

Message for the Feast of St. Maria Domenica Mazzarello

Sr. Yvonne Reungoat

Dear Sisters,

I have just returned from the Holy Land and my heart is overflowing with gratitude for the prayer and affection with which you accompanied me, for the solidarity to which you have witnessed as a sign of gratitude toward the Institute that we love.

The welcome back to Rome coincided with the days of the triduum in honor of St. Maria Domenica Mazzarello and with the welcome of Don Bosco's urn. Our Founder is in our midst not only with his mortal remains, but with his spirit. It paused in the Generalate precisely on May 13, the feast of our Co-foundress. Let us take this coincidence as encouragement to walk in the footsteps of our Founders, luminous signs of the all-foreseeing love of God.

Whoever enters the Generalate finds a truly singular welcome: Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, almost as though they are having a conversation with each other and with the persons who pass through the atrium. They are there, before the stature of Mary Help of Christians.

Let us go back to the atmosphere of Mornese in our minds, to the little church of Mary Help of Christians at the Mazzarelli that knew the conversations of the child and adolescent Maria Domenica. Let us travel once again the frontiers of Mornese until we reach the place where in 1864, the people welcomed Don Bosco who made his entry on a white horse that Fr. Pestarino provided for him.

Let us imagine the dialogue in the heart that Maria Domenica had in visiting the Saint of young people.

Surrounded by about a hundred boys, she revealed in a clear way her mission of giving her last breath to restore the smile, dignity and joy to their lives.

Don Bosco's mission confirmed Maria Domenica's apostolic intuitions, and was a blessing for her little projects, approved and supported by Fr. Pestarino, for the good of the girls of the village.

With the desire of interpreting all of you, dear Sisters, I will now speak directly to Maria Domenica

Not only the mission of Don Bosco, but what his very life represented for you, Maria Domenica, the evangelical model that you secretly sought. Heedless of the eventual gossip, you went forward before all to hear him: "Don Bosco is a saint and I feel it", you said.

A spiritual harmony led you to embrace his indications always and everywhere, with full trust, convinced that it was: "Don Bosco knows what Mary Help of Christians wants from us", that the Constitutions express his spirit and give the seal of the Marian face to the Institute

This spiritual harmony sustained you in the many sufferings that you had to face to carry out God's surprising plans for you, you, a woman lacking bookish knowledge, but possessed of one rich in humanity and in faith, called by Him to be the guide of a great family.

You were convinced, then, that the true superior was the Madonna.

Teach us, Maria Domenica, the secret of life, the quality of relationships, and missionary enthusiasm. Reveal to us the source that nourishes and makes our existence fruitful, capable of affecting the furrows of history, in the heart of the younger generations, in the monotony of daily life. Reassure us when we are tempted to discouragement, of giving up

in the face of difficulties. Obtain for us from Mary Help of Christians the docility of Spirit, the courage to take the high road even if we feel that we are inadequate and insufficient for the mission that today's times ask of us.

Maria Domenica, you lived in a little hamlet lost in the hills of Monferrato. Grant us that universal spirit that you made your Sisters of Mornese experience so that we will not close ourselves up into our little horizons, but that we may be open to understand the confines of the world.

You, with your glance, embraced all from the little window, the vineyards, the village, the church bell tower when you looked in the direction of the tabernacle and moved beyond the confines of the horizon to imagine other worlds, other situations to be evangelized. Make us always ready to stay and to go, always animated by love for Jesus.

Give us your passion of heart and help us to shake the ashes of that the flame of the love for Jesus so that those whom He sends to us may be revived.

Grant that we may accept the entrustment: "I entrustment to you" that you felt so urgently during the years of your youth.

Do not leave us alone in the commitment of indicating Jesus always and only to the younger generations in seeking ways to witness to Him also as an educating community through credible signs of evangelical love.

Explain to us the secret of your simple sanctity, capable of insinuating ourselves into the hidden corners of life.

Give us the gusto of going to the genuine sources of the charism, of joining the Word of God and the Salesian word, of living the commandment of joy, sign of a heart that loves the Lord very much.

Grant that we may feel that we are in continuity with you and with Don Bosco to offer to the young people of our time a trustworthy witness of love, a sign of hope for their future.

May each FMA, the young people, the members of the educating community and the Salesian Family, in particular the SDB, always so available and fraternal, always feel the expressions of my gratitude in their hearts.

On May 24th, at the feet of Mary Help of Christians, I will entrust sentiments of affection and of gratitude that are impossible to be expressed in simple words.

May Mary Help of Christians bless you all!

Rome, May 13, 2009