



APRIL 25, 2026

3. WITH YOU, MAÌN, ON THE PATHS OF LIFE

3.6 The Spirit Makes Life Fruitful – House of the Immaculate and the Path to the Orchard



"He who remains in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, because without me, you can do nothing."

Jn 15,2

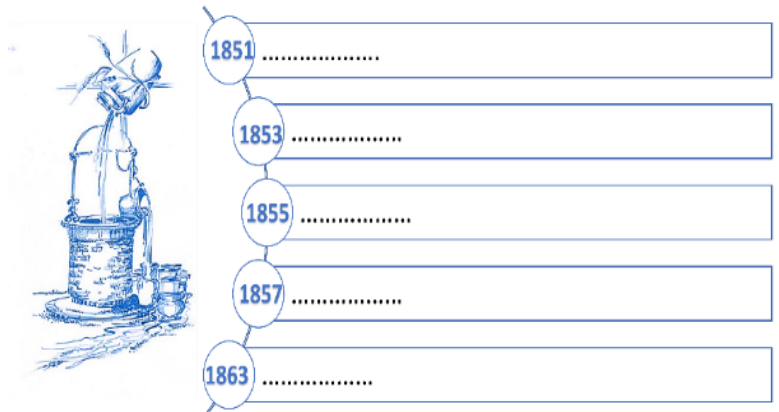
VISIT THE HOUSE OF THE IMMACULATE AND PATH TO THE ORCHARD

(In the meeting room of the Collegio before departing for the visit, the guide will briefly share the history of the DMI in Mornese and some traits of the life at the Casa Immacolata.)

The History of The DMI Group in Mornese

Guide: After the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Associations or Pious Unions with the title "Daughters of Mary" or "Daughters of Mary Immaculate" multiplied. In Mornese, the foundation and drafting of the Rule of the Pious Union "Daughters of Mary Immaculate" were due to the commitment of Angela Maccagno (1830-1890) - a pious and cultured school teacher:

- ✓ **1851:** She felt the inspiration to form a Pious Union with a precise educational and apostolic objective and with the innovative commitment to consecrate oneself to God through the vow of chastity.



- ✓ **1853:** created the rule's first draft, submitted it to Fr. Pestarino, and formed the DMI privately.
- ✓ **1855:** the original group began with the first five young people, Maria Domenica being the youngest at 17 years of age.
- ✓ **1857:** he obtained the reformulated draft from the theologian Giuseppe Frassinetti - a friend of Fr. Pestarino and his spiritual father. On May 20, the *Rule of the Pious Union of the Daughters of Saint Mary Immaculate* received the bishop's approval, Msgr. Contratto then went to Mornese on May 31st to give the medal to the Daughters, who renewed their consecration in front of all the townspeople.
- ✓ **1863:** accepted the Rule reworked by Fr. Giuseppe Frassinetti with the title *Rule of the Pious Union of the New Ursulines, Daughters of Mary Immaculate, under the protection of Saint Ursula and Saint Angela Merici*.

Since there was coexistence in the Casa Immacolata, the people in Mornese distinguish two groups who both lived the same Rule but contributed to education in the town differently:

- ✓ The *Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI)*: those who lived in the Casa Immacolata
- ✓ The *New Ursulines*: those who stayed at home

Some Traits of Life at the Casa Immacolata

(Some of the following sections will also be found in the Rosary later today.)

Guide: Through Fr. Pestarino, Don Bosco met the Daughters of the Mary Immaculate of Mornese and had several opportunities to encourage girls in their education.

- ✓ **1862:** it was an "indirect" meeting because, through Fr. Pestarino, Don Bosco sent a medal of the Most Holy Mary to the Daughters of Mary Immaculate with a precious message: "Pray well, but do as much good as you can, especially to youth, and do everything possible to prevent sin, even if it were just a venial sin."

- ✓ **1864:** Don Bosco went to Mornese and was welcomed by the people with demonstrations of esteem and affection. He specifically addressed the DMIs, encouraging them to move forward. "It seemed to Maria Domenica that Don Bosco's words were like the echo of a language that she felt in her heart without knowing how to express it; as the translation of his feeling; like something we have always waited for and has finally come" (*Cronistoria I, 144ff*)
- ✓ **1867:** Don Bosco's second visit to Mornese, when a group of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate already had a programmed life in the House of the Immaculate (- i.e., the "DMI"). Despite the cold, Don Bosco stayed with them, encouraging them with "the spirit of humility, the love of sacrifice, the desire to suffer any pain to bring souls to God." He concluded with "his favorite refrain: Be happy! Be happy because Our Lady loves you." (*Cronistoria I, 200*)
- ✓ **1869:** From 19 to 21 April 1869, Don Bosco made his third trip to Mornese; he met and addressed the DMI several times, speaking about the need for correct and appropriate behavior of imitating the celestial Mother to be true Daughters of Mary. (*Cronistoria I, 218*)

On this occasion, Don Bosco gives the DMI the *Guidelines for a Timetable-Program*. (cf. *Cronistoria I, 218-221*)

- Daily assistance at Holy Mass
- Work and meals at the same hours as much as possible
- In the afternoon, at the appointed time, a bit of spiritual reading, without interrupting work and, towards the evening, the recitation of the Holy Rosary
- Before going to rest, prayers of the good Christian are prayed individually; and next to your bed, seven Hail Marys to Our Lady of Sorrows
- During work, a certain silence and, on Saturday, a particular act of mortification in honor of the Most Holy Mary.

It can be seen that "in the program, the lines of the educational spirituality which would later characterize the new FMA Institute are evident, and which were already present in that first group of religious apostles, in full harmony with the Salesian charism lived and promoted by Don Bosco to Valdocco. The DMI, who were already committed to living the loving kindness and material and spiritual care of the girls, will have found a providential coincidence of style and thought later codified as the 'spirit of Mornese'".



House of the Immaculate

(Depart from the Collegio for the House of the Immaculate. Content is briefly presented while in front of the house.)

Guide: The years that Main lived in this house can be considered a time to consolidate her maturity in the life of faith and the apostolate. We can learn about the place through 5 famous questions.

WHERE – Where is this house?

- Now and also in Main's time, the house is always located **next to the parish**, on the left side for those facing the parish church.

WHAT – What is this house?

- **Fr. Pestarino wanted to buy this territory** from a lady named Ciarabattina (Angela Mazzarello) because it was near the parish church, which was very convenient for him to carry out pastoral work there. He demolished the small house there and built a larger house with five rooms on the ground floor and four rooms above.
- **He lived in this house**, especially during the winter, being much closer to the church for Holy Mass and confessions. He got up early every morning, opened the church, rang the bell, and was ready to meet and serve anyone.
- Why did Fr. Pestarino build a big house with so many rooms? At the same time, **Fr. Pestarino intended to hand over the house to the Daughters of**

Mary Immaculate of Mornese at the right time so that they would have a place for gatherings but also a home when they would be left without parents or when it would be impossible to live with brothers and sisters-in-law.

- Grateful for the foreseeing love of their pastor and spiritual father, **the Daughters of Mary Immaculate tried to offer something for the construction of the house.** Teresa Pampuro gave Fr. Pestarino what the family had obtained from selling some of their assets. The teacher, Angela Maccagno, had also given him a reasonable sum, as she was from a wealthy family. Main and Petronilla contributed their work. However, the more significant part always belonged to Fr. Pestarino.

WHEN – When was the house left to the DMI?

- It was **in October 1867** when the Collegio was almost ready, and Fr. Pestarino could move into it to keep an eye on the work of the bricklayers and the adjoining countryside. Even Don Bosco, at the suggestion of Fr. Pestarino, thought that it was the right time to hand over the house to the Daughters of Mary Immaculate; it was recommended to ensure that the pious young people could automatically live from their work without then returning and being dependent on their families.

WHO – Who came to live in this house?

- Maria Mazzarello, Petronilla, Teresa Pampuro, and Giovanna Ferettino were the ones who said "Yes" to Fr. Pestarino when he secretly questioned members of the Association of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate one by one and who obtained permission from their families. In addition to these four educators, there were three students: Maria Grosso, Maria Gastaldi, and Rosa Mazzarello.

WHY – Why was this move made?

- The reason was **so that the DMI could live there with the boarders and also keep the sewing room there**, with savings on rent, with greater freedom, **even for holding meetings, and with the possibility of increasing the**

number of students because the place was large and comfortable. (*Cronistoria*, pp. 183-187) Fr. Pestarino only wanted to train "active assistants for his apostolate," he never considered building a monastery. (*Cronistoria* 1, 101).

The spirit at the House of the Immaculate can be summarized with this dynamic:

Casa Immacolata – Richness of diversity

Casa Immacolata – Joy in poverty

Casa Immacolata – Fervor for salvation

Path to the Orchard

(On the side of the Church close to the path the guide shares the following information. Three participants are needed for the reading of the dialogue.)

WHERE – Where is this street?

- It is located **next to the Casa Immacolata**, on the right side if you are in front of the Casa Immacolata.

WHAT – What happened here?

- It remembers the **dialogue between Main and Petronilla** on a life and apostolate project.

WHEN – When did this take place?

- **Around 1861**, after Main's recovery from typhoid, precisely after the vision of Borgo Alto.

WHY – Why did this idea come up?

- What was their intention, and why? Let's listen to the story of the Chronicle:

(Near the path, the three animators will narrate the following episode.)

Voice: One morning, meeting Petronilla as they were leaving the church, she took her towards a little-traveled path called the vegetable gardens, and there, stopping next to a large walnut tree, she said to her:

Main: Listen, Petronilla, it seems that the Lord wants us to take care of the girls of Mornese. Look, you don't have the strength and can't go to the countryside; after my illness, I can't anymore. We both strongly desire to save our souls by doing good to the young girls.

Don't you think we could do it if we knew how to sew? I decided to learn to be a seamstress. Come with me too, let's go to Valentino Campi. He is a good tailor and an excellent Christian; he attends the sacraments and only has a five-year-old child; therefore, there is no danger in his house.

As soon as we have learned a little and can do it ourselves, we will leave the tailor, we will rent a room on our own, we will accept some girls who wants to learn to sew, and we will teach them, with the primary aim however, let us remember this well, to remove her from danger, to make her good and especially to teach her to know and love the Lord.

What we earn, we will put in common to live from our work; thus, we will be able to support ourselves without being dependent on our families, and we will be able to spend our entire lives for the benefit of the girls. Do you feel like doing as I tell you?

We must do this, but be careful: from now on, we must intend that every stitch is an act of God's love.

Voice: And in saying these last words, she seemed inspired. I looked at Petronilla in amazement at such a beautiful project, but having reached this point...

Petronilla: And why to the tailor? Don't you want to learn to sew like a woman?

Main: Yes, but because Campi also sells the fabric: this way, we learn to sew men's suits, which is more complex: in the meantime, we practice not only cutting but also the value of the fabrics, and this will help us for the prices to do. He has

many women who are easy to please and cannot always serve immediately because he has too much work. We will ask him to give us those easier jobs that he would refuse, and we will cut and sew them at home in our free hours and the evening. The seamstress, on the other hand, has barely enough work for herself and may fear that we want to take away her customers.

Petronilla: *(softly, turning to the listeners)* For a moment, I thought she was raving; she spoke so confidently, but then I understood that she was under a celestial inspiration, and then I replied that yes, I liked her plan, but I feared that the sisters-in-law put a spanner in the works and wanted me at home to help them. To which Maria forcefully replied:

Main: The sisters-in-law! You only talk about it with your father because he is the head of the house. He will give you consent. Now let's go back to church for a moment to pray to Jesus and the Holy Virgin to enlighten and support us."



PERSONAL REFLECTION

(The participants are invited to spend time reflecting on the following questions personally or in small groups.)

- There was a rich diversity among those who lived in Casa Immacolata. How do I embrace the rich diversity found in community and the educational mission?
- How do I demonstrate willingness to be open to the ideas of others?



ROSARY FOR THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION

(If weather permits, the Rosary can be prayed in the courtyard of the Collegio. In the courtyard put in various places the following signs: Divine Presence; Love for Work; Good Character; Salvation of Souls; Friendly Neighborhood. Each mystery will be prayed in front of the proper sign.)

Guide 1: In Turin, on 8 December 1841, the Salesian work began with the dialogue between the young priest John Bosco and Bartolomeo Garelli concluded with a Hail Mary.

In Mornese, the apostolic plan came to light, thanks to Main and Petronilla's passion for the salvation of girls and their desire to seek God's will and Mary's help in an atmosphere of prayer.

Today, let us dedicate our rosary to those our educating community.

Guide 2: In the Name of the Father...

"In His wonderful providence, God gave Don Bosco a heart as big as the sands of the seashore making him the Father and Teacher of a multitude of many young people.

In the unique divine plan God enkindled the same experience of apostolic charity in St. Maria Domenica Mazzarello, making her a special, active collaborator in the foundation of the Institute." (*Const. 2*)

Guide 1: Don Bosco's aspiration to dedicate himself to the education of girls and that of Maria Domenica to save young girls through education was like the waters of two rivers that merged at that moment, thus multiplying their strength and energy.

Guide 2: Guided by Don Bosco's *Program*, Main and her companions formed the principles for creating an educational family in the formation of girls.

Guide 1: While contemplating the spirit lived at Casa Immacolata in this rosary, we implore the Lord's grace on our educational mission and the recipients entrusted to us.

Sing: Salve Regina



Divine Presence

Guide 1: First mystery: the Incarnation of the Word of God – Beginning of a presence of love

Guide 2: At Casa Immacolata, the presence of God and the Madonna were practiced with the use of frequent ejaculations.

Voice 1: “Maria Domenica had placed a figurine of the Immaculate Conception in the brightest part of the room and, without saying anything, upon entering, she was the first to go there to make the sign of the Cross and devoutly recite a Hail Mary. This spontaneously became a program, so that every daughter, as soon as she entered, said: "Good morning," and went before the Madonnina to say her prayer" (*Cronistoria I*, 102)

Guide 1: With our minds and hearts, we review and place the faces of our apostolic recipients under the gaze of the Lord.

Our Father + 10 Hail Marys

Love for work

Guide 2: Second mystery: Silent life of the Word of God in Nazareth – Every day's salvific offering

Guide 1: At Casa Immacolata, a love for work was cultivated so that each one could say to herself: I support myself through my hard work.

Voice 2: “The two friends taught with great simplicity and patience how the work should be carried out and were always ready to give explanations to anyone who asked questions, but they demanded that every girl work with attention and diligence, and not waste even a minute." (*Maccono I*, 112) O Virgin of Hope, our Mother and Teacher, grant that, together with You, we may proclaim hope to others, young people and migrants.

Our Father + 10 Hail Marys

Good Characters

(In the second part of the Hail Mary, we pray: *Holy Mary, Mother of God, help us to sanctify our daily works*)

Guide 2: Third mystery: Apostolic commitment of the Word of God – Everything has been done for everyone

Guide 1: At Casa Immacolata, they constantly worked on their nature to form a good, patient, happy character.

Voice 3: “Maria scolded us if we deserved it; but, after the scolding, where she made us understand the evil committed, she loved us as before and didn't retain any bad mood; she didn't talk about it anymore and treated us as if nothing had happened.” (*Maccono I, 123*)

Guide 2: We remember with gratitude the good examples of the educators we met, and we turn to Mary to teach us to be like her, a presence that generates life.

Our Father + 10 Hail Marys

Salvation for Souls

Guide 1: Fourth Mystery: Paschal Journey of the Word of God – Life offered for the salvation of the world

Guide 2: At Casa Immacolata, there was a genuine zeal for the salvation of souls, expressed through constant appeals to both students and parents to remain vigilant against potential dangers.

Voice 4: The first aim of the education was to help the girls to know and love the Lord, to grow as good Christians, to remove them from danger, and to qualify them professionally to be able to earn their bread with dignity with their resources.

Our Father + 10 Hail Marys

Friendly Neighborhood

*(In the second part of the Hail Mary, we pray: **Holy Mary, Mother of God, intercede for us with zeal for the salvation of souls**)*

Guide 1: Fifth mystery: Apparitions of the Risen One – Model of spiritual accompaniment

Guide 2: At Casa Immacolata, they experienced being loved rather than feared

Voice 5: Maria Domenica “loved everyone without distinction, whether students or oratorians, whether they had graceful shapes and gentle manners, or were unattractive or coarse in features. She had no preferences, or, if she had any, they were for the least favored by nature or fortune, and especially for the neediest in soul and the orphans whom she followed and never lost sight of.” (*Maccono I, 140*)

Guide 1: We beg for a desired gift to better proceed with the mission entrusted to us today.

Our Father + 10 Hail Marys

(To conclude a Marian song will be sung instead of a litany.)

Song: Immaculate Mary (47)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJifmAN7D4Q>

Immaculate Mary, thy praises we sing;
Who reigneth in splendor with Jesus our King.
Ave, ave, ave, Maria! Ave, ave, Maria!

In heaven, the blessed thy glory proclaim;
On earth we, thy children, invoke thy sweet name.
Ave, ave, ave, Maria! Ave, ave, Maria!

We pray for the Church, our true Mother on earth,
And make you to watch over the land of our birth.
Ave, ave, ave, Maria! Ave, ave, Maria!



PRAYER

(At the foot of the Mary Help of Christians statue in the Chapel of the Collegio place a container with Marian medals.)

Song: You Are My All in All (48)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpXvdghcWl8>

You are my strength when I am weak
You are the treasure that I seek
You are my all in all

Seeking You as a precious jewel
Lord to give up I'd be a fool
You are my all in all

Taking my sin my cross my shame
Rising again I bless your name
You are my all in all

When I fall down you pick me up
When I am dry You fill my cup
You are my all in all

Jesus Lamb of God worthy is Your name (2x)

You are my strength when I am weak
You are the treasure that I seek
You are my all in all

Seeking You as a precious jewel
Lord to give up I'd be a fool
You are my all in all

Jesus Lamb of God worthy is Your name (5x)
Worthy is your name (2x)

Guide: Psalm 117, although short, is rich in its powerful call for all nations and all people to praise the Lord for His steadfast love and faithfulness. It is a universal call to worship that transcends national, ethnic, and social boundaries, emphasizing the unity of all under God's grace and faithfulness.

Psalm 117 - Praise for God's loving compassion

(alternating sides)

O praise the Lord, all you nations, *
acclaim him, all you peoples!

Strong is his love for us; *
he is faithful forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, *
and will be forever. Amen.

Jn 15, 1-5

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

True Daughters of Mary

Guide 1: “Show people who the true Daughters of Mary are, living in imitation of the heavenly Mother” (*Don Bosco to the DMI*). The communities of our first Sisters at the school of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, animated by great love and resourcefulness, faced difficulties with the hope of announcing the joy of the Gospel in the mission.

Guide 2: In their footsteps, we renew the awareness of our Marian identity: we welcome Mary as Mother, Teacher, and Inspirer of our vocation. Like her, we announce with our lives what we have seen and heard; we allow ourselves to be fascinated by the beauty of our vocation, by the presence of Jesus in everyday life, so that young people too can encounter him and discover in him the meaning of life, the source of enduring hope. (*Acts GC XXIV, 34*)

Guide 1: Each participant is invited to approach Mary Help of Christians to take a Marian medal.

Instrumental Music (49)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gr7la5uAR4g>

Guide 1: As we conclude our prayer moment, let us now stand and welcome the Holy image of Mother Mary so that we, too, can become her "true images" today.

Song: O Mary Help of Christians (50)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-Jb4BWDuFU>

Refrain

O Mary, Help of Christians, be a
Mother to us, in this world so fallen and so cold

The value of the life we're living are
challenged every day;
We are weak, you know, and often go astray.
We are scared to stand by what we profess,
For fear of what they'll say
Give us courage, help of Christians, on our way. (Refrain)

The pleasures of the world seem better
that the graces you bestow;
With our eyes of flesh we fail to see the goal.
So we put our feet into the grime,
pretending we feel good.
Cure our blindness,
so that we may see the shore. (Refrain)

