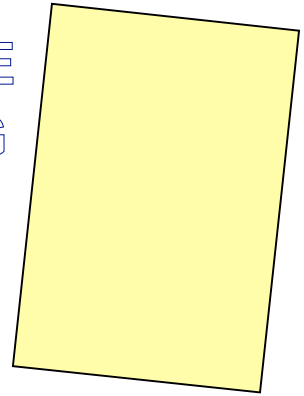


## A VAST MOVEMENT FOR THE YOUNG THE FRUITS OF THE GOOD SEED

### Saints and Founders of the SF



***In this way was born a true school of holiness which continues in our own time. From Don Bosco the founder, subsequent founders of new groups drew inspiration and guidance, spirituality and pastoral method (CIC 1).***

**A** good tree does not give bad fruit (Lk 6,43). The passage in Luke is significant for the history of the development of the Salesian charism. Don Bosco gave his life a gospel meaning putting it at the service of the young to help them to be holy and to be upright citizens. He stands for the good seed which became a good tree whose fruit is excellent. He was the pattern on which saints were modelled. His first successor Blessed **Michael Rua**, was seen as a new Don Bosco; he made fidelity to the Founder his own plan of life and action, and under him the Salesians grew from 773 to 4000, the houses (schools, institutes and missions) from 57 to 345, the Provinces from 6 to 34, in 33 countries. Paul VI beatified him in 1972, saying: “*He made the spring a stream, a river*”. Blessed **Philip Rinaldi**, his third successor, gave a new impetus to the interior life of the Salesians, putting absolute trust in God and in Mary Help of Christians; he sent 1800 Salesians to the missions, founded the VDB – *Volunteers of Don Bosco* Movement, who lived consecrated lives without leaving their families or their places of work. Saint **Mary Mazzarello**, was the co-foundress of the FMA the Salesian Sisters, intelligent, strong-willed, endowed with great emotional balance. After a period of illness she devoted her life to the education of the girls in Mornese, through a sewing and dress-making workshop, a festive oratory and a home for little girls without parents. A meeting with Don Bosco (1864) was decisive as he suggested to her a way of broadening her desire for the apostolate. Together therefore on 5 August 1872 they founded a new religious family for the benefit of the young. From this splendid fruit grew a great new apostolic enterprise which today numbers about 15 thousand Sisters with such splendid examples of holiness as the three Blesseds **Maddalena Morano**, **Maria Romero**, **Eusebia Palomino** and many other women of God ...

☪ **Among the Salesians-Cooperators** Blessed **Alexandrina da Costa** whose life was marked by the serious accident she had in escaping from a violent attack which left her immobile for over 30 years, sustained spiritually, but also physically by the Holy Eucharist (for 13 years her only food was the consecrated host). She made her promise as a Cooperator and offered her sufferings for the Salesian mission to the young. Then there is the Servant of God **Attilio Giordani** who decided to leave for Brazil with his wife, and with his children devoted his life to voluntary service; and again Cardinal **Giuseppe Guarino**, who welcomed the first Salesians to Sicily, and gave them an inheritance which enabled them to open the houses at Ali for the FMA and at Messina for the SDB, and with a Salesian spirit in 1889 founded the “*Apostles of the Holy Family*.” Blessed **Luigi Variara**, a

Salesian dedicated to the welfare of the least fortunate, especially the lepers in the leper colony at Agua de Dios, where he transformed the lives of the eight hundred sick people and the other inhabitants helping them in a way that was both full of cheerfulness and deeply spiritual; then he gathered together from among the lepers a group of young women to share his apostolic passion and founded in 1905 the "*Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary*." Also highly significant was the life of Bishop **Giuseppe Cognata**, Bishop of Bova Marina, founder of the "*Oblates of the Sacred Heart*". The indescribable suffering brought about by the calumnies which led to him having to put aside his role as Bishop for 22 years, did not weaken his faith. He was rehabilitated and now work is in progress to move forward the cause of his beatification.

☩ **The few lines of an article are not enough** to speak about Salesian holiness; the list is a long one: Blessed **Artemides Zatti**, **Zephyrinus Namuncurà**, **Laura Vicuña**, **Simon Srugi**, **Maria Troncatti**, Fr **Giuseppe Quadrio** Bishop **Stefano Ferrando**, Fr **Carlo dalla Torre**, Saint **Luigi Versiglia**, Saint **Callisto Caravario**, Fr **Vincenzo Cimatti**, the martyrs in Spain and in Poland. The tiny seed has indeed become a large tree "weighed down" with good fruit! However, I should like to finish with one of the "*Volunteers with Don Bosco*", **Nino Baglieri**, who died two years ago: a life considered worthy of a future process of beatification. A builder, at 17 years of age falling from a scaffolding he was totally paralysed. At first he lived in a mood of rebellion, but then the Spirit entered into his heart. He began to make of his situation an intense offering and prayer becoming for many people a spiritual focal point. He had learned to write using his mouth and this enabled him to leave behind some precious testimonies: "*No one is excluded from holiness, it depends on us, on how we say our "Yes" to the Lord. And if someone hears in his heart the voice of the Lord calling him to follow Him in consecrated life, don't be afraid to say your own complete "Yes". A yes to life!*" Today the Salesian Family has eight Saints, one hundred and ten Blesseds, eight Venerables, twenty-eight Servants of God ... Holiness is waiting for us. ☩