

ADMA on line

ASSOCIAZIONE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE
PRIMARIA - TORINO VALDOCCO

24th December 2011

Monthly message

Mary gives up hope

“Stay awake!”. This is Jesus’ call in the Gospel of today. He gives it not only to his disciples, but to all: “Stay awake!” (Mt 13,37). It is a salvific recall that reminds us that **life has not only an earthly dimension, but is projected to “elsewhere”**, like a small plant that sprouts from the soil and opens toward heaven. A heavy small plant, man, gifted with freedom and responsibility, to which **each one of us will be called to give an account of how he has lived, of how he has used his own capacities**: if he has kept them for himself or if he has made them beneficial for the good of his brothers. Isaiah, the prophet of Advent, helps us to think with an accurate prayer, turned to God in the name of the people. He recognizes the inadequacies of his people then he says: “No one must invoke your name, **no one woke up to draw us near to you**; why have you hidden your face from us, you have put us in remorse for our iniquities” (Is 64,6). Is it not normal to be struck by this description?



It seems to reflect some lovely views of the post modern world: cities where life is anonymous and horizontal, where God seems to be absent from man, the only patron, as if it was him the supreme architect and the administrator of all: the buildings, work, economy, transports, sciences, technology, everything seems to depend on man. And sometimes, in this world that appears to be so much perfect, some moving events occur, with nature, in society, from which we think God has retired, he has abandoned us to ourselves. **Truly, the real “patron” of the world is not man, but God.** Advent comes every year to remind us of that simple reality, for **our life might find her right orientation, towards the face of God.** The face of a “patron”, who is Father and Friend. With the Virgin Mary, who helps us in our way during Advent, let us make ours these words of the Prophet: “Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you are the one who moulds us, we all are the work of your hands” (Is 64,7) (Benedict XVI, *Angelus* 27th November, 2011).

In this world that is more and more in crisis and in breathlessness because it experiences a breakaway and poverty of the earthly things, **Mary gives us hope** to live this time of Advent and the joy of Christmas of the Lord as a time of grace in which we make the real experience of his Son Jesus. Only Jesus Christ can satisfy truly man’s heart made for eternal life. In Jesus we are called to be sons of God, called not to be left isolated, but to be able to call God with the name “Father” and feel ourselves to be part of his family. This gift is not only for us, but we have to communicate it and give it to others: that is the only way we can become true followers of Jesus. Christmas is the grace of light that radiates on our faces, it makes us bearers of God’s light to those who have not known the Father, to those who wonder in darkness of sin, of despair, suffering and loneliness. Christmas is to give our witness of God’s love for a wounded world from hatred and war. Mary prays so that in our heart the peace of her Son might reign, that we might not be afraid and become prisoners of hatred.

Our Association of Mary Help of Christians is called to be a sign of hope and joy for so many people: that is what we want to be through the testimony of the life in groups and the local councils characterized by a strong sense of belongingness and an intense fraternal communion; with the birth and the formation of ADMA groups of youth, composed by youth who are enthusiastic for Jesus, who love Mary, witnesses of the Gospel; with the presence of couples and young families where love is lived. These are my feelings and my wishes for all of you, they are Christmas wishes and I assure you of my special prayers for you and all your intentions.

Sig. Lucca Tullio, Chair Person
Don Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animator

Training Path 2011-2012



4. The paddle of Mary help of Christians (don Pierluigi Cameroni)

The Help of Christians and the Madama Palace –

When Don Bosco held the first meeting with the painter Lorenzone, through whom he asked for the paddle for the new church of Mary Help of Christians, it was a surprise for those who were present because of the magnificence of his ideas. This is how he expressed his thought: “On top, the Most Blessed Mary in the Choir of Angels; around her, more closer the Apostles, then choirs of martyrs, Prophets, Virgins, Confessors: on the ground, the emblems of Mary’s great victories and people of the various parts of the world raising their hands to her and looking for helps from her”. He was talking about all this as if it was a show he has already seen. Lorenzone starred at him as Don Bosco finished by saying: «And this mural painting where will you put it?». «In the new church!». «Do you think it will fit?». «And why not?». «And where are you going to find a room to paint it?». «The painter will think about it!». «And where do you want me to find an adequate space for that mural painting? We need a castel place for that. Unless you wish to have it in miniature to look at it with a light microscope». Everybody laughed. The painter took his measurements with his hand, took every proportion, demonstrated his argument. Don Bosco was not very pleased, but he had to admit that the painter was right. Then it was decided that the mural painting would contain only Our Lady, the Apostles, the Evangelists and few angels. At the bottom of the mural painting, under the glory of Our Lady, the house of the Oratory will be put. He rented a high living room of the Madama Palace, and the painter started working: it would take three years of hard work. «One day, a priest from the oratory said, I walked in his room to see the mural painting. It was my first time to meet with Lorenzone. He was on the stairs putting the last brush stroke to the face of the sacred image. He did not turn to see in spite of the noise that I was making when I entered, he carried on with his work, from there he came down and started to observe it as if his last touches were successful. Suddenly he realized that I was standing there, he took me by the hand and led me to a point where there was light in the mural painting and he said: – **Look, she is beautiful! It is not my work, no; it is not I who paints; there is another hand that guides my hand.** It seems you belong to this Oratory. So please tell Don Bosco that the mural will be a success as he wishes. He was very enthusiastic. Then he started working again». **When the mural was brought to the church and lifted to its place, Lorenzone fell on his knees, weeping and crying** (Memorie Biografiche, IV, 4-5).

Description made by Don Bosco - “But the most glorious monument in that church is the emblem that gives a meaning to the big painting on the major altar, in the chorus. It is equally the work of Lorenzone. Her height is more than seven meters. When looking at it, it looks like the apparition of Mary Help of Christians in the following model: The Virgin lies on an ocean of light and majesty, sitted on a throne of clouds. A mantle covers her and is held by a crowd of Angels, who form a crown, hand it to her with deference as their Queen. With the right hand she holds the sceptre that is the symbol of her power, almost referring to the words spoken on her behalf in the holy Gospel: *Fecit mihi magna qui potens est*. He, God, who is almighty, did great things. **With the left hand she holds the Baby who has opened hands to offer his graces and his mercy to those who appeal to his majestic Mother.** On her head she has the diadem the crown which proclaims her Queen of heaven and earth. From the top, descends a ray of celest light that forms the eye of God lands on Mary’s head. The following words are written on it: *virtus altissimi obumbrabit tibi*: the virtue from God above all will conceal its meaning, will cover and strenghten you. From the

superior part three rays of the dove are dropping, the Holy Spirit that goes radiating up to Mary's head through the following words: *Ave, gratia plena: God saves you, o Mary, you are full of grace*. This was the greeting given to Mary from the Archangel Gabriel when in the name of the Lord God he announced that she would become the Mother of the Saviour. Down the mural, there are the Saints, Apostles and the Evangelists, St. Luke, St. Mark into bigger natural dimension. They were carried by sweet ecstasy acclaiming: *Regina Apostolorum, ora pro nobis*, the Blessed Virgin who appears to them majestically over the clouds. Finally at the bottom of the mural painting the city of Torino is seen with other devotees who give thanks to the Blessed Virgin because of all the benefits they received and they supplicate to her to continue being their merciful mother in serious dangers of the present life. Generally, that work is well expressed, proportionate, natural; but **the value that is not to be lost is the religious idea that generates the devote impression in the heart of whoever looks at it**" (G. BOSCO, *Marvels of the Mother of God, invoked under the title of Mary help of Christians*, Torino 1868, pp. 127-128).



The reading of the paddle – The fame of Tommaso Andrea Lorenzone (1824-1902) is linked most of all to the mural painting of the Help of Christians, dominated by the figure of the Blessed Lady who holds in her hand the baby boy. Mary is shown standing and not sitted, as we usually see her represented in many paintings like the Queen-Mother who gives the baby Boy in adoration. Lorenzone, in fact, does another choice: **Mary standing, in vertical position**. This «dominating verticality», is a marian symbol related to messianic and heavenly elements, referring to the Immaculate and to the Mother of God: moon, star, dawn, throne, a high and saint place, tower of David. The verticality expresses thus the ascension towards the realm of the divine, in which creature is consecrated to God. That is why, the head of Mary is exalted with a crown. The only thing is that in our mural painting we have a double crowning: the crown of stars and the royal diadem.

The stars indicate the nearness to divinity, and were already used in ancient civilities, in Egypt and in Mesopotamia, for the attraction and the mystery that flows from them and from the greater witness that their Creator gives to them, for the beauty and the high harmony in the universe, they indicate also wisdom and perfection (Dn 12,3). But the most famous reference to the stars on the lady's head, is found in the book of Revelation. «*A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars*» (Rev 12,1). These twelve stars have some possible interpretations. They can indicate the twelve tribes of Israel and even the twelve Apostles, with the meaning of the totality of those redeemed who make a crown to our Lady; reference can also be made to the twelve zodiac signs, symbols of the perfection of the cosmos that turns around our Lady. In our mural painting the stars have six points. That is a marian attribute,

taken from the sarcophagus of the first christian centuries. The six points stars, already symbolize the house of David from whom descends the Messiah, it takes us back to the mystery of Incarnation because it is constructed with two triangles intersected from one another: in ancient times it was attributed to the symbol of Mary, place of encounter between Heaven and Earth. Though less visible, in the picture as Don Bosco wanted it, **the twelve stars are a particular sign to never forget, because it is the remains from the iconography of the Immaculate**; in that symbol, the saint wanted to gather; probably the spirituality

linked to the dogma that was just coming out from the church's teaching, and not just from that time, it belonged really to him. He suggested always the spirituality of the Help of Christians and not that of the Immaculate, and even placed of top of them.

The other signs in the mural are the golden crown and the sceptre that indicate the sovereignty. The crown for centuries has acquired an intense potential symbolism, becoming, as an attribute of the sovereign, the image of the entire people and therefore treasure *par excellence*. There were various types of crowns, all of them were signs of greatness and dignity. In that regards the **gesture of crowning of Mary**, we find its archetype in the biblical crowning of Queen Esther (Esther 2,16-18), **but it is mostly a christian tradition of the first centuries, linked to the dogma of Mary the Mother of God**, declared by the Council of Ephesus in 431. Crown and sceptre belonged to the marian type of «Basilissa», the Emperor of the East, who was represented by the western though. Mary is indicated as a queen ornamented by the symbols of power: she is sumptuously dressed, crowned, and with a sceptre, in everything similar to the worldly sovereign, vestments and jewels. In Rome, in "Santa Maria Antiqua", in 550, we already find paintings of the archangels Michael and Gabriel with the sceptre and the crown of Our Lady. It was not therefore a new idea expressed by the statues of the pinnacles of the Basilica in Valdocco, where Gabriel, from the right niddle, gives to Our Lady of the dome a crown of that time, while Michael, left, rises towards her the stem from which he waves the flag of victory. The crown of Mary and that of the Baby Boy are covered up by the centre of a star. **Mary is *Stella Maris***, the star of the sea, that orientates the sailors, in that sense, Mary is the one who guides the secured port. Referred to Christ, the star means divinity and achievement of salvation because **Jesus is the « the morning star»**, the star that emerges from the East carrying the hope of a new day (Ap 22,16; 2 Pt 1,19).

Even the precious stick, the sceptre, is a royal emblem of power and rule. The symbolism of the royal stick to judgement and installation of the sovereigns is larger and transversal to various epocs and cultures, but we always refer to effective acting. It is the instrument through which what is decided becomes operative (Es 4,17-20). That is the active meaning of the sign, symbol of him who achieves a work, **it has a particular meaning in the iconography of the Help of Christians, because she manifests as a queen who operates concretely for her people.** In the mural painting therefore there is not the apparition of an ecstatic and fixed Lady, but she is full of power, as the One who has to act, and this enters perfectly in the spirituality of Don Bosco and his perception of the Virgin as a mother who guides, protects, even fights for her sons, she is near to them and is constantly present (PAOLA FARIOLI, form the review "*Maria Ausiliatrice*", may 2003).

The link to a referent typography, is based on the composition, (in that case the building of the oratory) is an expedient dear to Lorenzone who will use it even in the paddle of San Giuseppe. Don Bosco, near his presence of Valdocco was "convinced of a particular power from God for the salvation of the youth" (P. BRAIDO, *Don Bosco prete dei giovani nel secolo delle libert *, Roma 2003, p. 13). Therefore the "emblems of the large victories of Mary and the people raising their hands", are more accurate and the oratory and the numerous cared young people, underlines the fact that the work initiated by Don Bosco was a victory of Mary and the youth substituted "the people from various parts of the world".

Updating letter – The cloth of the queen bee, with a very beautiful image of the Virgin Mary, represents both the ecclesiology and mariology of Don Bosco: Mary is the figure of the Church, her mother and model, where the face of the Mother is equal to the face of the Son, and where she appears sustained by Peter an Paul, and surrounded by the Apostles and the Evangelists. In few words: **an apostolic and missionary Church.** The Virgin of Don Bosco is a Queen, crowned with twelve stars and vestments of sun, like the Lady-sign of the book of revelation, thought non armed to kill her enemies, but loving, procurator, with opened hands to give and to offer her Son. The Son, from his side, according to the words of Don Bosco: "has his hands opened, offering thus his graces and his mercy to those who appeal to his Mother ". The Virgin of Don Bosco "is clothed with the sun", full of power, because she is immersed in the ocean of light that is God, immersed in the mystery of the Holy Trinity, that enlightens her person and her

mission. She is the way Don Bosco wanted her to be and that way he succeeded in representing her in the cloth of Lorenzone, who, full of emotion said: "I am not the one who paints. There is another hand that guides mine". **The Virgin of Don Bosco is the image of the Church, the heavenly church that already celebrates the marriage of the Lamb, and the earthly church that journeys in this world**, immersed by the mystery of God and sometimes of his light, but also present in our historical tribulations, attentive to our necessities, present and active in our families, the same as in all salesian houses, ideally represented in the Church of Valdocco, that appears in the inferior part of the mural painting. **That was the great intuition of Don Bosco, who has united the titles of Mary Help of Christians and Mary Mother of the Church**, linking the proper role of the Virgin Mother to the heart of the mission of the Church, who protects under her mantle all her faithful, she feeds them and makes them mature to the fullness of the life in Christ. This was what Don Bosco wanted to offer to his boys in a moment of profound change of the times, characterized by the new social and political situation, for the passage from an agricultural society of a patriarchal type to a new society, thrown into a process of industrialization, that has transformed gradually the social order: the family structure, the way of acquiring means to live, and in which, as usual, the youth were those who for the biggest part paid its consequences, remaining in poverty and exposed to perdition. Today like yesterday, today like in times of Don Bosco, actual profound social and cultural changes happen to have an enormous impact on family structure, on the social material, on the conception of life itself. **The Church and the salesian Family, is called to propose and to offer Jesus and his Gospel, the way Mary has done it.** Like Don Bosco, we members of the Salesian Family, we renew our vocation in the Church as "pastors of the young" with the mission to guide them to Christ, the only one who never deceives their most profound aspirations and fills their hunger and their thirst for life, their happiness and love. In the achievement of that mission we are not alone. **Mary has been given to us as a powerful help against evil in our fight for the salvation of the youth.** She is the help of Christians who cures with motherly love all those we meet by crossing this world of darkness represented at her feet (Pascual Chávez V., City of Mexico, 17 August 2007, Vth International Congress of Mary Help of Christians).



Prayer contemplating the paddle of Mary help of Christians

*O Mary Help of Christians,
Thou, immersed in an ocean of light of the Holy Trinity and sitted on
a throne of clouds,
Thou, crowned of stars like the Queen of heaven and earth,
Thou, who sustains the Baby Boy, the Son of God,
who with opened hands offers his graces to whoever comes to you.
You, surrounded with a human crown
by Peter, Paul, the Apostles and the Evangelists,
who acclaim you as their Queen Regina.
Thou, who unites heaven and earth,
Thou, Mother of the Church who is already in the glory of heaven
and of the pilgrim Church in the world,
make us restless builders of the Kingdom,
fill us with the passion of the "Da mihi animas",
make us signs of God's love for the poor and the little ones,
protect us from our enemies
And at the hour of our death guide us to the eternal glory. Amen!*
(Pascual Chávez – Rector Major)

ECHOS FROM THE VITH CONGRESS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

*“I am greatly happy for everything we have lived in the Congress. Everything was very pleasing, and above all, spiritually useful. I believe that that experience have put its signature on me the whole of my life. There will be a before and an after. During all that marvelous week in Poland I came to know how much God touches me with his love! And how much the Virgin’s love and delicacy surround my way! Why not give thanks to God and to the Virgin Mother for all the gifts and graces I have received? How much love rises in me through that marvelous experience in Poland! How much love and gratitude I feel towards Our Lady and Jesus! It is an intensive grace of God for me to have been in Poland. I feel myself a chosen one, I believe that all those who went to Poland unceasingly have to thank God”***(Horacio Bidarra, Salesian Cooperator from the province of Leon - Spain).**

*“We greatly thank God for having participated in that unforgettable spiritual experience organized by the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA). I ever could sum up the Congress in one word, I should say it was fantastic, perfect, the way every event organized by Salesians usually is! Everything superbly organized, in the small details: the timings were perfect, the interventions and testimonies were very profound, songs from the Italian youth groups and the choir in polish were delicious. Everything was marvelously animated. All the groups have tried to take along one or two young people, as the Rector Major wanted it, he wanted us to animate the youth in order to make them become members of the Association of Mary help of Christians, because most of the members are almost adults and old. There was an atmosphere of celebration and unity. A most awaited encounter with moments of spiritual direction, songs, prayers, reflections, team work, entertainment and relaxation. I have a full conviction that all those who participated in the Congress have tasted it the way I did and that they went back home full of energy and projects for the future. The harmony and experimented joy were a marvelous symbol of unity, communion and brotherhood. There we have lived fully the joy of Don Bosco and the love of Mary Help of Christians. Songs and dances have animated the Congress in every particular moment with a very great touch from the young people. It is said that almost 80 young people from Palazzolo (Italia), members of the Shalom Community, founded by Sister Rosalina Ravasio, gave very moving testimonies of their lives. They are now achieving and living a marvelous apostolical experience, in assembling the youth who have problems of drugs, alcohol and many other difficulties in life. A group of ADMA for youth developed in that area of Europe. Among the young people who went for the congress in Poland, many have been saved from some difficult life situations and they gave us the most moving testimonies***(Lilian Via San Martino, La Serena, Chile).**



LUBIANA (SLOVENIA) – On 15th November, 2011 Don Pierluigi Cameroni had the opportunity to meet with the Provincial Council of ADMA of Slovenia which has 5 active groups and some in the process of their formation. It was a fraternal encounter with the presence of **Don Tone Ciglar** and of **Sister Bernarda Gerič**. People shared on how far the association has gone and its commitment in the animation of the ADMA groups.

CATANIA (ITALY) – “On 4th November, 2011 the **ADMA group of “S. Giovanni Bosco” church in Catania** welcomed the visit of Don Pier Luigi Cameroni, Spiritual Animator of our Association. He participated also in the ADMA of the Etna zone. After the recitation of the Holy Rosary Don Pier Luigi celebrated the Holy Mass and in his homily he reminded us that belonging to ADMA is a great gift from Our Lady but, on our part, we must live with joy the commitments taken when we decided to enter and become part of the Salesian Family. He



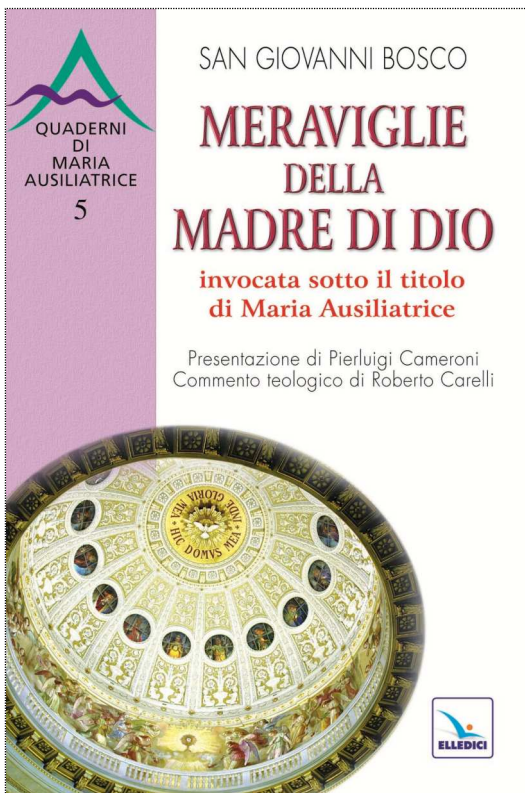
recalled then the “dream of the two columns” that Don Bosco had and in which it clearly was revealed to him that the Church, guided by the Pope, should be saved by the devotion to Jesus-Sacrament and to Our Lady. After the Holy Mass, Don Cameroni gave us a chance to live again the IVth World Congress of ADMA, held in August at the sanctuary of Our Lady of Czestochowa and presented to us the commitments matured from that experience. His visit was concluded with a fraternal moment” (**Don Pennisi Concetto, Animator**).

CORDOBA (ARGENTINE) – Provincial Council Argentine-North. On 4th November, 2011 at Collegio Pio X of Cordoba the provincial Council of ADMA held his meeting, presided over by **Father Aldo Tobares**. The following were the participants: Misses **Stella Maris Correa de Recio** (chair person), Misses **Beatriz Acosta de Sotti** (secretary), Misses **Elena Muñoz de Castelli** (treasurer), **Nicolás López Zamora**, representative of ADMA for Youth. Various topics were treated related to the life of the Association, in particular the visit of Father Aldo to the groups of Chaco, Corrientes and Salta, apart from the zonal encounters of Río Tercero, Córdoba and the meeting of the Salesian Family of Cuyo, in San Juan. The participants examined the lines and the project referring to the National meeting of Mary Help of Christians planned for the 21st -23rd September 2012 at the national sanctuary of Luján (Buenos Aires) (**Stella Maris Correa de Recio, Provincial Chair Person ARN**).





TURIN – ADMA YOUTH. Sunday the 20th November, 2011, feast of Christ the King, more than 30 young people of ADMA Youth of Primaria gathered for a one day retreat, under the guidance of their animators Enrico and Michela Fantino. Don Pierluigi presented the following theme for reflection: what Don Bosco would tell his boys in some texts like those in the famous book written by himself “*Il giovane provveduto*”. During the sharing, the main ideas that came up were the youth not being able to live the contents of faith, the challenge of being prophetic in living according to christian values, and also the joy to share a way of human and christian growth joyfully under the guidance and the motherly care of Mary Help of Christians



In questo anno 2011 il VI Congresso di Maria Ausiliatrice a Czestochowa ci ha fatto sperimentare la grazia della presenza di Maria nella nostra Associazione, nelle famiglie e nella vita di tanti giovani. E' stato, per tutta la Famiglia Salesiana, grande stimolo nell'impegno di evangelizzazione e di educazione, mediante l'affidamento a Maria e con il cuore apostolico di don Bosco.

Nel Natale Maria ci dona il suo Figlio che parla al cuore dell'uomo perché ritrovi la gioia della vita e la grazia della consolazione nell'ora della prova. Guidati da Lei ci impegniamo a costruire insieme le strade della riconciliazione e della fraternità.

In comunione con tutti voi auguriamo un Santo Natale e un fruttuoso 2012 sotto il manto dell'Immacolata Ausiliatrice

Consiglio dell'ADMA Primaria di Torino-Valdocco

The paper can be read at the following site:

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

and here: www.donbosco-torino.it/

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