

PRESENTATION OF SPIRITUALITY DAYS 2023

Good afternoon, greetings from Valdocco, Don Bosco's home. Good afternoon to all of you here in person and to whoever is following on social networks.

A fraternal greeting in the name of the entire team of the Rector Major's Secretariat for the Salesian Family, and all those who are working with us in preparing and making these Spirituality Days happen. There are many such people, coordinated by Fr Alejandro Guevara.

I would like to thank them all for their enthusiasm and the commitment they have shown to this event (now reaching its 41st edition) that celebrates the profound communion that exists between all the Groups and all continents. This nurtures our common spirituality at the service of the mission.

Over these days, representatives of more than half of the officially recognised Groups will come together, but we feel very close to the thousands of people who will be celebrating the Days in different parts of the world. Over these days we will experience our own particular Pentecost, moved by the Spirit of God that fills the universe, while still savouring the good taste that the figure of St Francis de Sales left us last year.

It was the Rector Major himself who proposed we offer one of the central elements of St Francis de Sales' spirituality as a Christmas greeting for this year: the dignity of the lay vocation, called to holiness because the Lord calls everyone to live the Gospel to the full. The Second Vatican Council was able to place the Christian laity in their rightful place within the holy People of God. Since then, the Church's Magisterium has not ceased to emphasise it, even if actions have not always spoken as loudly as the words. The Rector Major invites us to be "yeast in today's human family", to give appropriate value to the lay dimension of the Salesian Family.

We cannot ignore Don Bosco's broad perspective on the mission of the Church, especially in his mission to the young. In the diocesan process that recognised his heroic virtues, one witness, explaining the police intervention that occurred at the Oratory in 1860, wrote: "In reality, Don Bosco had become the head of the Catholic lay movement in Turin."

Seeing Don Bosco involve lay people in his educational mission and contemplating the breadth of his charismatic vision are the things that must guide us over these days of reflection.

Here, then, are some points to consider: the current situation of the laity in the Church, the identity of the lay Christian with the Salesian spirit, the complementarity of consecrated and lay, shared mission and formation, the path of synodality as the one to follow together, fields/areas where lay people are unable to be involved, educational processes to be strengthened for young people so they may become committed lay Christians, lay spirituality...

We are not starting from zero. All Groups of the Salesian Family, both lay and religious, feel this concern. But it is worth attempting to go beyond, considering the Church's current situation. We will dedicate these days to the family that the Lord is giving us, a gift we gratefully accept.

The meeting will focus on the Rector Major's Strenna and the commentary he himself will give us when presenting the letter he has addressed to the entire Salesian Family.

Members of the Round Table will help us in our reflection. And we will enlighten each other in group work and by getting to know certain youth experiences. We will also seek to get to know each other better (we have asked five groups to present their life and mission). All this in a family atmosphere of prayer and sharing in which we can have a significant experience of what the Strenna says: "Be yeast". Our meeting will be a valuable exercise of "being yeast in today's human family".

The wish of the organising group is that we experience this event intensively. Thank you for your participation and for the enthusiasm we will instil in each other. Welcome,

Feel at home. May Mary Help of Christians bless you all from her Sanctuary. It is She who will be the Teacher who will help us to understand so many things that the Spirit has reawakened in Don Bosco and in all those who worked with him in giving an ecclesial character to Salesian Work. Enjoy the Days!