



Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco

To the Provincials and Superiors of
Preprovinces
Their Offices

Subject: World Day of Gratitude 2024



Dearest Sisters,

I reach you with a greeting and with family news. I joyfully communicate that

the World Day of Gratitude 2024 will take place in Mozambique, on 26 April, and will be animated by the Mozambican Province “St. John Bosco”.

The Feast of Gratitude, an annual event that summons us to express gratitude to the Lord for every Sister, for young people, and for those who share with us the educational mission, is a significant moment of family life for us, sign of love and fidelity to the Institute.

From the beginning of the preparation for this year’s Feast, we want to recognize the priceless gift that our dearest Mother, Sister Chiara Cazzuola, is for every Daughter of Mary Help of Christians and for the Educating Communities of the world.

We can make our own the words that Mother Mazzarello addressed to Fr. Lemoyne, Director of the house in Mornese, as an expression of her filial and grateful heart:

*“Very Reverend and good Father,
On this special day each Sister would like, if possible, to manifest her feelings and express what is in her heart.*

We, as members of the Chapter, are closer to you than others, so we know better than anyone else the good that you do for our community, and what sacrifices and sufferings we cause you. Therefore, we would like to find some way to show our gratitude and filial affection. Oh, if only you could read our hearts! You would see that no words can express what they contain. When we say that we love you as our kind father, and that we would like to find some way to recompense you for all the

sacrifices you have to make for us, our expressions are sincere. They come from our hearts and are not mere compliments but only a small part of what our hearts would like to say."¹

First of all, I thank the Provincial, Sister Carolina Ilda Herminio, together with the Sisters of "Saint John Bosco" Province of Mozambique, for having welcomed the proposal with joy and for having given their willingness to prepare the feast.

In response to the Chapter Deliberation, in the context of Integral Ecology, the celebration of the World Feast of Gratitude is intended to be a hymn of praise. With the psalmist, we too proclaim: "O Lord, our God, you have given man power over the work of your hands" (cf. Psalm 8). We are invited to open our eyes and contemplate in the book of nature, the majesty of the Lord our God. What else can one do in front of such a marvelous manifestation, if not to let oneself be enraptured and sing? The sky, the sea, the earth, the stars, the flowers, man whom God has made "little less than the angels," speak to us of the very Author who created us.

The Province of Mozambique proposes to prepare ourselves spiritually also by praying often during March, Psalm 8.

The World Day of Gratitude 2024 will have as its theme

***With Mary, guided by the "dream",
we generate peace by taking care of our Common Home***

To prepare ourselves for this event, we are offered a four-week itinerary.

First Week (1 – 6 April)

Deepen "taking care" in the experience of Mother Mazzarello (Letter 22 and C. 49, 50)

Second Week (8 – 13 April)

Deepen "taking care" in the experience of Don Bosco (Strenna 2024, the dream at nine years)

Third Week (15 – 20 April)

Deepen "Education and ecological spirituality" (Laudato si', Chapter VI)

Fourth Week (22 – 25 April)

Lectio on the Beatitudes and commitment to live them every day with the Educating Communities through concrete gestures that express them:

- Day 22: «*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*»
(Recognize the presence of God in every person and in creation)
- Day 23: «*Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called children of God*»
(Concrete gestures of fraternity and peace)
- Day 24: «*Blessed are the merciful, they shall obtain mercy*»
(Gestures of forgiveness, given and received)
- Day 25: «*Blessed are the pure of heart, they shall see God*»
(Expressions of joy)

On the website of the Institute, you can find the material for the preparation journey, divided into four weeks, the daily prayer, the indications, and the necessary information.

¹ Letter 14, To the Director of the house of Mornese Fr. G.B. Lemoyne, 17 June 1878.

To involve the whole Institute with a *common symbolic gesture*, it is proposed to each Province to choose a seed typical of their land; sow it, take care of it, and then send a photo, accompanied by a short caption, with the meaning that this seed has for the population of that country. The photograph (*made in high resolution, not less than 1MB, in horizontal format*) can be sent to the email address <administratoreweb@cgfma.org>.

The **logo** of the Feast, through some significant elements, offers us a beautiful symbology: *Mary*, prototype of taking care that embraces the world our common home; the different *faces of young people* of the five continents, that express our educational mission given to Johnny Bosco in the *dream* at nine years; the *baobab*, sacred tree, symbolizing life, powerful symbol of Africa, that seems to unite heaven and earth, and that provides people with nourishment and remedies to various ailments; the colors of the *flag* of Mozambique that represent the country with its riches, its history, and its commitment to peace.

The moments to which we can join live, will in due time be reported on the website of the Institute. The brief description of the program of the Feast is as follows:

Tuesday 23 April: Maputo, Provincial House

Festive welcome at the airport

Greeting of the Archbishop of Maputo, Msgr. João Carlos Hatoa Nunes

Wednesday 24 April: Maputo, Provincial House

Eucharistic Celebration in the Provincial House

Greeting by the children of the Kindergarten “Mother Rosetta”

Greeting to the Apostolic Nuncio Msgr. Luís Miguel Muñoz Cardaba

Greetings from the students of the Professional Training Center “Don Bosco” of Maputo - Jardim

Encounter with the Provincial Council

Good Night

Thursday 25 April: Namaacha, Formation House "St. John Bosco" and "Mary Help of Christians" School

Visit to the Formation House and meeting with young women in formation

Meeting with the FMA Communities

Greetings from the Educating Community of “Mary Help of Christians” School

Visit to the headquarters of the Preprovince of the Salesians of Don Bosco

Good Night in the Provincial House

Friday 26 April: Maputo - Infulene "St. John Bosco"

07.30 – Welcoming Mother

08.00 – Eucharistic Celebration,

presided by Msgr. João Carlos Hatoa Nunes, Archbishop of Maputo

10.00 – Brief interval

10.30 – Theater: cultural expressions

13.00 – Dinner

16.00 – Words of Mother

16.30 – Conclusion of the Feast

18.30 – Vespers in the Provincial House

Supper and Good Night

The gesture of solidarity, which will unite all the Educating Communities in making visible the family spirit and the communion of goods, will be dedicated to the urgent needs of the Institute and, in

particular, to the construction in the Community of Moatize of a Reception Center for preadolescent girls who do not have access to secondary school, thus preventing premature marriages and promoting girls' empowerment.

To remain united in the time of preparation for the Feast of Gratitude, during the four weeks the Province offers us a prayer of thanksgiving for Mother Chiara, to be prayed in a community moment chosen according to the possibilities of each community.

I am grateful to you for your involvement in the preparation and realization of this significant moment of the Institute, an expression of our family spirit that unites us, once more, in saying a heartfelt THANK YOU to our Mother, together with the Salesian Family and the Educating Communities.

With the sisters of the Council, I greet you with much affection.

Rome, 13 February 2024

Sister María del Rosario García Ribas

Vicar General