



MARY IS OUR LIGHT ON OUR JOURNEY



We continue our journey during this time of global pandemic. Undoubtedly it is a situation that concerns us and that touches us as Christians. We live through it with our Marian identity and with our Salesian charism.

Some are worried, others are afraid, still others have isolated themselves to prevent possible infections. The reactions are many and varied, all understandable and deserving of respect. There are many people who work with the aim of returning to the normality in which we lived until a few months ago. In this scenario, which can obscure our deepest convictions and our gaze of hope and trust, we turn to Mary.

Once again, she comes to the aid of her children. She comes to our aid to enlighten our path, because Mary is a light for our lives.

Light has always enjoyed God's pleasure and that of human beings because God is the light that comes to enlighten the life of men (Jn 1: 4-

5). In God's plan each one of us has been created in His image and likeness. We are called to be salt of the earth and light of the world (Mt 5, 14). Light represents the origin of life, since the creator is God (Gen 1, 3). It is enough for God to think of something to bring it into being. God's thought is generative and creates beauty and goodness for the life of all of us. This reached its culmination in the manifestation of Jesus on Mount Tabor, when he was transfigured before his disciples (Lk 9, 28-36).

But where does this light of Jesus come from? Without doubt from his divinity, from his true and profound identity, even if we must remember that God wanted to have a Mother to

receive his being, his earthly existence. Mary is, therefore, the mother of light, as Jesus himself was to affirm "I am the light of the world" (Jn 8:12). Thus Mary too is light, because no one can give what he or she does not have. In the case of our Mother, she received from the Father. She is the pure virgin, full of grace. God created her in this way from eternity to be the mother of His Son, of the Light, of the sun that is born from above.

Mary is also our mother. Don Bosco reminds us of this by commenting on the crucifixion as described in the Gospel of John. In the words of John, the Fathers recognize three great truths:

1. That St. John acts in everything as the son of Mary.
2. That all the maternal duties that Mary exercised with Jesus now pass to her new son John.
3. That Jesus saw the whole human race in the person of John.

According to St Bernardine of Siena, by her loving cooperation in the ministry of Redemption on Calvary Mary truly gave birth to us all in the life of grace. We are all born from the pains of Mary with the love of the Eternal Father and from the sufferings of her Son.

This is how Mary becomes our Mother.

We are children of Mary and she is light for each of us. We are invited to become light for our world that is going through this situation of uncertainty and insecurity.

We ask our mother therefore to enlighten our lives - our thoughts, feelings, actions and affections and we ask also that we may enlighten with her light the lives of many people who live in darkness.

I invite you to light a small candle in your home with an image of Our Lady so that her love will enlighten our path, and to contemplate during this month the luminous mysteries of the rosary. By meditating on them every Thursday we may be helped to live in the Salesian key of hope.

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

The paper can be read at the following site:

www.admadonbosco.org

For every communication you can contact

the following email address: pcameroni@sdb.org

ADMA formation programme 2020-2021

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

3. FAN INTO FLAME THE GIFT RECEIVED

The first point of Pope Francis's message to the 28th General Chapter of the Salesians is an invitation to fan into flame the gift they have received. Each charism is not something dead to be buried in a cemetery, but a living fire that must be continually fanned into flame so that it illuminates and warms. Francis affirms that "living the charism faithfully is something richer and more stimulating than the simple closing of houses or activities; it involves a change of mentality in the face of the mission to be carried out." (Message to GC28)

We are not called just to repeat what Don Bosco did, almost in a literal and passive way. This would be to follow a logic of "repetitive fidelity", like a photocopier. The "creative fidelity" of the Holy Spirit is different. The Spirit is the one who continually makes all things new. This avoids two extremes - "neither adapting to the culture of fashion, nor taking refuge in a heroic but already disembodied past" - and leads us to a process of discernment, which alone can help us to fan into flame the charismatic gift we have received (cf. 2 Tm 1,6-7). (Message to the GC28).

It also expresses a genuine commitment of dynamic fidelity to Don Bosco, who wanted the *Association of Mary Help of Christians* to be a sign of his gratitude to the maternal presence of Our Lady in his life and work, and a form of Christian life centred on the knowledge, love and imitation of the Virgin Mary. In the mind of Don Bosco devotion means entrustment, imitation, and apostolic and educational passion. We renew our commitment to be "the light of the world" (Mt 5:14), to "bring fire to the earth" (Lk. 12:49), to cooperate in the mission of Christ for the salvation of souls under the maternal guidance of Mary, recognizing in the Eucharist the source and summit of our whole life.

We want to be like Don Bosco, observing the reality that surrounds us, treating people - especially young people in need -- with kindness, and offering them what they need to be able to create a promising future. With the powerful assistance of the Help of Christians, we live our faith in a way that manifests the presence of God in the world.



"Take Mary into your home". Education and evangelization of the family takes place at the school of Mary and in imitation of Mary as a woman of our home. True Marian devotion makes the family a place of welcome to life and of education in love, faith and hope. The biblical icon is that of Mary's visitation to the house of Elizabeth and Zachary. The Salesian trait is the family spirit that permeates all aspects and relationships of life. We are called to be like Mary in our family by cultivating attitudes of welcome, hospitality, listening and at the same time concrete help and generous availability. The family is the fundamental nucleus of society and of the Church. The Salesian charism returns to its origins in the animation of the family and the family acquires dynamism and evangelical joy in the encounter with the spirit of Don Bosco, in the practice of the pedagogy of loving kindness proper to the Preventive System. In a context of educational emergency and

abandonment of faith, it is strategic that we pay particular attention to the current situation of the family, the original subject of education and the first place of evangelization. The whole Church has become aware of the serious difficulties facing it and feels the need to offer extraordinary aid for formation, development and the responsible exercise of its educational task. For this reason, we too are called to ensure that youth ministry becomes ever more open to family ministry. The beautiful and traditional practice of the "domestic church" must be proposed and lived in this perspective. Mary wants families to pray together. She wants parents to pray with their children and dialogue more with them, because prayer is the medicine that heals many wounds and instills strength and hope. In fact, by creating an engaging family atmosphere within and around his works, Don Bosco not only gave rise to a particular style of interpersonal relationships and authority, but, guided by God, gave rise to a charismatic identity that is shared and finds its expression in the Salesian spirit and mission.

The action of the Holy Spirit guided Don Bosco to start various apostolic forces, first of all those he himself founded but also others to be founded later. His original project was not fully achieved during his life. It remained as a dynamic force to be developed. The Salesian Family with its innumerable groups is the clear historical proof of this. Don Bosco began his work on behalf of poor children, by founding the Salesian Congregation (whose initials SDB mean Salesians of Don Bosco), then the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (with the initials FMA), the Salesian Cooperators (SSCC), as well as the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA). But all this was nothing but the seed of which the Gospel speaks, that tiny seed which has a great future ahead of it, destined to become a great tree. Today this image has become an icon for all the children of Don Bosco, and all those who know this reality now speak with full awareness of the "Salesian Family tree".

A true return to Don Bosco cannot ignore devotion to the Help of Christians so dear to his apostolic heart and to the heart of his successors. It is a charismatic heritage of Don Bosco to be rediscovered and promoted especially today, when the struggle between God and the enemy becomes increasingly angry in a world terribly engulfed by a secularism intent on creating a humanity without God, by a relativism that suffocates the permanent and immutable values of the gospel and by a religious indifference that remains disinterested in higher values and the things that concern God and the church. This battle finds countless victims in our families and among our young people. The Virgin Mary is weaving an immense network among her spiritual sons and daughters against the forces of the Evil One throughout the world and preparing the victory of her Son Jesus Christ.

We are called to make Don Bosco's spirit our own and to reinterpret it in the renewed context in which we live and work. From this point of view, it is necessary to know how to distinguish clearly between the "mission of the Church", which is always the same for all ages and for all territories, and the "pastoral work of the Church", which is different in every age and in different contexts. Our mission is certainly that of Don Bosco - "to be signs and bearers of God's love for young people". Our pastoral work depends on many factors that are in constant rapid change. This is why in his Message to GC 28 Pope Francis begins by saying that "thinking about the figure of a Salesian for today's young people implies accepting that we are immersed in a moment of change, with all the uncertainty this generates. Nowadays no one can say with certainty and precision (if it has ever been possible to do so) what will happen in the near future on a social, economic, educational and cultural level. The inconsistency and "fluidity" of events, but above all the speed with which things change, means that every type of forecast needs to be reformulated as soon as possible (cf. Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*, 3-4)".

For personal reflection

We have received many gifts from God: we are aware of them and grateful for them. What gifts has the Lord granted you? Among the many gifts, we received the gift of Our Lady: do we give thanks to God for this gift and for her presence in our lives? What graces has Mary Help of Christians given you?

- Welcoming Mary into our homes is a gift that transforms our life and invites us to live in love, faith, hope and availability: how do I live the presence of Mary at home and in the family?

For prayer

Fan into a flame the gift of God (2 Tm 1,1-7)

From Paul, [apostle](#) of [Christ Jesus](#) through the [will](#) of [God](#) in accordance with his promise of [life](#) in [Christ Jesus](#), to Timothy, dear son of mine. Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord. Night and day I thank God whom I serve with a pure conscience as my ancestors did. I remember you in my prayers constantly night and day; I remember your tears and long to see you again to complete my joy. I also remember your sincere faith, a faith which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure dwells also in you. That is why I am reminding you now to fan into a flame the gift of God that you possess through the laying on of my hands. God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but the Spirit of power and love and self-control.

For everyday life

- Visit someone in need, be present with them in their situation, entrust them to Mary.
- Pray for the 32 groups of the Salesian Family. Do you know them? (see the book published with the presentation of the groups of the Salesian Family).



FAMILY CHRONICLE

Mary Help of Christians will celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Archconfraternity with a vast programme of events

The Archconfraternity of Mary Help of Christians has presented the programme of events and worship for the 125th anniversary of its foundation, which will be commemorated in 2021, if the health situation permits, on Saturday 24 October, in the great hall of the Salesian House. Manuel Jiménez Ávila, president of the association and the local ADMA council have proposed a programme based on 4 areas: religious, formative, cultural and social.

<https://youtu.be/Db6PEep6cv0>



ARCHICOFRADÍA DE
MARÍA AUXILIADORA CORONADA
Salesianos de la Santísima Trinidad - SEVILLA

Italy - The power of Saints

(ANS - Venice) - The saints ... perhaps we should pray to them more *and* more intensely, appeal more often to their intercession, implore they intervene to save and to save us. The saints are there, but they wait to be disturbed: they propose, but do not impose themselves. Knowing their history and having the image in your pocket is fine, but asking forcefully for their intervention is another thing. Maybe we think we can do it alone, victims of a world that has placed people in their own hands, in the finite, and not in the hands of God, to the Infinite.

So we are content to do what we can instead of daring the impossible. We resort to a thousand strategies, certainly important, even in the educational field, but let's not forget that Heaven is for us a powder keg of Grace: a spark of faith would be enough to make it explode!

I wish I had more faith! The faith of Don Bosco, of my mother when I fell ill with meningitis many years ago, of my grandmother who said the Christmas novena kneeling on the stairs. I would like our saints to

lavish upon us the same audacity that so many men and women of our day have, that courage that knows how to go beyond the thousand fears that sometimes lead us to skip life [as truants do in school, *trans. note*].

I wish our first attitude in the face of daily problems would be to launch a new challenge to Heaven to unleash the strength and determination of the saints. I would like the friends of Heaven to teach us the "ab-solute" prayer, that is, freed from any personal request, that oration in which our ego or self is lost in God to the point of saying, like Carlo Acutis, "Not I, but God".

Saints multiply desires and thus enlarge our hearts. This is the true strength of the saints: to be shadow and not light, concealment and not showcase, ostension and not ostentation, the eye of the needle and not the eye of the ego. The saints are handles and not doors. They allow us to open the door, they open us to the Mystery, but they do not put themselves in the place of the door. They are not perfect models, but people crossed by God. We can compare them to the stained glass windows of churches, which let light in in different shades of color. We need the saints of Heaven

and we need saints on earth, stained glass windows that color our courtyards so that they allow themselves to be pierced by the Light.

Of the saints, I am struck by their determination to declare war on evil and their awareness that the evil one does not renounce belligerence. They are those who have grasped that evil hurts, wounds and kills, and for this very reason, they live in the trenches of charity where one lives immolating life. To educate is to teach that it is worth fighting against evil, and it is to shape the conscience so that it has a refined palate for what is true, good and beautiful, capable of having a taste for Life. Educating is a battle in which our saints, if enlisted, advance and remain at the forefront.



Italy - Perpetual Adoration begins in Valdocco's Pinardi Chapel

Turin, Italy - October 2020 - Once the Don Bosco House Museum was inaugurated, last 4 October, and after listening to the requests of many faithful in recent years and the desire of many friends of the Salesian house in Valdocco, in perfect harmony with the project planned for the Salesian Places of the Mother House, and with the support of the Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, and all the people who worked to make this dream come true, on 24 October, the monthly commemoration of Mary Help of Christians, Perpetual Adoration began at the Pinardi di Valdocco Chapel. From 8:30 am to 8:30 pm the Pinardi Chapel will remain open for those looking for a quiet, peaceful and silent place of prayer in Valdocco. Already during the inauguration day, a good group of people went to the chapel to pray the Rosary, thank the Lord for this wonderful gift, and present their deepest needs to the Lord.

