



Office of the President  
World Confederation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco  
Via Marsala, 42, 00185, Roma, Italia  
[president@exallievi.org](mailto:president@exallievi.org) +35699296552

**31st January 2024**

**Dear Past Pupils and Friends of Don Bosco,**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Feast of Don Bosco is a day of celebration in all Salesian communities around the world I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and that you had a good start to the New Year. It was a pleasure to receive so many greetings and learn about how National and Provincial Federations and Local Unions have celebrated this special day for us all. Our love and gratitude toward Don Bosco remain the reason why we come together as a movement and as an association.

### **Italy: World Confederation announces new monument to honour Carlo Gastini in Valdocco**

On the feast of Don Bosco, the World President Bryan Magro announced that the Rector Major Cardinal Angel Fernandez Artime has approved a new project to have a monument dedicated to Carlo Gastini and all past pupils and friends of Don Bosco in the world in the place where our organisation was born. This was one of the dreams when we celebrated the 150th anniversary of our foundation in 2020 and due to the covid pandemic this project was delayed.

This monument will be the work of the Italian Sculptor Mauro Baldesseri which will give tribute to Carlo Gastini who was one of the founders of our first organisation in Valdocco, the second child to start living with Don Bosco at the first Oratory and close collaborator Don Bosco especially in the printing and the theatre.

The location for the monument is significant because Carlo Gastini worked as a book binder in the first printing which was located underneath the alcove and it is exactly beneath the entrance to the rooms of Don Bosco. This same portico is where the first past pupils held the feast of gratitude toward Don Bosco. When Carlo Gastini was setting up the first association, he met Don Bosco under the portico and told him: "You are to help each other, and support the Salesian work with the young".

In the coming weeks, we will share more information with you as we need the support of everyone to help us to realise this dream during this year. We hope to be able to inaugurate this new monument during the Extraordinary General World Assembly. We wish that every Federation, Local Union and past pupil to contribute to help us make this dream a reality.

### **Italy: Executive Council of World Confederation meet online**

The Executive Council of the World Confederation met online on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to discuss details on the organization of the Extraordinary General World Assembly, the approval of new members to the World Confederation, the calendar for 2024, and announcement of a new monument to honour Carlo Gastini in Valdocco.

### **Italy: Executive Council of World Confederation welcomes new members in the World Confederation**

The Executive Council during its meeting on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024 approved as new members four National Federations from Hungary, Togo, Malawi and Eswatini. As we prepare for the Extraordinary General World Assembly, we hope that more National or Provincial Federations will officially join the World Confederation to be more active and participate in the governance of the World Confederation.

### **Italy: Amendments to the Statute of the World Confederation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco**

2024 will be a special year for the World Confederation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco, as we will organize the Extraordinary World General Assembly where all National and Provincial Federations will have the opportunity to propose amendments to amend the statute. I would like to remind all National and Provincial Federations that they can send their changes to the Statutes by 31 March 2024 by filling in the Google form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hDjBXfniXE1mp0n2-vxDuBn8\\_vLNG1nTP7WB0U-yxow/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hDjBXfniXE1mp0n2-vxDuBn8_vLNG1nTP7WB0U-yxow/edit).

### **Italy – The Feast of Don Bosco at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome**

Celebrations held at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Rome which was built by Don Bosco. The Solemn mass was presided by the Cardinal of the Basilica, Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi where all the parish community and the Salesian Family participated including Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Past Pupils of Don Bosco, Salesian Cooperators, the Volunteers of Don Bosco – and many parish groups. The Cardinal reflected on the social commitment of Don Bosco which went beyond education, also the opportunity of work and building a future for a more just and fraternal society. Vocational formation is still the way to restore dignity to many young people who are disillusioned and disappointed by the world. Peace and justice were also among Don Bosco ideals which he committed himself to and which the Salesian Family continue to achieve in 135 countries around the world.

### **Russia – The Feast of Don Bosco celebrated in Moscow**

As in the last thirteen years, the Salesian Orphanage in Moscow celebrated the Feast of Don Bosco in the presence of many young people, Salesian Past Pupils and other guests. This year the celebrations were also joined by the Italian Deputy Ambassador to Russia, Dr. Pietro Sferra Carini, and the Consul General of Italy in Moscow, Giovanni Favilli, together with his wife. Those present attended Holy Mass and then attended the show "The Dream of Don Bosco" and the celebration and conviviality that followed.

### **Malta – The Salesian Family celebrates the feast of Don Bosco at national level**

The Friends of Don Bosco and the Salesian Youth Movement, together with the Salesian Family of Malta, celebrated the Feast of Don Bosco on Sunday, January 28 at Savio College in Dingli. Over 500 members of the Salesian Family gathered to celebrate this special day, in what was the first event in which the different Maltese Salesian places gathered to celebrate Don Bosco. The day began with a Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Fr Paul Formosa, SDB, Superior of the Salesian Vice-Province of Malta, and concelebrated by other Salesians; then various recreational activities followed, and some members of the Salesian Family were rewarded for their work by the "Friends of Don Bosco" of Malta.

### **South Sudan - Past Pupils of Tonj's Don Bosco Mission honour Don Bosco with a football tournament for peace**

Every year for the feast of St John Bosco, the Salesian Don Bosco Mission in Tonj organises several events and initiatives for the young people at the mission. This year, the past pupils of the mission organised a soccer tournament for peace to honour St John Bosco. The young people said they would like to pass on the values and virtues of the "Young People's Saint" to future generations. The purpose of the tournament is to promote peace among young people and help them channel their strength and energy into sport to form a healthy body and mind. This initiative is very important for the young people of Tonj as they witness the ongoing war in Sudan. Hundreds of young people pass through Tonj's Don Bosco Mission every year through Primary School, Secondary School, Don Bosco Radio, the Festive Oratory, and the Parish Youth Centre, so this initiative motivates Salesian past pupils to be grateful for what they have received and to pass on the legacy to the next generation.

### **Italy - Salesian Family Spirituality Days deepen the relevance of the Dream at the Age of Nine**

From the 18th to the 21st January, the programme of the Days of Spirituality of the Salesian Family 2024 was dedicated to the relevance of the Dream of Don Bosco at the age of Nine which this year marks the 200th anniversary. On the first day, the Rector Major opened the Spirituality Days with his traditional presentation of the Strenna to almost four hundred participants present at Valdocco (together with the 4,000 more participants connected online). The second day started with the round table and workshops by Fr Bruno Ferrero, Emilde Cuda (Argentina), Fr Rafael Bejarano (Colombia) and Blažka Nerkac (Slovenia). They presented wide-ranging considerations on the theme of the Dream of Don Bosco and then to answer targeted questions from the moderator. This experience was made more tangible through the guided visits to places of the origins of Don Bosco's work took place in the afternoon. This year past pupils and friends of Don Bosco were present from Italy, Spain, Hungary, Slovakia, Malta and North Belgium led by their respective presidents and delegates. On Sunday morning, the past pupils and friends of Don Bosco had the opportunity to share their dreams together on how they can strengthen animate the organisation in the coming year. The importance of the involvement of young people (GEX) was highlighted and the Extraordinary General Word Assembly which is to take place from the 2nd October to the 6th October.

### **East Asia-Oceania Region – Salesian Family Dreams Together on the Strenna for 2024**

Hundreds of East Asia-Oceania Region Salesian Family members from Pakistan to Samoa, from Mongolia to Australia came "together" in the already traditional virtual encounter of SF Spirituality Days. This Bicentennial anniversary of Don Bosco's Dream (1824-2024) produced some extraordinary results!

Brother Dominic Nguyen Duc Nam, SDB - World delegate for the Past Pupils and Friends of Don Bosco and Salesian Cooperators, shared his 'world experience' with more than 350 Salesian Family members, while being a core animator of the online virtual events in the EAO region:

*"We had a wonderful gathering of the Salesian family members in Valdocco for these 42nd SF Spirituality Days from 18 to 21 January 2024 with around 370 people coming from all over the world, from Africa, Asia, America, and Europe. Valdocco was fully packed with people who gave life to this historical Salesian place.*

As a member of the organising team, I am happy to meet the people who come here with great love and devotion to Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco. How nice to see the brothers and sisters of Don Bosco Family stay together to celebrate the 200 years of Don Bosco's Dream.

"After 4 days together, the Salesian Family members feel fearless in dreaming 'God's dream in Don Bosco' 200 years ago, making that dream come alive in their lives. All of them brought with them the spiritual gift 'Don Bosco's Letter', shared during the Sunday Eucharist by the Rector Major, 10th successor of Don Bosco."

### **Canada – Salesian Family Day: "The dream that makes us dream"**

On 21 January, at the end of the Salesian Family Spirituality Days, held in Turin, the members of the Salesian Family in Canada met online, to reflect on the Rector Major's Strenna 2024, defining dreams and concrete proposals to make it a reality. The meeting was attended by the Provincial Delegate of the Salesian Family and Salesian Cooperators in Canada, Sister Alphonsine Roy, Daughter of Mary Help of Christians (FMA), and her Salesian SDB counterpart, Fr John Puntino, together with SDB Past Pupils, FMA Past Pupils, Salesian Cooperators, FMA, members of the Association of Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco Volunteers from all over the country.

### **Cambodia - A great success for Salesian Family Day**

Members of various groups of the Salesian Family in Cambodia gathered on 13th January to participate in the annual celebration of Salesian Family Day, held at the "Don Bosco" Technical School in Phnom Penh. The Day was attended by representatives of the Salesians, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the

Association of Salesian Cooperators, the Past Pupils, ADMA, Volunteers with Don Bosco, the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (SIHM) and the Sisters of the Queenship of Mary Immaculate. After an initial prayer song, the speaker of the day, Fr Gerard Ravasco, explained the Rector Major's Strenna of 2024, talking to those present about the Dream of Don Bosco at the age of nine. Afterwards, divided into groups, the participants recounted their own childhood dreams, explaining how those dreams had influenced their later lives. The meeting concluded with Mass celebrated by Fr Eugene Xalxo, Salesian Family Delegate of Cambodia.

### **Brazil – The visit of Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, Rector Major, to the Province of Recife**

"The Salesian Family of North-east Brazil is celebrating! Don Bosco is among us!" In this spirit, the Salesians of Recife welcomed Cardinal Ángel Fernandez Artime, Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco on 30 January.

On the eve of St John Bosco, in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Recife, the Salesian Family met for the Vespers. The liturgy was presided over by Cardinal Fernández Artime, with the participation of the Salesians of the northeast and numerous representatives of the various groups of the Salesian Family, such as, among others, the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA), the Salesian Cooperators, the Past Pupils of Don Bosco and Canção Nova.

### **Democratic Republic of the Congo – Meeting of the students from Salesian schools in Kinshasa**

As part of the pastoral work in the schools, young students from Salesian schools in the city of Kinshasa met on 21 January to experience fellowship and communion based on the theme: "Dreaming and accompanying our dreams". The main objective was to help young people understand the importance of dreaming big and being supported in fulfilling their dreams. Another fundamental aspect of the initiative was to prepare them to experience the beauty of the Salesian Family, hoping that one day they could be part of the group of Past Pupils of Don Bosco. The day was marked by some fundamental moments, such as the Eucharistic Celebration with Fr Antoine Kabengele and catechesis on "How to accompany one's dreams", led by Fr Jerry Matsoumbou. The meeting ended with an exchange of good wishes for the year among the students, followed by a goodnight from Fr Justin Kumbu Bulendolo, Delegate for the Salesian Family in Africa Congo Congo (ACC) Vice-Province.

### **Portugal - Celebrating the centenary of Salesian work in Poiares da Régua**

The 100th anniversary of the presence of the Sons of Don Bosco in Poiares da Régua was celebrated with the Provincial Fr. Tarcizio Morais, was main celebrant at the Eucharist, concelebrated by many Salesians and with the participation of the Salesian Family. It was a day to thank God for the centenary and fruitful presence of the Salesian charism that saw the birth of many future Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and a large number of Salesian Past Pupils, Salesian Cooperators and Friends of the work of Don Bosco. During his homily, Fr Morais invited those present to live this charism with a vision of the future and hope.

### **India – Bosco Fest Unites Nagaland Through Music and Youth Empowerment**

In a harmonious blend of music and a shared commitment to youth development, Don Bosco Alumni units of Dimapur and Kolkata orchestrated the inaugural Bosco Fest at the Don Bosco Higher Secondary School in Dimapur, on January 7, 2024. The event featured a star-studded live musical concert by Bollywood playback singer Abhijeet Bhattacharya, Euphoria Band, and local talents Lenen Jamir and Aloba Naga. Beyond its musical extravaganza, the Bosco Fest served a noble cause as a fundraising event dedicated to youth development. With a global presence in more than 132 countries, The Salesian Congregation has consistently targeted youth as the focal point of its various initiatives. The mega event united the people

of Nagaland through the universal language of music while empowering the youth for a sustainable and innovative future.

One of the highlights of the evening was the appreciation of the 1986-1995 batch of Don Bosco Alumni, acknowledging their immense support and contribution to the event. The principal organizers, including Imti Imsong (President, Don Bosco Alumni Dimapur Unit), Mani Shankar Das (Secretary, Don Bosco Alumni Park Circus Kolkata Unit), Vikram Tanna (Don Bosco Alumni), Eshita Das, and Chetan Mazumdar, worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the event.

## CONCLUSION

This year will be marked by the organisation of the Extraordinary General World Assembly from the 2nd to the 6th October 2024 in Valdocco Turin. We hope that there will be a wide representation from many countries from all over the world who will be also present for this World Assembly. May I remind everyone on some of the important dates that we announced for the work related to the World Assembly:

**31st March 2024** – Final date to present Amendments to the Statute of the World Confederation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco

**30th June 2024** – Final Date to present documents from new and existing members of World Confederation

**31<sup>st</sup> July 2024** – Final Date to pay memberships fees for all years of membership of the members including for the year 2024.

In Don Bosco



Bryan Magro  
President of World Confederation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco