

MARY INVITES US TO RETURN TO GOD



Our Lady reads our hearts. She knows well our anxieties and fears. She wants us to have the joy of being with God and she wants us to be positive people. Where do we find this strength? In God, because **if we have God, we have everything**. We have goodness in our hearts, and we see the good in our neighbour. A person who puts God first has decided to be converted, to change his or her life for the better. God is our God. He created us and won eternal life for us through the death and resurrection of his Son. We must be aware that we are children of God and invited to joy.

Our Lady desires joy for us and she wants us to become joy for others. If we believe deeply in God, we see our future in a positive way. Gold is tested by fire. We are now being tried in the fire of difficulty, but at the same time we are invited to decide for the good. This demands prayer: "Whoever prays is not afraid of the future". Nowadays, some people go so far as to say that believing is old-fashioned, that we can live without God. Many feel that they are more intelligent, more evolved, and they think that faith is somehow out of date. Our Lady calls us to return to God, to personal conversion, because when we have had a personal encounter with God, nothing or no one stops us, no ideology, no pandemic. We are in fear of the corona virus but there are also many ideologies that are destroying us and they frighten us.

Only if people return to God will evil cease and peace reign in hearts and in the world. We are all called to holiness, but in the meantime, we are in a vale of tears. We must suffer and deny ourselves even if we are in the right. We often have to be silent even though we may feel like shouting. Without God we have no future and no eternal life either. The most important thing is to recognize in humility that we are sinners and in need of God's help. May God free us from the many pandemics, and from all confusion, slander and falsehood.

The Lord invites us to overcome evil and fight it with prayer from the heart and with joy in the heart. **The Lord will be victorious**. This is a time of grace and Mary Help of Christians is with us. Even though we are in difficult times, she takes us to her Son Jesus who died and rose to save us. This is the most important message - the Lord is our hope and with him we need no longer fear.

In the month of September, Fr Alejandro Guevara officially begins his service as world spiritual animator of ADMA. Thanks again to Fr Pierluigi Cameroni and a renewed welcome to Fr Alejandro.

*Mr. Renato Valera, President
Fr Alejandro Guevara SDB, Spiritual animator*

ADMA formation programme 2020-2021

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

1. Introduction



The ADMA formation programme for the year 2020-2021 is inspired by the Message of Pope Francis to the Salesians on the occasion of the 28th General Chapter (Valdocco 22 February - 14 March 2020) and the pedagogical-pastoral commentary on this message prepared by Fr Rosano Sala, Salesian expert in Fundamental Theology and Director of the magazine *Note di Pastorale Giovanile*. In 2017 Fr Sala was appointed by Pope Francis as Special Secretary for the Fifteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the theme «Young people, faith and vocational discernment". Since May 2019 he has been Consultor of the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops. He participated, as a synodal Father, in the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region on the theme: "Amazonia: new paths for the Church and for an integral ecology" (6-27 October 2019).

Pope Francis' Message to GC 28 is for us a precious navigational map. It is a small programme for our charismatic renewal as members of the Association of Mary Help of Christians. We have been committed for some years now to renew the Association through pastoral and educative action with couples and families, involving young people in the spiritual journey of ADMA, in order to make them experience the motherhood of the Church and of Mary. It is a message that helps us to think like Don Bosco, observing the reality that surrounds us, treating people, and first of all young people in need, with love, offering them what they need to be able to build a promising future. In this way, with the powerful assistance of the Help of Christians, we live our faith which manifests the presence of God in the world. Don Bosco wanted ADMA to reach out to families, society and the Church and to all who need help. He wanted to share his educational passion with those who, even if not called to dedicate themselves full time to the mission to the young, wished to live the Salesian spirit in the daily environment of life, in imitation of Mary Help of Christians. Indeed, "Moved by the Holy Spirit and responding to the urgent needs and signs of the times, Don Bosco initiated various apostolic forces and a vast movement of people, who in various ways work on behalf of young people and the working class." (From the preface to the Regulations of ADMA). Preserving and defending the faith among young people and the ordinary people was Don Bosco's daily preoccupation and the driving force behind his apostolic initiatives.

“The world of the working classes is the natural and ordinary context in which we encounter the young, especially those most in need of help. The commitment of the Family of Don Bosco is directed towards the ordinary people supporting them in their efforts for human development and growth in their faith, indicating and promoting the human and gospel values it stands for, such as the meaning of life, hope for a better future and the exercise of solidarity. Don Bosco traced out also with the Association of the Salesians-Cooperators and the Association of Mary Help of Christians, a path of education to the faith for the people, making good use of the contents of popular religious devotions. In addition, he dedicated himself to the promotion of social communication, so as to reach as many people as possible for the purpose of education and evangelisation.” (CHARTER of the CHARISMATIC IDENTITY of the Salesian Family of Don Bosco n. 31).

Don Bosco founded ADMA in order to involve the ordinary people in the mission and spirituality of the Salesian Congregation. As the second group founded directly by Don Bosco, ADMA has a special bond with the Salesians of Don Bosco, participating in the youth and popular mission proper to the Salesian charism. “The members form part of the Salesian Family through Salesian devotion to the Help of Christians in the manner established by Don Bosco himself. Membership is a commitment to honour Mary, helper and mother of the Church, by taking part in Don Bosco’s mission to peoples, particularly the young, and especially in its aspects of fostering and defending the Christians faith.” (ADMA Regulations art. 3). In order to carry out his vocation and mission of salvation of the young and of the ordinary people, Don Bosco, under the action of the Spirit, created around him a broad union of apostolic forces, in the form of an articulated movement, in the unity of a Family. “We must unite,” he wrote in 1878 “with the whole Congregation ... Let us unite (therefore) by aiming at the same end and by using the same means to achieve it ... Let us unite as in one family with the bonds of fraternal charity that spurs us on to help and support each other on behalf of our neighbour” (*Salesian Bulletin* January 1878, pp.1-3). Young people who are abandoned, full of fear, disoriented, with no prospect of the future, are our recipients, given to us by Mary Help of Christians as they were given to Don Bosco in his dream at the age of nine. To the extent that we dedicate ourselves to these unfortunate members of society and especially to the young, the world will recognize that we are sons and daughters of Don Bosco’s Madonna.

Dreaming together: young people, old people and the prophecy of Joel (3,1-5)



'After this I shall pour out my spirit on all humanity. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old people shall dream dreams, and your young people see visions. Even on the slaves, men and women, shall I pour out my spirit in those days. I shall show portents in the sky and on earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke.' The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the Day comes, that great and terrible Day. All who call on the name of Yahweh will be saved, for on Mount Zion will be those who have escaped, as Yahweh has said, and in Jerusalem a remnant whom Yahweh is calling.'

"How important it is to have intergenerational exchanges and dialogue, especially within the context of the family!" (Pope Francis in Rio de Janeiro on July 26, 2013). It is a fundamental requirement if we are to look to the future with hope. "Young people and the elderly build the future: young people because they lead history forward, the elderly because they transmit the experience and wisdom of their lives." *Aparecida Document* (No. 447). Young and old, grandparents and grandchildren. This pairing is one of the constant themes of this pontificate. It recurs in gestures, speeches, audiences and impromptu comments especially during journeys. As Pope Francis has frequently remarked regretfully, it is they, the young and the elderly, who are often the first victims of the "throwaway culture". But it is always they who together, and only if they act together, can start initiatives and find spaces for a better future. As Pope Francis observed in the Mass for the Consecrated, on 2 February 2018: "If the young are called to open new doors, the elderly hold the keys.. There is no future without this encounter between the old and the young. There is no growth without roots and no flowering without new buds. There is never prophecy without memory, or memory without prophecy. And constant encounter."

For Pope Francis, the meeting ground between young and old is in dreams. In some ways, this might seem surprising, an almost unlikely convergence. Yet, as the experience of the pandemic has shown us, it is precisely the dream, the vision of tomorrow, which has kept and continues to keep together those grandparents and grandchildren who were suddenly separated, adding to the burden of isolation. Moreover, this centring on the dimension of the dream has long been meditated on by the Pope and has a deep biblical root. In fact, Francis loves to recall frequently what the prophet Joel teaches us in what, the Pope says, he believes to be the prophecy of our times: "*Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old people shall dream dreams, and your young people see visions.*"(3,1).

Who but the young, the Pope asks, can take the dreams of the elderly and carry them forward? Significantly, during the Synod on youth in October 2018 he wanted to experience a special dialogue between generations in the meeting called "The Wisdom of Time" at the Patristic Institute of the Augustinianum. On that occasion, responding to the questions of young and old on topical issues for the Church and for the world, Francis exhorted us to "defend dreams as children are defended", noting that "closures do not know horizons but dreams do". The Pope, who is himself an old man, has trusted young people with great responsibility. He says, as if addressing every young person individually: "You cannot bring all the elderly along with you, but you can take up their dreams and carry them forward, it will do you good." And always in that meeting, he emphasizes empathy, something that appears even more

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necessary today, in the light of the dramatic experience of the pandemic. "It is not possible", he warns, "to share a conversation with a young person without empathy". But where are we to find this resource that is so necessary if we are move forward? "By staying close to the young," is the Pope's response. This closeness is a precious asset, as we have experienced in recent months when this fundamental dimension of existence has suddenly been "suspended" due to the virus. "Closeness works miracles", the Pope is convinced, "closeness to those who suffer", "closeness to problems and closeness between young and old". By nourishing the "culture of hope", closeness immunizes us from the virus of division and mistrust.

The Pope referred again to this bond in one of his recent apostolic journeys when he went to Romania in June 2019. It was here that Francis was touched by an image, while he was in Iași for the meeting with the young people and families of the country. He spoke of the joy he experienced at an unexpected meeting with an elderly woman: "She had her grandson in her arms, about two months old, no more. As I passed by, she showed him to me. He smiled. It was a smile of complicity, as if saying to me: 'Look, now I can dream!'" The Pope was touched by a meeting of glances that lasted only a few seconds. He is always careful to catch a spark in another person that goes beyond the limits of the moment and becomes a gift and message for all. He comments: "Grandparents dream as the grandchildren grow up, and the grandchildren have courage when they take their roots from their grandparents."

Roots and dreams. You can't have one without the other, because one is for the other. And this is certainly even truer today than in the past because the world urgently needs an "overview" that leaves no one excluded. Pope Francis highlighted this in an interview with the English language magazines *Tablet* and *Commonweal* in the darkest moments of the pandemic in Europe. The Pope dwells on the meaning of what we are experiencing in this dramatic year 2020. For him, the tension between old and young "must always be resolved in the encounter". "The young person is a shoot or a leaf but without the root it cannot bear fruit. The elderly person is like the root." Once again, he recalls "the prophecy of Joel". Elderly people today are frightened by a virus that destroys life and suffocates hope. Pope Francis asks for a surplus of courage. Perhaps the courage that is most difficult of all is the courage to dream. "Look the other way," he says. The Pope believes in the "wisdom of time". And he says, "Remember your grandchildren and don't stop dreaming. This is what God asks of you: to dream. What we are experiencing, amid fears and sufferings," he says forcefully, "is the right time to find the courage to imagine a new future with the realism that only the Gospel can offer us". This is the time when the "prophecy of Joel" can come true.

The programme for the year:

At a personal level:

- personal prayer (invocation to the Spirit)
- personal reading of the theme of formation
- personal reflection in the light of the questions proposed
- personal commitment to live the proposed theme.

At a group level:

- prayer together
- presentation and explanation of the monthly theme by the spiritual animator
- sharing in a group
- group commitment.

FAMILY CHRONICLE

TURIN - 2020 SPIRITUAL EXERCISES for ADMA FAMILIES



This year also, despite the difficult period, the usual spiritual exercises for families were organized in the months of July and August, but in a new, non-residential format at a more local level. Seven meetings took place lasting three days each from Friday to Sunday, in Piedmont in the Salesian houses of Valdocco, Cumiana, Avigliana and Colle Don Bosco and in Valle d'Aosta at Saint Oyen (AO).

Based on the scriptural account of the marriage feast at Cana, an image of every wedding in which Jesus and Mary are present, the Exercises were a kind of "lectio ecclesiae" of some major texts of the Council and post-Council era on marriage and the family (*Gaudium et Spes* and *Familiaris Consortio*).

The instructions and the sessions of discussion and sharing made it possible to deepen the theme of Grace in marriage, making young couples more aware of the gift and mission received and allowing more mature couples deepen their understanding and feel that they were participants in the great nuptial mystery of God and of all creation.

Special thanks to the priests who participated in these days for their precious presence, for listening and for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Thanks also to the young animators and to all the organizers for allowing numerous families to enjoy these days peacefully.

Being able to see one's spouse and children with the gaze of Jesus, growing in listening, in obedience and in the ability to esteem each other were some of the wonderful ideas of the retreat, but there is still a lot of work to do! We pray for this grace for our families and for the strength to face the difficulties related to this particular moment in history. Everything works for the good of those who love God! (Maria Adele and Andrea Damiani).

TURIN - YOUTH ADMA with DON ALEJANDRO

So far, 2020 has certainly been an exceptional year!

After the months of lockdown there was no certainty about what we might be able to do during the summer that is now coming to an end. It was a surprise then, when we were informed that the young ADMA university students would have three days of retreat in Cesana from 1st to 3rd August. The biggest surprise of these three days, however, was Fr Alejandro Guevara, the priest of Spanish origin who preached these exercises and who from September will take on the role of spiritual animator of the Association of Mary Help of Christians.

Fr Alejandro wanted his first meeting with ADMA to be with young people. He wanted to start with the young,

the heart of the Salesian charism, to write the new chapter in the life of the association that we are preparing to begin. He has the energy and the desire to get to work immediately to continue to promote ADMA and bring it to more and more people. This in turn has filled young people with enthusiasm, with the desire to get involved and to spend themselves in creating new initiatives under the guidance of an animator who will reside in Valdocco precisely to devote special attention to the association.

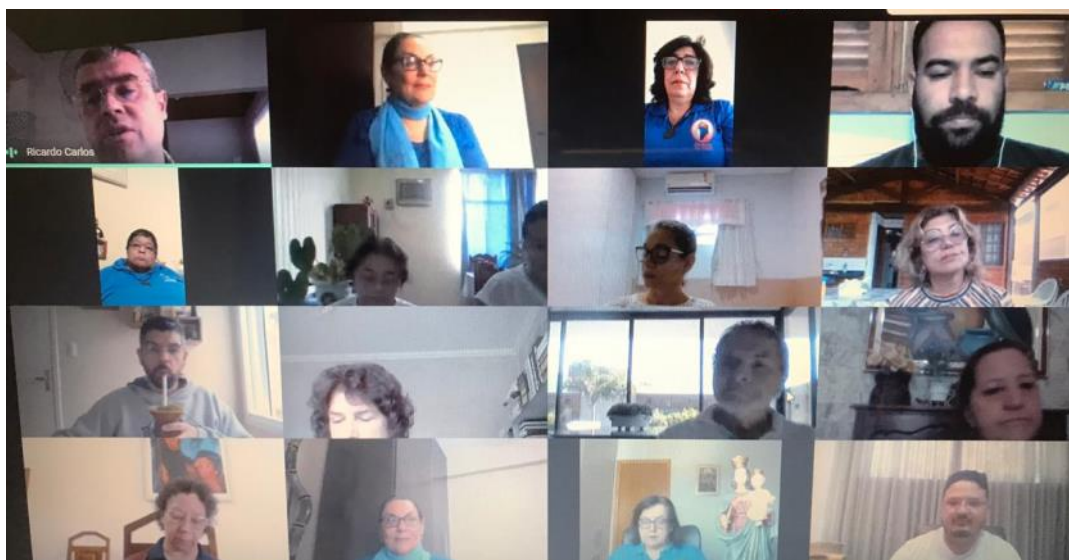


Inflamed with the joy that only the encounter with Jesus and Mary gives us, the young people can't wait to start this new year in the company of Don Alejandro. We will remember it as the year to be grateful for the journey with Don Pierluigi, which comes to an end, and for the one with Don Alejandro which is beginning.

ADMA BRAZIL - SECOND MEETING OF THE PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

The second meeting of the Provincial Councils of ADMA, the Association of Mary Help of Christians, in Brazil took place on the morning of 29 August. Due to the pandemic, the meeting took place on the virtual platform Google Meet. The coordination was entrusted to Fr. Sérgio Lúcio, SDB, National Delegate of ADMA. The councils of the six Salesian provinces were present: Manaus, Recife, Campo Grande, São Paulo, Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre, with about 23 participants, including members of the Councils and Delegates. The highlight was the opening greeting and the talk by Fr. Alejandro Guevara, SDB, the new Delegate of the Rector Major for ADMA. Also present was Fr Ricardo Carlos SDB, Provincial of Campo Grande and CISBRASIL delegate for the Salesian Family.

Fr Marco Biaggi, former Provincial of Mozambique, led the session on formation. He shared his testimony of the Marian experience of ADMA in Africa. The testimony of the commitment of African groups in the work of evangelization and support of families is remarkable. A moment of sharing of the six councils followed, facing the challenge of animating the Salesian communities in this time of pandemic. The agenda continued with some organizational details: the date of the Third ADMA Council Meeting was set for August 2021, and it was agreed with God's help to hold the National Congress of ADMA in the year 2022, at a place still to be decided. The meeting concluded with the blessing of Our Lady Help of Christians, given by Fr. Ricardo Carlos.



Sognate e fate sognare

XXX GIORNATA MARIANA
20 Settembre 2020 | Teatro Grande Valdocco

Programma della giornata

Mattina (Teatro Grande Valdocco)

- 09.00 Accoglienza e saluto
- 09.30 Celebrazione delle Lodi
- 10.00 Il rinnovamento dell'associazione (Don Pierluigi Cameroni)
- 10.45 Break
- 11.15 Saluto e benvenuto a Don Alejandro Guevara, nuovo animatore mondiale
- 12.00 Introduzione al cammino formativo dell'anno (Don Roberto Carelli)
- 12.30 Riscoprire la dimensione locale: l'esperienza dell'anno trascorso
- 12.45 Pranzo (al sacco o self-service)

Pomeriggio (Basilica Maria Ausiliatrice)

- 13.30 Visita guidata ai luoghi di Valdocco
- 14.30 Rosario meditato guidato dall'ADMA Giovani
- 15.30 Celebrazione Eucaristica e nuove adesioni all'associazione (presidente Leonardo Mancini nuovo ispettore ICP)

Il ritiro si svolgerà nel pieno rispetto delle norme anti Covid-19

Per Informazioni

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