

MARY INVITES US TO PRAY FOR FAMILIES AND FOR HOLINESS IN THE FAMILY

Dear friends, it is with great joy that we reflect on the **Seventh International Congress of Mary Help of Christians**. As we have already written: "In line with the motto of the Congress, "*Hic domus mea mea inde gloria mea. From the house of Mary to our homes*", we experienced the wind of the Holy Spirit that blows from the house of Mary and renews our homes and religious communities. We see it in the sheer joy of the participants; in the gratitude of those who contributed in different ways to the preparation and implementation of the conference, a sign of their true devotion to Mary; in the truth of the power of prayer; in the richness of the content offered in the reports, in the testimonies of lives of the saints, in the strong and poignant experiences of life, in the homilies of the Eucharistic celebrations; in the beauty and careful preparation of song and prayer; the joy of brotherhood and friendship; in the presence of people of all ages, from the newborn to the elderly, reminding us that God's mercy is from generation to generation. It is really a miracle of Mary Help of Christians!"

We want to express once again our thanks to the many people, institutions and families who contributed in different ways with the spirit of service and with the joy of the gospel to make this event of the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco an event of grace for all the participants and for the Salesian Family, as willed by Mary Help of Christians.



In particular the experience of the Congress confirms our commitment to **promoting prayer in families and for families**. Prayer is a contact and a relationship with God. We listen to God in our hearts and we speak to him from our hearts. Listening and speaking from the heart - this is prayer. But where are this love and this prayer born? They are born in the family. **The family that prays together stays together**. And if family members are united, they will love each other as God loves each one of them (Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta). We pray for the family because only with prayer will new vocations arise in families, to priesthood and consecrated life. In particular we value the prayer of the Rosary during the month of October.

With this issue of ADMA online, we begin a new year in the life of the association, one that we will live in harmony with the Church which is preparing to live the extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy and the Strenna of the Rector Major. We will be helped by the monthly catechesis given by Sister Linda Pocher, FMA, and we thank her for her willingness to work with us and to share our journey in ADMA.

We go forward with joy and courage, knowing that we are on the right road and that Mary Help of Christians is journeying with us.

Lucca Tullio, President
Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animator

Risonanze dal Congresso di Maria Ausiliatrice



Ho in cuore un vivo ricordo dell'esperienza vissuta con l'ADMA e l'amore a Maria ha preso nuova quota vedendo anche l'amore che le famiglie e tanti giovani hanno manifestato (Madre Yvonne Reungoat - Superiora FMA).

Words cannot express my gratitude to God, Mary Help of Christians, you, Tullio and all those who helped you to organize such a beautiful congress. It was very well organized and everybody enjoyed every minute of it. I can imagine all the hard work you have put into it and needless to say problems too. !!!! It was worth the hassle and time to organize such beautiful celebrations. Well done. Prayerfully united (Sr. Eugenia Pantalleresco - Malta).

Veramente è stata una gioia vedere lo sviluppo del congresso giorno dopo giorno e assaporare il gusto di questa unione di cuori arrivati da tutto il mondo. Tutto ciò ancor più ora che i giorni passano e alla fatica del momento subentrano le emozioni di quanto vissuto. Siamo felici che una nostra piccola goccia abbia potuto contribuire a tutto questo (Giovanni e Barbara con Edoardo e Eleonora - Torino).

Grazie a tutti quelli che hanno contribuito ad organizzare le giornate del raduno della famiglia salesiana. Sono stati giorni pieni ed intensi (Sergio Rocca - Torino).

Ringrazio di vero cuore per il Congresso di Maria Ausiliatrice riuscito molto bene e credo che porterà frutto in tante famiglie e anche nelle nostre sorelle e fratelli. Maria Ausiliatrice rinnova la Famiglia salesiana e anche le nostre comunità educanti, oltre che il nostro cuore (Suor Piera Cavaglià FMA - Roma).

GRAZIE, GRAZIE, GRAZIE per questi bellissimi giorni!!!! Mi sono trovata in mezzo al Mondo, un'esperienza nuova e coinvolgente. Mi ha emozionata pregare in tutte le lingue, vivere momenti di preghiera intensi, sentire testimonianze toccanti. Adesso riprenderò in mano i documenti, e li rileggerò con calma per farli miei (Luciana Bianchetti - Torino).

Muchas gracias por estos días de comunión y fraternidad, por su cariño y amistad. Fraternalmente (Luisa de Arribas - Spagna).





Me sale del corazón a mí y al Grupo de Barcelona, y seguro que también de toda ADMA de España, participantes en el Congreso, transmitirte nuestra cordial felicitación por el maravilloso Congreso de María Auxiliadora celebrado en Turín. La organización, la animación juvenil, la Liturgia y Oración, los Testimonios, las conferencias tan bien preparadas, valientes y llenas de amor a la Iglesia y al carisma salesiano... Y, especialmente, la presencia constante, cercana y sencilla del Rector Mayor y Sor Ivonne, que se han hecho "uno más" en medio de la Familia Salesiana.

Deseamos compartir contigo y con todos los del Equipo organizador y Animador del Congreso nuestra más sincera felicitación, auspiciando que los frutos del mismo y el empuje recibido se harán notar en ADMA y en los demás Grupos de la Familia Salesiana, especialmente mediante un mayor esfuerzo en la evangelización de las familias, que ha sido el mensaje claro de este Congreso mariano. Que el amor del Señor y la bendición de nuestra Madre Auxiliadora sea el merecido premio a vuestro gran trabajo. Unidos en la oración. Saludos muy cordiales (Joan Faner, Animador Nacional (Barcelona - España).

Mi felicitación por el éxito del Congreso de M. A. Los de mi grupo han venido muy contentos de esos días (Arcadio Cuadrado, Bilbao - Spagna).

Grazie tanto per tante cose belle fatte per tante persone al Congresso! Tanta gioia a tante che erano lì venute da tutto il mondo! Grazie di cuore. Adesso dobbiamo pregare per ringraziare la Madonna! (Leda - Brasile).

Gracia, Grazie , Obrigada pelo carinho de vocês foi tudo lindo. Salve Maria Auxiliadora !!!! ([Selma Toledo Menezes](#) - Brasile).



Un saluto tanto affettuoso ancora con la gioia nel cuore di quanto abbiamo vissuto per il Bicentenario di D. Bosco. Giornate intense nei diversi incontri ed eventi della nostra bella Famiglia. Ancora grazie per il Congresso ADMA è stato un bellissimo dono (Suor Maria Luisa Miranda, FMA - Roma).

Estuve muy atento al congreso por youtube y muy alegre de poder asistir espiritual y virtualmente VII Congreso Internacional de María Auxiliadora. Su alegría es nuestra alegría, y mientras todos ustedes esten alegres nosotros también en comunión con ustedes y con la oración que siempre esta presente (Roberth Gonzalez - Venezuela).

THE GOSPEL OF MERCY (1)

Sister Linda Pocher, FMA

1. In Harmony with Pope Francis

The Holy Year of Mercy will begin on 8 December 2015. In this regard the Pope wrote: "How much I desire that ... the balm of mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst!" (*Misericordiae Vultus* 5). "For me, the Pope's desire is a command," Don Bosco used to say. It follows that we, as his sons and daughters, are called in a special way to be on the same wavelength as the Holy Father. With joy and a sense of responsibility, we want to cooperate actively so that the Gospel of Mercy may be proclaimed throughout the whole world. The stakes are very high, since, says the Pope, the effectiveness of the new evangelization depends on it: "It is absolutely essential for the Church and for the credibility of her message that she herself live and testify to mercy. [...] Consequently, wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy." (MV 12).



But how are we to create these oases of mercy in all the places where we live and work? *The formative process proposed for the association for this year, will be a help for those who want to take on this task: we must allow ourselves to be reborn by the Father's mercy if we are to be witnesses and bearers of his love. We will walk together with Don Bosco and the saints of the Salesian Family who have gone before us on this road: loving kindness, not with blows, make yourself loved rather than feared... let all these typical expressions of our tradition spring from the experience of the transforming power of divine mercy. Mary, Mother of Mercy, will be our guide. She will teach us to "journey together with Jesus, in this adventure of the Spirit" - as indicated by the Rector Major in the Strenna for 2016. The Spirit, in fact, is the real protagonist of our journey, because He is the true operator of mercy, the living love which the Father and the Son constantly pour into our hearts (Rom 5,5).*

Before looking at the content of the Gospel of Mercy we ask ourselves:

At the beginning of this new year in the life of the association, am I willing to open myself to God to be transformed into a missionary of mercy?

2. Reborn in his mercy

In what does the Gospel of Mercy consist? Simply: *it is the proclamation supported by the testimony of life, that the love of God is powerful and that it really transforms the hearts of those who trust in Him.* The mercy of God, in fact, is the concrete reality with which he reveals his love as of that of a father or a mother, moved to the very depths out of love for their child... a "visceral" love full of tenderness and compassion, indulgence and mercy. (MV 6). This love which Jesus himself describes in his parables (Lk 15.1 to 32), can be contemplated in all its beauty and depth by looking at the mystery of the Cross. Benedict XVI writes that when Jesus speaks of "the father who goes to meet and embrace his prodigal son, these are no mere words: they constitute an explanation of his very being and activity. His death on the Cross is the culmination of that turning of God against himself in which he gives himself in order to raise man up and save him. This is love in its most radical form." (*Deus Caritas Est*, 12).

On the Cross, Jesus gathers into one the two meanings of the expression "giving one's life": to die for or in place of another and to create a new life. From Easter onwards, we are freed from the death sentence rightly hanging over us because of our sins and we receive the new life of God, his Spirit which is love, peace, joy, the certainty of being destined for eternal communion in the Trinity with all our brothers and sisters. Concretely, it is *through the sacraments that we are united to the death of Jesus and receive the Spirit that gradually makes us merciful as the Father is merciful* (Lk 6:36).



This miracle of mercy does not happen to us once only, on the day of our baptism, but is renewed in every confession and every Eucharist. Every time, in fact, that we open our heart humbly to God, we become new creatures (2 Cor 5:14 -17): we get a new way of looking at people and things, and the strength and courage to desire to do God's will, and these gifts grow slowly but really within us. And even though as long as we are on earth this new life is subject to trial and suffering, it is supported by a hope that does not disappoint: the promise of the Spirit that we carry in our heart and who guards us (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:14).

In the words of St Peter, "by his mercy the Father has given us a new birth" (1 Peter 1: 3-4). Here we are at the theological root of the need to consider education in a generative sense: God himself educates continuously by generating a new life in the womb of his mercy. "There is a close connection between education and generation: the educational relationship involves us in the activity of generation and in the experience of being children. Man does not give himself life, but receives it." This anthropological truth which Fr Roberto Carelli recalled for us at the recent International Congress of Mary Help of Christians shines even brighter if we consider that the same dynamic relationship binds us to God. As the one and only Creator, from the first moment of our existence, God himself is both father and mother to us. He gives us the gift of freedom and accepts fully the consequences and risks - the need to accompany us with his action as we grow in maturity and to educate us, and the possibility that we might reject, despise or abandon him. A man and a woman who love one another and are open to the gift of life, experience a fertility which they do not own totally, because through it they come to share in something that surpasses them, namely the creative power of God. They receive the gift of a child from the womb of divine mercy. The more we, lay people and consecrated persons, become aware of this truth, the more effective and fruitful our educational action will be, because it is modelled on the divine pedagogy.

It would be a very good exercise in that respect, if we were to read in a generative sense the story of the works of divine mercy that we find in Scripture. To give just one example, in the book *To Generate is to Narrate*, the Jesuit Jean-Pierre Sonnet writes that Exodus can easily be read as "the story of the birth and infancy of the people of Israel, until they reach maturity at Sinai. [...] The crucial phase of the event is the crossing of the sea, a traumatic scene in which the people experienced fear of the sea that lay ahead and of the Egyptians they had left behind. But they have to cross the sea; every other route is excluded. Then, thanks to God and to the mediation of Moses, the sea that had seemed an insurmountable obstacle opened before them." When they had crossed the sea, the people were safe. They began a new life, very different from the slavery they had endured in Egypt. They had been set

free, although they still had trials to face, but the presence of God is assured. To prepare the disciples for his passion and death through which they would receive final liberation from the slavery of death, Jesus uses the image of a painful birth. Good Friday is marked heavily by sorrow, but when death is overcome, their sorrow is changed into unquenchable joy (Jn 16: 21-23).

Accepting the Gospel of Mercy means believing that God wants to do and can do all that is necessary for our salvation. Of course, the Redemption of the world is not easily achieved. It cost the Father the blood of his Son! But for this very reason, the Christian has no right to give up hope, even in the face of death! Very often, however, the experience of suffering, injustice and evil threatens our faith and our hope. The fact is that God intervenes in our lives gently. He does not want to shock us with his power, but to educate us to know and recognize his mercy. The first step consists precisely in trusting him without fear: **Do I believe in the transforming power of God's love, or do I live trapped in fear, without hope, or in sin?**

3. Accompanied by Mary Help of Christians

Pope John Paul II used to say, "All Christians are called to holiness". Don Bosco said, in the famous sermon that inflamed the heart of Dominic Savio, "It is God's will that we should be saints. It is very easy to do that. A great prize is prepared in heaven for those who become saints." We can paraphrase by saying that all Christians are called to experience the mercy of God, to become witnesses of this on earth and to enjoy it eternally in heaven. We had living proof of this truth at the International Congress of Mary Help of Christians.

Among the many testimonies of everyday holiness that we heard, I would like to recall the intervention of Maria Ludovica Zanet, who showed us how "Salesian holiness includes stories of wounded families: families where one or both parents have died, or where for different reasons (physical, mental, moral and spiritual), the presence of the mother or father becomes detrimental to the welfare of the children, but today they are on their way to the honours of the altar." From the lives of Laura Vicuña, Carlo Braga and Anna Maria Lozano Díaz, we learn that there is no limit or wound that can prevent people becoming holy. Indeed, with the help of God "instead of suffering the situation passively, or moaning about it, they were able to move with heightened awareness to overcome the problem and react quickly, avoiding any withdrawal into self." Although starting off from a condition of life objectively disadvantaged, these holy people grew through the gift of their situation, and made this gift part of the concrete conditions of life. In doing so, they united *da mihi animas with cetera tolle* and became a living sign of the transforming power of God's mercy.

But the greatest testimony of the effectiveness of God's mercy is Mary. When faith is gripped by doubt, when hope falters and charity fails, we should turn to her, the Holy One, the most beautiful fruit of divine mercy, the one who allowed the Spirit full freedom to operate in her life according to the Father's plan. As the Mother of Jesus, she is also the mother of mercy in person. She is the living door through which mercy enters the world. Gazing upon Mary, we can see how she welcomes the Spirit and allows him to work. We learn what it means to listen to the Word and put it into practice. Mary also constantly intercedes for us. The more we are devoted to her, the more she strives to facilitate the work of God in us. As Montfort said, wherever Mary is, the Spirit hastens to come.

Between the Holy Spirit and Mary there is perfect collaboration, a collaboration that makes Mary the Mother of God, forming the child Jesus in her womb and guiding her step by step in her difficult task as parent and educator of the Son of God. Through situations of joy and sorrow, her love for God is constantly transformed into love for others and vice versa, since the content of the Word that she has received is precisely the practice of mercy. If we want to place our pilgrimage of mercy under her maternal care, the first condition is constancy in prayer: **Am I in the habit of listening every day to the Word of God? Do I entrust myself every day to Mary, even with one Hail Mary?**

FAMILY CHRONICLE

LECCE (ITALY) - ADMA MEETING AND PRESENTATION "LIKE STARS IN THE SKY"

In Lecce on 11 June 2015, Fr Pierluigi Cameroni met the members of some of the ADMA groups in Puglia, from Bari, Brindisi, Cerignola, Lecce and Martina Franca. Fr Cameroni presented the key elements of ADMA and the personal commitments to be assumed by members of the Association. In the evening Fr Cameroni spoke to a gathering of about 250 on the theme of holiness in the Salesian Family. He introduced them to the book "Like stars in the sky ..." His lively address convinced his listeners that the celebration of the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco is a favourable opportunity to study and make known his spiritual experience, which flourished in rich and diverse fruits of holiness. He mentioned the strong human and spiritual sensitivity of our saints, blessed, venerable and servants of God, and their yearning for fullness of life, love and happiness in God. He urged them to live the commitment and the call to holiness and to present it in a passionate way that would convince others, especially those of the younger generation. Since they were in the Salesian House in Lecce, where the only basilica in the world dedicated to Saint Dominic Savio is to be found, they could not fail to place particular emphasis on youthful holiness which has Dominic Savio as a leader. He is a masterpiece of the preventive system of Don Bosco built on the foundation of God's grace, which is the source of all holiness. (Fr Tommaso De Mitri, ADMA Spiritual Animator, Lecce).

CHILE - NEW MEMBERS ON NATIONAL ADMA DAY



On 24 July 2015, in various cities of Chile, on the occasion of National ADMA day, twenty-seven new members joined the Association and three families made their consecration. In Santiago, the Eucharist was celebrated in the *El Patrocinio de San José* College. The National Animator, Fr. Vicente Soccorso, presided and Frs Juan Bustamante and Pedro Pablo Cuello concelebrated. About 150 members of the Association with their families from all the communities of Santiago and Santa Cruz took part with great fervour. Members of other groups of the Salesian Family were also present: Past Pupils, Volunteers of Don Bosco and Salesian Cooperators. The new members come from Antofagasta 5; La Serena 1; Valparaiso Parish 2; Santa Cruz 2; Puerto Montt Parish 1; Puerto Varas Sacred Heart 4; Puerto Natales María Mazzarello 8; Punta Arenas Christ Obrero 3; and Punta Arenas María Auxiliadora 1.

MUMBAI (INDIA) - ADMA CELEBRATES THE BICENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF DON BOSCO



In the SHRINE of the Madonna of Don Bosco in Matunga (Mumbai, India), a large group of members of ADMA met on 16 August 2015 to honour St. John Bosco at the conclusion of the bicentenary of his birth. They attended the Eucharist at the Shrine and later held a meeting in the provincial house. The sharing by most of those present was really inspired. Each one told of a moving experience that shows how their lives are shaped and directed by the teachings of St. John Bosco and by the motherly intercession of Mary. It was a time of great fellowship!

Our ADMA group was founded here at the Marian shrine in September 2010 and is aggregated to ADMA Primary in Turin. We share all the prayers and the suffrages that are offered there. Members meet on the first Saturday of every month and strive to grow in their Christian life through reflection on four dimensions: doctrinal, ecclesial, Marian and Salesian.

May God love you and bless you always! (Fr Wilfred, spiritual animator).

ADMA Youth Mendoza Argentina



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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