

MARY LEADS US TO THE KING OF PEACE



Through Mary and her motherly Heart we welcome Jesus King of Peace. Peace is a gift to be invoked and received in prayer. Jesus particularly wants to dwell in our hearts and share our every joy and our every pain. We need to examine our hearts and see if he is really present with his peace and joy, if he has really conquered our hearts, if he has redeemed our freedom and led us to a fundamental option for God. Often we still live in the dark or in the ambiguity of life. Through Mary and with her help we can open ourselves to the light and accept God's salvation. Mary urges us to open our hearts to Jesus and give him our lives.

Those who experience God and his love becomes bearers and messengers of peace: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life - the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us - - that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have

fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete." (1 Jn 1:1-4). Our faces should reflect the joy of people who have encountered Jesus and live for his kingdom of peace and justice. Mary accompanies us with her motherly blessing.

As you will see in the news section of this issue, a new Council has been elected for the Primary ADMA in Valdocco, Turin. The spirit and the organization of the new Council are inspired by our Rules, the directives of the Rector Major, the *Charismatic Identity Card of the Salesian Family*, and the needs that arise from the situation for they are the place where we receive the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The event that characterizes this four-year period is the celebration of the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco, when the International Congress of Mary Help of Christians will take place in Valdocco. In light of the responsibilities and role of the Primary to the Association in the world and in relation to the Salesian Family, these are the lines of action:

- Care of families, especially the younger ones, in keeping with the directives of the Rector Major and the journey of the Church.
- Care of senior citizens, as a concrete response to the demands and opportunities linked to old age.
- Care of the young, in the ways indicated by the Holy Spirit, and in fidelity to the charism of Don Bosco.
- Formation of members and groups in knowledge and sharing of best practices of the Rule and of the spirit of the Association.

We wish you a happy feast of Don Bosco lived in the light of the *Strenna* that exhorts us to "draw upon the spiritual experience of Don Bosco, to walk in holiness according to our specific vocation."

Lucca Tullio, President
Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animator

WAY FOR FORMATION 2013-2014

«Da mihi animas, cetera tolle»



5. The Preventive System: pedagogical method and spirituality

1. A pedagogical approach constantly renewed

We believe that education is the main contribution we can make to change the world for the coming of the Kingdom. "There is no doubt," as Pope John Paul II said, "that the first and most important cultural development is the human person spiritually mature, that is, the person fully educated, capable of educating himself or herself and educating others". The original contribution we can make to the cause of education is called the Preventive System. It shows its continuing vitality in its ability to respond to various challenges. In the many situations in which it operates, it is in constant need of renewal. An essential element of this renewal is the sharing of pastoral educational practice in dialogue between SDBs, lay adults and young people, to acquire new knowledge of the sciences and of the different contexts in which we operate.

2. Central elements of the Preventive System

Knowing the Preventive System: it represents the quintessence of the pedagogical wisdom of Don Bosco and is the prophetic message that he left to his heirs and to the whole Church. To ensure fidelity and fecundity in this spiritual and educational experience we must reconsider the original insights of Don Bosco. He is convinced that *"this system is based entirely on reason, religion and loving kindness"*. Reason, religion and loving kindness are today, more than ever, essential elements in educational activity and precious seeds that can give life to a more human society, in response to the expectations of the new generations.

a) Reason

In the mind of Don Bosco, reason is synonymous with dialogue and persuasion, as opposed to coercion and imposition. It helps to evaluate things critically and to discover the true value of earthly things, respecting the autonomy and dignity of secular values. It leads people to discover and share the great efforts of the human person, in the incessant and arduous process of personalization and socialization.

Reason emphasizes the values of Christian humanism, such as the search for meaning, work, study, friendship, joy, compassion, freedom that is not divorced from responsibility, and harmony between human wisdom and Christian wisdom.

By his deeds more than by his words, Don Bosco shows that, at the root of his educational system, there is a solid humanism, and a genuine appreciation of created things. This makes the preventive system an *open system*, full of hope in the human person, able to deal with different cultural situations. It therefore involves special attention to contexts, a prior reading of the situation of young people and well planned educational interventions.

b) Religion

Religion, understood as faith received and responded to, is the point of intersection of the Mystery of God and the mystery of man, linked to the fragility of human history and its culture, but also prompted by the certain call of God. The awareness of this reality invites us to imitate God's patience, meeting young people and lay people "at the point where they have their freedom".

Religion means making room for Grace that saves, cultivating the desire for God, favouring the encounter with Christ the Lord which gives full meaning to life and a response to the thirst for happiness, and gradual integration into the life and mission of the Church. We need to realize that *the mission land* now extends to every part of the world. We must also be ready to undertake programmes of education to the faith that are targeted and gradual.

In *Christian contexts* it is still possible to carry out the preventive system more or less in its entirety and help lay faithful, both adults and young people, to discover the Face of Jesus. Listening to the Word and preaching the Word, celebrating the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Penance, a commitment to charity and witness, the happiness of living under the gaze of a loving Father - all these are still valid educational means to be promoted, without being excessively shy about them.

In *secularized contexts*, where the culture seems mute and unable to speak of the Father of Jesus Christ, it will be necessary to educate to an awareness of the transcendent and the big questions posed by the meaning of life and death, pain and love, without hiding the ray of light that comes to us from our faith.

In the contexts of the great monotheistic and traditional religions, the first educational dialogue will be with the lay people who are closest to us in order to recognize with them the grace already present in them, to encourage in them the desire for prayer, and to value the fragments of the Gospel and the educational wisdom present in the culture, the life and the experience of young people. We often find ourselves working with young people and lay people, with *men and women of good will* who do not show an explicit religious affiliation. Then the Preventive System moves us to seek and receive the spark of truth deposited in the heart of each person, to promote the "dialogue of life" - especially "in the concern for human life" and "promoting the dignity of women" - "which prepares the way for a deeper sharing."

c) Loving Kindness

For an effective educational relationship, young people must not only be loved, but must know that they are loved. Loving kindness is a particular style of relationship. A loving heart awakens the energy in the hearts of young people and helps them to mature even to the point of self-sacrifice.

It is expressed as unconditional acceptance and constructive and purposeful sharing of joys and sorrows. The love between educator and young people is expressed in positive signs. Loving kindness also finds expression in that pastoral charity which leads to a new educational culture which "offers a specific contribution also to the work of other educators." We have an explicit duty to seek the best ways and means to transplant the genius of Don Bosco in public life, in the world of culture, politics and social life. It will then give birth to a *new education*, which opens the way for the *new evangelization*. We need to look with special attention at strategies to deliver the preventive system to families, helping them to shed light upon the aspirations and problems of today, to create an environment of happiness, dialogue and solidarity, and in this way transforming them into true "domestic churches".

3. The Preventive System is also spirituality

There are elements of spirituality common to all groups of the Salesian Family. These are all inspired by Don Bosco, who is the founder of the Salesians, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (with Mother Mazzarello), the Salesian Cooperators and the Association of Mary Help of Christians. Other groups refer to their founders. These elements are found in the *Identity Card of the Salesian Family*, which should be known and studied, because it is the reference point for our spirituality of communion and for our formation in communion.

Let's not forget that the preventive system is a concrete expression and translation of this common spirituality. It reconnects us to the soul, attitudes and gospel choices of Don Bosco. The attractiveness of his spirit is linked to the practice of the preventive system. It is a successful system which is a model and inspiration for all those today who are engaged in education in different continents, in multicultural and multi-religious contexts. It is a model that demands of us all a constant reflection to ensure that young people always have a central place in our Salesian mission as recipients and as protagonists.

The practice of the preventive system leads us to the heart of Salesian spirituality which is pastoral charity. It was lived by Don Bosco as the pursuit of "the glory of God and the salvation of souls." *Da mihi animas, cetera tolle* became his prayer and his programme of life. Pastoral charity needs to be founded and nourished in prayer, contemplating the Heart of Christ, imitating the Good Shepherd, meditating on the Scriptures, living the Eucharist, making time for personal prayer, assuming a mentality of service to young people. It is a charity that is reflected and made visible in concrete gestures of closeness, affection, work and dedication. We adopt the Preventive System as a spiritual experience and not just as a way of evangelization or a method of education. It finds its source in the love of God who "provides in advance for all his creatures, is ever present at their side, and freely gives his life to save them". It disposes us to receive God in young people and calls us to serve Him in them, recognizing their dignity, renewing their confidence in their resources for good, and educating them to the fullness of life.

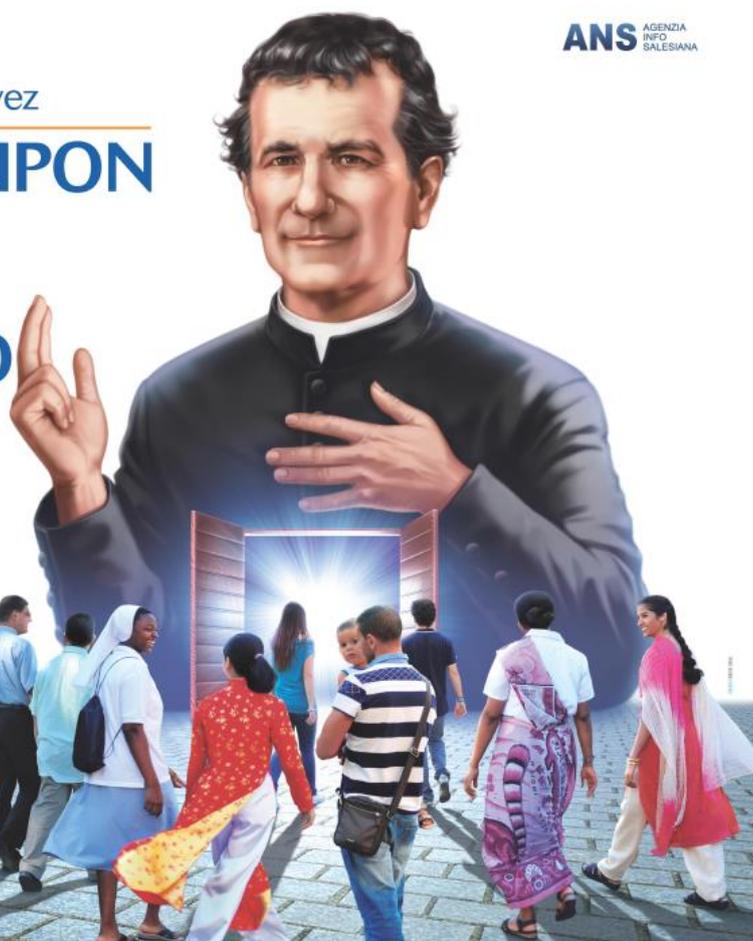
2014 STRENNA
of the Rector Major Fr Pascual Chávez

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**LET US DRAW UPON
THE SPIRITUAL
EXPERIENCE
OF DON BOSCO**

in order to
walk in holiness
according to our
specific vocation

da mihi animas, cetera tolle
the glory of God and
the salvation of souls



CHRONICLE

TURIN-VALDOCCO: NEW COUNCIL OF PRIMARY ADMA

Following the elections held on 15 December 2013 the new Council of the Primary ADMA Turin - Valdocco was set up. It will remain in office for the years 2014 to 2017. The members are as follows (pictured from left): Walter Gambarotto, councillor and coordinator of youth committee; Andrea Damiani, treasurer; Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, spiritual animator; Tullio Lucca, President and coordinator of the communications committee; Sr. Marilena Balcet, spiritual animator FMA; Rosanna Marchisio, secretary; Giovanni Scavino, vice-president and coordinator of the committee on family; Rocco Biondino, councillor and coordinator of the senior committee.



The role of the Primary ADMA is defined in art. 15 of the Regulations: "The Association of Mary Help of Christians in Turin-Valdocco is the heir and successor of the first ADMA founded by Don Bosco, and for this reason is called *Primary*. Given its origin and its connection with the Sanctuary, it exercises a role of animation, coordination and information for the Association at world level."

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GUATEMALA - NATIONAL RETREAT

The ADMA National Retreat for Guatemala was held from 8 to 10 November at Choacorral San Lucas Sacatepequez (Guatemala). It was organized by the ADMA centre of the *Divina Providencia* parish and given by Fr Guido Maroto. Frs Miguel Aguilar SDB, Agustín Vasquez SDB, Eduardo Castro SDB and Javier Rivas, SDB all cooperated generously. The topics for study and reflection were as follows: Mary, model of faith, Salesian spirituality, the Holy Eucharist, Contemplating Christ through the eyes of Don Bosco and the Apostolate of ADMA members. The film *El Gran Milagro* was shown and



the Rector Major's Strenna for 2014 was discussed. Finally the apostolate of ADMA members was emphasized, preaching the gospel and helping young people, as Don Bosco did. (Otoniel Cifuentes, National President of ADMA in Guatemala)

BOBO (BURKINA FASO) RENEWAL OF COMMITMENT



The ADMA group in Bobo has maintained the tradition of devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians on the 24th of each month. On the evening of 24 November 2013, the Feast of Christ the King, the members recited the Rosary and renewed their commitment. The parish priest, Father Lawrence Campillo, presided at the ceremony.

BARAKALDO (SPAIN) - MEETING OF LOCAL ADMA COUNCILS IN THE BILBAO PROVINCE

On Sunday 24 November 2013, about fifty members of the seventeen Local ADMA Councils in the Province of Bilbao gathered in Barakaldo for a formation day. We were welcomed at the Salesian House and the local group did everything possible to make us feel at home. The morning was devoted to reflecting on Salesian spirituality in preparation for the celebration of the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco. Fr Arcadio helped us to reflect on the instructions given by the personage in John Bosco's dream at the age of nine when he commissioned John to teach young people the ugliness of sin and the beauty of virtue. Throughout his life Don Bosco developed a way of life which he left us as the foundation of our Salesian spirituality. In the afternoon, Fr José Antonio Hernández presented a practical exercise on the project of life along the lines of the morning reflection. We were presented with two booklets on devotion to Don Bosco and Mary Help of Christians, which will serve to increase our devotion to our Mother and to prepare us to be "helpers" wherever we are. (Fr Arcadio Cuadrado, Provincial Spiritual Animator).



GELA (SICILY) - ACT OF ENTRUSTMENT OF CHILDREN TO MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS



On 5 December 2013, in the Parish of St. Dominic Savio in Gela, there was a celebration for 56 children who were lovingly entrusted by their parents to Our Lady. At the beginning of the Eucharistic celebration, at which the parish priest Fr Giuseppe Di Enna presided, there was a brief introduction by the president Luigina Ciaramella in which she commented on a passage from the Biographical Memoirs of Don Bosco. This was followed by a heartfelt Ave Maria as a response to the prayers in Mary's honour. In his homily the Parish Priest expressed his joy at seeing the

Church unusually crowded and he hoped that these occasions might be repeated more frequently. The Mass ended with the entrustment to Mary Help of Christians led by one of the mothers (Graziana Di Stefano), the dedication of the children read by a little girl (Alice Vullo) and the act of entrustment of young people to Our Lady by the President (Luigina Ciaramella). The list of all the children present was then read. The Parish Priest concluded with the blessing of Mary Help of Christians. At the end, sweets were distributed and all were invited to come back next year (Luigina Ciaramella, ADMA Regional President).

MANILA (PHILIPPINES) - DON BOSCO'S MADONNA MAKES A FIRST APPEARANCE IN THE GRAND PROCESSION IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY.

The statue of Mary Help of Christians was carried for the first time, along with a hundred other Marian statues from all over the Philippines, in the annual Grand Marian Procession which takes place in Manila on the first Sunday of Advent. This annual festival in honour of the Immaculate Conception began on 8 December 1619. It was interrupted during the Second World War and was resumed only in 1980. It takes place around the ancient walled city of Manila, called *Intramuros*, where the Cathedral is located. More than 400 parishioners, students, confreres, members of the Salesian Family and other devotees of Mary Help of Christians accompanied the statue during the long procession as an expression of Marian devotion. Don Bosco banners followed the procession, along with the musical band of the City of Mandaluyong. The statue of Mary Help of Christians was singled out among other statues, when they stopped in front of Manila Cathedral. It was decorated with a garland of local flowers by the Salesian Archbishop of Yangon in Myanmar, his Excellency Carlo Bo, guest of honour for the occasion.



TURIN - 8 DECEMBER: CHURCH OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

As is the tradition, on 8 December the Salesian Family of Turin visited the church of St. Francis of Assisi to commemorate the beginning of the Oratory of Don Bosco and his meeting with Bartholomew Garelli. Some of our ADMA members also went, including the President Lucca Tullio. They took part in the celebration of the Eucharist presided over this year by Fr Gianni Moriondo who is in charge of the oratory of Valdocco. In his comment on Don Bosco's meeting with the young mason, Fr Gianni drew attention to Don Bosco's insisting on wanting to start the catechism lesson NOW, beginning with the recitation of a Hail Mary. With Bartholomew Garelli, Don Bosco could not wait another moment. He did not give him another appointment. He did not sit down and begin to organize something complicated. He said "Let's start now". Now, now, now ... is the time of God and Mary! Forty-five years later Don Bosco told his Salesians: "All the blessings showered on us from heaven are the result of that first Hail Mary said with fervour and right intention."

VALUE OF ADMA ONLINE

I quote a passage from an email received from one of our members. I think it will help us to recognize and appreciate ADMA ONLINE as members and groups. It is a means given to us by Mary to be formed and to grow in communion and in Salesian spirituality. "I was very impressed by the message in December concerning the Virgin Mary which invites us to open the doors of our hearts, to be overshadowed by a deep discernment. It came to my spirit like balm or consolation, a message full of faith and hope. How beautiful! Thanks for sharing it: we too will share in the local ADMA. Everything is precious because the theme of formation for daily life in the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales and Don Bosco is a lesson in life for every member of the Salesian Family and for all those to whom we can pass on this message by our example.

Also I am very happy for this man of God, Attilio Giordani, who was recently declared Venerable. He died at 59 years, and gave great example as a father and husband, practising the Salesian Preventive System with young people. He was formed as a layman in the oratory where he worked and which he attended since he was a child. He is a wonderful example and I have already asked him to help me in this journey towards holiness of life because we need intercessors to encourage us not to fail in any undertaking. His life is a real motivation for us. Personally I am delighted whenever I read about the saints"(Patricia).

The paper can be read at the following site:

www.admadonbosco.org/index.php?lang=en

and here: www.donbosco-torino.it/

For every communication you can contact

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