 Reading time: 3 min.

Investing in the education of youth to build the families of today and tomorrow

The education of young people is the primary task of parents, connected to the transmission of life, and a primary duty with respect to the educative task of other subjects; the role of the EPC is therefore proposed as a complement, not a substitute for the educative role of youngsters' parents. The contribution of vocation as family, parents and couples can be identified in at least three central themes: love, life and education.

Caring for the family arouses great interest around the world. Particular attention is given to the issue through articles, scientific publications and conference documents. At the same time, the family is asked to take care of the bonds that make up the dense network that supports the person of young people in the growth process and that increases the quality of life of a community. Therefore, it is necessary to promote adequate educative-pastoral strategies to support the family, on the role it has in building interpersonal and intergenerational relationships, as well as in the overall understanding of the education and accompaniment of new generations.

In its complexity, each family is like a book that needs to be read, interpreted, and understood with great care, attention, and respect. In our contemporary society, family life has, indeed, certain conditions that expose it to weakness.

Meeting Don Bosco is a timeless journey. Following his dreams; understanding his passion for education; learning about his talent for pulling young people out of the "wrong path" to make them "good Christians and honest citizens", to educate them in the Christian faith and social conscience, to guide them to an honest profession, is an experience of extraordinary human and familiar intensity. Don Bosco's experience has deep roots. His life, indeed, is filled with families, a multitude of relationships, generations, youth without families, love stories and family crises, from the earliest years of his life, when he has to face the loss of his father at a very young age.

The Educative-Pastoral Community is one of the forms, if not the form, in which the family spirit is embodied. In it, the Preventive System becomes operational in a

community project. As a large family that is responsible for the education and evangelization of young people in a specific territory, the EPC is the actualization of that intuition which, at the origin of the Salesian charism, Don Bosco often repeated: “I have always needed everyone’s help”. Starting from this conviction, from the earliest days of the Oratory, he built around himself a family-community that did take into account the diverse cultural, social and economic conditions of its collaborators and in which young people themselves are the protagonists.



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Pastoral theology, in this process of accountability, affirms that the family is the recipient, context and subject of pastoral action. This reflection leads us to question the originality of the family within the EPC, which can occupy a specific place. The contribution of vocation as family, parents and couples can be identified in at least three central themes: love, life and education.

For this reason, both locally and at a provincial level, it is necessary to start planning formative courses for operators/ educators, integrating families into the SEPP, where the educative and pastoral proposal is structured around activities in which the family is the protagonist in favour of young people. These paths must include dialogue, the methodology of family pedagogy and the Salesian Spirituality as their central core.
For this reason, it is essential for the youth ministry to redesign itself together in a vocational sense; at the same time, it is necessary to enter into the daily life of families, speak their language, remain next to the fragility of relationships and recognize the hardships present in the lives of many of them, taking care of young people without families, young families, the most fragile family situations (from poverty, inequality and vulnerability) by promoting solidarity among families. It is then essential to accompany the love of young couples/families by taking care of them and planning a good and constant formation in love for the development of every vocation.

All that has been said regarding the Salesian Youth Ministry and Family, in order to be realised, the launching of formation processes for all the members of the EPC: for consecrated Salesians and for lay people who support the development of SEPP and the Salesian Family.