

**Oh Mary Help of Christians,  
Blessed Mother  
of the Savior,  
your help  
in behalf  
of Christians is invaluable!**

**Don Bosco**

# **Union**

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# Letter of the President



## “Pilgrims of our time... the footsteps of Don Bosco”

Friends,

From April 4-7, we held a Congress in Barcelona (Spain), to define the European Lines of Commitment for 2019 to 2021. The Congress aimed to combine the Salesian charism with the current European reality and rediscover its social dimension.

“What unites us is stronger than what divides us” is the phrase that Konrad Adenauer, Rober Schuman and Alcide De Gasperi liked to repeat. Being “pro-European” must mean, essentially, this.

We must ask what has remained today of the vision of Europe our founding fathers had, just now that we are in a deep economic, cultural and political crisis.

It is evident that today, European society is not the same.

We are in a transition period of our history, a time when, if we do not advance towards integration, we risk failing. Faced with the challenges of today, the founding fathers insisted on not closing us but in remaining with an open, creative and radiant spirit.

So for us, as Past Pupils, what is our spirit, what is our point of union? The charism of our founding fathers: Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello.

They left us an example of their life and an original style of union with God and effective pastoral practice. Our mission is clear and definitive. We should not go from one side to the other looking for the teachings that we can find in our founders

through the meditation of their great intuitions. We must inherit the charisma.

It is not a matter of replicating the experiences of Valdocco and Mornese, but rather the goal must be to revive in the present day of our lives the spirit with which they worked at the time. It is not, simply, a “return” as if we wanted to escape from our time and its challenges but, instead, a “restart”, a “capitalize”, or also “know how to inherit” their experience to assume it creatively in our current lives.

The adventures of each day confront us and, in a unique way, those that have to do with our Association present in many realities of the European Continent. The work of the groups and the plenaries have drawn the lines; I will enunciate them here and will comment on the next edition of our magazine, *Unione*:

- Continue creating bonds of union between the Confederation, Federations and Unions
- Identify the needs of each territory, contributing each one the talents that it possesses to respond effectively to the challenges of the future.
- Listen to young people and commit them to projects through the valorization of their abilities.
- Ask the Institute of the FMA, where necessary, to institute a secular figure that guarantees the charism and that works in common agreement with the Delegate.

An affectionate greeting.

**Maria Maghini**  
Confederal President

## AT HOME ... AMONG US

### Congress of Presidents and Delegates of the Federations

by Anna Maria Musso Freni

CASA ENTRE NOS is the name of a hotel in Rome, very close to the Basilica of San Pedro and, therefore, the headquarters of the World Confederation. It hosted the meeting of **presidents and delegates of Italian Federations** that took place on February 16 and 17. Family atmosphere, a splendid panoramic position that allowed admiring from the top of the hill the Eternal City and the dome of San Pedro. **This Historical meeting marked the passage of the Association with an innovative turn in the field of communication.** In that headquarters, the systematization of the data of our associative life was opened. It seemed a difficult task, but the presidents who arrived in Rome, under the guidance of Eva Agostini, learned without difficulty to manage their laptops **recognizing the usefulness of an instrument that allows connecting in real time with the breadth of the Salesian world** and to have at hand updated and correct data of the associative life. The two Roman days also allowed moments of dialogue about the problems of the Association and the functions of the religious and lay members of the Councils. The topics discussed referred, above all, to the closing of many Salesian houses and the difficulties that this entails in the Unions; that they

have run out of reference structures, or a place to meet due, besides, to the limited collaboration of the parishes.

On the other hand, **it has been a source of joy to discover that the small Unions that have been left without Salesians continue to be faithful to the Association**, feel a strong bond of unity between them and the institution and commit themselves to keep the charism alive. **Sr. Gabriela** explained how the Delegate must make presence, spiritual accompaniment and counseling. **Sr. Maria Luisa Miranda** reminded the Past Pupils of their duty to transmit to future generations the flame of the charism, continuing the task of presenting to the young people the great values of Don Bosco: the Eucharistic practice, devotion to Mary Help of Christians, fidelity to the Church and his teachings. **The Church of the Third Millennium is a Church in the direction of the existential peripheries**, attentive to the crises of contemporary society, particularly the plight of families. With a Salesian spirit, we must not lose sight of the fundamental objective of our existence: **the sanctity we must fulfill in daily life**, which is in our hands as a duty that concerns all believers, as Pope Francis does not tire of repeating.





***In the Beginning, the Word***  
*Do whatever he tells you*

***Because this son  
of mine was dead  
and has come back to life,  
he was lost  
and we have found him.***

*Luke 15, 24*

# The number one enemy **OF HOLINESS**

by Antonio Martinelli \*



## **TO INTRODUCE US IN THE THEME**

*Each one of us is aware of the difficulties to achieve coherence and fidelity to the indications that the Gospel proposes to us as a norm of life to answer the call to holiness. Challenges that arise from the context in which we live, from the education we receive in the family and in the environment with which we are linked; from the psychological structure that each one inherits or acquires, from the type of profession that we perform and that forms a particular mentality of judgment and action, of the people with whom we relate and with whom many hours of the day are shared, etc., etc.*

The religious formation has given the name of vices or capital sins to those deep, moral and behavioral inclinations of the human soul that like a deep root go through the life of grace until suffocating and suppressing it. They are pride, greed, envy, anger, lust, gluttony and sloth. They are called “capitals” because along with them other behaviors and attitudes are joined, also sinful, which provoke an internal disorder and directly oppose the attainment of the virtues that promote the spiritual growth of the believer. These sins sustain each other by expanding chaos and distance with the harmony of life. In the book of Proverbs (6, 16-19), we find a list of behaviors that allow us to understand, in a concrete way, the disasters that can cause the seven “deadly sins”. A page precedes the list that we will expose next. There we read: “Six things the Lord hates and seven things abominate: (1) haughty eyes, (2) lying tongue, (3) hands shed innocent blood, (4) heart plotting wicked projects, (5) running feet speedily towards evil, (6) false testimony that spreads lies and (7) who provokes fights between brothers”. From among the capital sins, I will immediately consider sloth, the number one danger on the road to evangelical holiness.

## **SPIRITUAL SLOTH**

The apostle John in the Apocalypse (2,14-16) writes to the Angel of Laodicea (that is, to the bishop, responsible for the Christian community): “Thus speaks the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the

Beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, and I know that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot! However, since you are warm and you are neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth. “The warmth of which John speaks is also called “sloth,” that is, aversion to industriousness, tedium to do things, negativism that takes possession of life, negligence in the exercise of the virtues necessary for sanctification. It is one of the seven deadly sins. It is the indolence, the lack of will, the spiritual laziness that possesses the mind and the heart, the inertia before the things of God (consider this dimension taking into account the whole of existence).

In the same way, as there is physical inappetence, so there is the spiritual lack, that is, sloth. St. Thomas Aquinas referring to it speaks of the sadness of spiritual good. Enzo Biachi alludes sloth, pointing out that etymologically it comes from a Greek word meaning “without a cure”. A yawn could be the image that best identifies the heartburn. The lazy, those who go from one side to the other all day without doing anything are the best representatives. Boredom bored a sin, let me say it, more dangerous than any other because it can seem vague and indefinable. It expresses a robust existential malaise. Once sloth was called “the meridian demon” that tempted the monks of the first communities in Egypt at the sunniest moments of the day. Today, in western culture, sloth is a “night demon” that threatens us with its void by distorting the relationship with space (Enzo Bianchi).

What does it mean to “distort the relationship with space”? This is what he thinks who has sloth, who find discomfort and boredom in daily commitments, particularly in the religious obligation that the life of the Gospel asks us to postpone and not carry it out, he imagines that if he was elsewhere, in another environment, would undoubtedly be more generous with God and with the brothers. Therefore, he tends to escape from reality and feels an aversion to his own current life. It is an internal division!

### THE TWIN CHILDREN

Sloth is never found alone; two twin sons who are like his crown and support him in his way of acting and thinking of accompanying him: conformism and emptiness. There is no doubt that each one of us is the son of his time and the space he occupies. All this is linked to a set of circumstances that have preceded it. Therefore, he lives “a certain homologation” with many others. This homologation cannot become a blind conformism. When this point is reached, it is not only a matter of homologation of exterior behaviors but of homologation of conscience. It rushes into conventionality and irresponsibility. This is the opposite of what the Gospel proposes. The “psychological misery of the mass” encompasses us. It seems that the discomforts of life and inner pessimism determine the contemporary world: the novel “La nausea” by Jean Paul Sartre, written in 1932, describes this reality precisely. The lazy, says Dante, “live without infamy and glory” are “sad souls”, “unhappy who were never alive”. Petrarch states: “Sloth is such a fatal will that I reluctantly withdraw from it.” Some images of the existential void in which sloths are immersed are, for example, Eyes that only pay attention to television with the control in their hands. Deaf ears, sealed by the headphones at all times, with the cell phone always active. His body transmits forgetfulness and disinterest, all day in pajamas, ready to go to bed

at any time or to settle on a sofa, etc., etc. For these people, life does not make sense; it is not worth living: it just breathes! It falls into apathy, without passions, without tastes. Quoting an evangelical reference, it can be said that it is like having “buried all the talents”. What is buried? Who dies! Who does not live! In this case, he is not an actor of his own life but only a passive spectator.

### CONCLUDING

To speak of holiness, to work for one’s sanctification is to speak of life, of joy, of self-realization, of the fullness of life. Sloth is a perilous attitude because nothing that is not the result of effort lets it grow. Sloth delights us by making us think that it is possible to achieve spirituality without combat. But this is not true.

\* SDB



# TIME AND MERCY

*Return with all the heart*

by Anna Maria Musso Freni \*



**The mercy of God is unlimited**, but the time for conversion is not. Pope Francis said it in Loreto, on the feast of the Annunciation and he never tires of repeating it in the Sunday audiences. No sin cannot be forgiven; there is no sinner who cannot convert and become holy, but the mercy of God must not be abused. Every possibility of conversion must be accepted immediately, or it will be lost forever.

**The Gospel repeats the warning** to take advantage of this opportune time with several examples and parables. Jesus exhorts vigilance when it

comes to waiting for the master to return from the wedding banquet.

He invites us to be on our guard so as not to be surprised by the thieves, to keep the lamps lit, like the prudent virgins, to prepare for his coming: "Be ready because at the least expected hour the Son of Man will come" (Luke 12,40).

**The Pope comments on the parable of the barren fig tree** as an example of the mercy of God and the negligence of man (Lk 13: 5-9). The owner of the vineyard orders the vinedresser to cut the fig tree because it has not produced fruit for three years. But the vinedresser, respectful and prudent, urges the owner to wait another year; meanwhile, he will fertilize and move the earth with the hope of making it fruitful. The owner of the vineyard is the image of God the Father during the trial, at the moment when justice prevails. The vinedresser is the image of the Son with the prevalence of mercy and patience.

The fig tree symbolizes the indifferent and arid humanity, reluctant to do everything on its part to achieve radical changes in its life.

**Some part of humanity lives in unfruitfulness, unable to contribute anything**, live for yourself, satisfied and calm. Jesus intercedes before the Father, begs him to give him time so that the fruits of love and justice can mature. The vinedresser patiently cures the land entrusted to him. Jesus leaves in suspense the conclusion of the episode. It





does not say if the tree finally produced fruit and when. In his view, we can think of a long wait, more than a year, like that of the Merciful Father and the Prodigal Son. The passage from sterility to an abundance of fruits symbolizes conversion, which in turn, change of route. The extension of time by the owner of the vineyard indicates the urgency of the conversion. Each one of us is challenged by this call to change and by invitation to correct in one's life the way of thinking, acting, relating to others.

**The conversion implies a daily work of struggle** against the effects of the original sin that is in us, in the same way that a sick person fights against illness with the necessary determination to be cured. Salvation or sanctity is not achieved with the decision of a moment but with the constant effort of each day, comparable to the daily training of wrestlers and athletes. It is a task not easy at all because of the weakness of our human nature; However, St. Paul reminds us that God gives us the strength to face weakness, wealth in poverty and forgiveness of sins. We all need healing, and we can be healed.

We all can become an instrument of healing for others if we have towards them a look of love with an open and faithful heart.

**To the desperate widow of a suicide**, who had died drowned, throwing himself off a bridge, the



priest of Ars told her not to distrust the salvation of her husband, since between the bridge and the river was the mercy of God.

This means that until the last moment, the repentant sinner can be forgiven; it was what happened to the good thief. However, who can assure us that in that final moment we will have the necessary lucidity to repent and ask for forgiveness? Will we have time to do it? And after a life passed between the tracking of material goods and submission to them, can we preserve the purity of heart necessary to accuse our sin? The Gospel indicates the way not to lose loyalty to God: "Come back to me with all your heart," says the Lord. "Do not judge, do not condemn. Forgive" (How many times do we do it?). Jesus invites us once again to deliver with overflowed moderation because with the same measure we will be given.

**Unfortunately, wellbeing often turns us deaf** to requests for help, blind to the needs of others, indifferent to suffering, too hurried to dedicate time to others. How long will be the time that God can dedicate to each one of us?

*\* Past Pupil Fed. Piemonte Maria Auxiliadora*

# She way to Sanctity

## MARCELLO CANDIA THE GIANT OF CARITY

By the Editors

In 1975, the most important weekly-illustrated press in Brazil, "Manchete" based in Rio de Janeiro dedicated an article entitled: **"The best man in Brazil"**. It began with these words:

*"Our country is a land of conquest for Italian businessmen and industrialists.*

**Marcelo Candia** live in Amazonas for ten years and has invested a lot of his money with a very different objective: to help Indians, mestizos, lepers, poor in general. We chose the best man in Brazil in 1975.

*"This news was reported by Father Piero Gheddo, author of the book "Marcelo de los leprosos", with these words."*

The Milanese entrepreneur dedicated eighteen years of his life as a lay missionary, becoming an example of how **"even a rich person can become and be recognized as a model of the authentic and heroic Christian life.**

**Using capital, profits, marketing techniques not to serve their selfishness but to invest them in the poorest and most abandoned neighbor."**

**When I saw him for the first time, in 1969, Marcelo Candia was 54 years old** – writes Renzo Alegri in the newspaper Il Faustino, on August 30, 2013 – he was a famous person, especially among the "good people" of Milan. In the years immediately after the war, he had proved himself a brilliant executive. Its carbonic acid factory based in Milan and with branches in Tuscany, Campania, and Puglia and abroad, was one of the leading companies in the sector in Europe. Then, in 1965, Candia had decided to change his life. He sold all his properties to have the freedom and go as a lay missionary in Amazonas.

He arrived in Brazil to receive the "Christmas Night" award as the most outstanding man of that year; I would receive a large amount of money. However, already at that moment, he was uncomfortable and confused. "How can I be the best man of the year?" He repeated incredulously, "I'm just a poor sinner. I came to claim this award not because I deserve it but because the money is useful because I am building a large hospital in the Brazilian rainforest, in Macapá, and the costs are incredible.

"In that place, I found my family," Marcelo Candia told me in a low voice, uncomfortable to have to talk about himself. "Many abandoned children have nothing. If we do not help them, they will die of hunger, sickness, and suffering. God is Father of all.



He has taught us that every man is our brother. That is why I consider those abandoned and leprous children as my children."

Canadia was born into a wealthy family. His father, Camilo graduated in chemistry in 1906, founded the **"Italian Factory of Carbonic Acid"** thanks to which

the fortune of the family was cemented. The mother, Bice Busatto, was a woman of great religious faith. It was his parents who raised him in love for his neighbor, especially the mother. When he was still a child, the mother took him in her company to visit the families most in need; they brought food, clothes, money and medicines. During his studies he attended, the “Mass of the poor” celebrated by the Capuchin Fathers in Milan and helped the friars distribute soup to the destitute of the city.

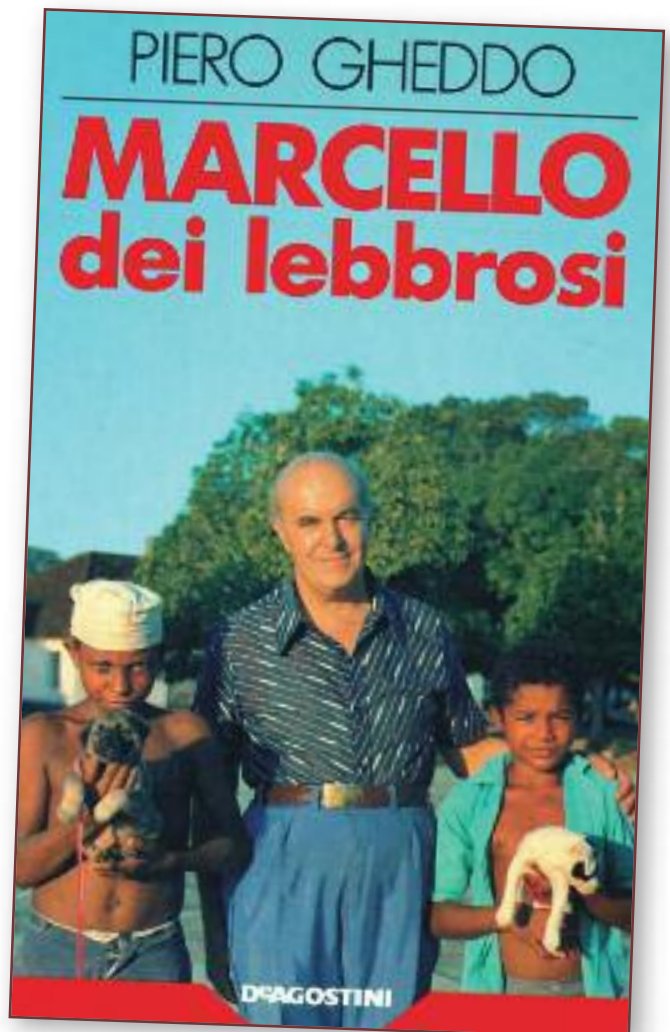
At 17, he had to face intense mourning. He lost his mother, who died of pneumonia. The pain defeated him tremendously, and he went into a deep depression crisis; however, that sad period ended and in memory of her mother’s kindness, he decided to dedicate his life to the ideals of altruism that she had taught him. He thought, then, of being a missionary. First, he had to finish his studies because he was convinced that with a professional career, he would help the poor better.

In 1939, he graduated in pure chemistry and one year later in pharmacy. Then the war broke out, and his dream had had to wait. In 1941, he was called to military service until 1943. Meanwhile, he continued studying, and in October 1943, he achieved his third degree, this time in biology. After the war, his father became ill, and Marcelo had to take over the management of the company.

**In spite of everything, he had not forgotten his ideals.** Hoping to realize his vocation, he dedicated himself to the problems of the mission in different ways. For example, in 1946, the same year in which he took over the management of his father’s company, he instituted the Association “**Lay people helping the Missions**”, an entity that facilitated cooperation with the missionaries. He founded the magazine “**La Misión**” to make known the problems of the missions. In that same period, he gave life, in Milan, to the “**Home of the Mother and the Child**”, dedicated to the assistance of young mothers. It also created various centers of free medical support for veterans of the war and the poor, as well as medical courses for missionaries.

**In 1950, he met Father Aristides Pirovano**, a missionary born in the city of Como (Italy) who had founded the mission of Macapá, in Brazil, at the mouth of the Amazon River. Very soon, they became great friends. Listening to the experiences of the missionary, Candia began to think seriously about traveling to Brazil. He decided that he would do it when the factory was ready to be managed without his presence.

**In 1955, the moment arrived when he felt ready to take the step to the mission.** However, as he prepared to communicate the news to his relatives, a new obstacle emerged. On the night of October 22, 1955, flames consumed his factory. Dozens of workers would lose their jobs. Marcelo understood that he could not abandon them in the middle of that difficulty. Therefore, he had to postpone his departure.



## *The way to Sanctity*

“We will rebuild everything,” he told the workers: “No one will lose their job.” He went to work with that capacity and incredible resistance to fatigue that characterized him. In ten years, the company became a jewel of efficiency and modernity. Now he could become independent of that personal project.

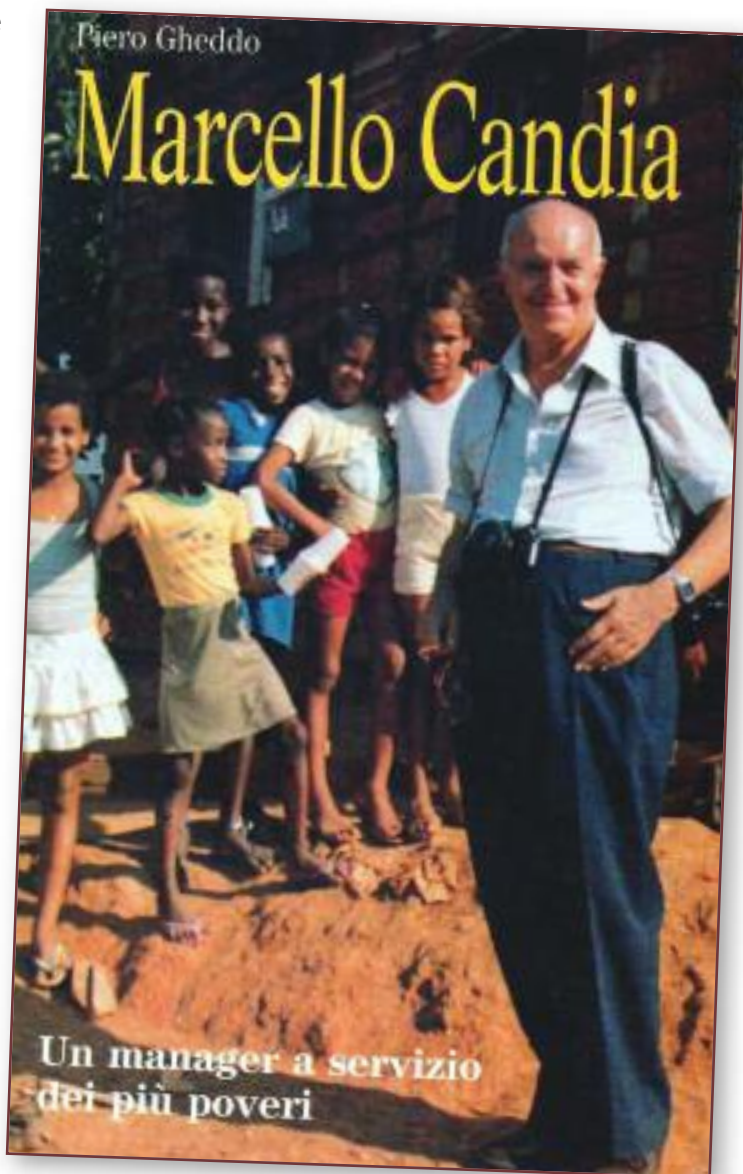
**Therefore, finally, in 1965, Candia sold everything he had and left for Brazil.**

**His organizational mentality was beneficial for the mission.** He founded hospitals, leprosarium, asylums and schools that are still in full and optimal activity. He designed and built the largest hospital complex in the Brazilian Amazon. With 160 meters of frontage, two floors built, the hospital can house 160 patients.

Marcelo worked up to eighteen or twenty hours a day. Each year I returned for a few months to Italy to raise funds and give lectures. He was subjected to exhausting careers looking for help. He worked for the love of God and did not seek rewards on this earth. In the headquarters of the mission, he did not seek to be treated with distinctions; even when he was very ill, he ate the same as his aides were served and never lamented. When he finished the work, he donated it to a religious institute because he did not seek to have direct management over his foundations, he did not want to be recognized as his “owner, director or manager”.

**His spiritual greatness and the authenticity of his deep faith** became known at the time of the final test when he learned that he had cancer in 1981. The doctors told him the truth, but he wanted to continue his rhythm of life as he had been doing without speaking to nobody of his illness.

A few days before leaving, he told a friend: **“If the Lord asked me for my consent, I would ask him to**



**leave me a little more. I have many things to do. But if he calls me, I'm willing to turn off the light.”**

He died in Milan on Wednesday, August 31, 1983, at 5:30 p.m.

On January 12, 1991, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, archbishop of Milan, opened the diocesan process for the cause of canonization of Marcelo Candia that was concluded on February 8, 1994. The second phase is still in the process before the Congregation for the Cause of Saints in the Vatican.

*SOURCES: “Marcelo de los leprosos” by Piero Gheddo (Editorial De Agostini); Article by Renzo Allegri in “Il Faustino”, August 30, 2013.*

# Let's walk together

## In the charism of the Founders



Continuing our reflection on the spirituality of the Past Pupil of the FMA  
let us reflect on the intuition of the woman who gave a feminine style to the Salesian charism.

by Gabriela Patiño, FMA \*

### the style of Mornese

**The spirituality of the Past Pupil and the FMA,** as we can read in the Statute, *is enriched, moreover, with the charismatic elements of the lifestyle and action of Maria Dominica Mazzarello who with "feminine intuition" shared with Don Bosco the same educational project.* As the Salesian Family Letter of Identity says, she knew how to do a reading with a feminine perspective of the experience of Don Bosco, giving it real and original face both in the spiritual and in the educational and apostolic life, the own patrimony of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

**At the 2015 World Assembly, Mother Yvonne,** presenting the theme "Witnesses of joy in the Peripheries of the world" affirmed that in Valponasca" Maria Dominica, still young, developed a sense of total trust in God's projects; She cultivated a deep relationship with Him until she surrendered to His designs without conditions.

The spirit of Mornese has its root and its effectiveness in the paschal mystery of Christ. In the solitude of the second Valponasca, Maria Dominica matured an itinerant intimacy with Him: as she felt more united to Jesus, she felt the need to be at the service of the smallest and neediest.



## Let's walk together

For this reason, she committed herself in solidarity with those who were in difficult situations: her relatives suffering from typhus, the poor young people in need of education and, later, the FMA of whom she the first General Superior and Co-Founder.”

In the logo of the Association we can see, in the lower part, the origins represented in the roots; on the one hand, the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, which symbolizes Don Bosco and, on the other hand, the Valponasca that represents Mother Mazzarello. It is Salesian spirituality with Mornese style.



*Eucharistic Celebration in the Valponasca on the occasion of the 2015 World Assembly*

**These are the roots in the heart of every past pupil** who has chosen sobriety as a way of life in a world ruled by the law of profit and the desperate desire to pretend and simulate what is not known. The past pupil knows how to confront the logic of abuse and deception through simplicity; she/he knows how to bring healthy joy in a dark, sad and hopeless world by instilling values amid catastrophic scenarios. She/he loves her/his work and dedicates herself/himself to it with determination and seriousness until it becomes a motive of asceticism. He knows how to take care of who is at her/his side because she/he feels that this is her/his responsibility. Seek sanctity in the expressions of existence observing the world with the eyes of an innocent and surprised child. She/he finds in the union with God and the meditation of the Word the meaning of her/his life. Embodies, with this way of being, the love of the Father experienced by Maria Dominica Mazzarello.

**How do you assume the style Mornese in your life?**

**What aspects of the *roots in the heart* should you take care of in greater detail in your identity as a Past Pupil of the FMA?**

*\* Confederal Delegate*

**Saint Mary Dominga Mazzarello,  
who was docile to the Holy Spirit  
and following the example  
of Mary Most Holy,  
faithfully fulfilled the will of God:  
Intercede before the Lord  
so that He may grant me  
the spiritual and temporal graces  
I need and in this way realize  
His project of love.  
And may my life,  
supported by the power of the Eucharist  
and by the help of the Blessed Virgin,  
become a testimony  
of faith and charity  
for the glory of God  
and the extension of his Kingdom  
in the world.  
Amen**

# “She has done everything”

## THE TIBIDABO SANCTUARY IN BARCELONA

by Laura Pollino \*

*It is well known to all that our beloved Don Bosco, once he thought of something, put everything on his part to carry it out. His charisma and energy took him anywhere without hesitation with the certainty that “Divine Providence” would always be on his side.*

**On one occasion, on the long train trip to Barcelona,** Saint John Bosco had one of his prophetic dreams: he saw a hill on which stood a magnificent temple.

**On April 8, 1886, Saint John Bosco arrived in the Condal City** to consolidate the new Salesian College of Sarria and get help for the Temple of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that he was building in Rome at the request of Pope Leo XIII. During the long journey by train, Don Bosco had one of his first prophetic dreams: he saw a mountain on which stood a magnificent temple; at the same time, the rhythmic sound of the train consistently suggested a Latin phrase: “Tibidabo! Tibidaboomnia! (To you I will give you, I will give you all things). **On the last day of his stay in Barcelona,** on May 5, when he came to thank the patron saint of the city, the Virgen de las Mercedes, for the goods received during that visit. During that time he received from twelve different hands from important Barcelona gentlemen a document in which was written the following: “To perpetuate the memory



of your visit to this city these gentlemen have met and, by agreement, have decided to cede the top of Mount Tibidabo. This gesture is in order that in its height, which threatens to become a source of irreligion, a shrine dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus be erected in order to maintain the indestructible religion that with so much zeal and example has preached to us and that it is a noble heritage of our country. “

**Don Bosco, now an old man, departed excitedly,** and with acknowledgment of their generosity answered: “You are instruments of Divine Providence because you allow the Lord to fulfill His inscrutable designs. When I left Turin, I thought to myself “The construction of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Rome is about to end, I must take another initiative to honor and propagate this strong devotion. Also, an inner voice calmed me thinking that very soon here His desire would be satisfied”. It was a voice that repeated to me: Tibidabo! Tibidabo! Yes, gentlemen, with your help very soon a majestic sanctuary dedicated to the Sacred Heart will be erected in this mountain, where everyone will be able to approach the holy Sacraments and will remain a permanent reminder of their charity and their devotion to the Catholic religion. “ On May 30, the construction of a small chapel began, financed by a devoted lady of



## “She has done everything”

Barcelona: the venerable Mrs Dorotea de Chopitea. On July 3 was blessed, and the following Sunday was celebrated for the first time the Holy Mass. Unfortunately, after this, there were several attempts by anti-Christian governors to have the hill dedicated to “public utility purposes”. However, the fervor of the people of Barcelona managed to prevent it. The following year, 1887, a popular movement was formed: on Pentecost, Monday began a pilgrimage that was called “Romería del Ram” (bouquet in Catalan), because the participants picked wildflowers along the way. The pilgrimage picked much strength with the passage of time that even during the years of the bloody Spanish Civil War was carried out clandestinely. The highest peak of Barcelona was finally conquered by the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

**In 1902 Cardinal Casañas, bishop of Barcelona,** placing the first stone of the Shrine, said, “To sanctify the mountain of Tibidabo, dedicating it to the adorable Heart of Jesus is, without a doubt, the best reparation that can be offered to God by the inhabitants of Barcelona, for the offenses of all kinds committed against Him in our city. The Sacred Heart of Jesus will rise in this as an effective lightning rod that, disarming the arrows of the Divine Justice, irritated by our sins, will turn them into rays of mercy that will move and inflame of love to all men”.

In 1911 the crypt was inaugurated, but the tremendous economic shortage delayed the construction work. Nevertheless, here came Providence: a simple woman, housewife, called Amelia Vivé Negra, without any other means than her fervor and warm communication promoted a great campaign where the economic benefits would be destined to the works. Thus, after the calamities and disasters of the Civil War, the works that would end a decade later, on October 10, 1961, were resumed. A monumental bronze image of the Sacred Heart was placed in the dome.

**That precise day was the 75th anniversary of the donation** of the hill of Mount Tibidabo to Saint John Bosco.

“A long and arduous road had been traveled. No doubt, the victory proclaimed from the top of that mountain building the Sanctuary is a symbol of the ultimate glory that one day the Holy Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ will reach, the glory that He himself



prophesied: “I have overcome the world!” (Jn 16, 33). The Expiatory Temple of the Sacred Heart, a truly imposing and dominant sanctuary: the facade of the Church is decorated with images on two levels. In the first level appear representations of San Jorge and Santiago, apostle, patron, of Spain. On the second level a series of sculptures representing some Saints.

**The whole building seems to tend towards the top.**

The architectural complex consists of a lower crypt and an upper church with a wide and solid central vault on which rises the dome supported by eight columns. All the style is a combination between the Romanesque lines combined with the typical Gothic verticality. The figures of San Miguel Archangel and San Juan Bosco are represented on the main façade. Inside the structure is divided into three naves with semicircular apses, stained glass windows and four rose windows on the facades. In the windows of the four towers, of great significance, appears the famous Latin phrase “Tibidaboomnia” (To you I will give you all things). From the crypt, built in neo-Byzantine style, access to the chapel of Perpetual Adoration, excavated on the side of the mountain. From the top of the dome, the sculpture of Christ made in bronze, seven meters high dominates and embraces the city.

**The visit to this architectural marvel is contemplated in the programming of the “LINES OF COMMITMENT 2019” with the possibility of deepening and directly observing the artistic, cultural and landscape particularities of this magnificent Temple, strongly desired by DON BOSCO.**



# *The Association is Life*

## *Witnesses of the identity*

From **BELFLOWER CALIFORNIA**

## *Gratitude Day 2019*

*summary by the Editors*



### **THEME**

"Give me your weariness and poverty. Your masses submitted, willing to breathe in freedom. "Emma Lazarus (verse on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty)

### **MOTTO**

"I entrust you," the Virgin Mary tells Mother Mazzarello

### **WRITING**

"Truly, I tell you everything you have done to one of these my younger brothers, they have done it to me" (Mt 25,40)

### **MADRE MAZZARELLO**

You can put on the truth of the Spirit of Our Good Jesus and seek good for you and our beloved neighbor, so in need of help" SMM, Letter: 26.4

Immigration is a crucial issue in our world and the history of this Nation. Through our educational mission, we can renew the soul of humanity with the culture of encounter, sustaining human rights and building bridges of compassion. The United States of America was born as immigrant peoples that together gave life to a new civilization.

Since its foundation until today, millions of people have risked crossing oceans, borders and bridges despite political pressure, discrimination and violence. History has shown that people can live and die with the firm conviction of giving others a different life expectancy through their cultural diversity.

This country is a refuge and a house for people from all over the world, People from many nations who have forged this Nation and have shown every day that a just and loving society is possible and can become an alternative against borders and walls. Today, the strong faith and perseverance of the people of the United States of America continue to survive and overcome divisions, differences and forms of discrimination and violence. We must have near our heart the words of Mother Mazzarello:

"I commend you" as we continue to bring meaning and hope to our times through the way we treat the most vulnerable among us.

The Provinces of the United States propose that our Salesian Family live the Word of Jesus that is particularly attractive, especially in the reality of today because many of our brothers and sisters seek a better future.

This year the offerings that the Provinces will collect, on the occasion of the Gratitude Day, will serve to carry out and sustain charitable projects with the migrants.



# From **MONCRIVELLO** (Italy) The gift that comes from the heart

by Daniela Regis \*

**Moncrivello, Salesian Union of Past Pupils, we could even say:** active in the territory to carry out the “Don” 2018 projects.

“Don”, thus, with affection usually define the bits of help that are carried out with Salesian spirit. In the pictures, we see those making cookies in the form of “chocolate baskets”, corn-based cookies, chocolate cakes and pears or apples with cinnamon; they also design aprons or make utensils for sale in regional markets.

In the meetings, prayer and work reign the union, the smile, the spontaneity, the devotion to Mary Auxiliadora, always with the proper prayer to the Holy Spirit, of healing for the Past Pupils. There is a climate of union and family in decisions and sharing. The “gift” is willing to help, to do, to be active.

**Her “gifts” are for the benefit of the children of the early childhood school,** the young people of the prismatic school of Moncrivello and for the Onlus Ni Uno Menos, of which Fiorella Regis was the first president, born and raised in Moncrivello. A gift also for the children’s oncology section of the Reina Margarita hospital in Turin and UGI (Italian Union of parents) based in Turin. Some of them also work in the Church helping with cleaning, catechesis and other activities where there is a need.

**A project** that the Past Pupils of Moncrivello have presented and are already putting into practice is “No to plastic”, rejecting this material that is irreversibly contaminating our oceans. At the Feast of the Federation and in other gatherings, we have used biodegradable material in glasses, utensils for coffee, plates and tablecloths.



**I hope that it is an example and a message** for the Salesian Family to want to encourage a cleaner world, without plastic pollution, for the future of our young people.

Salesian Hostesses: Arianna, Vanessa, Verónica, Viola are the young women who on December 2 in Moncrivello welcomed and accompanied the Past Pupils with their kindness during the feast day of the Federation; a day that received the Council of the Federation, Sister Giuseppina Franco, Father Fiorenzo and many Past Pupils. Sr. Giuseppina developed the theme of the meeting: “I am mission”. On December 2, a very full day was held for Moncrivello both from the organizational and growth point of view; yes, of Salesian growth because the Past Pupils of Moncrivello never are satisfied with being willing to serve others because their solidarity comes from the heart.

\* President Union Moncrivello



## From **CATANIA** (Italy) Together in Caltagirone

by Auxilium Past Pupils \*

We were a group of fifty on the streets of Caltagirone in the magical atmosphere of Christmas that links everyone and allows us to experience a journey through art cribs, markets, animated characters, streams, mountains, houses, ancient crafts...

A special tour, "The Way of the Cribs and Ceramics" put us in touch with our symbols, making us reflect on the meaning of Christmas, on the crib that, for us, still has an irreplaceable, unique and exceptional value. For this reason, we find it difficult to accept a certain tendency that proposes to give way to tensions and instrumentalisations against Christmas motives.

The varied Pesebres de Caltagiuro that we have had the fortune to admire communicated a strong sense of humility, tenderness and love, in keeping with our tradition of which we have appreciated beauty, art, creativity, "the cultured aspect and popular" at the same time. Now let's return to



what is the essence of the manger: Jesus becomes one of us.

Rediscover, little by little, the joy of "walking together", challenging the tiredness, the overwhelming cold of these days, because fraternity makes relationships stable and makes us feel closer with a fraternal embrace.

Past Pupils "Auxilium"  
Via Caronda, 224 - Catania

## *The Association is Life*

### From **SALERNO** (Italy) The story continues...

by Past Pupils \*

When the Salesians must close one of their houses, after so many years of full service, full of spirituality, self-denial and total dedication, this experience is traumatic for those who have lived the extraordinary gift of knowing them and having breathed thanks to them the Salesian/Mornesino charism. That was the experience that the Past Pupils of Salerno had to live when, two years ago, we had to accept this radical “pruning” after more than fifty years.

That house, that chapel, those walls tell our story. There we grew up as young people, as wives, mothers and, later, past pupils, supported and lovingly accompanied by so many religious who succeeded each other over the years.

We cannot stop sharing the devastating suffering that this decision caused in each one of us together with rebellion, disagreement and anger. We could not find a reason; we did not understand the logic of that decision. Little did we need to feel true orphans because we would lose the reference to that “house” and to so many Salesians who had been our teachers and guides, human and spiritual.

Nevertheless, we could not go on letting ourselves be overcome by nostalgia: that is how we decided to meet to pray and ask the Lord for the necessary strength to keep going and to help us read the signs of this time, which is, above all, is a time of grace.

We also went to Mary Help of Christians, asking her to continue accompanying us and protecting

us under Her cloak. And, suddenly, a special gift came to us from the Sisters: the image of Mary Help of Christians who was in the chapel. Imagine our joy!

In the photo, we are together with her with our federation delegate, Sr. Antonietta Ventre. Regrettably, in these days, one of our companions, Rosaria Acquaviva, who had been a federation councilor and president of the Union, died prematurely. We give her our posthumous gratitude for her presence full of energy and always available with an open heart to the needs of others.



## LET US REMEMBER

**On May 31 and June 30  
Holy Mass for the Past Pupils  
of the FMA  
and the deceased relatives  
in these months.**



## From the **FEDERATION LIGURIA** (Italy) **Mornese an important appointment**

by Past Pupils \*

This year our Spiritual Exercises arose with some additional difficulties.

Mornese, which is one of the most requested places, did not have available places so we had to move the date of the retreat for August, time in which many of us were still committed to our families for summer vacations.

As always, 5 or 6 co-operators were present, happy for this opportunity. After the first moment of discouragement, we drew strength to continue with enthusiasm, and the results were not long in coming.

Our dear Father Mario, as always in the front line, with Sr. Ely, had prepared the theme, the booklet, the readings and the splendid conference that gave us so much serenity thanks to the use of the Salesian climate. The leaflet that Sr. Ely made was entitled: "LORD, ALWAYS GIVE ME THIS WATER!". "Whoever drinks this water that I will give will never be thirsty" (Jn 4,5-30).

The beautiful environment helped us achieve the experience of days full of fraternity and reflection; it was enough to peek into the windows to discover the depth of those places so laden with Salesian spirituality.

The welcome of our dear Salesian, both of the Institute and of the College, it was always wonderful because they made us feel at home, transmitting to us the atmosphere of a family that restores and gives the strength to face another year of labors. A year that began



with sadness because we had to face the definitive loss of many people due to the fall of the Morandi Bridge in Genoa. We hope our prayers help those who suffer and those who have been in difficulty. On behalf of all of us, Past Pupils, Cooperators, etc., who belong to the Salesian Family, we send you a warm greeting and a "see you soon" with the hope that in a year we will be more numerous.



## The Association is Life

### From **TORTONA** (Italy) An unforgettable day

by Mariza Barbieri \*

On Saturday, December 8, 2018, on the occasion of the Feast of Mary Immaculate at the San José de Tortona Institute, the usual and expected annual ceremony of diplomas was held for the High school young graduates of the 2017/2018 school year.

After the Holy Mass, the young Past Pupils were crowned with the typical laurel and received the diploma directly from the hands of the mayor, Dr Bardone, and the advisor of the Office of Public Instruction of Tortona, Dr Graziani. Each year the ceremony has new features thanks to the contributions of the youth group of the Past Pupils association. This year, in particular, the surprise was a lovely picture frame. Always present is the "solidarity bench", in charge of the council of the association. Every year, thanks to the bonding of an increasing number of volunteers who with their hands and heart make beautiful crafts, contribute to raising funds to support families in difficulty with children and to carry out projects in a network with other entities such as the "Shelter House". The event was held in a serene and cheerful atmosphere, and there were



moments of real emotion: Clara, a young student, gave the director of the Institute, Sr. Anunciata, an offering to contribute to the maintenance of charitable works in memory of her beloved grandfather. The contribution, collected by Clara from her relatives and friends, was in response to the call of Pope Francis, the gift was sent by the Institute to the Salesian Works present in Syria.



\* President Union Tortona

It's late. The afternoon of November 25, 2018, a day that will remain forever in my memory.

I feel the need to write to express the accumulation of emotions that I experience and, having to show it, achieve greater clarity in my interior. What feeling presses my chest and makes my heart beat faster? It's surprise, recognition, satisfaction, joy. I explain why. After the Assisi Congress, the Federation Council of Coneglia had scheduled a training day with the theme: **"Joy, the fruit of peace"**, a topic that we felt was urgent and necessary to deepen. With the Padua Federation, we had agreed that we could schedule joint meetings. When our Delegate proposed to invite to the animation of the day the Councilor for the Salesian Family, Sr. Maria Luisa Miranda, we know that she is swamped visiting the different Salesian works all over the world, we thought that it would be an impossible mission. As members of the council, we did not expect much happily surprised and overjoyed when Sister Maria Luisa not only accepted the invitation but also proposed to be accompanied by the World Delegate, Sr. Gabriela Patiño. Did not Pope Francis often tell us not to be afraid to dream big? Well, we did it, and we were heard.

Sr. Maria Luisa, together with our Delegate, Sr. Eleonora, programmed the whole day with high meticulousness and offered an exciting material for the workshops. There was a bit of fear in us: how many rooms could we use? How to make the transfers so as not to waste time? How to serve 180 people food? The proposed work was quite compromising; did we have the level to carry it out successfully?

As a conclusion of the day, I can say that God is very generous with those who trust in Him. The day advanced without setbacks, the schedules and programs were carried out seamlessly. The workshops came out with many deep reflections and detailed instructions to become

## From **CONEGLIANO** to **PADUA** (Italy) Chronicle of an unforgettable day

by Anna Maria Mazzer \*



artisans of peace. Here are some reflections, first, it is necessary to start by cultivating and practicing justice, meekness, patience, humility, mercy, the ability to mediate, understanding, acceptance, listening, forgiveness. To bring peace to the family, in the workplace and civil society, I must, above all, build peace within myself, accepting my frailties and knowing how to reconcile with myself. Only then will I be able to take others as they are and as I would like them to be, with their values but, also, with their shadows only then will I know how to forgive. Peace is a gift offered by the risen Christ, a gift that He has given us with His death on the cross. Here is the reason why building peace requires knowing how to die to oneself so that the “we” may arise so that that unity for which Christ has prayed before dying is obtained.

Peace is an ideal that will never be fully achieved in this world because of the fragility of our humanity wounded by sin. However, in order to achieve it, we commit ourselves to building the Kingdom of God, which is Truth, Justice, Mercy,

Love, Peace, Joy. Only a heart in peace can taste real joy. In this sense,

we can say that joy, to which we all aspire, is the fruit of peace. Then we can make an equation: peace = joy. Do we want there to be joy in our hearts? Let us commit to building peace. In conclusion, Sr. Gabriela, a little Salesian but with great enthusiasm and passion, reminded us of the reality that the Past Pupils live in other countries of the world, making us discover the possibilities of doing the good that our Association has. In truth, we have felt spoiled and loved, encouraged and motivated to get our hands dirty to make this world a better one, adhered to God’s plan.

Thank you, Sister Maria Luisa and Sister Gabriela; we will pursue the benefit of the gift received.

*\* President of the Veneta Padua Federation*



# Family Album



**Brazil Bage:** “And life is beautiful, it’s beautiful!”  
Past Pupils of the group of “Laura Vicuña” meet every weekend to share sorrows and joys. “If we come into balance with life, good things will come”.

**Vallecrosia (Italy):** A special associative day.

There was no need to knock on the door because the entrance of our old and dear school was open, no schedules, uniforms, booklets, books or snacks...

Just eager to meet again. In the same dining room, on the same floor, were the same wooden tables where we shared the same “bread” at the time. Many memories and stories and in the heart the same love for Mary Help of Christians.



**Caltagirone (Italy):** A pleasant walk to conclude our associative year and to be able to start another year full of activities and good wishes such as to continue united and extend our Salesianity to those around us.



**Nunziata (Italy):** Moments of fraternity to enrich and consolidate our faith and the desire to remain united to spread our Salesianity.





**Rome (Italy):** Sacred Heart: A very strong emotion!  
After 30 years, the Past Pupils are reunited...  
Memories that bloom and fill the heart.



**Chile:** Together to share joy and salesianity...



**Novara (Italy):** The Past Pupils of Novara returned to Mornese, eager to drink from the sources of the charism.



**Oggiona (Italy):**

A nice night of partying... a simple dinner seasoned with joy and love.

Even though our Salesians are no longer present in our town for many years, we nevertheless commit ourselves and strive to continue living the Salesian style every day. We trust in Mary Help of Christians and in our great Salesian Family.



**Covagnolo (Italy):** Welcome, Sr. Catalina! Excited and happy, the Past Pupils went out to welcome the new delegate who will share her courageous "company".

# Hands in the world

## Commitment without borders

### When will **WAR** end?

by Alessandro Ciquera \*

The tent is lugubrious, as the vast majority in this forgotten field of Akkar.

The families live one after the other in this angle of stocks broken but not exterminated by the war.

This settlement is different from the others: here there is funding from a Saudi Czech who for years offers the possibility to 350 people, divided into about fifty families, to live without paying accommodation, unlike most of the fugitives.

The other side of the coin consists of the fact that in the countryside there are harsh rules, including the obligation of prayer five times a day in the mosque under penalty of being excluded from the "community". There is no talk of politics and criticisms are not admitted to who runs the camp; each nucleus must be reduced to its affairs if it does not want to have problems.

Families are forced to buy their food in the local Lebanese businesses, owners of the land, and whoever does not comply with the order is often physically attacked. It is whispered that the Czech, in the past, used this deposit of souls to find a woman for his court. Victims victimized.

In this angle of desperation is Abu Daud, arrived from Homs fleeing violence and the destruction of their community. It is not, at all, the stereotype of a contemporary hero. He has a shy and straightforward personality; The massive traumas of war have undoubtedly caused some mental problems. He spends the days working in the store and moving unconsciously.

"When will the war end?" I ask as I sit in front of him for a cup of tea. It is said that the mentally weak always tell the truth; Abu Daud shakes his head suddenly, and with his hand, he gives me a negative signal: "It will not end, there is no going back".

Your children look at us; in these days, we will accompany you to the hospital because they need an operation in your hands due to a disability they suffer.



As we speak, I see a small empty cage, hanging on the wall. Curiously, I ask, "Whose was it?" Abu Daud lights up a bit and says, "Mine." With a gesture, he asks his children to bring the other cage that is inside the store and where there are two canaries, one yellow and one red with yellow lines; He looks like a 1980s punk guy. I think he is cute.

Before I can ask another question, Abu Daoud says, "Watching them helps me free my head." Then he locks himself in his silence, broken from time to time by a smile when he looks at the little birds. I think back to the few words he said to me: "It helps me free my head": in these six words is the key. War, flight, hunger, marginalization, freedom. As if, the meaning of life could be found in a volatile, helpless and splendid being. He is taking charge of someone, as protection against inhumanity.

In one of the destitute refugee camps in Akkar, in one of the border districts of Lebanon, there is a man, his family and two canaries.

We return to the store; it rains again. Lewis Carroll, with his country of wonders, resonates far in my head.

"Alicia: How much time is forever?

White Rabbit: Sometimes just a second."

\*Past Pupil M. Mazzarello Union - Via Cumiana - Turin



# non uno di meno onlus

Project for sustainable development  
of the Past Pupils of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

[www.nonunodimeno.org](http://www.nonunodimeno.org)



## 150 - ITALY - Padua - SOLIDARITY ASSOCIATION ONLUS HELPING CHILDREN TO GROW HAPPY

**Who?** The project is aimed at 25 children of school age.

**Where?** In Padua, in a structure directed by the "Solidarity Association ONLUS".

**What is it about?** The initiative began in 2014 when a group of parents and Past Pupils at the service of the community set out to help families in difficulty who came from institutions, parishes or social pastoral (Caritas). The happiness and the possibility of a serene future also pass through healthy recreation and at this moment,

the volunteers need your contribution to acquire games to entertain the smallest children, full of life, enthusiasm and hope.

**Cost of the project:** 2.500,00 Euros / **Responsible:** S. Merlin, Solidarity, PD - Mr. T. Pavan, Ist. M. Auxiliadora PD

## 151 - ITALY - Padua - LEONATOS ASSOCIATION A HOUSE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

**For whom?** The project is aimed at six young people who finish their training in a family home.

**Where?** In Padua, in the Family House run by the Leonatos Association, which has been working in the territory of Padua since 1993 with two family homes where girls and young women are welcome, who do not have support from their families of origin and are accompanied in their process by the Salesian Sisters until they reach the age of majority.

**What is it about?** We want six young girls, who are already adults, to remain in the structure they have considered for many years as their family; at least for an initial period that allows them to continue their educational process while waiting to achieve complete economic and life autonomy.

**Cost of the project:** 2.500,00 Euros / **References:** Alessandro Santaterra, Asoc. Leonatos, Padua - Mrs A. Scarsi, Fed. Pd



### YOU CAN SEND YOUR HELP FOR THE PROJECTS AND FOR REMOTE SUPPORT THROUGH:

**Current account postal** n° 69867380 adress to **Non uno di meno ONLUS**

IBAN IT11T076010320000069867380 Bic-Swift BPPIITRRXX

**Bank account** to one of the accounts specified below addressed to **Non uno di meno ONLUS**

**Banca Prossima** IBAN IT 88 0 03359 016001 00000125496 Bic-Swift BCITITMX

**Unicredit** - IBAN: IT 08 K 02008 05008 000401396792 Bic-Swift UNCRITM1B88

# Reading is an adventure

## Seven brief lesson of Physics

of Carlo Rovelli

by Lorenzo Trapassi \*



Who said that physics is a tricky subject? And that a physics book should, necessarily, be a heavy university volume?

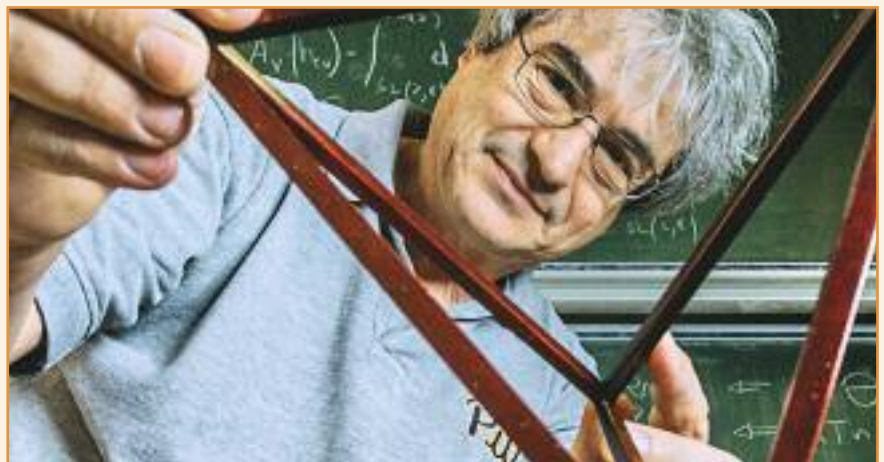
Whoever says so, obviously, has not yet read the “Seven brief lessons of physics” (2014) by Carlo Rovelli, a short, fun and enjoyable book. A physics book Yes; because in this essay the author has for his readers only seven lessons on as many fundamental questions of physics and he does it with an agile style and accessible to all, especially for those who do not have a scientific preparation.

Thanks to Carlos Rovelli, each reader can come to understand Einstein’s theory of relativity, the foundations of quantum physics, the architecture of the cosmos and many other things. The “Seven brief lessons of physics” can contribute to filling the knowledge gap that many of us have about the evolution of physics during the 20th century.

A quite widespread cultural gap, which is often associated with not so pleasant memories in the years of school education in which

we spent sleepless nights preparing for the final exam. But, as they say, it’s never too late to learn something new.

Carlos Rovelli’s book is one of those books that teachers should use to motivate their students in the study. Not only of physics, naturally, because the “Seven brief lessons of physics” cover all the experiences of the 20th century and explains how experiments and scientific studies played a fundamental role in our recent history, in peacetime and, unfortunately, in time of war. With this essay, deep down to earth, we will understand how much the quality of our life depends on the progress of scientific research and on the women and men who dedicate themselves to it.



### The Author



Carlo Rovelli is a physicist, born in Verona (Italy) in 1965. Active in the United States and in Italy he is currently an ordinary professor of theoretical physics in France, at the University of Aix-Marseille. In addition to dedicating himself to physics, he has dedicated several publications to the history of scientific thought and the philosophy of science, receiving various awards for his commitment to popularizing science.

# Family be what you are

## Explore the world of relations



### Fifth and last critical event: the family with older ADULTS

by Raffaella Messina \*

Already the nest is empty; the children have left home and probably have formed a new family. The grandchildren arrive, and those who were parents become grandparents. This stage is often accompanied by typical events of the elderly such as retirement, aging, physical weakness and, diseases. The third age requires much courage to know how to face the challenges and changes; it can be a period of life of great satisfaction for the older adult. Despite being physically weak, the older adult acquires a fullness of wisdom that helps him reap and enjoy those positive results that generate their actions.

Let us look at the tasks and difficulties of this last phase of the families' life cycle.

**Capitalize on the elderly couple and redefine their own identity.** To face the remarkable challenges of this phase, the couple assumes more and more each day a role of unity as a critical resource that can be counted on to rediscover even closer. Freed from work commitments and with independent children, spouses have the possibility and, sometimes, the need to rediscover old interests or to build different ones, so that they can redefine and restructure their own time and rediscover themselves in a new way.

**Typical difficulties:** If the couple has not managed to carry out the previous stages in a good level of intimacy and solidarity, in this phase they will have to fight against the feeling of rejection by the other in times of difficulty. The loss of labor activity and parental role, beyond physical aspects, is accom-



panied by a sense of loss of social recognition. Sometimes this leads to feelings of emptiness or lack of meaning and personal importance. It is necessary to face this condition of personal crisis before denying it to be able to reap the fruits of life and enjoy the old age.

**Build good relationships grandparents-parents.** Often in this phase, grandchildren are born and grow up. Grandparents and adult children who now know what it is like to have brought children into the world must develop an Adult-Adult parity relationship in which the experience of "being parents" is shared. In this way, the two generations exchange support and care.

**Typical difficulties:** There may be unresolved issues between grandparents and parents that stem from the failure to satisfy the evolutionary tasks of the other phases fully. As we said in the previous article, for example, grandparents may have hindered the growth, individuation and

real autonomy of the child; what could have produced in the children the sense of dependence that prevents them from feeling internally autonomous from their parents. For the good of all, even grandchildren, it is necessary to face these unresolved questions.

**Establish a relationship between grandparents and grandchildren.** One of the most satisfying tasks, if everything went well in the other phases, is to build a good relationship with the grandchildren. In relations with grandchildren, grandparents feed their sense of vitality; On the part of the grandchildren, the relationship with the grandparents has a sense of continuity and a sense of belonging to a broader family group with a history, a culture and a tradition.

**Typical difficulties:** If there has been distancing between grandparents and parents this reality will create an obstacle for a close and frequent relationship between grandparents and grandchildren; On the contrary, as I said before, grandparents run the risk of replacing parents by being too present and restoring affective and normative functions. In effect, the father can be detained in his role as a son delegating specific tasks to his parents (grandparents).

**Elaboration of mourning.** When the elderly couple dies, who survives must assume the reality of the loss of the loved one with whom they have shared many years of life. In addition to the couple, the entire extended family must mourn when the person disappears. The elaboration of grief requires time and the availability of being open to the healing of one's moments of pain.

**Typical difficulties:** Sometimes, the surviving couple cannot assume the process of mourning, although they feel the support of the relatives through the company during the pain. On other occasions, whoever survives the death of the beloved person cannot find the energy to face the loss and therefore experiences the illness and follows his life partner in death.

\* Psychologist, Salesian Past Pupil



*The last speech  
in a broad world audience,  
Golda Meir was held in Washington,  
in December 1973,  
when the Yom Kippur war had just ended.*

*The Americans let her know Sadat's intentions  
to secure Israel's borders.  
Golda understood that most probably  
the broad theory  
of battles was about to end.*

*She presented herself radiant  
to meet the press.  
Speaks quickly, with encouragement,  
responding with sagacity  
to the person who challenged her.*

*Then, a journalist asked her:  
"You contributed, like few others,  
to the birth of a nation.  
What other desire  
do you have left to perform?"*

*Golda, impassive, replied:  
"Sleep.  
I want to sleep like an old woman  
who is tired of traveling,  
of arguing, of getting angry [...]"*

# ***The Third Millennium***

## *The present that is already the future*

### **THE WOMEN WHO HAVE CHANGED HISTORY**

**Women of the present and the past, of whom there is much talk but little is known**

by Cristiana Mariani

#### **GOLDA MEIR**

**Born in Kyiv, in 1898, into a family of Ukrainian Jews,** her real name was Golda Mabovitz. The founder of the State of Israel, David Ben Gurion, much later suggested a surname that sounded more Jewish. That is why Meir, a name that means “Enlightened”. In Russia, the Mabovitz family did not have a comfortable life. In that period, the Jews were persecuted by the tsarist regime. Therefore, when Golda was eight years old, they moved to the United States, to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The love for America will remain as one of the axes of her life: “The America that I knew” – she will say later – “is a place where men on horseback protect the entourage of the workers. On the contrary, the Russia I met is a place where men on horseback massacre young socialists and Jews.”

**She moved to Denver when she was 14 years old, to her older sister’s house** after a fight with her parents who wanted her to drop out of school; Thanks to her academic life, Golda had first met the literary world, feminism and Zionism. It was love at first sight. Her other love would reach the age of 15 when she met Morris Meyerson, who three years later would become her husband. He will be your partner, the father of your children, but also your biggest failure. “He was a wonderful person – she will say years later – and with a woman different from me he could have been happy”.



**When she was 23 years old, she left with her husband for Palestine.** The trip was long and overcrowded: from the Atlantic Ocean, they reached the Mediterranean. They disembarked in Naples and from there through numerous boats and trains managed to reach the Holy Land. Golda – against the opinion of the husband – settles in an agricultural commune (Kibbutz). It was there, in that town, where the workers lived in a society based on the communion of property and with solidary rules, where Golda began her actual political formation. The experience of the kibbutz lasted until 1924. After that year, the whole family moved to Jerusalem.

**Her political commitment grew, and in 1928, she was nominated secretary of the Union of Women Workers (Women’s Working Council). In 1946, she became head of the political department of the Hebrew Agency for Palestine**



after having performed brilliantly in her trade union career.

**1950 was a year in which Golda had to face a tragic event**, her husband Morris dies from a heart attack. The couple for years lived apart, but she had not stopped feeding a unique and deep affection for him, causing great feelings of guilt for husband, who always remained in second place in a life where politics occupied the first. Another experience goes back to the problematic agreement during the peace talks between Israel and Jordan with the King of Transjordan Abdullah Ibn Husayn. The first meeting was held in a tent

between the king himself and Golda, disguised as a Bedouin so they would not recognize her.

**Golda's physical appearance provoked cruel jokes.** "You are the best man in my government," repeated Ben Gurion, sarcastically and often pointing out an apparent lack of femininity out of the ordinary. For the rest, Golda always wore orthopedic shoes, never heels, she smoked up to sixty cigarettes a day, her hands were yellow from nicotine, and she drank many cups of coffee during the day. However, she liked to wear a pearl necklace on public, and even on special occasions painted her nails in red enamel. I was not a religious woman. "When I was a child – she said – I went to the synagogue, only the Jewish New Year to accompany my mother and to find a place where she could sit down." Her religious sense came not from any faith or dogma but instinctive trust in men and stubborn love for humanity.

born love for humanity.

In 1963, she was diagnosed with lymphoma. Three years later, tired and ill, she resigned from her job as Minister of Foreign Affairs. **Unexpectedly returned to the field of politics in 1968 with all the energy: Prime Minister.** She was the first woman elected to this position at the central level in the political sphere of the State of Israel. In those years, Golda, strong thanks to a solid friendship with the American president Richard Nixon, encouraged the American Jews to immigrate to Israel: they arrived en masse, not "on eagle wings" as the psalm says but on the airplanes of David Ben Gurion.



**Bloodthirsty, arrogant and, at times, angry, she was not well accepted by the international press.** Among the chroniclers, she had few friends. One of these was the diamond tip of twentieth-century Italian journalism: **Indro Montanelli**. Tall and thin, trustworthy and always dressed in black, very different in various aspects, from the physical to the origin, but united by an intellectual affinity and strong reciprocal esteem.

**In the early seventies, the government of Israel faced two of its most severe international crises:** the massacre of Monaco and the Yom Kippur war. During the Olympics in Monaco of Bavaria in 1972 a Palestinian command called "Black September" took hostage the delegation of Israeli athletics. The Palestinians asked instead for the release of some political prisoners, but Golda maintained the iron line: no dealings with the terrorists. The eight athletes were massacred. The revenge came, albeit calmly: she ordered the murder (at the hands of the Israeli intelligence agents - Mossad) of each of those responsible for the tragedy of Monaco in that which will go down in history as the operation "the wrath of God".

**Another bloodbath took place in 1973** when Egypt and Syria suddenly attacked Israel during the Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement that for the Jewish religion is a day of fasting and prayer). The prime minister was linked in the controversies even though an internal investigation showed that her way of proceeding had been correct. A blow and an unbearable humiliation for Golda because she was already sick with leukemia, a disease that gave her no respite. Thus, a few days before turning 76, she retired from political life.

**The last years for Golda were intimate, introspective, and dense with nostalgia.** "When a woman does not want only to give birth and raise children" – she often said – "but to be someone... it's difficult. I know it from personal experience. You are at work, and you think of the children you left at home. You are in the house, and you think about the job you are doing. A struggle is unleashed inside you: your heart breaks into pieces.

**Energetic and full of power,** capable of conditioning the fate of the Middle East with a single gesture, she devoted her entire life to her two great loves: socialism and the Promised Land.



# I DO NOT WASTE *I reuse*

## GLASS BOTTLES, RENEW WITH COLOR

Who when finding a bottle or a small glass container with a particular and pleasant shape, has never thought about reusing it saying: "I do not want to throw it away"?

Here is the solution to add color to our tables, dining rooms or shelves in a few steps.



Do you want to give a spring touch to the dining room? There is nothing better than achieving this by taking bottles and glass containers that we have at home, turning them into beautiful vases or pots. The first thing we should do is pick up some transparent bottles or jars and decide which color we are going to apply.

It can be a single color that will produce several shades according to the coloring of the glass; we can also use different colors that inspiring us, why not, in the sunset tones, from yellow to violet.

Watercolors, temperas or enamels can be used. First, you should dilute the paint with a little water to fill the bottle (without it being too liquid) and vacuum with a large syringe, which can be obtained at any pharmacy.

The paint is then poured into the bottle or into the glass container with the help of the syringe. Larger bottles need between 80 and 100 ml of color. The bottle must be moved so that the paint flows towards the walls of the object. Once the surface is covered in color, the bottles should be left face



down on absorbent paper or some other place, for a few hours so that any excess is removed. By straightening the bottles, you can clean the excess paint on the edge. It should be left to dry completely, for a couple of days. If you have used watercolors, you cannot fill the bottles directly with water; for watercolors, it would be best to use plastic containers if you want to turn them into vases. Concerning the choice of floral varieties, each one should proceed according to their tastes. Daisies, for example, would be perfect.

Source: [www.greenme.it](http://www.greenme.it)  
VIVIR ECO - Dpo it yourself Roberta Ragni



# A thought to live by

Commentary by the Editor in Chief



## Teacher! Promoter of ... “life”

Surprises are always pleasant, especially when we find ourselves in moments of life that do not satisfy us. Indeed, I would never have thought of finding a Past Pupil of mine, a school located in a social context of high risk of delinquency and marginalization; It took me a while to recognize him after so many years because he was now a man.

I heard when he called me: “Teacher!” While shopping in the supermarket, very close to my house. It was a pleasant surprise. The meeting moved me in time because it reminded me of many delightful episodes, lived in the school from which I had lost memory.

He filled my heart with tenderness when he began to tell me about his successes in the professional field, his commitment in the field of volunteering, his tenacity in the face of the difficulties of his place of belonging. He told me that he had felt loved by me, deeply, and that I had positively marked him with a story that I once read in class and that bears the title: “Juan Salvador Gaviota” by author Richard Bach.

In retrospect, many memories came to my mind and the attention I received from the students when I managed to narrate those stories passionately, passionately linking young people within the plot as a kind of “magneto” effect, fundamental strategies for educational purposes.

As we all know, Juan is a young seagull with desires to go beyond the limits without worrying too much about the judgments of others and the prohibitions of the laws, facing difficult situations that he will later overcome. It may seem like a simple and banal story for children, but it hides the deep meaning of life: the search for freedom and personal fulfillment.

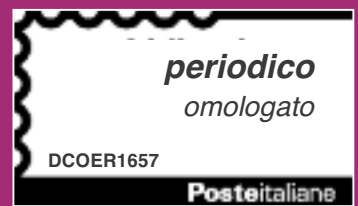


Domingo, the young student that I found, surely had to face difficult situations and sufferings; he had to have freed himself from the burden that the environment in which he had lived had inherited and with force of will he managed to fly high.

Many of you, like me, have experienced the moral and social rescue of the students themselves because we chose “Salesian” not to exercise only the instrumental role of the teacher who transmits only notions. We choose to “educate”, communicating with daily behaviors, discourses, gestures, words, sensitivity, listening, those universal values that allow students to achieve their own ideas at all costs, not to be content and to find within themselves the spiritual strength to get rid of the overcrowding of reality.

Is education, then, an illusion or reality?

The confirmation of what I wanted to convey are some affirmations of Pope Francis in the Apostolic Exhortation “Christus vivit”: the school needs self-criticism... one of the greatest joys of an educator is to see a student who is forming as a healthy person, integral, protagonist and capable of giving” (221).



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## Mary Mother of Love

Mary, Mother of Love, love us intensely.  
Now, more than ever, we need it.  
The earth, which you knew,  
is full of anguishing problems.  
Protect those who, troubled by difficulties  
or defeated by suffering,  
is full of distrust or despair.  
Love those who do not allow themselves to be loved  
and that people no longer love.  
Comfort those who have lost their last friends  
because of death or incomprehension  
and feel deeply alone.  
Please have mercy on mothers who mourn their lost,  
rebellious or unhappy children.  
Have mercy on parents who have no work,  
and it is impossible for them to bring abundant bread  
and instruction to their homes.  
Love those who do well  
and who, with illusion, believe they have found  
on this earth the object of their lives  
and have forgotten you.  
Love those to whom God has given beauty,  
goods and strong feelings  
so that they do not waste these gifts on useless and vain things  
but use them to make happy those who do not have them.  
  
Love, finally, those who do not love us.  
Mary, Mother of Love, mother of all,  
give us hope, peace and love. Amen.

(G. Perico S.J.)