

MARY INVITES US TO HAVE MORE TRUST IN GOD OUR FATHER



Dear friends, we still have in our eyes and in our hearts the great **Feast of Mary Help of Christians**. This year it reminds us of the **150th anniversary of the consecration of the Basilica** commissioned by Mary and built by Don Bosco with the help of so many people. Many people participated in the feast - faithful devotees of the Blessed Virgin, friends of the Salesian work and many of the people of Turin who are grateful to Don Bosco. "In our hearts today we have a feeling of profound love for Mary our Mother", said the Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, in his homily during the afternoon mass at which he presided in the basilica of Valdocco. "For those who share the Salesian charism, devotion to Mary Help of Christians is not simply a way of praying or expressing piety, but it is the experience of the active and effective presence of Mary in our hearts and in our work: our personal relationship with 'Mary who did everything'".

Then, speaking of the significance of the basilica of Valdocco for the whole Salesian world, the Rector Major observed: "Mary herself wanted this church to be her home. It is not simply a house where she dwells ... But a **'mother' house, from which we receive life and the motivation to reach out, beyond frontiers, seas and mountains, beyond all imagination**. It is the open and welcoming home of an outgoing family". And he added: "We cannot separate our experience of Mary's presence from our mission as educators of the young".

This maternal and active presence of Mary is a strong invitation to us to have more trust in God our Father. Today there is a restlessness in the world, in our hearts, in families and even in our activities ... Our Lady tells us that our peace is found only in God and she helps us in this search. Think of the restlessness in the world where there are so many ideologies based on hatred, violence, legalization of abortion, of divorce and euthanasia: we no longer trust God! But he is our joy, our peace, our blessing, our healing: **"Without God we have neither future nor eternal life"**. Mary urges us to open our hearts to the gifts that God desires to give us and in the silence of the heart to adore Jesus, who gave his life so that we might live in eternity where he wants to lead us. Our hope lies in the joy of the encounter with God in daily life. This is why we must not neglect prayer because prayer works miracles.

Article 2 of our Regulations reminds us: **"The Association of Mary Help of Christians offers an itinerary of Salesian holiness and apostolate"**. ADMA proposes a path of holiness: God calls everyone to holiness. Prayer helps us to recognize the beauty and grandeur of this journey and to bear witness to it. This gift is a call to be open to all that God works through us and to be able, in our life, to thank God and rejoice for all He does through each one of us. The common vocation to holiness is specified in the light of the Gospel journey lived, interpreted and proposed by Don Bosco.

In this spirit we look forward to 2019 as a special year of grace for our Association when we celebrate the 150th anniversary of its foundation at the 8th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians.

Renato Valera, President
Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animator

Formation Programme 2017-2018: Introduction to Devout Life by St. Francis of Sales

9. A WORD ABOUT TEMPTATIONS

Fr Gianni Ghiglione

The fourth part of the Introduction is devoted entirely to "opportune advice against the most frequent temptations".

The word temptation occurs in the Our Father when Jesus invites us to pray "lead us not into temptation". He himself, the Son of God, was tempted by the devil at the beginning of his public life. This means that being tempted is not evil, it is not a sin! It is not evil to have temptations but it is wrong to open the door to them! [Temptation] "cannot make us displeasing to God as long as we do not take pleasure in it and do not yield to it." (IV, 3). "As long as your will refuses its consent not only to the temptation but also to the pleasure, do not be in the least disturbed for God is not offended by them." (IV, 5). Note well that **there is a difference between feeling and consenting**. Feeling the attraction of evil or having temptations of all kinds happens to everyone; the evil lies in consenting, in allowing the will to accept them and put them into action (IV, 3).

What are the most frequent temptations?

Human respect: with great irony Francis talks about the attitude of the world towards those who decide to change their lives or embrace a truly Christian life. I have seen gentlemen and ladies spend whole nights in a row playing chess and cards. Their friends did not worry about it. But if we do an hour of meditation everyone rushes to the doctor to seek a cure for us! *To get on well with the world, we must go hand in hand with it. We should remain firm in our intentions and our perseverance will show that we are serious.* It is not easy to resist teasing and joking or to give up certain pleasant but futile habits. The temptation to backtrack is there and it is a good sign: it means that we have really changed course!

Discouragement: sometimes we are alone on the path we have taken and we are not understood even by those who are close to us. *Have a little patience and you will see that the discouragement is nothing and you will be filled with joy. One day of devotion is worth more than a thousand years of life in the world!*

Some advice **for serious temptations**, that is, those that lead to serious sin, betraying the promises we have made and turning away from God:

- *Have recourse to God:* we should pray with all our heart to reject the evil that faces us and seeks our assent.
- *Divert your mind from it by means of good and praiseworthy occupations.*
- *The best remedy against temptations whether great or small, is to open our hearts and make known our suggestions, feelings and affections to our spiritual director (IV, 7).*

And in the face of small temptations? *It is easy for a man or a woman to refrain from adultery but it is not easy to refrain from amorous glances, from giving or receiving flirtatious love, from soliciting little favours, from speaking or listening to words of flattery... little temptations to anger, suspicion, jealousy, envy, flirtation, vanity, frivolity, duplicity, affectation, deceit, unchaste thoughts - these are the trials which even the most devout and resolute must constantly face. Here also*

- *Renew the firm decision to serve God (IV, 9).*



- *Be committed to performing acts contrary to temptation: all for the love of God.*
- *Pray to Jesus who is by your side.*

Two temptations not to be underestimated:

- **Anxiety:** if you are driven by self-love in your efforts to free yourself from evil, then you will become anxious, as if it were more dependent on you than God. If on the other hand you are motivated by love of God, then you will do it with patience and serenity. Anxiety is one of the worst evils that can affect the soul, apart from sin. Our heart, when it is troubled and agitated, loses the strength to preserve the virtues it had acquired. We must be determined, Francis insists, but without anxiety or disturbance. Speaking of patience, he stressed that owning one's soul is the greatest aspiration of man!

- **Sadness:** the bad effects produced by sadness include anguish, laziness, indignation, jealousy, envy, impatience (IV, 12). Sadness removes all beauty from the soul and generates a certain distaste for the things of God. The remedy lies in renewing one's commitment to prayer and above all the frequency of Holy Communion, which gives strength to the heart and joy to the spirit.

Conclusion: we must try to keep a constant and unchanging balance of mind in the midst of this great variety of changes. A ship may sail in different directions, driven by various winds, yet the needle of its compass will always point towards the pole star. Let everything turn upside down, not only about us but also within us: the highest point of our heart, which is the needle of our compass, must always be turned to God, our Creator, and Saviour. (IV, 13).

On the care of spiritual life

If we read the fourth part we will taste the richness of wisdom, experience and concreteness of Francis, an extraordinary guide to the Lord Jesus. In the last part he insists on advice and exercises to strengthen and confirm our decision to walk the road we have undertaken. It seems to me that everything is concentrated in the initial comparison, which I beg you to read paying attention to the adjectives and adverbs because these are the words that make all the difference, as we mentioned at the beginning, between a good life and a "holy" life.

Even a good clock needs to be wound twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. Besides this, it has to be dismantled every year, to clean the rusty parts, to straighten those that are bent and to replace the worn out. Thus, whoever has a deep concern for his dear heart must wind it up daily to God, in the evening and in the morning, by means of the exercise mentioned above. Besides, he must examine its conditions several times, rectifying and readjusting it.

Finally, at least once a year, it should be dismantled and all its parts examined in detail. In other words, all its desires and passions are to be examined to remedy all the defects that may be there.

The centre always remains the heart!

He then gives examinations of conscience on the heart at three levels: towards God, towards self and towards one's neighbour.

And since love plays the most important role in the journey towards God, Francis offers some meditations to warm the heart, so that it may continue its journey with fidelity and perseverance.

For personal reflection:

How do you behave in the face of the temptations you consider "serious" for your Christian life?

And for "small" temptations, do you pray in the moment of temptation? Do you ask for help?

Are you ashamed of being a Christian or have you the courage to declare your faith?

Do you take care of your spiritual life? Which means:

Do you have a regular confessor, a friend of the soul?

Do you pray regularly?

Are you faithful to Sunday Mass?

Do you pause from time to time to reflect on your journey to the Lord?

Are you generous with the Lord? Don Bosco used to say "the Lord will not be outdone in generosity!"^c

“With Mary, the woman who believed” 8th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians



During the meeting of the World Consultative Body of the Salesian Family in Turin from 21 to 23 May in conjunction with the feast of Mary Help of Christians, the theme of the 8th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians was officially announced, to be celebrated in Buenos Aires (Argentina) from 7 to 10 November 2019.

With the title “With Mary, the woman who believed” the event will focus on listening to the Word, highlighting how faith in Jesus is transmitted from person to person, from generation to generation, narrating the marvels accomplished by God. All this is done with Mary, who welcomed Jesus in her virginal womb. She is our mother, teacher and guide in the faith, particularly in the accompaniment of the younger generation, in their journey to joy, as the Preparatory Document for the October Synod reminds us. In it the Church invites us to be generative adults, rooted “in prayer and in supplication for the gift of the Spirit that guides and enlightens everyone”.

The 8th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians is an event of the Salesian Family, promoted by the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) in agreement with the Secretariat of the Salesian Family and with the Salesian Family

of Argentina. Argentina was chosen to commemorate the first missionary frontier of Don Bosco and also to acknowledge the particular value Pope Francis attaches to devotion to Mary Help of Christians and the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Almagro, where he was baptized and where he expressed his love for Mary Help of Christians until he was elevated to the chair of Peter.

The Congresses of Mary Help of Christians are events of global importance for the Salesian Family which seeks to increase its spiritual and apostolic identity by promoting devotion to Mary Help of Christians. Providentially, in 2019 ADMA will celebrate the 150th anniversary of its foundation.

Since 1988 seven International Congresses have been celebrated:

- 1: Torino-Valdocco (Italy) in 1988, on the occasion of the centenary of Don Bosco's death;
- 2: Cochabamba (Bolivia) in 1995;
- 3: Seville (Spain) in 1999;
- 4: Torino-Valdocco (Italy) in 2003, on the occasion of the centenary of the coronation of Mary Help of Christians;
- 5: Mexico City (Mexico) in 2007;
- 6: Czestochowa (Poland) in 2011;
- 7: Torino-Valdocco / Colle Don Bosco (Italy) in 2015, on the occasion of the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco.

The paper can be read at the following site:

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FAMILY CHRONICLE

SEVILLE (SPAIN) - PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF ADMA IN THE SEVILLE AREA

The Salesian House of the Holy Trinity in Seville hosted the eleventh Provincial Assembly of the Seville area on Sunday 29 April 2018. Superbly organized by the host association from Trinidad, the event was attended by about 1000 people from Andalusia, Extremadura and the Canary Islands.

Preceded by the procession of the flags of the Associations present, the day began with the celebration of Holy Mass presided over by Fr Eusebio Muñoz, SDB., Delegate of the Rector Major for the Salesian Family. In his homily he said that one of the current challenges proposed by ADMA is the care of the sacraments in daily life. A large number of priests concelebrated, most of them spiritual animators of the various Associations. The Mass was "a piece of Heaven on earth". All the participants took part in silence and recollection. At the end Fr Eusebio read the message sent by the Rector Major for the occasion.

The Mass was followed by the formative moment of the Assembly, with a talk given by Fr Eusebio Muñoz. He began by stating that "he had never found a place where the Virgin Mary was loved more than in our region". On the other hand, he wanted to underline that young people are also responsible in spreading devotion and love for Mary Help of Christians, and that is why ADMA groups should be passionate in the commitment to approach and involve young people in the journey of the inner life. Undoubtedly, one of the ideas that most appealed to those present was that "thanks to the devotion to the Blessed Virgin we are preserving the faith in our homes, villages and cities", and that therefore the members must continue to serve the Church in this holy purpose.



SEVILLE - NEW PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

On 29 April 2018 the members of the new provincial council were elected during the eleventh Provincial Assembly of the Area of Seville. The Council for the four-year period 2018-2022 is as follows:

- MARÍA JOSÉ, VÉLEZ BERNAL - President - Animation of the Sevilla-Huelva area
- MARÍA DOLORES, MOYANO MATÍAS - Vice-President and Youth - Animation of the Extremadura area
- JOSÉ MARÍA, TORRES ZURITA - Secretary - Málaga-Granada-Almería area
- TRINIDAD, PALOMERO ALMENARA - Technology - Animation of the Córdoba area
- MARIBEL, PERERA DÍAZ - Formation- Las Palmas and Gran Canaria
- JULIO, NIETO MÁRQUEZ - Promotion - Animation of the Sevilla-Huelva area
- Omayra del Pilar, Vera Hernández - Communication - Animation Tenerife area
- MARÍA JOSEFA, VIDAL VISO - Family - Animation of the Cádiz area
- MARIBEL, LÓPEZ MENDOZA - Zelatrici - Animation of the Jaén area

All the elected representatives declared their willingness to accept the responsibility entrusted to them.



TURIN - YOUTH ADMA RETREAT

For some years now, the young people of Primary ADMA have gathered in Pianezza for a retreat. This year 56 young people, aged between 14 and 29, participated. Fr. Stefano Mondin, Youth Ministry Delegate of the ICP, preached the retreat, a sign of the increased collaboration between the SYM and Youth ADMA. Fr Roberto Carelli and Fr Matteo Mura were available for confessions and to listen and accompany young people. The presence of married couples from ADMA was significant. They took turns on the various days, witnessing to the beauty of married life in Jesus.

Mary was presented, as she lived her daily life, and in particular in those pages of the Gospel that recount the most important moments of her life: the Annunciation, the Visitation, Mary at the foot of the cross, Mary in the upper room in the midst of the apostles.

These days of retreat were a real meeting: meeting among young people, meeting of friends, meeting of those who guide and those who are guided, those who listen and those who are listened to, and - most of all - a meeting with Mary, with the mother who smiles on us and embraces us. While she caresses us with one hand, with the other she shows us the One in whom all these encounters become fruitful and generate little corners of paradise: Jesus.



BUENOS AIRES (ARGENTINA) - MEETING IN PREPARATION FOR THE 8TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

On Saturday, 5 May 2018, at the Salesian Provincial House of Southern Argentina in Buenos Aires, there was a meeting of the Central Commission which is preparing for the 8th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians, together with Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, Spiritual Animator of ADMA and Mr. Tullio Lucca who was appointed by the Primary ADMA to accompany this event. The Commission was presided over by Fr Honorio Caucaman, Provincial of ARS, and coordinated by Fr Alejandro Gomez, with the presence of various representatives of the groups of the Salesian Family.

The meeting allowed the participants to share the theme, the contents, the programme and the logistics for the celebration of the event. The place is significant. The Almagro neighbourhood has several works of the Salesians and of the FMA. In the centre is the wonderful Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, designed by the Salesian Fr Giuseppe Vespignani. It was here that Pope Francis was baptized.

In the evening we had a real family gathering in the home of Maria Ines, president of the South Argentina ADMA and with about 20 members of the ADMA of the North and the South, and all the provincial council members. We were moved by the presence of several members of North Argentina who made the journey to meet us.



On Sunday 6 May, Fr Pierluigi met some fifty ADMA members from the Buenos Aires area and Northern Argentina. We celebrated the Eucharist and held a beautiful meeting of discussion and communion on the programme and identity of ADMA. There is a great love for ADMA, even if the

necessary spiritual accompaniment is often lacking. There are dedicated people who are passionate about the Association. We concluded with the Rosary in the chapel where Pope Francis was baptized.

GUADALAJARA (MEXICO) - PROVINCIAL CONGRESS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

With the aim of promoting a deeper Marian devotion, the Provincial Congress of Mary Help of Christians was celebrated from 11 to 13 May. The event was held at the Salesian Institute of Tlaquepaque, Jalisco. About 130 people participated, mostly members of the Salesian Family, especially the Association of Mary Help of Chris-



tians (ADMA). The motto of the Congress was: "Mary Help of Christians, Our Lady of Difficult Times".

The Congress, was opened by the Provincial, Fr Hugo Orozco. It took place around three conferences: the first by Fr Juan José Bartolomé, a biblical scholar, entitled "Biblical foundation of Mary as Help of the faith of the disciples: a commentary on Jn 2, 1-12. The second, by Fr José Luis Plascencia, professor of theology, was entitled "Mary who helps and intercedes in times of difficulty", while the third was by Fr Octavio Balderas: "Attitudes of Mary in facing difficulty".

In addition to the conferences, the organizers prepared six short courses dedicated to different aspects of Marian devotion, in addition to 12 workshops on expressions of Marian devotion.

The postulators of the cause of the Servant of God, **Sister Antonieta Böhm**, gave an important presentation. Some important aspects of her life were presented in a musical prepared by the students of the College of Coacalco Laura Vicuña, the place where Sister Antonieta lived her last years.

The conclusion of the Congress took place with the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Father Hugo Orozco, at the end of which diplomas of aggregation to the Primary ADMA were awarded to the centres of Tlaquepaque, Sahuayo, Nuevo Laredo and Mexicali.

TURIN - MEETING OF THE SALESIAN FAMILY OF PIEDMONT AND VALLE D'AOSTA WITH THE RECTOR MAJOR

On the afternoon of Sunday 20 May 2018 the Rector Major met the members of the various groups of the Salesian Family in the Teatro Grande at Valdocco, More than 400 people were present. The Tenth Successor of Don Bosco invited each of those present to "live in the Church the beauty of their vocation, with the charism proper to each group of the Salesian Family". Then he also recalled that in order to do this a deep path of mutual knowledge is necessary: one cannot in fact love what one does not know. His words involved and excited the audience, who intervened with numerous questions. Since it was Pentecost Sunday, the Rector Major also emphasized: "The most precious thing we can and must offer to others is our witness of communion: showing that the unity of our Salesian Family is a precious gift of God and the Holy Spirit". Many ADMA members were present along with the President Renato Valera.



TURIN - WORLD CONSULTATIVE BODY OF THE SALESIAN FAMILY "LISTENING TO THE YOUNG, IT IS THE CHURCH ITSELF THAT IS REJUVENATED":

From Monday 21 to Wednesday 23 May the annual meeting of the World Consultative Body of the Salesian Family took place in Turin-Valdocco, presided over by the Rector Major Fr Ángel Fernández Artime. 27 groups of the Salesian Family were represented at the meeting. ADMA was represented by the President, Renato Valera, the treasurer, Andrea Damiani, the secretary, Mariapia Gallo and the spiritual animator Fr Pierluigi Cameroni.

On Monday 21 May Fr **Rossano Sala, SDB**, Special Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, presented his report in a clear and concise manner: "**Towards the Synod of Bishops, Emerging Dynamics, Relevant Issues, Decisive Questions**". He noted that "there is a loss of educational passion in the ecclesial community, which leads to an inability to accompany young people and an absence of significant adults."

Fr Sala then underlined how the impossibility of speaking to young people without listening to them has already emerged in the preparation of the Synod. "Only when you have a clear idea of reality can you discern and understand the challenges of the Church and of young people. One of the most important challenges is **listening to young people; and, listening to the young, it is the Church itself that is rejuvenated,**" he said.

Fr **Ivo Coelho**, General Councillor for Formation presided at the Mass. In his homily he spoke of "Mary as Mother and Teacher, who teaches us to love as Jesus taught us". The presence of the Department for Formation was very enriching for the participants, thanks to the presentation of the theme of the accompaniment of young people.

In the afternoon Fr **Silvio Roggia**, from the Department for Formation, presented the theme: "**Accompaniment and the Salesian Family**". "Accompaniment is the way Don Bosco educated the young and is something that belongs to all the groups of the Salesian Family. In accompaniment we discover the need young people have of adults they can trust ... We are the experts of accompaniment, but there is the challenge of preparing ourselves to accompany young people with quality and depth."

In the first part of Tuesday morning Fr Silvio Roggia continued on the theme of spiritual accompaniment. Some groups presented their experiences in listening and accompanying. The first group was "Cancão Nova", which described the accompaniment carried out at different stages of life. Sr. Paola Casalis, FMA then went on to present the experience of her Institute in listening to and accompanying young people with problems. The third group to intervene was the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) which, through the testimony of President Renato Valera, showed how the Association provides spiritual accompaniment to people of different ages. Finally, there was the presentation of a Salesian from Nigeria, on accompaniment in the different ethnic groups of his country.

In the afternoon there was the presentation of five groups: Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB), the Association of Salesian Cooperators (SSCC), the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC), the Witnesses of the Risen Lord (TR) and the Association of Damas Salesianas (ADS). Each group was able to present the work, the life and growth of its institution.

The evening ended with a visit to the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, led by the Rector, Fr. Cristian Besso.

The final workday, the eve of the Feast of Mary Help of Christians, began with the Eucharistic celebration in Don Bosco's rooms at which the Rector Major presided. He stressed the importance of remembering the origins of each group, which had often taken place in difficult conditions.

In the morning, several topics were discussed:

- **The project of the Salesian Family website: We are family!** by the *Cancao Nova* group. The website was started from the mutual desire to know each other and to share the most important news and events. The address is <http://fs.sdb.org/>
- **the contribution of each of the groups to the book "The Salesian Family of Don Bosco"**.
- **Information on the Spirituality days of the Salesian Family**, which will be from the 10th to the 13th January 2019, in Turin - Valdocco.
- **Holiness in the Salesian Family:** Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, Postulator General, gave a summary of the work of Postulation in this past year.

In the final talk the Rector Major said: "*I think we have a great wealth: each of our groups, associations and congregations of the Salesian Family, with all our diversity, we all have what is proper to each group or association, and this is beautiful: being a Salesian family does not detract from the uniqueness of one's own charism.*"

This is what is great about the Holy Spirit. The various founders tried to translate the Salesian charism into a reality of its own, in its own context, and with some difficulties. This is beautiful! But at the same time, I want to tell you that we must not forget that we are part of a great tree. This tree of the Salesian charism belongs to all of us. It is not owned by anyone. It is like the blood that is found in the life of each of the groups. We have the uniqueness of our own charism and the strength of the trunk which is the spirit of Don Bosco, and we are in the shadow of this great tree. This seems to me to be an opportune image and like everyone else, I want to really look to Don Bosco together with you and refer to him and to the beauty of Salesian holiness: Mother Mazzarello, Dominic Savio, all the Saints and the 118 Blessed, all the great holiness. Believe me, year by year we see how our Salesian family grows and becomes stronger. I have had the opportunity and good fortune in different places to meet confreres and sisters in your congregations. It is very beautiful when we come together. Year after year we see growth and communion [...]

We must not be triumphalist, but I can assure you that it is very emotional for me to hear how our Salesian charism has reached places we could never have imagined. Going around the world I am really moved by this. The spirit of God is always present in the lives of people, in our lives and in that of our institutes, congregations and families. We should have great hope.

I invite you to pray always for one another. What we do is not possible only with human forces. The strength of prayer, of our charism and of the Salesian Family is very great and is a true grace. [...]

