

MARY TEACHES US TO DISCOVER THE WISDOM OF LIFE



Our Lady is alive and walks with us, guiding us, through prayer, on the way of peace. Mary is a teacher of prayer, lived as a real relationship with God, of listening to His Word and obedience to his will. She wants to reach the hearts of all people, because, beneath the blanket of the ephemeral and of sin, the Mother of God sees the thirst of her children, who long for peace, love and joy. Today more than ever, people live in a desert far removed from God, in search of fleeting goods that do not satisfy the hunger for true happiness that they carry in their heart.

It is in prayer that we meet God and discover the beauty and grandeur of life in union with him. Mary, our Teacher and Seat of Wisdom, **teaches us the wisdom of life**. She helps us to find joy in life, directing it towards the plan of love that the Father has for us. Mary is our mother and teacher, educating us in the formation of the heart in order to achieve wisdom and a taste for the things of God.

Seat of Wisdom, is the title we use to refer to the maternal function of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, her dignity and her wisdom in the things that pertain to God. Jesus, the Wisdom of the Father, resides in the womb of the Virgin Mother. With her maternal help we can arrive at a deep understanding of our limitations, learning not to be overwhelmed by pride but to serve with humility, knowing the Lord with the understanding of faith and loving him with all our hearts.

Today's children and young people are in need of parents and educators who, like Don Bosco, are able to teach the wisdom of life, pointing towards heaven, educating the mind and the heart in the practice of goodness and truth, building our lives on the solid rock of the word of the Lord that we have heard, meditated and lived. It is the wisdom of life that shines in the lives of those who possess educational authority and it becomes a reference point and secure guide.

To her we entrust our journey of preparation for the Seventh International Congress of Mary Help of Christians which will be celebrated in Turin in August 2015.

Lucca Tullio, President
Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animator

Seventh International Congress of Mary Help of Christians

**Turin-Valdocco / Colle Don Bosco
6-9 August 2015**

***"Hic domus mea, inde gloria mea"
From the house of Mary to our homes:
His mercy from generation to generation***



From her house, Mary, Mother of the Church and Help of Christians, wants to raise our love for the Church and the Salesian Family to new heights and towards broader horizons. The sacred work of love which is called the family has for too long been bypassed by emergency issues that are in urgent need of her help.

The Pope now assigns to Mary a key role, convoking a Synod of the Church and asking for her help and love. The Pope stated: "The Synod will be on the family: its riches and problems." It will deal with the reality of men and

women who love each other and bring up their children, struggling every day with the tensions and failures of their bonds of love.

1. CONGRESS PERSPECTIVES

1.1 Biblical Perspective: Presentation of Jesus in the Temple - "His mercy is from generation to generation."

It is customary to see in the Holy Family of Nazareth, a real and concrete icon of the family, an image of how our families should be, namely a "domestic church" where people live the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, alongside this fundamental image of the family, there is another that highlights the fact that **every family is linked to previous generations**. The family will have a future only if it builds on the reality represented, as Pope Francis says, by the union of the two poles of life: youth and old age.

This second image is delivered to us in St Luke's scene of the **presentation of Jesus in the Temple** (cf. Lk 2.22-38). Giotto painted this scene in an extraordinary way in the right transept of the lower church of Assisi: the old man Simeon, a sign of the prophecy of the Spirit, is holding the baby Jesus, and the prophetess Anna, advanced in years, is portrayed in the act of praising God and proclaiming salvation to those who were waiting for the redemption of Israel. These two elderly people announce to future

generations the power and justice of God who has redeemed us in an infant. They are links in the chain of promise that has its origin in the bosom of Abraham. They are like "traces of memory like embers of the fire, of the values that make us great." They remind us that every family, like that of Nazareth, is part of the history of a people and cannot exist without previous generations.

Old and New Testament met in that encounter between the old man Simeon and a young mother, Mary. Their meeting represents the coming together of two generations in a wonderful way, in thanksgiving for the gift of Light that shone in the darkness so that the darkness did not prevail. The family of Nazareth, as a small domestic Church, becomes the "family of families" when seen in the light of the presentation of Jesus in the Temple. It represents the holy people of God, the heir of a promise that finally was accomplished: the Father, in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, took care of all the seed of Abraham (cf. Heb 2:16).



"In this scene three generations come together, **the inter-weaving of three generations**: Simeon holds in his arms the child Jesus, in whom he recognizes the Messiah, while Anna is shown praising God and proclaiming salvation to those awaiting the redemption of Israel. **These two elderly persons represent faith as memory**. But let me ask you: Do you listen to your grandparents? Do you open your hearts to the memories that your grandparents pass on? Grandparents are like the wisdom of the family, they are the wisdom of a people. And a people that does not listen to grandparents is one that dies! Listen to your grandparents. **Mary and Joseph are the family, sanctified by the presence of Jesus** who is the fulfilment of all God's promises. Like the Holy Family of Nazareth, every family is part of the history of a people; it cannot exist without the generations who have gone before it. Therefore, today we have grandparents and children. The children learn from their grandparents, from the previous generation. Dear families, you, too, are a part of God's people. Walk joyfully in the midst of this people. Remain ever close to Jesus and carry him to everyone by your witness." (Pope Francis to Families - 26 October 2013)

1.2 Theological-Cultural Perspective: Yes to the family!

"Families are the domestic Church, where Jesus grows; he grows in the love of spouses, he grows in the lives of children. That is why the enemy so often attacks the family. The devil does not want the family; he tries to destroy it, to make sure that there is no love there. Married couples are sinners, like us all, but they want to go forward in faith, in fruitfulness, in their children and their children's faith. May the Lord bless families and strengthen them in this time of crisis when the devil is seeking to destroy them." (Pope Francis on Renewal of the Spirit - June 1, 2014).

The family is made up of faces, of people who love, talk, sacrifice themselves for others and defend life at all costs. It is in the family that one becomes a person, growing up with mother and father, breathing the warmth of the home, which is the real nest and cradle of life. It is in the family that we receive our name and, therefore, our dignity. The family is the place of friendship, of affection, and the space of intimacy, where we learn the art of dialogue and interpersonal communication.

In God's plan marriage has always been and still is the basis of the family. In it the process of humanization of the world takes place, of every person and every society. **Marriage is a sort of "first sacrament" of human life**, where the person finds and understands himself or herself in relation to others and the love that he or she can give and receive. The family constituted by the marriage of a man and a woman, which makes them "*one flesh*" (Mt 19, 6) open to new life, is everywhere in crisis. It is surrounded by life styles that penalize the family. It is neglected by the policies of the society of which it is the fundamental cell, and is not always respected in its rhythms and supported in its commitments even by ecclesial communities. This is precisely what compels us to say that **we must have a special care for the family and for its mission in the Church and in society**. We need to develop support programmes before and after marriage. We also want to express our gratitude to the many spouses and the many Christian families who, by their example, show the world an experience of communion and service that is the seed of a more fraternal and peaceful society.

1.3 Salesian pedagogical perspective: living the family spirit in the footsteps of Don Bosco.

In harmony with the Church, the Salesian Family also pays special attention to the family as the primary object of education and the first place of evangelization. **We too are called to make sure that youth ministry is increasingly open to family ministry.**

The situation of the family is of particular concern, in almost all contexts. It is threatened not only by the widespread ethical relativism, but also by the withdrawal of legal support. This can lead to the break-up of the family and the recognition of other forms of marriages, with serious consequences in the area of education, such as the abandonment of children, cohabitation taxes, violence within the family. "Home" and "family" are two words often used by Don Bosco to describe the "spirit of Valdocco" that must prevail in our communities. We welcome the evangelical and charismatic appeal for mutual understanding and co-responsibility, fraternal correction and reconciliation.

In particular, right from first evangelization the transmission of faith from one generation to the next finds its natural place in the family. In it women play a special role, but we should not underestimate the role of the father and his responsibility. The signs of faith, the communication of the basic truths, education in prayer, the example of the fruits of love are all part of the lives of children and young people in the context of the care that every family reserves for its children. It is impossible to think of new evangelization without feeling a responsibility to proclaim the Gospel to families and support them in the task of education.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE CONGRESS

From the house of Mary to our homes: to bring about a new humanity, the breath of the Spirit who makes all things new, infuses in families and in the groups of the Salesian Family a network of authentic relationships, shared responsibility and communion inspired by the family spirit of Don Bosco.

2.1 Dialogue: the great lack in many families is precisely dialogue. Everyone stays anchored to his or her own position. Sometimes people refuse to dialogue in order to avoid arguments. This wind of God's Spirit that blows from the house of Mary has the power that is needed to bring us together and to overcome the prejudices and ambitions which are the worst enemies of the family.

How many families have been afflicted with a kind of dumbness, that causes us to keep the truth to ourselves instead of sharing it in the family. When people share the truth, loving relationships develop. Strengths are revealed without hiding the flaws. Perfectionists, moralists and purists kill the spirit and make family relationships cold, detached and disinterested.

The Spirit gives tongues of fire that enable people to speak in another language, the language of sin-

cerity that reveals who God is and who we really are. They show how the love of God is always greater than our faults and our forgetfulness.

The spirit gives a freshness that renews the mission of the family. Hard work and the effort needed to educate children, or assist elderly family members, lead to a tiredness that can only be overcome by the breath of the Spirit.

2.2 Love one another: the wind of the Spirit blowing from the house of Mary sweeps away the dust that settles over time. How many family relationships need to be dusted by the wind of the Spirit! This is typical of relationships that have remained unchanged over the years, relationships that have never found the strength to be renewed and to bear the fruit one expects in adult life. Sometimes engagements last for many years without marriage plans. Couples wait for a long time before being willing to have children. Spouses live in their new family but remain conditioned by their family of origin. These are examples of the dust that can accumulate and prevent couples from accepting the mission entrusted to them by God and living every day in a spirit of communion and sharing. This implies the positive attitudes of recognition, forgiveness, and gratitude expressed in the three little words “please, sorry and thanks”, as Pope Francis reminds us.

2.3 Presence of God: the wind of the Spirit blowing from the house of Mary, makes of our homes and communities an Upper Room, where the practice of prayer is the glue that binds and heals family relationships. Prayer requires two essential elements: attentiveness and harmony. Attentiveness means never missing an opportunity to turn to God in all our actions to ask for inspiration, to acknowledge our mistakes, express our sorrow and ask for forgiveness. Harmony means keeping our hearts open to God's will, to live in family unity even when there are differences of opinion, letting God decide which we should follow among all the possible choices that may arise. Attentiveness and harmony are prerequisites for prayer and, at the same time, the fruit of prayer.

In this way, prayer, fire and wind renew the Christian family urging it to go beyond the four walls of the home to communicate to the world the joy of living together, despite the differences, misunderstandings and limitations of each human person.

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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CHRONICLE

BARCELONA (SPAIN) - ANNUAL MEETING

On Saturday 18 May 2014, ADMA in the Province of Barcelona held its annual meeting in Sant Boi de Llobregat, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Salesian work in this small town in Catalonia. It was attended by representatives of almost all the local associations. Two videos were shown: one on the history of this Salesian community and another on the 200th anniversary of the institution of the liturgical feast of Mary Help of Christians. During the celebration of the Eucharist each local group renewed its commitment and some original poems dedicated to our Mother were recited. In all the Salesian houses the feast of Mary Help of Christians was celebrated with renewed enthusiasm. At the Salesian House of Rocafort (Barcelona), Auxiliary Bishop Sebastian Taltavull, past pupil of the Salesians of Ciutadella (Menorca), presided at the Eucharist. As in other years, the ADMA groups organized "a garden for Mary" with flowers in the streets, followed by the procession and the solemn entrance to the Church with the image of Mary and an emotional singing of the Salve Regina.

Martina Franca (Taranto - ITALY) - NEW MEMBERS

On 22 May 2014 in the church of Mary Help of Christians at Martina Franca (Taranto), Calella Maria, De Vito Rosy, Greco Elide, Lofrumento Dino e Marangi Anna stated their commitment to membership of ADMA. The Eucharist was celebrated by Fr Tarcisio of the Consolata Missionaries. Among those present were the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, with their Superior, Sister Rosetta Labbate, relatives, friends and members of ADMA. These new members had been prepared by Sister Carmela Marangi. They had a wonderful day, full of joy and grace and the witness of their love for Mary. They pledged to make her known and to spread devotion to her.



HIALEAH (UNITED STATES)

On May 24, 2014, the feast of Mary Help of Christians, in a solemn celebration which was attended by more than 500 people, forty-seven children received a medal of Mary Help of Christians, while sixteen new members joined ADMA. The liturgy in the church of the Immaculate Conception was an emotional occasion because we said goodbye to our pastor, Fr Francisco Hernandez, destined for a new community, and to our Animator, Sister Antonia Guzman Marisol. (Mari Carmen Acosta).

GELA (SICILY - ITALY) - PEREGRINATIO MARIAE

On 28 May 2014, in Gela in the Salesian parish of St. Dominic Savio, *Peregrinatio Mariae* ended with a Mass in the home of the Scaglione family. Mary Help of Christians is ever present to comfort the families who come to her with love. She hears the prayers and calms the souls of those who trust in her. We welcome Mary into our homes and talk to her as our heavenly Mother. She then speaks to her Son, and asks for all the graces we need to alleviate the sufferings that afflict us.

We never tire of accompanying Mary from home to home. It is lovely to see the little ones singing and praying! Young people, families, and young couples are always present at our meetings and we are often

asked to come again because community prayer strengthens the spirits. Sometimes I ask why did they want to host the Madonna in their homes, and I listen with great simplicity to what they say. They want to place themselves under her mantle not only so that she may hear their prayer but above all that she may help them to endure all life's vicissitudes in a Christian way. In the company of Mary we walk secure. On 30 May there was a pilgrimage to Bitolemi, a location on the outskirts of the city where there is a small shrine. (Luigina Ciaramella)



SICILY - ADMA REGIONAL PILGRIMAGE

On 8 June 2014, on the occasion of the centenary of the presence of the FMA in Calatabiano, the ADMA Provincial Council in Sicily decided to hold its ninth regional pilgrimage in the town. There were four hundred participants. Among those taking part were the regional president, Luigina Ciaramella, the spiritual leaders, Fr Angelo Grasso and Sister Carmelina Cappello, and representatives of the local authorities. Fr Giuseppe Ruta, Provincial of the Salesians, addressed them. After the welcome, there was a formative moment at the municipal theatre. The Provincial, Sister Anna Razionale, spoke on Don Bosco's Marian spirituality. At the wedding at Cana Mary showed herself to be a woman who trusted and entrusted herself fully to God. At the foot of the cross of her son Jesus, she pledged to care for all humanity. All who rely on her, as she intercedes with her Son, will have a secure place in Heaven. Don Bosco was guided by Mary since his dream at the age of nine and we can see what she did and continues to do. In the afternoon, there was Rosary and concelebrated Mass in the church of the Annunciation in Calatabiano. At the end there was the blessing of the banner of the centre of Giarre-Santa Maria La Strada, where the spiritual director is Fr Mario Gullo. (Petitto Venera - Regional secretary ADMA Sicily).



TURIN - ADMA YOUTH RETREAT

From 13-15 June 2014, at the picturesque shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in Forno di Coazze (Turin), a group of young members of ADMA from Turin shared a few days of retreat under the guidance of Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, together with some young couples who accompany them on their formation journey.

Praying at the grotto, which is similar to that of Lourdes, the young people experienced how important it is to be well protected and guarded under the mantle of Mary. During the times of sharing and discussion it was acknowledged once more that ADMA-Youth belongs to the young people and they must be given space; adults

supervise and accompany it. The traits of ADMA-Youth are in the spirit of the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception: be joyful, strive for perfection, have faith in each other, be of one mind, live in peace. The young people made some resolutions: to walk together helping one another along the way, to live up to their responsibilities, to prepare for the Congress in 2015 and to have a spiritual guide.

TEGUCIGALPA (HONDURAS)

On the last Saturday of every month we carry out our apostolate at a prison for young women called Cephias. Young mothers and their babies are detained there. This year we celebrated the Way of the Cross with them during Lent. We also brought them each a bag with food and articles for personal use. In this way, little by little, we carry out different activities and most importantly, we spread devotion to Mary Help of Christians and the love of the Blessed Sacrament. (De Cordova Carmen).



TURIN - PRIMARY ADMA - ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

On 22 June 2014, the feast of Corpus Christi, the Turin ADMA went on pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Mercy in Savona, a place closely linked to the history of Mary Help of Christians. Here, Our Lady appeared in 1536 and Pope Pius VII came here several times during the years of his imprisonment under Napoleon. After his release he crowned the statue of the Mother of Mercy. This event is also depicted in the facade of the basilica in Turin. For the members who participated it was a day of grace and friendship. The centrepiece of the day was the solemn celebration of the Eucharist and the prayer vigil in the crypt which houses the statue of the Madonna.

ARGENTINA - PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF THE CEFERINO NAMUNCURÁ PROVINCE OF ARGENTINA-SOUTH

The Council and the Animator, Fr Luis Timossi, visited the Salesian Houses in the Province of La Pampa, General Pico and Santa Rosa. When they reached the Don Bosco Houses in Toay, the members of ADMA were warmly welcomed by the Salesians. The Council plans to visit all the houses where there is an ADMA group to get to know each other better, sharing the Salesian spirit that urges us to continue working for our brothers most in need, and encouraging us as members of the Salesian Family.



ADMA NATIONAL COUNCIL SPAIN



A meeting of the National Council of ADMA in Spain was held on Saturday 28 June 2014 at the Salesian provincial centre in Madrid. The participants included lay people, Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. The meeting was also attended by the World President ADMA Turin-Valdocco, Mr. Tullio Lucca, with the animator Fr Pierluigi Cameroni. Also present were the two new Provincials of the Salesians in Spain: Fr Cristóbal López and Fr Juan Carlos Pérez, who expressed their interest in ADMA and made some suggestions for the way forward.

Several points were raised and shared: the implementation of the commitments made after the National Congress last year in Zaragoza; suggestions for animating ADMA after the re-structuring of the Salesians in Spain; promoting the responsibility of the laity in the conduct of the Association. Mr Tullio Lucca and Fr Cameroni then presented the lines of animation of ADMA for 2014-2015. They spoke also about the International Congress of Mary Help of Christians in Turin next year on the occasion of the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco and the institution of the liturgical feast of Mary Help of Christians. They gave some indications of the content and logistics of both commemorations. The meeting was characterized by a great atmosphere of brotherhood and co-responsibility in the knowledge that Mary Help of Christians is with us and guiding us with a mother's love and apostolic concern.

