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Maria De Mattias, Formation Directress

For us Adorers, February is the month of the Foundress, the month of this strong Woman, Saint, Mother and Friend. This year in a special way, on the occasion of the opening of the Congregational Novitiate, we want to look at her as Formation Director, to look at her through the stories of those who knew her life most deeply and experienced her holy witness with the teaching of her very words, gathered in her letters.

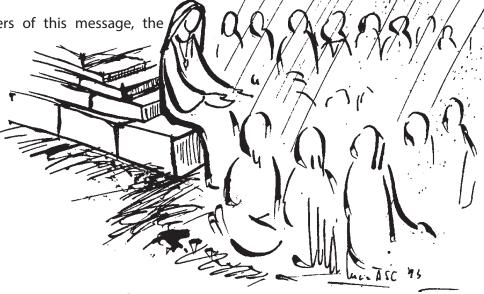
From the time the first young women asked to join her, her desire was to form missionaries, Adorers of the Divine Blood who wanted to be female counterparts to the Missionaries. It was the charism of the Institute of the Most Precious Blood. whose members would have to act in order that the blood of Jesus "not be shed in vain." (Cfr. Profiles 1, by Michele Colagiovanni)

To become announcers of this message, the

young women needed to experience a personal love with Jesus crucified, who alone is able to urge them to give their lives for the salvation of souls: Through formation, they experienced this Love and care. In this regard, in a letter to Merlini while speaking about formation, she wrote, "The young women

need to be helped, encouraged, treated with good grace not letting them worry too much about efforts in household chores, bring to them a certain regard because they are tender, young women about 14 or 15 years old. Poor things, if they are cultivated they will do good. Their flaws need to be pitied, and corrected with grace and strength. Recommend them to the heart of Our Lady. What harm is there in doing so instead of saying, "you'll be sent home."

Then I showed many examples of those whom I sent home who were not good for the Work.



(Letter 675)

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Summary



Thus, hers was a formation aiming for holistic growth of the person. In fact, in one letter to Sr. Maria Giuseppa Flavoni, to whom a young woman had been entrusted, she said regarding this, "Instruct Maria Filomena well in being consistent and prudent, as well as in gold embroidery and accounting (...) and in cleanliness and neatness in dress. (Letter 425)

Very often, the acceptance of young women and caused suffering and conflict in community. But she knew that formation is also the work of the Spirit and grace and so she entrusted them: "I took the young women in without searching for them, and with tears of tenderness, I placed them into the hands of Mary, Most Holy, so that she would watch over and defend them, since I was incapable; and oh! (Letter 631)

Maria formed with her example. Mother Clementine Zerr and Sr. Paolina Feser affirmed this

when they came from Germany to meet Maria De Mattias. In spite of difficulties, language was not an obstacle. The two young German Sisters, who would become two great Adorers, were touched by her life witness, by her spirit of prayer, breathing in the passion of love for the Crucified thanks to her, that led her to love the dear neighbor with the same fire of charity that brought Jesus to die on the cross.

Our Foundress' desire was to make these young women, women in love with Jesus, passionate missionaries for the salvation of souls.

The charism the Spirit gave to the Foundress brings with it a power that transcends time and space. It is with this experience that the formation of the Congregation Novitiate opens before us, the desire and will to find ways of expression and embodiment in today's history and intercultural reality.

Sr. Maria Grazia Boccamazzo, ASC

UISG Assembly Rome Constellation

Theme: "Sowers of prophetic hope ... generating dynamism of INTERCULTURALITY". Rome, January 9 and 10, 2020

In Monte Cucco, on January 10, 2020, during the annual assembly of the General Superiors residing in Rome, Sister Nadia Coppa, Adorer of the Blood of Christ, was elected UISG delegate for the Constellation of Rome, "the most international of all the constellations."

To Sister Nadia we express our congratulations and support in the service of the Church of God. We thank you for having accepted this commitment which, as a Congregation of Adorers of the Blood of Christ, brides of the Paschal Lamb, opens us more and more to share and strengthen our identity as consecrated women in the Church, accepting the challenges that arise today for all Institutes.





ROME CONSTELLATION MEETING

ROME CONSTELLATION MEETING



A Dream Becoming Reality

February 4, 2020, Feast of St. Maria De Mattias and day of the beginning of the Congregation Novitiate

History

The 2017 General Assembly succeeded in crowning what was a common desire for some time of having a single Novitiate for the entire Congregation. The primary purpose of this choice is that of being helped to grow as a SINGLE BODY, overcoming fragmentation and putting our energies together.

This was a dream, whose implementation with the Assembly Acts was entrusted to the new Administration. The project was motivated by the vision of forming new ASCs, women, who, enriched by God's Word, give birth to Christ to bring His charity into the realities of our time; women of dialogue, enabled to discover God's presence, the seed of hope and newness of life that all people have within themselves; women capable of relating with different people and cultures, who feel at home wherever they are because the region to which they belong is the ASC Congregation.

This radical change in our formation processes will help us to renew our ASC charism in a constantly transforming historical and cultural context. Therefore, in order to give life to this project it was necessary to create a multicultual context based on a community of Adorers coming from different realities and cultures.

The General Administration gave priority to the project, and through prayer and discernment, identified, first of all, the place and then the people to build the new formation community and, finally, the General Councilors who would accompany them.

The Sisters appointed to join the project were: Sr. Mariamma Kunnackal, appointed Novice Director and Sr. Joan Stoverink, assistant director; Sr. Emanuela Škarica, who accepted the role of local superior; Sr. Marisa Nardoni elected local treasurer and Sr. Martha Kwimba, as the youngest member of the formation community.

The new Sisters arrived in Rome in September, 2018 at the Generalate to experience an international community and be prepared for the formation of an intercultural community in response to the call for transformation, to the ASC

dream, needed today in the building up of the beautiful order of things.

In addition, attendance at human and spiritual refresher courses were offered to the formation community members and they participated monthly in discussions with the other realities of the Congregation on ASC spirituality. This also occurred by way of Skype with Sisters in the various parts of the world. The process included all the entities, from the largest to the smallest, giving each the opportunity to contribute and offer her experience. In that way, the Sisters were able discuss with other international congregations that made the same formation choice and are further along in the process.

In the meantime, and going hand-in-hand, an ad hoc Commission formed by the councilors in charge, Sr. Wiesława Przybylo and Sr. Matija Pavić, and Sr. Mariamma Kunnackal, Sr. Maria Hughes and Sr. Joan Stoverink worked to develop the formation plan, which involved all the Congregation through the distribution of questionnaires. The EGC held in Rome in November 2018 also gave the General Administration and Regional Superiors the opportunity to discuss the processes in place for the preparation of the Congregation Novitiate and to listen to the experiences of other international congregations who are already on their way with this choice.

Thus, on September 4, 2019, the Sisters of the formation community for the Congregation Novitiate, moved to the house chosen as the location of the Novitiate, on via G. Gatti, 13, in Rome. The house, belonging to the Italian Region, which had already been the Interprovincial Novitiate house in the 1980s and 1990s, was handed over on loan for this ministry to the General Administration. It was renovated to welcome the formation community and, during the month of November, the seven postulants of the Congregation Novitiate.

Sr. Maria Grazia Boccamazzo, ASC

Experience of the Transition Time of the Postulants in the Congregation Novitiate



The arrival of the seven postulants was completed on the 18th of November, 2019. The House echoed with joy and laughter though they did not know each other. During these two months of transition they were occupied mostly with activities for knowing each another, deepening their knowledge of English, learning the different cultures and appreciating the differences and richness of each.

In order to improve the English language, classes were given to them by Sr. Joan Stoverink, and we tried to use English as the medium of communication in the house. In addition, some basic Italian classes were also given by Sr. Enrica, ASC, to facilitate their communication when they meet people of the parish, neighbors, when they go for outreach ministry and also for some communication with ASCs who come to visit us who do not know English.

The different outings we arranged to get acquainted with places and methods of transportation were useful and helpful. We attended an Advent reflection day with English speaking sisters and novices at the SSND's Generalate. We went to visit the four Basilicas in Rome and other churches to see the Christmas cribs. Serving meals for the poor and participating in a Christmas concert at the Generalate were also enjoyed. A special highlight was attending an audience with Pope Francis.

We also had an event with the community to share our culture, families and vocation story. These sharings were very enriching and helpful to know each other and also their background for a better understanding. This sharing followed a cultural evening with songs, dances and lots of enthusiasm.

Every week we meet the postulants individually. There are moments of prayer besides Lauds and Vespers such as Lectio Divina and Eucharistic adoration. Recently, they have had presentations of Bibliodrama, and Lectio Divina as a style of life. In January they had classes on the Theology of Vows and Psychology and Group Dynamics.

For the Eucharist we go to St. Agnes Parish which is Italian, and twice a week we walk to the Ursuline Sisters for English Mass.

On the whole, the postulants seem to be happy; they help each other and they support each other and pray and they also eat all kinds of food. God is blessing them with His power and graces to face all the cultur shock and challenges with peace and tranquility. Sisters in community are a good support in all the levels. So we continue to live here with gratitude and joy. Thanks for the closeness and support of the members of the General Administration.

Sr. Mariamma Kunnackal, ASC and Sr. JoanStoverink, ASC



I am *Suchitra Paik* and I am 20 years old. I am from India and belong to the state of Odisha, I belong to the Region of India.

Now I am in postulancy and soon will become a novice. The first time I met the sisters was in a vocation camp and through them I met St. Maria De Mattias. Her life of humility touched my heart.

I am *Padma Vaddeaswarapu* and I am 20 years old.
I am from India and belong to the state of Andra Pradesh.
I belong to the Region of India. Now I am in postulancy.
The first time I met the sisters was in a vocation camp and through them I met St. Maria De Mattias.
I was touched by her zeal and enthusiasm.





I am *Martina Bukarica* and I am 29 years old. I am from Croatia and I belong to the Region of Zagreb.

The first time I met one sister of our congregation in Zadar, her life inspired me.

Also through her, I came to know Saint Maria De Mattias. I like the love of Maria De Mattias for the Precious Blood of Christ.

I am **Swarnalatha Bandi** and I am 20 years old. I am from India and belong to the state of Andra Pradesh. I belong to the Region of India and now I am in postulancy. I was inspired by the life of ASC sisters in my parish at Velgode and came to know St.Maria De Mattias.





My name is *Biljana Kostić* and I am 20 years old. I come from Banja Luka in Bosnia Herzegovina. I am ASC postulant and belong to the Region of Zagreb. From my birth I was with ASC sisters; I would go to the parish where they were present.

Through the sisters I got to know a great woman, sister and a saint, dear Maria DE MATTIAS.

I am *Mary Priya*, 22 years old. I am from Karnataka and belong to the Region of India. I am a postulant

I have known the ASC sisters from my young age. I studied in the school and came to know them and Saint Maria De Mattias. I like her zeal for the Crucified JESUS.





I am *Romina Giacconi* and I am 45 years old.

My city of origin is called Agugliano in the province of Ancona, Marche.

I am an ASC postulant of the Italian Region.

In 2013 I met the Adorers through participating in a meeting on mercy held in my city. Sr. Annamaria Vissani, ASC was the speaker.

To describe what strikes me most about the foundress Saint Maria De Mattias, I borrow Merlini's words: "strong, courageous and full of God woman."

."We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord."_

We, seven postulants (soon to be novices) from different Regions, have come to Rome to start a new experience for the ASC Congregation, an international novitiate. We are grateful to God who is giving us this opportunity to live together from different cultures. Seeing the pope and praying near the body of St. Maria De Mattias have been unique and meaningful experiences.

Our daily life is filled with joy and laughter. Sometimes there are difficulties in understanding the languages but that doesn't put a barrier in our relationships. We are here for each other, and ready to help in every situation when someone needs help. Our community sisters make us feel at home. We are joyful that we will grow in this international novitiate and we ask for your valuable prayers and blessings. Be assured that we will keep you in our prayers, dear sisters.

Continental Area: Africa Mission of Liberia

News from Grand Cess

The sisters from Liberia tell us about their Christmas experience.

December was certainly an eventful month for us. In addition to Advent and the celebration of Christmas, we honored the newly ordained Rev. Andrew Toe, native son of Grand Cess, with the



celebration of a Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday, December 29, followed by a meal in the parish courtyard (our outdoor kitchen was the food preparation site). The remainder of the afternoon was spent watching or participating in native

dances and visiting. We hosted six Sisters of the Holy Family in our home for two nights. They

brought mattresses with them as we only have one double and two single beds.

The plan to tell the parishioners on December 22 that we are leaving in February was just that. God has such a sense of humor as you will read in the story below! New date - January 5.

Friends of S. Zita paid the tuition for a man from here to spend the year in vocational school in Harper, three hours away, to learn to be an electrician. Zita decided she wanted to attend the graduation on December 21 and surprise him with the presence of his wife and two children. Father Francis had been told that the roads were better (we've been having unseasonable rains) and he agreed to drive. This was to be a day trip.

Long story short: They got stuck three times and had to dig out. The last incident of getting stuck was at 2 a.m. in the middle of nowhere and it was too dark to see to dig. And the battery was dying due to a broken part on the alternator. Zita and the two children and their mother came back by motorcycles Sunday morning about 10. To be

sure, she was not ready for an announcement and Mass was under way. Many mini-stories could be shared. The vehicle was finally repaired (spare parts must



come from a city two hours away) and back here on Christmas Eve. Father Francis is good at mechanics and certainly was a trustworthy man to have present when all this was happening. Thanks be to God everyone was safe.

After the midnight Mass celebrated at 11.00 PM both priests joined us for a dinner of spaghetti, chicken, peas and cake. The gift to ourselves was a bottle of wine we had saved for this day!

Finally, in the parish compound yard of our house, a new well is being hand-dug and much other manual work is occurring. A German NGO is funding this project, probably about \$15,000 to \$20,000 of materials and labor. This well is not only a blessing for us but also for the school as it is deeper and will be a source of good water when the school well is dry. The NGO will return later in 2020 to build a new well for the hospital here.

A blessed and Happy New Year to each and all. **Sr. Therese Wetta, ASC**

Continental Area: Asia Region of India

Christmas Celebration with the Poor Children from the Villages

The Indian ASCs who work in schools in different places tell us about their Christmas experience with children.

South India - Karnataka - Tarikere

It was a happy moment for all the children as they came together to celebrate Christmas. There were 55 children from 3 villages of Tarikere Taluk. We began the program at 11.30 am with a prayer dance. We had colorful cultural programs arranged from each village. After the cultural programs, the children played sports according to their class. The winners were awarded attractive prizes. Our parish priest Fr. Ealise gave a short Christmas message and concluded the program with lunch at 2.30pm. The children were so happy and enjoyed the celebration.

Sr. Rotion Mangarayil, ASC



North India - Jharkhand - Ranchi



Sr. Jancy Pallicka, ASC

Karnataka - Mysuru Christmas bells Ring and makes all people sing!



We our began Christmas celebration with prayer and a melodious prayer song. We lit the lamp symbolizing Jesus as the Light of the World. The students of NTT (Nursery Teachers' Training) & SHG's (Self Help Groups) were present. The students have their own way to capture our hearts. The NTT students did a beautiful dance.

Christmas is not complete without cake. We had cake cutting and our directress Sr. Jaisy delivered the message of Christmas and wishes for all those who were present. There was carol singing by the NTT students and also they received prizes for sports competition and exhibition at this event.

Sr. Jaicy Karukuttikaran, ASC

Region of India

Saint Maria De Mattias, a Contemporary Woman of the Word

A deep glance and reflection on the life and letters of St. Maria would reveal to us the fact that she lived her consecrated life in absolute synchronization with the Gospel values and fundamental Christian ecclesial principles. Truly, Maria was an ecclesial woman for whom sacred scripture was not something that has to be separated from life, something abstract, but rather it was an integral part of her life that influenced and reflected in her very style of life. Consequently we note that the Holy Spirit inspired her to choose a spirituality which is at the heart of the Church as well as in the heart of Jesus Christ, namely the spirituality of the Blood of Christ.

We can affirm that Maria De Mattias was a woman of the "WORD" precisely because she lived in totality the central themes the New Testament proposes and unfolds: the aspect of "God's divine mercy and Grace." The synoptic Gospels especially Lucan narratives highlight the aspect of the Mercy of God in the parables of the merciful father,(Lk,15:11-31), Good Samaritan, (Lk 10: 25-37) lost sheep, (15: 1-7), lost coin(15: 8-10) and the story of Zacchaeus (Lk, 19: 1-10), etc. Jesus amazingly makes tangible the great mercy of God in the face of the human miseries of sin and shame. This is absolutely in contrast with the image of an Old Testament God: a punishing and frightening God. The revelation of Jesus about his Father as a forgiving God transforms our preconception of God to the extent that we are coheirs with Jesus in the inheritance of his glory (Heb 9: 15-16).

Adetailed reflection of the letters and spirituality of St. Maria would undoubtedly reveal her great disposition of heart. The fabulous volumes of her letters demonstrate her total dependence on God and His divine Mercy. Further, her letters testify that she often submitted herself to God in utter dependence. Moved with great humility and in a spirit of submission she confessed her limitations and weaknesses. Maria De Mattias trusted in the mercy of God and in turn became a person who experienced the tender Mercy of God all through her life. The confrontation of her life with the Word of God helped her to discover herself, to live consciously, always in the present and not in the

past. The complete knowledge and control of her own feelings and thoughts helped Maria De Mattias to carve her personality, and to reach the height of human and spiritual maturity. This is because she always experienced the outpouring of God's mercy and compassion in her life. Without any inhibition, Maria acknowledged herself as the lowly servant of God and all her letters gives vivid expression of this outstanding quality.

"From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace." (Jn,1: 16-17). If it is through divine mercy we have been forgiven. It is precisely through grace and according to the measure of our faith we are redeemed. St. Maria De Mattias was a beneficiary of God's grace which enabled her to remain long hours in contemplation of the crucified Lord. Her faith was incredible and so the river of grace flowed into her life! "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is manifested fully in weakness." (2 Cor, 12: 9-10) Jesus re-confirms and encourages St. Paul to persevere in his call.

For us Adorers, the appeal of the 21st General Assembly is to daily listen to the WORD and enter into a process of personal transformation. We in India have also chosen the theme the "Wordcentered community" that would fundamentally take us back to the person of St. Maria, who lived in fullness a Word-based life. Her life and spirituality become a reliable and relevant source for us even today and she would challenge us to find life in the Sacred Scripture. To live in coherence with the Word is to experience the abundance of grace and fullness of God's mercy for us and in us.

Sr. Beena Thoombalan, ASC

Continental Area: Europe Missione Albania

Gratitude

On Christmas, Sr. Suela Pepa, ASC local superior of the community of Durazzo – Mamurras, Albania, hit by the November 26 earthquake, thanks everyone for the gestures of solidarity they received.

"Fear not: behold, I am announcing a great joy that will be for all the people: today in the city of David, a Savior is born for you, Christ the Lord.

This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

(Lk. 2:13)

Dear Ones,

We celebrated Christmas. God enters into our story, takes our brokenness and comes to find us in the smallness of a newborn child. In thinking about this Christmas 2019, what re-echoes constantly in my mind is the cry of a child beginning life, it is a cry of life.

It is Christmas in Durazzo and Mamurras as well, places racked by the shaking of the earthquake. Each morning as I pass by the crumbling six-story building near our house where seven people died in the dark of night, it seems I can still hear the cry of the little girl under the rubble who, unfortunately, did not make it.

Walking in the courtyard of Durazzo, I can hear the crying and choking words "God, help us" of little Ledion as each tremor made the earth shake. I hear the little girl playing outside with her doll in the mud of Thumana, taciturn and squealing with the pain of the poor who had become wretched.

Along the streets with crumbling building walls, I see children who have lost their smiles, their family homes. I see little Ajsel, in his red crib in the courtyard of the church, who innocently slept in the sunshine while in another block, life was lost among the ruins and the people around him were filled with pain. A sign for us, a child wrapped in swaddling clothes!

Yes! God comes to find us in our daily lives, in our anxiety, in our crumbling securities with the tenderness and innocence of a child. It is Christmas! The child wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger, Emmanuel, "God with us," enters into our history, is beside the women and men of our land, in this time marked by destruction and fear to

give us hope again of new life, also through those who with their concrete gestures help us to rise again and see light and not darkness.

Our wish is that God's love, tenderness and embrace may touch each broken heart, bind up every wound, hear each moan, dry every tear, and become the certainty that He is with us and will never abandon us.

May ours be the hope of the certainty that no earthquake and no rubble will ever be able to make the love God has for us crumble.

Best wishes to all of you who with your generosity and help have widened the tents of your hearts to welcome and give a place and help to those who have no place.

We give our heartfelt thanks for all you did and will continue to do for us, for our land and for our people.

May Emmanuel, the God of peace, give joy and serenity to you and your families.

ASC Community in Albania, Durazzo - Mamurras. Sr. Suela Pepa, ASC



Joy to the World, a Savior is Born!

The angels sang, "Glory to God in heaven and peace on earth, alleluia!" This proclamation awakens the shepherds and Kings to see the Baby Jesus in the manger and experience the great love of God in the great mystery of the Incarnation. We contemplate the humility of God who became human in order to encounter every man and woman.

Christmas is a moment of sharing our joy, love and moments of renewing our relationship. Jesus has come to the world to proclaim the great Joy to the world, because a savior has come into our midst, in order to save us from all the slaveries of the world and make us know that God is Love. God's Love is manifested to us by the Gift of JESUS, His only Son. So, Christmas is a time of giving as God the Father shared His Son to the world.

Christmas night is a time of grace for those who want to have it, for those who desire it in their hearts and long for freedom and salvation. But when we look at the world, there are still wars and destruction, innocent people dying, children being exploited and their innocence destroyed, entire peoples dying of hunger because of the arrogance and selfishness of the rich. Many people do not love each other, poisoned in their hearts by hatred. Many live without hope. I remembered the Gospel of Lk 4:18-19, "Jesus came to the world to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, to free the oppressed ..."

Christmas 2019 was very special and meaningful to me and to all of us in the Generalate community in Rome. The doors of our hearts and home were opened wide for the poor, lonely, unwanted and vulnerable. On Christmas we had a grant celebration with refugees/migrants and the poor. They were nearly 150 men, women and children in this celebration. We had a grand and high Eucharistic Celebration, organized by San'Egidio, the Volunteer Organization which cares for the migrants and refugees in Rome. After the Mass they offered a delicious dinner in the Church and greeted guests with Christmas Carols and distributed gifts to all at the end of the program. All these people were very excited and joyful.

We Adorers of the Blood of Christ were able to share the meal, joy, love and communion with these vulnerable people at the table. At the beginning some of us felt discomfort but when we were able to reflect Jesus on their faces, a total transformation took place in our attitude, a generous Love developed within us. This gave us inner joy and harmony to be with them, listen to their problems and to learn more about them. As we were closer to them our hearts moved with compassion. We realized that they are also like us, created with equal dignity, they are our brothers and sisters.

At Supper, when we sisters came for dinner at the table, we were very enthusiastic and joyful to share each one's experience being with these suffering and wounded. We were moved with compassion and promised prayers.



On 29th December, the members of the community went to the Community of Betania, in the Regional House, Rome where our elderly sisters live. We spent a few hours with them to share the joy and love of Christmas. We played Tombola and distributed prizes to the winners. At the end of the game we also distributed consolation prizes to all those who did not win. Sr. Sandra Paolacci was very welcoming and enthusiastic to have us in their community. We sang different carols for the sisters. Some of them thanked us for the great joy and love we exchanged with one another. Our presence increased hope and love in their life.



Sr. Rani Padayattil, ASC

General Administration Calendar



February 3-14: Celebration of the Extended General Council (EGC) at the Generalate in Rome with the participation of the Regional Superiors, Regional Councilors in charge of formation and the Coordinators of the Foundations

February 4: Feast of St. Maria De Mattias and beginning of the canonical novitiate for seven postulants of the Congregation

February 10: Concluding celebrations of the 185th anniversary in Acuto



Bithdays: Let's Celebrate Life

<u>40</u>		
Sr. Thi Ha Tran	02/15/1980	Korea
<u>70</u>		
Sr. Danuta Paterek	02/11/1950	Wrocław
Sr. Maria Orsino	02/22/1950	Italy
<u>90</u>		
Sr. Mary Schoenecker	02/01/1930	USA



International News ette



Monthly Communication

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