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EDITORIAL

FATIMA AWAITS YOU!

My dear friends,

A fraternal greeting to each and every one of you at the conclusion of this pastoral year and the formative journey towards the upcoming International Congress of Mary Help of Christians 2024 at Fatima.

It is precisely at Fatima that we will find ourselves, reflecting on 'The Dream'- The origin of Don Bosco's mission; which is our mission today as Salesian Family and on the mediation of Mary; The Mother and teacher, who precedes and leads us to Jesus and to the young.

We have prepared ourselves this year reflecting on important themes: Vocation and Oratorian Mission, Call to the Impossible, Mystery of the Name, Strength of meekness and loving kindness that distinguish the Salesian style.

And in these very days as we write this editorial, the word of God invites us to return to the theme of mission with an image as strong and meaningful as that of the 'Sower.' An image that helps us to re-read our lives, our services, the activities in which we are involved by



putting everything back into the hands of the Father. *“Thus is the kingdom of God: like a man who sows seed on the ground; sleep or wake, night or day, the seed sprouts and grows. How, he himself does not know. The soil spontaneously produces first the stalk, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear; and when the fruit is ripe, immediately he sends forth the sickle, for the harvest has come”* (Mark 4:26-34)

God certainly uses us; He makes us participants in his plan of love for man. He calls us by name and in the name, He entrusts us with a mission, as happened to John in the dream: *“No one gives himself a name but receives it. I do not call myself. In the name is written the vocation and in it is included the method (not with blows but with meekness and charity), the mission/end (to gain these friends of yours), the content (instruction on sin and virtue).”*

But God does not leave us alone! Whatever the mission, He only asks us to ‘be’ seeds and scatter seeds of His love, confident that He will be the one to make His Kingdom sprout and grow. It is good to place trust in God the Father, it is liberating to feel that we are collaborators and not absolute

protagonists, it is comforting to know that it is the soil that spontaneously produces its fruit.

As a member of ADMA, we can read the previous pastoral year and plan, the new year in the light of this word. Our commitment to the weakest and to the young, has not been and will never be in vain. Our educational and formative commitment, has not been and will never be lost. Our desire to make Mary known, will be fulfilled, if we recognize ourselves as simple farmers and humbly defer our every action to the Father’s will. If we accept the mission we are given, along with the soil in which to work and if we do not try to hastily evaluate the harvest but wait patiently for the right times, for everything to mature, above all the maturing of the heart of each young person we meet. Though today a small seed, it will sprout and grow powerful tomorrow.

Best wishes to all for a peaceful summer.

Fr. Gabriel Cruz Trejo, SDB
Spiritual Animator ADMA Valdocco.

Renato Valera,
President ADMA Valdocco.

FORMATIVE PATH

The formative programme 2024-2025 of ADMA: A GREAT SYMPHONY OF PRAYER IN THE JUBILEE YEAR OF THE CHURCH

ADMA’s formation program for the year 2024 - 2025 places us in the path of the Jubilee of 2025, which, as Pope Francis writes: *“has always represented in the life of the Church an event of great spiritual, ecclesial and social significance. Since Boniface VIII, in 1300, instituted the first Holy Year - with a secular recurrence, which then became, on the biblical model, fifty years and then fixed every twenty-five years. The Church has experienced this celebration as a special gift of grace, characterized by the forgiveness of sins and, in particular, by indulgence, the full expression of God’s mercy.”*

Pope Francis indicates to us that the Jubilee’s title **“Pilgrims of Hope”** puts at the center of the Jubilee year, the **“keeping lit the torch of hope that has been**

given to us, and to do everything possible so that everyone regains the strength and certainty to look to the future with an open mind, a trusting heart and a farsighted mind. The coming Jubilee can greatly enhance a climate of hope and trust, as a sign of a renewed rebirth for which we all feel the urgency.”

The Pope invites us to **cultivate this Hope** by looking at the dramas of today’s world *“capable of recovering a sense of universal brotherhood”* and not closing our eyes to the rampant poverty that prevents millions of men, women, young people and children - especially the many refugees forced to leave their lands - from living in a manner worthy of human beings. *“May the voices of the poor be heard in this time of preparation for the Jubilee which, according to*

Formative path

the biblical command, restores to each person access to the fruits of the earth."

We are also called to walk this spiritual journey of conversion: *"Feeling that we are all pilgrims on the earth in which the Lord has placed us"*, to cherish its beauty. We are also invited to be *"ever more and ever better a sign and instrument of unity in the harmony of diversity"* by participating in the life and building of the Church and by valuing all the charisms and ministries that the Holy Spirit never ceases to bestow.



Aware that in order to live all this, our strength alone is not enough. This year's formative journey will follow the Pope's invitation, to dedicate the time of preparation for the Jubilee, to a great 'symphony' of prayer. First of all, the desire to be in the presence of the Lord, to listen to Him and to adore Him. Thank God for the many gifts of His love for us and to praise His work in creation, which commits everyone to respect and take individual responsibility to safeguard it. Prayer is the voice "of the one heart and the one soul" (cf. Acts 4:32), which translates into solidarity and the sharing of daily bread. Prayer that enables every man and woman in this world to turn to the one God, to express to Him what is reposed in the secret of the heart. Prayer as the best way to holiness, leading to living contemplation even in the midst of action. In short, an intense year of prayer, in which hearts open to receive the abundance of grace, making the "Our Father," the prayer Jesus taught us, the life program of every one of his disciples."

Therefore, in continuity with the summer spiritual exercises, we will strive to deepen our prayer life, starting from listening to the Word, so that it can become a concrete help in our daily life, as a couple, at work, in the family.

The journey will be divided into three steps, each declined in three stages:

Step one: Listening to and praying the Word: we will set out to listen to the Word, with simple and concrete tools, to pray the Word and with the Word, to learn and re-learn how to make it alive in our lives. We will seek to set our hearts to listen to Jesus, who insists on becoming One with us. We will walk together in listening to the Word in order to understand how to make it become nourishment and guidance in our journey, giving it space in silence, silencing our thoughts to listen to voice of Jesus. We will learn to experience extended moments of prayer through Lectio Divina and common sharing of testimonies.

Step Two: Discernment: We will take some steps to grow in discernment of spirits, through the Ignatian experience, so dear to Don Bosco and St. Francis de Sales. We will grow in our understanding of how we can find, precisely in prayer, a privileged moment and a concrete tool for daily discernment, in small and big choices. In this way, we will learn to intercept and promptly cast out temptations and welcome the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

Step Three: Living in the Presence of God: Finally, we will try to learn a little more about living, what for Don Bosco was contemplation, in action. Prayer is authentic, only if this vertical dimension towards God is directed towards the horizontal dimension of good deeds towards man.

Meditating upon the dream of Don Bosco when he was just 9 years old, we have perhaps arrived at the moment of realizing the beauty of virtue: "...set out now to teach the ugliness of sin and the beauty of virtue" by avoiding sin and cultivating virtues in a joyful attitude of trust, confidence, smile and actions.

We will make this journey cultivating, according to Pope Francis' instructions, a ray of Hope, especially for the poorest. We will not forget to contemplate the beauty of creation and to care for our common home. We will seek the best ways to be more and more a sign and instrument of unity in the diversity of the situations that the daily life presents to us.

We ask Mary to accompany the Church, the Salesian Family and the Association in this journey of preparation for the great event of grace, the Jubilee.

NAZARETH, GOD'S FAMILY

10. MARIA, MOTHER AND TEACHER

We continue to reflect on family education in the school of Nazareth. In that liturgical jewel, the Mass dedicated to St. Mary of Nazareth, the Church returns again and again to reflect on the fact that Mary (and with Her the Church) became our Mother and Teacher because even before she was Mother and Teacher of Jesus, she was first inspired and formed to be a perfect disciple. In the beautiful preface of this Mass, it says thus: *"in daily familiarity with her Son, in the house of Nazareth, the cradle of the Church, Mary offers to us a precious teaching of life. Mother and disciple of Christ the Lord, she guards and ponders in her heart the first fruits of the Gospel."*

The familiarity contracted with Jesus in carrying out her mission as Mother led Mary to become a disciple of her Son, and it is by virtue of her discipleship that she is now our loving [Mother and authoritative Teacher](#). This happened - which is not to be underestimated - "united to Joseph, a righteous man, by a bond of spousal and virginal love," the same love that circulates in the Church and makes supernatural every natural bond, which, left to itself, does not stand the test of fragility, sin and death. And this, for the simple fact that a child needs a father and a mother, in the natural as well as in the supernatural order. No psycho-sociological alchemy and no socio-political pressure should convince us otherwise.

To understand the "precious teaching about life" that radiates from the house of Nazareth for successful family upbringing, let us try to compare, aided also by Recalcati's reflections in his fine book, *'The Secret of the Son,'* the four paradigmatic figures of the relationship between parents and children that culture and Scripture deliver to us: Laius and Oedipus, the merciful Father and the prodigal son, Abraham and Isaac, Mary-Joseph and Jesus.

Belonging and freedom

It is interesting to note that Jesus, who from boyhood showed that he was supremely free, was nevertheless filially submissive to Mary and Joseph, who in turn became more and more aware of the mystery of which their son was the bearer. It did not occur to Jesus either to be free without constraint or to obey in a servile manner: his identity as son of God and son of man was perfectly harmonious. Jesus is the

concrete ideal of every son, the one who inaugurates the possibility of being grateful for the bond with one's parents, and is also able to recognize in God a greater origin and destiny.

In the story of Jesus, parents and children do not deny or kill each other: there are tensions, certainly, but they do not result in conflict and rupture. As an adult, Jesus will have the mission, lived in perfect and loving agreement with the Father and also with the consent of the Mother, to give his own life to redeem our lives, and to offer his death to free every man from death, but in his story, unlike the Greek as well as the Freudian tale—in short, unlike the family tragedy that marks man's experience and is a fundamental figure of Western culture—[there is no shadow of real or symbolic infanticide or patricide, nor is there any trace of authoritarian or incestuous affiliations](#). In the story of Jesus, law and freedom, family bond and personal destiny, find a happy human and divine accord: nothing inhuman, nothing fanatical.

In Nazareth, it fully succeeds in the educational enterprise that *every family has to accomplish, that of living a bond united to its children, of offering intense affections but respectful of its own mystery and the mystery of its children, of achieving a happy balance between old and new, between tradition and innovation*. In Nazareth, there is even the ultimate happening of God in the cycle of human generations. In the mirror of Nazareth, it applies to all that the parent-child relationship is *sharing the unshared*, continuity of common life and recognition of the originality of each. The experience of filiation is never appropriation and possession, but always somehow displacement and decentralization, and this Mary and Joseph began to understand from the very beginning, and they lived it to the end in an exemplary way. And Jesus, better than any other son, was truly a son, that is, he was able to inherit, to make his own, in an original way, what was given to him as an [inheritance](#), even becoming Himself the foundation of the new and eternal Covenant. For the task of a son, Recalcati says very well, "is not to repeat, but to take up individually, subjectively, what has been transmitted to him by those who have gone before him."

The lost son

Fear dominates between Laius and Oedipus: Laius fears his son, Oedipus hates his father. Weighing on both is a fate of death: the father tries to kill the son, the son kills the father. The law of fate applies, there is neither freedom nor grace: "Oedipus remains fixed in the position of one who, rejecting the symbolic debt that binds him to the other, constantly claims only his credit with the other. For that matter, Oedipus' father does not know, in turn, how to pass on any inheritance to his son except his own vow of death." The story of authoritarian fathers, unable to beget, and ungrateful, rebellious sons, unable to inherit, is one that tends to repeat itself, despite the best of intentions, authenticity of desires and sincere love, mostly because of 'too much' love.

And please do not say, as we often hear, that love is never too much: here 'too much' means excessive, unbalanced, unmatured love. Love is never too much when it is true love, but that is all to be seen. Yes, because parents generally sincerely love their children, and great is the affection that children feel for their parents. But the point is that loving is not enough! Loving feeling does not protect against inexperience, immaturity, selfishness. *It is important to create the conditions for children to be and feel truly free, and thus grateful to have been generated and eager to become generative in turn.*

Oedipus is the lost son, as lost is every son who does not understand the debt of gratitude to those who begot him, and misunderstands the sense of law and authority as despotic and oppressive of his freedom. It is the son who aims at self-assertion without the recognition of the other: his desire knows no bounds because he recognizes no debt. "I didn't ask you to come into the world," is the blackmail motive that legitimizes the claims of many adolescents. It must be said, however, that such a child is often the fruit of parents who, by covering him with things and care, and not with testimonies of what is true and good, necessarily and blamelessly becomes conceited and pretentious, selfish and tyrant: it is the child, says Recalcati, who "has the feeling of being in perpetual credit by rejecting all forms of debt. His demand knows no limits because it is based on the disavowal of debt. This parable properly illustrates the fate of the son when his just right to freedom stands swaggering without acknowledging any form of provenance. The imperative demand – 'give me!' - of the son does not honor the father, but implicitly

accuses him of selfishly keeping all his substance for himself."

The son found

The found son is the one in the of the merciful father (cf. Lk 15:11-32). He too is a lost son, as indeed is his older brother. Both misunderstand their father's law, which basically educates one to be both free and grateful: the one trying to assert himself through transgression, the other trying to get approval through conformity. The one losing the gifts, the other inhibited in the midst of so many gifts. For both, is decisive, in different ways, the father's word: "my son, what is mine is yours"! For the younger son, it sounds like this, "why appropriate an inheritance that no one takes away from you? Why want everything and now, prematurely and out of time?" For the elder son instead, "look, you are son, not slave! You can take it whenever you want!"

Now, how does the younger son become the found son? Here: because *the father goes beyond the law, which would condemn the son, through mercy, which instead redeems him.* In fact," Recalcati explains, "although the law imposes stoning for sons who do not honor their father and mother, this father does not avail himself of the law that would confirm him in his authority. He does this a first time by immediately depriving himself of his substance, not therefore reminding him that his inheritance is due only upon his death. As if to suggest to him, 'you do not need to kill me to be yourself, nor to violate the law to enjoy life,' he does this a second time by denying him the slave treatment his son expected, and by cladding him in his son's marks. As if to tell him, 'do not expect condemnation, but forgiveness. I do not look at your sin, but I think of you as my son!' He does this a third time by celebrating his return. Hence the Christian logic, which so many believing and non-believing parents have known and know how to live by: after a thousand admonitions to their children not to do evil and not to harm themselves. In the end, they win by not being overcome by evil but by overcoming evil with good, and this leads them to *anticipate forgiveness upon their son's repentance,* to celebrate having found him rather than hold his mistakes against him. For, forgiveness is not the fruit of merit, but a gift that overcomes all demerits. Here, too, Recalcati says it well: "forgiveness is not deserved by the son; it does not reward repentance. Rather, it is what truly makes it possible. It makes repentance possible not as cynical reasoning ('if my father keeps

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his wage earners, he will keep, at the very least, me as well as them...), but as conversion, change, authentic transformation." Theologically it is clear: repentance deserves forgiveness, but forgiveness elicits it.

What is remarkable, from a psychological and educational point of view, is that here the son is found, because the father has the courage to lose him. Recalcati appropriately points out that "the condition of the son as such always demands the right to revolt. The family cannot exhaust the horizon of the world. Just as human life needs acceptance, home, family, so, with the same intensity, it needs to go elsewhere, to separate, to cultivate its own secret. Belonging and wandering are two equally fundamental poles in the process of humanizing life." Put simply: when parents do not accept the 'educational risk' they will try to protect their child with the force of law (which today means excessive care, words, instructions, explanations, protections), unbalancing the relationship between law and desire, which instead is essential for the child's growth. Now, on the other hand, the law is only a pedagogue, says St. Paul, but what counts is grace: so, it is wrong for children not to keep the law, but it is equally wrong for parents to play the part of interpreters and guardians of the law. The law has love as its content, and the heart of love is mercy.

The sacrificed son

It is so challenging to become fathers and mothers according to the heart of God. Our faith is based on what God worked in the heart of Abraham, whom in fact, Christians recognize as their 'father in faith.' In the face of the perennial risk of 'appropriating' a son, perhaps as in the case received as a miraculous gift from God, God asks Abraham for the sacrifice of Isaac, and in this way he educates Abraham to lose his son, to know how to let go of him, to give him to himself, because to withhold a son out of too much love is to prevent him from becoming a man and from achieving something new: "Abraham faces a test that, in reality, awaits every parent. God is the symbolic other of the law that asks every royal father to give up his ownership of the son he has begotten. Is not this, the highest manifestation of the love of a father, and, more generally, of every parent toward a child? To let go of the child, to know how to lose, to sacrifice all right of ownership, to abandon, as happens to Abraham, his own son to the desert."

But more than that, it is so costly to become fathers

and mothers according to the heart of God, that God the Father Himself realizes the right father-son relationship by bringing the beloved Son into play. Solemn here are the words of St. John to express the extremity of God's love for us: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16). Remarkable! Whereas the sacrifice of Isaac required of Abraham is ultimately a "suspended sacrifice" (Petrosino), the Son's sacrifice is consummated to the end: "before the feast of Passover Jesus, knowing that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end" (Jn. 13:1). The non-paternalistic fatherhood of God and, at the foot of the Cross, the non-maternalistic motherhood of Mary, realize the masterpiece of an obedient and courageous son, capable of fulfilling his mission to the end, and of becoming the paradigm of a successful life, whose fundamental rule is that, it is vital to give life, it is mortal to withhold it: "he that hath found his life, shall lose it: and he that hath lost his life for my sake, shall find it." (Mt 10:39).

Here is what children should progressively learn so as not to avoid growing up either weak or conceited: that **life and true love are joy and sacrifice, willingness to give one's life even for the sake of receiving it, and joy in experiencing** – according to the Lord's word – that "there is more joy in giving than in receiving" (Acts 20:35). And here is what parents should avoid: if too many sacrifices were prematurely imposed in the past, today's risk is to pander to and saturate every request for enjoyment, trying to avoid all kinds of sacrifices for them. Those who have some life experience know well what Scripture already assures and repeats, "Man in prosperity does not understand, he is like animals that perish" (Ps. 48:3, 21). And he knows equally well that, if taken well, trials make one grow: "we boast even in tribulation, knowing full well that tribulation produces patience, patience a tried virtue, and tried virtue hope" (Rom. 5:3).

Roberto Carelli SDB

HUMBLE AND HIGHEST CREATURE

In our Pilgrimage with Mary, Teacher of Integrale Ecology

11. VIRGIN MOTHER

In number 241 of the encyclical *Laudato Sì*, Pope Francis states that in Mary's glorified body, thanks to her assumption into Heaven, a part of creation has already reached the fullness of its beauty. At first, it might seem that these words are only about Mary. To be resurrected with her body, just like Christ her son, is certainly a privilege of Mary. God's gifts to his Church, however, are always for the benefit of all! What is the benefit we also derive from Mary's glorification? The benefit for us is that as we look at Mary in glory, we see our destiny and are strengthened in faith, hope and charity.

The book of Revelation, in chapter 12, presents a vision at the center of which stands a mysterious woman:

"1. Then a great sign appeared in the sky: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars. 2. She was pregnant and cried out in labor pains in childbirth. 3. Then another sign appeared in the sky: a huge red dragon, with seven heads, ten horns and on its heads seven diadems; 4. its tail dragged down one-third of the stars in the sky and hurled them down to the earth. The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth to devour the newborn child. 5. She gave birth to a male child, destined to rule all nations with an iron scepter, and the child was immediately raptured to God and to his throne. 6. Instead, the woman fled into the wilderness, where God had prepared a refuge for her to be nourished there for one thousand two hundred and sixty days."

Church tradition has seen in this woman alternately the concrete person of Mary and the personification of God's people, Israel and the Church. Through this image of struggle and victory, the believing community rereads the prophecy of Genesis regarding the woman and her offspring (Gen 3:15). This mysterious woman, then, is the New Eve, that is, the Woman par excellence: she is the Mother of the new world, the world redeemed by the Lord. In her, we contemplate, as in Judith, in Esther, in the Bride of the Song and in Mary, the vocation of the Church: the call to be co-workers and collaborators with God for the salvation of the world. Indeed, the birth of the Messiah is continuously actualized, in every believer as in Mary, through the incarnation of

the Word and the action of the Spirit.

In the messianic birth described on this page, it is not that of Bethlehem but of Easter morning. The birth pains correspond to those of Calvary, where all creation was renewed in the birth of the Cross. The Son of the woman, therefore, is not only the Christ. In that child are represented all those who, reborn in Baptism, have become children of God, children of the Church and children of Mary (cf. Jn. 3:3-8; Mt. 18:3).



The woman's flight into the desert is a kind of new exodus. The desert, in fact, is a place of intimacy and divine protection: after the Lord's Passover, the time of the Church opened, a time of persecution, in which, however, the bread of life, the Word and the Eucharist never fails (cf. Hos 2:16-25).

We can look at this mysterious woman as an example of generativity and try to interpret the symbols that belong to her in this light. The woman, first of all, is clothed with the sun: that is, she is able to be fully herself in the light of God; she has nothing to hide (cf. Gen 2:25). Beneath her feet, which is the place Scripture reserves for defeated enemies, is the moon, a symbol of what in creation is unstable, because it is cyclical: to keep it under one's feet is to know and master one's own fruitfulness.

The woman is crowned with stars: the number 12 represents the tribes of Israel and also the apostles. This symbol therefore indicates the woman's dual membership in the ancient and new covenant with God. In the creation account, however, the stars represent the passage of time (cf. Gen. 1:16). The crown of stars, therefore, could also indicate the fact that the woman does not fear the passage of time but is at peace with it.

Humble and highest creature

Finally, the woman does not fear the toil, the pain, that inevitably belongs to generation. Her courage speaks of her passion for life. The child she gives birth to, however, is immediately taken away from her, because it does not belong to her. The text, later on, speaks of numerous offspring, as if to say that freedom with regard to the people or works to which we have given life is a fundamental dimension of generativity (Rev. 12:17).

The author of Revelation, a few verses later, reveals the identity of the dragon: it is the ancient serpent, the tempter who, in the Genesis account, had deceived the woman into trying to take possession by force of what can only be received by gift: being equal to God, that is, being his children (Gen 3:5). According to the book of Genesis, one of the consequences of that gesture, which expresses a radical lack of trust in the Creator, is the tendency to take possession of one's neighbor as if it were one's own: the husband does it with his wife, the mother does it with her children, generating a chain of suffering that is very difficult to break (cf. Gen 3:16; 4:1). The vision of Revelation, therefore, is a text of struggle, streaked with the blood of history, but it is also a work of contemplation wrapped in a halo of light from which the happy ending emerges: the dragon cannot have the last word. In the end, every tear will be wiped away and death will be defeated forever (21:14).

The image of the woman in labor pains is probably the fruit of the prayer of a persecuted community, which together rereads the Scriptures and interprets them under the guidance of the Spirit, in the light of the Lord's Resurrection.

The author of the text, therefore, defines it as 'prophecy' (1:3; 22:7, 19), which in biblical language is above all interpretation of the signs of the times and a call for faithfulness to the present moment. The intention of the text, then, is to help us live with hope, to be optimistic without ignoring suffering, in the certainty that the evil one no longer has power over us and that the universe is in the hands of God the Father, who tirelessly cares for his creatures.

God has promised to redeem all creation from the threat of destruction and death. Mary's glorification is only the beginning of the glorification of the whole creation. We are destined to share in the glory of Mary and Jesus, along with all of creation. God has created everything. He will cherish and redeem

because everything he has created is precious in his eyes and worthy of esteem. Now, however, creation is entrusted by God to our hands: what are we doing with it? How do we take care of so much beauty?

At the end of this year's journey, in which we have contemplated together the relationship between Mary and the believers' commitment to integral ecology, let us ask ourselves once again: **what inspires our daily actions? What sustains us and encourages us to undertake and persevere in ecological conversion even when it costs effort? Don Bosco used to say that, in difficult times, "a piece of heaven fixes everything": Mary's glorious presence in our lives and in the life of the Church can be this piece of Heaven, this reminder of God's faithfulness that always fulfills his promises.**

Linda Pocher FMA

GRACE RECEIVED

“DO WHAT HE TELLS YOU”

Following Christ in joy and sorrow, guided by the hand of Mary Help of Christians.

We are Andrea and Elena.

We have been able to recall memories during these days of how much Our Lady has accompanied us step by step in every moment of our lives and how many gifts she has given us.

FAITH

Elena: the gift of faith. We have received it personally since we were children, through different paths, through the Salesian family in schools, oratory and youth experiences, and so as Don Bosco taught us, we have lived, and still live, the figure of Mary as a simple and constant presence in our daily lives.

MEETING and WEDDING

Andrew: Another gift we received was our meeting and then marriage.

We met each other on a Marian pilgrimage. The first time I saw Elena was in a church dedicated to Mary.

In the engagement, besides the joy of being together, some wounds that we carried in our hearts also emerged. For me, the fear of losing affections, because my parents were separated when I was 11 years old, and therefore the risk of living everything as a “carpe diem,” the risk of taking everything and now for the fear of losing. While for Elena, the fear of getting married and giving herself completely in this sacrament. We understand well that these are two fears that clashed, that with our strength alone, it would be impossible to get married. So, we had to rely on Mary from the very beginning, who reminded us that nothing is impossible to God. So, day after day, one Hail Mary after another, the Lord healed our hearts and led us all the way to marriage.

We got married in Valdocco 7 years ago, and the gift within the gift was to see Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco open their doors to us. Our celebration was planned right in their home. It was really exciting.

The Holy Spirit suggested to us as the Gospel for



that day “The Wedding at Cana” where we saw our story summed up: a certain presence Mary who told us, “*Do what He tells you.*” We, in our small way, with daily commitment as Don Bosco wanted, tried to fill the jars certain that the miracle of turning water into wine would be performed by the Lord.

Out of our love, 4-year-old Anna and 2-year-old Beatrice were born. .

ADMA

Elena: One of the greatest gifts we received from Mary was the gift of ADMA, the Association of Mary Help of Christians.

We started attending this path soon after we got married on the advice of the priest who celebrated our wedding and some friends.

Right from the start, we felt like we were at home, like we were with family. We met fellow travelers with whom we could share joys, support each other in our daily lives. We also found that Salesian spirituality made of cheerfulness and commitment that we had already known as children and that, we feel, belongs to us completely now.

Two years ago, we also felt the call and the need to be part of this family, and so we started attending the aspirant’s course that prepared us to make the commitment to join the Association last October.

DISEASE

Andrew: Around this same time, as we were maturing the choice to join ADMA, we found out that Elena had malignant breast cancer. Nothing happens by accident. It was an opportunity to mature a

Grace received

greater reliance on Mary and to surrender our lives completely into her hands. It seemed to us that it is easy to receive the blue scarf and membership card but more difficult it is to surrender to God's will. During these days, however, we never lacked joy, the fruit not of our own prowess but of the graces that Mary lavished abundantly on our family. The fear of being widowed with two little girls to raise, or for Elena to be the last time she could put the girls to sleep in the evening, touched our hearts but never disturbed us. On the very day of the promise after the beautiful ritual photos, with the indescribable joy in our hearts of belonging totally to Christ through Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco, on the way home in the evening all of Elena's hair fell out, a sign that we had to undress the old man and woman, as St. Paul reminds us, because the Lord was preparing us for a new life. After six months of invasive treatment, on Maundy Thursday, Elena was operated on and the first 'thank you' was expressed right in the Basilica on Holy Saturday, all four of us together, participating in the Easter Vigil.

After about a week, we got a call from the hospital and the oncologist told us that Elena was completely cured. There will still be years of preventive care, but the healing was complete. Back in the Basilica, at the feet of Mary Help of Christians, we rendered our heartfelt thanks. I remember, that same evening, at our home, in front of the 'Capelita', that is, the small portable statue of Mary Help of Christians

that goes around every home, we knelt down with our daughters and told them the good news with the addition of sushi and crodino, to celebrate the feast. Their joy was a gift that we will always carry with us.

The prayer for us, from the whole Salesian family, ADMA in particular, and the Church in general, moved us and filled our hearts with gratitude. We received messages from Africa, from Spain, from America, the world in communion with us. The friends of ADMA gave us constant affection, prayer and closeness. Even among relatives, sometimes, one cannot experience such deep care made up of a smile or a simple WhatsApp message with folded hands.

To all goes our heartfelt thanks!

Andrea e Elena: we experienced that in the Basilica, there is not only the statue of Mary but Her living presence.

It moves one to think that an infinity of graces has departed from this Basilica. With the same feelings, we too can tell ours because we are part of this wonderful story.

We are grateful and certain that we are with you in the heart of Jesus, Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco.

FAMILY EVENTS

Rwanda – Promise by ADMA and Salesian Co-operators

On Sunday, April 28, 33 members of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) and 11 Salesian Cooperators renewed their promise, while four ADMA members and six Salesian Cooperators made their first promise. The ceremony was held at the headquarters of the 'Michele Rua' Post-novitiate in Kabgayi, belonging to the 'Carlo Lwanga' Vice-Province of Africa Great Lakes (AGL). Fr. Pierre Célestin Ngoboka, Superior of the AGL Vice-Province, presided over the Eucharist, recalling that these new members of the Salesian Family "have joined us to carry forward the mission what Don Bosco has given us."



Perù – Meeting of ADMA members: Formation, Prayer and Live-in

On Saturday, April 20, a meeting of the members of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) was held in the provincial house of the 'Santa Rosa de Lima' Province of Peru (PER) on the occasion of the visit of their World Spiritual Animator, Fr. Gabriel Cruz. Eighty-two members from the Lima centres and the centres of Magdalena del Mar, Breña, Callao, Rimac and Barrios Altos attended, as well as some representatives from the Chosica community, which is about 2 hours from the capital. In addition, several members of the Piura and Huancayo centres joined online during the training period. It was a time of formation, prayer and live-in. The meeting was organized and coordinated by the spiritual animators of ADMA Peru - Sr. Raquel Ibañez, FMA and Fr. Jozef Kamza, SDB, who is also PERU Provincial Vicar. It



should be noted that ADMA in Peru has about 20 centres (FMA and SDB) comprising of about 700 people committed to the mission: spreading love for the Blessed Sacrament and Mary Help of Christians.

Slovenia – Annual Meeting of the ADMA members

Members of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) from local centres in the Salesian Province of Slovenia (SLO) gathered at Marijanišče in Veržej on April 19-21 for their annual meeting and spiritual renewal. ADMA Provincial Assistant Fr. Janez Žerovnik, SDB, invited Fr. Miran Sajovic, SDB, for the occasion, who spoke to the participants about some members of the Salesian Family on the path to holiness from the perspective of Marian devotion, such as Blessed Sister Eusebia Palomino, FMA, and Servant of God Fr. Andrej Majcen SDB.



New Guideline – Primary ADMA responds

At the request of one of our readers, this new column '*ADMA primaria risponde*' (the primary ADMA responds) was created to offer insights into questions of general interest. Anyone who would like to suggest a topic or question can let us know by emailing adma@admadonbosco.org

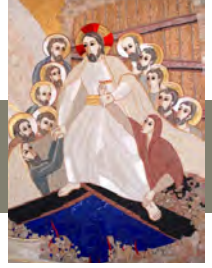


Adma Primaria
risponde



Holy Mass for the Deceased members of ADMA

Every 24th of the month, holy mass is celebrated for all the deceased ADMA members from all over the world at 9 a.m. in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin.



INTENTIONS FOR MONTHLY PRAYER

We wish to join the prayers of all ADMA groups around the world for the intention of Pope Francis:

July: for the pastoral care of the sick.

We pray that the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick will give people who receive it and their loved ones the strength of the Lord, and it will increasingly become for all a visible sign of compassion and hope.



August: for political leaders.

We pray that political leaders will be at the service of their people, working for integral human development and the common good, caring for those who have lost their jobs and particularly the poorest.

WE ARE ASKING EVERYONE TO SEND US AN ARTICLE, A PHOTO OF A FORMATION MEETING, THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 24TH OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, A VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY BEING CARRIED OUT. The article (.doc format, max. 1200 characters without counting spaces) and a maximum of 2 photos (.jpg digital format and no less than 1000px wide), with a title and/or brief description, must be sent to adma@admadonbosco.org. It is necessary to indicate in the subject line of the e-mail "Family Events" and in the text the author's data (name, surname, place of the shot, affiliation Adma, city, country). By sending, you automatically authorise Adma to process, publish, even partially, and disclose the article and photographs in any form. The images may be published, at the editorial staff's discretion, on the website www.admadonbosco.org, and/or in other Adma websites, accompanied by a caption.