

□ Reading time: 3 min.

*In the photo: Carlo GASTINI, the promoter and first leader of the Don Bosco Past Pupils movement, amongst the boys in the Valdocco bookbindery - Turin.*

*A new wind is blowing through the heart of the Salesian Family today. On every continent, thousands of Salesian Alumni and Friends of Don Bosco are rediscovering the relevance of the Salesian charism and the value of a vocation received in the classrooms of a school, an oratory, or a children's home. This is not merely an organisational renewal, but a return to the source: listening to the Gospel through Don Bosco's eyes, walking together in a synodal style, and serving the young with educational passion. It is a call to transform while remaining faithful to a dream that continues to generate life and hope.*

Across the worldwide network of the Confederation of Past Pupils and Friends of Don Bosco, a quiet awakening is taking place. The largest movement within the Salesian Family has embarked on a journey of deep renewal — not simply an administrative reform, but a spiritual transformation that seeks to rediscover the heart of its mission. Guided by the spirit of synodal leadership, this journey invites all members to listen, discern, and walk together in faith and service.

At its core, this transformation is not about change for the sake of modernity, but about fidelity to Don Bosco's dream. It is an act of profound discernment — looking back with gratitude, living the present with courage, and reimagining the future with hope. Each past pupil and friend of Don Bosco carries within them a spark of the same fire that once burned in Don Bosco's heart: a passion for young people, especially the poor and forgotten. That fire continues to shine in classrooms, boardrooms, hospitals, workshops, and homes across the world. Every member becomes a living witness of Don Bosco's mission — forming “good Christians and upright citizens” through faith, compassion, and service.

The 2024 Extraordinary General World Assembly marked a milestone in this renewal. With delegates from over forty countries, the theme “*Journeying Together: Change for Continuity*” captured the essence of a movement embracing transformation while staying true to its roots. The Assembly reaffirmed that faithfulness to Don Bosco's vision means keeping it alive through creative adaptation. From that spirit emerged a bold seven-step plan — a roadmap focused on listening to all voices, reconnecting with Salesian heritage, and responding to the changing needs of young people facing new forms of poverty, isolation, and injustice.

This journey is strengthening the presence and outreach of the organisation across the four regions of the world. Every gathering, meeting, and initiative becomes a moment of

encouragement, renewal, and rediscovery of our shared vision and mission. Four key pillars have emerged as guiding lights for this renewal: Fraternity, Synodal Leadership, Change, and Mission.

Fraternity lies at the very heart of the Salesian charism — that family spirit of joy, simplicity, and mutual care. It strengthens identity and unity, forming a foundation on which collaboration and growth can flourish. Synodal leadership, inspired by Pope Francis' invitation to a more inclusive Church, calls the Confederation to a new way of leading: one that is participatory, humble, and rooted in communion. Change is no longer seen as a threat, but as a sign of vitality — a response to the Spirit's movement in our times. As Don Bosco and Carlo Gastini began 155 years ago, the dream remains alive, and it is now our responsibility to make it real for the young people of today.

A vital sign of this renewal is the active participation of young alumni (GEX). Their energy, creativity, and insight bring new life to the movement. The young are not only the future but the present of the Salesian Family. Their involvement ensures that the mission remains dynamic, relevant, and deeply connected to the challenges and opportunities of modern life. The Strategic Plan of the Confederation places GEX participation at every level of leadership, ensuring that youth engagement is not just discussed, but lived. When the young are trusted and empowered, a new spirit of collaboration and vitality is born.

Looking ahead, the challenge is to ensure continuity — to keep offering spaces where young people can find what Don Bosco once offered: *a home that welcomes, a school that educates, a playground that delights, and a church that guides*. These must remain living realities within our movement.

Equally essential is unity and collaboration. The Confederation's strength lies in its diversity — a global family bound by one charism and one mission. To build on nostalgia alone would be to lose sight of the call to action that Don Bosco entrusted to us: to be evangelisers and educators of the young as active laypeople within the Church.

Today, the world needs witnesses of faith and hope. The mission entrusted to us — to support one another, to serve the young, and to sustain the Salesian spirit — is more relevant than ever. This is our moment: to be bearers of faith, to educate and accompany young people, and to help them become upright citizens and steadfast believers. By embracing synodal leadership, we learn anew what it means to journey together — to listen, to serve, and to transform the world, one young person at a time.

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