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Nucleus 29

We Walk Together

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To continue our journey, I would like us to pause together to reflect on the invitation to holiness that Pope Francis and the Rector Major extend to us. A holiness to the measure of each person and therefore, to the measure of the FMA Past Pupils. Let us gather the points we have in our hands to understand better our identity and enjoy the gift received. We will do it slowly, seeking to re-read and assimilate every part of the content of Article 4 of the Statutes of the Association.

The Spirituality of the FMA Past Pupils

To speak of the spirituality of the FMA Past Pupils is to speak of the daughter and son of God as Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello dreamed them to be, that is, good Christians and honest citizens who after leaving the houses of the FMA, live in the world with the characteristics proper to the Salesian charism in the style of Mornese.

The term 'spirituality' is presented by St. Paul as the *way of being* of a new person who was created by God, certainly wounded by sin, but redeemed in Christ and moved by the Spirit. Thus, we can say that Christian spirituality is the one that favors human life in all its dimensions, accompanied and guided by the Spirit so as to act in everything as Jesus did. "*Whoever claims to abide in Him ought to live [just] as He lived*" (1 John 2: 6).

In his exhortation 'Gaudete ed exultate', Pope Francis tell us, "Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Choose God, choose God over and over again. Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life" (cf. *Gal 5:22-23*) (GE 15).

The Charter of Identity of the Salesian Family confirms that '*Spirituality*' means that our life is being guided by the Spirit, He who graces with His charisms the various Groups belonging to the one Family" (Charter of Identity of the Salesian Family, 22). In other words, spirituality is an interior dynamism that moves people to the gift of self and at the service of others. It gives salvific efficacy to all that we are and do. As Mother Mazzarello says, "It is the hand of God at work in you" (Letter 66.2). It is the Spirit who continues to work with us and for us today, in spite of our fragility. "Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing" (John 15: 5).

To understand the spirituality of the FMA Past Pupils it would be enough therefore, to come close to the Christian life experiences lived by them in many parts of the world. It is in concrete life that we find the Spirit working in the life of women and men involved in families, schools, work places, in the political and social fields...because they live with conviction and joy the values received in a Salesian house. "They are the next-door saints" as Pope Francis says.

There are many testimonies and good practices to know, observe, study, and also to contemplate because the FMA Past Pupils are the ‘masterpieces’ of the Spirit who, like icons, show the face of Christ, the splendor of the Father.

There does not exist a specific study on the *spirituality* of the FMA Past Pupil. It could be made and it would be interesting. However, there already exists a brief summary, the one I want to propose for your reflection. It is article 4 of the Statutes of the Association that we will continue to study. With this introduction, we begin to make space for the Spirit, to listen to Him and understand what He suggests to us.

How do you feel the Spirit speaking to you? How would you like to respond?

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