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## Akash Bashir – A Past Pupils of Don Bosco on the Path to Sainthood

### An open letter on the 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary from his martyrdom and the beginning of the cause of beatification

Akash Bashir – a past pupil of Don Bosco from Lahore in Pakistan, on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2015, gave his most precious gift to defend the Catholic community who gathered to celebrate mass in St. John's Church in Youhannabad. He was only 20 years old, with a lifetime ahead of him, when he chose to protect others with the most precious gift that he had on this earth – His Life.

It was on a Sunday morning when a suicide bomber attempted to enter the Church which had over 1000 worshippers attending mass in the parish. When he realised that a suicide bomber tried to enter the Church, he courageously attempted to halt him, realizing the gravity of the situation, Akash knew that the only way to stop him was to physically restrain him. Bravely, he told him, "I will not let you pass even if I have to give up my life." It was at this point that the suicide bomber detonated the bomb with Akash struggling with him not to let him in the Church with full of worshippers.

Akash Bashir embraced the values of Life, Freedom, and Truth which we believe in as a movement of past pupils and friends of Don Bosco. He defended Life by giving up his Life! He upheld Freedom by standing up to violence. He embraced the Truth by fighting radicalisation. He stands high as a perfect example to the gift of Salesian education which we, past pupils and friends, were awarded through the charisma of Don Bosco.

Born to a humble family, on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1994, Akash Bashir went to study at the Don Bosco Technical Institute. Akash led a life just like that of any other young person and he had his own dreams for his future. He lived with his ordinary family, he had friends both at school and work, he enjoyed sports, and prayer was part of his life. Dedicated to Don Bosco's call to young people to be an "honest citizen and good Christian", he became a security-volunteer in his parish church, at a time when the situation in Pakistan was apprehensive with the risk of suicide bombers targeting religious places.

As World Confederation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco, we welcome the official opening of the Diocesan Inquiry into the martyrdom, fame of holiness, and signs of the Servant of God Akash Bashir on his 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death on the 15 March 2022 by the Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw, OFM at the Cathedral of Lahore in Pakistan. The main actor of the cause of beatification is the Salesian Congregation, the World Confederation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco are the co-petitioners, the Postulator is Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, and the Vice-Postulator is Fr. Gabriel de Jesús Cruz Trejo SDB.

Akash Bashir is the first Pakistani citizen who is elevated to Servant of God and is the first to mark the beginning of the cause of beatification in Pakistan.

**Bryan Magro**  
**President**  
**World Confederation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco**

