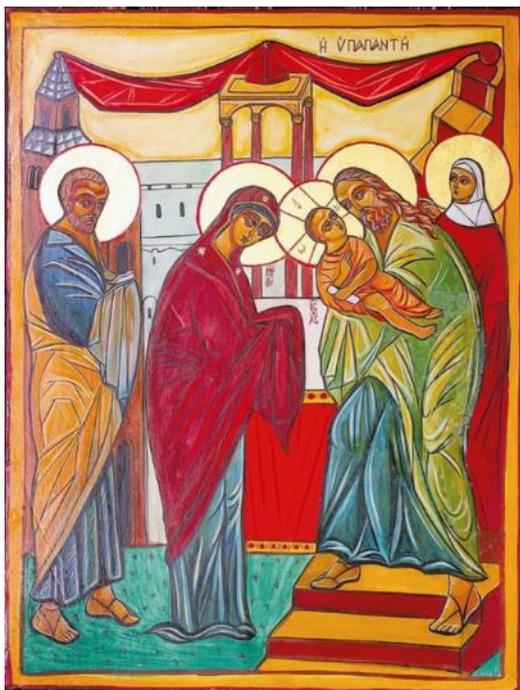


MARY INVITES US TO WITNESS TO GOD



In today's world we experience a great absence of God in the hearts of people and we see an increase in situations of war and violence, natural disasters, a sense of unease and confusion in the lives of many people. The exclusion of God, the abandonment of prayer, and the rejection of the order of creation lead to the lack of peace. **As a loving caring mother, Mary urges us to bear witness to God,** to be faithful and obedient to His will and His commandments, and to live in prayer. This **renewal must start first of all in our families.** They must return to being places of love and life and witnesses of his presence and of his providence, according to the plan of God.

In this light, we, as ADMA, accept the invitation of Pope Francis to pray for the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, convened for the month of October. The theme of the synod will be **the pastoral challenges that concern the family in the context of evangelization.** "Such support on your part, dear families, is especially significant and more necessary than ever. This Synodal Assembly is dedicated in a special way to you, to your vocation and mission in the Church and in society; to the

challenges of marriage, of family life, of the education of children; and the role of the family in the life of the Church. I ask you, therefore, to pray intensely to the Holy Spirit, so that the Spirit may illumine the Synodal Fathers and guide them in their important task. As you know, this Extraordinary Synodal Assembly will be followed a year later by the Ordinary Assembly, which will also have the family as its theme. In that context, there will also be the World Meeting of Families due to take place in Philadelphia in September 2015. May we all, then, pray together so that through these events the Church will undertake a true journey of discernment and adopt the necessary pastoral means to help families face their present challenges with the light and strength that comes from the Gospel... [Jesus] is the one who brings together and unites generations! He is the inexhaustible font of that love which overcomes every occasion of self-absorption, solitude, and sadness. In your journey as a family, you share so many beautiful moments: meals, rest, housework, leisure, prayer, trips and pilgrimages, and times of mutual support... Nevertheless, if there is no love then there is no joy, and authentic love comes to us from Jesus. He offers us his word, which illuminates our path; he gives us the Bread of life which sustains us on our journey." (Letter of Pope Francis to Families February 2, 2014).

The commitment to renew and revitalize our Association with the predilection of Mary Help of Christians for families, puts us in profound harmony with the Church's journey and that of the Salesian Family. May the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph always accompany us all and help us to walk together in love and mutual service.

Lucca Tullio, President
Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animator

WAY FOR FORMATION 2013-2014

«Da mihi animas, cetera tolle»



7. Awareness of belonging to a charismatic and apostolic Family

Charismatic Family

"While recognising their different fields of action, [Don Bosco] was always convinced that the apostolic strength of the whole Family would depend on its unity of purpose, of spirit, of method and style of education." (art. 1). **This belonging draws on a common spirit** which is the foundation of the mission inspired by the charisma of Don Bosco, while respecting the *particular and specific characteristics* of each group (art.3). Despite the diversity of the groups of the Salesian Family, there is a **spiritual relationship and apostolic affinity** which "is nourished by the common baptismal consecration by which all are drawn into the Mystery of the Trinity and in communion with the Church; by participation in the Salesian mission at the service of the young and the poor and for the promotion of a new Christian humanism; by a new sense of citizenship and solidarity on a global scale; by sharing the spirit of Don Bosco; by the exchange of spiritual gifts within the Family; by a common reference to Mary Help of Christians and to Don Bosco, their holy Founder or Patriarch; by the special link with the Rector Major, the successor of Don Bosco." (art. 4).

"All heirs to the Salesian charism and spirit, the Groups establish among themselves a very close relationship so that each Group expresses the identity of the Salesian Family, but not without reference to the others. In fact, **entering into a Group, in virtue of a specific vocation, means entering the whole Family**; it is as though each one feels entrusted to the others in a mutual relationship. It is then that the different members enable the Family to live the completeness of gifts and values, because in the various Groups can be seen emphasised the particular spiritual features which are the common patrimony and which for this reason cannot be missing in any Salesian heart. The communion of the Family places these at the disposal of everyone. All this is for the benefit of the mission, since it makes it possible to undertake in a more adequate and effective manner the human development and Christian education of the young, of poor people, of the sick and of peoples not yet evangelised. The relatively short history of the Salesian Family demonstrates that without real communion there is the danger of a progressive impoverishment of the project of Don Bosco even to the extent of being unfaithful to it. **The recognition that without the others the members of a particular Group cannot be themselves**, ought to be an awareness cultivated by all, inspiring appropriate expressions and practical attitudes" (Article 10).

The signs of membership of the Family are: the sharing of formation, spiritual and pastoral programmes around the Strenna of the Rector Major; the powerful experience of the Salesian Family Spirituality Days and the different forms of response to this experience; active participation in local and provincial consultative bodies of the Salesian Family.

Apostolic Family

For this communion to be authentic and fruitful it must be missionary in fidelity to Don Bosco who "was always aware of the need for *cooperative charity* in educative and pastoral service, convinced that the Holy Spirit raises up charisms for the benefit of the whole Church... working together makes the witness more effective, the proclamation of the Gospel more convincing, fosters a more lively apostolic charity, and makes it possible to appreciate better the characteristic traits of each Group while it reflects and gives expression to the identity of the Family in communion and in the mission."(art.19)

"**Apostolic spirituality** is the centre which inspires and animates the life of communion in and for the mission of the Salesian Family. It is, in fact, a communion which does not arise from human planning, nor does it coincide with an organisation no matter how perfect nor with refined techniques for bringing people together, but flows from that pastoral charity which having been evoked by the Spirit in the heart of Don Bosco, inspired him even to the heights of holiness. (article 22). This apostolic and dynamic charity is the centre of the Don Bosco's spirit, manifested in the **oratorian heart**. "It is fervour, zeal, making all possible resources available, seeking new paths, a capacity to resist under trial, the will to start again after defeats, an optimism that is nurtured and cultivated and spread abroad; it is that concern, full of faith and of charity, which finds in Mary a shining example of self-giving." (art. 29)

The exercise of **apostolic charity** is the unifying force of our life in Christ and the sure way to holiness: "Apostolic charity constitutes for everyone belonging to the Salesian Family the inner principle and force capable of unifying the many different daily activities and preoccupations. It fosters the fusion in a single inner movement of the two inseparable poles of apostolic charity: passion for God and passion for one's neighbour." (Art. 30).

This membership also requires **knowledge of the specific identity**: "The communion of the Salesian Family is based, in addition to the common charism and the same mission, also on knowledge and appreciation of the different Groups which make it up. Unity, in fact, is never uniformity, but plurality of expressions converging on a single centre. It is therefore necessary to foster knowledge about each other in order to enjoy the gifts and the particular features of each Group in so far as together they constitute a treasure that is to everyone's benefit." (Art. 38). Also, "to ensure unity of spirit and a convergence on the mission, **moments of formation in common are also necessary**, especially when it is a question of throwing light on or studying in depth the essential aspect of the charism or of planning projects to be shared." (Art. 39). We want to continue to form lay people who are open to the spirituality and mission of the Salesian Family and of the Association of Mary Help of Christians, by growing in the spirit of the Association. We want it to be increasingly at the service of the needs of lay people, both in language and in content. We want all of this to be in harmony with the ecclesiology of communion, with the rediscovery of a new consciousness of the prophetic, priestly and kingly mission of the laity, and with the development of the capabilities of the Association, the fruit of the charism we have received from God through Don Bosco.

. The role of the spiritual animators

The role of well prepared spiritual animators who are passionate about the Salesian charism and mission is fundamental in the life of our groups. Particularly important is the presence of **priests who are real pastors and guides**. The Vatican Council II presents priests as guides and educators of the people of God. It states: "Ceremonies however beautiful, or associations however flourishing, will be of little value if they are not directed toward educating men in the attainment of Christian maturity." And it gives the reason for this affirmation: «As educators in the faith priests must see to it, either by themselves or through others that the faithful are led individually in the Holy Spirit to a development of their own vocation as required by the gospel, to a sincere and active charity and to that freedom with which Christ has made us free.» In this way the Salesian priest is called to his most significant responsibilities in the area of formation. The Word of God, the sacraments and in particular the Eucharist, the service of unity and of charity represent the greatest treasures of the Church. (Art. 42)

PRESENTATION OF ADMA TO THE 27TH GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO

In recent years (2008-2014), following the directives given by the Rector Major in 2007 in the Fifth International Congress of Mary Help of Christians in Mexico City, ADMA is found to be more and more a living reality spread throughout the world. The Association is now "more youthful and more Salesian" (Fr Chavez). It is has been reconfirmed and regenerated as a popular expression of the Salesian charism, with the specific duty of defending and spreading the faith among the people of God through devotion to Mary Help of Christians and the worship of the Holy Eucharist. In this six-year period an event of particular grace was the Sixth International Congress of Mary Help of Christians (Czestochowa 2011), which became on that occasion an event of the whole Salesian Family.



1 STRONG POINTS OF RENEWAL

1.1 Don Bosco, founder of ADMA. Among the characteristics of Don Bosco as a person and of his holiness is his gift as a founder. Ten years after the founding of the Salesian Congregation and a year after the consecration of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, he founded the Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians (18 April 1869). This fact is confirmed:

- From the point of view of history by the studies of Peter Braido ;
- From the point of view of the magisterium by various interventions of the Rector Major Fr Pascual Chávez;
- From the point of view of the charism: cf. *The Identity Card of the Salesian Family*;
- From the liturgical point of view: cf. The Salesian Proper for the solemnity of Don Bosco 31 January.

1.2 Youth work and family ministry: there can be no Youth Ministry that is not closely linked to family ministry.

ADMA Families: Mary is our Mother and Teacher in the formation of spouses and parents. In this way, devotion to Mary and the centrality of the Eucharist help us to a better understanding of the relationship between spouses and their involvement with their children, and with the Church and society. ADMA was present with a special stand at the World Congress of Families held in Milan in 2012. A proposal has been drawn up for families who want to grow in their marriage and family life in the light of the Gospel and according to the Salesian spirit.

Youth ADMA: there is a need to create better links and shared projects between different groups around the world. We have begun with the draft of a formative and apostolic programme for young people, in the light of real life experiences in different parts of the world.

1.3 Leadership of local groups: I invite you to take on a spirit of service like that of Mary, consisting of formation, witness and commitment. Attention is paid to formation and the life of the local Councils, with special attention to the SDB and FMA spiritual leaders.

2 LINES OF ACTION

- Annual formation programmes in line with the Rector Major's Strenna and the programmes of the Church.
- Participation in the Spirituality Days of the Salesian Family in Rome.
- Collaboration in the drafting and dissemination of the Identity Card of the Salesian Family.
- Development of the website: www.admadonbosco.org.
- Drafting of a monthly training leaflet and information in six languages through *ADMAonline*.
- Publication of the Series *Quaderni di Maria Ausiliatrice* (Notebooks of Mary Help of Christians)
- five issues already published.
- Publication of the booklet *Famiglie in cammino alla scuola di Don Bosco* (Families at the school of Don Bosco).
- Formation for members and groups (Italy, Spain, Argentina, Central America, Peru ...).
- Mapping of groups: so far more than 600 groups with over 100,000 members have been listed.

CHRONICLE



BOMBAY INDIA - ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

In November 2013, ADMA members in the Province of Bombay in India organized their annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Health at Velankanni in southern India. The invitation was extended to family members and other devotees, so the group consisted of sixty-three participants. It was a great experience of prayer, spending three days in this holy place thronged by devotees from all over. The religious sense is very strong and proves contagious to all who visit the shrine. The group participated in daily Mass and at all the other times of organized prayer. We were moved by the Eucharistic procession on the first Friday and, on the first Saturday, the procession of "Mary's chariot" along the seashore. The group also visited the new Morning Star Church which is still under construction. When finished it will host 10,000 people. On the return journey the group stopped in Chennai where we had the privilege of celebrating Mass in the crypt housing the tomb of St. Thomas the Apostle and where the basilica of St. Thomas is built. The pilgrimage has encouraged the participants to experience a strong sense of Mary's presence in their lives and become ardent promoters of his devotion in others (Father Wilfred D'Souza).



ADMA OF BOLIVIA - DEPARTMENTAL MEETINGS

During the months of November-December 2013 there were several neighborhood meetings animated by Fr Severino Laredo.

1. **Cochabamba:** the meeting was attended by groups from the College of Don Bosco in the Mary Help of Christians barrio and from the Don Bosco Temple in the Kami barrio. These groups are known for their fidelity to the meetings, keeping minutes of meetings, and several activities including the Rosary on Radio Maria, the month of the Bible, the visit and the Rosary in their homes, hospital visits ...



2. **Santa Cruz (city):** The meeting was held in the church of Mary Help of Christians. Those elected were responsible for different groups: for the young, for the intermediate group and for seniors. They acknowledged their need for formation in the Salesian spirit. The ADMA Youth of Santa Cruz carried out their first mission of evangelization and solidarity in the village of San Javier and in some communities, inviting people to attend Sunday Mass and providing toys for the children. Ten young ADMA members took part in the mission. Their motto was "go and make disciples of all nations". Sharing with others the love of God and the Virgin Mary turned out to be a beautiful experience.

3. **Norte Cruceño:** The meeting, held in the College of Mary Help of Christians in Montero, was attended by several groups: Montero (La Floresta), La Abrita, Villa El Carmen, Turubito, Villa Copacabana, Sagrado Corazón, Portachuelo, S. Carlos, Yapacaní, San Juan de Yapacaní and Okinawa. The activities of the groups include pastoral work in the parish, participation in the pastoral council, visiting families, visiting the sick and the elderly, participation in the Salesian Family retreat, helping people in need, reading and sharing the gospel and the Memoirs of the Oratory.

4. **La Paz:** the meeting was held at the Salesian University with the participation of the following groups: Villa Victoria, Bella Vista (Brajés), the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Dominic Savio of Calacoto and the host groups from the university.

5. **Sucre:** as in all the other meetings they began with a report on the life of groups and their activities. The director of the school agreed to present ADMA at the first meeting of the parents of the children and young people.



MAKATI CITY, PHILIPPINES - On the feast of St. John Bosco, 31 January 2014, Fr Pier Luigi Cameroni, Postulator General for the Causes of Saints and spiritual director of the Association of Mary Help of Christians, led a formation session on Salesian holiness. It was attended by members of ADMA and by Salesian Cooperators of the Northern Philippines, and the Spiritual Animators of ADMA, Fr Nestor Impelido, SDB and Sr Asela Chavez, FMA. The meeting was held on the occasion of the opening of the diocesan enquiry for the cause of beatification and canonization of the Servant of God, Father Carlo Braga (1889-1971), missionary to China and founder of the Salesian presence in the Philippines. (Maria Junifer, Provincial President of ADMA).



GENOA SAMPIERDARENA. On Saturday 8 February 2014 we had the joy of having among us Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, Spiritual Animator of ADMA. He met the newly formed ADMA group in the Salesian parish, with members from Latin America, especially from Ecuador and Peru. The group was started on 24 May 2013 at the urging of Fr Vaclav Klement. At present it has twenty-three candidates, including three Italian women who are married to South American men. The group is growing and is characterized by the candidates' willingness to help each other and their witness of Christian life in difficult times. There is a growth in charity and faith, first in our own families and then among our brothers and sisters in the neighbourhood. We meet on the 24th of every month to reflect and to offer formation to the candidates. We are studying the ADMA regulations and we hope that sometime this year we will be able to celebrate solemnly the first new members to make their promise in the presence of the Provincial. (Fr Daniel Coronel, Spiritual Animator).



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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