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## EDITORIAL

### MARIAN CONGRESS AT FATIMA

Dear friends of the ADMA,

From the 29th August to the 1st September 2024, Fatima will host the 9th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians. Promoted by our Association and open to all the groups of the Salesian Family, it aims to make known, deepen and spread the devotion to "Our Lady of Don Bosco".

With open invitation to all groups of the Salesian Family, the International Congress of Mary Help of Christians celebrates two charismatic aspects of the Salesian spirit: Devotion to Eucharist and devotion to Mary Help of Christians.

The first Congress was convoked by Rev. Fr. Egidio Viganò, Don Bosco's 7th Successor, and was held in Turin in 1988, the centenary of Don Bosco's death. Since then, seven more International Congresses have been held.

In the last of these meetings which took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2019, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of ADMA, it was announced that the 9th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians would be held in Fatima, a Marian pilgrimage place par excellence.

The theme chosen for the 9th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians, *"I will give you*

*the Teacher*", reflecting on *Don Bosco's Dream at the age of 9*, whose 200th anniversary is celebrated in 2024. Reflecting on that dream, the aim is to make Mary better known as Mother and Teacher who accompanies and guides the whole Salesian Family on the path towards Jesus and towards the young people most in need.

The formation itinerary, conceived as a preparation for the Congress, will seek to deepen the "Dream at the age of 9" and will be divided into five themes in ten stages.

The first theme in the dream is, of course, the Oratorian mission: here the educational charism and the Preventive System as a path to holiness will be analysed. (*see ADMA online in September and October*).

The second theme will stress the mystery of life as vocation and mission, something that is in us but greater than us. It will therefore reflect on the theme of faith, vocational discernment, spiritual struggle and Christian life. (*see ADMA online in November and December*).

In the third theme, the invitation is to reflect on the experience of God as presence and mystery, an experience that involves the themes of encounter and proclamation, conversion and faith, contemplation and action, liturgy and apostolate.

The fourth theme presents the style of the Salesian charism, loving-kindness. The objective will be to promote a pedagogy of love, totally inspired by God's charity, and therefore a relational style characterised by humility and gentleness, benevolence and affability.

The last theme provides an opportunity to reflect on the maternal face of the Church in the whole of God's plan.

Registration is individual and can be done through the form available on the congress website, where all the details and costs of participation are also available: <https://mariaauxiliadora2024.pt>

Considered by St. John Paul II as 'the altar of the world', Fatima, and more precisely the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, is the spiritual centre of Portugal. In 1917, between May and October, Our



Lady appeared there six times, manifesting herself to three simple and poor shepherd children: Francisco and his sister Jacinta Marto and their cousin Lúcia dos Santos. The Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary in Fatima responds to the request made by Our Lady in the apparition of 13 October 1917: "I want to tell you to build a chapel here in my honour, because I am the Lady of the Rosary". The Little Chapel of Apparitions was erected in 1919 on the site of the 1917 apparitions at Cova da Iria and, since then, the shrine has been developed in response to the large influx of pilgrims.

We proceed on our journey in communion with the entire Salesian Family. We wish you a fruitful novena and feast of Don Bosco and we look forward to seeing you in Fatima.

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

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

## FORMATIVE PATH

### The mystery of the name: *AS YOU LIVE, YOU ARE KNOWN*

#### 1. The name in the nine-year-old's dream

If we try to see the theme of the 'name' in the dream of the nine-year-old, we notice, first of all, the appearance of the venerable man with the shining face whom little John cannot look at because he is blinded. The man nobly dressed in white puts an end to the violent squabble between the laughing and blaspheming children and little John. The mysterious person peremptorily calls him by name and imposes an order on him. "He called me by name": it is a fundamental biblical reference, when God calls by name, he always entrusts a mission (Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Mary, Peter, Saul...). It indicates that the initiative is always God's who first pronounces the name and makes it real. "God said light and the light was". God calls John Bosco by name and indicates to him the Preventive System "not with blows but with meekness and charity you must win these friends of yours". After pronouncing his name and indicating a mission, at this point, John Bosco feels the need to know the name. Twice he asks: "Who are you who command me what is impossible? ...But who are you, who speak like this?". It is proper for man to know, to ask himself questions from reality, to understand... this is also the case for John.

Although he is small, he has a quick and alert intelligence and a desire to understand who the mysterious character is who asks him a seemingly impossible question. The response of the luminous character reflects divine pedagogy: "I am the son of she whom your mother taught you to greet three times a day". The knowledge of the divine name will come about for John Bosco and in Salesian spirituality through the maternal mediation of Mary. Just as it happened for the incarnation of the Word, where his "here I am" was necessary, so to know, enter into relationship, experience the power of Jesus, it is necessary to pass through his mother Mary. And again, this knowledge occurs in prayer through the very gentle call of the Angelus prayer three times a day in a peasant society. The mystery of the name must be asked of the mother, thus concludes the character who disappears from the scene: "Ask my mother for my name". In the life of Don Bosco, how true this statement is: the heartfelt prayer before Our Lady of Graces in Chieri to understand his vocation,

the indication of the place of the martyrdom of Saints Salvatore, Adventore and Ottavio so that the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians would be built there, the understanding of the dream with tears in his eyes on 16th May 1887 before the altar of Mary Help of Christians in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

To understand the name, to know the mystery behind it, to know Jesus is not a one-off operation that happens once in a lifetime, but rather it is the fruit of an ongoing process that begins, lasts a lifetime, and grows to the full maturity of Christ, until he is formed in you (Gal 4:19).



#### 2. The name in the Bible

In the Bible, the imposition of a name is the characteristic statement of a person (Adam calls his woman *issah* because she *is*). Throughout the Semitic world, the name is the very reality of a thing, the knowledge of the name implies a kind of power over the being whose essence and energy is known. The famous text in which God reveals his name is contained in chapter 3 of the book of Exodus. God is revealed not with a noun but with a verb (*hjh*, "to be, to become, to continue to be). Thus, the sacred and unutterable four-letter tetragrammaton for the Hebrews (JHWH) is configured. In reality, the text of Ex 3:14, rather than a definition and revelation of the divine name, contains a denial of revelation. "I am who I am" is perhaps an affirmation of God's unknowable essence rather than a definition of God's eternity ("He who is always") or of his faithfulness ("He who is always faithful") or even of his beingness, as classical Christian philosophy wanted.

However, this appellation 'I am' is not empty because it evokes the exact point at which God

reveals Himself: the story of the Exodus in which He presents Himself as liberator and Saviour. As Martin Buber put it, it could be translated as 'I am present, there where I will be present... I am present always'.

### 3. The story of Moses (Ex 3: 1-10; Acts. 7: 30.31)

**What does he do?** The first thing Moses does is marvel. Standing there in the desert, while he is grazing his father-in-law's flock, he sees a burning bush in the distance and it seems to him that it continues to burn without being consumed. Moses, who is 80 years old, is capable of marvelling at something, of being interested in something new: a burning bush that burns but is not consumed. He could have said: 'There is fire; it is dangerous for the flock if the fire spreads; let us go away, let us take the sheep far away'. Or he could have said: 'There is something supernatural; it is better not to be caught in a trap; let us leave and let the younger ones, those with more enthusiasm, take an interest: I have already had my experiences and that is enough'. Instead, 'Moses marvelled', that is, he was taken by that capacity, which is proper to the child, to be interested in something new, to think that there is still something new. So, Moses marvelled, and instead of not caring and going away, "he drew near to see"; the text says much more than 'seeing'; it indicates the nous (katanoesai), the mind, thus looking, considering, reflecting, seeking to understand etc. Here we see the freedom of spirit achieved by Moses through purification. Had he been an embittered and resigned man, he would have merely concluded: "A strange thing, but it does not concern me". But no: he wants to understand, he wants to see what it is all about. Here is a living man, even if he is old. "Moses said to himself, 'I want to draw near to see this great spectacle, for the bush does not burn'" (Ex 3:3).



Moses is a man who allows questions to emerge within himself; he is no longer the man who has everything sorted out and catalogued, who has understood everything; he is a man who is still capable of asking himself questions that demand a careful answer. One can suppose a situation of this kind: in the desert there are different plateaus,

one on top of the other, and often one has to make a long round trip to get to the higher plateau; Moses is on a lower plateau with his sheep, he sees on a higher plateau the bush and says: "I will go up, I will make the round trip, I want to see what it is all about". Which means leaving the flock, perhaps even in danger, going up in the sun, etc. In the words 'I want to go up and see this great spectacle', then, we glimpse Moses' spirit; it is as if Moses were saying: 'I am a poor man, a failure, but God can do new things, and I want to take an interest, I want to understand, I want to know why'. Notice that here the great question that Moses had been asking himself for 40 years returns: 'But why did God allow that failure? Why, if he loves his people, did he not use me to save them? Why did he not take the opportunity that I gave him?'. This 'why', which Moses cultivated, refined and purified, here it emerges again in the face of that unexpected vision. This 'knowing' in Moses is something that simmers within him, it is a passion that has not fallen asleep, but rather purification has made it simpler, freer. Moses does not go to the mountain in search of a new personal success; he goes because he wants to know how things are, he wants to face the truth as it is.

**What does he listen to?** Ex. 3:4-6. The text says: "The Lord saw that he came near to see, and God called him from the bush and said, Moses, Moses. Moses hears his name. Imagine Moses' shock of fear and amazement at the same time, when he hears himself called in the desert, in a place where there is not a soul. Moses realises that there is someone who knows his name, someone who is interested in him; he believed himself to be an outcast, a failure, an abandoned person: yet someone calls out his name in the middle of the desert. It is a violent experience, one that perhaps we too have had when, finding ourselves in a place where we thought we were completely ignored, we suddenly hear someone calling our name.

Moses now hears himself called by name twice: "Moses, Moses". Moses also feels that a decisive moment has come for his life: it is the moment when he must be truly available, without making the mistakes of the first time; therefore, he is filled with fear. "What is about to happen to me?". And here Moses hears something that he perhaps did not expect. He who had flung himself with such ardour to see the burning bush, would have been pleased to hear: 'Thank you that you have come, that you

have not let bitterness overcome you'; and instead, he hears that voice telling him: "Do not come near, take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is a holy land". Moses, with all his ardour, was trying to do the same thing: to see, that is, that phenomenon of the burning bush as framed in his view of God, of history and of God's presence in history. And so God says to him: "Moses, this is not the way; take off your sandals, for you do not come to me to encapsulate me in your own ideas; it is not you who must integrate me into your personal synthesis, but it is I who want to integrate you into my project". Moses, therefore, hears: "Do not come near, first take the sandals off your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground". Imagine Moses' shock on hearing these words. Is this a holy land? This cursed desert, a place of jackals, of desolation, of barrenness, where only bandits like to come, where decent people do not dwell? This desert where I thought myself abandoned, miserable, bankrupt: is this a holy land? Is this the presence of God? Is this the place where God reveals himself?

**What does this mean?** At this point, Moses understands what the divine initiative is: it is not he who seeks God, and therefore must go, in order to find him, to purified and holy places; it is God who seeks Moses and seeks him where he is. And the place where Moses is, whatever it may be, even if it is a miserable, abandoned, resourceless, cursed place, that is the holy land; there is the presence of God, there the glory of God is manifested. We can contemplate how Moses experienced his own change of horizon, his true conversion, his new way of knowing God. Until now God was for Moses one for whom much had to be done: one had to make a revolution, sacrifice one's own position of privilege, throw oneself out to one's brothers, spend oneself for them, only to be still discouraged and thrown away. Now at last, Moses begins to understand; God is different: until now he had known him as one who exploits you for a while and then abandons you, a master more demanding than the others, ...more than Pharaoh; now he begins to understand that he is a God of mercy and love, who takes care of him, the last among the failed and forgotten by his people.

Then Moses goes on to hear more words: "Again God said: 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob'" (Ex. 3:6). Moses realised that he did not understand anything about God; in any case, he thought that this was a new,

different God. But behold, God says to him: 'I am the God of your fathers; if you had understood me, you would have realised that I am the same God, God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; I acted like that with them too'. The Lord was a God who cares for those who are forsaken, those who feel hopeless and failed. In vv. 7ff. he continues: 'The Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their overseers. For I know their sufferings; I have come down to deliver them from the hand of Egypt and to bring them out of this land to a land that is beautiful and spacious, where milk and honey flow. Now the cry of the Israelites has reached me and I myself have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians torment them'.

How careful is the diction, all in the first person: I have seen, I have heard, I have come down, etc. ... "You, Moses, thought you were a man of much learning and much versed in the knowledge of man; you thought you understood your brothers, their misery; you thought it was you who took the initiative to understand them, and then begged me to understand them too; yet it is I who understand them first, it is I who understand all these things, it is I who see and hear. You, Moses, thought you were the first to discover the beauty of freedom, eager as you were to make it be enjoyed, and you did not succeed; but all this came from me. You never thought that this was my work, and instead you threw yourself into it, thinking that the work was all yours, that everything depended on you. Now you realise that I see, I feel...; indeed, if there is any compassion in you for the people, it comes from me; if there is any sense of freedom in you, it is I who give it to you; if there is any curiosity in you, it is mine".

#### 4. For the concreteness of the path

In the ritual of the Jewish Passover dinner (aggadà), some of the boys listening to the story of the Passover night behave differently. One of them is sleepy; another says: "But what does this Egypt thing matter to me?" Still another asks: "Why are we celebrating this feast and what does this feast mean to us?" This is the attitude of Moses and John Bosco, who ask that fundamental question: "how come?" "What is your name?". A good educator does not only know how to give answers, but first of all knows how to provoke questions. Some educational attitudes help in this arduous task: arousing wonder (*thaumazein* in Greek) and making memory (*zakar* in Hebrew).

## NAZARETH, GOD'S FAMILY

### 4. THE HOLY NAME OF MARY

On 12th September, there is a liturgical feast in the Catholic Church dedicated to the Holy Name of Mary. It is a feast day promulgated and extended to the entire Church by Pope Innocent XI in 1683. It reminds us that *pronouncing, invoking, singing, celebrating the name of Mary does us immense good.*

To invoke the name of Mary is **to evoke the masterpiece of the Father; it is to exalt the first fruit of the Son's sacrifice, it is to admire the most beautiful temple of the Spirit.**

Mary is the name that recalls the most **transparent reflection of God's glory**, the most exalted point of creation, the blessed among all women, the Mother of Jesus who was given to us by Him as our Mother. As the Collect prayer of the Mass dedicated to the holy name of Mary says, every Christian who utters Mary's name with a filial heart will not fail to "experience the power and sweetness of her name".

The name of Mary is a name that **edifies and purifies**: it is the name of the All-holy, the All-beautiful, the name that inspires chastity and purity, gentleness and beauty, integrity and holiness at the mere utterance of it, a name that educates not only to silence and contemplation, but also to intimacy and communion of love. To pronounce Mary's name is to enter the sphere of God, just as naming a cathedral after Our Lord - as J. Guittou observes - leads to exalting the One who is present in it, Jesus Christ our Lord: "this is the role Our Lady plays in the work of the Catholic Church: to be an atmosphere, a fluid, a creative and hidden energy".



Mary's name is also a name that unites: Already as a woman, Mary is oriented to contain, welcome, gather, unite, as Mother of God she unites heaven and earth, and as Mother of the Church and of all men, she is honoured in different ways in all religions. One cannot underestimate this typically her maternal function: there are so many divisions, in family ties and in social ones, between nations and between religions, that one would not want to do without that mysterious efficacy that God has bestowed on Mary in the order of dialogue, welcome, mercy.

#### Sweetest name

It is precisely in Jesus' ears that the name of Mary resounded in the sweetest way! And it was first and foremost on Jesus' lips that Mary was affectionately called 'mother'! Looking at Jesus' Nazarene experience, one learns to invoke Mary's name and to call her 'mother' with a child's heart.

At a time when attempts are being made to deny or surrogate the figure of the mother, the elementary fact must be forcefully recalled - wonderful where it is there, tragic where it is lacking - **that without a mother there is in every child a vital failure and a deficit of hope that marks an entire existence**, a background of indecision and despair that painfully accompanies every action of life and every season of life. Instead, to feel oneself embraced and caressed, looked at and called by name by one's mother is the experience that lies at the root of one's personality and singularity, and that nourishes all trust in oneself, in others and in God. Being able to call one's mother, to be certain of her listening and of her attention, of her affection and her 'personal' care is the **fundamental inheritance that allows one to exist in a truly human and personal manner**. If the maternal experience is already related to hope, Marian devotion is thus to the highest degree: as St. Louis Grignion de Montfort says, Mary was God's Paradise, she is in Paradise with God, from Paradise she looks at us and in Paradise she waits for us.

The maternal imprint of hope is so decisive, that even the Son of God, in his humanity, had the same experience as we have: that of calling Mary 'mother' and of finding in this name the sweetest reality on earth, the one that most of all recalls God's paternity

## Nazareth, God's family

in heaven. That is why it is easy and spontaneous for Christians, because of their intimate union with Christ, to feel Mary as mother and to call her affectionately mother. God's paternity and Mary's maternity belong intimately to God's providential plan. Montfort explains it simply and effectively: "just as in the natural and physical generation there is a father and a mother, so **in the supernatural and spiritual generation there is a father who is God and a mother who is Mary**. All true and predestined children of God have God for a father and Mary for a mother; and whoever does not have Mary for a mother does not have God for a father' (Treatise on True Devotion, 30). This was already expressed by St. Cyprian in the relationship between the paternity of God and the motherhood of the Church: "he cannot have God for a father who does not have the Church for a mother".

### Mary, shining star

The domestic experience that Jesus had in Nazareth was so decisive for his existence among us, that he wanted to give it as a gift and recommend it to all of us. He knows that without Mary's motherhood, our spiritual life, with all its trials, ultimately does not hold up. If St. Bernard sang "look to the star, invoke Mary", it is because in Mary's name, we find the best support for hope, which is certainly a theological virtue, and therefore a gift from God, but which in the face of inner obstacles, the remorse of sin, the turmoil and fears of the world, the bewilderment and confusion of the heart, needs a sure support so as not to go astray.

In the name of Mary, hope is restored, confidence is renewed, discouragements are overcome, and one can always begin anew: "by following her," continues St. Bernard, "you cannot go astray, by praying to her, you cannot despair. If she supports you, you will not fall, if she protects you, you will not give in to fear, if she is favourable to you, you will reach your goal'. Truly, as Pope Paul VI said, there is no authentic Christian who is not Marian. Because, of course, one cannot love Jesus if one refuses or undervalues the most beautiful gift that Jesus, after himself, wanted to leave us for our salvation and joy!

### Call her by name!

The liturgy rightly says that in the Church, along with the name of Jesus, it is necessary that "the name of Mary also resounds on the lips of the faithful", because "the Christian people look to her as a shining

star, they invoke her as Mother and in dangers they turn to her as a safe refuge" (Pref. Holy Name of Mary). In concrete terms, it is important to call Mary by her name, to overcome resistance and hesitancy, pride and human respect, cultural fashions and theological objections, and not to be afraid to call her 'mother', to invoke her in every need, to ask the Spirit through her, to place all trust in her to be heard and fulfilled, just like a child who finds shelter in its mother's arms.

And then one must be *convinced to ask for every grace in her name*. Montfort, and behind him a host of saints like Don Bosco, ensures that in heaven, Mary has maintained and increased her 'maternal rights' towards Jesus. And so, every prayer that passes through the confident invocation of her Name is destined to certain success. Montfort, referring to the teachings of St. Bernard, St. Bernardine and St. Bonaventure, explains precisely that, without prejudice to God's transcendence and the superiority of the Son, Mary's maternal function confers on her an unparalleled power of intercession, which must be thought of in affective, maternal-filial terms. Courageously expressing himself, he says: "If everything in heaven and on earth and God Himself is subject to Mary, it must be understood that the authority conferred on her by God is so great that it appears that she has the same power as God and that prayers and requests are so effective with God that they always count as commands with His Majesty, who never resists the prayer of His beloved mother, and because she is always humble and conforms to His will" (*Treatise*, 27).

## HUMBLE AND HIGHEST CREATURE

*In our Pilgrimage with Mary, Teacher of Integrale Ecology*

### 5. MARY, QUEEN OF HEAVEN

**“Looking at the world with wise eyes”,** as the Pope invites us to do **by learning from Mary, means recognising in the elements of creation the imprint of God’s love and the call He addresses us to correspond to love with love, taking care of every created thing entrusted to us.** Along with water, the earth is fundamental to human survival and life. But the earth lies beneath our feet, so it can easily happen that we are distracted, that we forget its importance and value.

In the many manifestations of the climate crisis we are currently experiencing, a wise heart knows how to recognise the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor who are often such precisely because they are deprived of free and dignified access to the earth and its goods. A land to inhabit and cultivate, and descendants who can prolong beyond death the life of the fathers in their children and grandchildren, are the two faces of the one promise to which the God commits himself by making his covenant with Abraham.

Scripture, therefore, is well aware of the importance of the earth, in its concreteness as a source of subsistence and a place to dwell, as well as in its symbolic meaning, which refers to the fragility of the human being and his need to maintain a good relationship with the whole of Creation and with God.

If the first Creation account describes the birth of the universe from God’s womb (Gen 1), the second Creation account presents God as a potter who moulds the first man from the earth, and as a farmer who plants and cultivates a garden in which human beings can live.

The genre of the tale, of course, is not historical, but symbolic. In many ancient cultures, the creation of the human being had to do with the earth, recognised as the great mother, from which all living beings receive life and nourishment. Sacred Scripture transposes and transforms this myth, which was certainly widespread in the land of Canaan. The author of Genesis, in fact, does not present the earth as a female divinity, but as an element of the reality created by God, which He, the only Creator, uses to shape human beings.



The Bible thus expresses our dependence on the rest of creation: despite being the only being created in the image and likeness of God, in fact, the human being is created last, after heaven and earth, after plants and animals (Gen 1:26-28). The whole creation could also subsist without the presence of man and woman, but man and woman could not survive without the other natural elements, thanks to which they find a home, nourishment and work, as custodians of the garden that God himself entrusts to them.

**The life of the human being on earth, moreover, is marked by the need to learn from experience and to discern good from evil** (cf. Jer 18:2-6). In the arena of history, among the other creatures to which he is connected, the human being made of earth thus experiences his fragility, his incompleteness, until he encounters the mystery of death, which tragically brings him back to his origin: the womb of the earth (Wis 9:13-18).

In the First Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul recalls the account of the creation of Adam, the first human being, taken from the earth, to affirm that the true Adam is Christ, the human being from Heaven (1 Cor 15:45-49). As descendants of the first Adam, we too are made of earth, but thanks to the gift of the Spirit of the Risen One, the true Adam, we become sharers in the resurrection of Jesus, we discover that we are destined for Heaven.

Like Christ, we too will experience death as a passage, not as final defeat: the earth, where we will be buried, like Christ’s tomb, will be a womb for us, from which we will rise to live forever in God.

Continuing St. Paul’s reasoning, the Church Fathers



## Humble and highest creature

compare Mary to the virgin earth, not yet cultivated, of the Genesis account, from which the Holy Spirit moulds the new humanity of the Son Jesus (Lk 1:35). Mary, moreover, is the New Eve, who with her 'yes' opens to God the possibility of re-establishing communion with human beings, having been broken by the rejection of the first Eve. Mary, in her body and in her heart, is the land of Heaven: the fragile and humble place where God abides. Mary's attitude of acceptance, moreover, does not end at the moment of her Son's conception. Mary continually renews her 'fiat' through a multitude of small concrete actions that offer the Son of God made man the ground on which to rest his feet. Mary, in fact, is not only asked to give Christ a body, but to accompany him, in the time of his hidden life, on the long journey that awaits him to become fully man. A journey that requires care, attention and educational wisdom (Lk 2:41-52).

In his preaching, Jesus often used images taken from agricultural work and country life (Mt 6:25-34). Certainly He was a great observer and, through parables, He wished to stimulate His listeners to look at the reality around them with His own gaze: the gaze

of the wise man, capable of recognising in everyday life the signs of the presence and love of the Father.

It is very likely, moreover, that Jesus, at least in his childhood, helped Mary to cultivate a garden or a small field. In those days, in fact, even families of artisans owned a little land, in which to cultivate the necessities for daily sustenance.

In the so-called parables of growth, three characters often appear: the farmer; the seed; the soil (Mk 4:1-32). The *seed* represents **the gift of God**: his Word, his grace, his presence that anticipates on this earth the kingdom of heaven. The seed carries within itself the strength to germinate and bear fruit.

*Walking in ecological conversion means learning to care for the earth and the seed, as a good farmer does, so that every creature can be respected and valued as a gift from God to the whole creation.* For there is nothing lacking in creation that we may need in order to live, as long as we know how to share the gift, grow in solidarity and universal brotherhood. *May Mary, our common Mother, help us and accompany us day by day on this long journey.*

## FAMILY EVENTS

### Philippines: Gathering of the Salesian Family of East Asia and Oceania Region

The "Mary Help of Christians" Province of the Southern Philippines (FIS) hosted two important regional events at the "Don Bosco" retreat house in Lawaan: **the meeting of Delegates for Youth Pastoral Ministry of East Asia-Oceania and the meeting of the Salesian Family of East Asia-Oceania.** These two events lasted four days, bringing together 65 delegates from about 15 countries of the Region, as well as from Rome, representing the central offices of the Congregation.

The two meetings were enriched by the presence of Fr. Miguel Angel Garcia-Morcuende, SDB, General Councillor for Youth Ministry; Fr. Joabeth Vivo, SDB, Collaborator of the Youth Ministry Sector; Fr. Joan Lluís Playà, SDB, Central Delegate of the Rector Major for the Secretariat of the Salesian Family; Fr. Alejandro Guevara, SDB, World Spiritual Assistant of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA);



Bro. Dominic Duc Nam Nguyen, SDB, World Delegate for Past Pupils and Salesian Cooperators; Sr. Leslye Sandigo, Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, General Councillor for the Salesian Family; and Sr. Lucrecia Uribe, Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, World Delegate for Salesian Cooperators of the FMA. **The meetings that took place in Lawaan aimed at strengthening the cooperation and coordination of the different groups of the Salesian Family in the field of youth ministry, strengthening the charismatic spirit of working with and for young people.**

## Pakistan: Retreat of the groups of the Salesian Family at Lahore

For small realities like Salesian Pakistan, even the most normal things, such as the retreat of the Salesian Family groups, can have the character of exceptionality. **On Saturday, 11 November, for the first time, all the groups of the Salesian Family in Lahore (Past Pupils, Adma and Salesian Cooperators) gathered for a spiritual retreat.**

After a meditation on the Strenna 2023, the participants devoted time to personal reflection, with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Then Holy Mass and the rosary were celebrated with the boarding school children. The evening ended with a shared dinner during which Mr. Asif Daniel, National President of the Past Pupils, shared some exciting news: **the World Past Pupils Federation will support the Jaranwala project.** This initiative, conceived by the Past Pupils of Lahore, came about as a gesture of solidarity with the Christian community



of Jaranwala, a city located 100 kilometres from Lahore.

**The project involves the distribution of school materials, which has already taken place, and the creation of 22 scholarships for technical education, thus demonstrating the Salesian Family's dedication to promoting education and solidarity in difficult contexts.**

## International Congress of Mary Help of Christians 2024 at Fatima (Portugal)

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

## Salesian Family:

### *“Dreams and common Strategies to face the new challenges in Sicily”*

(ANS - Palermo) - **The regional conference of the Salesian Family of Sicily was held on Saturday 25th November (9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.)** in Palermo, at the Salesian Home “Adolescent Jesus”, on the theme: **“Common dreams and strategies to face the new challenges in Sicily”**.

The aim of the conference was to improve the common training path because the future also would need the Salesian Family: “What are the challenges of our time? - says Don Giovanni D’Andrea, Provincial of the Salesians of Sicily - With which strategies and in which ways, and how can we create new ways to respond to these challenges and not remain mere spectators in a society that is changing so fast? This is our dream, children of a dreamer Don Bosco. Saturday’s occasion was useful for all the members of the Salesian Family of Sicily groups to reflect on what this time of ours is asking of us and what answers we can give, because as Salesian Family of Sicily, we cannot stay away from the needs of all people and of Christians in particular”.

#### The speakers at the conference were:

- **Valerio Martorana**, manager and journalist, member of the World Presidency of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco and Director of the magazine “Voci Fraterne”, who spoke on “The new challenges of the Salesian Family in Sicily”;
- **Salvo e Linda Adamo**, from the MetaCometa Association, on “Foster Families - Solidarity Families”;
- **Agostino Sella**, President of the Don Bosco 2000 Association, on “Migrations and Solidarity Corridors”;
- **Dony Sapienza**, Vice President of the Social Cooperative “Centro Orizzonte Lavoro” on “Services and opportunities for the future of young people”.

The debate was moderated by **Massimo Melodia**, Salesian Cooperator, who together with his wife Giuseppina is coordinator of the Salesian Family Movement.

The participants in the conference were the members of the Regional Council of the Salesian Family of Sicily, the Regional Councils of each group, the members of the city councils, Directors and Rectors



of the Salesian houses of Sicily, Salesian Youth Movement team and Delegates and Assistants for the Salesian Family. The provincial of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) of Sicily, Sister Angela Maria Maccioni, was also present.

The event has already 180 members of the various groups of the Salesian Family of Sicily, representing the Past Pupils of Don Bosco, Past Pupils of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Salesians of Don Bosco, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA), Salesian Cooperators (ASSCC), Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB), Volunteers with Don Bosco (CDB), Apostles of the Holy Family (ASF), Salesian Oblates of the Sacred Heart (SOSC), Disciples, Salesian Family Movement, Salesian Youth Movement.

The conference was coordinated by Fr. Franco Di Natale, Vicar of the Salesians of Sicily; Sr. Assunta Di Rosa, FMA; Stefano Carpino, Carolina Fiorica, Fr. Arnaldo Riggi and Massimo Melodia.

## 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](mailto: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](http://www.admadonbosco.org), and/or in other Adma websites, accompanied by a caption.*