



ADMA

on line

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For a shared mission.

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.*



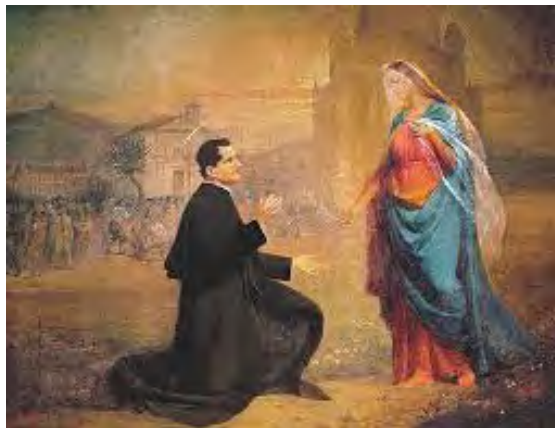
The impossible is God's way

My dear friends,

We are now entering a new pastoral year. We look back and remember the celebration of the 9th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians, which took place in Fatima with the theme 'I will give you the teacher', in memory of the dream that little John Bosco had at the age of nine and which represents the inspiration and the beginning of his whole mission.

In Fatima, we gathered in great numbers, from every continent and from different places and countries. Each of us with our own history and experience, each with our own path, but all called and wanted there by Mary and all united by feeling part of that dream that is our origin as Salesian Family.

All of us certainly came to Fatima with a dream to get back to Mary. We came with something to offer and something to ask of Her who is mother and teacher. We certainly entrusted everything we hold close to our hearts: our children, families, friends, the suffering, the sick, our projects, our communities, ADMA and the Salesian Family.



They were intense days of prayer, rich in joy, profound in content. Filled with gratitude, we want to thank Mary once again for this immense gift and to thank all those whom She used to make this congress possible. Of the many beautiful speeches and testimonies, we would like to recall two that we hope and wish can guide our journey and our choices.

The first is that of Don Andrea Bozzolo who, in his commentary on the Dream, reminded us how *'while bearing witness to the fascination of an encounter with God that seduces for ever, at the moment of the call, biblical men seem more to hesitate in fear before something that goes beyond them, than to launch themselves headlong into the adventure of the mission. The turmoil that John experiences in the dream seems to be a similar experience. It stems from the paradoxical character of the mission assigned to him, which he does not hesitate to define as 'impossible' ('Who are*

*you who command me what is impossible?')... it is not on the level of natural aptitudes that the demand for the impossible is played out here, but on the level of what can be included in the horizon of reality, of what can be expected on the basis of one's own image of the world, of what falls within the limits of experience. **Beyond this frontier, the region of the impossible opens up, which is, however, biblically, the space of God's action.'***

Let us truly remember that nothing is impossible for the Father. The dream will carry on. "Lord ask me what you want and give me what I ask for," said St Augustine. So, let us have courage, willingness and hope in animating the life of our groups, in offering our willingness to serve the weakest and most fragile.

The second sharing was that of Don Stefano Martoglio who began his concluding speech by saying *"I take the floor, after what we have heard and experienced, to reaffirm an act of personal and institutional entrustment, according to the heart of Don Bosco and the Faith of the Church. We close these days with **one of the spiritual aspects that Don Bosco perceived and lived as important on a personal level and qualifying for his work: Marian devotion.** We entrust ourselves to the maternal hands of Mary. Here now, in this holy place of Mary's presence; we ask her to make fruitful in life what we have lived, prayed and listened to here" and he goes on to say **"popular religiosity is the fifth essence, the distillate, of the experience of centuries that is brought to us as a gift; of which we must appropriate"** and again reminding us how **"Mary is, in Don Bosco's life, a perceived, loved, active and stimulating presence, aimed at the great mission of eternal salvation and holiness. He feels her close and entrusts himself to her, allowing himself to be guided and led along the paths of his vocation (he dreams of her, he 'sees' her). She is an operative presence: she who accompanies, supports, guides, encourages; she who was given to him: 'I will give you the Teacher under whose discipline you can become wise, and without whom all wisdom becomes foolishness."***



We strongly reaffirm our entrustment personally and as an Association to Mary. ADMA is asked in a special way to preserve those forms of popular religiosity and that simple and yet profound devotion which makes us live with Mary present, with Mary at home, with Mary in our families. The presence of Mary, Don Stefano reminds us, "stimulates us to live consciously in the presence of God in a process of totality": *"Al pensier di Dio presente / fa" che il labbro, il cuor, la mente / di virtù seguan la via / o gran Vergine*

Maria. / Sac. Gio Bosco' (prayer written by the saint at the foot of one of her pictures)'.
We wish everyone a happy time ahead.

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

Renato Valera,
President ADMA Valdocco.

Formation

A great symphony of prayer in the jubilee of the Church:

2. *"Be attentive to what you hear"*

Prayer is the Will of God

The Christian ideal is to do God's will 'on earth as it is in heaven'! But immersed as we are in the things and words of the world, recognising and putting God's will into practice requires the work of discernment. And discernment is done fundamentally in the light of the Word. Among the most beautiful Gospel pages on discernment is the parable of the sowing in Mark's Gospel. It is the one commonly referred to as the parable of the 'sower', to highlight God's activity; or of the 'seed', to foreground man's receptivity; or finally of the 'sowing', to embrace both the work of the sower and the condition of the soil on which he works. Here Jesus makes us reflect on the importance of our listening and cooperation. The Word becomes the principle of discernment, which asks us to approach it not only intellectually but also and even more practically: it is always true in the things of God: tasting more than knowing, living more than just understanding, doing good and detaching oneself from evil more than recognising just good and evil!

In this parable, the link between prayer and the Word is evident. It is, in fact, sandwiched between two recommendations concerning the 'crisis' of the Word, the fact that the Word of God is both good news and judgement, and the fact that man is not always well disposed to listen to it: 'Listen...Pay attention to what you hear...Let him who has ears to hear hear... and if you do not understand this parable, how will you understand all the other parables?' In the middle, the most dramatic, even difficult to understand: "To you has been confided the mystery of the kingdom of

God; to those outside, on the other hand, everything is set forth in parables, so that: they may look, but not see; they may hear, but not understand". One understands then that the different types of ground mentioned in the parable do not refer to our morality (pure and impure, righteous and sinners, leaders and outcasts), but precisely to our listening to the Word, where what counts is not just hearing but listening, and listening with particular attention, because the Word bears fruit if it makes us change our mentality, if it reshapes our way of evaluating, judging and acting. If this happens - Jesus suggests - we will go from good to better, otherwise from bad to worse: "to the one who has will be given, from the one who does not have will be taken away even what he has."

In any case, *the he underlying message of the parable is one of joy*. This is understood from the conclusion, where Jesus emphasizes the superabundance of fruit: "another one fell on the good earth, bore fruit that came up and grew, and yielded now thirty, now sixty, and now a hundredfold." The lesson of the parable, ultimately, is that despite apparent frustrations and failures, Jesus' ministry will certainly bear wonderful fruit. This is also true for our mission as imperfect disciples: much of the work will be lost, many will be those who for a thousand reasons will not understand or accept it: and yet we can be sure that in the end our labour will bear fruit, and abundant fruit.

We note here *the realism of Jesus*. The parable in this sense is easily understandable. We have here



the normal story of a farmer: he sows sparingly and, inevitably, much seed is lost for a variety of reasons; birds, brambles and stony ground are well known to farmers and typical of the difficulties they face. Optimism, however, prevails: no farmer despairs of this loss of work and seed, however, because it is to be expected, and he can still have a good harvest after all. We too are called to be very realistic: it is not possible to be good soil, it is not easy to become good soil; it is not easy to have had a real encounter with Jesus and to have recognised him as Lord, it is not easy for our sons and daughters to make a decisive choice of faith. It takes time, it takes whole life, a story made up of opportunities and temptations, of falls and resurrections.

It should also be noted - something very important in our performance society - that the story of the Word and prayer is a process of growth: sowing, sprouting, maturing, bearing fruit. As if to say: it is not a question of understanding everything right away, or of always succeeding: what is decisive is to be good soil. Even the metaphor of the four soils is ultimately dynamic: from time to time we are now one soil, now the other, at times we are inhospitable, at times we are barren, still at times we are agitated, in others still we are welcoming and fruitful.

In order to clarify the meaning of the four soils, let us follow Jesus' explanation: **1.** There are people who hear the Word but are deprived of it by Satan: it is the land along the path, where a bird catches the seed before it can produce; **2.** There are people, who hear the Word and rejoice in it, but defect during tribulation and persecution: it is the rocky, rootless ground, where the seed does not take root; **3.** There are people who hear the Word, but are so enamoured or preoccupied with the world that the Word is overwhelmed: they are the soil where the seed germinates but is suppressed by bushes; **4.** There are people who hear the Word, welcome it, and bear fruit: they are the field made of good soil, which also produces with surprising abundance.

As the soul frees itself from the obstacles to listening, the work of discernment comes to the fore. Here the Church has elaborated much very concrete wisdom. Let us recall some cardinal points: **1.** The good spirit leads one to recognise that Jesus is Lord and to choose according to the Gospel; **2.** The good spirit leads one not to divide, not to break charity; **3.** The good spirit frees one from pride and selfishness, while it makes humility and charity grow, makes faith, hope and love grow. Hence: when faced with

an inspiration, look where it leads you; **4.** The good spirit is a source of joy and peace, inspiration and consolation, it removes obstacles and infuses courage, while the evil spirit saddens and agitates, infuses false reasoning and desolation, exaggerates obstacles and leads to discouragement; **5.** Therefore, in desolation, it is necessary not to make changes, to remain firm in intentions and decisions, and to remain very much in prayer, to be patient; instead, in consolation, move! Fear is never spiritual: 'in love there is no fear'. Moreover, in consolation one must remain humble, while in desolation one must feel strong!

To go deeper, *keep in mind St. Ignatius' four rules for making a good choice:* **1.** The first is that the love which impels me and makes me choose such a thing comes from above, from the love of God, so that the one who chooses first feels in himself that the love, which he more or less has towards the thing he chooses, is only for his Creator and Lord... **2.** Imagining a man whom I have never seen or known to whom I desire all perfection, consider what I would tell him to do and choose for the greater glory of God our Lord and for the greater perfection of his soul, and I will observe, doing the same, the rule dictated for the other... **3.** I will consider, as if I were on the point of death, the behaviour I would then have adopted in the present choice, and, regulating myself according to that, I will firmly make my decision; **4.** Imagining and considering how I will find myself on the day of judgement, I will think how I would then have deliberated about the present thing, and the rule I would then have followed I will now adopt, so that I may find myself *alloca* with great pleasure and joy.

Don Roberto Carelli, SDB



Family Alphabet

How to *love* deeply

There would still be so much to say about love. But to understand the struggles of today in realizing such a beautiful and demanding love project as that of the family, called to unite and distinguish all the dimensions of love - passionate and brotherly love, nuptial and filial tenderness, eros and agape - there are a couple of considerations we cannot omit.

The reconciliation of law and love

Prominent among the reversals of our time in matters of love is the subversion of God's commandment to 'love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbour as yourself' (Mk. 12:30).

The first thing that stands out, and which our time forgets, is that *love is the object of command and the meaning of command is love*. As if to say: 'look, love has its own laws, and don't try to invent them yourself; but rest assured, the heart of the law is ultimately love!' reveals a God sincerely concerned to protect human love from the forms of its corruption. The modern dissociation between law and love, on the other hand, has something diabolical about it: apparently it favours the spontaneity of love. But in reality, by making it arbitrary and unstable, it mortifies it. By rejecting the evangelical paradox that reconciles law and love, one enters a forest of contradictions: love, which aims at constraint, becomes intolerant of all constraint. An entire civilisation thus enters the tunnel of discomfort: the excess of the law, mortifying desire, yesterday produced neurotic, repressed and transgressive people; the defect of the law today exposes desire to every invasion, producing people with psychotic tendencies, continually oscillating between control and loss of control over their impulses, relationships and events.

The unity of love of God and neighbour

The second instruction that comes from God's commandment *is the unity and asymmetry between the first and second commandments*. The whole of Scripture chorally affirms that love of God is inseparable from love of neighbour: one is the foundation of the other, the other is the fruit, verification and deepening of the first.

On the other hand, Scripture warns that love of God is not on the same level as love of neighbour: one

cannot love any creature as one loves God, that would be idolatry! That is why son against father, mother against daughter, and daughter against mother, mother-in-law. Jesus, precisely to protect family affection, is very strict: 'whoever does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and even his own life, cannot be my disciple' (Lk 14:26). Jesus knows our struggle to keep God in the foreground - He is so discreet! - compared to human affections - often so cumbersome! - and that is why he says: 'henceforth in a house of five, they shall divide three against two and two against three; father against son and son against daughter and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law' (Lk 12:53). In short, if you put human affections before the love of God, you lose the one and you lose also the others. Otherwise, claims and resentments ensue, and they are tears and sorrow.

In concrete terms, imputing one's own evil to one's parents, expecting one's own happiness from one's spouse, projecting one's own success onto a child, are all forms of idolatry, which mortify people and destroy bonds. On the contrary, the more and more people decide for God and resolve to do His will in everything, the more they find themselves and each other: 'you will receive a hundredfold' (Mt 19:29)!



The order of love

The last thing to note is that *the three loves of the commandment are arranged according to a precise hierarchy: love of God, love of neighbour, love of self*. The message is clear: the primacy of God's love frees self-love from the bondage of pride and selfishness, opening love of neighbour to courage and generosity. No wonder then that in a society such as ours, which



marginalises the love of God and puts self-love at the centre - 'take care of yourself', 'try to love yourself', 'you cannot love others if you do not love yourself' - the love of neighbour is so scandalously trampled upon. Yes, because when a whole society speaks of love in terms of self-fulfilment and relational well-being, of success and satisfaction, the result will always be pitilessly uneven: weak and narcissistic identities, incapable of deciding for oneself and being accountable to others; hence fragile relationships, shaky memberships, and short-term contracts.

The Christian will hold firm, for the good of all, the minimum and maximum that the word 'love'

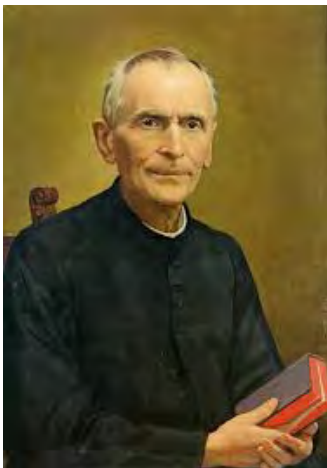
suggests: *love is giving life, not withholding it. It is dedication and sacrifice!* And without forgetting the right symmetry, because God can and must be loved above all things, while others must be loved as themselves. Otherwise love becomes possessive and obsessive. It becomes domination and dependence. To wit: how many men are servile to the stronger and aggressive with the weaker! And how many women annihilate themselves for the sake of their children or play the victim!

Roberto Carelli, SDB

(Source: Roberto Carelli – Family Alphabet)

Salesian Blessed and Saints

29 October: *Michael Rua, Salesian Priest, Blessed*



One day Don Bosco confided to Fr. Costamagna: "If God were to say to me: prepare to die, but choose a successor, because I don't want your work to cease; for him ask for as many graces, virtues, gifts and charisms as you think necessary, and I will grant everything: I assure

you, dear Costamagna, that I wouldn't know what to ask, because I already see everything in Fr. Rua".

Michael Rua was born in Turin on 9th June 1837, in the working-class neighbourhood of Borgo Dora; his father worked in the arsenal and the family lived in a lodge in the factory. Within a few years, the mother was left alone with two children. Having lost his father, Michelino's eyes often stopped to watch the workers at work in front of the red-hot ovens where the artillery pieces were melted down. It was a kind of barracks where the boy attended his first two classes of education. This was followed by third grade at the Brothers of the Christian Schools, called to the Borgo years earlier by the Marquis Tancredi di Barolo to educate the children. It was among the school benches that he met Don Bosco, who sensed something special in the little boy's eyes. Holding out his hand, as he was used to do with so many boys, he told him: "You and I will do everything by halves".

Those words remained imprinted in Michael's heart and from that day on he took him as his confessor. Third grade was the last compulsory class and when the 'saint of young people' asked him what he was going to do the following year, he replied that, being an orphan, they had promised his mother in the factory that they would give him a job. For the priest, who was also fatherless, convincing the woman to let him continue his studies was not difficult and Michael entered as a boarder at Valdocco, already 'populated' by over five hundred boys. Meanwhile, the priestly vocation was sown in his heart and on 3rd October 1852, he received the clerical habit from the saint at the Becchi of Castelnuovo. The following year was a special year because the 4th centenary of the Eucharistic Miracle was being celebrated. Don Bosco had written a booklet for the occasion and one day, as they walked together through the streets of Turin, he jokingly predicted to the young man that he would have it reprinted fifty years later.

On 26th January 1854, Don Bosco gathered four young companions in his room, giving birth, perhaps unwittingly, to the Salesian Congregation. Present at the meeting were John Cagliero and Michael Rua, who was charged with drawing up the 'minutes'. Inseparable friends, they were among the most willing when, in August, a cholera epidemic broke out in the city, probably brought by veterans of the Crimean war. In the poorest neighbourhoods, the two generously helped the sick and Cagliero fell seriously ill. As a collaborator of the 'Company of the Immaculate' with Dominic Savio, he was a



model pupil and an apostle among his companions. On 25th March 1855, in Don Bosco's room, Michael made his simple 'profession': he was the first Salesian. At Valdocco, there were shoemaking, tailoring and bookbinding workshops. Many boys saw their lives changed. Some were able to study, others gathered there in the evenings after work, others only on Sundays. Michael became the saint's main collaborator, despite his young age. He won his complete trust, even helping him transcribe the drafts of his books, often at night, stealing the hours from his sleep. During the day, he went to the San Luigi oratory, near Porta Nuova, in an area full of immigrants. The most marginalised were the boys who came down from the valleys to the city in search of work as chimney sweeps. Rua, taking catechism and teaching in primary schools, knew countless stories of misery. The oratory was also frequented by St. Leonard Murialdo and Blessed Francesco Faà di Bruno. In November 1856, when Margherita Occhiena, Don Bosco's mother, died, Michael called his own mother to look after the young people of Valdocco. Mrs. Giovanna Maria would do this for twenty years, until her death. Attending the seminary, in those days, because of the anticlerical laws, was not easy but despite this, the young man did it with profit and, indeed, many companions studied using his notes.

In February 1858, Don Bosco wrote the Rules of the Congregation and the 'trusted secretary' spent many nights copying his indecipherable handwriting. Together they took them to Rome for the approval of Pope Pius IX, who, in his own hand, corrected them. Michael had to copy them at night while during the day he was the founder's shadow, busy accompanying him to meetings with various personalities. The following year, the Pope made the Salesian Congregation official. On the evening of 18th December 1859, the day the Congregation was born, Fr. Rua, ordained sub-deacon the day before, was unanimously elected Spiritual Director. On 29th July 1860, Michael Rua was ordained a priest. At the altar of the first Mass were white flowers donated by the chimney sweeps of the San Luigi Oratory. Three years later, he was sent to open the first Salesian house outside Turin: a small seminary in Mirabello Monferrato. He stayed there for two years and returned to the city while the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians was being built in Valdocco. Don Rua became the reference for many activities, even answering letters addressed to Don Bosco. He worked non-stop and in July 1868 he even came close to death because of peritonitis.

Though the doctors were of the opinion that he was dying, he recovered; some said through Don Bosco's intercession. Several religious vocations were born among the Oratory boys, over seven hundred. In that year, the work on the shrine was completed; In 1872, the first Daughters of Mary Help of Christians made their religious profession; In 1875, the first missionaries left for Argentina led by Fr. Cagliero. Later the Cooperators and the Salesian Bulletin were born. Valdocco had reached enormous proportions, while in Rome, Pope Leo XIII asked the Congregation to build the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Don Bosco was often travelling through France and Spain and Don Rua was at his side. By 1884, the founder's health was declining and it was the Pope himself who suggested him to think of a successor. Fr. Rua was appointed vicar with right of succession by the pope on 7th November. On the night of 30-31 January 1888, in the presence of many priests, he accompanied the saint's hand in giving the last blessing. He then remained kneeling before the body for over two hours.

He became Rector Major of the Salesian Society and Don Bosco's first successor. Don Rua was its faithful interpreter, realiser, consolidator and continuer of the charism in all its dimensions, with a very clear objective from the beginning of his mandate. The other thought that remained fixed in my mind was that we must esteem ourselves very fortunate to be children of such a Father. Therefore, our concern must be to support and, in due time, to develop more and more the works he began, to follow faithfully the methods he practised and taught, and in our way of speaking and acting to try to imitate the model that the Lord in his goodness has given us in him. This, O beloved sons, will be the programme I will follow in my office; let this also be the aim and study of each of the Salesians.

That exercise by Don Rua is above all a charismatic and exemplary government: Don Rua himself is a charismatic and exemplary person, that is, he governs by good example, being a true model. He does not project himself, but Don Bosco and his charisma always and everywhere: before his Salesians, before the Church and civil society. Therefore it can be said that while he governs with intelligence, his governance is even more strengthened by the holiness and moral quality of the person.

Fruits of this animation and government are: *the expansion of Salesian foundations* often opened with poverty of means and scarcity of personnel and in



many places having to face very difficult situations; *the missionary expeditions* sent to support and bring to full development the works already began and to attempt new ones, particularly among peoples not yet evangelised. During his 22 years of leadership, Don Rua increased the number of Salesian foundations: from 64 houses at Don Bosco's death, to 341 houses in 1910, the year of his death.

Another fruit of this action blessed from above and supported by tireless commitment was *the growth in vocations*. Don Rua's constant insistence on cultivating vocations made Salesian houses a school of Christian formation, often reminding the Salesians of the core of their vocation; overwhelming love of God that is transformed into love of neighbour. For Fr. Rua, the excellence of any Salesian work consists in the ability to promote vocations, and this is an indication of fidelity to Don Bosco's charism, as well as being a sign of the fruitfulness of the Salesian pastoral and pedagogical system. At Don Bosco's death, there were 768 Salesians; at Don Rua's death there were 4,001 professed Salesians and 371 novices. This work of vocational promotion was accompanied by a stabilising action in the formation process, with the establishment of formation centres: novitiates and philosophical and theological studentates.

This work of governance and animation found its source in fidelity to Don Bosco and his charism, through the mediation of the Constitutions and the Regulations, the lived experience of Salesian community life, direct contact with his writings either in the original or in translation, and the approach to those who had lived at his side. Fr. Rua was convinced that insisting on Salesians living in close communion with the person and figure of Don Bosco was a sure way to overcome individualism, isolation and the liberal tendencies visible in external society, to strengthen a strong sense of belonging to the Congregation and to create prayerful, harmonious, fraternal and apostolic Salesian communities, united under the directors and firmly linked to the Provincial, Rector Major and General Chapter.

Fr. Rua was a tireless missionary, a faithful interpreter of the preventive education system. Travelling hundreds of kilometres, he visited the houses of the Congregation around the world, coordinating them as one big family. He said that his travels had made him see 'poverty everywhere'. The first great industrialisation made peasants abandon their land, for a meagre wage earned in the

factory after endless days of work. The Salesians took many children off the streets, opening oratories and schools that, despite their simplicity, quickly became centres of welcome and education. Don Rua *was a great innovator in education*: in addition to schools, where he introduced vocational courses, he organised hostels and social clubs. As head of the Congregation, he dealt scrupulously with administrative matters, which sometimes led him to be harsh with his collaborators. The words that Don Bosco said to him when he was still a young boy often came to mind: 'You will have a lot of work to do'.

For Don Rua, among many satisfactions (in 1907 Don Bosco was declared venerable, in 1908, the Roman church of Santa Maria Liberatrice was finished), there was no lack of trials and difficulties. In 1896, the anticlerical government of Ecuador expelled the Salesians from the country; the same happened in France in 1902. In 1907, in Liguria, in Varazze, some heavy calumnies against the Congregation had to be answered through legal channels.

The Masonic plan fell apart and the slanderers had to flee abroad. However, Don Rua's health was seriously affected. Under the weight of years, he was bedridden. He died on the night between 5 and 6 April 1910, murmuring an ejaculatory taught to him by Don Bosco when he was a boy: 'Dear Mother, Virgin Mary, let me save my soul'. The 'second father of the Salesian Family' was buried beside his teacher. Paul VI beatified him on 29th October 1972, stating: 'The Salesian Family [...] had in Don Bosco its origin, in Don Rua its continuity [...]. He made of the saint's example a school, of his Rule a spirit, of his holiness a model [...]. Don Rua inaugurated a tradition'. His tomb is now venerated in the crypt of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin.

Prayer

God our Father, you have given Blessed Michael Rua, the priest, spiritual heir of St John Bosco, the ability to form in young people your divine image; grant us, called to educate the young, to make known the true face of Christ, your Son.

We beseech you to glorify your servant, and to grant us, through his intercession, the grace we ask of you...

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Pierluigi Cameroni, SDB

(Source: Pierluigi Cameroni - Like stars in the sky)



Guidelines of the Association of Mary Help of Christians

2. Da Mihi Animas in ADMA: *The defence of Christian Faith*

In compliance with the 'Da mihi animas' inspired by the Holy Spirit, Don Bosco founded the ADMA - an association of lay faithful - for the defence of the Christian faith of the common people, with the young and the poorest as special goals.

In a spirit of communion with the Church and the Salesian Family, through the rediscovery of a new prophetic, priestly and royal conscience of the laity, ADMA wants to promote the formation and maturation of lay people by proposing:

- **A path of solid Christian spiritual life accessible to all ages**, which focuses on the personal relationship with Jesus Eucharist, under the maternal guidance of Mary Help of Christians, through prayer, participation to the sacraments and catechesis;
- **An integral human formation in tune with the preventive system**, fostered by the development of Christian virtues, which occurs in relationships with others and in the responsible assumption of one's duties as a citizen. We set the formation paths of the Association starting from those offered by the Church and the Salesian Family and in particular from the Strenna of the Rector Major.

Mary invites us, in communion with the whole Church, to defend and nourish the faith of the family, the vital cell of society and the Church, the 'cradle' where we learn to take the first steps of education to love, starting from the most vital relationships.

At this time of great confusion, as lay people, we feel called to be not only the object, but also the subject of evangelisation. We therefore want to promote paths that help spouses to live the beauty of marriage with joy and the education of their children with maturity, a task that primarily belongs to them. We look with an attentive eye to all the youngest families, to those with teenage children, with an open, listening vision, capable of grasping the signs of the times, of welcoming and nourishing.

We look at the family from an open perspective, listening, capable of reading the signs of the times, and we address all adults who, even if not associated, wish to integrate faith into daily life, in a Salesian spirit, as honest citizens and good



Christians. In an inter-generational perspective, we value the experience and wisdom of the elderly, actively involving them in the community journey and offering them opportunities to live their stage of life to the full.

We also look to young people to offer paths of human and Christian formation, paying particular attention to collaboration with the Salesians, the oratory or the formation centre. Accompanying mature adults, who bear witness to the beauty of the different vocations to love in the Church - priests, consecrated men and married couples - is an opportunity we have found fruitful.

Every youth is considered a Salesian heart. However, we primarily address the adult portion of the Salesian Family, with an inter-generational look at the whole family. Therefore, our care for the youngest (boys, girls and young minors) is primarily as part of the family. ADMA activities for young people are therefore not so much oriented towards creating youth groups in their own right, but rather alliances to contribute - in the centres, in the oratories, in the Salesian Youth Movement - to the construction of proposals for young people. In this context, as ADMA, we can offer young people our dimension as a Eucharistic and Marian group and our attention to favouring spaces for prayer and encounter with the Lord, taking care of the interiority. Such formative proposals should have a subsidiary and complementary character, finding from time to time the most suitable community form - gatherings/camps and meetings - to help young people deepen their relationship with Jesus and Mary.

Special attention is devoted to the formation of new members. For them we have drawn up a booklet and



set up a one-year programme, led by a team of lay people and priests. This journey, besides helping them to understand what a richness it is to belong to the Association, aims to make them appreciate the beauty of the gift of welcoming Mary into their lives, as St. John did, and to share the graces that associates receive daily with gratitude.

The commitment to education does not exhaust the apostolate of the Association: we note with joy how so many groups around the world, following the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, also strive to respond to so many other needs, such as the fight against poverty.

Guidelines

Remembrance of Mary Help of Christians of 24th: *Guidelines*



For the commemoration of Mary Help of Christians on the 24th of every month, an hour of prayer to meditate on the life of Jesus through Mary's eyes is proposed

as a guideline:

- **Expose the Blessed Sacrament.**
- **Introduce the recitation of the Rosary** with Pope

Francis' monthly prayer intention.

- **At the beginning of each mystery**, mention the mystery and read the Gospel carefully.
- **At the end of the Rosary**, invite participants to express free prayer intentions.
- **To conclude, say a Salesian goodnight** (maximum 5 minuts).
- **It is important to recommend** the sacrament of **Confession** at the beginning of the prayer time.
- **The prayer is accompanied by musical animation.**

Family Events

Myanmar: Beginning of ADMA in the country

On Wednesday the 24th July 2024, the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) was launched in Myanmar, with the first 66 members making their promises.

The solemn celebration took place in the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians of the 'Don Bosco-Nazareth' work in Anisakan, and was presided over by the Superior of the Salesian Vice-Province of Myanmar (MYM), Fr. Bosco Nyi Nyi, assisted by the Delegate for the Salesian Family, Fr. John Gam Seng.

During the ceremony, medals, regulations, badges, cards and association uniforms were presented to each member. Meanwhile, in other cities of the country, there are also a good number of lay people who are preparing to join ADMA, the fourth group of the Salesian Family.





Spiritual Exercises of ADMA Primary

The Summer Spiritual Exercises of the Turin ADMA Primary concluded on Saturday 17th August, held under the theme: 'Your Word is a Lamp to my steps'. The days of retreat were organised in Valdocco in July and in the Salesian house of Pracharbon, in Val d'Ayas (Val d'Aosta) from 28th July to 17th August divided into 5 groups. Almost 500 people, belonging to different ages and conditions participated in it: families with young children and teenagers, adults and elderly people, underlining the mission of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) in offering inter-generational training, in which people who are going through different phases of life can enrich one another and walk together, united by their common faith in Jesus and by their entrustment to Mary Help of Christians. The catecheses were guided with great care and depth by Fr. Gabriel de Jesus Cruz Trejo, Spiritual Animator of the Primary ADMA, by Fr. Michele Molinar sdb, the Vice-Provincial of the Salesians of Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta, Fr. Roberto Carelli Sdb, Professor of Theology and Fr. Pierluigi Cameroni, Postulator General of the causes



of beatification and canonisation. The presence of Sr. Lucrecia Uribe Duque, FMA, Delegate for the Salesian Family, and Sr. Marilena Balcet, Councillor of the Primary Adma, was also invaluable, as they accompanied the participants, fostering an atmosphere of friendship and sharing.

Congress of Mary Help of Christians at Fatima

The 9th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians held at Fatima at the end of August brought together more than 1,300 participants from over 44 countries, including priests and lay people. It was an important moment of reflection, highlighting the universality of Marian devotion and the importance of Mary in the life of the Salesian Family. Fr. Andrea Bozzolo, Rector of the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, presented Don Bosco's 'Dream at Nine' as a symbol of the Salesian vocation and mission.

For him, Don Bosco's dream experience is seen as a divine revelation that profoundly shaped his life and mission. In the dream, Don Bosco sees young people in a large courtyard, a symbol of the educational mission that would be entrusted to him. The appearance of a Christological figure and the presence of Mary Help of Christians reveal the need for a 'caring' and 'guiding' approach to young people, Fr. Bozzolo stressed.

'Don Bosco's mission is an invitation to transform the impossible into the possible, through faith and



obedience, revealing the paradoxical character of the divine vocation, where the light of truth is often accompanied by obscurity and uncertainty,' he explained.

Finally, Fr. Bozzolo emphasised that true education and transformation must take place through gentleness and charity, and not through repression and punishment. Don Bosco's Preventive System is inspired by this approach, reflecting the importance of gentleness and love in the formation of young people, a central principle of Salesian pedagogy and



Christian practice,' he emphasised.

Fr. Juan José Bartolomé, a Salesian with a degree in Theology and a Doctorate in Sacred Scripture, in his presentation, on the theme 'Mary of Nazareth, teacher in the art of discernment', highlighted Mary's journey from the birth of Jesus to her adolescence,

using different biblical passages. Exploring Mary's vocation as a model of faith and obedience to God's will, he observed: "Before choosing God, she had to accept that God had chosen her; (...) those who are aware that they have been called feel graced by Him; like Mary, to find one's vocation is to have found God's grace".

New Guideline: *Primary ADMA responds*



At the request of one of our readers, this new column '*ADMA primaria risponde*' (the **primary ADMA answers**) was created to offer insights into questions of general interest. If you would like to suggest a topic or send question, please let us know by e-mail at adma@admadonbosco.org

Mass for the deceased ADMA members

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



Monthly Prayer Intention

For a shared mission

We wish to unite the prayers of all ADMA groups around the world for the intention of Pope Francis.

For a shared mission

We pray that the Church will continue to support in every way a synodal lifestyle, as a sign of co-responsibility, promoting participation, communion and shared mission among priests, religious and lay people.