

# Election of the 266th Successor of Saint Peter

*Every death or resignation of a Pontiff opens one of the most delicate phases in the life of the Catholic Church: the election of the Successor of Saint Peter. Although the last conclave dates back to March 2013, when Jorge Mario Bergoglio became Pope Francis, understanding how a Pope is elected remains essential to grasp the functioning of a millennia-old institution that influences over 1.3 billion faithful and – indirectly – global geopolitics.*

## 1. The Vacant See

Everything begins with the **vacant see**, that is, the period between the death (or resignation) of the reigning Pontiff and the election of the new one. The apostolic constitution *Universi Dominici Gregis*, promulgated by John Paul II on February 22, 1996, and updated by Benedict XVI in 2007 and 2013, establishes detailed procedures.

### *Verification of the vacancy*

In case of death: the Cardinal Camerlengo – currently Cardinal Kevin Farrell – officially confirms the death, closes and seals the papal apartment, and notifies the Dean of the College of Cardinals.

In case of resignation: the vacant see begins at the time indicated in the resignation act, as happened at 8:00 PM on February 28, 2013, for Benedict XVI.

### *Ordinary administration*

During the vacant see, the Camerlengo manages the material assets of the Holy See but cannot perform acts reserved exclusively for the Pontiff (such as episcopal appointments, doctrinal decisions, etc.).

### *General and particular congregations*

All cardinals – electors and non-electors – present in Rome gather in the Synod Hall to discuss urgent matters. The “particular” congregations include the Camerlengo and three cardinals drawn by lot in rotation; the “general” congregations summon the entire College of Cardinals and are used, among other things, to set the start date of the conclave.

## **2. Who can elect and who can be elected**

### *The electors*

Since Paul VI’s *motu proprio Ingravescentem aetatem* (1970), **only cardinals who have not reached the age of 80 before the start of the vacant see have the right to vote.** The maximum number of electors is set at 120, but this can be temporarily exceeded due to closely spaced consistories.

Electors must:

- be present in Rome by the start of the conclave (except for serious reasons);
- take an oath of secrecy;
- stay at the *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, the residence established by John Paul II to ensure dignity and discretion.

The enclosure is not a medieval whim: it aims to protect the cardinals’ freedom of conscience and shield the Church from undue interference. Breaking the secrecy results in automatic excommunication.

### *Those eligible*

In theory, **any baptized male** can be elected Pope, since the Petrine office is of divine right. However, from the Middle Ages to today, the Pope has always been chosen from among the cardinals. If a non-cardinal or even a layman were chosen, he would have to be immediately ordained a bishop.

## **3. The conclave: etymology, logistics, and symbolism**

The term “conclave” comes from the Latin *cum clave*, “with key”: the cardinals are “locked in” until the election to

avoid external pressures. The enclosure is guaranteed by several rules:

- Allowed places: Sistine Chapel (voting), *Domus Sanctae Marthae* (lodging), a reserved path between the two buildings.
- Communication ban: electronic devices are collected, signal jammers used, *anti-spy controls* in place.
- Secrecy is also ensured by an oath that includes spiritual sanctions (*automatic* excommunication) and canonical penalties.

#### **4. Typical agenda of the conclave**

1. “*Pro eligendo Pontifice*” Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica on the morning of the entry into the conclave.
2. Procession in the Sistine Chapel reciting the *Veni Creator Spiritus*.
3. Individual oath of the cardinals, pronounced before the Gospel book.
4. *Extra omnes!* (“Everyone out!”): the Master of Pontifical Liturgical Celebrations dismisses those not entitled to stay.
5. First (optional) vote on the afternoon of the entry day.
6. Two daily votes (morning and afternoon) followed by the scrutiny (counting).

#### **5. Voting procedure**

Each round follows four steps:

**5.1. *Praescrutinium*.** Distribution and filling out in Latin of the ballot “*Eligo in Summum Pontificem...*”.

**5.2. *Scrutinium*.** Each cardinal, carrying the folded ballot, says: “*Testor Christum Dominum...*”. He deposits the ballot in the urn.

**5.3. *Post-scrutinium*.** Three *scrutators* drawn by lot count the ballots, read aloud each name, record it, and perforate the ballot with needle and thread.

**5.4. *Burning*.** Ballots and notes are burned in a special stove; the colour of the smoke indicates the result.

To be elected, a qualified majority is required, that is, two-thirds of valid votes.

#### **6. The smoke: black waiting, white joy**

Since 2005, to make the signal unmistakable to the faithful in St. Peter's Square, a chemical reagent is added:

– Black smoke (*fumata nera*): no one elected.

– White smoke (*fumata bianca*): Pope elected; bells also ring.

After the white smoke, it takes another 30 minutes to an hour before the new Pope is announced by the Cardinal Deacon in St. Peter's Square. Shortly after (5 to 15 minutes), the new Pope appears to give the *Urbi et Orbi* blessing.

## **7. “*Acceptasne electionem?*” – Acceptance and pontifical name**

When someone reaches the required threshold, the Dean of the College of Cardinals (or the oldest by order and legal seniority if the Dean is the elected) asks: “*Acceptasne electionem de te canonice factam in Summum Pontificem?*” (Do you accept the canonically made election as Supreme Pontiff?). If the elected consents – *Accepto!* – he is asked: “*Quo nomine vis vocari?*” (By what name do you wish to be called?). Taking the name is an act full of theological and pastoral meanings: it recalls models (Francis of Assisi) or reform intentions (John XXIII).

## **8. Immediately following rites**

8.1 *Vesting*.

8.2 *Entry into the Chapel of Tears*, where the new Pope can recollect himself.

8.3 *Obedientia*: the electing cardinals file past for the first act of obedience.

8.4 *Announcement to the world*: the Protodeacon appears on the central balcony with the famous “*Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum: habemus Papam!*”

8.5 *First “Urbi et Orbi” blessing* of the new Pontiff.

From that moment, he takes possession of the office and formally begins his pontificate, while the coronation with the pallium and the Fisherman's ring takes place at the inauguration Mass (usually the following Sunday).

## **9. Some historical aspects and development of the norms**

1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries: Acclamation by clergy and Roman people. In the absence of stable norms, imperial influence was strong.

1059 – *In nomine Domini*. College of Cardinals. Nicholas II limits lay intervention; official birth of the conclave.

1274 – *Ubi Periculum*. Mandatory enclosure. Gregory X reduces political manoeuvres, introduces seclusion.

1621–1622 – Gregory XV. Systematic secret ballot. Improvement of ballots; two-thirds requirement.

1970 – Paul VI. Age limit of 80 years. Reduces electorate, favouring quicker decisions.

1996 – John Paul II. *Universi Dominici Gregis*. Modern codification of the process, introduces *Domus Sanctae Marthae*.

## **10. Some concrete data of this Conclave**

Living cardinals: 252 (average age: 78.0 years).

Voting cardinals: 134 (135). Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera, Archbishop Emeritus of Valencia, Spain, and Cardinal John Njue, Archbishop Emeritus of Nairobi, Kenya, have announced that they will not be able to participate in the conclave.

Of the 135 voting cardinals, 108 (80%) were appointed by Pope Francis. 22 (16%) were appointed by Pope Benedict XVI. The remaining 5 (4%) were appointed by Pope Saint John Paul II.

Of the 135 voting cardinals, 25 participated as electors in the 2013 Conclave.

Average age of the 134 participating cardinal electors: 70.3 years.

Average years of service as cardinal of the 134 participating cardinal electors: 7.1 years.

Average length of a papacy: about 7.5 years.

Start of the Conclave: May 7, Sistine Chapel.

Voting cardinals in the Conclave: 134. Number of votes required for election is two-thirds, i.e., 89 votes.

Voting schedule: 4 votes per day (2 in the morning, 2 in the afternoon).

After 3 full days (to be defined), voting is suspended for a full day ("to allow a prayer pause, informal discussion among electors, and a brief spiritual exhortation").

Then follow 7 more ballots and another pause up to a full day.

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## **11. Unwritten "internal" dynamics**

Despite the strict legal framework, the choice of the Pope is a spiritual but also a human process influenced by:

- Profiles of candidates ("papabili"): geographic origin, pastoral experience, doctrinal competence.
- Ecclesial currents: curial or pastoral, reformist or conservative, liturgical sensitivities.
- Global agenda : ecumenical relations, inter-religious dialogue, social crises (migrants, climate change).
- Languages and personal networks: cardinals tend to gather by region (the "Latin American" group, "African" group, etc.) and meet informally during meals or "walks" in the Vatican gardens.

## **A spiritual and institutional event together**

The election of a Pope is not a technical step comparable to a corporate assembly. Despite the human dimension, it is a **spiritual act essentially guided by the Holy Spirit.**

The care of minute rules – from sealing the Sistine doors to burning the ballots – shows how the Church has transformed its long historical experience into a system now perceived as stable and solemn.

Knowing how a Pope is chosen, therefore, is not just curiosity: it is understanding the dynamic between authority, collegiality, and tradition that supports the oldest religious institution still operating worldwide. And, in an age of dizzying changes, that "little smoke" rising from the roof of the Sistine Chapel continues to remind us that centuries-old decisions can still speak to the hearts of billions, inside

and outside the Church.

May this knowledge of the data and procedures help us to pray more deeply, as one should pray before every important decision that affects our life.

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## **The New Headquarters of the Salesians. Rome, Sacro Cuore (Sacred Heart)**

*Today, the original vocation of the Sacred Heart House sees a new beginning. Tradition and innovation continue to characterise the past, present, and future of this significant work.*

So often did Don Bosco desire to come to Rome to open a Salesian house. From his first trip in 1858, his goal was to be present in the Eternal City with an educational presence. He came to Rome twenty times, and only on his last trip in 1887 was he able to realise his dream by opening the Sacred Heart house in Castro Pretorio.

The Salesian Work is located in the Esquiline district, established in 1875, after the breach of Porta Pia and the Savoy's need to build the ministries of the Kingdom of Italy in the new capital. The district, also called Umbertino, has Piedmontese architecture. All the streets are named after battles or events related to the Savoy state. In this place that recalls Turin, there had to be a Temple, which was also a parish, built by a Piedmontese, Don Giovanni Bosco. Don Bosco did not choose the name of the Church, but it was the will of Leo XIII to revive a devotion, more relevant than ever, to the Heart of Jesus.

Today, the Sacred Heart House is completely renovated to meet the needs of the Salesian Central Headquarters. From the time of its foundation to the present day, the house has undergone several transformations. The Work began as a Parish and International Temple for the spread of devotion to the Sacred Heart. From the beginning, Don Bosco's declared goal was to build a home next door to accommodate up to 500 poor children. Fr. Rua completed the Work and opened workshops for artisans (arts and crafts school). In the following years, the middle school and classical high school were opened. For some years, it was also the seat of the university (Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum) and a training house for Salesians who studied at Roman universities and were involved in the school and oratory (among these students there was Fr. Quadrio). It was also the headquarters of the Roman Province first and of the Circumscription of Central Italy from 2008. Since 2017, due to the move from Via della Pisana, it has become the Salesian Central Headquarters. Renovation began in 2022 to adapt the spaces to the function of the Rector Major's house. Don Bosco, Fr. Rua, Cardinal Cagliero (his apartment was located on the first floor of Via Marsala), Zeffirino Namuncurà, Monsignor Versiglia, Artemide Zatti, all the Rectors Major successors of Don Bosco, and Saint John Paul II, Saint Teresa of Calcutta, and Pope Francis have lived or passed through this house. Among the directors of the house, Monsignor Giuseppe Cognata served (during his rectorship, in 1930, the statue of the Sacred Heart was placed on the bell tower).

Thanks to the Sacred Heart, the Salesian charism has spread to various neighbourhoods of Rome. In fact, all the other Salesian presences in Rome have been an offshoot of this house: Testaccio, Pio XI, Borgo Ragazzi Don Bosco, Don Bosco Cinecittà, Gerini, the Pontifical Salesian University.

### **Crossroads of Hospitality**

From the beginning, there have been two determining characteristics of the Sacred Heart House:



1) *Catholicity*, in that opening a house in Rome has always meant for the founders of religious orders a closeness to the Pope and a broadening of horizons at a universal level. In the first conference to the Salesian Cooperators at the monastery of Tor De' Specchi in Rome in 1874, Don Bosco stated that the Salesians would spread throughout the world and that helping their works meant living the most authentic Catholic spirit;

2) *attention towards poor young people*: the location near the station, a crossroads of arrivals and departures, a place where the poorest have always gathered, is inscribed in the history of the Sacred Heart.

In the beginning, the House took in poor children to teach them a trade, and later, the oratory gathered the children of the neighbourhood. After the war, the shoeshine boys (boys who shined shoes for people leaving the station) were gathered and cared for first in this house and then moved to Borgo Ragazzi Don Bosco. During the mid-1980s, with the first immigration to Italy, young immigrants were hosted in collaboration with the nascent Caritas. In the 1990s, a Day Centre gathered children as an alternative to prison and taught them the basics of reading and writing and a trade. Since 2009, an integration project between young refugees and young Italians has seen many initiatives of welcome and evangelisation flourish. The Sacred Heart House has also been the headquarters of the National Centre of Salesian Works of Italy for about 30 years.

### **The New Beginning**

Today, the original vocation of the Sacred Heart House sees a new beginning. Tradition and innovation continue to characterise the past, present, and future of this significant work.

First of all, the presence of the Rector Major with his council and of the confreres who take care of the global dimension indicates the continuum of Catholicity. It is a vocation to welcome many Salesians who come from all over

the world and find in the Sacred Heart House a place to feel at home, experience fraternity and meet with Don Bosco's successor. At the same time, it is the place from which the Rector Major animates and governs the Congregation, tracing the lines to be faithful to Don Bosco in the present.

Secondly, there is the presence of a significant Salesian place where Don Bosco wrote the letter from Rome and understood the dream of the nine years. Inside the house there will be the Don Bosco House Museum of Rome, which, distributed on three floors, will tell the story of the Saint's presence in the eternal city. The centrality of education as a "thing of the heart" in his Preventive System, the relationship with the Popes who loved Don Bosco and whom he first loved and served, the Sacred Heart as a place of expansion of the charism throughout the world, the difficult path of approval of the Constitutions, the understanding of the dream of the nine years and his last educational breath in writing the letter from Rome are the thematic elements that, in an immersive multimedia form, will be revealed to those who visit the Museum.

Thirdly, the devotion to the Sacred Heart represents the centre of the charism. Don Bosco, even before receiving the invitation to build the Church of the Sacred Heart, had oriented young people towards this devotion. In *The Companion of Youth* there are prayers and practices of piety addressed to the Heart of Christ. However, with the acceptance of the proposal of Leo XIII he becomes a true apostle of the Sacred Heart. He spares no effort to seek money for the Church. The attention to the smallest details infuses his thought and devotion to the Sacred Heart into the architectural and artistic choices of the Basilica. To support the construction of the Church and the house, he founded the **Pious Work of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**, the last of the five foundations created by Don Bosco throughout his life together with the Salesians, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Salesian Cooperators, the Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians. It was erected for the perpetual

**celebration of six daily masses in the Church of the Sacred Heart in Rome.** All the members, living and deceased, participate through the prayer offered and the good works performed by the Salesians and young people in all their houses.

The vision of the Church that derives from the foundation of the Pious Work is that of a “living body” composed of the living and the dead in communion with each other through the Sacrifice of Jesus, renewed daily in the Eucharistic celebration in service of the poorest young people. The desire of the Heart of Jesus is that all may be one (*ut unum sint*) as He and the Father. The Pious Work connects, through prayer and offerings, the benefactors, living and deceased, the Salesians of the whole world and the young people who live at the Sacred Heart. Only through communion, which has its source in the Eucharist, can benefactors, Salesians and young people contribute to building the Church, to making it shine in its missionary face. The Pious Work also has the task of promoting, spreading, deepening devotion to the Sacred Heart throughout the world and renewing it according to the times and the feeling of the Church.

### **The central station for evangelising**

Finally, attention to poor young people is manifested in the missionary will to reach the young people of all Rome through the Youth Centre open on Via Marsala, right at the exit of Termini station where about 300,000 people pass every day. A place that is home for the many Italian and foreign young people, who visit or live in Rome and are thirsty, sometimes unconsciously, for God. Moreover, various poor people, marked by the fatigue of life, have always crowded around Termini station. It is another open door on Via Marsala, in addition to that of the Youth Centre and the Basilica, that expresses the desire to respond to the needs of these people with the Heart of Christ. In fact, the glory of His face shines in them.

Don Bosco's prophecy about the Sacred Heart House of April 5, 1880, accompanies and guides the realisation of what has been told:

*But Don Bosco looked further into the future. Our own Bishop John Marengo recalled a mysterious remark he made which we should not let time obliterate. On the very day he accepted that burdensome assignment, Don Bosco asked him:*

*– Do you know why we accepted that house in Rome?*

*– No, he answered.*

*– Listen, then. We agreed because one day, when there will be another Pope and he shall be the right one, we shall set up our headquarters there to evangelise the Roman countryside. It will be no less important a task than that of evangelising Patagonia. Then will the Salesians be acknowledged and their glory shine forth! (BM XIV, 474)*

*don Francesco Marcoccio*

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## **Father Crespi and the Jubilee of 1925**

*In 1925, in anticipation of the Holy Year, Father Carlo Crespi promoted an international missionary exhibition. Recalled by the Collegio Manfredini of Este, he was given the task of documenting the missionary endeavours in Ecuador, collecting scientific, ethnographic, and audio visual materials. Through travels and screenings, his work connected Rome and Turin, highlighting the Salesian commitment and strengthening ties between ecclesiastical and civil institutions. His courage and vision transformed the missionary challenge into an exhibition*

*success, leaving an indelible mark on the history of Propaganda Fide and the Salesian missionary work.*

When Pius XI, in view of the Holy Year of 1925, wanted to plan a documented Vatican International Missionary Exhibition in Rome, the Salesians embraced the initiative with a Missionary Exhibition, to be held in Turin in 1926, also in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Salesian Missions. For this purpose, the Superiors immediately thought of Fr. Carlo Crespi and called him from the *Collegio Manfredini* of Este, where he had been assigned to teach Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Music.

In Turin, Fr. Carlo conferred with the Rector Major, Fr. Filippo Rinaldi, with the superior responsible for the missions, Fr. Pietro Ricaldone, and, in particular, with Msgr. Domenico Comin, Apostolic Vicar of Méndez and Gualaquiza (Ecuador), who was to support his work. At that moment, travels, explorations, research, studies, and everything else that would arise from Carlo Crespi's work, received the approval and official start from the Superiors. Although the planned Exhibition was four years away, they asked Fr. Carlo to take care of it directly, so that he could carry out a complete scientifically serious and credible work.

This involved:

1. Creating a climate of interest in favour of the Salesians operating in the Ecuadorian mission of Méndez, enhancing their endeavours through written and oral documentation, and providing an appropriate collection of funds.

2. Collecting material for the preparation of the International Missionary Exhibition in Rome and, subsequently transferring it to Turin, to solemnly commemorate the first fifty years of the Salesian missions.

3. Conducting a scientific study of the aforementioned territory in order to channel the results, not only into the exhibitions in Rome and Turin, but especially into a permanent Museum and a precise "historical-geo-

ethnographic" work.

From 1921 onwards, the Superiors commissioned Fr. Carlo to conduct propaganda activities in various Italian cities in favour of the missions. To raise public awareness in this regard, Fr. Carlo organised the projection of documentaries on Patagonia, *Tierra del Fuego*, and the Indians of Mato Grosso. He combined the films shot by the missionaries with musical comments personally performed on the piano.

The propaganda with conferences yielded about 15 thousand Lire [re-evaluated this corresponds to € 14,684] later spent for travel, transport, and for the following materials: a camera, a movie camera, a typewriter, some compasses, theodolites, levels, rain gauges, a box of medicines, agricultural tools and field tents.

Several industrialists from the Milan area offered several quintals of fabrics for the value of 80 thousand Lire [€ 78,318], fabrics that were later distributed among the Indians.

On March 22, 1923, Fr. Crespi embarked, therefore, on the steamship "Venezuela," bound for Guayaquil, the most important river and maritime port of Ecuador. In fact, it was the commercial and economic capital of the country, nicknamed for its beauty: "The Pearl of the Pacific."

In a later writing, with great emotion he would recall his departure for the Missions: *"I remember my departure from Genoa on March 22 of the year 1923 [...]. When, once the decks that still held us bound to our native land had been removed, the ship began to move, my soul was pervaded by a joy so overwhelming, so superhuman, so ineffable, that I had never experienced it at any moment of my life, not even on the day of my First Communion, not even on the day of my first Mass. In that instant I began to understand who a missionary was and what God reserved for him [...]. Pray fervently, so that God may preserve our holy vocation and make us worthy of our holy mission; so that none of the souls may perish, which in His eternal decrees God wanted to be saved through us, so that He may make us bold champions of the faith, even unto death,*

even unto martyrdom" (Carlo Crespi, New detachment. The hymn of gratitude, in *Bollettino Salesiano*, L, n.12, December 1926).

Fr. Carlo fulfilled the task he received by putting into practice his university knowledge, in particular through the sampling of minerals, flora, and fauna from Ecuador. Soon, however, he went beyond the mission entrusted to him, becoming enthusiastic about topics of an ethnographic and archaeological nature that, later, would occupy much of his intense life.

From the first itineraries, Carlo Crespi did not limit himself to admiring, rather he collected, classified, noted, photographed, filmed, and documented anything that attracted his attention as a scholar. With enthusiasm, he ventured into the Ecuadorian East for films, documentaries, and to collect valuable botanical, zoological, ethnic, and archaeological collections.

This is that magnetic world that already vibrated in his heart even before arriving there, of which he reports as follows inside his notebooks: *"In these days a new, insistent voice sounds in my soul, a sacred nostalgia for the mission countries; sometimes also for the desire to know scientific things in particular. Oh Lord! I am willing to do anything, to abandon family, relatives, fellow students; all to save some soul, if this is your desire, your will"* (place and date unknown). – *Personal notes and reflections of the Servant of God on themes of a spiritual nature taken from 4 notebooks*).

A first itinerary, lasting three months, began in Cuenca, touched Gualaceo, Indanza, and ended at the Santiago River. Then he reached the valley of the San Francisco River, the Patococha Lagoon, Tres Palmas, Culebrillas, Potrerillos (the highest locality, at 3,800 m a.s.l.), Rio Ishpingo, the hill of Puerco Grande, Tinajillas, Zapote, Loma de Puerco Chico, Plan de Milagro, and Pianoro. In each of these places, he collected samples to dry and integrate into the various collections. Field notebooks and numerous photographs document

everything with precision.

Carlo Crespi organised a second journey through the valleys of Yanganza, Limón, Peña Blanca, Tzaranbiza, as well as along the Indanza path. As is easy to suppose, travel at the time was difficult: there were only mule tracks, as well as precipices, inhospitable climatic conditions, dangerous beasts, lethal snakes, and tropical diseases.

In addition to this there was the danger of attacks by the indomitable inhabitants of the East that Fr. Carlo, however, managed to approach, laying the foundations for the feature film "*Los invencibles Shuaras del Alto Amazonas*," which he would shoot in 1926 and screen on February 26, 1927, in Guayaquil. Overcoming all these pitfalls, he managed to gather six hundred varieties of beetles, sixty embalmed birds with wonderful plumage, mosses, lichens, ferns. He studied about two hundred local species and, using the sub-classification of the places visited by naturalists on Allionii, he came across 21 varieties of ferns, belonging to the tropical zone below 800 m a.s.l.; 72 to the subtropical one that goes from 800 to 1,500 m a.s.l.; 102 to the Subandean one, between 1,500 and 3,400 m a.s.l., and 19 to the Andean one, higher than 3,600 m a.s.l. (A very interesting comment was made by Prof. Roberto Bosco, a prestigious botanist and member of the Italian Botanical Society who, fourteen years later, in 1938, decided to study and systematically order "the showy collection of ferns" prepared in a few months by "Prof. Carlo Crespi, botanizing in Ecuador).

The most noteworthy species, studied by Roberto Bosco, were named "Crespiane."

To summarise: already in October 1923, to prepare the Vatican Exhibition, Fr. Carlo had organised the first missionary excursions throughout the Vicariate, up to Méndez, Gualaquiza, and Indanza, collecting ethnographic materials and lots of photographic documentation. The expenses were covered through the fabrics and funds collected in Italy. With the material collected, which he would later transfer to Italy, he organised a trade fair Exhibition, between the months of June



and July 1924, in the city of Guayaquil. The work aroused enthusiastic judgments, recognitions, and aid. He would report on this Exhibition, ten years later, in a letter of December 31, 1935, to the Superiors of Turin, to inform them about the funds collected from November 1922 to November 1935.

Father Crespi spent the first semester of 1925 in the forests of the Sucúa-Macas area, studying the Shuar language and collecting further material for the missionary Exhibition of Turin. In August of the same year, he began a negotiation with the Government to obtain a significant funding, which concluded on September 12 with a contract for 110,000 Sucres (equal to 500,000 Lire of the time and which today would be € 489,493.46), which would allow the Pan-Méndez mule track to be completed). Furthermore, he also obtained permission to withdraw from customs 200 quintals of iron and material confiscated from some traders.

In 1926, having returned to Italy, Fr. Carlo brought cages with live animals from the eastern area of Ecuador (a difficult collection of birds and rare animals) and boxes with ethnographic material, for the Missionary Exhibition of Turin, which he personally organised, also giving the official closing speech on October 10.

In the same year, he was busy organising the Exhibition and then giving several conferences and participating in the American Congress of Rome with two scientific conferences. This enthusiasm and his competence and scientific research responded perfectly to the directives of the Superiors, and, therefore, through the International Missionary Exhibition of 1925 in Rome and that of 1926 in Turin, Ecuador became more widely known. Furthermore, at the ecclesial level, he contacted the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, the Holy Childhood, and the Association for the Indigenous Clergy. At the civil level, he established relationships with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Government.

From these contacts and from the interviews with the Superiors of the Salesian Congregation, some results were

obtained. In the first place, the Superiors gave him the gift of granting him 4 priests, 4 seminarians, 9 coadjutor brothers, and 4 sisters for the Vicariate. Furthermore, he obtained a series of economic funds from the Vatican Organisations and collaboration with sanitary material for the hospitals, for the value of about 100,000 Lire (€ 97,898.69). As a gift from the Major Superiors for the help given for the Missionary Exhibition, they took charge of the construction of the Church of Macas, with two instalments of 50,000 lire (€ 48,949.35), sent directly to Msgr. Domenico Comin.

Having exhausted the task of collector, supplier, and animator of the great international exhibitions, in 1927 Fr. Crespi returned to Ecuador, which became his second homeland. He settled in the Vicariate, under the jurisdiction of the bishop, Msgr. Comin, always dedicated, in a spirit of obedience, to propaganda excursions, to ensure subsidies and special funds, necessary for the works of the missions, such as the Pan Méndez road, the Guayaquil Hospital, the Guayaquil school in Macas, the Quito Hospital in Méndez, the Agricultural School of Cuenca, the city where, since 1927, he began to develop his priestly and Salesian apostolate.

For some years, he then continued to deal with science, but always with the spirit of the apostle.

*Carlo Riganti*

*President of the Carlo Crespi Association*

*Image: March 24, 1923 – Fr. Carlo Crespi Departing for Ecuador on the Steamship Venezuela*