



Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco

To the Provincials and the
Preprovince Superiors
Their Sees



Dearest Sisters,

I come with joy to communicate to you the place and the theme of the **Feast of Gratitude 2020** at the world level.

Let us all feel involved, FMA, laity, young people in giving thanks to the Lord at the completion of these six (or more precisely twelve) years of service of animation and government of our Mother, “bond of communion and center of unity of the Institute” (C art. 116).

There are many reasons for the gratitude we wish to express: for her fidelity, for her incessant giving of herself with love and wisdom for the charismatic mission that she communicates with so much enthusiasm, for the courage with which she has faced numerous trips and the inevitable hardships to reach the educating communities in every part of the world without ever sparing herself but rather with an ever joyful face.

In this grand world thanks to the Lord, there shines like a star in the galaxy, the gratitude which each community also expresses and celebrates in mutual gratitude between the FMA, laity, and young people for the gift of sharing and co-responsibility in carrying out, not without daily difficulties, the educational mission.

This year, the feast will take place in

Rome
In the Roman Province of *St. John Bosco*
on 26 April 2020

and will be prepared in collaboration with the Sisters of *Mother of the Church Preprovince* and with the Sisters of the General House.

The theme proposed is:

*Your life is a tree that bears fruit.
Thank you, Mother!*

The logo represents a luxuriant tree reaching out towards the city, symbolically represented by the bridge over the River Tevere and by St. Peter's dome, which draws life from the river and gives it to the young in a circularity that opens to the newness indicated by the Spirit.

The Institute is always nourished at the living source of Jesus and of the Church and in it has given witness of a consecrated life spent in total dedication to the young people, in the "*da mihi animas cetera tolle*" and in the response to the mandate "*A te le affido*".

Our 'thank you' is for the life, for the beauty of the charism that we receive and give and for the mission that Mother carries out in the Institute.

The Word of God chosen is taken from Psalm 1:

*Blessed is the one who has...
the law of the Lord as his joy;
and on His law meditates day and night.
He is like a tree planted near streams of water,
that yields its fruit in season;
Its leaves never wither;
whatever he does prospers...
Because the Lord knows the way of the just.*

The Psalm presents the way of the just, faithful to the Law of the Lord and trustful of His Providence, in harmony with creatures and with Creation.

The analogy of the tree planted near streams of water recalls the commitment to ecological conversion to which the Pope invites us in the Message for the World Day of Peace of this year, connected to dialogue and reconciliation.

Like a seed that has sprouted becoming a tree, thus the life of the Institute along the river of history, has given and gives the fruit of integral education and holiness to many young people.

Attentive listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and to the heart of the young of every land, creative fidelity to the charism of Don Bosco and of Mother Mazzarello move every Educating Community to say 'Thank You'. Saying thank you means remembering the 'great things' God has worked and works in our life and in history.

We know well that the Feast of Gratitude is not just a formal recurrence, nor only an expression of kindness, but touches the identity of the Institute that, in the charismatic project of Don Bosco, was generated as a "living monument of gratitude to Mary Help of Christians," a thank you prolonged over time and space with the young people of the various Continents.

Beginning with Psalm 1, especially the verses cited above, we express our choral gratitude to Mother for the service she has carried out with wisdom, foresight, and dedication as a woman faithful to the Gospel and to the dream of the Founders of the Institute.

The Sisters of St. John Bosco Roman Province suggest a community meditation on Psalm 1, using the attached reflection, if you deem it useful, and in the time preceding the Feast, to pray the *Our Father*, the prayer of the children, of those who are in harmony with the Creator and all of Creation. As a sign of communion, every Province is invited to choose one of Mother's Circulars and to make it the object of sharing and of prayer with the Educating Community. Starting from this sharing, we invite you to offer to Mother a 'thank you-commitment', responding to the questions contained in the Circular chosen. The response may be sent to portale.fmairo@gmail.com.

We are urged as Educating Communities, in particular children and young people, to make a gesture that expresses the commitment of reconciliation and ecological conversion (for example: taking care of a flower bed, a small garden or a vegetable garden, planting one or more trees, cleaning up an abandoned green area or urban space ...). We will send a photograph of this expression taken with reflex (not with mobile phone) in high resolution horizontal jpg format (not less than 200 dpi) or a short video recording (at 1920X1080 resolution) lasting 60 seconds maximum by **31 March 2020** to portale.fmairo@gmail.com.

On social channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube) FMAIRO Roman Province of St. John Bosco and on the Province website (fmairo.net), 'posts' will be inserted periodically, which will recall the theme and the signs of communion proposed. The images that will come from the Provinces will compose a video that will be published on the occasion of the Feast of Gratitude.

On the website of the FMA Institute you will find information and news on the Feast of Gratitude 2020.

Every year, the feast of Gratitude also unites the Provinces in a gesture of solidarity that makes visible the family spirit and the communion of goods, helping us to broaden our gaze on the Institute as a large and varied world Family.

The offerings, which will be collected this year and sent to the General Bursar, will serve for the urgent needs of the Institute and to support the implementation of a project to combat the family, social, and economic distress of minors and young people welcomed in "Mary Help of Christians" Educational Day Center in Sanluri (Sardinia) and the implementation of micro-projects aimed at strengthening and increasing socio-cultural, and sporting activities in favor of children and young people in Ladispoli (Lazio).

To Mary Immaculate, powerful Help, Mother and Teacher, true Superior of the Institute, we entrust the life and mission of our Mother, whom we want to reach now with choral thanks and grateful prayer.

I greet you on behalf of her and the sisters of the Council. Together we continue to pray for vocations, for peace, for all humanity, and for our sisters who live in lands wounded and affected by war and violence by sharing fears, sufferings, hopes of many people, especially of many young people with an uncertain future.

I wish you a good preparation for the feast and I greet you with affection and gratitude.

Rome, 11 February 2020

Sr. Chiara Cazzuola
Vicar General