

MONTHLY MESSAGE

n. 6 – 2017

Turin - Valdocco 24 June



ADMA

on line
Associazione di Maria Ausiliatrice

MARY INVITES US TO CONVERSION

The centenary of the apparitions of Our Lady in Fatima serves as a strong appeal for conversion, to open our hearts to the grace to which we are all called, to be witnesses of peace and love in this troubled world rocked by so much violence. So much confusion and disorientation are due to the fact that **many people have forgotten that life on earth is passing**, that life is a pilgrimage to eternity. "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Col 3: 1-3). We need to regain the desire for heavenly things, for paradise. Our hearts must turn to God and his will. We must have a taste for the things of God. Mary is with us, fighting for us and interceding for us with her Son Jesus.

We would like to express special thanks for the rich experience of animation and guidance experienced in Bolivia at the National Congress of Mary Help of Christians where we had the opportunity to present the new lines of ADMA. These have already been presented in some provinces, and will be repeated in September in Brazil. We hope they can be put in practice in ADMA groups.

The celebration of Mary Help of Christians this year in Turin included the meeting of the **World Consultative Body of the Salesian Family** with the Rector Major. It was a true celebration of the Christian people who honoured and revered Mary with feelings of filial devotion, recognizing in her the Mother of Consolation and Hope in our past lives and for our future.

We entrust to the care of Mary Help of Christians all who are striving to safeguard respect for the life of every person, from the very first moment of conception to its natural end, and all who work for the those in need without discrimination for reasons of nationality, culture, ethnicity or religion. We entrust to Mary Help of Christians the many martyrs of our time that their sacrifice may be a leaven of life and peace for all.

Journeying together under the mantle of Mary Help of Christians, we will reach true communion, which is God's gift, but it requires a continuous effort from every baptized person.

Finally, we express a heartfelt thanks to Fr Silvio Roggia for his collaboration this year, through the monthly formation topics inspired by Pope Francis' *Amoris Laetitia*. We pray for him and for his mission.



Lucca Tullio, President

Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animator



On 20 June 2017 Fr Roberto Carelli celebrates 25 years of priesthood! Thank you for your precious pastoral and educational service to our ADMA Association.

10. Spirituality of family and marriage

Fr Silvio Roggia, SDB

Spirituality born of family life

The last chapter of *Amoris Laetitia* aims very high, but does not present the family with a level of holiness that is unreachable. In fact, the communion of family love is by its nature open to the greatness, height, beauty and depth of God's own life.

This is not something new from Pope Francis. He begins by saying "Several decades ago, in speaking of the lay apostolate, the Second Vatican Council emphasized the spirituality born of family life. The Council stated that lay spirituality "will take its particular character from the circumstances of... married and family life" (AL 313). Notice what he says: spirituality



born of family life. This means that it is not something added from the outside, nor is it something achieved by great effort, other than that of ordinary daily life in the home.

"The Lord's presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes. Living in a family makes it hard for us to feign or lie; we cannot hide behind a mask. If that authenticity is inspired by love, then the Lord reigns there, with his joy and his peace. The spirituality of family love is made up of thousands of small but real gestures. In that variety of gifts and encounters which deepen communion, God has his dwelling place." (AL 315).

I am familiar with a wonderful experience of community life among a group of three families in Tuscany. They have a single bank account, where all revenue is shared, and each family uses it freely according to need, so great is their mutual trust. They have a great acceptance of life, of their many children and of those they have adopted. But the thing that is closest to spirituality born of the family is the principle of self-promotion: if it is well lived the family experience already has what it needs to continue to grow.

This does not mean closing the door on all the wealth that comes from ecclesial life and from so many other experiences of solidarity and communion. But it is good to recognize that family love is a source that continues to give life from within, because it is inhabited by God. "The Trinity is present in the temple of marital communion. Just as God dwells in the praises of his people (cf. *Ps* 22:3), so he dwells deep within the marital love that gives him glory." (AL 314). Francis is not afraid to use the loftiest words to describe the Church's spiritual journey down through the centuries, the same words that are used for the highest form of holiness and communion with God.

In the light of Easter

We know very well that the mystery of the Lord's passion, death and resurrection is the foundation of our whole faith. It is the "fullness of time" that gives meaning and direction to the life of the universe and to every human existence, from Adam to the end of the world. This same Paschal experience embraces the life of the family, in a way that could not be more concrete.

"If a family is centred on Christ, he will unify and illumine its entire life. Moments of pain and difficulty will be experienced in union with the Lord's cross, and his closeness will make it possible to surmount them. In the darkest hours of a family's life, union with Jesus in his abandonment can help avoid a breakup. Gradually, "with the grace of the Holy Spirit, [the spouses] grow in holiness through married life, also by sharing in the mystery of Christ's cross, which transforms difficulties and sufferings into an

offering of love". [Final Report, 2015, 87] (AL 317).

But the Paschal Mystery does not stop at Golgotha. The darkness all over the earth lasts only three hours, just enough to prepare the way for the sun of the day without sunset on the day of Resurrection. It is wonderful to hear from the Pope - and here he quotes John Paul II - that from now on life in the Spirit (= spirituality) lived by married couples and their families is a sharing in the joy of the new life of the Risen Lord.

"Moments of joy, relaxation, celebration, and even sexuality can be experienced as a sharing in the full life of the resurrection. Married couples shape with different daily gestures a "God-enlightened space in which to experience the hidden presence of the risen Lord." [*Vita consecrata*, 42] (AL 317).

So too regarding sexuality. We do not have time here to examine the 'theology of the body', which is perhaps the greatest gift St John Paul II left to the Church and the world. Those who have the chance to do so will discover how great and beautiful the love mystery is in the mutual gift of their bodies between man and woman: it is truly communion in the free, total, faithful, fruitful love of Christ. It is a foretaste of the joy of Paradise. Christopher West is one of the best interpreters and promoters of John Paul II's theology of the body. He rightly points out how this intuition is already present in poetry, songs, and art. True love between man and woman is very close to paradise ... the distance is as short as possible. Among other things, he quotes the words of *Almost Paradise* by Mike Reno and Ann Wilson: 'We're knocking on heaven's door. How could we ask for more? I swear that I can see forever in your eyes Paradise ...'

Obviously, there is nothing automatic or taken for granted once and for all, as if it were a wedding present. As with every disciple of the Lord, life in the Spirit grows as we open our hearts to his presence, and this is done first of all with that fundamental path of faith in which we all grew up: family prayer.

"Family prayer is a special way of expressing and strengthening this paschal faith. A few minutes can be found each day to come together before the living God, to tell him our worries, to ask for the needs of our family, to pray for someone experiencing difficulty, to ask for help in showing love, to give thanks for life and for its blessings, and to ask Our Lady to protect us beneath her maternal mantle. With a few simple words, this moment of prayer can do immense good for our families." (AL 318)

Love that is exclusive and free

The concluding part of *Amoris Laetitia* opens a window on the paradox of married love. It is close to the gospel, precisely because it is always paradoxical: 'Whoever wants to save his life will lose it; But whoever loses his life for my sake will find it (Mt 16:25).

Where is the paradox of the joy of love between spouses? On the one hand, it is said with clarity that fidelity to the end is an "interior requirement of the covenant of conjugal love" (FC 11) and is simply indispensable. Francis reiterates this by quoting John Paul II's words in Cordoba, Argentina (4/8/1987): "a person who cannot choose to love for ever can hardly love for even a single day." (AL 319). On the other hand, it is equally clear that this love forever will always be limited, not only because of our weaknesses, but by its very nature:

"There comes a point where a couple's love attains the height of its freedom and becomes the basis of a healthy autonomy. This happens when each spouse realizes that the other is not his or her own, but has a much more important master, the one Lord. No one but God can presume to take over the deepest and most personal core of the loved one; he alone can be the ultimate centre of their life. At the same time, the principle of spiritual realism requires that one spouse not presume that the other can completely satisfy his or her needs. The spiritual journey of each - as Dietrich Bonhoeffer nicely put it - needs to help them to a certain "disillusionment" with regard to the other, to stop expecting from that person something which is proper to the love of God alone. This demands an interior divestment. The space which each of the spouses makes exclusively for their personal relationship with God not only helps heal the hurts of life in common, but also enables the spouses to find in the love of God the deepest source of meaning in their own lives. Each day we have to invoke the help of the Holy Spirit to make this interior freedom possible." (AL 320).

This journey into the mystery of love and joy could not end in a more beautiful way: love in the end is God Himself, it is his name, his mystery. It all depends on letting ourselves be touched and enveloped by his presence that transforms every human experience into something divine, all the more so since this experience is what he has set as the foundation of every life. "It is a profound spiritual experience to contemplate our loved ones with the eyes of God and to see Christ in them." (AL 323) This is what makes family life fruitful and a source of new life in all its relationships and in all directions.

"All family life is a "shepherding" in mercy. Each of us, by our love and care, leaves a mark on the life of others; with Paul, we can say: "You are our letter of recommendation, written on your hearts... not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God" (2 Cor 3:2-3). Each of us is a "fisher of men" (Lk 5:10) who in Jesus' name "casts the nets" (cf. Lk 5:5) to others, or a farmer who tills the fresh soil of those whom he or she loves, seeking to bring out the best in them." (AL 322). Marital fruitfulness involves helping others, for "to love anybody is to expect from him something which can neither be defined nor foreseen; it is at the same time in some way to make it possible for him to fulfil this expectation. This is itself a way to worship God, who has sown so much good in others in the hope that we will help make it grow." (AL322)

Prayer to the Holy Family

As a conclusion of this journey to the joy of love which we have made with Pope Francis over the past few months, we join in his prayer to Jesus, Mary and Joseph - the three 'presences' on his simple pontifical coat of arms. We may get the 'temptation' to memorize it and pray it every day ... let's try it right away!

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
 in you we contemplate
 the splendour of true love;
 to you we turn with trust.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
 grant that our families too
 may be places of communion and prayer,
 authentic schools of the Gospel
 and small domestic churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
 may families never again experience
 violence, rejection and division;
 may all who have been hurt or scandalized
 find ready comfort and healing.

Holy Family of Nazareth
 make us once more mindful
 of the sacredness and inviolability of the family,
 and its beauty in God's plan.
 Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
 Graciously hear our prayer.
 Amen.



FAMILY CHRONICLE

Cochabamba (Bolivia) - National Congress of Mary Help of Christians



From 28 April to 1 May at the Don Bosco Fátima Centre in Cochabamba, the National Congress of Mary Help of Christians in Bolivia took place, with the aim of promoting devotion to Mary Help of Christians, especially among families and young people. More than 200 members from different groups in the country participated. The meeting was coordinated by the National President **Ms. Patty Reyes** and the spiritual animator **Fr Severino Laredo**.

Talks were given by the World President, Mr Tullio Lucca, and the World Spiritual Animator, Fr Pierluigi Cameroni. They presented the new lines of the Association, in relation to membership of the Salesian Family, and accompanying families and young people. Another vital aspect presented which is vital to the life of the groups is the identity and role of the local council: if the council works properly, ADMA works well. The profile of the people who should be part of a council is as follows: men and women of faith, communion, human relationships, available for apostolate among the members and capable of reaching out to others. The experiences of ADMA Youth of Santa Cruz and Cochabamba were very interesting.

The Salesian Provincial, **Fr Javier Ortiz**, was present throughout. He stressed that a new vision of ADMA was emerging at this meeting, a call to involve families and to be open to the new generations, to trust them and to bring the preventive system of Don Bosco to the family. It was good to share the Marian and Apostolic dimensions of the Salesian charism with the other groups of the Salesian Family. One of the most interesting aspects was the presence and participation of other members of the Salesian Family.

The participants were very pleased with the shared charismatic experience and showed interest in the proposed themes. The presence of President Tullio was significant. He gave his testimony as a committed lay person, husband and father of a family, reminding us that ADMA is a lay association. After each talk, there was intense group work from which the lines of guidance and commitment for ADMA in Bolivia emerged. The participants welcomed the indications offered in the various talks and expressed the desire to start the new Vision for the Association in Bolivia.

In the concluding Eucharist at which the Provincial presided, over 40 new aspirants joined the Association, showing the vitality and the future of ADMA in Bolivia.

Bolivia - Meeting with the Priests of the Quinquennium

From 26 to 28 April 2017, there was a meeting in Cochabamba of 11 Salesians in the first five years of priesthood. On the final day the World President of ADMA, Tullio Lucca and the Spiritual Animator, Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, were present. They presented the themes: "Spirituality of the Association of Mary Help of Christians" and "The causes of holiness in the Salesian Family". The meeting helped us to get to know the new approaches of ADMA and to share a rich moment of Salesian fraternity, greatly appreciated by the young Salesian priests.



Turin - Primary ADMA - Retreat for ADMA Youth

Over 40 young people from high school and university shared two days of spiritual retreat at the beginning of May. The key words were Joy, Sharing, Friendship and Faith - simple words, but together they describe a unique experience. With the help of two priests, a nun, three couples and many other people, we rediscovered the importance of putting on the Christian armour to face the adventures of life, confident, trusting and smiling!



Congo-Pilgrimage of Mary Help of Christians

In Lubumbashi on 21 May 2017, the Association of Mary Help of Christians promoted a pilgrimage with prayer, meditation on the Rosary mysteries, and Mass at which the Provincial Fr Jean Claude presided. We prayed for peace in the world, in our families, in our country. We thank all Christians in the Marian city and all those who participated in the realization of this Marian Day in our Province. Let us imitate Mary Help of Christians in all that we do. (Fr Albert Kabuge).

Sao Paulo (Brazil) - Provincial Meeting

On 6 May 2017, about 200 members of the Association of Mary Help of Christians met in the Parish of Our Lady of Fatima and Santo Amaro in Guarujá -SP for the provincial meeting of ADMA.

With the help of the Parish Priest, Fr. André Torres, the participants reflected on the theme of the meeting which was "With Mary, We are Family!" re-echoing the Rector Major's Strenna. The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by the Provincial, Fr Edson Donizetti Castilho, and concelebrated by Fr Narciso Ferreira, the provincial spiritual animator of ADMA, and Fr André Torres.



During the meeting, the **election of the Provincial Council of ADMA** took place, the realization of a dream of the ADMA groups in the Province. The following were elected: Tania Maria de Campos, coordinator; Dineia Custódio da Silva, formator; Lucia Helena Chahin, responsible for finance; Valderez Gonzalez, in charge of communication; Marli Cezario Israele, secretary.

After the election of the provincial council, it was announced that the venue of the next provincial meeting, to be held in 2018, will be the city of Lorena. The meeting ended with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Leon, Guanajuato (Mexico) - Provincial Meeting



On 19, 20 and 21 May, the Provincial Meeting of the Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) took place at the House of Don Bosco in León, with the participation of more than 150 representatives of

local groups from the cities of Tijuana, Mexicali, Chihuahua, Nuevo Laredo, Guadalupe, San Luis Potosí, Irapuato, Leon, Guadalajara, Colima and Sahuayo.

With this meeting, new efforts were launched to strengthen and enrich the work of this group of the Salesian Family, in line with the worldwide promotion that aims to grow numerically, with the participation of young people and families. Among the topics of reflection proposed to the participants was the conference of Fr José Luis Plascencia SDB. His topic was *"With Mary we can see a new Pentecost"*.

Particular attention was paid to the election of the new provincial council. President: Joaquín Salas, de Guadalajara, Jalisco; Vice-President: Alfredo Estrada, Ciudad Guadalupe, Nuevo León. Treasurer: María del Carmen Quintanar, Mexicali, Baja California. Secretary: Irma Aurora Hinojosa, Mexicali, Baja California. Representative for the Northeast Zone: Margarita Fierro, Chihuahua, Chihuahua. Representative for the Northeast Zone: María Eugenia Chávez, Ciudad Guadalupe, Nuevo León. Representative for the Centre-West Zone: María Guadalupe Saavedra, Irapuato, Guanajuato.

The meeting ended on Sunday 21st after the Mass at the Shrine of St John Bosco. Fr Francisco José Enríquez Zulaica SDB, Delegate for ADMA, presided.

Brindisi (Italy)

On Sunday 21 May 2017, the ADMA Group of the Sacred Heart in Brindisi, renewed its commitment to the Association and accepted the entry of two new members. This event took place in an atmosphere of Marian prayer deeply felt by the ADMA Group and the entire Parish Community.

The Eucharist was celebrated by Fr Giorgio Micaleto, the Spiritual Animator. He expressed in particular the joy of belonging to the Association (with 35 to 40 members). He invited the whole Parish Community and others to consider the possibility of being part of ADMA.



Turin - World Consultative Body of the Salesian Family

This year, to highlight the centenary of the founding of the Institute of the Don Bosco Volunteers, the meeting of the Salesian Family World Consultative Body took place in Turin precisely on the days of the Feast of Mary Help of Christians. The meeting - besides constituting a unique moment for knowledge, fraternity and shared spirituality among the various leaders of the different groups - dealt with specific issues of common interest, such as the forthcoming Synod of Bishops on "Young People, Faith and vocational discernment"; the development of a collective web site; the evaluation of the Salesian Family Spirituality Days; the progress

of the causes of beatification and canonization in the Salesian Family; and communications of projects and proposals of mutual interest. ADMA was represented by President Tullio Lucca, to whom the Rector Major expressed heartfelt thanks and good wishes as he draws near the end of his term of office, and the Spiritual Animator, Fr Pierluigi Cameroni.



The paper can be read at the following site:

www.admadonbosco.org

and here: www.donbosco-torino.it/

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