

June 22, 2015



MESSAGES - Describing his prepared remarks as “a little formal,” Pope Francis laid aside his written text and spoke off-the-cuff for approximately thirty minutes with male and female religious of the Salesian Family.

The Salesians, with their sister order the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, were founded by St John Bosco – known as Don Bosco – Turin’s most famous and well-known saint.

In the Pope’s written discourse to the Salesians and to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice, FMA) – which he promised to consign to the Rector to distribute to the Salesians – Pope Francis spoke about three specific aspects of the charism of Don Bosco: his trust in divine Providence; his vocation to be a priest of the young, especially the poorest among them; his loyal and active service to the Church, particularly to the Pope.

Don Bosco’s unwavering confidence in God, the essence of consecrated life

The founder of the Salesian Family, he said, lived out to the end his priestly mission “sustained by an unwavering confidence in God.” This confidence, the Pope said, is also “the essence of the consecrated life, so that the service of the Gospel and of our brothers should not remain a prisoner of our views, of the realities of this passing world, but might continue to rise above ourselves.”

The service to the young, beginning with the most vulnerable

Another important aspect of the life of Don Bosco, Pope Francis continued, is “the service to the young, beginning with the most vulnerable and abandoned: this concerns the “pedagogy of the faith” which is taken up in the Salesian formula “educating to evangelize, and evangelizing to

educate.” The Holy Father encouraged the Salesian religious to carry on “with generosity and confidence the multiple activities in favour of the new generations: oratories, youth centres, professional institutes, schools, and colleges. But without forgetting those whom Don Bosco called ‘the young people of the streets’.” These young people, he said, “have great need of hope, of being formed in the joy of the Christian life.”

A Saint always docile and faithful to the Church and to the Pope

Finally, the Pope recalled that Don Bosco was always “docile and faithful to the Church and to the Pope, by following their suggestions and pastoral indications”; and he invites his spiritual sons and daughters “to always go forward anew to find the children and young people where they live: in the peripheries of the great cities, in areas of physical and moral danger, in social contexts where they lack so many material things, but above all lack love, understanding, tenderness, hope.”

Making “an oratory” of every place, aiming at ever greater apostolic horizons

Concluding his remarks, the Holy Father called on the Salesians “to proclaim to all the mercy of Jesus, making ‘an oratory’ of every place, especially the most inaccessible; bearing in the heart the ‘oratorian’ style of Don Bosco and aiming at ever greater apostolic horizons,” recalling the great many religious institutions living that today are living the charism of Don Bosco “to share the mission of taking the Gospel to the furthest reaches of the peripheries.”

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