

## "YOU WILL BE MY DAUGHTER"

### Sister Eusebia Palomino Yenes, Daughter of Mary Help of Christians (Spain, 1899-1935)

Header "*Thursdays of the Auxilium*"

Video "*trailer*" of the centenary of Sr. Eusebia's first profession and the 20th anniversary of her beatification. Spanish FMA Province "*Mary Help of Christians*" (SPA)

Welcome to the fourth meeting of this 2023-24 academic year that brings us together to delve into the heritage of the Salesian charism, into the diversity of expressions of the Preventive System. We ask the Lord, through the Virgin Mary, whom Sister Eusebia invoked with full trust, for the gift of growing in holiness, each according to the vocation received.

This year marks the centenary of her first profession as a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, and twenty years separate us from the ecclesial recognition of her holiness, which proclaimed her blessed on April 25, 2004.

This month's Salesian Thursday is part of these two anniversaries, with this desire to make known the "poor of the Lord", as she defined herself in her letters (78 and 80). From now on, I would like to thank all the people who have collaborated in different ways to make it happen, both in the technical aspect and in the materials they have made available to us. At the end you will find the available bibliography. And gratitude also to those who have taken care to preserve the texts and memories that allow us to know first-hand this Daughter of Mary Help of Christians who passed through this life, as her Master, *doing good*. In the seventies of the last century, Sister Carmen Martín Moreno, Visiting General Councilor, expressed in the report of her visits to the FMA community of Valverde del Camino that the memory of Sister Eusebia Palomino Yenes remained very much alive despite the fact that forty years had passed since her death. Here is her testimony for the cause of beatification:

She was so impressed, both by what she experienced in Valverde and by what she discovered in the General Archive, that she discussed it with the other General Councilors and with the Mother General. All of them, that is, the fourteen that made up the General Council, felt that it was necessary to study the matter directly. They became aware of the value of holiness lived in the heroic virtues peculiar to religious life, preferably obedience, humility and poverty; that this example of holiness of Sister Eusebia was especially valid for the moment of our Congregation and of the Church, so we considered that it was appropriate to ask for the opening of the beatification process.

Mother General (Mother Ersilia Canta) made everyone see that it was convenient to put a test to see if it was the Lord's will to glorify Sister Eusebia or not: to ask, through her intercession of Sister Eusebia, that the Lord grant us the solution of the following very urgent problem and of very difficult solution, both because of its economic aspect, as well as its legal and material aspect. The transfer of the Pontifical Faculty of Pedagogy-Religious Sciences from Turin to Rome. The difficulty was twofold. There was no suitable premises in Rome and there was not enough money to be able to buy it in the necessary conditions. The protection of the Servant of God was invoked, and in a short time, that is, very quickly, all the difficulties were resolved. To such an extent was the economic question and its resolution, a sign of the special protection of the Servant of God, that the same Economer General made to all of them and to Sister Carmen Martín Moreno in a special way, the confirmation that this constituted the test for the Congregation of a singular grace obtained from the mercy of God obtained through the mediation of Sister Eusebia. It was necessary to have a biography that was as broad and complete as possible, as well as documented, that would include all the facts, sayings and vicissitudes of Sister Eusebia. To this end, the Council entrusted Sister Domenica Grassiano, a writer, to go to Spain and visit all the places from Cantalpino to Valverde, passing through Salamanca and Barcelona, collecting all the documents, declarations, stories, facts and sayings, both of Sister Eusebia and of what is

said or referred to about her, also making available to her all the documentation found in the General Archive (cf. Positio II, 10).

The biography of Sister Domenica Grassiano, *Un carisma en la estela de D. Bosco (Un carisma nella scia di D. Bosco)*, was published in 1977. The Autobiography, which was published on the fiftieth anniversary of her death, is the text written with notes by Sister Eusebia, which go only as far as her entry into the novitiate. These notes were written at the suggestion of D. Jesús de Mora y Mora, parish priest of Valverde. The manuscript has not been preserved, but her superior, Sister Carmen Moreno Benítez (martyr beatified on March 11, 2001), transcribed and completed them (1931) from the narratives she heard directly from the lips of Sister Eusebia. Father Manuel Garrido Bonaño, of the Order of St. Benedict, a native of Valverde del Camino, was in charge of its publication. He remembers witnessing St. Eusebia's wake when he was only nine years old. To him we also owe the publication of the letters of St. Eusebia that have been preserved. On April 25, 1934 (exactly seventy years before her beatification) Sister Carmen Moreno had asked Sister Eusebia's mother to keep them. M. Clelia Genghini, shortly after the death of Sister Eusebia, took them to the General Archive of the FMA Institute. To Father Garrido we also owe the biography "Sor Eusebia Palomino Yenes" (the Italian translation: "Eusebia Palomino, gioia Crescente nell'offerta totale"), documented from the direct testimonies of those who knew her. All these bibliographical references help us to understand to a large extent the human and spiritual stature of the figure to whom we dedicate today's meeting, in the month in which we celebrate his liturgical memorial.

In the opening projection we have seen a brief biographical profile of Sister Eusebia. We go on to develop her portrait more extensively.

Eusebia Palomino Yenes was born in Cantalpino (Salamanca) on December 15, 1899. Five days later, she was baptized. Her godmother was her aunt Anita, whom she evokes many times in her letters. Agustín, the father, works as a temporary bracero in the service of the landowners in the surrounding area and her mother Juana Yenes takes care of the house and their four children. Because of a problem with his hand, for almost a year, Agustín was forced to ask for help from the charity of other poor people in the villages of the area. When they arrive in the villages, he smiles at the good people who welcome him and asks for "a little bread for God's sake." She will always remember him, thanking those people for their charity, doing the same for the poor, encouraging the generosity of the wealthiest and, above all, humbling himself before others. In the cookbook she wrote in the months immediately preceding her death, already bedridden by her serious illness, she says, "Pray to God for the soul of this poor beggar, that she may soon go to enjoy the eternal mansions of paradise".

That family was very poor, but rich in human and Christian virtues. The little house in which they lived, more than a house, looks more like a small room. In Letter 9 Sister Eusebia reminds us: "... I love our little house very much because I have spent my entire childhood there, I remember it fondly and I call it my hut, my paradise where I learned so many things." There she remembers that her father, while her mother prepared dinner or mended clothes, took the catechism and taught religion to her and her sisters. It was an atmosphere of peace that he always remembers with great happiness and gratitude. She repeats this in letter 21 and in the last letters she wrote to her mother. Later she will go to school, but she will learn little. She had to leave it to earn some money as a nanny and maid in her village. Sister Eusebia shows a great capacity for memory, but with a very uncultivated academic level, for obvious reasons.

First Communion was one of the great events of her life, already showing a spiritual maturity that was very unusual. Poverty is increasing in her family and she has to "migrate" to the capital of the province, as her sister Dolores had done before and then her sister Antonia will do. In Salamanca, the three of them find work as servants. Special circumstances brought her into contact with the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. She is distinguished by her industriousness, by her gentleness, conquered by virtue, for she herself says that she had a strong character, and by her piety. Her great desire to consecrate herself to God came to fruition when M. Enriqueta Sorbone, Vicar General, on her visit to Salamanca in 1921, accepted her as a candidate

for the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. On January 31, 1922 she was admitted to the postulancy in Salamanca and on August 5 of the same year she took the habit in the Novitiate House of Barcelona-Sarriá. Two years in which she assimilated and embraced the Salesian charismatic identity. It was in the Novitiate that she outlined her Marian devotion that had accompanied her since she was a child. In addition to this, her great love for Christ in the Eucharist and in her Passion will be the favourite themes of her apostolate. An untimely fall and the resulting illness call into question the transition to religious profession. Her total detachment from herself and her unconditional obedience determined the decision of her superiors, who accepted her to her first profession on August 5, 1924. She was assigned to the Colegio de Valverde del Camino, in the province of Huelva.

The students of Valverde, where she arrived on the 24th of the same month and year, seeing her fragile appearance and lack of physical attractiveness, did not welcome her. Valverde was the only destination that Sister Eusebia had and there she developed her apostolate. The girls' initial impression of Sister Eusebia changes little by little, in appreciation, even more, in admiration. In charge of the kitchen, the porter's office, the wardrobe, she attended the festive oratory on Sundays and holidays, and still found time to transform a small terrace in the lower courtyard into a small garden. Her letters often allude to that garden where she sows vegetables, legumes, potatoes and flowers for the chapel. In her apostolate she used all the means at her disposal. She was faithful to her ideal: to sanctify herself and save souls.

She was admired for her many charisms, which she lived with an astonishing naturalness. The testimonies of people who have known her affirm this. Her confessor exclaimed as the parish bells rang to announce her death: "A saint has died!"

The Spanish situation of 1931 offered Sister Eusebia the opportunity to accomplish something that had long been maturing day after day. She offered herself a victim to the Lord. And the Lord accepted it. Three long years of untold pain will follow. In the letters of that time, Sister Eusebia does not imply any of this. She communicates her great joy, an overflowing joy and joy.

Like Don Bosco, she had received from the Lord the gift of prophecy. She predicted the Spanish Civil War. Her superior, Sister Carmen Moreno, took care of her during her illness. Sister Eusebia prophesied her martyrdom. She left this world on February 10, 1935. The Municipal Board, whose political connotation is not exactly favourable to the Church, unanimously decreed to donate a niche "in perpetuity" for this citizen, in consideration of the "relevant merits of virtue" and the selfless dedication to the education of the poorest children. In the March 1935 Parish Bulletin, the commemorative article is entitled: "Burial of a Saint." The parish priest writes it, who concludes: "Her tomb will be glorious." John Paul II declared her Blessed on April 25, 2004.

Mother Chiara, in circular 1034, dated January 1, on the occasion of the bicentenary of Don Bosco's 9th birthday dream, makes a clear invitation to us: "Let us safeguard, as a precious inheritance, the dream of John with its symbolic and charismatic value and let us reflect on the centrality of the figure of Mary, whom the mysterious Personage identifies as the "Teacher". In fact, it is always she who continues to do wonders in our lives and in our educational mission. From the very beginning, Mary was present at the birth of the Salesian charism precisely because her mission was to carry new life in her womb and to generate new life. The Lord, therefore, entrusts to his Mother, Our Lady of Pentecost and immaculate model of the Church, the precious task of being a Teacher (cf. Strenna 1:4). It will be Mary who will take care of the continuity of the dream, until Don Bosco is able to understand everything."

We dare to affirm that Sister Eusebia participates in this legacy, even before entering into contact with the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. The Virgin Mary is Mother and companion on her journey from the beginning of her history, until she discovers God's plan for her. We will see that later on, she fully identifies with her and lives a filial relationship, which impels her in a renewed way to collaborate

in the work of the Redemption. We see this on many occasions through the testimony that she herself has given us, as we have said before.

It was May 24, 1917. Eusebia served in the house of Mrs. Antonia, wife of the person in charge of the "S. Rafael" Nursing Home. Consuelo Hernández Encinas, a student in the years when Sister Eusebia served in the house of the FMA, and who later was also a companion in the novitiate, remembers that the young Eusebia told her, when they were passing by that place, that she found herself in front of the emblematic "House of the Shells" of the city of Salamanca on the steps of the Jesuit church. Then he saw a procession approaching, recognizing Mary Help of Christians in the passage of the Virgin, in the depths of herself, she heard a voice "You will be my daughter".

This is how S. Eusebia herself relates it years later in the notes collected in her Autobiography:

"When they reached where I was, they stopped in front of me and when I saw Mary Help of Christians, I felt attracted to Her. I knelt down and with great fervour said to her: "You know, my Mother, that what I want is to please you, to always be yours and to make myself a saint," and I said this with such fervour that even tears rolled down my cheeks. You know, my Mother, that if I could and had money I would go somewhere and be a nun, in order to serve you better, but I am poor and I have nothing. - But, inside I felt something very great, a consolation and satisfaction that it is not possible to explain. So much so that the comfort and satisfaction I felt made me shed tears." (51)

That image was familiar to her: it was the same one of a medal she had found in the ground while she was taking care of Mrs. Antonia's garden, a medal she had attached to her rosary. (Cf. 49)

Sister Eusebia says that "not a fortnight had passed since this" when, meeting at the fountain of St. Julian's to get water, she met a girl who invited her to the Oratory at the home of the Salesians. At his insistence, She, who was enrolled in the Jesuits' Sunday school, agreed to attend the following Sunday:

"That Sunday I went to the Salesians and when we entered, the receptionist, Sr. Concepción Asensio, first accompanied us to the Chapel. As soon as I entered, I found Mary Help of Christians there, and when I saw her I felt something great that I cannot explain, and I fell on my knees at her feet. Then, I felt inside myself being told, "This is where I want you." (52)

That meeting was the seal and the revelation of the identity of the family relationship that our dear Eusebia had maintained with the Blessed Virgin from a very early age.

Again, she speaks to us herself:

"Everything I ask of Our Lady, She grants it." (18)

"My first love since I was a little girl was to the Blessed Virgin and I have already told you what I did when I went to church. I thought of my mother and said: without her we could not live, so then, in the life of heaven, which is so beautiful for me and to which I have so much desire to go, it will be the same, that is, without Mother we will not be able to live and even more so without the Virgin, who is the Mother of heaven and earth."

"As a child, I sometimes considered myself stained and unworthy of Him resting on my chest and then I would go to my Immaculate Mother and tell her to purify my heart and present it to Jesus so that He could rest in me." (25)

We continue to turn to her Autobiography (29), which also collects the dreams that Eusebia remembers having. In the first, she dreamt of the Virgin Mary: "In my young age and education I understood that this meant the great number of souls who would be saved by availing themselves of the protection of the Blessed Mother, Virgin Mary. From then on, I tried to love her as one loves her earthly mother and when I went to church, I rejoiced in being close to her (...)"

At the end of 1921, when she went to say goodbye to her parents to become a postulant, Eusebia bought a statue of Mary Help of Christians for her people, so that she could visit the families. She organized the "choir", in agreement with the parish priest and with her friend Caridad López, who later also entered the Institute. (Cf. 62-63) This little statue can still be seen today in his birthplace. Letter 81, the oldest that is preserved of her, clearly shows her deep devotion to Mary Help of Christians, to the point of wishing that one day her native Cantalpino could have a large image to take out in procession on the day of her feast.

It was planned that she would go to Barcelona, but as she missed her job in the house of the FMA in Salamanca, she stayed there as an assistant in the kitchen and in the laundry: "While I was hanging out the clothes," says Eusebia, "I prayed the three parts of the Rosary, the station to the Blessed Sacrament, the seven Our Fathers to St. Joseph and offered everything to the Blessed Mother and Virgin. Because of the cold, my hands were all cracked, particularly on my fingers, which caused me great pain when I hung out my clothes, but since I offered everything to my good Mother, the colder I was and the more they hurt, the happier I was." (65-66)

And years later, she expressed this profound joy with a genuine expression, already a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, in the letter to her parents in May 1928: "I cannot explain to you the beautiful and great joy that overflows in my soul because of the love of Mary." (C 10)

"On August 15" (1928, she wrote to her parents) "the fair begins here. So, I have to remember that one (in Cantalpino, her birthplace); for as many times as I went to church and put myself under the mantle of the Virgin to ask her for graces and favours. And she, compassionate and generous, listened to my prayers, and like another flower planted me in the orchards of the Christian religion, where, today contented and happy, I serve the Lord." (C 12.5)

These are just a few examples, which we have selected in order to illustrate this central aspect of her vocation, but we leave the door open to be able to approach directly the abundant written sources and thus know, first-hand, the human and spiritual richness of our beloved Sister Eusebia.

M. Mazzarello, in a good night, a few months before her death, recommended: "Let us be true images of the Virgin" (Cronistoria III, 216). In Sister Eusebia this recommendation is fulfilled in its broadest content, as we will try to present.

Eusebia establishes a permanent contact with Maria, a relationship that takes shape with the passage of time and that captures the most varied nuances of that inner voice that will always remain: "You will be my daughter". This melody did not end when, on August 5, 1924, she professed his vows in Barcelona-Sarriá (the first presence of the FMA in Spain, founded almost forty years earlier), but acquired an increasing density. She is present, insofar as her dream of becoming a nun in a family that "is all Mary's" is fulfilled; but above all, it is recreated and projected into the future because Sister Eusebia strengthens this relationship through a growing apostolic dynamism, a faithful expression of Don Bosco's motto "Da mihi animas coetera tolle".

The time of formation in the novitiate led her to define her devotion to Mary based on a practice that, apparently, had spread at that time, as Father Garrido refers in his biography. He says that in *Positio I* (134-135) Marian Slavery is spoken of as an eminently Salesian practice. In 1961, at the meeting of the Novice Masters of the Salesian novitiates of Europe, it was agreed that the consecration of Marian Slavery should take place, according to St. Louis Marie Monfort Grignon. In this regard, we have some authors who reflect on the meaning that this devotion had for Sister Eusebia. D. Antonio Maria Calero, sdb, ("The Mystical Dimension in Blessed Eusebia Palomino"). Sister Francesca Venturelli, FMA, also speaks of the gift of self, to the point of offering herself as a victim ("The total gift of self, without reservations, in the life of Blessed Eusebia Palomino"). The contribution of both helps us to better understand what at first glance could cause us to question her Salesian charismatic identity. Sister Francesca puts it this way: "Her bond with Mary is not intimate, but always open to others, generous; hers is a trust that becomes an imitation of the One who at

Cana (cf. Jn 2:3) was aware of what was lacking and became a spokesperson for those in need. It is in this context that we must place the devotion that Eusebia, who became FMA, lives, cultivates and propagates without sparing any effort: the "Marian slavery" of Montfort (with the help of her superior, she writes and sends informative material to numerous parish priests and religious superiors throughout Spain). Her insistence on spreading this devotion even reached Mother General, Sister Luisa Vaschetti, who asked her why it is necessary to become "slaves of Mary" and why it is not enough to be "her daughters". Eusebia responds with a letter (No. 48 that we will not read), in which she reveals, with the simplicity and wisdom of the humble, the reason for the beauty of this way of giving herself to Mary in order to reach Jesus. She (Sister Eusebia) suggests in fact, to give everything and forever, even the most precious that you possess spiritually... one's own good works, the desire to serve the Lord. To emphasize the totality, she uses a very simple, eloquent and effective expression "without reserving to me the value of a pin." (4-C 48)

In this regard, Consuelo Hernández Encinas, a novice, named above, relates:

"After having prepared our Mother Master - now deceased - for the Slavery of the Blessed Mother. Virgin, she invited the one who wanted to become herself, voluntarily. We all answered in the affirmative. It was the eve of the feast of Mary Help of Christians, with the charm of her Image on the altar, which looked like a flower garden. From his hands hung a ribbon through which all the rings - each with its name - a symbol of slavery and which each one received, had to pass. Only one remained in the hands of the Image of the Virgin, that of Sister Eusebia. We all thought at the time that she would be the worthiest of the affection of the Queen of Heaven. Of course, she well deserved it. This devotion she always preserved and propagated." (Positio 703)

In the Chronicle of the Valverde school of September 12, 1934, we read that "... seminarians who are on vacation to the number of eleven, some other young people and several people have been consecrated as slaves of love to the Virgin" (155 Cit. In Fr. Garrido's biography)

"In the name of FMA reside two particular aspects: the filial relationship of the members with Mary and their mission in society and in the Church... Through the relationship with Mary, the FMA becomes, like Mary, a Help of Christians with "the Help of Christians" among the poorest young people", says Piera Cavaglià, in her lecture entitled "The Experience of Filiality and its Educational Consequences in St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello and in the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians" (374) given at the Interdisciplinary Study Seminar "Filiality, category that questions the identity of the FMA" held in Rome in 2014.

It is the same with Sister Eusebia: she feels and knows that she is the daughter of such a good Mother. This deep relationship moves her to do the possible and the impossible to extend the Kingdom of God, love Jesus in the Eucharist and feel the need to make Him loved. He is her center, for Him she lives, for Him and like Him she is able to give her own life in everyday life and to the extreme of fully identifying herself with Christ in an act of complete freedom: this is the meaning of her offering as a victim. "No one takes my life, but I give it freely" (cf. Jn 10:17-18). The apostolate is the expression of a total and unconditional love, which embraces all facets of daily life. Eusebia lives united to Christ at all times and Mary is her best ally. In letter 76, to Teresa Vizcaíno, who asked her advice on entering the Order of the Visitation, she says:

"True holiness is not about going into a corner and praying, or disciplining yourself, or doing noisy things. No. True holiness consists in the renunciation of ourselves, following in all things the common life and exact fulfillment of all the duties that obedience imposes on us. That is where we must seek holiness, and we must march with the right intention of pleasing God alone and of drawing hearts to Him through our self-denial, so that they may be converted and loved to Him."

From her candid simplicity, her apostolate is addressed to all kinds of people as in a wide range: girls, adolescents, young women, families, seminarians, priests, parents and people from the village, with whom,

directly or indirectly, she maintain a relationship, always with a clear purpose: to collaborate in the salvation of all, with a particular pedagogical-educational imprint, guiding how to undertake or continue the path of life, whose goal is eternal happiness, God's only desire for his children. Catechesis is one of the privileged means of carrying out this particular mission. She takes advantage of every moment to invite people to grow in the Christian life, not only personally, but also capable of spreading her apostolic spirit. She also spreads devotion to the Rosary of Wounds and to Merciful Love, all of which, together with that of Marian Slavery, are practices of popular piety that invite in a simple way to the contemplation of the Paschal Mystery of Christ.

Both her letters, as well as the abundant testimonies collected in *the Positio* for the cause of beatification, reveal this educational passion, born of a heart open to welcome the love she receives from God and to distribute it with her hands full. "In the letters to her parents," writes Sister Francesca Venturelli, "she speaks enthusiastically of parties, theatres and trips, she tells them that she likes to climb trees, that she loves to cook delicious stews for important days - full of charity, in her last illness, she wrote with great difficulty a book of recipes that would help her cook sisters. She was the first to invent games in the oratory, and in everything she was attentive, to ask the girls of the school to be obedient, to take care of the catechesis with stories that could be understood by all, even the poorest and simplest; she is profound when she educates the spiritual and moral dimension. In this regard, we have the testimony of a priest from Valverde who testifies how he could recognize in confession, by her delicacy, the girls who were followed by her. Sister Eusebia does not withhold on accompanying us towards high goals, on proposing the gift of ourselves to Jesus and Mary. And everyone realizes that she bears witness to what she teaches, that she lives what she says she believes." Comments (5)

We read, for example, in Letter 45.5, which he addressed to his mother in 1932: "If we want our soul to have life and life in abundance, let us go often to receive the Holy Sacraments, in particular the Holy Eucharist; For just as our body needs its nourishment every day, and if we do not give in to it, it faints and dies, so is our soul, it also needs to be nourished every day, because if not, it languishes and becomes sick. It is nourished by the Holy Eucharist, Holy Mass, prayer and good readings."

Virtudes Domínguez, whom Sister Eusebia called "my secretary," recounted: "In the Oratory they assigned her for little girls and by the hundreds they went on Sundays to be with her. What examples I told you! What games I made them that made us grown-ups fool us! She wanted a swing for her girls and one day the director of the Alkali Company and his wife went to visit the school and she made this request and immediately gave away some iron swings surrounded by chains and made in conditions so that her girls, whom she loved so much, would not be in danger. Another day she asked Sister Carmelita for a kitchen and Sister Carmelita laughed when she found out how poor the house was: "Yes, yes, Madam Director, a kitchen for the children of the Protectorate." (Positio II 671-672)

And Sister Clotilde Márquez, FMA from Valverde, whom she prepared for her First Communion, declares: She spoke to us about spiritual things with great faith and naturalness and with such fervour that we students sought her out to listen to her; leaving them all enchanted. How many times did I see her working in the garden she had prepared for herself! Her dream was to help the House, which was very poor. Her great concern was to seek the comfort of her sisters and the girls. In the courtyard, in addition to the garden, she built benches for the Oratorians to sit in Catechism classes. (Positio II 254)

As we have already pointed out in her portrait, her self-giving culminates in the supreme gesture of giving her life, united to her Lord. It is surprising that, despite not having an academic education, she lives, suffers and enjoys the events of her homeland and as far as she understands it, she does her best to collaborate for the common good, adding herself to those whom Jesus calls blessed because they work for peace. We can well say that she lived active citizenship. She felt responsible for the fact that many were unaware that in God the Father and in his Son Jesus Christ is found the path that leads to true happiness. Letter 55, dated 25 April 1934, shows her full apostolic commitment, which reveals the greatness of her heart and her boundless

desire to help everyone find the treasure of a faith that leads to full human fulfilment. She recounts how the tensed social climate of the preceding years has given way to a certain calm and has made it possible to celebrate the Holy Week processions. "God grant that the blindfold that covers their eyes may soon be removed and they may see the falsehood of evil, the nobility of the good, and turn away from those tortuous paths that lead them to the precipice and be saved. This is the end for which the Lord has created us so that, living as good Christians, we may sanctify our souls through the commandments and the works of mercy done for our brothers and sisters." (C 55.2-3)

With regard to active citizenship, letter 84, which she wrote in the form of poetry and addressed to Dolores Mora Benito, niece of the parish priest of Valverde del Camino, who exercised charity, had a large territory and workers in his charge, Mr. Eusebia does not spare advice to her, in order to guarantee an adequate working relationship, with a clear sense of social justice and the integral promotion of those under her.

In letter 62 (presumably from October-November 1934, which she addressed to her widowed mother for three years), she wrote to her reassuring her about the events that had occurred in the north of Spain and the repercussions they could have on Valverde. In this letter she recalls the moment when, three years earlier, the sisters of the community were forced to leave the school because they were in danger and were housed by various families: "we were all spread out in the houses; and since they all had telephones and the telephone operators are girls who have been educated in our homes, who knew us very well, at night we had less work, so they put us in communication with the houses where we were and we talked to our superior, who was at the house of this man's mother where I was." She was with the Zarza-Fleming family. This is what she says of the head of the family: "That man is a lawyer from the mines of Riotinto and he is so good and so simple that he looks like a child; and he is like the president of the Association of Parents, and he is the one who has formed the Civic Guard of Catholic Youth, who help the (Civil) Guard to go around the town all night, in order to watch the two convents and the Parish and scare away the bad guys." (C 62.5)

She asked several students to bury medals in the four cardinal points on the outskirts of Valverde. They divided the medals into four equal parts, and as there was one left over, Sister Eusebia indicated that it should be buried at the entrance to the road that connects Nerva and Riotinto with Valverde, because there would have to be reinforced protection. When the war broke out (Sister Eusebia had already died), it became known that a whole troop of miners' trucks tried to penetrate Valverde to raze it to the ground and at that same point mentioned above of the Direction House, they returned to Riotinto under the pretext of the existence of artillery, cavalry, tanks and armoured cars at that point. There was none of this. That point was defended by about fifty Falangists and Civil Guards. (Cf. Positio II, 248)

Sister Cayetana Romero Domínguez, daughter of Mary Help of Christians, who knew Sister Eusebia as a child, but only after her death understood the value of her holiness, relates: "When I was a little older, I heard that older people commented on great things about Sister Eusebia's reputation for holiness, but if I have to tell the truth, at the time, I had no great admiration for her. However, when we went to play at school on Sundays, I was surprised by the patience and gentleness with which she treated us. The memory of how she was always smiling next to the swings, made us stop for a few moments of rest to give ourselves a little catechesis, she almost always spoke to us about the Missions. Sister Eusebia was ill and yet she continued her apostolate among those who wished to speak with her. They did not enter her room except by means of a tube, they communicated with her in another adjoining room. That day there were several seminarians talking to her through the tube, and I met them (as always, out of curiosity). To each one she gave recommendations or advices, which I did not hear by the way, but from the cheerful countenances they put on and from the answers they gave I imagined that they must be favourable. But one of them came along and he wasn't the same. He became sad and somewhat annoyed: "why Sister Eusebia, am I not going to persevere?" I did not hear her reply, but it is true that shortly afterwards this young man left the seminary, and is today a good father of a family, while all the others have been and are excellent priests." (Positio 262-264). On the subject of the missions, Sister Eusebia had heard first-hand from the Salesian Luigi Versiglia

(now St. Luigi Versiglia), who passed through the Novitiate in 1921, the year in which he was consecrated bishop. He also listened to stories from Monsignor Domingo Comín, a missionary in Ecuador.

Among the documents preserved in the General Archives of the FMA Institute in Rome, there is a postcard addressed to the superior of the College of Valverde, by the Centro Montfortiano in Rome, in which she is informed that they have received the list of people who have consecrated themselves as slaves of the Virgin and which is immediately inserted in the register and added: "Thus the Virgin will be very pleased with the enthusiastic steward and will bless her"; these are words addressed to Sr. Eusebia. It is dated October 26 and is postmarked 1933. It also appears in a news item in the magazine "Regina dei Cuori": "From Spain has come a list of five hundred and ninety-three names: all these people have been recruited for Holy Slavery by the zeal of a religious Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, from Valverde del Camino (Huelva). ("Regina dei Cuori", 20 -1933: 348).

Sister Eusebia's Marian filiality is also recognized in her expressions of joy at belonging to the Institute and she shares this with her mother in letter 60, which, although it is not dated, is deduced to correspond to the summer of 1934. At that time, she was seriously ill, in severe pain, unable to eat, only a little coffee with milk, and the Apostolic See of Seville granted her permission to receive Communion without fasting on 8 September. Sister Eusebia is a living stone of Don Bosco's monument of gratitude to the Mother of God and she demonstrates it even by providing the numerical data, as if she had the list of the Institute in her hands: "We are already in the five parts of the world, because we are 6,500 sisters and about 1,000 novices with more than 600 houses. attended by 230,000 students(...) Her enthusiasm, despite her lack of strength, does not diminish, in fact, it seems to increase. The description of the Oratory is so lively, as if she was offering us the recording of a documentary. "In all our houses, both of the Salesians and of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the most complete joy always reigns through games, music, theatre, walks to the countryside with the schoolgirls. If you were to look at our patios and swings on Sundays, they looked like beehives, some skipped the rope, others sang on the wheels, others played hide-and-seek, others swung and others played tambourines and danced *sevillanas*. Then we would ring a bell, everything went silent and the catechism is explained to them, then a priest goes, gives the blessing with the Blessed Sacrament and they leave the chapel to play until night falls and they go home, happy and happy." And for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, her pen gives us a clear synthesis of the Salesian spirit, ten years after her first profession. We also refer to Letter 55: "This is the spirit of our Congregation and that Don Bosco left to his sons the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians: joy, bread, work and paradise. And despite the fact that our Congregation is so active, we have quite a few saints whose cause for beatification is already in Rome."

We have some recordings made at the time of her beatification, twenty years ago, more or less.

(Video: Dolores Mora and Josefa Pérez)

What we have reviewed so far is a small sample of the innumerable testimonies of those who knew her in life. We have tried to outline some aspects by which we recognize that the promise heard in front of the image of Mary Help of Christians on May 24, 1917, has been fulfilled in the unprecedented and genuine response of the creative fidelity of this daughter of hers, helper with her, especially, but not only, among young women. Many others remain in the archive, which we hope will be known because it has been possible to awaken the desire to draw even closer to this humble nun, who lived true apostolic charity, that which she said, which "does not draw treasures from the pocket but from the heart" (C 55).

We have not counted the hundreds and hundreds of graces that are collected in the cause of beatification, which she carried out during her lifetime and which she continues to perform, because it is not the object of today's meeting.

As we approach her liturgical feast, we thank the Lord once again for Sr. Eusebia's gift to the Salesian Family and to the Church. Glory be to him who continues to set his gaze on the humble, just as he looked at Mary.

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## **Videos**

Video "trailer" of the centenary of Sr. Eusebia's first profession and the 20th anniversary of his beatification. Spanish FMA Province "Mary Help of Christians" (SPA)

Testimonies of Dolores Mora and Josefa Pérez taken from "The Joy of Humility"

## **Links on the Web**

MUSICAL "VOICE OF GOD". Sister Eusebia's Musical

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJOfUPlvogU>

REPORT ON THE MUSICAL OF SOR EUSEBIA, Witnesses Today Program CANAL SUR

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l89iWPSGDsQ>

SISTER EUSEBIA, A SOUL OF GOD. (VALVERDE) SOUTH CHANNEL . Witnesses today.

[https://youtu.be/KKNHMOg\\_I\\_A](https://youtu.be/KKNHMOg_I_A)

SALESIANAS SALAMANCA ON LORD'S DAY, TVE 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fJX9kA6y9Q>

THE LORD'S DAY - ITALIAN TRANSLATION BY ROBERTA TOMASI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPX5uqqMx5M>

Blessed Eusebia Palomino CGFMANET (150<sup>o</sup>)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMAYNMIS8ik&feature=youtu.be>

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