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## EDITORIAL

### P.1 VIRGIN MARY, PRAYING WOMAN

Dear friends and devotees of Mary Help of Christians,

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«In our daily lives, we meet with the **Virgin Mary as a praying woman**. Our Lady prayed. When the world still ignored her, when she was a simple girl betrothed to a man of the house of David, Mary prayed. We can imagine the young girl from Nazareth gathered in silence, in continuous dialogue with God, who would soon entrust her with His mission. She was already full of grace and immaculate from conception, but she knew nothing yet of her surprising and extraordinary vocation and of the stormy sea she would have to sail. One thing was certain: Mary belonged to the great host of those humble of heart that official historians did not include in their books, but whom God prepared for the coming of His Son.

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Mary did not direct her life independently: **she waited for God to take the reins of her path and guide her where He willed**. She was docile, and with this readiness she prepared the great events that involved God in the world.

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Mary was in prayer when the Archangel Gabriel came to bring her the good news in Nazareth. Her **“Here I am”**, small and immense, which in that moment made the whole of creation leap for joy, had been preceded in the history of salvation by so many other *“here I am”*, by so many trusting obediences, by so much availability to God’s will. There is no better way to pray than to put oneself, like Mary, in an attitude of

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openness, of a heart open to God:

***“Lord, what You will, when You will and how You will”.***

That is, a heart open to God’s will. And God always answers. How many believers live their prayer this way! Those who are more humble of heart, pray like this, with essential and simple humility,

***“Lord, what You will, when You will and how You will”.*** And this is how they pray, not getting angry because their days are full of problems, but going into reality and knowing that in humble love, in love offered in every situation, **we become instruments of God’s grace**. A simple prayer, **putting our lives in the Lord’s hands. Let Him guide us**. We can all pray like this, almost wordless.

Prayer knows how to tame restlessness: We are restless, we always want things before we ask for them and we want them right away. This restlessness hurts us, and prayer knows how to tame restlessness, how to transform it into availability. When I am restless, I pray. Prayer opens my heart and makes me available to God’s will. The Virgin Mary, in those few moments of the Annunciation, knew how to reject fear, even though she foresaw that her ‘yes’ would bring her very hard trials.

If in prayer we understand that every God-given day is a call, then, we open our hearts and accept everything. We learn to say:

***“Whatever You want, Lord. Just promise me that You will be present at every step of the way”.***

That is what is important: to ask the Lord for his presence at every step of our journey: that he does not leave us alone, that he does not abandon us in temptation, that he does not desert us in bad times. That ending of the ‘Our Father’ is like this: the grace that Jesus himself taught us to pray for this grace in ‘Our Father’.

Mary accompanies Jesus’ entire life in prayer, up to his death and resurrection; and at the end she continues and accompanies the first steps of the

nascent Church (cf. Acts 1:14). Mary prays with the disciples who deserted Jesus when he met with rejection, while she stood by the Cross. She prays with Peter who gave in to fear and wept out of remorse. Mary is there, with the disciples, amidst men and women whom her Son had called to form His community. Mary does not play the priest among them, no! She is the mother of Jesus who prays with them, in community, as one of the community. She prays with them and prays for them. And, again, her prayer precedes the future that is about to be fulfilled: by the power of the Holy Spirit, she has become the Mother of God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she becomes the Mother of the Church.

Praying with the nascent Church, she becomes the Mother of the Church, accompanies the disciples in the first steps of the Church in prayer, waiting for the Holy Spirit. In silence, always in silence. Mary’s prayer is silent. The Gospel only tells us of one prayer of Mary: She prays to her Son at Cana to deliver the wedding organizers from their embarrassment when they ran out of wine. But, imagine: having a wedding feast and ending it with milk because there was no wine! What a graceful mother! Mary’s presence is in itself prayer, and her presence among the disciples in the Upper Room, waiting for the Holy Spirit, is in prayer. Thus, Mary gives birth to the Church, she is the Mother of the Church.

***“Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart”*** (Lk. 2:19).

This is how the evangelist Luke portrays the Mother of the Lord in the Infancy narratives in the Gospels. Everything that happens around her ends up having a reflection in the depths of her heart: the days full of joy, as well as the darkest moments, when even she struggles to understand which paths the Redemption must take. Everything ends up in her heart, to be sifted through prayer and transfigured by it. Be it the gifts of the Magi, or the flight into Egypt, up to that terrible Friday of passion: everything the Mother keeps in her heart and dialogues with God.

Someone has compared Mary’s heart to a pearl of incomparable splendour, formed and polished by patient acceptance of God’s will through the mysteries of Jesus meditated upon in prayer. How wonderful if we too could resemble our Mother a little! With a heart open to the Word of God, with a silent heart, with an obedient heart, with a heart that knows how to receive the Word of God and lets it

grow as a seed of the good of the Church.»

May this catechesis of Pope Francis on the prayer of Mary help us to heal our inner life and our relationship with God. May it bear fruit in gestures of service and love towards all.

**Renato Valera,**  
**ADMA Primaria's President.**

**Alejandro Guevara,**  
**ADMA Primaria's Spiritual Animator.**

## FORMATIVE PATH

### CONGRESS AT FATIMA: “I WILL GIVE YOU THE TEACHER”

On the occasion of the recent ‘Spirituality Days’ of the Salesian Family, the **9th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians** was presented. It is organized by the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) and open to all groups of the Salesian Family. It will be held in Fatima from **29th August to 1st September 2024**. It is important to start our preparation already for this significant moment of thanksgiving and entrustment to Mary. The Congress will be held in the ‘Paul VI’ congress hall in the Shrine of Fatima, Portugal, a special Marian place, where the Virgin Mary appeared to three young shepherd children in 1917 and through her message to them to invite the whole world to prayer and penance.

The title chosen for this event will be **‘I will give you the teacher’**, in memory of Don Bosco’s dream at the age of 9 whose 200th Anniversary will be celebrated in 2024. It is a dream that was deeply imprinted in Don Bosco’s heart and that guided him throughout his life. As Don Andrea Bozzolo, who will be a speaker at the Congress, writes, it is the Salesian *‘founding legend’*, the *‘sacred page’* that still today

*“exerts a consistent performative energy, touching the feelings, moving to action and generating identity.”* In it are gathered in effective narrative synthesis *“the constituent elements of the Salesian vocation, like a testament to be handed down to future generations”*. Starting from the dream, the inspiration we want to



share is that **Mary Help of Christians may be more and more the Mother and Teacher who accompanies and guides the whole Salesian Family on the path towards Jesus and towards the young people most in need.**

The formative itinerary for the year will seek to deepen the nine-year dream in a timely manner, divided into 5 themes and 10 stages. **The first theme** present in the dream is clearly **‘the Oratorian mission’**: in it we will examine our educational charism, the preventive system as a way to holiness, the particularity of a pedagogy of grace and a pedagogy of celebration that reaches boys and girls in their concrete and daily lives.

**The second theme** present in John Bosco’s experience of the dream, we could say, is **‘the call to the impossible’**: in it, we will speak of the mystery of life as vocation and mission, something that is in us, but greater than us, and which therefore involves the theme of faith, vocational discernment, spiritual combat, Christian life as cross and joy, humiliation and glorification; this will allow us to understand well the meaning of the ‘holy joy’ so much recommended by Don Bosco to his boys.

**The third theme** can be expressed as **‘the mystery of the Name’**: it is the theme of the experience of God as presence and mystery, an experience that involves the themes of encounter and proclamation, conversion and faith, dwelling and working, contemplation and action, liturgy and apostolate.

**The fourth theme** concerns the distinctive style of the Salesian charism, **‘loving-kindness’**. The aim is to promote a pedagogy of love totally inspired by the charity of God, and therefore a relational and



educational style marked by humility and meekness, benevolence and affability. This is a new educational logic, where love is the fulfilment of the law, where justice is administered as mercy, where love is not only felt but also demonstrated, where educational work keeps away from the forms of ancient rigorism and modern laxity.

The fifth and final theme present in the dream at the age of 9 is 'Mary's maternal mediation'. It is an opportunity to reflect on the feminine and maternal face of the Church in the whole God's plan. Here,

we can deepen the idea that God's initiative must be matched by human accompaniment, and that in the work of education we must always harmonise firmness and patience.

Let us entrust in prayer the preparation and realisation of this great event in the entire Salesian Family.



## ENTRUST - TRUST - SMILE

### LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR ÁNGEL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME

The Rector Major invites us to give thanks to God for 150 years of life of the Association of Mary Help of Christians: *"Faithful to the charisma of our holy founder of the Salesian Family, let us be guided by the Holy Spirit for a renewed evangelising and educative impulse, bringing faith in Jesus Christ and love for Mary to all young people - boys, girls, adolescents - especially the poorest and most needy"*.

It is necessary to renew the Association with a focus on the family and the new generations, fostering and nurturing personal relationship, openness to all, and a spirit of service, making Mary's profound evangelical attitudes our own: her availability to God, her fidelity in the hour of trial and of the cross, her spirit of joy and thanksgiving for the wonders the Lord works.



The Association and the membership in it are founded on the experience of Mary's motherhood

and help. *She is with us, loves us and protects us!*

The Charter of the Charismatic Identity of the Salesian Family, no. 37, reminds us:

*"Entrustment is an ascending dynamism: it is, making the gesture of self-giving to respond generously to a mission to be fulfilled; but it is also a descending dynamism: welcoming with trust and gratitude the help of the one who guided Don Bosco and continues to guide the spiritual Family that originated from him"*.



The Association of Mary Help of Christians is a light that shines for the whole Salesian world and invites us to be disciples and missionaries of the Gospel of joy with Mary. Many eyes look at this reality, which is capable of involving, as an Association, families, parents and children, young and old, boys, girls and adolescents.

St. John Paul II proposed it to us as a beautiful navigational chart, telling us as Salesian Family:

*"By your work, dear educators, you are performing an exquisite exercise of ecclesial motherhood. Always have before you Mary Most Holy as the highest collaborator of the Holy Spirit, who was docile to His inspirations and therefore became the Mother of Christ and the Mother of the Church."*

Let us walk together with enthusiasm: entrust, trust, smile! May God bless us!

**Maria Adele and Andrea Damiani**

## FORMATION OF ADMA ASPIRANTS

### 8. AT THE SERVICE OF THE ASSOCIATION

The eighth and last chapter of the training itinerary which the Primary ADMA at Valdocco, Turin, proposes to the aspirants, refers to the articles of the Regulations which concern the structuring of the Association from the local level up to the world level.

The first level of associative life to be promoted and taken care of in a special way is the local level which constitutes the fundamental nucleus of the Association. Each local Association is coordinated by a Council, elected by the assembly of all the members from a list of candidates who make themselves available for fraternal service. The Local Council consists of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and an appropriate number of councillors according to the needs of the Association. The Spiritual Animator is a member by right. Council members hold office for four years and may be re-elected for a further four years. When the Council is elected, appointments are made.

The local Association thrives if the Council exercises commitment and a spirit of service, aiming to involve the members as much as possible in the life and initiatives of the Association. A spirit of service, fraternal communion and active co-operation must characterise in particular the activity of the Local Council, which has the following tasks:

- **planning, promoting and coordinating** the members' formative and apostolic initiatives;
- **maintaining links with the Salesian Family**, participating in the Council;
- **deciding** the convocation of Assemblies;
- **providing for the administration** of the Association's goods;
- **accompanying the aspirants** in their insertion and in their formative journey;
- **enhancing** the skills and spiritual talents of each member;
- **promoting initiatives** that foster members' vocational fidelity and active participation

The President convenes the meetings, presides over them, coordinates the work and sees to their execution, represents the Association, participates in the Salesian Family Council and calls for the



elections for the renewal of the local Council. The Vice-President takes the place of the President when he is absent or when necessity requires it, but always in agreement with him. The Treasurer draws up the budget and the balance sheet which must be approved by the Council and presented to the competent authority and the Annual General Body Meeting. The Secretary draws up the Register with the minutes of the meetings, the up-to-date list of registered members and aspirants, the chronicle of the Association and the related documentation.

The Spiritual Animators of the Association are appointed by the Salesian Provincial or the Provincial of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. They take care, above all, of formation in Salesian spirituality and in communion with the direction of the particular Church. This ministry must be carried out, respecting the lay nature of the Association and the Council's roles of responsibility without demeaning or replacing it. The Association, where possible, is organised at the Provincial level with a Council that animates, coordinates and directs the local Associations and maintaining relationship with the other groups of the Salesian Family. The Provincial Council is elected by the local presidents. It consists of the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and a suitable number of councillors. The Provincial Council is a body that helps the life of the Association in order to promote the sense of belonging of the local Groups, avoiding particularisms that would invalidate the identity of the ADMA. The tasks of the Provincial Council are:

- **planning, promoting and coordinating** the formative and apostolic initiatives of the groups;
- **promoting collaboration** among the local Groups,



## Formation of ADMA aspirants

meeting them and supporting the commitment of the Councils;

- **establishing with the local councils** the itinerary of initial and ongoing formation, according to the orientations of the Association;
- **participating in the life of the Salesian Family** by being part of the Provincial Council;
- **promoting intense moments** of spirituality and animating initiatives that foster the fidelity of the members.

Where necessary and appropriate, a National Coordination can be established, consisting of a coordinator, a suitable number of associates and Spiritual Animators. The National Coordination is the responsibility of the individual Provinces and distinct nations, both in its constitution and in its regulations.

The Regulations of the ADMA foresee a further particular instrument of coordination and animation, in communion with the Salesians of Don Bosco and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians: the World Council of the Association. At the World Consultation, convened under the responsibility of the President of the Primary, with his Council, the Vicar of the Rector Major, the General Councillor of the FMA in charge of the relationship with the Salesian Family, the President with the Spiritual

Animator and a Councillor of the Primary will take part; in addition, representatives of the various geographical areas where the Association is present will be summoned. It is to be ensured that there is a majority of lay people over consecrated persons. The Council ordinarily meets every 6 years. An excellent occasion is the International Congress of Mary Help of Christians which is organised by the Primary Council.

The various Provincial Councils and the national and world coordination structures have the function of animation, support and accompaniment but they cannot and must not replace local life and commitment. Finally, the last two articles of the Rules concern:

- **the material goods that the Association**, as a public ecclesiastical juridical person, has the capacity to acquire, possess, administer and alienate, according to ecclesiastical legislation and that of the various countries.
- **the translation of the rules** into various languages must be faithful and in conformity with the official text and submitted to the Primary.

**Gian Luca and Mariangela Spesso**

## FAMILY EVENTS

### 16th 'Spirituality Days of the Salesian Family

*- Final summary by groups: ADMA*

**To be enhanced in personal life:**

- **We are grateful that we had the opportunity to reflect together** on the lay dimension that flows from the gift of baptism and that in the Salesian Family we can live with that personal style that is tailor-made for us by the Holy Spirit.
- **To be enhanced in personal spiritual formation**, to draw from the power of the Eucharist and the accompaniment of Mary, what is needed to **be leaven as courageous lay people** in the places where we live, and seeing the beauty 'of others' **through the gaze of Jesus**.

**To be enhanced in the life of the Association:**

- **Creating space for dialogue with** those we meet in various realities, becoming outgoing Christians who, as the Pope says, know how to dialogue and accept each person where they are and **make them feel loved**.
- **Having a special attention**
  - > **to the accompaniment** of young couples/families and adults, **involving them**;
  - > **to creating relationships and networks** that develop the spirit of family.



## Family events

- **finding new ways of boosting the apostolic commitment of members** by making them understand the importance of being a missionary in everyday life through simple gestures, following the example of Mary;
- **always recalling the importance of intercessory prayer** for one another.

To be enhanced 'in' and 'with' the Salesian Family:

- **Joint formation programmes** for lay, consecrated and priests on 'being lay today';

**Planning and building together:** complementarity not only among states of life, but also among Groups;

**Commitment to live together** making the relationship as instrument of communion and as foundation of the mission.

## Mary Help of Christians Pilgrimage in Angola

**Ndalatando, 19-21 May 2023**

With great enthusiasm and active participation, **the national pilgrimage of the Salesian Family to the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, in the city of Ndalatando (Kuanza Norte), took off with the motto: 'With Mary, the light of the Gentiles, on the synodal path'.**

From 19th to 21st March, many devotees arrived in Ndalatando, coming from many Salesian presences and parishes in Angola: Cabinda, Huambo, Benguela, Dondo, Viana, Palanca, Cacuaco, Sambizanga, São Paulo. From the city of Luanda, the capital of Angola, two trains left in the morning with more than 500 people on board, mainly young people, to arrive in the afternoon in the city of Ndalatando (250 km by rail); they came from other places by Bus and car, all with great enthusiasm and longing to experience the pilgrimage in a spirit of prayer, contemplation and celebration.

The inaugural mass was held with a large number of faithful in the courtyard of the Don Bosco School, packed with 4,000 people. The parish priest, Fr. Gino Favaro, helped the faithful to reflect on the importance of Mary in the life of the Church and in the life of every Christian.

20th May, Saturday, began with the Eucharistic Celebration, presided over by the Vicar of the Salesian Province of Angola, Fr. Manuel Cambanje, and concelebrated by many Salesian priests.



Many faithful walked towards the land that the provincial administration had assigned for the construction of the new Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, 2.5 kms from the city. When they arrived at the site, Fr. Martin Lasarte, the Salesian Provincial of Angola, invited all the faithful to pray a 'Hail Mary': with great faith, they all knelt down and asked for their dream to be fulfilled. It was like the 'Hail Mary' that Don Bosco prayed with Bartolomeo Garelli, from which the Salesian work was born. Everyone hopes that this new construction in honour of Mary would be realised soon.

Around 3 pm, a sea of people moved from the other side of the city to take part in the procession in honour of Mary Help of Christians.

A large crowd of faithful from all the city parishes joined the pilgrims and accompanied Our Lady, praying, singing and dancing.

At 9 pm, the vigil began with music, singing,

## Family events

entertainment and prayer. Brother Gesù invited people to pray the rosary to Mary 'who unties knots', recalling the difficult situations experienced by many families, without peace or work, and very many young people, slaves to the vices or violence. The mothers, at that moment, put all their worries into Mary's heart.

On Sunday morning, the feast of the Ascension of Jesus, a festive mass was celebrated to close the pilgrimage.

During his homily, Fr. Martin highlighted the relationship between the feast of the Ascension and Mary's presence in the life of the Church, drawing a

parallel, at the end, between the phrase Jesus said before ascending into heaven: **"Go to all the nations ... I will be with you every day!"** and the phrase Don Bosco had written in the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Turin: **"This is my home, from here goes forth my glory"**.

Before the profession of faith, there was the renewal of the promises of the ADMA groups.

Mary's 'glory' truly filled these holy days and accompanied all the pilgrims on their journey back to their homes, giving them courage to witness to their faith in Jesus and to continue to be 'light' to their families and to this world.

## The ADMA of Medellin meets Mother Chiara

On the 16th April, on the occasion of Mother Chiara's visit to Colombia for the **celebration of the World Gratitude Day**, the Salesian Family of Medellin had the great joy of participating in a meeting with Mother Chiara.

The ADMA groups of the FMA in Medellin gathered there. **Mother Chiara invited them to continue to work together to do as much good as possible in the society.** On this occasion, some children of ADMA family members, ADMA youth and ADMA adults took part in the meeting and shared a special moment with Mother Chiara



## ADMA in Japan grows through Prayer Sessions via Zoom, well organised



On the eve of Pentecost Sunday, 27th May 2023, in the church of Honjo, in the province of Saitama (Tokyo metropolitan area), **18 new members made their promise as ADMA** (Association of Mary Help of Christians). They are of different nationalities (Japanese, Brazilians, Peruvians and Bolivians), coming from many different cities and places, such as Gifu, Chiba, Tsuzuki, Mishima, Oizumi, Ota, Isesaki, Kazo, Yorii and Tokorozawa. ADMA members from Tokyo and Hamamatsu also participated in this festive occasion.

These members have grown in their vocation to ADMA through their daily prayer of the rosary



## Family events

through the Zoom meetings. Every evening, they gather for the prayer of the rosary together with other non-ADMA members. All together **they are about 60 people, of different nationalities**. The language of prayer was according to the nationality of the participants (Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, English, Korean, French, Latin, Croatian or Congolese dialect).

Every day, as 'Goodnight talk', the spiritual animator comments on a biblical text of that day or on a

significant event. Once a week, he comments on the Sunday readings. On Wednesdays, the spiritual talk is in Japanese and on Saturdays in Spanish and Portuguese.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and contagious joy of the ADMA members, there are other people who have shown interest in ADMA and are undergoing their formation via Zoom.

**We thank Mary Help of Christians for this joyful day.**



I will  
give you the  
**TEACHER**  
IX Congress of Mary Help of Christians

Fatima 29 August - 1 September 2024

Registration from 24 September 2023

[www.mariaauxiliadora2024.pt](http://www.mariaauxiliadora2024.pt)

**WE ARE ASKING EVERYONE TO SEND US AN ARTICLE, A PHOTO OF A FORMATION MEETING, THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 24TH OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, A VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY BEING CARRIED OUT.** The article (.doc format, max. 1200 characters without counting spaces) and a maximum of 2 photos (.jpg digital format and no less than 1000px wide), with a title and/or brief description, must be sent to [adma@admadosbosco.org](mailto:adma@admadosbosco.org). It is necessary to indicate in the subject line of the e-mail "**Family Events**" and in the text the author's data (name, surname, place of the shot, affiliation Adma, city, country). *By sending, you automatically authorise Adma to process, publish, even partially, and disclose the article and photographs in any form. The images may be published, at the editorial staff's discretion, on the website [www.admadosbosco.org](http://www.admadosbosco.org), and/or in other Adma websites, accompanied by a caption.*