Greetings of Mother Chiara Cazzuola to the Salesian Family – Turin 13- 16 January 2022

Dearest FMA Sisters, Salesian confreres, and friends of the SF,

I greet you with affection and joy. I am happy to join you in these very important Spirituality days, even if only with a brief message.

With the General Council, we have entrusted Sr. Leslie Sàndigo, the new Councilor for the SF Sector, to represent us in Turin during the Salesian Spirituality Days. Right now we are making all the preparations for the coming plenary session with the newly elected General Councilors. It will be an intense period that will involve us in planning the six-year period, in discernment for the appointment of new Provincials, and in many other challenges, which we will face day by day regarding the present and the future of the Institute. For all this, we entrust ourselves to your prayers.

I pray that together, you and I may fully live the Strenna the Rector Major has given us in this year of grace, the fourth centenary of the death of St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of our beautiful and large family.

Fr. Ángel invites us to enter deeply into the roots of the Salesian charism, to take on more consciously the spirituality of Saint Francis de Sales, and appreciate it as the foundation of Don Bosco's educational style in the evangelization of young people. Mother Mazzarello is also along the same lines when she says, "Freely do all that charity requires" (*L* 35,3) and puts into effect the same principle of the freedom of love, which gives itself, is renewed, and is always creative.

This year as FMA, we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Institute. On our journey, the certainty that Mary walks with us continues to animate us. She supports and accompanies us in the various phases of history to be a sign of foreseeing love in the world and in the Church today. Accepting the challenges of contemporaneity, with her we say again our 'yes' and from her we learn to do whatever Jesus tells us (cf. Jn 2: 5), to be with her assistance 'helpers' of life, guardians of joy and of hope, especially in the educational mission that keeps us attuned to the young men and women of the five Continents.

By involving all the Educating Communities and the Salesian Family, we wish to celebrate the fidelity of God who, through Don Bosco and the direct intervention of Mary Help of Christians (cf. C 1), raised up the Institute and accompanies it in time and space with vigilant love. As a theme for this celebration, we have chosen Don Bosco's expression, *‘Mary walks in this house’* (cf. *Cronistoria* V, 51-52). These are the words he said in his last encounter with the FMA in Nizza Monferrato in 1885 and they seem to us to be in close harmony with the Chapter theme.

We feel that the appeal to recognize the presence of Mary on our journey is not only for us, but together as the Salesian Family. We are all called to live the generative force of the charism in this unprecedented historical hour, as in Valdocco and in Mornese. We are sustained by the unshakable certainty that the Holy Spirit as well infuses new vitality and missionary creativity in our communities today.

We have recently concluded GC XXIV in which we tried to focus on the essentiality of three choices: formation, missionary synodality, integral ecology. In the second choice, we assume missionary synodality as a lifestyle that generates new ways of participation and also of animation and government. We consider that in the synodal journey of the Church we are called as the people of God, to live in synergy the diversity of vocations and charisms. In the synodal journey as Salesian Family, we share spirituality and mission in respect and appreciation for the characteristics of each group; each one is called to live the richness of Salesian holiness by applying it with original and specific nuances.

In this light, it is beautiful to recall the unusual and revolutionary proposal for his time of Francis de Sales who affirms that we can all meet God by living daily life to the full, in the harmonious synthesis between action and contemplation. This is possible if we value everything that belongs to human nature created by God and respond to His love as beloved children who welcome His will and try to carry it out it in the fabric of ordinary life.

For us sons and daughters of Don Bosco, holiness has the face of educational passion in which our Oratorian heart vibrates with the *da mihi animas cetera tolle*.

My wish is that all of us may live with joy and enthusiasm the apostolic and missionary dynamism of which St. Francis de Sales and our saints give us a shining example. With their help and guidance, we can continue to be today as Salesian Family a gift of hope and love especially for young men and women, proclaiming to all the joy of the Gospel in a world thirsty for beauty, fraternity, and hope.