 Reading time: 4 min.

Traditionally, as Salesian Family we receive the Strenna every year; a gift at the beginning of the year, and in these few lines I am keen to look inside this gift to welcome it as it deserves, without losing any of the freshness of the gift.

A gift, because first of all, *strenna* means: I give you a gift! I give you something important to celebrate a new time, a new year. This is how Don Bosco thought of it and gave it to all the young people and adults who were with him.
This gift, the *strenna*, I want to give you for the beginning of the new year, of a new time.
This is beautiful and important: a new year, a new time is a container containing all its other contents. The year to come is not the same as the ones you have experienced so far. The new year requires a new look to live it to the full; because the new year will not return! Every time is unique because we are different from last year, from the way we were last year.
The *Strenna* is about preparing for this new time, beginning to look inside this new year, highlighting certain things that will be an important part of this year.

The common thread
The gift of time, of life; in life the gift of God and all the other gifts within: people, situations, occasions, human relationships. Within this providential way of seeing the gift of time and life, the *strenna*, a gift that Don Bosco, and after him all his successors have given every year to the whole Salesian Family… is a look at the new year, at this new time, to see it with new eyes.
The *strenna* helps us to see the time to come by focusing on a common thread that guides this new time: the common thread that the *strenna* gives us is Hope. This is also important! The new year will certainly have many things in store, but don't get lost! Start thinking about how important it is… don't throw things to the winds, but collect!
The *strenna* that our Father Angel has put together for us, like a new suit, highlights events that we will all experience, and unites them with a common thread, Hope!
The events that the 2025 *Strenna* highlights are global or particular events that involve us, for us to live them well:

• **The ordinary Jubilee of the year 2025**: a Jubilee is a Church event in the Catholic tradition that the Holy Father gives us. To live the Jubilee is to live this

pilgrimage that the Church offers us to put the presence of Christ back at the centre of our lives and the life of the world. The Jubilee that Pope Francis give us has a generative theme: *Spes non confundit*! Hope does not disappoint! What a wonderful generative theme! If there is one thing the world needs at this difficult time, it is Hope, but not the hope of believing we can do things for ourselves, at the risk of it becoming an illusion. It is the Hope of the re-discovery of the Presence of God. Pope Francis writes: 'Hope fills the heart!' Not only warms the heart, but fills it. Fills it to an overflowing measure!

• **Hope makes us pilgrims.** The Jubilee is a pilgrimage! It sets you on the move internally, otherwise it is not Jubilee. Within this Church event that makes us feel Church we, as a Salesian Congregation and as the Salesian Family have an important anniversary: it takes place in 2025:

• **The 150th anniversary of the first missionary expedition to Argentina.**

In Valdocco, Don Bosco cast his heart beyond all borders: he sent his sons to the other side of the world! He sent them, beyond all human security, sent them when he did not even have what he needed to carry on what he had started.

He just sent them! Hope is obeyed, because Hope drives Faith and sets Charity in motion. He sent them, and the first confreres set out and went to where not even they knew! From there we were all born, from the Hope that sets us on our way and makes us pilgrims.

This anniversary should be celebrated, like every anniversary, because it helps us to recognise the Gift, (it is not your property, it was given to you as a gift) to remember and to give strength for the time to come with the energy of the Mission. Hope founds the Mission, because Hope is a responsibility that you cannot hide or keep to yourself! Do not keep hidden what has been given to you; acknowledge the giver and hand over with your life what has been given to the next generations! This is the life of the Church, the life of each one of us.

St Peter, with foresight, writes in his first letter: 'always be ready to answer anyone who asks you about the hope that is in you!' (1 Pet 3:15). We must think that answering is not just words; it is life that responds!

With the hope that is in you, live and prepare for this new year to come, a journey with young people, with our brothers and sisters, to renew Don Bosco's Dream and God's Dream.

Our coat of arms

Sul mio labaro brilla una stella (On my standard shines a star) we used to sing once upon a time. On our coat of arms, as well as the star there is a large anchor and a burning heart.

These are some simple images to begin to move our hearts in the direction of the time to come, ‘Anchored in hope, pilgrims with youth’. Anchored is a very strong term: the anchor is the salvation of the ship in the storm, firm, strong, rooted in Hope!
Within this generative theme there will be all of our daily life: people, situations, decisions… the ‘micro’ of each one of us that is welded with the ‘macro’ of what we will all experience together… handing over to God the gift of this time that is given to us. Because to the Strenna that we will all receive you must add your part; your daily life that you will know how to illuminate with what we have written and will receive, otherwise it is not a Hope, it is not what your life is based on and it does not set you in ‘motion’, making you a Pilgrim.
We entrust this journey to the Mother of the Lord, Mother of the Church and our Helper; Pilgrim of Hope with us.