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**SPECIAL ISSUE:
COMMITMENT LINES OF EUROPE**

Barcelona 2019

**Pilgrims of our time
... in the footsteps of Don Bosco**

Union

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A Special Past Pupil: Madre Antonia Colombo



My dearest Past Pupils,

While the magazine was in print, we received the news of the death of Mother Antonia Colombo, a special Past Pupil.

Mother Antonia Colombo, *Superior General Emeritus*, met the FMA at the oratory of Lecco and was attracted by their educational style and the witness of joy.

She enrolled at the Catholic University of Milan and, as she would write later, chose the Faculty of Jurisprudence to *"become a lawyer and help the poorest people defend their rights with all their human dignity. I was thinking, at that time, about a vocational option that would allow me to carry out a social activity at the service of the neediest people, especially young people who lived in a low-income family context or morally at risk"*.

After the novitiate in the town of "Contra di Missaglia", she made her religious profession on Aug. 6, 1959, the same year in which she graduated from law school; in 1963, at the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium) she graduated in applied psychology.

In 1996, she was elected Superior General of the Institute and was re-elected for a second six-year term in 2002.

In 1997, she received the Marisa Bellisario award with the following inspiration: "Due to her particular sensitivity to female issues, manifested in the years in which she was President of the Pontifical Faculty of Education Sciences at the

University" Auxilium " – inspired by her numerous publications, research and relations with religious and lay organizations involved in issues concerning women, starting, above all, with those in education".

In her missionary animation, Mother Antonia favored the commitment to build active citizenship and promote a circular mode of animation as conditions for valuing the resources of each person and as a testimony of communion. She encouraged the educational communities to become workshops of life and communion through educational relationships. She maintained the importance of educating in the value of solidarity to contribute to the construction of a human coexistence under the sign of the civilization of love and peace, rooted in the values of the Gospel. *Humanizing culture and relationships* in light of the message of Jesus and the Salesian charism was not a simple slogan for Mother Antonia but a necessary task that identified her mission as Mother and as a formative guide.

Mother Antonia has reached the goal, and we know that she is in the joy of the risen Lord forever; from there she will remember all the Past Pupils of the world whom she loved with such love, being herself, also a Past Pupil.

May Mother Yvonne and all the Sisters of the FMA Institute feel us close with affection and prayer.

Maria Maghini
Confederal President

P.S. If you have a memory or a testimony, you can send it to: unione@exallievfma.org

A thought to live

A Comment from the Director



Remove words from Silence

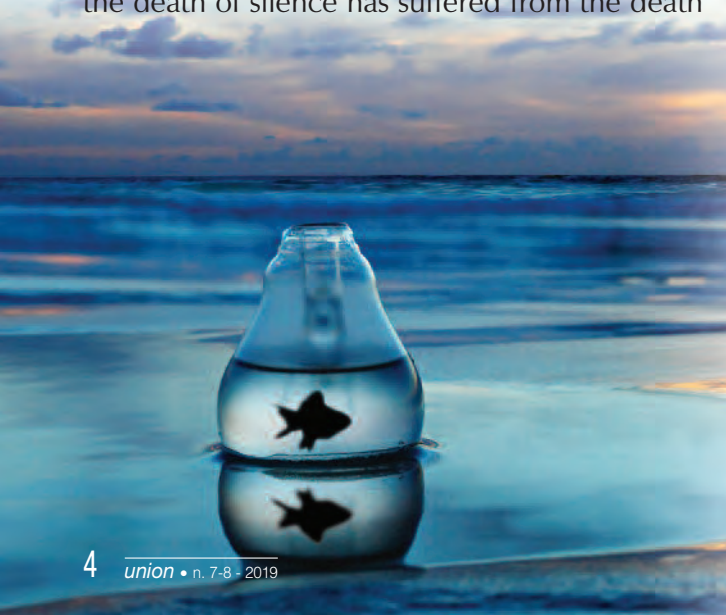
We are so submerged in the absurdity of noise that to speak of silence is a paradox, an anachronism in this time in which man himself is the main author of noise. The street, the shopping centers, our houses, sometimes even the temples, become spaces where words are imposed on silence and noise takes over these areas: we need to “listen” to the noise and stop “listening” to the silence. From morning to night, we have become slaves of noise and the word itself – the oral word and not understood – generates rumor rather than harmony. A modern song says several times “before speaking, think; Stay even a moment longer, a moment with your head in your hands and think.” It is a warning signal that invites us not to utter empty words, meaningless words, banal, stupid, the product of an instinctive movement rather than a cerebral synapse. We must recover the authentic dialogue; unfortunately, with the spread of noise, the dimension of silence has been neglected, and the contemporary man with the death of silence has suffered from the death

of the word. To educate ourselves in silence, it is necessary, above all, to begin by knowing how to keep silent, by disciplining the language; but this is not enough because to be silent is not just to stop talking. You can be silent but be convulsed inside. Let us think, for example, of a person close to us who is silent but who carries a grudge or resentment within himself; this is a silence that hurts because it has negative dimensions. Silence is not a void; it demands a continuous exercise, an exercise that allows, to those who persevere, to recover the deepest values. Only in the silence that we can find ourselves and in the discovery of our self will we find the way to the infinite. Thus, the words that spring from silence are soft, beautiful, true, and full of meaning, charged with God. I learned to discover the beauty of silence in Avigliana, a house of Salesian spirituality where our dear Father Fiorenzo accompanied us during the spiritual exercises to discover the silence of creation, the cosmic silence that allowed us to enter into harmony with transcendence. An experience that makes us more human and more divine!

Silence to “listen.”

“In the outside silence but, above all, inside, Pope Celestino V managed to hear the voice of God, the only one capable of guiding his life. Dear brothers and sisters, let us not be afraid to be silent outside and inside of us, if we have desires to be able to perceive not only the voice of God but also of who is at our side, the voice of others (Benedict XVI, Sunday, July 4, 2010).

Concetta Apolito



In the beginning, the Word
Do whatever He tells you

**The spirit of God hovered over
the surface of the water**
Genesis 1, 2

This masterly phrase comes to give us hope and seeks to reestablish an order devastated by chaos and evil; it also reminds us that the order to which man is called has its origin in God. Transcribed from the Gospel

THE HOLY SPIRIT is the fountain of Life

by Antonio Martinelli *



Not only are there dangers and enemies on the path of holiness.

In general, the dangers are present in any circumstance, but there are also safe aids and supports to be able to proceed correctly.

The main help is the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, our effort would be futile!

Christian holiness is not our work but the fruit of docility – loved and cultivated – to the Spirit.

At Pentecost, the history of Christian holiness begins because the Holy Spirit is the source of holiness, which is the vocation of all.

From the day of Pentecost this holiness, of which Christ is fullness, is given to all who are docile to the action of the Holy Spirit and strive to open themselves to his presence. It is the Spirit that makes us experience full joy and coming to us opens our hearts to hope, encourages, and favors interior maturation about God and our neighbor.

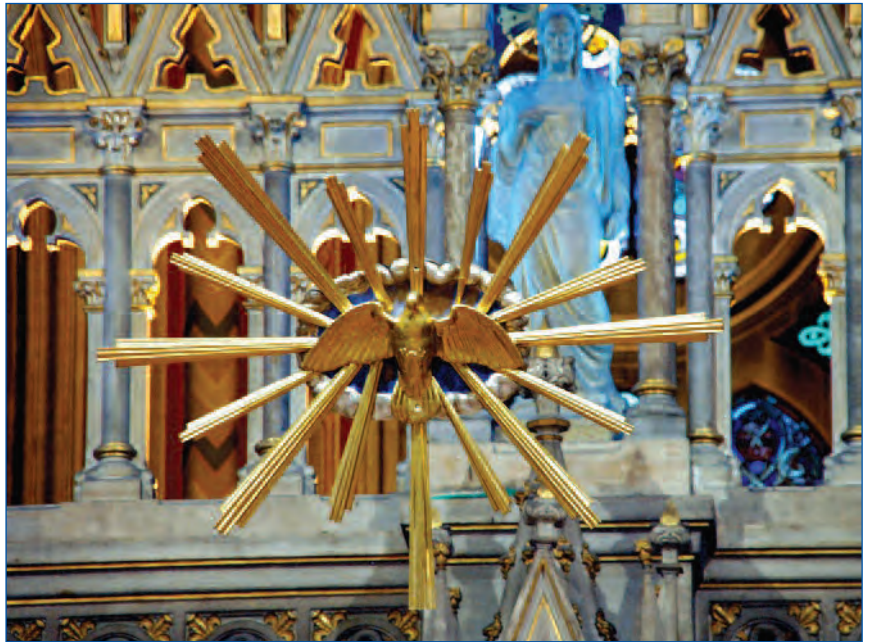
The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us:

“Through the power of the Holy Spirit we take part in the passion of Christ dying to sin, and in his resurrection born to a new life; we are members of his body that is the Church, branches grafted into the Vine that is himself.

Through the Spirit, we are all participants in God. We participate in the divine nature through the Spirit. This is the reason why the Spirit divinizes those in whom he is present”:

Holiness then has an ultimate root in baptismal grace, in the insertion into the paschal mystery of Christ through which his Spirit, his Risen Life, is communicated to us.

I turn our gaze to Mary, example and model of holiness for all believers, and the action of the Spirit in our daily lives.



MARY, PARCEL FERTILIZED BY THE SPIRIT FOR A NEW CREATION

Saint Matthew writes (1, 18): “The generation of Jesus Christ went like this: his mother, Mary, was married to Joseph and, before they began to be together, she found herself pregnant by the work of the Holy Spirit”.

The exegetes note, concerning the narration of St. Matthew, the lexical reminiscence that can be presented with the book of Genesis since Matthew intended to present “the genesis, generation or birth” of Jesus. Jesus represents the new Adam; he is the new man who inaugurates the new story and the alliance. In addition, Luke (1, 35) makes an implicit reference to the book of Genesis, which states, “the Spirit of God hovered over the waters” (Gen 1, 2) with their creative and life-giving force.

The time for the new creation has arrived.

Mary represents the new earth fertilized by the Spirit of God because she becomes fertile and offers the world the new man.

“Nothing is impossible for God” (Lk 1:37), neither the sterility of Elizabeth nor the virginity of Mary.

The intervention of the Spirit overcomes any obstacle. The believer has always received and receives the gift of the Holy Spirit through the sacraments and gifts of the same Spirit so that each faithful can realize the vocation to holiness. To forget the Spirit in our daily existence is to forget the commitment we have assumed in baptism, confirmation, penance, prayer. “Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love”.

The parable of the sower who abundantly disperses the seed is correctly applied to the Holy Spirit that inhabits the heart of man: finding a fertile ground that will flourish as holiness.

Arriving in our life, the Spirit opens our hearts to hope, stimulates, and favors inner maturation in the relationship with God and with our neighbor. This is what St. Paul tells us: *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, magnanimity, benevolence, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control”*.

“The Holy Spirit moves us, makes us advance along the path of holiness”.

Pope Francis expresses himself thus: “Clearly, the Holy Spirit bothers us because it moves us, makes us walk, and drives the Church to move forward. We want the Holy Spirit to accommodate us; we want to tame it. Nevertheless, this is not correct because He is God; it is that wind that comes and goes, but you do not know its origin. It is the strength of God; it is he who comforts us and gives us the strength to move forward. All this is uncomfortable. But let us not resist the Holy Spirit: this is the grace that I would like us to ask the Lord: docility to the Holy Spirit, to that Spirit who comes to our aid and drives us on the path of holiness”.

MARY INHABITED BY THE SPIRIT FOR A NEW PRESENCE OF THE LORD AMONG HIS CHILDREN

There is a “presence” of God manifested by the signs of the great theophany (cf. Exodus 24, 16).

There is also a “presence” that invades the meeting tent built with the instructions of God himself (cf.

Exodus 40, 34 ss).

There is a “presence” that does not manifest the distance and separation of God and man (Exodus 33, 20) but the condescension that brings God closer to his people: He dwells in their midst (cf. Deuteronomy 4, seven y 12, 5).

The final stage is represented by the “presence” of the glory of God in Christ Jesus (cf. John 1, 14).

God, invisible and inaccessible, becomes close through Jesus; despite being veiled for humanity, he finds different ways to make himself known through the “signs” he performs in their lives.

In this way of the “presence” of God among his people is Mary, under the shadow of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lucas 1, 35).

Holiness is a gift, and a task as the evangelist Luke says when he tells the story of Zacchaeus.

Holiness is to welcome Jesus who passes, is to let us look for Him in the truth of our lives, is to welcome him in own house, is to start a path of conversion to move from the logic of desire to the logic of the gift.

In this sense, the challenge is to overcome that claim that we can manage the encounter with God, so we will open the way to the availability of the heart to be found by Him and be taken beyond our expectations.

It is to let the Spirit work within us.

MARY, PERSONAL TRANSPARENCY BEFORE THE MYSTERY OF THE SPIRIT

When Mary reached the end of her journey with the Lord Jesus, her Son, she discovered her unity with the community of Pentecost, the nascent Church.

First in the Annunciation and then on Pentecost, Mary had to become “transparent” before the mystery of the Spirit, which became a living icon as she was a responsible collaborator of the Father and mother of the Son and the new children in baptism.

To know the activity of the Spirit, to discern the signs of his strength and his eschatological hope we must look at Mary.

We cannot begin the path to holiness without the intervention and help of the Holy Spirit.

* SDB

The way to Sanctity

DOROTEA First Salesian Cooperator

by Maria Rosa Olivella *

Mrs Dorotea de Chopitea is a central figure in the history of the beginnings of the Salesian charism in Spain, especially in Barcelona. Unfortunately, we know her very little.

On this occasion, we have the opportunity to discover who this great person was, this woman of deep gaze and prophetic action. Without her intervention, the city would not have been the same.

Some biographical notes

Dorotea de Chopitea and Villota was born in Chile on June 4, 1816. Pedro Nicolás Chopitea, originally from Lequito (Vizcaya - Spain), had immigrated to Chile in 1790. He married Isabel Villota, a young Creole. They formed a family rich in goods and Christian virtues, committed to the use of wealth for the benefit of poor people around. God blessed the house of Peter and Elizabeth with numerous children. Dorotea was one of the last to reach the heart of the home.

In those years, the Chileans began to claim the independence of Spain that, finally, they obtained in 1818. In that year, after the political riots that could affect their eldest children, Don Pedro decided to return to Spain. He chose the city of Barcelona to establish himself and start a new life. In the 19th century, Barcelona was a city in the process of industrial expansion (textile and metallurgical companies, especially), cultural (modernism in architecture) and spiritual.

Dorotea was only three years old when she arrived in the city. The Montcada road, where the family resided, and the church of Santa Maria del Mar were the places where she spent her childhood and youth. When she was thirteen, advised by his sister Josefina, she chose as a spiritual director Father Pedro Naudó who for fifty years was her confessor and adviser in the most delicate and difficult moments. She was educated in good manners, in courage and in the ability to detach her heart from "riches." She received the education given to the young women of the rich families of that time.

In 1832, at just sixteen, she married José Maria Serra, who belonged to a family of immigrants from Chile, active merchants. Dorotea's family returned to Chile, but she decided to advance the date of her marriage and stay in Barcelona. She was a tall young woman, of a strong and determined, mature. The



vote of "I will love you forever" that the husbands' exchange before God was developed in an affectionate and solid married life that was rewarded with the arrival of six daughters: Dolores, Ana Maria, Isabel, Maria Luisa, Maria Jesus and Carmen. Fifty years later, Mr Serra states: "Our love grew from day to day".

The work and luck of José Maria in commercial activities brought remarkable economic prosperity to the family. Serra was one of the founders of the Bank of Barcelona, and in 1855, a major metallurgical company called the Land and Maritime Machinist was established. The family wealth allowed him to build a large house on Gran Via, in 1870, when the old city walls were destroyed.

In spite of her social position, Dorotea did not stop living an authentic evangelical spirituality and carried out an intensely social activity for the most humble classes and the benefit of the Church.

Her day: she got up at 5:30 a.m. and spent a couple of hours in prayer in the Church of the Sacred Heart. She was organized and a leader, active and determined. She always worked, even during vacation time. The day was divided between the house and the office:

in the morning letters, account books, purchases, payments and collections. She planned the distribution of resources: alms, pensions, scholarships ... she consumed meals with the family and spent the afternoon making sheets and dresses for orphans and church ornaments. She visited the boards of directors, the authorities and the providers responsible for the centers. Finally, she dedicated time for reading and the rosary on her knees until 11 at night. Her home was made up of a great kinship: husband, daughters, service personnel and, above all, the poor. She created a great network of relationships. Dorotea served as a homemaker and intelligent company for her husband. She was at his side at all times and accompanied him on his trips to Russia and Rome, where she was able to meet with Pope Leo XIII. The employees of the house felt part of the family, and she was close, especially in their illnesses and paid them higher salaries than usual.

Her assets: Being a millionaire, she became poor for love of Christ and those in need. She committed to her business and investments because she was sure that if they worked well, she could dedicate her assets to social works. She knew how to manage a rigorous administration with much sacrifice and commitment. She saved and was austere, discreet and thorough, very affectionate and made herself loved. She knew how to be direct, often remaining anonymous, and she did not like to be photographed.

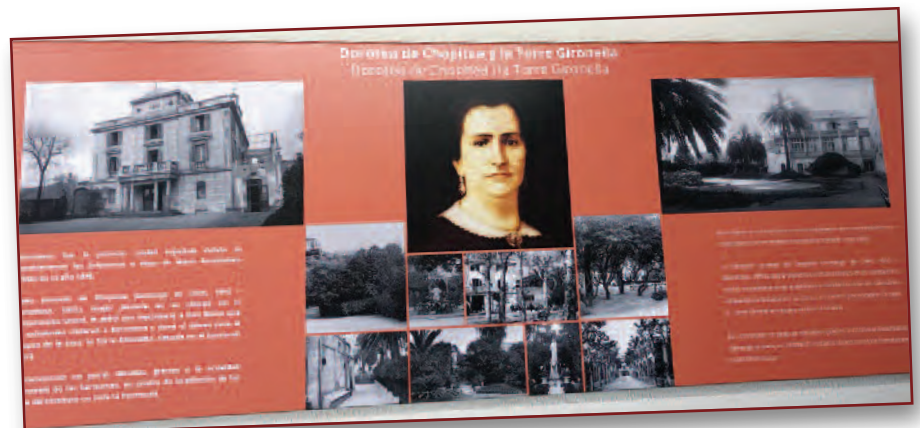
The vocation: Her life was a response to God from the depths of her being. Christ was the center of her life of loving contemplation and her social action. With a strong character and determined will, she always lived in the presence of God. From 1882, after the death of the husband, until 1891 she continued to run her business enterprises alone despite her tiredness and disappointments since she wanted to build a city for everyone, to train the poorest people so that they could defend themselves with their forces — all for the love of others and for the love of God. With the effectiveness of her management and her tireless action and commitment, she managed to carry

out personally many institutions. She was known as “the mother of the poor”.

Her work: Dorotea used two instruments: work and faith. She was a woman with a deep look towards her environment, towards the needs of the people. A woman of prophetic action because she acted with two qualities: she did not only give financial aid, but she gave herself; she did not give alms but created educational and health institutions to solve, especially, the educational and moral needs of the poorest in Barcelona. She founded the first charitable homes for children, children of working women in the periphery of the factories, who died prematurely or were abandoned. She paid special attention to the education and cultural promotion of girls and young people to prevent the daughters of low-income families, due to lack of training, from becoming “working girls”.

She bought land to build hospitals, structures for community work and shelters. She financed the construction of churches, schools, offices and hospitals. In particular, a church for the Jesuits and three for the Salesians: Sarria, Tibidabo, Rocafort; 15 schools, including two managed by SDB and one by the FMA; 4 hospitals; 7 residences for children, youth and young ladies, and the elderly.

On Good Friday in 1891, she contracted pneumonia in the cold church of Maria Reparadora. She was 75 years old, and they soon realized that she would not overcome the crisis. At her service, Father Rinaldi was present who accompanied her in her last moments. She died in Barcelona on April 3, 1891, surrounded by her daughters, sons-in-law and grandchildren. Her mortal remains rest in the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians of Sarria. Pope John Paul II declared her Venerable on June 9, 1993. * FMA



Billboard about the life of Dorothea that is in the Salesian house of Torre Gironella.

Let us walk together

In the charism of the Founders



by Gabriela Patiño, FMA *

Searching for values

The spirit that has its roots in the preventive system and the mornesino style manifests itself with its peculiar characteristics.

We read in the Statute “the spirituality of those who adhere to the Association is expressed as follows: *In the search for values that promote the growth of the person and contribute to the development of human and civil culture*”.

Father Filippo Rinaldi, in the early years of the twentieth century, around 1900, was the confessor of many young women of the FMA Oratory. There was a small group of young ex-Oratorians who, after receiving training and education in the Oratory, wanted to commit themselves by helping each other in the experiences and the dissemination of the principles and values received in the Oratory.

This desire was reflected in the first regulations of the Association: “**Keep alive the memory** of the years spent in the Oratory, encouraging each other to persevere in the good principles.” Moreover, it is still alive in so many women and men who are part of the Association because they were trained in the FMA Houses, regardless of their religious, cultural, social and ethnic belonging. They want to share, deepen and witness human and religious values according to **Don Bosco’s Preventive System**.

In this way each past pupil in their daily life, regardless of where they are, and in the various spheres of action, in the Church, in the family, in the study or work environment, in the political and social world, in the school field, free time and social communications, contribute responsibly to the affirmation of the values on which the dignity of the person is based.

As Pope Francis says in the Exhortation Christus Vivit: “It is true that as members of the Church, we should not be strangers. All should feel brothers and neighbors, like the Apostles, who enjoyed the “favor of the whole people” (Acts 2, 47; cf. 4, 21.33; 5, 13).

At the same time, we must have the courage to be diverse, show other dreams that this world offers

us, to witness the beauty of generosity, service, purity, strength, forgiveness, fidelity to one’s vocation, prayer, fight for justice and the common good, love for the poor, social friendship” (CV 36).

All these values can be found in the Salesian houses and have made us feel close to each other, as brothers and sisters, as a family.

Identify the values that distinguish you as Past pupil of the FMA
What dream do you have as Past pupil of the FMA?

* Confederal Delegate

**Oh Father of heaven, in your goodness
you handed me over
to Mary Help of Christians
since my youth.
With her motherly help let me
be able to face life
with the mentality of Jesus;
to learn how to love in the Holy Spirit,
that I can fulfil your will
as Mary did even in difficulties
and always believe
with confidence and hope,
in your Divine Providence.
With your help,
guide all Past Pupils
to live the Salesian’s values
and their baptismal commitment.
Amen.**

“Pilgrims in the world in the footsteps of Don Bosco.”
***SPECIAL* LINES OF COMMITMENT EUROPE 2019-2021**
Greetings of Madre Yvonne



My dear friends, I wish that during these days you be able to live a deep experience of encounter among you so that you cultivate the Salesian spirit and be characterized by the joy of fruitful sharing for the benefit of your personal life and that of the Confederation.

To have chosen Barcelona is to get in touch with Salesianity in many of its forms. Barcelona welcomed Don Bosco in 1886, paying him honors and recognitions because they knew how to recognize in him the apostle of the young workers, a man completely for God and for the young, especially the poorest. **Barcelona is also the city of Dorotea de Chopitea**, the first Salesian Cooperator from whom the cause of beatification has been introduced. In the course of the Spanish civil war, the Salesian presence contributed a sad share of martyrs.

Finally, the city retains a monumental memory of Don Bosco's visit: the temple of the Sacred Heart, on top of Mount Tibidabo.

I encourage you to take advantage of the visits that will be offered these days as if they were a pilgrimage. The task that awaits you during these days is exciting and engaging because it combines the Salesian charism with the reality of today's European society.

You come from all over Europe, and everyone brings with them hopes, fears, dreams and moods that cross their own countries. I am not referring only to the political and economic dimension but also the common Christian identity and, first, to the Greco-Roman culture, the first to sense the value of the human person.

We cannot put aside our European identity. This awareness prompted the founding fathers of the European Union and convinced them that only a strong union between all the countries of the continent could

deter men from starting new wars and favoring the peaceful growth of all.

European culture brings together diverse sensitivity and values due to the presence of peoples of diverse origin. This and many other aspects must be taken into account when developing the lines of commitment.

The areas in which social attention must be expressed today are multiple and varied, especially related to the territories and their history, with the political evolution, reception or rejection of migration, the integration of those who arrive in Europe seeking conditions of less adverse life.

The Salesian charism adapts very well to this task: everyone can look at their possibilities and ask himself or herself about how they can contribute so that young people overcome poverty, guarantee fraternity and support those who live marginalized, favor the assimilation of culture, Social and labor promotion.

We have signs that tell us where to go as indicated by Pope Francis: the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which encourages commitments to take care of our common home; the exhortation *Amoris Lætitia*, which recalls the importance of the family in society and, finally, the apostolic exhortation *Christus vivit* that takes us to the heart of that field preferred by Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello as was the education of the new generations.

I want you to have eyes and hearts that know how to see the needs, look together for the answers that link people, and make them feel protagonists of their progress, allowing them to value their resources.

The Auxiliary, who has always accompanied the mission of the Salesian Family, accompany this search for objectives and indicate the path they should propose to the Association for the coming years.

SALESIAN CHARISM AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY

Summary of the conference by Sr. Maria Angeles Garcia Maimar

We celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. The reflection on this text will help us to contextualize the historical moment we are experiencing and to perceive the current transformation of European society.

With the International Declaration of Human Rights for the first time, all men were guaranteed the recognition of the inalienable rights of the human person, valid throughout the world and in all historical periods, which must be recognized, accepted and promoted.

When the Second World War ended, the founding states of the European Union agreed on common objectives and inspirations in the writing of this text; they sought to promote a world in which coexistence based on aspirations for peace, development and mutual respect as possible. These aspirations, these rights, unfortunately, are not respected at present and do not constitute reference points for the exercise of political power.

The increase in violence and conflict in many countries is worrying. The violation of today's rights leads to the conflicts of tomorrow; violations that often derive from the fear we have developed towards differ-

ence, towards the other, the stranger; from the fear of losing personal benefits. In Europe, extremist and populist groups abound alongside dangerous nostalgia for nationalism.

The Pope warns that it is not time to build walls and trenches but to work for the realization of the dream of the founding Fathers of a united and concordant Europe, a community of peoples who wish to share the same destiny of development and peace. Peace demands love for truth and creativity. The European Union may remain faithful to its commitment to peace if it maintains hope and the ability to renew itself to respond to the needs and other expectations of its citizens; if he knows how to face the problem of large migratory flows that often lead to humanitarian tragedies.

Europe must take the motivations of these mass displacements seriously, respecting every people, culture and person, favoring integral human development. No violence finds justification in religion; Pope Francis reminds us.

Like Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, we have also received the call to promote the rights of the marginalized and forgotten. Young people, with their legitimate questions about the meaning of life, must continue to be the center of our educational mission. As a Salesian Family, we offer the integral education of the person in response to the instances of the Church, of society, for the promotion and defense of Human Rights.

Our charism asks us to know how to combine the Gospel with history, in the existential peripheries, educating in respect, in the attention to each member of a community.

In the existential peripheries, where the degradation is more evident, education is characterized by being preventive, working in a network with the various social organizations. Young people today, as happened in the days of Don Bosco, need to find a helping hand to guide them towards the discovery of God and his project of happiness; they need to find people who trust them.

Therefore, we are invited to open our eyes beyond our limited horizons, not to look at life from the stand, not to fear being rejected, to embody the charism by living the preventive system.

May this be our path to holiness.



The statue of Don Bosco in the garden of the Sarria house.

HOW DON BOSCO AND MOTHER MAZZARELLO CHANGED MY LIFE

Summary of the Conference by Maria Angels Pavon



M. Angels Pavon, Salesian Spanish cooperator, teacher and psychologist, speaks from her own volunteer experience carried out, initially, in the Ludoteca de Sant Boi (San Baudilio), and then at the Don Bosco Center.

Committed since adolescence in the struggle for the values of justice and solidarity, she was attracted to the work of the Salesians who lived through the challenges of Don Bosco through the help of the neediest. M. Angels highlight the strengths of the charism that encouraged her in her life decisions:

Positive sense of life, which derives from the joy that arises from the deep conviction of feeling loved, accepted, close to God and in peace. With this awareness, you can look to the future with the hope that the transformation into positive is possible, working with young people and making their change with them.

Unconditional welcome the charism teaches to welcome social and origin differences, but also the toughest life situations, to lead them to transformation. The experience lived in the Salesian center of Saint Boi teaches how, through the community, fam-

ilies living in situations of poverty, illness, drug addiction can be cared for and helped to achieve change.

Spirituality in community. The Salesian proposal of holiness is to live communally, lay and religious together. The community helps to interpret God's will for each of us and to realize the Kingdom of God here and now. The Salesian community creates a support network in difficult times.

Training. Formation helps to find the reasons for our faith. The path of formation, being in community, allows young people to discover their vocation, God's project for their lives. It helps to solve doubts, to know themselves, to find appropriate answers at every stage of life.

Feeling called by God gives a new meaning to life. The consistent response to this call provides a sense of happiness to feel that the vocation itself is being realized.

This is the vocational orientation granted to me by the Salesian charism. My family shares my decisions, and I can only thank those who have preceded me and now accompany me because they awoken in me the great treasure of faith.

ALSO IN BARCELONA
The Basílica of Tibidabo

“She has done everything”

by Laura Pollino *





BARCELONA

Feelings and impressions

When I was proposed to participate in the Barcelona conference as a **representative of the “young people”**, I must confess that I felt, first, a great honor for this proposal but, as the time to leave for the meeting approached, I began to feel worried. I wondered what my contribution would be to an event of such importance that the purpose was to define the European commitment lines for the next biennium... precisely me, who until recently had been president of a small Union. **However, from the beginning, I perceived the Grace** of participating in these days: from the reception of my travel companions at the airport to the smiles of those who, in different languages, received us at the Marti Codolar residence, through the excellent organization of each moment so that we could make the most of this experience. **I had the possibility of knowing the Salesian reality present in Barcelona** and the strong imprint left in that land by Don Bosco himself; but, above all, I touched with my own hands the spirit of the Salesian family that, despite our different ages, places and forma-



tions, allowed me to really feel at home. I do not know what kind of contribution I could give to this event, but what **I am sure of is the treasure that I took home**. This has an invaluable value that allows me to strongly perceive that I am not alone on this trip but that I can count on the support and strength of a living community.

Claudia



Since early in the morning, while going to visit the **Temple of the Sacred Heart of Tibidabo**, we were invaded by great emotions not only because of the architectural beauty of the Temple but, above all, because we returned in time to the time when **our Saint, with his Charisma, his genius and his breadth of horizons managed** to realize his dreams by trusting only in Divine Providence.

Don Bosco came to Barcelona to make the collection that benefited the construction of the Church of the Sacred Heart in Rome, but he not only obtained financial aid but also

was invited to establish male and female Salesian formation institutes in Spanish soil. **Many years have passed, and the Salesian presence is very felt all over Barcelona!**

The greatest joy is to see that the houses designed by our Saint are still active and functioning thanks to the assistance of many students. Schools of different grades work with the full quota and always with the same Salesian spirit: "Da mihi animas, tolle coetera"

Heartfelt thanks to Don Bosco, who knew how to board the train at the right time.

Now, among us, will anyone take the train just in time? We trust in Divine Providence and the help of our protective Saints.

Franca, Fabiola y Giusy

A beautiful adventure was to go to Barcelona to meet again and work together for the future! The organization allowed us a very interesting tour of the city but our days were enriched, above all, by the **interventions of Past Pupils from various European countries** who shared their experiences in everyday life, with skills and creativity to work for the benefit of people in difficulty.

This is what we call good practices, interventions that tend to assist and help people who are in difficulty like that experience told by a Past Pupil of the



M. Auxiliadora School in Valencia. There are women, wives and mothers who, despite caring for their own family, have sufficient solidarity to help immigrant women in vulnerable situations. **The Past Pupils of the Maria Auxiliadora School of Valencia** and some members of the ADMA coordinate training courses for women to prepare them for the labor market; they also get necessary help so that they acquire sufficient competence for intercultural coexistence and thus increase their self-esteem. **For 18 years, they have been dedicated to the reception**, to the development of an organized program to achieve job opportunities. At the end of the course, the participants obtain a certificate of attendance and an accreditation certificate that, with the enrollment in the course, can favor in obtaining the permanent permit.

Another activity that caught my attention was the

one carried out by the Rosana Union in the province of Cuneo. The Past Pupils Association took charge of continuing the mission of the FMA who were present in the territory until 2005; first, through registration in the regional registry of volun-



***Special* Lines of Commitment EUROPE**

teering for the promotion of culture, education and continuing education; secondly, committing to offer some courses to meet different needs according to different ages through ad hoc projects.

The course starts from the catechetical preparation to the formation of the animators for the Oratory, through parish services, solidarity, theater, social parties, activities with pensioners, walks, tournaments and much more. These strategies are giving optimal results both among young people and in-group activities. **Living with them helps to value their talents more effectively**, and they take better care of their relationships. Teenagers learn to have confidence in their animators and to understand the meaning of gratuitousness.

The animators of age commit to the younger ones becoming more autonomous. **This choice of responsible life**, although sacrificed, teaches to shorten the dense journey due to academic tasks and gives great satisfaction.

Very particular, although quite strong was the testimony of the Union of Alassio that since 2003 opened an outpatient and free nursing service to “take charge” daily of those who cannot afford paid medical assistance. The Past Pupils, with volunteers and three nurses, worked to give information to the associates, accompanying the sick and their families in a spirit of charity. **Over time this initiative also became a “Listening Center”** where the most fragile people feel “at home”. The assistance, listening and love with which

people are treated are typical of the Salesian charism. **Listening to these experiences made us reflect** and understand that no one builds the future in isolation. As Sr. Luisa Miranda has told us: “... **it is a mission too big to live alone**, whoever wants to follow me knows that he must walk on thorns.” The sharing of values should help to find ways to live better this time; we have to be parents of our future and not so many children of our past.

The shared experiences clarified the expectations that society has with us! The successful projects are those that were deeply linked to the concrete realities of children, youth and adolescents; This is where the need to be present is prevalent with the ability to educate and give love.

In the Association, new developments are needed to develop dynamic strategies, without stopping given the difficulties but continuing with faith, joy and hope.

It is important to BE PRESENT! Society needs us, of the presence of people willing to be linked free to the service of the weakest as Don Bosco and Madre Mazzarello did throughout their lives.

The Congress is over, the Past Pupils said goodbye with enthusiasm and with the desire to work seriously on the lines of commitment in each of their places of origin; and there is a new appointment: that of 2021!

Franca Piromallo

Vicepresident of the Federación Sagrada Familia
Milán Bonvesin



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IN **BARCELONA** ... AFTER THE FOOTPRINTS OF DON BOSCO

From the left: The house where Don Bosco lived. – The balcony where he used to speak with the people – Interior of the School – Salesian School dedicated to Dorotea de Chopitea – Celebration in the chapel – Sr. Gabriela with the parish priest, Jose Maria Maideu, SDB at the Sarria School.



PILGRIMS OF OUR TIME

The celebration of the Eucharist in the morning in Spanish with some parts in Italian, praying and hearing different languages; all made me feel part of the Universal Church.

The pilgrimage begins in the morning with a cloudy and cold climate. We visited the nearby town of Sarria and the “Can Prats” house of the Salesians where Don Bosco lived for a month. In the years of the civil war (1836-1838), there was terrible religious persecution against the Church. 31 Salesians and 2 FMA were martyred. In this house, a chapel was built where the Salesians gathered in prayer to stop these massacres.

We continue the road to Torre Gironella, the first house donated by Doña Dorotea de Chopitea to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Spain. The rain accompanies us as we reach the top of Mount Tibidabo, a position that, together with the magnificence of the Church of the Sacred Heart, gives the place an even more majestic air. It is possible to climb higher, almost as if one wanted to find the face of Christ who stretches his arms and is in the center of the bell tower. The image seems to ascend to heaven with open arms from the top of the basilica, blessing Barcelona, but at the same time assuming all the sins of the world. Tibidabo means “I will give you”, remembering the place where Jesus was tempted by Satan a third time. The con-

struction of the temple began in 1902 and finished in 1961; Don Bosco wanted to dedicate it to the Sacred Heart.

On Friday afternoon we deepen, through two experiences, the theme “Salesian charism and transformation of European society today”; finishing this work we subdivided into groups to work the points in common and socialize the conclusions of the case with the general assembly.

Finally, on Saturday morning, you could not miss the visit to the Sagrada Familia, a temple in permanent construction and an important symbol of Spanish religiosity, a masterpiece of the architect Gaudí who dedicated sixteen years of his life in this building. It was a wonderful discovery, thanks to a local guide. It is not possible to explain with words so much beauty both inside and outside the Church, consisting of five naves, all with a predominance of vertical architecture.

Gaudí, brilliant architect, coherent Christian, this endeavor was very probably inspired by God. In July 2010 the process for its beatification began in Rome.

Daniela Castelletti

President Unión de Legnano Santos Mártires



... AFTER THE FOOTPRINTS OF DON BOSCO

Under the gaze of Mary Help of Christians, with the invocation: "Come, Spirit of God upon me; I open up to your presence, you will change my heart", the Congress of the European Commitment Lines begins in the beautiful location of the Marti Codolar residence, donated by the same Marti Codolar family to Don Bosco during his trip, now converted into headquarters of our Salesian brothers in Barcelona.



The Holy Spirit must inspire us very hard in these three days of the congress, because Past pupils from different parts of Europe will be dedicated to this work: Italy, France, Belgium, Slovakia, Poland, Spain and Portugal, as *"Pilgrims of our time... in the footsteps of Don Bosco."*

The objective of the meeting is exciting and engaging. It is about finding an answer about how the Salesian charism has to be combined within today's European reality to discover the social dimension.

Among the working groups of the Congress have been the conclusions among which there is a neuralgic point: "listen to young people ..."; This initiative challenges us in a particular way precisely because this is the Salesian charism in which we are inspired and have decided to live in everyday life.

Numeral 67 of the apostolic exhortation *Christus vivit* states: *"Young people are our sacred land from a look that must change and mature towards them."* Called by vocation to have a look of love towards young people we have now received the invitation of Pope Francis *from a look of the father (and of the mother) and guide, to recognize and identify oppor-*

tunities right there where others see only walls or dangers; all this, going beyond appearances.

At a glance, listening can be born; listening ... we expect linking people to projects that valorize the talents we have been given. *"This is the look of God the Father, able to value and feed the seeds of good in the hearts of young people."*

Can we, then, put ourselves at the service of a new Europe? Of course! With eyes and hearts that know how to see the needs of people and with themselves. To look for answers: here, where we are, where we live and work, in line with the vocation entrusted to us; eyes attentive to Creation, heart set in the family, in young people, attention to all the realities that should always occupy the first place in society starting from ourselves, first, with actions that are motivated by good intentions.

Then, the words that we know very well: *"I entrust them to you"* will accompany us in the search, every day, for new paths that can be proposed and indicated as a whole to all the Past Pupils of Europe. *iA good place to start!*

Lorena Motta

President of the Federation of Lombarda
Sacred Family, Milán Bonvesin





Family album in **BARCELONA**



GOOD LIVING PRACTICES

From ITALY Rossana (Cuneo)

The Rossana Union was established in the sixties, since September 2005, after the FMA had had to close the house, they took charge in continuing the Salesian/Mornesino educational mission. Dividing into activity groups in the territory to respond to the demands of different ages with:

Organization of the oratory life on holidays and during the working week with the training of the leaders, summer stays at sea or in the mountains, organization of shows. Organization of social parties such as the New Year, solidarity activities, charity and friendship dinners open to other volunteer groups, solidarity and support initiatives for the elderly and geriatric homes.

We also have catechetical activities and many parish services, including recreational activities for pensioners and missionary solidarity. Many young past pupils also volunteer outside the parish and in other countries.

We create and maintain relationships with all associates, with the important objective to approach young people, to move them towards the Association, to value them through their involvement in charitable activities.

Thanks to the contribution of the Province of Cuneo and the Volunteer Services Center (CSV), interesting projects have been carried out aimed at training game animators and circus arts experts, a film in Piedmontese language was produced that linked actors not professionals of all ages to publicize the Cunenese land in the post-war era. Through dance and show, young people are integrated, transmitting values such as the duty of welcome, the sense of forgiveness, the mission of the believer. In these initiatives, it is understood that to dialogue with the other ages; it is necessary to accept the passing of the years, giving an example of joy and commitment in the free service for Christ.

It is necessary to value young people also through personal and community prayer meetings, stimulate them in their commitments, integrating them into the programming of different initiatives.

It is important to implement initiatives to continue gathering young people after they finish the cate-



chesis in preparation for confirmation and receiving it; religious but also lay activities to keep groups of teenagers together and answer their questions.

We need our FMA, we need them a lot, but we want to continue the path they set us by keeping in touch with the institution at the level of the Past Pupil and the Salesian Family.

ALASSIO: We put the heart...

Don Bosco arrived in Alassio in 1869 after the invitation of the pastor, Francisco del Valle, and the municipal administration. Alassio's was the first house he founded outside Piedmont.

It was September 20, 1870. Alassio eventually became a goal of rest and work. In 1876, called by Don Bosco, the FMA arrived that for a long time had their work but working in line with the Salesians. The Past Pupil Union was born in Alassio on November 12, 1971, and immediately qualified as a youth institution, dynamic and active, with periodic meetings, theatrical activities, distribution of charitable supplies to the poor and visits to the sick. The slogan that characterizes it is "Know how to care ...". The Union was conceived as a space to strengthen ties and build a sense of belonging to the Association, creating a family spirit. In this way, it becomes a house where you can LIVE, building relationships, CONTAGING "lost" adults to bring them back to the path of faith and UNDERTAKEN community activities, helping each other.

Particular attention is given to young people because they want to be heard with an open heart and be part of solidarity projects. With the young people, a permanent training itinerary is travelled through meetings, recreation moments that are open even to the participation of families and ex-

periences of accompaniment to the sick. In 2003, what we could define “the girl with the eyes of the Union” was born: the ambulatory nursing service **Milena Gazzano**, which is named after the president of the Union who took part in the decision-making process to carry out This project and that unfortunately died very young. The outpatient service operates in premises provided by the municipality and offers free help from nurses who volunteer together with alumni, alumni and other groups of volunteers. But, above all, it is a listening center that the patient feels like the center of everything. The motivation that encourages volunteers is to maintain an environment of perfect charity accompanying people in their fragility, making the exhortation of Mother Mazzarello proper: “Have a great charity: love one another”.



From Spain: VALENCIA

In collaboration with the FMA, with the ADMA groups and volunteer groups, the Valencian alumni carry out in a Salesian house a project of welcome-integration and human promotion for migrant women, coming from different areas of Africa and Eastern Europe.

The recipients of the project are migrant women between the ages of 18 and 65, with limited personal and economic resources, of different cultural levels and with interest in receiving training.

The activities articulated at various levels are:

- 1) Registration and reception through a daily personal relationship of dialogue and mutual knowledge.
- 2) They are learning the basic knowledge of cooking, housekeeping, organization of work at home, care for

the elderly and the sick, knowledge of medicines and some types of therapies.

- 3) Creation of job opportunities through the socialization of market offers, about the capabilities and possibilities of each of them; taking into account, also, the individual requirements of schedules and displacements. Participants are given a certificate attesting to their attendance, which, despite not being an official document, however, allows the possibility of obtaining a residence permit.
- 4) In this phase of the process the conditions of the immigrants are evaluated after getting a job; In this regard, the number of applications by the number of people who achieve employment, the general working conditions and the possibility of continuity therein are considered.

On many occasions, the volunteers engaged in this type of service are the same benefactors that sustain the work economically. The contribution of the FMA offered by the locations and the daily assistance is very valuable, and ADMA is present with part of the economic support.

The project is advertised through flyers that reach various institutions and parishes. Requests for help grow continuously and exceed our ability to satisfy them fully.

VALDEPEÑAS: DREAMS Project

Why DREAMS? Because we are heirs of great dreamers, Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. We seek to gather the 159 dreams of Don Bosco and make the wish that all children and adolescents grow and be happy by becoming authentic people. Our project is based on the preventive system, an



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educational proposal focused on the person and the active presence of educators. The project, which began in the scholastic year 2009/2010 through the Valsé Foundation of the FMA to respond to the situations of risk and social exclusion present in that place, seeks to imitate the educational action carried out by the Beata Sr. Teresa Valsé with the young women of Trastevere in Rome. Initially, it offered 15 scholarships for financial assistance to children attending state schools, aged between 6 and 12 years. In a building of the FMA, from 4 pm to 6:30 pm, the children can have special assistance to develop academic tasks, a snack and focused activities and the transmission of human values. Today this help is offered to 30 children who are between 6 and 16 years old with the desire to: Improve their academic performance and help them become an active part in the life of their community. Promote the integral development of the child and their ability to relate.

Develop personal and social skills, increasing self-esteem.

Help and accompany families in creating an environment that makes the meeting between their members pleasant.

SUECA - TORRENT

The FMA has been present in Sueca (Spain) since 1933 after the invitation made by Blessed Carmen Viel, martyr of the civil war. The Salesians have been responsible for transmitting the Salesian spirit to hundreds of young people who have passed through the school and the oratory. In the small town, before an agricultural character and close to Valencia, more than 30 young women have embraced the religious life. The Past Pupil association was born very soon and has carried out various activities, including theatrical performances from which true actors have emerged. Today the Board of Directors is made up of relatively young Past Pupils who work in communion with ADMA and other Pastoral associations.

The main activities are:

1) Making an open letter published three times a year, of formative and informative nature.

- 2) Solidarity workshop in which objects for sale are developed to support VIDES (International Volunteering).
- 3) Particular attention to the young, we organize parties and meetings to publicize the Association.
- 4) A special focus on the preparation and celebration of Easter, Don Bosco and Madre Mazzarello festivities, the date on which the Union festival is celebrated with the welcome given to the new members.
- 5) The party before Christmas has a strong tradition and is celebrated the Friday before the solemnity with the Eucharist, dinner and the lottery game.
- 6) The most significant is the celebration of Mary Help of Christians prepared with ADMA.

From: POLAND - WROCLAW

Past Pupil, Malgorzata Welpa Mlunarezyk, a Polish-language teacher, conduct volunteer activities for the benefit of immigrant children. It offers linguistic support with the teaching of the Polish language to the children of migrants from China, Korea, Russia and Ukraine established in Poland, and to the children of Poles who migrated to the United States or England and who returned to settle again in Poland. Help is also provided to parents who need it. Since 2018, she has taken care of two Ukrainian girls. There are many Past Pupils linked to various types of volunteering who carry out the Preventive System in their own lives, recalling the teachings received from the FMA: the Past Pupils are like rivers whose channel feeds on other tributaries to spill their waters in the immense sea.



COMMITMENT LINES – Europe 2019 - 2021

CONCLUSIONS

Continue strengthening the relationship between Confederation, Federations and Unions.

Identify the needs of each territory by synergizing the qualities of each one, making a presence today with a view to the future.

Listen to young people and link them in projects valuing their talents.

Ask the FMA Institute, where necessary, the implementation of a lay figure to ensure the charisma and work hand in hand with the Delegate.

Conclusions of Italy:

The Italian Federations propose to enter into the reform of the Third Sector (that is, volunteering) to be recognized and work in the territory with a legal basis.

Ask the Confederation for the constitution of the Italian Entity.

The Hands In The World

Commitment Without Borders

The **Big Lies** of Violence

by Alessandro Ciquera *

If you walk through the destroyed areas of Homs, in Syria, you will have an almost morbid curiosity about knowing the circumstances surrounding it.

That is, touching the ruins with your own hands, devouring the whole reality with a glance, perceiving the passing of the years in destruction, looking at photos and maps of the refugee camps in Lebanon.

You will arrive in Homs anyway; I did it twice in the same year, to recognize this land.

The emptiness inside does not speak; it sucks you into a vortex where there is no meaning; the thoughts and the picture are the same.

You expect to experience something particular; you walk, take pictures in those areas forgotten by the world and devastated by violence, but you must keep going, without stopping, making your way between puddles and civilians looking for firewood to steal it, take it home, burn it and warm it up a little.

You look for something, and you do not find it; then, you wonder why.

Instinct tells you to move on ... but where do you go? The tour is over; you are at the station you were looking for, in addition to the grey rubble there is only deafening loneliness.

Here is the great lie of violence: it is a black hole that excites you, attracts you, makes you believe that you can handle it, but then it gets you in every corner, it chains you, drags you to the lowest.

There is nothing but grey rubble. You have just arrived at the place you were looking for, but you do not feel what you thought you could feel; you only perceive cold and the bitter taste of deception.

You cannot try to assimilate something because, in reality, there is nothing; It is the absolute nothing: there are no relationships, and without relationships, there is no life, there are no stimuli, there are no memories to create, emotions to which you can cling.

A place that does not create memories is a

dead place, a site that resembles thousands of others. So are these areas, all the same, to the point that none leaves you with the impression of a particular detail; there is only destruction and ruin; you see a destroyed building, and you think you have already seen them all. It is a life that creates deep memory; the life lived, the change, the gesture. Remove these simple elements, and you will erase the very existence of a city. Very often, we underestimate the strength of the relationship, of friendship, of love.

For these priorities, we should be willing to risk; not because of the emptiness, because of this, I am sure, none would risk a minute of his life; for this reason, it is that the emptiness resorts to the deceits, it is transferred.

Evil is superficial, banal, "it expands horizontally, like fire, infecting everything it touches," Hannah Arendt wrote in the post-war period in 1948. While good goes to "depth," evil can only be extreme, certainly banal but extreme.

Only good can be "radical" because of only good reaches depth within us, it is sown as a seed and saves us from the darkness.

* Past Pupil Union M. Mazzarello – Via Cumiana – Turin





non uno di meno onlus

progetto sviluppo delle Exallieve/i delle Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice

www.nonunodimeno.org

149 - HONDURAS - San Pedro Sula MARIA MAZZARELLO SCHOOL RAISING HOPE FOR STUDY

To whom? Approximately 21 children

Where? San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

What Project? The local school "Maria Mazzarello" welcomes about 250 children and adolescents – among them, 80% are girls – with considerable social risk and without the support of their families of origin. The project seeks the necessary economic resources to favor the study of some children who belong to families of inhabitants of the street to grow in them the awareness that it is possible to build a different future and a new hope.

Cost of the project: 3.800 Euros / **Responsible:** Sr. Carmen Leticia Rubio Vega



152 - INSTITUTE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO CAMPAIGN FOR SYRIA

The presence of the FMA in Syria dates back to 1913 through the management of the **Italian Hospital in the Mazraa area in Aleppo**. During the civil war of 2011, which later became an international conflict, the Salesians of Don Bosco remained faithful to their mission through their presence and the support of local populations. The needs of a territory that is still in attempts at pacification are, of course, many; but based on the small things; **one of the basic needs at this time is to implement an operational program for the management of the patients' medical records**. The need for a laptop for appointment assignment is critical. With this computer, doctors and nurses can constantly monitor their patients and update their data.

Let us help our Sisters through an awareness campaign

Project Manager: Sr Vilma Tallone, email: info@missionegiovanifma.org

www.cgfmanet.org – www.missionegiovananima.org

Video of the campaign can be found in [youtube.com/missionegiovanifma](https://www.youtube.com/missionegiovanifma)

With the **TAX OF FIVE PER THOUSAND**, we have carried out a project of playful and cultural support for vulnerable children and a project of welcome for young people with different problems.

In this moment of economic difficulties for so many, donating five per thousand does not cost so much, but it is worth a lot. Sign the income statement in the space indicated and write the **Tax Code of the ONLUS:**

97397810587

Reading is an Adventure

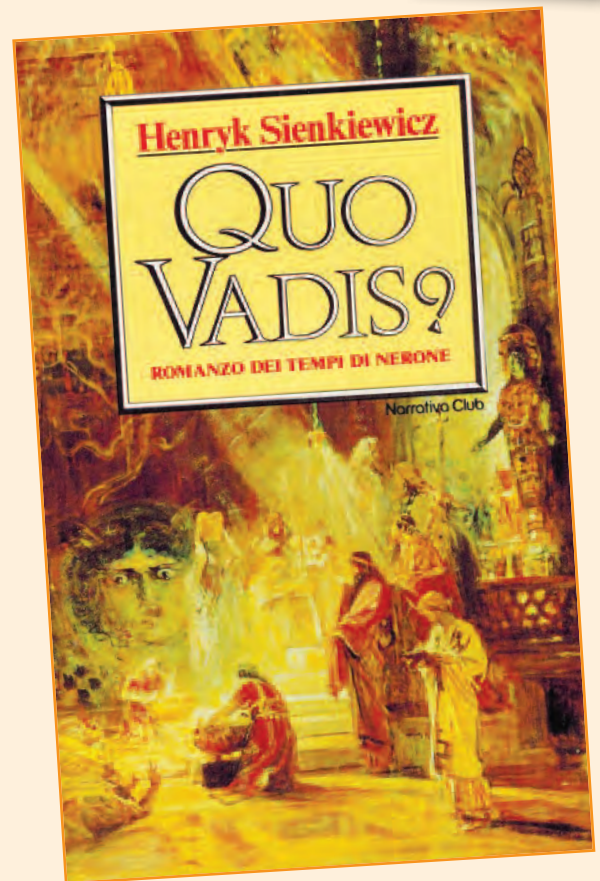
QUO VADIS? by Henryk Sienkiewicz

This month's novel can be recognized as a success story among the most extraordinary in international literature. Translated to almost every language in the world, the book has also been adapted for television and film productions. Also, the title of the book has become a proverbial expression, familiar even to those who have never read the book.

I am talking about "Quo Vadis", the masterpiece of the Polish Henryk Sienkiewicz, a beautiful historical novel published between 1894 and 1895 in deliveries in a newspaper, according to a very common way at that time and that constituted a kind of precursor to our series of television that is also published by episodes.

The novel takes place in one of the most interesting moments in the history of Rome, the kingdom of Nero. Precisely, against the background of that Imperial Rome, readers will be passionate about an exciting and contrasting love story: that of an aristocratic Roman, Marco Vinicio, and the beautiful foreigner Lycian. A love that finds the main obstacle in religion: he is a pagan patrician while she is a devotee of Jesus Christ and his revolutionary message that preached faith in one God who had sacrificed his own Son for the salvation of humanity. The love story of the two young people is confused with that of the Christian community that, precisely, in the Neronian era, was spreading in Rome under the guidance of the Vicar of Christ, the apostle Peter. A community victim of suspicion and prejudice that would end up being cruelly persecuted, especially after the terrible fire that devastated Rome in 64 AD.

by Lorenzo Trapassi *



Among rich aristocrats of the court of Nero, midwives and centurions, slaves and gladiators, readers can enjoy, during reading, one of the best accomplished historical frescoes of ancient Rome, a perfect historical novel that made its author deserved the Nobel Prize for literature in 1905.

The author



Henryk Sienkiewicz, a Polish writer and journalist, was born in 1846 and died in 1916. A tireless traveler, the Author felt a deep love for Italy, a country he visited several times.

Precisely, in Rome, Sienkiewicz found the inspiration to write "Quo Vadis" after having visited the place – between the Appia way and the Ardeatina way – where tradition ensures that the Apostle Peter met Jesus.

Family, become what you are

Explore the world of relationships



by Raffaella Messina *

ADOPTION: A LOVE CHOICE

In the past month, we have dealt with the fundamental stages of the family life cycle, highlighting the critical moments and the way they should be faced so that they became a resource and not obstacles. Our trip started from the formation of the couple and the birth of the child, an event that indicates the most intense moment within the life cycle and concretizes the most precious desire.

But what happens when this desire cannot be realized? When the couple finds out that it is not possible to bring children into the world, an extremely painful wound remains. The sterile spouse can be perceived by the other party as the obstacle to the realization of that beautiful desire to generate life. You can even perceive yourself as someone who is missing something, with an inevitable sense of guilt towards your partner. Discovering sterility can lead to recriminations and a silent resentment that, in some cases, can lead the couple to a deep crisis and even at the end of the relationship.

Nowadays science through assisted fertilization allows us to overcome some limits imposed by our body but, frequently, these treatments involve a long and expensive process, built amid high hopes but, also, with the risk of many disappointments. Another way to realize the desire to have a child is adoption; it is a true choice of love as long as the duel has been elaborated concerning the procreative capacity itself.

If this elaboration of the duel is not realized, **the desire of a child is irremediably transformed into an obsessive need to have it at all costs, even leading to the failure of the family project.**

In the next article, we will stop on the issue of adoption and seek to understand how this long and



difficult process is articulated, from a legal and psychological perspective, which carries with it the illusion of a new relationship.

In the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *“Amoris Laetitia”* of Pope Francis on love in the family, the Holy Father maintains that **“the option of adoption and reception expresses particular fertility of the conjugal experience, not only in cases of Spouses with fertility problems. They are faced with situations in which the child is loved at any cost, such as a right to self-affirmation, adoption and acceptance. Properly understood, show an important aspect of being parents and being children, insofar as they help recognize that children, both natural and adopted or foster, are other subjects in themselves and they need to receive them, love them, take care of them and not just bring them into the world.”**

I wish you a serene holiday break.

* Psychologist, Salesian Past Pupil

Third Milenium

The present that is already future

WOMEN WHO HAVE CHANGED THE HISTORY

Women, of the present or the past, who are talked about but little is known

by Cristiana Mariani

COCO CHANEL

In statistics, Gabrielle Chanel has been considered the most revolutionary fashion designer of the 20th century. The revolutions are not only "warlike" but can also be cultural, social and "fashionable." Who does not like to feel comfortable with what you wear? The choice is made based on your own tastes but, indisputably, with an eye on the trends of the moment. For example, if men did not wear leggings on their legs again, women would not have to force them to wear pannier on their skirts ... Precisely this was what Coco Chanel also thought.

"Elegant and comfortable," was the new female model that Chanel invented for women of the new century, dynamic and hardworking, who were not satisfied with the traditional clothes of the Belle Époque. The fashion of that time was still very close to retrograde concepts: the corset and the pannier were a kind of cages in which women locked themselves in order to obtain a much appreciated but damaging aesthetic balance. Thus, Chanel, in counter-current, with revolutionary vision, began proposing sports models with simple and smooth designs, overcoming any obligation and in line with the new health trend at the beginning of the century.

He was born in Saumur, in the Loire region of France, on August 19, 1883. She had an unfortunate childhood: the premature death of his mother, the abandonment by his father Henri-Albert Chanel, who was a street vendor, and the years Past with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Aubazine, they marked their childhood. Surrounded by women dressed only in austere clothes, in rigorous black and white, with the rigidity, in addition, of the abbey, Gabrielle begins in this environment to become Chanel: the antithesis of the opposite colors and the severity of the lines will be, in one morning, the distinctive feature of his fashion. The extreme elegance of black and white. The black color in the feminine garments was related only to the duel; Chanel transformed it into a color to dress on any occasion, elegant and



sensual. She argued that luxury is not the antonym of poverty but of vulgarity. Simplicity can be elegance and refinement, while excesses can obtain the opposite effect. "Before leaving, look in the mirror and take something off" is the quote that best expresses this style rule based on minimalism.

After turning 18, Gabrielle had the option of leaving Aubazine Abbey and starting, from an early adulthood, to forge her own life. She found work as an employee at the Maison Grampayre store in Moulins and, at the same time, sang in a cafe: who

sings the song *Qui qu'a vu Coco?* (Who has seen Coco?) Precisely, according to legend, this is the moment when everyone starts calling her Coco. In a coffee shop in Moulins she had the first of many important meetings of his life when she met Étienne de Balsan, son of textile entrepreneurs who became his first sponsor: Coco was very skilled at designing hats; Very soon the women who surrounded the company of Balsan fell in love with their proposals. In 1916, Rodier, another industrialist in the French textile world, exclusively granted him the diffusion of the jersey, a woven garment that would be revealed as the best interpretation of Chanel's creations due to its softness with the body and its innate ability to mold the Women's body.

However, it will be only from 1920 his consecration: in that year she opened his first boutique in Paris on Rue de Cambon, 31; from that moment on, her life had a steady rise due to her definitive success, although Coco Chanel was not a woman who stopped and, above all, was always satisfied. She created his first and famous perfume called Chanel No. 5 stating: "A woman without a perfume is a woman without a future." Perfume is a sensation, a magic that can change our day-to-day and leave indelible memories in our memory and that of others. His Chanel No. 5 is a timeless fragrance; even today, it is considered one of the best in history.

Coco Chanel began designing jewelry because she considered them essential accessories to better express femininity. Also in this field, she broke with tradition; we owe her the invention of fantasy jewelry: jewelry that anyone can get, made of metal or semi-precious stones that can be worn at any time of the day. Necklaces, bracelets and earrings became inseparable "friends" of modern women.

"Fashion passes, style fits." In the mid-20s of the last century, this phrase became the *petit robe noir*, the black dresses of simple design, capable of making each woman look the same as the other but with a particular style. An obvious example of this perspective is the absolute success obtained by his Chanel work-

shop: his trench coats, sweaters or sweaters, always identical creations in terms of his cut and the care of his sewing were made with always diverse fabrics at the rhythm of the change of time.

When World War II broke out, Chanel was forced to withdraw from the fashion scene for a short time. His return, in 1954, was like a winning woman for once more. Gabrielle, at the time, was a 71-year-old woman and critics of the time gave her up for retirement. Nevertheless, Coco was not a woman who let herself be easily defeated; thus, with its new collection No. 5 brings to light the design of a wool sweater, a garment that will be dressed by many women in the world, from the most famous to the least known. Among them was Jackie Kennedy who on the day of the murder of her husband, President JFK wore a Chanel design in the wool of a pink ignition: thus, haute couture was intertwined with one of the most dramatic events of the twentieth century.

On January 10, 1971, Gabrielle Coco Chanel died at the age of 87 in her suite at the Ritz Hotel in Paris. After his death, the brand was under the direction of Gastón Berthelot and Ramón Esparza, assistants of Madame Chanel; later, in 1983, it would pass under the creative direction of Karl Lagerfeld, an extraordinary designer who knew how to update the stylistic codes of the fashion house without ever betraying Coco's vision.

Source: Giovanni Deponti www.westwing.it
www.lofficielitalia.com

* Past Pupil



I DO NOT WASTE, *I reuse*

CERAMIC MUGS THAT ARE NO LONGER USED

It seems that the cups multiply by themselves over time, invading the kitchen spaces. Without a doubt, you should also have cups and wells that you no longer use at home. Maybe because they are broken, have some defect or were replaced by others. Fortunately, several ideas can help us not to throw them without mercy in a trashcan. They can be recycled and transformed, with simple handicrafts, to become useful objects in our home.

Needle and pin pad: We take a piece of cloth, hopefully, colored; we fill it with wadding and close it to form a small cushion that will be introduced into the cup. Perfect, artistry achieved!

The planter an old cup can become an elegant planter for a small plant that can be placed in the kitchen or on a living room table. It would also look good on a balcony or the terrace.



Bird feeder. Simply glue the cup to the convex part of a plate and attach the ear of the cup to a rope that knots on the tree branch so that it has stability. In the concave part of the dish, you can put the food for the birds.

Support for cakes. Turn an old cup and stick a sweet dish on its base with the concave side up. This becomes the base on which you can rest the cake and leave very well in the decoration of the table.



Break the cups into small pieces and use them as stones to favor drainage in vases and plants. Put them under a thick cloth and break them using a fine hammer to get the pieces small enough. Then, use them as stones for drainage by placing them at the bottom of the containers that contain flowers or plants. Ceramic pieces can have gravel functions to favor the drainage of the soil.

Use the cup to make a gift package. It is preferable to choose one that is not stained, or that has not been customized. No person will want to receive a stained cup of coffee that has your name (unless they are homonyms). Fill it with candies, chocolates, sugar in lumps, coffee beans ... or what you know the recipient likes. Wrap it with a ribbon: it will be a delicate gift, not so complicated to make but very original and respectful.

Keep personal hygiene utensils. You can put the toothbrush and toothpaste in one cup while in an-



other you place the comb brushes and shavers. But pay attention! Be sure to put them in a place where they do not run the risk of falling in the morning cares or while you are still sleeping.

If you still have too many cups at home, you might have one in the car or in the office to use instead of the disposable cups of coffee shop cups. It is a good ecological idea! And it is in perfect harmony with the project to discourage the use of plastic.





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PRAYER TO MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Extracted from preliminary documents from the Congress Lines of the commitment of Europe

Mary Help of Christians, here we are under your maternal gaze to ask you,
once again, for your Mother's heart to intercede for us before your Son.

We trust you, Mary, in the same way
as we did in our childhood, when our Salesians,
your Daughters, taught us to love you
as a mother who welcomes all who approach you
under her mantle.

We present to you once again our Association,
all the alumni and alumni of the world
that we trust in your Help so that we can overcome
any obstacle and difficulty.

We entrust to your protection the Salesian Sisters,
your daughters, who daily pray
for our needs and through which you send us
infinite graces from heaven: we have roots in the heart,
and from there no one can tear them away.

Intercede for us, at your feet, our Founding Saints,
Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello who constantly
protect and care for the Salesian Family.

Nothing will take us away from the constant commitment
for the benefit of today's world:
we want to be and bear witness to our Salesianity
through our lives and our joyful promises.

We have hands in the world
to be able to transform it with our love.
Guide us, Auxiliary, and support us every day.

AMÉN