

# Monsignor Giuseppe Malandrino and the Servant of God Nino Baglieri

*Monsignor Giuseppe Malandrino, the ninth Bishop of the Noto diocese, returned to the House of the Father on 3 August 2025, the day on which the feast of the Patron Saint of the Diocese of Noto, Mary Ladder of Paradise, is celebrated. 94 years of age, 70 years of priesthood and 45 years of episcopal consecration are respectable numbers for a man who served the Church as a Shepherd with “the smell of the sheep” as Pope Francis often emphasised.*

## **Lightning rod of humanity**

During his experience as pastor of the Diocese of Noto (1906.1998 – 1507.2007), he had the opportunity to cultivate his friendship with the Servant of God Nino Baglieri. He almost never missed a “stop” at Nino’s house when pastoral reasons took him to Modica. In one of his testimonies, Monsignor Malandrino says: “...finding myself at Nino’s bedside, I had the vivid perception that this beloved sick brother of ours was truly a “lightning rod of humanity”, according to a concept of sufferers so dear to me and which I also wanted to propose in the Pastoral Letter on the permanent mission *You will be my witnesses*” (2003). Monsignor Malandrino writes: “It is necessary to recognise in the sick and suffering, the face of the suffering Christ and to assist them with the same care and with the same love of Jesus in His passion, lived in a spirit of obedience to the Father and in solidarity with his brothers”. This was fully embodied by Nino’s dearest mother, Mrs. Peppina. She, a typical Sicilian woman, with a strong character and great determination. She replies to the doctor who proposes euthanasia for her son (given his serious health conditions and the prospect of a life as a paralytic), “if the Lord wants him, he will take him, but if he leaves him to me

like this, I am happy to look after him for life.” Was Nino’s mother aware of what she was going to face at that moment? Was Mary, the mother of Jesus, aware of how much pain she would have to suffer for the Son of God? The answer, when read with human eyes, does not seem easy, especially in our 21<sup>st</sup> century society where everything is unstable, fluctuating, consumed in an “instant”. Mamma Peppina’s Fiat became, like Mary’s, a Yes of Faith and adherence to that will of God which finds fulfilment in knowing how to carry the Cross, in knowing how to give “soul and body” to the realisation of God’s Plan.

### **From suffering to joy**

The friendship between Nino and Monsignor Malandrino was already underway when the latter was still bishop of Acireale. In fact, as early as 1993, through Father Attilio Balbinot, a Camillian very close to Nino, he presented him with his first book, “From suffering to joy”. In Nino’s experience, the relationship with the Bishop of his diocese was one of total filiation. From the moment he accepted God’s Plan for him, he made his “active” presence felt by offering his sufferings for the Church, the Pope, and the Bishops (as well as priests and missionaries). This relationship of filiation was renewed annually on 6 May, the day of his fall, later seen as the mysterious beginning of a rebirth. On 8 May 2004, a few days after Nino celebrated the 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cross, Monsignor Malandrino went to his house. In memory of that meeting, he writes in his memoirs, “it is always a great joy every time I see him and I receive so much energy and strength to carry my Cross and offer it with so much Love for the needs of the Holy Church and in particular for my Bishop and for our Diocese. May the Lord always give him more holiness to guide us for many years always with more ardour and love...”. Again: “... the Cross is heavy but the Lord gives me so many Graces that make suffering less bitter and it becomes light and sweet; the Cross becomes a Gift, offered to the Lord with so much Love for the salvation of souls and the Conversion of

Sinners...". Finally, it should be emphasised how, on these occasions of grace, the pressing and constant request for "help to become a Saint with the daily Cross" was never lacking. Nino, in fact, absolutely wanted to become a saint.

### **An anticipated beatification**

Moments of great significance in this sense were the funeral of the Servant of God on 3 March 2007, when Monsignor Malandrino himself, at the beginning of the Eucharistic Celebration, devoutly bent down, albeit with difficulty, to kiss the coffin containing Nino's mortal remains. It was an homage to a man who had lived 39 years of his existence in a body that "did not feel" but which radiated joy of life in every way. Monsignor Malandrino emphasised that the celebration of the Mass, in the Salesian courtyard which had become an open-air "cathedral" for the occasion, had been an authentic apotheosis (thousands of people participated in tears) and it was clearly and communally perceived that they were not in front of a funeral, but a true "beatification". Nino, with his testimony of life, had in fact become a point of reference for many, young and old, lay people and consecrated persons, mothers and fathers of families, who, thanks to his precious testimony, were able to read their own existence and find answers that they could not find elsewhere. Monsignor Malandrino also repeatedly emphasised this aspect: "in fact, every encounter with the dearest Nino was for me, as for everyone, a strong and vivid experience of edification and a powerful – in its sweetness – spur to patient and generous giving. The presence of the Bishop gave him immense joy every time because, in addition to the affection of the friend who came to visit him, he perceived the ecclesial communion. It is obvious that what I received from him was always much more than the little I could give him." Nino's fixed "obsession" was to "become a saint"; having fully lived and embodied the Gospel of Joy in Suffering, with his physical ailments and his total gift for the beloved Church, ensured that everything did not end with his departure to the Heavenly Jerusalem, but

continued, as Monsignor Malandrino emphasised at the funeral. “... Nino’s mission now also continues through his writings as he himself had announced it in his spiritual Testament.” “... my writings will continue my testimony. I will continue to give Joy to everyone and to speak of the Great Love of God and the Wonders he has done in my life.” This is still coming true because “a city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house” (Matthew 5:14-16). Metaphorically, it is intended to emphasise that “light” (understood in a broad sense) must be visible, sooner or later; what is important will come to light and will be recognised.

To revisit these days – marked by the death of Monsignor Malandrino, by his funerals in Acireale (5 August, Our Lady of the Snow) and in Noto (7 August) with subsequent burial in the cathedral which he himself strongly wanted to be renovated after the collapse of 13 March 1996 and which was reopened in March 2007 (the month in which Nino Baglieri died) – means retracing this bond between two great figures of the Netine Church, strongly intertwined and both capable of leaving an indelible mark on it.

*Roberto Chiaramonte*

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## **To the heights! Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati**

“Dearest young people, our hope is Jesus. It is He, as Saint John Paul II said, ‘who awakens in you the desire to make something great of your life [...], to improve yourselves and society, making it more human and fraternal’ (XV World Youth

Day, Prayer Vigil, 19 August 2000). Let us remain united to Him; let us remain in His friendship, always, cultivating it with prayer, adoration, Eucharistic Communion, frequent Confession, generous charity, as the blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati and Carlo Acutis, who will soon be proclaimed Saints, taught us. Aspire to great things, to holiness, wherever you are. Do not settle for less. Then you will see the light of the Gospel grow every day, in you and around you" (Pope Leo XIV – homily for the Youth Jubilee– 3 August 2025).

Pier Giorgio and Fr. Cojazzi

Senator Alfredo Frassati, ambassador of the Kingdom of Italy to Berlin, was the owner and director of the Turin newspaper La Stampa. The Salesians owed him a great debt of gratitude. On the occasion of the great scandalous affair known as "The Varazze incidents", in which an attempt was made to tarnish the honour of the Salesians, Frassati had defended them. While even some Catholic newspapers seemed lost and disoriented in the face of the heavy and painful accusations, La Stampa, having conducted a rapid inquiry, had anticipated the conclusions of the judiciary by proclaiming the innocence of the Salesians. Thus, when a request arrived from the Frassati home for a Salesian to oversee the studies of the senator's two children, Pier Giorgio and Luciana, Fr. Paul Albera, Rector Major, felt obliged to accept. He sent Fr. Antonio Cojazzi (1880-1953). He was the right man: well-educated, with a youthful temperament and exceptional communication skills. Fr. Cojazzi had graduated in literature in 1905, in philosophy in 1906, and had obtained a diploma enabling him to teach English after serious specialisation in England.

In the Frassati home, Fr. Cojazzi became more than just the 'tutor' who followed the children. He became a friend, especially to Pier Giorgio, of whom he would say, "I knew him at ten years old and followed him through almost all of grammar school and high school with lessons that were daily in the early years. I followed him with increasing interest and affection." Pier Giorgio, who became one of the leading young

people in Turin's Catholic Action, listened to the conferences and lessons that Fr. Cojazzi held for the members of the C. Balbo Circle, followed the Rivista dei Giovani with interest, and sometimes went up to Valsalice in search of light and advice in decisive moments.

#### A moment of notoriety

Pier Giorgio had it during the National Congress of Italian Catholic Youth in 1921: fifty thousand young people parading through Rome, singing and praying. Pier Giorgio, a polytechnic student, carried the tricolour flag of the Turin C. Balbo circle. The royal troops suddenly surrounded the enormous procession and assaulted it to snatch the flags. They wanted to prevent disorder. A witness recounted, "They beat with rifle butts, grab, break, tear our flags. I see Pier Giorgio struggling with two guards. We rush to his aid, and the flag, with its broken pole, remains in his hands. Forcibly imprisoned in a courtyard, the young Catholics are interrogated by the police. The witness recalls the dialogue conducted with the manners and courtesies used in such contingencies:

- And you, what's your name?
- Pier Giorgio Frassati, son of Alfredo.
- What does your father do?
- Italian Ambassador in Berlin.

Astonishment, change of tone, apologies, offer of immediate freedom.

- I will leave when the others leave.

Meanwhile, the brutal spectacle continues. A priest is thrown, literally thrown into the courtyard with his cassock torn and a bleeding cheek... Together we knelt on the ground, in the courtyard, when that ragged priest raised his rosary and said, 'Boys, for us and for those who have beaten us, let us pray!'"

#### He loved the poor

Pier Giorgio loved the poor. He sought them out in the most distant quarters of the city. He climbed narrow, dark stairs;

he entered attics where only misery and sorrow resided. Everything he had in his pockets was for others, just as everything he held in his heart. He even spent nights at the bedside of unknown sick people. One night when he didn't come home, his increasingly anxious father called the police station, the hospitals. At two o'clock, he heard the key turn in the door and Pier Giorgio entered. Dad exploded:

– Listen, you can be out during the day, at night, no one says anything to you. But when you're so late, warn us, call!

Pier Giorgio looked at him, and with his usual simplicity replied:

– Dad, where I was, there was no phone.

The Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul saw him as a diligent co-worker; the poor knew him as a comforter and helper. The miserable attics often welcomed him within their squalid walls like a ray of sunshine for their destitute inhabitants. Dominated by profound humility, he did not want what he did to be known by anyone.

### Beautiful and holy Giorgetto

In the first days of July 1925, Pier Giorgio was struck down by a violent attack of poliomyelitis. He was 24 years old. On his deathbed, while a terrible illness ravaged his back, he still thought of his poor. On a note, with handwriting now almost indecipherable, he wrote for engineer Grimaldi, his friend. Here are Converso's injections, the policy is Sappa's. I forgot it; you renew it.

Returning from Pier Giorgio's funeral, Fr. Cojazzi immediately wrote an article for the Rivista dei Giovani. "I will repeat the old phrase, but most sincerely: I didn't think I loved him so much. Beautiful and holy Giorgetto! Why do these words sing insistently in my heart? Because I heard them repeated; I heard them uttered for almost two days by his father, by his mother, by his sister, with a voice that always said and never repeated. And why do certain verses from a Deroulède ballad surface, "He will be spoken of for a long time, in golden palaces and in remote cottages! Because the hovels and attics,

where he passed so many times as a comforting angel, will also speak of him." I knew him at ten years old and followed him through almost all of grammar school and part of high school... I followed him with increasing interest and affection until his present transfiguration... I will write his life. It is about collecting testimonies that present the figure of this young man in the fullness of his light, in spiritual and moral truth, in the luminous and contagious testimony of goodness and generosity."

The best-seller of Catholic publishing  
Encouraged and urged also by the Archbishop of Turin, Monsignor Giuseppe Gamba, Fr. Cojazzi set to work with good cheer. Numerous and qualified testimonies arrived, were ordered and carefully vetted. Pier Giorgio's mother followed the work, gave suggestions, provided material. In March 1928, Pier Giorgio's life was published. Luigi Gedda writes, "It was a resounding success. In just nine months, 30,000 copies of the book were sold out. By 1932, 70,000 copies had already been distributed. Within 15 years, the book on Pier Giorgio reached 11 editions, and was perhaps the best-seller of Catholic publishing in that period." The figure illuminated by Fr. Cojazzi was a banner for Catholic Action during the difficult time of fascism. In 1942, 771 youth associations of Catholic Action, 178 aspiring sections, 21 university associations, 60 groups of secondary school students, 29 conferences of St. Vincent, 23 Gospel groups... had taken the name of Pier Giorgio Frassati. The book was translated into at least 19 languages. Fr. Cojazzi's book marked a turning point in the history of Italian youth. Pier Giorgio was the ideal pointed out without any reservation; one who was able to demonstrate that being a Christian to the core is not at all utopian or fantastic.

Pier Giorgio Frassati also marked a turning point in Fr. Cojazzi's history. That note written by Pier Giorgio on his deathbed revealed the world of the poor to him in a concrete, almost brutal way. Fr. Cojazzi himself writes, "On Good Friday



of this year (1928) with two university students I visited the poor outside Porta Metronia for four hours. That visit gave me a very salutary lesson and humiliation. I had written and spoken a lot about the Conferences of St. Vincent... and yet I had never once gone to visit the poor. In those squalid shacks, tears often came to my eyes... The conclusion? Here it is clear and raw for me and for you; fewer beautiful words and more good deeds."

Living contact with the poor is not only an immediate implementation of the Gospel, but a school of life for young people. They are the best school for young people, to educate them and keep them serious about life. How can one who visits the poor and touches their material and moral wounds with their own hands waste their money, their time, their youth? How can they complain about their own labours and sorrows, when they have known, through direct experience, that others suffer more than them?

Not just existing, but living!

Pier Giorgio Frassati is a luminous example of youthful, contemporary holiness, 'framed' in our time. He testifies once again that faith in Jesus Christ is the religion of the strong and of the truly young, which alone can illuminate all truths with the light of the 'mystery' and which alone can give perfect joy. His existence is the perfect model of normal life within everyone's reach. He, like all followers of Jesus and the Gospel, began with small things. He reached the most sublime heights by forcing himself to avoid the compromises of a mediocre and meaningless life and by using his natural stubbornness in his firm intentions. Everything in his life was a step for him to climb; even what should have been a stumbling block. Among his companions, he was the intrepid and exuberant animator of every undertaking, attracting so much sympathy and admiration around him. Nature had been generous to him: from a renowned family, rich, with a solid and practical intellect, a strong and robust physique, a complete education, he lacked nothing to make his way in life. But he

did not intend to just exist, but to conquer his place in the sun, struggling. He was a man of strong character and a Christian soul.

His life had an inherent coherence that rested on the unity of spirit and existence, of faith and works. The source of this luminous personality lay in his profound inner life. Frassati prayed. His thirst for Grace made him love everything that fills and enriches the spirit. He approached Holy Communion every day, then remained at the foot of the altar for a long time, nothing being able to distract him. He prayed in the mountains and on the road. However, his was not an ostentatious faith, even if the signs of the cross made on public streets when passing churches were large and confident; even if the Rosary was said aloud, in a train carriage or in a hotel room. But it was rather a faith lived so intensely and genuinely that it burst forth from his generous and frank soul with a simplicity of attitude that convinced and moved. His spiritual formation was strengthened in nocturnal adorations, of which he was a fervent proponent and unfailing participant. He performed spiritual exercises more than once, drawing serenity and spiritual vigour from them.

Fr. Cojazzi's book closes with the phrase: "To have known him or to have heard of him means to love him, and to love him means to follow him." The wish is that the testimony of Pier Giorgio Frassati may be "salt and light" for everyone, especially for young people today.

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## Habemus Papam: Leo XIV

On 8 May 2025, the feast day of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii, **Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost** (69) was elected as the **267<sup>th</sup> Pope**. He is the first Pope born in the United States

*and has chosen the name Leo XIV.*

## **Here is a brief biography**

**Birth:** 14 September 1955, Chicago (Illinois, USA)

**Family:** Louis Marius Prevost (of French and Italian origin) and Mildred Martínez (of Spanish origin); brothers Louis Martín and John Joseph

**Languages:** English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and French; reads Latin and German

**Nickname in Peru:** '*Latin Yankee*' – a summary of his dual cultural identity

**Citizenship:** American and Peruvian

## **Education**

- Augustinian minor seminary (1973)
- Bachelor's degree in Mathematical Sciences, Villanova University (1977)
- Master of Divinity, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago (1982)
- Licentiate in Canon Law, Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas – Angelicum (1984)
- Doctorate in Canon Law, Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas – Angelicum (1987), with a thesis entitled: 'The role of the local prior of the Order of St. Augustine'
- Religious profession: novitiate of Saint Louis of the Province of Our Lady of Good Counsel of the Order of Saint Augustine (1977)
- Solemn vows (29 August 1981)
- Priestly ordination: 19 June 1982, Rome (by Archbishop Jean Jadot)

## **Ministry and main appointments**

1985-1986: Missionary in Chulucanas, Piura (Peru)

1987: Director of vocations and director of missions of the Augustinian Province 'Mother of Good Counsel' in Olympia Fields, Illinois (USA)

1988: Sent to the mission in Trujillo (Peru) as director of the joint formation program for Augustinian aspirants from the Vicariates of Chulucanas, Iquitos, and Apurímac

1988-1992: Director of the community

1992-1998: Teacher of professed friars

1989-1998: Judicial Vicar in the Archdiocese of Trujillo, professor of Canon Law, Patristics, and Morals at the Major Seminary 'San Carlos y San Marcelo'

1999: Provincial Prior of the Province "Mother of Good Counsel" (Chicago)

2001-2013: Prior General of the Augustinians for two terms (approx. 2,700 religious in 50 countries)

2013: Teacher of professed religious and Provincial Vicar in his Province (Chicago)

2014: Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Chiclayo and Titular Bishop of Sufar, Peru (episcopal appointment on 3 November 2014)

2014: Episcopal consecration on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (12 December 2014)

2015: appointed bishop of Chiclayo (26 September 2015)

2018: 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-president of the Episcopal Conference of Peru (8 March 2018 – 30 January 2023)

2020: Apostolic Administrator of Callao, Peru (15 April 2020 – 17 April 2021)

2023: Archbishop ad personam (30 January 2023 – 30 September 2023)

2023: Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops (30 January 2023 [12 April 2023] – 9 May 2025)

2023: President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America (30 January 2023 [12 April 2023] – 9 May 2025)

2023: Created Cardinal Deacon, titular of St. Monica of the Augustinians (30.09.2023 [28.01.2024] – 06.02.2025)

2025: Promoted to Cardinal Bishop of the Suburbicarian Diocese of Albano (06.02.2025 – 08.05.2025)

2025: Elected Supreme Pontiff (08.05.2025)

## **Service in the Roman Curia**

He was a member of the Dicasteries for Evangelization, Section for First Evangelization and New Churches; for the Doctrine of the Faith; for the Eastern Churches; for the Clergy; for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life; for Culture and Education; for Legislative Texts, and of the Pontifical Commission for the Vatican City State

May the Holy Spirit enlighten his ministry, as he did with the great Saint Augustine.

Let us pray for a fruitful pontificate rich with hope!

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# Election of the 266th Successor of Saint Peter

*Every death or resignation of a Pontiff opens one of the most delicate phases in the life of the Catholic Church: the election of the Successor of Saint Peter. Although the last conclave dates back to March 2013, when Jorge Mario Bergoglio became Pope Francis, understanding how a Pope is elected remains essential to grasp the functioning of a millennia-old institution that influences over 1.3 billion faithful and – indirectly – global geopolitics.*

## 1. The Vacant See

Everything begins with the **vacant see**, that is, the period between the death (or resignation) of the reigning Pontiff and the election of the new one. The apostolic constitution *Universi Dominici Gregis*, promulgated by John Paul II on February 22, 1996, and updated by Benedict XVI in 2007 and 2013, establishes detailed procedures.

*Verification of the vacancy*

In case of death: the Cardinal Camerlengo – currently Cardinal Kevin Farrell – officially confirms the death, closes and seals the papal apartment, and notifies the Dean of the College of Cardinals.

In case of resignation: the vacant see begins at the time indicated in the resignation act, as happened at 8:00 PM on February 28, 2013, for Benedict XVI.

### *Ordinary administration*

During the vacant see, the Camerlengo manages the material assets of the Holy See but cannot perform acts reserved exclusively for the Pontiff (such as episcopal appointments, doctrinal decisions, etc.).

### *General and particular congregations*

All cardinals – electors and non-electors – present in Rome gather in the Synod Hall to discuss urgent matters. The “particular” congregations include the Camerlengo and three cardinals drawn by lot in rotation; the “general” congregations summon the entire College of Cardinals and are used, among other things, to set the start date of the conclave.

## **2. Who can elect and who can be elected**

### *The electors*

Since Paul VI’s motu proprio *Ingravescentem aetatem* (1970), **only cardinals who have not reached the age of 80 before the start of the vacant see have the right to vote.** The maximum number of electors is set at 120, but this can be temporarily exceeded due to closely spaced consistories.

Electors must:

- be present in Rome by the start of the conclave (except for serious reasons);
- take an oath of secrecy;
- stay at the *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, the residence established by John Paul II to ensure dignity and discretion.

The enclosure is not a medieval whim: it aims to protect the cardinals’ freedom of conscience and shield the Church from

undue interference. Breaking the secrecy results in automatic excommunication.

### *Those eligible*

In theory, **any baptized male** can be elected Pope, since the Petrine office is of divine right. However, from the Middle Ages to today, the Pope has always been chosen from among the cardinals. If a non-cardinal or even a layman were chosen, he would have to be immediately ordained a bishop.

### **3. The conclave: etymology, logistics, and symbolism**

The term “conclave” comes from the Latin *cum clave*, “with key”: the cardinals are “locked in” until the election to avoid external pressures. The enclosure is guaranteed by several rules:

- Allowed places: Sistine Chapel (voting), *Domus Sanctae Marthae* (lodging), a reserved path between the two buildings.
- Communication ban: electronic devices are collected, signal jammers used, *anti-spy controls* in place.
- Secrecy is also ensured by an oath that includes spiritual sanctions (*automatic* excommunication) and canonical penalties.

### **4. Typical agenda of the conclave**

1. “*Pro eligendo Pontifice*” Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica on the morning of the entry into the conclave.
2. Procession in the Sistine Chapel reciting the *Veni Creator Spiritus*.
3. Individual oath of the cardinals, pronounced before the Gospel book.
4. *Extra omnes!* (“Everyone out!”): the Master of Pontifical Liturgical Celebrations dismisses those not entitled to stay.
5. First (optional) vote on the afternoon of the entry day.
6. Two daily votes (morning and afternoon) followed by the scrutiny (counting).

### **5. Voting procedure**

Each round follows four steps:

**5.1. *Praescrutinium*.** Distribution and filling out in Latin of the ballot "*Eligo in Summum Pontificem...*".

**5.2. *Scrutinium*.** Each cardinal, carrying the folded ballot, says: "*Testor Christum Dominum...*". He deposits the ballot in the urn.

**5.3. *Post-scrutinium*.** Three *scrutators* drawn by lot count the ballots, read aloud each name, record it, and perforate the ballot with needle and thread.

**5.4. *Burning*.** Ballots and notes are burned in a special stove; the colour of the smoke indicates the result.

To be elected, a qualified majority is required, that is, two-thirds of valid votes.

## **6. The smoke: black waiting, white joy**

Since 2005, to make the signal unmistakable to the faithful in St. Peter's Square, a chemical reagent is added:

- Black smoke (*fumata nera*): no one elected.

- White smoke (*fumata bianca*): Pope elected; bells also ring.

After the white smoke, it takes another 30 minutes to an hour before the new Pope is announced by the Cardinal Deacon in St. Peter's Square. Shortly after (5 to 15 minutes), the new Pope appears to give the *Urbi et Orbi* blessing.

## **7. "*Acceptasne electionem?*" – Acceptance and pontifical name**

When someone reaches the required threshold, the Dean of the College of Cardinals (or the oldest by order and legal seniority if the Dean is the elected) asks: "*Acceptasne electionem de te canonice factam in Summum Pontificem?*" (Do you accept the canonically made election as Supreme Pontiff?). If the elected consents – *Accepto!* – he is asked: "*Quo nomine vis vocari?*" (By what name do you wish to be called?). Taking the name is an act full of theological and pastoral meanings: it recalls models (Francis of Assisi) or reform intentions (John XXIII).

## **8. Immediately following rites**

**8.1 *Vesting*.**

**8.2 *Entry into the Chapel of Tears*,** where the new Pope can



recollect himself.

8.3 *Obedientia*: the electing cardinals file past for the first act of obedience.

8.4 *Announcement to the world*: the Protodeacon appears on the central balcony with the famous "*Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum: habemus Papam!*"

8.5 First "*Urbi et Orbi*" blessing of the new Pontiff.

From that moment, he takes possession of the office and formally begins his pontificate, while the coronation with the pallium and the Fisherman's ring takes place at the inauguration Mass (usually the following Sunday).

## **9. Some historical aspects and development of the norms**

1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries: Acclamation by clergy and Roman people. In the absence of stable norms, imperial influence was strong.

1059 – *In nomine Domini*. College of Cardinals. Nicholas II limits lay intervention; official birth of the conclave.

1274 – *Ubi Periculum*. Mandatory enclosure. Gregory X reduces political manoeuvres, introduces seclusion.

1621–1622 – Gregory XV. Systematic secret ballot. Improvement of ballots; two-thirds requirement.

1970 – Paul VI. Age limit of 80 years. Reduces electorate, favouring quicker decisions.

1996 – John Paul II. *Universi Dominici Gregis*. Modern codification of the process, introduces *Domus Sanctae Marthae*.

## **10. Some concrete data of this Conclave**

Living cardinals: 252 (average age: 78.0 years).

Voting cardinals: 134 (135). Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera, Archbishop Emeritus of Valencia, Spain, and Cardinal John Njue, Archbishop Emeritus of Nairobi, Kenya, have announced that they will not be able to participate in the conclave.

Of the 135 voting cardinals, 108 (80%) were appointed by Pope Francis. 22 (16%) were appointed by Pope Benedict XVI. The remaining 5 (4%) were appointed by Pope Saint John Paul II.

Of the 135 voting cardinals, 25 participated as electors in the 2013 Conclave.

Average age of the 134 participating cardinal electors: 70.3 years.

Average years of service as cardinal of the 134 participating cardinal electors: 7.1 years.

Average length of a papacy: about 7.5 years.

Start of the Conclave: May 7, Sistine Chapel.

Voting cardinals in the Conclave: 134. Number of votes required for election is two-thirds, i.e., 89 votes.

Voting schedule: 4 votes per day (2 in the morning, 2 in the afternoon).

After 3 full days (to be defined), voting is suspended for a full day ("to allow a prayer pause, informal discussion among electors, and a brief spiritual exhortation").

Then follow 7 more ballots and another pause up to a full day.

Then 7 more ballots and another pause up to a full day.

Then 7 more ballots and then a pause to evaluate how to proceed.

## **11. Unwritten "internal" dynamics**

Despite the strict legal framework, the choice of the Pope is a spiritual but also a human process influenced by:

- Profiles of candidates ("papabili"): geographic origin, pastoral experience, doctrinal competence.
- Ecclesial currents: curial or pastoral, reformist or conservative, liturgical sensitivities.
- Global agenda : ecumenical relations, inter-religious dialogue, social crises (migrants, climate change).
- Languages and personal networks: cardinals tend to gather by region (the "Latin American" group, "African" group, etc.) and meet informally during meals or "walks" in the Vatican gardens.

## **A spiritual and institutional event together**

The election of a Pope is not a technical step comparable to a

corporate assembly. Despite the human dimension, it is a **spiritual act essentially guided by the Holy Spirit.**

The care of minute rules – from sealing the Sistine doors to burning the ballots – shows how the Church has transformed its long historical experience into a system now perceived as stable and solemn.

Knowing how a Pope is chosen, therefore, is not just curiosity: it is understanding the dynamic between authority, collegiality, and tradition that supports the oldest religious institution still operating worldwide. And, in an age of dizzying changes, that “little smoke” rising from the roof of the Sistine Chapel continues to remind us that centuries-old decisions can still speak to the hearts of billions, inside and outside the Church.

May this knowledge of the data and procedures help us to pray more deeply, as one should pray before every important decision that affects our life.

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## **The Vicar of the Rector Major. Don Stefano Martoglio**

We have the joy of announcing that Don Stefano Martoglio has been re-elected as Vicar of the Rector Major.

The chapter members elected him today with an absolute majority and from the first ballot.

We wish Don Stefano a fruitful apostolate and assure him of our prayers.

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# New Rector Major: Fabius Attard

**We are pleased to announce that Fr. Fabius Attard is the new Rector Major, the eleventh successor of Don Bosco.**

Brief information about the new Rector Major:

Born: 23.03.1959 in Gozo (Malta), diocese of Gozo.

Novitiate: 1979-1980 in Dublin.

Perpetual profession: 11.08.1985 in Malta.

Priestly ordination: 04.07.1987 in Malta.

He has held various pastoral and formative positions within his home province.

He was for 12 years the General Councillor for Youth Ministry, 2008-2020.

Since 2020 he has been the Delegate of the Rector Major for the Ongoing Formation of Salesians and laity in Europe.

Last community of belonging: Rome CNOS.

Languages known: Maltese, English, Italian, French, Spanish.

We wish Fr. Fabio a fruitful apostolate and assure him of our prayers.

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## Election of the first Rector Major

*During the eleventh General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation, the first Rector Major, Fr. Paolo Albera, was elected. Although he formally represents the second successor of Don Bosco, he was actually the first to be elected, as Don Rua had already been personally appointed by Don Bosco,*

*through divine inspiration and at the request of Pope Pius IX (Don Rua's appointment was officially confirmed on November 27, 1884, and subsequently ratified by the Holy See on February 11, 1888). Let us now be guided by the narrative of Fr. Eugenio Ceria, who narrates the election of Don Bosco's first successor and the works of the General Chapter.*

It hardly seems possible to speak of ancient Salesians without starting from Don Bosco. This time it is to admire divine Providence, which led Don Bosco to meet the indispensable men along the arduous path in various roles and offices of his newly established Congregation. Men, I say, not made, but to be made. It was up to the founder to seek out young boys, to raise them, educate them, instruct them, inform them of his spirit, so that wherever he sent them, they would represent him worthily among the members and before outsiders. This is also the case with his second successor. The small and slender Paolino Albera, when he came to the Oratory from his native village, did not stand out among the crowd of companions for any of those characteristics that draw attention to a newcomer. Yet Don Bosco soon noticed in him the innocence of his character, intellectual ability veiled by natural shyness, and a childlike disposition, which gave him good reason to hope. He accompanied him up to the priesthood, sent him as Director to Sampierdarena, then Director to Marseille and Inspector for France, where they called him *petit Don Bosco*, until 1886 when the trust of his brothers elected him General Catechist or Spiritual Director of the Society. But his progress did not stop there.

After Don Rua's death, according to the Rule, the governance of the Society passed into the hands of the General Prefect, Fr. Filippo Rinaldi, who therefore presided over the Superior Chapter and directed the preparations for the General Chapter to be held within the year 1910. The great meeting was set to open on August 15, preceded by a course of spiritual exercises, conducted by the Chapter members and preached by Fr. Albera.

An intimate diary of Fr. Albera, in English, allows us to know what his feelings were during the waiting period. Under April 21, we find: "I spoke at length with Fr. Rinaldi and with great pleasure. I wholeheartedly desire that he be elected to the position of Rector Major of our Congregation. I will pray to the Holy Spirit to obtain this grace." And under the 26th: "Rarely is there talk of Fr. Rua's successor. I hope that the Prefect is elected. He has the necessary virtues for the position. Every day I pray for this grace." Again, on May 11: "I accept to go to Milan for Fr. Rua's funeral. I am very happy to obey Fr. Rinaldi, in whom I recognise as my true Superior. I pray every day asking that a Rector Major be elected." Under June 6, he reveals the reason for his strong inclination towards Fr. Rinaldi, writing about him: "I have a high opinion of his virtue, his ability, and initiative." Shortly after going to Rome in his company, he wrote on the 8th in Florence: "I see that Fr. Rinaldi is well-received everywhere and regarded as Fr. Rua's successor. He leaves a good impression on those with whom he speaks."

If it had been permissible to campaign, he would have been a great elector. Numerous Salesians thought the same way, not to mention the Spaniards, among whom he had left a great legacy of affection. Inspectors and delegates, when they arrived from Spain for the General Chapter, did not make many mysteries even when speaking with him. However, he showed all the indifference of a deaf person who does not understand a word of what is said to him. In this, his attitude was such that it impressed his cheerful interlocutors. There was a true sense of mystery.

On the evening of the Assumption, the opening meeting was held, in which Fr. Rinaldi "spoke very well," as noted by Fr. Albera in his diary. The election of the Rector Major took place in the session the following morning. From the beginning of the voting, the names of Fr. Albera and Fr. Rinaldi alternated at short intervals. The former appeared increasingly troubled and astonished. The latter, on the other hand, showed no sign of emotion. This was noted, not without a

hint of curiosity. A great applause greeted the vote, which reached the absolute majority required by the Rule. Fr. Rinaldi, having completed the last act in his capacity as President of the Assembly with the proclamation of the elected, asked to read a memorandum. Upon receiving consent, he had a sealed envelope returned to him by Fr. Lemoyne, Secretary of the Superior Chapter, which had been given to him on February 27 and bore the inscription: "To be opened after the elections to take place upon the death of dear Fr. Rua." Having received it in his hands, he unsealed it and read: "Fr. Rua is seriously ill, and I feel it is my duty to put in writing what I keep in my heart for his successor. On November 22, 1877, the usual feast of St. Charles was celebrated in Borgo San Martino. At the table presided over by the Venerable John Bosco and Msgr. Ferrò, I too was seated next to Fr. Belmonte. At a certain point, the conversation turned upon Fr. Albera, with Don Bosco recounting the difficulties posed by the clergy of his country. It was then that Msgr. Ferrò wanted to know if Fr. Albera had overcome those difficulties: – Of course, replied Don Bosco. He is my second... – And running his hand over his forehead, he stopped the phrase. But I immediately calculated that he did not mean the second who entered nor the second-ranked, since he was not from the Superior Chapter, nor the second Director, and I concluded that he was the second successor. However, I kept these things in my heart, waiting for events. Turin, February 27, 1910." The electors then understood the reason for his demeanour and felt their hearts expand. They had therefore elected the one preconised by Don Bosco thirty-three years earlier.

Fr. Bertello was immediately entrusted with formulating two telegrams to inform the Holy Father and Cardinal Rampolla, Protector of the Society. The message to the Pope was: "Fr. Paolo Albera, new Rector Major of the Salesian Society and General Chapter, who with the utmost concord of spirits today, the ninety-fifth anniversary of the birth of the Venerable Don Bosco, who elected him and celebrates him with the greatest joy, and thank Your Holiness

for the precious advice and prayers and declare profound respect and unlimited obedience." His Holiness promptly replied by sending his Apostolic Blessing. The telegram alluded to a pontifical autograph of August 9. It read as follows: "To the beloved sons of the Salesian Congregation of the Venerable Don Bosco gathered for the election of the General Rector, in the certainty that all, setting aside any human affection, will cast their vote for that Brother, whom they judge in the Lord to be the most suitable to maintain the true spirit of the Rule, to encourage and guide all the Members of the religious Institute towards perfection, and to make the many works of charity and religion to which they have dedicated themselves prosper, we impart with paternal affection the Apostolic Blessing. From the Vatican, August 9, 1910. Pius PP. X."

The Cardinal Protector also addressed a "fatherly word of encouragement and blessing" to the Moderator and Electors of the Chapter on August 12, saying among other things: "Your beloved Don Bosco, with the most intense affection of a father, undoubtedly turns his gaze from Heaven towards you and fervently implores the Divine Paraclete to pour upon you the heavenly light, inspiring you with wise counsel. The holy Church awaits from your votes a worthy successor to Don Bosco and Fr. Rua, who knows how to wisely preserve their work, and indeed to increase it with new growth. And I too, with the most vivid interest, united with you in prayer, transmit warm wishes that, with divine favour, your choice may be content in every respect and bring me the sweet consolation of seeing the Salesian Congregation ever more flourishing for the benefit of souls and in honour of the Catholic Apostolate. Therefore, let your hearts be far from human concerns and personal feelings in such a sacred and solemn act, so that, guided solely by right intentions and a burning desire for the glory of God and the greater good of the Institute, united in the name of the Lord in the most perfect concord and charity, you may choose as your leader the one who, by the sanctity of life, is an example to you, by the



goodness of heart a loving father, by prudence and wisdom a sure guide, by zeal and firmness a vigilant guardian of discipline, religious observance, and the spirit of the Venerable Founder." His Eminence, receiving Fr. Albera not long after, gave him unmistakable signs of believing that the choice had been made in accordance with the wishes he had expressed.

The very early moments of the feelings of the elected one were expressed in the diary, in which under August 16 we read: "This is a day of great misfortune for me. I have been elected Rector Major of the Pious Society of St. Francis de Sales. What a responsibility on my shoulders! Now more than ever I must cry out: *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende*. I have prayed a lot, especially in front of Don Bosco's tomb." In his wallet, a yellowed sheet was found, on which this programme was outlined and signed: "I will always have God in view, Jesus Christ as a model, the Helper in aid, myself in sacrifice."

At the same time, all the members of the Superior Chapter had expired, and it was necessary to hold the election, which took place in the third session. The General Prefect was elected first. The votes on the name of Fr. Rinaldi were overwhelmingly in favour. Of the 73 voters, 71 voted for him. Thus, there was only one vote missing, which went to Fr. Paolo Virion, the French Inspector. The other, most likely his, was for Fr. Pietro Ricaldone, Inspector in Spain, whom he greatly esteemed. He therefore resumed his daily toil, which was to last another twelve years, until he himself became Rector Major.

Having done this, the Chapter moved on to electing the remaining members, who were: Fr. Giulio Barberis, General Catechist; Fr. Giuseppe Bertello, Economist; Fr. Luigi Piscetta, Fr. Francesco Cerruti, Fr. Giuseppe Vespignani, Councillors. The latter, Inspector in Argentina, thanked the assembly for the act of trust, stating that he was obliged for particular reasons and also for health to decline the nomination, asking to proceed to another election. But the

Superior did not believe he should accept the resignation so readily and asked him to suspend any decision until the next day. The next day, invited by the Rector Major to notify the resolution taken, he replied that, following the Superior's advice, he fully submitted to obedience with the intention of taking on the role.

The first act of the re-elected General Prefect was to officially inform the members of the election of the new Rector Major. In a short letter, briefly mentioning the various phases of his life, he appropriately recalled the so-called "Dream of the Wheel," in which Don Bosco saw Fr. Albera with a lantern in his hand illuminating and guiding others (BM VI, 910). He then concluded very appropriately: "My dear brothers, let the loving words of Don Bosco in the testamentary letter resonate once again in your ears: 'Your Rector is dead, but another will be elected for you, who will take care of you and your eternal salvation. Listen to him, love him, obey him, pray for him, as you have done for me.'"

To the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Fr. Albera deemed it appropriate to issue a communication without too much delay, especially since he was receiving a good number of letters from them. He therefore thanked them for their congratulations, but above all for their prayers. "I hope," he wrote, "that God will grant your wishes and that He will not allow my ineptitude to be detrimental to those works to which the Venerable Don Bosco and the unforgettable Fr. Rua dedicated their whole lives." He finally hoped that among the two branches of Don Bosco's family there would always be a holy competition in preserving the spirit of charity and zeal left as a legacy by the founder.

Now let us take a brief look at the works of the General Chapter. It can be said that there was only one fundamental theme. The previous Chapter, having completed a rather summarised revision of the Regulations, had decided that, as they were, they would be practiced for six years *ad experimentum* and that Chapter XI would resume their examination, establishing the definitive text. There were six

Regulations: for the Inspectors, for all Salesian houses, for the novitiate houses, for the parishes, for the festive oratories, and for the Pious Union of Cooperators. The same Chapter X, with a petition signed by 36 members, had requested that the administrative issue be addressed during the XI<sup>th</sup>, and especially on how to make the income sources granted by Providence to each Salesian house increasingly fruitful. To facilitate the arduous work, a Commission, so to speak, of technicians was appointed for each Regulation, with the task of conducting the relevant studies and presenting the conclusions to the Chapter itself.

The discussions, which began during the fifth session, went on for another 21. In order to close the matter, it would have been necessary to prolong the works much longer. Still, the General Chapter unanimously deferred the task of completing the review to the Superior Chapter, which promised to carry it out by appointing a special Commission. Nevertheless, in order to show that it was not disinterested and to assist the work, the General Chapter expressed the desire to create a Commission with the task of formulating the main criteria that should guide the new Commission of Regulations in its long and delicate task. So, this was done. Therefore, ten directive norms, elaborated by its delegates under the presidency of Fr. Ricaldone, were brought to the assembly's attention and approved. Their context was to maintain the spirit of Don Bosco intact, preserving those articles that were recognised as his, and to eliminate anything that was purely exhortative from the Regulations.

I will remember nothing more than two episodes from the XI<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, which seem to have particular importance. The first refers to the Regulations of the festive oratories. The extra-chapter Commission had deemed it appropriate to simplify it, especially for the part concerning the various roles. Fr. Rinaldi felt that the concept of Don Bosco regarding the festive oratories was thus abolished, hence he rose up saying: "The Regulations printed in 1877 were

truly compiled by Don Bosco, and Fr. Rua assured me of this four months before his death. I therefore wish that it be preserved intact, for if it is practiced, it will be seen that it is still good even today."

At this point an animated discussion arose, of which I will highlight the most notable points. The speaker declared that the Commission was completely unaware of this particularity, but he also noted that this Regulation had never been fully practiced in any festive oratory, not even in Turin. The Commission opined that the Regulations had been commissioned by Don Bosco based on the Regulations of the Lombard festive oratories. In any case, the intention was only to simplify it and to introduce what was practical as found in the best Salesian oratories. Yet Fr. Rinaldi did not calm down, and he insisted upon Fr. Rua's desire that these Regulations be respected, as a work of Don Bosco, even with the introduction of what was deemed useful for young adults.

Fr. Vespignani reinforced this thesis. Having come to the Oratory already a priest in 1876, he had received from Fr. Rua the task of transcribing the Regulations from Don Bosco's original writings, and he still retained the early drafts. Fr. Barberis also assured that he had seen the autograph. The opponents had objections regarding the roles, but Fr. Rinaldi did not disarm. On the contrary, he uttered these forceful words: "Nothing of Don Bosco's Regulations should be altered, otherwise they would lose their authority." Fr. Vespignani confirmed his thoughts once again with examples from America and especially Uruguay, where, when at the time of Msgr. Lasagna there was an attempt to try differently, nothing was achieved. Finally, the controversy was closed by voting the following order of the day: "The XI General Chapter decides that the 'Regulations of the festive oratories' of Don Bosco, as printed in 1877, be preserved intact, making only in the appendix those additions deemed appropriate, especially for the sections of older youth." The sensitivity of the assembly in the face of an attempt at reform in matters sanctioned by Don Bosco is commendable.

The second episode belongs to the penultimate session for a matter not unrelated to the Regulations, as it might seem at first glance. Once again, it was proposed by Fr. Rinaldi, who became the interpreter of the desire of many, that the position of the Directors in the houses be defined after the decree on confessions. Until 1901, being ordinary confessors of the members and students meant that in directing, they acted habitually with a paternal spirit (this topic is extensively covered in Annals III,170-194). After that, however, it began to be observed that the paternal character desired by Don Bosco in his Directors and insinuated in the Regulations of the houses and elsewhere was being abandoned. The Directors indeed began to attend to material, disciplinary, and school affairs, thus becoming Rectors and no longer Directors. "We must return," said Fr. Rinaldi, "to the spirit and concept of Don Bosco, especially manifested to us in the 'Confidential Memories' (Annals III,49-53) and in the Regulations. The Director should always be a Salesian Director. Except for the ministry of confession, nothing has changed."

Fr. Bertello lamented that the Directors had believed that with confession they had to leave the spiritual care of the house as well, dedicating themselves to material offices. "Let us hope," he said, "that it was just a momentary thing. We must return to the ideal of Don Bosco, as described in the Regulations. Let those articles be read, meditated upon, and practiced" (He cited them according to the edition of the time; in the present they would be 156, 157, 158, 159, 57, 160, 91, 195). Fr. Albera concluded by saying: "It is an essential issue for the life of our Society that the spirit of the Director be preserved according to the ideal of Don Bosco; otherwise, we change the way of educating and will no longer be Salesians. We must do everything to preserve the spirit of fatherhood, practicing the memories that Don Bosco left us: they will tell us how to do it. Especially in the reports, we will be able to know our subjects and direct them. As for the young, fatherhood does not mean caresses or unlimited

concessions, but caring for them, allowing them the opportunity to come and see us. Let us not forget the importance of the evening talk. Let the sermons be done well and with heart. Let us show that we care about the salvation of souls and leave the unpleasant parts to others. Thus, the Director will retain the halo that Don Bosco wanted him surrounded with."

This time as well the Capitulars found a General Exhibition of the Salesian Professional and Agricultural Schools open in the Oratory, the third, which lasted from July 3 to October 16. Having already described the two previous ones, there was no need to stop and repeat more or less the same things (Annals III, 452-472). Naturally, the past experience served for a better organisation of the exhibition. The criterion already stated twice by the organiser Fr. Bertello prevailed, namely, according to an arrangement desired by Don Bosco, that every Exhibition of this kind is an event intended to be repeated periodically for the teaching and encouragement of the schools. The opening and closing were graced by the presence of city authorities and representatives of the Government. Visitors were never lacking, including high-ranking personalities and even true experts. On the last day, Professor Piero Gribaudo made the first presentation of about 300 former Turin students to the new Rector Major. Deputy Cornaggia, in his final speech, pronounced this judgment worthy of being remembered (Salesian Bulletin, Nov. 1910, p. 332): "Whoever has had the opportunity to delve into the study of the organisation of these schools and the concepts that inspire them cannot help but admire the wisdom of that Great One, who understood the workers' needs in the conditions of new times, anticipating philanthropists and legislators."

Fifty-five houses participated in the exhibition with a total of 203 schools. The examination of the exhibited works was entrusted to nine distinct juries, which included 50 of the most distinguished professors, artists, and industrialists from Turin. Since it was necessary that the

Exhibition have an exclusively educational character, the works were judged according to this criterion, and the prizes were awarded. These were substantial, offered by the Pope (a gold medal), by the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (five silver medals), by the Municipality of Turin (one gold medal and two silver medals), by the Agricultural Consortium of Turin (two silver medals), by "Pro Torino" (one *vermeil* medal, one silver, and two bronze), by the former students of the "Don Bosco" Circle (one gold medal), by the "Augusta" Company of Turin (500 Lire in typographic material to be divided into three prizes), and by the Salesian Superior Chapter (a golden laurel crown as the *grand prize*) (Those awarded are listed in the cited issue of the Salesian Bulletin).

It is worth reporting the last periods of the report that Fr. Bertello read before the winners were announced. He said: "About three months ago, at the inauguration of our small Exhibition, we lamented that due to the death of the Rev. Fr. Rua, we had lost he to whom we intended to pay tribute with our studies and our works on his priestly jubilee. Divine Providence has given us a new Superior and Father in the person of the Rev. Fr. Albera. Therefore, in closing the Exhibition, we place our intentions and hopes in his hands, confident that the artisan, who was first cared for by the Venerable Don Bosco and then the joy of Fr. Rua, will always have a fitting place in the affection and concerns of their Successor."

That was Fr. Bertello's last achievement. A little more than a month later, on November 20, an unexpected illness suddenly extinguished such an industrious existence. His robust intellect, solid culture, firmness of character, and goodness of spirit made him first a wise Director of the college, then a diligent Inspector, and finally for twelve years an expert General Director of the Salesian professional and agricultural schools. He owed everything, after God, to Don Bosco, who had raised him in the Oratory since he was little and had formed him in his image and likeness.

Fr. Albera did not delay in fulfilling the great

duty of paying homage to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, to the One whom the Rule calls "the arbiter and supreme Superior" of the Society. Immediately on September 1, he left for Rome, where, upon arrival on the 2nd, he already found the audience ticket for the morning of the 3rd. It almost seemed that Pius X was eager to see him. From the Pope's lips, he gathered some kind expressions, which he kept in his heart. In response to the thanks for the autograph and the blessing, the Pope said he believed he acted this way to make known how much he appreciated the worldwide activity of the Salesians and added: "You were born recently, it is true, but you are spread all over the world and everywhere you work a lot." Being informed of the victories already obtained in the courts against the slanderers of Varazze (Annals III, 729-749), he warned: "Be vigilant, for your enemies are preparing other blows against you." Finally, when humbly asked for some practical guidelines for the governance of the Society, he replied: "Do not stray from the customs and traditions introduced by Don Bosco and Fr. Rua."

1910 had already come to an end, and Fr. Albera had not yet made a communication to the entire Society. New and incessant occupations, especially the many conferences with the 32 Inspectors, always prevented him from sitting down at the table. Only in the first half of January, as noted in the diary, did he write the first pages of a circular, which he intended to be somewhat lengthy. He sent it with the date of the 25th. Apologising for the delay in making himself known, commemorating Fr. Rua and praising Fr. Rinaldi for his good interim governance of the Society, he elaborated on particular news about the General Chapter, his own election, the visit to the Pope, and the death of Fr. Bertello. In all, he had the air of a father who converses familiarly with his children. He also shared with them his worries about the events in Portugal. After the monarchy was overthrown in Lisbon in October 1910, the revolutionaries had fiercely targeted the religious, attacking them with wild fury. The Salesians did not have any victims to mourn, however, the



brothers at Pinheiro near Lisbon had a bad day. A gang of thugs invaded and looted that house, not only mocking the priests and clerics but also sacrilegiously profaning the chapel and even more sacrilegiously scattering and trampling the consecrated hosts. Almost all the Salesians had to leave Portugal, seeking refuge in Spain or Italy. The revolutionaries occupied their schools and laboratories, from which the students were expelled. The persecution also extended to the colonies, so that it was necessary to abandon Macao and Mozambique, where much good was being done (Annals III, 606 and 622-4). But even then, Fr. Albera could write: "Those who have scattered us recognise that they have deprived their country of the only professional schools it possessed."

He, who in the early days of the Society had often heard Don Bosco predict the multiplication of his children in every even remote nation, and then saw those predictions marvellously fulfilled, certainly felt the weight of the immense legacy received and believed that for some time it was not appropriate to embark on new works, but it was necessary to focus on consolidating the existing ones. He therefore deemed it necessary to instil the same thing in all the Salesians. To achieve this, it was not enough for the Superiors alone. He strongly recommended common cooperation. Since in those years modernism was also posing threats to religious families, he warned the Salesians, urging them to flee every novelty that Don Bosco and Fr. Rua could not have approved.

Together with the circular, he also sent each house a copy of the circulars of Fr. Rua, who from his deathbed had entrusted him to collect in a volume. The typographic work had already been completed about two months earlier. In fact, the publication included a letter from Fr. Albera dated December 8, 1910.

For the upcoming anniversary of Don Bosco's death, he therefore sent the houses a double gift, the circular and the book. He held this second one in special regard because he knew he was offering a great treasure of asceticism and

Salesian pedagogy in it. He had proposed to follow the traces of Fr. Rua, especially aiming to imitate his charity and zeal in procuring the spiritual good of all the Salesians.

*Annals of the Salesian Society, Vol. IV (1910-1921), pp. 1-13*

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## **Our guest: Father Alphonse Owoudou, Chapter Moderator**

*On Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at Valdocco, Turin, the twenty-ninth General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation will begin. This event is the main sign of unity of the Congregation in its diversity. We talked about this with Fr Alphonse Owoudou, the Regional Councillor for Africa-Madagascar and Chapter Moderator*

### **Can you introduce yourself?**

My name is Alphonse Owoudou, a Salesian of Don Bosco, originally from Cameroon (ATE Vice Province) in Africa. In April 2025, I will celebrate my 56<sup>th</sup> birthday. I am currently the Regional Councillor for Africa-Madagascar. Before taking on this role within the General Council, I was the Superior of the ATE Vice Province, Equatorial Tropical Africa.

My journey first took me to Gabon as a young Salesian priest and diocesan chaplain for youth. Subsequently, I continued my studies in psychology at the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS). I then reached Lomé, Togo, where I had completed my novitiate and post-novitiate; I returned there after 12 years as a member of the formation team. I then had the responsibility of the current Don Bosco Institute of Higher Studies.

In 2015, I returned to ATE to be part of the provincial animation team. Happy to reunite with my confreres and my country after 20 years, I initially served as Vice Provincial from 2015 to 2017, before being appointed Provincial in June 2017. This period allowed me to discover my Province, its works, and the large educational and pastoral community across a territory of six nations, later reduced to five with the birth of the ACC Province.

Since CG28 in 2020, I have the immense privilege of serving as Regional Councillor, ensuring the link between the 15 Provincials of Africa-Madagascar and the General Council, in accordance with Article 140 of our Constitutions. This mission has allowed me to discover and better understand the richness, complexity, and beauty of Salesian Africa, a region full of history, promises, challenges, and resources.

### **What is the role of the Moderator?**

In the context of the General Chapter, the role of the Moderator is primarily to ensure technical coordination and the regularity of processes before and during the Chapter. He presides over the Technical Commission, is responsible for preparing the work schedule, the working document prepared by the Pre-Chapter Commission, as well as the recommendations of the Rector Major or the Vicar for the proper conduct of Provincial Chapters and election rules.

Assisted by his secretariat and the General Secretary, the Moderator also takes care of validating the elected delegates by verifying the numbers from each Province, thus ensuring the legitimacy of their participation in the General Chapter. He sends the Provincials the necessary forms for the minutes and templates for contributions from the Provincial Chapters, groups of confreres, and individual members. Once these contributions are collected, he organizes, classifies, and prepares them. He introduces the members of the Pre-Chapter Commission to the central theme of the General Chapter in order to collaboratively develop the document that will serve

as the basis for reflections and debates during the Chapter sessions.

The General Chapter is often defined as “the main sign of the unity of the Congregation in its diversity”. It is in this spirit that the Moderator must guide and facilitate exchanges so that this unity is fully manifested, thanks to careful preparation and well-structured discussions.

### **Why is the Chapter so important for the life of the Congregation?**

The General Chapter is crucial for the life of the Congregation because it represents “the main sign of the unity of the Congregation in its diversity”. It is a moment when Salesians come together to reflect on how to remain faithful to the Gospel, to the charism of Don Bosco, and to the needs of the times and places where they carry out their mission. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Salesians discern God’s will to better serve the Church and youth at a specific moment in history.

In addition to this spiritual dimension and reflection on the mission, the General Chapter plays a central role in the governance of the Congregation. It is during the Chapter that elections or re-elections of the Rector Major, his Vicar, and other members of the General Council take place. This electoral process allows the Congregation to choose the leaders who will guide the Salesian mission for the coming years. These elections are fundamental because they ensure not only continuity but also the vitality and adaptation of the Congregation to current challenges.

The Chapter is also an opportunity to review and adapt the Salesian mission to present times. For example, during the 29<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, one of the central themes is the “weakening of charismatic identity” perceived within the Congregation, and discussions are planned to address this concern. Additionally, legal issues that have remained pending since

the previous Chapter will also be addressed.

In summary, the General Chapter is a time of discernment, decision, and renewal, allowing the Congregation to better respond to the needs of today's world while electing the leaders who will guide this mission in unity and fidelity to Don Bosco.

### **What is the theme of the Chapter?**

The central theme of the 29<sup>th</sup> General Chapter is, "Passionate about Jesus Christ, dedicated to young people", with the subtitle "Living our Salesian vocation faithfully and prophetically". This theme invites us to return to the essence of our consecrated identity, centred on Christ and the young. It is a call to renew the very heart of the Salesian vocation, to rekindle the spiritual and apostolic fervour that must animate every Salesian.

Concretely, this means deepening our spiritual life, dedicating ourselves more to prayer and contemplation, while remaining firmly committed to the young, especially the poorest and most marginalised. The Chapter invites us to be not only educators and pastors but also prophetic witnesses of the Gospel in a changing world. In other words, it is not enough to carry out works; it is necessary that these works deeply reflect our passion for Christ and our commitment to the young.

The theme also highlights three major priorities for renewal: spiritual life and formation, increased collaboration with laypeople and members of the Salesian Family, and finally, a courageous review of the governance structures of the Congregation to adapt them to the current needs of the mission.

### **Who are the participants?**

The 29<sup>th</sup> General Chapter brings together a total of 226 Chapter members and a team of 45 confreres and collaborators

responsible for logistics and other services. Specifically, this includes:

14 members of the General Council, including the General Secretary;

the General Procurator and the Emeritus Rector Major;

2 Chapter members from the General House (RMG);

2 from the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS);

22 from the Southern Cone Region;

27 from Inter-America;

27 from East Asia-Oceania;

29 from the Mediterranean Region;

32 from Africa;

33 from South Asia;

and, 36, the largest group, from Central-Northern Europe.

These Chapter members will arrive at the General Chapter as bearers of the discernment and hope of the 13,544 Salesians registered for this important event. During GC29, 93% of the assembly will be made up of clerics and 7% of Brothers.

### **What are your concerns?**

I feel overall serene, especially after the entire “synodal” journey we have just gone through since that famous month of July 2023, with a resilience that I admire.

We have worked intensively in the 92 provinces and 7 regions, as well as within the General Council. Furthermore, the Technical Commission, the Juridical Commission, and the Pre-Chapter Commission have worked with a great sense of sacrifice and admirable flexibility to prepare for this important and perhaps unique turning point. I am convinced that God will help us face the challenges of this Chapter that, in the mind of the Rector Major emeritus, Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, was to be prophetic and a bearer of renewal.

That said, my “concerns” naturally align with those of all my confreres, whose reflections have been summarised in the *Instrumentum Laboris*, derived from the 244 documents we

received. Among the main ones is the issue of charismatic identity. Many express fear that our Salesian charism is gradually losing its specificity and that we risk becoming similar to any social organisation. This could weaken the effectiveness of our mission, as what makes us unique is precisely our ability to unite social action and a spiritual witness rooted in faith. This is why the first sentence of the Constitutions, like a creed, tells us that we are a masterpiece of God for His glory and for the holistic salvation of His children.

There is also concern about the growing secularisation and de-Christianisation of our societies, not only in the West. This reality makes it more difficult for us, Salesians—and I bet it is the same for all consecrated persons and religious confessions—to proclaim and live openly the faith in the public sphere. These challenges require an adaptation of our vision and pastoral methods, particularly in accompanying young confreres and new generations.

Another important theme is that of integral ecology and digital culture. The Chapter will certainly emphasise the need for us, as the last three popes have repeated since the beginning of this millennium, to adapt to the digital world in which young people live today, integrating greater attention to the environment, our “common home”, in all aspects of our mission.

Finally, there is an urgency for renewal in our spiritual, fraternal, and apostolic life. It is important not to let ourselves be absorbed exclusively by practical activities but to rediscover spiritual vitality at the centre of our action. This involves more intense prayer, a more solid and inculturated formation, and better collaboration within the Salesian Family and with laypeople, who are called to play an important role in our mission. This call for collaboration is not new, but the context of the Synod on Synodality brings a more powerful and better-articulated scope.

## **Will there be surprises?**

There may be surprises during this 29<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, due to the breadth of its agenda and the expressed desire to make “courageous decisions” and adopt a “more prophetic” stance. In any case, this is what many of us hope for.

Among these surprises, one of the key aspects could concern the review of governance and animation structures. The Chapter may choose to significantly rethink the General Council, making it more agile and better suited to the current needs of the Congregation. Rethinking can also mean maintaining the existing structure but living and managing it better. This could also include a re-evaluation of electoral processes to ensure that the chosen leaders are the result of a more collegial, linear, and transparent process.

Another potentially significant point concerns synodality, particularly in closer collaboration with laypeople. This could translate into a deeper shared governance, in line with the approach “with and for the young”. By strengthening this synodality, the Salesian mission could not only renew its commitment to the young but also become truly prophetic by embodying a model of participatory leadership and co-responsibility with laypeople. This would be a strong sign that the spirit of communion and collaboration is at the heart of our charism.

Moreover, as the *Instrumentum Laboris* already emphasises, there are strong expectations that this Chapter will be a moment of courage and prophecy. It is likely that GC29, instead of multiplying exhortations, will decide to focus on a few key priorities, in accordance with the signs of the times. Among these priorities, particular attention could be given to the implementation and strengthening of the protocol for the safeguarding of minors and vulnerable persons, ensuring that every Salesian work is a safe and protected place for all. Education to peace and peaceful coexistence could also feature



among the central themes, especially in contexts marked by violence or conflict.

Finally, contemporary issues such as the digital mission, integral ecology, and social justice could be the subject of bold decisions, taking into account the diversity of contexts in which the Salesian charism must express itself today. By focusing on concrete areas, the Chapter could provide profound and coherent responses to current challenges while respecting the richness of the various local realities.

Thus, the decisions made could reflect this synodal and prophetic dynamism, centred on Christ and the service of the young, paving the way for a renewed Salesian future faithful to its evangelical commitment.

**In summary:**

### ***Context***

The 29<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation will be held at Valdocco, Turin, from February 16<sup>th</sup> to April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and will bring together 226 Chapter members to reflect on the future of the Salesian mission.

### ***Role of the Moderator***

- technical coordination: develop the schedule, organise the work, and prepare the basic documents;
- validation of participants: verify the eligibility of delegates, ensure their legitimacy, and collect their contributions;
- thematic preparation: introduce the members of the Pre-Chapter Commission to the main theme of the Chapter to develop a working document that will guide the debates;
- ensure that exchanges fully reflect the unity and diversity of the Congregation, fostering collective reflection and spiritual discernment.

### ***Importance of the Chapter***

- spiritual approach: reflect on fidelity to the charism of Don Bosco, to renew missionary fervour;
- governance approach: elect leaders for the coming years;
- adaptive approach: respond to contemporary challenges, such as the weakening of charismatic identity or growing secularisation.

### ***Theme***

Central: “Passionate about Jesus Christ, dedicated to young people – Living our Salesian vocation faithfully and prophetically”.

Core areas:

- spiritual life and formation: strengthen prayer, contemplation, and spiritual formation;
- collaboration with laypeople: promote shared leadership with members of the Salesian Family;
- review of governance structures: adapt structures to current realities for a more effective mission.

### ***Challenges and issues***

- charismatic identity: reaffirm Salesian specificity to avoid becoming an ordinary social organisation (like an NGO);
- secularisation: adapt pastoral methods for effective proclamation of faith;
- digital world and ecology: integrate digital and environmental issues into the mission;
- spiritual renewal and collaboration: intensify prayer and strengthen cooperation with laypeople and youth.

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# **In Memoriam. Cardinal Angelo**

# Amato, SDB

*The universal Church and the Salesian Family bid farewell for the last time on December 31, 2024, to Cardinal Angelo Amato, S.D.B., emeritus Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Born in Molfetta (in the province of Bari, Italy) on 8 June 1938, he served the Holy See for many years and became a point of reference in theology, academic research, and the promotion of holiness within the Church. The funeral rites, presided over on 2 January 2025 by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, Dean of the College of Cardinals, were held at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter's Basilica. At the conclusion, His Holiness Francis presided over the rite of the "Ultima Commendatio" and the "Valedictio," paying his homage to this illustrious son of St. John Bosco.*

*Below is a biographical profile retracing his life, the most significant stages of his formation, his academic and pastoral experiences, up to his mission as Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.*

## **The Origins and the Salesian Choice**

Angelo Amato was born in Molfetta on 8 June 1938, the eldest of four children in a family of shipbuilders. Growing up in an environment that fostered a spirit of commitment and responsibility, he completed his early studies at elementary schools run by the Alcantarine Sisters and the Salesian Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Molfetta. Later, he continued with middle school and, foreseeing a possible future in a maritime career, enrolled at the Nautical Institute in Bari, in the section for long-course captains. It was during his third year of studies, in October 1953, that he decided to pursue the priesthood: he left the Nautical Institute and entered the Salesian aspirantate in Torre Annunziata.

Thus, his religious vocation was intertwined from the beginning with the Salesian Family. After a probationary period, he completed his novitiate at Portici Bellavista from

1955 to 1956. On 16 August 1956—the day that Salesian tradition reserves for the first profession of the novices—he made his religious vows, becoming a Salesian of Don Bosco. From that moment on, his life would be profoundly linked to the Salesian charism, with particular attention to youth and education.

After the novitiate, Angelo Amato attended the philosophical seminary in San Gregorio in Catania, where he obtained his classical high school diploma (in 1959) and, subsequently, a degree in Philosophy at the then Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum in Rome (today the Pontifical University of the Salesian Order). In 1962 he made his perpetual profession, definitively consolidating his belonging to the Salesian Congregation. In those same years, he also undertook a practical internship at the Salesian College in Cisternino (Brindisi), teaching literature at the middle school level—an experience that immediately brought him into contact with youth apostolate and teaching, two dimensions that would mark his entire mission.

### **Ordination and Theological Studies**

The next step in Angelo Amato's journey was studying Theology at the Theological Faculty of the Salesian University, also in Rome, where he earned his licentiate in Theology. Ordained a priest on 22 December 1967, he decided to further specialize and enrolled at the Pontifical Gregorian University. In 1974, he obtained his doctorate in Theology there, thus joining the ranks of the university teaching staff. The field of theology fascinated him deeply, a passion that would be reflected in the great number of publications and essays he authored over the course of his academic career.

### **The Experience in Greece and the Research on the Orthodox World**

A decisive phase in Father Angelo Amato's formation was his stay in Greece, beginning in 1977, promoted by the then Secretariat for Christian Unity (today the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity). Initially, he spent four months at

the Jesuit residence in Athens, where he devoted himself to the study of modern Greek—both written and spoken—in preparation for enrolling at the University of Thessaloniki. Once admitted to the courses, he obtained a scholarship from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which allowed him to reside at Monì Vlatadon (Vlatadon Monastery), home to an institute for patristic studies (Idrima ton Paterikon Meleton) and a rich library specializing in Orthodox theology, enhanced by microfilms of the manuscripts of Mount Athos.

At the University of Thessaloniki, he attended courses in the history of dogmas with Professor Jannis Kaloghiros and systematic dogmatics with Jannis Romanidis. Simultaneously, he carried out an important study on the sacrament of penance in Greek Orthodox theology from the 16th to the 20th century: this research, supported by the well-known Greek patrologist Konstantinos Christou, was published in 1982 in the series *Análekta Vlatádon*. This period of ecumenical exchange and in-depth acquaintance with the Eastern Christian world greatly enriched Amato's formation, making him an expert in Orthodox theology and the dynamics of dialogue between East and West.

### **Return to Rome and Academic Commitment at the Pontifical Salesian University**

Back in Rome, Angelo Amato assumed the role of professor of Christology in the Theological Faculty of the Pontifical Salesian University. His scholarly abilities and clarity of exposition did not go unnoticed: he was appointed Dean of the same Theological Faculty for two terms (1981–1987 and 1994–1999). Furthermore, between 1997 and 2000, he served as Vice-Rector of the University.

During those years, he also gained further international experience: in 1988, he was sent to Washington to deepen his knowledge of the theology of religions and to complete his manual on Christology. Alongside his academic work, he held advisory roles for several bodies of the Holy See: he was a consultor for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and for the Pontifical Councils for Promoting Christian Unity

and Interreligious Dialogue. He also served as an advisor to the Pontifical International Marian Academy, underlining his interest in Mariology—a field typical of the Salesian spirituality centered on Mary Help of Christians.

In 1999, he was appointed Prelate Secretary of the restructured Pontifical Academy of Theology and Director of the newly founded theological journal *Path*. Moreover, between 1996 and 2000, he was part of the theological-historical commission for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, thus contributing significantly to the organization of the jubilee celebrations.

### **Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Episcopal Ministry**

On 19 December 2002, a very significant appointment came: Pope John Paul II designated him Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, concurrently elevating him to the rank of Archbishop and assigning him the titular see of Sila, with the personal title of Archbishop. He received episcopal ordination on 6 January 2003 in the Vatican Basilica, from none other than John Paul II himself (now Saint John Paul II). In this role, Monsignor Angelo Amato collaborated with the then Prefect, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (the future Benedict XVI). The Dicastery's task was, and remains, to promote and safeguard the Catholic doctrine throughout the world. During his mandate, the new Archbishop continued to maintain an academic approach, combining his specialized expertise in theology with ecclesial service aimed at upholding the orthodoxy of the faith.

### **Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and the Cardinalate**

A further step forward in his ecclesiastical career came on 9 July 2008: Pope Benedict XVI appointed him Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, succeeding Cardinal José Saraiva Martins. In this dicastery, Monsignor Amato was responsible for overseeing the processes of beatification and

canonization of the Servants of God, discerning heroic virtues, miracles, and the testimony of those who, throughout history, have become saints and blessed in the Catholic Church.

At the Consistory of 20 November 2010, Benedict XVI created him a Cardinal, assigning him the deaconry of Santa Maria in Aquiro. With his new red hat, he was able to participate in the conclave of March 2013, which elected Pope Francis. During Francis's pontificate, Cardinal Amato was confirmed "*donec aliter provideatur*" as Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints (on 19 December 2013), continuing in this role until 31 August 2018, when he resigned upon reaching the age limits, leaving a lasting legacy through the number of beatifications and canonizations examined during those years.

### **Commitment to the Local Church: The Example of Don Tonino Bello**

A particular testimony to Cardinal Amato's bond with his homeland occurred in November 2013, when he traveled to the Cathedral of Molfetta for the closure of the diocesan phase of the beatification and canonization process of Don Tonino Bello (1935–1993). The latter, Bishop of Molfetta from 1982 to 1986, was dearly loved for his commitment to peace and the poor. On that occasion, Cardinal Amato emphasized that holiness is not the privilege of a select few but a universal vocation: all believers, inspired by the person and message of Christ, are called to live their faith deeply, with hope and charity.

### **Final Years and Death**

After stepping down from the leadership of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Cardinal Angelo Amato continued to serve the Church by participating in events and ceremonies, always making his deep theological knowledge available. His commitment was always marked by a refined human touch, evident respect for his interlocutors, and a humility that often moved all who met him.

On 3 May 2021, his deaconry of Santa Maria in Aquiro was

elevated *pro hac vice* to a presbyteral title, further honoring his long and faithful dedication to ecclesiastical ministry. The death of the Cardinal, which occurred on 31 December 2024 at the age of 86, has left a void in the Salesian Family and in the College of Cardinals, now composed of 252 cardinals, of whom 139 are electors and 113 are non-electors. The announcement of his passing elicited reactions of sorrow and gratitude throughout the ecclesial world: the Pontifical Salesian University, in particular, recalled his many years of teaching as a professor of Christology, his two mandates as Dean of the Theological Faculty, and the period during which he served as Vice-Rector of the institution.

### **A Legacy of Fidelity and the Pursuit of Holiness**

In reflecting on the figure of Cardinal Angelo Amato, certain traits emerge that characterized both his ministry and his testimony. First and foremost, his profile as a Salesian religious: his fidelity to his vows, his deep bond with the charism of St. John Bosco, and his attention to youth, as well as intellectual and spiritual formation, represent a constant guiding line throughout his life. Secondly, his vast theological production—particularly in the areas of Christology and Mariology—and his contribution to dialogue with the Orthodox world, of which he was a passionate scholar. Undoubtedly, his service to the Holy See as Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, as Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and as a Cardinal, underlines the importance of his role in promoting and safeguarding the Catholic doctrine, as well as in valuing the witnesses of holiness. Cardinal Amato was a privileged witness to the spiritual richness that the universal Church has expressed over the centuries, and he played an active role in the recognition of figures who serve as beacons for God's people.

Moreover, his participation in a conclave (that of 2013), his closeness to great Pontiffs such as John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis, and his collaboration with numerous



dicasteries testify to a service given in every possible dimension—a fusion of academic insight and pastoral governance within the Church.

The death of Cardinal Angelo Amato leaves behind a legacy of doctrine, ecumenical sensitivity, and love for the Church. The Diocese of Molfetta, which had already experienced his participation in the beatification process of Don Tonino Bello, remembers him as a man of faith and tireless pastor, capable of uniting the demands of theological discipline with those of pastoral charity. The Salesian Family, in particular, recognizes in him the fruit of a well-lived charism, imbued with that “educational charity” that, since Don Bosco, has accompanied the journey of countless consecrated individuals and priests around the world, always in service to the young and the needy.

Today, the Church entrusts him to the mercy of the Lord, in the certainty that, as the Pontiff himself affirmed, Cardinal Amato, a “good and vigilant servant,” may now behold the face of God in the glory of the saints he helped to recognize. His testimony, made concrete by a life devoted to service and by profound theological preparation, remains as a sign and encouragement to all who wish to serve the Church with fidelity, meekness, and dedication, until the end of their earthly pilgrimage.

In this way, the message of hope and holiness that animated every action of his finds its fulfillment: whoever sows in the field of obedience, truth, and charity reaps a fruit that becomes a common good, an inspiration, and a light for future generations. And this, ultimately, is the most beautiful legacy that Cardinal Angelo Amato leaves to his religious family, to the Diocese of Molfetta, and to the entire Church.

And We Must Not Overlook the Scriptural Legacy Left by Cardinal Angelo Amato.

Below is a list – surely not complete – of his publications:

No.	Year	Title	Info
1	1974	I pronunciamenti tridentini sulla necessità della confessione sacramentale nei canoni 6-9 della sessione XIV (25 novembre 1551)	Essay on conciliar hermeneutics
2	1975	Problemi attuali di cristologia	Lectures of the Salesian Theological Faculty 1974–1975
3	1976	La Chiesa locale: prospettive teologiche e pastorali	Lectures of the Salesian Theological Faculty 1975–1976
4	1977	Cristologia metaecclesiale?	Considerations on E. Schillebeeckx's “metadogmatic” Christology
5	1977	Il Gesù storico	Problems and interpretations
6	1977	Temi teologico-pastorali	

7	1978	Annuncio cristiano e cultura contemporanea	
8	1978	Studi di cristologia patristica attuale	Concerning two recent publications by Alois Grillmeier
9	1979	Il sacramento della penitenza nelle "Risposte" del patriarca Geremia II ai teologi luterani di Tübingen (1576,1579,1581)	
10	1980	Annunciare Cristo ai giovani	(Co-author)
11	1980	Il Cristo biblico-ecclesiale	Proposal of a criteria-based synthesis on the essential contents of contemporary Christological proclamation
12	1980	Il Cristo biblico-ecclesiale latinoamericano	The "religious-popular" Christological module of Puebla

13	1980	La figura di Gesù Cristo nella cultura contemporanea	Christ in the conflict of interpretations
14	1980	Selezione orientativa sulle pubblicazioni cristologiche in Italia	
15	1980	L'enciclica del dialogo rivisitata	Concerning the International Study Conference on Paul VI's <i>"Ecclesiam suam"</i> (Rome, 24–26 October 1980)
16	1981	Il Salvatore e la Vergine-Madre: la maternità salvifica di Maria e le cristologie contemporanee	Proceedings of the 3rd International Mariological Symposium (Rome, October 1980)
17	1981	La risurrezione di Gesù nella teologia contemporanea	
18	1981	Mariologia in contesto	An example of inculturated theology: "The mestizo face of Our Lady of Guadalupe" (Puebla no. 446)

19	1982	Il sacramento della penitenza nella teologia greco-ortodossa	Historical-dogmatic studies, 16th–20th century
20	1983	Inculturazione-Contestualizzazione: teologia in contesto	Elements of selected bibliography
21	1983	La dimension “thérapeutique” du sacrement de la pénitence dans la théologie et la praxis de l’Église gréco-orthodoxe	
22	1984	Come conoscere oggi Maria	
23	1984	Inculturazione e formazione salesiana	Proceedings of the meeting in Rome, 12–17 September 1983 (co- author)
24	1984	Maria e lo Spirito Santo	Proceedings of the 4th International Mariological Symposium (Rome, October 1982)
25	1985	Come collaborare al progetto di Dio con Maria	Principles and proposals

26	1987	La Madre della misericordia	
27	1988	<a href="#"><u>Gesù il Signore</u></a>	Essay on Christology
28	1989	Essere donna	Studies on John Paul II's Apostolic Letter <i>"Mulieris dignitatem"</i> (co-author)
29	1990	Cristologia e religioni non cristiane	Problems and current issues: introductory considerations
30	1991	Come pregare con Maria	
31	1991	Studio dei Padri e teologia dogmatica	Reflections following the Instruction of the Congregation for Catholic Education of 10 November 1989 (=IPC)

32	1991	<p><i>Verbi revelati 'accommodata praedicatio' lex omnis evangelizationis"</i> (GS n.44)</p>	Historical-theological reflections on inculturation
33	1992	<p><a href="#"><u>Angeli e demoni Il dramma della storia tra il bene e il male</u></a></p>	The drama of history between good and evil
34	1992	<p>Dio Padre – Dio Madre</p>	Preliminary reflections
35	1992	<p>Il mistero di Maria e la morale cristiana</p>	
36	1992	<p>Il posto di Maria nella "Nuova evangelizzazione"</p>	
37	1993	<p>Cristologia della <i>Secunda Clementis</i></p>	Initial considerations
38	1993	<p>Lettera cristologica dei primi concili ecumenici</p>	
39	1994	<p><a href="#"><u>Trinità in contesto</u></a></p>	

40	1996	Maria presso la Croce, volto misericordioso di Dio per il nostro tempo	Marian Conference of the Servants of Mary Reparatrix, Rovigo, 12–15 September 1995
41	1996	<i>Tertio millennio adveniente:</i> Lettera apostolica di Giovanni Paolo II	Text and pastoral theological commentary
42	1996	<a href="#"><i>Vita consecrata. Una prima lettura teologica</i></a>	
43	1997	Alla ricerca del volto di Cristo: ... ma voi chi dite che io sia?	Proceedings of the 27th Diocesan Theological Week, Figline Valdarno, 2–5 September 1997
44	1997	Gesù Cristo verità di Dio e ricerca dell'uomo	Christology
45	1997	<a href="#"><i>La catechesi al traguardo. Studi sul Catechismo della Chiesa cattolica</i></a>	(Co-author)
46	1997	<a href="#"><i>Super fundamentum Apostolorum</i></a>	Studies in honor of His Eminence Cardinal A.M. Javierre Ortas (co-author)



47	1998	El Evangelio del Padre	
48	1998	Gesù Cristo morto e risorto per noi consegna lo Spirito	Theological meditations on the Paschal mystery (co- author)
49	1998	<a href="#">Il Vangelo del Padre</a>	
50	1998	Una lettura cristologica della “ <i>Secunda Clementis</i> ”	On the existence of Pauline influences?
51	1999	Evangelización, catequesis, catequistas	A new stage for the Church of the third millennium
52	1999	La Vergine Maria dal Rinascimento a oggi	
53	1999	Missione della Chiesa e Chiesa in missione]. Gesù Cristo, Verbo del Padre	Field II
54	1999	La Chiesa santa, madre di figli peccatori	Ecclesiological approach and pastoral implications

55	2000	<p><i>Dominus</i>  <i>Iesus</i>: l'unicità  e l'universalità salvifica di Gesù  Cristo e  della Chiesa</p>	Declaration
56	2000	<p>Gesù  Cristo e l'unicità della mediazione</p>	(Co-author)
57	2000	<p>Gesù  Cristo, speranza del mondo</p>	<p>Miscellany  in honor of Marcello  Bordoni</p>
58	2000	<p>La  Vierge dans la catéchèse, hier et  aujourd'hui</p>	<p>Communications  presented at the 55th  Session of the French  Society for  Mariological Studies,  Sanctuaire Notre-Dame-de-  la-Salette, 1999  (co-author)</p>
59	2000	<p>Maria  e la Trinità</p>	<p>Marian  spirituality and  Christian existence</p>
60	2000	<p>Maria  nella catechesi ieri e oggi</p>	<p>A  synthetic historical  overview</p>
61	2001	<p>Crescere  nella grazia e nella conoscenza di  Gesù</p>	

62	2002	Dichiarazione "Dominus Iesus" (6 agosto 2000)	Studies (co-author)
63	2003	<a href="#">Maria</a> <a href="#">Madre della speranza</a>	For an inculturation of hope and mercy. [Component part of a monograph]
64	2005	La Madre del Dio vivo a servizio della vita	Proceedings of the 12th International Mariological Colloquium, Santuario del Colle, Lenola (Latina), 30 May – 1 June 2002 (co- author)
65	2005	Lo sguardo di Maria sul mondo contemporaneo	Proceedings of the 17th International Mariological Colloquium, Rovigo, 10–12 September 2004
66	2005	Maria, sintesi di valori	Cultural history of Mariology (co- author)
67	2007	Sui sentieri di Clotilde Micheli fondatrice delle Suore degli Angeli adoratrici della SS. Trinità	Spirituality and human promotion (co- author)

68	2007	<a href="#"><u>San Francesco Antonio Fasani apostolo francescano e culture dell'Immacolata</u></a>	
69	2007	Il vescovo maestro della fede	Contemporary challenges to the magisterium of truth
70	2008	<a href="#"><u>Gesù, identità del cristianesimo Conoscenza ed esperienza</u></a>	Knowledge and experience
71	2008	La <i>Dominus Iesus</i> e le religioni	
72	2009	Catholicism and secularism in contemporary Europe	
73	2009	<a href="#"><u>Futuro presente Contributi sull'enciclica "Spe salvi" di Benedetto XVI</u></a>	Contributions on Benedict XVI's encyclical " <i>Spe salvi</i> " (co-author)
74	2009	La santità dei papi e di Benedetto XIII	
75	2009	Maria di Nazaret. Discepola e testimone della parola	

76	2009	Reflexiones sobre la cristología contemporánea	
77	2010	<a href="#"><u>I santi nella Chiesa</u></a>	
78	2010	Il celibato di Cristo nelle trattazioni cristologiche contemporanee	A critical-systematic review
79	2010	<a href="#"><u>Il celibato di Gesù</u></a>	
80	2010	<a href="#"><u>Il santo di Dio. Cristologia e santità</u></a>	
81	2011	<a href="#"><u>Dialogo interreligioso Significato e valore</u></a>	
82	2011	<a href="#"><u>I santi si specchiano in Cristo</u></a>	
83	2011	Istruzione "Sanctorum mater"	Presentation
84	2011	Le cause dei santi	Aid for the "Studium"

85	2011	<a href="#">Maria</a> <a href="#">la Theotokos.</a> <a href="#">Conoscenza ed esperienza</a>	
86	2012	<a href="#">I</a> <a href="#">santi testimoni della fede</a>	
87	2012	<a href="#">Santa</a> <a href="#">Ildegarda di Bingen</a>	
88	2012	<a href="#">Santi</a> <a href="#">e beati. Come</a> <a href="#">procede la Chiesa</a>	
89	2012	Testi mariani del secondo millennio	(Co-author)

90	2013	<p><a href="#"><u>I santi evangelizzano</u></a></p>	<p>Contribution to the Synod of Bishops of October 2012, which documents the indispensable evangelizing nature of the Saints, who, thanks to their exemplary Christian conduct, nourished by faith, hope, and charity, become points of reference for the Catholic Church and for the faithful of all nations and cultures, guiding them toward a life of holiness. The volume is divided into two parts: the first contains doctrinal reflections on the concept of Holiness and the causes of Saints, while the second gathers homilies, letters, and reports given throughout 2012, which describe the lives and work of Saints, Blesseds, Venerables, and Servants of God.</p>
91	2013	<p><a href="#"><u>Il Paradiso: di che si tratta?</u></a></p>	

92	2014	Accanto a Giovanni Paolo II	Friends and collaborators recount (co-author)
93	2014	<u>I santi profeti di speranza</u>	
94	2014	<u>La Santissima Eucaristia nella fede e nel diritto della Chiesa</u>	(Co-author)
95	2014	<u>San Pietro Favre</u>	
96	2014	<u>Sant'Angela da Foligno</u>	
97	2015	I santi: apostoli di Cristo risorto	
98	2015	<u>Gregorio di Narek. Dottore della Chiesa</u>	
99	2015	<u>Beato Oscar Romero</u>	
100	2015	<u>Santa Maria dell'incarnazione</u>	



101	2015	<a href="#"><u>San Joseph Vaz</u></a>	
102	2015	<a href="#"><u>I Santi apostoli di Cristo risorto</u></a>	
103	2016	<a href="#"><u>I santi: messaggeri di misericordia</u></a>	
104	2016	Misericordiosi come il Padre	Experiences of mercy in the lived holiness
105	2017	<a href="#"><u>I santi, ministri della carità</u></a>	Contains reflections on charity and a gallery of men and women (saints, blesseds, venerables, and servants of God) exemplary in the heroic exercise of this divine energy known as charity
106	2017	Il messaggio di Fatima tra carisma e profezia	Proceedings of the International Forum on Mariology (Rome, 7–9 May 2015)
107	2018	<a href="#"><u>I santi e la Madre di Dio</u></a>	

108	2019	Perseguitati per la fede	The victims of National Socialism in Central and Eastern Europe
109	2019	<i>Sufficit gratia mea"</i>	Miscellany of studies offered to His Eminence Cardinal Angelo Amato on the occasion of his 80th birthday celebration (genetliaco)
110	2019	<a href="#">Un'inedita Sicilia. Eventi e personaggi da riscoprire</a>	
111	2020	<a href="#">Il segreto di Tiffany Grant</a>	
112	2021	<i>Iesus Christus heri et hodie, ipse et in saecula</i>	Collection of contributions promoted by the Pontifical Salesian University for Cardinal Angelo Amato on the occasion of his 80th birthday celebration (genetliaco)
113	2021	<a href="#">Dici l'anticu... La cultura popolare nel paese del Gattopardo. Proverbi di Palma di Montechiaro</a>	

114	2023	<a href="#"><u>Una Sicilia ancora da scoprire. Eventi e personaggi inediti</u></a>	
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