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**Let's walk together**

## **THE STRENGTH OF TESTIMONY**

Under the care of Gabriela Patiño

Dear friends, I am setting out on the formative journey that you are undertaking together and in which Sr. Maritza has accompanied you for so many years. A sincere thanks to you for your words, your closeness, your help. Now I want to continue this path of learning with all of you from a life full of wisdom and beauty, the one that the men and women of our Salesian Family and of the Church offer us.

In this twelfth formative nucleus we listen to Mother Yvonne in her intervention at the V Confederal Assembly in Mornese, "*Witnesses of Joy in the Outskirts of the World*". We will focus on the first part of her conference: The Power of Witness, and we will treasure her suggestions that will help us on the path to holiness.

### **1. THE STRENGTH OF TESTIMONY**

The words of Paul VI resound in our hearts: "Today's man no longer listens to teachers, and if he listens to them, it is because they are first and foremost witnesses". Words that are equally valid for our time. A life lived with evangelical coherence is the first message that reaches people's hearts.

This is why it is important to know who we are, for whom and what we live for, what dream we cultivate. The return to evangelical and charismatic sources is an indispensable condition.

What is Jesus telling us today? In a world where the big news no longer makes the headlines because one leading story chases the other at the speed of light and overlap over each other, we are called to testify that the encounter with Him is the solid rock of our life; to demonstrate with facts that the new humanity inaugurated by Jesus is possible. Provided that we nourish our spirit every day at the source of love, that we are faithful to Jesus not only with the effort of our will, but with the availability to allow ourselves to be encountered by Him, to welcome the grace of His presence: a gift that we must ask of the Holy Spirit with humility every day.

### ***Trust in God and in His love***

Don Bosco transmitted to us three great loves - the Eucharist, Mary Help of Christians and the Pope - rooted in an unshakable trust in God, which is why he did great things. Pope Francis reminded us of this during his meeting with representatives of the Salesian Family in the basilica of Turin on 21 June last 2016. The relationship of trust with the Lord - he added - must also be the substance of the Salesian Family which finds strength, hope and fruitfulness in the Lord.

On trust in God, and in Jesus who revealed his face to us, Pope Francis often returns in his speeches and in his encounters with people, as well as in his documents. In the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, which appeared from the beginning as the program of his pontificate, he underlines the importance of Jesus returning to amaze us, that He opens our cold hearts and shakes our lukewarm and superficial existence, that He touches us and spurs us forward to communicate this new life. We need to recover a contemplative spirit which can help us to realize ever anew that we have been entrusted with a treasure which makes us more human and helps us to lead a new life. (cf. n. 264).

New life is rooted in the Eucharist, where the most profound and intimate encounter with Jesus takes place. This encounter transforms our thoughts, our words, our choices, our gestures, which in turn

become the source of life, bread along the way. In happy moments and in those of greatest effort when we think we cannot make it, we know that we are not alone: Jesus walks with us, he gives us a new outlook, a new freedom and a new hope.

In many parts of the world, especially the most tormented and persecuted for the sake of faith, there are those who are willing to give their lives to remain faithful to Jesus. In fact, many lives have been given. I am thinking, for example, of the Coptic Christians of Egypt who, before being killed, shouted the name of Jesus.

I was also struck by the recent testimony of an immigrant to Turin from the Middle East. He is not afraid of being threatened for his faith. He knows that Jesus will not abandon him, even when the supreme witness of life is necessary, because Jesus will help him to live his own freedom and this will allow him to be faithful to the choice to love to the end.

### ***Ready to Give Up the Gift of Life***

Giving up one's life today is no longer a distant hypothesis, but it can challenge us closely. Only an existence rooted in Jesus, as Shahbaz Bhatti<sup>1</sup> and many other Christians of our time testified, can give strength in moments when everything is asked of us. Most of us are called / to give up our life day by day, in the daily life of our commitments lived with love and for love.

In GC XXIII the laity sent us a significant message, starting with the President, Paola Staiano, who, in the opening address, underlined the intent of the Association: "To be together, as the Salesian Family, and with you in particular, a significant presence in the territory in which we operate, committing ourselves to live our specific mission, bearing witness in every encounter, relationship, action, to the joy of having encountered the Risen Christ, the authentic meaning of our life".

Allowing ourselves to be transformed by the encounter with Jesus is the first choice of pastoral conversion highlighted in our General Chapter (cf Acts GC XXIII,55) and I know that you in the provincial and local centers have fully shared it. Witnessing to Jesus has always been the most convincing announcement of the merciful face of the Father. By revealing the Father to us, He has revealed to us who we are. In a time of loss of values, it is very significant to propose a vision that allows the human to recover. We ask ourselves: "Do we still know how to read the human?", "Can we look to the person and find his/her truth, or is this person more like a ghost walking in our streets?". These are demanding questions that concern us closely and affect the anthropological question: who am I, what do I live for, what can I hope for?

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<sup>1</sup> Christian faith minister in the Pakistani government, killed for the faith in 2011.

### ***With a Specific Vision***

In this context, it is urgent not only to re-propose the Christian vision of the human person, but to ensure that it dialogues with the men and women of today. The strength of the content is not enough; it is necessary to accept the challenge of an understandable language, as the Synod on the New Evangelization showed us, and as Paul VI already suggested: "What is the use - in fact - of saying beautiful things if then the men of today do not understand us?".

It is therefore important to reflect that which emphasizes the taste for the human where knowledge and experience, listening and dialogue, interiority and transcendence, closeness and solidarity are intertwined. Understandable language does not consist only of simple words adhering to the person's experience, but of coherent gestures that express the passion for God and the passion for humanity. In Jesus we find the highest testimony of a transcendent and supportive humanism, therefore the vision that goes back to the Incarnation remains an unsurpassable paradigm. The perspective of the Incarnation is the fundamental criterion of our daily life, of our spirituality and of the mission to

which we are sent together. Rooted in him is the Salesian spirituality of joy and the choice of a Samaritan life that pushes us to go out to the outskirts of the world.

Confederal Delegate

WORKSHEET FOR THE CONFEDERAL, FEDERATION, UNIONE COUNCILS AND FOR ALL PUPILS OF THE WORLD.

Please send your personal or group response by e-mail to [delegatamondialeexallieve@gmail.com](mailto:delegatamondialeexallieve@gmail.com) or by regular mail to the address:  
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This content offered to us by Mother Yvonne and proposed for the reflection of all in this edition of Nucleus, should be read with serenity and listened to carefully.

Look for a testimony, personal or community, that has affected a single past pupil, the Unione or the Federation, and tell it to share it with all.

Pray Psalm 103 to bless the Lord, His name and His benefits. Contemplate in Him the greatest witness of mercy.

Praise the LORD, my soul;  
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.  
Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—  
He forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,  
He redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,  
He satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.  
The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.  
He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:  
The LORD is compassionate and gracious; slow to anger, abounding in love.  
He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;  
He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is His love for those who fear Him;  
as far as the east is from the west,  
so far has He removed our transgressions from us.  
As a father has compassion on his children,  
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him;  
for He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust.  
The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field;  
the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.

But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear Him,  
and his righteousness with their children's children—  
with those who keep His covenant and remember to obey His precepts.  
The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.

Praise the LORD, you His angels, you mighty ones  
who do His bidding, who obey His word.  
Praise the LORD, all His heavenly hosts, you His servants who do His will.  
Praise the LORD, all His works everywhere in His dominion.

Praise the LORD, my soul.