

INSTITUTE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Founded by St. John Bosco
and by St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello

N. 1020

Thanks be to God from Sunrise to Sunset

Dearest Sisters,

It is a great joy to live in communion the 150th of the foundation of our Institute on August 5. Together we will celebrate this anniversary in the spirit of the *Magnificat*. Thus, from sunrise to sunset, every community in the world will raise the hymn of praise and gratitude to God for the marvels He has worked in the history of our Educating Communities and in the life of each Daughter of Mary Help of Christians.

On this day, each one will renew the Covenant of love with the Lord and will express deep gratitude for the full and abundant life of the young people. We prepared for this celebration as an Institute with "three years of praise, of gratitude, of new educational and vocational vitality. We were accompanied by the woman who outlined the feminine face of Don Bosco's educational charism, reliving it in Mornese and Nizza Monferrato in a creative and daring way, together with the first communities, with young people, and with the laity. " (cf. Circ. 989).

We were guided by the words of Mother Mazzarello, "*Let us really thank the Lord who gives us so many graces*" (L 37,10); "*I entrust them to you*"; "*Courage! Let us go forward with a big and generous heart*" (L 47,12).

We continue to hear **the echo of the Jubilee celebrations**, lived in the five continents with the variety of colors and cultures that enrich our Institute, in which the educating communities, local churches, and the territory where we are present have been involved. In every place, the celebration of the 150th anniversary created a good opportunity for the revival of vocations and for greater visibility of the charism today. Our thoughts go in particular to the Provinces which, despite the difficulties linked to the pandemic, wars, and suffering have creatively found different ways to express and celebrate this

anniversary. This has made us more aware and grateful for the beauty of our vocation and for the communion that unites us around the same charism.

Among the **Jubilee events** experienced as General Council recently, we recall some.

On 3 June, in the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome, together with the Comboni Missionary Sisters who like us celebrate the 150th anniversary of their foundation, we gave thanks to the Lord for the wonders accomplished through the two Congregations.

On 14 June, in the prestigious Hall of the Protomoteca of the Campidoglio, a round table was held promoted by the Pontifical Faculty of Education Science "Auxilium" for a discussion with several voices on the *feminine perspectives for Rome 'educating city'*.

The virtual pilgrimages in the places of our origins allowed the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the laity of the Salesian Family to approach in-depth the spiritual and charismatic wealth of Mother Mazzarello and of the first communities of Mornese and Nizza Monferrato.

In the pilgrimage spirit, the Council lived together with the people of God the solemnity of Mary Help of Christians in the Basilica of Turin Valdocco. We entrusted the post-Chapter journey of the Institute to Her.

All the realities of the world were present as well in other experiences we lived during these months, in particular, during the Spiritual Exercises at the Collegio of Mornese. This time of grace allowed us to relive the original freshness of our charism, the depth of the Mornese spirit, and the climate that animated our first community.

During the concluding Eucharistic Celebration in the Parish of the Town, we renewed the commitment of fidelity to the Lord's call, embracing all the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians of the world. Mother placed on the altar the formula of Profession written by many hands, the expression of unity in diversity. After having chorally proclaimed it before the altar, each of us signed our name on the manuscript.

We experienced a climate of fraternity, simple and joyful, with the communities visited during this time, as well as in the encounter in Turin with the Rector Major Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime and his Council. Together we visited the ‘House of Don Bosco Museum’. It was an opportunity to return to the spirit of Valdocco to listen to the heart of Don Bosco and feel his fatherly presence that still today speaks to us and encourages us.

Recharged with new charismatic energy, we continued the work of the plenum, giving priority to study and reflection in line with the deliberations of GC XXIV. ‘Toward a new style of formation’, ‘Missionary Synodality’, and ‘Ecological Conversion’, were the topics of the Six-Year Planning, studied in an ongoing exercise of synodality. Very meaningful was the experience with the Sector collaborators in the two workshop days on the Chapter Deliberations. We intend to continue this process of elaboration in the desire to give concreteness to what GC XXIV entrusted us.

We are encouraged by the words of Pope Francis who invites us “to be missionary communities in outreach, going out to proclaim the Gospel to the peripheries, with the passion of the first Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.” (Encounter with the Chapter Members, 22 October 2021)

We thank the Holy Father for the esteem he continues to show towards our Institute, recently confirmed by the appointment of our dearest Mother Yvonne Reungoat as a member of the Dicastery for Bishops. We renew our wishes that become prayer, “May Mary continue to guide and accompany your journey as she has already done since the origins of our Institute 150 years ago.” (Words of good wishes of Mother Chiara Cazzuola to Mother Yvonne Reungoat)

We are all aware that the celebration of this Jubilee projects us with hope towards the future and commits us to express the charism with renewed creativity. From 25 to 30 September 2022, we will experience a privileged opportunity for study with the International Congress organized by the Pontifical Faculty of Education Science "Auxilium" with the theme: Contribution of the FMA to Education (1872 - 2022). Paths, Challenges, and Perspectives. Among the many elements that make this event unique, we recall the artistic evening “Salesian World Vision” which will have as its main theme “I CARE - Educating is a thing of the heart”.

Thanks to new technologies, many young people from all over the world will be able to express their experience of the Preventive System with creativity.

With other events already planned, we will continue the festivities of the 150th and, as a perennial reminder of this year, the Generalate will have a new and special touch of "Mornese" welcome. A statue of Mother Mazzarello will be placed in the garden, which portrays her seated, ready to dialogue with simplicity and familiarity with those who pause by her.

We commit ourselves so that the celebration of this event may mark a rebirth and reawakening of vocational and missionary freshness in every Daughter of Mary Help of Christians and Educating Community. We desire to live a new missionary season in which all of us, together with lay people and young people, can rediscover the strong appeal, "I am a mission" (EG 273), renewing our vocational response to realize God's dream for each one of us.

May the mandate made to Mother Mazzarello, "I entrust them to you" become a stronger "I will take care of you," said with the life of our communities, shown in daily fraternity, in unconditional sharing, as the expression of the maternal features of God's face. It would be beautiful if there were a multiplication of community experiences open to the young people, happy to share daily life with them, the gift of faith and of vocation in the Mornese style.

May Mary, the first believer who welcomed Life fully, and gave it with the total availability of her entire being, support our joyful fidelity to the Covenant of love that God established with each one of us. We desire to be more and more with Her, happy women, in love with Jesus, passionate about the mission, entirely given to God for the salvation of young people.

In communion of prayer

Castel Gandolfo, 24 July 2022

Mother and the Sisters of the General Council