



Confederazione Mondiale Exallieve ed Exallievi delle Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Via Gregorio VII, 133 int.4/sc.B 00165 Roma
Tel.06/63.56.92 Fax 06/39.37.51.31 C.F. 97070250580 www.exalliefma.org

Nucleus 26°

A young rebel called to holiness

Gabriela Patiño*

We continue our reflections on listening and accompaniment. This time, we acknowledge that it is not an easy task, it requires a lot of patience, love, and working together. But it is work that bears fruit. This is why the Church decided to question itself about accompanying the young to recognize and accept the call to love and to a full life.

We find a good example once again on the pages of the Cronistoria. A young rebel arrived at a Salesian house and was welcomed by a community that listens without prejudice, accompanies with patience, and waits for the right moment. It allows Baptismal grace to become fruitful, as Pope Francis says in his Exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate*.

The Cronistoria reads: It was the vigil of the Immaculate when two sisters sent by Don Bosco came as students, Emma and Oliva Ferrero. Emma is already 18 years old and of extraordinary beauty. She was educated with refinement at Turin in an Institute of sisters and then returned to her family. She enjoyed the theater, dances, happy companions until there was a reversal of fortune. Her father went to Don Bosco to ask his help. Don Bosco offered to take the three children. The youngest would go to the superior, Sr. Elisa Roncallo in Turin, and the other two to Mornese.

Emma obeyed, thus removing herself from the shame of her misery. But her spirit revolted within her. When she was invited to go to confession in order to enjoy the feast of the Madonna, she responded with a contemptuous and ironic smile, and participated in the church functions with the same attitude. At lunch and at recreation, she acted with an impertinence that was unusual for Mornese. Sr. Mazzarello, Sr. Enrichetta, and Sr. Emilia tried to approach her, to appease her, but she received them with a shrug.

She continues in this way. She eats little, sleeps very little, does not work or pray and is always irritated, always restless, moody, and only worried about her trunk. In order to prevent her from doing harm to the other students, Enrichetta surrounds Emma with vigilant and affectionate attention, without losing sight of the girls playing. She entertains her with questions and stories, but nothing influences the disdainful soul of the girl, who does nothing but arouse the envy of her companions.

Sr. Enrichetta suffers a lot. She feels she is beside a poor soul that even rebels at God's grace. Everyone is praying for her who is troubled by who knows what thoughts...Sr. Emilia knew how to appeal to Emma with such human and divine reasoning as to make her promise to give the lovely gift of a holy confession to her good assistant, to Mother, and above all, to her own soul.

Even Emma Ferrero seems ready to finally come to reason. After an experiment suggested by Mother, at Enrichetta's return from her trips, she seems not to have as hard a heart as her character. Even if she did not make a grand feast at the arrival of her good assistant, neither did she show difficulty in greeting her. Then she behaved a bit better, without removing herself from her charitable attentions.

She still speaks little, but she willingly helps those who ask her for a favor. But she still has a special attachment to her trunk and she is often there to take out her things very slowly, almost in respect of their memories. Then, filled with a sense of revulsion, she throws them all back inside, grumbling a little with her sister. She did not participate very much in the carnival festivities with the students, but she seems to have laid aside her disdainful attitude for some time. She even succeeds in smiling. But this is not yet enough.

Between May and June, Emma Ferrero had made real progress in piety and good example. She often goes to Communion, there are no more stunts or moods, she remains at the loom the whole day, active and serene. At recreation, she engages with her companions happily and with Sr. Enrichetta, without going to contemplate the little idols in her trunk anymore. She even begins to humble herself in the presence of her companions. Some days ago, there was a very large, deep hole in the garden, left by the farmer who had uprooted a plant. It seemed like a grave. The students laughed as they passed. Emma becomes thoughtful, goes down into the hole, sits down and tells her companions, "you can cover me with soil, I merit nothing else". Some have tears in their eyes. They all understood that the poor girl was not doing it as a joke, but through deep conviction.

The return of Mother to Mornese marks the date of a divine triumph on the resistant Emma Ferrero. Emma chose the time of recreation to drag her famous trunk into the middle of the courtyard and there, one after the other, she burns her letters, photographs, souvenirs, and beloved trinkets, serene and calm as though obeying an inner voice.

With Mother's return, her name day was also celebrated and the postulants went to the students' dining room for the day. Before that gathering of young people, Sr. Enrichetta does not hesitate to say, "And if tomorrow even Emma would take her place among the postulants?" There was a great *oh!* of general joy, but not of surprise, because Emma had become so good that they all noticed something great was maturing in her.

In fact, the next day, when they saw her enter the church with the cape, each one repeated, "She will be a holy sister!".

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

- Read the account attentively
- Identify a challenge and a commitment to accompany the growth of the children and young people
- If you wish, send a photo or video.
- With the universal Church pray for the **young**.

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:
delegatamondialeexallieve@gmail.com or by regular mail to:
Via dell'Ateneo Salesiano, 81 - 00139 Roma RM

* Confederal Delegate