 Reading time: 4 min.

From 6 to 10 May 2026, the VI World Congress of the Association of Salesian Cooperators (ASSCC) will be celebrated in Rome, at the Fraterna Domus House.

*The event coincides with an extraordinary anniversary: on **9 May 2026, the Association turns 150 years old.** It was indeed on 9 May 1876 when Don Bosco gave definitive shape to what he had imagined as the "external part" of the Salesian Family – Catholic laypeople engaged in the world, animated by the same spirit and the same mission as the sons of St John Bosco. One hundred and fifty years of history, of widespread presence in neighbourhoods, in parishes, in schools, in the peripheries of the world, alongside young people and the most fragile families.*

An awaited and prepared Congress

The VI World Congress was preceded by a three-year preparation that began in 2023, built around the main theme: "A dream, a promise and the future". A journey designed to bring every Salesian Cooperator back to their roots, to renew their identity and to project themselves towards the challenges of the coming years.

The theme has been articulated into three inseparable dimensions.

The **dream**, that of Don Bosco, which traced his entire life and from which, over time, the whole Salesian Family took shape.

The **promise** is the one freely pronounced by every Salesian Cooperator: the choice to belong to the Salesian Family, to bear witness to the charism of Don Bosco, to stand alongside young people with the same passion as the founder.

The **future**, that of being the "good leaven" that society needs, capable of fermenting from within the realities in which one lives, ready to face the epochal changes of the present time with creativity and hope.

The three-year period: remember, renew, relaunch

To structure this journey, the World Council had articulated the three-year period around three dynamic verbs, one for each year:

2023–2024 – **REMEMBER**: looking at the origins, retracing concrete facts of one's personal and associative history. An exercise in living memory, not nostalgia, but the reappropriation of an identity.

2024–2025 – **RENEW**: drawing on the novelties introduced by the Project of Apostolic Life (PAL), strengthening the sense of belonging to the Association.

2025–2026 – **RELAUNCH**: bringing out the identity of the Salesian Cooperators with greater clarity, facing the challenges of the coming years. And it is precisely this relaunch that the VI World Congress is called to ratify and guide.

What will be decided at the Congress

The Congress is not just a celebration. It is a moment of governance and associative discernment of great importance. Delegates from all over the world – representatives of the different regions and provinces – will examine the state of the Association, evaluate the fruits of the three-year period just concluded, and establish the operational guidelines for the six-year period 2026–2032. This is serious work of shared reflection, in which the apostolic priorities, formative strategies, and practical orientations that will guide the ASSCC over the next six years emerge.

A particularly awaited moment is the appointment of the new World Coordinator of the Association for the six-year period 2026–2032, which falls to the Rector Major of the Salesians. A choice that expresses the profound communion between the ASSCC and the Salesian Congregation, joint custodians of the same charism.

9 May: the heart of the Congress

On this date, exactly one hundred and fifty years after its foundation, the Congress will pause to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Association. It will not be a

moment of complacency, but an act of gratitude and renewal of the original promise.

One hundred and fifty years during which so many men and women, in every corner of the planet, have chosen to live as “Salesians in the world”: in factories and offices, in families and parishes, in schools and difficult neighbourhoods, alongside the young people no one looked at.

9 May 1876 was a founding date; 9 May 2026 aims to be a date of relaunch. A renewed promise, a reaffirmed mission, a rediscovered momentum.

A Congress open to the world

One of the most significant novelties of this edition is the dimension of universal participation that the leaders wanted to guarantee. Several moments of the Congress will be live-streamed on the Association’s official YouTube channel, so that every Salesian Cooperator in the world – even those who cannot physically be in Rome – can experience the Congress “in associative communion”, feeling part of a single body.

In the months preceding the event, the Association’s official website made materials, formative aids, graphic resources, and news available, allowing all local communities to prepare and enter into the atmosphere of the Congress. An official anthem – “With the power of love” – accompanied this time of preparation, becoming the sonic symbol of this historic moment.

The common thread: leaven in history

The theme chosen for the VI World Congress – “Being leaven to be fruitful” – is not a simple slogan. It is a theology, a lifestyle, a vocation.

Leaven cannot be seen, it does not take up space, it makes no noise. But it transforms. It is the evangelical image of the Christian presence in the world: small, silent, widespread, but capable of making whatever it touches grow. And it is exactly the image that Don Bosco had in mind when he thought of his “external Salesians”: not an elite separated from the world, but a ferment within the dough of

history, capable of transforming it from the inside with the discreet power of love.

150 years after that brilliant intuition, the Salesian Cooperators gather in Rome to rediscover that strength, that identity, that promise. And to listen once again to the suggestion that Don Bosco left as a spiritual legacy to his followers: “Entrust everything to Jesus in the Eucharist and Mary Help of Christians and you will see what miracles are.”

A dream that continues, a promise that is renewed, a future that opens up.

The event calendar can be consulted at
www.asscc-mondiale.org/webSite/agenda-vi-cm

*For information and updates on the event: www.asscc-mondiale.org*1