

## MARY IS MOTHER - MARY IS POWERFUL - MARY IS OUR HELP



Dear Friends,

The month of May has arrived, the month we have been looking forward to, the month of flowers, of life, of spring, of the rebirth of all things. It is the time for us to let our best desires blossom, the tenderest and deepest feelings of desire and hope that we carry within us.

This year as every year she is waiting for us with hope ... and we have an important appointment with our Mother, the Help of Christians. Our love is so great that it is not enough to celebrate only on 24 May, the day of her great feast, nor just to prepare for nine days in the novena. We want to honour and venerate her for this whole month dedicated to her, to the Virgin of Don Bosco.

It is precisely our Father Don Bosco, through his writings and the experience of his own his life, who tells us that she has done everything and that the Association of Mary Help of Christians is a sign of gratitude for the many favours received from the Virgin Mary. It was the graces received and the requests of so many simple, humble and trusting people that pushed Don Bosco to build the Basilica and to found our Association. We are the fruit of a grateful heart and many confident requests. What a beautiful invitation it is for us then to live this month thanking Mary for so many graces, favours and signs of her maternal

protection and at the same time to entrust to her all our deepest concerns and intentions.

We know that Mary Help of Christians is the Virgin of difficult times and this year, with all its difficulties, is not deprived of her special care and help. Precisely for this reason the problems we are experiencing are a special opportunity to spread and radiate our devotion, to invite people to come to her, so that more people can experience her care and protection. Therefore, we are all promoters of devotion to the Help of Christians in our homes, families, and also with our friends, neighbours, acquaintances, reaching even those we have not reached in other years. This year we all want to live under the mantle of the Help of Christians, we all need her special predilection for her children, especially those who most need her help. This year the



Help of Christians wants to embrace everyone, without exception, because in her heart we all have a place reserved for us.

This year, on the day before the feast of the Help of Christians, we will celebrate Pentecost with the whole Church, remembering the coming of the Holy Spirit to Mary and the Apostles. What a beautiful coincidence! We cannot have a better way to prepare for the great feast. We prepare with prayer, united with the whole Church, in communion with the apostles and the successors of the apostles. The Holy Spirit guides the steps of the great family of Jesus. From the Upper Room until today the Church has not ceased to announce and proclaim that Mary is the Mother of us all. This is the wonderful news we want to celebrate in this month of May. Mary is a mother. Mary is Powerful in the hour of battle.

From Valdocco, we wish you all a happy feast of Mary Help of Christians.

Renato Valera, President of ADMA Valdocco.  
Alejandro Guevara, Spiritual Animator ADMA Valdocco.

## ADMA formation programme 2020-2021

"Dream...and help others to dream!"

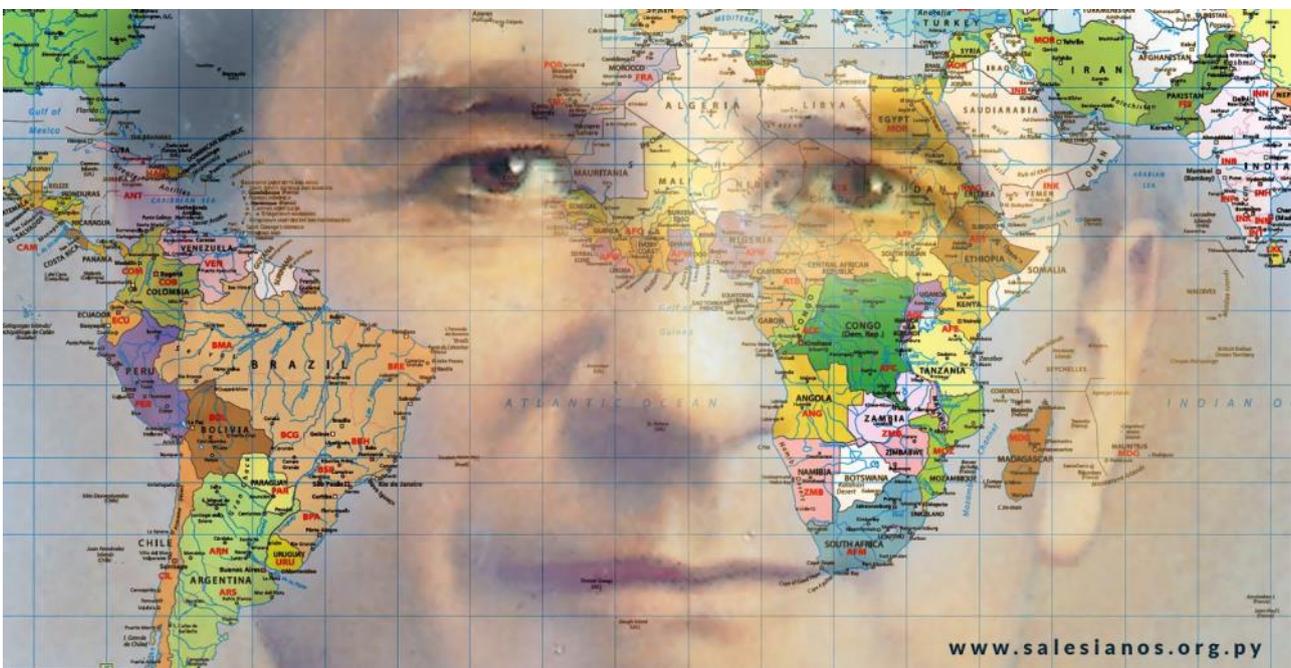
### 8. The "Valdocco OPTION" IN A plurality of languages

From the beginning Don Bosco's horizon was Catholic, that is universal. Nobody was excluded from his embrace. We know that even when there was a shortage of personnel in the early works in Italy and in Europe, he responded by sending the first missionaries to Argentina. Pluralism often frightens us and makes us close in on ourselves, but in the light of faith it is a great blessing, because in the light of the Gospel it marks the ransom of Babel on the day of Pentecost!

Here we must go deeper, because Pope Francis' invitation is clear: "The universal presence of your Salesian Family is a stimulus and an invitation to guard and preserve the richness of many of the cultures in which you are immersed without trying to get them all to conform." (Message to GC28).

Today there is a strong temptation to uniformity, which arises from fear of anything different. Globalization seeks to impose on everyone a single model, one way of thinking, a standardized and repetitive style. It is a disease of the age we live in that infects everyone a little. It can be healed only by a renewed conversion of heart. We all know that communion in the Christian sense can only be generated by maintaining our identity. Only in this way can we contribute to the beauty and symphony of the whole. If we were all the same there would be no communion but mere conformity.

For this reason, Pope Francis often speaks of the Church as a many-sided figure rather than a sphere. A sphere suggests uniformity, like a single-coloured wall. A many-sided figure suggests a mosaic made up of many small stones that create something beautiful and original by their harmonious relationship.



Today we like to speak of *inculturation* which is the capacity to identify the seeds of the Word present in every human culture, where grace always precedes the presence of the Church and the proclamation of salvation. We speak also of *interculture* by which we mean the specific richness that emerges from the meeting of different cultures that can mutually fertilize each other in a real exchange of gifts, creating new relational dynamics that enrich the existing heritage. In this regard Pope Francis said in his *Message to GC 28* that "Christianity does not have a single cultural model" to which other cultures should conform, denying their own specific identity.

During the Special Synod on the Amazon we grew as a Salesian Family, because we were able to rediscover some missionaries who did not in any way distort the culture where they went but fully assumed not only the language, but also the usages and customs of the peoples to whom they were sent. They evangelized through a dialogue capable of listening with respect and valuing with wisdom the elements of the local culture and transforming them in the light of the Gospel - Blessed Sister Maria Troncatti, missionary in the Amazon rainforest, the Servant of God Rudolf Lunkenbein, who was martyred for his defence of the rights of the Bororo, and the great father Luigi Bolla, missionary among the Achuar for 60 years, to mention only those who were remembered most at the recent Synod. They fulfilled fully the invitation that Pope Francis addresses to all of us: "Strive for Christianity to be able to take on the language and culture of the local people". It is sad to see that in many places, the Christian presence is still experienced as a foreign (especially European) presence, a situation that can also be found in formation programmes and lifestyles. The invitation is clear and repeated: "The Salesian is called to speak in the mother tongue of each of the cultures in which he finds himself".

Africa is a continent with a rich future, but it needs to strengthen its formation programmes, especially for initial formation. Europe continues its decline in number and is getting older but continues to have resources of thought and means for the mission. The great continent of Asia, where most of the world's youth population resides, continues to be a fertile ground for the charism. The American continent, while maintaining a high religious sensitivity, is experiencing some vocational difficulties that make us think. Now these movements below the surface, slow but significant in the medium and long term, invite us to enter with courage and joy into a new season of confrontation, enrichment and implementation of the Salesian charism.

The charism is not an unbreakable and unchangeable granite block, but a fire that must be constantly fed and which is therefore called to renewal if it is to continue to exist. It is a question of making the most of the new contributions to make the charism grow. Pope Francis assures us: "The unity and communion of your family is able to absorb and accept all these differences, which can enrich the whole body in a synergy of communication and interaction where everyone can offer the best of themselves for



the good of the whole body. In this way Salesianity, far from being lost in uniformity without nuance, will be expressed in a more beautiful and attractive way... it will be able to express itself "in dialect". (cf. 2 Mac 7:26-27). (Message to GC28)

Finally, Pope Francis refers to a new "common language" that has entered our world. He speaks of "the intrusion of virtual reality as the dominant language". Recognizing that this is "a space of mission", he also warns against some dangers, because the digital environment "can lock us up in ourselves and isolate us in a virtuality that is comfortable, superfluous and little or not at all involved with the lives of young people, of the members of our community or with apostolic tasks." Here we must be very careful because "the individualistic retreat, so widespread and socially proposed in this widely digitized culture, requires special attention not only with regard to our pedagogical models but also with regard to the personal and community use of time, of our activities and of our assets".

#### *For personal reflection*

- Speaking of plurality of languages is an invitation to our association to "go out" to meet and get to know other ADMA groups, other groups of the Salesian Family, and other ecclesial groups.
- The virtual language in the time of the pandemic presented opportunities for encounter and evangelization. How do I use these means?

#### *For prayer*

- Pentecost: The Church from the beginning was rich in diversity as willed by God. (Acts 2: 1-11)

*When [Pentecost](#) day came round, they had all met together, when suddenly there came from [heaven](#) a sound as of a violent wind which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and there appeared to them tongues as of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the [Holy Spirit](#) and began to speak different languages as the [Spirit](#) gave them power to express themselves. Now there were devout men living in [Jerusalem](#) from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, and each one was bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language. They were amazed and astonished. 'Surely,' they said, 'all these men speaking are Galileans? How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, [Pontus](#) and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, [Egypt](#) and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; residents of Rome - Jews and proselytes alike - Cretans and Arabs, we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.'*

#### *For action*

Meet and get to know a Church group previously unknown.

## GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

### ADMA AFO

This month we meet Irene PATHINVOH, (ADMA Provincial President), Sr. Monique AMEGNAGLO, (FMA Provincial Spiritual Animator) and Br. José Manuel NOGUEROLES, (ADMA Provincial Spiritual Animator). They speak to us about ADMA in the Francophone West African Province (AFO) and BENIN.

Irene and Monique are of Beninese nationality, Fr José Manuel is a Salesian missionary of Spanish origin. All three work in Cotonou - BENIN. Irene is a mother and has been involved in



the Association of Mary Help of Christians for many years. She has been a part of it practically since its beginnings in this region. She has worked a lot in the field of education. Sister Monique, spiritual animator of ADMA for several years, and José Manuel grew up in a Salesian environment from an early age. José Manuel has been a member of the AFO province since 1989. He has worked in the

Salesian missions in Togo and Benin and participated in the animation of the Salesian Family of which he is currently the provincial delegate.

Now let's talk about ADMA .....

### How and where did the association develop in your province or region?

- o From the arrival of the first Salesians in West Africa in the 1980s, the first groups of the Association of Mary Help of Christians began to arise, driven by the love and devotion of the Salesian missionaries to Mary Help of Christians.

### Can you tell us how many local groups and members there are today?

- o The Association is present in practically all the countries of the Province: Togo, Benin, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea Conakry, Senegal and now also in Gambia. There are 24 groups present in most of the Salesian works of the province. The number of members is impressive (about 720).

### How is the association structured at provincial and local level?

o ADMA is animated at provincial level by a Council which coordinates and guides the efforts of local groups. There is also national coordination in each country. The ADMA Provincial Council meets frequently, at least 5 times a year.



### Can you tell us more about life and the growth of the association?

o Formation exists at two levels: initial formation in preparation for the promise and then ongoing formation. We have published several brochures in the province to assist in this formation. The highlights are the monthly commemoration of Mary Help of Christians on the 24th of each month, the novena, the annual national pilgrimage, the provincial congresses every four years. The forms of commitment and apostolate are manifold: in the field of evangelization and catechesis, in caritas and in social action, in the liturgical and festive animation of the Marian feasts.

### Describe your relationship with the other groups of the Salesian Family.

ADMA is present in the Local Council of the Salesian Family and also in the Provincial Council. Through the Consulta, ADMA participates in the activities and important moments of the Local and Provincial Salesian Family: the day of the Salesian Family on the Strenna of the Rector Major, retreats, excursions, pilgrimages, the animation of the 24th of each month, moments of fraternity, moments of presentation of the Salesian vocation ...



Looking to the future, what ideas and plans do you have to maintain faith among the people and to promote the love of Jesus in the Eucharist and abandonment to Mary?

○ To grow in Salesian identity and spirituality in order to witness to the people and to the young our love for Jesus and Mary.

And for the young?

○ I believe this is one of the keys to the future of the Association. In our province we are launching ADMA-YOUTH groups. To accompany these groups we are preparing programmes and brochures clearly oriented according to Salesian Youth Ministry and with the spirituality proper to ADMA: love for Jesus in the Eucharist and Mary Help of Christians, according to the Salesian spirituality of young people. and with special attention to the family.

Have you a suggestion for Primary ADMA so that it can carry out its commitment of animation on a world level and increase the exchange and dialogue between groups?

○ First of all I thank you for your animation efforts and I ask you to continue to support and guide the various local initiatives by giving unity, depth and future perspectives to the Association.



## THE REGULATIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS TO GET TO KNOW AND LIVE OUR IDENTITY

### ARTICLE 2 - Nature and purpose (second part)

ADMA proposes a programme of apostolic holiness inspired by the Salesian charism and spirit.

God calls everyone to holiness: prayer helps to recognize the beauty and grandeur of this journey and to bear witness to it. The Salesian spirit, in the light of the evangelical journey, finds expression in service and help especially to young people most in need, in the simplicity of the practices of piety, in pastoral charity and apostolic and educational commitment, joyful fraternity and the family spirit.

Don Bosco, founder of ADMA, values in a special way the worship of the Eucharist and devotion to Mary Help of Christians, in all forms, public and private, approved by the Church. The reference is to the two pillars of the educational system and of Salesian spirituality.

The Eucharist, received and adored, is both sacrifice and sacrament, strength and consolation, source of peace and fire of activity: it is the central point for the radical conversion of the heart to the love of God. The Help of Christians is Mother of God and of the Church, who intervened in the foundation of the Salesian Family: as Don Bosco said, "She did everything. It is Mary who built her house. Each stone, each ornament signals a grace".

ADMA is therefore a Eucharistic-Marian group. Eucharistic worship and devotion to the Immaculate Help of Christians are fundamental points of the spirituality and life of the Association. It is also an ecclesial and Salesian group, which works in communion with and fidelity to the Pastors of the Church and in collaboration with other ecclesial groups, especially with those of the Salesian Family.

Don Bosco, in fact, "linked Marian devotion indissolubly to the sense of the Church, to the ministry of Peter, to the simple faith of the people of God, to the urgency of the needs of youth" (from the Charter of Communion in the Salesian Family, art. 17).

Let us trust the three great loves of Don Bosco, the Eucharist, the Help of Christians and the Pope, and let us entrust ourselves to them in our service to the Church.

Andrea and Maria Adele Damiani

## FAMILY CHRONICLE

• Dear friends of ADMA, we are happy to let you know that starting from 24 May, the feast of Mary Help of Christians, a new website of the Primary ADMA of Valdocco will be active, completely renewed in graphics and content.

This has been a big undertaking that we hope will bring new fruits of communion among all groups in the world, help us to make the association known and above all to spread even more devotion to Mary Help of Christians and love for Jesus in the Eucharist.

The new site is the beginning of a project that we would like to develop to better take care of the animation of ADMA in its global dimension. We are convinced that for this it would be nice if we could work together in the future so that it is not just the site that unites us, but a great network of relationships that crosses all continents and that is blessed by Mary! Special thanks to Chiara and Alberto who contributed with so much dedication and commitment to the creation of this new site. Thank you!

[www.admadonbosco.org](http://www.admadonbosco.org)

LINK for the novena in honour of Mary Help of Christians 2021.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ANSchannel> beginning 15 May.

Second reunion of ADMA Provincial Spiritual Animators of Cono Sud

<https://www.infoans.org/es/secciones/fotonoticias/item/12724-brasil-segunda-reunion-online-de-animadores-adma-del-cono-sur>

The paper can be read at the following site:

[www.admadonbosco.org](http://www.admadonbosco.org)

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