

MONTHLY MESSAGE

n. 10 – 2018

Turin - Valdocco 24 October



OUR LADY INVITES US TO CHOOSE HOLINESS AND LIFE WITH GOD IN GRACE AND PEACE

Dear Friends, on Sunday 16 September ADMA Primary officially opened the 150th year since its foundation with a well-attended pilgrimage, which, in a simple and popular way reminded us that we are God's people on a journey with Mary Help of Christians.

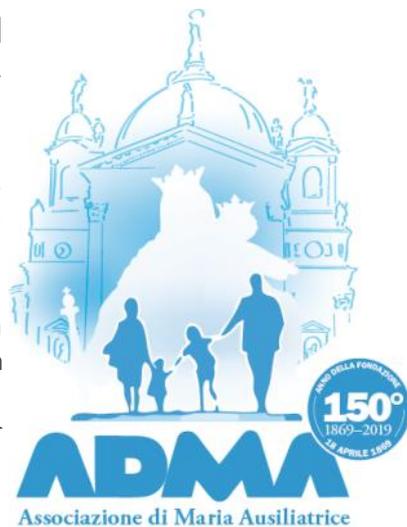
Providentially this anniversary, coming in the wake of Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate* and the Rector Major's Strenna for 2019, is a strong stimulus to holiness. Our Lady invites us to a special holiness in everyday life. She calls us to great things, but in simplicity. She calls us to daily holiness. By **inviting us to opt for holiness and for life with God in grace and peace**, she exhorts us to live in the grace of God, in peace with God and not in sin, like dry branches. It is an invitation to give up sin and be converted. "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing" (see Jn 15: 5). If we remain in God, we bear much fruit like healthy bunches of grapes. We often forget to marvel at small things: it can be a fruit, or a grace received. God never abandons us: if we remain in grace and in peace and trust in Him, God will bless us and reward us a hundredfold.

It is not too late to opt for holiness, because Mary Help of Christians always gives us hope. She encourages us and she does not give up on the joy of seeing a lost child who finds God. There is always time for us to be converted and to opt for holiness. Our Lady is a woman of hope. She is the Morning Star. She is our guide at this very critical moment. Our Lady gives us courage to be witnesses. The Church is going through a difficult time for many reasons. There is a wave of apostasy, unbelief, secularism and scandal. Our Lady asks us to be with God in holiness, to be in the Church and to help. A clean-up is needed! We pray that we may have holy priests and consecrated persons. We support them by praying with them and for them. We live by



God's commandments. We must aim at paradise, but to get there we have to make a choice, an option for sanctity. If we are fixed on that goal we can live a normal life, using the things of this world, not allowing people or things to take the place of God. Our Lady is purifying hearts in the Church and in society.

In this special year of the 150th anniversary of our foundation we in ADMA are called to grow in holiness and in prayer, to be leaven, salt and light of the world. We invite all ADMA groups at provincial and local level to plan special initiatives for the 150th anniversary, highlighting, *"in a special way the worship of the Eucharist and devotion to Mary Help of Christians, in all forms, public and private, approved by the Church, working in communion with and fidelity to the pastors of the Church and in collaboration with other ecclesial groups, especially those of the Salesian Family."* (Article 2 of the Regulations).



Renato Valera, President

Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animator

Good night of the Rector Major, Fr Angel Fernández Artime, in the Church of St Francis of Sales in Valdocco to the members of ADMA (24 September 2018)

I feel very emotional in this chapel because for me it is one of the most beautiful places we have here in Valdocco. This little church has witnessed many moments of holiness, of prayer and of the growth of young people in holiness. We know that it was here that Dominic Savio lost the sense of time and space in ecstasy. Here Dominic Savio and his friends promised the Immaculate Virgin to undertake a real journey of holiness. Here Michael Rua, John Cagliero and many others celebrated their first Mass. Here the life of faith of many young people grew day by day. It is wonderful for me to close my eyes and imagine Don Bosco with those young people in this little church. The structure is still the same. Only the paintings are different. My heart is deeply touched. I would love to be like a computer and to take a pen-drive, upload whatever I wanted and then pass it on to others. In this way I could offer my service as a gift to the world, seeing these young people, some of them here, others elsewhere in Asia or America, some with street children, others engaged in the professional training of young people.

If it were possible to communicate this feeling that I carry in my heart and the many emotions I have experienced, and to transfer them into the hearts of my Salesian confreres, of the Salesian Family, of you young people, then it would be impossible not to have great hope, great faith, and a beautiful joy in transmitting the many things you carry in your hearts. I remind you of a slogan that is certainly well known to you all: **"I am mission"**. We are all mission, every one of us. Each of you has received this gift from God to give of your best through the simplicity of your life.

In recent weeks I find myself reflecting a little more about next year's Strenna on holiness: **"Holiness is also for you,"** to use a phrase given to us by Pope Francis. It is wonderful to study this in a simple way, because then we can say to our young people: you also have the challenge, the duty, the opportunity, the gift and the grace to be saints. This is not only for Domenico Savio and many others like Laura Vicuña, and Zeffirino Namuncurà. In our Salesian Family we have more than 46 saints, blessed and venerable under the age of 29.

What seems most important to my mind is that one need not do anything special but just **allow the Holy Spirit to work seriously in your life. Let God work in your hearts and in the depths of your being.** Continue doing what you are doing - your study, your work, your relationships, friends, services, summer camps, songs - everything! I think, dear friends, and I include also you parents, our world today needs young people as convinced as you, not to be strange young people but to be what you are, to witness to what your deep motivations are. And I can tell you, from my experience going around the world, that you are not the only ones. I do not say this to take away from your goodness. I say it to help you believe that there are many, thousands and thousands of young people from the Salesian world, who want to write a few beautiful pages with their life. This was what I wanted to tell you today, **here in this place which was a true school of life and holiness.**

The paper can be read at the following site:

www.admadonbosco.org

For every communication you can contact

the following email address: pcameroni@sdb.org

Formation Programme 2018-2019: With Mary, the woman who believes

150th foundation of ADMA (18 April 2019)
8th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians
(Argentina 7-10 November 2019)

Fr Pierluigi Cameroni
World spiritual animator



Del 7 al 10 de noviembre de 2019. Buenos Aires, Argentina

2. October: The Virgin Mary at prayer

In her visit to the mother of the Precursor Mary expresses her spirit, giving glory to God, in words of humility, of faith and of hope: The *Magnificat* **My soul magnifies the Lord** (cf. Lk 1,46- 55) is the **prayer par excellence of Mary**, the song of the Messianic times in which the exultation of the ancient and the new Israel converge. St. Irenaeus seems to suggest that in the canticle of Mary the triumph of Abraham that foretold the Messiah (cf. Jn 8:56) and the voice of the Church resounded prophetically in anticipation: *In her exultation Mary proclaimed prophetically in the name of the Church: My soul magnifies the Lord*. In fact, the canticle of the Virgin Mary has become a prayer of the whole Church for all times.

The *prayer of the Virgin Mary* is seen at **Cana** where she brings a temporal necessity to the attention of her Son with a delicate entreaty. In response to her prayer Jesus worked the first of his "signs," confirming the disciples' faith in him (cf. Jn 2, 1-12).

The last biographical detail on Mary also presents her as the Virgin at prayer. The *Apostles were assiduous and united in prayer, together with some women and with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with his brothers* (Acts 1:14). **Mary is present at prayer in the early Church and in the Church of every age**. When she was assumed into heaven she did not abandon her mission of intercession and salvation. The Church is also the Virgin at prayer as she presents the needs of her children to the Father every day, *praises the Lord incessantly, and intercedes for the salvation of the world*. (*Marialis Cultus* 18).

1. Mary Woman of the Magnificat

In the *Magnificat* (Lk 1,46-55), Mary celebrates God's saving interventions. She lists seven (a number that in the Bible expresses totality and perfection) to include all the works of salvation accomplished by God in the history of mankind. Mary teaches us that **prayer is first of all praise and thanksgiving to God** for all that he has done in the universal history of mankind and in our personal history.

Mary is the woman of joy, who testifies by singing the Magnificat: "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, because he has looked at the humility of his servant" (Lk 2,46-48). Her interior attitude is well expressed in this song, which recalls the Psalms of the "anawim", the "poor" who trust only in God, and the song of Anna (1 Sam 2: 1-10). It opens with docility to the surprising action of God, but nevertheless reveals the profound faith of this Jewish woman, capable of surrendering herself totally to the Eternal. **At the school of Mary, we learn the primacy of the contemplative dimension of life**, that continuous acceptance of the initiative of the Lord which consists in letting ourselves be loved and led docilely by him.

We ask ourselves: is God really the Lord of my life, as he was for Mary? Am I docile to his action, to his Word and to his silence? Do I let myself be guided by him, meditating on what he gives me in life in the light of the Scriptures, to discern his will and to realize his plan of love for me and for those whom he entrusts to me even in difficult moments, such as those that our society is living?

2. Mary the Woman who Intercedes

At the wedding at Cana, when the party ran the risk of becoming a disaster because the wine had run short,

Mary very discreetly brought the situation to the attention of her Son. She said simply: "They have no wine" (Jn 2, 1-12). Mary teaches us that prayer of intercession is also important. The liturgy teaches the same in the prayer of the faithful which allows us to embrace the world and to bring before God the expectations and supplications of the whole of humanity. Sometimes it is the only way to love our brothers and sisters.

Mary is attentive. She is still attentive to marriages already begun and looks after the needs of the spouses. She does not isolate herself in her own world. On the contrary, **love makes her reach out towards others.** She does not even look for her friends to comment on what is happening and to criticize the poor preparation for the wedding.

And because she is attentive she notices that there is no wine. Wine is a symbol of joy, of love and of abundance. How many teenagers and young people feel that for some time there has been no wine in their homes! How many sad lonely women ask themselves if love has gone, if the love in their lives has run out! How many elderly people feel left out of family feasts, abandoned in a corner, deprived of the nourishment of the daily love of their children, their grandchildren, and great-grandchildren! The lack of wine can also be the consequence of the lack of work, of sickness or of the problematic situations that families all over the world are going through. Mary is not a mother who "pretends". She is not like a mother-in-law who watches to make fun of our inexperience, our carelessness and our mistakes. **Mary is simply our Mother!** She is ever present, attentive and thoughtful. It is good to hear this: Mary is our Mother. Let's say it all together. Mary is our Mother! Again: Mary is our Mother! And again: Mary is our Mother!

When Mary realized that there was no wine she turned confidently to Jesus. This means that **Mary prayed.** She did not go to the steward but presented the problem directly to her Son. The answer she received seems off-putting: "Woman, what do you want from me? My hour has not come yet." (v. 4). But in the meantime, she has placed the problem in God's hands. Her concern for the needs of others anticipates the "hour" of God. And Mary is part of that hour, from the nativity to the cross. She was able to turn a stable into a home for Jesus, with poor swaddling clothes and an abundance of love. (*Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium*, 286), and she received us as sons and daughters when a sword pierced her heart. She teaches us to **place our families in the hands of God.** She teaches us to pray, nurturing the hope that our concerns are also the concerns of God.

Prayer always makes us move out of the world of our own concerns. It makes us go beyond what causes us suffering, the things that worry us or the things we need. Prayer helps us to put ourselves in other people's shoes. "The family is a school where prayer also reminds us that we are not isolated individuals; we are one and we have a neighbour close at hand: he or she is living under the same roof, is a part of our life, and is in need." (*Pope Francis - Guayaquil - Ecuador - 5 July 2015*).

3. Mary, the Woman who Perseveres in Prayer

Finally, while the Apostles were waiting for the fulfilment of the promise made by Jesus, **Mary persevered in prayer awaiting the Holy Spirit** (Acts 1: 14). In this way she teaches us that prayer is the vigilant expectation of the Lord who comes to accompany us, every day, in the happy and sad moments of life. She teaches us to wait and to be able to accept every surprise that the Lord has for us on our journey.

We too need prayer, tossed as we are by the wind and storms. It is an indispensable means for entering into true dialogue, in a filial relationship with the God who is ever close to us, the God who saves us from our loneliness, from our egoism and from our sins. For this also we turn our gaze to our Mother of Heaven. **Our Lady is a woman of prayer and a teacher of prayer.**

Contemplation of Our Lady in prayer and her whole life as a life of prayer should convince us of the beauty of cultivating a solid inner life of personal relationship with the One and Triune God. We learn to turn to the Father, the inexhaustible and eternal source of every good. We identify with the beloved Son through an ever more lively contemplation of his life and his teaching, and with the constant support of the Holy Spirit, the living breath and intimacy of God, the only one who, as Saint Paul says, "searches the depths of God".

4. In Constant Prayer

The Christian life is a life of prayer. The praying person lives in relationship with God, open to him and his will, in prayer and adoration. Prayer then becomes the way to live in the presence of God in everyday life, cultivating that union with God which is typical of Don Bosco and his spirit. We will share in the fullness of God's life in paradise. Prayer immerses us in the joyful presence of God here and now in the daily occupations of everyday life. We remain in contact with God, raising our mind and memory to him in short prayers of invocation, praise and supplication. For St Teresa of Avila, prayer is "an intimate relationship of friendship, a frequent presence

alone with the One by whom we know we are loved".

- **Devote time every day to prayerful silence**, listening to the Word, in intimate adoration with Jesus. Create spaces of trusting prayer where the heart is open to God face to face, where all other voices are silenced in order to hear the gentle voice of the Lord which resounds in silence. The prayerful reading of the Word of God, which is sweeter than honey (see Psalm 119.103) and "a double-edged sword" (Heb 4:12), allows us to listen to the Master so that it becomes a lamp for our steps and light for our journey (see Ps 119.105).

"In that silence, we can discern, in the light of the Spirit, the paths of holiness to which the Lord is calling us. Otherwise, any decisions we make may only be window-dressing that, rather than exalting the Gospel in our lives, will mask or submerge it. For each disciple, it is essential to spend time with the Master, to listen to his words, and to learn from him always. Unless we listen, all our words will be nothing but useless chatter." (Gaudete et Exultate No. 150).

- **Take time every morning to direct the whole day to God and time every evening to thank him** and remember his love, to recognize the signs of his presence and his providence in our daily lives, in the lives of the people we met during the day and in the life of the Church. We ask the Lord to enlighten our lives and the choices and decisions that we are called to make.

- **With the heart of children loved by God, cultivate the prayer of trust and confident supplication to God the Father.**

Supplication is an expression of the heart that trusts in God, of one who knows that he cannot make it alone. In the life of the faithful people of God we find many supplications full of tenderness and deep trust. "In reality, our prayer will be all the more pleasing to God and more effective for our growth in holiness if, through intercession, we attempt to practise the twofold commandment that Jesus left us. Intercessory prayer is an expression of our fraternal concern for others, since we are able to embrace their lives, their deepest troubles and their loftiest dreams. Of those who commit themselves generously to intercessory prayer we can apply the words of Scripture: "This is a man who loves the brethren and prays much for the people" (2 Mac 15:14). (Gaudete et Exultate No. 154).

- **Celebrate the Eucharist as the culmination and source of our life.** The Eucharist celebrated, adored and lived, is the heart of faith and of the Christian life. Don Bosco saw it as the first column of the two that constitute the foundation of his educational system and the identity of the Association of Mary Help of Christians.

Meeting Jesus in the Scriptures leads us to the Eucharist, where the written word attains its greatest efficacy, for there the living Word is truly present. In the Eucharist, the one true God receives the greatest worship the world can give him, for it is Christ himself who is offered. When we receive him in Holy Communion, we renew our covenant with him and allow him to carry out ever more fully his work of transforming our lives. (Gaudete et Exultate # 157)

HAIL, thou Star of Ocean, Portal of the sky, Ever Virgin Mother Of the Lord most high!
Oh, by Gabriel's Ave, Utter'd long ago, Eva's name reversing, 'Stablish peace below.
Break the captive's fetters, Light on darkness pour; All our ills expelling, Every bliss implore.
Show thyself a mother, Offer Him our sighs; Who for us incarnate Did not thee despise.
Virgin of all virgins, To thy shelter take us; Gentlest of the gentle, Chaste and gentle make us.
Still as on we journey, Help our weak endeavour; Till with thee and Jesus We rejoice for ever.
Through the highest heaven, To the all-holy Three, Father, Son, and Spirit, One same glory be

FAMILY CHRONICLE

COLOMBIA - EIGHTEENTH NATIONAL CONGRESS OF ADMA

About 290 people took part in the Eighteenth National Congress of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA), of the two Salesian Provinces of Colombia, from 4 to 7 August, in La Ceja, Colombia. Coming from 19 Colombian cities, the participants shared this gathering in an atmosphere of prayer, unity, joy, Salesian spirit, and Marian spirituality. The participation of various ADMA groups led by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians is noteworthy.



The inauguration was attended by Fr Luis Fernando Valencia, the new provincial of the Medellín province, and many other Salesians. The participants watched a video on the role of the Association of Mary Help of Christians in contemporary society. It included the greetings of the Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, and a message from Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, world animator of ADMA.

The motto of the Congress was "**Our Mother, the Help of Christians, accompanies our young people on their journey through life**". This was also the theme of the various activities and the talks given by the speakers, in harmony with the forthcoming Synod of the Church on young people.

On Monday 6 August, Feast of the **Transfiguration** of the Lord, there was a much-appreciated visit by the participants to the Benedictine Monastery of Santa María of the Epiphany in the city of Guatapé. Here they were deeply touched by the silence, recollection, austerity, and spirituality as well as the Gregorian Chant which created a unique and unforgettable atmosphere for the Eucharistic celebration.

The ADMA national congress is organized alternately every four years by each of the Colombian provinces. The city of **Duitama** in the Province of San Pedro Claver of Bogotá was chosen as the venue for the next National Congress in 2022.

SAO PAULO (BRAZIL) - PROVINCIAL MEETING



About 250 members of ADMA of the Province of Mary Help of Christians of Sao Paulo attended the provincial meeting in Lorraine on Saturday, 15 September 2018. The theme of the meeting was "**With Mary, Woman of Faith**." The meeting was organized by the ADMA group in the city. It brought together members of the groups from Americana, Guarujá, Sorocaba, Pindamonhangaba, Campinas, Araras,

Araraquara, São Carlos, Itaquera (SP), Santa Terezinha (SP), Lapa (SP), Bom Retiro (SP) and São José dos Campos in addition to the 3 groups of Lorraine.

The Provincial Fr **Justus Piccinini** welcomed the participants, underlining the importance of this moment for ADMA and asking for perseverance in the mission entrusted to Don Bosco. He thanked Fr **Narciso Ferreira** for the work done in the Association and the Lorraine group for their work in preparation for the Congress.

The first conference was given by Fr. Maurizio Tadeu Miranda. He invited the participants to reflect on the fact that God took the initiative to come among mankind and reveal himself. The human response to God's initiative is called FAITH. It is our FAITH that makes us recognize that he meets us and manifests himself in our lives and

enables us to respond to God's intervention in a free, personal way. Mary, the Mother of God, helps us to approach Jesus with constant steps in the Faith. She is the evangelizer par excellence.

The participants were divided into ten groups to share their ideas on the following questions:

1) How do we promote devotion to Mary Help of Christians in the animation of ADMA with proposals for young people and children?

2) What keeps you from taking part in ADMA and fully assuming a role in it?

3) What are the signs of life and hope that we experience in our ADMA groups?

Shortly after lunch we prayed the Rosary, led by the ADMA group of Guarujá.

In the second conference, Father Maurizio asked us to reflect on the Faith in God that Mary taught us while she carried the Child in her womb. Faith needs to be professed (catechesis), celebrated (sacraments, prayers, liturgical feasts) and witnessed (concrete gestures in the family and in the community). ADMA must respond positively to this call.

Fr Narciso presided at the Mass with Frs Edson, Miltom, Tertius and Tetuo concelebrating. Fr Narciso highlighted the challenges and demands of Marian devotion in the Salesian community that should have many young people to enrich the community with the whole Christian experience. We must be open to the need to walk with the young, to accompany them in the situations they face, welcoming them with joy as Don Bosco did.

The meeting exceeded expectations and reiterated the importance of the apostolic activity of ADMA in the Salesian Family for the salvation of youth. We can count always on the blessing of Mary Help of Christians, as we approach the 150th anniversary of the foundation of ADMA.

ITALY - OPENING OF THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDATION OF ADMA

Serralunga di Crea, Italy - 16 September 2018 - Last Sunday, more than 200 members of ADMA Primary and ADMA in Piedmont held a pilgrimage to the Marian shrine of Crea in Monferrato, a place that



Don Bosco visited on 10 October 1861 on one of the autumn walks with his boys. This pilgrimage of faith and entrustment marked the official beginning of the formation programme of this special year of grace which will see two major events for ADMA: the 150th anniversary of its foundation on 18 April 2019 and the 8th International Congress of Mary Help of Christians on the theme "With Mary, the woman who believed" (Buenos Aires, Argentina - 7-10 November 2019). This formation programme will look at Mary and allow ourselves to be guided by her on our journey of faith as God's people, taking up and putting into practice the themes that led Don Bosco to found ADMA as the second group of his charismatic Family.

YOUTH ADMA ECUADOR

24 September 2018 was a historic day for ADMA in Ecuador. In the shrine of Mary Help of Christians at Guayaquil 12 young people expressed their commitment to Mary as members of ADMA. It is a seed that we hope will multiply in all the ADMA centres in Ecuador. (Fr Alejandro Saavedra, SDB, Parish Priest and Rector of the Shrine).



VENEZUELA - NATIONAL MEETING OF ADMA

The national meeting of ADMA took place on 16 September 2018 at the María Auxiliadora parish at Sarria in Caracas. The meeting was attended by members of ADMA from Caracas, Valencia, Los Teques, San Antonio, Maracaibo and Por-lamar. It was led by Fr Orlando Gramcko, national spiritual animator of ADMA and Fr Danny Da Franca, who spoke about the importance of service to the most needy.



SPAIN - 110-YEAROLD STATUE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS IN PROCESSION FOR THE CENTENARY OF THE SHRINE OF CORDOBA

On 22 September 2018 the statue of Mary Help of Christians of Cordoba was carried in procession through the streets of the city. It was an extraordinary occasion intended to commemorate the centenary of the blessing and consecration of the shrine bearing the same name.



The statue of Mary Help of Christians was blessed on 25 March 1908 by the then bishop of Cordoba, Msgr. José Pozuelo Herrero. Then, 10 years later, there was the blessing and consecration of the sanctuary on 23 September 1918. The Salesian workshops in Sarriá, Barcelona had been commissioned to execute the wooden sculpture of Mary Help of Christians which was completely restored in the 1960s. Subsequently, the workshops of "Nuestra Señora de la Almudena" in Madrid also refurbished the statue in 2005. Four years later, on 10 May 2009, the Salesian community of Cordoba witnessed a significant event with **the pontifical coronation of the statue**: it was a historic moment which attracted thousands of faithful from many parts of the country.

On Saturday 22 September, the statue of Mary Help of Christians was carried in procession through the streets of the city to the cathedral where a solemn pontifical Mass was celebrated with the Bishop of Cordoba, Msgr. Demetrio Fernández González, presiding.