

## MARY INVITES US TO LIVE THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS



Our Lady is Mother of the Church, of the pilgrim Church here on earth, of the Church which is being purified in Purgatory, and of the Church in Heaven, made up of all the saints who are already in the Light of God. We are still on the way, but enlightened by the light of Faith. In prayer we enter the Communion of Saints: "All the baptized here on earth, the souls in Purgatory and all the blessed in heaven form one big family. This communion between earth and heaven is realized especially in intercessory prayer." (Pope Francis 30 October 2013). As Don Bosco was dying, he said to the young people: "I await you all in Heaven."

The Saints are an example for us. They have made the journey of conversion and perfection. They have endured to the end in faith and Christian life. Their life is an incentive for us, an exhortation. "The will of God is your sanctification" (1 Thess 4.3) says St. Paul. God wants us all to be saints! Called in different ways we look at our brothers and sisters in Heaven, and humbly but with commitment, we follow the path that led them to eternal life. The process of conversion lasts a lifetime. When we see the Saints we feel stimulated and encouraged to continue on the same path, without ever growing weary.

These considerations invite us to reflect on the brevity of life, in which we have to take those irreversible decisions that determine our lives. Our Lady calls us and invites us always to decide for conversion, prayer, heaven, and God. She insists always on a radical decision because life is short. Our time in life is to allow God to enter our lives and be at the centre of our hearts. We look at the goal of our life's journey, the blessed eternity where we will be forever with God. We prepare for our meeting with Jesus by daily prayer. The time of life is short, fragile, but precious. It is the time for us to make those decisions that lead us to eternal life. In prayer we prepare our hearts to detach ourselves from the things that pass and to yearn for what is eternal. Blessed Maddalena Morano used to say: "Keep one eye the ground and ten on heaven."

Our Lady accompanies us on this journey. She leads us to Jesus and hands us over to him, interceding for all of us, especially for those who are devoted to her. St. Dominic Savio used to say: "My friends will be Jesus and Mary." The Heart of Mary leads us to be of one heart with the Heart of Jesus. We accept Our Lady as Mother, with full confidence, and she leads us to follow Christ on the path of holiness.

*Mr Lucca Tullio, President  
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 glory mea"**

From the house of Mary to our homes his mercy is from generation to generation

### 3. I was glad when they said to me we will go to God's house

*Fr Roberto Carelli*



The autumn colors of the Christian liturgy have a special charm. While the liturgical year draws to a close, we celebrate the saints and we remember the dead. This leads us to think of the end of our own lives, the end of history and the universal Kingship of Christ. Every Christian is called to live in a small way what the church is living in the splendour of its celebrations. It is a good time to reaffirm the primacy of God and the ideal of holiness, the desire to live the beatitudes and to experience the communion of the saints. We re-

solve to serve the Lord and to collaborate in the salvation of souls. It is the right time to return to God, to bring together all our days and all our work, overcoming disorders of the mind and heart, conquering our passions and giving up the preoccupations that make us yield to the opposing temptations of activism and laziness. It is time to return to living with eyes firmly fixed on eternal life, to get rid of the noise and encumbrance of earthly things, and to realize more fully that "unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain" (Psalm 126.1). "One day in your house is better than a thousand elsewhere." It is better to "stand on the threshold of the house of God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked" (Ps 83,11).

**How beautiful is the call to holiness!** How great is our joy when they tell us that "we will go to the house of the Lord" (Psalm 121.1). It is beautiful to nourish a sincere desire to experience God's love and be comfortable in his presence, to feel attracted by the things of heaven more than those on earth, to be excited by his Word and taste the sweetness of the Eucharist! How beautiful it is to feel deeply convinced that the experience of the saints is not only for them but also for us, to be convinced that we grow in the spiritual life not by our own efforts but by grace, knowing that even though we are misera-

ble we are objects of mercy. How consoling it is to know that we are freed from resignation to mediocrity and the presumption of self-sufficiency, as if God did not exist or did not care for us! How wonderful to feel love for the Church and for Mary and the Saints flourishing in our souls, and to feel ourselves freed, perhaps after years of futile effort, from feelings of pride and anger, or the worms of envy and jealousy, and from the tendency to judge and condemn. How encouraging to see the seeds of magnanimity and mercy towards friends and enemies, compassion, and concern for the poor and little ones! How beautiful is the foretaste here below of the communion of saints, to perceive the profound unity between the Church on earth and in heaven, united in praise and thanksgiving for all that the Lord Jesus has done for us. How wonderful to be able to sing along: "You have redeemed us, O Lord, with your blood, you have called us from every nation and race, from every tongue and nation, and have made us a kingdom for our God!"

God wants to make his home in us and teach us to live in him precisely in order to give us the gift of this great joy, which of course will be fulfilled as all the promises of God are fulfilled, and to distract us from false joy that sooner or later will prove to be illusory. The whole history of salvation is the history of this amazing truth: the story of God making himself at home with us. God chose to adapt painfully in order to dwell with us and in us, to accustom us to living happily with Him and in Him.

We know how much it costs. We know all too well how easy it is to live in our homes forgetting God, or to stay in the house of God forgetting our neighbour. Experience shows clearly: when we forget God, our homes become hell on earth, and the house of God becomes full of merchants and thieves. When we lose sight of God we also lose sight of our neighbour. When we trample on our neighbour we also lose respect for God. At one point we become so distracted from the things of heaven and caught up in the things of the earth, that we do not realize any more that "focused on worldly matters, we become inwardly insensitive the more we are attentive to external matters." (St. Gregory the Great).

When God is not at the centre, anything can happen. We risk falling into the sin of irreligion as well as **carnal and spiritual worldliness**. This happens when we enter the house of God but do not engage in the interests of God, but rather our own. Then begins the habit of the sacred, and the sacred takes the place of God. It was the experience of Israel: liturgies, religious customs and traditions, prayers, traditions, religious style of life, had become more important than God. They had been transformed into idols. Castellana says in his fine book on the Tents of God, "God then intervenes forcefully. Natural events, political changes, cultural events, misunderstandings in their own environment and the contingencies of life, combine to drive the merchants from the Temple." In his wise and merciful love, God impoverishes us and humbles us. He makes us experience emptiness and sterility, and then gives us again his richness and fruitfulness. "When you chastise man with rebukes for sin, you consume like a moth what is dear to him"(Ps 38.12). "It was good for me to be afflicted, that I might learn your statutes "(Psalm 118.71).

We need to be convinced: in life God is either all or nothing. When we distance ourselves from God we are not condemned to nothingness but to the worldliness of the Devil. The human heart is never neutral - it is always either deployed in the service of God or enslaved to the devil. As Chesterton noted, "modern man has lost his Father, and found many masters." As we know from the Gospel, when God is absent the temple of the heart is full of thieves and merchants, and finally falls into ruin (cfr. Jn 2.13 to 22). The soul feels restless and dissatisfied, sometimes euphoric, sometimes depressed. The symptoms are well known: searching for happiness but feeling unhappy. Everything is OK and nothing is OK. Critical of others and indulgent of self. Strict with others and lenient with self. How many lives are miserable because they are far from God! But how much happiness there is for those who are reconciled with God, recognizing him again as the only Lord! The house of the heart is no longer empty. It becomes stronger and can withstand any test. It is not built on the sand of human words, but on the rock of the Word of God (Mt 7.24 to 27).

Another thing to bear in mind is that when you lose sight of God and the ideal of holiness, not only will you lose the love of self, but also the love of others. You lose both Church and family. In a society

that seems to deify love and do without God, the risk is that the family - as pointed out by Pope Francis - is reduced from being the domestic church to a mere association. In the name of being 'social', 'relational', or 'affective', it loses the most important thing in the family - the presence of God! **Away from the house of God, our own houses collapse, and the order of love gives way to disorder and disaffection.** Christian holiness is paradoxical in this sense, it knows that **the more you belong to God, the more you become a gift for everyone!** **On the other hand the more you keep to yourself or the more you want to be for everyone, the more you lose God and the less you are for others!** Here also we need to be convinced: to have a family and have children without the grace of marriage is like trying to love without love. Outside marriage, love is an effort, in marriage it is a grace!

Creating harmony between the house of God and our homes, which in practice means the harmonization of the life of the Church and family life, is absolutely crucial. **Mary was the dwelling place of God on earth and now in heaven she is at home with God.** As Castellana says, "[In the Incarnation] God filled Mary with himself and Mary filled herself with God. Both are at the same time containing and contained. Mary belongs entirely to God and God alone. And **as she is both Mother of God and our Mother, she teaches us to make room for God and abide in Him.** Going to the house of Mary we learn to be comfortable with God and to feel at home. At her school it is impossible to have an inhuman religion (spiritualism) or an atheistic humanism (secularism)! This much is clear: when there no mother it is difficult to feel that we are children, at either the natural or supernatural level. This is why Pope Francis said that "the Church without Mary is an orphanage!" It is also a deep-rooted belief in the Church that the recognition of the fatherhood of God, and not simply his existence as the Creator, requires the motherhood of the Church. "Anyone who does not have the Church as Mother, cannot have God as Father," said St. Cyprian. For this very reason, Blessed Pope Paul VI said, "You cannot be a Christian without being Marian."

We come to the practice. **No one better than Mary can help us bring about unity between heaven and earth,** between the houses not built by human hands and the homes we build with our own hands. She who lived in the humility of Nazareth and is now the glorious Queen of heaven, helps us to understand that we cannot separate the house of God and our homes, the places of the spirit and places of the flesh. We must live with our eyes on God and his will. In this sense, says St. Ambrose, "We must not deny the legitimate rights of nature, but we must always give preference to the gifts of grace." And Mary knows this well, because in her the mystery of the temple reached its fulfillment in Jesus, in whom "dwells all the fullness of God." (Col 2.9). The point is, therefore, to live everything, *eros* and *agape*, the mysteries of the flesh and the mysteries of the temple, in the light of God, who desires that love for him and our neighbour may be one. There is no alternative between the sacred and the profane: the alternative is between true and false religion, between faith and unbelief, fidelity and infidelity to God's law, between zeal and apathy in carrying out his will. In summary, this is what God wants, that we, like Jesus and Mary, make of our lives a sacrifice pleasing to God (Psalm 39.8, Heb 10.7-9). This is the ideal of holiness!

Our personal, family and community resolve this month will be **to sanctify our daily actions.** We will do this by trusting in God's grace and bringing to it our good will. We'll do it for the love of God and love of our dear ones. And when it seems to cost more or when it is less fruitful, we will do it as penance for our sins and to prepare us for paradise. In everything we invoke the grace **"to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives."** (26.4).

## VIIITH CONGRESS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS: NOTICE

The Seventh International Congress of Mary Help of Christians, promoted by the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) is an event for the whole Salesian Family and will be held at Turin and at Colle Don Bosco, Turin from 6 to 9 August 2015. Providentially it merges well with the year we celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco and at a time when the Church pays special attention to the pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization.

The motto: "Hic domus mea, inde gloria mea - From Mary's house to our homes" is chosen to show the maternal presence of Mary, Mother of the Church and Help of Christians, making us appreciate the beauty of living in a family. Don Bosco also has much to say today to the family: his life, his educational system, and his spirituality are founded in the spirit of the family that was born at Valdocco and developed by entrusting itself to Mary.



The Logo of the Congress symbolizes these concepts in its three elements:

- The Basilica of Valdocco symbolizes the charismatic nature of the Salesian Family, in its spirit and in its mission.
- Mary Help of Christians symbolizes the living and active presence of Mary in the life of Don Bosco and in the movement that he founded.
- The family which is the cradle of the presence of Jesus and Mary, for a renewed commitment to education and evangelization.

Every month on ADMA's Website [www.admadonbosco.org](http://www.admadonbosco.org) you can share in the program of formation and preparation for the Congress, which presents its perspectives and objectives.

On the website [www.mariaausiliatrice2015.org](http://www.mariaausiliatrice2015.org), which will be continuously updated, you will find all the necessary information regarding the various phases of enrollment and participation in the Congress.

## CHRONICLE

### SICILY - MEETING OF LOCAL GROUP COUNCILS



On 4-5 October 2014 Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, Spiritual Director of the Association, travelled to Sicily to meet the councils of the thirty local groups. The meeting was aimed at strengthening the bonds of friendship and common formation, especially with regard to the key role of local councils in animating and guiding groups. The first meeting in Catania on Saturday 4 October was attended by about 120 members representing fifteen groups from eastern Sicily. The following day the meeting for groups from western

Sicily took place in Capaci (Palermo). It was led by the local group with great enthusiasm and genuine involvement of the diocesan parish. There was obvious interest of all in the proposed contents, especially the value of growing together in the sense of belonging to the Association and striving to live with greater awareness and responsibility for their apostolic mission in the spirit of ADMA.



### PHILIPPINES - 32<sup>nd</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION

On Saturday 25 October 2014, ADMA in the Philippines celebrated its 32<sup>nd</sup> National Convention at the Don Bosco Technical Institute, Tarlac City. There were members of several groups: Makati, Parañaque, Manila, Pasay, Pasig, Laguna, Pampanga, Tarlac, Pangasinan and Marinduque. In this meeting, 18 candidates have expressed their commitment to membership and were accepted in the Association.



## TURIN - VALDOCCO - 24<sup>th</sup> MARIAN DAY



To mark the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco, the 24<sup>th</sup> Marian Day was celebrated on Sunday 12 October 2014, in a Marian spirit of communion and joy Fr Roberto Carelli, professor of theology at the Crocetta in Turin, gave a second catechesis in preparation for the Seventh Congress of Mary Help of Christians to an audience of about 400 people. His

talk was entitled "The houses of Mary and places of Grace." He invited his listeners to follow a journey of grace and to welcome Mary into our homes, which should become domestic churches.

Mr Tullio Lucca, president of the Primary ADMA, presented the topic, perspectives, objectives and programme of the Seventh International Congress of Mary Help of Christians, to be held in Turin-Colle Don Bosco from 6 to 9 August 2015. The theme of the Congress is *Hic domus mea, inde gloria mea*. From the house of Mary to our homes. His mercy is from generation to generation. The theme is a response to the challenges facing the family today in the context of the new evangelization, accompanied by Mary and with the apostolic heart of Don Bosco.

In the afternoon, at the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians after the recitation of the Rosary there was a solemn Eucharist presided over by Fr Enrico Stasi, Provincial of Piemonte-Valle d'Aosta. During the celebration, thirty-five people joined the Association from the groups of Primary ADMA, Arese, Nave, San Benigno Canavese and the Shalom Community of Palazzolo,

This Marian Day was evidence of the process of renewal of ADMA: the presence of so many families, youth, children showed the face of the people of God who follow Mary Help of Christians by witnessing to Christian freedom and the joy of the gospel.

## BILBAO - DEUSTO (SPAIN) - AREA MEETING

The ADMA groups in the north east of the Province of St James the Great in Spain came together on Saturday, October 18, 2014 at the Salesian House of Bilbao-Deusto for a formation and animation meeting at the beginning of the new year for the association. The solemn Eucharist presided over by the Rector, Fr Isaac Diez, opened the meeting. A photographic overview of the activities of last year was then shown, bringing to life the year's experiences. Fr Arcadio Cuadrado, Spiritual Director of the area, outlined the objectives in the context of the family spirit, helped this year by the Bicentenary of the Birth of Don Bosco, the Synod on the Family and the Seventh International Congress of Mary Help of Christians. During the working sessions, the groups tried to make the proposed objectives more practical. A family lunch concluded the meeting, at which more than 100 members had participated. (Fr Arcadio Cuadrado).



## PANJIM (INDIA) - MARIAN PILGRIMAGE



Seventeen ADMA members from the Province of Panjim went on a Marian pilgrimage on 18-20 October 2014 to Mangalore to visit the various shrines and places of worship, which are of particular charm and religious atmosphere, as the pilgrims experienced during their prayer. The Milagres Church in Hampankatta, a shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Miracles, was the first example of such an atmosphere. The Chapel of Saint Aloysius College at Kodailbail, contains the famous frescoes of Brother Antonio Moscheni, SJ, painted between 1899 and 1901. They depict the lives of the apostles, of St. Aloysius and other Jesuit saints. The

Shrine of the Infant Jesus in Nanthoor on Carmel Hill contains beautiful statues of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Child Jesus. The main shrine of Blessed Joseph Vaz is at Mudipu, 25 km from the city of Mangalore. This place is known as Miracle Hill for the miraculous appearance of spring water from three sources during an attempt on the life of Blessed Joseph Vaz. The Fatima Retreat House in Jeppu was our place of rest, refreshment and prayer.

As ADMA we express our congratulations and assure our remembrance in prayer to **Mother Yvonne Reungoat**, confirmed by the 23<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter as Superior General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians for a second term. Our prayers and good wishes go also to all the sisters of the new Council.

The paper can be read at the following site:

[www.admadonbosco.org/index.php?lang=en](http://www.admadonbosco.org/index.php?lang=en)

and here: [www.donbosco-torino.it/](http://www.donbosco-torino.it/)

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