***To the Association of Salesian Cooperators***

Dear Salesians Cooperators, Delegates and Delegates, World Councilors,

We are near Easter and with pleasure I share this message with you.

The health emergency we are experiencing these days is changing our daily habits. The restrictions that are being implemented in many countries force us to a social isolation that we would never have thought of.

All of us at various levels – family, work, Association – are involved and this does not let us indifferent. This emergency has violently entered our lives and sometimes we have difficulties to react.

But we must not lose courage.

As Salesians Cooperators we are called to live our Promise in the conditions of life in which we find ourselves. Even now, when there is this pandemic.

In the Rome Congress held in 2018, as the Association of Salesians Cooperators, we accepted the challenges for the six-year period, paying attention to many aspects that also challenge us in this period.

We pay attention to Families, starting from ours and making ourselves bearers of hope towards those who live near us, worrying if they need what is necessary to live, because there may be families where there is no job. We take care of elderly and sick persons, making our presence feel in the ways that everyone can do.

We pay attention to the young people who feel disoriented in these moments. They are forced into lifestyles that are not always close to their natural desire to join and be together. We become points of reference as adults in the faith by transferring hope to the future to them. We tell them about past experiences lived in similar situations (earthquakes, wars, ...) to help them understand that together and with confidence, we will overcome even these difficult days. Yet we believe that "Everything will be fine".

We pay attention to the Salesians Cooperators of our Centers, the Delegates, the Aspirants to avoid the feeling of abandonment that can be created due to the difficulty of communicating, of meeting each other. Let's get close to the families of those who died from this pandemic.

Let us keep vivid contacts with all our brothers and sisters of the Salesian Family in the circumstances which we live in. They are part of our family and we must have gestures of attention even towards them.

We welcome the words of Pope Francis who invites us to bring out the creativity of love.

As Salesians, being creative is our characteristic trait.

The current means of communication are helping us (video-chat, social, ...). Let's use them to spread hope.

Let's commit the time given to pray, to do the formation, to keep relationships alive, even if only by telephone.

Let's find new ways of being close to everyone we know even with economic solidarity through local interventions. At this moment, contacts with those situations that each Center knows are more effective.

We cannot let the days go by without living them as protagonists in places where we are, with the means we have to our disposal, staying at home and respecting the rules imposed by the various governments. Even this is a way to make our being "Good Christians and Honest Citizens" concrete.

Enthusiasm, joy and hope that we will be able to give in these moments are based on the certainty that the Lord does not abandon us.

He is among us now, although sometimes it is difficult to see his presence, he supports us and invites us to have hope.

He who passed through the cross on Good Friday continues to tell us that after it there is the Resurrection Sunday.

This is the creativity of Love that we must bring out from our daily life these days.

I wish a Happy Easter of the Lord to each one of you together with all your loved ones.

Christ is truly risen

The World Coordinator

 Antonio Boccia