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EDITORIAL

FR. GABRIEL CRUZ, NEW ANIMATOR OF PRIMARY ADMA

Dear friends of ADMA,

Receive my fraternal greetings at this time when the Church celebrates the Mystery of the Lord's Incarnation, contemplating with amazement how he is welcomed by Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the Magi, who represent all men and women of good will.

With this communiqué, I bring you **family news from our dear Rector Major. Fr. Alejandro Guevara had to return to his Province of origin**, concluding his service as Spiritual Animator of our ADMA Association. **He has appointed Fr. Gabriel Cruz as Animator to accompany the Primary ADMA, with the task of carrying out this service for the time preceding the celebration of the General Chapter of our Congregation, together with the World Coordinator, Mr. Renato Valera, and his council.**

We thank Fr. Alejandro for his service during these years in which he has accompanied you with great enthusiasm and dedication. **I ask you to welcome the person of Fr. Gabriel**, who, in addition to his personal testimony, brings with him a rich direct missionary experience, collaborating with Fr. Pierluigi Camerani, the power of grace at work in the hearts of members of the Salesian Family who are walking towards ecclesial recognition of their holiness.

I know that he takes on this service with great passion, willing to involve himself, according to his possibilities, in the journey of the Association which is preparing, among other initiatives, the next World Congress in Fatima. I and the members of the Secretariat will also walk with him, with you and with the Provincial Delegates in all that is necessary to give continuity to the programme of ADMA, precisely at a time when the Association is progressively expanding. Fr Gabriel's e-mail address is animatore.spirituale@admadonbosco.org as well as gacruz@sdb.org.

The Lord, who in Mary, has given us the Mother and Teacher, will guide us. To Her, we entrust ourselves, in Her we trust, and with Her we will enjoy the

fruits which she sows in our hearts as an excellent educator.

After the celebration of Holy Christmas, living as a family, we can express our sense of Salesian Family in the month dedicated to Don Bosco by sharing with everyone the love for Mary that so identifies you.

With all my affection,

Fr. Joan Lluís Playà
Delegate of the Rector Major for the Salesian Family.

Turin - Rome, 1 January 2024, Solemnity of the Motherhood of Mary.

Brief introduction of ADMA's new spiritual animator

Fr. Gabriel was born in Mexico on 17th June 1977. He takes over as the **new World Spiritual Animator of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA)**, from 1st January 2024.

Since 1997, I have been a Salesian of Don Bosco. Ordained priest on 30th June 2006.

Amongst numerous academic qualifications, I have obtained degrees in philosophy, university education, theology, missiology and theology of religions with a focus on Islam from the Pontifical Gregorian University and the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

Among the specialisations obtained, I recently completed 'Advanced Training in the Causes of Saints' at the Pontifical Lateran University, promoted in collaboration with the Dicastery of the Causes of Saints.

Within the Society of St. Francis de Sales, I have been involved in formation and teaching, as a formator, professor and Rector of formation houses and seminaries.

First in my homeland and then in Pakistan, I served as Vice-Postulator in the Cause of Beatification and Canonisation of the Servant of God Akash



Bashir, and as Provincial Delegate and Councillor of the Southern Province of the Philippines, until 1st September 2022, the date from which - after being assigned to Italy - I collaborate with the Postulator General of the Salesians.

From 1st January 2024, I am appointed by the Rector Major as Spiritual Animator of the Association of Mary Help of Christians – ADMA.

FORMATIVE PATH

The mystery of the name: *KNOWING WHAT HOW WE LIVE - 2*

1. The name in the dream at the age of Nine

Hearing a word that comes from outside. At the beginning of the dream, there is a theophany: a venerable man appears, in virile age, nobly clothed in a white mantle, with a luminous face that could not look at him. The voice that calls Giovannino (he called me by name) comes from outside and with a command (he ordered me), to understand life as a dream to be realised (self-realisation as today's culture understands it). No one gives himself a name but receives it. I do not call myself. In the name is written the vocation and in it is included the method (not with blows but with meekness and charity), the mission/end (to gain these friends of yours), the content (instruction on sin and virtue).

Know the identity of those who speak to you. Who are you? The question about the identity of the mysterious character concerns us all. "Who do you say that I am?" Jesus asks his disciples. Mary wonders what the meaning of such a greeting was. It is impossible to escape such a question in order to give an answer of meaning to one's life. One does not belong to ADMA without asking Jesus and without receiving from Him the answer, "the Son of Mary". In Don Bosco's experience, the knowledge of Jesus comes through Mary. In the millenary experience of the Church, Mary's womb which generated Jesus continues to form Him in the minds and hearts of those who believe in Him.

Don't be in a hurry. It is not uncommon to come across wanting everything and now, to have a desire and see it already fulfilled. Yet, this is not the way of education, God's pedagogy. It is enough to read the letter to the Hebrews to understand that God's action passes through correction, education, patience. It takes a long time. Our Lady says to John: "in due time you will understand everything". The understanding of the dream for Don Bosco happened in Rome in the Sacred Heart Basilica on 16th May 1887: "That morning, Don Bosco wanted to go down to the church to celebrate at the altar of Mary Help of Christians. No less than fifteen times, during the Holy Eucharist, he stopped, seized with strong emotion and shedding tears. Fr. Viglietti, who was assisting him, had to direct him from time to time so that he could go on. [...] Who would not have wanted

to know what was the cause of such emotion? Fr. Viglietti, when he saw him return to his usual calm, asked him. He replied: 'I had before my eyes the scene when I dreamt of the Congregation when I was ten years old. I could see and hear my mother and brothers questioning the dream...- Our Lady had told him then: 'In due time you will understand everything' - Sixty-two years of hard work, sacrifices and struggles had now passed since that day, and a sudden flash of lightning revealed to him, in the erection of the Church of the Sacred Heart in Rome, the crowning of the mission that had mysteriously overshadowed him at the beginning of his life.

From the Becchi of Castelnuovo to the See of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, how long and arduous had been the journey! He felt at that point that his personal work was coming to an end, blessed Divine Providence with tears in his eyes, and looked up confidently to the sojourn of eternal peace in God's bosom' (MB, XVIII, 340-341). Often God's ways seem so tortuous, so different from how we would have traced them, yet the patience that comes from faith is the only way to see the divine plan realised.

Making peace with one's family history. Giovannino shares the dream with his family the next morning. It is amusing to listen to the reactions of his siblings 'who laughed', his mother and grandmother: 'keeper of goats, sheep or other animals', 'who knows, maybe he will become a priest', 'leader of brigands', '**you mustn't worry about dreams**'. He was of his grandmother's opinion at the time, and in the original manuscript it is emphasised, precisely to reinforce the idea that it seemed such an impossible thing to achieve, that it was better to concentrate on the present, to live the everyday, to be concrete in the peasant life to be carried on with focus. I invite you to read between the lines the relationships within the Bosco family: there had been the serious loss of the father and yet there had been no lack of dialogue, everyone could express themselves freely and their identity was respected and valued, relational difficulties and differences of opinion were addressed in truth and resolved even through painful choices of estrangement (cf. Cascina Moglia). The balancing and wise presence of the mother guaranteed a serene, though challenging,

growth of relationships. How important it is to reread one's own family history, to make peace with the relational wounds we may have suffered from our parents, siblings, other relatives! Our personal balance and our response to what the Lord is asking us to do depends on it. The worst attitude would be to flee from this reality or to pretend that there are no difficulties: such a position would impede the healthy development of our vocation and mission.

2. The inheritance of the name

The son is given a name. In the name, there is all its singularity and uniqueness. Maria Zambrano writes: "Nothing is more decisive in a life than one's origins. That is why a father represents much more than a man who begot us. He gives us a name. As long as our individual life lasts, we are marked by this name and thanks to this we are someone well-defined. Our individuality, so concrete, is linked to the name we receive from our father, for us a seal, a distinguishing mark. To have a name is to have a clear origin, to belong to a lineage, to have a destiny, to feel called by unmistakable voices, to feel bound and obliged. Having a name, we feel that in each of our actions, we bring into play the whole inheritance that binds us. We feel responsible for things that, if they were ours, would not press us and, instead, press us much more than those that directly affect us. It is the burden, the call of those who called themselves like us, living continuity that forms real history; we are heirs, we are always continuators.

Nothing began with us. The name gives us concretely, without abstract considerations, the historical responsibility that belongs to everyone, not only to those who occupy a high, leading position. We are all, in one way or another, responsible for history, custodians of continuity. Historical responsibility in the face of something that is more difficult to name: the awareness of our limitedness, of having been generated; humility in the face of origin (M. Zambrano, *Towards a Knowledge of the Soul*, 118).

3. The story of Nathanael (Jn. 1, 45-51)

Background: Nathanael, also called Bartholomew, is one of the twelve apostles of Jesus. At the beginning of John's Gospel, the story of his vocation is told, the way the Lord called him. He is a very pleasant character and has to do with the theme of the name and the gradual understanding of it in one's life. One day Philip tells his friend Nathanael that he has met Jesus of Nazareth and that He is the Messiah of



whom Moses spoke in the Law and the Prophets. Nathanael's reaction expresses his scepticism: the Messiah cannot have his home in an insignificant village like Nazareth. We are faced with the usual scandal that all those who have not yet come to faith raise before the person of God who becomes man like us. We are faced with the evangelical logic of the humble sign from which comes the greatest good, which is hidden from the man who considers himself secure in this world. Philip does not attempt to clarify or resolve his companion's doubt, but seeks to invite him to a personal experience with the Master, the same one he had previously lived and which changed his life. Only faith is capable of overcoming the motives of scandal and human self-sufficiency. And Jesus actually arouses it in every man who listens to his word, as Nathanael did, who agreed to accept the mystery that Philip proposed to him with the simple invitation: *Come and see* (v.46).

The encounter. Nathanael's readiness to meet Jesus, a sign of his sincere search and his desire to come to the truth, is recognised by the one who reads the heart of man. And Jesus, seeing him on his way, willing and open, anticipates and greets him as an authentic representative of Israel, a man in whom there is no duplicity of life and who confesses his own poverty before God. Jesus, in this future disciple of his, considers one of the 'remnant', of the true people of God, precisely because he knows Jesus by seeing him. The disciple, astonished by Jesus' words about him, asks the Master how he can know him. The expression: "How do you know me?" reveals the divine origin of the person of Jesus, the supernatural knowledge he has of the secrets of men. Jesus knows Nathanael well because he knows every man and knows what is in the depths of each one. Precisely this Jesus gives Nathanael yet another proof to reveal to him the knowledge of his

person: he saw him while he was under the fig tree. The fact is a clear allusion to Nathanael's knowledge of the Jewish traditions about the Messiah and the love he had for the Scriptures, as the rabbis used to read and comment on the Torah under the tree. There, too, the disciple was accompanied and sustained by God's loving gaze. Nathanael surrenders before the evidence and recognises in Jesus the Messiah and confesses: "You are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel" (v. 49).

The promise. With his testimony of human faith in the Messiah, Nathanael is open to a further revelation of Jesus. And the evangelist, by putting the promise on Jesus' lips: "You will see greater things than these" (v. 50), emphasises that the disciple's initial faith will be strengthened by further signs of Jesus' ministerial activity, which manifest the glory of the Son of Man. The revelation, which Christ promises the disciple, already finds a clear and solemn affirmation in v. 51: "Truly, truly, I say unto you, you shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man". Detached from the singular context of the passage, the "you shall see" contains a great prophecy about the manifestation of Jesus' glory, which extends throughout the whole of his life until his return to the Father. The verse is the summit towards which the whole pericope tends in a crescendo movement towards the person of Jesus. At the beginning, a small group of people are searching for Jesus and, in order to understand who he is, they try to establish a comparison with the Baptist (1:19-34). Subsequently, the disciples reflect on Jesus and confess him under various titles: Lamb of God (v.36), Rabbi (v.38), Messiah (v.41), the one whom Moses wrote in the law and the prophets (v.45), Son of God and King of Israel (v.49). Finally, to the man's efforts to understand who Jesus is, Jesus



himself gives an answer that serves to correct and complete the various comprehensions. The disciples did not err in their presentation of the Master, but always placed him in the context of Israel's messianic hopes. Jesus goes beyond this hope,

uses apocalyptic language and speaks of the continuous revelation of the Father, of a movement of angels ascending and descending, recalling the scene in Jacob, in which the patriarch dreamt of seeing a ladder resting on the earth, as the summit reached heaven; and upon it, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending (Gen 28:12). The ascending and descending is a reminder of the human and divine reality of Jesus. Although he is among men, he is in communion with the Father and fulfils his function as a revealer, because he is the 'place' where the Father's world is reflected. For the evangelist, every true Israelite stands before the 'house of God' and the 'gate of heaven', prefigured by the historical person of Jesus, where the mystery of the 'Son of Man' is contemplated. The man Jesus is the Son of man, he is the incarnate Logos and the man glorified by the resurrection, who reveals the Father with authority. At the end of this first itinerary of faith of the disciples, we can see how John put terminology on their lips concerning the deepening of the mystery of the person of Jesus, which, in fact, took place throughout the whole earthly affair with the Lord until his resurrection.

4. For the concreteness of the journey

What John Bosco experienced in his dream and understood at the end of his life and what Jesus revealed to Nathanael and read in the light of his resurrection show us that the mystery of the name and meaning of life is understood from the end. Just as the meaning of a film cannot be deduced from the opening scene, but only from the final one, in the same way from the moment that 'we are time', the dynamics of a life are understood gradually and in a constant process of growth. From an educational point of view, the human virtue most frequently mentioned in the New Testament and consequent to being time is patience or perseverance (upomonè), particularly suited to living more like sowers than harvesters, more like farmers than shopkeepers. The term (upo=under and minus=to stay) literally indicates Mary's attitude of 'staying under the cross', of being submissive to the Father's will. Thus, as in the dream, Mary will reveal to us the name of her Son in the interweaving of her and our history.

Francesco Marcoccio, SDB

NAZARETH, GOD'S FAMILY

5. JOSEPH AND MARY, A MAN AND A WOMAN

The Holy Family arrives in Nazareth after having escaped the devastations of Herod and after a time of exile in a foreign country. Wars and migrations happen not only today. Every age has its dramas and contradictions, and every family, today as yesterday, is affected by them. Even Joseph and Mary experienced their fatherhood and motherhood with hardship. Let us go once again to Nazareth to *contemplate in evangelical light the truth of man and woman according to the eternal will of God and the events of the times.*

The sexual revolution in the modern narrative

If the problem of ancient times was dynastic violence, the problem of modern times is ideological violence. From domination over things and people, we move on to the negation of things and people passed off as self-evident. From the Marxist maxim of equality and the Nazi *myth of race*, we have now moved seamlessly to the *myth of the pure relationship and the pure individual, devoid of natural and supernatural foundations, without family roots and gender identity*, oblivious of all tradition and bent on our own desires. The fallout on family ties is immediate and devastating, because man is with all evidence a social being!

And indeed, it is not difficult to recognise that *the two greatest tragedies of our time are abortion and the death of the father, the physical slaughter of children and the cultural slaughter of fathers.* In addition to the mortification of the maternal destination of women and the paternal destination of men, there is now an attempt to level out, devalue or even *eliminate the natural difference between the sexes*: being male or female would no longer be an objective fact, but a subjective preference. All this in open contradiction to the common sense of all time and today's scientific acquisitions: there is in fact no doubt that what a child needs is a family, a father and mother clearly distinct in their sexual position and clearly united in their conjugal love.

Those who accompany the educational, psychological and spiritual journeys of young people see this well: **the confusion of family roles and sexual identities**, i.e. the confusion as to what a father and a mother really are, and the obscuring of what the specific gift and task of a man and a woman are, seriously *compromises the affective maturation of boys and girls, not without disorientation on the part of the adults themselves*: Thus affection is disrespected, dialogue turns into conflict, sentiment descends into resentment, and intimacy gives way to estrangement. Here is the result of the sexual revolution: not true liberation, but the inability of men and women to understand what they want and need. As Elizabeth Badinter has observed, making a careful review of the history of feminism, the changes brought about by the 1968 protest and the sexual revolution 'destroyed in a short time five thousand years of distinction of roles and universes'. In reality, Pope Francis affectionately says in one of his beautiful catecheses on the family, 'to solve their relationship problems, man and woman must instead talk to each other more, listen to each other more, know each other more, love each other more'.

Sex education in the biblical account

One need only pause a little in Nazareth to rediscover the grammar of the sexes necessary for the phrasing of love. The biblical narrative, which presents salvation history as a succession of generations, is always careful to emphasise the difference between men and women. It does not even need to give it great prominence, *because it is the most natural and most sacred thing in the world: it is the difference that makes*



us exist and makes us the image and likeness of God!

Meanwhile, one of the most surprising facts of the sacred story in comparison to the narratives of other religions, is that **God is definitively revealed in the space of a family**. In it, the Son of God becomes man as a boy, not as an androgyne, and Mary is presented as the virgin wife of Joseph, a man of the house of David. Remarkably, Mary is hailed as the 'full of grace', while Joseph is referred to as the 'son of David': the one experiences a divine pregnancy, the other ensures a **historical descent**. The language is markedly different: Joseph is foreshadowed in the prophetic words addressed by Nathan to King David: 'I will secure after thee the seed out of thy womb, and I will make his kingdom established. He shall build a house in my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever (2 Sam 7:11-13). Instead, it is the angel Gabriel who speaks to Mary in the name of God: 'Fear not, Mary, for you have found favour with God. Behold, you will conceive a son, give birth to him, and call his name Jesus' (Lk. 1:30-31). As we can see, Mary cooperates with God in the order of generation, Joseph in the order of generations. Mary, like every woman as such, is tenderness, while Joseph, like every man as such, offers stability. Ultimately, God enhances by his own revelation that fact of reality experienced in the family: that the woman is herself the man's home, while the man builds her a house.

The woman's maternal orientation is ultimately a direct symbol of God's mercy (in Hebrew, 'mercy' literally means 'mother's womb!'), while the man's paternal orientation better represents God's justice. Mercy and justice are then one in God, because God exercises his justice exactly in optics and in terms of mercy. Faced with the interpenetration of God's justice and mercy, we understand by analogy the common fruitfulness of man and woman: In it, the man cannot be fruitful without the woman, nor the woman without the man, nor the man without giving himself totally to her, nor the woman without welcoming him totally.

As Card. Ratzinger wrote in his beautiful letter on the collaboration of man and woman in the Church, *the woman is called to contain, the man to transmit*. Or, as a fine theologian like L. Bouyer used to say, 'the man represents, the woman is': the one represents, because only the Father who is in heaven is Life and the source of life, while the other is in itself the host

of this life. In this sense, the woman is always the *owner* of her relations, while the man is often called upon to be *ministerial*, to represent another: the woman's physical pain in the mystery of generation and the man's relative physical 'marginality' are in this sense not trivial things, but are the object of specific feelings and educational care, which are usually completely absent in the modern formative processes! And yet these are simple things, written and explained by God in our very flesh, and not only in the evidence of the *receptive form* of the female body and the *active form* of the male body, but also in the greater propensity of women to *relationship and men to action, in the connective inclination* present in the brain of the one and the distinctive inclination present in the brain of the other. Thanks to these wonderful gender characteristics, man and woman can mature together: the woman *sensitises* the man's soul and the man *stabilises* the woman's soul, for otherwise, as we too often see, the woman will remain a victim of her own complexity and inner richness, and the man will remain dispersed in things and unconcerned with people. This is why the Pope says that the craft of the family is above all this: "perhaps the greatest mission of a man and a woman in love is this: to make each other more of a man and more of a woman. To make each other grow is to help the other shape his or her own identity' (AL 221).

Roberto Carelli, SDB

HUMBLE AND HIGHEST CREATURE

In our Pilgrimage with Mary, Teacher of Integrale Ecology

6. MARY, BUSH THAT BURNS BUT NOT CONSUMED

Energy is everything, yet it is at the same time something extremely elusive. Our life depends in many of its fundamental aspects on the availability of energy, especially electricity. Yet energy cannot be seen or touched, except in its effects: light, heat, movement...

“God said, let there be light! And light was”: this is the first word/action performed by God according to the book of Genesis. **Light, therefore, is the first creature.** The decision to start creating from light has its own logic: how could we see what is there and what is missing in the universe if there was no light?

In nature, human beings draw light primarily from the stars, which God himself created not only to illuminate, but also to regulate the passage of time. It is light and warmth from which, in ancient times, human beings could benefit but not control, and this is precisely why the stars, in ancient religious traditions, were gods or symbols of gods: to whom we owe everything, but who are beyond our control.

Light and heat are also available to the human being in fire, which, however, as an element of creation, is still an ambivalent reality, capable of inexorably destroying what it comes into contact with. **Fire must be controlled in order to serve the good.** Only a controlled fire becomes an instrument of life: to illuminate, to heat, to cook, to purify, all indispensable elements for a life worthy of being human.

Throughout Scripture, the person who proves most adept at wielding this power is God himself.

In the book of Exodus, the people on their way are guided by God during the night by a pillar of fire (Ex. 13:21). In the account of Isaiah's vocation, an angel purifies the prophet's mouth by touching it with a burning coal (Is 6:66). In the Gospel of John, the Risen Jesus lights a fire and cooks fish for his friends on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Jn 21:9). Luke's gospel reports this expression of Jesus: “I have come to bring fire to the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! There is a baptism that I must receive; and how anxious I am, until it is accomplished!” (Lk. 12:49-50).

Jesus is passionate about the salvation of humanity. He is impatient that God's love may spread like fire over the whole earth. As in the preaching of the Baptist (Lk. 3:16), fire is also associated with baptism in Jesus' words. The disciples and apostles, gathered together at Pentecost, receive this baptism of fire, which sets them aflame with passion: it enables them to make themselves understood by all, it impels them to go out, to set out to spread the good news of salvation throughout the earth (Acts 2:3).

Fire, together with wind, another reality beyond the control of human beings, is therefore associated with the Spirit, that is, with love. And in this association, the nature of that energy is revealed to us, which, to quote Dante, alone has the power to move the sun and the stars. The Spirit is given to believers as a source of unity, as a force that enables them to face difficulties and overcome darkness, all kinds of darkness, even the darkness of death.

Elisabetta De Luca's 'Madonna unveiled' seems to be woven in fire. Her body, advancing towards the viewer, seems to be moving out of the limbs of a flame. Her arms raise, to the right and left, a single tongue of fire from which her face emerges and which simultaneously acts as a veil, veiling and revealing her fiery nature. Likewise, **Mary is a woman of fire, all filled with the Spirit and love.**

Not for nothing did the Fathers of the Church recognise in the biblical image of the burning bush a prefiguration of the mystery of Mary's divine maternity. For, how is it possible that a creature can contain the Creator in her womb without being burnt by his power, annihilated by his greatness? It is possible because **God's power is the power of love** (1 Jn. 1).

The story of Moses, on the other hand, is also a mystery of the encounter between human frailty and the power of God. In his youth, when he was still living in Pharaoh's court, he had experienced the fire of passion for the salvation of his people and was burnt by that fire. In order to defend one of his brothers, he had killed a man and this fact had forced him into exile (Ex. 2:11-21). In his maturity, at

Humble and highest creature

the very place of his exile, God manifests himself to Moses to reveal to him his passion for the people he has created.

The fire of God's passion for the people, however, is a fire that does not consume!



How is this prodigy possible?

It is possible because passionate love, which the Greeks called 'eros', in God is never separated from gratuitous and merciful love, or 'agape'. It is a mystery to which human beings are invited to approach with respect, taking off their sandals.

Respecting God, however, does not mean being afraid of Him and His power, but rather the desire to meet Him authentically

and recognise Him for what He is, without manipulation. The Church Fathers also used the image of the burning bush to describe the prodigy of God's incarnation in Jesus: how is it possible for divinity to fully inhabit humanity? Because God is love, he is fire that heats and purifies, but does not consume.

Thanks to the incarnation of the Son, the fear of God's omnipotence is dispelled forever. He is a child, crying and unable to speak. He entrusts himself totally to our hands and our voice to announce his salvation in the world. Just as He entrusted Himself to Moses to deliver the people from Egypt, just as He did with Mary in the mystery of the incarnation, this child entrusts Himself today to each one of us, He is present in all those we meet, in them He awaits us, so that we may do our part, collaborate with Him in the regeneration of the world (Lk 9:48).

The transition to modernity was made possible by the development of the ability to control and even produce energy autonomously, no longer depending on the sun, the wind or the whims of fire. The ambivalent, not to say ambiguous, outcomes of technological development, however, remind us of the unsustainability of a manipulation of reality created without limits and boundaries.

We are maturing in the realisation that no one is saved alone.

The energy of love, which is the Spirit, is the only unambiguous force, which under no circumstances destroys. This is the fire that burns but does not consume.

We need energy to live, but we need it all the more that the criterion governing its distribution is fraternal love, which is also respect for neighbour and nature, social justice, solidarity. Let us ask Mary, the woman of fire, who most of all knew the secrets of the power of God's love, to be our guide again and always.

Linda Pocher, FMA

FAMILY EVENTS

Salesian Family Spirituality days – Bangalore (India) Province

The Salesian Province of India-Bangalore (INK) celebrated the **Salesian Family Day**, which was held on two separate occasions: on 26th November in the State of Karnataka, at the 'Don Bosco Ajjanahalli' mission, and on 3rd December in the State of Kerala, at 'Don Bosco, Vaduthala'. More than 350 members of the Salesian Family belonging to different groups - Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Salesian Cooperators, members of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA), Volunteers of Don Bosco, Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians, Catechist Sisters of Mary Immaculate Help of Christians and Sisters of Mary Auxiliatrix (SMA) - participated. Numerous activities were organised over the two days, and participants were able to experience an atmosphere of authentic



family communion. The presence of Fr. Jose Thomas Koyickal, provincial of the Bangalore Province, and Fr. Shalbin Kalanchery Paul, Vice-Provincial, added further joy and closeness among the members of the Salesian Family.

Poland: *Walking together as Salesian Family of Central and North Europe Region*

From 22nd to 25th November 2023, the meeting of the Provincial Delegates of the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) with the Representatives of the other groups of the Salesian Family of the Central and Northern European Region took place in Krakow, followed by the celebrations in the different regions of the Salesian World in October and November.

The participants came from the Provinces of Poland, Germany, North Belgium and Holland, Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Malta. The groups present were SDB, FMA, Salesian Cooperators (ASSCC), Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA), Past Pupils of Don Bosco (ExA-DB) and Past Pupils of the FMA (ExA-FMA), Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB), Community of the Mission of Don Bosco (CMB) and the Contemplative Fraternity of Mary of Nazareth (FCMN).

'Walking together as Salesian Family' was the theme of the meeting, as in the other regions of the Congregation. The reflection on the situation of the Salesian Family in the Region, on the problems faced and the sharing of many good practices that are being implemented, indicated some challenges and specified some conclusions for the journey in



the coming years. These include:

- Starting from the reality experienced by young people and their families, a reality contemplated through the eyes of God. Neither criticism nor nostalgia for past times. On the contrary, a proactive attitude that knows how to bring into play our profound charismatic educational and evangelising identity.
- Maintain a close working relationship with those in charge of Youth Ministry in the various projects, particularly those to which the Salesian Family Groups can make a specific contribution, such as accompaniment and vocational guidance.

Family events

- Engage in everything that concerns shared formation with the laity, in the deepening of the knowledge of the Salesian Family and the charismatic specificity of the Groups that make it up, and in the formation of their members, especially the Lay Groups.

- To give new impetus to the Provincial and local Consultations as instruments of reflection and revitalisation of the Salesian Family in the territory, and to study a proposal for a more effective coordination of the Salesian Family in the Region, taking into account its cultural and religious characteristics.

The meeting allowed ample time to share the identity and mission of the VDB, the FCMN and the CMB, which are preparing to launch a mission in Ukraine.

The meeting was co-ordinated by Fr. Joan Lluís

Playà, Central Delegate of the Rector Major for the Secretariat for the Salesian Family, and was animated by members of the Secretariat team: Bro. Dominic Nguyen, World Delegate for Salesian Cooperators and Past Pupils; Sr. Leslye Sandigo, General Councillor for the Salesian Family; and Sr. Lucrecia Uribe FMA, World Delegate for Salesian Cooperators, and Sr. Gabriela Patiño FMA.

The combination of reflections and communications, together with moments of prayer and family togetherness led to a valuable experience of communion and spirituality among all the participants. They were days that nourished the service of animation and accompaniment to be carried out in an increasingly synodal manner, days in which to breathe and live the precious gift of the Salesian Family that the Holy Spirit, through Don Bosco, has given to the Church for the benefit of the young and the people.

Portugal: *International Congress of Mary Help of Christians 2024 at Fatima*

In the spirit of solidarity and mutual aid that distinguishes us, a **'Solidarity Fund'** has been set up by the Turin Primary ADMA to help the groups most in need.

All donations can be sent either by:

-ADMA bank transfer IBAN IT16 V030 6909 6061 0000 0130 575

- or by following the instructions at the following link <https://www.admadonbosco.org>

For any contribution, requests or for clarification, group leaders can write to: adma@admadonbosco.org

The amount received will be distributed among the various groups that request. There will not be contribution to individual participants.

“The Lord loves a cheerful giver”



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

Fatima 29 August - 1 September 2024

Registration now open

www.mariaauxiliadora2024.pt

INTENTIONS FOR MONTHLY PRAYER

We wish to unite the prayers of all Adma groups worldwide for a special intention.

In this month, we will pray ***for peace in the world*** with the words of Pope Francis.

This is a dark hour

This is a dark hour, Mother. And at this time, we surrender ourselves in your bright eyes and rely on your heart...

Mother, we alone cannot do anything, without your Son we cannot do anything. But you bring us back to Jesus, who is our peace...



You, who reveal the tenderness of the Lord, make us witnesses of his consolation. Mother, You, Queen of Peace, pour into our hearts the harmony of God.

Amen.

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@admadonbosco.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.admadonbosco.org, and/ or in other Adma websites, accompanied by a caption.*