

Message of Pope Francis to GC 28: the “Valdocco option”

(Post-Chapter reflection, pages 55 – 65)

Questions proposed for discussion

Pope Francis suggests that the four characteristics of Don Bosco’s Valdocco experience--*home, parish, school, and playground* (Cf. Constitution 40)--are to be lived out today in four areas which he describes as the “Valdocco option.” Following is a listing of these four areas and a question for community reflection for each of them:

- (1) The “Valdocco option” and *the gift of the young* (pages 58-60)

Don Bosco was not a theorist; his work resulted from his response to the spiritual and material needs of the young people around him. *What steps have our Salesian community and EPC taken to study and respond to the changing spiritual and material needs of the young people in our area?*

- (2) The “Valdocco option” and *the charism of presence* (pages 60-63)

Don Bosco’s mission would not have succeeded without the generous assistance of capable collaborators. The Holy Father reminds us that “we are not formed *for* the mission, but *in* the mission.” *Every Salesian community is called to view our lay partners as participating fully in the mission with us, that we are to be formed with them and work hand in hand with them. What specific actions have our Salesian community and EPC taken to animate our lay collaborators to feel an ownership in our mission, to know that they are essential partners with us in the mission?*

- (3) The “Valdocco option” *as expressed through many languages* (pages 63-64)

Don Bosco evangelized the young people of his day in a language they could understand, not only in formal Italian, but also in the local Piedmontese dialect. *In our 21st-century setting, what specific efforts are our Salesian community and EPC making to evangelize our young people in a down-to-earth language that they can understand, including the language of the virtual world in which they are continually immersed?*

- (4) The “Valdocco option” and *the ability to dream* (pages 64-65)

Don Bosco believed that the Lord communicated with him through his dreams, and he gave form to the divine message received through those dreams when he opened his first oratory. Pope Francis says that we must dream of “open, fruitful and evangelizing houses.” *What dreams do our Salesian community and EPC have for the future of the Salesian mission in our concrete setting? Are we able to be faith-filled dreamers like Don Bosco? What have we done to actualize our dreams?*