



## THE JOY OF BELONGING TO THE WORLD CONFEDERATION *MORNESE* Past Pupils of the FMA

Joy comes from a feeling of belonging to something and someone. Common humanity, being in the image of God, knowing that we are saved in Jesus in this time close to Easter, is a reason for boundless joy. The higher the sense of belonging, the greater the joy that comes with it. For this reason, one of your primary concerns must be to maintain a heightened sense of belonging so that it is not reduced to a simple "togetherness" of members who meet only for occasional reasons—identity without belonging leads to individualistic complacency. Belonging without identity can become authentic. In one case, like the other, you feel that this does not fill the heart with joy and does not lead to change.

The fact that we live in an ephemeral culture, in a social reality with liquid, easy relationships, makes it even more urgent to feel a sense of belonging to the Confederation: to know its vision, mission, and reason for its existence. We can say that the bond is born based on this certainty. Otherwise, the Confederation will not escape the buy-and-throw mentality. Belonging requires fidelity, which is both memory and prophecy.

For this reason, the Confederal Council wanted to emphasize the sense of belonging to the Association at all levels as the only objective for these six years. This commitment touches everyone as a priority choice.

Feeling part of the same Association makes the past pupils sisters and brothers spiritual. "United with one heart and one soul," and they live in communion with the bond of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello.

At this point, it would be interesting to ask ourselves a few questions: Do I know the Association? Do I feel part of it? How do I live my membership? This is my family of reference for fully living my Salesian identity. Depending on how I live my belonging, my identity will be seen and, consequently, my commitment to assuming the Salesian charism as a layperson. Often, one risks believing that fidelity to the charism is only personal and forgets the other aspect, fidelity to others, the group, and the Union. God calls me to remain with him forever, my brothers and sisters, and the young. He calls me to feel that I belong to my Association. Belonging becomes the most explicit expression of identity. We all know that we need mediations for our human condition to externalize, evaluate, and consolidate our identity. This modality that sustains us is none other than belonging. Therefore, identity and belonging are different dimensions of a single reality that are mutually binding. So much so that when there are conflicts in identity, they affect the sense of belonging. We will now consider the diverse ways of living belonging to the CMM-EX-FMA.

### LEGAL BELONGING: "STAY"

In this belonging, there is a very linear relationship. The past pupil is aware of their rights and duties as part of this Association but does not go further. The person is limited to doing externally what he is asked to do. Attitudes that we can find in this lifestyle:

- The person who "adheres faithfully and silently" never breaks down; he has a shallow level of discontent; he does not ask the group for anything. She does not think that she is prophetic or living the charism... The saddest thing is that she feels she is the recipient and not the protagonist.
  - The person who commits to being part of the Association as a "leisure group" life without leaving herself...
  - The person is in constant "criticism and destructive tension" towards everyone.
  - The person who lives in a "nostalgic" way because she is always looking for the past, never the present, much less the future, or
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➤ The person who adheres in a "non-existent" way- hardly cares about the group/Union...

### VITAL BELONGING: "TO BE"

This way of living belonging underlines the fundamental aspect of an inner attitude. The whole being, mind, heart, and will are included. The person is aware of being an integral part of the group, of the Confederation to which he feels he belongs, in the same way, that he thinks it belongs to him. He recognizes the value and meaning that the Association he is a part of has for him.

Some characteristics of a member who lives this type of membership:

- ❖ He effectively engages personally with the Association and the Union
- ❖ He assumes the reality of the Association and feels responsible for the progress made
- ❖ He lives the Association's mission and challenges as his own
- ❖ Tries to function as a builder of fraternity, overcoming the difficulties inherent in ordinary life.

### COMMUNION BELONGING: CO-RESPONSIBLE

Finally, belonging sets in motion the person's highest and most operative dynamism, translating into an active commitment toward the Association, the community, and the ecclesial and social environment in which he finds himself. We can say in summary that it is Co-responsibility in the mission.

Some characteristics of a member who lives this type of membership:

- ✓ Everyone must participate in the planning and verification meetings of the various activities in the managers' choices.
- ✓ He supports the economic autonomy of the Association so that he can conduct his mission.
- ✓ He sets out on a journey of renewal and communion to make some fundamental choices regarding missionary commitment in the new cultural contexts marked, among other things, by an ever more rapid change of mentality and customs and by the growing human mobility with presence, on the same territory, of people belonging to different religions, cultures, and social strata from ours.
- ✓ Everyone wants to grow up, become adults, and be in places where decisions and policies favor the person's dignity and fundamental rights, especially those of young people.

We are all on the way, committed to building this great Association. I hope we all have the stamp of charismatic quality that allows us to be recognized as Salesians. May there be a business card in your gaze: I am a Past Pupil!

I take this opportunity to wish you a holy Easter in the name of Mother Clare and all the FMA! The risen Jesus brings us the true joy of being missionary disciples in our families and the contexts we meet!

Sr Leslie Sándigo  
Councilor for the Salesian Family

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