



*Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians*  
*Formation Sector*

# **GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMATION PERIOD OF TEMPORARY VOWS**

**Rome 2017**

**Rome, FMA Institute 2017**

## Presentation

Dearest sisters and formation communities,

With simplicity and joy I present to you the Guidelines for the formation period of temporary vows, fruit of work done together by the Formation Sector, International Commission, Formators and, above all, Temporary Professed Sisters as those who are primarily responsible for their own formation.

In fact, if the leading role in all formation is played by the Holy Spirit, grace cannot be used to the full and remains ineffective without the free and responsible co-operation of the person directly concerned. Many human persons intervene in the formation of the Temporary Professed. The more they become channels through which the abundant grace of the Spirit can flow, the more efficacious their mediation is because it transparently manifests the very face of God.

As an Institute, we already have secure guidelines for formation available: Church guidelines, FMA Constitutions, Plan of Formation "*Rooted in the Covenant*", as well as the Guidelines for the Educational Mission of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians "*That They May Have Life and Have Life in Abundance*".

However, something more specific was required that would be in dialogue with today and would also challenge the communities in which the Temporary Professed Sisters live the years from after the Novitiate until Perpetual Profession. This period is fundamental for the progressive building of the identity of the Daughter of Mary Help of Christians.

What follows are simple guidelines directed towards practical action that every Province and community can enrich and adapt according

to the context, without however, neglecting fundamental elements that come from the Gospel and the Charism.

From the Provinces and individual persons, the Sector received very rich material that, unfortunately, we have had to summarize, although we are aware that by doing this, many interesting nuances have been lost. Let me assure you that nothing of what you have offered was useless because we will keep it in mind in what we do and propose.

The six chapters that comprise this text are preceded by an introduction to help to situate it within the journey of the Institute. The first shows the *challenges* in the global context that have a close influence on formation. The second focuses on the *voice of the Temporary Professed, the formation communities, and the formators* who were consulted by means of an appropriate questionnaire sent by the Formation Sector. The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters respectively regard the *convictions* developed by listening to the local and province realities, the preferred *choices* and some *indications* for the journey that will need to be enculturated in each place. The center (Chapter three) presents the *icon of Mary at Cana*. It seems to represent the FMA vocation and mission very well according to the Salesian charism: to collaborate in the growth of life, hope, and joy in the younger generations.

In entrusting this work to the Provinces, I ask Mary Help of Christians to open hearts and minds to receive it with joy so as to make it daily life, enriching it with your practical experience.

Rome, 13 June 2017

Sr. Yvonne Reungoat  
Superior General

# **INTRODUCTION**

**The Institute Questions Itself**

**Mother Yvonne's Report at GC XXIII**

**A Choice of the Formation Sector**

**Steps of the Process**

<p><i>In dialogue with reality</i></p>	<p><b>The Institute Questions Itself</b></p> <p>1. Sensitive to contemporary cultural challenges, the Institute places itself in dialogue with reality and questions itself on how to respond to the needs of the young FMA, whose life is shaped by contemporary culture. They are Sisters who desire a consecrated life able to recognize their need for God and for the total gift of self to young people; one that offers them the possibility of living their vocation with enthusiasm and fruitfulness. This implies proposing adequate paths of formation. Therefore as an Institute, we are called to re-plan programmes of formation, offering common objectives, flexible in the area of personalization and of the passage from content to process; a clearer mystagogic, educational accompaniment; readiness to search, together with the young people in formation, for the most adequate ways and to follow these with them.</p>
<p><i>And with the spiritual experience of the Founders</i></p>	<p>2. The passion for Christ is present in our experience, the commitment to respond as Church, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the call to follow Jesus. This must be integrated with the human face of the spiritual and foundational experience of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. The challenge is to form persons who choose to consecrate themselves, within a specific charism, living the beauty of a life that, before being a 'commitment', is above all a gift of love and happiness. The challenge is to form persons "capable of awakening the world", who, by living fidelity, know how to give the reason for the joy that inhabits them. They know how to become a witness, a proclamation, a companion, someone close, thus expressing the pastoral charity of the charism (Cf C 1-7).</p>





<p><i>With clear, well-grounded Guidelines</i></p>	<p>This initial journey lays the foundation so that ongoing, life-long formation will not only be possible, but will be desired, sought after, undertaken with care, and loved! It requires a process of discernment that looks toward the horizons suggested by the Spirit and lets itself be led to great things through the sign of the weak and the fragile.</p> <p>7. The Institute, especially the communities and the young Sisters, expect Guidelines that are clear and well-grounded, that will help them to grow in vocational identity, empower the mystagogic and missionary dimension of the community so that their testimony may be contagious, and that awe and gratitude in the encounter with what is new and different can be experienced. The indispensable condition is to place oneself in an attitude of ongoing formation, aware that 'life generates life'; courageously to assume clearer planning with regard to the formation of the formators and of the formation communities.</p> <p><b>Steps of the Process</b></p>
<p><i>Guiding criteria for reflection</i></p>	<p>8. The criteria that have guided this reflection from the beginning were those of listening to reality, involvement, participation, inter-congregational and intercultural dialogue, in creative fidelity to the charism and to the Magisterium of the Church and of the Institute.</p> <p>Almost 100% of the Temporary Professed and the communities who have these Sisters present replied to the questionnaires sent to them on May 24, 2015. Almost all of those interviewed, 649 Temporary Professed and 249 Formation Communities, responded with openness, freedom, sincerity, sense of belonging, and of co-responsible participation in the process.</p> <p>The responses were gathered and organized by Province,</p>

<p><i>Expanded Team and International Commission</i></p>	<p>Interprovincial Conference, and theme. To these were added those previously sent to the coordinators for formation. This contribution allowed us to deal with a question that is vital to the whole Institute, beginning with the experience of many of those directly involved in the formation process of the Temporary Professed.</p> <p>9. An expanded team was formed that, in the preparatory phase, identified the goal, "<i>Beginning with the dream of a mystical and prophetic consecrated life, to re-plan the formative phase of Temporary Profession by elaborating Formative Guidelines that are uniform for the whole Institute, open to enculturation in the various contexts, within the broad and dynamic horizon of a changing social and ecclesial reality</i>" and methodology that guided the work of the Commission convoked from June 8 to 16, 2016.</p> <p>The International Commission formed by FMA belonging to nine Interprovincial Conferences, was guided and inspired by the Word "<i>See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?</i>" (Is 43: 19), and listening to the wisdom of reality, focused on: <i>the signs of life</i> (what has been born and is growing), <i>the difficulties</i> (what blocks and prevents the journey), <i>the calls</i> (what challenges, provokes, urges change and demands a response), <i>the dreams</i> (what is expressed or underlying in view of the future).</p> <p>One great certainty animated and guided the various steps of the process: that the Holy Spirit would not allow His light and His guidance to be absent in offering the Temporary Professed a formation that is faithful to the Charism and responds to today's needs.</p> <p>The Commission, full of expectancy, assumed the task with joy and, at the same time, with a sense of responsibility. It undertook intense work, marked also by</p>
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<p><i>Mary at Cana: inspiring Icon</i></p>	<p>moments of fatigue, traversed with hope and optimism, with the certainty that they were building and giving birth to 'something new'.</p> <p>Attentive listening to the life of the Temporary Professed, to the formation communities, to the Formators, and dialogue with the social-cultural and ecclesial realities, allowed for a broader vision of the reality of the Temporary Professed at the world level.</p> <p>The attitude of discernment, openness and flexibility, allowed the reorientation of the journey many times and the convergence on some guidelines, experiences and conditions that were held to be a fundamental part of the formation journey of the Temporary Professed, and the responsibility of accompaniment on the part of the formation community, the Animator and the Provincial.</p> <p>10. The Biblical text of <i>Mary at Cana</i> (John 2:1-11) was identified as the inspiring icon for the mystagogical mission of the formator, openness to the Spirit, and the docility of the Temporary Professed on their journey toward the gift of self to God in following Christ forever, as well as the involvement and foreseeing attention of the community that joyfully celebrates the feast of the transformation of the water into wine.</p>
<p><i>The Plan of Formation – fundamental reference point</i></p>	<p>11. Listening to the life of the protagonists at this formative stage reinforced the conviction that the Plan of Formation is more relevant than ever. The Institute deems it a fundamental reference point for the formation stage of Temporary Profession. The Guidelines proposed focus on some aspects that require special attention and care, and need to be assumed in the formation journey throughout the whole time of the temporary vows in order to respond to the challenges that our times bring for the formation of the new generations.</p>

	<p>Therefore, the challenge and the commitment remains to adopt what is proposed by the Plan of Formation in regard to the Temporary Professed, enriched by the Guidelines, and translated into <i>enculturated formative journeys</i> (Cf <i>PF</i> pp. 11, 50).</p> <p>Today, more than ever, formation requires planning, identifying clear objectives and conditions for adequate accompaniment.</p>
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# **1. Challenges in today's context that need to be faced in the formation process during the stage of Temporary Profession**

*The Challenge of Identity*

*The Challenge of the Family*

*The Challenge of Spirituality*

*The Challenge of Relationships*

*The Challenge of Migration and of Intercultural Relations*

*The Challenge of our Common Home*

*The Challenge of Communications*

**1. Some challenges in today's context that need to be faced in the formation process during the stage of Temporary Profession**

<p><i>Discernment in times of change and transformation</i></p>	<p><b>12.</b> The rapidity of the processes of change and of transformation is the principle element that characterizes contemporary societies and cultures. As a result of the combination of great complexity and rapid change we find ourselves in a situation of fluidity and uncertainty never before experienced. This is a fact that must be accepted without pre-judgment as to whether it is a problem or an opportunity. This situation calls for the adoption of a global vision, an attitude of vigilance and discernment, a re-thinking of our formative style.</p>
<p><i>Globalization, anthropological revolution and formation</i></p>	<p>Structurally, globalization characterizes the world in which we live and generates multiple and complex challenges for society, for consecrated life, and for the formation of the younger generations. We find ourselves faced with an anthropological revolution that calls into question the human person in its need for meaning and hope. The plurality of proposals offered in the context of globalization, generates a greater exchange at economic and commercial levels, but it does not automatically create greater solidarity among individuals and peoples. At times, we see radical forms of individualism and particular cultural identities being considered absolute, isolation, closure in one's own interests, and forms of ethical relativism.</p> <p>In this context there is an urgent need for formation that is able to enter into dialogue with diversity, to express fraternity and solidarity in the face of</p>

<p><i>Challenges that effect the life of the Temporary Professed</i></p>	<p>indifference generated by fear. This requires a formation that responds to the need for authentic personal relationships, the demand for communication that is not manipulated; the request for company, attention and care.</p> <p>In what follows we will highlight challenges that effect the context and life of the Temporary Professed. However, we are aware that these traits, which characterize society and mark the lives of all the FMA and in particular of the young Sisters, need to be interpreted within the practical reality specific to each region. Although we are dealing with global trends, the differences among various realities remain significant.</p>
<p><i>Multiple Identities and Memberships</i></p>	<p><b>The Challenge of Identity</b></p> <p><b>13.</b> The younger generations show an open and dynamic identity. They claim the right to be different, to self-esteem, responsibility, seeking meaning for their life, and struggling for solidarity and peace. However, they must face a daily reality in which the human person seems to be lost, confused, and fragmented. They live in a world traversed by multiple visions of life, often deprived of a uniform meaning able to offer security, orientation, hope. In fact, the human person, immersed in <i>multiple identities and memberships</i> that are often virtual, suffers a loss of image, that is, of a sense of identity that allows one to feel less confused and dispersed. The value of the person, though affirmed in theory, is often disregarded at the level of the effective protection of one's rights. On the other hand, the exasperated demand for individual rights can lead to individualism and increases the solitude of the</p>

<p><i>Humanism centered on Christ</i></p>	<p>person, who is often drowned in activism.</p> <p>This challenges the entire formation of the FMA, and in a particular way, the formative phase of temporary profession, because of the uncertainty introduced by the passage from a more 'sheltered' stage, like that of the Novitiate, to a more exposed one, typical of the apostolic mission of the post-novitiate community. The formation community must be attentive to promote a non-defensive identity, but one that is <i>open and flexible</i>, capable of finding its way between diverse cultures and of sharing <i>the world as everyone's home</i>. The challenge of identity calls to us as well, to form people able to live with greater clarity a <i>humanism</i> centered on Christ: the humanism of the incarnation, closeness and face to face encounter with another. It is Jesus who gives a face and meaning to every human being. In Him, we can all recognize each other as brothers and sisters. The humanism witnessed to by Jesus is a practical humanism, a humanism of closeness, listening, companionship and gift.</p>
<p><i>Beauty and complexity of the reality of the Family</i></p>	<p><b>The Challenge of the Family</b></p> <p>14. Today, the family presents a diversified and complex panorama. It is the first environment where the person receives the opportunity to grow and it remains the foundation on which the identity and individuality of each human being is built. The family is still the first value listed by young people in the statistics of the various Countries. Pope Francis, in the Apostolic Exhortation <i>Amoris laetitia</i>, dwells at length on the beauty of the family founded on matrimony and on the love that supports it, but is also aware of the challenges that threaten to weaken</p>

<p><i>Context of the family of origin and family spirit</i></p>	<p>it today.</p> <p>Diverse models of family are emerging in the various social-cultural contexts. As with all social entities in a time of weak and precarious identity, in many cases families experience situations of fragility. They are not encouraged to undertake the journey needed to rebuild, where possible, serene and harmonious relationships, whether for the stability of the marriage commitment or for the good of the children, although there are praiseworthy initiatives in this regard. In addition, gender theory continues to make inroads and has even reached the point of calling into discussion the identity of the person.</p> <p>The formative community is challenged to keep in mind the family context from which the young person comes with a view to personalized programmes of accompaniment. We cannot take for granted the existence of a solid faith journey or of affective and vocational consistency. The formation community seeks to witness to the beauty, not only of a caring family. It is also a demanding family in which one gives, receives, and grows while trying to make personal resources available, in an exchange of gifts between those who possess a solid experience and those who are seeking to understand the dynamics of the community and to insert themselves fully into it. The 'family of the community' supports this effort of the young person, but cannot take away the difficulties. However, it can accompany the young Sisters in facing them. Above all, it believes that the Charism is put into practice in the life of each one. In community, we take care of each other, and together, we take care of the life of the young people, living the <i>da mihi animas cetera tolle</i></p>
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<p><i>Communities characterized by a circular style and mutual relationships</i></p>	<p>according to the spirituality of the Preventive System. No one stands <i>looking out the window</i>. We are all 'consecrated for a mission'. In addition, <i>we ourselves are the mission, a prophetic challenge</i> for today's world.</p> <p>The family spirit desired by our Founders requires co-responsibility and a model of authority exercised according to the circular style of animation proposed by the documents of the Institute. This style favors mutual relationships, places resources in communion, values inter-generational relationships as precious opportunities for mutual appreciation and giving of trust (Cf <i>PF</i> pp. 151-159).</p> <p>Even in the houses in which the various sectors of the community mission are primarily entrusted to the young Sisters, the mission remains a community mandate and is a generator of life in the measure in which each one collaborates in the joy of those who are directly involved for the good of all, especially the poorest.</p>
<p><i>Search for Spirituality and Religious Syncretism</i></p>	<p><b>The Challenge of Spirituality</b></p> <p><b>15.</b> There is no question about the young people's need for spirituality. Surveys show that among them there is no real crisis of religion or of the search for meaning. Indeed, a notable group of people exists who feel the need to delve into the dimension of spirituality in order to find equilibrium and harmony. Certainly, the religious dimension tends to be relegated to the private sphere and absorbed into the context of the satisfaction of individual needs. It is often a religiosity for individual use, for personal comfort; a religion of consolation and not of responsibility, which involves the emotional and</p>

<p><i>Thirst for more human relationships</i></p>	<p>psychological aspects, but neglects the values that serve to support it over time like fidelity, constancy, coherence with choices, assumption of responsibility, life plans.</p> <p>It is not an institutional religious spirit, but rather one that is private. Thus, young people continue to migrate spiritually from one experience to another in a repeated attempt to experience to the full, new and more or less mystical emotions. These may satisfy them individually but never quench their thirst because each choice is abandoned as soon as there is a new weight to bear, or the reality of community needs to be met and faced up to. Their desire to encounter Jesus emerges in this frenetic world, which is so fragmented and rapidly evolving.</p> <p>The fact remains that there is a large section of young people who show considerable openness to the religious question, which however must evolve into more mature forms of identification and of belonging.</p> <p>The risk of a certain spiritual anemia, provoked by internal and external causes, challenges us as formative communities to consider if and in what measure, we represent the spiritual oasis that people and especially youth sometimes seek, even without knowing it. We are convinced that formation communities can represent that alternative for which today's world waits.</p> <p><b>The Challenge of Relationships</b></p> <p><b>16.</b> The quality of relationships is one of the greatest prophetic challenges.</p> <p>There is hunger and thirst for <i>more human relationships</i>, for universal fraternity: the greatest antidote against indifference. However, everyday life</p>
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<p><i>Perspective of the periphery: a precious resource for formative growth</i></p>	<p>entire world has become a place in which to live our mission in multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-faith contexts. As a reaction to globalization and to this movement of peoples, we see new forms of nationalism cropping up, the building of walls that divide and separate, thinking that this will protect the identity and well-being already acquired.</p> <p>The challenge of intercultural relations urges us to overcome situations of mere co-existence and place ourselves in a <i>new cultural perspective</i> that finds the reason for its existence in <i>encounter, dialogue and sharing</i> among diverse cultures. This means building a constructive relationship with the other – culture or individual – in the sense of <i>deciding and making a practical effort</i> to approach, to communicate reciprocally, to dialogue and to enrich each other.</p> <p>Thus, intercultural relations need to be <i>built</i> on all fronts as an objective, a commitment, a responsibility, a principle of education and formation, an indispensable task for everyone. This means that <i>authentic formation must be intercultural</i>.</p> <p>As a formation community, we face these challenges by assuming the perspective of the periphery. We can see everything better from there. In contact with the diversity of others and with the periphery, perhaps we will be able to accomplish a real change of mentality. Often, direct contact with situations of poverty, of degradation, of rejection provoke a positive shock that does not leave us indifferent. With Jesus, we recognize that our place as Christians is not one of privilege or power, but of feeling one with the people of God, side by side with the poor. We must allow the young Sisters to live and to reach the places where they can experience suffering,</p>
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*Listening to the  
cry of Mother  
Earth*

injustice, ignorance, religious indifference. We must accompany them gradually so that they can live this experience as a precious resource for growth and formation and for evangelization, not only in favor of the poor, but also for themselves.

The periphery can be a way to nourish the family spirit, to keep alive the fire of the charism for the poorest young people. This is present in the reality of community, oratory, human and social advancement. It is also present in the school, though it is sometimes more difficult to remain in step with those who cannot make the grade and to plan beginning with the least.

### **The Challenge of our Common Home**

**18.** Our *common home* is traversed by a crisis of sustainability. The cry of Mother Earth is also the cry of entire populations forced to migrate for climatic as well as other reasons: the spread of the desert, environmental pollution, poverty, injustice, violence and war. The environmental crisis is, at the same time, a human, ethical, and spiritual crisis. In a reality where everything is interconnected, there is in fact, only one crisis, Pope Francis stated in the Encyclical *Laudato si'*, and those who pay the price are the poorest. Consumerism, individualism, social politics that privilege only some groups, create pockets of increasing hardship and rejection.

To respond to this challenge, grand political choices are not enough. There is an urgent need to promote in ourselves and in young people, an attitude of *taking care*: nourishing one's spiritual life, overcoming indifference, trying to feel the suffering of so many of our sisters and brothers, overcoming the temptation of activism, but rather reflecting together with young

<p><i>Contemplative gaze and 're-enchantment'</i></p>	<p>people and the lay people, on the great questions of life and on the signs of hope that we can give. We will not solve the great problems, but these signs will show that we are taking on renewed ecological responsibility.</p> <p>We ask ourselves what type of formation and education we impart; what attitudes and styles of life we promote. The religious vows that we profess not only require purification of the heart, but also a change in the way we consider creation. We see it with the contemplative gaze of one who knows how to recognize beauty and makes daily choices that preserve it. The Letters of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life during the year of Consecrated Life, speak of <i>re-enchantment</i>, not only in reference to the first call and to vocational joy, but to all of creation.</p>
<p><i>Digital technology generates a new anthropology</i></p>	<p><b>The Challenge of Communication</b></p> <p><b>19.</b> Communication is an ever-present dimension of our life and of our educational mission. It has brought great advantages in knowledge and relationships, especially on the technological level. It has produced a certain uniformity of consumer goods. It has made us more aware of situations that were once inaccessible. It has globalized knowledge, putting it online, available to many. It has brought peoples and cultures closer. However, it has not always improved the quality of relationships. The excess of information can create familiarity, and finally, indifference. Slowly, digital technology leads to new habits, new ways of thinking, relating, and acting that express a new anthropology.</p>

*Humanization  
of the digital  
environment*

In the area of formation, it is important to look at the enormous possibilities of these means, as long as we do not forget that it is the human mind that uses them. We are not adolescent victims, but educators, attentive, in the first place, to cultivate our humanity; educators who do not forget the priority of really meeting the other person face to face. We do not deny that ubiquity – being in many places at the same time – which is a characteristic of the contemporary world on the network, can induce even the FMA, especially the younger ones, to be involved only in episodic experiences; to involve themselves in multiple membership and at times, not experience any of them as the foundation of their lives. They could feel the same about fidelity, believing that they can abandon it, as they stop a program they no longer like.

Instead, temporary profession is the time in which, they can savor more completely, the joy of the call, the mystical and prophetic power that radiates from it. It is important that together, Temporary Professed and older Sisters, learn to make the digital environments more human so that they may serve the good of the person, of their growth in freedom and responsibility.

The joy of feeling ourselves a family allows us to communicate in depth, sharing moments of fraternity and of life, and together directing our attention towards a joyful proclamation to the young, also making use of technology as our Founders would have done.

*Awake and  
vigilant to form  
today*

**20.** The challenges and uncertainties we live, together with our contemporaries, re-awaken our hope, fruit of faith in Jesus Christ who continues to

	<p>repeat to us “Do not be afraid”. This urges us to seek ways to write our story under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by Mary, awake and vigilant, in dialogue with the new generations, and re-awakening the joy of the call. These are challenges that call us to review the structure of formation, basing it on the Constitutions, on the Institute’s Plan of Formation, on the guidelines in the booklets, <i>“One Generation Speaks to the Other”</i>, especially the one on inter-generational dialogue, elaborated by the Formation Sector.</p>
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## **2. Listening to the Temporary Professed, formation communities, and formators**

### **The reality of the Temporary Professed**

#### **How might one describe our Temporary Professed?**

##### **2.1. From 'already' to 'not yet'**

*Experience of God*  
*Charismatic identity*  
*Community*  
*Mission*  
*Accompaniment*

##### **2.2. Challenges that emerged from the life of the Temporary Professed**

##### **2.3. Dreams of the Temporary Professed**

## 2. Listening to the Temporary Professed, formation communities, and formators

<p><i>The young Temporary Professed of today</i></p>	<p><b>Reality of the Temporary Professed</b></p> <p>21. The Temporary Professed live the challenges brought by the socio-cultural changes taking place. Those who respond to God’s call, although attracted by high ideals, at the same time carry within themselves the issues and problems of their generation.</p> <p>It is for this reason that we approach these young women, who have encountered a God who is real, with great awe and hope, but also with a certain fear and trembling. He looked at them with love and this was enough to bring about a human-spiritual experience of great importance. God calls them and makes them new. He does not concentrate on their wounds, but aims at the person’s capacity to love and entrusts each with a mission.</p>
<p><i>Passage to a community in mission</i></p>	<p>Temporary Profession, in respect to the Novitiate, requires the readiness to manage a new reality. Both the Institute and the Temporary Professed find themselves facing formative challenges which provoke a radical change of vision, perspective, and mental paradigms both in the Temporary Professed and in the community.</p> <p>On the one hand, there is the experience of a noteworthy change in respect to the Novitiate because life is no longer as regulated, accompanied, and supported in every crisis of faith or of tears. Religious life in temporary profession seems less</p>

<p><i>Traits of the Temporary Professed</i></p>	<p>protected, but in effect, it challenges the young woman to meet God, to act in His presence in the multiplicity of new experiences lived in a community in mission. Even the possibility of initiative for the Temporary Professed is greater than that of the Novices and, perhaps, they feel less closely accompanied.</p> <p>On the other hand, the life of the Temporary Professed looks more like that of other young people who are not consecrated because, like them, she must study, face demanding professional challenges and make decisions with increasing responsibility. However, she is challenged to do all this according to her own identity as a consecrated FMA, inspired by deeper motivations, different from those of her companions of study and profession. As an FMA, not having to think of her future or her plans, she is called to seek only the demands of the Kingdom of God in the accomplishment of her mission.</p> <p>The young women who respond to the Lord's call and enter our Institute bring with them the characteristics they share with their peers. This marks all expressions of life and even their way of integrating spirituality and the Charism in the process of building their personality.</p> <p><b>How might one describe our Temporary Professed?</b></p> <p>22. By the very fact of being young, they enjoy a lot of energy, a gift that sometimes becomes a disadvantage because they find it difficult to wait. The formative processes of spiritual growth are experienced as slow and lacking newness. Obviously, it is not easy to understand the silent and slow</p>
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	<p>development through which God reveals Himself as a real possibility for one's life.</p> <p>They value time and need to busy themselves with 'important things', in what has a resonance, and becomes an event for their life. What they deem important, is not always so for the very 'mature' communities in which they live. Yet again, there is the clash between structures created by a 'big story' and personal experience, characterized by little stories or events in which the Temporary Professed feels she must remain, participate in, and live.</p> <p>Listening to the life of the Temporary Professed, of the formation communities and of the formators through the questionnaires, puts before us a reality that bears signs of life and also of fatigue, of an already and not yet, which expresses the joy and the work of moving toward the progressive consolidation of their FMA identity.</p>
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## 2.1 From 'already' to 'not yet'

<p><i>Need to unify life in Christ</i></p>	<p><b>Experience of God</b></p> <p>23. What emerges in a special way is the need for interior life. The experience of feeling oneself loved by God, the certainty of the Lord's presence in one's life, of His mercy, give sense and meaning to existence.</p> <p>The responses express an awareness of the need to unify one's life in Christ, to deepen one's encounter with Him in personal, community, and liturgical</p>
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<p><i>Difficulty in integrating all the dimensions of life in pastoral charity</i></p>	<p>prayer, listening to the Word, the celebration of the Sacraments of Eucharist and of Reconciliation. They recognize the way of prayer, of remaining with Jesus, of nourishing themselves with Him, and of letting themselves be renewed by His merciful embrace as privileged ways of nourishing their relationship with the Lord. These also challenge their life, and lead them to evaluate daily “where is my heart directed towards”, to ask themselves: “What has happened to my heart today”.</p> <p>The desire is manifested to let themselves be shaped by the Paschal Mystery, by identification with Christ, by developing a contemplative attitude that leads them to share the journey towards holiness with the Sisters and the young people.</p> <p>Almost all emphasized the emergence of a difficulty in unifying life, integrating all the dimensions of consecration: prayer, study, community life, and mission.</p> <p>On one hand, this difficulty is attributed to too many activities, to activism that characterizes the ‘hurried life’ of the community. On the other hand, this fatigue makes them feel the weight of intense work, of an accelerated rhythm of life. But perhaps, it also indicates the lack of a deep knowledge of Don Bosco and of Mother Mazzarello, of their untiring work that had its source in interior life, in the theological virtues, and in first place, pastoral charity. In addition, it is necessary to be aware that action must simply be an overflow of the interior life and spirit of contemplation, which does not seem to be so alive in their spiritual experience.</p> <p>There is a noticeable weakness of faith, sometimes expressed in lack of trust in the Lord as the sure</p>
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reference point for the building of their identity, in the inability to discover His presence in their story and in those who mediate God's presence, in the difficulty of reading events from God's point of view. There is the perception that prayer does not transform their life and that often, they lack coherence and transparency in living the evangelical counsels.

A secularizing mentality is still present that shows itself in a certain individualism, a worldly mentality that places self at the center, one's interests, the fear of an uncomfortable journey that leads beyond success and passing glory, a weakening of the passion for the *da mihi animas* because the *cetera tolle* frightens them. They experience scant openness to asceticism, to living one's life the way Jesus did, in perfect obedience to the Father; to accepting the Cross because on it is Christ, who showed all His capacity to suffer for love.

However, they have the certainty of God's call to Salesian life and they are aware of the demands of responding to this vocation.

### **Charismatic Identity**

The Temporary Professed manifest a clear awareness of their identity as FMA and the experiences through which the charism and Salesian spirituality are expressed.

**24.** Mary is present in the experience of the Temporary Professed in all contexts. The filial relationship with Her emerges strongly; the sense of her constant presence in their life, in prayer, in the effort to live their consecration and mission (Cf C 44).

*Presence, trust  
and filial  
relationship with  
Mary*

<p><i>The Preventive System in the style of Salesian loving kindness</i></p>	<p>Mary's company in daily life is expressed through keeping their eyes on Her as the model of motherhood, obedient servant, attentive to needs, disciple of the Son. Her company is experienced in times of difficulty, when they feel her present as the Mother who accompanies and supports them on their journey, guides them in important decisions and in the mission.</p> <p>What emerges less is the contemplation of the marvels God has worked in Her, her generous and humble response, in the pure and simple faith that marked her personal journey of response to God.</p> <p>At the same time, there is little awareness of Don Bosco's intention that we should be the living Monument of gratitude to Mary with all the spiritual and educational implications that this brings in itself and of the necessity of expressing it in practical action.</p> <p><b>25.</b> The responses lead us to return to the, often highlighted, need to study, share, and live the Preventive System, not only as an educational method, but as a specific spirituality in the Church according to the form proper to the Salesian charism. A dimension that must certainly be given attention is Salesian assistance (Cf C 67) undertaken in all its richness as a friendly presence, listening, foreseeing love (Cf C 1), with its value as sacrifice and gift. It is probably from this perspective that we need to consider the often manifested difficulty of remaining with young people whose languages we do not understand, and from whom we feel distant by reason of different cultural preparation. Often, it is difficult to dialogue with them because they belong</p>
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<p><i>The community, workshop of Salesian life</i></p>	<p>deep need for it, but at the same time, all the weaknesses that impoverish it are brought to light. The ordinary means of Salesian tradition like the Good Night and community meetings, are amply present as something in which there is regular participation. However, they do not seem to be used as opportunities to re-read, from a wisdom perspective, events or certain circumstances that would require a community reflection of the kind that could allow for the development of a deeper and more spiritual dimension of daily life.</p> <p>It is this practice that we find present in the experience of Don Bosco and of Mother Mazzarello, who used to begin from experience to help recognize the presence of God and of Mary in daily life.</p> <p><b>Community</b></p> <p><b>28.</b> The Temporary Professed see the community as a place of growth. They perceive they are unconditionally accepted, listened to and accompanied by it, valued in their own uniqueness, supported in taking on responsibilities, and in their sense of belonging. 'Living and working together' (Cf C 49) is recognized as an important element for growing in their identity as FMA; as a 'workshop' in which they can share and learn pastoral organization, educational experiences, prayer in the Salesian style, sisterly relationships, and educational relationships with young people. It is also an opportunity to learn from the experience of other Sisters, especially the older ones.</p> <p>It appears that the Temporary Professed Sisters both see the need for, and make an effort to build fraternal relationships that are more human, able to favor communion in the light of the Gospel, becoming an</p>
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<p><i>Young consecrated on a journey</i></p>	<p>experience of mutual affection that can overcome conflict. They affirm that daily life, lived in community, favors growth in relationships and in intergenerational dialogue, reciprocity in giving freely, the experience of collaboration and growth in co-responsibility. In addition, they express the desire for mature community relationships, rooted in Jesus, aimed at fulfilling the common educational mission. By living the family spirit, the community contributes to vocational growth. It becomes a place where the joy of life together is expressed. It encourages the living of a happy and coherent life, and seeks to appreciate the contribution of the Temporary Professed in an atmosphere of trust and joy (Cf C 50).</p> <p><b>29.</b> The Temporary Professed recognize a weakness in the awareness of the Trinitarian, prophetic dimension of life and of community relationships (Cf C 36). They manifest the need for clear relationships that allow for autonomous growth and freedom in religious life, overcoming relationships and attitudes that make people 'childish'. They recognize the need to live sisterly relationships that help to manage the difficulty of affective solitude.</p> <p>Besides, in reference to some contexts, they express the fear of making a mistake, of being judged, of not being understood, and this generates a defensive attitude that is also shown in the difficulty of accepting sisterly correction. The difficulty in accepting correction is also caused by the way in which this is given, which does not always respect the requirement of 'saying it in private' and making it part of an honest and sincere sisterly dialogue, dictated by affection and the will to help human and spiritual growth. This attitude requires reciprocity</p>
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<p><i>In a community that is built in the midst of lights and shadows</i></p>	<p>that allows those who are older in years to be open to receive sisterly correction from the Temporary Professed when circumstances call for it.</p> <p>Another difficulty is the presence of only one Temporary Professed Sister in a community made up of older Sisters. This lack of other young Sisters with whom to share and dialogue, together with a weak communion of life because of generational distance, sometimes leads to a temptation to isolation or to forms of individualism that can lead to dependence on technological means.</p> <p>The Temporary Professed also recognize the weakness of their capacity for living the attitude of 'going out of self' in relationships and their personal contribution to community life and to the mission, undertaking some areas of management of the works, and participation in community work. Sometimes there seems to be a lack of a sense of belonging to a reality made up not only of people, but also of places, services, contributions that coincide with the good functioning of the whole. Little readiness is seen to prefer the good of the community and/or another Sister to one's own in the ordinary circumstances of life.</p> <p><b>30.</b> The community sometimes lacks adequate preparation to undertake its formative task; to welcome the Temporary Professed and live, in a positive way, the fatigue of intergenerational relationships and of changes brought about by the presence of younger members and the resources they may contribute; to favor the serene insertion of the Temporary Professed into an already existing situation and to encourage the development of autonomy, freedom and co-responsible participation.</p>
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<p><i>The poorest young people nourish educational passion</i></p>	<p>The presence of the Temporary Professed requires from the community greater clarity in their charismatic identity, capacity to risk by being involved in new and different experiences, to discuss and share them, accepting the possibility of making mistakes, being open to dialogue, trust, and ready to learn from the Temporary Professed.</p> <p>The community does not always give coherent witness, to a life unified in the spirituality of the Preventive System, lived in the everyday, expressed in communion regarding the educational plan, values based on the Gospel and the shared mission. At times, it does not show awareness of being the theological place of fraternal experience in which each one is responsible for the Gospel fidelity and vocational growth of each Sister, whether Temporary Professed or a Senior Sister.</p> <p><b>Mission</b></p> <p><b>31.</b> The Temporary Professed are aware of participating in the apostolic mandate entrusted to the Institute by the Church in favor of young people of the working classes, of those who have less possibility of success in life and are more exposed to danger.</p> <p>They affirm that the encounter with the poorest young people helps them to recognize the face of Jesus in them. It reinforces their charismatic identity, and their passion for the educational mission realised in the style of the Preventive System. This inspires the Educational Project according to reason, religion, and loving kindness and viewed from the perspective of its cultural, evangelizing, social, and communicative aspects (Cf <i>Guidelines for the Educational Mission of the FMA</i> nos. 41-57).</p>
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<p><i>The shared mission reinforces charismatic identity</i></p>	<p>There is a clearly manifested desire to live a life that is more essential and human, with less heavy structures, so as to be more easily available for situations of poverty, suffering, and weakness present in more marginal contexts. Perhaps poverty is not lived coherently as a theological category in imitation of the Son of God who lowered Himself to walk the roads of the world and the theology of the Incarnation which is the foundation of Salesian Spirituality.</p> <p>The Temporary Professed manifest the desire to reach young people where they are, to understand their language through experience that takes place also in works typical of Salesian tradition: schools, residential facilities, catechesis, social work, parish, street oratory in the style of 'remaining with young people', and of Salesian assistance proper to the Preventive System. They value the possibility of experiencing an adequate accompaniment through guided experience that facilitates a gradual integration into the mission.</p> <p><b>32.</b> In some contexts, they experience this shared mission, not only with the Sisters, but also with the lay people and youth. They recognize that this experience reinforces charismatic identity, personality, and vocation, the sense of responsibility and of co-responsibility and often helps them to develop a clearer self-concept, in addition to developing the capacity to form relationships different from those experienced in community.</p> <p>The young Sisters are open to newness and are ready to live within diverse cultural horizons through temporary missionary experiences to better experience the beatitude of the poor, to witness that</p>
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<p><i>Fatigue of the mission</i></p>	<p>limitations can be overcome with joy by those who live freely in Christ and have learned to love. They are sensitive to relationships capable of favoring integral human development, of promoting a culture of encounter that is expressed in the search for the common good and in the joy of life.</p> <p><b>33.</b> The Temporary Professed are affected by the fatigue of the communities and of formation in going beyond an encounter of solidarity with the poor who struggle for life, to create daring projects in defense of downtrodden rights, to recognise the small signs present that can inspire steps and choices in a new direction.</p> <p>However, the ability to plan and organize the 'outgoing' mission either at personal level or at that of community sharing has not yet been fully developed. The Temporary Professed experience the struggle of undertaking and expressing in practice the spirituality of the Preventive System and the prophecy of free self-giving.</p> <p>Some young Sisters do not feel they are prepared for the mission entrusted to them because they lack experience and because of difficulty in dialoguing with the weaker groups and/or those more culturally prepared. This difficulty seems to be caused by not ensuring a gradual integration into the mission after the novitiate, an effective meeting of hearts around a shared project, and accompaniment in all its phases (Cf C 96). This discomfort sometimes leads to their remaining distant from young people for fear of not being able to respond to their needs.</p> <p>The Temporary Professed feel themselves overburdened with responsibilities and with work that they often have to carry out alongside their</p>
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<p><i>Need of accompaniment and readiness to let oneself be accompanied</i></p>	<p>studies. They are aware of not studying in depth due to lack of time. The result is a diffused discomfort and a sense of inadequacy that does not allow them to involve themselves profitably in growing in their apostolic and professional identity.</p> <p><b>Accompaniment</b></p> <p><b>34.</b> The Temporary Professed stress how they feel being responsible and involved in their own formation as the signs of life. Every day this re-proposes the need to begin from Christ, to place Him, Word and Bread, at the center of life, and to live in a habitual attitude of discernment, of re-reading daily experience, starting from listening, dialogue, an attitude of recognizing God who makes Himself present in the ups and downs of human life. Accompaniment sharpens one's awareness and the discovery of oneself, openness to dialogue and to sharing, the passionate desire to contribute to the building of fraternal community, and of relationships lived in an evangelical style through the power of charity.</p> <p>However, the clearly expressed awareness of being called to live the formative journey in first person does not exclude the need for accompaniment and the readiness to let oneself be accompanied. To this end, they recognise the positive contribution offered by the Animators and by the communities and the effort to utilise the different opportunities.</p> <p>The Temporary Professed show awareness of the need for a guide who welcomes and accompanies them with gentle empathy; who helps them to overcome haste, fear, the tendency to quit; one who knows how to wait with patience without however letting the journey stall. She knows how to be weak</p>
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<p><i>With mutual trust</i></p>	<p>with the weak; how to be alert and recognise the signs of God's passing in persons and events in order to point them out. She believes and is capable of urging people onwards to the threshold of mystery and supporting the 'trembling knees'. She knows how to entrust herself to the Holy Spirit and to freely lead others to do the same. She also knows how to accompany them to accept, in vocational unity, their own being as mother and generator of life in the style of loving kindness, and to assist on the journey of radical self-giving (Cf C 97).</p> <p><b>35.</b> With great realism, the Temporary Professed lament that in certain cases, there is a significant lack of communities capable of accompaniment in personal commitment, living communion and coming together around a shared plan, at the service of the young. There is a lack of communities that practice the values of Salesian spirituality in community and in the mission; who know how to help people experience the family spirit and the way in which the Salesian educational charism is lived out. They also lament that at times there is a lack of formators who are sufficiently solid as persons, lack professional preparation and availability of time to listen to and accompany the Temporary Professed. They expect reciprocal trust and prudence. They do not want to feel judged during the personal encounter, even if, at times, they on their part show little ability to accept observations and directions for their journey.</p> <p>On the part of the Animators, they ask for humility to undertake and manage the fatigue of accepting that the young Sisters can make mistakes in their choices, knowing that they learn from their mistakes.</p>
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relationships that are more functional than sisterly; with the burden of organisations and of huge works. Their sensitivity leads them to want to experience greater centrality of the person, more dialogue and closeness. At times, even the stance the Temporary Professed adopt in the community is not in line with feeling part of a family, builders of communion, co-responsible for the development and growth of the vocational experience.

The Formation Plan identifies coordination for communion as our style of animation. It is a form of leadership based on a circular process; a strategy of relationship that aims at being life-giving for every person; a prophecy of togetherness that is lived by means of the involvement of FMA and laity in the shared mission. In addition, it states that the Preventive System, adopted together, requires a planning mentality and organisational flexibility, subsidiarity and co-responsibility.

It seems evident that the fatigue shown by the Temporary Professed in some educating communities, is a strong call to a serious evaluation of how the Institute's Plan of Formation has been adopted and how it has been lived up until today in the practice of the animation and government of the communities (Cf PF pp. 151 ff).

**40.** *We are called to take on a new vision of ongoing and initial formation, to review our formative models.*

We need to re-plan formative programmes that are more flexible and more systematic; a clearer educational accompaniment; a readiness to seek, together with the Temporary Professed, the most adequate ways to journey with them. In this regard, we are called to make a strategic and planned choice

<p><i>Intergenerational dialogue</i></p>	<p>of the formation of animators and formation communities to give greater quality to the accompaniment of the formation processes in all phases of formation and at every stage of life (Cf <i>PF</i> pp. 17-18; 55).</p> <p><b>41.</b> <i>We are challenged by the scant capacity to recognize the preciousness of intergenerational dialogue, the richness of the presence of diverse cultures and diverse ways of looking at reality.</i> The difference of mentality and of life styles sometimes renders dialogue and intergration between the generations difficult and slows the integration of the Temporary Professed into the mission and into the community life. In some situations there is the tendency to compare the present and the past in a way that is not life-giving, highlighting the distance between the generations and, at some moments, reinforcing positions that do not educate to responsibility, to trust in the young Sisters, to treating them as adults. Thus, there is the risk of depriving ourselves of the newness, fruitfulness, and vitality that the Holy Spirit is giving to our charism. In the communities, all of the different generations are called upon to make prophetic choices, to share the Gospel life, and to center their lives on the love of Christ.</p>
<p><i>Inhabit the existential frontiers of young people</i></p>	<p>Intergenerational dialogue contributes to creating a new culture of encounter, guarantees the continuity of the story, and generates the future (Cf <i>PF</i> p. 40; <i>Intergenerational Dialogue. Strategies for a community of all ages in One generation speaks to another</i>).</p> <p><b>42.</b> <i>Challenged by the new forms of poverty and the cry of the poor.</i> In the situation in which we live, we are</p>

challenged by the poverty in which many young people and families live, by the risk of developing a handout society, regarding the role we should play in some particular situations, our life style of 'moderation', solidarity and closeness to the poor of our times. Following in the footsteps of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello we feel the need to keep our heart steadfast in our preferential option for the poorest.

Today, we are called to respond in new ways: to undertake a courageous review of our houses and works that need to be more centered on young people in situations of social vulnerability. We need the readiness and courage to move out, to remain among the people, to meet young people on the peripheries, to go toward those most in need and to be credible witnesses to the love of God. This requires a continual movement out of self.

Poor and young people are waiting for us, but they do not come to us if we do not go among them and dirty our hands together with them.

This challenge raises some questions that affect our educational mission in both formal and informal areas. How can we reach young people who live in the various 'existential frontiers'? How can we speak to them of God if it seems they are not interested? How can we be close to them, companions on the road and the journey? How can we promote a culture of solidarity, non-violence, justice, and peace? How can we be more sensitive and open to the responsibility of building our 'common home' in daily life? (Cf C 65).

*Be in the new  
digital sectors*

**43.** *Acceptance of the possibilities and the gift of the digital environment on the one hand, and on the other,*

	<p><i>the tendency to adopt a consumer mentality and to enter into a circle of excessive dependence.</i> The digital culture can lead to attitudes of dispersion, evasion of reality, a lack of poverty. Excessive time is dedicated to the use of mass media technology to the detriment of the interior life, of the mission, and of community life. It is a strong call to form ourselves and to accompany the Temporary Professed to 'be present' in the new digital sectors as users who are aware and questioning, developing an ethical vision that is adequate for the new languages; befriending the beauty of the digital world, and living as prophets in this new arena, with the explicit aim of spreading the Gospel (Cf C 17; PF p. 175; Acts GC XXIII, no. 48).</p>
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### 2.3 The dreams of the Temporary Professed

<p><i>What the Temporary Professed have at heart</i></p>	<p><b>44.</b> There are as many dreams as there are situations in which we live in our personal lives, communities, mission and in various contexts. What we have at heart moves us from within!</p> <p>In their responses to the questionnaire, the Temporary Professed express what they have in their hearts and want to see becoming more and more a reality in their personal life and in the educating communities.</p> <p>o <i>To live the fullness of the Covenant of love with the Lord so as to fill their whole life with happiness, affectively and effectively placing Christ at the center of their own life and integrating Him into all the dimensions of their existence, in the one passion for God and young people.</i></p>
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- *To be communities in a continual state of formation;* mystical and prophetic communities which live the values of the Gospel and the spirit of Mornese. Communities in which the Sisters feel they are disciples on the journey, involved in the formative process and respectful of the growth rhythm of each one.
- *To build simple and flexible communities,* open to intercultural and inter-congregational relations, happy to live the Salesian vocation, to build deep interpersonal relationships, to experience reciprocal accompaniment, to be able to risk all with the passion of the *da mihi animas cetera tolle*.
- *To be poor communities for the poor, going out toward the existential peripheries of the community itself and of the educational mission,* capable of making courageous choices for austerity, rejecting a mentality of wastefulness and the dynamics of consumerism. The totality of our belonging to Christ can become the place of welcome for all of humanity.
- *To experience the joy of an effectively shared mission.* To open up spaces for personal, institutional, and virtual relationships; to broaden mind and heart, and direct the capacity for joyful abnegation toward what creates relationships, communication, accompaniment, collaboration, and communion for a more fruitful mission. Responsibly to undertake the challenge of walking this journey together – lay persons, religious, and youth.

	<p>o <i>To see ourselves as heirs of the dreams of our Founders and of the Sisters who have preceded us and who had the courage to dream grand dreams in order to be prophetic today and keep alive that which one day set our heart on fire. To be, from generation to generation, the memorial and the prophecy of God's foreseeing Love among young people.</i></p>
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### **3. Mary at Cana: icon of inspiration**

**The Marriage Feast of Cana in Galilee**

### 3. Mary at Cana: Icon of inspiration

<p><i>A Gospel, charismatic reading of Mary at Cana</i></p>	<p><b>45.</b> Reflecting on the real experience of the Temporary Professed, we have found the icon of Mary at Cana to be a text that can inspire and interpret the formative journey of this stage. It is a Christological and Marian passage that expresses our Marian identity, our way of being present today among young people, and of getting everyone involved in participating in God’s hour. We have undertaken a Gospel-charismatic reading, placing it within the context of the formative process of Temporary Profession.</p> <p>The icon of Mary at Cana thus constitutes point of reference to the <i>docibilitas</i> of the Temporary Professed on their journey towards the gift of self to God in the <i>sequela Christi</i> forever; to the mystagogical ministry of the formator, openness to the Spirit, involvement in and foreseeing attention of the community that joyfully celebrates the feast that results from the transformation of water into wine.</p>
<p><i>The Temporary Professed: ‘a land that is married’</i></p>	<p><b><i>The Wedding Feast of Cana in Galilee</i></b> (John 2: 1-11)</p> <p><b>46.</b> The image of the wedding celebrated in Cana of Galilee recalls the context of the New Covenant, the analogy of spousal love that is the biblical image <i>par excellence</i> of the relationship of God with His people (Cf C 9). In our Plan of Formation, the FMA is presented as a ‘land that is married’. The Temporary Professed Sister, therefore, is a woman in love with Jesus Christ and His plan and who therefore has decided to give herself unconditionally to Him so that He may be known, loved, and followed by all, especially young people. The future belongs to those</p>



<p><i>The house of Cana – icon of the FMA community</i></p>	<p>in patience and simplicity, but also in making proposals, pointing to ways of reaching the 'not yet' of the charism. The image of the 'home' and in it of the 'Mother of Jesus', is the icon of the FMA community with its animator who receives and accompanies the Temporary Professed in the celebration of the feast of life and of the Covenant that God established with Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, and in which we participate. The community gives itself completely so that the feast God wants to celebrate with the new generations may continue. They have invited Jesus to share daily life with them, seeking to be, each day with Mary, helpers of the young.</p> <p>This maternity of the community, and especially of the Formator, is a participation in the paternity-maternity of God, of Christ, of Mary who make the Church a home, family, hearth, place of human-divine growth; a space for healing and liberation. It is the place where God can accomplish His promises (Cf C 62).</p>
<p><i>The animator, helper and companion on the journey</i></p>	<p><b>49.</b> The Formator, together with the community, accompanies and facilitates this process, conscious that the main protagonist in the formation of the Temporary Professed Sister is the Holy Spirit. Therefore, she acts as a 'friend of the Bridegroom' who assists close by and rejoices at the voice of the Bridegroom who calls and supports.</p> <p>Human marriages, although symbols of the Covenant between God and His people, are part of the daily life of the people. Mary, the 'Mother of Jesus', is immersed in reality and from within she perceives its potential and fragility, she sees that the feast of life is about to be ruined, either from the lack of foresight</p>

	<p>of the spouses and of their 'home' or perhaps because they had given all they had and reached the limit of their resources. In this text of the Wedding at Cana, we see the presence and the action of Mary as Mother, Helper, educator, and companion on the journey of those who desire to follow Christ and celebrate the covenant that He established with humanity. She throws light on the mystery of the Church and her mission, especially our vocation as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians to be sign and expression of God's foreseeing love for young people. Like Mary, formators accompany so that the person of Jesus and His plan will be an all-encompassing connection that unifies all aspects of life for the Temporary Professed (Cf C 4).</p>
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## **4. Convictions that matured during the process**

#### 4. Convictions that matured during the process

<p><i>Convictions at the root of the Guidelines</i></p>	<p>50. From listening to reality, the Word of God, the Constitutions, the Plan of Formation and other Documents proper to the Institute, and the Magisterium of the Church on Consecrated Life today, we have strengthened some convictions that anchor and sustain these Guidelines. They are expressed in the form of choices, experiences and conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <i>The Word of God</i> is the axis on which all of Consecrated Life revolves, the soul of its theology, spirituality, formation, and mission. The Word leads us to a personal encounter with the living Christ Jesus, and is the genuine source of spirituality. It inhabits the daily routine of our life and is the reference criteria for the choices we are called to make in our daily experience.</li><li>○ <i>The Eucharist and Reconciliation</i> are the columns that support and nourish vocational fidelity in the everyday experience of our fragility. The daily encounter with Jesus is an experience of being a spouse, of communion with one's Sisters in the community and of life-giving power in the educational mission.</li><li>○ <i>Authentic listening lets us hear the cry of life</i> that resounds especially in the poor and in the new generations. Listening means obeying and acting, helping justice and love to blossom in life, integrating the Word of God and life, faith and uprightness, religious practice and social involvement.</li></ul>
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- *Discernment* is a key element for daily growth in a life conformed to the Gospel. An habitual attitude of discernment favours docility to the Spirit, acceptance of self, *docibilitas*, the progressive clarification and purification of motivations, interiorisation and personalisation of values, and the capacity for free and responsible choices.
- *A new form of FMA consecrated life*, that will express incarnation, mysticism, prophecy, and hope, is possible by adopting the life style of the minority, the itinerant, the Gospel, through the challenging, active presence and role of the new generations as protagonists. It is a life influenced by inter-generational, inter-congregational and inter-cultural dynamics.
- *Formation favours letting ourselves be transformed by the Holy Spirit and configured into the image of Christ*; it is a journey that lasts all through life, is developed in the everyday, embraces the whole person, and favours her integral development. Today there is a greater need than ever for communities in a state of ongoing formation.
- *Accompaniment* is an essential coordinate without which there is no formation. In fact, formation is in itself, a relationship of accompaniment that nourishes the religious life of the FMA. The accompaniment of the Temporary Professed is a strategic, charismatic choice. In addition to favouring the consolidation of charismatic identity, it promotes development, inculturation, and the future of the charism. It is urgently

necessary to restore personal accompaniment as a systematic and continual process.

- *The mysticism of encounter is based on relationships and on an experience of the love of the Trinity*, and is a necessary condition for living more human relationships. In fact, it is an encounter with God in the encounter with others. It is the responsibility of being prophetic as a community, able to feel, listen, and seek the way together. Encounter in the intergenerational community is contemplation, ecstasy before the sacred ground of the other. It means remaining in an attitude of welcome and sharing in which we help each other to recognise our own uniqueness. It is the space of empowerment and enrichment. The mysticism of encounter requires a daily journey of asceticism.  
*The family spirit*, the creative outpouring of the heart of Don Bosco (Cf C 50) allows us to experience the mysticism of encounter as a family that is being built each day in joyful availability and in the mission.
- *The suffering faces of poor young people are the suffering face of Christ*. They challenge the very heart of the mission of Consecrated Life and of our being educators of young people. They challenge our style of living the vows in their community and pastoral aspects. They are one of the theological and charismatic places where God speaks and waits for us. Poor youth call us, urge us to go out toward the new existential frontiers and peripheries with the passion of the *da mihi animas cetera tolle*.

## **5. Choices to be prioritised**

**Temporary Professed Sisters**

**Community**

**Animator of the Community**

**Provincial**

## 5. Choices to be prioritised

<p><i>Lines of action to be prioritised</i></p>	<p><b>51.</b> Listening to the Word, the Charism, the Constitutions shapes the life of the FMA, the reality, especially the life of Temporary Professed, the communities, the formators and the way of organising the period of Temporary Profession in the various social-cultural contexts. It gives direction to the proposal of choices to be prioritised, without losing sight of an overall vision of the needs of this phase, expressed in the fundamental experiences and developmental tasks presented by the Plan of Formation.</p> <p>With attention to the subjects of the itinerary of the phase of Temporary Profession, some <i>Guidelines for Action</i> have been identified that need to be prioritised today, together with the corresponding <i>experiences</i> to be encouraged and the <i>conditions</i> to be created (Cf C 96-98; PF pp. 140-148).</p>
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### 5.1 Temporary Professed Sisters

<p><i>Processes of interiorisation and integration</i></p>	<p><b>52.</b> <i>To undertake, decisively and responsibly, the processes of interiorisation and integration that favour the unification of the person in Christ, being missionary disciples, and cultivating the mysticism of daily life in a single movement of pastoral charity.</i></p> <p><b>Experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ The exercise of narrating and re-reading the personal, community, and pastoral experiences of</li> </ul>
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daily life from a wisdom perspective.

- ✧ Frequent and constant practice of *Lectio divina* and community sharing of the Word of God.
- ✧ Times of reflection with those who accompany them on the demands of following Jesus as FMA in order to live one's life choice coherently.
- ✧ Responsible management of time to harmonise moments of silence, listening, prayer, encounter, and presence among the young; to share, as community, experiences of faith, life, vocation, and mission.
- ✧ Attention to and appreciation of daily life that leads us to recognise and accept ourselves as persons involved in a process of growth by means of small steps in view of a definitive choice.
- ✧ Time to restore serene harmony with creation, reflect on our style of life and our ideals, and encourage a culture of tenderness and caring.
- ✧ Personal and community prayer that expresses an incarnated spirituality, accepts reality, and transforms life, is rooted in Jesus, nourished by the mission, and lived according to Mary's style.
- ✧ Preparation, discussion, and evaluation of the Personal Life-plan in order to take one's life ever more seriously and to live the FMA identity coherently.
- ✧ Words and simple daily gestures of loving kindness, gratitude, and free giving, which by breaking the mould of egoism, violence, and exploitation, facilitate encounter and help life to grow.

**Conditions**

- \* A habitual attitude of discernment leading to

<p><i>Undertake being a consecrated woman</i></p>	<p>progressive clarification and purification of motives, interiorisation and personalisation of values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Vigilant and responsible attention to God’s calls in daily life and openness to reading the signs of His presence with contemplative eyes.</li> <li>* Constant, courageous, and coherent choices so that Christ may truly be the center of life.</li> <li>* Asceticism in the organisation and management of time in order to express the daily gift of a life lived with the joy of one who has understood that “to lose life is to gain it”.</li> <li>* Readiness to go out of oneself to adopt responsible austerity, grateful contemplation of the world, care for the fragility of the poor and of the environment, responsible participation in the building of our common home, educating self to create an ‘ecological citizenship’.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>53. Accept and undertake with gratitude the beauty of being a consecrated woman educator who sees in Mary, woman, mother and educator, the icon of attentiveness and service so that nothing will be lacking for the joy of her children.</i></b></p> <p><b>Experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Create opportunities for the life-giving study of the Marian dimension that characterises us, understanding how we experience her presence in the formative process, in the small daily steps, and in our being mother and helper among young people.</li> <li>✧ Appreciating formative proposals that help to understand and read needs, emotions, feelings,</li> </ul>
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and encourage us to learn how to manage them and integrate them into our fundamental choice.

- ✧ Spaces for dialogue and discussion at personal and community level on the affective and sexual aspects of our lives to empower our energies and place them at the service of community and our mission among the little ones and the poor.
- ✧ Provide opportunities for cultivating free, deep, and lasting friendships at generational and intergenerational levels.
- ✧ Weave healthy educational relationships that are lifegiving.

### **Conditions**

- \* Adequate self-awareness as a woman and readiness to accept oneself in truth.
- \* Readiness for mutual acceptance of gifts and fragility, for closeness, and to accompany and let oneself be accompanied.
- \* Involvement in the creation of an atmosphere of freedom, trust, acceptance, one that is non-judgmental; an atmosphere of respect that, even in small everyday actions, expresses our being a community of women consecrated to God for young people.
- \* Sense of belonging to an attentive community where each one notices when the 'wine' of the family spirit and of apostolic passion is lacking, and takes care of the joy of everyone with tenderness, thus experiencing a fruitful maternity in daily life.

*Formative  
availability*

***54. To place oneself in an attitude of constant readiness to be formed, growing in 'docibilitas' and letting ourselves be transformed by the formative***

***potential of life, the theological place of God's action.***

**Experiences**

- ✧ Create spaces for listening life experiences, for sharing and searching together, so as to feel our intergenerational community as the privileged place of vocational growth that spreads to the young people with diffusive Salesian joy.
- ✧ Times of discussion and formation of a critical sense in a context that raises questions and requires that we 'learn how to learn'.
- ✧ Study and deepening of the social-cultural and ecclesial reality of one's context, letting oneself be questioned by the challenges and calls of the young people, of women, above all of the more fragile and poor young people that urge us to adopt adequate pastoral strategies for today.
- ✧ Sharing formation and mission together with the lay people in reciprocity, co-responsibility, and subsidiarity, maturing together in each one's specific vocational identity.

**Conditions**

- \* Interior freedom and willingness to learn from life and to let oneself be formed by everyone and everything, with openness to the dynamism of the Spirit.
- \* Availability for the personal encounter with one's Animator, letting oneself be accompanied by the community and by other formative mediations, in order to consolidate one's charismatic identity.
- \* A habitual attitude of openness to discussion and the acceptance of eventual observations in an

<p><i>Resilience in the light of the Paschal Mystery</i></p>	<p>open and sincere dialogue, carried out in the spirit of seeking the truth and of reciprocal growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Development of the capacity for listening and critical analysis of the context in which one lives, seen with the eyes of a missionary disciple, in an attitude of openness to the pastoral challenges that call for daring and creativity in the educating and evangelising mission.</li> <li>* Awareness of being welcomed as growing, adult persons.</li> <li>* Appreciation of and care for community encounters and the ordinary means of Salesian formation, seen as opportunities for the consolidation of our charismatic identity.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>55. Form oneself to resilience by accepting the process of purification with realism, trust and patience in the light of the Paschal Mystery.</i></b></p> <p><b>Experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Re-reading, from a Gospel perspective, of experiences of failure, defeat, discouragement, conflict, crisis and trials, accepting this purification that confirms us as disciples of Christ, to the point of supreme fulfillment in love on the Cross.</li> <li>✧ Undertake paths of interior healing, integrating and reprocessing eventual wounds to learn how to manage what could limit our interior freedom.</li> <li>✧ Fidelity to the Sacrament of Reconciliation to experience the healing power of God's mercy and to learn to be merciful towards others.</li> <li>✧ Training to discover the transfigured face of the Risen One in all that is disfigured here and now,</li> </ul>
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and to live one's suffering in solidarity with those who are more disadvantaged.

- ✧ Practice remaining in prayer, solitude, expectancy, fidelity, and free self-giving, especially in times of greater aridity and darkness.

### **Conditions**

- \* Experience oneself as a person with great, and at times undiscovered possibilities; one who is not perfect, but in permanent construction, and committed to assuming one's own limitations and those of our Sisters in community.
- \* Acceptance of limitations, suffering and conflicts as an integral part of life.
- \* Manage the difficulties of daily life through the acceptance of reality with its contradictions and limitations both in the community and in the mission, without idealising fraternal life in community or nourishing unrealistic expectations.
- \* Perception of the affective and effective, praying, patient and healing closeness of the formator and of the community.
- \* Development of a vision of faith to discover what God is asking, above all in difficult moments, and where He is directing us, in the awareness that suffering can be an opportunity for growth.
- \* Willingness to live the mysticism of daily life in a community in mission, giving special and constant attention to allowing oneself to be formed by the Paschal experience that requires configuration to Christ.

***56. Form oneself to interpersonal and virtual communication, re-reading the culture of***

<p><i>Communication from an educational-Salesian perspective</i></p>	<p><b><i>communication in which we are immersed from an educational-Salesian perspective.</i></b></p> <p><b>Experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Intelligent interaction in the communication networks to inhabit them as places of encounter, dialogue and narration of the Gospel to young people.</li> <li>✧ Formative opportunities to network, in a friendly, participative, and supportive style of communication that not only enables consumption and use, but above all, interactive production of content and messages that are attentive to harmony and beauty.</li> <li>✧ Discernment, discussion and evaluation, both personal and with others, on ways of becoming involved in social networks, and evaluation of any eventual areas of dependency.</li> <li>✧ Appreciation of music and song, art, theater and dance as typically Salesian expressions capable of communicating values.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Creation of an ecosystem of communication with the involvement of everyone, where transparency and freedom of expression are lived, so that each one has a voice, can be themselves and express themselves in an authentic, responsible and free way.</li> <li>* Openness to the new communication culture as the place in which reality is being built today and a new way of relating.</li> <li>* Freedom from digital dependence in the awareness that technology alone does not change</li> </ul>
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<p><i>Adoption of planning in formation</i></p>	<p>us. By inhabiting the network, we ourselves generate changes with our capacity to filter, choose, share, and manage what the network offers with intelligence and good sense.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* An interior disposition constantly to learn, discern and challenge ourselves in order to read cultural changes and interpret them from the perspective of a believer, in view of a different approach to reality and life, and an educational mission in harmony with the needs of today.</li> <li>* Interior clarity in order to inhabit the network and use technology as a way of proclaiming the Gospel, in coherence with one's life of faith and with the choice of consecrated life.</li> <li>* Self-discipline and asceticism in inhabiting the digital arena for a balanced and wise use of the communication networks.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>57. To adopt a planning mentality in charismatic, cultural and professional formation to respond with competence to the challenges of the educational mission.</i></b></p> <p><b>Experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Commitment to reach adequate 'professional' competence that will qualify us for the service required by the mission, as justice toward the recipients of our mission, and to give us sufficient authority before the laity and the young people.</li> <li>✧ Taking up the study of religious, theological, and educational sciences, as a possible form of professional preparation, but also as a revision, re-formulation and consolidation of one's faith and vocation.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ Appreciation of study as an opportunity to continue one's formation and to acquire personal formative habits in a progressive configuration to Christ the Good Shepherd.</li> <li>✘ Effort to cultivate the apostolic dimension through study, and recognising the importance of an adequate preparation for dialogue and the evangelisation of today's culture.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* In an atmosphere of dialogue and research together, to be ready to accept what obedience asks regarding the courses of study that are proposed based on the needs of the mission.</li> <li>* Acceptance of study as an experience that touches life insofar as it offers criteria for judgment and the critical evaluation of reality and situations according to a Gospel mentality, in order to make concrete choices.</li> <li>* Constant purification of one's motivation in order to study with the right intention and to form oneself to educate by proclaiming the Gospel to young people.</li> <li>* Commitment to study seriously and with a sense of responsibility, to study in depth, whether we like it or not, to study with a method, but also with common sense regarding hours, effort required and management of anxiety.</li> </ul>
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## 5.2 Community

	58. <i>Joyfully undertake responsibility of being a</i>
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<p><i>In a state of ongoing formation</i></p>	<p><b><i>community in a state of ongoing formation, living daily life in the awareness of one's limitations and the mysticism and prophecy of being united around a shared project at the service of young people.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Experiences</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ Accepting the meaning and implications of the shared mission, aware that the mission is a place of formation for the Temporary Professed and for all the members of the community.</li> <li>✘ Mutual accompaniment, taking care of each other, thus favoring mutual empowerment in view of the realization of the common mission.</li> <li>✘ Strengthening a community style of involvement and of collaboration to create together a climate of freedom, dialogue, transparency, trust and mutual appreciation, in an atmosphere of faith and of deep life in the Spirit.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Conditions</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Communities that are responsible for the call to be prophetic, ever ready to 'examine' and grasp the seeds of newness raised up by the Holy Spirit, to be ready, daily, to 'go out' toward new frontiers of the educational mission.</li> <li>* Habitual experience of community discernment in the light of the Word of God, the Constitutions and reality, for the life of the community in mission.</li> <li>* Communities that are places of education in which, through a process of continual self formation, each one grows as a believing, consecrated educator of young people. Communities in which there is a deep prayer life</li> </ul>
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<p><i>Accompany and be life-giving</i></p>	<p>and the experience of the older Sisters in the transmission of the charism and in the witness of fidelity is appreciated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Awareness of one's resources and limitations, and mutual readiness to accept each one's potential and fragility and to manage eventual conflicts by living differences in the light of the Paschal Mystery.</li> <li>* An austere and simple life style that shows our commitment to the following of Christ and favors sharing in solidarity with the poor.</li> <li>* Freely offered times of mutual self-giving in our life together as Sisters, in community relaxation, sharing and the celebration of life.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>59. Knowingly commit oneself with responsibility and hope to the mission of being a life-giving, formation community in the accompaniment of the Temporary Professed.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Experiences</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Guidance and accompaniment to learn how to discern and undertake a true education to Salesian prayer proper to 'contemplation in action'.</li> <li>✧ Gradual integration of the Temporary Professed into the community mission lived with the free and responsible involvement of all the members.</li> <li>✧ Opportunities for direct contact, closeness, and proximity with the poorest, meeting them in the existential peripheries of one's context, with practical acts of solidarity.</li> <li>✧ Adoption of the specific journey of the Temporary Professed into the formative plan of the</li> </ul>
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community, attentive to clarity of objectives, practical lines of action, experiences, and indicators for evaluation.

- ✧ Creation of a favourable climate for the development of freedom and responsible participation in which each one can express herself as she is, sharing what she feels and what she plans.
- ✧ Creation, by all, of a community atmosphere in which each one is responsibly involved in the management and care of the house according to the family style.
- ✧ Acceptance of the mission to promote the integration of the Temporary Professed Sister into the community, her charismatic and pastoral development, helping her mature in responsibility and co-responsibility, and strengthening her sense of belonging to the community and to the Institute.
- ✧ Involvement and participation in intercultural, inter-faith, and inter-congregational experiences, freeing ourselves from self-sufficiency and being turned in on self, in order to create together, in the place where we live, networks that build up life and make it more human.

### ***Conditions***

- \* Community that is a theological space of acceptance, sharing and spiritual depth incarnated in daily life, bearing witness to a charismatic style of living the vows, of encouragement to be more radical and faithful in imitation of Jesus.
- \* Community in which one experiences a form of daily living that is fresher and less structured,

	<p>open and close to the people, happy and totally given to the mission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A community atmosphere that promotes life, in which one is nourished by relationships rooted in a mature, simple faith that express trust, tenderness, sensitivity, and care for the needs and times of growth of the others.</li> <li>* Coherent and contagious witness of vocational joy, the family spirit, shared mission, in which intergenerational dialogue is experienced, together with the richness and fatigue of encounter with diversity and newness.</li> <li>* Capacity to grasp and appreciate the contribution of newness and of renewal the Temporary Professed bring for the inculturation of the Charism.</li> <li>* Knowledge of the formation programme of the Temporary Professed (the formation phase of Temporary Profession in the Institute Plan of Formation and the eventual Province formation plan) to take on its role within the process with greater awareness and periodically evaluate its effective involvement.</li> <li>* Openness to discernment of the vocational journey of the Temporary Professed, in the light of the text <i>Discernment and Accompaniment</i> and the <i>Criteria for Discernment and Acceptance into the Institute. Deliberations and Supplemental Material pertaining to the document 'Discernment and Accompaniment'</i> of 2012.</li> </ul>
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### 5.3 Animator of the Community

*Priority of accompaniment*

**60.** *Undertake the accompaniment of the Temporary Professed as principal mission (Cf C 52; PF pp. 146-148).*

### **Experiences**

- ✧ Assume responsibility for self-formation to become ever more a woman of God, rich in humanity, spiritual and educational wisdom, and qualify herself in the art of accompaniment.
- ✧ Effective openness to the inter-congregational reality in the Church and to the charisms that enrich the Church. Participation at inter-congregational and other encounters, to keep up-to-date and study the needs of the formative phase of Temporary Profession by sharing with other formators and being open to new horizons.
- ✧ Accompaniment of the Temporary Professed in re-reading experience, integrating themselves into community, mission and study, paying attention to all dimensions of the person.
- ✧ Periodic evaluation of the formation itinerary with the community and the Temporary Professed.
- ✧ Commitment to network and to interact with the young people entrusted to her, aware that formation takes place beginning with communication; that we cannot learn the network without 'being in the network', that is, without learning the dynamics of connection and without living its interactions.

### **Conditions**

- \* Avoid taking on multiple tasks in the community in order to dedicate herself to the ministry of accompaniment with efficacy, serenity and

	<p>responsibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Joy and enthusiasm in one's FMA vocation in an attitude of ongoing self-formation.</li> <li>* Knowledge of the roots of the Charism and of the 'new earth' in which to plant it, ability to prune the branches without touching the root.</li> <li>* Readiness for ever deeper knowledge of self, of one's possibilities and limitations, to accompany the Temporary Professed in their growth process with greater realism, experiential competence, and humility.</li> <li>* A mentality that is open to change, to study, to a critical sense, and to the creative spirit.</li> <li>* Be an animator-formator capable of re-awakening hope, encouraging questions and great social sensitivity in a world that marginalizes and impoverishes without compassion.</li> <li>* Readiness to let oneself be accompanied by the young Sisters and to place oneself on a continual journey of purification and of inner freedom.</li> <li>* Adequate competency in relating: capacity for welcoming, listening, discretion, prudence, establishing adult relationships, encouraging a process of growth in freedom.</li> <li>* Trust in persons, in their resources, their readiness to grow and be transformed, helping them to overcome fears and defeatist attitudes.</li> <li>* Competence in knowing how to distinguish problems of personal maturation from structural ones that can be counter-indications for religious life.</li> <li>* Ability to involve the community and the Council in the formative journey of the Temporary Professed.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Collaboration and synergy with the formators of the preceding phases and/or experiences.</li> <li>* Readiness for the personal encounter, dialogue and discussion with the Provincial.</li> </ul>
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## 5.4 Provincial

<p><i>The community that receives the Temporary Professed</i></p>	<p><b>61. Criteria for choosing the community in which to insert the Temporary Professed</b></p> <p>A community that is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Understand and accept responsibility for the formative accompaniment of the Temporary Professed.</li> <li>* Be open to welcoming the young Sisters in their uniqueness and looking on them with kindness, valuing their differences as richness.</li> <li>* Allow the Temporary Professed to discover the reality of life and to incarnate the values of Salesian religious life, even in their poverty and fragility.</li> <li>* Recognise itself on a journey, that it is not perfect, but is capable of animating all its members to grow together in their experience of God, in transparency, dialogue, sisterly discussion, community discernment, and openness to young people.</li> <li>* Promote co-responsibility in community life and unity around the shared mission as an educating community.</li> <li>* Live animation and government in a balanced way, in a circular style and in the family spirit.</li> </ul> <p><b>62. Criteria for cultural formation</b></p>
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*Formation for  
the educative  
mission today*

- \* Attention to integration between spiritual, charismatic formation and professional studies in the strict sense, to ensure growth in faith, maturing in one's vocation, and educational competence.
- \* Opportunities for solid cultural formation to be able to educate young people, today, with the passion of the *Da mihi animas cetera tolle*.
- \* Personalised and professionalised study courses, paying attention to personal aptitudes, in dialogue with actual situation, the Province mission, and the educational challenges of time and place, to stimulate the participation and the co-responsibility of the Temporary Professed.
- \* Present study as a wisdom based, Gospel approach to reality and as a requirement for fidelity to the vocational identity and educational mission of the FMA.
- \* A circular model of teaching-learning in which theoretical reflection and practical experience presuppose each other and are mutually enriching.
- \* Balance between times for study and pastoral experience, so as to allow for the accomplishment of the task of cultural formation with seriousness and responsibility.

### **63. Choices to be made**

#### *Planning*

- \* in the formation of the formators and the Animators in discernment and accompaniment.
- \* in the professional formation of the Temporary Professed with regard to the needs of the mission, insuring the presence of a Sister who

*Attentive  
reflection on the  
choices to  
prioritise*

accompanies the development of their studies.

*Accompaniment*

- \* of the Animators and periodic personal and group encounters with the Temporary Professed, keeping in mind the formative objectives and the content of the programme for Temporary Profession.
- \* of the Temporary Professed Sister, in dialogue with the Animator, during her gradual integration into the mission entrusted to her.

*Proposal of*

- \* Tasks compatible with the requirements of this formation stage.
- \* Pastoral experiences in varied educational areas, avoiding as far as possible, too frequent changes or remaining in the same community for the entire time of Temporary Profession.
- \* The possibility of missionary experiences that favour living among the poorest and also of service freely given in the houses for the sick and elderly Sisters.
- \* Adequate time for reflection and prayer before writing their request for admission to temporary and perpetual profession.
- \* Periodic evaluations with the Temporary Professed, the Formator and the Community with regard to the formative journey.
- \* Knowledge and responsible involvement of the whole Province in the formative journey of the Temporary Professed.

## **6. Indications for the journey of Temporary Profession and for the experience of the Second Novitiate**

- 6. 1      Organization of the phase of Temporary Profession**
- 6. 2      Organization of the Second Novitiate**

## 6. Indications for the journey of Temporary Profession and for the experience of the Second Novitiate

### 6.1 Organization of the phase of Temporary Profession

<p><i>To prepare for the total gift of self</i></p>	<p><b>64. Areas requiring attention (Cf Regulations 95-96)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Be aware that the formation phase of Temporary Profession<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o embraces the entire period of temporary profession,</li><li>o is a phase of initial formation and requires a systematic formative accompaniment, independently of the way in which it is carried out:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Specific formative times and accompaniment throughout the six years at various levels (interprovincial conference, interprovince, province, community)</li><li>* An eventual intensive year at the most suitable time for each context, and commitment to specific accompaniment in the other years of temporary profession.</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>- Facilitate the study and vital comparison with the Constitutions</li><li>- At Provincial level, with the involvement of the Temporary Professed, prepare the formative itinerary for the period of Temporary Profession, in continuity and dialogue with the other stages of formation</li><li>- As far as possible, do not leave just one Temporary Professed Sister in a community; insert the Temporary Professed sisters in communities that allow for participation in formative encounters</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Temporary Professed may also be members of communities of initial formation, but should not be entrusted with specific responsibilities for formation</li> <li>- Attend to the possibility of completing the studies required for their specific theological, educational, and Salesian preparation, but be vigilant that they do not study during the whole time of Temporary Profession</li> <li>- Avoid their frequenting night school classes or distant schools, sometimes without having adequate time for study during the day. This compromises the seriousness of the studies themselves, community life and the spiritual life of the young woman.</li> </ul>
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## 6. 2 Organization of the Second Novitiate

<p><i>Immediate preparation for perpetual profession</i></p>	<p><b>65. Experience of the Second Novitiate</b></p> <p><b>Meaning of the experience</b></p> <p>The decisive importance of perpetual profession and its very special character require the courage to stop, to review one's vocational journey in the light of the Word of God and of the Charism, to re-visit the essential elements of the FMA identity, to 'return to one's first love', to give oneself time to develop a deeper awareness of the step one is about to take. The second novitiate constitutes a time of more meaningful evaluation in the light of their imminent 'yes' forever (Cf C 98-99; R 97).</p>
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**Aim**

In an atmosphere of prayer and reflection the FMA, leaving aside her usual activities, reviews her life in the light of the Holy Spirit to better ready herself to make her definitive response of fidelity to God in the Institute.

**Objectives**

- \* Review her vocational journey in an attitude of discernment, to discover the signs of God who is living and active in her story.
- \* Deepen with greater awareness the experience of the Covenant with Christ as a spouse and the community dimension of the FMA vocation.
- \* Renew passion for young people so as to be, at Mary's school, a sign and mediation of the charity of Christ, the Good Shepherd.

Integrate eventual specific objectives with reference to concrete reality.

**Times and Ways**

At least two months, spread over two or more phases.

Looking at the reality of the Institute we note different ways of organising the second novitiate: in a cyclic form or in two or three distinct periods per year, ordinarily in the fifth year and the year of perpetual profession.

- It is proposed that the two months or phases should not be cyclic, in order to guarantee that the programme will not be repetitive for those who prolong the time of initial formation and in order that each month and each phase may have its own specific objectives and the required

gradual approach.

- It is advisable to give preference to a group experience, perhaps by uniting with other Provinces and/or Interprovincial Conferences because of the richness that this brings with it at the level of sharing, discussion, intercultural dialogue and reciprocal encouragement within a broader experience of the Institute.

## **Contents**

### *Criteria*

- \* Proposal of content in continuity with the formative itinerary of Temporary Profession.
- \* Content that emphasizes interiorization and unification of life around the fundamental choice of Jesus Christ and of young people, beginning with our charismatic Spirituality.

### *Themes*

- Transversal themes: Covenant, charismatic identity, Marian dimension, vocational unity
- Thematic nuclei in the light of the Constitutions: Consacration, Evangelical Counsels, Prayer Life, Fraternal Life, Mission
- The dynamism of fidelity
- Discernment and accompaniment
- The Rite of Religious Profession
- Study and reflection on life in the light of the Founders and Patrons of the Institute
- Other: based on the needs of the local setting

### *Areas needing attention*

- \* Formation of a team (stable at least for a few years) that together plans the experience of the two

	<p>months and is present when the experience takes place. It would also be good to involve some Temporary Professed during the time of Planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Agree on objectives, share its approach with readiness to modify it in a style of co-responsible involvement and participation.</li> <li>* Possibility of sharing as far as possible with the Provincial who could make sure to be present for some days during the experience, together with the Novice Formator, or eventually with an FMA responsible for initial formation.</li> <li>* The contents should be presented using methods that involve experience and celebration.</li> <li>* An atmosphere of silence and prolonged times for personal reflection in order to review, interiorise, and arrive at a new personal synthesis.</li> <li>* Times of relaxation that favour fraternity in a family style.</li> </ul> <p><i>Other</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The Province (Provincial, Animator) should insure that the young Sisters do not arrive at the second novitiate very tired, with the real danger of not benefiting adequately from the experience.</li> <li>* Guarantee that the Temporary Professed Sister can participate in the experience from the first to the last day, seeking to put other pastoral or study needs in second place.</li> <li>* The experience should be characterized by a simple and moderate life style.</li> <li>* Some Provinces propose having the second novitiate at Mornese.</li> <li>* The choice of place can be a formative strategy.</li> <li>* The first and second month can conclude with the</li> </ul>
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	Spiritual Retreat. * Evaluation during and at the end of the journey.
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## Conclusion

At the end of this shared reflection, we feel a deep need to thank all those who have collaborated with us, becoming actively involved throughout all the phases of the process.

During the journey, we have lived a real experience of the Holy Spirit, being mutually enriched by sharing who we are and what we have at heart. We have all put ourselves on the line as a family preparing the wedding feast for a daughter!

Gathering the responses, reflections and suggestions we have felt ourselves in some way a part of the life of many Sisters and communities who with confidence and Gospel *parresia* (audacity) gave us their experience of the formative phase of Temporary Profession. Together, we are aware of the importance of preparing new wineskins so that the wine of vocational joy may give shape to our daily life and continue to brighten the life of the young FMA in formation.

Mary at Cana is the Gospel Icon that will continue to accompany us in taking responsibility for these Guidelines, but we must make ourselves available by giving our assent to her invitation: "Do whatever He tells you". Then the new wine of joy will be there to gladden our fraternal table, especially if it is enriched with the new wine of the young Sisters who offer the community the prophetic newness of a joyful and sparkling proclamation of the Gospel. Mary is the efficacious model and guide in the process of identification with Christ. A Woman who is '*docibile*', she let herself be challenged by reality, daring even to the point of temerity, to promote life and increase the joy of her children, above all of those who are young and poor.

Our founders, Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello are important reference points in the formative process. They are God's Word for us. They have handed on to us a Charism, a spirit that has

crossed oceans and times and is proposed anew to us in all its dynamism and beauty.

In relation to the task of each one in the formation process, we are challenged to discern what the Lord wants from Salesian religious life in the history of our day.

On the one hand, we ask ourselves about the kind of formative accompaniment to offer. On the other hand, we ask what kind of readiness for formation is needed so that the formation of the Temporary Professed may transform life through the faithful and prophetic following of Jesus Christ. It is a *sequela* that requires making the sentiments of Jesus toward the Father our own. Mother Mazzarello expressed this very effectively when she spoke of the importance of “clothing yourselves in the Spirit of our good Jesus” (*Letter 26, 4*).

The Guidelines contain directions that the Institute offers to all Provinces, communities and Temporary Professed Sisters with the intention of providing an authoritative proposal for discernment and revision of the formative phase of Temporary Profession.

It does not, however, pretend to be exhaustive. Every Province is called to inculturate it, developing it in its own reality and integrating it with further contributions from the formators, the Temporary Professed and every Sister of the Province.

All this needs to be seen within the framework of the unity of the Charism and the specific cultures that characterize each local context, so as to insure a serious and inculturated formation through fruitful intergenerational dialogue. The mutual gift of experience and wisdom, on the one hand, and of zeal, freshness and enthusiasm on the other, will propose anew the ideal of the first love.

We will be prophets and witnesses of God’s love for young people in today’s world in the measure in which we let ourselves be led to conversion on the journey of building or of consolidating the FMA identity.

Today, the Church calls us to discern the quality and grade of the new wine, to have the courage to ask ourselves: is what we taste and offer the new generations to drink, truly new wine, robust and healthy? If together as educating communities, we elaborate new ways of living the Gospel according to the spirituality of the Preventive System, we will be able to offer daring responses of witness and of proclamation to young people, especially the poorest. We are asked to adopt a style that brings together the desire and the capacity to 'invent the future'. In fact, new wine requires that we go beyond, that we creatively care for the newness of the Charism so that it may keep the genuine taste of fruitfulness of the origins.

The Plan of Formation, 'Ratio institutionis' elaborated by the Institute in response to the request of *Consecrated Life* (no. 68), remains the reference Document, both for its global approach and for its reference to guidelines for the specific phase of temporary profession. What we propose deepens some aspects that, today, require particular attention and care.

We pray that, with the power of the Spirit, these Guidelines will awaken new avenues of hope, according to the Gospel prophecy born of the dreams of our Founders, who urge us to recreate in our own situations 'new Covenants of love' involving everyone, especially young people, in the abundance of the banquet and in the joy of the feast.

May Mary guide us. May she, the woman of the good wine, who with us, renew the feast of the Covenant.

## **Appendix**

### **The Wedding at Cana in Galilee - Jn 2: 1-11**

#### **Inspirational Icon**

**A Gospel-Charismatic reading  
in the context of the formation process of  
Temporary Profession**

**Outline for Prayerful Reading**

## ***The Wedding at Cana in Galilee - Inspirational Icon***

**Jn 2: 1-11**

### **A Gospel-Charismatic reading in the context of the formation process of Temporary Profession**

In the Gospel of John<sup>1</sup> we note that this text is placed at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, as part of the first proclamation of the new economy of salvation. It is also situated among the events that centre on the first Passover.<sup>2</sup> We see it in continuity with the call of the first disciples: "Come and see"<sup>3</sup> and immediately after this, the encounter between Jesus and Nathanael to whom He announces that he would see much greater things.<sup>4</sup> Entering into our chosen text, we meet Jesus and his disciples in Cana of Galilee, the home-town of Nathanael,<sup>5</sup> where the Lord Jesus performed this sign that was the paradigm of his whole mission. Jesus is the best wine<sup>6</sup> that arrives in the fullness of time.<sup>7</sup>

The paschal context of the text is expressed in the opening verse: "*On the third day*", which helps symbolically to link us to the Passover of Jesus Christ that took place in the fullness of time. It was only after the third day that Jesus fully manifested his glory through the sign of the empty tomb<sup>8</sup> and of his return to the Father.<sup>9</sup> This initial expression of the text places us in the temporal, historical

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<sup>1</sup> Aware that there are different proposals for dividing and structuring the message of this Gospel, we have opted for the one that divides it into: The Prologue (1: 1-8); Jesus' ministry or the Book of Signs (1: 19-12: 50); Jesus' hour or the Book of the Passion-Resurrection (13: 1-20: 31) and the Epilogue (21: 1-25).

<sup>2</sup> Cf Jn 2: 13ff; cleansing of the Temple, stay in Jerusalem and the various signs that aroused faith in many, the encounter with Nicodemus...

<sup>3</sup> Cf Jn 1: 39.

<sup>4</sup> Cf Jn 1: 50.

<sup>5</sup> Cf Jn 21: 2.

<sup>6</sup> Cf Jn 2: 10.

<sup>7</sup> Cf Jn 2: 4b.

<sup>8</sup> Cf Jn 20: 1 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Cf Jn 14: 12,28; 16: 10,17,28; Lk 24: 50-51; Acts 1: 2,9.

dimension in which the Good News of Jesus developed. The Gospel introduces the events of a whole week,<sup>10</sup> described day by day and concludes with the definitive manifestation of the glory of Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup>

In order to understand the text better, it is necessary to recall how, in the book of Deuteronomy, God promised his people a new prophet like Moses. He also promised<sup>12</sup> that he would feed them and would seal a new and definitive Covenant with them. This conviction inspired the sacred writer to place many sayings on the lips of Jesus that had been attributed to Moses during the crossing of the desert.<sup>13</sup> According to John, Jesus is the new Moses who is no longer simply the prophet who spoke for God, but his Incarnate Word,<sup>14</sup> the one sent<sup>15</sup> from the Father<sup>16</sup> who passes on God's message to humanity through his human life. God is love<sup>17</sup> and invites us to love one another as he has loved us.<sup>18</sup>

Jesus Christ is the new Moses, come to proclaim the New Covenant to those who follow the way marked out by him during his earthly life. In this way, some 'signs' are given that confirm his identity and arouse faith.<sup>19</sup>

In the text chosen as the inspiration for the formation for the Temporary Professed, Jesus provides his first sign.<sup>20</sup> The image of the marriage celebrated in Cana of Galilee needs to be seen in the context of the New Covenant, in which the analogy of married love is

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<sup>10</sup> The week is announced with the expression: "The next day", repeated from the beginning of the Gospel in the quotes: Cf Jn 1: 19,35,43.

<sup>11</sup> Cf Jn 21: 14.

<sup>12</sup> Cf Deut 18: 15,18-19.

<sup>13</sup> Cf Ex 6: 5-13; 16: 1 ff.

<sup>14</sup> Cf Jn 1: 14.

<sup>15</sup> Cf Ex 3: 12,13,17; Jn 3: 17,34; 6: 29,57; 7: 29; 10: 36; 17: 18.

<sup>16</sup> Cf Jn 4: 34; 5: 23-24, 30.

<sup>17</sup> Cf 1 Jn 4: 8.

<sup>18</sup> Cf Jn 13: 34.

<sup>19</sup> Cf Jn 2: 11.

<sup>20</sup> Cf Jn 2: 11.

the biblical image *par excellence* for the relationship of God with his people throughout the history of salvation.

For Hosea,<sup>21</sup> as for other prophets, God's transcendence lies in his ability to offer the love of a spouse to his people, seen as a land that is devastated, abandoned and without a husband. His greatness is rooted in the omnipotence of a love without limits, which does not allow itself to be conquered or overcome by what is not love. In the Formation Plan of the Institute, *Rooted in the Covenant*, the Daughter of Mary Help of Christians is presented as a land married to the Lord. The Temporary Professed Sister could be seen, therefore, as one in love with Jesus and His plan; one who has chosen to give herself passionately,<sup>22</sup> so that her Spouse may be known, loved and admired by all, especially young people.<sup>23</sup> One who loves is proud of the beloved and wants to make him ever better known, so that others may see his beauty and, with her, sing the joy of being deeply loved. Life belongs to those who fall in love and are capable of taking the risk necessary to make this love 'eternal' in time.

The image of spouses,<sup>24</sup> when love is lived in God's way, makes them one flesh, capable of generating new life. Starting from this analogy the Temporary Professed Sister, as a missionary disciple of Christ, gradually learns to see herself as a space in which the fullness of humanity is re-created and made real. The mission is undertaken as the ability to generate life in the Spirit, becoming merciful and unconditional love and care for those who are fragile and wounded. In other words, the Temporary Professed Sister is called to

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<sup>21</sup> Cf Hos 1: 2; 2: 16-22.

<sup>22</sup> Cf "Temporary Profession, while maintaining its ad tempus character, has within itself that fullness of intention which finds its roots in the pact of love with God" - INSTITUTE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, *Rooted in the Covenant. Plan of Formation of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians*, Rome, 2000, p. 140.

<sup>23</sup> Cf *Ibid*, pp. 142-145.

<sup>24</sup> Cf Xabier Pikaza, "Amor de hombre, Dios enamorado. San Juan de la Cruz: una alternativa". Desclee de Brouwer, Bilbao, 2004. pp. 69-71.

bear many children of God who ask to be born again in Spirit and in truth.<sup>25</sup>

In this way, she does not only see herself as one who generates life, but commits herself to building it, by living her integration into the community, loving it as a place of growth, and offering her contribution, conscious that the community is always being built. It is a place where we welcome and respect each other as adults. It is a reality permeated by the spirituality of *loving kindness* and the joy of dreaming for young people, while committing ourselves to practical projects for the educational development and advancement of the poorest.<sup>26</sup>

The bishops of Latin America, gathered at Aparecida (Brazil, 2007) remind us that: *"Life is strengthened by giving it and grows weak in isolation and affluence. In fact, those who use the possibilities of life best are those who leave the safe shore and become passionate for the mission of communicating life to others [...] life grows and matures in the measure in which we give ourselves for the life of others. This is the definitive mission".*<sup>27</sup>

Adopting the formation process for the Temporary Professed from the perspective of the wedding feast of Cana, that is as the covenant that God wants to establish with the new generations, means living the Salesian mission as a Marian motherhood. Thus the Reign of God is the new horizon of love in which to serve him, creating the conditions of life so that others, in the process of growing in humanity, may increase in communion with the Lord of life. For this, it is necessary to listen and do what Jesus says.<sup>28</sup> The Temporary Professed Sister discovers that the mission, as a Marian motherhood, involves active intercession for justice, where a more dignified life is possible for all, especially the younger generations.

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<sup>25</sup> Cf Jn 3: 5-8.

<sup>26</sup> *Rooted in the Covenant*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>27</sup> CELAM, "V Conferencia general de Episcopado Latinoamericano del Caribe", Aparecida, 2007, no. 360.

<sup>28</sup> Cf Jn 2: 5.

Such intercession must be capable of being translated into practical commitment to bring it about.

The image of married love, the context in which this first sign of Jesus took place, shows us that human fullness is only reached by starting from communion with diversity. It is therefore weakened if it is not open to generate new life, because it creates a short circuit of self-contemplation and distances one from true human fulfilment which is openness to a greater fullness to come. The Temporary Professed Sister is invited to experience an apostolic community where all grow together in patience and simplicity, but also in the capacity to be proactive, seeking to bring about the 'not yet' of the charism.<sup>29</sup>

The image of the virgin-spouse-mother is *par excellence* that of Mary at Cana. She is the one that the sacred writer presents as the "Mother of Jesus, present at the wedding".<sup>30</sup> It would seem that she was almost 'part of the family'.<sup>31</sup> She is not just present, but gives orders to the domestic staff and is obeyed by them,<sup>32</sup> since the servants recognise her authority during that wedding and in that house. She is not just another invited guest; she is part of the 'house', which is celebrating because it is sealing a new Covenant. Mary is aware of what is happening, not simply as a spectator or someone interfering, but rather as an active participant in the situation.

Human weddings form part of the everyday life of the people and are a symbol of the Covenant of God with his people. Mary, 'the Mother of Jesus', is immersed in the situation and grasps from within its potential and weakness. She understands that the celebration of life is about to be ruined, both by the lack of foresight of the couple and their 'house', and perhaps because they have spent everything, reaching the limit of their available resources. What we know for

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<sup>29</sup> *Rooted in the Covenant*, p. 141.

<sup>30</sup> Cf Jn 2: 1.

<sup>31</sup> We are using the term 'house/home' according to one of its biblical meanings, as referring to the family and/or the inhabitants of a specific place, as in Lk 19: 9, Acts 11: 14 or to its descendants, as in Mt 10: 6; Lk 1: 33.

<sup>32</sup> Cf Jn 2: 5.

certain is that this 'house' is celebrating the feast of life, the newness of God who is generating something new. The couple have invited Jesus, desiring that he should share their everyday reality. Mary, 'the mother', knows that her Son has something to offer, not only so that the feast may continue, but that it may reach its fullness. For this reason, she approached Jesus discretely in an attitude of supplication and as a helper, presenting the fragility of the situation to him and begging him to act.

The images of the 'house' and of the 'mother of Jesus' are icons of the FMA community with its animator<sup>33</sup> that welcomes and accompanies the Temporary Professed in the celebration of the feast of life, of the Covenant that God established with Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, and which we participate in and prolong in time. The community gives its whole self so that the feast that God wants to celebrate with the younger generations may continue. It invites Jesus to share everyday life and tries to be, every day with Mary, helpers among young people.

The formator, like Mary, 'the mother', knows the real situation of the young Sister, the fragility that many times blocks the celebration of the feast of life. She guides the temporary Professed Sister with well thought out and evaluated educational interventions, to be a "helper" with "Our Help". She intercedes with Jesus for the situation, especially that of young people who, at times, are about to 'ruin' themselves.

This motherhood of the community, and in particular that of the formator, reflects the motherhood of God, Christ and Mary, which makes of the Church<sup>34</sup> a home, a family, a hearth, a place of human and divine growth, space for healing and liberation. It is a place where God can fulfil his promises: *On that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen, ... and rebuild it as in the days of old; in order that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations*

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<sup>33</sup> *Rooted in the Covenant*, pp. 145-148.

<sup>34</sup> Cf Bárbara Pataro Buckler, "*O feminino da Igreja e o conflicto*", Ed. VOZES, Petrópolis, 1996. pp. 266-285.

*who are called by my name.*<sup>35</sup> Therefore it is a mission based on trust in the action of the Spirit who transforms us into “wounded healers”, humble and courageous, capable of looking at our own fragility and allowing ourselves be touched by the healing power of God, incarnate and in love, who burn with zeal for his house.<sup>36</sup>

The formator, together with the community, accompanies and facilitates this process, aware that in the life of the Temporary Professed, the leading role is played by the Holy Spirit. As the “friend of the Bridegroom”<sup>37</sup> she collaborates closely, rejoices to hear the voice of the bridegroom, calls and supports.<sup>38</sup> The exegetes do not hesitate in affirming that the six jars of the rite of ritual purification are signs of the ‘law’, which had reached the limit of what it could give. The real purification and healing of the human person comes from the presence of the bridegroom,<sup>39</sup> Jesus Christ, source of a joy that never fails.

In this text of the Wedding at Cana, the presence and action of Mary emerges as Helper, educator and companion of those who desire to follow Christ and celebrate the covenant that God has established with humanity. She sheds light on the mystery of the Church and its mission, especially on our vocation as FMA inasmuch as we are sign and expression of God’s love for young people. In Mary we rediscover the attitudes we are called to incarnate, if we want to share in intimacy and mission with Jesus: listening to the Word and words of God (seeds of the Word), communion with the Body of Christ (Eucharist) and with his suffering flesh present in history.

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<sup>35</sup> Cf Amos 9, 11-12.

<sup>36</sup> Cf Jn 2: 17b.

<sup>37</sup> Cf Jn 3: 29.

<sup>38</sup> INSTITUTE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, *Constitutions and Regulations*, Rome 2015, art. 67: “Salesian assistance, a typical expression of the Preventive System, is an indispensable educational need resulting from our communion with Christ that makes us attentive to the Holy Spirit at work in each person. It is a welcoming, active, witnessing presence among young people, a warm-hearted sharing in their lives, and aspirations”.

<sup>39</sup> Cf Mt 9: 15; 25: 1,6,10; Mk 2: 19; Lk 5: 34.

Mary is the spouse, virgin and mother, fruitful because of her openness to the Spirit. Her's is virginity that can only be understood from the perspective of the experience of a love that wants to proclaim and 'bring forth'. The formator, like Mary, accompanies so that the person of Jesus and His plan may be, for the Temporary Professed, an all-embracing experience that involves every aspect of her life. When Jesus and His plan are transformed into the young Sister's 'reason' for being, chastity, poverty and obedience are filled with meaning and bring all human potential to its fullness. Every Temporary Professed is invited to: "*develop an ever clearer awareness of the centrality of Christ in her life. It is a centrality that calls for the integration of all dimensions of life and the development of the capacity for synthesis between affectivity and consecrated virginity, freedom in the use of goods and religious poverty, the capacity for initiative and responsible obedience*".<sup>40</sup>

Mary continues to be the Teacher. "*With her help, each day, we want to begin the journey of formation. We invoke her as our companion on the journey, a sister who is close in every season of life, who helps us discover the shape of a future as yet unseen*".<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Rooted in the Covenant*, p. 143.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

# **“Do whatever Jesus tells you”**

## **Outline for Prayerful Reading**

### **1. Opening the furrows of the Word**

- ✧ I recall some experiences of marriage covenants that I recognise as meaningful for me (the marriage of my parents, of a brother or sister, of a friend, of some young person that I accompany ...).
- ✧ What elements of this experience do I find in my life as a spouse of Christ according to the Salesian way of life?

### **2. Welcoming the seed**

- a) I slowly read the text of John 2: 1-11 and listen to what the Spirit whispers to me.
- b) I deepen my understanding of the text by:
  - ✧ Reading the comments to chapter 2 of John in my Bible
  - ✧ A Gospel-charismatic reading in the context of the formative project for the period of temporary profession.

### **3. Letting the seed of the Word germinate in my life**

- ✧ How do I live the love of unlimited self-giving as a spouse? In what experiences do I manifest this capacity?
- ✧ Do I experience the need to make Jesus, my beloved, known especially to young people? How and where do I manifest my desire to make Him known?
- ✧ Faced with the reality of life for young people and the celebrations that 'risk being ruined', how do I invoke the intervention of Jesus? How do I show that I am a 'helper'?
- ✧ As community, how do we live with Jesus in the everyday? How do we express our being a womb that generates life?

#### **4. Contemplating and transforming the “Do whatever He tells you” into prayer**

- ✧ Give time to praise, thank, offer, adore, etc.

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**PAGINE RETRO**

**Do whatever He tells you. The new wine of joy will continue to gladden our fraternal table, enriched with the new wine of the young Sisters who offer the community the prophetic newness of a joyful and sparkling proclamation of the Gospel to the young and the poor in today's history.**