

# MONTHLY MESSAGE

n. 6 – 2021

Turin - Valdocco 24 June



Dear members, in the light of the feast of Mary Help of Christians that has just passed, we are approaching the conclusion of this year's journey in the association by re-reading and meditating on the letter of Pope Francis to the Salesians of Don Bosco on the occasion of their General Chapter. *Dream and Let Dream*, was the title of the letter, an invitation to "revive the gift received", "remain restless and intrepid in discernment" and still "remain in creative fidelity to the Salesian identity".

We re-read the letter to find ideas for rediscovering the strength of our charism in our association and in our situation, and looking at the present time with new eyes, "cultivating a contemplative attitude" because "neither pessimism nor optimism are gifts of the Spirit, because both come from a self-referential vision capable only of measuring oneself by one's own strengths, capacities or abilities, preventing us from looking at what the Lord is accomplishing and wants to accomplish among us."

If we adopt this attitude and look to the future with hope, we can grasp some very beautiful signs for our association that are in some way the fruit of an evangelical reading of the present time:



1. The need to rediscover what is close at hand, the local reality in which we live and work.  
2. The possibility of getting to know what is further away, to enhance ADMA as a widespread reality in every corner of the world.

If we think about the first point, the pandemic has prevented us from holding meetings and large gatherings but has allowed us to rediscover our presence as ADMA in our local situation. We have perhaps begun to live in the "small situations near at hand" we have

resumed our life in the parishes, the Salesian houses, and our homes.

Basically, this means rediscovering what Don Bosco had in mind for us 150 years ago in the regulations of the association: - the commitment as ADMA members to collaborate in the life of the parish and in the Salesian mission, offering our service and our presence to live and spread devotion to the Eucharist and to Mary Help of Christians. - the commitment to imitate Mary in her daily attitudes, entrusting ourselves to her and, in particular, entrusting to her our commitment to families and young people (Article 4 of the regulations).

If, on the other hand, we think about the second point, the pandemic opens up new horizons for us, offering us new possibilities and forms of dialogue, animation and exchange on a global level between the various ADMA groups around the world. It is a great novelty that opens up and enriches us, teaching us to go out of our own situation to meet our neighbour. This will allow us to discover and appreciate the many forms the charism takes, and the ways the spirit has led our association to every corner of the world.

Let us then entrust our projects to Mary, asking her to enable us to grasp the new opportunities and to continue dreaming as we follow in her footsteps.

Renato Valera, *President ADMA Valdocco.*

Alejandro Guevara, *Spiritual Animatore ADMA Valdocco.*

## ADMA formation programme 2020-2021

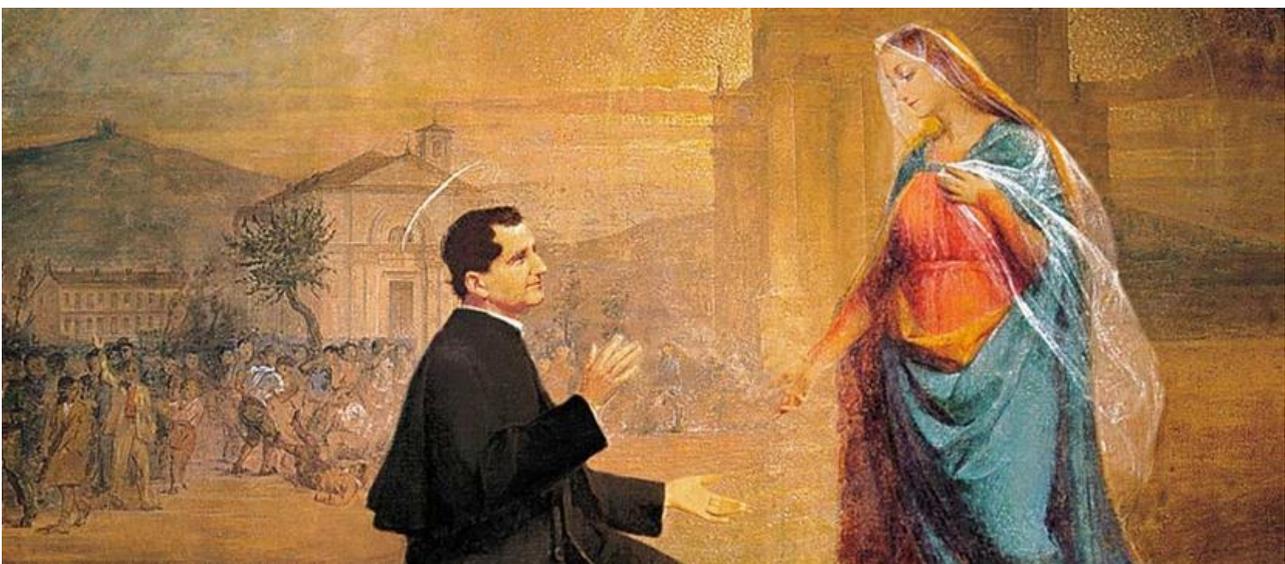
"Dream...and help others to dream!"

### 9. . DRAW ON THE GRACE OF THE BEGINNING

The final words of the *Message to GC 28*, are short and concise. They remind us of a constant experience throughout Don Bosco's life, the special grace that accompanied his every step - the "Valdocco option" and the ability to dream. From the beginning to the end of his life, our founder dreamed, learning from dreams to believe in God who guided him. He fulfilled his dreams with determination, in the certainty that through his dreams God was manifesting himself in his life: "They were the Lord's way of entering into his life and into the life of your whole Congregation, enlarging the idea of what was possible. Far from keeping him asleep, his dreams helped him, as they did St Joseph, to embrace another dimension and depth of life, born out of the depths of God's compassion. (*Message to GC28*).

If we think about it, what our world lacks today is the ability to imagine. Until a few decades ago, we, as Church and as the Salesian Family, had "great stories" that gave us life and gave us strength to accomplish great deeds, dreams that we passed on with joy to our people and to the young. They shaped our personal and community existence: the drama of the history of salvation, the certain hope in eternal life, the enthusiasm of the missionary adventure, the aspiration to holiness, the attraction for young people to dedicate their life in the form of religious consecration, and the certainty of adhering to a full and abundant form of life.

With the limited horizon of our age, today we risk being trapped in the present without cultivating an accessible and positive vision of the future. In this way we do not see any opening to transcend the earthly experience that we live day after day. The imagination has shrunk, and



the measure of life has become cramped and self-centred, enclosed in comfortable, safe spaces. The young people at the Synod said that they are often forced to give up their dreams, so much so that many of them have even stopped dreaming.

And what happens to a young person who stops dreaming? He or she loses the soul of youth itself, which basically consists in looking to the future with joy and hope. But we can also ask ourselves: what happens to a Congregation or an Association that renounces its dreams and even stops dreaming? And again: what about a Church unable to cultivate dreams? Stopping dreaming means killing hope, and letting our life be dominated by "sad passions" and "dark passions": despair, depression, negative judgment on everything, the inability to glimpse the good that exists, the death of the desire to seek ways out, and the inability to fight for a better world, letting oneself be carried downwards. Without dreams we are not dead yet, but neither are we alive! Without dreams, our life is set out on the path of Judas, who no longer sees any light on his journey. A life that gives up dreaming is doomed to sadness.

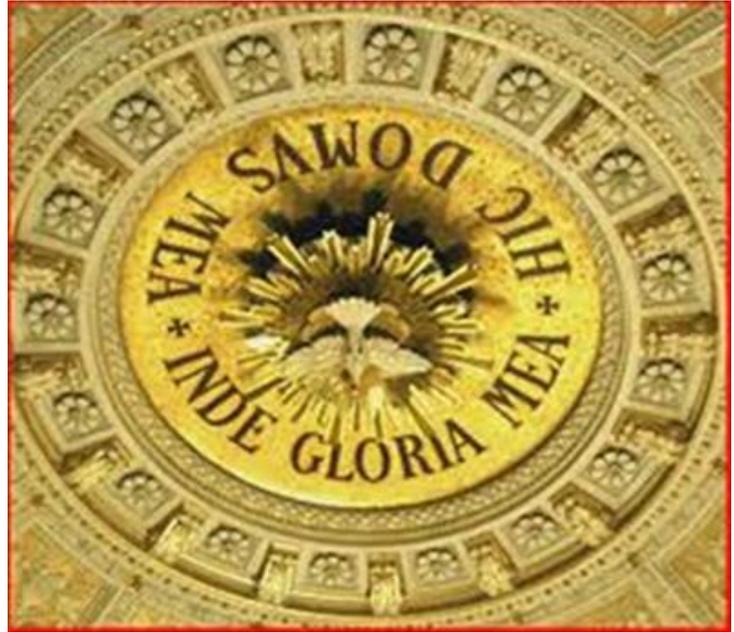
The Church and the Salesian Family will be able to give birth to a new future only if they are able to touch the hearts of young people on the level of imagination, if they are able to awaken in them high ideals for which it is worth committing one's life, presenting faith as an adventure capable of mobilizing life, offering it a positive and exciting meaning. Capturing the ability to desire a full and abundant life is what has made faith attractive and desirable in all the different epochs of the history of Christianity. Are we still able to describe faith as something intriguing and capable of awakening the hearts of our contemporaries? It seems to me that in the prophetic invitation of Pope Francis - "Dream ... and Let Dream!" - there is a bit of all of this.

We want to re-propose one of Don Bosco's more prophetic and programmatic dreams which opened great horizons to him, and which is still for us today a reason for hope and renewed fidelity to the Salesian charism and to the call we have received.

A WONDERFUL thing happened during those days to comfort Don Bosco, by disclosing future events to him. Let us narrate it in his own words from the pages of his memoirs:

On the second Sunday of that year (1844) I was to tell my boys that the oratory was being transferred to the Valdocco area. I was, however, truly worried because I was uncertain about the exact location, the means and the people [to help me]. On Saturday night, I went to bed feeling uneasy, but that night I had a new dream which seemed to be a sequel to the one I had had at Becchi when about nine years old. I think it best to put it down literally. I dreamed that I was in the midst of a multitude of wolves, goats, kids, lambs, sheep, rams, dogs and birds. The whole menagerie raised an uproar, a bedlam, or, better, a racket that would have frightened even the bravest man. I wanted to run away, when a Lady, dressed as a shepherdess, beckoned me to follow Her and accompany the strange flock She was leading. We wandered aimlessly, making three stops along the way, at each of which many of those animals changed into lambs, so that the number of lambs continually increased. After a long trek, I found I was in a meadow, where those animals were grazing and frolicking, making no attempt to bite each other. I was exhausted and wanted to sit by the roadside, but the Shepherdess invited me to keep walking. A short distance away, I came upon a large playground surrounded by porticoes, with a church at one end. Here I noticed that four fifths of those animals had become

lambs. Their number was now very large. At that moment many young shepherds came to watch over them, but they remained only a short time and walked off. Then a marvellous thing happened: many lambs turned into shepherds, and they, in increasing numbers, took care of the flock. When the shepherds became too many, they parted and went elsewhere to herd other strange animals into pens. I wanted to leave, because I thought it was time for me to say Mass, but the Shepherdess asked me to look to the south. On doing so, I saw a field in which corn, potatoes, cabbage, beets, lettuce and many other vegetables had been planted. "Look again," she said. I did so and beheld a monumental church. In the choir loft I saw choristers and musicians who seemed to be inviting me to sing Mass. On a white streamer inside the church there was emblazoned in large letters HIC DOMUS MEA, INDE GLORIA MEA (Here is my house and hence my glory will come forth). Still dreaming, I asked the Shepherdess where I was, and the meaning of all this walking, the stops, that house, the church and then another church. "You will understand everything," She answered, "when with your bodily eyes you will behold all that you now see in your mind." I thought I was awake, and so I said, "I see clearly, and with my bodily eyes; I know where I am going and what I am doing." Just then the bell of St. Francis of Assisi Church rang the Ave Maria and I awoke. (BM II 190-191)



*Pope Francis' Message to the 28th General Chapter*, in a lovely familiar goodnight, invites us to reawaken that ability to **dream** which is the undeniable sign of the vitality of our educative charism: "I would like to offer you these words just like the "goodnights" in every good Salesian house at the end of the day, inviting you to dream and to dream big. Know that the rest will be given to you as well. Dream of open, fruitful and evangelising houses capable of allowing the Lord to show so many young people his unconditional love and also allowing you to enjoy the beauty to which you have been called. Dream... not only for yourself and for the good of the Congregation, but for all young people deprived of the strength, light and comfort of friendship with Jesus Christ, deprived of a community of faith to sustain them, of a horizon of meaning and of life. Dream... And Let Dream!

This is nothing more than **a pedagogy of faith and prophecy** - faith to which we are invited through dreams, which are a prophecy of the future and a blessing for us, for young people and for all those who share a passion for education with us. For Don Bosco, dreams were prophecies destined to come true: the dream carried him forward in faith, pushed him to dare the unimaginable, to risk everything. It is God who, through his dreams, accompanied him by the hand, step by step, making him a prophet for the good of all young people, without exception.

For personal reflection

- What is God's dream for you today? What is God calling you to at this moment in life?
- What is God's dream for the local ADMA?

FOR PRAYER • Vision of Paul revealing his mission (Acts 16,6-10) *"They travelled through Phrygia and the Galatian country, because they had been told by the Holy Spirit not to preach the word in Asia. When they reached the frontier of Mysia they tried to go into Bithynia, but as the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them they went through Mysia and came down to Troas. One night Paul had a vision: a Macedonian appeared and kept urging him in these words, 'Come across to Macedonia and help us.' Once he had seen this vision we lost no time in arranging a passage to Macedonia, convinced that God had called us to bring them the good news.*

FOR ACTION

Write a letter with your dreams and also God's dreams



## GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

### ADMA SPAIN - MADRID

#### ADMA - ZONA CENTRO MADRID

With great pleasure and trying to be brief, I present to you ADMA Zona Centro Madrid, Spain. First of all, the Council of ADMA Zona Centro Madrid is made up of 7 people, according to the model of the Regulations. We are animated by Lola Lozano FMA and Alejandro Viñas SDB. I, Gloria Blanco, am serving as president until new elections when we can have an Assembly of ADMA Presidents.

Next, our spiritual animators introduce themselves.

My name is Alejandro Viñas Raya. I am the spiritual animator of the ADMA Association, Central Area (formerly the Province of Madrid) of the Province of San Giacomo Maggiore. I am also spiritual animator of the Carabanchel Alto Association. I belong to the Miguel Rúa community of Carabanchel and have been a priest since April 1974. I come from the Salesian school in Puertollano (Ciudad Real) where I was a student for 5 years. I did my aspirantate in Zuazo del Cuartango (Vitoria) and Arévalo (Ávila) - Novitiate in Mohernando - Philosophy in Guadalajara - 3 years in Guadalajara. - 3 years Practical Training in Atocha (college) - 3 years of Theology in Salamanca - 2 years as a Priest in Atocha (student residence) and student for the Licentiate in Moral Theology in Comillas - 1 year in Collegio dei Ferrovieri - 2 years in Ciudad Real (college) - 10 years in Paris (as chaplain of the Spanish emigrants) - 2 years in Alcalá de Henares - 3 years in Carabanchel (director of the aspirantate for Brothers) - 6 years as Vice-Provincial of Madrid - 6 years Rector in Estrecho - 1 year sabbatical in Paris - 6 years Director of Paseo de Extremadura - the last 8 years in Carabanchel, in the Miguel Rúa Community (I started teaching and after retirement, since



2017, I have been working for 3 hours in administration, updating and taking care of the library, and at the disposition of the Pedagogical Director of the ESO Baccalaureate. Since 2016 I have also been ecclesiastical assistant of the VDB of the Madrid group. I have been a Salesian since 1965 when I made my profession at Mohernando (Guadalajara). Since the academic year 2013-2014, I have been spiritual animator of the association.

My name is MARIA DOLORES LOZANO LOZANO. I was born in Salamanca on 14 November 1940. The family foundations were very good. From my parents I learned simplicity, charity, responsibility, hospitality, etc. We are 6 siblings. The eldest is an FMA and the youngest is an SDB. My Salesian story is simple. I entered the Institute at the age of 20. I have been an FMA for 55 years. My life has developed in a peaceful and joyful environment, with a sense of responsibility, faith and a lot of enthusiasm.

Now let's talk about the origin of ADMA in the Central Zone: Each ADMA group is due to a personal experience of the love of our Mother Mary and the brothers and sisters who surround her. True love and devotion are to be seen in the Salesians and in the Salesian Sisters of Mary Help of Christians. This leads to the desire to be part of the Association, where consecrated persons and lay people walk together in communion. According to the regulations of the Association there is a living devotion, united to the two columns, learning to adore the Lord and to love his Will. We see that ADMA is a path of sanctification. We feel the presence of the Blessed Virgin as Mother and Teacher in the towns and cities wherever the Salesian charism has been. Even if a work is closed our Mother remains in her blessed image, with her children. She never leaves, she is at home with us.

In 1899 the Salesians arrived in Madrid - Atocha. Today the Shrine at Atocha is the main temple of Mary Help of Christians in our city. However, their first presence in what is now the Central Zone, was in Bejar in 1895. In Salamanca, the devotion began in 1897, in the beautiful church of San Benito. The image of Mary Help of Christians always attracted devotees. During a procession there, Sister Eusebia Palomino, now Blessed, felt in her heart the call of the Mother of God.

Returning to the capital Madrid, in what were then the very poor suburbs of Carabanchel, 1903, Paseo de Extremadura, 1925, in the neighborhood of Estrecho, 1922, we have the second most important Salesian temple in the capital of Spain. The first stone of the great temple was laid in 1926. Its dome is the second biggest in Madrid. King Alfonso XIII and the Rector Mayor Fr Philip Rinaldi were among the personalities who part in the ceremony.



The oldest work of the Salesian Sisters is in Salamanca and dates back to 1904. Salesians and Salesian Sisters animate the local councils of this unique ADMA that was started in Turin. It would take a long time to talk about each local association, so I mention only the oldest ones.

How are we structured in Spain?

There are 6 ADMA zones in the territory of the two SDB provinces and one FMA province. Zona Centro Madrid and two other zones are in the Santiago el Mayor area. The FMA Province which covers all of Spain has six Zones in its territory. We have a National Coordinating Committee which includes the Presidents and Animators of the Zone Councils, plus another person from each Zone Council who is chosen by the President. We meet three times a year, but we are in permanent communication. We coordinate animation, formation, pilgrimages and future National Congresses of Mary Help of Christians. In the history of Spain there have already been 40 such congresses, always open to the whole Salesian Family. Everything is a service to the Area Councils, so that they in turn can animate their respective Local Councils. During this pandemic we have experienced intense communion to support the members in hope and prayer with daily recital of the rosary, sending the novena that comes to us from Turin, transmitting and sharing all the initiatives from the various Area Councils that seem helpful. We evaluate the most appropriate resources for significant times of the year so as to make them available. We communicate all the meetings, activities and events of the Salesian Family to facilitate participation. One very dear initiative that we continue to support despite the difficulties, is that of ADMA Families. It is a slow process, but with the help of our Mother, it will undoubtedly go on if it is the Will of God.



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

The members of the Association are part of the Salesian Family "on account of their devotion to the Help of Christians in the form established by Don Bosco himself. This belonging commits us to honour Mary, our Help and Mother of the Church, by participating in Don Bosco's mission to youth and the ordinary people, especially by increasing and defending the Christian faith among the people."

ADMA is one of the groups founded directly by Don Bosco in 1869, together with the Salesians (1859), the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (1872) and the Cooperators (1876). Joining the Association therefore means belonging to the great tree of the Salesian Family, now made up of 32 groups, which has its origin and founding father in St John Bosco. Membership and participation in the Salesian Family are expressed and strengthened through fraternal communion and collaboration with different groups, through mutual knowledge, spiritual communion and apostolic sharing. In the Salesian Family, the Association emphasizes and spreads popular Marian devotion, "as an instrument of evangelization and promotion of the working class and needy youth". The Marian character of ADMA expresses one of the constitutive elements of the charism and the Salesian spirit, enhancing the commitment to safeguard, increase and defend the faith in the people of God. The Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, is the father and centre of unity of the entire family. Since 2014 he has been the 10th successor of Don Bosco and is called to represent him in a living way today. He offers the example and teaching that ensure fidelity to the spirit, and the stimulus to participate in the Salesian charism. He carries out a vital service of animation through his paternal goodness, his guidance and his commitment to the fruitfulness of the Salesian vocation in all his expressions.

Andrea and Maria Adele Damiani

## FAMILY CHRONICLE

- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/interviste/item/12936-spagna-don-alejandro-guevara-la-famiglia-salesiana-e-una-famiglia-mariana-e-non-puo-essere-compresa-senza-la-presenza-di-maria>
- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/foto-notizie/item/12930-burundi-festa-di-maria-ausiliatrice-a-butere>
- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/foto-notizie/item/12928-papua-nuova-guinea-sotto-il-manto-di-maria-ausiliatrice>
- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/presentazione-libri/item/12925-maria-per-l-unita-di-tutti-i-cristiani-la-vergine-maria-nelle-sue-feste-e-nella-vita-della-comunita-cristiana>
- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/foto-notizie/item/12924-uganda-avviato-a-palabek-il-primo-gruppo-dell-adma>
- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/l-approfondimento/item/12917-honduras-i-piedi-di-maria-ausiliatrice-una-riflessione-mariana-di-mons-walter-guillen-soto-sdb>
- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/notizie/item/12916-italia-la-festa-di-maria-ausiliatrice-2021-nella-sobrieta-e-nella-speranza>
- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/foto-notizie/item/12914-paraguay-processione-nautica-in-onore-di-maria-ausiliatrice>
- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/foto-notizie/item/12911-vaticano-papa-francesco-un-pensiero-ai-salesiani-e-alle-salesiane-che-lavorano-tanto-nella-chiesa-per-i-piu-lontani-i-piu-emarginati-la-gioventu>

- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/l-approfondimento/item/12909-italia-la-chiesa-e-figlia-di-maria-ausiliatrice>
- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/l-approfondimento/item/12895-rmg-maria-ausiliatrice-e-i-missionari>
- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/notizie/item/12891-rmg-al-via-domani-la-consulta-mondiale-della-famiglia-salesiana>
- <https://www.infoans.org/sezioni/notizie/item/12963-rmg-maria-comunicatrice-nella-vita-di-gesu-e-nella-prima-comunita>

The paper can be read at the following site:

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

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