



JUNE 20, 2025

3. WITH YOU MAIN ON THE PATHS OF LIFE

3.13 Life Without End – Nizza



***“No one has greater love than this:
Giving one's life for his friends” Jn. 15,13***

(Sanctuary)

WELCOME AND GREETINGS

(When possible, the superior of the community will welcome the participants to Nizza. This will take place in the Sanctuary after the participants have taken a snack.)

VISIT-PRAYER: THE SANCTUARY OF OUR LADY OF GRACE

(When possible, a Sister from the place will guide the various visits at Nizza. When there is prayer during the visit, time will be made to pray the prayer.)

A Moment with Mary



Guide 1: Here in Nizza, Mother Mazzarello's love for Mary Help of Christians becomes more mature, and she transmits it to the Sisters and girls with her words, letters, and life. Also, Mother Mazzarello invites us to be images of our Mother Mary today. She was certain that the Virgin would be happy with her daughters and that she would obtain from Jesus the grace to be holy.

Guide: 2 Although it has often been restructured, the sanctuary preserves the ancient structure. Monsignor Cagliero consecrated it in 1884 and, on that occasion, blessed the Mary Help of Christians statue donated by Don Bosco, which is still in the sanctuary behind the altar.

This statue was crowned in 1922. The Pope gave the Church the title of 'Sanctuary'.

- To the right and left of the main altar are the evangelical pictures of the "wise virgins and foolish virgins" and the "encounter of Jesus with Martha and Mary," representing two attitudes of the FMAs.
- On the right side of the door were the remains of Mother Mazzarello (*moved from the cemetery to the Sanctuary in 1913; they remained until 1933 when they were transferred to the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin.*)
- In the choir loft is the stained-glass window of Don Bosco giving out the Constitutions.
- In the side altars are St. Mary Mazzarello and St. John Bosco
- In the Sanctuary we see Mother Clelia Genghini's devotion to the Guardian Angels.

Guide 1: The Cronistoria records five visits of Don Bosco to this Mother House after its inauguration, and always on the occasion of the annual retreat, which he so appreciated, in August/September, for the ladies or, the last time, on August 23, 1885, for the Sisters. Memorable on that occasion was his vision of Our Lady and his challenging words: "I want to tell you that Our Lady is right here ... that she is happy with you... she walks among you... and covers the House with her mantle!"

Prayer

Guide 2: Together let us pray:

Mother of God and our Mother, sustain us in these difficult times.

Intercede with your Son,

that he may help us to make our homes into small local churches,

summoned for his praise,
in listening to his Word
and in the joyful experience of his wonders.
We entrust ourselves to you, Our Lady of Grace,
that you defend us in danger,
intercede for us and our salvation,
protect our community and the whole world,
because united and with your help
we can win this battle
and at the same time, praise the Most Holy Trinity. Amen



(by Don Egidio Berardi, parish priest of Raiano, diocese of Sulmona-Valva)

Guide 1: In this house, which welcomed and spread the originality of the spirit of Mornese, there has always been a special devotion to Our Lady. One can almost hear Don Bosco's words echo during his last visit, on 23 August 1885.

As you leave the Sanctuary towards the courtyard, you will find this plaque. What does this expression mean to you as an FMA?

"... I want to tell you that Our Lady [...] is pleased with you and that what she really wants of you is that you continue in your present spirit of fervor. This is what Our Lady really wants." (Cronistoria V, 43)





WALK IN THE VINEYARD

(The following takes place at the statue in the vineyard.)

Our Lady of the Vineyard

Guide: Mother Mazzarello continually recommended charity. This charity becomes visible in concrete actions that will fill our hands when we stretch them out to God in that moment of the final encounter with Him: "At the end of our life, we will be judged on love."

Voice: "My good Sisters, know that where charity reigns, there is Paradise. Jesus is so pleased to be among the Daughters who are humble, obedient, and charitable. Let Jesus gladly be among you." (L 49,3)

Guide: According to the FMA tradition, this statue was the first image of Mary Help of Christians donated to the Sisters of Mornese and brought with them to Nizza when the house of Mornese was closed. Initially, in Mornese, it was positioned in a place built in the orchard at the Collegio where the Sisters gathered for recreation and good nights when there was good weather. In Nizza, the statue is in the vineyard where we recall Mother Mazzarello sending the young Sister Felicina to "do penance" of "two rounds around the vineyard" in the middle of the morning.



Sharing in couples: When did I first become aware of Mary's presence?

Guide: Let us reflect on the many Sisters and missionaries before us leaving for the missions, the girls who visited 'Our Lady' to thank and ask her for protection, those in need, or just to be close to her. Today, we are here, next to Mary, the first image of the Help of Christians brought to this house.

Let us be close to her and allow her gaze to meet ours. In this Jubilee Year of Hope, we join Pope Francis in one of his declarations of his 'confession of faith' as he prepared for his priestly ordination, *"I believe in Mary, my mother, who loves me and will never abandon me"* (*Hope: the Autobiography*, 2025, 205). Then, in the quietness of our hearts, let us speak with her as our Mother.

(brief pause)

Guide: Mother Mazzarello tells us: "The most beautiful flower that Our Lady would be happy to receive is the renewal of our spirit, like plants in spring" (Cron II 134). Hence, to her, we entrust ourselves, our Institute, the hopes of the Church and the world. Together let us pray...

O Mary, most powerful Virgin, great and illustrious defender of the Church, wonderful Help of Christians, formidable as an army in battle array, you who alone have overcome every heresy in the world, in our anguish, in our combats, in our difficulties, defend us from the enemy, and at the hour of our death, receive our souls into Paradise. Amen. (*Don Bosco's Prayer*)



VISIT THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

(The following takes place in the Church of St. John the Baptist.)

Guide 1: Here we find ourselves in the Church of St. John the Baptist, the first parish that was frequented by our Sisters when they arrived to Nizza. We can only imagine the thoughts that raced through the minds as they walked the streets to arrive to this church.

Mornese and Nizza were quite different; going from simple village life to the hustle and bustle of a busy city. The Sisters must have experienced awe and wonder, but at the same time fear and inadequacy.

From the Cronistoria volume 3 we recall the eve of Mother Mazzarello's transfer to Nizza...

Guide 2: Naturally these discussions enkindled ever more the desire of the girls to have Mother at Nizza. On her part, Mother began to feel the need of living with the community, which was now practically all reunited in the new house.

Yet, she felt sad to see the school at Mornese almost empty, and the end of that work which had cost sacrifices without number. She felt sorry to leave behind children, companions, acquaintances, all very dear to her, for whom she foresaw the loss of moral and spiritual help because of the withdrawal of the Sisters.

She seemed to feel again the anxiety of saintly Father Pestarino for the dying Collegio, which had been built more with prayers and tears than with stones and bricks. Besides, ever present to her mind were her dear old parents, by whom she was ever more loved and appreciated, and whom she would have to leave, precisely when they had most need of comfort and help. But the Lord had so disposed this through Don Bosco, and the sacrifice should be made with merit and in a cheerful spirit. (*Cron. Vol 3: Mother on the eve of the transfer to Nizza*)

Guide 1: Mother Mazzarello suffered greatly in the transfer of the Mother House from Mornese to Nizza. It was particularly painful for her because it meant uprooting herself from her native place, leaving persons who were very dear to her and places that had played an unforgettable part in her apostolate. These few sober words below show her determination to face the new situation with courage and serene abandonment, revealing how, in the words of Pope Francis in this Jubilee Year of Hope, "we must pivot in building our daily existence in the cross of Christ" (*Hope, The Autobiography*, 2025, 104).

Without a doubt all of us have at some point in our life have found ourselves in a similar position. We left family members, friends and coworkers who were very dear to us. We received an obedience where we felt inadequate for the task at hand. We experienced going from simple to complex, from known to unknown.

Let us pause for a moment with the words of Mother Mazzarello knowing that her advice comes from her personal experience.

You must know by now that I am no longer in Mornese, but here in Nizza. We must always make sacrifices while here on this earth. Let us make them willingly and cheerfully and the Lord will take note of everything and in His own time give us a beautiful reward. (L 22,4)

(The moment in the church concludes with a brief pause.)



VISIT THE CEMETERY

(If time permits the participants can visit the Jewish cemetery and recall the story of Anita Bedarida, before visiting the new mausoleum.)

Guide: The new mausoleum contains the mortal remains of our previous Mother Generals with the exception of Madre Mazzarello whose remains are in Turin and the Servant of God Mother Rosetta Marchese who is buried in Rome.

We pray a decade of the Rosary for all our Sisters who have preceded us; we thank God for their courage, love, and fidelity.

(The guide will pray the first half of the Hail Mary and everyone will respond using the indicated second half of the prayer.)

In the Name of the Father...

Our Father...

1. Holy Mary, Mother of all mothers, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen
2. Holy Mary, Mother full of beauty, pray for us...
3. Holy Mary, woman of hope and purest Virgin, pray for us...
4. Holy Mary, Woman of the New Covenant, pray for us...
5. Holy Mary, Bride without blemish, pray for us...
6. Holy Mary, Tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, pray for us...
7. Holy Mary, perfect consecrated woman, pray for us...

8. Holy Mary, Mother of young people in difficulty, pray for us...
9. Holy Mary, Immaculate Help of Christians, pray for us...
10. Holy Mary, Mother of God, and our Mother pray for us...

Glory Be...

Eternal rest grant unto them O, Lord

And let perpetual rest shine upon them

May they rest in Peace

Amen (3x)

Mary Help of Christians...



PRAYER

(Before evening prayer begins, a short stop will be made in the corridor leading to Mother Mazzarello's room)

Corridor Leading to Mother Mazzarello's Room

Guide: We need to remember that, until 1929, these were the rooms for the Mothers of the General Council.



Here lived:

- **3 Mothers General:** Mother Mazzarello, Mother Caterina Daghero, and Mother Luisa Vaschetti.
- **Councilors:** Mother Petronilla Mazzarello, Mother Elisa Roncallo, Mother Emilia Mosca, Mother Enrichetta Sorbonne, Mother Caterina Arrighi, Mother Marina Coppa, Mother Clelia Genghini, and others.

Let us imagine Mother Mazzarello, with her simplicity, saying to the Sisters: "God wants you to be a missionary." What a joy, even the pain of leaving the community, moving away from Mother Mazzarello, and even more, the missionary ardor she encouraged them.

The Room of Mother Mazzarello

(The prayer will take place in both room of Mother Mazzarello and the adjacent room.)

Guide 1: Maria Mazzarello spent the last two years of her life in Nizza. Here, she fulfilled her mission as Mother and Co-foundress. Here, in Nizza, she was unanimously re-elected as Superior General on August 29, 1880, and strengthened the expansion and



development of the Institute; Mother Mazzarello traveled to visit the houses of the Institute in Italy and France more frequently. From this house, she could exercise the fullness of her motherhood for the Sisters near and far in an extraordinary way; she had the opportunity to have more frequent contact with Don Bosco and other Salesian Superiors.

We are in the room where Mother Mazzarello responded with a total and definitive yes to the love of the Lord. Here, she gave her life as an offering pleasing to God. Look and contemplate this place. Let it speak in memory of a life given to the end.

Jn 12,24

Voice 1: Truly, verily, I say unto you, if the grain of wheat falls to the ground and does not die, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.

(brief pause)

Guide 2: We are the fruit of a contemplative love, a love given, ever hope-filled, a love made life. We admire with amazement how God broke into the life of Mother Mazzarello. In this poor and austere room, we celebrate her entry into life without end ... in its glorification.

All: Mother, your whole life has been guided by a great tension towards the goal, desire, and love with all your strength, heart, soul, and mind. Thank you for your yes to the Life that is Jesus, for your giving of life marked by the mystery of Easter.

Guide 1: Let the Mother Mazzarello speak to us. Fr. Giovanni B. Lemoyne's report on the illness and death of Mother Mazzarello, reveals to us the human face and, simultaneously, the entire hope of the encounter with the Lord.

Guide 2: Sometimes, she turned to those who assisted her.

Mother Mazzarello: I am afraid of losing my courage!

Guide 1: And the reply: Trust in the Lord, do not fear.

Mother Mazzarello: You always give a good saying, but that blessed self-love is always our enemy. However, I have placed all my trust in the Lord and Our Lady Most Holy. You, however, never leave me alone. My imagination scares me, and when you are here, I feel calm.

Guide 2: Of a cheerful nature, she proved to be sure that this was her last illness; she thought that death was always before her eyes. Sometimes, to those who tried to encourage her with the hope of healing, she replied:

Mother Mazzarello: You know nothing!

Guide 1: Other times, she added.

Mother Mazzarello: You say that I will recover, but I assure you that certain things in the Congregation will not be fixed if I do not die!

Guide 2: At other times, Mother showed her great maternal sense and concern for the future of the Institute.

Mother Mazzarello: ... I recommend to you [superiors and senior Sisters of the house] first: I fear that when I am gone, petty jealousies, envy, sadness and misery may arise among you through motives of superiority, seeing a younger member in charge, or some such cause. As a result the spirit of charity and holy union may

diminish in the house. [...] I know that the Congregation belongs to Our Lady who will always help you, but you do your part. Obey willingly whomever the Superiors will appoint. Restrain your own will to command. Second: Help one another to practice virtue but leave spiritual direction to those appointed. [...] Conferences, conferences: let them be given by those whose duty it is. And let catechism be catechism! (*Cronistoria III, 344-245*)

Guide 1: Raising his hand Fr. Cagliero gave her a last absolution. There was no time to lose. In fact her color changed, the light went out of her eyes, her emaciated features grew sharper.

Fr. Cagliero: At this moment, Mother, Don Bosco is surely praying for you; and I bless you in his name.

Guide 2: On hearing that dear name and receiving that blessing, Mother smiled faintly, then made a sign to have her pillows fixed, lay gently back on them, made a movement of her hand in farewell and steadily fixed her gaze on the crucifix.

Mother Mazzarello: Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I recommend my soul to you!

Guide 1: The names "Jesus! Mary!" were pronounced three times, with a little pause between. Then she closed her eyes to this vale of tears, to open them in her heavenly home! Her heart had ceased to beat, but the smile of the just was on her face and on her half-open lips

Guide 2: It was just 3:45 a.m.; the dawn of Saturday, May 14, vigil of both the novena to Mary Help of Christians and the anniversary of Father Pestarino's sudden death. Bereft of their Mother, the Sisters reflected on these coincidences and drew from them hope of heavenly comfort.

Guide 1: Let us allow the words of Mother Mazzarello to penetrate our hearts. Let us try to listen to what she wants to say to each one of us here, in this room

where she left the earth to begin an endless life with God. And in the silence of our hearts, we thank God for giving us this gift of life.

(brief pause)

Guide 2: Let us join our prayers with those of our Sisters.

(Spontaneous prayers)

Guide 1: Mother Mazzarello is here. Today, she also speaks to us about her passionate gift to live and give life generously.

All: "Try to do everything always and everything for Jesus, remaining as united as possible to Him."

Guide 2: This "being" in the presence of the Lord allowed Mother Mazzarello to unify her whole life in God, to the point of being configured; in this manner, she participated in the same Paschal Mystery.

Guide 1: It took many years until 1935 for the charismatic mission of St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello to be declared Co-foundress of the FMA Institute in all its vigor.

All: Mother, we want to walk with you towards holiness.

Guide 2: The hope of Heaven permeated the whole existence of Mary Domenica, that dwelling place that she and the first FMA waited for and prepared during their lives and which they familiarly called "the House of Paradise." Therefore, Paradise is not only the place of one's intimacy with the Lord but that of joy in fraternal encounters.

All: Mother, we want to walk with you towards holiness.

Guide 1: On May 3, 1936, Pope Pius XI, proclaiming the heroic virtues of Mary Domenica Mazzarello, described the venerable as the exemplary Daughter of Mary:

Guide 2: “Her life hides something great precisely because it takes place and is carried out entirely under the gaze and guidance of the Mother of God.”

Guide 1: Mother Mazzarello had completed her journey of holiness on this earth. She is now definitively united with God and has entered the fullness of life without end. Let us pray together:

All: Mary, our mother and our help, you walk with us throughout the history of salvation: help us to make you present today to all we meet. Grant that, like Mother Mazzarello, we may witness limitless fidelity, love that transcends all boundaries, and joy that explodes from the total gift of ourselves. Through Christ our Lord. AMEN

Song: Only in God

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tx-haKg_oAk

Only in God is my soul at rest
In Him comes my salvation
He only is my Rock
My strength and my salvation

Refrain

My stronghold my Savior
I shall not be afraid at all
My stronghold my Savior
I shall not be moved

Only in God is found safety
When the enemy pursues me
Only in God is found glory
When I am found meek and found lowly (Refrain)

Only in God is my soul at rest
In Him comes my salvation

(The song concludes the prayer moment. The remaining time before supper will be left for silent reflection.)

ADDITIONAL READING

Jewish Ghetto: The presence of Jews in the town has been documented since 1539. In 1723, with the establishment of the ghetto, the 79 Jews then residing in Nizza were forced to move to the houses of the district called the Ospedale. An episode of 1879 is linked to the Jewish community. A young Jew, Anita Bedarida, wanted to convert to Christianity, but after some hardships and unpleasant episodes, her relatives brought her back into the family. (*Chr. 3:48-49. 58-59.76. 107*)

