

MARY URGES US TO BE THE REFLECTION OF GOD'S LOVE AND TO TESTIFY TO THE RISEN JESUS



Our Lady invites us to conversion and above all to personal conversion. Perhaps never before, until this year, have we had such an intense Lent in prayer. And even now in these fifty days until Pentecost, we have time to work on ourselves for our conversion. In our own house or in our own room, we can find time when we can pray, getting up early in the morning before the rest of the family, or late at night, in a place by ourselves. We can set up a prayer corner where we can place the Holy Scripture, a statue of Our Lady, a Crucifix, or the Rosary ...

In this Easter season and in preparation for Pentecost we are invited to **pray to the Holy Spirit to strengthen us in faith and trust in God.** In this period of pandemic, we may be tempted to lose trust in God and become weak in faith. We must pray to the Holy Spirit because trust in God is fundamental if we are to face the future calmly. **There is hope because Our Lady is with us and the Holy Spirit guides our life.** We need to trust, to be converted and to

feel that our life is a gift from God. We need to be wary of the temptation that our hearts become hardened because the trials last so long and are so difficult, and then we become arid in prayer. We need to spend the time of preparation for Pentecost in prayer, like the Apostles and Our Lady. This is truly a time of grace and conversion for all of us. We pray to the Holy Spirit so that we, like the Apostles, may become strong in faith until the end of our earthly life. Then eternal life awaits us. We were born and we will never die ... our goal must be Paradise. St Philip Neri used to sing: "Paradise! Paradise!"

With Mary's help and the power of the Holy Spirit we will be the reflection of God's love and we will bear witness to the Risen Jesus by our lives. If we have the Risen Jesus in our hearts, we will have joy and we will be positive people, friendly, far-seeing people ... If we trust in God, God will not abandon us. God loves us and gives us a joy that is not afraid of any pandemic. We are called to something else which is to give God his due place in our families and in our society.

We believe in the power of prayer, especially that of the **Holy Rosary.** It is not a repetitive prayer to put us to sleep, but a prayer to contemplate the life of Jesus. We come to Jesus through Mary. The Rosary transforms us. The Rosary rejuvenates us. It unites us to Our Lady, and she takes us to Jesus. Whenever possible, we should pray the rosary together as a family.

Best wishes to all for a happy feast of Our Lady Help of Christians and a Holy Pentecost. "Come, Holy Spirit, come to us through Mary."

*Renato Valera, President
Fr Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Spiritual Animator*

Formative Journey 2019-2020

Anchored to the two columns: Jesus the Eucharist and Mary Immaculate-Helper

Luis Fernando Álvarez González, sdb

8. The Eucharist lived and adored



*The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when **the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him.** God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." (Jn 4: 19-26).*

To worship means to respect, to listen to God, to serve him as He wants and in what he wants.

To adore is to dare to love him with all your strength and without conditions. We all feel within ourselves and openly confess that Jesus of Nazareth, as a man who lived at a specific time, died and rose, is of fundamental importance for the total meaning of life. We have placed all our trust in him, we have made him the centre of our whole existence and we have accepted the mystery of his life that inspires us to follow him with all our hearts, loving him "more than father or mother, more than son or daughter" (cf. Mt 10:37). None of this can be explained without love. Is Jesus the centre of your life, your only Lord?

The Risen Jesus is the first to love.

To answer our question if it is possible to love Jesus, to bridge the distance that separates us from him and to know what it really means to love Jesus, it is necessary to understand that the Risen Jesus has first loved us. He appears to us, even when we do not expect him. It is he who makes our love for him truly possible. When we embrace Christ in a strong love relationship, deep down it is not we who take the initiative. Rather we are the ones who respond, the ones who were first touched by his love. He alone makes our love possible so that we can love him. And he makes our love possible by making himself present in this permanent Easter of the Church and of Creation, He reaches out to us in various ways: through the community, people, nature, the Word, the Sacraments, and the Eucharist. He is always alive (he is the Living Lord!), even if his presence is not yet definitive or totally victorious, because many close their doors to him. But he does meet us and we meet him. He continues to tell us: «Do not be afraid ... it is I ... look at me, touch me ... take and eat ... drink». Do you recognize the primacy of God's grace in your life and his love that reaches out and saves us?

We can love Jesus beyond all time and space.

When we say that we love Jesus we are loving a real, historical man with certain characteristics - a man who came mysteriously to meet us and fascinated us. And for this reason we look for him, think about him, talk about him, talk to him, get closer to him, and let ourselves be influenced by him. In the same way we love another person, in this way - at least - we love Jesus.

But we love him as human beings. And in all human love, however dedicated it may be, there are always reservations: fear of not being at the level of the loved one, of not being able to love adequately, of loving and ultimately failing so that our love appears as a passing whim. A love without these doubts would not be authentic. Every love aspires to be unconditional and definitive, giving oneself radically. So we too want our love for Jesus to be a definitive love, which overcomes the reservations and the uncertainties of human love. If human love is limited and always has its reservations and uncertainties, can we love Jesus to the point of total and extreme giving?

When we say to Jesus during our prayer of adoration that we love him unconditionally, we know well that this unconditionality does not come from us. We always trust that it will be supported by the One who will keep our love alive and strong until the end. And basically, we can only give ourselves definitively to someone that we know will never fail us. And this can only be Jesus, our one Lord and Saviour!

Love and enthusiasm for Christ are the first source and the goal of the life of believers. The goal of every sacramental celebration is to experience "the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge" (Eph. 3: 18-19). We could be passionate about the historical figure Jesus, the abstract idea of Jesus or Christological dogma, without relating in a vital way with him as a living person and our contemporary. To love him could therefore be a simple moral imitation or a philosophy. On the contrary, true love for Jesus sets us on a journey, challenges us constantly, and leads us to live life as an adventure. Urged on by a mysticism that is ever old and ever new, we wish to be a living gospel for the people of God and humble builders of his Kingdom in our world. The art of loving is never fully learned, but it is necessary if we are to be credible witnesses of Christ.



Who is Jesus for you?

Life itself as a gift from God

Like us, Paul did not share life with Jesus on earth. When he recounts his experience of meeting the Risen One in Damascus, he is convinced that what happened between Jesus and him is a model of God's way of acting with everyone. Furthermore, to frame this experience in the history of salvation, Paul sees it at the centre of his personal history. From this experience, he is able to reconstruct the various phases of his life in God's plan.

This is how he describes it in the Letter to the Galatians: "When he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood" (Gal 1: 15-16). The protagonist of his story is God who chooses him, calls him, reveals his Son to him and entrusts him with a mission. Filled with amazement, he contemplates his life as

a work of art, as a prodigy that came from the hand of God. His sentiment is similar to that of Mary, who feels supported by grace: "The Almighty has done great things for me" (Lk 1,49).

The encounter with Christ urges Paul to redefine his life, to build a new self-awareness and to restructure his value system. Looking back, he can say: "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith" (Phil 3: 7-9). Looking to the future, he is serene, confident and full of hope: "straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil 3: 13-14). Contrary to what he thought as a Jew who was zealous for the law, salvation is no longer a strenuous conquest, but a free gift. And this discovery fills him with joy!

It is not possible to be a witness of Jesus without a personal experience of Him and without a personal friendship with Jesus. This is so profound and overwhelming that it escapes all attempts at theorization, objective analysis and adequate verbalization. It is possible to evoke it only through images and symbols or through exclamations in the form of personal testimony.

Paul, like you and me, did not live with Jesus on earth. He says that "Christ Jesus has made me his own." (Phil 3:12) He summarizes his relationship with Jesus in these words: "I am alive; yet it is no longer I, but Christ living in me" (Phil 1:21). Could he possibly have stated it in a clearer, more immediate, more determined, more complete and more eloquent way?

When did Jesus enter your life, when did you meet him?

The paper can be read at the following site:

www.admadonbosco.org

For every communication you can contact

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From the letter of the Rector Major for the 150th anniversary of ADMA: "Entrust, trust, smile"

On the road to holiness

ADMA is "a journey of sanctification and Salesian apostolate", proposed and lived in the perspective of that universal call to holiness so dear to St. Francis de Sales, who encouraged everyone to live a devout life, and to Don Bosco the Father of the Salesian Family. He spoke to the young people of the oratory and to the ordinary people about the goal of holiness as a goal open to all, easy to follow and the way to eternal happiness. Saint Francis de Sales and Don Bosco presented holiness, not as a path reserved for the privileged, but always as a call for everyone, wherever one lived, whatever one's state of life or occupation or profession. The Second Vatican Council confirmed and proclaimed this reality. Pope Francis strongly reaffirms it in his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* which is a call to holiness in the contemporary world. The Salesian Strenna for the year 2019 - *holiness also for you* -- was a clear and decisive call to holiness for all.

Certainly, it is a journey that sometimes requires going against the current, but which leads in the end to happiness. Following the example and inspired by the humanism and optimism of Saint Francis de Sales, it is very important to show that living as Christians is also from a human point of view something that makes us happy already on this earth, despite the difficulties that we all have to face.

This is, in the first place, **a journey of holiness to be lived in the family**. This requires the life-long witness of love between married couples, between parents and children, between brothers and sisters, and between young and old. It means desiring and seeking the good of others. In concrete terms, this "good" demands accepting the other as he or she is, dedicating time to dialogue, building relationships based on affection and respect, being able to understand and forgive, and refraining from complaining. A family that does not give up in the face of difficulties and where both parents and children live with faith in God and in his Providence, like the Holy Family of Nazareth, is a great support and a fruitful resource for the Church and for society. **It is also a question of proposing the ideal of holiness to the younger generation** - following Jesus - in ordinary life made up of study, friendships, work, service, making them aware that the world, and with it the Church, is already in their hands. This is why young people must receive a good human and Christian formation and, at the same time, feel accepted with hope and trust. The central point is to help them to know and love Christ in ordinary circumstances and to live their entrustment to Mary Help of Christians.

This is a challenge for ADMA at the present time. In ADMA there are some women whom the Church recognises as a model of life and whose intercession we invoke to support us on the journey of faith.

Among them, there is **Blessed Alexandrina Maria da Costa** who was enrolled in the Association by her spiritual director Fr Umberto Maria Pasquale on 12 September 1944. There is also **Blessed Teresa Cejudo Redondo**, wife and mother, martyred in 1936. She contributed to the foundation of ADMA in Pozoblanco (Spain) and was secretary of the group. Then there are Servants of God **Rosetta Franzi Gheddo**, enrolled in 1928 in the ADMA group of Nizza Monferrato, and **Carmen Nebot Soldán** of La Palma del Condado (Spain), who died in 2007. These Blessed and Servants of God are distinguished by a particular love for Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin (the two great pillars of Salesian spirituality) as well as for their heroic testimony of faith in suffering martyrdom and in family life. They are united by sharing in the Salesian charism and exemplify in an outstanding way the spirit of Don Bosco lived as lay people in the family and in society. They are a model and a stimulus for the sanctification of members of ADMA and the Salesian Family.



Beata Alexandrina
Messaggera di Gesù

Balasar 30 marzo 1904 - 13 ottobre 1955

18 APRIL 2020- 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF ADMA

Moved by the Holy Spirit and in response to the urgent needs and signs of the times, Don Bosco brought into being various apostolic forces and a vast movement of persons who work in different ways for the benefit of the young and the working classes.

The Association of Mary Help of Christians was founded by Don Bosco as a special instrument "to promote veneration of the Blessed Sacrament and devotion to Mary Help of Christians".

It was canonically erected in the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Turin on 18 April 1869, and "he considered it almost an integral part of the Salesian Society" (Fr Pietro Ricaldone, *Maria Ausiliatrice, Colle Don Bosco 1951*, p. 83).

By a Brief of 5 April 1870, Pius IX raised it to the rank of an Archconfraternity, with the rite of aggregating Associations arising in every part of the world with the same name and purpose.

(from the preamble of the Regulation of ADMA)

Dear members of ADMA

We're living in an unusual historical moment for our generations with this coronavirus pandemic. First of all, we renew our closeness to all those who have been affected more by this epidemic through the deaths of loved ones, to those who have been affected by the contagion, to those who in many ways are making their contribution. We would like to share some commitments:

- to persevere in the commitment of prayer to Jesus in the Eucharist and Mary Help of Christians that we are doing as Salesian Family all over the world;
- to dedicate personal times of prayer and reflection to understand in the light of faith what the Lord is saying to all humanity in this situation;
- to intensify the action of closeness and solidarity already undertaken in different ways to support those most affected at human, social and economic level.

We share a strong feeling of thanksgiving for the gift of ADMA, made by Jesus and Mary through Don Bosco. We experienced this with the celebration we had last year on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of our Association:

- through celebratory moments such as:

- * on 18th April (Holy Thursday) in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians;
- * the feast of Mary Help of Christians in Turin on 24th May;
- * Marian Day in Turin on 6th October with the Rector Major, with the beautiful slogan: "Share the grace";



* The VIII International Congress of Mary Help of Christians, held in Buenos Aires from 7th to 10th November with the motto "With Mary a believing woman", an event of the Salesian Family which touched the hearts of many and saw the participation of over 1300 people and the significant presence of many young people;

- through meetings, formative and liturgical moments, pilgrimages, charity initiatives, spiritual exercises, held in all parts of the world with the involvement of the Salesian Family and the local Church;

- with the maturation, in the light of the journey made in these years, lived with a great spirit of communion, of a rich reflection on the identity and mission of ADMA, documented through:

* the letter of the Rector Major of 18 April 2019 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Association entitled: "Entrust, trust, smile";

* the monthly magazine ADMAonline;

* the last notebooks of the *Mary Help of Christians Series*: the VII entitled "All generations will call me Blessed" and the VIII entitled "1869-2019: 150° of foundation of ADMA G. Bosco, Association of the Devotees of Mary Help of Christians, Ángel Fernández Artime, Entrust, trust, smile!";

* the publication of the critical edition of Don Bosco's pamphlet of 1869 dedicated to the Association of the Devotees of Mary Help of Christians, edited by don Bruno Bordignon;

* the Acts of the VIII International Congress of Mary Help of Christians, held in Buenos Aires in November 2019.

May Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and our Blessed Alexandrina da Costa and Teresa Cedjuo Rondono intercede for all of us.

Sig. Renato Valera, president, don Pierluigi Cameroni, Spiritual Animator e Council of ADMA Primaria of Turin-Valdocco



NEW EDITION OF THE BOOK "THE SALESIAN FAMILY OF DON BOSCO"

A new edition of the book "The Salesian Family of Don Bosco" has been published, since the edition of the year 2000 was now dated.

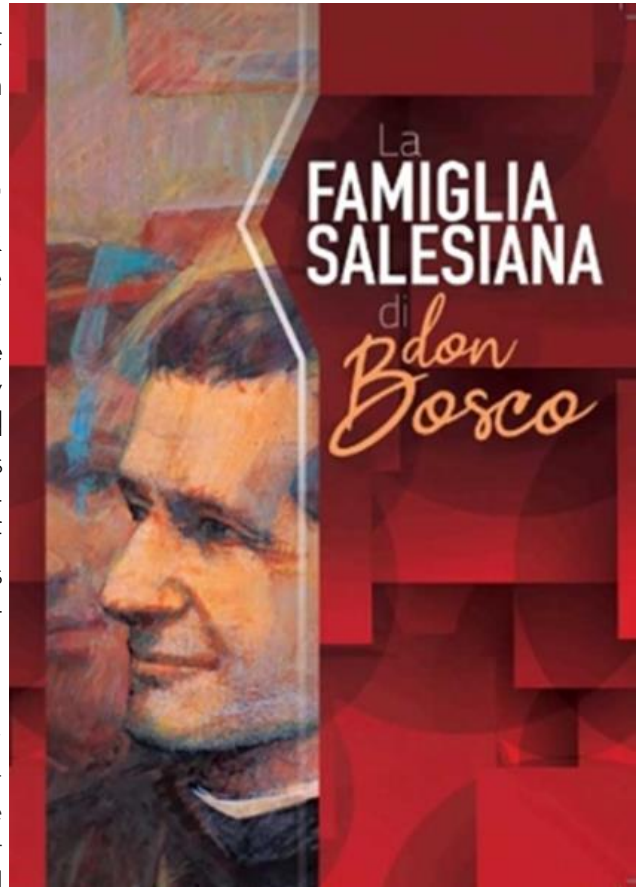
In the *Presentation*, the Rector Major Fr Ángel Fernández Artime writes: "The Book of the Family" that I am presenting is above all a reason to thank God for the gift that our Salesian Family is for the Church, the fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit, in view of a mission. It is also a reason to thank the Lord Jesus for the maternal protection that Mary his Mother exercises over the whole Church and over this humble religious family, which is, feels and recognizes itself as a Marian Family. And finally, it is a good opportunity to thank the Spirit of God for giving us our Father Don Bosco, since this Family was not born as the fruit of a human project only, but of God's initiative."

Fr Eusebio Muñoz, Delegate of the Rector Major for the Salesian Family, has written: "This new edition of the book helps us to understand better the vitality of a charismatic family of the Church that is growing significantly, both quantitatively and

qualitatively. It is easy to see that the significant increase in the number of groups shows the relevance of the Salesian charism. This surprising growth reflects the depth of the response that Don Bosco's family is giving to the challenges of our time. The book illustrates the response of the Salesian Family to the constant call of God, following the path marked by Don Bosco."

The coordination work was carried out by Fr Rafael Jayapalan. Starting from the original Italian edition, the book was translated into French, English, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish.

The book is addressed first of all to the Groups of the Salesian Family and their members. In addition, the book is also intended as a tool to make the Salesian Family visible in the Church and in society. It is addressed also to the great movement of people inspired by Don Bosco and his educational message.



IMPORTANT NOTICE. Because of the pandemic which has caused many ecclesial events to be postponed for a year, the President Renato Valera with the Council of the Primary ADMA, in agreement with the Rector Major and the Salesian Provincial of Portugal Fr José Aníbal Mendonça, wishes to communicate that the **Ninth International Congress of Mary Help of Christians will be held in Fatima from 29 August to 1 September 2024.** That year will be the 200th anniversary of the prophetic dream of young John Bosco at the age of nine.