

MARY INVITES US TO PRAYER, BALM FOR THE SOUL



Dear friends, we thank the Lord and Mary Help of Christians for this 150th anniversary. It is truly a year of grace for our Association. The celebration of the Eighth International Congress of Mary Help of Christians from 7 to 10 November is the culmination of a journey that relaunches our Association with a renewed spirit of entrustment to Mary, love of the Eucharist, fraternal communion and witness to the Gospel. (We will dedicate a special issue in December to the Congress).

In order to fulfil our Christian and Salesian vocation, **Mary invites us to prayer, which is balm for the soul.** Prayer is the breath of the soul. If we do not have this breath with God, we do not have it with our neighbour either. Prayer is not just repeating formulas, but it is an encounter with God. Prayer is living in intimacy with God and witnessing to his love. For a person of faith, prayer becomes balm and spiritual healing when one is wounded, when one is without God or far from God. In the words of the saintly Curé D'Arès: "Before the Blessed Sacrament, I look at him and he looks at me". Prayer is a one-to-one with Jesus and Mary. That "one-to-one" is very important, because without it our prayers are dry, like a lifeless tree. Prayer is balm for our souls. In fact, we are all a bit anxious. When we begin to pray, prayer really becomes light and love of God. It calms the heart. Through abandonment to God we are freed from the many fears that we have, from all our fears and uncertainties.

The encounter with God takes place through prayer: not only by praying more but making our life become prayer. How do we do it? Through spontaneous prayer, the Rosary, adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, and meditation. Our programme must become more and more intense every day and so every day our soul becomes simpler. The more we give ourselves to God, the more contact with God becomes real. Unfortunately, today the world is losing all this and for this reason Our Lady asks us to be decisive, to embrace the way of holiness. Sometimes our witness is arid and ineffective, because we speak but we are not living what we say. **We need to pray until prayer becomes a joy.** Then it will be easy to bear witness to God. Our testimony will be like a spring with water that must come out somewhere. In the same way, our living with God becomes a spring that brings water into the desert and the desert will flourish.

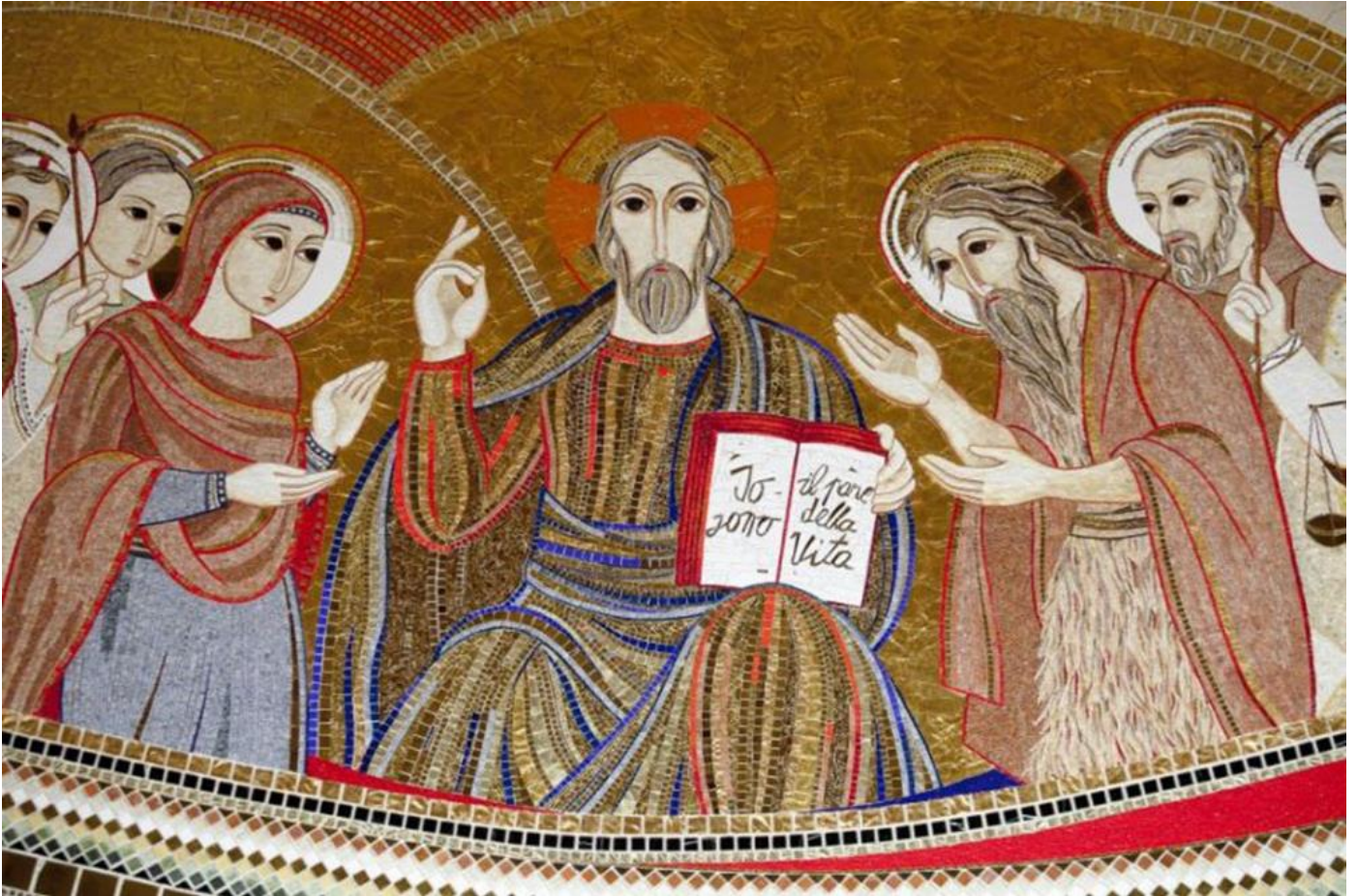
"With Mary, the woman who believes", we walk the roads of the world with the freedom and joy of the children of God, in the communion of the Saints.

*Renato Valera, President
Don Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animator*

Formative Journey 2019-2020
Anchored to the two columns: Jesus the Eucharist and Mary Immaculate-Helper

Luis Fernando Álvarez González, sdb

3. The Assembly: living stones



"So put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander. Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation; for you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. **Come to him, to that living stone**, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; **and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house**, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame." To you therefore who believe, he is precious, but for those who do not believe, "The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner," and "A stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall"; for they stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people**, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy." (1Pet.2.1-10)

You are that temple

[You are] a temple of living stones, an assembly, as the Second Vatican Council already stated: "Liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church" (cf. SC 26); and "the pre-eminent manifestation of the Church consists in the full active participation of all God's holy people in these liturgical celebrations (cf. SC 41). Do you live as a living stone of the Church?

Coming together, a sign of the presence of Christ

"The Church has never failed to come together to celebrate the Paschal Mystery" (SC 6). The coming together of Christians for the Eucharist is the clearest sign of the presence of the Risen Lord among them. In fact, their meeting - seeing each other again, getting to know each other and feeling that they are all brothers and sisters - is the first sign of the presence of the Lord in the celebration. It is an invisible but living, real and personal presence of Jesus Christ, who promised us: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am among them" (Mt 18:20). It is the visible sign of the encounter in which Christ fulfils his word and is visibly present in the assembly. The liturgy underlines this when it incenses the whole assembly with great respect.

Do you feel that you are a member of the people of God? When you participate in the Eucharist do you feel part of a people of believers?

The rites of entry

Some rites emphasize in their own way this presence of the Lord in the assembly to renew his people with his Paschal Mystery - the so-called entry rites, initial rites or preparation rites:

a) *The entry of the President while the assembly is already in place*: the singing, the procession, the accompaniment of the acolytes and other ministers. This rite allows the assembly to grasp with all its senses the coming of Christ himself, who becomes present to preside over the liturgy of his Church. And it also facilitates the expression of faith in him, who acts in the assembly, with it and for it. Without the President the assembly is incomplete. Only when this rite is well-performed does the proper disposition to celebrate arise in the heart.

b) *The sign of the cross and the words that accompany it*: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". **The liturgy is "the masterpiece of the Trinity"** in the assembly. It is not "our masterpiece". Through the rites, we take part in the masterpiece of the Trinity. This is something wonderful. It is a rite that leaves no room for doubt, but is in danger of routine and, as we know, becoming "accustomed" is much worse than not believing.

c) *The President's greeting*: a real greeting because of the friendliness and tone with which it is spoken; but different because of the words used, which are normally taken from the New Testament. It is a ritual greeting, but authentic and full of warmth, to make everyone feel their communion with the Lord and with others. With this greeting, the President reminds the assembly that the Lord is present and all are about to celebrate with Him.

d) *The response of the assembly to the president's greeting*: with this response the assembly is constituted and ready to celebrate. We have gone from feeling part of an "anonymous public" to feeling and recognizing ourselves as a "priestly assembly", from feeling like a mass of spectators to being a celebrant community.

e) *The welcoming of some special members of the faithful*: some Eucharists begin with a reception at the door of the church or the participation in the entrance procession of some of the faithful, in particular those who are subjects of the sacrament that is being celebrated: catechumens, candidates for confirmation, couples preparing for marriage, candidates for ordination, aspirants for ADMA on the day of their Promise, etc., or a mention of the deceased at a funeral Mass. This rite expresses a more personal participation of these people in the celebration of the whole Church.

f) *The penitential act*: this rite is always necessary. It reminds us of the words of Jesus himself: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Mt 5:23-24). Reconciliation with our brother always precedes worship of God. Otherwise, our worship is emptied and lost like water in cracked vessels.

This rite is followed by the *Lord have mercy*.

g) *The singing of the Gloria*: for centuries the song of glory has added splendour and beauty to the most important feasts. It gives the feast its vibrant and festive tone, infecting the assembly with the unstoppable joy of the angels in heaven.

h) *The Opening Prayer*: the last rite of entry is a prayer which the assembly confirms with its very important 'Amen'.

But those who truly celebrate the Eucharist must keep in mind that the sign cannot function well without these two requirements: **the faith of those who celebrate and the significance of the sign itself**. Each of the members of the assembly can contribute to both, through careful preparation for the celebration and a celebration in which people really participate.

Do you try to understand the meaning of the signs and words of the liturgy? Do you believe that you are celebrating, do you live what you are celebrating?

The Assembly celebrates by participating

There is a text from the Second Vatican Council that we cannot ignore: "Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the 'sacrament of unity,' namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops. Therefore, liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it; but they concern the individual members of the Church in different ways, according to their differing rank, office, and actual participation." (SC 26). This statement is very important. Look at the verbs: **pertain to, manifest, have effects upon and concern**. Liturgical celebrations pertain to the whole Body of the Church, they have effects upon the whole Body of the Church, they manifest the whole Body of the Church; but they concern each member of this Body in a different way according to their personal participation. In other words, it is the whole community that celebrates the Mystery of Christ so as to live by him, but each one participates in it personally. Therefore, although in the celebration we usually speak in the plural, when it comes to personal acts we speak in the singular: for example, *I believe, I confess, I give myself to you, yes I do*, etc. It is in this personal interior space that the mystery of Christ touches each one. This must be kept in mind by those who participate in the Eucharist.

How does your participation in the liturgy express your **belonging to the Body of the Church, manifesting it, being affected by it and being concerned for it?**

This means that the liturgy is not only a manifestation of the Paschal Mystery of Christ, present and active in the celebration. It must also be a visible expression of the free and faithful response of the assembly, that is, an expression of personal participation. **Without the full personal participation of each person there is no living assembly, no living celebration, no living Church.**

What we do in the celebration is to share in the mystery of Christ, so that Christians may live through him. In the celebration there is the river of living water (cf. Rev 22:1-2) from which "grace flows towards us, as if from the spring" of the Risen Lord. Liturgical participation is precisely living from the Paschal Mystery of Christ present in the celebration and drinking from the river of living water. That is why the ultimate goal of the celebration is liturgical participation. **That is why without full participation there is no fruitful celebration.**

The task of those who prepare and animate the Eucharist is to help ensure that this full participation is expressed in song, acclamation, moments of silence, attentive listening, deep prayer, and the gestures and attitudes of the celebration.

From the letter of the Rector Major for the 150th anniversary of ADMA: "Entrust, trust, smile".



Popular character of the Salesian charism

In the popular mind, the Salesian charism and work are normally associated with the world of youth. It is very important to recognize, together with this fundamental aspect, the popular dimension of the charism, which Don Bosco also expressed through the foundation of ADMA, which he promoted **for the defence and growth of the faith among the Christian people**. According to the apostolic spirit of Don Bosco, faith in Jesus Christ and entrustment to Mary are the constituent elements of the identity and mission of the Association.

The popular class is the natural and ordinary environment where we express our option for youth, the social and human space to seek and meet young people. In fact, there is a relationship of interpenetration between young people and the ordinary people. The commitment of the Family of Don Bosco, to accompany the new generations in the effort of human promotion and growth in faith, is intended to highlight the evangelical values of

which the young and the working classes are bearers. It is the task of all God's people who find themselves, in the diversity of states of life and ages, to enhance intergenerational relations and the role of the family, giving a simple and accessible response to the challenge of a society that is often disintegrated and conflictual.

The popular dimension of the Salesian mission characterises us in a special way and is a typical expression of the founding charism: "Enlightened from on high, Don Bosco was also interested in adults, with a preference for the humblest and poorest, for the working classes, the urban underclass, the immigrants, the marginalised, in a word, for all those who were most in need of material and spiritual help. Faithful to Don Bosco's orientation, the Groups of the Salesian Family share this preferential choice. The Association of Mary Help of Christians has included in its new Regulations the Salesian apostolate addressed in particular to the ordinary people".

In our commitment to this great and varied community of people "of everyday life" **we have a true experience of God**: "The popular class is the natural and ordinary environment where we meet young people, especially those most in need of help. The commitment of the Family of Don Bosco is addressed to ordinary people, supporting them in the effort of human promotion and growth in faith, highlighting and promoting the human and evangelical values of which they are the bearers, such as the meaning of life, hope for a better future, and the exercise of solidarity. With the Association of Salesian Cooperators and the Association of Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco traced a path of education to the faith for the people, valuing the contents of popular religiosity".

FAMILY CHRONICLE

SANTA CLARA (CUBA) - TRAVELLING A PATH OF HOLINESS

On 24 October the Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians of the Salesian House of Santa Clara (Cuba) organized *the Spiritual Way of Father Vandor*, an itinerary of prayer and meditation in the places where the **Venerable José Vandor** (1909-1979), a Hungarian Salesian, missionary in Cuba, spent his last 25 years. The commemoration ended with the celebration of the Eucharist in the place where Father Vandor celebrated Mass when his painful illness prevented him from doing so in the church. The occasion led to a tribute to the missionaries who worked in Cuba, in memory of Venerable José Vandor Wech. The 110th anniversary of his birth and 40th anniversary of his departure for the House of the Father are celebrated this year.



The paper can be read at the following site:

www.admadonbosco.org

For every communication you can contact

the following email adress: pcameroni@sdb.org

PAPUA NEW GUINEA - ADMA MEETING



Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea - November 2019 - On 2 November, in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA), a day of meetings for the members of the association was held at the Archdiocesan Shrine of Mary Help of Christians. The event, organized by Fr Joseph Tinh, SDB, Provincial Delegate of ADMA, with the assistance of "300 Youth for Mary", the local youth group of the ADMA, saw the participation of over 165 people. The day began with the welcome of Fr Dominic Kachira, Vicar of the Vice Province of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (PGS), who encouraged the members to spread devotion to Mary. Fr Ambrose Pereira, SDB, Secretary of the Catholic Episcopal Conference for Communications and Youth, gave the opening speech on "Mary Help of Christians in the life of the faithful". In the second session, Fr Alfred Maravilla, PGS Provincial, presented the historical background on the Marian title "Help of Christians" and, above all, on the objectives of ADMA. In the afternoon, several groups of young people presented moments of music and dance, interspersed with different testimonies.



SPAIN - DEATH OF SISTER PILAR CHINCHILLA

We share the sorrow of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the ADMA members in Spain on the sudden death of Sister Pilar Chinchilla, a great devotee of Mary Help of Christians, promoter and animator for many years of the Association of Mary Help of Christians. We join in the prayer of suffrage and thanksgiving for the testimony of Sister Pilar. May Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello welcome her into the Salesian paradise.

PHILIPPINES - 37TH NATIONAL CONVENTION



In the Philippines ADMA celebrated its **37th National Convention** on 26 October 2019 with the theme: "ADMA accompanying young people to Jesus, through Mary". The meeting was held at the National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Paranaque City with the Auxilium Group as this year's host. Approximately 250 ADMA members attended. They were from Metro Manila, Pasay City, Laguna, Pampanga and Pangasinan, Marinduque and from the Southern Province from Victorias, Negros Occidental and Pasil, Cebu City. Fr Elmer Sicat SDB, spiritual animator of ADMA, led the adoration and prayer of the Holy Rosary. In order to better know, appreciate, understand the young people of the current generation and to better understand the theme of the convention, **Mrs. Lesley Anne**, Minister of Youth and professor/formator in various universities and seminaries, was invited as speaker.

The afternoon programme was marked by the presentation of ADMA members from different groups. All the participants received copies of *St. John Bosco Today*, the magazine of the Salesian Family in the Philippines, which presents ADMA on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of its foundation. (Maria Junifer L. Maliglig - ADMA National Vice President)