

“Entrust Yourself, Have Faith, and Smile!”

Greetings to all. We are Elena and Elisabetta, University students, who began a journey a number of years ago with other young people of ADMA in Torino. Today we hope to share with you our experience in a very concrete way, beginning with "entrust yourself, have faith, and smile" - the motto that we seek to live every day with Mary's help.



Entrusting oneself is this: TO ENTRUST is to place into the Lord's Hands all our difficulties and uncertainties. It is precisely *entrusting ourselves* that starts us on our journey – the one traced out by the Rosary we pray every 24th of the month, during the day, or at times of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In fact, it might sound strange and - permit us to say - absolutely counter-cultural that a young person should draw near to a prayer that is so traditional and slow in a world in which everything is "right away" and where so much depends upon how many "likes" we get on a post. And yet, it is precisely this putting ourselves into the Lord's Hands that is a true and proper training ground for life, helping us overcome difficulties and uncertainties in a concrete way.

An image comes to mind, which we saw a while ago, of Baby Jesus who, like all other babies in a moment of need, calls insistently to his Mom, grabbing onto her dress. We recognized ourselves in this very familiar scene in the moment in which we tangibly felt the power of such an entrustment, when praying insistently for various difficult situations in our life. Moreover, when we saw hundreds of persons, among whom were many children, on their knees praying the rosary, we were certain that we would see miracles: not only extraordinary or "over the top" ones, but also hidden ones, the most precious and concrete, among which is also our conversion.

Time after time, the Rosary became the soundtrack of our life, even in the smallest difficulties. It is like the time when a Priest came to tell us how he had remained struck by two young middle school girls in our group, who, while climbing a mountain that never seemed to end, told him to say a rosary so that – in their own words – Mary would give them a kick so they could climb faster. And don't think that we're talking about some modern-day Dominic Savios, either; we are not!



Or when we recited the rosary on the bus in Italian and Arabic with the young people from the Middle East this summer during the Salesian Youth Movement Days while traveling to Campus Misericordiae with members of the Salesian Youth Movement. It came spontaneously to us to pray the rosary when our bus driver was having a hard time finding the right road. Praying together, with reciprocal support and in thanksgiving, we found and shared the different stories of our faith: the one that you live with difficulty among bombs and tears because of the war, and the one that limps along in the midst of a spreading western atheism.

In this way, we learn to *have faith* and to build our house on rock. It is through contact with the ADMA families that we experience extraordinary witness in a concrete way. In a time such as ours in which one cannot speak of trust, chastity, fidelity, and, above all, of vocation, to experience in a tangible way that these ideals do not fall if they are founded on Christ, is the most beautiful hope that we young people can nourish. Thanks to this launching of the family and youth pastoral, our security is reinforced. Who could still be afraid if he or she places his or her future in God's hands? It is this which we learn when we see Priests, Sisters, and couples living their Call with fecundity. Growing up with these families, fear and uncertainty diminish and our future looms bright and rich in significance. At the same time, we recognize in the Priests a gift from God and we thank them with our prayer.

Finally, with a *smile* on our lips, we seek to be witnesses to the Gospel of Joy, on the invitation of Pope Francis. It is a joy which goes beyond any of the pre-fabricated game plans of this world and brings us to live a holy and healthy friendship in profundity. The is not a friendship which is "dorky" or

“sanctimonious”, but full of enthusiasm and simplicity, which makes us enjoy life and grow to be “true friends in the matters of the soul,” as Dominic Savio underlined in the Rule for the Sodality of Mary Immaculate. Who better than he knows how to indicate to us the road to youthful sanctity, which consists in staying very happy?



It is God who is the guarantor of our friendship and who enables us to extend our initiatives to other friends who are even outside of ADMA. Indeed, we have no fear when proposing experiences which someone might define as being too high and unattainable. We know that, in truth, there lives inside each young person the desire to be looked upon with a loving gaze, one that opens him or her up to be able to receive and accept the Love of Jesus.

In giving service we seek to give witness to the fact that reason, religion, and loving-kindness are still today a healthy and holy trinomial for every child. Pope Francis this summer was peremptory when he said: "If you do not serve others, you are good for nothing." For this reason, also, being inserted into the reality of the ADMA families, we offer the children the experience that we have made of God during our retreats and in our friendship.

Beyond living our journey of formation in the annual retreats for ADMA Youth, we are also very much involved in the various initiatives of the Salesian Youth Movement – whether bringing our young people there or whether just in making ourselves available. Even if they knew us already, still at the beginning of

our involvement with them, their first reaction was unreal: "ADMA what?" "But are you a wandering oratory?" But now, they are starting to grasp the attractiveness of this experience and the reality that it is - in its simplicity and in its accessibility to all. In these last months, other young people in other Salesian parishes have begun prayer gatherings and times for sharing on the 24th of the month to help the journey of the oratory along.

Thus, we proceed one step at a time along this journey with Mary and, thanks to Her, at every step, we *entrust ourselves, we have faith, and we smile.*

