 Reading time: 7 min.

The Holy Spirit unceasingly continues the hidden work in souls, leading them to holiness. Not a few members of the Salesian Family have led lives worthy of the title of Christian: consecrated men and women, lay people, young people, have lived their lives in faith, bringing God's grace to their neighbours. It is up to the General Postulation of the Salesians of Don Bosco to study their lives and writings and propose to the Church that it recognise their holiness.
A few days ago, the new headquarters for the Postulation was opened. We hope that the new facilities will be an opportunity for a renewed commitment to the causes of canonisation, not only on the part of those who work directly on the causes, but also for all those who can make a contribution. Let us be guided in this by the Postulator General for the Causes of Saints, Fr Pierluigi Cameroni.

It is necessary to express deep gratitude and praise to God for the holiness already recognized in the Salesian Family of Don Bosco and for that in the process of being recognized. The outcome of a Cause of Beatification and Canonization is an event of extraordinary importance and ecclesial value. In fact, it is a matter of discerning the reputation of holiness of a baptized person, who has lived the Gospel Beatitudes to a heroic degree or who has given his life for Christ.
From Don Bosco to the present day, there is evidence of a tradition of holiness to which attention should be given, because it is the incarnation of the charism that originated from him and was expressed in a plurality of states of life and forms. These are men and women, young people and adults, consecrated persons and lay people, bishops and missionaries who, in historical, cultural and social contexts of different times and space, have made the Salesian charism shine with a singular light, representing a patrimony that plays an effective role in the life and community of believers and for people of good will.

The commitment to spread the knowledge, imitation and intercession of the members of our family who are candidates for holiness

Tips for promoting a Cause.

– Encourage **prayer through the intercession** of the Blessed, Venerable Servant of God, through images (also relics *ex-indumentis*), brochures, books… to be spread

in families, parishes, religious houses, spirituality centers, hospitals to ask for the grace of miracles and favors through the intercession of the Blessed, Venerable Servant of God.

– The diffusion of the **novena** Blessed, Venerable Servant of God, invoking his intercession in various cases of material and spiritual need, is particularly effective. Two formative elements are emphasized: the value of insistent and trusting prayer and that of community prayer. Let us recall the biblical episode of Naam the Syrian (2 Kings 5:1-14), where we see several elements: the signalling of the man of God by a maiden, the injunction to bathe seven times in the Jordan, the indignant and resentful refusal, the wisdom and insistence of Naam's servants,

Naam's obedience, the obtaining not only of physical healing but of salvation. Let us also recall the description of the first community of Jerusalem, when it is stated: "All these persevered and with one accord in prayer, together with some of the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren" (Acts 1:14).

– It is advisable, **every month, on the day of the date of death** of the Blessed (Venerable) Servant of God, to take care of a moment of prayer and commemoration.

– Publish quarterly or quarterly a **Sheet** that informs about the journey of the Cause, particular anniversaries and events, testimonies, thank you… to emphasize that the Cause is alive and accompanied.

– Organize a Commemorative Day **once a year**, highlighting particular aspects or anniversaries of the figure of the Blessed, (Venerable) Servant of God, involving groups that are particularly "interested" in his or her witness (e.g. priests, religious, young people, families, doctors, missionaries…).

– Collect and document the **graces and favors** that are attributed to the Blessed, (Venerable) Servant of God. It is useful to have a notebook in which to write down and report the graces asked for and those received, as a testimony to the reputation of both holiness and signs. In particular, if it is a matter of healings and/or alleged miracles, it is important to urgently collect all **medical documentation** that proves the case and evidence attesting to intercession.

– To set up a **committee** that undertakes to promote this Cause also in view of the

Beatification and Canonization. The members of this Committee should be persons particularly sensitive to the promotion of the Cause: representatives of the diocese and parish of origin, leaders of groups and associations, doctors (for the study of alleged miracles), historians, theologians and experts in spirituality…

– Promote knowledge through the ***writing of biography, critical editions of writings*** **and other multimedia productions**.

– Periodically present the figure of the Blessed, (Venerable) Servant of God **in the Parish Bulletin and in the diocesan newspaper, in the Salesian Bulletin**.

– Have a **website or a link** dedicated to the Blessed, (Venerable) Servant of God with his/her life, data and news relating to the Cause of Beatification and Canonization, request for prayers, notification of graces…

– Review and tidy up the **environments** where he/she has lived. Organize an **exhibition space**. Develop **a spiritual itinerary in his footsteps**, enhancing places (birthplace, church, living environments…) and signs.

– To organize an **archive** with all the catalogued and computerized documentation relating to the Blessed, (Venerable) Servant of God.

– To create an **economic fund** to support both the expenses of the Postulation of the Cause and the work of promotion and animation of the Cause itself.

– To promote **works of charity and education** in the name of the Blessed, (Venerable) Servant of God, through projects, twinnings…

Pay special attention to alleged miracles!

– To take care of our “theological” gaze to grasp the miracles that take place every day in our lives and around us.
– To pray and to have others pray for the various cases that arise and to ask that through the intercession of a Servant of God or Venerable or Blessed, the Lord intervene with his grace and work not only a miracle objectively concerning bodily health, but also a true and sincere conversion.
– To make people better understand what a “demonstrable” miracle is and what it is

used for in a Cause of canonization, showing not only the scientific, medical but also the theological aspect.
– Appoint a person in charge to communicate and report graces and alleged miracles. Following a Cause to certify a miracle is a very great commitment for a promoter who must demonstrate true love for the Servant of God.
– To raise awareness that we must have more faith in the intercession of our saints.
– Communicate when we ask for a grace to unite in prayer. Don’t get tired of praying.
– Follow better and personally the people to whom you give the material (novenas, holy cards, etc.) and also carefully choose the places where to do it.
– It is important to sensitize the faithful to continuous prayer sustained by great faith and always ready to accept God’s will. We can learn by looking at the lives and sufferings of our Saints.
– In addition to prayers, it is important to be close to families who have great problems and to give them some relics.
– In the case of an alleged miracle, it is necessary to proceed rigorously by using a scientific methodology in collecting evidence, testimonies, medical opinions, etc., and possibly by ordering all the information in chronological sequence.

A miracle is composed of two essential elements: the scientific and the theological. The second, however, presupposes the first.

You need to prepare

1. A brief and accurate report on the particular circumstances of the case; This consists in a chronological case of all the elements of the prodigious fact, both those concerning the scientific and the theological elements. The chronological case involves: generality of the healed; symptoms of the disease, chronology of medical-scientific events; indication of the decisive hours of recovery, clarification of the diagnosis and prognosis of the case, highlighting all the research performed. Outline the therapy followed, explain the mode of healing, i.e. when the last observation was made before healing, the completeness of the healing, presented in great detail, and the permanence of the healing.

2. A list of texts that can contribute to the search for the truth of the case (healed, relatives, doctors, nurses, people who have prayed…).

3. All documents related to the case. Medical, clinical, and instrumental documents

(e.g., medical records, medical reports, laboratory tests, and instrumental investigations) are required for alleged miraculous healings.

Initial discernment before initiating a cause

First of all, it is necessary, on the part of the Provincial and his Council or of the Superior or Head of a group, to investigate and document with the greatest diligence about the *fama sanctitatis et signorum* of the candidate and the relevance of the Cause, in order to verify the truth of the facts and the consequent formation of a reasoned moral certainty. Moreover, it is essential that the Cause in question affects a significant and significant portion of the People of God and is not the intention of only some group, if not even of some person. All this involves a more motivated and documented initial discernment, to avoid dispersion of energies, forces, times and resources.
It is then essential to identify the right person (Vice Postulator) who takes the Cause to heart and has the time and opportunity to follow it in all its stages.
It should also be remembered that starting and continuing a Cause requires a considerable investment of resources in terms of people and financial contributions.

Conclusion

Sanctity recognized, or in the process of being recognized, on the one hand is already the realization of evangelical radicalism and fidelity to Don Bosco's apostolic project, to which we look as a spiritual and pastoral resource; on the other hand, it is a provocation to live one's vocation faithfully in order to be available to bear witness to love to the extreme. Our Saints, Blesseds, Venerables and Servants of God are the authentic incarnation of the Salesian charism *and of the Constitutions or Regulations* of our Institutes and Groups in the most diverse times and situations, overcoming that worldliness and spiritual superficiality that undermine our credibility and fruitfulness at the root. The saints are true mystics of the primacy of God in the generous gift of self, prophets of evangelical fraternity, servants of their brothers and sisters with creativity.

The path of holiness is a journey to be made together, in the company of the saints. Holiness is experienced together and attained together. The saints are always in company: where there is one, we always find many others. The sanctity of daily life

makes communion flourish and is a “relational” generator. Holiness is nourished by relationships, by confidence, by communion. Truly, as the Church’s liturgy makes us pray in the preface of the saints: “In their lives you offer us an example, in intercession a help, in the communion of grace a bond of fraternal love. Comforted by their testimony, let us face the good fight of faith, to share the same crown of glory beyond death.”