



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

Roma, 19 marzo 2019
Prot. 86

Dear Past Pupils,

With praise and thanksgiving, join us today to celebrate the 111th anniversary of the foundation of the Association of the Past Pupils of the FMA. With these attitudes, we look to the origins, to rediscover the life lived by the first Past Pupils, women who, like you, let themselves be fascinated by the Salesian charism, transmitted by the sisters who accompanied the early oratorians with such zeal.

I invite you to dwell on the figure of the FMA who, together with Don Filippo Rinaldi, gave life to the Association that spread all over the world: Sr. Caterina Arrighi, a woman passionate about God and others.

Caterina had a docile and compliant temperament; she had learned to place the tenacious will at the service of superior ideals. She burned down the stages of the formative period because in her the qualities of a person determined to belong entirely to the Lord in the spirit of Don Bosco and of Mother Mazzarello were evident. Among her companions, she distinguished herself for the simple and profound piety that was well suited to the Salesian style. Moreover, she soon showed that she possessed the two essential virtues of an authentic Christian and the Salesian charisma: humility and charity.

As a young FMA she lived a fully Salesian experience, thanks also to frequent contacts with superiors who had personally known Don Bosco. In the house in Via Cottolengo 33, a thriving oratory found in the director Sister Arrighi, a zealous animator. Girls of the people, mostly workers, sometimes destitute, in need of Christian formation and adequate social promotion, frequented it. Sister Caterina took this mission entirely, following the young women also in their field of work and assisting many of their families. The house in via Cottolengo also housed an infirmary for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians of every part of Italy: a beautiful gym for the exercise of its prevenient charity.

She extended her hand to the benefactors, and in this, the caring hand of Don Rinaldi also helped her. With him, she collaborated in the institution of the "Deposito Cassa" (Cooperative Bank) in favor of the oratorians.

To strengthen the work of moral assistance for the prevention of evil among the ex-oratorians, she invited them to participate in the beautiful celebrations of the Oratory for the main solemnities of the year.

Don Rinaldi, in seeing them, thought that it could also be done in the feminine branch what the Salesians did in the masculine branch: that is the association of the past pupils.

An FMA to be discovered today, to learn from her the dimension of generous service to those around us, in need of help, of listening, of accompaniment. Sr. Caterina Arrighi was an example of daily holiness at the roots of the Association: the roots in the heart!

Sr. Maria Luisa Miranda sends her best wishes in this new anniversary of the foundation!
I always carry you in my prayers with much love,

Sr. Gabriela Patiño O.
Confederal Delegate