

MARY INVITES US TO TRANSFORM OUR FACE

We are living in a world inundated with worry and anxiety. There are many things which show that human beings are fragile. It does not take much to put them in crisis. Many men and women have lost focus on what is most important: God in our life. Worries take away our peace of mind and tend to overwhelm us like a river in flood. If we no longer believe, we don't trust God. If I believe, I'm not afraid of the future, because I believe that God loves me with an immense love ... We must be people who pray, who love, who trust in God. We will not have any worries about tomorrow, because tomorrow is already in the hands of God.



The Lenten journey is a gift and a strong stimulus for conversion of heart and of life, for families and ADMA groups. Mary Help of Christians, through her presence and her intercession, accompanies us on this journey that urges us to react to evil, sin and corruption and to draw closer to God, to return to him in order to welcome the mystery of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. **Faith transforms our lives and our faces.** During Lent Our Lady wants us to devote ourselves in silence to transforming ourselves and thus preparing ourselves for the new life of Easter. She asks us to be concerned about our spiritual life and to be open to God.

In this hour of trial and tribulation, and of purification, **let us cling to the Rosary.** The holy Rosary has been victorious on a thousand occasions. We who are in love with Our Lady call ourselves "Marian" because we have been taught and accompanied by her, and we invoke her intercession. As Marian people we become radical in our immense love for God. With prayer and spiritual awakening, God, through Our Lady, asks us to fight in silence for a new life, as spring does. In spring we see flowers and colours. We too must work on ourselves with prayer and penance. We must become people of prayer, an example of love and also an example of courage. In prayer we will find peace. We do our best in our family, in our parish, in the workplace, in our ADMA groups, knowing that Our Lady does not abandon us. She walks with us and fights for us.

May Mary, the woman of Easter, help us to experience more and more the grace of the risen Christ and to transform our lives with the power of God's love. **Happy and Holy Feast of the Resurrection!**

*Renato Valera, President
Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animatore*

Greetings from Mr. Renato Valera, President of ADMA, to the Salesians of the 28th General Chapter

Dear Rector Major

Dear Salesians of Don Bosco



I am happy and excited to greet you today at the opening of the 28th General Chapter of the Congregation. It is a great emotion to have all of you gathered here in Valdocco and the first word that I would like to address to you in the name of all the ADMA (Association of Mary Help of Christians) and I think in the name of all the laity who are part of the Salesian Family is 'THANK YOU'. Thank you, because your presence in the world is a gift, your words are important, your blessing is indispensable, your accompaniment is vital for the young people, the families, the communities to which you have dedicated your lives. The gaze of a Salesian friend can be what "changes our life", all of you, as Don Bosco know how to make us feel loved and those who feel loved become capable of loving, those who feel welcomed are capable of welcoming, those who feel forgiven are capable of forgiving.

"What kind of Salesians for the Youth of Today" is the theme of your chapter. A theme that is at the same time the origin and the future, the dream and the reality, the center and the periphery of your mission. It is a theme that concerns us so closely: What kind of Salesians for our children? For us? For our parishes? For our society? For the youth of the world?

We wish you all intense moments of encounter, prayer and discernment on these issues. I am certain that this chapter will bear great fruit.

We also want to share with you all, the grace that we, as ADMA, have received during these years of journey. "Sharing the grace" is precisely the motto that our young people wanted to use in the 150th year of the Association because - they told us - "you cannot keep something beautiful

for yourself, so you must give it".

So, we share with you three reflections that come from our experience:

Don Bosco had at heart the defence of young people, especially the weakest. He went to look for them in the streets, in prisons, on construction sites. Also today the mission is the same and to meet the young we must also meet their families. We must help them, accompany them, bring them to Jesus and the joy of this encounter. The families who walk with us have simply experienced this: we don't go back when we feel loved.

Mary Help of Christians wants to live in our communities, our schools, our oratories, our groups. You Salesians have always been crazy about Mary Help of Christians. Don Angel reminded this, at the end of the VIII International Congress of Mary Help of Christians in Buenos Aires last November. So, let us entrust everything to her, let us trust her, let us speak more about her to our children, let us teach them to open their hearts to Mary, to entrust themselves to her.

We, the lay people will have to occupy a new place in the Salesian family and in the church. It will help us in this journey to have you close and to rediscover there where Don Bosco thought of you: in the midst of the children, in the oratory, in the courtyard, in the confessional. It will help us to see you among us lay people, in groups, in retreats, at lunch, on a trip, among our families, with our children who call you by name.

We accompany you, dear Salesians, in this chapter with prayer and in particular we entrust to Mary Help of Christians and to Don Bosco the work of the Chapter, so that thanks to their powerful intercession, the Holy Spirit may enlighten your hearts and minds and we also pray with you and for you so that the Lord may send us so many new Salesians to work in His harvest.

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

Luis Fernando Álvarez González, sdb

6. The bread of the Eucharist - second part



For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. (1 Cor 11.23-29).

The Central Rites of the Eucharistic Liturgy

The Risen Jesus, after explaining the Scriptures to us until our hearts burn, shares the Bread of his Body given up for us and the wine of His Blood poured out for all of us. The liturgy of the Word leads to the celebration of the Eucharist. The main elements of the Eucharistic liturgy are:

The Procession of Gifts:

At Sunday Mass in the city of Kara, Togo, all the faithful, without exception, assemble in the Parish Church, take part in the procession, everyone singing and bringing their own gift or that of their family. These are very poor Christians, most of them offer only small change. But no one failed to contribute their gift, however small. This is why it is beautiful to think that in every procession of the gifts, when we go to the altar the Lord meets us, looking out for each of us as we offer our gifts. The last of the faithful bring bread and wine with water, brought from the assembly of the faithful, not from the sacristy, nor from the credence table, because the gifts of the Eucharist belong to the assembly. They represent the living sacrifice of each of its members. Then the priest says: "Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father."

The Roman Missal, explaining the authentic ministry that the People of God exercise in the Eucharist, affirms that the faithful exercise the royal priesthood, "to thank God and offer the immaculate victim, not only by the hand of the priest but together with him, and to learn to offer oneself". If this is taken seriously it is capable of changing a whole life. The rites of presentation of the gifts culminate with the prayer over the offerings. How do you join your life to the offering of Jesus to the Father?

The Eucharistic Prayer:

The Eucharist is an action in which prayer predominates. We have already seen the collect, the opening prayer which concludes the initial rites. We have omitted the prayer of the faithful (which closes the liturgy of the Word) and we have also alluded to the prayer over the offerings (which concludes the rite of presentation of gifts). But without doubt, the great Eucharistic prayer which gives its name to the whole Eucharist, is "the centre and summit of the whole celebration", when the Paschal mystery of Christ becomes ours.

It is a prayer of thanksgiving, consecration and offering and a moment that demands of us a lively, living faith. The meaning of this prayer is that the whole Assembly unites itself with Christ in recognition of the greatness of God and in the offering of sacrifice. The President recites the Eucharistic prayer alone, but the Assembly is associated

with the prayer he makes on behalf of the whole community. Here the final Amen, which should be sung, acquires the utmost importance. How do you live the prayer of thanksgiving and offering?

It must be said with regret that this prayer is not sufficiently appreciated or followed as it should be. It demands very special attention of everyone. Above all, it is necessary to avoid distraction, to dominate the imagination (the "madwoman of the house", according to St Teresa) and to know how to concentrate.

If we dedicate time to it, pray it personally and try to get to know each part of it, it will not be too difficult for us to internalize and make this impressive prayer our own. The authors of the liturgical reform wanted with all their might to facilitate the participation of the people in the Eucharistic Prayer. The current Roman Missal contains 14 Eucharistic prayers, a wealth never seen before in the history of the Roman rite.

The parts of the Eucharistic prayer:

The Preface: expresses thanks for the whole work of salvation or for some particular aspects of it. It ends with the singing of the acclamation of the Sanctus. There are currently over 85 prefaces. This variety teaches us to be truly grateful to the Lord for everything he does for us.

The two prayers of Epiclesis: invoking the Father to send his Spirit on the offering of his Church and transform it into the Body of the Lord. In the epiclesis there is the most powerful synergy (collaboration) between God and man that takes place both in the celebration and in the liturgy of life. The double invocation of the Holy Spirit expresses very clearly that it is not the community that "controls God", but that it makes itself "available to God and his initiative." In the West we have two prayers of epiclesis: one of consecration and another of communion or rather, one for bread and wine and another for the community.

The account of the institution: with the words and gestures of Jesus at the Last Supper the sacrifice that Christ instituted is made present, when he offered his Body and his Blood as bread and wine and gave it to the apostles in the form of food and drink, asking them to do the same in his memory. It is the moment of supreme adoration and union with God.

The Anamnesis: memorial or remembrance. It is we who remember the central moments (passion, resurrection, ascension) of the Passover of Jesus. However, it is not encapsulated in the past as a fossil but present in our history, here, at this moment.

The Offertory or Anaphora: This is the central movement of prayer to the Father with Christ in the Spirit. Mother Church wants the faithful not only to offer the sacrifice of Jesus, but also to learn to offer themselves with him and like him.

The Intercessions: for the pope, for the bishop, for the living, for the deceased, and for those who are celebrating a sacrament. This means that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church, both earthly and heavenly; and it is offered by all the faithful, living and dead. This intercession of the Church is the moment when human weakness becomes the place of life in which God's power is manifested, the moment of life when our prayer is most effective, because in every request the Spirit is invoked and allowed to act.

The final Doxology with the acclamation of the great Amen: this is the logical end of this great prayer of thanksgiving and praise. The text is identical for all the Eucharistic prayers of the West. It reads: "Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever". The celebrating assembly responds by singing the great Amen.

The paper can be read at the following site:

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

In the footsteps of St Francis de Sales

When Don Bosco decided to found a Marian association, he thought of the members as "devotees" of Mary Help of Christians. This small word, an old word now out of fashion, is the key to enter the burning heart of the relationship between Don Bosco and the Help of Christians. St Francis de Sales teaches that "true devotion" has to do first of all with the love of God. Indeed, it is nothing other than the authentic love we receive from God (grace) and makes us capable of responding to his gifts (charity). For this reason the "devotees" are those who "fly" on the path of holiness, since "true devotion" perfects in them every action and every work, from the smallest to the greatest, making the "devotees" more cordial and friendly, more courageous and ready to give themselves, each according to his or her own vocation and mission in the Church.

In fact, St. Francis de Sales, in his "*Philothea*" (subtitled *Introduction to the Devout Life*) proposes a path of Christian life characterized by great joy and spiritual depth, where devotion is not mere piety (devotionalism). It is "holiness lived to the limit of charity". St Francis de Sales clearly defines his thought in this regard: "**Devotion** is nothing but an agility and spiritual liveliness, with which charity carries out its operations in us, and we operate through it, promptly and affectionately". Anyone who reads carefully comes to understand that the protagonist of the devotion is Jesus, who with his love - his charity - "performs his work in us" and makes sure that "we work through it". Being devoted means being able to acquire a habitual readiness of charity. It is possible only if the heart always remains immersed in Jesus so as to allow us to follow readily the inspirations that he gives us.

Introducing the devotees, St Francis de Sales tells us that "they are humans with an angelic heart or angels with a human body, they are not young, but they seem so because they are full of vigour and spiritual agility; they have wings to fly and launch themselves into God with holy prayer, but they also have feet to walk among men in holy and friendly conversation; their faces are beautiful and smiling because they receive everything with sweetness and gentleness; their legs, arms and head are uncovered because their thoughts, their affections and their actions tend only to please God. The rest of their body is covered, but in a beautiful light garment, because they use this world and its things in a pure and limpid way as far as their condition requires."

It's as if we are hearing again the words of Don Eugenio Ceria, when he tells how Don Bosco lived in **union with God**: "He seems to have received the gift of never being distracted by the loving thought of the Lord no matter how many serious uninterrupted tasks he had." Don Ceria concluded by saying that every act of Don Bosco's life, whatever he was doing, was prayer. True Devotion is a journey that points to the roots of holiness and of the Salesian charism. It represents that "being always happy" that we try to live now on earth and hereafter will enjoy forever in Paradise. Obviously, such a beautiful design, fascinates us on the one hand, and on the other hand can frighten us to the point of discouraging us from undertaking it. In response to this temptation, St Francis de Sales is very clear (see *Treatise on the Love of God*) in recalling that Love of one's neighbour and of God, the goal of devotion, is not only a suggestion: **it is a commandment!** This is so, precisely that we may not be tempted to consider it too high a destination, to the point of discouraging us and making us give up on the path of devotion.

Aware of our efforts and our frailty, Don Bosco has taken an even more beautiful step: we are not devotees of any kind but **Devotees of Mary Help of Christians**. To Don Bosco's way of thinking, the gift of love that unites us to the Father and the Son (grace) and that urges us to action (charity), passes explicitly, almost consciously, through the maternal mediation of Mary. Indeed, throughout the whole of his life, Our Lady was present as his constant guide in carrying out the mission he received from the Father. She was the wise teacher who taught him the art of educating young people with love, as commanded by Jesus in the dream at nine years of age. In times of adversity she was his powerful intercessor through whom protection, consolation and strength were obtained from the Holy Spirit.

FAMILY CHRONICLE

TORONTO (CANADA)

Our Toronto ADMA group had another wonderfully blessed year. On January 28th we celebrated mass in honour of our founding father, St. John Bosco. During the mass our newest members, Rosemary D'Silva and Lynn Sinclair-Artuso, made their solemn promise, followed by the rest of our members renewing their solemn promise to our Blessed Mother, under her title of Mary, Help of Christians. It was a beautiful moment filled with love for our Blessed Mother and Jesus. After mass we took pictures to commemorate this day and then we continued our celebration with a reception and some joyful fellowship.

We continue to meet on a monthly basis and hold three retreats each year under the spiritual guidance of Fr. Frank Kelly, SDB. Our group has been blessed with wonderful spiritual directors who share their maturity and insight with us and guide us in our faith formation.

This year we continued our journey of greater self-awareness and understanding of God's love and mercy by continuing and completing our study of Dr. Gregory Popcak's book, Broken Gods, Hope, Healing, and the Seven Longings of the Human Heart. It provided us with a deeper understanding and insight into our human frailties, and helped us to explore the wonderful plans of our Father because of His great love for us. Dr. Popcak helped guide us to understand how best to apply God's plans for us to ourselves. As we grow in deeper understanding, and acceptance of God's love for us, we will be able to more readily share His love and mercy with others and build up His kingdom here on earth. And, of course, we do all this through the intercession and guidance of our Blessed Mother. May we continue to grow in love for God and one another and may Our Blessed Mother direct and sanctify us as we continue on our journey here on earth. (Margaret Pupulin - President, ADMA Toronto).



SAO PAULO (BRAZIL) - PILGRIMAGE OF THE STATUE OF OUR LADY APARECIDA

Brazil - February 2020 - On the occasion of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Association of Mary Help of Christians, the ADMA groups of the São Paulo Province (BSP) brought the statue of "Our Lady Aparecida" on pilgrimage to various cities. Leaving the city of São Carlos, the statue of the patroness of Brazil was brought to Araras and Piracicaba. From there, the statue was taken to São Jose dos Campos, accompanied by 18 representatives of ADMA, to the symposium on the figure of the venerable Fr Rodolfo Komorek. For the ADMA groups the pilgrimage continued to Sorocaba, Americana, Campinas and São Paulo. It will end in the cities of Vale do Paraíba, having covered about 1,000 km, and finally returning to Aparecida for the Salesian Pilgrimage 2020.



80th ANNIVERSARY OF ADMA IN MARSALA

16 February 2020 marks a day of grace for the Association of Mary Help of Christians in Marsala. All over the world ADMA is celebrating the 150th anniversary of its Foundation. In this year of Grace, the ADMA group in Marsala had an additional reason to celebrate: 80 years have passed since that 16 February 1940 when ADMA in Marsala was granted Aggregation to the Primary ADMA in Turin.



To seal this bond with Turin, a married couple representing the Primary ADMA attended the celebrations: Rosanna Marchisio and Daniele Aiassa. The day was also marked by the participation of the ADMA Provincial Council of Sicily in its entirety and a good representation from the local centres of Alcamo and Capaci. This moment of celebration was also shared with the other groups of the local Salesian Family and with the city Confraternities. The whole day was passed in a spirit of family and union, as our Holy Founder would have wished.

GUATEMALA - THE PROMISES OF ADMA AND SALESIAN COOPERATORS ON THE DON BOSCO'S FEAST

San Benito Petén, Guatemala - January 2020 - The feast of Don Bosco was celebrated in the parish of "San Benito de Palermo" in San Benito Petén. The celebrations began with a novena from 22 to 30 January. On the 31st, an impressive procession took place through the main streets accompanied by a musical band. At the end of the procession, Mass was celebrated, presided over by the Bishop of Petén, Mons. Mario Bernardo Fiandri, SDB, and concelebrated by Fr Giampiero De Nardi, SDB and Fr Miguel Giorgio. Bishop Fiandri highlighted how Mamma Margherita was an inspiration for Don Bosco. Immediately afterwards, eight members of ADMA made their promises and some Salesian Cooperators renewed their promises.



FIRST ADMA GROUP IN VIETNAM - WALKING IN FAITH WITH MARY

In 2018 a new ADMA group was started in Trai Gao, one of the Salesian parishes in the northern part of Vietnam. This is the story of the group: given the previous isolation of Vietnam from the rest of the Salesian world, and the strong Marian devotion (Our Lady of La Vang) in the country expressed in many Marian groups in the parish (Legion of Mary etc.), ADMA began only recently.

A few years ago, a first ADMA group was started by an FMA Sister in central Vietnam, but we have no definite information. In 2018 our Salesian parish in Trai Gao (diocese of Thai Binh, bishop Peter Nguen Van De, SDB) started the first ADMA group in our Salesian parishes. In May 2018 the parish priest of Trai Gao, Fr John Baptist Trần Văn Hào, SDB assisted by the FMA sisters formed the first ADMA group. Today we have about 104 registered members and among us there are about 40 members who frequently participate in all activities.

What are the activities of ADMA in Trai Gao? Every day after Mass there is the prayer of the Rosary, followed by the "goodnight" thought. Every month there is the Novena in honour of Mary Help of Christians and Eucharistic adoration. Every May there is a special "Feast of the offering of flowers." The members attend a spiritual retreat twice a year. Their apostolate includes the raising of funds for the poor during Advent and Lent. ADMA members and families help those in need inside and outside the parish. Some of them also contribute as volunteers at the FMA kindergarten and on the occasion of the parties organized by the parish community.

An annual formation course is provided. This year 2020 it focuses on the education of their children according to the preventive system of Don Bosco and on the sharing of the Strenna of the Rector Major. Although our ADMA group is still very young, we hope to grow in our faith by spreading devotion to Mary Help of Christians in many practical ways. And we are also looking for inspiration from other ADMA members in neighbouring Asian countries.

