

# Announcement from the Rector Major at the end of his term of office

**To my Salesian Brothers SDB**

**To my brothers and sisters in the Salesian Family**

My dear brothers and sisters: Please accept my fraternal and affectionate greetings on this day when we remember our Father Don Bosco's birth. I am sending you these words a few minutes after solemnly celebrating the liturgical feast of Don Bosco's birth at the Becchi, Colle Don Bosco, where he was born on 16 August 1815. This child was a wonderful instrument of the Spirit of God to give life to the great movement that is the Don Bosco Family.

This morning, in the presence of the Vicar of the Rector Major and many of my Salesian brothers and sisters, the Salesian Family, lay friends of Don Bosco, civil and public service authorities and 375 young people from all over the world who took part in the Youth Synod, I signed my resignation from the service as Rector Major, as established by the Constitutions and Regulations of the Salesians of Don Bosco, given that I have been called by the Holy Father, Pope Francis, to another service.

I would like to communicate to the whole Salesian world, in these words, what has taken place. I would like to express my outlook of faith and hope in the Lord who has guided us, and I wish to express my gratitude for so much good received over these ten and a half years as Rector Major of the Congregation and, in the name of Don Bosco, as Father of the entire Salesian Family.

1. First of all, dear brothers and sisters, in addressing you

I would like to express my deep gratitude to God for these years in which he has blessed our Congregation and the Salesian Family. Over a decade we have certainly experienced very different events and situations, especially in a Congregation that is present in 136 nations; I think I can say that we have approached everything from a perspective of faith, with great hope and determination, always for the good of the mission and in fidelity to the charism we have received.

2. I am grateful to the Lord for the fact that over these years I have not lacked, nor have we lacked, the serenity and strength that comes from him. For how true is what the risen Lord says to St Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Cor 12:9). This is how I have experienced, and this is how we as the General Council have experienced our service of animation and government. In particular, I would like to thank the two General Councils that have accompanied me over these ten and a half years for their loyalty to our common project, for their dedication and their service.

3. At the end of this period at the head of the Salesian Congregation, I express particular thanks to the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr Stefano Martoglio, who takes up his service at the head of the Congregation with total dedication and generosity. In the coming months there will be much work and great responsibility, but his personality, his fraternal approach, his ability and optimism, with the help of the General Council and guided by the Lord, will facilitate the journey that remains until the 29th General Chapter.

4. I express my deep gratitude to all my Salesian confreres around the world. I have always felt welcomed, loved and fraternally accepted, and I have found collaboration and generosity. It is true that the Salesians of Don Bosco love and care for the Rector Major as they would for Don Bosco himself, as he asked of us in his spiritual testament. Thank you for your generosity.

5. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Salesian Family spread throughout the world: to our sisters the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, to the Salesian Cooperators, to the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) – all founded by Don Bosco – and so on up to the 32 groups that today make up this great charismatic tree. These were years of growth and blessing. Thank you to all the people who, through faith in the Lord, have made all this possible.

6. And over these ten years of my service of animation and government, during which I have been able to visit 120 of the countries in which the Congregation and the Salesian Family are present, I have received the great gift of meeting young people around the world: little ones, teenagers, young adults, boys and girls of every nation. I was able to “see with my own eyes, feel with my heart”, first-hand, how “the educational miracles that heal and transform lives” continue to happen every day in many Salesian presences and in our family. And I was able to meet thousands and thousands of young people from all continents and cultures. They were one of my profoundest joys.

7. And I have one last thank you to make. Throughout these years, I have always felt encouraged and supported by the unconditional love of my biological family. For nine of these years my parents, now with God, accompanied me lovingly, serenely, and with their prayers, always telling me not to worry about them. They and all the rest of my family have always been there for me, supporting me with their presence and representing a safe haven to reach so that I never forget my humble origins.

8. Let me conclude by referring to what I said on 25 March 2014 when the then Rector Major, Fr Pascual Chavez, asked me, on behalf of the 27th General Chapter which had elected me in the voting, whether I would accept the service of Rector Major.

I remember that in my poor Italian of that time I said, not without deep emotion, that “trusting in the Grace of the Lord and in faith, with the certainty that I will always be supported by my Salesian confreres, and because I truly love the young people whom I carry in my Salesian heart, I accept what is asked of me.” Today, with these words of thanks, I can tell you that everything I had hoped for has come true with God’s grace.

My final words are addressed to our Father Don Bosco and the Help of Christians. There is no doubt that Don Bosco has watched over and supported his Congregation and his Family over these years. And I have no doubt that in all this time what he himself had assured us has been achieved: “She did everything”. This was the case with Don Bosco. This has been the case in the recent years to which I refer, and this will undoubtedly continue to be the case. To her, our Mother and Help of Christians, we entrust ourselves.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you and greetings from this brother of yours who is and always will be a Salesian of Don Bosco. With all my affection,

**Ángel Fernández Cardinale Artime**

Prot. 24/0427

Colle Don Bosco, 16 August 2024

*Let us also add the office termination act.*

I, the undersigned, Ángel Fernández Cardinale Artime, Rector Major of the Society of St Francis de Sales,

– whereas in the Consistory of 30 September 2023 the Holy Father Francis created and proclaimed me Cardinal of the Deaconry of Santa Maria Ausiliatrice in Via Tuscolana; whereas on 5 March 2024 he assigned me the titular see of Ursona, with the dignity of archbishop, and whereas on 20 April 2024 I received Episcopal Ordination in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome;

– considering that the religious elevated to the Episcopate is subject only to the Roman Pontiff (can. 705);

– taking into account that, in accordance with can. 184 §1 CIC “*An ecclesiastical office is lost by the lapse of a predetermined time*” and that, by decree of 19 April 2024, the Holy Father ordered “*by exception and only for this case*” the continuation of my service as Rector Major after episcopal ordination, until 16 August 2024, hereby

## **I DECLARE**

that, since the time established by the aforementioned decree has expired, **from today's date I have ceased to hold the office of Rector Major of the Society of St Francis de Sales.**

In accordance with art. 143 of the Constitutions, the Vicar, Father Stefano Martoglio, will simultaneously take over the governance of the Society *ad interim*, until the election of the Rector Major that will take place during the 29th General Chapter convened in Turin from 16 February to 12 April 2025.

**Ángel Fernández Cardinale Arttime**

Prot. 24/0406

Rome, 16 August 2024

---

# **A Salesian, Director of the Pontifical Missionary Works**

# in Lithuania

*On 16 June 2024, Cardinal Luis Antonio G. Tagle, Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelisation, confirmed Fr Alessandro as National Director of the Pontifical Missionary Works (POM) in Lithuania for another five-year term (2024-2029). Fr Alessandro, a Salesian from Turin, has been working as a missionary in Lithuania since 1998. He is currently the rector of the Salesian community in Vilnius, pastor of the parish entrusted to the Salesians and editor of the Lithuanian Salesian Bulletin.*

*He was appointed national director of the POM in 2019 at the proposal of the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference, and his post can be summarised as the Church of Lithuania's national commissioner of missionary animation, especially with a special eye for missions directly dependent on the Pontifical Organisations.*

## **What are the Pontifical Missionary Societies?**

The Pontifical Missionary Societies (POM) are a worldwide network of prayer and solidarity in the service of the Pope to meet the spiritual and material needs of peoples and local Churches in the so-called mission territories. They are an organisation of the universal Catholic Church that promotes and supports missionary activities worldwide. Their main mission is to spread the Gospel and support Christian communities in developing countries. In each country of the world, there is a national POM directorate that, through the various diocesan directors or national appointees of religious congregations or ecclesial movements, coordinates the initiatives of that country for the growth of missionary attention.

Let us look in detail at the history, the theological and ecclesial motivation of these 4 Works and their specificity.

1. Work of the Propagation of the Faith: founded in 1822 in Lyon, France, by Blessed Pauline Jaricot. Its purpose is to

provide financial and spiritual support to Catholic missions around the world. It was recognised as 'Pontifical' by Pope Pius XI in 1922.

2. *Opera dell'Infanzia Missionaria* (also known as Holy Childhood): founded in 1843 by Charles de Forbin-Janson, Bishop of Nancy, France. It aims to sensitise children in Christian countries to the missionary cause and to promote solidarity among children worldwide. It was also recognised as 'Pontifical' by Pope Pius XI in 1922.

3. *Opera di San Pietro Apostolo*: founded in 1889 by Jeanne Bigard and her mother Stéphanie in Caen, France. Its aim is to support the training of local clergy in mission territories. It supports scholarships for clergy and priests from mission countries, both locally and abroad. Declared 'Pontifical' in 1922 by Pope Pius XI.

4. Missionary Union of the Clergy: founded in 1916 by Father Paolo Manna, a PIME (Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions) missionary. It promotes missionary awareness among clergy and pastoral workers. It is not just for the clergy, but for the awareness of the entire people of God as possessors of the universal missionary mandate. It became a pontifical work in 1956, under the pontificate of Pope Pius XII.

### **Theological and ecclesial motivation**

POM is rooted in the Church's mission to evangelise, which originates from Christ's mandate to his disciples: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Mission is therefore seen as a response to the divine invitation to share the Good News with all nations. The heart of mission is the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ, the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the witnessing of the Christian faith.

On the other hand, proclamation not supported by solidarity would not be very credible. The POMs express the solidarity of

the universal Church with the young Churches, especially in the poorest countries, through spiritual and material aid.

From the ecclesial point of view, the POMs are a concrete expression of missionary cooperation within the universal Church. They provide support to local churches in mission territories, helping them to develop church structures and to train clergy and laity. They also promote missionary awareness among the faithful, stimulating prayer, missionary vocation and financial support for missions. They facilitate international cooperation within the Church, enabling an equitable distribution of resources for mission needs.

The Pontifical Mission Societies are a vital component of the Catholic Church, embodying a commitment to evangelisation and global solidarity. Their history reflects a continuous and growing attention towards missions, while their theological and ecclesial motivation highlights the importance of the missionary mandate in the context of the Christian faith.

We Salesians are also called to be part of this ecclesial missionary journey of spiritual and material closeness and solidarity.

### **Universal Mission Collection**

Since 1926, World Mission Day has been celebrated on the penultimate Sunday of October in all the Catholic communities of the world, as a day of prayer and universal solidarity among sister Churches. It is a time when each one of us is called to face up to the responsibility that is incumbent on every baptised person and on every Christian community, whether small or large, in response to Jesus' mandate "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15). It is placed at the beginning of the pastoral year to remind us that the missionary dimension must inspire every moment of our lives and that "missionary action" Pope Francis reminds us "is the paradigm of every work of the Church" (EG 15).

The Day is associated with an annual collection of offerings with which the Pontifical Missionary Societies, an expression



of the Pope's solicitude towards all the Christian communities of the world, come to the aid of the young missionary Churches, especially those in difficult situations and of greatest need, providing for their basic pastoral needs: training of local seminarians, priests, religious, catechists; construction and maintenance of places of worship, seminaries and parish structures; support for local Catholic TV, Radio and Press; provision of means of transport for missionaries (cars, motorbikes, bicycles, boats); support for the education, upbringing and Christian formation of children and young people. For this reason, this collection of offerings differs from other purposes, as well as from other possible forms of cooperation between particular Churches.

### **Theme of World Mission Day 2024**

Every year the Holy Father sends a message to the whole Church on the occasion of World Mission Day. This message pays special attention to the activities of the POMs in the service of the whole Church. This 2024, the theme of World Mission Day is "Go and invite everyone to the banquet", inspired by Mt 22:9. This theme was chosen to emphasise the mission of the Church to bring the invitation to salvation to all humanity, reflecting the parable of the wedding feast in which the king invites everyone at the crossroads to participate in the banquet.

Pope Francis highlights three key aspects:

1. "Go and invite!" Mission as a tireless going out to everyone to invite them to an encounter and communion with God. This calls the Church to always be outgoing, overcoming obstacles and difficulties to bring the Gospel to all.
2. The "Banquet". The eschatological and Eucharistic perspective of the mission. The eschatological banquet symbolises the final salvation in the Kingdom of God, and participation in the Eucharist anticipates this perfect communion with God.
3. "Everyone". The universal mission of Christ's disciples, who must go to the margins of society to invite all, without

exclusion, to participate in the new life in Christ.

*Fr Alessandro BARELLI, sdb*

---

# Letter from Rector Major Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime

*For the attention of my Salesian confreres, for the attention  
of our dear Salesian Family*

My dear Salesian confreres, my dear brothers and sisters in the Salesian Family throughout the world: please accept my warm and affectionate greetings, especially at this time.

The reasons for my writing to you today, right on the eve of my Episcopal Ordination, at the nomination of the Holy Father Pope Francis, is to officially and definitively pass on to you my personal situation with regard to our Congregation and the Salesian Family.

Some time ago, Pope Francis expressed to me his wish that my Episcopal Ordination would take place during this Easter season together with our Salesian confrere Archbishop-elect Giordano Piccinotti, and that I could continue my service until the appropriate date. So, trusting always in the Lord, who is the only guarantor of our lives, the following is definitive:

1. The Holy Father has prepared a document for me with the 'deroga' (an Italian term meaning "an exception to what is legislated", in which he authorises me to continue for a further period as Rector Major, after having received

episcopal consecration). This document containing the Holy Father's authorisation has already reached us and is in the archives of the Congregation.

2. In agreement with Pope Francis, I will conclude my service as Rector major towards the evening of 16 August this year, 2024, following the celebration of the 209th anniversary of the birth of our father at Colle Don Bosco. On the same day we will celebrate the closing of the Youth Synod' with the young people, a Synod in which 370 young people from all over the world will have participated on the occasion of the bicentenary of the dream at 9 years of age, an event for Don Bosco that was a dream-vision and a programme for life that has come down to us.

On that afternoon, in a simple act, I will sign my letter of renunciation in accordance with Article 128 of our Constitutions, and I will hand over this document to the Vicar of the Rector Major Father Stefano Martoglio who, according to Article 143, will assume the government of our Congregation 'ad interim' until the election of the Rector Major at GC29 to be held in Valdocco (Turin) from 16 February 2025.

3. Certainly from now on, but particularly from that date onwards, I will be attending to the service that the Holy Father will indicate to me.

I wish to thank the Lord, together with all of you, my dear brothers and sisters, for how blessed we have been over these last ten years, both as a Salesian Congregation and as the Family of Don Bosco. The Lord has assisted us in his Spirit and our Mother the Help of Christians has never let go of our hand. And we are certain that this will continue to be the case in the future because "She has done everything".

My final word at this moment is addressed to Don Bosco who will undoubtedly continue to look after his Congregation and his precious Family.

With true affection and united in the Lord,

Cardinal Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, *sdb*  
Rector Major  
Society of St Francis de Sales  
Rome, 19 April 2024  
Prot. 24/0160

---

# Episcopal ordination of Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime

The Holy See announced in a press release issued by the Press Office on 5 March 2024 that Pope Francis has decided on the episcopal ordination of Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, *sdb*, Rector Major of the Salesian Society of Saint John Bosco, assigning him the titular See of Ursona, with archiepiscopal dignity. It is an ancient episcopal see in Spain (4th century), which was located in the city of Ossuna, suffragan of the archdiocese of Seville, and since 1969 has been counted among the titular episcopal sees of the Catholic Church.

The episcopal ordination takes place in accordance with Pope John XXIII's Apostolic Motu Proprio, *Cum Gravissima*, on the episcopal dignity to be conferred on all cardinals (15 April 1962), and is scheduled for 20 April next.

He is the first Rector Major to be appointed cardinal and also the first Rector Major to be appointed archbishop of the Catholic Church.

Following this elevation to the cardinalate, various events have taken place and others will follow:

- 9 July 2023, at the end of the Angelus, Pope Francis announced his creation as a cardinal;

- 30 September 2023, he was created a cardinal, receiving the cardinal's biretta and ring in the Ordinary Public Consistory;
- 4 October 2023, he took office in the Roman Curia, being appointed a member of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (DIVCSVA);
- 17 December 2023, he took possession of the diaconate of Mary Help of Christians in Via Tuscolana;
- 20 April 2024, he is scheduled for episcopal ordination; it will be done through the laying on of hands and the prayer of ordination by Card. Emil Paul TSCHERRIG, Apostolic Nuncio Emeritus in Italy and in the Republic of San Marino, who will be joined by His Eminence Cardinal Cristóbal LÓPEZ ROMANO. Cristóbal LÓPEZ ROMERO, sdb, Archbishop of Rabat (Morocco) and Bishop Lucas VAN LOOY, sdb, Bishop Emeritus of Ghent (Belgium). The celebration will take place in the Papal Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome and will begin at 3.30 p.m;
- 16 August 2024, end of mandate as Rector Major and beginning of his service at the Holy See, according to the mission that will be entrusted to him.

His successor at the head of the Salesian Congregation will be elected at the 29th General Chapter of the Congregation (which will take place from 16 February to 12 April 2025), which has already been convoked, according to the Salesian Constitutions.

We wish our Rector Major, Cardinal Ángel, every success in his service to the Universal Church.

---

# Salesian Cardinals

*Throughout the history of the Salesian Congregation, the popes have chosen some of its members as cardinals, that is, as his closest collaborators in the government of the Universal Church. Always a reason for joy and sadness: joy because of the appreciation of the service performed by certain Salesians, sadness because the Congregation has to do without one of its most valuable members.*

The term “cardinal” comes from Latin and means “hinge”, i.e. a point around which a door usually revolves. Or perhaps it can be better understood if we recall the cardinal virtues, i.e. the virtues around which all other human virtues revolve.

Cardinals are people who have received the sacrament of Holy Orders and are called by the Pope to perform a mission alongside him in the Universal Church, either individually or collegially. They hold the most important positions in the Roman Curia.

Their importance also lies in the fact that they are the ones who have the mission of electing the new pontiff (only the electors, i.e. those who have not reached the age of 80), with the College of Cardinals gathered in Conclave, when the *Sede Vacante* occurs.

There are three groups of cardinals: Cardinal-bishops, who are the holders of the suburbicarian dioceses (outside the walls of Rome or in the city’s environs) and, by decision after the Second Vatican Council, the Eastern Patriarchs elevated to the cardinalate (who retain the title of their own patriarchal see); Cardinal-presbyters – the most numerous -, and Cardinal-deacons. The latter two orders are respectively assigned titles or deaconships (churches) in Rome. These honorary titles reflect their closeness to the Pope.

There are usually 6 Cardinal-bishops (there are 6 suburbicarian Sees), but today, by virtue of a papal dispensation, 4 more Cardinal-bishops are appointed *ad*

*personam* (without the cardinal title being elevated to an episcopal title) and 2 more patriarchs, in total 12, of whom 6 are electors.

There are 182 Cardinal-presbyters, of whom 97 are electors.

The Cardinal deacons are 27, of whom 16 are electors.

In total there are 221 cardinals, of whom 119 are electors.

Cardinals are usually chosen from among bishops, archbishops, metropolitans or patriarchs, but there have also been appointments among priests. Pope St John Paul II appointed 9 priests as cardinals, Pope Benedict XVI appointed 5 priests as cardinals and Pope Francis has so far appointed 8 priests as cardinals, 10 if we consider the latest announcement on 9 July.

The first Salesian to be elevated to the dignity of cardinal was Archbishop John Cagliero, on 6 December 1915. After him, 18 other Salesians received the cardinal's biretta and the 20th, Fr Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, will receive it on 30 September next. He is the first Rector Major to receive the cardinal's red hat.


For many people looking in from the outside, the first thing they see is the dignity it implies; but even if this is real, Pope Francis reminds them that it is not a privilege, but a service, and the red colour means it must be performed until the outpouring of blood. And it is an unspecified service that requires total availability. God asked Abraham to set out without specifying where he would go, to prove his faith; similarly for the new cardinals.





We wish our Rector Major, Fr Ángel many graces from the Lord to guide him in his new mission and assure him of our prayers.

In the hope of making more and more Salesian cardinals known, we present below the list of all these cardinals with the dates and the most important offices they have held or continue to hold to date.

<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	11.01.1838, Castelnuovo d'Asti, Italy
Ordained priest	14.06.1862
Consecrated Bishop	07.12.1884
Created Cardinal	06.12.1915
Coat of arms	<div></div>
Motto	Recto fixus Calli ero
Apostolic Vicar of Northern Patagonia (Argentina)	30.09.1884 – 24.03.1904
Titular Bishop of Magyddus	30.10.1884 – 24.03.1904
Titular Archbishop of Sebastia	24.03.1904 – 06.12.1915
Apostolic Delegate in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras	07.08.1908 – 06.12.1915
Cardinal Parish Priest of St. Bernard at the Baths	09.12.1915 – 16.12.1920
Cardinal-Bishop of Frascati	16.12.1920 – 28.02.1926
He was inspector for 2 years, bishop for 41 years of which 10 Cardinal	
Deceased	28.02.1926, Rome, Italy, † 88
<div></div>	
<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	05.07.1881, Brzeczkwice, Poland
Ordained priest	23.09.1905
Consecrated Bishop	03.01.1926
Created Cardinal	20.06.1927
Coat of arms	<div></div>



Motto	Da mihi animas cetera tolle
Apostolic Administrator of Upper Silesia (Poland)	07.11.1922 – 28.10.1925
Bishop of Katowice (Poland)	28.10.1925 – 24.06.1926
President of the Polish Episcopal Conference	1926 – 22.10.1948
Metropolitan Archbishop of Poznań (Poland)	24.06.1926 – 03.05.1946
Metropolitan Archbishop of Gniezno (Poland)	24.06.1926 – 22.10.1948
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Mary of Peace	22.12.1927 – 22.10.1948
Founder of the Society of Christ for Polish Immigrants	08.09.1932
Metropolitan Archbishop of Warszawa (Poland)	13.06.1946 – 22.10.1948
Cardinal and Religious of the Salesians of St. John Bosco	
Servus Dei. He was Provincial for 3 years, Apostolic Administrator for 3 years, Archbishop of Warszawa for 23 years and Cardinal Primate of Poland for 21 years. Cause for canonisation is underway	
Deceased	22.10.1948, Warsaw, Poland, † 67
<div></div>	
Born	27.09.1907, Talca, Chile
Ordained priest	03.07.1938

Consecrated Bishop	29.11.1959
Created Cardinal	19.03.1962
Coat of arms	
Motto	Caritas christi urget nos
Bishop of Valparaíso (Chile)	24.10.1959 – 14.05.1961
Metropolitan Archbishop of Santiago (Chile)	14.05.1961 – 03.05.1983
President of Caritas Internationalis	1962 – 1965
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Bernard at the Baths	22.03.1962 – 09.04.1999
President of the Episcopal Conference of Chile	1963 – 1968
President of the Episcopal Conference of Chile	1972 – 1976
He was Bishop of Valparaíso for 3 years, Archbishop of Santiago de Chile for 11 years and Cardinal for 22 years	
Deceased	09.04.1999, Santiago, Chile, † 91
	
Born	26.03.1905, Francova Lhota, Czech Republic
Ordained priest	29.06.1932
Consecrated Bishop	16.11.1947
Created Cardinal in pectore	28.04.1969
Revealed as cardinal	05.03.1973
Coat of arms	




Motto	Actio sacrificium caritas
Bishop of Litoměřice (Czech Republic)	27.09.1947 – 06.04.1974
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. John Bosco in Via Tuscolana	12.04.1973 – 06.04.1974
Was Bishop of Litoměřice (Czech Republic) for 26 years and Cardinal for 5 years	
Deceased	06.04.1974, Litoměřice, Czech Republic, † 69
<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	17.01.1929, Acarigua, Venezuela
Ordained priest	17.12.1955
Consecrated Bishop	06.01.1990
Created Cardinal	21.02.2001
Coat of arms	<div></div>
Motto	Servus Christi pro fratribus
Titular Bishop of Utimmira	23.10.1989 – 27.05.1995
Apostolic Vicar of Puerto Ayacucho (Venezuela)	23.10.1989 – 27.05.1995
Apostolic Administrator of San Fernando de Apure (Venezuela)	27.05.1992 – 12.07.1994
Metropolitan Archbishop of Caracas (Venezuela)	27.05.1995 – 06.07.2003
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Maria Domenica Mazzarello	21.02.2001 [24.05.2001] – 06.07.2003

He was Provincial for 6 years, Regional Councillor for 6 years, Bishop for 13 years, and Cardinal for 2 years	
Deceased	06.07.2003, Caracas, Venezuela, † 74
<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	23.08.1910, Neunkirchen, Austria
Ordained priest	27.03.1937
Consecrated Bishop	01.11.1983
Created Cardinal	25.05.1985
Coat of arms	<div></div>
Motto	Omnia et in omnibus Christus
Rector Magnificus of the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum	1958 – 1966
Prefect of the Vatican Apostolic Library	1971 – 07.09.1983
Titular Archbishop of Bolsena	07.09.1983 – 25.05.1985
Pro-Librarian of the Vatican Apostolic Library	07.09.1983 – 27.05.1985
Pro-Archivist of the Vatican Secret Archives	09.07.1984 – 27.05.1985
Cardinal-Deacon of S. Giorgio in Velabro	25.05.1985 – 29.01.1996
Archivist of the Vatican Secret Archives	27.05.1985 – 01.07.1988
Librarian of the Vatican Apostolic Library	27.05.1985 – 01.07.1988

Cardinal-Parish priest of S. Giorgio in Velabro	29.01.1996 – 12.12.2007
He was titular Archbishop of Bolsena for 2 years and Cardinal for 22 years	
Deceased	12.12.2007, Vatican City State, † 97
<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	04.09.1922, San Casimiro, Venezuela
Ordained priest	04.09.1949
Consecrated Bishop	24.05.1973
Created Cardinal	25.05.1985
Coat of arms	<div></div>
Motto	Misericordia et veritas
Coadjutor Bishop of Trujillo (Venezuela)	26.03.1973 – 05.10.1981
Titular Bishop of Præcausa	26.03.1973 – 26.05.1982
Secretary of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law	12.02.1975 – 22.05.1982
President of the Disciplinary Commission of the Roman Curia	05.10.1981 – 1990
Pro-President of the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law	22.05.1982 – 18.01.1984
Titular Archbishop of Præcausa	26.05.1982 – 25.05.1985


Pro-President of the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law	18.01.1984 – 27.05.1985
Cardinal-Deacon of Our Lady of Coromoto in St. John of God	25.05.1985 – 29.01.1996
President of the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts	27.05.1985 – 06.12.1989
President of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See	06.12.1989 – 24.06.1995
President of the Pontifical Commission for Vatican City State	31.10.1990 – 14.10.1997
Cardinal-Presbyter of Our Lady of Coromoto in St. John of God	29.01.1996 – 16.10.2007
President of the Pontifical Commission for Vatican City State for 7 years	
Deceased	16.10.2007, Caracas, Venezuela, † 85
<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	02.02.1926, La Libertad, Nicaragua
Ordained priest	10.08.1958
Consecrated Bishop	31.03.1968
Created Cardinal	25.05.1985
Coat of arms	<div></div>
Motto	Omnibus omnia factus
Titular Bishop of Putia in Byzacena	18.01.1968 – 16.02.1970




Auxiliary Bishop of Matagalpa (Nicaragua)	18.01.1968 – 16.02.1970
Metropolitan Archbishop of Managua (Nicaragua)	16.02.1970 – 01.04.2005
President of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference	1971 – 1975
President of the Episcopal Secretariat of Central America and Panama	1976 – 1981
President of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference	1979 – 1983
President of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference	1985 – 1989
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. John the Evangelist in Spinaceto	25.05.1985 – 03.06.2018
President of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference	1993 – 1997
President of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference	1999 – 2005
He was Auxiliary Bishop of Matagalpa for 2 years, Bishop of Managua for 15 years, Cardinal for 15 years	
Deceased	03.06.2018, Managua, Nicaragua, † 92
<div></div>	<div></div>
Born	21.02.1921, Siétamo, Spain
Ordained priest	24.04.1949
Consecrated Bishop	29.06.1976
Created Cardinal	28.06.1988


Motto	
Motto	Ego vobiscum sum
Rector magnificus of the Pontifical Salesian University	1971 – 1974
Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education	20.05.1976 – 26.05.1988
Titular Archbishop of Meta	20.05.1976 – 28.06.1988
Cardinal-Deacon of S. Maria Liberatrice at Monte Testaccio	28.06.1988 – 09.01.1999
Archivist of the Vatican Secret Archives	01.07.1988 – 24.01.1992
Librarian of the Vatican Apostolic Library	01.07.1988 – 24.01.1992
Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments	24.01.1992 – 21.06.1996
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Maria Liberatrice at Monte Testaccio	09.01.1999 [24.04.1999] – 01.02.2007
He was titular archbishop of Meta for 12 years and Cardinal for 18 years	
Deceased	01.02.2007, Rome, Italy, † 85
<b>Óscar Andrés RODRÍGUEZ MARADIAGA</b>	
Born	29.12.1942, Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Ordained priest	28.06.1970
Consecrated Bishop	08.12.1978
Created Cardinal	21.02.2001
Coat of arms	








Motto	Mihi vivere Christus est
Titular Bishop of Pudentiana	28.10.1978 – 08.01.1993
Auxiliary Bishop of Tegucigalpa (Honduras)	28.10.1978 – 08.01.1993
Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Honduras	1980 – 1988
Apostolic Administrator of Santa Rosa de Copán (Honduras)	1981 – 27.01.1984
Secretary General of the Latin American Episcopal Council	1987 – 1991
Apostolic Administrator of San Pedro Sula (Honduras)	1993 – 11.11.1994
Metropolitan Archbishop of Tegucigalpa (Honduras)	08.01.1993 – 26.01.2023
President of the Latin American Bishops' Council	1995 – 1999
President of the Episcopal Conference of Honduras	1996 – 13.06.2016
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Mary of Hope	21.02.2001 [27.05.2001] – ...
President of Caritas Internationalis	05.06.2007 [09.06.2007] – 15.05.2015
Coordinator of the Council of Cardinals	13.04.2013 – 07.03.2023
Cardinal Emeritus	2023
Age	80
<b>Tarcisio BERTONE</b>	
Born	02.12.1934, Romano Canavese, Italy



Ordained priest	01.07.1960
Consecrated Bishop	01.08.1991
Created Cardinal	21.10.2003
Coat of arms	
Motto	Fidem custodire concordiam servare
Rector Magnificus of the Pontifical Salesian University	01.06.1989 – 04.06.1991
Metropolitan Archbishop of Vercelli (Italy)	04.06.1991 – 13.06.1995
Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith	13.06.1995 – 10.12.2002
Metropolitan Archbishop of Genoa (Italy)	10.12.2002 – 29.08.2006
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Maria Ausiliatrice in Via Tuscolana	21.10.2003 [24.03.2004] – 10.05.2008
Secretary of State of the Secretariat of State	15.09.2006 – 15.10.2013
President of the Interdicasterial Commission on Particular Churches	15.09.2006 – 15.10.2013
President of the Interdicasterial Commission for the Church in Eastern Europe	15.09.2006 – 15.10.2013
Cardinal Protector of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy	15.09.2006 – 15.10.2013
Member of the Cardinal Commission of Vigilance over the Institute for Works of Religion	14.10.2006 – .03.2008
Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church of the Apostolic Chamber	04.04.2007 – 20.12.2014

President of the Cardinal Commission of Vigilance over the Institute for the Works of Religion	03.2008 – 15.01.2014
Cardinal Bishop of Frascati	10.05.2008 [03.10.2009] – ...
Cardinal Camerlengo emeritus of H.R.C.	2014
Age	88
<b>Joseph ZEN ZE-KIUN</b>	
Born	13.01.1932, Shanghai, Cina
Ordained priest	11.02.1961
Consecrated Bishop	09.12.1996
Created Cardinal	24.03.2006
Coat of arms	
Motto	Ipsi cura est
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Mary Mother of the Redeemer in Tor Bella Monaca	
Coadjutor Bishop of Hong Kong	13.09.1996 – 23.09.2002
Bishop of Hong Kong	23.09.2002 – 15.04.2009
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Maria Madre del Redentore at Tor Bella Monaca	24.03.2006 [31.05.2006] – ...
Cardinal Emeritus of Hong Kong	
Age	91
<b>Raphael FARINA</b>	
Born	24.09.1933, Buonalbergo, Italy
Ordained priest	01.07.1958

Consecrated Bishop	16.12.2006
Created Cardinal	24.11.2007
Coat of arms	
Motto	Dominus spes nostra
Rector Magnificus of the Pontifical Salesian University	1977 – 1983
Secretary of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences	1981 – 1989
Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture	1986 – 1991
Rector of the Pontifical Salesian University	1991 – 1997
Prefect of the Vatican Apostolic Library	25.05.1997 – 25.06.2007
Titular Bishop of Oderzo	15.11.2006 – 25.06.2007
Titular Archbishop of Oderzo	25.06.2007 – 24.11.2007
Archivist of the Vatican Secret Archives	25.06.2007 – 09.06.2012
Librarian of the Vatican Apostolic Library	25.06.2007 – 09.06.2012
Cardinal-Deacon of S. Giovanni della Pigna	24.11.2007 [05.04.2008] – 19.05.2018
President of the Pontifical Commission for the Institute for Works of Religion	24.06.2013 – 22.05.2014
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Giovanni della Pigna	19.05.2018 – ...
Cardinal Emeritus	2014
Age	89
<b>Angelo AMATO</b>	



Born	08.06.1938, Molfetta, Italy
Ordained priest	22.12.1967
Consecrated Bishop	06.01.2003
Created Cardinal	20.11.2010
Coat of arms	
Motto	Sufficit gratia mea
Pro-rector of the Pontifical Salesian University	01.10.1991 – 02.12.1991
Prelate-Secretary of the Pontifical Academy of Theology	1999 – 19.12.2002
Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith	19.12.2002 – 09.07.2008
Titular Archbishop of Sila	19.12.2002 – 20.11.2010
Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints	09.07.2008 – 31.08.2018
Cardinal Deacon of S. Maria in Aquiro	20.11.2010 [11.02.2011] – 03.05.2021
Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Maria in Aquiro	03.05.2021 – ...
Cardinal emeritus	2018
Age	85
<b>Ricardo EZZATI ANDRELLO</b>	
Born	07.01.1942, Campiglia dei Berici, Italy
Ordained priest	18.03.1970
Consecrated Bishop	08.09.1996
Created Cardinal	22.02.2014
Coat of arms	

Motto	Para evangelizar
Bishop of Valdivia (Chile)	28.06.1996 – 10.07.2001
Titular Bishop of La Imperial	10.07.2001 – 27.12.2006
Auxiliary Bishop of Santiago (Chile)	10.07.2001 – 27.12.2006
Metropolitan Archbishop of Concepción (Chile)	27.12.2006 – 15.12.2010
President of the Episcopal Conference of Chile	.11.2010 – 11.11.2016
Metropolitan Archbishop of Santiago (Chile)	15.12.2010 – 23.03.2019
Cardinal-Presbyter of the Most Holy Redeemer in Valmelaina	22.02.2014 [11.10.2014] – ...
Cardinal Emeritus	2019
Age	81
<b>Charles MAUNG BO</b>	
Born	29.10.1948, Mohla, Myanmar
Ordained priest	09.04.1976
Consecrated Bishop	16.12.1990
Created Cardinal	14.02.2015
Coat of arms	
Motto	Omnia possum in Eo
Apostolic Administrator of Lashio (Myanmar)	1985 – 1986
Apostolic Prefect of Lashio (Myanmar)	1986 – 07.07.1990
Bishop of Lashio (Myanmar)	07.07.1990 – 13.03.1996
Bishop of Pathein (Myanmar)	13.03.1996 – 24.05.2003
President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar	2000 – 2006

Metropolitan Archbishop of Yangon (Myanmar)	24.05.2003 – ...
Cardinal-Presbyter of St Irenaeus in Centocelle	14.02.2015 [21.10.2015] – ...
President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences	16.11.2018 [01.01.2019] – ...
President of the Myanmar Episcopal Conference	2020 – ...
Apostolic Administrator of Myitkyina (Myanmar)	18.11.2020 – ...
Age	74
<b>Daniel Fernando STURLA BERHOUET</b>	
Born	04.07.1959, Montevideo, Uruguay
Ordained priest	21.11.1987
Consecrated Bishop	04.03.2012
Created Cardinal	14.02.2015
Coat of arms	
Motto	Servir al Señor con alegría
Titular Bishop of Phelbes	10.12.2011 – 11.02.2014
Auxiliary Bishop of Montevideo (Uruguay)	10.12.2011 – 11.02.2014
Metropolitan Archbishop of Montevideo (Uruguay)	11.02.2014 – ...
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Galla	14.02.2015 [17.05.2015] – ...
Vice-President of the Episcopal Conference of Uruguay	16.11.2021 [01.04.2022] – ...
Age	64

<b>Cristóbal LÓPEZ ROMERO</b>	
Born	19.05.1952, Vélez-Rubio, Spain
Ordained priest	19.05.1979
Consecrated Bishop	10.03.2018
Created Cardinal	05.10.2019
Coat of arms	
Motto	Adveniat Regnum Tuum
Archbishop of Rabat (Morocco)	29.12.2017 – ...
Apostolic Administrator of Tánger (Morocco)	24.05.2019 – 25.02.2022
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Leo I	05.10.2019 [16.02.2020] – ...
President of the North African Regional Bishops' Conference	15.02.2022 – ...
Age	71
<b>Virgilio DO CARMO DA SILVA</b>	
Born	27.11.1967, Venilale, Timor-Este
Ordained priest	18.12.1998
Consecrated Bishop	19.03.2016
Created Cardinal	27.08.2022
Coat of arms	
Motto	Ad Deum Patrem Omnipotentem
Vice-President of the Episcopal Conference of Timor	2016 – ...
Bishop of Díli (East Timor)	30.01.2016 – 11.09.2019



Metropolitan Archbishop of Díli (East Timor)	11.09.2019 – ...
Cardinal-Presbyter of St. Albert the Great	27.08.2022 [07.05.2023] – ...
Age	55
<b>Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME</b>	
Born	21.08.1960, Gozón-Luanco, Spain
Ordained priest	04.07.1987
Created Cardinal	30.09.2023
Consecrated Bishop	2024 – ?
Coat of arms	
Motto	Sufficit tibi gratia mea
Age	63

# I wish to continue to serve others... in a different way. MY NOMINATION AS CARDINAL

*I feel I share the 1884 affirmation of our holy Founder, “I see more and more what a glorious future is prepared for our Society, the extension it will have and the good it will be able to accomplish.”*

Dear friends of the Salesian charism, may my sincere, fraternal and affectionate greeting reach each and every one

of you.

It has been “suggested” to me by the Salesian Bulletin to prepare this greeting not like on other occasions recounting something significant that I have experienced, but by talking about myself, about this new situation that awaits me. And I experienced something I had studied about the person of our father Don Bosco. It was difficult for him to talk about himself and even more difficult to express his feelings. In my case, I must admit that it is a little difficult for me to speak or write about the latest events that have happened to me; but I admit that sooner or later I have to do so, and the message of the Salesian Bulletin arriving in the hands and hearts of so many friends of Don Bosco’s charism is a good way to send this personal message.

After the unexpected news (especially for me), with which the Holy Father Francis announced my name as well, among the 21 people he has chosen to be “created” Cardinals of the Church in the next Consistory on 30 September, thousands of people wondered, especially among the Salesians of Don Bosco and members of the Salesian Family around the world: and now what will happen? Who will accompany the life of the Congregation in the near future? What steps await it? You can well understand that these are the same questions that I too have been asking myself, while thanking the Lord in faith for this gift that Pope Francis has given us as a Salesian Congregation and as the Family of Don Bosco.

From a faith perspective, knowing the great things God has done and what we know through his Word, one could say that God loves surprises us. Usually, in the Bible, God says: “Go! The way will reveal itself.” One important thing we have learnt from Don Bosco: let nothing disturb us and let us trust in God’s Providence.

I feel I share the 1884 statement of our holy founder, “I see more and more what a glorious future is prepared for our Society, the extent it will have and the good it will be able to accomplish.”

I was able to speak personally with the Holy Father, Pope

Francis, after the Angelus announcement, assuring him of my availability to count on me for any service. I responded as Don Bosco did when he was asked to build the Church of the Sacred Heart in Rome, in his case an elderly and sick Don Bosco, who also felt the weight and responsibility of a fledgling Congregation: Don Bosco replied: "If this is the Pope's order, I obey!"

With simplicity, I told the Holy Father that we Salesians have learnt from Don Bosco to always be available for the good of the Church, and in particular for whatever the Pope may ask. Therefore, while I thank God for this gift that belongs to the whole Congregation and Salesian Family, I express my gratitude to Pope Francis by assuring him, on behalf of all the members of our great Family, of a more fervent and intense prayer. Prayer which, as I said, will always be accompanied by our sincere and deep affection.

### **What will happen now?**

I must share with you that I was deeply touched by the sensitivity of our Pope Francis in realising that my service as Rector Major was not to change immediately from one day to the next. For this reason, about half an hour after the announcement of the appointment during the Angelus prayer on Sunday 9 July, the Holy Father sent me a letter in which he spoke of the time needed to prepare myself for the General Chapter of our Congregation before taking on what he intends to entrust to me. As always, the Holy Father showed himself to be attentive, warm, a profound admirer of Don Bosco's charism, and particularly affectionate. Feelings which, on my own behalf and on behalf of the whole Salesian Family, I have reciprocated.

I would like to share with you the arrangements that the Holy Father has communicated to me.

The Pope has decided that, for the good of our Congregation, after the Consistory of 30 September 2023 I may continue my service as Rector Major until 31 July 2024. After that date I will submit my resignation as Rector Major, as requested by

our Constitutions and Regulations, in order to assume the service from the hands of the Holy Father that he will entrust to me.

This is what the Pope himself has communicated to me. We will be able to bring forward the 29th General Chapter by one year, that is, to February 2025. My Vicar, Fr Stefano Martoglio, will take over the government of the Congregation *ad interim*, as stipulated in our Constitutions, until the celebration of GC29. Finally, it remains for me to say and answer another question that many of you will have: what task will the Holy Father entrust me with? Pope Francis has not yet told me. Besides, given this wide margin of time I think it is the most appropriate.

In any case, I ask all of you, dear confreres and members of the groups of our Salesian Family to continue to intensify your prayer. Especially for Pope Francis. He himself expressly requested this at the end of the private audience granted to me.

Finally, I also ask you to pray for me, placed before the prospect of a new service in the Church which, as a son of Don Bosco, I accept in filial obedience, without having sought it because I truly believe that in the Church, the services we perform cannot and must never be sought or demanded as if it were a matter of making them a personal career. What is proper to the "world" is improper for us as servants in the name of Jesus. And we must differ (I hope greatly) from some of the world's standards. Witness to all this is our beloved Father Don Bosco before the Lord Jesus.

I thank you for the affection, the closeness expressed in these weeks with the many messages I have received from all over the world.

I feel as if the same words that Our Lady said to Don Bosco in his dream when he was nine years old (the second centenary of which will be celebrated next year) are addressed to me: "In good time you will understand everything." And we know that for our Father this actually happened almost at the end of his life, in front of the altar of Mary Help of Christians in the

Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which had been consecrated the day before, on 16 May 1887. From the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians I send you an affectionate and grateful greeting entrusting each and every one to Her, the Mother who will continue to accompany and support us. As always, I greet you with immense affection.

---

## **WYD as a synodal experience of Church renewal**

Interrupting the life of a city is always an extraordinary act. Filling the streets with young people from all corners of the world is a moving memory. A World Youth Day is this and much more.

The organisation of a WYD requires so many hours of work, putting all kinds of resources at the disposal of young people. If it bears spiritual fruit in proportion to the effort, it will have been worth it, all for an educational, communicative and evangelising reason: the objective of an event like this is to make Jesus Christ known to a large number of young people, and to succeed in making them understand that following Him is a sure way to find happiness.

It is to young people that we must look with particular fondness these days and discover the secret of a surprising phenomenon: a “silent revolution” is taking place in the world of youth, whose biggest stage is the World Youth Days. Young people who raise questions among Christians and are not afraid to show themselves as such, young people who do not want to be intimidated let alone deceived, young people who bring enthusiasm and passion to bring about change.

These meetings continue to surprise both inside and outside the Church. And they are a snapshot of a youth that is very different from the one proposed by some, thirsting for values, searching for the deeper meaning of life, with a desire for a different world than the one we found when we arrived.

Today, a significant percentage of WYD participants come from very different family, social and cultural backgrounds. Many of these young pilgrims have no Christian reference points in their own contexts. In this sense, the lives of many of them resemble surfing: they cannot expect to change the wave, but they adapt to it to direct the board where they want it to go. These radiant faces of the Church wake up every day with the desire to be better followers of Jesus among their family, friends and acquaintances.

Young people have the strength to give their best, but they need to know that this commitment is doable, they need the complicity of adults, they need to believe that this struggle is neither sterile nor doomed to failure. For this reason, the days are a way for young people to experience synodality, the particular style that characterises the life and mission of the Church. Belonging to their local church community implies belonging to a much larger and universal community. A community in which we need everyone, young and old, to 'take charge of the world'.

For this, it is necessary to cultivate certain attitudes for this new synodal spirituality. WYD allows us to:

- share the small stories of others, experiencing the courage to speak freely and bring to the table deep conversations that come from within;
- learn to grow together with others and appreciate how we are adding to each other, even if at different “speeds” (styles, ages, visions, cultures, gifts, charisms and ministries in the Church);
- to take care of the “community green spaces” for our relationship with God, to take care of our connection with the

source of life, with the One who takes care of us, to root our trust and our hopes in Him, to unload our worries on Him, to be able to “take charge” of the mission He leaves in our hands;

- to accept and welcome our fragility, which connects us to the fragility of our world and mother Earth;
- to be a voice that joins with many others to denounce the excesses that are currently being committed against the Planet and to take common actions that contribute to the emergence of a more responsible and ecological citizenship;
- to reorient pastoral processes together from a more open and inclusive perspective, making us ready to “go out to meet” all young people where they are, and to make visible and real the desire to be a “Church on the move” that reaches out to believers and non-believers alike, and to become a travelling companion for those who want or need it.

In short, a synodal Church that fosters a change of heart and mind that enables us to approach our mission in JESUS WAY. An invitation to feel within us the touch and gaze of Jesus that always makes us new.

Official WYD 2023 website: <https://www.lisboa2023.org>

WYD 2023 saltisani website: <https://wyddonbosco23.pt>

---

# **Letter from the Rector Major after his appointment as cardinal**

*To my Salesian Brothers (sdb) To the Salesian Family*

My dear brothers and sisters: receive my fraternal greetings

full of sincere and heartfelt affection.

It was such an unexpected news (especially for me), that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, also announced my name among the 21 people he had chosen to be 'created' Cardinals of the Church at the next Consistory on September 30th. After that, thousands of people must have asked themselves: What is going to happen now? And how will the Congregation be in the near future? You can understand that I asked myself these same questions, and at the same time I presented to the Lord, in faith, this gift that Pope Francis has given us as a Salesian Congregation and as the Family of Don Bosco. We should have no doubt about how much the Pope loves us; in the same way Pope Francis knows how much we all love him and how we support him, as much as possible, through our prayer.

Within half an hour of the announcement he made at the Angelus last Sunday, July 9th, the Holy Father handed me a letter in which he asked me to go and speak to him as soon as possible, in order to agree on the necessary timing in my service as Rector Major for the good, first and foremost, of the Congregation. He himself mentioned to me in this letter about the preparation of the next General Chapter.

Yesterday afternoon I was received by Pope Francis and we entered a serene, fraternal and mutually affectionate dialogue. Now I am in a position to share with the whole Congregation and the Salesian Family of the world the concrete directives according to the will of the Holy Father.

These provisions are as follows:

- we will be able to bring forward the General Chapter by one year, i.e., that it would take place starting in February 2025;
- the Pope has seen as conducive, for the good of the Congregation, that after the Consistory of September 30th I may continue as Rector Major until July 31st, 2024, that is, until the conclusion of the summer session (in Europe) of the General Council;



- after that date I will present my resignation as Rector Major, because I have been called by the Holy Father for the service he will entrust to me. This is what he has communicated to me;
- according to article 143 of our Constitutions, by reason of the ‘cessation from office of Rector Major’ on being called by Pope Francis to another service, the Vicar, Fr Stefano Martoglio, will assume the government of the Congregation until the celebration of GC29;
- the 29th General Chapter will be convoked by me, at least one year before its celebration, as established in our Constitutions and Regulations (R 111), and it will be the Vicar Fr Stefano who will preside over it;
- during all this time we will continue with the programme established for the animation and government of the Congregation, but adding the efforts of all the members of the General Council and of some extraordinary visitors appointed by the Rector Major, in order to carry out all the extraordinary visitations (including those that were scheduled for the year 2025). In this way it will be possible to arrive at GC29 with a complete vision of the whole Congregation, at present;
- for all the other elements related to the General Chapter, I will provide detailed information when the official convocation of the General Chapter will take place.

Finally, it is only left for me to say what many of you may be wondering: What is the Holy Father going to entrust to me? He has not yet told me, and I understand that, with so much time ahead of us, that is the best thing to do. I do ask all my Salesian brothers and sisters and our dear Salesian Family to continue to intensify our prayer. First of all, for Pope Francis. This was his request in his final greeting: he asked us to pray for him. And I also ask you to pray for what we will experience in this year as a Congregation and as a Salesian Family.

In truth, I ask you to pray for me too as I face the prospect

of this new service in the Church which, as a son of Don Bosco, I accept in obedience, without having sought or wanted it. Our beloved Father Don Bosco is a witness of this before the Lord Jesus.

And from here, from the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, she, Our Mother, will continue to accompany us. I believe, like Don Bosco in his dream at nine – of which we will celebrate the bicentenary next year – that “in due time we will understand everything”. In the case of our Father Don Bosco this happened at the end of his life, before the altar of Mary Help of Christians in the Basilica of the ‘Sacred Heart of Jesus’ which had been consecrated the day before, on that May 16th, 1887. Let us place everything in the hands of the Lord and his Mother.

Greetings with immense affection,

Prot. 23/0319

Turin, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023

---

## Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome

*In the twilight of his life, obeying a wish of Pope Leo XIII, Don Bosco took on the difficult task of building the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at the Castro Pretorio in Rome. To complete the gigantic undertaking he spared no tiring journeys, humiliations, sacrifices, shortening his precious life as an apostle of youth.*

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus dates back to the beginnings of the Church. In the early centuries, the Holy Fathers invited people to look at the pierced side of Christ,

a symbol of love, even if it did not explicitly refer to the Heart of the Redeemer.

The earliest references found are from the mystics Matilda of Magdeburg (1207-1282), St Matilda of Hackeborn (1241-1299), St Gertrude of Helfta (ca. 1256-1302) and Blessed Henry Suso (1295-1366).

An important development came with the works of St John Eudes (1601-1680), then with the private revelations of the Sisters of the Visitation, St Margaret Mary Alacoque, spread by St Claude de la Colombière (1641-1682) and his Jesuit brethren.

At the end of the 19th century, churches consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus spread, mainly as churches of expiation. With the consecration of mankind to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, through Leo XIII's encyclical, *Annum Sacrum* (1899) the cult was greatly extended and strengthened with two more encyclicals to come later: *Miserentissimus Redemptor* (1928) by Pius XI and especially *Haurietis Aquas* (1956) by Pius XII.

In Don Bosco's time, after the construction of the Termini railway station by Pope Pius IX in 1863, the neighbourhood began to be populated, and the surrounding churches could not serve the faithful adequately. This led to the desire to build a church in the area, and it was initially planned to dedicate it to St Joseph, who was appointed as the patron saint of the Universal Church on 8 December 1870. After a series of events, in 1871 the pope changed the patronage of the desired church, dedicating it to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and it remained in the planning stage until 1879. Meanwhile, the cult to the Sacred Heart continued to spread, and in 1875, in Paris, on the city's highest hill, Montmartre (Mount of Martyrs), the foundation stone was laid for the church of the same name, *Sacré Cœur*, which was completed in 1914 and consecrated in 1919.

After the death of Pope Pius IX, the new Pope Leo XIII (as Archbishop of Perugia he had consecrated his diocese to the Sacred Heart) decided to resume the project, and the

foundation stone was laid on 16 August 1879. Work stopped shortly afterwards due to a lack of financial support. One of the cardinals, Gaetano Alimonda (future archbishop of Turin) advised the Pope to entrust the enterprise to Don Bosco and, even though the pontiff was initially hesitant knowing the commitments of the Salesian missions inside and outside Italy, he made the proposal to the Saint in April 1880. Don Bosco did not think twice and replied: "The Pope's wish is a command for me: I accept the commitment that Your Holiness has the goodness to entrust to me." When the Pope warned him that he could not support him financially, the Saint only asked for the apostolic blessing and spiritual favours necessary for the task entrusted to him.



#### Laying the foundation stone of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Rome

On his return to Turin, he wanted the Chapter's approval for this undertaking. Of the seven votes, only one was positive: his... The Saint was not discouraged and argued: "You have all given me a resounding *no* for an answer, and that is fine, because you acted with all the prudence needed to make serious, major decisions such as this. However, were you to give me a yes answer, I can promise you that the Sacred Heart of Jesus will supply the funds to build the Church, He will pay off our debts, and He will even give us a handsome bonus as well." ([MB XIV,580](#)). After this speech the vote was repeated and the results were all positive and the main boon was the Hospice of the Sacred Heart which was built next to the church for poor and abandoned boys. This second hospice project was included in an Agreement made on 11 December 1880, which guaranteed the perpetual use of the church to the Salesian Congregation.

Acceptance caused him grave worries and cost him his health, but Don Bosco, who taught his sons work and temperance and

said it would be a day of triumph when it was said that a Salesian had died on the battlefield worn out by fatigue, preceded them by example.

The building of the Church of the Sacred Heart at the Castro Pretorio in Rome was done not only out of obedience to the Pope but also out of devotion.

Let us take up one of his talks on this devotion, made during a "good night" to his pupils and confreres only a month after his acceptance, on 3 June 1880, the eve of the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

"Tomorrow, my dear children, the Church celebrates the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is necessary that we too, with great effort, try to honour him. It is true that the external solemnity moves to Sunday; but tomorrow let us begin to celebrate in our hearts, to pray in a special way, to make a fervent communion. Then on Sunday there will be music and the other ceremonies of external worship which make Christian feasts so beautiful and majestic.

Some of you will want to know what this feast is and why the Sacred Heart of Jesus is especially honoured. I will tell you that this feast is nothing other than to honour with a special remembrance the love that Jesus brought to mankind. Oh the great, infinite love that Jesus brought us in his incarnation and birth, in his life and preaching, and particularly in his passion and death! Since then the seat of love is the heart, so the Sacred Heart is venerated as the object that served as a furnace to this boundless love. This veneration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, that is, of the love that Jesus showed us, was of all times and always; but there was not always a feast specially established to venerate it. How Jesus appeared to Blessed Margaret a feast manifested to her the great good that will come to mankind by honouring His most loving heart with special worship, and how the feast was therefore established, you will hear in the sermon on Sunday evening.

Now let us take courage and each one do his best to correspond to so much love that Jesus has brought us". ([MB XI, 249](#))

The church was completed for worship seven years later, in 1887. On 14 May of that year Don Bosco attended the consecration of the Church with great emotion, solemnly presided over by the Cardinal Vicar Lucido Maria Parocchi. Two days later, on 16 May, he celebrated the only Holy Mass in this church, at the altar of Mary Help of Christians, interrupted more than fifteen times by tears. They were tears of gratitude for the divine light he had received: he had understood the words of his dream when he was nine: "In good time you will understand everything!" A task completed amidst many misunderstandings, difficulties and hardships, but crowning a life spent for God and the young, rewarded by the same Divinity.

A video was recently made about the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. We offer it to you below.

---

## **Rector Major, Fr Angel FERNANDEZ ARTIME, appointed cardinal**

At the end of the Marian prayer on Sunday, 9 July 2023, Pope Francis announced the creation of 21 new cardinals, including the Rector Major of the Salesians, Fr Angel FERNANDEZ ARTIME.

We wish our Rector Major many graces from the Lord to guide him in the new mission entrusted to him by the Universal Church!

The official news can be found [HERE](#).