



## **EUROPE/ITALY - On the occasion of the 140th anniversary of the foundation: a film on the expansion of the Missionary Daughters of Mary Help of Christians**

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - Born in 1872, the International Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) celebrates its 140th anniversary this year. To celebrate the anniversary, the Institute has made a film centered on the figure of Maria Domenica Mazzarello (familiarily called "Maìn"), the nun who, along with Don Bosco founded the congregation. From Mazzarello's charisma a great missionary work developed. Today, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians are present in 94 countries, in the five continents, with a total of 1,436 communities. In Africa there are 502 FMA that animate 93 communities present in 24 countries; in the Americas 4,188 are working in 524 communities present in 23 countries; in Asia there are 2,430 FMA in 324 communities present in 20 countries; in Europe there are 6,215 FMA in 485 communities present in 22 countries; in Oceania there are 47 FMA and work in 10 communities present in 5 countries.

The film, titled "Maìn, the house of happiness," narrates Mazzarello's short lifespan (44 years), but intense and fruitful. In a first phase, from her birth in Mornese, in Upper Monferrato (1837) to her First Communion (1850), the girl lives in a family environment characterized by a strong Christian life and the work in the fields, accompanied by her spiritual director. The second phase (1850-1860) is characterized by the choice to donate her youth to the Lord by a vow of virginity and participation in parish life. At 23 she fell ill with typhus and risks her life. She had a fragile health, she devoted herself to the education of the girls in the country through a sewing workshop, a festive oratory and a home for the children without families. In the third phase of her life (1860-1872) she meets St. John Bosco (1864), the answer to her questions. Together they founded, on August 5, 1872, the new religious family of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. In the last phase of her life (1872-1881) Maria Domenica Mazzarello guides the beginnings of the congregation, she forms the nuns, does many travels to visit the new foundations. She died in Nizza Monferrato on May 14, 1881. She was beatified by Pope Pius XI in 1938 and canonized by Pius XII in 1951.

The film is being dubbed or subtitled in 11 languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Slovenian and Croatian. In processing the Multideafilm, led by Sister Catherine Cangià, she made use of professional actors and workers. The film ends with a quick roundup of graphics and photographs that tell the expansion of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in the world. (AD/SL) (Agenzia Fides 02/05/2012)

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