



**SEPTEMBER 25, 2024**

**1. IN THE HEART OF THE CHURCH AND THE INSTITUTE**

**1.3 Encountering the Church of yesterday and today**

**1.3.1 Audience – Holy Father**

*(prayer in pullman)*

**Angelus**

**Entrustment** *(alternating sides)*

**Guide:** We entrust our life to Mary, our Mother and guide so that she can help us to joyfully sing of God's love for us, to live our vocation with commitment, renewed in faith, in love with Jesus, eager to communicate with passion and coherence the beauty of the Gospel to the new generations:

O Mary Help of Christians,  
we entrust our journey to you  
of total donation to God.

Teach us to sing with joy and gratitude  
our Magnificat to the Lord.

Make us attentive to the voice of the Spirit  
because we know how to live with humility,  
charity, simplicity, and trust in our daily life.

Like You, we desire to abandon ourselves to the Father  
to continue to live chaste, poor, and obedient  
and to be, with our life

transparency of God's love  
and reflection of your maternal goodness  
on the example of Mother Mazzarello  
for the young people entrusted to us. Amen.

## **MORNING PRAYER**

**Guide 1:** We begin our pilgrimage by thanking God for his gift of love because he has given us the Church as a mother who welcomes, accompanies, and strengthens our faith.

Let us go to St Peter's Basilica, the center of the Universal Church, and meet Pope Francis and listen to his message. May the Holy Spirit guide us and enlighten our hearts so that together we can welcome with joy the graces that God offers us.

### **Song: City of God**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zRAUH8yBcQ>

Awake from your slumber! Arise from your sleep!  
A new day is dawning for all those who weep.  
The people in darkness have seen a great light.  
The Lord of our longing has conquered the night.

Refrain: Let us build the city of God.  
May our tears be turned into dancing!  
For the Lord, our light and our Love,  
has turned the night into day!

We are sons of the morning; we are daughters of day.  
The One who has loved us has brightened our way.  
The Lord of all kindness has called us to be  
a light for his people to set their hearts free.

(coda) God is light; in him there is no darkness.  
Let us walk in his light, his children one and all.

O comfort my people make gentle your words,  
proclaim to my city the day of her birth.

O city of gladness, now lift up your voice!  
proclaim the good tidings that all may rejoice!

**Guide 2:** God is a faithful Shepherd. He provides for us without sparing a single detail. He guides us into a righteous life. He protects us, not by shielding us from difficulty, though He does at times, but by permitting in our lives only what is beneficial to us according to His good purpose for us. We need to trust Him as our faithful shepherd.

### **Psalm 23: The Lord is my Shepherd**

*(alternating sides)*

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;

Beside restful waters he leads me;  
he refreshes my soul.

He guides me in right paths  
for his name's sake.

Even when I walk in the dark valley,  
I fear no evil: for you are at my side

With your rod and staff  
that give me courage

You spread the table before me  
in the sight of my foes;

You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

Only goodness and kindness follow me  
all the days of my life;

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
for years to come. Glory...

### **Jn 2:1-5 "Do whatever He Tells You"**

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." [And] Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you."

*(brief pause for reflection)*

**Guide 1:** "Jesus reveals himself as the Bridegroom of God's people, announced by the prophets. He reveals the depth of the relationship that unites us to Him; it is a new covenant of love. We are aware that the grace of Baptism characterizes us as the People of God on a journey and expresses itself in the beauty of being children of the Father and sisters and brothers in an outpouring of service". (AXXIVGC).

**Guide 2:** Lord, rich in love and mercy, we thank you for this day of encounter with the Church and with Pope Francis, your Successor; may we know how to consolidate our faith in you and accept and practice your teachings. May the Holy Spirit make us witnesses and multipliers of your love. May your blessing accompany us to "Do what Jesus tells us" and thus be new wine in our mission. We ask this through Christ our Lord. AMEN

## **ST. PETER'S BASILICA**

*(in the Basilica individually in silence each one renews her faith)*

The acts of the XXIVGC remind us that faith is real for us in a process to be shared as consecrated women, as educating communities, as Salesian Family, and as a Church to revive and bear witness to the beauty of our vocation and mission in an attitude of continuous formation. In this process, we assume missionary synodality as a way of life to listen to the cry of the poor and the earth and make bold evangelical choices.

Close to the tomb of St. Peter and so many of his successors, we hear the resounding words of Jesus himself: "You are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Let us pray for the Church and, in particular, for all our sisters and brothers who are called to bear witness to the faith through martyrdom; let us pray for ourselves as pilgrims in these holy places that we may open ourselves to the love of God the Father and accompany each other on the path of holiness.

### **I renew my faith with the Apostles' Creed**

**I believe** in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; on the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe** in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

## **ROSARY**

*(Glorious Mysteries prayed in the pullman on the return to Sacro Cuore, omitting the litany and concluding with the Magnificat)*

**Guide:** Like Mary, we thank the Lord for the graces we have received this day and for the wonders He has granted us in this meeting with the Pope and the Church.

### **Magnificat: Magnificat**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioKgv\\_CLI18](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioKgv_CLI18)

Refrain: All that I am sings of the God who brings new life to birth in me.  
My spirit soars on the wings of my Lord.

My soul gives glory to the Lord, rejoicing in my saving God,  
who looks upon me in my state, and all the world will call me blest;  
For God works marvels in my sight, and holy, holy is God's name.

God's mercy is from age to age, on those who follow in fear;  
Whose arm is power and strength, and scatters all the proud of heart;  
Who casts the mighty from their thrones and raises up the lowly ones!

God fills the starving with good things, the rich are left with empty hands;  
Protecting all the faithful ones, remembering Israel with mercy, the promise  
known to those before and to their children forever!

## **ADDITIONAL READING**

### **Mother Mazzarello and Don Bosco in Rome**

Today we want to recall Mother Mazzarello's trip to Rome in November 1877, to remember those unforgettable days in the heart of Christianity, to spiritually walk in her footsteps and enjoy her messages of life.

Here is the account of this experience found in the second volume of the *Cronistoria*:

## **Mother Mazzarello and Two Missionaries from Mornese Travel to Rome**

### **A competition of humility for the trip to Rome**

“Since the 9th (November 1877) has already been fixed for the papal audience, the missionaries will have to be in Rome on the eve of the 9th.

Mother Petronilla, who has never travelled, gives way to Mother Emilia Mosca, who is better suited for the task; but Mother Emilia - who would fly to Rome - feels sorry for the missionaries, who would be entrusted to her alone.

In this beautiful contest of humility, Mother Mazzarello says resolutely: 'I'll go: it's my turn and the Lord will take care of it'. And without listening to the advice of human prudence, she prepares to leave for the journey to Rome

Towards evening, *la Madre* and two missionaries left Mornese to go to Sampierdarena and join the Salesians on their way to Rome.

They spend the night with the good women who are in charge of the wardrobe and kitchen of that hospice, where they are festively received and served in every way. What a joy for Sr. Angela Vallese to also find Fr Cagliari there, whom she had not yet seen since he returned from America!

At dinner, while making the final arrangements for the journey, Mother Mazzarello said to Fr Cagliari: 'My dear Rector, don't you think that by going to Rome, I will make the Institute lose esteem? The Holy Father will believe he will see in the Superior General an educated, well-knowledgeable Sister, and instead he will have before him nothing but a poor ignorant woman'.

Don Cagliari smiles and encourages Mother Mazzarello to go all the same. Then addressing the two Sisters and the others present, including Fr Costamagna and Fr Paolo Albera, rector of the house, he says in a whisper: 'Let us learn our lesson'. The next day they leave for Rome, in the company of Fr Giovanni Cagliari.

### **In Rome**

When they arrive in Rome, they receive fine hospitality **at the pilgrims' center**, in separate rooms for the Salesians and for the Sisters. However, they find nothing

to eat because the pilgrims' center only offers a meal at two o'clock in the afternoon.

What to do? The Salesians are very hungry; the Sisters say nothing, but... Mother Mazzarello then, not afraid of the darkness, nor of unfamiliar surroundings in Rome, takes Sister Borgna with her and, as if she were in Mornese, goes to the nearest shops to get fruit, bread and cheese for everyone.

The following morning - Friday 9 - rising early and well rested, the Sisters attend several Masses in the pilgrims' chapel. This is followed by a little breakfast, and then off to visit St Peter's Basilica, before climbing the stairs to the Vatican for the papal audience.

Around twelve o'clock everyone is waiting for the Holy Father. Preceded by a movement of police officers, papal guards and prelates, there is the Pope, in his papal chair. His face bears the traces of suffering, for his health is considerably declining.

Taking his cue from the feast day, the dedication of the Lateran Basilica, the Holy Father speaks of the goodness of the Church towards those who pledge obedient, and of the divine severity towards those who reject the Church not recognizing her affectionate and tender protection.

He speaks at length about Don Bosco and the great grace of being sons and daughters of such a father. He shows his delight and also his amazement on hearing that the so many are kneeling at his feet asking for the papal blessing to go on to the missions in America. He asks Fr Cagliero: 'Where does Don Bosco get all these people?'

- 'Your Holiness, divine Providence sends them to him'.

The Pope stretched out his hands, looked up to heaven and exclaimed: 'Oh, divine Providence!'

At this point, Mother Mazzarello, moved and humble, whispered, without taking her eyes off the venerated figure of Pius IX: 'O Lord, bless your Vicar!'



Fr Cagliero then introduced the Mother General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians; the Holy Father congratulated her and the Sisters. He added tenderly that they were fortunate and blessed by the Lord because they were daughters of Don Bosco; that they too will have a vast field of evangelical work and that, as true caring and loving mothers, they will do great good, preserving from evil so many young girls neglected by their parents. In the missions they will save so many poor girls teaching them to know God, to love him and serve him on earth, to reach him in heaven.

He ends the audience with his blessing: 'May our Apostolic Blessing, O my good sons and daughters, descend upon you, upon your parents and relatives, upon your Brothers and Sisters, that the glory of God, the good of the Church and the salvation of souls may increase. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen!'

### **The Pope then allows those present to kiss his ring**

He reminds the two missionaries to be like the great basins of the fountains, which receive water and pour it out for the benefit of all: basins of virtue and knowledge, for the benefit of others. Placing his two hands on each one's head, he adds paternally: 'May God bless you, so that you may do so much good!'

The missionaries are moved and amazed. *La madre* does not speak: all her being is summarized in her eyes. Even as she leaves, insistently she is questioned by the Sisters who remain outside of the audience about the impression she just received, she only states her admiration for the Pope's great goodness.

Then, hurriedly, they set off for the pilgrims' center for lunch. A car, placed at their disposal by a Co-operator for their stay in Rome awaits them, accompanied by Brother Musso, master shoemaker and newly appointed missionary.

In the afternoon they all go together to the catacombs of St Callistus. Although the temperature in Rome is generally moderate, it is rather chilly. Mother

Mazzarello, whose rheumatism won't leave her alone for a moment, has her head wrapped in a shawl.

While visiting the catacombs, however, she notices that the Salesian cleric Carlo Pane is shivering with cold from an attack of malaria that has been afflicting him for months. She then takes off her shawl and without hesitation hands it to the cleric, begging him to use it to avoid a greater illness.

The poor feverish cleric flinches a little, but is then forced to accept it because of *la madre's* insistence and his need for warmth.

The shawl therefore changes hands: and the Sisters look with sorrow at the suffering Mother Mazzarello. She smiles at the Sisters, takes a purple-striped black silk handkerchief out of her pocket and covers her poor sick head, nor does she take it off when they leave to return to Rome from the catacombs.

They return to the pilgrims' center at dusk. Mother Mazzarello thinks that the Salesians and Sisters would gladly enjoy a snack. Again she goes shopping with Sr Borgna, also providing breakfast. So the beautiful streets near the pilgrims' center witness a Mother General with her head covered by her black and purple kerchief, laden with bread and fruit. She cares nothing about herself; all care and attention is for others. It is a good thing that the center does not lack pillows to give some comfort to her poor aching head. In Mornese she does not have even that! When rheumatism assaults her and her ears cause her so much pain, she makes do with a little wooden piece of timber to keep her aching head up. If someone goes to her for something less hard, she is quick to say: 'No, this is enough for me; we are poor women!'

The rest of the days in Rome are spent visiting the basilicas and the Christian monuments of Rome.

At St. John Lateran they even have the good fortune to attend the consecration of some bishops and to hear a Mass in the Gregorian chant. Mother Mazzarello knows how to draw from everything reasons of filial devotion for the Pope, of

profound veneration for the holy apostles and martyrs, who precisely in Rome confessed Jesus Christ, shedding their own blood for the faith. In front of so many treasures of art and religion she often exclaims: 'How beautiful Paradise will be!.'"  
(*Cronistoria*, Vol II)

### **Don Bosco in Rome**

Don Bosco visited the Vatican many times to contemplate its beauty, but especially to attend various audiences with the Holy Father. An accurate chronicle, written by the cleric Rua, describes in detail his first visits to St Peter's Basilica and his first audiences with Pope Pius IX.

Don Bosco visited every corner of St. Peter's Basilica with interest, even going so far as to touch the tomb of the Apostle Peter with a stick.

**The first meeting with the Pope took place on 9 March 1858.** On that occasion the Holy Father advised Don Bosco to found a 'Society' that could continue the work with young people that he had begun. And it was the seed of what was to become the Salesian Society.

During **his seventh stay in Rome**, from 24 to 22 March 1873, Don Bosco spoke to Pope Pius IX about the project of founding a congregation of women, starting from a group of young women who lived in Mornese. They were under the guidance of a saintly priest, Fr. Dominic Pestarino and led by Maria Domenica Mazzarello. They were already doing the same work he was doing in Turin with boys. In a later audience, the Pope said to Don Bosco: 'I thought about your plan to found an Institute of women religious, and it seems to me the right thing to embark on for the greater glory of God and to the advantage of souls.'

In **his ninth stay in Rome** Don Bosco came for two particular purposes: the approval of forming the Institute of Mary Help of Christians and for the vocations of adults to the ecclesiastical state and of Salesian Cooperators.

Pope Leo XIII also welcomed Don Bosco to the Vatican several times. Let us remember that he was the Pope who asked him to build the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome.

Let us think back to 1884 when Don Bosco wrote the letter from Rome which is an educational poem. It is written from the Sacred Heart Basilica where, in the letter, he insists on the spiritual means to be used for true educational effectiveness: to approach the sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist frequently and to have a filial devotion to Our Lady.

**On 20 April 1887, Don Bosco made his last journey from Turin to Rome.** He met Pope Leo XIII again who praised him for his achievements and heartened him with affection. On 14 May 1887, the Sacred Heart Basilica was solemnly consecrated by the Cardinal Vicar, Parocchi, in the presence of numerous civil and religious authorities.

On the same day as the consecration of this church, the large organ built by organ builder Giuseppe Bernasconi of Varese was also inaugurated, placed on the balcony overlooking the presbytery.

Today, at the beginning of the nave of St. Peter's Basilica, above the statue of St Peter and the effigy of Pope Pius IX, stands the statue of Don Bosco, just as he himself had dreamed would eventually happen.

## **SOURCES**

- *Cronistoria* of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Vol II
- *Don Bosco a Roma-Venti Viaggi nella Città Eterna*, edited by Fr. Antonio Sperduti.