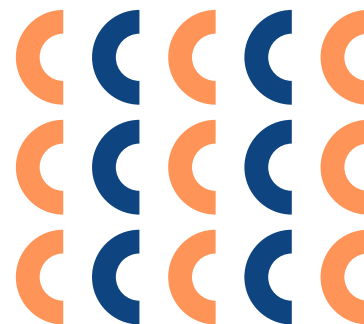




STRENNNA 2027



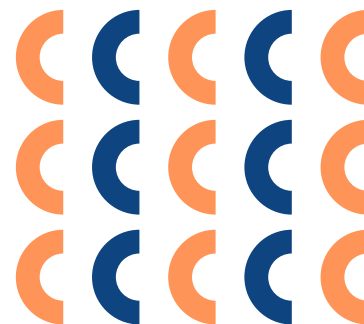
APOSTOLIC CHARITY. A READING FOR SALESIAN COOPERATORS

The hymn to charity by Saint Paul (1 Cor 12:31-13:13), the central element of the 2027 Strenna of the Rector Major for the entire Salesian Family, becomes today a privileged key for reading the vocation of the Salesian Cooperator in the light of the Apostolic Life Project and in our context of the 150th anniversary of the Association. Paul affirms that, above all charisms, even the most extraordinary, there is a “more excellent” way: charity. Without it, says the apostle, everything loses consistency; without it, even the most admirable gifts become empty of meaning. This affirmation resonates strongly in the Salesian identity, because the PAL teaches that the heart of Don Bosco’s spirit is precisely apostolic charity, that inner force that unites the passion for God and the passion for young people (Statute, art. 15 §1).

When Paul declares that “if I have not charity, I am nothing”, he illuminates the very essence of the vocation of the Salesian Cooperator. The PAL recalls that this vocation is a gift of the Spirit to live the Gospel in the world, in communion and co-responsibility, and that the Salesian mission is born from a concrete, effective, patient and benevolent love, like the one described by the apostle. The charity Paul sings is not sentimentalism nor philanthropy: it is a way of seeing, acting and relating that recognizes in each person the image of God and seeks their growth, dignity and salvation. It is exactly the charity that Don Bosco lived and taught, the charity expressed in the Preventive System, the charity the PAL asks of each SC as a style of life, action and relationship.

The Pauline hymn describes a charity that “believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things”. This charity sustains the Salesian mission in the most difficult environments, allows accompaniment of the most vulnerable young people, inspires patience in formative processes, nourishes communion in Centres and Provinces, and makes fidelity possible in the midst of crises. The PAL insists that the SSCC are “spiritual brothers and sisters” who live communion with the bonds of Don Bosco’s spirit (Statute, art. 21), and that associative belonging is a vital element to sustain the vocation (Statute, art. 28). This communion is not only structure: it is charity lived, charity organized, charity that becomes mission.

In the context of the 150th anniversary of the Association, this text acquires a special strength. Celebrating 150 years means recognizing that the history of the SSCC is a history of apostolic charity: men and women who, on all continents, have made pastoral love their way of life. It also means assuming that the future of the Association depends on the ability to live that same charity today, with creativity, boldness and spiritual depth. The SSCC World Congress has been an opportunity to renew this conviction: it is not enough to have structures, programs or initiatives; without charity, everything becomes noise. With charity, instead, everything flourishes: formation, mission, communion, identity, presence in the Church and in society.



The hymn concludes by affirming that “faith, hope and charity remain, but the greatest of these is charity”. This affirmation is also a compass for the associative journey. Faith sustains the vocation; hope opens horizons; but charity is what gives concrete form to Salesian life. It is charity that makes the SSCC a “cooperator of God” (Statute, art. 14 §3), that inspires youth and popular mission, that animates family life, that strengthens communion with the Salesian Family, that drives economic solidarity, that sustains ongoing formation, that allows accompaniment of fragile or isolated realities.

In the light of the PAL, of the Salesian charism and in this 150th anniversary, this text of Saint Paul becomes a call to return to the origin, to the source, to the core: apostolic charity. A charity that is patient, benevolent, humble, persevering; a charity that does not seek its own interest, that is not irritated, that does not take account of evil; a charity that rejoices in the truth and never ends. A charity that, lived in a Salesian key, becomes educational mission, close presence, accompaniment, discernment, communion and service.

The hymn to charity is, ultimately, the best possible commentary on the PAL and the best spiritual program for the 150th anniversary: without charity, we are nothing; with charity, we are truly Salesian Cooperators, heirs of Don Bosco’s heart and builders of hope for young people and for the world.



Borja Pérez Galnares SC
Coordinador Mundial