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Nucleus 25°

## **Two orphans at the school of M. Mazzarello**

Gabriela Patiño\*

In nucleus 25, Mother Yvonne invites us to look to the future to open it to the new generations and therefore to interpret reality in its often hidden potential. We find a response in Mary Domenica when she was still young and after her illness, as she sought her place and allows herself to marvel at the successes, signs, call...

With her, we continue our reflection on this synod journey to draw from the fonts of Mornese, from what supports our mission for and with the young that the Madonna still entrusts to us today. Thus it is from the committed life of a young laywoman, Main, that we find what to do and how to do it to accompany those who need to grow, who seek a path, an answer.

Let us listen to the account from the Cronistoria...

“One day she was passing by the small hill of Borgo Alto when she seemed to see herself in front of a huge block of buildings that looked like the exterior of a school with a large number of girls. She stopped to look at it full of awe and said to herself, ‘What is this that I am looking at? This large building was never here! What is happening? And she heard a voice say to her: *I entrust them to you*’.

Mastering herself as usual, Mary rapidly went away from there and tried not to think of it anymore. But those girls were always there as though calling her, especially every time she had to pass that hill. Nothing succeeded to distract her, not even throwing herself into her work with increasing activity.

To free herself from that insistent thought, she tried to speak with Fr. Pestarino after confession. But when she described the building to him, the holy priest quickly interrupted her, scolded her for dwelling on a fantasy, and prohibited her from thinking about it or telling anyone about it.

But her heart was full and Petronilla recounts: ‘We were together at the oven and Mary told me: ‘You know, I went to Fr. Pestarino for confession and after it seemed that it would be good to tell him something...of certain girls...but he sent me away calling me a visionary. Mary suffered from this and she needed to share it, yet she did not want to disobey. Then I heard it later from Sr. Laurentoni who had known about it from Mazzarello. That time she ended by sighing...I don’t want to think about it anymore’.

Not think about it! Surely not deliberately, and much less give it importance, so much so that she did not speak of it, not even with Maccagno toward whom she had complete deferential confidence. But, in spite of this, and when she least expected it, a group of young girls appeared to her in her imagination as though saying, ‘So, when will you teach us how to sew?’.

Contributing to this was the good that Maccagno was doing through the school and that Mary admired with a holy desire to imitate her by continuing it. She said with sorrow, “This school finishes too soon, just at ten or twelve years of age when vanity and passions rise up and the girls have greater need of care and of assiduous vigilance”.

Even today, similar reflections come to mind, looking at the reality of many children, young people, and persons abandoned to harsh conditions due to war, injustice, people’s egoism. Like Main, our imagination is full of images and our heart desires to do something because the call is within us and we cannot remain tranquil and indifferent. There are others around us who in their reality, needs, and suffering touch us and make us dream of finding solutions, perhaps insignificant in the eyes of many, but yes, small gestures that help to look at life in the light, to find the way.

The Cronistoria teaches us from the life of Mary Domenica. Trusting in Providence, her spirit finds rest, serenity, and joy, while the little ones feel at home and open themselves in the certainty that someone is accompanying them with tender wisdom.

“The schoolgirls were happy with the affection shown to them and soon spread the praises of the workroom. A merchant who was widowed and had two little girls, six and eight years old, went to ask her to keep them the whole day since he was always away from home. Their grandmother would send their lunch and take them home in the evening. Two orphans! They were welcomed, naturally, even though the daily routine had to be modified quite a bit for them.

The two orphans sang the praises of their teachers, and the poor father, understanding that the little ones had found with them the serene joy they needed to grow well, asked the two Daughters of the Immaculate to keep them overnight as well. The mission changed aspect. What would Fr. Pestarino say?

Fr. Pestarino said yes; never would his great heart impede the work of God that he saw progress admirably. And even less when upon his return from his visit to Turin for the feast of St. Francis de Sales, his soul full of the stories he heard from a thousand voices that agreed in repeating the miracles of charity worked by Don Bosco in accepting every boy that Divine Providence sent to him. Don Bosco, he must have said to himself at the request of the Daughters, sends no one away, whatever the cost of the sacrifice. These two go ahead without knowing and as much as they can, in the footsteps of his apostolate. Why should I put obstacles in their doing good? Thus, the first two resident students were accepted”.

## WORK SHEET FOR THE CONFEDERAL, COUNCIL, FEDERATION, UNIONS AND FOR ALL THE PAST PUPILS OF THE WORLD.

Read with awe the account of the Cronistoria.

In the description, find an invitation for the concrete life of the Union, of the Federation.

If you wish, also send a photo as evidence of the commitment assumed.

Let us unite ourselves with the universal Church in the **prayer for the Youth of Synod 2018**

Lord Jesus  
in journeying towards the Synod, your Church  
turns her attention to all the young people of the world.  
We pray that they might boldly take charge of their lives,  
aim for the most beautiful and profound things of life  
and always keep their hearts unencumbered.

Accompanied by wise and generous guides, help them respond to

the call you make to each of them,  
to realize a proper plan of life and achieve happiness.  
Keep their hearts open to dreaming great dreams  
and make them concerned for the good of others.

Like the Beloved Disciple, may they stand at the foot of the Cross,  
to receive your Mother as a gift from you.  
May they be witnesses to your Resurrection  
and be aware that you are at their side  
as they joyously proclaim you as Lord.

Amen.

Please send your personal or group response by e-mail to  
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