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EDITORIAL

ST. ARTEMIDE ZATTI: MODEL FOR ALL

My dear friends,

We have now entered into the new pastoral year and we are in the second stage of the 2022 Formation itinerary, a journey through which we want to rediscover the foundations of our Christian life and return to that luminous source which guides us to live our vocation with total commitment and sustains us in our service.

The second stage with the theme “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: prayer and word” will help us to focus on prayer as an essential element of Christian life and as dialogue of love with the Father, who “speaking to us through his Son, enables us to speak to Him as His children.”

The second stage providentially takes place in the proximity of a great event which unites the entire Salesian Family and the whole Church in joy, which we too as ADMA want to give great prominence: the canonisation of Artemide Zatti by the promulgation of the Holy Father Francis, which took place in Rome on 9th October.

This event is providential for us as we are also reflecting on the theme of prayer because it is precisely in prayer and in a simple and open dialogue with the Father that Artemide Zatti’s path to holiness began and was formed, and now surely from heaven,



“cultivated and matured a profound relationship with God.”

he will bless our meetings and our reflection this month.

We read of Artemide Zatti who, as a young immigrant to Argentina,

*“cultivated and matured a profound relationship with God, under the guidance of Salesian Father Carlo Cavalli, his Parish Priest and Spiritual Director. Artemide found in him a true friend, a wise confessor and an authentic and expert spiritual director, who formed him in the daily rhythm of prayer and weekly sacramental life. With Fr. Cavalli, he established a spiritual and collaborative relationship. In his parish priest’s library, he had the opportunity to read Don Bosco’s biography and was fascinated by it. **It was the real beginning of his Salesian vocation.”***

Certainly his earthly experience - his desire to become a priest and his entry into the novitiate, his ability to carry and offer his own illness that would prevent him from continuing along this path, the gift of his recovery granted by the intercession of Mary Help of Christians, his sincere and generous yes to professing as a Salesian Coadjutor, and finally his service of love with the sick - is entirely sustained by a great faith and a great dialogue of prayer with the Father, in obedience to his will and entrustment to Mary Most Holy.

So, let us also cultivate this desire and let us ask together - through the intercession of the Saint and Mary Help of Christians - for the gift of prayer, so that it may always be at the centre of our projects, the heart of our meetings and the driving force behind our activities. Only prayer makes us alive and will keep our association alive and fruitful.

*Renato Valera,
President - ADMA Primary.*

*Alejandro Guevara,
Spiritual Animator - ADMA Primary.*

FORMATIVE PATH

HERE I AM AT YOUR DOOR AND KNOCK: PRAYER AND WORD

“Therefore, behold, I will draw her to me, I will lead her into the wilderness and I will speak to her heart.” (Hosea 2, 16)

God is a dialogue of love and calls us to dialogue with Him.

To pray is to enter into this dialogue with God who seeks us and desires to be with each one of us.

“Prayer is a conversation, a dialogue, a conversation of the soul with God. Through it, we speak to God and reciprocally God speaks to us; we aspire for Him and breathe in Him and reciprocally He inspires in us and breathes on us.” (Theodotion VI, 1)

“Behold: I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door for me, I will come to him and dine with him and he with me.” Rev (3:20)

To pray is to keep the door of our heart open. As Pope Francis says:

“God is the friend and the bridegroom.



In prayer we can establish a relationship of trust with Him, so much so that in the ‘Our Father’ Jesus taught us to express to Him a series of needs. We can ask God anything, everything; explain everything, tell everything. It does not matter if we feel at fault in our relationship with God: not good friends, not grateful children, not faithful spouses. He continues to love us. This is what Jesus demonstrates definitively at the Last Supper when he says: «This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.» (Lk 22:20). In that gesture, Jesus anticipates in the cenacle the mystery of the Cross. God is a faithful friend: even if human beings stop loving, He continues to love, even if that love leads Him to Calvary. God is always near the door of our heart and waits for us to open it. And sometimes He knocks on the heart but is not compelling: He waits. God’s patience with us is the patience of a father, of one who loves us so much. I would say, it is the patience of a father and a mother at the same time, always close to our heart. When he knocks, he does it with tenderness and with much love.”

“I have told you these things while I am still with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (Mt 16, 25-26)

The protagonist of prayer is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, who wishes to live and walk with us every day, to enter and inhabit our heart.

As in the parable of the merciful father, God continually gazes into our hearts from afar, always longing to see us return to Him, even with a single nod.

Prayer is first of all openness to this gaze, to this relationship, to the gift that God wants to give us of His Love, so that we can perceive it, encounter it, feel loved by Him and reciprocate this love in our daily lives.

“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.” (Jn 14, 23)

By speaking to us through His Son (Word), God enables us to speak to Him as children (prayer).

Prayer is, therefore, listening to the Word of the Lord which is given to us in order to enter into full communion and union with Him. If we entrust ourselves to the Word, we will be transformed by it little by little, because it is efficacious and does what it says. The Word must be welcomed not only as a teaching that can enlighten our minds but also as a seed that mysteriously makes the life of Jesus germinate in our hearts. He is the ‘Sower’ and we are invited to be *“those who, having heard the Word with a whole and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with perseverance.”* (Lk, 8-15)

“At that time, as a large crowd gathered and people from every city flocked to him, Jesus said in a parable, «The sower went out to sow his seed. As he sowed, one part fell by the wayside and was trodden down, and the birds of the air ate it. Another part fell on the stone and, as soon as it sprouted, dried up for lack of moisture. Another part fell among the thorns and the thorns which grew together with it, choked it. Another part fell on the good soil, sprouted and yielded a hundred times as much.» Having said this, he exclaimed, «He who has ears to hear, let him hear!»

His disciples questioned him about the meaning of the parable. And he said: «To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others only in parables, because by seeing they may not see and by hearing they may not understand.»”

The meaning of the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. The seeds that fall by the wayside are those who have heard it, but then the devil comes and takes the Word away from their hearts, lest by believing they should be saved. Those on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy but have no roots; they believe for a time, but in the time of trial they fail. The one fallen among the thorns are those who, after hearing, on the way let themselves be suffocated by the cares, riches and pleasures of life and do not fructify. The one on

the good ground are those who, after listening to the Word with a full and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with perseverance.

“I particularly recommend mental prayer that engages the heart to meditate on the life and passion of the Lord. If you contemplate Him often in meditation, your heart and soul will be filled with Him; if you consider His way of acting, you will take His actions as a model for your own. He is the light of the world: it is therefore in Him, by Him and through Him that we can be enlightened and find clarity. Believe me, we can reach the Father only through this door.” (Philothea II:1)

Prayer aims at union with God and the fulfilment of His will. It gives us the right sense of our wretchedness as creatures and our greatness as children of God. It makes us capable of discerning by reading reality and history with God’s eyes. It makes us grow in the attitudes of faith, hope and charity.

“There is nothing that purifies our intellect so much from its ignorances and our will from its evil affections as prayer which introduces our mind into divine clarity and light and exposes our will to the warmth of heavenly love; it is the water of blessing, which, sprinkling us, makes the plants of our good desires green and blossom again, washes our souls of their imperfections and extinguishes the passions in our hearts” (Philothea II, 1-2).

“Let us all try to pray in this way, entering into the mystery of the Covenant, to place ourselves in prayer in the merciful arms of God, to feel wrapped in that mystery of happiness that is the life of the Trinity, to feel like guests who did not deserve such honour and to repeat to God, in the amazement of prayer: is it possible that You know only love? He does not know hatred. He is hated but He does not know hatred. He knows only love. This is the God to whom we pray. This is the glowing core of every Christian prayer. The God of love, our Father, who waits for us and accompanies us.” (Pope Francis)

In this journey, the best guide is Mary. She knew how to be the good soil of the Word whom she welcomed with her FIAT and generated not only in her heart but also in her flesh.

Learning to pray

St. Francis de Sales invites us **first of all to prepare the heart:**

I would like to remind you of the preparation which consists of the following points:

I propose four ways to help you put yourself in the presence of God. Do not pretend to use them all at once. Choose the one that suits you best, simply and briefly.

- *The first is a lively and careful awareness that God is in everything and everywhere and there is no place or thing that does not manifest his presence. Although we know this, we often do not think about it and it is therefore as if we did not know. That is why, before prayer, say to your heart with deep conviction: "My heart, God is right here!"*
- *The second way is to think that He is not only present in the place where you are but He is particularly present in the depths of your heart. And your heart is His privileged and special home!*
- *The third way is to think of our Saviour who, in His humanity, from heaven with His gaze continuously follows all people on earth.*
- *The fourth way is to imagine the Saviour close to us, just as we want to be with friends. If you are then in a place where the Blessed Sacrament is, this presence is real: He is really present there. He sees you and thinks of you (Philothea II:1-2).*

The second step is to approach the Word

"I take the chosen passages for prayer. I renew within me the consciousness that this Word is full of the Holy Spirit and I begin to read it with an attitude of respect and basic interest in it. I read and reread the text until my inner attention lingers more on certain words, drawing from them a certain flavour, a warmth, or until I perceive that certain words begin to relate more vividly to me. Or when I understand certain words as particularly important for me, for my situation, for our church community or even for present context. Then I dwell on them and begin to repeat them in a low voice, with attention to my heart and my relationship to



this Word, that is, a Person speaking to me. In this way, as I repeat these sacred words for several minutes, perhaps with my eyes closed, I am not so much attentive to their meaning as to who they are, what they are full of and where they are meant to take me. It is the Word of God that arouses in me a veneration, a fear, a respect.

*As Origen taught, it is the Word imbued with the Holy Spirit. **When I listen to the Word, repeat it or simply pay attention to it, it is the Holy Spirit acting in me. The relationship that is established with the Word is realised by the Holy Spirit and is in Him. It is the Spirit who opens me to the attitude necessary for the Word to speak to me.** Since the Word is a living Person, I do not need to attack it with my own in order to know it. I can also interrupt the repetition of the Word to tell the Lord some reflection or feeling of mine that I am experiencing at that moment. The important thing is that all the time I keep this formula of speaking, thinking, praying to a Thou, that is, maintain an attitude of relationship with God. I must not be afraid to tell, at the beginning perhaps even in a low voice, my reflections, questions, thanks, supplications to the Lord, calling him by name" (Rupnik - The Discernment).*

Formative path

The third step is to identify the good resolutions that prayer has aroused in us:

“Coming out of meditation, Philothea, ***you must take with you above all the resolutions and decisions you have made, to put them into practice immediately during the day. This is the indispensable fruit of meditation.*** As you leave the prayer that has engaged your heart, you must be careful not to shake it; you would risk spilling the balm you have gathered in prayer. I mean to say that, if possible, you should remain silent for a while and gradually bring your heart back to consciousness, preserving as long as possible the feelings and affections that have blossomed within you.”

For personal prayer and meditation:

- 1) Is your prayer a silent listening to the Word of God?
- 2) Does this listening become a true and personal dialogue with the Lord?
- 3) Do you let Mary accompany you in prayer to be a good soil?

Monthly commitment:

Devote time to prayer with the Word of God.

KNOWING OURSELVES

ADMA IN PORTUGAL

- Would you kindly first tell us something about yourself in brief. Where do you come from?

- From Europe – Portugal. I am Sr. Maria Fernanda Afonso - FMA Provincial ADMA Animator and on behalf of Fr. Joaquim Taveira da Fonseca – an SDB Provincial ADMA Animator. We are also delegates for the Salesian Family.

- Something of yourself, life and your experience of faith? How long have you been FMA?

- I have been a FMA for 41 years. I was born in a Christian family. We prayed the Rosary every day. We are five brothers and sisters. I met the FMA when I was 11 years old when I joined a boarding school. By the end of that year, I had already told a friend from my town, also a boarder, that I would like to become a nun. Today we are both FMAs.

The love for Mary was very much cultivated in the College but at that time, the ADMA had not yet been introduced to us.

Fr. Joaquim Taveira has been a SDB for 60 years and a priest for 50 years. Since childhood, he has been fascinated by the Salesian environment. He entered the SDB minor seminary in Poiares da Régua.

- How long have you been an animator of the Association?

- I have been a provincial animator for ADMA for 10 years. Fr. Taveira for 7 years.

- What have you been doing?

- I have been a teacher, assistant, catechist, director, provincial secretary, SSCC delegate. Since 2012, I have continued to do almost everything, but I have never had a leading role. Now I am SSCC national delegate, local pastoral coordinator, assistant and catechist.

Fr. Taveira has been a teacher, school coordinator, national sports coordinator, headmaster for many years and above all parish priest. He is now Delegate for the Salesian Family, for the SSCC (also local), for the VDB, as well as provincial and local Animator for ADMA.

- And now to ADMA... How and where did the

Association develop in your province/region?

- The Association of Mary Help of Christians has existed in Portugal for many years, linked to the SDB houses, since the beginning of the Portuguese Province of St. Anthony. In the book by Amador Anjos, on the Centenary of Salesian work in Portugal, 1894-1994, p. 96 onwards, we read the following:

“In the context of the Portuguese province, the Association of the devotees of Mary Help of Christians experienced a certain flowering in the early days. Then it entered a long phase of almost oblivion. In recent times it is renewing itself and trying a minimum of organisation and formation, while realising that today it cannot limit itself to a set of religious practices and wearing a badge, but must assume the apostolate as an integral part of its spirituality.”

An interview with Fr. João de Brito who was the Provincial of the SDB, confirmed this: “The origin of the Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians in Portugal is of course linked to the coming of the SDB to Portugal but its growth is undoubtedly due to Fr. Álvaro Gomes, at the same time as the beginning, some 40 years ago, of the Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady Help of Christians at MOGOFORES which became national in 1986.”

In the FMA communities, it was only in 1988 that the first ADMA group started in Cascais, at the Externato Nossa Senhora do Rosário, founded by Sr. Rosa Teixeira, the then Director, and then followed by Sr. Lea Teixeira, the first local and provincial Animator. The number of local centres increased in the FMA houses and the SDB houses and were restructured.

- Can you tell us today how many local groups and associates exist today?

- Participation in the various activities organised by the Association got much reduced because of the pandemic. It is slowly increasing.

There are currently 16 groups in Portugal, 9 of which are SDB groups, in the following centres: Estoril, Évora, Funchal, Lisbon, Manique, Mirandela, Mogofores, Porto, Cabo Verde. There are 7 FMA groups in the following Centres:

Knowing ourselves

*Abrantes, Arcozelo, Assunção, Bairro do Rosário, Monte Estoril, Setúbal and Vendas Novas. **The number of Associates according to the 2021 Census is 615, with 200 affiliated with the FMAs and 415 with the SDBs. Since then, there have been new commitments.***

- How is the Association structured at provincial and local level?

- The Association is organised according to the ADMA Rules. There is a Provincial Council and there are local Councils. Some have had elections at the right times, others less so.

- Can you tell us more about life and the journey in the Association?

*- The ADMA's proposal, in general, is offered to those who follow the Association's activities with enthusiasm. The groups meet monthly, close to or coinciding with the monthly commemoration of Mary Help of Christians, in order to deepen their formation and to organise specific activities which have as their main aim **'to promote love for Our Lady, under the title of Help of Christians'** and **'to increase adoration of Jesus, present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist'**. Some groups organise moments of Eucharistic adoration and Marian prayer open to others or participate in those organised by the SDB or FMA Communities. In the SDB houses, the Eucharist is always celebrated on the 24th. The National Day of ADMA is celebrated on the day of the pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians. The formation proposals are, in general, those sent by the Primary ADMA. The local ADMA groups take part in pilgrimages (in October, to the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, in May, to the Shrine of Fatima), retreats and other training activities organised at the national level. Some groups also collaborate in social and charitable activities of the local Church.*

- How do you relate with the other groups of the Salesian family?

- The Association participates, through its National President, in the annual Salesian Family Council and in the Salesian Family web page (Word in the ear). The members of the Local Centres participate in the three national activities for the whole Salesian Family (Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in October; Presentation of the

Rector Major's Strenna in January; Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in May). At the local level, they organise moments of 'Live-in' with the other groups of the Salesian Family present in the House and sometimes in the area.

- Thinking of the future, what ideas and projects do you have to preserve the faith among the people and to promote love for Jesus in the Eucharist and entrustment to Mary? And for young people?

- This is a good question to ask at the first meeting of the year, this September, with the representatives of the local councils.

I think it would be good to try to invite the most sensitive families to catechesis to revive love for Our Lady in families.

I propose to ADMA PRIMARY to make known the various activities carried out with families and young people so that the good practices can inspire the ADMAs in other countries.

The work done with the existing groups has been important to revitalise the devotion to Mary Help of Christians in the working classes of our society and to live according to Christian and Salesian principles. There is still a lot of work to be done on the Christian and Salesian level. Families have to be energized to develop their entrustment to Mary.

"Promote love for Our Lady, under the title of Help of Christians."



ENTRUST - TRUST - SMILE

INTRODUCTION

LETTER OF RECTOR MAJOR REV.FR. ANGEL FERNANDEZ



“Entrust, Trust, Smile!”

This is the title of the Letter addressed by the Rector Major, Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, to the Salesians and to the whole Salesian Family on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA), founded by Don Bosco on 18th April 1869, one year after the consecration of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco.

The desire of our Rector Major is to renew the Marian dimension of the Salesian vocation, updating the appeal that Fr. Egidio Viganò made inviting us to **“take Our Lady home”**

This Letter can help us to revive in our hearts the same love for the Mother of God which guided Don Bosco throughout his life:

“Without Mary Help of Christians, we would be anything else but certainly not Salesians and not Salesian Family!” (Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime)

With the ADMA, Don Bosco wished to offer the

“Without Mary Help of Christians, we would be anything else but certainly not Salesians and not Salesian Family!”

(Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime)

Christian people a simple itinerary of sanctification and apostolate accessible to all, with the intention of defending and promoting the faith of the people and valuing the contents of popular religiosity.

Pope Francis also recalls:

“The memory of St. John Bosco is alive in the Church, as the founder of the Salesian Congregation, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Association of Salesian Cooperators and the Association of Mary Help of Christians and as the father of today’s Salesian Family.”

In conclusion, the Rector Major expressed it this way:

*“While we give thanks for these 150 years of life of the Association of Mary Help of Christians, let us commit ourselves, faithful to the charism of our holy founder of the Salesian Family, to allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit for a renewed evangelising and educative thrust... The essential aspect of this evangelising mission consists in **renewing the Association with a privileged attention to the family and to the new generations.**”*

In the next articles, we will reflect on the contents of the Letter with the lively desire to strengthen the devotion to Mary Help of Christians and the adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Andrea and Maria Adele Damiani

4TH CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES AND SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT

One of the aspects that made St. Francis de Sales famous is spiritual accompaniment. The themes of this accompaniment and especially the modalities are collected in three of his writings: the *Philothea*, the *Letters* and the *Spiritual Retreats*.

When he was in Paris, with the Jesuits, between the age of 18 and 20, he had an accompaniment experience that we could describe as 'do-it-yourself'. It was a traumatic experience because it was conducted in total autonomy, scrupulously following a Jesuit text entitled 'The Book of the Accompaniment'.

Soon after reading this book, he found himself disoriented and torn, amidst scruples and perfectionism. He finally decided to abandon this chain when he discovered that it was the trusting love in God that must guide us and the help of a wise guide, in order to be able to love one another in harmony, because one finally feels loved.

This leads us to Annecy, to the house of the 'Gallerie', where the order that was to be founded by St. Francis took its very first steps.

In the courtyard, the holy bishop gathered his first disciples, including Joan of Chantal, and through conversations in a very familiar but equally rigorous style, formed them to total donation to the Lord.

We find these interventions of his as a father and brother collected in the work, 'Spiritual Retreats', and we immediately enjoy a small extract:

"Now you will ask me what a soul that has totally abandoned itself into the hands of God is inwardly occupied with: it does nothing but remains with our Lord in holy idleness, without worrying about anything, neither of its body nor of its soul. In fact, since she has embarked under God's Providence, why should she stand thinking about what will become of her? However, I do not mean to say that it is not necessary to think about the things to which we are obliged, each according to his own



assignment. For example, if a sister has been given the care of the garden, she needs not say: I don't want to think about it; our Lord will provide. Similarly, a superior or novice mistress must not say: 'I have abandoned myself to God and I rest in His care', and under this pretext, neglects to read and learn the teachings that are proper to the exercise of her office."

In 'spiritual accompaniment', Francis is very simple, very sensitive and delicate, and is equally clear in proposing paths to holiness.

In the 'Philothea', at the end of the first part, therefore substantially at the beginning of this path, there is an emblematic text, intense and determined, which invites us to take our baptism very seriously.

"I want to be converted to the good and merciful God; I desire, propose, choose and irrevocably decide to serve and love him now and for eternity. To this end I entrust, dedicate and consecrate my spirit to him, with all its faculties; my soul, with all its powers; my heart, with all its affections; my body, with all its senses. I protest that I no longer wish to abuse any part of my being against her divine will and sovereign majesty.

To her, I sacrifice myself and immolate myself in spirit, to be forever to her a loyal, obedient and faithful creature. O Lord, you are my God, the God of my heart, of my soul, the God of my spirit; as

such I acknowledge you and adore you for all eternity. Long live Jesus.”

Certainly, very clear and very determined. The text we have heard sounds like a declaration of war; yet, it is also very delicate: delicate in welcoming personal stories, delicate in correcting excesses and also in sustaining labours. He himself will say that in every garden there are herbs and flowers that require, each one, special attention.

“Often awaken in yourself the spirit of joyfulness and gentleness. This is the true spirit of devotion and if you are sometimes assailed by the opposite, spirit of sadness and bitterness, throw your heart passionately into God and commend it to him. Go out for a walk, read one of the books you enjoy the most.”

A small clarification, but a key to his style, comes to us from a profound scholar and biographer of Francis, the Jesuit André Ravier: “During our work, we were struck by a fundamental, essential law of correspondence of Francis de Sales. For him, there is no spiritual direction if there is no friendship, i.e. exchange, communication, mutual influence.

Of course, he never renounces the authority as bishop, confessor and counsellor, but his authority always remains most humble, most human and, I dare say, most tender. He knows that God alone acts in the heart of the man or the woman and that only the spirit gives efficacy to the pastor’s words. He walks, taking one step after another. He searches, questions, suffers, hopes and prays, and is only fully at ease when he forms one heart, one soul and one spirit with his correspondence.” Let us try to recall and summarise some essential traits of his accompaniment.

First of all, the fundamental attention to the personal situation of the soul in front of him or her; to his or her state of life, to the state of health and to the deep desires that God causes to mature in her or him in order to attract them to Himself.

At the beginning of the ‘Philothea’, in chapter three of the first part, with great simplicity, Francis combines Christian holiness and existential condition.

The Christian life must be lived differently by the

artisan, the servant, the prince, the widow, the maiden, the bride. But that is not enough; the exercise of devotion must be proportionate to the individual’s strengths, occupations and duties.

Any kind of precious stone dipped in honey becomes more resplendent, each according to its colour. The same is true for Christians: all become more friendly and sympathetic in their vocation if they combine it with devotion. The care for the family becomes serene, the love between husband and wife more sincere, the service of the prince more faithful, all occupations sweeter and more pleasant.

Prayer and meditation are certainly two essential aids in the path of accompaniment that Francis proposes. A method and much concreteness are the other aids.

Philothea, you must above all carry with you the resolutions and decisions made, to put them into practice immediately in the day. This is the indispensable fruit of meditation. If it is missing, not only is meditation useless but is often harmful because virtues that are meditated upon but not practised swell the spirit with presumption and we end up believing that we are what we set out to be: we can only become what we want to be when the resolutions are strong and sound; not when they are sluggish and inconsistent and therefore destined not to be implemented.

In his writings, Francis invites us not to escape from our condition in life. This is our first responsibility and we must not live it superficially.

To Madame de Brulard, wife of the President of the Parliament of Burgundy, he writes:

“We are what we are... We are what God wills. It is the evil of evils to always want to be what we cannot be and not want to be what we can be. We must not sow in our neighbour’s field; do not desire to be what you are not but desire to be well what you are. What is the use of building castles in Spain if we have to live in France? We must bloom where God has planted us, abandoning ourselves to the ‘bon plaisir de Dieu’ - as it pleases God.”

For Francis, this is the supreme rule that he lived and how he educated the laity and the consecrated.

4th Centenary of the death of St. Francis de Sales

All this, however, with a particular colour: to do 'everything out of love and nothing by force'; a splendid Salesian teaching, and this section of the letter explains it to us:

"After having asked love of God, one must ask love of one's neighbour. I advise you to visit hospitals at times, comfort the sick, tend to their infirmities and pray for them, doing assistance. In all this, take care that your husband, your servants and relatives do not feel sorry if you stay too long in church or neglect the home.

You must not only be devout and love devotion, but you must make it lovable to all, and you will make it lovable if you make it useful and pleasant. The sick will love your devotion if they find comfort in your charity; your family if they recognise that you are more concerned for their welfare, more amiable in your corrections and so on; your husband, if he sees that the more your devotion grows, the more cordial you are to him and the sweeter in the affection you bear him; your relatives and friends, if they see in you more frankness, forbearance and yielding to their wishes that are not contrary to those of God. In short, you must make your devotion attractive."

We conclude this little tour in the little church of the 'Gallerie'. It was a small cellar that Francis transformed into a chapel for his nuns and for those who wanted to enter to pray. In fact, it has an entrance that leads directly outside: From this same door the first nuns went out to visit the poor and the sick. Sacred environment that brings us back to God, protagonist of our journeys of faith and love.

Fr. Michele Molinar

Source: [InfoANS](#).

FOR GRACES RECEIVED

“LORD, IF YOU WILL, YOU CAN HEAL ME” FR. GIUSEPPE QUADRIO AND MARIA PIA GALLO



**“Lord, if you will,
you can heal me.”**

In May 2016, after 2 months of medical examinations and many tests, I was diagnosed with stage IV uterine carcinoma, with metastases to lymph nodes, liver and bones, inoperable and only treatable only with chemotherapy. It was like hitting a wall. I was terrified, gripped by a thousand fears. Fear of not making it, I was filled with fear for my family, for my husband and for our five children.

I couldn't pray any more. But others did it for me: **I was immediately surrounded by the prayers and affection of all the families of the ADMA and, without exaggerating, of the whole great Salesian Family, a true power of God!**

Thus began the novenas to the Venerable **Fr. Giuseppe Quadrio**, the great priest who took me under his protection. I even dreamt of him one night covering me with a golden blanket.... But back to the novenas, it was a great emotion for me to see so many families (including so many children and young people!) praying for me and I felt so unworthy.

And the graces were not long in coming: I endured the treatment very well despite the fact that everyone had predicted countless side effects. In the meantime, I continued to entrust myself with my whole being, offering my illness for the faith of my children. I often repeated: **“Lord, if you will, you can heal me.”**

Then after all these months of therapy, the PET scan a few weeks ago showed that the tumour lesions have all disappeared. I am healed! For the doctors, almost a miracle; for me and my husband, great grace received through the intercession of Fr. Quadrio and the faith of so many friends and so many strangers who have prayed for me. My heart is full of joy and gratitude. I really feel part of a big family of families walking together under the guidance of Jesus and Mary Help of Christians. Yes, dear friends, I do testify that faith works miracles. I thank you all for your love and prayers and am certain that God will give you back a hundredfold, both here below and in Heaven!

*Salesian Bulletin,
Maria Pia Gallo, ADMA Turin*

If you have received a grace, send a short testimony accompanied by a photo to adma@admadonbosco.org

FAMILY EVENTS

ADMA Youth - Retreat



Cesana - At the end of the summer, from 2 to 4 September, *about fifty youngsters took part in the spiritual exercises organised by the primary ADMA: 30 boys and girls from the middle school and 20 from the high school. They were accompanied by two Salesians and the teams made up of married couples, young university students and working people.*

These were days to stop and take a breath, finding refreshment not only from the torrid heat of the last few months, but also, or rather above all, from the frenzy of the days and the incessant buzz of things to do, which, alternating with the tepid idleness of the long summer hours, usually fills the holidays of young people and teenagers. Stop, be silent, listen, pray and play: *these were the slogans for the three days at Cesana, an opportunity to open the heart and make space in silence to meet the Lord, to listen to His Word and to experience a lot of Salesian cheerfulness that exploded between one silence and another, between one catechesis and another, in the games, dances, songs, chatter during the walk, in the noisy chatter at the tables during meals and even in the cleaning that followed in the kitchen and refectory.*

While the older children meditated on the parables, addressing the themes of listening to the Word, the relationship between mercy and justice, freedom and forgiveness, the middle school children reflected on their relationships with God in the family and with friends, always starting from the Word. The days, marked by Lauds, daily Mass and the rosary for the high school boys, and for the younger ones, by prayers in the form of readings, songs and the ever-present three Hail Marys of Don Bosco before going to sleep. The experience culminated in confessions and adoration on the last evening and ended in the final Mass together with the parents. The boys returned home more united, joyful and energized to start the year, without however sparing us a critical note: three days are too short!

ADMA Primary Turin - Retreat

More than 300 people participated in the first Retreat of Primary ADMA of Turin.

Castelnuovo Don Bosco, Italy – 18th September 2022 - The annual pilgrimage of the Turin Primary ADMA *began with the first retreat at Colle Don Bosco where families from Piedmont and Liguria gathered.* More than 300 people took part. There were also many children and young people present, who spent playing and praying under the attentive guidance of the numerous animators.



Guided by Fr. Alejandro Guevara, ADMA's World Spiritual Animator and by Fr Roberto Carelli, the day had various moments of formative and spiritual growth: catechesis, Reconciliation, adoration, the rosary, sharing and the Eucharist. This year's theme was that of the starting point of every Christian's life: love, that is, how to experience the concrete and sensitive love of God, for God and consequently, love for others. Everyone has been created by God's love and as St. Augustine says, *"You made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you"*. The monthly commitment was to trust God by praying ***"Lord, our Father, help me to experience your love as a child does."***

Local ADMA of the Don Bosco Oratory, Jaboatão dos Guararapes, Pernambuco, Brasil



On the 24th of May, the feast of Mary Help of Christians, on the 24th of July, the day of remembrance of Mary help of Christians, and on the 18th of August, during the feast in honour of St. John Bosco, we renewed our membership in the presence of our local Spiritual Director. On this occasion, we received the new medals and ribbons as indicated by our Provincial Spiritual Animator. They were moments of great communion and participation with the blessing of the Mary Help of Christians and our Founder Father Don Bosco.

In the coming year, *in January 2023, our local ADMA will celebrate the 70th anniversary of its aggregation to the Primary that took place exactly on the 10th January 1953, with 907 members.*

Eunice Silveira
 Coordinator of the ADMA, Don Bosco Oratory
 Jaboatão - PE – Brazi

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@admaddonbosco.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).

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