



EDITORIAL

“HAPPY FEAST TO ALL” (153°)

Dear ADMA friends,

We have reached the month of April, full of spring, joy, colours... but above all celebration. For us Christians, the most important feast of the year is the Lord's EASTER, the passage of Our Lord Jesus Christ from death to life. By loosening the bonds of slavery and sin, he has given the definitive victory of human existence through his love. This is why we are celebrating with such joy this event that is so important in filling and giving deep meaning to our lives. Our experience of this joy is so deep that we cannot keep quiet and we want to transmit it and share it with everyone else. These are the days of sacramental celebrations, of exchanging our joy wishing each other a happy Easter and of deepening our faith in the Risen Lord.

It is very meaningful to contemplate Mary, the mother of Jesus who always accompanied the faith of the disciples. She, who has always been close to people's suffering, comes close in these days and consoles, comforts, listens, welcomes... with her sincere and persevering prayer, she hopes and waits with trust when so many doubt. Mary, in the Word of God, presents herself as a model for the disciples; she believes in the Father's love, opens her heart to receive the great gift of the Holy Spirit and allows herself to be transformed by the power of the Resurrection.

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For us, Mary's children, there is another event to celebrate, an important feast for all ADMA members: the feast of our birth, the day of our foundation. The 18th of April every year is an occasion to remember our origins, how we were born, to go back to the source which is Don Bosco's passionate heart towards Mary Help of Christians.



This date is an opportunity to renew our loving remembrance of all the people who have transmitted the devotion to Mary in different places, thanking them for giving us this beautiful gift. It is an invitation to remember our Marian and Salesian identity. It is a date that is celebrated in the Easter season, which is why we are invited to take a moment and place ourselves at the feet of Our Lady of Don Bosco and ask the Lord to enlighten us with the light of his Easter, his mercy and his forgiveness, so that we may have a heart that is pleasing to him, to remember and renew our desire to love and serve.

For us, this feast is an Ecclesial event, because it was the Archbishop of Turin, Msgr. Riccardi di Netro, who approved the regulations presented by Don Bosco. In this way, the Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians is not only Salesian but has been recognized by the Church and thus presents itself to the world as a public association of lay faithful. Thus, it is an invitation to strengthen our communion with Pope Francis, lived it through our communion with the presbyters and the people of God. In our present time of divisions, living united as a large Christian family is a big challenge for all. At the same time, it is also an invitation to remember those who are most in need, in poverty, in war, in sickness etc. May this feast help us to revive the ecclesial sense of our Salesian and Marian identity.

Dear friends, we invite you all, present in different parts of the world, to experience this feast with joy, united in prayer before Mary, in communion with all the local groups, in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, and to celebrate together as Mary's beloved children.

*Renato Valera, President of
ADMA Valdocco.*

*Alejandro Guevara, Spiritual Animator
ADMA Valdocco.*

FORMATION SECTION

FAMILY MINISTRY: FAMILIES JOURNEYING TOGETHER

One of the most intense highlights of *Amoris Laetitia* is that the Church recognises the family as 'the principal SUBJECT of family ministry'. In the marriage celebration, the bride and the groom are the ministers. The deacon or the priest only receive and ratify the consent they exchange. It is the core of the 'sacrament', the 'yes' between Christ and the Church.



200. "The Synod Fathers emphasized that Christian families, by the grace of the sacrament of matrimony, are the principal agents of the family apostolate, above all through 'their joy-filled witness as domestic churches'

Chapter VI asks the family, as the subject of family pastoral care, to ACCOMPANY: it is the family that becomes close to other families, in all the stages of their formation, stability and growth, above all, in moments of crisis, in difficult moments and in painful situations, the old-age or the moment of facing the mystery of death.

The family is the GOOD SHEPHERD: like Mary at Cana, it is attentive to the needs of others; like the Good Samaritan - on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho - it is ready to help its suffering neighbours; it is the One who sits at the well where the Samaritan woman comes to draw water and gives words of salvation; it is the One who writes on the ground and does not judge but invites you to change your life while those around you already have stones in their hands ready to stone you; it is the One who walks beside you on Easter Sunday evening and restores hope and joy to those who are disappointed and dismayed. Pope Francis insists on this closeness, on the presence to walk together from the very beginning of the life of a new family:

*"I encourage Christian communities to recognise the great benefit that they themselves receive from supporting engaged couples as they grow in love."
(AL207)*

If it is a commitment for the whole Church community, it is all the more a ministry, a gift/service, especially for families and spouses.



208. With the help of missionary families, the couple's own families and a variety of pastoral resources, ways should also be found to offer a remote preparation that, by example and good advice...For every couple, marriage preparation begins at birth. What they received from their family should prepare them to know themselves and to make a full and definitive commitment. Those best prepared for marriage are probably those who learned what Christian marriage is from their own parents, who chose each other unconditionally and daily renew this decision. In this sense, pastoral initiatives aimed at helping married couples to grow in love and in the Gospel of the family also help their children, by preparing them for their future married life.

'Presence' is a fundamental dimension of the pedagogy/spirituality we have inherited from Don Bosco, to the point that Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, the Rector Major, did not hesitate to use the concept of the

'sacrament of presence', to say how important and life-giving it is to be and walk alongside young people, just as Don Bosco did and taught us to do.

The same language and above all the same reality comes into play in the accompaniment of families and of married couples. It is a formidable support at the beginning of the journey but it is all the more so at various stages in which each couple and family lives.

211. Both short-term and long-term marriage preparation should ensure that the couple do not view the wedding ceremony as the end of the road, but instead embark upon marriage as a life-long calling based on a firm and realistic decision to face all trials and difficult moments together. The pastoral care of engaged and married couples should be centred on the marriage bond, assisting couples not only to deepen their love but also to overcome problems and difficulties.

There is an old-fashioned word that captures well this learning and acquiring skills: **training**. The reference to sports is not out of place, because already in Paul's letters, this 'concept' used athletes as an example: "Whoever is an athlete is temperate in all things" (1 Cor: 9:25)

Cultivating love and overcoming hardships is a learning process that one never ends, both on a personal level, as couples and in bringing up children.

Temperance was so important to Don Bosco that in his writings to the Salesians he used as his motto both 'Da mihi animas cetera tolle' and 'Work and temperance'. For him, they had the same weight.

Being moderate, inspired by knowing how to sacrifice oneself for the good of others, is an indispensable factor for growing in love as a family, whatever our position in it may be, husband or wife, parent or child, brother or sister. Not being a family as it should be leads to crises that backtrack and divide, instead of making us unite and walk ahead.

In the Charter of the Charismatic Identity of the Salesian Family, there is an article that carries as the title the motto of Don Bosco: Work and Temperance (art. 34)

*“The exercise of apostolic charity includes the need for conversion and purification, in other words, the death of the old man/woman so that the new man/woman may be born, live and grow, who in the image of Jesus, the Apostle of the Father, is ready to sacrifice himself/herself every day in apostolic work. Giving oneself means emptying oneself and allowing oneself to be filled by God so as to give Him to others. **Detachment, renunciation, sacrifice are essential elements, not only because of any taste for asceticism, but fundamentally by the logic of love.**”*

This character of love, which is communicated first of all by example both in the family and among families, gives the energy and strength needed for the journey, with its seasons and stages, outlined by Pope Francis in a precise way in 7 stages (numbered within the quote to identify them more easily):



220. This process occurs in various stages that call for generosity and sacrifice. (1) The first powerful feelings of attraction give way to the realization (2) that the other is now a part of my life. (3) The pleasure of belonging to one another (4) leads to seeing life as a common project, (5) putting the other's happiness ahead of my own, (6) and realizing with joy that this marriage enriches society. As love matures, (7) it also learns to 'negotiate'. Far from anything selfish or calculating, such negotiation is an exercise of mutual love, an interplay of give and take, for the good of the family.

In the home, decisions cannot be made unilaterally, since each spouse shares responsibility for the family; yet each home is unique and each marriage will find an arrangement that works best.

*It is important to take note of the last sentence: **'each home is unique and each marriage will find an arrangement that works best.'***

At each new stage of married life, there is a need to sit down and renegotiate agreements, so that there will be no winners and losers, but rather two winners.

Accompanying is never a substitute for the other, whether it be an individual, a married couple or a family. Here we come back to what we discussed last month:

“Fostering growth means helping a person to shape his or her own identity. Love is thus a kind of craftsmanship” (AL 221).

In the life of a family, there is a sacred moment when discernment and choice in love is experienced in a unique way with an openness to the mystery that goes far beyond the mere life of the couple: the choice to communicate life to a new creature who will be first and foremost a child of God.

“The parents themselves and no one else should ultimately make this judgment in the sight of God” (AL 222).

Children make us feel one with the Salesian spirit that Don Bosco communicated to us: "It is enough that you are young for me to love you".

Pope Francis asks us to give them absolute priority and the fullest accompaniment in love, all the more so when they find themselves in difficult situations for which they are not responsible but have to carry/suffer the greatest burden.

246. *The Church, while appreciating the situations of conflict that are part of marriage, cannot fail to speak out on behalf of those who are most vulnerable: the children who often suffer in silence. Today, “despite our seemingly evolved sensibilities and all our refined psychological analyses, I ask myself if we are not becoming numb to the hurt in children’s souls... Do we feel the immense psychological burden borne by children in families where the members mistreat and hurt one another, to the point of breaking the bonds of marital fidelity?” Such harmful experiences do not help children to grow in the maturity needed to make definitive commitments. For this reason, Christian communities must not abandon divorced parents who have entered a new union, but should include and support them in their efforts to bring up their children.*

“How can we encourage those parents to do everything possible to raise their children in the Christian life, to give them an example of committed and practical faith, if we keep them at arm’s length from the life of the community, as if they were somehow excommunicated? We must keep from acting in a way that addseven more to the burdens that children in these situations already have to bear!”

This is an appeal made to everyone. It must be lived all the more fully by those who are inspired by the charism of Don Bosco and his mission. He made the choice of the neediest young people the driving force behind all his tireless apostolic activity.

Helping heal the wounds of parents and supporting them spiritually is also beneficial for children, who need the familiar face of the Church to see them through this traumatic experience.

Points for personal reflection and sharing

- To be a GOOD SHEPHERD as a couple and as a family: how much is this mission part of my/our way of understanding our life at home? Is there any couple or family ‘on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho’ near my house, waiting for us, to reach out as a good shepherd dressed as a good Samaritan?
- ‘Sacrament of presence’ as a family. Reflecting on my/our life story, can I/we go back to those couples/families who have left an important mark on my/our path? What can I learn from them and imitate in my/our life today?
- ‘Work and TEMPERANCE’: what ‘practices of self-giving’, in the daily rhythm of life within the confines of the home could help me/us become more and more capable of loving?
- Be welcoming towards all children, especially those from families in difficult situations. How much is already being done, and what else can be done?

KNOWING OURSELVES

How beautiful to meet people

In the last few weeks, we had the opportunity to take part in some video calls organized by Fr. Alejandro and Sr. Lucrezia for different regions of the world. As part of the process taken up a few months ago, we are trying to meet with the various SDB and FMA spiritual animators and delegates and the lay representatives of the various local ADMA groups. In this way, we were able to get to know and share the beautiful experiences of growth and apostolate in South America, Northern Europe, part of Africa and Asia and other regions of the world. A sincere thanks to every one of you for your availability to meet us in spite of the technical and linguistic difficulties and to make us share in your journeys, joys and difficulties. As Primary ADMA of Turin, we are attentive and we want to understand what can help us to grow together in our journey and what we can do concretely to collaborate with the various local realities. Each meeting was accompanied by a document which was prepared earlier and translated into various languages in order to help formation and inspire discussion. The first theme was 'Identity and Mission' of ADMA while the second was 'The Role of the Spiritual Animator'. Now we are waiting for comments, suggestions and proposals from all the participants. There will be other meetings which will be occasions for making this mutual exchange regular and systematic.

It was very enriching to see and share, though online. The richness of our Association, spread and incarnated in different parts of the world just as our Father Don Bosco dreamed it would be, always touches us and makes us happy. It will be even more effective if we can meet in person, perhaps at the International Congress of Mary Help of Christians in Portugal in 2024, or in the Basilica at Valdocco, or in your own countries.

For now, we keep you all in our prayers at the feet of Our Lady in Turin and wish you a joyful Easter.



We look forward to seeing you on the next video calls, reminding you that you can always write to us at adma@admadonbosco.org
 We invite you to follow the news on the website www.admadonbosco.org.

REGULATIONS

ARTICLE 9 – COMMUNION WITH THE SHRINE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS IN TURIN



The Association of Mary Help of Christians is inseparably linked to the Shrine of Turin-Valdocco. Our Lady, in fact, not only intervened in the construction of the Basilica but also extended her patronage from there all over the world. According to Don Bosco's testimony:

"It is Mary who built her own house. Hic domus mea, inde gloria mea".

From this blessed place, she still spreads the light of her grace and her effective intercession.

The ADMA is therefore called to keep itself united to this sacred place: the link between the Association and the Shrine is fundamental. It is in fact the only group of the Salesian Family which has its historical and organisational headquarters in Turin at the Shrine of Valdocco because of the special bond with the Basilica.

The Primary ADMA is called in a special way to take care of and make visible this spiritual and historical link. As we will examine in more detail in article 15, the Primary ADMA plays the role of animating, uniting and keeping the Association worldwide informed.

Each local Association, therefore, cultivates a special communion of dialogue and solidarity with the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Turin - Valdocco and with the Primary ADMA; the latter will propose all those means that facilitate such communion.

The relationship between the local groups with the Basilica and the Primary ADMA is characterised by a spiritual bond which is shared and expressed through contacts, visits, different forms of communication and information, and concrete gestures of solidarity. It is fundamental to maintain and cultivate this relationship on the part of every group and every provincial and national coordination body.

Andrea e Maria Adele Damiani

400th DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

"COMMUNICATION IS A MATTER OF THE HEART": "ST FRANCIS DE SALES COMMUNICATOR. INNER PILGRIMAGE, WISDOM IN THE ART OF COMMUNICATING".



Francis is well known as the saint of gentleness. Gentleness, in terms of communication, in the general context of his work, can be understood as his great intuitive and emotional ability to listen to the echo of people's lives in his interpersonal relationship, to

understand the concrete meaning of things, to observe people, to care and to protect. Integral communication is manifested not so much "in argumentative or discursive elaboration, but in trying to communicate in tune with the frequency of events, in the language that translates the specific visibility and resonance of things". When he talks about how to give a good sermon, he makes some statements that show his profound emotional intelligence: "I cannot speak of God without emotion", "our words must come from the heart rather than from the lips. One may say fine words, but the heart speaks to the heart while the mouth only to the ears". Every sermon should always be "a sermon of love".

For St. Francis de Sales, the human relationship must be natural and manifest paternal and fraternal spontaneity. This attitude allows the communicator to be close to the people, arousing a sense of joy. It allows openness and trust in the relationship and puts the person in a state of acceptance of the message.

In spontaneity, people open up and manifest themselves with gratitude and joy. In this context, Francis said: "I have just come from catechism, where we enjoyed with our children making them laugh a little, making fun of the masks and dances; I was in a good mood and a large assembly encouraged me making me feel one with them... May God make me a true child in innocence and simplicity".

Communicating is a gift and a commitment, building on a human, spiritual and cultural level. Study is also prayer. He insisted a lot with his clergy on the indispensable necessity of training, education and the solid formation of his priests. "Science," he insisted, "is the eighth sacrament of the hierarchy of the Church". From his own experience of study and scientific insights, he knew that in order to dialogue with culture and respond to the spiritual and pastoral needs of the cultural context in which he lived, the spirituality of learning was very important.

Taken from [link](#)

FAMILY EVENTS

ALL UNITED FOR PEACE



Turin - On the 24th March, the monthly commemoration day of Mary Help of Christians, the ADMA Primary lived a very intense moment of international prayer with the whole ADMA worldwide and the Salesian Family in the Basilica to invoke through Mary's intercession the gift of peace in all countries and especially in Ukraine. Fr Daniel Antúnez, SDB, President of Missioni Don Bosco, and Fr Danijel Vidovic, in charge of Hospitality in Valdocco, in the concluding goodnight, shared about their journey to the Salesian communities of Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine (Lviv) and the hosting of a group of refugees in Valdocco.

At this link, [il link](#) il video integrale you can watch the complete video of the prayer service.

FMA's BRING NEW LIFE



On 27th February 2022 at Maria Bhavan - Bableshtar (India - Mumbai), 13 members of the ADMA of their Unit made their Promise. They were very well prepared for this great occasion by Sr. Anita Gracias, their local Spiritual Animator. Fr. Richard D'Silva, Rector and Parish Priest of Don Bosco Church, Savedi-Ahmednagar, celebrated the Eucharist making it very meaningful and inspiring with his powerful homily on Don Bosco's dream of the Two Pillars. These simple ladies from a rural background were overwhelmed with deep joy when they took the Promise and received their badges. They expressed their feelings of gratitude to the Sisters of the Community and to Sr. Catherine Fernandes, Spiritual Animator of the ADMA, for this unique blessing which the good Lord has given them, to be Devotees of Mary Help of Christians. The new members were warmly welcomed into the Salesian Family.

NEW ADMA COUNCIL, CARACAS-VENEZUELA



On the 12th of February this year, in the Salesian parish of Mary Help of Christians of Boleita, Salesian Province of Dan Lucas in Venezuela, the new Council of ADMA Venezuela held the Inauguration of the new year, in the presence of the representatives of the local centres of ADMA Boleita, ADMA La Dolorita and ADMA La Vega.

Robert Eduardo González Gómez

NEW GROUP AT PARMA



On the 24th of March, as every 24th of the month, we gathered at the feet of Mary Help of Christians to pray and ask for protection for all families, especially for the most troubled and needy ones. Particularly we thanked Mother Mary for having inspired our ADMA group to be formed at Parma and to be officially recognized in our Salesian parish of San Benedetto. After the Eucharistic Adoration and a reflection by our spiritual animator Fr. Carlo Montelaghi Sdb from the Salesian Community at Parma, we concluded the day with a fraternal celebration together with another our spiritual pillar, Sr. Emilia Sperandio FMA, whom we can never thank enough for the hospitality she and the community offered us in their little chapel for our

meetings.

WE REQUEST EVERYONE TO SEND US AN ARTICLE, A PHOTO OF THE FORMATION MEETING, THE COMMEMORATION OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS ON 24TH OF THE MONTH, A VOLUNTARY SERVICE THAT IS CARRIED OUT

The article (format.doc, **max 1200 characters** without counting spaces) and a maximum of 2 photographs (digital format jpg and not less than 1000px in capacity), with a title and/or a brief description, should be sent to adma@admadonbosco.org.

It is necessary to specify in the subject line of the email "Family Chronicle" and in the text, the author's details (name, surname, location of the photo, Association it belongs to, city, country).

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