras	1980 – 1988
Apostolic Administrator of Santa Rosa de Copán (Honduras)	1981 – 27.01.1984
Secretary General of the Latin American Episcopal Council	1987 – 1991
Apostolic Administrator of San Pedro Sula (Honduras)	1993 – 11.11.1994
Metropolitan Archbishop of Tegucigalpa (Honduras)	08.01.1993 – 26.01.2023
President of the Latin American Bishops' Council	1995 – 1999
President of the Episcopal Conference of Honduras	1996 – 13.06.2016
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Mary of Hope	21.02.2001 [27.05.2001] – ...
President of Caritas Internationalis	05.06.2007 [09.06.2007] – 15.05.2015
Coordinator of the Council of Cardinals	13.04.2013 – 07.03.2023
Cardinal Emeritus	2023
Age	80
Tarcisio BERTONE	
Born	02.12.1934, Romano Canavese, Italy



Ordained priest	01.07.1960
Consecrated Bishop	01.08.1991
Created Cardinal	21.10.2003
Coat of arms	
Motto	Fidem custodire concordiam servare
Rector Magnificus of the Pontifical Salesian University	01.06.1989 – 04.06.1991
Metropolitan Archbishop of Vercelli (Italy)	04.06.1991 – 13.06.1995
Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith	13.06.1995 – 10.12.2002
Metropolitan Archbishop of Genoa (Italy)	10.12.2002 – 29.08.2006
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Maria Ausiliatrice in Via Tuscolana	21.10.2003 [24.03.2004] – 10.05.2008
Secretary of State of the Secretariat of State	15.09.2006 – 15.10.2013
President of the Interdicasterial Commission on Particular Churches	15.09.2006 – 15.10.2013
President of the Interdicasterial Commission for the Church in Eastern Europe	15.09.2006 – 15.10.2013
Cardinal Protector of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy	15.09.2006 – 15.10.2013
Member of the Cardinal Commission of Vigilance over the Institute for Works of Religion	14.10.2006 – .03.2008
Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church of the Apostolic Chamber	04.04.2007 – 20.12.2014

President of the Cardinal Commission of Vigilance over the Institute for the Works of Religion	03.2008 – 15.01.2014
Cardinal Bishop of Frascati	10.05.2008 [03.10.2009] – ...
Cardinal Camerlengo emeritus of H.R.C.	2014
Age	88
Joseph ZEN ZE-KIUN	
Born	13.01.1932, Shanghai, Cina
Ordained priest	11.02.1961
Consecrated Bishop	09.12.1996
Created Cardinal	24.03.2006
Coat of arms	
Motto	Ipsi cura est
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Mary Mother of the Redeemer in Tor Bella Monaca	
Coadjutor Bishop of Hong Kong	13.09.1996 – 23.09.2002
Bishop of Hong Kong	23.09.2002 – 15.04.2009
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Maria Madre del Redentore at Tor Bella Monaca	24.03.2006 [31.05.2006] – ...
Cardinal Emeritus of Hong Kong	
Age	91
Raphael FARINA	
Born	24.09.1933, Buonalbergo, Italy
Ordained priest	01.07.1958



Consecrated Bishop	16.12.2006
Created Cardinal	24.11.2007
Coat of arms	
Motto	Dominus spes nostra
Rector Magnificus of the Pontifical Salesian University	1977 – 1983
Secretary of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences	1981 – 1989
Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture	1986 – 1991
Rector of the Pontifical Salesian University	1991 – 1997
Prefect of the Vatican Apostolic Library	25.05.1997 – 25.06.2007
Titular Bishop of Oderzo	15.11.2006 – 25.06.2007
Titular Archbishop of Oderzo	25.06.2007 – 24.11.2007
Archivist of the Vatican Secret Archives	25.06.2007 – 09.06.2012
Librarian of the Vatican Apostolic Library	25.06.2007 – 09.06.2012
Cardinal-Deacon of S. Giovanni della Pigna	24.11.2007 [05.04.2008] – 19.05.2018
President of the Pontifical Commission for the Institute for Works of Religion	24.06.2013 – 22.05.2014
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Giovanni della Pigna	19.05.2018 – ...
Cardinal Emeritus	2014
Age	89
Angelo AMATO	

Born	08.06.1938, Molfetta, Italy
Ordained priest	22.12.1967
Consecrated Bishop	06.01.2003
Created Cardinal	20.11.2010
Coat of arms	
Motto	Sufficit gratia mea
Pro-rector of the Pontifical Salesian University	01.10.1991 – 02.12.1991
Prelate-Secretary of the Pontifical Academy of Theology	1999 – 19.12.2002
Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith	19.12.2002 – 09.07.2008
Titular Archbishop of Sila	19.12.2002 – 20.11.2010
Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints	09.07.2008 – 31.08.2018
Cardinal Deacon of S. Maria in Aquiro	20.11.2010 [11.02.2011] – 03.05.2021
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Maria in Aquiro	03.05.2021 – ...
Cardinal emeritus	2018
Age	85
Ricardo EZZATI ANDRELLO	
Born	07.01.1942, Campiglia dei Berici, Italy
Ordained priest	18.03.1970
Consecrated Bishop	08.09.1996
Created Cardinal	22.02.2014
Coat of arms	

Motto	Para evangelizar
Bishop of Valdivia (Chile)	28.06.1996 – 10.07.2001
Titular Bishop of La Imperial	10.07.2001 – 27.12.2006
Auxiliary Bishop of Santiago (Chile)	10.07.2001 – 27.12.2006
Metropolitan Archbishop of Concepción (Chile)	27.12.2006 – 15.12.2010
President of the Episcopal Conference of Chile	.11.2010 – 11.11.2016
Metropolitan Archbishop of Santiago (Chile)	15.12.2010 – 23.03.2019
Cardinal-Presbyter of the Most Holy Redeemer in Valmelaina	22.02.2014 [11.10.2014] – ...
Cardinal Emeritus	2019
Age	81
Charles MAUNG BO	
Born	29.10.1948, Mohla, Myanmar
Ordained priest	09.04.1976
Consecrated Bishop	16.12.1990
Created Cardinal	14.02.2015
Coat of arms	
Motto	Omnia possum in Eo
Apostolic Administrator of Lashio (Myanmar)	1985 – 1986
Apostolic Prefect of Lashio (Myanmar)	1986 – 07.07.1990
Bishop of Lashio (Myanmar)	07.07.1990 – 13.03.1996
Bishop of Pathein (Myanmar)	13.03.1996 – 24.05.2003
President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar	2000 – 2006

Metropolitan Archbishop of Yangon (Myanmar)	24.05.2003 – ...
Cardinal-Presbyter of St Irenaeus in Centocelle	14.02.2015 [21.10.2015] – ...
President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences	16.11.2018 [01.01.2019] – ...
President of the Myanmar Episcopal Conference	2020 – ...
Apostolic Administrator of Myitkyina (Myanmar)	18.11.2020 – ...
Age	74
Daniel Fernando STURLA BERHOUET	
Born	04.07.1959, Montevideo, Uruguay
Ordained priest	21.11.1987
Consecrated Bishop	04.03.2012
Created Cardinal	14.02.2015
Coat of arms	
Motto	Servir al Señor con alegría
Titular Bishop of Phelbes	10.12.2011 – 11.02.2014
Auxiliary Bishop of Montevideo (Uruguay)	10.12.2011 – 11.02.2014
Metropolitan Archbishop of Montevideo (Uruguay)	11.02.2014 – ...
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Galla	14.02.2015 [17.05.2015] – ...
Vice-President of the Episcopal Conference of Uruguay	16.11.2021 [01.04.2022] – ...
Age	64

Cristóbal LÓPEZ ROMERO	
Born	19.05.1952, Vélez-Rubio, Spain
Ordained priest	19.05.1979
Consecrated Bishop	10.03.2018
Created Cardinal	05.10.2019
Coat of arms	
Motto	Adveniat Regnum Tuum
Archbishop of Rabat (Morocco)	29.12.2017 – ...
Apostolic Administrator of Tánger (Morocco)	24.05.2019 – 25.02.2022
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Leo I	05.10.2019 [16.02.2020] – ...
President of the North African Regional Bishops' Conference	15.02.2022 – ...
Age	71
Virgilio DO CARMO DA SILVA	
Born	27.11.1967, Venilale, Timor-Este
Ordained priest	18.12.1998
Consecrated Bishop	19.03.2016
Created Cardinal	27.08.2022
Coat of arms	
Motto	Ad Deum Patrem Omnipotentem
Vice-President of the Episcopal Conference of Timor	2016 – ...
Bishop of Díli (East Timor)	30.01.2016 – 11.09.2019

Metropolitan Archbishop of Díli (East Timor)	11.09.2019 – ...
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Albert the Great	27.08.2022 [07.05.2023] – ...
Age	55
Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME	
Born	21.08.1960, Gozón-Luanco, Spain
Ordained priest	04.07.1987
Created Cardinal	30.09.2023
Consecrated Bishop	2024 – ?
Coat of arms	
Motto	Sufficit tibi gratia mea
Age	63

Coat of arms of Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime

We present the Coat of Arms of His Most Reverend Eminence, Cardinal Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME SDB, Rector Major of the Society of St Francis de Sales (Salesians of Don Bosco).

Every cleric who is appointed by the pope as a cardinal must put together a coat of arms to represent him.

A coat of arms is not just a traditional formality. It represents the most important thing for a person, family or institution, and allows identification across space and time.

They appeared, according to some research, in the era of the Crusades when Christian knights applied them on their clothing, horse harnesses, shields and banners so allies and adversaries could be easily recognised. Later, they diversified and were passed on to noble families and also in the Church, so much so that a science known as heraldry has also appeared, dealing with the study of coats of arms.

Ecclesiastical coats of arms were standardised in 1905 by Pope Saint Pius X in the **motu proprio 'Inter multiplices cura'**. Thus, an ecclesiastical coat of arms comprises a personal shield (blazon), numerous external ornaments that echo the insignia of the dignities to which they refer (the cardinal's is a red galero with 15 red tassels), and a personal motto, usually in Latin, as a statement of faith. The elements of the coat of arms refer to the holder's name, his origins, his place of residence and religious symbols that recall theological messages and spiritual values or summarise ideals of life and pastoral programmes.

BLAZONING (formal description)

"Argent, coped*[i]* azure. In I to the characteristic figure of Jesus the Good Shepherd, found in the Catacombs of St Callistus, in Rome, all natural.*[ii]* to the monogram MA, gold, stamped*[iii]* by a crown of the same; in III, to the anchor of two hooks*[iv]* , silver, corded gules. The shield is stamped with a hat*[v]* with red cords and tassels. The tassels, thirty in number, are arranged fifteen on each side, in five orders of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5*[vi]* , Beneath the shield, in the silver list, the motto in black capital letters: "SUFFICIT TIBI GRATIA MEA".

EXEGESIS

"Medieval man (...) lives in a "forest of symbols". St Augustine said it: the world is made up of "signa" and "res", of signs, that is, symbols, and things. The "res" that are the true reality remain hidden; man only grasps signs. The essential book, the Bible, contains a symbolic structure. To each

character, each event in the Old Testament corresponds a character, an event in the New Testament. Medieval man is constantly engaged in “deciphering”, and this reinforces his dependence on clerics, learned in the field of symbolism. Symbolism presides over art and in particular architecture where the church is first and foremost a symbolic structure. It prevails in politics, where the weight of symbolic ceremonies such as the consecration of the king is considerable, where flags, weapons, emblems, are of paramount importance. It reigns in literature, where it often takes the form of allegory.”[\[vii\]](#)

Gestures and symbols refer, therefore, to something deeper: to a message, to a value, to an idea that goes beyond the sign itself.

“In human life, signs and symbols occupy an important place. As a bodily and spiritual being together, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through material signs and symbols. As a social being, man needs signs and symbols to communicate with others through language, gestures and actions. The same thing happens in his relationship with God.”[\[viii\]](#)

“The learned and famous heraldist Goffredo di Crollalanza in *Genesis and History of Blazonic Language* (1876) writes among other things, “Heraldry had chivalry as its author, need as its motive, trophies as its purpose, tournaments and crusades as its occasion, the battlefield as its cradle, armour as its field, design as its means, the symbol as its auxiliary, creation as its matter, ideology as its concept, and the blazon as its consequence.” He adds, “The blazon is not the illustration; just as the mind is not the soul, but the manifestation of the soul.”[\[ix\]](#)

“Heraldry is a complex and particular language made up of a myriad of figures and the coat of arms is a mark that is meant to extol a particular feat, an important fact, an action to be perpetuated.

"This documentary science of history was at first reserved for knights and participants in deeds of arms, whether warlike or sporting, who made themselves recognisable by their coat of arms, placed on the shield, helmet, flag and also on the caparison [horse ornaments], representing the only way to distinguish themselves from one another.

The heraldry of knights was almost immediately imitated by the Church, even though ecclesiastical bodies in the pre-heraldic period already had their own distinctive signs, so much so that when heraldry emerged in the 12th century, these figures took on the colours and appearance of that symbolism.

Ecclesiastical heraldry in our time is alive, current and widely used. For a prelate, however, the use of a coat of arms today must be defined as a symbol, allegorical figure, graphic expression, synthesis and message of his ministry.

It must be remembered that clerics were always forbidden from exercising the militia and bearing arms, and for this reason the term "shield" or "armour" proper to heraldry should not have been adopted; however, it must be said that until recent times, clerics used their family coat of arms, very often devoid of any religious symbolism.

The very symbolism of the Roman Church is drawn from the Gospel and is represented by the keys given by Christ to the Apostle Peter.

Ecclesiastical heraldry in our time is alive, current and widely used. For a cardinal, the use of a coat of arms today must be defined as a symbol, allegorical figure, graphic expression, synthesis and message of his ministry." [\[x\]](#).

In the first period, the ecclesiastical coats of arms had the shield stamped by the mitre with the fluttering infulas; with the passing of time, however, the prelatic hat with the cords and the various orders of tassels or bows, of different numbers according to dignity, *all in green* if bishops,

archbishops and patriarchs, *all in red* if cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, was consolidated at the top of the shield.

We also note that the "Instruction on the robes, titles and coats of arms of cardinals, bishops and lower prelates" of 31 March 1969, signed by the Cardinal Secretary of State Amleto Cicognani, states verbatim in Article 28: "Cardinals and bishops are permitted to use the coat of arms. The configuration of this coat of arms must conform to the norms regulating heraldry and be suitably simple and clear. Both the crosier and the mitre shall be removed from the coat of arms." [\[xi\]](#)

In Article 29 below, it is specified that cardinals are permitted to have their coat of arms affixed to the façade of the church attributed to them as a title or diakonia.

The most excellent and reverend bishops stamp, in fact, the shield, attached to a simple astylar cross (with one crossbar), gold, trefoiled, placed in a pole, with the hat, cords and tassels of *green*. The tassels, twelve in number, are arranged six on each side, in three orders of 1, 2, 3.

The most excellent and reverend archbishops stamp the shield, attached to a gold patriarchal astylar cross, trifoliate, placed in pole, with the hat, cords and tassels of *green*. The bows, twenty in number, are arranged ten on each side, in four orders of 1, 2, 3, 4.

The most excellent and reverend Patriarchs stamp the shield, attached to a gold patriarchal astylar cross, trifoliate, placed in a pole, with the hat, cords and tassels of *green*. The bows, thirty in number, are arranged fifteen on each side, in five orders of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 [\[xii\]](#) .

The most eminent and reverend cardinals of the Holy Roman Church stamp the shield, clasped to a gold patriarchal astylar cross, trifoliate, placed in a pole, with the cap, cords and tassels of *red*. The bows in number of thirty are arranged

fifteen on each side, in five orders of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

The origin and use of hats of *green*, for patriarchs, archbishops and bishops, is said to derive from Spain, where, in the Middle Ages, prelates wore a hat of green. This is why the shields of bishops, archbishops and patriarchs are stamped with a hat of *green*.

In 1245, at the Council of Lyons, Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254) granted the cardinals a *red* hat, as a special badge of honour and recognition among other prelates, to be worn when riding through the city. He prescribed it in red to admonish them to always be ready to shed their blood to defend the freedom of the Church and the Christian people. And it is for this reason that since the 13th century cardinals have stamped their shield with a *red* hat, adorned with cords and tassels of the same colour.

Finally, the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Cardinal Chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church wears the shield with the same hat as the other cardinals, but stamped with the papal gonfalon, *during munere*, that is, during the Apostolic See vacant. The papal banner or papal standard, also called the *basilica*, is in the shape of an umbrella with red and yellow kernels with the pendants cut in vajo and of contrasting colours, supported by a pole in the shape of a lance with a halt and crossed by the papal keys, one gold and the other silver, decussate, with the gibbets facing upwards, tied with red ribbon.

The same colours of *green* or *red* are also to be used in the ink of the seals and coats of arms on the deeds, the latter with the prescribed conventional signs indicating the enamels.

The blazoning – heraldic description – of the coat of arms of Cardinal Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME SdB does not bear the shield attached to a gold, astylar cross, placed in a pole, because he is not a bishop. He will be consecrated to the episcopal

order next year, after he ceases to serve as Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco, and at that time his shield will be attached to an astylar cross, placed in a pole.

Over the centuries, the Old and New Testaments, Patristics, the *legendaries of the Saints*, and the Liturgy have offered the Church the most varied themes for its symbols, destined to become heraldic figures.

Such symbols almost always allude to pastoral or apostolic tasks of ecclesiastical institutes, both secular and regular, or tend to indicate the mission of the clergy, recall ancient traditions of worship, memories of patron saints, pious local devotions.

ENAMELS

One of the fundamental rules governing heraldry states that *he who has less has more*, with regard to the composition of the enamels, figures and poses of the shield.

And the armour we shall now examine is composed of the metals *gold and silver and the colours blue and red*.

To seek one's coat of arms, therefore, the real one, to be able to raise as a banner, with which to mark one's cards, to fully understand its symbols, is it not, in some way, to seek oneself, one's image, one's dignity?

This is how an act, which could only be read formally, can instead acquire a symbolic and highly meaningful meaning.

Gold, silver, azure and red, then, are the enamels that appear in the coat-of-arms of our Eminence Cardinal Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME SdB., but what symbols do these enamels contain and present, what messages do they convey to the often bewildered mankind now in the 21st century?

The "metals", gold and silver, heraldically represent and recall the ancient armour of the knights who, according to their degree of nobility, were in fact gilded or silver-plated; gold, moreover, is a symbol of divine royalty, while

silver alludes to Mary. The blue "colour" recalls the sea the crusaders crossed on their way to the Holy Land, while the red "colour", which was considered by many heraldists to be the first among the colours of arms, the living blood shed by the crusaders.

Delving more specifically into the heraldic symbolism of the 'enamels', we recall that among the "metals", gold represents Faith among the virtues, the sun among the planets, the lion among the zodiac signs, July among the months, Sunday among the days of the week, the topaz among the precious stones, adolescence to twenty years among the ages of man, the sunflower among the flowers, the seven among the numbers and himself among the metals; the silver represents Hope among the virtues, the moon among the planets, Cancer among the zodiac signs, June among the months, Monday among the days of the week, the pearl among the precious stones, water among the elements, childhood up to seven years among the ages of man, the phlegmatic among the temperaments, the lily among the flowers, the two among the numbers and himself among the metals.

Among the "colours", light blue symbolises Justice among the virtues, Jupiter among the planets, Taurus and Libra among the zodiac signs, April and September among the months, Tuesday among the days of the week, sapphire among the precious stones, air among the elements, summer among the seasons, childhood up to the age of fifteen among the ages of man, choleric among the temperaments, rose among the flowers, six among the numbers and tin among the metals, while the red, Charity among the theological virtues, Mars among the planets, Aries and Scorpio among the zodiacal signs, March and October among the months, Wednesday among the days of the week, ruby among the precious stones, fire among the elements, autumn among the seasons, manhood until fifty among the ages of man, sanguine among the temperaments, carnation among the flowers, three among the numbers and copper among the metals.

The red: "it is also a reminder of the Orient and overseas expeditions, as well as demonstrating justice, cruelty and anger. *Ignescunt irae*, said Virgil. Finally, as it was consecrated to Mars by the ancients, it signifies intrepid, grandiose and strong impulses. The Spaniards call the red field 'sangriento', or bloody, because it brings to mind the battles they fought against the Moors. We find a similar name in Germany in *blütige Fahne*, *vexillum*, *cruentum*, an all red field without any figure, indicating royalty rights, and found in the arms of Prussia, Anhalt, etc. Red is, together with blue, one of the two most commonly used colours in the coat of arms; but it is more frequently found on the arms of Burgundian, Norman, Gascon, Breton, Spanish, English, Italian and Polish families In flags, red represents boldness and valour, and seems to have been adopted in the beginning by the fire worshippers." [\[xiii\]](#)

Among "colours", "**natural**" is "a figure reproduced in its natural colour (i.e. as it appears in nature) and not as a heraldic enamel." [\[xiv\]](#)

We would like to point out that it was also necessary to create conventional signs to understand and identify the "enamels" of the shield when the coat of arms is reproduced in seals and black and white prints. Thus, heraldists, over time, used various systems; for example, they wrote in the various fields occupied by the enamels, the initial of the first letter corresponding to the colour of the enamel, or they identified the colours by inscribing the first seven letters of the alphabet or, again, they reproduced, in the fields of the enamel, the first seven cardinal numbers.

In the 17th century, the French heraldist Vulson de la Colombière proposed special conventional signs to recognise the colour of the enamels in shields reproduced in black and white. The heraldist Father Silvestro di Pietrasanta of the Society of Jesus was the first to make use of them in his work *Tesserae gentilitiae ex legibus fecialium descriptae*, thus

spreading their knowledge and use.

This classification system, which is still used today, identifies red with thick perpendicular lines, blue with horizontals, green with diagonals from left to right, purple with diagonals from right to left, and black with crossed horizontals and verticals, while gold is dotted and silver without hatching.

To represent colour “au naturel”, some heraldists envisage other conventional signs, but we intend to espouse the thesis of the heraldist Goffredo di Crollalanza where, for colour “au naturel”, after recalling that it can be placed over metal and over colour indifferently, without infringing the law of overlapping enamels, he clarifies that it is expressed [\[xv\]](#) in drawings by leaving the piece blank and shading the figure in appropriate places.

Also of this opinion was the distinguished heraldist Archbishop Bruno Bernard Heim, who in the pontifical coats of arms of Popes John XXIII and John Paul I that he designed, in those reproduced in black and white, in the patriarchal cape of Venice depicts the lion of St. Mark without any conventional signs.

THE FIGURES

Jesus the Good Shepherd

The figure of Jesus the Good Shepherd responds to a profound aspiration of ancient man. The Jews saw God as the true shepherd who guides his people. Moses, in turn, had been given the task of being a shepherd and guide for his people. The Greeks knew the image of the shepherd standing in a large garden and carrying a sheep on his shoulders. The garden is reminiscent of paradise.

The Greeks associate the shepherd with their longing for a pure, uncorrupted world. In many cultures, the shepherd is a father figure, a caring father to his children, an image of

God's paternal concern for mankind.

The first Christians make the aspiration of Israel and Greece their own. Jesus is, like God, the shepherd who leads his people to life. Christians of Hellenistic culture associate the figure of the good shepherd with that of Orpheus, the divine singer. His song tamed ferocious beasts and raised the dead. Orpheus is usually depicted within an idyllic landscape, surrounded by sheep and lions.

For Hellenistic Christians, Orpheus is a Jesus figure. Jesus is the divine cantor, who with his words makes peaceful what is wild and fierce in us and revives what is dead. Jesus, presenting himself in John's gospel as the good shepherd, realises the archetypal images of salvation contained in the human soul under the shepherd images. This figure, in the shield, precisely because of its significance, is loaded into the main posture.

Monogram of Mary Help of Christians

This monogram, MA, stamped with a crown, all in gold, symbolises Mary HELP OF CHRISTIANS, Don Bosco's Madonna. After the name of Jesus, there is no name sweeter, more powerful, more consoling than that of Mary; a name before which the Angels bow in reverence, the earth rejoices, hell trembles.

St John Bosco once confided to one of his first Salesians, Fr John Cagliero, a great missionary in Latin America and future cardinal, that "Our Lady wants us to honour her under the title of Help of Christians", adding that "The times are so sad that we need the Holy Virgin to help us preserve and defend the Christian faith."

This Marian title, in truth, had already existed since the 16th century in the Loretto Litanies and Pope Pius VII instituted the feast of Mary Help of Christians in 1814 and set it for 24 May, as a sign of thanksgiving, for the return to Rome, on that day, acclaimed by the people, after the exile

decreed by Napoleon. But it was thanks to Don Bosco and the construction of the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, in Turin Valdocco – desired by Our Lady herself, who appeared in a vision to the Saint, indicating that she wanted to be honoured in the exact place where the first Turin martyrs Avventore, Ottavio and Solutore, Christian soldiers of the Theban Legion, suffered death – that the title of Help of Christians became current again in the Church. Fr Lemoyne, the Saint's private secretary, writes verbatim in his monumental biography, "What appears clear and irrefutable is that between Don Bosco and Our Lady there was certainly a pact. All his gigantic work was done not only in collaboration, but even in association with the Virgin."

Don Bosco, consequently, recommended his Salesians to spread devotion to Our Lady, under the title of Help of Christians, wherever they were in the world. But Don Bosco did not leave the devotion to Mary Help of Christians to spontaneous devotion alone; he gave it stability with an Association that took its name from Her. Direct witnesses saw in the Association of the Devotees of Mary Help of Christians, one of the initiatives dearest to Don Bosco and of the widest resonance, after that of the two religious congregations (Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians) and the Association of the Cooperators.

In fact "it is not Don Bosco who chose Mary; it is Mary who, sent by her Son, took the initiative to choose Don Bosco and to found the Salesian work through him, which is her work, 'her business', forever.""[\[xvi\]](#)

The anchor

The anchor recalls, firstly, that Cardinal Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME SdB, is the son of a fisherman from the sea of Spain.

It is worth remembering, then, that "The Salesian coat of arms is a condensation of essential incentives characterising every true son of Don Bosco. St John Bosco also wanted the

theological virtues represented in the shield: for Faith, the star; for Hope, the anchor and for Charity, the heart. It might seem absent from the Salesian coat of arms is the indispensable presence of Mary Help of Christians, from whom, Don Bosco said, all that is Salesian derives. But the Founder himself, and all the first confreres, always identified in the symbols of the anchor, the star and the heart, also the reference to Jesus and his Mother; and this is another aspect of the significant density that the coat of arms encompasses" [\[xvii\]](#) .

Indeed, the Salesian's life and actions are an expression of his faith, the shining star; of his hope, the great anchor; and of his pastoral charity, the burning heart.

The anchor, in heraldry, symbolises constancy. [\[xviii\]](#) "An instrument used in Mediterranean navigation, importance was already attached to it in antiquity as a symbol of the god of the sea. The anchor promised stability and security and therefore became the symbol of faith and hope. Employed at first in pre-Christian grave images as a professional indication and as a marker of sailors' graves, due to its cross-like shape, it became in early Christianity a disguised symbol of redemption." [\[xix\]](#)

Like man, the symbol is also what it has been in order to be authentically what it will be.

It is therefore necessary to make memory and hope of this very rich and inexhaustible source, from which it is still possible to draw for our today.

Giorgio ALDRIGHETTI

Blazoning and exegesis by heraldist Giorgio Aldrighetti of Chioggia (Venice), ordinary member of the Italian Heraldic Genealogical Institute. Miniatures by heraldist Enzo Parrino of Monterotondo (Rome).

[\[i\]](#) Heraldic partition consisting of a shield divided into three sections, of two different enamels, obtained by two curved lines that, from the midpoint of the upper side of the shield, reach the midpoints of the two lateral flaps of the shield. (L. Caratti di Valfrei, *Dizionario di Araldica* (*Dictionary of Heraldry*), Milan 1997, p. 50. entry *Cappato*).

[\[ii\]](#) "A figure reproduced in its natural colour (i.e. as it appears in nature) and not as a heraldic enamel (*Ibid.*, p. 18, entry *al naturale*).

[\[iii\]](#) "These are all the different external ornaments of a coat of arms, placed above a shield". In this case. on the monogram). (*Ibid.*, p: 203, entry *timbro* (*stamp*)).

[\[iv\]](#) "They are the crampons of the anchor", (La Caratti di Valfrei, *Dizionario di Araldica*, cit., p. 211, entry *uncini* (*hooks*)).

[\[v\]](#) Prelatic hat, a sign of ecclesiastical dignity, depicted with a hemispherical cap and flat round brim characteristic of the galero, a broad-brimmed headdress used from the late Middle Ages until recent times by cardinals and other prelates. Used as a non-liturgical external adornment of the shield. It takes on different colours, and is adorned with cords from which one or more bows usually hang in a pyramid shape on both sides; the dignity and role held by the holder can be deduced from their number and the enamels of the ensemble. (A. Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo-A. Pompili, *Manuale di Araldica Ecclesiastica*, cit., p. 116, entry on the *Cappello prelatizio* (*prelatial hat*)).

[\[vi\]](#) The most eminent and reverend cardinals of the Holy Roman Church stamp their shield – attached to a gold astylar cross, trifoliate, placed in a pole, if they have episcopal consecration – with their hat, cords and tassels of red. The bows in number of thirty are arranged fifteen on each side, in

five orders of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

[\[vii\]](#) Jacques Le Goff, *L'uomo medievale*, Bari 1994, p. 34.

[\[viii\]](#) *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Vatican City 1999, p. 335.

[\[ix\]](#) A. Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo – A. Pompili, *Manuale di Araldica Ecclesiastica*, cit., p. 18.

[\[x\]](#) P. F. degli Uberti, *Gli Stemmi Araldici dei Papi degli Anni Santi*, Ed. Piemme, s. d

[\[xi\]](#) from *L'Osservatore Romano*, 31 March 1969.

[\[xii\]](#) The heraldist His Excellency Most Rev. Bruno Bernard Heim for the Patriarchal Coat of Arms states: "*The Patriarchs adorn their shield with a green hat from which descend two cords, also green, ending in fifteen green bows on each side*" (B. B. Heim, *L'Araldica della Chiesa Cattolica, origini, usi, legislazione*, Vatican City 2000, p. 106.)

[\[xiii\]](#) G. Crollalanza (di), *Enciclopedia heraldico-cavalleresca*, Pisa 1886, pp. 516-517, entry *Rosso*.

[\[xiv\]](#) L. Caratti di Valfrei, *Dictionary of Heraldry*, Milan 1997, p. 18, entry *al naturale*.

[\[xv\]](#) A. Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo – A. Pompili, *Manuale di Araldica Ecclesiastica*, cit., p. 28, entry *Al naturale*.

[\[xvi\]](#) *Cooperators of God*, Rome 1976-1977, Edizioni Cooperatori, p. 69

[\[xvii\]](#) G. Aldrighetti, *Il bosco e le rose. Il nostro stemma (The Wood and the Roses. Our coat of arms). Bollettino Salesiano*, December 2018.

[\[xviii\]](#) L. Caratti di Valfrei, *Dizionario di Araldica*, cit., p. 21, entry *Ancora*.

[\[xix\]](#) H. Biedermann, *Enciclopedia dei simboli*, Milan 1989, p.30, entry *Ancora*.

I wish to continue to serve others... in a different way. MY NOMINATION AS CARDINAL

I feel I share the 1884 affirmation of our holy Founder, "I see more and more what a glorious future is prepared for our Society, the extension it will have and the good it will be able to accomplish."

Dear friends of the Salesian charism, may my sincere, fraternal and affectionate greeting reach each and every one of you.

It has been "suggested" to me by the Salesian Bulletin to prepare this greeting not like on other occasions recounting something significant that I have experienced, but by talking about myself, about this new situation that awaits me. And I experienced something I had studied about the person of our father Don Bosco. It was difficult for him to talk about himself and even more difficult to express his feelings. In my case, I must admit that it is a little difficult for me to speak or write about the latest events that have happened to me; but I admit that sooner or later I have to do so, and the message of the Salesian Bulletin arriving in the hands and hearts of so many friends of Don Bosco's charism is a good way to send this personal message.

After the unexpected news (especially for me), with which the Holy Father Francis announced my name as well, among the 21 people he has chosen to be "created" Cardinals of the Church

in the next Consistory on 30 September, thousands of people wondered, especially among the Salesians of Don Bosco and members of the Salesian Family around the world: and now what will happen? Who will accompany the life of the Congregation in the near future? What steps await it? You can well understand that these are the same questions that I too have been asking myself, while thanking the Lord in faith for this gift that Pope Francis has given us as a Salesian Congregation and as the Family of Don Bosco.

From a faith perspective, knowing the great things God has done and what we know through his Word, one could say that God loves surprises us. Usually, in the Bible, God says: "Go! The way will reveal itself." One important thing we have learnt from Don Bosco: let nothing disturb us and let us trust in God's Providence.

I feel I share the 1884 statement of our holy founder, "I see more and more what a glorious future is prepared for our Society, the extent it will have and the good it will be able to accomplish."

I was able to speak personally with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, after the Angelus announcement, assuring him of my availability to count on me for any service. I responded as Don Bosco did when he was asked to build the Church of the Sacred Heart in Rome, in his case an elderly and sick Don Bosco, who also felt the weight and responsibility of a fledgling Congregation: Don Bosco replied: "If this is the Pope's order, I obey!"

With simplicity, I told the Holy Father that we Salesians have learnt from Don Bosco to always be available for the good of the Church, and in particular for whatever the Pope may ask. Therefore, while I thank God for this gift that belongs to the whole Congregation and Salesian Family, I express my gratitude to Pope Francis by assuring him, on behalf of all the members of our great Family, of a more fervent and intense prayer. Prayer which, as I said, will always be accompanied by our sincere and deep affection.

What will happen now?

I must share with you that I was deeply touched by the sensitivity of our Pope Francis in realising that my service as Rector Major was not to change immediately from one day to the next. For this reason, about half an hour after the announcement of the appointment during the Angelus prayer on Sunday 9 July, the Holy Father sent me a letter in which he spoke of the time needed to prepare myself for the General Chapter of our Congregation before taking on what he intends to entrust to me. As always, the Holy Father showed himself to be attentive, warm, a profound admirer of Don Bosco's charism, and particularly affectionate. Feelings which, on my own behalf and on behalf of the whole Salesian Family, I have reciprocated.

I would like to share with you the arrangements that the Holy Father has communicated to me.

The Pope has decided that, for the good of our Congregation, after the Consistory of 30 September 2023 I may continue my service as Rector Major until 31 July 2024. After that date I will submit my resignation as Rector Major, as requested by our Constitutions and Regulations, in order to assume the service from the hands of the Holy Father that he will entrust to me.

This is what the Pope himself has communicated to me. We will be able to bring forward the 29th General Chapter by one year, that is, to February 2025. My Vicar, Fr Stefano Martoglio, will take over the government of the Congregation *ad interim*, as stipulated in our Constitutions, until the celebration of GC29. Finally, it remains for me to say and answer another question that many of you will have: what task will the Holy Father entrust me with? Pope Francis has not yet told me. Besides, given this wide margin of time I think it is the most appropriate.

In any case, I ask all of you, dear confreres and members of the groups of our Salesian Family to continue to intensify your prayer. Especially for Pope Francis. He himself expressly requested this at the end of the private audience granted to

me.

Finally, I also ask you to pray for me, placed before the prospect of a new service in the Church which, as a son of Don Bosco, I accept in filial obedience, without having sought it because I truly believe that in the Church, the services we perform cannot and must never be sought or demanded as if it were a matter of making them a personal career. What is proper to the “world” is improper for us as servants in the name of Jesus. And we must differ (I hope greatly) from some of the world’s standards. Witness to all this is our beloved Father Don Bosco before the Lord Jesus.

I thank you for the affection, the closeness expressed in these weeks with the many messages I have received from all over the world.

I feel as if the same words that Our Lady said to Don Bosco in his dream when he was nine years old (the second centenary of which will be celebrated next year) are addressed to me: “In good time you will understand everything.” And we know that for our Father this actually happened almost at the end of his life, in front of the altar of Mary Help of Christians in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which had been consecrated the day before, on 16 May 1887. From the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians I send you an affectionate and grateful greeting entrusting each and every one to Her, the Mother who will continue to accompany and support us. As always, I greet you with immense affection.

Have you thought about your vocation? St Francis de Sales

could help you (4/10)

[\(continuation from previous article\)](#)

4. Where is your heart

Dear young people,
you have written to me asking about discernment which, I remind you, means being attentive to the voice of God that is deep in your heart. As Jesus tells us, “where your heart is, there is your treasure.” In other words, who am I and for whom am I prepared to give my heart? The journey to the depths of the heart is not always easy, for along with the whispers of God there are also loud cries and other voices competing with Him and trying to get your attention. These voices can manifest themselves in our thoughts, feelings and desires. Does that mean we have to ignore them in order to hear God’s voice? I would say the opposite: we must learn to discern these voices. We must sift our thoughts, feelings and desires to understand what belongs to what we know to be temptations and, instead, to understand the inspirations that come from and lead to God. It is precisely through these inspirations that God communicates desires to our hearts.

As you know from my writings, I am a great admirer of St Paul. We should follow his suggestions and teachings: “Do not conform to the mentality of this century, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may discern the will of God, what is good, pleasing and perfect to him.” If we decide to simply follow our thoughts, emotions, and superficial desires, we will never truly perceive the voice of God speaking in the depths of our hearts. So it is really necessary that we question ourselves:

- firstly: do these feelings, thoughts and desires come from God or from something else?
- secondly: are they helping me to reach God or are they leading me away from him?

Once you have laid this foundation, you can proceed to discern and seek the voice of God that is already present in your spirit.

Unfortunately, we spend a lot of time and energy revolving around ever-changing emotions and a “multiplicity of desires” that prevent us from making the choices that would lead us deeper. This process simply produces inconstancy, impatience and a constant desire for change.

In my *Spiritual conversations*, I recalled St Paul’s words that everyone is a temple of God (1 Cor 3:16): as in the temple in Jerusalem, we need to pass through a series of courtyards in our hearts to reach the innermost and deepest place called the Holy of Holies.

Taking the idea from an invention of your time, I would like to use the image of the lift. You enter the lift with your thoughts, feelings, desires; if these become inspirations, they can take you deep into the Holy of Holies. The lift will take you lower and lower as you learn the truth contained in these feelings, thoughts and desires.

Finally you will reach the core, although I prefer the biblical term “heart”. There words are no longer necessary. In the heart, in fact, the Spirit can reach the soul of each of you and become fully your Master. Here the mind is called to silence and there is no longer any need for reasoning or words that would lead to distraction. Here we understand what spirit discernment is because God is Spirit and He speaks directly to your soul illuminating your path and showing you the way forward. If you live in the Spirit, walk according to the Spirit (Gal 5:26).

Office for Vocational Animation

[\(continued\)](#)

The Giving of the Salesian Missionary Cross

On 24 September the Rector Major presided at the giving of the missionary cross to the members of the 154th Missionary expedition of the Salesian Congregation. This is the 154th group since Don Bosco presided at the first missionary send-off in Valdocco on 11 November 1875.

The missionary send-off in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco is the way in which the Salesian Congregation renews its missionary commitment before Mary Help of Christians. The heart of this touching celebration is the missionary who receives the missionary cross from the successor of Don Bosco, the Rector Major. In fact, this distinctive Salesian missionary cross is given by the Rector Major only to those who offer the radical and complete gift of self which, by its very nature, implies total availability without any time limits (*ad vitam*).

Receiving the Cross expresses many emotions and spiritual challenges. The life of the missionary is focused on the person of Christ and of Christ crucified. It implies that the missionary first receives and then passes on the great teaching of the Cross: the infinite love of the Father who gives the best of himself, his Son; love to the end that is obedient and generous in giving oneself to the will of the Father for the salvation of humanity. For every Salesian missionary "Our highest knowledge [...] is to know Jesus Christ, and our greatest delight is to reveal to all people the unfathomable riches of his mystery." (SDB Constitutions art. 34).

The Good Shepherd in the Salesian missionary cross reveals Salesian Christology: pastoral charity is the nucleus of the Salesian spirit, the attitude that “wins hearts by gentleness and self-giving” (SDB Constitutions art. 10-11).

Da Mihi Animas cetera Tolle (give me souls, take away the rest): This is the motto that characterised the Sons of Don Bosco from the beginning. In a missionary context this brief Salesian prayer acquires particular significance: leave everything, even one’s land and culture, and the things that give security, in order to devote oneself without limit to those to whom one is sent, to be an instrument of salvation for them.

The Holy Spirit who comes down on the Good Shepherd in the river Jordan, descends now on Christ present in the pastoral dynamism of the Church. Without the Holy Spirit, and without the light, discernment, strength and holiness that come from the Spirit, all missionary activity is no more than a series of activities, sometimes empty, carried out in distant places.

Finally, the text written at the back of the cross: “*Euntes ergo docete omnes nationes baptizantes eos in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti*” (Mt 28:19) (Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit): the heart of the missionary mandate given by the Risen Lord. The text gives a mandate to teach all people so that they may become followers and disciples of Jesus (the Greek text emphasizes *mathêteúsate*, “make disciples”, which is more than just *docete*, “teach”). Evangelisation, the fullness of grace, comes through words and deeds, with the greatest of all the sacramental graces which is baptism that plunges the person into the mystery of communion with God.

In 1875 Don Bosco sent 10 Italian Salesians to Argentina. Today, missionaries come from all populated continents and are sent to all populated continents. Every Salesian, every

Province shares responsibility for the missionary activity of the whole Congregation. Thanks to Salesian missionaries, Don Bosco's charism is now present in 134 countries. The reflections of some members of the 154 missionary expedition reveal how much Salesian missionaries have touched people's lives, and in turn, generate new Salesian missionary vocations.

Cl. Jorge DA LUÍSA JOÃO, Salesian from in Bengo, Angola is 31 years old. "The seed of my missionary vocation developed when we watched missionary videos in the Salesian community at Benguela, where I became an external aspirant. Then during my prenovitiate, novitiate and post novitiate this developed with the accompaniment of my spiritual guide. Now that the Rector Major has accepted my missionary application and sends me to Capo Verde. my dream is to give my whole life in the mission land where I will be sent and be buried there, just like the missionaries who gave everything for Angola and whose bodies rest on Angolan soil."

Cl. Soosai ARPUTHARAJ from Michaelpalayam, Tamilnadu. "My missionary vocation began when I was a in the beginning of my initial formation, but I was afraid to tell anyone of my missionary desire. But during the meeting for young Salesians of our Province they spoke to us of missionary experience. This made me ask myself: "Why can't I become a missionary *ad gentes* in the Salesian congregation?" I am grateful to my Vice-Provincial who guided me to finally make this decision to offer myself to the Rector Major to go wherever he will send me. Thus, I accepted willingly the proposal of the General Councillor for Missions to send me to Romania. I know this is God's call to me to give my life to the youngsters of Romania.

Cl. Joshua TARERE, 30 years old from, hails from Vunadidir, East New Britain, Papua New Guinea. He is the first salesian missionary from Oceania. "When I was a child I knew only the diocesan priest in my parish. As a secondary student I was not in a Salesian school. But thanks to Salesians from Don Bosco

Rapolo who came to my parish for Sunday mass, I was inspired by their missionary work. They came to my country to serve the young people. This experience of service and availability to others helped me identify myself with their missionary vocation."

"During my novitiate my Novice Master, Fr. Philip Lazatin, encouraged me to discern and clarify my missionary interest. In the Post Novitiate, I continued my discernment with my Rector, Fr. Ramon Garcia, as well as with my spiritual guide, to discover if my desire to be a Salesian missionary is truly a call from God. After a long period of discernment, I finally decided to apply to the Rector Major and make myself available anywhere he will send me to. This I did freely without any pressure from anyone."

"I am told that I am the first Salesian from Oceania to be a missionary. But to me this is not important. What is important is my availability to respond with generosity to God's personal call to me. As a missionary to South Sudan, I have a mixed feeling of fear and courage. The media present all negative images of violence, and displaced people in South Sudan. But I am also inspired to be courageous because I know fully well that the Lord who has sent me for His mission will surely take care of me. My fears have not overtaken my great desire to serve, to love and to be one with the new culture and people I am sent to."

Cl. Francois MINO NOMENJANAHARY from Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar is 25 years old. He is destined for the Vice-Province of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, offers us his testimony today. "I have to admit that I have never heard of Papua New Guinea before, until Fr. Alfred Maravilla, proposed that I go there. I accepted willingly to be sent because I have offered my availability to respond to God's call to me to be a missionary. I also had to explain to my parents and family where my missionary destination is. Thanks be to God, they came to accept it. Surely, Like everyone else, I have my fears. I am happy to meet missionaries in Papua New

Guinea in this course. I am happy to know that the first Papua New Guinean Catholic priest, Louis Vangeke, was formed in the seminary in Madagascar. This makes me feel also connected to my mission land.

Fr. Michał CEBULSKI from Katowice, Poland is 29 years old. He was ordained a few months ago, in June. "As a young Salesian he spent a year of practical training in Ireland. "Since I was a child I heard stories about missionaries which developed in me the desire to be like them. I am happy that I am sent to Lithuania, the country that shares a border with Poland. Although my country shares the border with Lithuania and we have similarities regarding food and culture, the Lithuanian language will not be easy for me. My new Provincial told me that I will have to learn Italian for some months. But once I will be in Lithuania, approaching the people and understanding their culture will be my priority. I hope that the Lithuanian people will discover God's love through my service. I want to help young people to live with true joy, which Don Bosco told us, is caused by a pure heart."

Br. Kerwin P. VALEROSO, a 35-year-old Salesian Brother from Pura, Tarlac, Philippines is going to the new Circumscription of North Africa (CNA). "Once I saw the pictures of the first three missionary expeditions of Salesians. Thinking about the places where they reached, the works they built, the hearts they have touched, and the souls they have saved, I felt that this was my vocation. I am grateful to my formators, mentors, and friends who co-journeyed with me to purify and strengthen my missionary vocation."

"I am grateful to my family, confreres and friends who made me feel their support, prayers, and well wishes as I embark to respond to my missionary vocation. I do not hide that I have mixed feeling of joy and fear in going to North Africa whose language, culture, or people I do not know yet. I have no knowledge of Islam either. However, my main task now is to learn well this year the French language. I have to say that

our confreres in Paris, France have made me really felt welcomed. I am also grateful to my Province of origin (FIN) that despite the multitude of work in the apostolate, has generously encouraged me to offer myself for the missionary works of our Congregation."

Cl. Dominic NGUYEN QUOC OAT, 30 years old, is from Dong Nai, Vietnam. "I had been interested about the mission since I was in Secondary School. I even shared with my high school classmates about my dream of becoming a missionary. As a young Salesian I had discerned because I believe that God is inviting me to be a missionary for Him and for his people, hence I applied make a lifelong missionary commitment wherever the Rector Major will send me."

"God has offered me an opportunity to be a missionary in Great Britain. I'm happy to accept my missionary destination although, I have some concerns because I am an Asian who is being sent to Europe. I need to educate myself more about the language and culture of my mission country. But I believe that God who called me to be a Salesian missionary will continue to bless me with his Grace to carry out the mission he has entrusted to me."

Fr. Andre DELIMARTA, is one of the first two Indonesian Salesians. At 55 years old, he had been Novice Master, Rector, Parish Priest in his Vice Province (INA). He is a member of last year's 153rd missionary expedition destined for Malaysia, but he will receive the missionary cross only this September 24. "I grew up with Salesians. The loving-kindness, hard work, commitment and the spirit of sacrifice of Salesian missionaries like Fr Alfonso Nacher, Fr Jose Carbonell, Deacon Baltasar Pires and Fr Jose Kusy have had a great impact on me. It was they who taught me Don Bosco, introduced me to the Congregation and made me fall in love with their missionary zeal".

"When I was in initial formation I wanted to be a missionary but my formators prohibited me because they said Don Bosco has

to take root in Indonesia. In fact, as the first Indonesian Salesian I had insisted on making Don Bosco's charism take root in Indonesia as our priority. But when the insistent appeal for missionaries was relayed to our Vice Province, my missionary vocation was reignited. My love for Don Bosco and for the Congregation made me decide to offer myself as a missionary. If the Congregation needs missionaries, then I want to say: "Here I am! I'll go!"

Here are all 24 members of the 154th Salesian Missionary Expedition:



- Shivraj BHURIYA, from India (Mumbai Province – INB) to Slovenia (SLO);
- Thomas NGUYEN QUANG QUI, from Vietnam (VIE) to Great Britain (GBR);
- Dominic NGUYEN QUOC OAT, from Vietnam (VIE) to Great Britain (GBR);
- Jean Bernard Junior Gerald GUIELLE FOUETRO, from the Republic of Congo (Africa Congo Province – ACC) to Germany (GER);
- Br Blaise MULUMBA NTAMBWE, from the Democratic Republic of Congo (Province of Central Africa – AFC) to Germany (GER);
- Fr Michael CEBULSKI, from Poland (Province of Cracow – PLS) to Lithuania (Special Circumscription of Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta – ICP);
- Br Kerwin VALEROSO, from the Philippines (Province of the Northern Philippines – FIN) to the North Africa Constituency (NAC);
- Br Joseph NGO DUC THUAN, from Vietnam (VIE) to the North African Circumscription (NAC);
- Fr Domenico PATERNÒ, from Italy (Province of Sicily – ISI) to the North African Circumscription (NAC);
- David Broon, from India (Province of Tiruchy – INT) to Albania (Province of Southern Italy – IME);
- Elisée TUUNGANE NZIBI, from the Democratic Republic of Congo

(Province of Central Africa – AFC) to Albania (Province of Southern Italy – IME);

- Fr George KUJUR, from India (Province of Dimapur – IND) to Nepal (Province of India-Calcutta – INC);
- Br Soosai ARPUTHARAJ, from India (Province of Chennai – INM) to Romania (Province of North East Italy – INE);
- Br John the Baptist NGUYEN VIET DUC, from Vietnam (VIE) to Romania (Province of North East Italy – INE);
- Br Mario Alberto JIMÉNEZ FLORENCE, from Vietnam (Province of Central Africa – AFC) to Romania (Province of North East Italy – IME);
- Br John Paul VIET DUC, from Vietnam (Province of India – IND) to Romania (Province of North East Italy – INE);
- Br John Paul L. Mario Alberto JIMÉNEZ FLORES, from Mexico (Province of Guadalajara – MEG) to the Delegation of South Sudan (DSS);
- Sarathkumar RAJA, from India (Province of Chennai – INM) to Sri Lanka (LKC);
- Lyonnell Richie Éric BOUANGA, from the Republic of Congo (Province of Africa Congo – ACC) to the Vice Province of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (PGS);
- Joshua TARERÉ, from Papua New Guinea (PGS) to the Delegation of South Sudan (DSS);
- Nomenjanahary François MINO, from Madagascar (MDG) to the Vice Province of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (PGS);
- Jean KASONGO MWAPE, from the Democratic Republic of Congo (Province of Central Africa – AFC) to Brazil (Province of Brazil-Porto Alegre – BPA);
- Khyliait WANTEILANG, from India (Province of Shillong – INS), to Brazil (Province of Brazil-Porto Alegre – BPA);
- Fr Joseph PHAM VAN THONG, from Vietnam (VIE) to South Africa (Vice Province of Southern Africa – AFM);
- Fr Miguel Rafael Coelho GIME, from Angola (ANG) to Mozambique (MOZ);
- Klimer Xavier SANCHEZ, from Ecuador (ECU) to Mozambique (MOZ).

Progress

An explorer was travelling through the immense forests of the Amazon in South America.

He was looking for possible oil deposits and was in a great hurry. For the first two days, the natives he had hired as porters adapted to the fast and anxious pace that the white man demanded for everything.

But on the morning of the third day, they stood silent, motionless, breathless.

It was clear that they had no intention of setting out again.

Impatiently, the explorer, pointing to his watch, gesticulated and tried to make the leader of the porters understand that they had to move, because time was pressing.

– Impossible, replied the man, calmly. These men have walked too fast and are now waiting for their souls to catch up with them.

People of our age are always moving faster. And they are restless, dazed and unhappy, because their souls have fallen behind and can no longer catch up with them.

Missionary experience in Peru

Interview with José Gallego Vázquez, Salesian Brother, who after many years of service in his homeland left it to go on

mission, meeting many needs.

1. Who are you and how did the missions in Peru come about?

Hello, I am Salesian Brother José Gallego Vázquez. I was born 54 years ago in Vigo, Spain. I worked in several houses in the former Province of Santiago el Mayor de León for 22 years, before leaving as a missionary to Peru in 2010.

The Salesians arrived in Peru in 1891 and run an oratory in the Rímac neighbourhood of Lima, where they teach classes, prepare the sacraments and play with children.

2. What do the Salesians do in Peru?

We serve three missionary areas in the jungle, as well as schools, shelters, oratories and youth centres, vocational schools, parishes, Salesian Family groups and other pastoral and welfare activities.

3. Challenges of missionary life?

I have been working for more than seven years in the Amazon Mission of San Lorenzo, which has a population of 11,000 and is located on the banks of the Marañón river, in the Loreto region. I am responsible for the Oratories and the Youth Centre. We run five oratories once a week (one oratory two days a week) and a youth centre from Tuesday to Saturday evenings. The oratories and youth centre are attended by 430 children and older youth per week. We have moments of human formation (talks with city institutions, civic values, etc.), Christian formation, goodnights, sports, championships, Salesian evenings, conviviality, workshops (dance, football, handicrafts, ecology, etc.).

The children and older youth we serve come from low or very low-income families, from large families and with unmarried parents who often come from other households.



Since 2016, we also run a vocational training centre, specialising in carpentry, agriculture and animal husbandry and motor mechanics. This centre is aimed at the indigenous people of the province. We have a residence five hours away from the mission, in a small indigenous community. We take care of up to 50 young men and women. They are also given a human and Christian formation and, those who request it, are prepared for the sacraments.

4. What can you say about community visits and your travels?

The missionary community covers an area of about 30,000 square kilometres, where we assist three parishes and about 130 indigenous and mestizo communities. It is an itinerant missionary community; the rivers are our meeting places with the mestizos and indigenous people, as we serve up to seven native peoples (Shawi, Kandozi, Chapra, Kocama, Aguajun, Achuar and Wampis). Their welcome is always good, expected and desired, nourished by our desire to say Mass, receive a word from the priest or Salesian brother. We would like to reach them more often, but distances, the cost of travel and the lack of missionaries make it very difficult to assist and accompany our brothers and sisters. This is why I encourage those who read these lines to lend a hand for a while, to help support these missions with resources, and to sensitise everyone to pray to the Lord for our recipients, the missionaries and the new native vocations.

5. Your personal experience as a missionary.

Meeting the missionaries, walking through the jungle, eating like the people, sleeping in their homes, living with them and learning so much from them, one gradually learns to appreciate them, to relativise so many things in the world, to appreciate and value life with a different way of managing time and the environment. I greatly appreciate the balance in which they live in contact with nature, which they feel and experience as part of them, forming a whole, when they hunt, when they fish, when they gather in the fields or orchards, when they have

their wayús or masato moments, or in community assemblies to regulate community life.

One also learns and appreciates how the Christian leaders of the communities, many fathers and mothers of families, animate the Christian life of their community with the celebration of the Word on Sundays, the preparation of the sacraments for children and adults, etc. Some of them have been there for 30, 40 or more years. This is a generous example and testimony of perseverance and vocation to service to help keep the faith of the Christian community alive.

6. What process is followed for young people interested in religious life?

My final words are to reflect on the vocational dimension in these mission lands. We see that there are young men with vocational concerns, who express the desire to become priests or religious. Accompaniment with a formation plan and overall planning is fundamental to help them in their discernment in these first moments of restlessness and search. Pastoral activity and involvement will help them, in their responsible performance, to mature in their lives as persons and as committed Christians, before taking other steps. All this will bear fruit if the entire missionary community is involved in this journey, contributing and facilitating the approach and living together with the young person. This is why it is so important to be open, welcoming communities that invite and share life and mission with them.



This process comes before sending them to the provincial vocational meeting, which is organised every year, to continue the process in another Salesian house, either as a volunteer or as an aspirant or pre-novice. It is a personalised, slow and patient process.

In thanking José Gallego Vázquez for his service to those most in need, we pray that the Lord will raise up more vocations for the Salesian missions, remembering that God blesses this generosity with many more vocations. And let us remember that even if prayer is essential, we must also do our part, as Don Bosco used to say: “speak often of vocations, talk a lot about the missions, have the letters of the missionaries read” ([MB XIII,86](#)).

Marco Fulgaro

Have you thought about your vocation? St Francis de Sales could help you (3/10)

[*\(continuation from previous article\)*](#)

3. If I do not know myself, can I be free to choose?

Dear young people,

it is a great joy for me to welcome and share your vocational concerns. You are living a very beautiful period of life, you deeply feel the desire to live to the full, and all the paths to reach it are open before you. Have the courage to search patiently and, above all, to arrive at a decision that will fill your yearnings with truest happiness. It is not an easy task: it implies assuming one's own fragility and discovering the fundamental truth that life is a wonderful gift that has been given to us, a mysterious gift that surpasses us.

God has given us life and faith. The Christian vocation is precisely the response to the call to life and love with which God has created us. We are called to be children of God and to

live as children, feeling and acting in the love that God has poured into our hearts. We are called to be his disciples and to be them with passion. By responding to it, we find the path to true happiness.

What we seek, what we want to be, has as its basis and foundation who we are. Starting from the loving acceptance of what we are, the Lord calls us to build our identity. We can hardly live this search and this effort alone. We have the great good fortune that Jesus himself wants to accompany us. Always keep Jesus close to you, as your companion and friend. Nobody like him can help you find your way to God and be happy. Next to him, invoking him with simplicity and with much confidence, you will be able to discover better the meaning of existence and of your vocation.

Seeking your vocation means being concerned about how to respond to God's dream for you. By him you were created and dreamed. What is God's dream for your life? And how can you respond to this dream? Let it always be God's will, the divine will, that which guides your life. Seek, love and strive to do God's will. He has given you life to give it, for you to give it, to share it, to hand it over, not for you to keep it for yourself. To whom do you want to give your life? It has a divine destiny. Out of love you were created in the image and likeness of God and only He will fill your desire for goodness, happiness and love.

The first and most important task you have in your hands is to discover and build your vocation. It is not something established from the beginning, in advance. It is the fruit of freedom, of a freedom built slowly, capable of venturing on the path of self-giving. Only with great inner freedom can you arrive at an authentic vocational decision. Freedom and love, in fact, are the two great wings to face the path of life, to give and deliver it.

I conclude by assuring you that I will always remember and commend you to the Lord, so that He may accompany you, guide you and direct your life along the path of grace and love. On your part, always seek the good Jesus, have Him as the friend

of your soul, invoke Him, share with Him your sorrows, your anxieties, your worries, your joys and your sadnesses. And dare to commit yourself seriously to Him and to His cause. He is waiting for you.

Office for Vocational Animation

[\(continued\)](#)

Venerable Archbishop Antônio de Almeida Lustosa “father and friend of the poor”

On 22 June 2023, the Holy Father Francis received Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints in audience, and during the Audience the Supreme Pontiff authorised the same Dicastery to promulgate the Decree concerning the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Antônio de Almeida Lustosa, of the Salesian Society of St John Bosco, Archbishop of Fortaleza; born 11 February 1886 in São João del Rei (Brazil) and died 14 August 1974 in Carpina (Brazil).

A life in the light of the Immaculate

Antônio de Almeida Lustosa was born in the city of São João del Rei, in Minas Gerais (Brazil), on 11 February 1886, on the anniversary of the first apparition of the Immaculate at Lourdes, a circumstance that marked him profoundly, giving him a filial devotion to Our Lady, so much so that he was described, by now a priest, as the poet of the Virgin Mary.

He received a good Christian and human upbringing from his parents, João Baptista Pimentel Lustosa and Delphina Eugênia de Almeida Magalhães, exemplary Christians. An intelligent boy

with a good and generous disposition, the son of a judge, he showed visible signs of a strong priestly vocation at an early age. That is why at the age of sixteen he entered the Salesian College at Cachoeira do Campo, in Minas Gerais, and three years later he was in Lorraine as a novice and assistant to his companions. After his first religious profession in 1906, he also became a teacher of philosophy, while studying theology.

Perpetual profession took place three years later, while 28 January 1912 marked the date of his priestly ordination.

After a number of assignments within his Religious Congregation, in 1916 he was rector and master of novices at Lavrinhas, in the Colégio São Manoel, to which those from Lorraine had been transferred, and where he had taught the year before. In the five years he spent there, the young Lustosa expressed the best of himself both as a priest and as a Salesian, leaving, according to those who knew him, indelible traces.

Episcopal ministry

After his role as Rector at the Mary Help of Christians secondary school in Bagé and his appointment as assistant parish priest in the adjoining parish, he was consecrated Bishop of Uberaba on 11 February 1925, the day he chose to commemorate the presence of Our Lady in his life.

In 1928 he was transferred to Corumbá, in Mato Grosso, and in 1931 he was promoted to Archbishop of Belém do Pará, where he remained for 10 years.

On 5 November 1941, he became Archbishop of Fortaleza, capital of the State of Ceará.

Together with an unusually large number of initiatives and activities of a social and charitable nature, he created more than 30 new parishes, 45 schools for the needy, 14 health centres on the outskirts of Fortaleza, the School of Social Services, the São José and Cura d'Ars hospitals, to mention only a few of the most significant works attributed to his

episcopate.



Monsignor Lustosa enters the Archdiocese of Belém do Pará (15.12.1931)

His pastoral activity developed particularly in the field of catechesis, education, pastoral visits, an increase in vocations, enhancement of Catholic action, improvement of the living conditions of the poorest, defence of workers' rights, renewal of the clergy, the establishment of new religious orders in Ceará, not to mention his rich and fruitful activity as a poet and writer.

Even before the Second Vatican Council, Fr Antônio had described catechesis as the primary objective of his pastoral action. To this end, he founded two religious Congregations, the Institute of Cooperators of the Clergy and the Congregation of the Josefinas. Today, the Josefinas are spread throughout Northeast Brazil, as well as in the Diocese of Rio Branco in Acre.

Wherever he went, and wherever he worked, his name and memory were remembered with respect and veneration, as a man of God, a true model of virtue and holiness.

Eleven years after his resignation from the Archdiocese, following which he retired to the Salesian House in Carpina, and confined to a wheelchair due to a disastrous fall that caused him to fracture his femur, he died on 14 August 1974, demonstrating, even during his illness and suffering, an exemplary attitude of complete and unconditional acceptance of God's will.

His body was transported to Fortaleza, where his funeral was celebrated with an incalculable number of faithful and ecclesiastical and civil authorities paying their last respects. His burial became to all intents and purposes a true popular consecration of a life, such as that lived by the Servant of God Bishop Lustosa, entirely devoted to God and the

good of his neighbour.

Abandoned to the will of God

A virtuous, ascetic bishop, marked by obedience and a strong desire to do the Father's will, always and in everything, Bishop Lustosa demanded the most total abandonment of himself to the cause of God and neighbour.

His great concern was indeed to live up to God's and the Church's expectations in the exercise of his episcopal ministry.

He travelled in various regions of Brazil, from north to south, always bringing with him the gifts that Divine Providence had reserved for him.

In this fruitful activity he left significant legacies, not only for the material works he accomplished, but especially for the memory of his luminous and evangelising presence.

A humble and simple man, who shunned any ostentation or any quest for public recognition of his pastoral actions in the service of the Church and the society in which he was embedded, he was endowed with an extraordinary charisma, tireless perseverance, and a rich and fruitful religious and social vision.

He strove to lift the people of the regions in which he served, from the precarious and poor conditions in which they found themselves. The greater the challenge, the greater his dedication to finding alternatives that would at least minimise the suffering of those he came into contact with.



Monsignor Lustosa blesses the foundation stone of the agricultural school (09.02.1932)

He tried to offer and create opportunities for the most disadvantaged people to take care of their families, he worked to provide them with a religious and cultural background, so as to free them from illiteracy and provide them with the

tools to gain a place in society.

Pastor with a big heart

For 22 years in the Ceará region, Bishop Lustosa showed the full force of his cultural, religious and social work, anticipating and realising works that would later be incorporated by government authorities, both at state and municipal level.

He made the working classes aware of their value and importance, welcoming those who were on the margins of society, including single mothers, domestic helpers, orphaned and abandoned children, the homeless, those in need of housing, the illiterate, the sick, exalting the rights and duties of each and every person and restoring and/or recognising their dignity.

He placed himself totally at the service of God and humanity, faithfully responded to the divine inspiration that guided his steps and actions towards a society closer to justice, supported by the Church's social doctrine – *sub umbra alarum tuarum*.

He radiated holiness to all those who had the privilege of knowing him and living with him, continuing to this day to spread his radiance over all those who come more or less directly into contact with his figure and works.

With his meritorious pastoral action, he not only guided souls, but also hearts in a harmonious action that led to a true Christian spiritualisation of the immense flock of which he was Pastor.

His work of spiritual guidance was considered and recognised then, and even more so today, as a work of social harmony, and spiritual balm in difficult conflict situations. His personal action worked the miracle of disarming spirits, going beyond the limits of dogmatic, liturgical and theological preaching, succeeding in instilling in people a heightened religious sense and giving them a greater and/or new awareness of the right to freedom and justice.

Bishop Lustosa's work, which exalts the popular soul, ennoble

the sense of faith, spreads the feeling of human solidarity and the virtue of brotherhood, crosses geographic borders and asserts itself internationally.

A rich personality



Monsignor Lustosa receives the visit of the Rector Major, don Luigi Ricceri in Carpina (27.06.1970)

The personality of the illustrious Archbishop Antônio de Almeida Lustosa is multifaceted, generated from a very young age and consolidated throughout his earthly life, always guided by the common good and the defence and promotion of Christian principles and values.

Archbishop Antônio left a trail of spirituality, both through the books he published and the catechetical work he took to the most distant and inaccessible regions.

A salient feature of his rich spirituality was his extraordinary spirit of prayer, intimately rooted in him and never flaunted. He was also a man who imposed upon himself mortification, sacrifices and fasts.

Another noble dedication of his spirit was his literary verve, and his work in literature was great, from pastoral letters to articles in newspapers and periodicals and numerous works, published and unpublished, of a historical, folkloristic, religious, geographical, cultural, anthropological, spiritual and ascetic nature.

He was, like Don Bosco, a prolific writer in various fields, in theology, philosophy, spirituality, hagiography, literature, geology, botany.

His literary works reveal his deep spirituality and the extent of his social concerns in evangelising his flock. With his pen, he brought the Gospel to all.

Archbishop Antônio de Almeida Lustosa was a faithful example of a fully realised vocation. He proved this over his long

pastoral activity in the dioceses he led and guided with the hands of a spiritual master.

He was a model bishop of his time, characterised by unshakeable fervour and firmness of mind.

A true man of God, he was always concerned about people's welfare, which is why he was known as "the father and friend of the poor".

Archbishop Lustosa sought to be faithful to the founder of the Salesian Congregation – St John Bosco – by following in his footsteps, embracing his examples, thus implementing the Salesian charism in Brazil, so much so that he was recognised as the Bishop of social justice.

The following words paid tribute to the Servant of God on the 19th anniversary of his death, by the then Postulator General of the Cause, Fr Pasquale Liberatore, and eloquently and effectively summarise the importance and significance of his message in the Church and society of his time, as well as its relevance today: "He was a great ascetic (even from his external appearance: 'an airy shell' was said of his physical person), but with an adamant will, which belied the fire that burned within him. Thanks to his inner strength he was able to do exceptional work, traces of which remain in the most diverse fields: a passionate seeker of truth, a serious scholar, a writer and poet, the creator of many works: the Cure d'Ars pre-seminary, the Cardinal Frings Institute, the São José Hospital, the shrine of Nossa Senhora de Fátima, the Assunção Cearense radio station, the Casa do Menino Jesus, schools, workers' groups, etc., and above all – he was the founder of a religious congregation.

Both great yet simple, he knew how to combine the Bishop's many commitments with catechism to children and – in the last years of his life – his erudite Latin lessons with the humble collection of stamps. A zealous pastor, he loved his people, never left his flock, felt the urgency of vocations and filled his seminaries with them.

In his heart he always remained Salesian. He was said to be "an eternal Salesian". Already Master of Novices as soon as he

was ordained a priest, he remained a forger of souls in Salesian style throughout his life.

An ascetic, I said at the beginning. In reality he personified the motto left to us by Don Bosco: work and temperance.

The secret of his holiness is to be found in his having abhorred all forms of mediocrity. He was an athlete of the spirit – perhaps that is why we like to remember him “always on his feet” (even though in his later years he was confined to a wheelchair). Always on his feet! Even today. Like one who continues to teach a lesson. The most difficult and most demanding lesson: that of holiness.

Dr Cristiana Marinelli

Colleague in the Salesian General Postulator's Office

South Asia. Don Bosco among the young

Living today don Bosco's mission to the young especially those who are resource-poor in South Asia

The Lord made clear to Don Bosco that he was to direct his mission first and foremost to the young, especially to those who are poorer. This mission to the young, especially the poorer ones became the reason for the existence of the Salesian Congregation.

Like our Father Don Bosco, every Salesian says to God on the day of his religious profession: “I offer myself totally to you. I pledge myself to devote all my strength to those to whom you will send me, especially to young people who are poorer”. Every Salesian collaborator is committed to this same mission.

The latest General Chapter of the Congregation made renewed call for absolute priority to be given to the poorest, most abandoned and defenceless.

When I was given the opportunity to submit an article for the Salesian Bulletin, my thoughts immediately went to what I consider to be one of the largest interventions on behalf of the poorer youth in the South Asia Region of the Salesian Congregation, namely, preparing poor young people for employment through short-term skills training. After the 28th General Chapter, the South Asia Region made a choice to help young people remove abject poverty from their families. But before I present that, let me present to you the South Asia Region of the Salesian Congregation.

The South Asia Region comprises all Salesian works in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Kuwait and UAE. There are 11 Provinces and 1 Vice Province. With more than 3.000 professed Salesians the South Asia Region accounts for 21.5% of Salesians in the world working in 413 Salesian Religious Houses, accounting for 23.8% of Salesian Houses in the Congregation. The median age of confreres is 45. It is providential that so many Salesians are working in the region that has the largest populations of youth and poor youth in the world.

The Salesian Family in the Region comprises in addition to the Salesians, the Institute of the Daughters of Mary help of Christians (1.789), Association of the Salesian Co-operators (3.652), World Confederation of the Past Pupils (34.091), Secular Institute of the Volunteers of Don Bosco (15), Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (915), Association of Mary Help of Christians (905), Catechist Sisters of Mary Immaculate Help of Christians (748), The Disciples – Don Bosco Secular Institute (317), Sisters of Maria Auxiliatrix (102), and Visitation Sisters of Don Bosco (109).

The works of the Salesians in collaboration with other members of the Salesian Family and other Religious and laity reach out to over 21.170.893 beneficiaries. A variety of works (formal and non-formal technical education, works for youth at risk (YaR), Schools, Higher Education, Parishes, Youth Centres, Oratories Social work etc) are directed to serving the beneficiaries. The other Salesian Family members have independent works that reach out to many more.

The world, under the leadership of the United Nations has set the goal to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere” as the first of its Sustainable development Goals. The Salesian works achieve these goals in manifold ways, but one prominent work among them is short term skill training offered to poor youth who are then helped to get employed and earn a living to be the protagonists who bring their families out of poverty.

The Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia (SPCSA) set up Don Bosco Tech (DBTech) as a vehicle to coordinate the efforts of all Salesian Provinces in this area of work. Established in 2006, the DBTech model and its name has been imitated in other parts of the world. In these years the network (DBTech India) has trained over 440.000 young people. The work is done through the various Salesian institutions as well as through a large network of collaborative work with other Diocesan and Religious Congregations and with a large pool of highly motivated lay collaborators who are committed to working for the poorer section of youth.

While the achievements over the years on behalf of the poorest youth, has been great, I would like to point to the achievements of 2022-2023 to appreciate the work of all Salesians and their collaborators to carry on the dream of Don Bosco to dedicate ourselves to young people especially those who are poorer.

I have chosen this work to be presented since it above all achieves the largest and best outcome for the poorest

families.

Here we have a network with 26.243 students being trained in one year! Very few large institutions in the world would have so many students graduating (20.121) in one year. Even if they had, the graduates would rarely be in such numbers from the poorest sections of society.

Of these approximately 18.370 are employed as they finish their skills training (approximately 70% of those trained).

All these students have been given totally free training and job placement without charging fees. This is achieved through the generous contribution of benefactors and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partners. DBTech has over 30 funding partners including Corporates, Foundations and Government.

The Salesian predilection for poorer youth is evidenced in the fact that almost all the trainees come from the “Economically Weaker Sections” of society – 98%.

Even more important to note is that 10.987 (55%) of the already graduated 20.121 students (others being in training, awaiting conclusion of their classes) are coming from families who have an annual income less than Rs.100.000, that is approximately 1.111 Euro per year (calculated at 1 Euro = Rs.90). This is family income less than 100 Euro per month. This would mean families living on less than 3 Euro per day. We are speaking of families and not individuals!

<i>Annual Family Income</i>	<i>Approximate Daily Income of Families</i>	<i>Total Youth Trained</i>	<i>% of Youth Trained</i>
Below 1 Lakh / Below 1.111 Euro	Below 3 Euro	10.987	55%
1-3 Lakh	Below 3-9 Euro	8.144	40%
3-5 Lakh	Below 9-15 Euro	469	2%

5-7 Lakh	Below 15-21 Euro	161	1%
7 Lakh and above	21 Euro and more	360	2%
Grand Total		20.121 (+ 6.302 in class)	

Note: Euro calculated to be 1 = Rs.90

Dopo la formazione gratuita, questi giovani poveri guadagnano oggi in media 10.000 rupie al mese, il che ha reso il loro reddito personale annuo superiore al reddito familiare annuo delle loro famiglie.

After free skill training, these poor youth are today earning an average of Rs.10.000 per month which has made their personal annual income above the annual family income of their own families.

In the context of the need for outcome based transformative interventions, the Salesian Family of South Asia with the primary role played by the young people who get skilled and employed are truly forming "honest citizens". The young people who have been trained and placed in jobs are today contributing to nation building. The annual income generated by these students employed after free training is approximately Rs. 2.204.400.000 which is equivalent to approximately 24.493.333 Euros annually.

The training duration varies according to sectors. The trainings are provided in various sectors: Agriculture and Allied; Apparel, Made Ups and Home Furnishing; Automotive; Banking and Finance; Beauty & Wellness; Capital Goods; Construction; Electronics & IT Hardware; Food Processing; Furniture & Fittings; Green Jobs; Handicrafts and Carpet; Healthcare; IT-ITES; Logistics; Media and Entertainment; Office Management; Plumbing Industry; Power; Retail; Tourism and Hospitality and, Others.

It is also to be noted that in developing nations where girls and women are the weaker and more defenceless, the services offered by the Salesians are serving the females more. More than 53% of the trainees who completed their course are female.



Le storie dei giovani che hanno trasformato la loro vita cogliendo le opportunità offerte dalle opere salesiane sono molto importanti nella narrazione dell'attenzione salesiana verso i più poveri.

The stories of the youth who have transformed their lives through taking the opportunities provided by the Salesian works stand tall in the narrative of Salesian focus on the poorest.

The Salesians have truly received support from many generous people, foundations, corporations and government to achieve the transformation of so many underprivileged youths to become honest and productive citizens. We are truly grateful to all of them. God has been blessing the Region with growth in Salesian Vocations too.

For more information, one could visit the website of DBTech India at <https://dbtech.in>.

Such work, as Don Bosco would tell us, is “our greatest satisfaction”! It is addressed to the poorest. It involves largescale collaboration between Religious and Secular bodies. It is a great example of lay collaboration. It is addressed to all youth – 72% of the beneficiary youth belong to Hindu religion which is the largest religion in the South Asia Region.

In the *Biographical Memoirs of Saint John Bosco* we read Don Bosco's words: “Make sure you always stick to the poor children of the people. Do not fail in your prime purpose and let your society always have it in view: do not aspire to

greater things. [...] If you educate the poor, if you are poor, if you do not make noise, no one will envy you, no one will seek you out, they will leave you alone and you will do good.” (MB IX,566).

We also present some young people whose encounter with Don Bosco’s charism has changed their lives.

Adna Javaid

Adna Javaid’s struggles began at a very young age. She grew up in poverty. She was born in Bemina, a region in the heart of Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, India. Adna’s father Javaid Ahmad Bhat was a shopkeeper who could hardly support his family. She dropped her studies after completing 12th grade and remained in her home for some years. She wanted to chase her dreams, but could not find a way to fulfil them.

Despite her difficult circumstances, she began writing plays and performing them in small venues in her locality. However, her early efforts were unsuccessful, and she faced rejection after rejection. In 2021, Adna staged her first play, “I Know I’ve Been a Girl,” in her community. The play was poorly received, and Adna lost all of her savings. However, she continued to have faith and slowly built up her future.

During the Don Bosco Tech Srinagar mobilization near her locality, Adna saw the Don Bosco Tech team and spoke to them about her problems. The team convinced her to join the training and assured job assistance, and she decided to join the CRM Domestic Voice Domain.



Adna’s breakthrough came in 2021 when she realized that she was closer to her dreams after training at Don Bosco Tech Training Centre Srinagar.

Since then, Adna has become one of the most successful and influential figures in the BPO sector. Despite facing significant obstacles and setbacks, she persevered, continued to work hard, and believed in herself and her vision.

She is now working as a Customer Care Executive Process, at J&K Bank, supported by DigiTech, Call System Pvt. Ltd, with Rs 12,101 CTC monthly remuneration.

Adna is so happy about her life now, and she is also helping many girls to join the job-oriented course at Don Bosco Tech Training Centre, Rajbagh, Srinagar.

Peesara Niharika

Peesara Niharika hails from a rural place located far away from Don Bosco Tech, Karunapuram center. She completed her graduation with the support of her parents, who are daily wage workers. Difficulties and shortcomings were the watchwords in her life from a very young age. At a point in life, she even dropped her studies and supported her parents financially, by working in agri-farms with the villagers. But she longed to pursue higher studies, whenever she watched her school friends go to college, while she was working in the paddy field.

One day, as she was looking for an employment opportunity, Niharika came across the mobilization wing at Karnuapuram, organized by the staff of Don Bosco Tech Centre and made a firm decision to enrol herself in the Skill Training Program. Having an interest in Customer Relationship Management, she got herself enrolled in the CRM Domestic Non-Voice program at Don Bosco Tech, Karunapuram center.

She was found to be very active and agile during the training program, trying to efficiently communicate with everyone in her batch. She is multitalented with skills such as dancing, singing, and playing games, and also enthusiastically spreads positivity around her. Through life skill sessions, she could get rid of her timidity and stage fear.

At the time of the interview, she was hired by Ratnadeep, in Hyderabad for the role of Customer Service Representative with a pay scale of INR 14,600/- per month including ESI and PF. Now she has the capacity to lead her family and support her parents who are extremely grateful to Don Bosco Tech Society for the huge transformation in their daughter's life. Niharika overwhelmingly says that her journey at Don Bosco Tech Karunapuram center will forever remain a happy memory for the rest of her life.

Chanti V.

"The difference between who you are and who you want to be is what you do".

Chanti is from a low-income family in Vepagunta, Vishkapattanam. After he completed his intermediate, he wanted to go for higher studies but could not afford the fees. Then, he got to know about the Don Bosco Tech training centre, Sabbavaram through his neighbourhood friend and the mobilization activity in his village. He came to know from the counsellors that this institute provides free training with NSDC certifications.

After joining Don Bosco Tech, along with the E-commerce course, Chanti also learned spoken English and computer. The trainers still remember that on his first day at Don Bosco Tech, his poor communication skills and less than minimum knowledge of Computers were vividly noticed by them. There was no proper education system or facilities in his village for him to learn such skills. But his desperation towards learning a new subject and need for a better job convinced the trainers to include him in the E-Commerce Domain.

He managed to get placed in the company, Ecom Express as a delivery boy. After witnessing his talent, the company gave him higher responsibility and now he gets INR 20,000/- per month.

He and his parents were extremely happy about his achievement. He is very grateful to the institute for making him what he is today. Now, he has become an inspiration for young boys in his village who are struggling to get a decent job. He has informed many of them about DB Tech, Sabbavaram, and many have expressed their desire to join the institute.

Klerina N Areng

Klerina N Areng from Meghalaya she completed her 10th in the year 2009 as a private candidate. Then she heard about the Don Bosco Tech Society giving free training plus placement out of State. She was very interested and decided to join the training.

She was enrolled under Skill Meghalaya F& B Service Associate Batch-2 in the Don Bosco Tech, Shillong Centre. All her classmates were younger than her so most of them made fun of her and called her mommy, but she just ignored them.

She was very punctual, respectful, and was a very good learner. She learned everything faster than her batch mates. In the whole 2 months of training, she showed discipline and excellent results. Finally, after the completion of her training, DB Tech offered her a job at JW Marriott Sahar Mumbai, as a Steward with a monthly salary of CTC Rs 15000.

She is very much thankful to DBTech and MSSDS Skill Meghalaya for providing her an opportunity to earn her livelihood in a decent way. Now, with the salary she will be able to support her parents financially.



Fr Biju Michael, SDB
General Councillor for South Asia