



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO TURIN

MEETING WITH THE SALESIANS AND THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Basilica of Maria Ausiliatrice
Sunday, 21 June 2015

[Multimedia]

Prepared address by the Holy Father:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In this, my pilgrimage dedicated to the veneration of Jesus Crucified in the sign of the Holy Shroud, I chose to come to this place which represents the heart of the life and work of St John Bosco, to celebrate with you the second centenary of his birth. With you I thank the Lord for giving to the Church this Saint who, together with so many other Saints from this region, are an honour and a blessing for the Church and the society of Turin and Piedmont, of Italy and the entire world, in particular because of the care he had for all the poor and marginalized young people. One cannot speak of Don Bosco today without seeing him surrounded by many people: the Salesian Family founded by him, the educators inspired by him, and naturally so many young people, young men and women, from all parts of the world who praise Don Bosco as “father and teacher”. So much can be said about Don Bosco! But today I would like to remark upon only three distinguishing features: trust in divine Providence; vocation to be a priest to the young people, especially the poorest; loyal and diligent service to the Church, notably to the person of Peter’s Successor.

Don Bosco fulfilled his priestly mission until his last breath, sustained by an *unshakable trust in God* and in His love, and through this he did great things. This trusting relationship with the Lord is

also the substance of consecrated life, so that the service to the Gospel and to our brothers is not a remaining prisoner to our line of sight, to the fleeting realities of this world, but a constant surpassing of ourselves, anchoring ourselves to eternal realities and immersing ourselves in the Lord, our strength and our hope. And this will also be our *fruitfulness*. Today let us ask ourselves about this fruitfulness and — allow me to say — about the very “good” Salesian fruitfulness. Are we up to the task?

The other important aspect of the life of Don Bosco is *service to young people*. He achieved it with determination and steadfastness, amid obstacles and struggles, with the sensitivity of a generous heart. “He took no step, he said no word, he took up no task that was not directed to the saving of the young.... Truly the only concern of his heart was for souls” (*Salesian Constitution*, n. 21). Don Bosco’s charism leads us to be educators of the young by carrying out that teaching of faith which is summarized thus: “evangelize by educating and educate by evangelizing” (*General Directory for the Catechesis*, 147). Evangelize young people, teach young people full time, starting from the most frail and abandoned, by offering a teaching style built on reason, religion and loving kindness, universally appreciated as a “preventative system”. That powerful meekness of Don Bosco, who surely learned from his mother Margherita. Powerful meekness and tenderness! I encourage you to continue with generosity and trust the multitude of activities for the younger generations: oratories, youth centres, professional institutes, schools and colleges. But without forgetting those which Don Bosco called the “street children”: they have such need of hope, of being formed in the joy of Christian life.

Don Bosco was always *docile and faithful to the Church and to the Pope*, following pastoral recommendations and directions. Today the Church turns to you, spiritual sons and daughters of this great Saint, and in a concrete way he sends you to go out, to set out ever anew to find the youth and young people there where they live: on the outskirts of metropolitan cities in the areas of physical and moral danger, in social contexts which are lacking in so many material things, but above all are lacking in love, understanding, tenderness, hope. Go to them with the overflowing paternity of Don Bosco. The oratory of Don Bosco was born out of the encounter with children on the street and for a certain time roved among the neighbourhoods of Turin. May you proclaim to all the mercy of Jesus, making an “oratory” in every place, especially in the most impervious; carrying in your heart the oratorian style of Don Bosco and aiming at ever broader apostolic horizons. From the firm roots that he planted 200 years ago in the soil of the Church and of society, many branches have emerged: 30 religious institutions live its charism for sharing the mission of bringing the Gospel to the limits of peripheries. The Lord then blessed this service, creating among you, throughout these two centuries a wide range of people whom the Church has proclaimed saints and blessed. I encourage you to continue on this path, imitating the faith of those who came before you.

In this Basilica, so dear to you and to all the People of God, let us invoke Mary Auxiliatrix that she may bless every member of the Salesian Family; may she bless the parents and educators who

spend their lives raising young people; may she bless every young person who is found in the works of Don Bosco, especially those dedicated to the poorest, in order that, thanks to well received and educated youth, the joy of a new humanity may be given to the Church and to the world.