



ADMA

on line

May 2025

*Mary never
leaves us alone*

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WE ARE ASKING EVERYONE TO SEND US AN ARTICLE, A PHOTO OF A FORMATION MEETING, THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 24TH OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, A VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY BEING CARRIED OUT. The article (.doc format, max. 1200 characters without counting spaces) and a maximum of 2 photos (.jpg digital format and no less than 1000px wide), with a title and/or brief description, must be sent to adma@admadonbosco.org. It is necessary to indicate in the subject line of the e-mail **"Family Events"** and in the text the author's data (name, surname, place of the shot, affiliation Adma, city, country). *By sending, you automatically authorise Adma to process, publish, even partially, and disclose the article and photographs in any form. The images may be published, at the editorial staff's discretion, on the website www.admadonbosco.org, and/or in other Adma websites, accompanied by a caption.*



New Council of Primary ADMA

My dear friends, first of all my best wishes to you all for the month of May dedicated to our heavenly Mother!

It is very nice to think how the month dedicated to Our Lady acts as a link between Easter and Pentecost. Mary acts as a 'guarantee' and after Jesus' resurrection, she also desires and accompanies our every small or great daily resurrection. *Mary never leaves us alone on our journey. She waits for us, she consoles us, she exhorts us to welcome Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit on us, on our families, on our communities of believers, on the world.* We ask Mary this month to prepare our hearts and make us capable of welcoming the Holy Spirit and all His gifts, and to enjoy all His fruits, first and foremost, peace.

In this editorial, first of all we would like to welcome once again the **new Rector Major, Fr. Fabio Attard, the Vicar Fr. Stefano Martoglio and the entire new General Council.** We sent them a message of good wishes on behalf of all of you, which we also quote in this issue.

We would also like to joyfully announce the installation of the **new council of the Primary ADMA, which will lead the Association from 24th May 2025 - Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians.**

We warmly welcome the new councillors and we entrust in prayer their generous 'yes', the simple but precious service of animation which they are about to carry out so that ADMA and all of us can continue to 'be light', spread grace and bear witness to what we have experienced: the beauty of entrusting our lives to Jesus through Mary.

We would also like to thank from the bottom of our hearts all the members of the outgoing council who have accompanied the Association during the last

four years with love, fidelity, always seeking unity, catching signs of hope and above all entrusting to and trusting in the Lord. How many novelties and how many beautiful initiatives have been taken these years because of their availability and sacrifice!

Every small step is important. Every small contribution is valuable. Thus, certainly even passing on of the baton is a humanly intense and exciting moment with grateful memories, to continue dreaming. But what is most important is the certainty of a journey of Grace that is bigger than us and we never take alone. In Mary's footsteps, from generation to generation, we will cross time and history

Fr. Gabriel Cruz Trejo, SDB
Spiritual Animator ADMA, Valdocco.

Renato Valera,
President ADMA Valdocco.





Presentation of the New Council

My dear friends,

It is with great emotion, sense of commitment and responsibility that I address you for the first time, as the new Council of the Primary ADMA takes office and I begin my mandate as president of the Association of Mary Help of Christians. My membership and that of my wife Daniela to ADMA eight years ago, was a graceful gift and a happy journey towards Mary and Jesus, in the company of many friends and families. Perhaps, this is why, Mary organised everything so that we could now give back a part of all that we have received.

All of us councillors wish, first of all, to thank our mother Mary for having chosen us in the Council, giving us the opportunity to respond to the many gifts we have received, in a spirit of service and gratitude. We entrust ourselves to Her, the 'true President' of ADMA, so that She may guide all the actions and choices for the journey of our great family towards Jesus. In the year of the Jubilee dedicated to Hope, we want to interpret the commitment in the Council with a valuable quote recalled in the Strenna of the Rector Major for this year: ***'Hope is the ability of each one of us to work for something because it is right to do it, not because that something will guarantee success.... Doing something because it makes sense: this is where hope consists, and it presupposes values and it presupposes faith'***. Faith is the reason for the participation of all of us in ADMA. Believing in Eucharistic Jesus and maternal Mary Help of Christians is what unites us in whichever country we are in or whatever language we speak.

We want to thank all the members of the outgoing Council for their commitment, the attention and the quality they have put in helping ADMA grow, carrying out the passion and the intention of Don Bosco who founded it: Chiara Audasso with Alberto, Maria Pia Gallo with Massimo, Giovanni Scavino with Barbara, Tullio Lucca with Simonetta, Paolo Peirone with Monica, Luciana Bianchetti. A special, and also personal, thanks goes to President Renato Valera with Barbara. Your presence and service have been a precious gift for the Association, and your example of faith, love and care will remain a cornerstone for the path of the new Team.

I am sure that everyone's commitment will continue

in the future with different roles but with the same fervour to give their time and talents. Today, more than ever, the Council needs this, and I hope that all the members of the Primary and all local Associations will feel guided by Mary to offer their contribution in simplicity and humility and above all in serene offering of their time. The mode will continue to be the one Don Bosco wanted, a style of familiarity and cheerfulness, simplicity and practicality.

Thanks again to Beppe Sardella and Monica who have renewed their availability and to all our animators: Fr. Gabriel Cruz, Sr. Lucrezia Uribe, Fr. Roberto Carelli, and Sr. Marilena Balcet who will continue to accompany us with love and patience in this 'itinerary of sanctification and Salesian apostolate'.

Finally, I would like to share a thought with all the members of ADMA groups around the world, especially lay people. Our Association is growing a lot in every continent: today, we have more than 800 groups in 50 different countries. A special commitment of the new Council will therefore be aimed at enhancing the worldwide role of Primary animation. In order to make it even more relevant and effective, it will be important to add to this initiative, your support with prayer and your active collaboration: we would like you to be an active part of this journey which, with the help of Mary and Jesus, will soon lead us to organise the World ADMA Council and the next Congress of Mary Help of Christians, fundamental stages of coordination and animation in particular with our SDB and FMA spiritual animators.

We entrust our journey to Mary Help of Christians, our Mother and Teacher. May she always guide and protect us.

Giuseppe Tufano
New president of Adma

Here we give a brief presentation by the new ADMA Primary councillors:

- Aldo

For me and my family, joining ADMA stems from the



desire to grow spiritually together, as a family and as a community. The Association offers us opportunities for prayer, meditation and reflection that can be shared by all the members of the family; it provides us an environment to participate in spiritual retreats, helps to strengthen family ties, sharing faith with other families experiencing similar situations. This sense of belonging is one of the important aspects for those seeking support and friendship in their faith journey.



Family life may present challenges and moments of crisis. ADMA offers a supportive environment where families can share their concerns and receive spiritual and practical help. The community becomes a safe reference point where comfort and encouragement can be found in difficult times. Joining ADMA means embracing and promoting Marian spirituality. Families are encouraged to develop a personal devotion to Mary, recognising her role as guide and intercessor in the Christian life, inviting us to place ourselves at her service.

- Elisabetta

A warm greeting to all the members of the Association from Valdocco, Turin! I am Elisabetta Seno. This year, I am celebrating 10th year as a member of ADMA. I thank the Lord for the gift of having known the Association and grown up in a big family of families who welcomed me 10 years ago. These have been years full of many graces received on a personal level and as a primary ADMA. As a Council member, I now wish to give back some of the many graces I have received. I wish to place myself at the service of helping the worldwide dimension of our association grow more and more. There are so many groups present in so many nations in diverse precious realities, blossoming through the mediation of Mary Help of Christians, following Don Bosco's charism. I dream of an Association that is more and more united, more and more enriched by the different cultural sensitivities from all over the world and that the link with the 'two columns' and the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, our House, from which everything originated, grows deeper and deeper. A prayer from Valdocco in the hope of meeting you soon!

- Dedo

My name is Manfredo and I have been married to Alessandra for 22 years and we have 3 children.

We have known ADMA since 2017 when a couple of friends, who now no longer walk in ADMA, proposed to us the monthly retreats and then the spiritual exercises in Pracharbon. For us, being part of the great Salesian Family, as member of ADMA, is the confirmation of the foundations of our call to marriage, because the charisma of the ADMA is based on the two pillars dreamt by Don Bosco: the Eucharist and Mary Help of Christians. Our journey has been a crescendo of love for people and of joy in seeing how many graces Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco continue to bestow on all the members and their surroundings. So, I accepted the request to be available to serve the ADMA in the Council and in particular in the Secretariat and Communication, a very demanding task, but I trust in the help of many associates of good will and in Mary Help of Christians to do well as a council member.

- Beppe

My name is Beppe. I have been married to Monica for 30 years. We have two children aged 24 and 27. We have been Salesian Cooperators since 1993. For us joining ADMA was the natural consequence of realising the incredible amount of graces Mary has given us over the years. We have discovered that Mary's 'being' is not only being beside Jesus, but above all being beside us, in good times and in times of trials. Mother Mary leads us to Jesus. She loves us with compassion and generosity and shows us the way to heaven. In the ADMA Council, I take care of the activities that take place in Valdocco, the initiatives aimed at young people and the organisation of monthly and summer retreats. To accept the invitation to be part of the Council was, for me, to recognise Don Bosco's call to listen to Mary's voice, to follow her gaze, to accept her guidance.



- Antonio

Entrust, confide and smile: this is a motto that the Association has made its own, and it is the one we wanted to embrace when we made ourselves available to be part of the Council. We have entrusted to Mary our doubts and our fears concerning our inadequacy for the role to play. We trust in Mary's continuous guidance and protection so that we

will say one day 'She has done everything'. We will try with greater fervour to joyfully bear witness to our belonging to this great family, part of the larger Salesian family, not just by talking about God but being his witness. Let us pray for one another so that the Devotion to Mary Help of Christians may grow and spread.

Letter to the New Rector Major Don Fabio Attard

We share the letter sent to the new Rector Major, on behalf of all ADMA members around the world

*Valdocco, 30th March 2025
IV Sunday of Lent*

Dearest Fr. Fabio,

We, in the name of all the new members of the Primary ADMA council and in the name of the whole Association of Mary Help of Christians, welcome with great joy the news of your election as Eleventh successor of Don Bosco and of all the new members of the General Council for having accepted this responsibility.

We assure you of our prayers. We promise you of our collaboration in the Salesian mission for the young and with the young, and we recognise you as the 'father and centre of unity' of the entire Salesian Family.

We were filled with happiness at your first words at Valdocco as the new Rector Major that showed us your human qualities, along with courage and determination, but above all your deep faith and a deep-rootedness in the charism.

You spoke of 'passion for God' that fuels a passion for man; you recalled how the educational service is precisely that of 'servants'; you spoke of a 'call' to be carried into a new era, where the thirst for meaning is 'ancient'. A thirst to be grasped, to offer space for people and proposals.



So, thank you Fr. Fabio. As of now, we see that you have already grasped this thirst and - like a 'simple glass of water' - you have offered and will continue to offer your life, your time, your energy to the young people of the world.

May Mary enlighten your steps, and those of the General Council and of the entire Congregation.

***United in prayer,
The ADMA Primary Council
In the name of all the Members***



Formation

Hail Holy Queen - A prayer full of tender yearning

'Angel of God, my guardian'

The general tone of the prayer 'Salve Regina' is inspired by subtle sweetness, which is, however, permeated by a subtle nostalgia. Sweetness because it is addressed, with simplicity of children, to Mother Mary who is recognised as a merciful and compassionate mother, full of care and attention towards her children, who are still engaged in a demanding and not risk-free journey. Precisely for this reason, the 'Salve Regina' is also traversed by a thread of nostalgia: nostalgia for Heaven, for God, for that Mother whose intercession we now recognise by faith. The 'Salve Regina' is a prayer that, even without naming it, speaks to us indirectly of Heaven. That is precisely why it is so sweet. It is essentially a supplication, introduced by an articulate greeting, almost a praise, which is then taken up again at the conclusion. In the middle, two stanzas follow one another: one presents the subjects of this supplication, the condition of those who have recourse to the sweet heavenly Mother; the other presents the object of the supplication, the requests made to the Mother. Let us dwell on just a few points.



is Queen because of the nobility of her soul and the excellence of the gifts she received; she is Queen 'because she is uniquely associated with her Son, both in the earthly journey and in the glory of Heaven' (Benedict XVI). To venerate her as Queen is not an anachronistic custom; rather, it means recognising her powerful intercession and having recourse to it. Only in Heaven will we realise the graces Our Lady has obtained for us; we will be moved and ashamed at the thought of such sweetness, often unrequited by us. How many of us who fail to have recourse to Mary's help deprive ourselves of the graces from her! I believe that in heaven we will regret for not having taken advantage of Mary's intercession; we will note the power of this mediation, its infallible efficacy, and

we will reproach ourselves for our unbelief, which has caused us to neglect that exceptional help arranged for us. Among the many aspects of Marian intercession, the Mother of the Lord supplements and makes up for our prayer. Mary enriches my lacking love for the Lord, drawing from her own love for Him, and in this way makes my prayer pleasing to God, because she 'lends me

hers'! Mary draws from her prayer of pure love, and presents it to the Most High in my name: such a prayer cannot but be supremely pleasing to God!

A special queen

The prayer opens with a polite greeting. How many opportunities throughout the day to greet Our Lady, to revive our love for Her in a simple but sincere way! To preserve our faith and increase our love for Mary, we need to sustain and manifest this love through small but meaningful gestures. Mary is first of all hailed as Queen. The insistence on Mary's queenship - and, correlatively, on the relationship that her faithful have with her - is influenced by the feudal society in which the prayer was composed (probably at the end of the 11th century). Mary is a special Queen, however, because she is all concerned for the situation of her children, and she spends the privilege of her queenship interceding for the benefit of the future subjects of this kingdom. She is a tenderly loved queen, before whom one is not afraid to open one's heart wide, confiding one's concerns to her. The title of queen is well suited to Mary. She

Mother full of mercy

And here we come to the second key appellation: Mother of Mercy. The prayer insists on Mary's motherhood, indeed, on Mary's double motherhood: she is Mother of Jesus, and at the same time our Mother too. Mother of Jesus in the order of human nature, our mother in the order of grace. This is exactly why Mary can also be an advocate, because she is perfectly credited on both sides, with an undeniable advantage for us! She who is Mother of the Incarnate Word and shares the royal dignity with Him, is at the same time our Mother, in solidarity with us, and invests her royal credentials for us, interceding before the King. Strengthened by this prestigious mediation, those who invoke her, we 'exiled children of Eve', come forward. These words express all the paradox and painful tension of the



human condition which experiences itself torn between a desire for purity, for Heaven, for God, and the heaviness of so many compromises and earthly aspirations. It is curious that Eve is mentioned, just when we are addressing the new Eve (as the Fathers like to call Mary). We speak of Eve, while we refer to her who changed Eve's fate (so we sing in the Ave maris stella). We could say this: if there is a double motherhood of Mary, we also see a double filiality of our own: we are children of Eve (therefore subject to the consequences of original guilt, including suffering and death), but also children of Mary. It does us good to remind ourselves of this, especially when, discouraged by repeated falls, we might despair of bad habits or recurring sins; Mary remains the generous mediatrix of all graces! The description of the human condition is completed with a reference to 'this valley of tears', to designate the current condition of the world. It is perhaps the passage that the contemporary reader feels is furthest removed from his sensibility. Indeed, the expression is influenced by the troubled era in which the prayer was composed, in which earthly suffering and hardship must have seemed almost unbearable. The current condition of much of humanity is fortunately quite different, almost contrary: we are generally well settled in a fairly comfortable world, from which we are terribly sorry to be separated. Yet, this still does not satisfy the human heart. Man is not made for the things of this world, which can never satiate him, no matter how abundant. We cross it with kindness and sympathy, this world, because we are on our way to the other world, the goal of our pilgrimage. With beautiful grace, the 'Salve Regina' restores eternal depth to the story of our lives. It reminds us that we are on our way to a destination

that lies beyond the daily hassles, and keeps the taste for it alive. It directs us to Paradise, the 'Salve Regina'. And of Paradise it discloses to us the sure way, guarded by the Mother of Mercy.

A discreet supplication

And here we are at the heart of the 'Salve Regina', in which a double supplication is made: one concerning the present time ('Turn your merciful eyes upon us'), the other our future life ('Show us, after this exile, Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb'). There in between lies our death, not directly named, but discreetly alluded to. In the first supplication we ask Mary to place her eyes upon us, those eyes that inspire comfort, because they are full of mercy. In the second, we ask her to assist us at the moment of our death, coming herself to take us and introduce us to Jesus, showing us that Face which will be the object of our contemplation for eternity. What a privilege to live under Mary's loving gaze! To know that our days are guarded by these caring eyes. She, who discreetly took the side at Cana of two somewhat clueless young men, in order to save their wedding feast and, with it, their good reputation, will she not do much more for us, when she sees that we may incur some serious danger, especially to our souls or to our fidelity to our vocation? And so ends the 'Salve Regina', with our gaze and desire turned to Heaven: such a death, I dare say, is not frightening, it tastes almost sweet. To close one's eyes to this world, assisted by the most caring of mothers, is truly an incomparable grace. 'Show us, after this exile, Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb'.

Fr. Marco Panero, SDB

Family Alphabet

G as Generation

Just as the letters F and G of the alphabet are very close, so the reality of the Family is to the fact of Generation! And this for good and bad. To deny the family is sooner or later to deny the generation; to acknowledge the family is certainly to promote the generation. And just as the unity of spouses promotes a solid identity in children, so their discord produces many forms of instability. In any case, it is sad to see that where the family loses its natural contours and its religious references, everything happens to children: childhood pampered, childhood

violated, childhood denied.

Love and its fruitfulness

We have seen it: just as God is the mystery of Love and Life, so the family, made in the image and likeness of God, is the primordial place of love and life. Love and Life understood not as two separate realities, but interpenetrated: love is the source of life, life is the fruit of love. This is a more important observation than one might think, even if it is far removed from the divorce and contraceptive culture



in which we are immersed, and yet it must be said: there is no such thing as love and fecundity, there is love and its fecundity, there is the fecundity of love! After all, there must be a reason why God has placed in the generative act such intense pleasure, and in the birth of children such great tenderness! Yes, there is a reason, and it is wonderful. We do not think about it enough. If the first word of the Creed is the fatherhood of God, the second is the eternal generation of the Son! Yes, in God himself there is generation, an infinite and happy transmission of love and life. And here is the reverberation on creation: the creative act will not only be the production of a reality distinct from God, but the germination of a filial reality.

Simply put, we are children of humans because we are destined to be children of God! In Jesus, God 'predestined us to be his adopted sons' (Eph 1:5), and God has filled us with the most precious goods of creation and religion not only to snatch us from the corruption of the world, but above all 'to make us partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet 1:5). This is the heart of the divine plan: to make us children in the Son.

Children or sons?

As is to be expected, the Enemy will try in every way to scrabble God's wonderful design, will do everything to disfigure the filial figure of man. Among the many symptoms of our 'culture of death', it is worth recalling one, as it is less obvious than the tragedies of abortion and violence against children, of denatality and artificial birth. As M. Gauchet observed, today many come into existence, but few are truly begotten, because authentically human generation is not a purely biological fact, but a symbolic one. To generate is more than to produce or reproduce: it is to pass on life and love, existence and meaning, nature and culture; it is to pass on 'the heritage of a marriage', to pass on the substance of a father and mother, their tenderness and wisdom. In this sense, on closer inspection,

generating is inseparable from educating: one cannot give birth without teaching how to be in the world. If we find ourselves in a state of 'educational emergency' today, it is because too many children are orphans, as too many parents abdicate the task of education. Cantelmi says it well: "in the profile of the parents of our day, we can find some who are affectionate and caring, concerned for their children, but who have given up on educating, that is, on transmitting visions of life, narratives, value and meaning frameworks, reflections of meaning". More profoundly, one could say that to generate is to bring into the world in an integral manner: it is the maternal task to bring into life and the paternal task to bring into society. This is why the classic family gesture of authentic generation is that of the father who raises the infant, still largely bound to the body and psyche of the mother, and, by naming him, recognises him as a member of a family and a homeland. It is then understood that the act of generation is always an act of adoption: not only the happening of a life, but also a free 'yes' to life, an act of recognition and election, the conferring of a name and the promise of an inheritance. Recalcati explains it well: "parenthood is always adoptive, it is never natural, but always calls for the gesture of adoption, the recognition of that life as my son: 'Yes, you are my son'. This 'yes' is founded through an act of responsibility: 'Yes, you are my son'. This 'yes' saves, gives meaning to life, associates life with meaning. It is one of the few certain things in the work of psychoanalysts: when this 'yes' is missing, when this adoption has not taken place, life goes wrong, it dissociates from meaning, it remains a cry in the night, it becomes desperate." Parents should, in this sense, make themselves imitators of God the Father, when in view of the incarnation of the Son He pronounces the solemn words that resound throughout Scripture: "you are my son, today I have begotten you" (Ps 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; Heb 5:5); or when, at the beginning of his messianic mission, He says with Father's pride: "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17).

Fr. Roberto Carelli SDB

(Source: Roberto Carelli – Family Alphabet)



Salesian Blesseds and Saints

Saint Dominic Savio

Dominic Savio was born in the village of San Giovanni, a hamlet of Riva near Chieri (Turin), on 2nd April 1842, to Carlo and Brigida Gaiato. He was the second of 10 siblings. His father came from Ranello, a hamlet of Castelnuovo d'Asti (today Castelnuovo Don Bosco) and worked as a blacksmith; his mother came from Cerreto d'Asti and was a seamstress. Dominic was baptised on the same day as his birth in the parish church of Riva presso Chieri, as recorded in the baptism certificate signed by the parish priest Fr. Vincenzo Burzio. In November 1843, the Savio family moved to Morialdo, a hamlet of Castelnuovo d'Asti, about a kilometre from Becchi, where Don Bosco's house was located. Here, Dominic lived a serene childhood, rich in affection and docile to the religious teachings that came to him from his parents who were profoundly Christian.

A fundamental stage in his extraordinary path to holiness was his First Holy Communion, to which he was admitted at the age of just 7, as an exception. The 'Propositions' of that event are known: "1: I will go to confession very often and take communion as often as the confessor gives me permission; 2: I want to sanctify feast days; 3: My friends will be Jesus and Mary; 4. Death rather than sin." These resolutions, which Dominic would renew every day of his life and which would mark the existence of many other saintly boys, already express a great level of holiness, a work of Grace that Don Bosco himself would recognise, appreciate and direct towards lofty heights.

Dominic grows up and wants to learn. He goes to school at the cost of much effort: about 15 kilometres, every day, alone, along unsafe roads: "My dear, aren't you afraid of walking all alone on these roads?", a companion asks him. "I am not alone, I have a guardian angel who accompanies me every step of the way". His companions call him to dive into the waves of a stream. He realises this is not good and turns his back on them and goes on his way. He is only ten years old, but he has the makings of a leader. One winter morning, at school, while waiting for the teacher, his classmates fill the stove with stones and snow. To the teacher, irate, the classmates say: "Dominic did it!". He does not defend himself, does not protest and the teacher

chastises him severely, while the others snigger. But the next day the truth comes out. "Why", the master asks him, "did you not immediately tell me that you were innocent?" Dominic replied: "Because that fellow, being already guilty of other faults, would perhaps have been thrown out of school. For my part, I hoped to be forgiven since it was the first fault I was accused of in the school; besides, I was also thinking of our Divine Saviour, who was unjustly slandered". In February 1853, the Savio family, for work reasons, went to live in Mondonio, about 5 kms from Morialdo.

The teaching priest from Mondonio, Fr. Cugliero, had been Don Bosco's seminary companion. Meeting him one day, he spoke of Dominic as a pupil of Don Bosco in joy and piety, worthy of special consideration. "Here in his house," he said, "he may have young men like him, but he will hardly have anyone who surpasses him in talent and virtue. Test him and you will find a Saint Louis". On 2nd October 1854, on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, Dominic and his father met Don Bosco at Becchi: it was the decisive stage on his path to holiness. Dominic asked Don Bosco to be admitted to the Oratory in Turin, because he longed to study to become a priest. Don Bosco was astonished: "I saw in him a mind entirely according to the spirit of the Lord, and I was not astonished considering the work that divine Grace had already done in that tender heart". And he said: "Eh! It seems to me that there is good stuff there". Frank and determined, using his mother's work as a metaphor, Dominic replied: "So I am the cloth: you are the tailor; take me and make a beautiful dress for the Lord".

Dominic arrived at the Oratory on 29th October 1854, at the end of the deadly plague of cholera that had decimated the city of Turin. He immediately became friendly with Michele Rua, Giovanni Cagliero, Giovanni Bonetti and Giuseppe Bongiovanni with whom he went to school in the city. In all probability he knew nothing of the 'Salesian Society' that Don Bosco had begun to tell some of his young men about it in January of that year. On 8th December 1854, while in Rome, Pope Pius IX declared the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary a 'dogma of faith'. Dominic knelt before the altar of



the Mother of God in the church of St. Francis de Sales, solemnly consecrating himself to her. "Mary, I give you my heart; let it always be yours. Jesus and Mary be my friends always; but for heaven's sake, let me die rather than the misfortune happening to me of committing a single sin". It was in this same circumstance, the desire was born in his heart to found what, officially established on 8th June 1856, would be 'The sodality of the Immaculate Conception.

Dominic was cheerful, a trusted friend to all, especially those in difficulty, assiduous and constant in his study commitments. To Camillo Gavio, from Tortona, one of his best friends, he confided: "Know that we here make holiness consist in being very cheerful. We will only endeavour to avoid sin, as a great enemy that robs us of God's grace and peace of heart, to fulfil our duties exactly, and to frequent the things of piety. Let us begin today to write as a reminder: *Servite Domino in laetitia*, let us serve the Lord in holy joy. A joy that is an expression of a life lived in deep and intimate friendship with Jesus and Mary, a sign of the renewing action of the Spirit and of a joyful and contagious holiness, which forms young apostles capable of drawing souls to God". During these months, he also formed a spiritual friendship with John Massaglia: They both had the same desire to embrace the ecclesiastical state, with a real desire to become saints. This pact helped them reach great heights of Christian life, through the sharing of spiritual and apostolic experiences, the practice of correction, and obedience to superiors. "I want us to be true friends," Dominic had asked John. And truly they were 'true friends in things of the soul', starting a school of holiness for young people characterised by an intense life of prayer, a spirit of sacrifice and hard work, joyful apostolic fruitfulness. Of John Massaglia, Don Bosco testified: "If I have to write down the beautiful traits of virtue of the young Massaglia, I would have to repeat most of what was said about Savio, whose faithful follower he was as long as he lived".

In the Oratory, there were wonderful boys, but there

were also indifferent boys who behaved badly and there were suffering boys, struggling in their studies and homesick. Everyone tried individually to help them. Why couldn't the most willing young men join together in a 'secret society' to become a compact group of little apostles at the service of others? Dominic guided therefore by his usual industrious charity chose some of his faithful companions, and invited them to unite with him to form a group called the 'Sodality of the Immaculate Conception'. Don Bosco gave his consent: they tried, they drew up a small regulation. One of those who helped Dominic Savio most effectively in the foundation and drafting of the regulations was Giuseppe Bongiovanni. From the minutes of the Sodality preserved in the Salesian Archives, we know that the members, who met once



a week, numbered about ten: Michael Rua (who was elected president), Dominic Savio, Joseph Bongiovanni (elected secretary), Celestino Durando, John Bonetti, Angelo Savio cleric, Joseph Rocchietti, John Turchi, Louis Marcellino, Joseph Reano, Francis Vaschetti. Giovanni Cagliero was absent because, convalescing after a serious illness, he was living at his mother's house.

The concluding article of the Rule, which was approved by all, even by Don Bosco, said: "A sincere, filial, unlimited trust in Mary, a singular tenderness towards her, a constant devotion will make us superior to every obstacle, tenacious in our resolutions, strict towards ourselves, loving towards our neighbour, and exact in everything". The members of the Sodality chose to 'cure' two categories of boys, who in the code language of the minutes were called 'clients'. The first category consisted of the unruly ones, those who were easy to talk to and beat up. Each member would take one of them in and act as his 'guardian angel' for as long as necessary. The second category were the newcomers. They helped them to spend the first few days in joy, when they did not yet know anyone, did not know how to play, spoke only the dialect of their village, and were homesick. In the minutes, you can see the unfolding of each meeting: a moment of prayer, a few minutes of spiritual reading, a mutual exhortation to go to Confession and Communion;



‘they then talk about the clients entrusted to them. Patience and trust in God was urged for those who seemed entirely deaf and insensitive; prudence and gentleness towards those who were easy to persuade’. Comparing the names of the participants in the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception with the names of the first ‘ascribed’ to the Pious Society, one gets the moving impression that the ‘Sodality’ was the ‘dress rehearsal’ of the Congregation that Don Bosco was about to found. It was the small field where the first seeds of the Salesian flowering germinated. The ‘Sodality’ became the leaven of the Oratory.

The few months Dominic still lived at the oratory were a further confirmation of his resolution to become a saint, which he particularly pursued after hearing a sermon by Don Bosco on the easy way to become a saint. “It is God’s will that we all become saints; it is very easy to do so; a great prize is prepared in heaven for those who make themselves saints”. For Dominic, that sermon was like a spark that set his heart on fire and he immediately began to practise the advice given to him by Don Bosco: “First of all a constant and moderate cheerfulness, and advising him to be persevering in the fulfilment of his duties of piety and study, I recommended that he should always take part in recreation with his companions”. The one who realised Dominic’s moral and spiritual stature was Mamma Margaret, who one day confided to Don Bosco: “You have many good young men, but none surpasses the beautiful heart and soul of wise Dominic”. And she explained: “I see him always praying, staying in church even after the others; every day he leaves recreation to visit the Blessed Sacrament.... He stays in church like an angel dwelling in Paradise”. And it is, thanks to their love for the Eucharist and devotion to Mary, that these young men live and share an intense spiritual and mystical life, of evangelical radicalism in obedience to God’s will, in the spirit of sacrifice, in apostolic and educational fruitfulness among their companions, especially the most difficult or marginalised.

With Don Bosco, Dominic, however, remained alone until 1st March 1857 when, because of an illness, which was immediately very serious, he had to return to his family at Mondonio. In a few days, despite some occasional hope, the situation precipitated and Dominic grew worse. He died in Mondonio on 9th March 1857, serenely exclaiming: ‘Oh! What a beautiful thing I see...’. Mary’s presence marks the whole story of this young man, as She accompanies

him in fulfilling the Father’s blessing and his mission. The Church recognises his holiness, even though he was very young. Pope Pius XI called him a ‘small, indeed great giant of the spirit’. He realised the truth of his name: Dominic, ‘of the Lord’; and Savio ‘wise’: therefore wise in the things of the Lord and authoritative for the exemplarity and holiness of his life.

Prayer

*O God, source of all good,
we bless you because in St. Dominic Savio,
you have given to adolescents
an admirable example of charity and purity
and a model in building true spiritual friendships.
Docile to the action of your Spirit,
he knew how to tread in a short time
a simple and sure path to holiness,
in joy of heart and fidelity
to his daily commitments.
Help us to imitate his love for the Eucharist,
the entrustment to Mary Immaculate,
the apostolic zeal for the salvation of our neighbour
and grant that we too may grow as your children
in joy and love
to the full stature of Christ the Lord
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.*

Pierluigi Cameroni, SDB

(Source: Pierluigi Cameroni - Like stars in the sky)



By Grace Received

Have you received a grace and wish to tell about it?

The '**By Grace Received**' column welcomes the testimonies of those who have experienced a moment of light, an unexpected help, a healing, an answer that arrived when it seemed impossible.

If you wish to share your story, we invite you to send us a story of a maximum of 7,000 characters, including spaces, in which you describe your experience of grace received.

We also ask you to attach a significant photograph (of you, of the place linked to the grace, of a symbolic object, etc.) which will accompany the text in the publication.

Send your contribution to: adma@admadonbosco.org

Each testimony will be read with respect and attention. Some may be selected for publication in our column.

Thank you for choosing to share your experience.

Family Events

Pracharbon – a profound experience of Salesian Family

I participated in the Retreat in Pracharbon for a few years and it was a formidable experience of communion within the FAMILY. I won't add adjectives, because they would be limiting. Certainly, living together with ADMA, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (Sr. Linda Pocher then) and some SDBs like me, one was inside an intense Salesian Family experience. But the



kind of communion that is created and breathed there goes beyond all institutional parameters. It is a family of generations, from the youngest, to the young people who animate them, to parents with children who grow up... to grandparents. But above all, it is God's family, that is, the way He dreams of us. This can be perceived in so many moments experienced together in Pracharbon. Among them, one has remained strong in my heart, and I can still see the faces and hear the voices: when that ice-cream microphone went around the circle of pews during the afternoon sharing time. Those voices, so different, were each of a daughter or son as He meets us, as He wants us and loves us, just as we

are. In recent years SYNOD has been the password for almost every church event, and we are happy that it is so. If I search the folders of my memory, both for the 18 years I spent in Africa and for those I lived before and after Nigeria and Ghana here in Italy, I cannot find an experience that has made me understand and live more what it means to WALK TOGETHER, synods, than that round of pews in Pracharbon. Thank you!

Silvio Roggia, SDB



Joint Retreat of ADMA of Piemonte and Valle d'Aosta and Salesian Cooperators:

A day of deepening the Act of Faith



On Sunday the 16th ADMA of Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta and the Salesian Cooperators met. The meeting saw the active participation of 130 people, including families and Salesian Cooperators, ended with the Holy Mass, celebrated by Fr. Michele Molinar, Provincial Vicar of the Salesians of Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta. The ADMA of Piemonte and Valle d'Aosta group, animated by Fr. Gabriel de Jesús Cruz Trejo, this year is focused on the theme of Prayer.

After having examined, in the previous meetings, the 'I adore you in the morning and in the evening', the Hail Mary, the Angel of God, the Eternal Rest, Fr. Roberto Carelli deepened the Act of Faith, as the foundation of Christian life. A prayer to 'do', not simply to say, which, starting from the initial profession of faith 'My God, because you are infallible truth, I believe all that you have revealed', and confirming the main truths of our Creed 'I believe in you, the only true God in three equal and distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit...', dissolves in the final supplication 'Lord increase my faith'. The concluding supplication is also good news because those who pray start from the assumption that they already have some faith and ask that this may increase. In conclusion, in his speech, Fr. Carelli reminded participants to save the seed, i.e. the faith, help those who still have faith and keep it intact. One must therefore, first of all, not lose but cherish one's faith, the seed of Christian life: 'Lord, increase my faith'.

Primary ADMA meets the GC29 Participants

On the evening of Tuesday 18th March, in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco, a meeting was held between the Turin-Valdocco Primary ADMA, presided by Renato Valera, and the interested members of the 29th General Chapter, animated by the Rector Major's Central Delegate for the Salesian Family, Fr. Joan Lluís Playà, SDB and his team. The ADMA group of Valdocco, with its 200 members, is also a world reference point for the entire Salesian Family, the fourth in the index of adherent groups, 100,000 strong, founded by Don Bosco himself in 1869, in Valdocco. Salesians from 5 different Salesian Regions and 4 continents (Mexico, Poland, India, Vietnam, eSwatini, South Africa, Congo, Myanmar, West Africa, the Philippines and Japan) joyfully accepted the invitation of the ADMA Primary management. After a brief introduction by the President of the Primary ADMA on its history, a lively debate followed on the current organisation, the communication and animation tools and the experience of the ADMA group of Valdocco, with the help of interpreters, in Italian, French and English. The main interest of the Salesians present was on how to start a new ADMA group in their specific cultural and religious environment, considering



that many of the capitulars present come from countries where ADMA is still in the initial phase of development, or how to face the challenges of the ageing of the members, of the generation gap or involvement in the Salesian mission; or how to accompany the ADMA aspirants in their initial formation before their promise, according to the ADMA regulations (ed. 2003). As ADMA Valdocco is made up of many families, a mix of 3 generations, the theme of family emerged several times as the key to the future: there are no perfect families, each



one has its ups and downs, but entering ADMA also means entering the big Salesian Family, with many spiritual and community benefits. The members of ADMA were urged by the Salesians present to continue their excellent digital visibility (achieved thanks to the website and the monthly animation carried out with the training newsletter 'ADMA online', available in 10 languages). The Sons of Don Bosco also requested information on some visible signs, such as the badge of Mary Help of Christians, and to share more 'graces of Mary' and experiences

of faith through the monthly ADMA Online. Finally, the Superior of the Province of the North Philippines (FIN), Fr. Gerry Martin, who will host the next International Congress of Mary Help of Christians (Manila, 8-11 February 2028), informed all present about the preparation and logistical organisation. "We pray that the second largest group of lay people in the Salesian Family will grow especially in the unexplored corners of the Salesian world," Fr. Václav Klement, Superior of the Southern African Vice province, said in conclusion.

ADMA group of Murska Sobota, Slovenia



We are the ADMA group from Murska Sobota, Slovenia, accompanied by the FMA community. Our spiritual guide is Sr. Cecilija Hozjan FMA. In Slovenia, we are the largest group (102 members). We are very grateful to you, editors of the ADMA Online bulletin, because every month, you inform us of the events of the entire Salesian world. We promise that with our contribution we will continue to support your work.

We are very happy to receive the bulletin by email. In this way, we experience that Mary Help of Christians unites us wherever we are. And the most beautiful thing is to be united in prayer.

The personal commitment of each member of our group in Murska Sobota is: praising the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, singing in church, reading the Word of God during Holy Mass, pilgrimage to Marian shrines, celebrating novenas. Before Holy Mass, every day, we recite the Holy Rosary. And we certainly do not forget to celebrate members' birthdays. This year, we will have the promise of new members, and this makes us very happy. United in prayer are those who have left the earthly world.

We always remember them and offer Holy Mass for them. We gladly visit our elderly and sick members who stay in the various old people's homes.

We also have the little chapel of Mary Help of Christians, which helps the families of our members unite in prayer. We try to help according to our possibilities and, with donations, we also support our parishes.

During solemnities, we gather for spiritual retreats and, once a year, we organise spiritual retreat. We meet with great joy and feel close to the other ADMA groups.

With much affection, we greet you all and on your work we invoke every blessing from the Lord.

The members of the ADMA group of Murska Sobota, Slovenia .

Veronika Mitov, President
Sr. Cilka Hozjan FMA



Monthly Prayer Intention

For working conditions

We wish to unite the prayers of all ADMA groups around the world for the intention of Pope Francis.

For working conditions

We pray that through work, each person may be fulfilled, families may be sustained with dignity, and society may become more humane.

