

**CONGREGATION OF THE
SISTERS OF SAINT ANN**
FOR US TO PRAY IS TO HOPE



International Seminar of Ongoing Formation

Rome – Turin, 26 July – 18 August 2024

A warm welcome to the heart of SSA Family

A pilgrimage of hope founded on prayer: In the truest sense, a pilgrimage is more than just a physical journey; it is a **sacred path** that leads us inward, fostering spiritual growth, self-discovery and a deeper connection with God and with the Sisters, with whom we shall journey together. Each step we take together over these next few days is an opportunity to reflect, to get to know and grow in faith and in our sense of belonging to the Church and the Congregation.

We have come from various parts of the world, each carrying unique experiences and perspectives. Yet, here, we unite with a common purpose: to seek wisdom, to share our journeys, and to strengthen our mission through collective prayer and hope. This Seminar is our shared pilgrimage, a time to pause from our everyday responsibilities and immerse ourselves in the richness of our union with the Trinity, according to our Charism.

As pilgrims, we are called to open our hearts and minds to the action of the Spirit with **humility and gratitude**. We are called to live each session, each visit, each conversation, and each prayer with a readiness to be transformed, to be renewed in our commitment, and to be inspired by the grace that God bestows upon us.

Welcome, dearest Sisters, to this blessed pilgrimage. May it be a time of profound discovery and spiritual enrichment for each of us. Let us journey together with faith, hope, and love, trusting in God's guidance every step of the way.

Praying for the Grace:

Grace of Unity: May we be united in purpose and spirit, fostering a deep sense of sisterhood and collaboration among all participants.

Grace of Wisdom: We seek the wisdom to discern the path forward in our personal and congregational journeys.

Grace of Renewal: May this Seminar be a source of spiritual and emotional renewal for each of us.

May Mary our Mother and St. Ann, Blessed Mother Enrichetta and our Venerable Founders Carlo Tancredi and Giulia Cobert di Barolo intercede for us and obtain for all of us the graces and blessings we need.

26 July- Friday

From the roots to wings



Our pilgrimage is just beginning, and we are full of gratitude for Jesus' grandparents whose feast we celebrate today. *They knew how to hope and their hope was not disappointed.*

Their lives take us back to our roots, reminding us that we are *children of a history to be cherished*. Our roots, the love that awaited us and that we received when we came into the world, the family environments in which we grew up, are part of a unique story that preceded and generated us. We did not choose it, but received it as a gift; and it is a gift we are called to cherish.

Their yes to God's plan also reminds us that we are *artisans of a history to be built*. The mystery of human life is this: we are all children of someone, generated and shaped by someone, but as we become adults we are also called to be generative, fathers, mothers and grandparents of someone else.

At the end of this Day: Looking at the person I am today, what do I want to do with myself? Without postponing till later, how do I begin today?

27 July – Saturday

"Rooted in Prayer to fly in Hope"



Our prayer wants to revive our Hope through the contemplation of Psalm 139 and the Icon of Merciful Love. We are invited to grow in the relationship with God that is deeply personal and involves our whole being. God has marvellously designed us, knows us deeply, is always with us and continually guides us. His infinite knowledge, presence and love form the foundation of our faith and trust in Him and open us to Hope.

The young man surrounded by the three Persons represents MYSELF, exhausted, debased, disfigured... But I am surrounded lovingly by the Trinity. The Triune God seems to say to each one of us, "*Daughter of my tears and my blood, Daughter of my unfailing love*" (cf. *A Window on Love*, p. 16-18).)

"In each of us is a soul of infinite price, that Jesus Christ loves with immense love". (cf. *Const* 1846, art. 384).

At the end of this Day: God knows me, loves me and wants that I, who am loved, is able to love. What sentiments do I have to offer God? What Hope has He revived in me?

28 July – Sunday
Witnesses of hope:
the Apostle of the Gentiles and our Elderly Sisters



St. Paul's Basilica and the Three Fountains' site offer a profound connection to the life and martyrdom of St. Paul. They encapsulate the themes of faith, sacrifice, and the spread of Christianity. We can deepen our understanding of St. Paul's mission and the early Christian Church's challenges and triumphs.

The Holy Father's Message for the Fourth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on the theme "***Do not cast me off in my old age***" (cf. *Ps 71:9*), acknowledges the situation of many elderly people of today, and assures them that God never abandons His children, never. ***Our Senior Sisters are the pillars of Hope and strength to all of us.***

At the end of this Day, What aspects of St. Paul's life and martyrdom resonated most deeply with you?

Being witnesses of Hope in daily life demands sacrifice. Does the example of St. Paul and the Sisters we met, inspire me to make any personal sacrifices or commitments in my own life?

29 July – Monday

At the roots of our journey of growth



Prayer is a vital component of human growth and fidelity to one's vocation. It provides the foundation for a deep relationship with God, sustains and nurtures commitment, facilitates personal transformation, offers guidance and wisdom, strengthens communal bonds, integrates faith with action, and supports continuous growth. By weaving prayer into the fabric of our lives, we can remain faithful to our vocation, drawing strength, inspiration, and clarity from our spiritual practice.

At the end of this Day, I write my experience of today.

30 July – Tuesday

Saint Peter: Rock of Hope



As the primary Church of the Pope, St. Peter's Basilica serves as a spiritual epicenter for Catholics worldwide. It symbolizes the unity of the Church under papal leadership and stands as a testament to the apostolic succession from St. Peter to the current Pope.

St. Peter's Basilica in Rome is of profound significance due to its spiritual, architectural, historical, cultural, and liturgical importance. It stands as a beacon of faith, a masterpiece of human creativity, and a symbol of the Catholic Church's global mission and unity. Through its rich history, artistic treasures, and ongoing role in the life of the Church, St. Peter's Basilica continues to inspire and attract millions of believers and visitors from around the world.

At the end of the day: Being in the heart of the Church, praying in the place believed to be built over the tomb of St Peter, remembering that: 'You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it', encourages me to:

31 July – Monday

Pilgrims of Hope

“For if the young are called to open new doors, the elderly hold the keys. An institute remains youthful by going back to its roots, by listening to its older members. There is no future without this encounter between the old and the young. There is no growth without roots and no flowering without new buds. There is never prophecy without memory, or memory without prophecy.”
(Pope Francis at Mass: ‘Consecrated life renewed in encounter with Jesus’ 2-2-2018)



1 August – Thursday

In Hope we have been generated



“In the history of the civil-ecclesial community of their times, **Carlo Tancredi and Giulia di Barolo** interpreted their personal and conjugal experience in the light of God who is Providence. They acknowledged in their lives the plan of God who created man and woman in His image, wanted them to be happy and called them to communion with Himself. (C 1)

We will walk on the footsteps of our Founders Carlo and Giulia as their daughters who wish to live in fidelity and creativity the Charism, they have transmitted to us. Their life of sanctity and charity amazes us!

We will visit the Barolo Palace where they lived an exemplary married life and where their dream of the Foundation of our Institute became a reality. On the ground floor the first Kindergarten school was opened and we were entrusted with the mission of being educators of children and youth.

May the Lord grant us to feel ‘dear daughters’ as we enter our dear Mother Mother House, which was built by our beloved Founders and was inaugurated on 13 August 1840. Our Founders willed to establish our Mother House next to the renowned Sanctuary of Our Lady of Consolation.

At the end of the day: with admiration and thanksgiving for the gift of our Beloved Founders. I have learnt from them:

2 August – Friday

Regenerated by a living and active hope (cf. 1 Pet 1:3)



The Barolo Social District: our Founders sowed the seeds of their charism and mission, starting, in March 1823, the so-called Refuge for women found guilty, but repentant, which was to be followed by the Refuge and the St. Philomena Hospital for disabled girls. Julia founded a Congregation for women to take in former female prisoners, now called the ‘Daughters of Jesus the Good Shepherd’. Today 17 charitable organisations operate there.

Faithful to the legacy left to her by her husband, Giulia, with God's help carried on the work they had dreamed of together. There was no lack of difficult moments, but she relied on the Lord. As she wrote:

“Again, I began to feel alone; the fire has finished burning, the holocaust is consummated... No, but there is a perpetual one, the fire of which burns in our soul. At every moment I experience the joy of this sacrifice: weak, languishing as it may be, my life pines for God and is consumed for Him. Ah! let us give back to Him that which He has given us: soul, thoughts, life, strength, let us offer Him all, so that He may deign to receive them. In return He will give us eternity”. (Giulia Colbert, *La sera*, in *Con gli occhi del cuore*, pp. 239-240).

At the end of the Day: What should I do to be more faithful to the Charism received through our Founders and the gift of a living and working hope?

3 August- Saturday

Abandonment in God our Good Father, source of our Hope



The Spirituality of Mother Enrichetta was formed and developed through her contemplation of the Trinitarian Mystery which was characterized by a profound experience of the **Divine Paternity**, by the following of **Jesus Christ, Incarnated and Crucified** and by her openness to the **Holy Spirit** which made her ever more *a daughter* and urged her towards the *mission*.

Her profile appears clearly from a few essential lines: the sense of God, reassumed in the motto: "*God alone, in everything always!*"; her total adhesion to this "presence" in "*wanting what God wants, how God wants it, and why God wants it*", which is translated in missionary zeal. This is what she lived and this is what she has left to us as her heredity. Through her life witness, she revived the true spirit of the Congregation, giving it renewed fervour and great vitality; she stamped on it a strong missionary impulse and extended its works.

At the end of the Day: I see the Good Daddy's work in my life, I verify my ability to adhere to His will and to want what He wants, and I commit myself:

4 August- Sunday

Signs of Hope in the Church and Society



“The Shroud is also an image of God's love as well as of human sin.... In its presence believers can only exclaim in all truth: ‘Lord, you could not love me more!’, and immediately realize that sin is responsible for that suffering: the sins of every human being. (St. John Paul II, Veneration of the Shroud, 24 May 1998)

“How does the Shroud speak? It speaks with blood, and blood is life! The Shroud is an icon written in blood; the

blood of a man who has been scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified and wounded in his right side. Every trace of blood speaks of love and of life”. (Pope Benedict XVI, Veneration of the Shroud, 2 May 2010)

The Church of Corpus Domini in Turin is built on the site of a Eucharistic miracle that took place in 1453, where a consecrated host was miraculously preserved.

Whereas, the **Shrine Mary Help of Christians** wanted by St John Bosco, was inaugurated on 9 June 1868, and is surrounded by a vast area, called Valdocco, where many of the activities run by the Salesians and usually dedicated to young people are carried out. Together, they provide a multifaceted foundation of hope, faith, and inspiration for the Catholic community and beyond.

At the end of the day: I thank God for the gift of the Saints and for having called me too to Sanctity. Therefore, I implore for this grace of Sanctity.

5 August – Monday

“...For a living Hope, into an inheritance that is imperishable”(1Pt 1: 3-4)



The Church of Santa Giulia is not only a place of historical importance but also a living testimony to the enduring legacy of our Founders Carlo Tancredi and Giulia. It continues to inspire and provide hope to the faithful through its connection with Carlo and Giulia Falletti di Barolo and their exemplary lives of service and charity. Throughout their lives they worked tirelessly for that ‘inheritance that does not corrupt’.

Monumental Cemetery at Turin: is a historically and culturally significant site. For us, the importance lies in the fact that Carlo Tancredi was Mayor of Turin between 1826 and 1827, at the time when the General Cemetery was planned, of which he was then the biggest financier. In 2013 the remains of Carlo Tancredi was moved to the Church of Santa Giulia, where we see him next to his beloved Giulia.

At the end of the Day: What am I doing with the inheritance I have received?

6 August – Tuesday

Pilgrims full of Hope and Gratitude



We return from our pilgrimage to Turin with hearts brimming with hope and gratitude. Our journey has been a profound and transformative experience, leaving us with indelible memories and renewed faith.

This pilgrimage has been more than a journey to sacred sites; it has been a journey within ourselves. Meeting our Sisters and visiting the places of our origins strengthened in us the sense of belonging to our Religious Family, and renewed in us the desire to be faithful to our vocation and mission.

At the end of the Day: I write down a word or fact, heard or seen or experienced, from which the strongest call came to me. Which one?

7 August – Wednesday

A great witness of Hope: Pope Francis



Pope Francis is widely regarded as a profound witness of hope, and his papacy has been marked by numerous actions, teachings, and personal characteristics that embody this virtue.

Pope Francis's witness of hope is multifaceted, encompassing his teachings, actions, and personal example. His focus on mercy, compassion, social justice, environmental stewardship, humility, and inclusive evangelization embodies the hope of the Gospel. Through his leadership, he inspires millions around the world to embrace and share this hope, fostering a more compassionate, just, and hopeful world.

At the end of the Day: What strikes me most about the person and magisterium of Pope Francis? How can I be a witness of hope?

8 August – Thursday

Guardian and witnesses of the Great Hope



Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore : The Virgin Mary's role as Mother of God and her intercession are central to Christian hope. The Basilica houses the most important Marian icon, the **Salus Populi Romani**. Pope Francis before and after each of his apostolic journeys usually goes to entrust himself to Her.



Church of St. Prassede : At the apostle Paul's preaching, the senator Pudentius and his daughters Pudenziana and Praxedes were also converted to Christianity. After the death of her father and Pudenziana, who were martyred, Prassede used her family's patrimony to

build a church 'sub titulo Praxedis'.

These Churches, together with the **Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help**, serve as guardians and witnesses of the Great Hope in the Catholic Church. Through their historical significance, architectural splendour, spiritual legacy and the profound acts of faith they inspire, they stand as pillars of hope, reminding the faithful of the enduring presence of God's grace, the intercession of the Saints and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

At the end of the Day: The 'Great Hope', I simply thank God who is always faithful! And I once again entrust myself to Mary...



9. August – Friday

The Rule of Life, a path of Hope

“Our Rule of life, for us Sisters of St. Ann, is the path that enshrines an itinerary of following Christ, in accordance with our foundational Charism. In the awareness that our vocation is a grace from God, all of us strive with every possible care to conform ourselves in everything to Jesus Christ. We accept our Rule of Life as a living tradition of the experience of the Spirit. of our Founders and of Blessed Enrichetta to be lived, safeguarded, deepened and constantly developed by us in harmony with the Body of Christ continually in the process of growth”. (C.229)



Let us give thanks to the Most Holy Trinity for the journey along which Providence has led us. This has been a time of Grace for our Congregation which, notwithstanding the fatigue, has experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, and the power of communion which generates life and renews hope. The path that opens before us is also a time of Grace, in which we are called to receive and live our Rule of Life, so as to better respond to the demands of our vocation in the Church, according to the Charism that has been handed down to us.

At the end of the Day: With love and gratitude, I kiss the Cross of my Religious Profession that I wear every day and renew my commitment of fidelity to the gift received.

10 August – Saturday

Passion of Christ: Strength of Hope



Holy Stairs (Scala Sancta)

Pilgrimage of Penance and Prayer: The Holy Staircase in the Pontifical Sanctuary in Rome, according to an ancient Christian tradition, with its 28 steps is the staircase climbed by Jesus Christ, to present Himself

to Pilate, before His condemnation to death. Pilgrims climb the stairs on their knees in a profound act of penance and devotion, seeking to unite their suffering with that of Christ.

Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem:

This basilica houses important relics of the Passion of Christ, including fragments of the True Cross. These relics serve as a powerful reminder of Christ's sacrifice and the hope of the resurrection.



Basilica of St. John Lateran, Mother of All Churches,

Cathedral of the Pope: As the Cathedral of the Bishop of Rome, the Basilica of St. John Lateran holds a special place in the Catholic Church. It symbolizes the unity and continuity of the Church under papal leadership.

At the end of the Day: My eyes have seen so many signs of God's love for me, manifested in a special way in the passion of His only Son. How do I feel called to manifest my love for Him?

11 August – Sunday

Horizons of Hope: Charismatic Family

This vision of starting the Lay Associates of Saint Ann (LASA) was concretized during the XXXI General Chapter in 2002. The Chapter Document in reference to sharing the Mission with the laity cites: *“It is important to strengthen some experiences of sharing our foundational spirituality with the laity. These are the first steps of a journey open to the future. (No. 7)*

Pope Francis said several times, The Church needs that the Church needs lay people who take risks, who are willing to dirty their hands, who are not afraid of making mistakes, who are ready to go forward. We need lay people with a vision of the future, who dare to dream.



This is what Carlo Tancredi and Giulia did in their time, and this is what we SSA and LASA want to do today. With a shared mission, encouraged by their lives, we spread the joy of the Gospel in the world through our Educational Mission.

The Lay Associates of St. Ann (LASA) embody a charismatic identity that is deeply rooted in the values and mission of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann. Through their commitment to service, education, spiritual growth, community, and evangelization, they extend the legacy of Carlo and Giulia Barolo, bringing hope and transformation to their communities. By integrating the charisms of the Founders into their daily lives, LASA members serve as living witnesses of the Gospel, promoting a culture of love, compassion, and justice in the world.

At the end of the Day: How can I help the lay faithful to draw from the richness of our Charism? What step can I take?

12 August - Monday

Traces of Hope in our land



Shrine of Divine Love (Santuario della Madonna del Divino Amore): Devotion to Mary as a loving and protective mother brings hope to the faithful, assuring them of her intercession and support in times of need. The Shrine houses a miraculous icon of the Madonna, which has been venerated since the 18th century. Stories of miracles and answered prayers associated with the icon inspire hope and reinforce faith in divine intervention.

Catacombs of St. Callixtus: They are among the most significant early Christian burial

sites, where many martyrs, popes, and saints were buried. Their witness to faith in the face of persecution offers a powerful message of hope and resilience.

Fosse Ardeatine, Tragic History: It is a site of the horrific massacre during World War II, where 335 Italians were executed by Nazi forces. This site stands as a solemn reminder of the atrocities of war and the price of freedom. They symbolise resilience, the search for peace and hope for a future free from such atrocities.

We are faced with powerful traces of hope in our land. Together, these sites inspire and sustain the faithful, reminding them of the profound hope that underlies their faith and history.

At the end of the Day: I entrust to the Lord all people who need to experience God's presence in the midst of life's trials:

13 August – Tuesday

Traces of Hope in the heart of Rome



The theme of hope runs through human history down the centuries, and this is also testified by numerous works of art, from every era. At the end of this day we will be able to say that our eyes have seen. Just one

example: **The Colosseum:** Although originally a site for gladiatorial games and executions, the Colosseum is also remembered as a place where many early Christians were martyred. Their courage and sacrifice stand as powerful witnesses to the hope and strength found in faith.



We want to live this day bearing in mind what Pope Francis indicated, that is, *'all expressions of authentic beauty can be recognised as **a path that helps one to meet Lord Jesus**'* (EG no. 167).

At the end of the day: Was I able, despite my tiredness, to appreciate beauty? Have I encountered the Lord? Have I renewed my hope?

14 August - Wednesday House of Prayer and Hope



History of the Holy House of Loreto:

Three centuries after the life of Jesus, the newly converted Emperor **Constantine** built a basilica over the humble brick house believed to have sheltered the Holy Family. According to Catholic tradition, the Holy House came under threat during the turmoil of the Crusades, so in **1291**, angels miraculously transported the house from its original location to a site in modern-day

Croatia. An empty space was left in Nazareth

and a small house suddenly appeared in a field in Croatia. The bewildered parish priest brought to the scene by shepherds who discovered it, had a vision in which the Virgin Mary revealed it was her former house. On **December 10, 1294**, the house was again moved by angels because of the Muslim invasion of Albania. It landed first in Recanati, Italy, but was shortly thereafter moved for a third time to its present location in Loreto.

We visit our Community in Castelfidardo, where Bl. Enrichetta lived.

“In 1880, there was at Castelfidardo a great drought, so much so that even the cistern of the monastery from which many persons drew, was without water.

Mother Enrichetta, returning from India, passed through Castelfidardo. The Sisters saw in her the angel who would console them in their calamity and accompanied her to the cistern. The beloved Superior smiled and very calmly responded: “Let us not worry, because the Lord will send us more than enough.” Then, going up to the cistern, she looked inside it for a moment. Then, raising her eyes towards heaven as an invocation and trust, like she usually did in urgent cases, she went back into the house with the Sisters who followed her. Although the sky was serene that day, before evening, it began to rain so abundantly that the cistern overflowed with water”. (Um. Grand., p.679)

At the end of the day: Through the hands of Mary, let us thank God:

15 August – Thursday

With Mary, Mother of Hope



The Feast of the Assumption of Mary, commemorates the belief in the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven at the end of her earthly life.

Dogma: The Assumption of Mary was formally defined as a dogma of the Catholic Church by Pope Pius XII in 1950. This means that Catholics are required to believe that Mary was taken into heaven, body and soul, after her death. It is a significant feast in the Catholic Church, emphasizing Mary's unique role in salvation history, her fidelity to God's will, and the hope of resurrection and eternal life for all believers. Through prayers, devotions, and celebrations, Catholics honour Mary as the Mother of Hope and seek her intercession in their spiritual journey.

At the end of the day: Day after day the Lord finds ways to renew my hope. And how can I be an instrument of hope for those are around me?

16 August – Friday

Steps of Hope



Jesus exhorts us to walk and makes us renew our faith. Prayer, which is a profound relationship with Him, is a transformative pathway that leads to a more profound experience of hope in God's promises and presence.

At the end of the Day: I write the notes of this intense day of prayer and hope.

17 August – Saturday

The Church, a place of Hope



The Church is a beacon of hope in the world providing spiritual refuge, fostering community, proclaiming the Gospel message of salvation, engaging in acts of charity and justice, offering healing and reconciliation, and nurturing hope for the future. Through its teachings, sacraments, and mission, the Church inspires believers to live

with faith, hope, and love, contributing to the building of a more hopeful and compassionate society.

Under the protection of the Virgin Mary, let us renew our Yes to correspond more and more to the gifts we have received!

At the end of the Day: What have I gained from this day of reflection and sharing? To be a living member of the Church, I commit myself to:

18 August –Sunday

On the wings of Hope



"On the Wings of Hope" encapsulates the transformative power of prayer in uplifting our spirits, guiding our actions, and fostering a hopeful outlook on life. As we pray with faith and perseverance, we soar on the wings of hope, trusting in God's promises and embracing His vision for a future filled with peace, healing, and joy. This sub-theme invites the Seminar Participants to deepen their understanding of prayer as a pathway to hope and to explore how hope, ignited and sustained through prayer, can inspire a positive change and spiritual growth in their lives and communities.

At the conclusion of this Seminar focused on prayer and hope, we now wish you.

1. "May our prayer always be a source of hope, lighting the path forward in our lives."
2. "Let us carry the light of hope from this Seminar into our communities, inspiring others with our faith and perseverance in prayer."
3. "Let our hearts be filled with gratitude for the gift of hope that prayer brings, guiding us towards a future filled with God's grace and peace."
4. "As we depart from this gathering, let us carry with us the certainty that God hears our prayers and grants us the hope we need to face each day with courage and trust."
5. "With hearts uplifted in prayer, may we always remember that in God's hands, there is hope for every challenge we face and every dream we hold dear."
6. "Let us go forth from this Seminar with renewed hope, knowing that through prayer, we are held in the loving embrace of our Heavenly Father."

Evaluation and Conclusion