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## EDITORIAL

### MARY, THE SORROWFUL MOTHER

Dear friends of ADMA,

We are fully immersed in the Lenten season that prepares us for the celebration of the Christian Mystery centered on the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. To reach the light, it is necessary to pass through the cross.

Pope Francis in his message for Lent this year invites us to contemplate the experience of the Transfiguration where the voice that was heard from the cloud said, **“Listen to him”** (Mt. 17:5). Therefore, the first instruction is very clear: **“listen to Jesus”**. Lent is a time of grace in listening to the One who speaks to us. And how does He speak to us? First of all, in the Word of God which the Church offers us in the liturgy. Let us not let it fall on deaf ears. If we cannot always attend Mass, let us meditate on the daily Bible readings, even with the help of the Internet. Besides speaking to us in the Scriptures, the Lord does so through our brothers and sisters, especially in the faces and stories of those in need.

The same voice a little further on says, **«“Arise, do not be afraid.”** When they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus alone» (Mt. 17:6-8). Here is the second indication for this Lent: ‘do not take refuge in a religiosity made up of extraordinary events, fascinating experiences, for fear of facing reality with its daily labors, difficulties and contradictions.’

The light Jesus shows the disciples is a foretaste of the Easter glory, and toward it we must go, following him 'alone.' Lent is oriented toward Easter. The 'retreat' is not an end in itself, but prepares us to live the passion and cross with faith, hope and love, leading to the resurrection.

It is not easy to face difficulties, to overcome obstacles, to live through the sufferings that daily life presents to us. That is why we contemplate Mary, the grieving mother. No one like her can understand our 'sorrows.' We know that in God's saving plan (cf. Lk. 2:34-35), they are associated with Christ crucified and the Virgin of Sorrows, just as they are in the liturgy and popular piety.

Just as Christ is the "man of sorrows" (Is. 53:3), and so took upon himself all the sorrows of the world, to "reconcile with himself all beings: those in heaven and those on earth, pacifying them by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20), so Mary is the 'woman of sorrows,' whom God wished to associate with His Son, as mother and sharer in his Passion.

We can affirm in a special way during this time of penance that Our Lady's whole life, from the very beginning of Jesus' earthly life, has been put on the line by participating in the rejection of her Son (cf. Lk. 2:35). However, the piety of the Christian people has over time pointed to seven main episodes of the Mother's sorrowful life and considered them as the 'seven sorrows' of the Virgin Mary.

Thus, following the model of the Via Crucis, the pious exercise of the Via Matris dolorosae, or simply Via Matris, approved by the Apostolic See, was born. From the 16th century, there are incipient forms of the Via Matris, but in its present form it is not earlier than the 19th century. The fundamental insight is

to consider the entire life of Our Lady, beginning with the prophetic announcement of Simeon (cf. Lk. 2:34-35) and ending with the death and burial of her Son, as a journey of faith and sorrow: a journey articulated in seven 'seasons,' corresponding to the 'seven sorrows' of the Mother of the Lord.

The exercise of piety of the Via Matris harmonises well with some of the themes proper to the Lenten itinerary. Just as Our Lady's sorrow has its cause in the rejection Christ suffered from men, the Via Matris constantly and necessarily refers back to the mystery of Christ, the suffering servant of the Lord (cf. Is. 52:13-53:12), rejected by His own people (cf. Jn. 1:11; Lk. 2:1-7; 2:34-35; 4:28-29; Mt. 26:47-56; Acts 12:1-5). It also refers to the mystery of the Church: the stations of the Via Matris are stages in the journey of faith and sorrow in which Our Lady preceded the Church. The Via Matris has 'Pieta' as its highest expression.

Dear friends, I invite you to pray together to Mary for so many suffering people in our world: *"O God, you willed that together with your Son, lifted up on the cross, His grieving Mother should be present: grant that, united with her in the passion of Christ, we may share in the glory of the resurrection."*

Holy Lent to each one of you with Mary's gaze.

Renato Valera,  
 ADMA Primaria's President.

Alejandro Guevara,  
 ADMA Primaria's Spiritual Animator.



**"The light that Jesus shows his disciples is a foretaste of the paschal glory..."**

## FORMATIVE PATH

# GRACE SUPPOSES NATURE: THE EXERCISE OF THE VIRTUES

Along with the struggle against the most common temptations, we are called to foster the action of the Holy Spirit through the virtues. They will help us in particular, **Humility and Meekness**, character traits of Jesus, *“Learn from me who am meek and humble of heart”*. (Mt 11:25-30)

As St. Francis de Sales says, *“Bear with gentleness the little injustices, the small inconveniences, the losses of little importance that happen every day. These small occasions lived with love will earn you God’s heart and make it all your own.”*

We will better understand how the development of virtues can help us grow in peace and love: patience, meekness, humility, poverty of spirit (even in the midst of riches), avoiding backbiting and judgments. We will seek not only to love others but to make others feel loved, drawing on the great wealth of Salesian spirituality and Don Bosco: *loving-kindness, tireless work and Salesian temperance and optimism*. Let us remember Pope Francis’ three words: *please, sorry and thank you*.

### 1. What is humility?

The Greek term for humility used in the Magnificat (*“he looked upon the humility of his servant”*, Luke 1:48) and in St. Paul’s Christological hymn to the Philippians (*“he humbled himself by becoming obedient unto death”*, Phil 2:8) is the noun *tapeinòs* and the verb *tapeinòo*. When reading Mickey Mouse as a child, there were episodes in the stories of Uncle Scrooge concerning the loss of his vast fortune; whenever such situations occurred, Uncle Scrooge’s comment was, ‘me tapino’(me poor man!!). Where does it come from and what is the meaning of the expression? In the study of the Greek language, the term *tapeinòs* has five meanings depending on the context:

1. *of places*, low, depressed; *of stature*, short;
2. *of lowly person*, humbled, submissive and still lowly, humble, mean, small, poor, weak;
3. *spiritually* depressed, dejected;
4. *morally* mean, vile, modest, humble;
5. *of things*, modest, resigned, poor.

The semantic reference for both contexts of the Magnificat and the hymn to the Philippians is that of the person. In the case of Mary, humble, lowly handmaid, poor and weak; in the case of Jesus, humble and submissive. The two contexts both help us to understand in depth the meaning of being humble; one is helpful in explaining the other. To be humble like Mary and thus find God’s complacency, there is a need to be humble and submissive, as Jesus was at the moment of His death on the cross, His most extreme lowering. In short, there can be no humility without humiliation. These two realities seem directly proportional. If one is weak and poor in reality or feels so, it is really the moment when one can be lifted up: *“He who is lifted up will be humbled (tapeinòo) and he who humbles himself (tapeinòo) will be lifted up”* (Lk. 14:11). It is really the praise of frailty, a situation in which God can enter, pitch his tent, build his dwelling place and inhabit it.



### 2. What is the significance of the passage of *“learn from me that I am meek and humble of heart”* (Mt. 11:25-30)?

The passage is placed at the end of chapter 11 and is preceded by John the Baptist sending two disciples to Jesus to ask Him if He was indeed the Messiah. John, who was Jesus’ cousin, chosen to be His messenger, had recognized Him since He was in the womb of His mother Elizabeth exulting with joy at Jesus’ visitation in Mary’s womb, now wonders if He is *“the One who is to come, or must we wait for another?”* Jesus answers with the characteristics of the Messiah mentioned by the prophet Isaiah: *“the blind recover their sight, the crippled walk, the poor are told the good news...”* To this question Jesus adds praise toward His cousin and a confirmation of his mission as a forerunner. The contrast is really sharp between the Baptist’s demanding proclamation to

conversion and the lack of reception of his message and what Jesus himself is proclaiming. Truly the cities by the Lake of Galilee in which many miracles took place did not believe in the power of Christ.

Immediately the passage is followed by the dispute with the Pharisees about the Sabbath and the temple. Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath, reiterates, *“Mercy I want and not sacrifice.”*

Between these two passages lies the present text. Recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, accessing His filial relationship with the Father, knowing Him in depth to the point of experiencing Him: it is not the result of human effort; it is not tied to knowledge and observance of the law; it is not achieved through demanding asceticism; it goes beyond the hardness of heart of not accepting His miracles. It is a free gift from the Father (it pleased Him). So much so that Jesus thanks Him with a public confession in the form of a prayer for all to hear. *“Bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and revealed them to the little ones.”* Only the little ones, the poor, the humble can access the knowledge of God.

Those who are big, rich and proud, full of themselves, relying only on their own strength, self-sufficient, can never know the breadth, width and depth of God’s love. And here is Jesus’ punch line, *“Everything has been given to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and the one to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.”* The Father-Son relationship is one and it is totalizing: everything is given by the Father and the Son. And Jesus’ knowledge of the Father is unique: He, the only begotten of the Father, begotten not created, of the same substance, in the bosom of the Father from eternity and forever is the One who becomes incarnate, becomes man, lowers Himself to death on a cross, reveals the face of the Father because He is one with Him. One cannot access the Father except by passing through the divine person of the incarnate Word.

And here is the invitation to everyone in their existential frailty: *“Come to me all you who are weary and tired and I will give you rest.”*

Fatigue and weariness are two life situations often present in human beings; they affect not only the physical dimension, but much more the moral, existential and spiritual dimension.

We cannot but think of the anguish of pandemic times, the absurdity of wars, the economic uncertainty, the difficulty of growing up, of taking on new responsibilities, of illness and old age. In these two fatigued and weary terms are the men and women of all categories and at all times. In the face of harsh reality, of adverse history, there is the bursting proclamation of relief from Jesus. We ask ourselves: Who will come to our rescue? Who will deliver us? Jesus answers tenderly: *“I will give you freshness. I will quench your thirst. I will give you that living water that quenches your thirst for eternal life. I will wash your feet and serve you. Do you not notice? Right now a new thing is budding. Take my yoke upon you.”*



Jesus gives us a burden. It is His burden. He becomes a burden for us. The yoke is a wooden plank for leading animals in pair and aiding the driving of the chariot. The yoke is always for two: one is Jesus and the other is us. You are never alone. It’s awesome, the image of being in pair with Jesus – where the burdens are shared. That’s why it says at the end that His yoke is gentle (because He paired with me) and His burden light (because He bears the heaviest part. He is the one who carries the cross for me). We are called to be Cyrenees with Him, Cyrenees of His cross but also of His joy.

Verse 29 highlights a teaching statement, *“Learn from me, for I am meek and humble (tapeinòs) in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* We recognize the master and Lord if we put ourselves in his school of meekness and humility, if we are meek and meek like the Immolated Lamb, condemned, humiliated, abused, vilified like the Crucified One. The price of humility is humiliation, and the fruit, salvation and joy.

### 3. What does St. Francis de Sales say about humility and meekness?

True humility is generous. For, the more the humility brings us down to the knowledge of the nothingness that we are to ourselves, the more it makes us esteem the virtues that God has showered on us, especially faith, hope, love and that certain capacity that He has given us to unite ourselves with Him

through grace. This appreciation that humility makes of God's gifts is the foundation of generosity of spirit. Humility convinces us that we can do nothing by ourselves since it makes us recognize our wretchedness and limitation. Generosity, in turn, makes us say with St. Paul, *"All things I can do in Him who gives me strength."* Humility makes us mistrust ourselves; generosity makes us trust in God. These two virtues are so united to each other that there cannot be one without the other nor can they ever be separated. Humility is grateful; That humility prevents us from seeing the good that God has put in us, is not true. In fact, God's gifts must be recognized and esteemed.

To know oneself means to recognize not only one's own nothingness but also the great dignity that God has placed in us by creating us in His image and likeness, capable of uniting us with Him and endowed with a certain instinct that makes us strive and aspire for this union. True humility is full of love and in the service of love, so much so that it can be said that charity is a rising humility and humility is a descending charity. Humility hides and covers virtues in order to preserve them; it lets them be seen when love demands it. Thus, it does not parade its gifts, but when charity demands, it knows how to give its neighbor with frankness and gentleness not only what is useful to the person but also what pleases him. So, all forms of humility that bring prejudice to charity are certainly false. Again, true humility is gentle, strong, serene and gracious. By walking with simplicity on this path, we will make ourselves pleasing to God because He is pleased with humble hearts.

Therefore, I urge you to be joyfully humble before God as well as before the world. Do not seek visible humility. Without avoiding it when the opportunity arises, embrace it joyfully. Take care, however, that your outward humility is always a true expression of your heart.

Guard your littleness with love because God looks upon it with complacency and fills it with grace. Love your poverty, rejoice in being empty that the Lord may fill you with His Kingdom. So, nourish your soul with a spirit of humble and hearty confidence in God. As you find yourself frail and miserable, learn to hope more boldly in Him. You will thus practice great humility, generous and quiet. In the service of God, it will preserve you in a filial and loving freedom

without embittering your heart and will keep in you a spirit of holy joy. (Cf. Spiritual Retreats, V, 2-4; VIII, 14; III, 20. Introduction to the Devout Life (Philothea) III, 5. Letters of 1-11-1604; 1607; 8-1608).

#### 4. What can a poor little Salesian Cooperator (Vera of Jesus) teach us?

**Vera:** *O my Jesus, I have nothing to give You. I find nothing but your own gifts and I offer them to You. I intend to offer them through the Heart of your and my sweet Mother together with my poor will. O Jesus, do Thou, destroy me but may I not resist Thee, make me humble, take my whole heart: may it beat only for Thee and may I tell Thee in every beat that I love Thee, that I detest sin. My Life, let me have no other Life but Thine, no other sigh but Thine, no other breath but Thine.*

**Jesus:** *"In the holy name of obedience, listen to my Voice: it is Cross, it is Love. My Love and My Cross will never leave you, so will be MY VOICE. Accept it out of obedience, out of love and in a spirit of humility and penance. Behold, I AM in you in love and sorrow. This Voice, my voice, will be the fire that will purify you. I want MY TEMPLE to burn, to be consumed for me. Thank me, my child, that My Father's love is great for you. Tomorrow, at Holy Mass, you will bring my gifts, the gifts of my mother's heart, and you will unite them with your miseries, your nothingness, your very small heart. I will take everything. Remember: the wine and the water. In this mystery is the union, the giving. Only with me does the offering rise to God the Father. O my child, immerse yourself in my love. Only my grace will sustain you. Look at me in the Cross, love me in the Cross, fasten in the Cross: I draw you to me, Jesus. Do everything in my name and for my love. When weariness crushes you, invoke me: I will help you!" (Take me with you, 117).*

**Jesus:** *"Gift of God, Gift of Love. My Love has no boundaries, no barriers. It is not your miseries that prevent my Grace in you because my Grace is LOVE. It is your doubts, your uncertainties, the limits you place on abandonment in me: Jesus! How fragile you are, My child! Come to Me: I am the STRENGTH, your strength. Think of the Tabernacle. You believe in MY PRESENCE in the Tabernacle. Believe in ME, your Jesus does not deceive you. It is I, Jesus! I would speak to any sinner if he had faith in Me, if he believed in Me, in My Love. I would show Myself to him as I once did, even in My Holy Humanity, but*

he still would not believe because he has no Faith. If Faith has grown in you, know that it is My Gift! Believe Me speaking to you and ask no more, do not explain why: so, it pleased MY FATHER, so it pleases Me. You receive in humility and gratitude My Voice. Return to Me, surrender yourself to My Love. Feel My Cross, feel My Yoke! Let Me penetrate you.” (Take Me with you, 120).

**Vera:** O Jesus, give me the pain of sins, a pure and holy LOVE, give me the gift of humility and obedience. O Jesus give me ‘everything’ because I have nothing. Thank you. (Take me with you, 122).

**JesUs:** “Now, My child, listen to Me: it is My Father’s will that you be recollected, humble, waiting for Me. I call you to fulfill a mission. Fear not, you have the Love Force. I will lead you through rough and winding paths, but in the end, you will recognize Me because I will be there waiting for you. Yes, it is Jesus of the Tabernacle who speaks, who calls, “**I am.**” You have to do nothing, for now, but wait for Me. I prepare ‘My ways’ by which you and many other souls will set out.

I want you for ME ALONE, I remove you from the worldly affections. **I put ‘everything and everyone’ in the Hands of my Father**, your family members and I will think of them, but you think only and always of Me. You will have to ‘depart’ from this world, leave it for Me, detach yourself for Me. A Bride is not of the bridegroom if she is not crucified with the relationship. I draw you to the madness of the Cross.

See, I make you a ‘gift’ of My riches, of My passions: passion of Love, of Sorrow; sacrifice, offering, immolation of My Blood.

My poor daughter, you see nothing of all this yet! I, Jesus, Way, Truth, Life will announce many things to you in due time. Remain in humility, in my Love, in my Grace. With the forgiveness of your sins, I redeemed you, in the washing of My Blood, I purified you yesterday, today and will purify always.

You need every day this baptism of Blood and only in My Blood does this happen. Prepare yourself, My daughter, soon I will come to you. It pleased My Father. So, it still pleases Him to make use of the poorest and most unpleasant creatures, but redeemed by My Blood, for His will. You are ‘nothing’ and for this you fear. I have told you that I speak to you in the Heart of my Mother, and through that sword that pierces your

Mother’s Heart, my Voice comes to You. From ‘Her’ hear me. Now pray, pray to My Father that He may be pleased to answer your prayers.

When they arrive at My Father’s Throne, they must have the fragrance of incense. Ask Me for incense in your prayers and then unite them with those of the Church, of the Pope; bring them to Father Gabriel so that he may offer them to Me. Ask for My Kingdom, My Will, My Love, My Grace, My Blessing on all humankind. Toward evening, I descend into the world, among souls and I look at them, I search them... Yes, I descend with My Grace into the souls who have served Me. I infuse peace and serenity into their hearts: They are ‘My treasure’ on earth. Fr. Gabriel will speak to souls by My mouth, and My Voice will pass into hearts. For this, your heart must suffer. It must bleed. Send it to Father Gabriel that he may offer it to Me in the Heart of My Mother of Sorrows. Write this so that he may know My Desires. To other souls, I will tell My Love; I will use them to embrace all.

**Conclude with this particular Blessing of Mine: I want you all; I want you safe; I want you in My Kingdom. Yes, My child, I am your beloved Jesus yes, yes, yes, it is I, Jesus.”** (Take Me with You, 128).

## For personal prayer and meditation

- 1) Can I endure small injustices or daily setbacks with patience and gentleness?
- 2) In difficulties, do I break down and get angry with myself, letting pride overcome me, or do I surrender myself to God and tell myself, “All things I can do in him who gives me strength?”
- 3) When I am fatigued and tired, do I ask Jesus for help in prayer, certain that I can partner with Him and that He will bear my burdens?

## Monthly commitment

I commit myself not to complain in the face of difficulties and setbacks and say “**Jesus, I trust in you**” and “**I can do all things in Him who gives me strength.**”

## KNOWING OURSELVES

### INTERVIEW WITH FR. SAMSON ANTONY, SDB ADMA ANIMATOR OF SURREY, BC - CANADA



First of all, Tell us briefly about yourself.

**- Where do you come from?**

*I come from a Salesian parish in India called 'Our Lady of Lourdes' (founded about 90 years ago) in Madras/Chennai. Brought up in this Salesian parish, I got to know the Salesians early in my childhood. It is a multicultural and multilingual parish. When I was studying at Don Bosco School, the catechist asked who would like to join the congregation and I said 'yes'. There, I learned to love Our Mother and care for the poor and abandoned youth.*

**- Something about your history, experience of life and faith?**

*After my priestly ordination and a short time in India, I went to Tanzania as a missionary and was appointed a philosophy teacher in the Post-novitiate in Moshi. After two years, I returned to India. Then I went to teach philosophy in Sri Lanka. After that, I was back in India, teaching in diocesan seminaries and in many post-novitiates in the 11 Salesian provinces in India.*

*Later, I was asked to help out at the catacombs of San Callisto in Rome for two years. After that, I went to Scotland to study psychology and then for some courses in UPS in Rome while I was serving at the catacombs.*

*After that, I went to Palermo, a city full of immigrants, where I was asked to help them out for five years. During that period, I had the chance to do my doctorate in psychology in UNIPA. After 11 and a half years in Italy, I was given the opportunity to come to Canada to Surrey in 2017 and now I am serving this Salesian province.*

### And now let's turn to the ADMA...

**- How has the Association (ADMA) developed in your province/region?**

*In Chennai, in a Salesian parish, the pastor was enthusiastic about ADMA. That's where I got in touch with the Association. Later, many parishes in my mother province started ADMA.*

*In Canada, however, ADMA was little known. In the parish*

*where I am now, there was a small group of Alumni of Don Bosco. Their wives wanted to join in the prayers and activities and thus they formed a ADMA group though there was no official recognition. When I came here, I made them understand what ADMA really was.*

*In 2021, we received the letter of erection of the ADMA group, and in 2022, we made a lot of preparation. Though many people signed up, expressing their interest in the ADMA, during the training sessions only 22 people came for the programme and got the guidance from the ADMA Primary and a few Salesian animators from US. I was particular that the first aspirants have a solid training. Eventually, on the 24th May, 2022, 17 took the promise, all young adults among whom a few were married (there are also some couples). There are now 27 people going through the training to become ADMA members. They are all adults. We would like to involve more young people.*

*The province of our group is British Columbia.*

**- How do you experience your relationship with other groups in the Salesian Family?**

*Our Salesian Parish has many groups belonging to the Salesian Family: Cooperators, Alumni, ADMA. The FMA are there across the street. We have a big youth center, 2 schools (elementary and primary) and a regional high school. When we have a meeting, everyone comes. There is a big gathering of the Salesian Family (as you can see [on our website olgcsurrey.ca](https://www.olgcsurrey.ca)). On our website, you can also get up-to-date information about ADMA and other groups in the parish.*

*All Salesian celebrations are organized and held together.*

**- Thinking about the future, what ideas and plans do you have to preserve faith among people and to promote love for Eucharistic Jesus and for Mary?**



## Knowing ourselves

*We have many activities in our parish to promote faith: we visit families, the hospital, the homes for the elderly etc. During these visits, we always bring the Blessed Sacrament to people. We have an evangelization called 'Gospel Roads' and many activities for youth groups. It's a vibrant parish!*

*There is a 24-hour Adoration chapel in our church. Parishioners are given a 'code' with which they can enter the church at any time, even at night.*

*There are also many volunteers who help with their time and money.*

### - And for the youth?

*There are many youth groups, particularly 'Gospel Roads'. The teachers at the school too are very young who can relate to the students in a familiar*



*way. We also have a youth choir. There are many altar boys. The children too are included and they are happy to be participants.*

Fr. Antony Samson,  
Animator of ADMA Surrey, BC - Canada.

## ENTRUST - TRUST - SMILE

### LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR FR. ÁNGEL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME ENTRUST, TRUST, SMILE! ~ A 150-YEAR JOURNEY

Salesian historian Pietro Braido describes the foundation of ADMA by Don Bosco:

*"A born organizer Don Bosco did not leave the devotion to Mary Help of Christians just as spontaneous one. He gave it stability with an Association that took its name from Her. Direct witnesses saw in this institution one of the initiatives dearest to Don Bosco and of widest resonance after that of the two religious Congregations and the Association of the Cooperators. [...] The last part of the document contained the text of the statute, a long series of prayers and devout practices with an indication of the relevant indulgences, a brief catechesis on indulgences in general, and the decree of 22nd May 1868, by which Pope Pius IX granted plenary indulgence to all those who 'religiously' visited the church dedicated in Turin to Mary the Immaculate Virgin under the title of Mary Help of Christians, on the titular feast of the same church or on one of the preceding days."*

The Archconfraternity of Mary Help of Christians,

so named by Don Bosco (today ADMA), acquired a worldwide dimension from the beginning. In 1988, the centenary year of the Saint's death, a historic relaunch by Rector Major Fr. Egidio Viganò took place.

The Congregation and the Salesian Family have grown its devotion to Mary Help of Christians. Salesian spirituality cannot be separated from the devotion to Mary Help of Christians.

The Rector firmly states, *"Our devotion to Mary Help of Christians is intimately connected both to the Salesian mission and to the proper spirit of the Salesian charism that we received from Don Bosco as a gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Then, in 2003, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life approved the Association's new Regulations. In recent years ADMA has been particularly renewed and has grown in number and quality thanks to the involvement of families and various initiatives, such



as the International Congresses of Mary Help of Christians.

We renew and re-launch the sense of belonging and shared formation among more than 800 local groups present in the world through the annual formative

journey, the monthly commemoration of Mary Help of Christians, retreats and spiritual exercises, the care of publications such as the bulletins of Mary Help of Christians and social communication.

Andrea and Maria Adele Damiani

## FORMATION OF ADMA ASPIRANTS

### 3. WE ARE THE FAMILY SALESIAN

The third point of the formation proposed to aspirants by the Primary ADMA in Turin Valdocco refers to Article 3 of the Association's Regulations, which deals with ADMA's membership in the Salesian Family.

Joining the Association means becoming part of the great tree of the Salesian Family, a movement of people promoted by Don Bosco, under the guidance of Mary Help of Christians, for the mission of youth and the people:

*"We must unite," he wrote in 1878, "among ourselves and with the Congregation... by aiming at the same goal and using the same means... as in one family with the bonds of fraternal charity that spurs us to help and support one another on behalf of our neighbor."*

The Family of Don Bosco is Salesian because it refers to St. Francis de Sales, chosen by Don Bosco as our inspiration and patron. Salesian Humanism is based on unshakeable trust in the goodness of the person and values everything positive rooted in created realities and the events of history, stimulating the good and refusing to mourn over evils. It leads to seeking cooperation wisely, as each person has gifts that must be discovered, recognized and valued. It helps to believe in the power of education that sustains the young person's growth and encourages him to become an upright citizen and good Christian. It leads one to rely always and everywhere on God's providence, with the help of Mary.

The Salesian Family is charismatic because it has its deepest roots in the Trinitarian Mystery, the source, model and goal of every human family. It places God at the center of its life, in union with Jesus, recognized

present in the Eucharist, in docility to the action of the Holy Spirit, to live the spirituality of daily life in concrete dedication to the good of people. In Don Bosco, this spirituality becomes Apostolic Charity, with the motto *"Da mihi animas, caetera tolle"*. It is the spirituality of Union with God in daily life, whereby the needs of the brethren invite prayer and constant prayer and one that nourishes generous work for the good and salvation of the brethren. Prayer, in Salesian spirituality, is a movement that starts from action to reach God, and from God leads back to action by bringing Him, because mind and heart are filled with Him. Action and prayer, in Don Bosco, became one: the extraordinary work that engaged him from morning to night did not disturb his prayer. Rather it aroused it and directed it. Don Bosco's vertical dimension – prayer to God – inspired him towards horizontal dimension – his service to youth and people.

Distinctive traits of this spirituality that we have inherited from Don Bosco are:

- **Salesian loving-kindness**, that is, the ability to love and to be loved;
- **tireless work and temperance**, in spending oneself for the good of the young;
- **Salesian optimism**: confidence in the victory of the good, appreciation of human values and education in daily joys.

The Salesian Family is apostolic because in it, the Holy Spirit creates an inner dynamism that impels one to gift and service for the good of souls. Members of the Salesian Family live a 'missionary communion' that promotes the Preventive System, a condensation of Don Bosco's pedagogical wisdom:

**1. Reason**, which emphasizes the values of Christian humanism (search for meaning, work, study, friendship, cheerfulness, piety, freedom not away from responsibility, harmony between human wisdom and Christian wisdom);

**2. Religion**, which means making room for saving Grace, cultivating a desire for God, fostering an encounter with Christ the Lord;

**3. Lovingkindness**, which expresses the need for young people not only to be loved, but to know that they are loved, in order to initiate an effective educational relationship; it is a particular style of relationships and it is a loving-kindness that awakens the energies of the youthful heart and matures them to the point of self-sacrifice.

Privileged recipients of this apostolic commitment are young people, God's gift to the Salesian Family and the field indicated by the Lord and Mary to Don Bosco, the working class and the family. In this perspective, we recall the words of St. Paul VI in the Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii nuntiandi*:

*"Popular religiosity (...) if it is well oriented, especially through a pedagogy of evangelization, is rich in values. (...) this popular religiosity can be more and more (...) a true encounter with God in Jesus Christ."*

The Salesian Family is Marian because all its spirituality and solicitude finds in Mary the shining example of self-giving. Love for Mary was - along with love for Jesus in the Eucharist and for the Pope - one of the three loves that marked Don Bosco's spiritual and apostolic life. The whole Salesian Family is and feels like a Marian Family, born through the maternal solicitude of the Immaculate Help of Christians. The ADMA in the Salesian Family has the task of emphasizing the special Eucharistic and Marian devotion lived and spread by St. John Bosco, which expresses the founding element of the Salesian charism. In this perspective, ADMA participates in the youth and popular mission proper to the Salesian charism, in the commitment to safeguard, increase and defend the faith among the people of God and sees, in the present times, the family as the privileged recipient. As St. John Paul II reminds us,

*"Today, when the faith is being severely tested, and various sons and daughters of the People of God are exposed to tribulations because of their fidelity to the Lord Jesus, when humanity... shows*



***"Da mihi animas, cetera tolle"***

**It is the spirituality of union  
with God in daily life.**

*a serious crisis of spiritual values, the Church feels the need for Mary's maternal intervention: to restore its adherence to the one Lord and Savior, to carry forward with the freshness and courage of Christian origins the evangelization of the world, to enlighten and guide the faith of communities and individuals, especially to educate the young, to whom Don Bosco gave his whole self, to the Christian meaning of life."*

The common father and center of unity of the entire Salesian Family is the Rector Major, Don Bosco's successor. Don Bosco indicated to his spiritual children, *"Your Rector will take care of you and your eternal salvation."*

**Gian Luca and Mariangela Spesso**

## FAMILY EVENTS

### Adma In Canada, Toronto



Our ADMA group in Toronto experienced another year of grace and blessings under the guidance and protection of Mary, Help of Christians.

On 24th January, we celebrated the Eucharist together in honor of St. Francis de Sales. *During the Mass, Angelina Bellio made her solemn promise, followed by the other members who renewed their solemn promise to our Blessed Mother, Mary Help of Christians.* Fr. Frank Kelly, SDB, our Spiritual Director, inspired us with a wonderful homily and presented Angelina with the ADMA badge. After the Mass, we took photos to commemorate this day and then

continued our day with spending time joyfully together.

We meet once a month and hold three retreats in a year under the direction of Fr. Kelly, SDB. **This year, we continued our journey deepening God's love and mercy.**

### IX Congresso Internacional de María Auxiliadora



At the recent Days of Spirituality of the Salesian Family, the programme for the **9th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians** was presented. It is organized by us, the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA), and addressed to all the groups of the Salesian Family. **It will be held in Fatima from 29th August to 1st September, 2024.**

Fr. Antonio Marcelino SDB, a Salesian from Portugal and General Coordinator for the Congress, and Giovanni Scavino, ADMA's World Councilor, have enthusiastically invited the whole Salesian Family to prepare for this special event of thanksgiving and entrustment to Mary.

The Congress will be held in the 'Paul VI congress hall' at the Shrine of Fatima, Portugal, an inspiring Marian Shrine, where the Virgin Mary appeared to three young shepherd children in 1917. It invites the whole world to prayer and penance.

The title chosen for this event is **'I will give you the teacher,'** recalling Don Bosco's dream at the age of 9, whose 200th anniversary will be celebrated in 2024. It is a dream that was deeply imprinted in Don Bosco's heart and guided him throughout his life.

**In the coming months, more information will be posted on the website dedicated to the Congress: [mariaauxiliadora2024.pt](http://mariaauxiliadora2024.pt)**

**We entrust in prayer, the preparation and realization of this great event.**