

Composition and Animation

Art. 43. A growing Family

The Salesian Family in these last decades has experienced a real springtime. Under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, other groups have been added to the original groups and have enriched communion and broadened the Salesian mission.

Everyone can see how much the Family has grown, and how the apostolic work has multiplied in various countries of the world, and the field of activities has extended to the benefit of many young people and adults. This invites us not only to thank God, but also makes us more aware of our greater responsibility; in fact the vocation of our Family, like every other vocation, is at the service of the mission, in a particular way for the salvation of youth, especially, the poorest, the abandoned and those in danger.⁴⁵

Art. 44. An open Family

The Salesian Family, which has the characteristics of a great Movement for the salvation of youth and expresses itself in a variety of forms for the apostolate in the missions, among the working classes, in the means of communication and in the care of vocations, is open to other groups which ask to be officially recognised by the Rector Major.

The essential criteria to be recognised in the Salesian Family are:

- 1. Participation in the "Salesian vocation",** in other words, sharing, to a significant degree, in the human and charismatic experience of Don Bosco. In fact, he remains for all the groups the original inspiration for a particular path of discipleship and apostolate; as such, he is the source of inspiration and point of convergence.
- 2. Participation in the Salesian mission to the young and/or the working classes.** This means that every group, among its specific

⁴⁵ See Pascual Chavez, "The Salesian Family Yesterday and Today: The Seed Has Become a Tree and the Tree a Wood," *Strenna of the Rector Major, Rome, 2009*.

ends, includes some typical element of the Salesian mission, even though expressed in different forms and with particular emphasis.

3. *Sharing the spirit, the educative method and the missionary style*, in other words, sharing the spiritual and pedagogical patrimony of Don Bosco.

4. *Evangelical life according to the Salesian spirit*, that is to say, a life inspired by the evangelical counsels as the way to holiness; this is expressed in practical terms either by the profession of the vows of religious consecration, or in the various kinds of promise or commitment which give each of the groups its particular features.

5. *An active fraternity*, which leads each group to link itself and work in harmonious synergy with the other groups of the Salesian Family.

Art. 45. Points of reference

In virtue of their apostolic communion of a charismatic nature, the groups which make up the Salesian Family recognise in the Rector Major, successor of Don Bosco, the Father and centre of unity of the Family itself.

Then, the Salesians of Don Bosco, particular heirs of his charismatic richness, have the responsibility of animating the whole Salesian Family. They, in fact, have particular “responsibilities: to preserve unity of spirit and to foster dialogue and fraternal collaboration for mutual enrichment and greater apostolic fruitfulness”.

Therefore they carry out a service which does not belong to the authority of government, but to the humble and joyful dedication of one who promotes a path of fidelity to the gift received, fostering its communication, sharing and bringing into reality.

Art. 46. Organisations of animation and times for meeting

To ensure a regular and effective animation of the Salesian Family, some essential coordinating bodies are available to us, and we encourage specific occasions for meeting together.

At world, regional, national, province and local level, unity and animation are supported and strengthened by councils or consultative committees of the Salesian Family.

The meeting of the consultative committee at various levels is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- To study and examine more deeply Don Bosco, his life, pedagogy and spirituality in order to know, understand and imbibe better the heart, his apostolic project and his criteria for pastoral activity;
- To strengthen the sense of belonging, fostering a direct and practical knowledge of the different groups of the Family and appreciation of their specific identity;
- To arrange meetings and formation experiences in common;
- To know the pastoral challenges facing society and the local Churches within which the Salesian Family takes its place, studying possibilities for forms of pastoral synergy, according to the specific nature of the individual groups and in communion with the Salesian mission;
- To seek to put into action, as often as possible, practical apostolic initiatives, shared by all the groups in the area.

The *World Consultative Committee* meets every year at the Salesian Generalate and proposes the essential lines for animation for the next pastoral year.

In the individual regions or provinces, every year the *Salesian Family Day* is celebrated with specific opportunities for formation and the sharing of experiences.

At the world level, every year *the Spirituality Days of the Salesian Family* are held. These represent a time of communion, reflection and sharing, during which it is possible to study specifically the contents of the *strenna of the Rector Major*. This document is proposed each year by Don Bosco's Successor as an invitation to come together in reflection and in the practical implementation of some particular aspect of Salesian spirituality and mission.