



CONVEGNO INTERNAZIONALE
Il Volto Umano
del Saveriano
DAL 17 AL 28 GIUGNO 2026
CASA MADRE - PARMA - ITALIA



My Heart Echoes Your Invitation

Final Message of the Conference on the Human Face of the Xaverian

PARMA

Casa Madre, 28 June 2026

«My heart echoes your invitation: “Seek my face!” Your face, Lord, I seek» (Psalm 27:8).

Dearest Xaverian confreres and all of you who share with us the missionary vocation in the charismatic family of Saint Guido Maria Conforti,

at the close of these ten days of the Conference on the Human Face of the Xaverian, we wish to reach you with a fraternal greeting and to share with you, through this message, the fruit of what we have lived.

We came to Parma from our different missions, bringing with us stories, languages, cultures, ages and different sensibilities. Some already knew each other, others met for the first time.

And yet, from the very first moments, we rediscovered ourselves as part of one family, welcomed in the Casa Madre, that womb which gave life to the mission of our Institute.

We listened to the voices of confreres, laypeople and sisters from different continents; we retraced stories of fidelity, fragility, dedication and hope; we recalled men and women who, through the concreteness of their lives, made visible the human face of the Xaverian missionary dreamed of by Saint Guido Maria Conforti.

More than seeking a definition, we learned to recognize a face: a humanity that allows itself to be shaped by the Gospel and that, precisely for this reason, becomes a credible sign of the mission.

And as so many names, stories and testimonies passed before us, we understood that the mosaic would not be complete without the faces of those who today read these lines.

My Face

My face is first of all a face to be recognized, even before it is shown.

In these days we learned that affectivity is neither a luxury nor a risk for consecrated life, but the dimension that runs through every



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gesture, even of those who consider themselves “insensitive”: a humanity that does not feel is a mute humanity. To recognize oneself means having a good relationship with oneself, knowing that each of us is the only person who will remain with us until the end, and giving names to one's feelings instead of remaining illiterate in them.

It also means coming to terms with one's own stones: self-sufficiency, self-deprecation, victimhood, narcissism, the habit of “it's always been done this way”. It is not a matter of eliminating them, but of seeing them: what matters is not whether they are there, but whether I recognize them.

It is a face that bears the marks of its own fragilities, of advancing age, of illness, of loneliness, and which precisely in this finds the courage to ask for help, knowing that no one is self-sufficient or self-referential.

It is a face that needs time for itself, silence, care, because only a freed heart can truly encounter the other.

The Face of Christ

The face of Christ is the face of one who comes among his own and is not always welcomed, yet never ceases to draw near.

Jesus is born “unknown” according to the logic of the world, son of the gratuity of a woman before any lineage, and for this reason opens for us a fatherhood and a family different from what we would expect.

We see him weep before the tomb of Lazarus, because nothing is more human than tears; we see him stop at the well with the Samaritan woman and allow himself in turn to be revealed by her, who becomes the first missionary.

We see him, at the Last Supper, experience loneliness in the midst of his own, and precisely there say: “among you it shall not be so”, girding himself with the apron as one who serves.

On the cross he feels in his body the pain of the other, and in the moment of greatest weakness he builds a new family around himself, the mother and the beloved disciple.

To gaze upon Him, and to let ourselves be gazed upon by Him, remains the starting point of our every human face.



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This face has not remained closed in a distant time: it has continued to take shape in the faces of those who, by contemplating it, allowed themselves to be shaped by Him.

It happened in our Founder, who as a child before a crucifix experienced a gaze that preceded him and called him, and from that gaze learned no longer to fear himself and to embrace the bold project.

It happened in many confreres whom we recalled in these days: concrete men, with their limits, who did not seek the stage but knew how to be bridge-builders rather than protagonists, capable of entering a culture without colonizing it, of serving without demanding recognition. In each of them fidelity to Christ did not produce a uniform face, but a different and recognizable face, because holiness is not a smooth sphere but a polyhedron of a thousand faces.

And it happened also in those who lived the fragility of illness, old age, misunderstanding, remaining faithful nonetheless: because to contemplate the face of Christ does not mean to imitate a perfect image of him, but to let oneself be traversed by the same mercy that He has had for us, until we become, in our turn, a credible reflection of it for those we encounter.

The Face of the Other

The face of the other is always greater than we can comprehend: it is infinite, it does not allow itself to be reduced to our categories.

The commandment written in every face is simple and radical: do not kill me, do not close me in your schemes, do not make me a number. It is a face that questions us even before we question it, because the other is always, in some way, our lord: we are responsible for him even before we have decided to be.

From a missionary point of view this means that a culture, a people, a confrere are always greater than our understanding of them; for this reason Conforti left us a prayer that remains timely: “look, Lord, upon so many brothers”, a prayer for “the distant brothers” we do not yet know.

It is a face that is revealed only in concrete closeness, in the sharing of meals, in visits to families, in that simplicity that knows how to thaw coldness and warm to small things.



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And so that the face of the other may remain real, and not dissolve in the digital age where everything seems to be everywhere and no one's, we need to meet in person, in a shared place and time. Only in this way does the face remain what it is: not an idea we form of the other, but a free person, who surprises us and asks us to serve them.

Not to Conclude

The human face of the Xaverian is not a goal achieved once and for all, but a journey that renews itself every day: in my face to be recognized and cherished, in the face of Christ to be contemplated and let be configured in us, in the face of the other to be welcomed as a gift and not as a threat.

And this is our path of holiness: we have rediscovered that our humanity will always walk together with our faith. What is human in us is made fuller by the Spirit, and what is spiritual takes shape precisely in our humanity, in a bond that cannot be dissolved.

It is from here that the change we wish to bring home is born: not a programme to be applied to others, but a work that begins with each one of us, in sensitivity to what we live each day and to what, in us, still resists this healed image.

«We have the urgent duty to remain deeply human, lovingly guarding that magnificent humanity that has been given to us and shown to us in its fullness in Christ» (Magnifica Humanitas, 15). This is the duty we feel called to bring home, to our communities and our missions: not a perfect humanity, but a true one.

Let us then entrust this journey and these days lived together to the words of the Psalm: «May God have mercy on us and bless us; may he make his face shine upon us; so that your way may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations» (Psalm 67:2-3).

May the face of God, shining upon us, make us capable of becoming in our turn a credible face of the Gospel for the brothers and sisters we encounter, near and far.

May our Lord Jesus Christ be known and loved by all,

**The Participants in the Conference on the Human Face of the
Xaverian 2026**