



ASSOCIATION OF SALESIAN COOPERATORS WORLD COUNCIL



INTERVIEW WITH **FATHER FILIBERTO GONZÁLEZ** NEW SDB WORLD DELEGATE FOR THE SALESIAN COOPERATORS

Q. Dear Fr Filiberto, you have recently been appointed the SDB World Delegate for the Association of Salesian Cooperators. I would like to ask you a few questions so that I can introduce you to the whole Association.

A. **Thank you, Carlo. I'm very happy to answer.**

Q. First of all, could you tell us a little about yourself?

A. **I am the son of José de Jesús and Anna Maria. I am the eldest of six brothers and seven sisters. I was born in Mexico. I had the opportunity to meet Don Bosco and the Salesians when I was six years old at the oratory in Tlaquepaque, and from that moment on, his penetrating gaze and serene smile stole my heart. I entered the aspirancy in 1966, at the age of 12. I made my first profession in 1974 and was ordained a priest in 1982. I served as an assistant at the novitiate, was in charge of studies and discipline at a school, studied communication sciences at the UPS (Pontifical Salesian University), worked as a formator at the postnovitiate, served as Delegate for Youth Ministry, Provincial Councillor, director and novice master, Postnovitiate Director, Provincial for the first time, General Councillor for Social Communication – first under Fr Pascual Chávez and later under Fr Ángel Fernández – Provincial once more, and now Fr Fabio Attard has appointed me as Delegate to accompany the SSCC and Past Pupils.**

Q. Thank you very much, and now allow me to ask you a personal question: how did you feel when the Rector Major informed you of this new appointment?

A. **I had just finished my term as Provincial in Guadalajara, Mexico, and was planning to go to the community and works in Tijuana, on the border with the United States, where the Congregation has oratories, parishes, schools and social works for the poorest, and where there is a shortage of personnel. Then, one day, the Lord surprised me with a call from the Rector Major asking me to take on this wonderful service. You cannot say no to the Rector Major, the successor of Don Bosco. So, I thanked him for his trust and accepted, placing my trust in God and in Mary Help of Christians, who have always accompanied me throughout my life.**

Q. With this appointment, you are now a member of the World Council of the Association of Salesian Cooperators. What are your expectations?

A. **Firstly, to place myself at the service of everyone in the task entrusted to me, living out—together with them—my baptism, religious profession, and priesthood in accordance with Salesian spirituality and Don Bosco's mission to young people and ordinary people; to maintain and reinvigorate our identity and unity with the Rector Major, Father of the Salesian Family, and with all the groups within our great Family; and to play a meaningful role in advancing the Kingdom of God alongside the universal and local Church, bearing witness to, and presenting, both personally and as a community, the joy and relevance of the Gospel to young people.**

Q. We have celebrated the 150th anniversary of our Association; in your view, what are the most urgent steps to be taken together with the World Council over the coming years?

A. **I join not only in the gratitude and joy of the celebration, but above all in the commitment that gives meaning and direction to the future; specifically: reaching out to young people, trusting in them, and motivating them to become protagonists and agents of change in their own**



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environments; maintaining the family spirit and local, regional, and world communion, as envisioned by Don Bosco; deepening and updating our Salesian identity at this moment in history; sharing responsibility in a synodal spirit; living our lives with a commitment to integral and ongoing formation; directing the Association's Salesian mission towards genuine social and political impact, acting as leaven in the dough; promoting autonomy within unity, and sustainability through solidarity.

Q. In the past, you have been involved in 'Social Communication': how important do you consider this issue to be for the Salesian Family and, in particular, for our Association?

A. Certainly, it has become an increasingly important reality for the Church, the Salesian Family and the Association with each passing year. We, as an Association, stand with the Church, bearing in mind Pope Leo XIV's encyclical **Magnifica Humanitas** and one of the guiding principles set out by the Rector Major, Fr Fabio Attard, for this six-year term. Pope Leo XIV invites us to 'disarm' AI of power-driven logic, to avoid digital inequalities, to protect human thought, and to communicate with transparency and truth. In turn, the Rector Major reminds us that 'Don Bosco was a visionary who did not fear innovation, whether in the ecclesial, educational, cultural or social spheres'. Therefore, as an Association, artificial intelligence becomes both a tool and a mission, helping us to reach young people wherever they are. While embracing AI, we must acknowledge that it represents only one aspect of a broader reality, which includes social media, virtual communities, digital storytelling and much more. Taken together, these elements constitute a new pastoral frontier that challenges us to be present and proactive. Our mission is not simply to use technology, but to evangelise the digital world, bringing the Gospel into spaces where it might otherwise be absent. Think of yourselves, of your children – all of whom are now immersed in a reality that surrounds us and demands a critical and educational approach capable of discerning and choosing what is good and humanising. We must live within this reality, seizing every opportunity to become better human beings and setting aside everything that robs us of our dignity as children of God.

D. Thank you so very much; now I invite you to freely share a few words of greeting for all Salesian Cooperators around the world.

A. Thank you very much for the opportunity to address all the Salesian Cooperators around the world, allowing them to come to know me a little better. You are a wonderful community willed by God, and I am very happy to live out my missionary vocation as a Salesian priest alongside your lay missionary vocation as Salesian Cooperators. Let us look to and walk towards the future together, grateful to those who have gone before us, and full of trust in the Risen One who accompanies us and reveals himself as alive in the communion we share.