The MESSAGE of the Rector Major

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**GOD GAVE US A REAL MOTHER**

Mary is our mother because by taking care of us She teaches us, at the depth of our soul, how to take care of ourselves and how to take care of others, how to take care of life, of creation, of the growth of our brothers and sisters and of the life of those who are in greatest risk of losing it and losing themselves.

The dream Don Bosco had during the night between the 9th and the 10th May 1868, while he was in Barcellona, and which he then shared with a voice trembling with emotion, is truly unforgettable. It is so because of the huge amount of children that ran towards him telling him, “We have waited for you! We have waited for you so much but at last you are here: you are amongst us!” It is so especially because of the presence of the Shepherdess who tells Don Bosco, “Do you remember the dream you had when you were nine years old?” Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a strong and significant presence, to the extent that many times she is the Good Shepherdess that leads her children to Jesus.

As members of Don Bosco’s family, we cannot think of ourselves without her, because “She did everything” and continues to do so! At this point, I would like to ask you: Who is Mary for you? Who is she for you? Who is she for me?

My dear ones, I invite you to contemplate Mary through the eyes of intelligence and of the heart. Contemplate her as Woman, Mother, Teacher and Help.

She is first of all a Woman. In the fourth Gospel, Jesus himself calls her so twice and in two very important occasions: During the first sign He does at the wedding in Cana (cf. Jn. 2, 1 -12), a sign thanks to which “... his apostles believed in him”, and during the time He was on the cross, when Mary and the beloved disciple of Jesus were there (cf. Jn. 19, 25 -27).

“Woman, what do you want from me?” and “Woman, here is your son!”. “Woman”: a beautiful title given to the new Eve, mother of the new Adam. In her, all humanity reawakens and is reborn again through Her Son’s action. Even when St. Paul speaks of the humanity of the only Son of God, he defines him as one “born from a woman” (Gal. 4, 4). We cannot ponder on the mystery of the incarnation without contemplating her as a woman. And contemplating her as woman means journeying even more on the path of humanization that marks the Salesian vocation for all the members of our Family. We live and work for an authentic humanity that is fraternal, supportive and at peace. And she is the first one that accompanies us to do so.

Mary is also a Mother for us all and even more, I would say she is our *Mummy*! God chose for his son a real mother. Undoubtedly, when Jesus was growing up besides Mary and Joseph, he was able to recognise within him the warm love he had experienced from all eternity besides his Father, the Father of all.

Mary was a mother like many of our mothers. “Son, why have you done this to us? See, your father and myself were anxiously looking for you” (Lk. 2, 48).This text from Luke reveals to us all the heart of a mother. How many times mothers feel worried about their children!

And what did the shepherds behold when they went to Bethlehem? Didn’t they by chance find a mother and a father who were taking care of their little son? (cf. Lk. 2, 16). This is why she is mother: because she takes care of us! Hence, the gift which Jesus gave to his friend dazzles even more: “Here is your mother!” (Jn. 19, 27). She is our Mother because in taking care of us, she teaches us deep down within our soul to take care of ourselves and of one another, to take care of life, creation, of the growth of our brothers and sisters, of the life of those who are at risk of losing it and losing themselves...

My dear ones, as a Salesian Family, as friends of Don Bosco, let us take care of life! Let us take care of one another!

We cannot even forget what our beloved Don Bosco did when he lost Mamma Margheret: he went to the Consolata shrine and there, with all his heart he renewed his sonship and his trust in the mother that was always there, close by, near him and his children. Today, we too want to say to Mary: be our mother! Teach us how to take care of life!

Mary is also a *Teacher*! The teacher that tells us: “Whatever He (Jesus) tells you to do, do,” (Jn. 2, 5); the teacher who was the first one to keep in her heart all the things pertaining to Jesus (Lk. 2, 51) and she teaches us to do the same. The Christian person is the one who keeps all these things of Jesus in his heart and always draws from this treasure.

She, the woman and mother, was shown by Jesus to Don Bosco as the one who would show him and help him to do the mission he had been assigned, “the teacher under whose discipline you can become wise, and without whom all wisdom becomes ignorance” (MO)

And “discipline” is very much part of discipleship.

Are we are good disciples of Mary, as were Don Bosco, Mother Mazzarello and the first members of our Salesian Family?

Finally Mary is a *Help*. After the Angel’s annunciation, the first action of the woman, already mother, was to be of service to Elizabeth (cf. Lk. 1, 39). The Gospel says that “*she arose and went in a hurry*”! What a beautiful expression of the service in the Church, particularly within the Salesian fold: Let us *in a hurry* be of service to take care of life that is still growing, and that is so often menaced; *in a hurry* let us answer to the cry of the youth, especially those in most danger; *in a hurry* but not in a rush, i.e. dedicating the necessary and sufficient time required, as She did when she “*remained with (Elizabeth) for about three months, (before) returning back to her house*.”

Mary is the one that notices that wine was running out at Cana... She is the one that sets Jesus in motion and in so doing she becomes a help that ensures that joy in feast of life won’t run out.

Therefore dear brothers and sisters, I tell you once again: do not be afraid of anything because Mary is our Help, She is our Mother and teacher who teaches us how to be real missionary disciples of Jesus and how to take care of our life to make it more human, according to the measure of Christ, the Eternal Word born from a Woman.