



**JUNE 21, 2025**

## **4. PREVENTIVE SYSTEM IN THE FMA INSTITUTE (NIZZA)**

### **4.2 Preventive System: The Influence of Sr. Emilia Mosca**

*(meeting room)*

#### **SR. EMILIA MOSCA**

*(Briefly present the ppt/pdf “The Influence of Emilia Mosca” found in RESOURCE. After reflecting on the following question, each participant will share her thoughts with a partner.*

**Note:** *extract of ppt of Sr. Piera Cavaglià)*



#### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

*(The participants will pause for no more than 10 minutes to reflect on the following question.)*

**Which strategy of Emilia Mosca’s educational approach is most needed in the mission where you serve?**



*(in the courtyard)*

## **VISIT THE COURTYARD OF DON BOSCO**

### **Ancient Convent**

**Guide:** The convent of Our Lady of Grace probably dates back to the fifteenth century. It had been inhabited by several orders of friars and confiscated from the Capuchins in 1855. In May 1878, Don Bosco and Countess Balbo bought the property to transfer the FMAs from Mornese.



In the spring of 1877, Don Bosco chose to buy it and decided to ask the FMAs to move from Mornese to Nizza and open a school for young women there. The school and the church kept the ancient name of "Our Lady of Grace." From the courtyard we can see where Mother Mazzarello would see the girls and greet them.

## Meteorological Observatory

**Guide:** Fr. Clement Bretto, a Salesian teacher at the School of Nizza, even before the School obtained its equalization wanted a meteorological observatory to be built next to it as an adjunct to secondary studies. The work took a year and by 1892 it was already functioning with installed instruments that were state-of-the-art for the time.

Observations were made 3 times a day at fixed times, recorded on special registers and sent to the "Regio Ufficio Centrale di Meteorologia e Geofisica in Rome" and the "Regio Ufficio Idrografico del Po" (*Regio Genio Civile*) in Turin.

The Sister entrusted with the direction of the Observatory was elected as a full member of the "Italian Meteorological Society."

## Sacred Heart Church

**Guide 1:** Mother Elisa Roncallo has the Sacred Heart Church built for the non-boarders of the festive oratory, school and alumnae. The Church is inaugurated at the same time as the new school building of which it is meant to be symbolically the cornerstone, and capable of accommodating more than 500 Oratorian girls. Of considerable artistic merit and very sweet expression is the painting of "Our Lady of Grace" placed in the side chapel.

**Guide 2:** In November 1917, because of the war, part of the house was requisitioned and the dormitories of the students and Sisters were moved: for the students, with the dispensation and permission of the Bishop, four rows of beds were placed in the Church of the Sacred Heart.

**Guide 1:** Restorations were inaugurated on September 29, 1966: the large statue was replaced by a painting, again depicting the Sacred Heart. In 1985 the Sacred Heart Church was renovated again due to the need for more classrooms: it was cut in two horizontally and three vertically.

Mother Elisa Roncallo and Sr. Teresa Valsè Pantellini are buried here. Today, material describing the history of the charism is preserved inside.



### **VISIT FMA NURSING HOME**

*(When possible, the participants will make a short visit to the elder Sisters. This usually takes place in the meeting room or chapel of the Sisters. The group is introduced and a song is sung to the Sisters.)*



*(meeting room)*

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION AND EVALUATION LINK**

*(Each participant receives a Marian image. They are invited to find a quiet place that has spoken to them today. Each participant will also make time to complete the evaluation link.)*

**Identify two strategies that have been presented to you today that you will implement in your educational mission. Write the strategies on the back of the Marian image.**



(meeting room)

## LARGE GROUP SHARING

*(The participants are free to share their thoughts from the day. The sharing concludes with the singing of the Magnificat.)*

### General sharing

#### Song: Magnificat

*(taken from the song sheet in the App)*



## ADDITIONAL READING

### Emilia Mosca

This presentation is intended to be a loving tribute to Mother Emilia Mosca outlining her educational style of an FMA who is of substantial significance in our history. She lived alongside the founders of the Institute and grew up at their school. She contributed to expressing and inculturating the pedagogical dimension of the charism in relation to the education of women.



With good reason it can be said that she took part in the founding process, because with Maria Domenica Mazzarello and the first Sisters of Mornese and Nizza, she contributed to giving the first communities a Salesian educational imprint. She is also one of those branches of the strong vines of Mornese and Nizza that bore much fruit, fruit that remains.

### The audacity of a Salesian educator

She is certainly one of the most significant FMA of our origins. A direct collaborator of Mother Mazzarello and Mother Caterina Daghero, she is characterized by the educational genius with which she was able to interpret the Preventive System in the feminine sphere.

## **From a pure educational work, to its genuine Salesian imprint**

This is her great merit! It is certainly not easy to summarize the Salesian imprint of her educational method in a few lines. There is much balance in the following note: 'Education must be neither rigid nor soft' (*notebook, 301, Italian edition*).

In her presentation of the pilot school at Nizza, Mother Emilia wrote: 'It is proposed to give the daughters of the people, together with religious and moral education, that intellectual ascent which befits women' (*Mosca, Emilia, Cenni storici sulla Scuola, in Nizza, page 183, Italian edition*).

But to achieve this aim, what is the Salesian methodological path? Cf. the testimony of Sr Teresa Pentore who was his pupil.

## **Understanding people, situations, eras**

The following is one of the fundamental assumptions of her educational style. She committed herself to understand, know, intuit, and understand starting from herself: "The person who knows her/his own faults is more forgiving of others" (*notebook, 20, Italian edition*).

She knew the preciousness of the young person in her strengths and weaknesses. She said that one must thoroughly know young people in order to be able to address them. Woe to the gardener who does not know one's plants, instead of cultivating them, they are killed (*Cf. Nizza, 318, Italian edition*).

"We must take into account the character of each one, the efforts that each one makes, without pretending perfection from anyone or even in ourselves, because perfection is not of this world" (*she wrote this to an FMA provincial*).

"Each person is a world to be studied in which one admires God" (*notebook, 246, Italian edition*).

## **Welcoming and encouraging goodness**

She said, 'The fundamental principle of the Salesian method is charity', indeed 'the principle of Salesian charity' (*Genghini, Clelia, Un anno, 102, Italian edition*). One

must "be Sisters and mothers". "True shrewdness in both education and leadership comes from the heart" (*notebook, 319, Italian edition*).

"See to it that the heart always accompanies the achievements of mind and hand; that it loves the persons and things with which one is in relation" (*notebook, 248, Italian edition*).

"It is not wit, nor glory, nor even love that gives the measure of a person's height, but goodness" (*notebook, 289, Italian edition*).

Quoting St Francis de Sales she used to say that neither sugar nor sweetness ever spoils anything. "I have had to repent for being impatient, but never for using charity and sweetness" (*notebook, 428, Italian edition*).

### **Making the assistants and teachers co-responsible**

Both to the assistants and the teachers she expressed trust, involved them, and made them responsible. She knew how to support the motivation for a free choice but was also not afraid to demand, yes, she demanded a lot. She formed strong and tenacious wills, and at the same time recommended to the assistants a way of dealing that was never imposing, always encouraging.

She recommended that the teachers involve the girls and young women as apostles among their companions, as Don Bosco did. With realism she noted: 'A little selfishness, a veiled self-love, a certain fear of slipping in authority, a certain zeal more for one's own rights than for those of young people, take us far away from that means which, among Salesians, has an unquestionable effectiveness'. (*Genghini, Un anno 90, Italian edition*).

### **Together, striving towards a single goal**

Education for life is the orientation and goal of everything. The goal is clear. It was to strive to form women apostles with those characteristics of one's womanhood that is open, responsible, and dynamic.

And in this work all the Sisters were involved through their own particular competence and presence. Those Sisters who carry out ancillary duties are also educators in their own right.

### **Helping to encounter God in the unfolding of each day**

God is at the heart of the educational mission: "to educate one must have recourse to Christian motives". Mother Emilia was apostolically creative in finding ways to guide the girls and young women and their educators to encounter God. She was convinced that young people must be quenched at the source of life. God is the presence of love that is encountered in pain, joy, daily work, study, play, song, celebration and friendship.

The encounter with God makes joy gush forth, the joy of the Resurrection!

### **Reference to Don Bosco**

She was aware that constant emulating Don Bosco would help the Institute retain its Salesian character. Mother Mosca referred often to Don Bosco! But even when she does not mention him explicitly, her advice and guidance carry the echo of the Don Bosco's words and style. To a Sister she wrote: 'Assist, supervise, correct, but always calmly. as Jesus did with the Apostles, as Our Lady would do if she were in your place'.

### **Reference to Mother Mazzarello**

She had been molded at the school of this great mother and educator and therefore her manner reflected the source. Rather than explicit references to Mother Mazzarello's words, we find a concern to remain faithful to the 'spirit of the Motherhouse'.

In the *Cronistoria* she wrote many years later one finds a single precious reference to Mother Mazzarello, dated 14 May 1881, the day of the death of Mother Mazzarello: 'It was a universal weeping; even the smallest boarders mourned *la madre* who made it so easy for them to be good and to please their teachers' (p. 62, *Italian edition*).

### **Putting oneself at the school of Jesus**

From those who knew her, how many time was Mother Emilia in adoration before the Eucharist! Her center was Jesus and so her method of education drew inspiration from the One who said: "Learn from me who am meek and humble of heart". She wrote: "Let us surrender ourselves to Him who knows people's hearts!" She recommended that educators often confront themselves with the way Jesus loves everyone in order to model one's educational interventions on this way of being.

### **Inspired by Mary, the Mother of God**

She felt this tender presence accompanying her path and guiding her actions. Even to the borders she would say: 'You have left your mother: Our Lady is always with you and for you. [...] I want you to know how to understand the gift of having Mary as your Mother' (*Genghini, Un anno, 17-18, Italian edition*).

This presence also inspires our being close to the young people in an attitude of service, like Mary.

