

## Video Oratory – Here is your field

**Sr. Maria del Carmen:** *The oratory is in you.* This is the conviction that has motivated us to start this process of re-launching the Oratory-Youth Center in all the continents. At the end of the month of September, the Youth Ministry Sector, together with a study-commission and 13 Sisters representing the various inter-provincial conferences, has realized an important step in this process.

*Here is your field*, was the meeting's slogan. The experience was divided into four moments, each guided by well-known phrases of Don Bosco.

*"Do you know how to whistle?" - Oratory: open doors*

*"You are my only thought..." - Oratory: an ongoing construction*

*"Do you know what this poor old man asks of you...?" - Oratory: place of vocational and missionary growth*

*"Near or far I always think of you..." – The oratory is in you*

The journey included the step to analyze the Oratories-Youth Centers present in the different contexts and to listen to experiences and reflections. From its very beginning, the FMA oratory has always emphasized the importance of the "oratorian heart" as the criterion of renewal of our Salesian identity and as our educative model.

**Sr. Elena Rastello:** We asked ourselves: "What elements of the past can offer us proposals for a fruitful reflection aimed at the actualization of the oratory?" The historical journey of the oratories from its beginnings until the '50s showed that: "Initially, the oratory was a response to the necessary demands in education related to the increase of work possibilities for women and the migration of many adolescents away from home. The oratory was not designed as an escape from everyday problems, nor as an entertainment away from concrete reality; rather, it was a presence attentive to the social dimension."

Analyzing the model of oratory proposed by the *Da Mihi Animas* magazine until the '90s, we see that the oratory is the place of educational relationship, of welcome, of mutual trust between Sisters and the young, a space of spiritual direction. It is a youthful educative community and the youth is its characteristic element: it is the "Church that is young". *Young people are the oratory*, not just *in* the oratory.

**Sr. Maria del Carmen:** The "oratorian heart" remains for us today a criterion for the renewal of our Salesian identity. It is our educative model. The expression "oratorian heart" precisely means an awareness of our educative identity, together with the commitment to constantly live the spirit of the *da mihi animas*. The world of the young is the home of every FMA. It is the living world of the Salesian sister and whoever shares their educative project. In other words, for us, being educators is vital.

**Sr. Elena Rastello:** The meeting used a participative methodology. Through a dialogue with experts, it became clear to us that the Oratory-Youth center for children, young people and educators is the privileged place of encounter with the Lord, and that there are connections between Oratory-Youth center and informal settings, the digital world, and other "spaces" where it is more urgent to be present among the young. The rich sharing of experiences among the participants has shown the many facets of the Oratory-Youth center in the various socio-geographic contexts where we work. Another element highlighted is the fact that the Oratory-Youth center reaches the poorest young people, especially through its creative and sustainable management.

**Sr. Maria del Carmen:** The presence and the accompaniment of Mother Yvonne Reungoat encouraged us. Likewise did the contribution of the Salesians who shared with us their conviction that the Oratory is an important part of their vocation at the service of the young. The experience of many Sisters who are creatively and courageously undertaking new ways to reach, evangelize and educate young people increased our enthusiasm and our awareness of the importance of re-launching this work which is strongly charismatic.

We are very much aware of the urgency of the new evangelization and of the importance of rekindling our educative passion in an open and dynamic process of formation – reflection – action that must be lived in the local and provincial communities, by the provincial coordination of Youth Ministry, in the Educating Communities and local and provincial Teams animating the Oratory-Youth centers.

The Oratory is in you, is to underline that this process involves every FMA and puts to the test our holiness.