

MARY INVITES US TO DEEP PRAYER

God's love for us manifests itself also in Mary's maternal presence and help as she accompanies the Church and the human race. **Mary is in our midst**, and we are grateful to God for this gift. Without her, we cannot change the world. As she was present in the Upper Room, Mary is present with the little flock today as they join in prayer with her, believing that the world can change from all the ideologies and storms that are destroying the world, and despite all the forces that seek to destroy the Church. **Our Lady is alive and praying with us**. She was the one who first received the good news. She suffered and she knows what suffering is. In the Magnificat, she shows that she knows the joys and the suffering of the Church. The Holy Spirit continues to blow in the Church today through Our Lady, breathing on the people of God as they experience renewal.



The world is undergoing a crisis of faith. **Our Lady invites us to deep prayer**, prayer from the heart, with hope in eternal life. This is a daily conquest that needs to be renewed every day with constancy, until our whole life becomes a prayer. Then from prayer we move to witness, because by praying we choose God and we receive His Love, so that we can pour it out on others. We do so with joy, the joy of being baptized Christians. This means that we cannot stop at prayer of petition, asking for this or that grace. We must also pray the prayer of praise, thanksgiving and adoration.

Our Lady wants us all to become poets, who pray in such a way that **our prayer becomes a song of gratitude, joy and testimony**. Our Lady does not want to be seen as tired Christians, but joyful Christians, full of gratitude to God and with a heart that sings, grateful for all that God has given us, beginning with life, and also for giving us Our Lady to be in our midst as our hope and the star that shows us the way. When we join in prayer with Our Lady we are not afraid because Our Lady is with us. And she brings us to God, to her Son: then God is with us! Our Lady is with us to tell us that with God we are always victorious. She tells us that life is short, and is passing. Eternity is waiting for us. If we see life in this way, we are no longer afraid, because God is with us. We need to persevere in prayer with faith.

We thank Mary Help of Christians for the new ADMA groups that are emerging especially in Africa and for growth in the sense of belonging to the Association and the Salesian Family. In these times of struggle and trial, our Association must shine for Marian, Eucharistic, Apostolic and Salesian testimony! We go forward with joy and perseverance!

Lucca Tullio, President
Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animator

Vatican - Fr Titus Zeman, SDB, will be beatified on 30 September 2017

(ANS - Vatican City) - The Venerable Servant of God Titus Zeman, Salesian priest from Slovakia, killed in hatred of the faith at 54 years of age (born Vajnory, 4 January 1915, died Bratislava 8 January 1969), will be beatified on 30 September 2017 in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia.

He was the first of ten children of a peasant family who also acted as sacristans. As a child, Titus was always sick but at the age of 10 he was healed suddenly through the intercession of Mary Most Holy. To the surprise of everyone, he promised her that he would be her son forever, and that he would become a Salesian priest. He achieved this dream in 1927 after overcoming the opposition of his family, parish priest and director of the Salesian work of Šaštín for two years. He displayed the same determination all through his life. Titus Zeman became a novice in 1931, made his temporary profession in 1932, perpetual profession in 1938 and was ordained priest in 1940.



In 1946 when the communist regime in post-war Czechoslovakia began to persecute the Church, Fr Titus was dismissed from the school where he was teaching because he defended the symbol of the crucifix. He escaped providentially the "Night of the Barbarians" (April 13-14, 1950) and the deportation of the religious because he was working in a diocesan parish. He then asked himself what he could do to enable clerics to reach the goal of priesthood. He decided then, despite the suffering involved, to accompany them across the Iron Curtain to Turin where the Rector Major, Fr Ricaldone, welcomed him and blessed the group. After two successful crossings in the summer and autumn of 1950, the expedition failed in April 1951.

Fr Titus Zeman then faced a week of torture between capture and arrest (9-16 April 1951). He spent a further 10 months in detention before trial. He was heavily tortured until his trial on 20-22 February 1952. Another 12 years of detention followed (1952-1964). Then after almost five years in freedom when he was constantly followed, spied upon and persecuted (1964-1969), Fr Zeman was branded "m.u.k.l." or "Man destined for elimination" and had to undergo a hard life in prison and forced labour camps.

He was forced to do manual work with radioactive uranium without any protection. He spent many months in solitary confinement. He was poorly treated despite increasing cardiac, pulmonary and neurological impairment.

He was unrecognizable when he returned home on 10 March 1964, and went through a period of intense suffering. This included spiritual suffering by being banned from the public practice of his priestly ministry. He died on 8 January 1969 from a triple heart-attack after being treated as an "experimental guinea pig". He was acknowledged as a martyr at the time of his death. Even the spies present at the funeral spoke of him in the records as a martyr who suffered for the Church.

In the same year 1969, while communism was still in full force, a review process declared that his condemnation of espionage and high treason was not legitimate. In 1991, the rehabilitation process acknowledged definitively that he was innocent. Fr Zeman's testimony is the incarnation of Jesus' vocational call and the pastoral preference for children and young people, especially for young Salesian confreres, a preference that was to manifest itself, as in Don Bosco, in a true passion seeking their good. He put all his energy, all his strength, all his life into a spirit of sacrifice and offering: "Even if I lost my life, I would not consider it wasted, knowing that at least one of those I had helped became a priest my place".

Conclusions of the National Congress of Mary Help of Christians in Cochabamba, Bolivia, 29 April – 1 May 2017

Certainties:

- The Virgin Mary was always present in the life of St. John Bosco, thanks to Mamma Margherita, who inculcated love and devotion to Our Lady in prayer and daily life. From the beginning, she was the centre of all his work: "She did it all".
- Mary is the cornerstone of the Salesian Family, an inspirational presence, mother, teacher, and model to follow in service and hospitality, helping us to guide our lives according to God's will.
- Mary is a Eucharistic woman who leads us to Jesus, so we are a Eucharistic and Marian group.

Challenges and commitments:

1. To improve our human, spiritual, and missionary formation.
2. To cultivate a sense of belonging.
3. To strengthen the family spirit.
4. To give priority to accompaniment in the Association.
5. To grow in the style of complementarity and collaboration between the vocation to marriage and the vocation to consecrated life, priestly and missionary life.
6. To find new ways and strategies for renewing and strengthening the Association in accordance with the needs of the situation.
7. To start ADMA Youth and help it to grow in hospitality and collaboration in family ministry.
8. To start ADMA Families involving the families of the members of the Association.
9. To see the family as a place of God's tenderness and a place of salvation.
10. To make communication between the members and the centres of the Association more fluid.
11. To set up local, regional and national councils to improve the organization of the Association.
12. To regularize the canonical erection and aggregation to ADMA Primary at the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco, to complete their membership of the Association and the Salesian Family.
13. To get to know the life of the Saints, Blessed, Venerable and Servants of God of the Salesian Family, to imitate their virtues and ask for their intercession with prayer. (Getting to know the life of one each year).

FAMILY CHRONICLE

Écija (Spain) - Tenth Provincial Assembly of the Seville area



On April 30, we celebrated the Tenth Provincial Assembly of ADMA in the Seville area in the house of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Écija. The organizing group worked hard for everything to go well. We had very intimate moments with Mary Help of Christians and her Son Jesus. The Salesian atmosphere was palpable everywhere and the participants had a very positive impression of the event. About 1000 people filled the College Chapel and other areas destined for this purpose. The day began with Mass presided by Cardinal Carlos Amigo Vallejo, Archbishop Emeritus of Seville. He spoke of his affection and friendship for the whole Salesian Family. In his homily, he often highlighted the intercession of Mary Help of Christians: "Most Holy Virgin Mary, pray for me" as we often sing in the hymn in her honour. The Mass was concelebrated by the Provincial Fr Cristóbal López and several Salesian priests who had come to accompany the different associations.

The formation session had a new format this year - a spiritual interview with the cardinal, who gently, profoundly and humorously answered the questions of the delegate for the Salesian Family, Fr Alejandro Guevara, SDB. The cardinal spoke strongly and

clearly: **"The groups of Mary Help of Christians are to be heard and loved."** Of course, his words gave joy to the faithful gathered there. In short, this was a unique opportunity to renew our sense of belonging to ADMA, promoting the Salesian and Spiritual identity of the members and bringing us once more to the feet of Mary, Help of our Family.

Conakry (Guinea Conakry) - the first ADMA group

On 21 May 2017, the parish Anne-Marie Javouhey de Nongo-Conakry held an important event for the Salesian Family: the first commitment of the members of the Association of Mary Help of Christians. The event took place during a celebration presided over by Fr Denis Soro, Delegate of the Salesians of Don Bosco in Guinea, Senegal and Mali.

In the afternoon, a fraternal meal was offered to the associates. It was a time of fraternity with the Salesian community, Salesian Cooperators, and some parishioners. The Salesian Family Conakry celebrated with ADMA.



Cotonou (Benin)



On 24 May, Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians, the ADMA group in Cotonou had the joy of welcoming new members who pledged to support the Salesian work with prayer and attendance at Salesian Family meetings.

Kabgayi - (Rwanda) - First ADMA Group

On 24 May 2017, Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians, 30 aspirants of ADMA expressed their commitment to join the Association during a Mass presided over by the Provincial Fr Camiel Swertvagher. This is a beautiful group of well-prepared men and women who carry out their apostolate in the spirit of ADMA. We thank the Lord and the Help of Christians that our dream of launching this branch of the Salesian Family in the Great Lakes Province has been realized. Now some thirty men and women are preparing to join the Association next year.
- (Fr Pierre Célestin NGO-BOKA, SDB Vice-Provincial AGL and ADMA Animator)



Porto Novo (Benin)



The various Eucharistic celebrations of Sunday 28 May in the parish of St Francis Xavier in Porto Novo marked the parish celebration of the feast of Mary Help of Christians for ADMA and for the whole parish community. During the Masses at 7.00 and 8.00 a.m. some of the faithful received their medals and became full members of ADMA. The Parish Priest, Fr Jean Aurelien Lemondo, urged the whole community to have a special devotion to Mary Help of Christians with prayer and daily gestures that testify to our Christian identity.

We ask Mary, Star of Evangelization, Mother of love and Good Counsel to pray that Salesian work may be more fruitful. May she guide the steps of all mothers in the education of their children.

Sicily - Twelfth Regional Pilgrimage

The Twelfth ADMA Regional Pilgrimage of Sicily took place on Sunday 4 June 2017.

Two special moments marked the encounter: the first in the Salesian House of Barcelona at Pozzo di Gotto, where 370 participants assembled from twelve groups from Adrano, Barcelona, Calatabiano, Canicattì, Catania, Capaci, Gela, Messina, Marsala Palermo, Floridia, and San Cataldo with the Provincial Fr Pippo Ruta and the FMA Provincial, Sr Maria Pisciotta. The theme of pilgrimage *"From the House of Mary to our Homes"* was presented by Sr Maria, showing how good Christians live their relationships in the family and with others in a spirit of fraternity, forgiveness and welcome.

The second significant moment was in the afternoon when we went in procession to the Shrine of Our Lady of Tindari, reciting the Holy Rosary and singing hymns to Mary.

The Eucharistic Celebration presided over by the Provincial and celebrated by Fr Angelo Grasso, regional animator, concluded this day of grace. - (Giuseppe Auteri and Regional Council).



ADMA Primary - Pilgrimage to Annecy

On 2-3 June 2017, a group of families, young people and older members from ADMA Primary, accompanied by Fr Gianni Ghiglione, went on a pilgrimage to Annecy (France) "In the footsteps of Saint Francis of Sales".

In a pleasant climate of friendship, we were able to appreciate the beauty of the place and get to know better the figure of this great saint, born in 1567, and chosen by Don Bosco as a model for his Salesians to imitate his lifestyle and pastoral zeal.

By re-reading some passages from the Introduction to the Devout Life, Fr. Gianni emphasized in particular the need to develop charity and mercy in families and religious communities, cultivating gentleness and patience and avoiding anger and complaining. It is important to remember that God looks at the heart and does not reward according to the level of office held, but according to the love and humility put into exercising it. May St Francis of Sales and Don Bosco accompany us on our journey and, in the knowledge that earthly evils are very little compared to eternal goods, encourage us to spend our lives with generosity! (Damiani Andrea).



ADMA Primary - Pilgrimage to Oropa

On Sunday 25 June 25, the senior ADMA made its annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Oropa. We enjoyed the beauty of the landscape, the richness of the faith of many generations, the joy of the fraternal encounter.



The paper can be read at the following site:

www.admadonbosco.org/index.php

and here: www.donbosco-torino.it/

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