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EDITORIAL

“THOUSAND REASONS TO BE DEVOTED TO MARY”

My dear friends,

Here we are in the middle of the month of May, a month which has always been dedicated to Our Lady, a month in which we prepare ourselves in every part of the world to celebrate the great feast of Mary Help of Christians.

Don Bosco in **‘THE MONTH OF MAY CONSECRATED TO MARY IMMACULATE’** reminds us that *“It is true that there is no kingdom, no city, no town or house in which, if there is not an altar, there is not at least an image or statue of Mary as a sign of graces and favours received. However, the month of May is consecrated to Mary in a special way”* and again in the same text, Don Bosco emphasises *“there are countless reasons for all of us to be devoted to Mary. I will begin by mentioning the three main ones which are as follows: Mary is holier than all creatures, Mary is the mother of God, Mary is our mother”*.

The month of May is a special time, when there are many opportunities to revive our popular devotion, to intensify our prayer, to bring our requests to Jesus through Mary and to sing our praises for the benefits we obtain in our lives, especially in our spiritual lives.

There are certainly many means offered to us: praying the Rosary, participating in the sacraments, novenas



and processions. Everything is offered to us, never as an external gesture but always as a means of rediscovering true devotion to and love for Mary.

St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort in his Treatise on 'True Devotion to Mary' guides us in this direction, telling us that *"True devotion to Mary is interior; that is, it starts from the mind and the heart; it comes from the high esteem one has for her greatness and the love one has for her... True devotion to Mary is tender, that is, it is full of trust in the Holy Virgin, like the trust that a child has in his/her mother... true devotion to Mary is holy, that is, it leads the soul to avoid sin and to imitate the Virgin's virtues... true devotion to the Virgin is constant: it strengthens the soul in goodness and encourages it not to easily abandon the practices of piety... finally, true devotion to Mary is selfless: it moves the soul not to seek itself but God alone in his holy Mother."*

In the tenderness of Mary who embraces and guides our Association in the world, I wish you all a holy Marian month!

*Renato Valera, President
ADMA Valdocco.*

*Alejandro Guevara, Spiritual Animator
ADMA Valdocco.*

FORMATIVE PATH

THE FAMILY, OUR FAMILY, MY FAMILY

Education cannot be absent from our formative journey. In his apostolic letter on the family, Pope Francis devotes an entire and insightful chapter to the educational task of the family. It cannot but be so: **Education is the natural process of generation**, or, as the Fathers of the Church of the early centuries called it, a second generation. It also makes us happy because the Salesian Family lives essentially based on an educational charism where education is not only an anthropological place but also a theological place. If this is true, then some clear truths should be highlighted always.

All authentic education must be inspired by the paternal and maternal, authoritative and loving, strong and good, firm and gentle ways of family education.

Education

1. Education requires a place. **The family is the original and primary place of education.** It is the first agent. This implies, from a preventive point of view, that first of all families should be helped in the task of education. Otherwise, it will be up to other agencies to rectify the damages caused by the neglect of family education, and with little success.

2. **The educational mission springs from the vocation to fatherhood and motherhood.** This means that education is originally the education of children, and that therefore every authentic education must be inspired by the fatherly and motherly, authoritative and loving, strong and good, firm and gentle ways of family education. In concrete terms, this means that sciences like philosophy and psychology, the school and the state cannot replace the family in the task of education but should assist it.

3. From a more Christian perspective, since children are first and foremost God's children and because He is the Creator while parents are only procreators, **education** which in itself can be defined as an integral introduction to reality **must be first and foremost education in faith.** Hygiene and nourishment, education and socialisation, training of the faculties and social adaptation, protection from dangers and the provision of opportunities are of no use if we do not help the children in the development of the baptismal seed, in the growth of faith, in the development of virtues, in the discovery of and generous response to their vocation, and ultimately in the salvation of the soul, without which all is lost.

4. Like all aspects of family life, **family education succeeds when it goes beyond itself.** The paternal and maternal, affective and educational competence matured in the family must open itself to other civil and ecclesial agents of education and make itself available to society and the Church. This means offering generously and creatively one's own availability for the education not only of one's own children but also of the children of others.

Family education

Against this general background, let us listen to the precious insights that Pope Francis has offered us in the seventh chapter of *Amoris Laetitia*. The first is the clear affirmation of the irreplaceability and preciousness of family education:

“The family is the first school of human values, where we learn the wise use of freedom. Certain inclinations develop in childhood and become so deeply rooted that they remain throughout life, either as attractions to a particular value or a natural repugnance to certain ways of acting. Many people think and act in a certain way because they deem it to be right on the basis of what they learned, as if by osmosis, from their earliest years: “That’s how I was taught.” (AL 274)

Family upbringing is so decisive that it shapes children for better or for worse. This must convince parents to accept *“the inevitable responsibility and to carry it out in a conscious, enthusiastic, reasonable and*

appropriate manner” (AL 259). As if to say: if we must educate, then let us do it well! Let us ask ourselves: What is the heritage of life, culture, faith, love that we want to leave behind as an inheritance to our children after our death and beyond our defects?

Having said this, the Pope offers four points based on educational approach, moral education, sex education and finally religious education.

1. On the style of education, at a time when it has become very difficult to educate because of the collapse of an entire tradition, the high rate of cultural fragmentation and the excess and the rapidity of cognitive and emotional stimuli, the Pope points out that **the educational occupation must not become a dis-educational effort**. Children are formed by presence, witness, deeds and by attention to the time they are living (their existential position) and not by extreme control of the space in which they live (where they are, with whom they live, what they are doing etc.). Here are a couple of passages to understand this:

“Parents need to consider what they want their children to be exposed to, and this necessarily means being concerned about who is providing their entertainment, who is entering their rooms through television and electronic devices, and with whom they are spending their free time. Only if we devote time to our children, speaking of important things with simplicity and concern, and finding healthy ways for them to spend their time, will we be able to shield them from harm.” (AL 260)

“Obsession, however, is not education. We cannot control every situation that a child may experience. Here it remains true that “time is greater than space”. In other words, it is more important to start processes than to dominate spaces. If parents are obsessed with always knowing where their children are and controlling all their movements, they will seek only to dominate space. But this is no way to educate, strengthen and prepare their children to face challenges. What is most important is the ability, lovingly to help them grow in freedom, maturity, overall discipline and real autonomy... The real question, then, is not where our children are physically, or whom they are with at any given time, but rather where they are existentially, where they stand in terms of their convictions, goals, desires and dreams.” (AL 261).

There is also a very important and delicate passage in which the Pope points out that in order to avoid

The real question, then, is not where our children are physically, or whom they are with at any given time, but rather where they are existentially, where they stand in terms of their convictions, goals, desires and dreams.

unnecessary and excessive anxiety, it is important for parents to accept a priori and peacefully **the novelty, originality and surprising decisions of their children**:

“Inevitably, each child will surprise us with ideas and projects, born of that freedom, which challenge us to rethink our own ideas. This is a good thing.” (AL 262)

2. On moral education, i.e. the introduction to good life which is not so much about multiplying possibilities but about the quality of action, the Pope puts in first place the development of trust without which one cannot grow serenely:

A person’s affective and ethical development is ultimately grounded in a particular experience, namely, his or her parents can be trusted. This means that parents, as educators, are responsible by their affection and example for instilling in their children trust and loving respect (AL 263).

Moreover, in the face of the legacy of modern and post-modern pedagogies, the former vertical and authoritarian and the latter horizontal and anti-authoritarian, the Pope brings back the theme - now also echoed in the human sciences - of **goodwill and good habits**, the theme of virtues:

“Parents are also responsible for shaping the will of their children, fostering good habits and a natural inclination to goodness.... Moral education has to do with cultivating freedom through ideas, incentives, practical applications, stimuli, rewards, examples, models, symbols, reflections, encouragement, dialogue and a constant rethinking of our way of doing things; all these can help develop those stable interior principles that lead us spontaneously to do good. Virtue is a conviction that has become a steadfast inner principle of operation. The virtuous life thus builds, strengthens and shapes freedom, lest we become slaves of dehumanizing and antisocial inclinations.” (AL 264,267)

Another educational theme that needs to be revived today which the Pope makes very clear, is **the theme of restitution and reparation**. The underlying theme is education for responsible freedom which develops autonomy without denying limits and constraints:

“It is also essential to help children and adolescents to realize that misbehaviour has consequences. They need to be encouraged to put themselves in other people’s shoes and to acknowledge the hurt they have caused... Children themselves at certain point come to appreciate that it was good to grow up in a family and even to put up with the demands that every process of formation makes.” (AL 268)

“Correction is also an incentive whenever children’s efforts are appreciated and acknowledged, and they sense their parents’ constant, patient trust... One of the things children need to learn from their parents is not to get carried away by anger. A child who does something wrong must be corrected, but never treated as an enemy or an object on which to take out one’s own frustrations.” (AL 269).

This is not easy, because the result of the individualistic and free culture is the fall of all authority, law and discipline, the paradoxical consequence of which is the multiplication of regulations and prohibitions. So, the Pope does not fail to suggest to parents the importance of **educating a sense of limits, always keeping in the foreground the openness of possibilities**:

“It is important that discipline does not lead to discouragement, but is instead a stimulus to further progress... A balance has to be found between two equally harmful extremes. One would be to try to make everything revolve around the child’s desires; such children will grow up with a sense of their rights but not their responsibilities. The other would be to deprive the child of an awareness of his or her dignity, personal identity and rights; such children end up overwhelmed by their duties and a need to carry out other people’s wishes.” (AL 270)

3. Again, with regard to sex education, the Pope recognises its urgency and delicacy, and asks that it **be seen in the broader context of education to love**:

“It could only be understood in the context of an education to love, to mutual giving. In this way, the language of sexuality would not be sadly impoverished but enlightened.” (AL 280)

The task of parents includes an education of the will and a development of good habits and affective inclinations in favor of the good.



It is very important that the theme should be love and not sex directly, because today’s problem, diametrically opposed to that of the past, is the directness and excess of stimuli and information which is accompanied by a lack of modesty and morality:

“The information has to come at a proper time and in a way suited to their age. It is not helpful to overwhelm them with data without also helping them to develop a critical sense in dealing with the onslaught of new ideas and suggestions, the flood of pornography and the overload of stimuli that can deform sexuality.” (AL 281).

“A sexual education that fosters a healthy sense of modesty has immense value, however much some people nowadays consider modesty a relic of a bygone era. Modesty is a natural means whereby we defend our personal privacy and prevent ourselves from being turned into objects to be used.” (AL 282)

“Frequently, sex education deals primarily with “protection” through the practice of “safe sex”. Such expressions convey a negative attitude towards the natural procreative finality of sexuality, as if an eventual child were an enemy to be protected against.” (AL 283).

Here are some proposals:

“The important thing is to teach them sensitivity to different expressions of love, mutual concern and care, loving respect and deeply meaningful communication. All of these prepare them for an integral and generous gift of self that will be expressed, following a public commitment, in the gift of their bodies. Sexual union in marriage will thus appear as a sign of an all-inclusive commitment, enriched by everything that has preceded it.” (AL 283).

“Sex education should also include respect and appreciation for differences, as a way of helping the young to overcome their self-absorption and to be open and accepting of others....Only by losing the fear of being different, can we be freed of self-centeredness and self-absorption. Sex education should help young people to accept their own bodies and to avoid the pretension “to cancel out sexual difference because one no longer knows how to deal with it.” (AL 285)

4. Last, but not the least, in order of importance is the task that God entrusts to the family of educating in the faith. This requires parents to recognise **God’s authority and the primacy of His grace**, and to humbly and consciously act as ministers and co-workers, first and foremost by taking care of their own formation:

“Faith is God’s gift, received in baptism, and not our own work, yet parents are the means that God uses for it to grow and develop.... We know that we do not own the gift, but that its care is entrusted to us. Yet our creative commitment is itself an offering which enables us to cooperate with God’s plan. For this reason, “couples and parents should be properly appreciated as active agents in catechesis... Family catechesis is of great assistance as an effective method in training young parents to be aware of their mission as the evangelizers of their own family.” (AL 287)

Bear in mind, after all, that in the field of faith, more than in any other field, **education is equivalent to witness:**

“It is essential that children actually see that, for their parents, prayer is something truly important. Hence moments of family prayer and acts of devotion can be more powerful for evangelization than any catechism class or sermon.” (AL 288).



“Children who grew up in missionary families often become missionaries themselves; growing up in warm and friendly families, they learn to relate to the world in this way, without giving up their faith or their convictions.” (AL 289).

Preventive System of Education

As a great and holy educator that he was, Don Bosco testified that education is more of an art than a science or a technique. It requires finesse of mind and a sense of the concrete. The Pope himself, at Don Bosco’s school, has testified that he appreciated and learned from Don Bosco’s sons the necessary **creativity and flexibility of the educational task**. It means that the educational enterprise cannot be limited to reference to eternal and ideal values, nor to established practices and techniques: **education must always be attentive to the promptings of God and the signs of the times** in order to know how to respond in a concrete, solicitous and creative way to the conditions of its own time and to the situations in which young people find themselves. A passage from the **Salesian Constitutions** is enlightening this point:

“The Salesian is called to be a realist and to be attentive to the signs of the times, convinced that the Lord manifests his will also through the demands of time and place. Hence his spirit of initiative and apostolic creativity: “In those things which are for the benefit of young people in danger or which serve to win souls for God, I push ahead even to the extent of recklessness.” Timely response to these needs requires him to keep abreast of new trends and meet them with the well-balanced creativity of the Founder; periodically he evaluates his work.” (Const. SDB 19)

The Charter of the Charismatic Identity of the Salesian Family (CCISF) also dwells on the creativity and concrete flexibility of the educational work, first of all enumerating the most appropriate means:

“The desire to do good means looking for the best ways to put it into practice. At stake are the correct interpretation of needs and practical possibilities, spiritual discernment in the light of the Word of God, the courage to take the initiative, creativity in identifying untried solutions, adaptation to changing circumstances, the ability to collaborate, and the willingness to evaluate.” (CCISF 35)

The Charter of the Charismatic Identity -- it is a 'charismatic' identity that cannot be disregarded without the risk of fruitlessness! -- insists on flexibility, on the ability to integrate eternal things into the movements of history.

It is important all the more today because there are strong neo-conservative tendencies and temptations,

past ecclesial, pastoral and educational styles that no longer exist. Here, the words of Fr Rinaldi, Don Bosco's third successor, are very strong and prophetic:

“Fr. Philip Rinaldi reminds the Salesians – and what he says applies to all the groups of the Salesian Family: “This flexibility in adapting to every form of good continually arising among humanity is the spirit proper to our Constitutions: the day in which a variation contrary to this spirit should be introduced would be the end of our Society”. It is not only a question of strategy, but also a spiritual matter, since it implies a constant renewal of themselves and of their actions in obedience to the Spirit and in the light of the signs of the times.” (CCISF 35)



KNOW THE ASSOCIATION

ADMA - CHILDREN AND YOUNG ASSOCIATION OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS – SAN PAOLO

In an atmosphere of joy and relaxation, the members of ADMA Children and ADMA Youth from the Parish of the Holy Family, in the city of São José dos Campos, SP, Brazil, met for their monthly formation with dedication and great love for Mary Help of Christians.

They get the opportunity to build up their unity in the Salesian spirit, sharing moments of youth dynamism, living and witnessing holiness with commitment and animation. They try to grow together in the Salesian charism which is based on the 'two columns' dreamt of by Don Bosco: The Eucharist and Mary Help of Christians.

The members are invited to live and witness their love for Mary Help of Christians in their daily life, in the places where they study, play, in their families and where they spend their free time.

The formative programmes are divided according to age groups. The ADMA Children propose a monthly meeting with recreational activities, films on Salesian and Christian themes, with interactive activities in a language which is easy to understand, and end the meeting always with fraternal snacks.

The ADMA Youth proposes a path of growth for adolescents and young people and follows the themes proposed in the ADMA Regulations, the Charter of Charismatic Identity of the Salesian Family, the annual Strenna of the Rector Major presented during the meetings with an appropriate musical and participative language. They are accompanied by the Spiritual Animator, Fr Maurício Miranda, the Salesian seminarians and the ADMA adults from the local presence.



REGULATIONS

ARTICLE 10 - PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF THE ASSOCIATION (FIRST PART)

“All baptized Catholics of at least 18 years of age can apply for membership in the Association. Membership implies the commitment to live what is prescribed by art.4 of the present regulations and regular participation in the Association’s meetings in a spirit of solidarity and belonging.”

As we have already seen in Article 4, membership of the Association implies following commitments, having as privileged places the family, the living ambience, the work environment and friendship:

- to value the participation in liturgical life, especially in the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, in the practice of personal Christian life;

- to live and spread the devotion to Mary Help of Christians, according to Don Bosco’s spirit, in particular in the Salesian Family;

- to renew, strengthen and live the practices of popular piety: the commemoration of the 24th of the month, the Holy Rosary, the novena in preparation for the feast of Mary Help of Christians, pilgrimages to Marian shrines etc.;

- to imitate Mary by cultivating in one’s own family a Christian environment of welcome and solidarity;

- to practise, through prayer and action, concern for the poorest young people and people in need;

- to pray for and support lay, religious and ministerial vocations in the Church, and in particular in the Salesian Family;

- to live the spirituality of daily life with evangelical attitudes, in particular with thanksgiving to God for the wonders He continually performs and with fidelity to Him even in the hour of difficulty and of the Cross, following the example of Mary.

The Association is sustained by the commitment of each member: each one is called upon to participate with a spirit of communion and collaboration in the meetings and in the various activities, and to offer his



or her availability for the commitments to which he or she is called.

The vocation to be part of ADMA requires a free and motivated response, convinced under the action of the Holy Spirit and with the assistance of Mary Help of Christians, with the accompaniment of the group leaders.

It is in fact a choice of life which requires a careful discernment and a constant commitment to the service of the Church in the Salesian spirit and mission.

Andrea and Maria Adele Damiani

4TH CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES AND HIS PASTORAL PROSPECTS: SALESIAN GENTLENESS AND INTEGRAL FORMATION.

The topic we are going to deal with in this video is a Salesian theme and very much Bosconian. It is the gentleness of St Francis de Sales which Don Bosco made his own and re-presented with the concept of 'the loving-kindness'.

Salesian gentleness is not about being lenient and surrendering. It certainly does not imply weakness of character. The gentleness that St. Francis de Sales lives, feels, proposes and on which he will base almost everything of his daily life has a deeply Christian root. It starts from Jesus who said of himself: ***"I am meek and humble of heart."***

To tell the truth, gentleness is not a single reality; it is a combination of two virtues: gentleness and humility. The two terms are not even equivalent. St. Francis de Sales says that these two fundamental realities are the basis of holiness and he also says that they are very rare virtues.

He would say that one must have a gentle heart towards one's neighbour and a humble heart towards God. The combination of these two is the Salesian gentleness.

We might think that the more important of these two virtues is certainly humility. St. Francis de Sales says that humility is the first and foundation of all the other virtues and makes our hearts sweet. Let us listen to him:

"The Lord loves humility so much that he has no difficulty in allowing us to fall into sin in order to derive holy humility from it. Charity and humility are the main threads; all the others are connected to them. One has only to keep oneself between these two: one is the lowest, the other, the highest. The stability of the whole building depends on the foundation and the roof. Keeping the heart bound to the exercise of these, it is not very difficult to find the others. They are the mothers of the virtues: they follow them like chicks follow hens."

The virtue of humility, which St. Francis de Sales cultivated so much and longed for himself, is a fundamental virtue.

The Baroness of Chantal, when she met Francis de Sales, began a correspondence with him and was fascinated by the holiness that transpired. She wrote to Francis with great esteem, even calling him a 'saint'. This language and this way of looking at his wretched person embarrassed him greatly because Francis wrote to her:

"I must forbid you to use the word 'saint' when you write about me because, my daughter, holiness in me is more apparent than real and more, the canonisation of saints is not your business."

The gentleness that St Francis de Sales proposes to us has two aspects: one, with oneself and the other, with others. One of the most frequently quoted and certainly most inspiring statement of St Francis de Sales is: *"In education, we need a cup of science, a barrel of prudence and an ocean of patience."* This statement is all the more true if we think that the first educational task is the one with ourselves: this gentleness with ourselves starts from not being surprised by our limits and frailties because they are part of our human nature. We are made this way and precisely because we are made so, we are loved by God who wanted us. This sweetness comes from enduring our limits, not harshly but with much patience, we will say, 'with much holy patience'. It is not resignation but comes from humility. It grows with much mercy. With much evangelical realism, St. Francis de Sales says:

"Be patient with everyone, but above all with yourselves; I mean, that you do not get upset about your faults and that you always have the courage to get rid of them. I am happy if you begin every day anew; there is no better means of perfection in one's spiritual life than to begin again and again and never to think that one has done enough."

St. Francis de Sales, like the Good Shepherd, truly having personified in himself the attitude of the Good Shepherd, sustains the wounds of his sheep. Let us pick up another passage from Francis' letter:

“Our faults should not please us but they should not also astonish us or take away our courage. Instead, we must draw from them humility and mistrust of ourselves, not with discouragement nor affliction of heart, nor even mistrust of God’s love for us because God does not love our faults and venial sins. Just as a child’s mother does not cease to love him because of weakness, though it displeases her. Indeed, she loves the child tenderly and with compassion. In the same way, God does not cease to love us tenderly.”

Speaking of the daily battle of his conversion and our conversion, Francis expresses himself with a phrase that is particularly interesting. He says, *“one must be gently at war.”*

His spiritual direction is very human, profound and very wise. It communicates trust in the person who entrusts himself to him and is born of a deep spiritual optimism and is certainly powerfully encouraging. Let us listen to some of his insights regarding spiritual direction:

“We must hold together two things: an extreme affection for good daily prayer and our commitment to improvement, not being disturbed, concerned or surprised if we happen to commit shortcomings. The first element depends on our fidelity which must always be whole and grow from hour to hour; the second depends on our weakness from which we can never be able to free ourselves totally in this mortal life. When we commit a fault, let us ask our heart whether it has kept alive and intact the resolution to serve God. Let us say to it: why are you grumbling now? And it will answer: I was surprised, I don’t know how but now I am so disheartened! Alas, dear daughter, we must forgive this poor heart. It is not because of infidelity that it errs but because of weakness.”

Sweetness with oneself has a sure and evident reflection in sweetness with others. This is the second chapter on which we want to share a few words from Francis de Sales.

From Francis comes the key to gentleness with one’s neighbor. It is expressed at the level of family, household and in the community interactions.

“One must consider one’s neighbour in God. When will we all be full of gentleness and serenity towards our neighbour? It is when we know how to see the souls of our neighbour with the Heart of the divine Saviour.

Whoever considers his neighbour outside of this runs the risk of not loving him either with purity or with constancy. In that perspective, who would not love him? How can we not put up with him? Who would find him unpleasant and boring? When our neighbour is burdensome and unpleasant, only the love of the Saviour leads us to love him and this love is pure and liberates us inwardly.”

Historians say that, when Francis was bishop, a young man came to him and spoke in an abusive manner, and Francis corrected him, certainly, but with great restraint to the amazement of those who were listening.

Francis was later asked how he had exercised such restraint and delicacy in his reply, he said: *“I was afraid of losing in a quarter of an hour that little bit of meekness that I have been trying to keep in the cup of my heart for 22 years.”*

St. Paul VI, in 1967, the 400th anniversary of the birth of St. Francis de Sales, wrote an Apostolic Letter entitled ‘Sabaudie Gemma’, the Gem of Savoy. In it, precisely by portraying the gentleness of St. Francis with others that the Pope stated:

“One finds in him supreme integrity of life, supreme gentleness and benignity. He is never violent in disputes, he loves the errant while correcting errors; and if his positions differ, he never uses polemical opposition. Faithful in loving, praying and enlightening, he knows how to be patient for a long time, how to gradually lead errant people back to the fullness of truth.”

The biographers and historians of Saint Francis de Sales tell us that gentleness, which is one of his characteristics, was certainly not spontaneous. It did not come to him as a gift of nature. He built up his Christian gentleness over a long period of time and with an amiable conversion that lasted throughout his life.

[Here is the video](#)

FAMILY EVENTS

18 April 2022. **Anchored to the two Columns for 153 years...**



On 18th April 1869, a dream came true here in Valdocco: Don Bosco founded the Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians, as a sign of gratitude for the countless graces and miracles attributed to Mary's intercession and as an instrument to spread the devotion to the Virgin Mary and love for Jesus in the world.

And the dream continues! Over the years, many people have made their own the commitment to live their daily lives by imitating Mary and placing themselves under her mantle as her children.

Today, after 153 years, ADMA is one of the 32 groups of the Salesian Family, and under that mantle, it now has over 100,000 members in more than 50 countries around the world. The ADMA lives, changes, transforms itself through the people and it is called to live up to the challenges of the present times, renewing its fidelity to the two pillars: Adoration to Eucharist and devotion to Mary Help of Christians.

18th April is an important date. It reminds us of our origins and that we are on a journey and part of a river of grace that flows from generation to generation in history. It is not a past event to celebrate but a present one to live.

What then is our greatest desire? It is to be light, to spread grace and bear witness to what we have experienced: the beauty of entrusting our lives to Jesus through Mary. It is she who takes us by the hand and acts as our teacher in every situation. We have received everything with gratuitousness and hence we give everything to those we meet.

Cause opened in Savona for **Beatification of Vera Grita, "Someone to look up to"**



[Video Opening of the Diocesan Inquiry for the Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Vera Grita.](#)

On Sunday, the 10th of April 2022, at the Episcopal Seminary of Savona, the diocesan enquiry for the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Vera Grita (1923-1969), Lay, Salesian Cooperator, primary school teacher and 'voice' of the group 'Living Tabernacles' was officially opened. The day saw the participation, both in physical presence and online, of various people belonging to the groups of the 'Living Tabernacles' and to the Salesian Family, in particular the Salesian Cooperators and the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA).

In the morning, Doctor Lodovica Maria Zanet, collaborator of the General Postulation for the Causes of the Saints of the Salesian Family, presented the process that the Church follows for Beatification with its various phases and dynamics. She highlighted how the story of Vera Grita calls us to enter into profound harmony with a witness of littleness without allowing ourselves to be misled by the discretion. Vera knew how to live hidden because she learned to become a saint first before God's gaze rather than before the gaze of men. Hers was an extraordinary response (beautiful, rich, convincing) to the ordinary conditions of life.

Adma Primay - Family Retreat at 'Colle Don Bosco'

On 10th April 2022, the families of ADMA gathered at Colle Don Bosco for the annual retreat of the Palms, led by Fr. Roberto Carelli and assisted by Fr. Alejandro with his presence.

The theme of the day was **'Love at the time of trial'**. The families discussed the themes of the 6th chapter of the Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia. In particular, they reflected on the theme of marriage as a gift and a task, with an exhortation to live holy in the present, with mercy towards the imperfection, change and fragility of the spouse. *"In marriage,"* Don Roberto reminded the spouses present, *"each spouse is an instrument of God to help the other grow, and it is necessary to take time to grow in the family and in the faith."* A final consideration concerned the crises that may occur along the way. They require a gaze of humility with an openness to a renewed 'yes' that can make it possible for love to be renewed, strengthened, transfigured and enlightened.



As the families spent time in silent reflection and Eucharistic Adoration, the animation of their children was carried out by older animators focusing on their formation using also games.

ADMA Primary youth meeting with ukrainians in Valdocco



On Saturday the 23rd, we had a fraternal meeting with the group of Ukrainian families hosted at Valdocco.

Despite the difficulties in communicating, we believe we managed to convey our closeness, our affection and, above all, Mary's love for them.

Thanks to our young people who participated and to those who contributed to the delicious dinner that was offered.

We believe that it was an important opportunity for our young people to share, to serve and to know the effects of this tragedy at first hand. It made them become aware of the situation and reflect.

The money collected was donated, after deducting the costs, to the needy Ukrainian people and, in particular, to the group hosted at Valdocco.