

# DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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**Mary was  
the channel  
through which  
God became man.  
He assumed  
her Immaculate flesh.**

**Cover: The Suffering Christ  
of Limpias**

A closeup of the face of the miraculous  
crucifix presented to the church  
at Santander, Spain  
by Don Diego de la Piedra Secadura.  
It is believed this crucifix  
was carved by Pedro de Mena



## From The Editor's Desk

A Good "Homely" Family Hug!

It strikes me that at the heart of the family is the duty of handing on the Faith. It is in the family that we learn about love and belonging, sharing and sacrifice, joy and pain, forgiveness and unity. It is in the family we learn that Faith means trusting in

ourselves, others and God.

That is as it *should* be, but is it actually so? In overhearing the conversations of some parents I find that the predominant subjects revolve around chores to be done, who met whom, the next TV programme, who has tuitions next or other mundane or 'urgent' matters.

In this frenetic paced society I have come to realize that our families barely sit down to talk to each other about themselves; to disclose their joys and fears, their anxieties or achievements in the safe confines of the home. Factually it is here that our youngster feels least 'at home' - how very odd! Were we to commit ourselves to sitting down as a family and really listening and speaking to one another, we could and should be able to really feel *at home*, at home. For those who have never tried this, it might seem awkward at first, but start, we must. When we begin to feel at ease with one another at home we will want to share 'quality time' with one another. We will no longer be strangers to each other. Then our itchy teenager will not dash off to 'hang out' with his/her friends where s/he feels more comfortable. No longer will the hardworking father find a reason to stay longer at the office, or the mother at the society meeting for the development of the neighbourhood. Today, parents may feel falsely reassured, thinking that their youngster is 'at home' in the company of some 'reliable' friends. We may even feel relieved to know this, rather than having to awkwardly face our teenager at home. How much further from the truth could we be?

It is only when our teen learns to give and receive that *hug from the home* within the family that s/he will not want to run out of the door before s/he's actually enters. All of us want to be heard and all of us need acceptance, but the fact is: there is so much going on in the hearts and in the heads of our children, so much din and confusion, that it is only the decibels of rock and punk and rap that seem to drown the 'noise' out. Do we parents ever stop and ask why?

When you discover that your teens spend much more time with their friends and their gizmos rather than at home, it is you, the family, who must first ask: where on this rollercoaster ride of life did they hop off? Was it probably while you parents were busy with your legitimate day to day chores that your youngster found a more welcome *hug* elsewhere and you, the family, may have lost him/her for now...or more dreadfully, forever! Shouldn't you give it a thought? Does your youngster need to be heard...or helped or...saved? It may be now or never!

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

## 4. THE STORY OF A PENCIL

*Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss*

**A** very long time ago, the Pencil Maker spoke to the pencil he had just invented saying, "There are five things you need to understand well before I send you out into the world as one of the great inventions of our time. If you always remember them and abide by them you will become the best pencil that ever was."

The first is that by design you will be able to do many great things, but only if you allow yourself to be held in that 'Someone's' hand and let yourself be guided as to where to leave a mark. By yourself you can do nothing, but in the hand of a skilled artist, you will work marvels. Artists generally are temperamental, but stay united with your master always, and learn to work in co-ordination with his plans and designs no matter how bizarre they seem to you. Second, for you to function at your best, you will need to experience a painful sharpening from time to time, but this is the only way you can operate as a pencil. Third, you have the ability to correct any mistakes you might make. But again for this you need to be totally at the disposal of the one directing and guiding you. Fourth, the most important part of you will always be what is inside and invisible. And fifth, wherever you work you will leave an indelible mark and all future generations could benefit from what you do.

Now the pencil took its time to understand deeply the principles by which it could be the great invention it was designed to be, promising to remember and abide by these fundamental rules. It

meekly entered the box fully determined to live up to its Maker's dream.

### **Abide in Me**

We may not have realized how very much like the Pencil each of us is. When Jesus told us: "I am the Vine and you are the branches", how many of us would have realized that without a vital and living link between the two, the branch would be totally useless and ineffective, exactly like the pencil? Of what use is a pencil if it lies in the box untouched? And yet, 'they also serve who stand and wait' said the Poet. And so, the Pencil, like us, needs to wait till the Master has need of us. But then, how often would we believe that when we are sent across the path of someone in need, it is God who is really choosing us for a mighty deed, to leave behind an indelible mark for the rest of humanity to read in the life of this person? Every inspiration to do good that crosses our minds, is actually the Master inviting us to come into his grasp that he may use us for the good of others. I guess that if we did realize this, we would have co-operated a lot more enthusiastically with everyone and in everything that ever happened to us.

Again, the quality and also quantity of work we do depends not just on our skill and capacity, but primarily on the skill of the One who wields us. The real creativity and genius come from him and not from us. Ours it is only to give material shape to what is in the

Master's mind. He it is who runs the Universe and we are only his instruments. Also, the more pliant and flexible we are in his hands the better will be the result. Our will has to be completely surrendered into his hands – only then can the two partners work as one. Any time we try even indirectly to assert our own will over against his, the results would be disastrous. Further, all of us experience that some days are full while other days are boring and lifeless. Yet, if we did understand that we are like the Pencil called upon to work only when there is a need, we would not grudge ourselves those idle moments, nor feel that we are useless except when we are productive and at work.

### **Dying Is Rising**

Perhaps the second rule seems the most painful and difficult of all – the need of periodical sharpening. And yet, it stands to reason that without this sharpening and losing of oneself, the productivity of the Pencil diminishes... and so does ours. What makes things really difficult is that this sharpening happens through the instrumentality of different people and in various, often unexpected, ways. Basically it involves a divesting of Self or of our Ego and our innate desire not to be touched or interfered with by anyone. We like to be masters of our own destinies. This would possibly be the most difficult element or requisite for our happy functioning as instruments in God's hands. And yet, there is no way we can operate at our optimum without a thorough periodical overhauling. In his parable of the Vine and the branches, Jesus spoke of a pruning that the Father does in

order that the branches may produce more and better fruit. The secret here seems to lie in understanding the positive purpose behind this pain and inconvenience and accepting it with faith in the Father's love.

Once we understand this inexorable Law of Life and also learn how to flow with it, without resisting it and breaking ourselves against it, Life becomes quite smooth and productive. What we need to do is to keep focused on the end result. Knowing that only when the pencil point has been sharpened to perfection that its mark is clear, sharp and legible would help us want to produce such an impression and be ready to pay the full price for it.

### **Human it is to Err**

What stands out with regard to the mistakes that we make is that they don't really matter at all. It takes the Master just a flourish of his highly skilled hand to do away with all the mess we may have created and to re-work that part to greater perfection. In fact, while we are most embarrassed by our mistakes and failures, the Master doesn't pay much attention to them; rather, he takes them in his stride and has the required skill to move on. For him, it is part of the process of creating something new and worthwhile while for us these same shortcomings seem to be major hurdles and blunders.

Another difficult aspect is the realization that the part that is visible outside, the glittering, colourful and showy exterior is actually of not much worth or value and obviously, the least important as far as the purpose of the pencil goes! In fact, this wooden covering

has to be totally lost and shed if at all the lead is to be accessible and the pencil is to leave a mark behind. Should the pencil resist the sharpening process because it was averse to losing its shiny outside, it would be totally useless as a writing tool. Here too the paradox applies: 'He who seeks to save his life will lose it but he who loses his life for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel (the Truth) will keep it!' For us too, the most precious part of us is hidden deep within the recesses of our being – the image and likeness of God that we carry within us. This is not generally visible to others except through the effects of our work. The visible part of us, our looks, physique, hair-style, clothing, diction and the rest is not of great consequence. And yet, it would shock us to realize how much time and effort we spend attending only to these external, dispensable characteristics! Proportionately, how much time do we give to the interior development of ourselves, to the disciplining of our minds and spiritual faculties? We feel that what most impresses people is the exterior and that is all that matters. The Pencil has a lot to teach us in these matters.

### **Your Contribution?**

Finally, our work itself is to leave an indelible mark behind – for better or for worse. Whether we are aware of this law or not, and also whether it is good we do or evil, we leave something behind for posterity to enjoy or suffer! So, when we depart from this world, we are going to leave it as either a better or a worse place to live in – only future generations can tell. Think of some of the amenities we

are so accustomed to now-a-days, like electricity, a plentiful water supply, modern medical facilities, air-conditioning and the like; we bless all those who have contributed towards the invention of these facilities which make life so much easier and pleasant, especially in big cities. But these very blessings question us: 'What about your contribution to society? Are you one who only receives but does not give in return? We need to remember that each of us is sufficiently equipped to leave an indelible and unique mark for all generations to admire.

We recall Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite who, realizing one day with a jolt that the world would always remember him for this destructive invention only, turned everything around by placing all the royalties he obtained from this creation of his at the service of those who use their talents for the betterment of society - in the now famous and well-known Nobel prizes. Today most people remember Alfred Nobel only for the prizes that promote the welfare of Society.

What is going to be your contribution to society and to the world? Can you learn some of the basic laws of success from the simple pencil? Every one of us is like a pencil... created by the Maker for a unique and special purpose. By understanding and remembering this purpose constantly and by placing ourselves confidently in the hands of our Maker, we can ensure that our lives on earth fulfill the meaningful purpose God keeps secretly in his heart. You were made to do several great things – but for which of these would you want to be remembered? □



**I BELIEVE IN THE GOD WHO BELIEVES IN ME!**

*by Fr. John Gonsalves, sdb - Asst. Parish Priest,  
Sacred Heart Church Yerwada, Pune*

**F**or me the vocation to be a Salesian Priest is the greatest gift after life. It gives meaning and joy to me. I believe in this and I believe in a God who believes in me.

My story began in a simple village, Uttan Pali, surrounded by the hills, fields and the sea. Here the people are generous, loving and simple and they have a deep faith and trust in God. The seed of a religious vocation was planted in my own family. The way we shared thoughts and things, the way we cared for one another, the way we prayed fervently, kept us united in love in spite of our poverty and family problems. My parents were my role-models. They taught me through their silence and their words. I experienced their deep faith, hard-work and love for the family. It was my mother who drew me to love Jesus intensely. I was encouraged to attend Mass daily, to say my prayers, join the Legion of Mary and altar servers' association. The wisdom and power of her words helped me at all the important decisions in my life.

I studied in Marathi up to Std. X and then Fr. Diego Nunes assisted me to go to Don Bosco, Lonavla . He said that Lonavla was not meant just to learn English but also to become priests or religious. I expressed the desire to study English but not to become a priest, yet if God called me I would say YES. For the first few days I felt home-sick, new faces, new language and new culture. I asked God to help me and Mother Mary to pray for me. I liked the atmosphere



of Lonavla – Fathers and brothers, the education, sports, music, drama and the spiritual life. I fared well in my studies thanks to my teachers and friends.

In Std. XI, deep within my heart, I felt God's call. I spoke to Fr. Romulo Noroñha, my rector. I wished to work to support my family for a few years and then return to join, but he discouraged me saying that God would look after my family. I trusted and God blessed my family and me abundantly for the sacrifice that they made. Two of my sisters are religious nuns!

The journey ahead was tough and challenging but God saw me through all these difficult moments.

Today I am a happy Salesian priest. What an amazing grace I have been blessed with!

Our world needs brave hearts and strong spirits today and God, who has a plan for each of us, will assist us if we are generous with him, he never fails. □



# FAMILY LOVE

by Joan Levy Earle

**H**onour thy father and thy mother, that your days may be long in the land of the living." This Fourth Commandment meant more to me than ever when my parents celebrated their diamond jubilee anniversary of marriage. It is such a blessing to still have them with us, and in fairly good health.

We live in a time of fast food, fast cars and drive-through convenience shopping. Even marriage seems to be suffering from this quick fix mentality where six months after pronouncing their vows some couples discover that their lives are missing all the glamour of Hollywood romances and they are ready to give up on each other.

What a blessing it is for all of us to see a couple persevere through the ups and downs of life and

remain committed to each other for 60 years. For my parents the trials of losing their only son at 29, various house moves and job transfers, career changes, and the burdens of modern living have not extinguished the love that they pledged to each other during the Second World War.

In that fall, the security of my parents' home took on a special significance. For 14 years my husband Jack and I had occupied the apartment over our business. When we knew that we were going to retire, an opportunity presented itself for a tenant, and so we rented the apartment four months before closing the business. Jack was already living at our farm and our daughter who had been living with us, had recently married, so there was only accommodation needed for one person...me. I checked with Mom and Dad who generously offered their spare room, and I moved back home.

Their middle-aged daughter would be spending week-nights with them and week-ends at the farm. There would be an extra place setting at their dining room table and extra dishes to wash, but someone coming and going, with things happening and a day to day reporting of all the events during the final days of our store's business.

For me, going home was so simple. And the extra blessing of being able to kiss my mom goodnight almost every night, that was significant.



I am the oldest and I left the nest at the tender age of 17. Oh, I went home again at 22 until I was married at 23, but my early twenties were filled with lots of long distance calls for advice and once or twice, I called them for a small loan.

I was busy during my early married years and my mom was also busy teaching, so our visits were mostly holidays and birthdays, even though we lived in the same city. The past few years we had chatted more on the telephone, but with the family business to run, I wasn't able to visit for a cup of tea as often as I would have liked.

Now I was going to see them five days a week, have breakfast early in the morning with mom who is also an early riser, and watch television in the evening with them and chat about the day's events.

To say that the experience worked out would be an understatement. The Lord has given me not only loving parents, but the kind that are really interested in my well-being and in how my life is doing. And Dad even offered to make signs for the going-out-of-business sale at our store. Mom surprised me often with my laundry folded and gave me a few new sweaters to wear that she found in her closet. Mom is always happy when I curl her hair and I am still thrilled when I return from doing errands to find out that she has folded my washed clothes.

When I think of the joy of still having both my parents alive, I am so grateful to God. I know that the day will come, and probably it isn't far off for one of them, when we will bid farewell for the last time, but they are still teaching me

new things and sharing their interests and concerns with me.

I have realized that watching my Dad do his morning crossword puzzle is a small thing I would have missed had I not moved back home again. They help each other, discuss their plans for the day, and remind each other of the medications which have helped keep them going for several years.

It is those little things that touch our hearts that count the most in life. Sometimes I came home so tired that I could only eat my meal and then head for my bed and get to sleep early. That was alright with them, for they understood the workload I was facing. And the night that I decided to work a few extra hours and forgot to call them was quite amusing as I arrived home to my father's stern greeting that "your mother was very worried about you when you didn't get home for supper tonight." I apologized and remembered my teenage years when I had experienced the same loving concern for my safety.

The perseverance in married love that I have witnessed from two loving parents who have never given up on each other is a reminder to all of us, their children, and to their grandchildren, who are now starting to marry, that relationships that are worked at with all of our hearts can last a lifetime through.

Yes, you can go home again when you have parents whose love has no limits... even when you are old enough to be a grandparent yourself. Not only can you go home, but you can benefit by the experience and gain a new understanding of the true meaning of family love. □



# walking with the Church



## **Resurrection: Myth or Reality?**

by F. Clancy

*I have great difficulties with the doctrine of the Resurrection. How can a body gone to dust rise again? Is belief in the resurrection a myth or a real truth? Do we really have hope of seeing our loved ones again?*

**W**hen we are baptized we are plunged into Christ's Paschal mystery. As St. Paul reminds us (Rom 6:3-4), we enter the tomb with Christ, imitating him in his death, so that we may rise like Christ to a new life. Baptism initiates this mystery, life unfolds its possibilities, and crossing the threshold of death crowns our participation in Christ's victory over death. These are not easy mysteries to explain intellectually. That is why we need faith. Our faith is nothing unless it is centred on the Paschal mystery as its essential core.

### **Acorns and Oaks**

If you sow an acorn in your garden what happens? You have to abandon the neatly and highly polished acorn into the dark, cold and damp earth. In due time, and under suitable conditions, a first shoot appears. Is this delicate shoot identical with the acorn which was planted? Yes and No! If you root up the little oak seedling you will probably still find the

acorn attached, but shrivelled, as the source of new life for the seedling. Yet the seedling soon achieves its own independent existence and grows to form a sturdy oak whose shade, foliage and acorns we admire. Without the seeming death of the acorn we would have no sturdy oak.

### **Nature's Miracles**

Nature rehearses the miracle and mystery of the resurrection all around us if only we had the eyes of faith to see it and so attend to these mini-sacraments of an eternal truth.

Little birds hatch from eggs carefully warmed by a patient thrush. Magnificent butterflies with colourful wings emerge from hidden cocoons where once-active caterpillars undergo a radical transformation. Seeds planted in autumn grow lush and lovely as new life emerges from these tiny buried treasure chests.

Daylight follows twilight and



the dark of night. Our daily awakening from the night of sleep is, in its own way, a dress rehearsal for our final awakening to eternal life.

### **First Fruits**

'Dying you destroyed our death; rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory'. With these words we proclaim the mystery of faith at Mass. Jesus used the image of the dying wheat grain (Jn 12:24) to explain this same mystery. His own passion and death were comparable to the wheat grain apparently dying in the earth. The green blade which rises with Easter is a symbol of his victorious resurrection.

This is a victory to be shared with us. St. Paul describes the risen Christ as: 'The first fruits of all who have fallen asleep' (1 Cor 15:20). The golden harvest of the resurrection is only possible because of the prior death and rising of Christ, that precious grain of wheat. That lovely line from an Irish hymn re-echoes this serene truth: 'Ag Christ an siol, ag Christ an fomhar' - 'Christ's is the seed, Christ's is the harvest'. Our departed loved ones form part of Christ's harvest, of which He is the first-fruits.

### **The Bread of Life**

In the Eucharist the Church gathers to celebrate ceaselessly the Paschal mystery. Here faith is nourished and strengthened as we feast at the Table of God's Word and the Table of the Eucharist. Jesus assured His disciples that anyone who eats His flesh and drinks His blood will be raised up on the last day (Jn 6:54). He is the living Bread as much as the dying wheat grain, each of which gives us the pledge of resurrected life. No wonder that St Ignatius of Antioch could speak of the Eucharist as being 'the medicine of immortality'.

### **An Easter People**

Pope John Paul II often spoke of Christians as an 'Easter People' whose song is 'Alleluia!' We must truly believe and live the faith which we profess as children of the light, shining in the world like 'bright stars' (Phil 2:15). Our aim should be like St. Paul who strove only to know Christ and the power of His resurrection (Phil 3:10). Faith is a much deeper reality than rational argument or intellectual proof. We cannot, nor should we try to, explain away the resurrection.

### **Unnecessary Worry**

Undue worry about the 'how' and 'when' of the resurrection, and the 'where' of our departed loved ones, often only succeeds in applying a restrictive bridle to faith. The challenge is to 'let Christ Easter in us'. That is an exciting invitation, not an illusory myth. 'With thoughts such as these you should comfort one another' (1 Th 4:18). □

# Witnesses in & for Our Times



## ST. JEAN-GABRIEL PERBOYRE 1802 - 1840

*by Paolo Rizzo*

In the diocese of Cahors and the commune of Puech, in a parish on the outskirts of Mogesty Jean-Gabriel was born on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1802 to Pietro Perboyre and Maria Rigal. Since it was during the years of the reign of Napoleon his Christian education took place at home since the Napoleonic forces conspired against the Church. Jean-Gabriel, who was an alert and intelligent youngster, had his elementary education in his hometown.

The heart of young Jean-Gabriel possessed just one great passion, one great love: Jesus and each day his love of God grew stronger. Already as a boy he was assigned work in the countryside supervising the labourers on the family farm at Puech.

In 1816 Louis, his brother, entered the seminary at Montauban (Tarn-en-Garonne), where his paternal uncle Monsieur Jacques, of the priests of the Missions of St. Vincent de Paul was rector. Jean-Gabriel, who was just fifteen-years-old, followed his younger brother into the seminary,



to keep him company.

In the seminary he yearned for the religious life, in the footsteps of the great saint of charity. Sometime later he decided to remain and so was admitted into the congregation of the missionary priests. When he was accepted as a novice he immediately became a model of prayer, obedience and

mortification: "Jesus deserves everything so why not give him everything?"

He took his vows on December 28<sup>th</sup>. 1820 and at the age of 18 he started studying theology at the mother-house of the Congregation in Paris. There he was noted for his remarkable intelligence and his charity that rendered him similar to St. Vincent his father and founder. Without realizing it he became a model to his seminary companions who, looked at him and strove to become better.

Since he was far better than his colleagues, he was sent to teach at the boys college of St. Vincent of Mon-Didier (Somme). There he revealed his extraordinary ability to teach and assist even the youngest "to reach the stature of Christ."

### **Priest and Teacher**

On September 23<sup>rd</sup>. 1826, he was ordained a priest in the chapel of the mother house of the Congregation in Paris. He was 24 years old and truly in love with Jesus. The superior, thinking of proposing him as model to the clerics of the Congregation sent him to teach dogmatic theology at the Major Seminary of Saint Flour. He was then appointed rector of the ecclesiastical "hostel" that was opened in 1827 in the same city. In the autumn of 1832, he was recalled to Paris to become the assistant-novice master at the house of St. Lazarus.

He obeyed and was most dedicated to this new appointment, but Fr. Jean-Gabriel had another dream: the missions of China. He repeatedly asked and insisted that he be sent, "to

bring Jesus Christ, to convert the souls to Him." His desire became even more ardent when, on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. 1831, his brother Fr. Louis Perboyre died at Batavia on his way to China. Jean-Gabriel would have to take his place.

He was finally permitted. On March 21<sup>st</sup> 1835 he set sail from the port of Le Havre and sailed directly for China. On August 29<sup>th</sup> the same year he reached Macao. He remained there for a few months to undertake the study of Chinese before being sent in the central province of Hunan. A short time later he was appointed the first vicar general of the place. In the following year and a half he worked amidst many difficulties of every kind including persecutions. The province was about 174 thousand square kilometers.

### **Missionary**

In January 1838, he moved to the province of Hupeh, where his missionary activity intensified. In his preaching and sermons he said: "The only reality that exists is Jesus Christ and he said, I am the way, the truth and the life. You do not have to walk this way. Do not be dissuaded by this. We need his illumination to walk this way. There is no other light other than Him. Jesus is the truth in person and He himself said, unless you follow me you will walk in darkness but if you walk with me you will have the light of life."

Anti-Catholic persecution broke out in China. Fr. Jean-Gabriel was soon compelled to go into hiding. It was certain that he also needed strength to be sustained on this journey in order to persevere. "This same Jesus, who wants to

be our nourishment gives himself to us in the Eucharist and will be our strength. This is why he said: "I am the life." Whatever we desire we find in him, crucified, in the Gospel and in the Eucharist. There is no other way, no other truth, no other life. Therefore we are united only to him, and we seek to know no one else and we follow him constantly."

During the persecutions, he was betrayed by a cowardly Christian who was seduced by a bribe and so revealed the missionary's hideout.

Father Jean-Gabriel was arrested at Tcha-yuen-keu on September 26<sup>th</sup> 1839 and taken to Kwang-Ytang where he was first subjected to a long round of interrogation and cruel torture. Then, the following day, he was transferred to Ku-gheng where he suffered even more questioning and torture. He was confined to a very dirty prison cell at Wuchang where he remained for eight months being subjected to more atrocious torture and suffering while awaiting his death sentence that was to be pronounced against him by a local court and ratified by the emperor.

### **Martyr**

During that sad period Fr. Jean-Gabriel was certain that: "We cannot be saved if are not conformed to Jesus Christ. After our death we will not be asked if we have been wise, if we have held high offices, if we have earned the respect of humankind, but we will be asked if we have striven to imitate Jesus Christ. If God does not find in us some trace of the Divine Model, we will be rejected

with the others, but if we are conformed to this Model we will be glorified. The saints in heaven are none other than those who are the images of Christ glorified since on earth they were united with Christ in his suffering and devoted to Him and his mission."

Jean-Gabriel, the ardent missionary, was close to be sacrificed because from the time he was very young he was conforming himself to Jesus.

On the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1840 the decree was ratified. At midday Fr. Jean-Gabriel Perboyre, aged 38 was crucified like Jesus. His end came swiftly at the point of a sword. Everything was over exactly as he had desired when he was preparing himself for his priesthood. He gave his life and shed his blood for Jesus.

He was barely dead and they buried his remains on "Red Mountain" the city cemetery where those who were executed were buried. His remains were taken to France in 1860 and laid to rest at the mother house of the Congregation. In 1843 Pope Gregory XVI introduced his cause for beatification. On November 10<sup>th</sup> 1889 Pope Leo XIII declared him blessed and Pope John Paul II canonized him, numbering him among the saints.

In a reading that is assigned to be read during the Liturgy of the Hours for his feast day that falls on September 11th, he said: "Everything is Christocentric: We always hold Jesus Christ before our eyes, assimilating his intimate feelings and imitating his virtues and his style of life." □

# IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

## Payment in Full

The owner had just insured his ramshackle house against damage by fire.

"What would I get," he asked the agent, "if the house should burn down tonight?"

"I would say about ten years," replied the agent promptly.

## Increase in Transit

"Did that crate of chickens reach you safely?" asked the farmer.

"Well, yes," replied the poulterer, but you didn't pack 'em properly, and after searching the neighbourhood I only found twelve."

"Umph, you did all right, I only sent eight."

## Good Impression

When the visitor was shown into the manager's private room he remarked:

"That new clerk of yours seems a hard worker."

"Yes," replied the other, "that's his speciality."

"What, working hard?"

"No; seeming to."

## And Be Quick

Caller: "And will you walk with me as far as the bus stop, Tommy?"

Tommy: "I can't."

Caller: "And why not?"

Tommy: "Because we're going to have dinner as soon as you leave."

## Manner of Court

One day when old Stevens, the lawyer, was pleading a case in

court, the judge ruled against him for the second time, and old Stevens got up with scarlet face and commenced gathering his papers as if to quit the courtroom.

"Do you understand, Mr. Stevens," the judge asked, eyeing him indignantly, "that you are trying to show contempt of this court?"

"No, your Honour," replied Stevens, "I don't want to show my contempt; I'm trying very hard to conceal it."

## The Sound of Peace

She was tucking her grandson in bed.

"Shall I tell you a bedtime story?" she whispered.

"Not tonight Grandma," the child murmured.

"Then, shall I sing you a lullaby?"

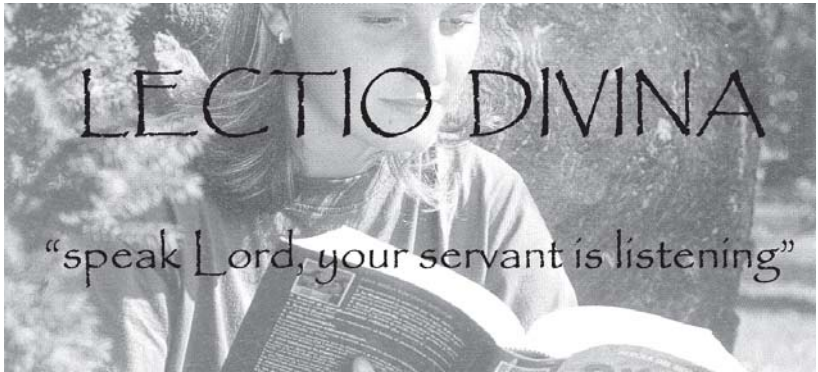
"No," replied the child. "Suppose you go away and let me get some sleep?"

## Precise Prayerful Petition

Little Ben, growing out of early childhood, was being taught to address his parents as "father" and "mother".

One night, saying his prayers, he followed the usual practice, "Lord bless daddy and mummy." Then suddenly he paused and in a most solemn and respectful manner offered a revision: "Excuse me, Lord, I should have said father and mother." He meditated briefly, then concluded, "But Lord, they are the same old parties." □





## ***The Our Father...Thy Kingdom Come***

*by Roberta Fora*

**T**hy Kingdom come” is a powerful invocation that helps us to profess our faith in the power of God and our own fragility at one and the same time.

Going through the pages of the Bible we are immediately aware that Jesus speaks to the crowds about the Kingdom of God in parables. In fact, In the Gospel of Matthew we read: “The Kingdom of God is like a treasure hidden in a field, that a man finds, and rushing off full of joy, he sells all he has and buys that field!”

And again: “The Kingdom of God is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he finds one of great value, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that pearl.”

Probably we recite the Our Father so mechanically that we do not realize the profundity of the words that we say.

When we turn to the Lord saying: “Thy kingdom come,” what we are really admitting is, that we wish to recognize the greatness of God and the beauty of his Word. In this phrase we

realize that our faith is an inestimable gift for which we might possibly be ready even to “give up our life” and “sell all that we have.”

The Kingdom of God is gradually being built in our daily lives. The Kingdom of God deeply impregnates our human values and our daily Christian living.

If we succeed, despite the difficulties we encounter, to plan a scale of values in which our fundamental priorities are inspired by Christ and the Christian values, then we surely are on the right path.

It is not easy to joyfully witness to the fact that we belong to the Lord in a world that is so full of



egoism and anger and ill-will. At times we might really have to “go against the current.” There we are called to be concrete examples of a lived faith to our children, by living a *sobrio* lifestyle, caring for one another and being open to those in need whom we meet everyday.

Only in this way our recitation of “Thy Kingdom Come,” becomes a sincere appellation, confirming that our spiritual journey is a confirmation of what drives us every day to encounter the Lord.

This phrase offers us the ability to recognize God’s presence in our lives, acknowledging that all that we have and are, comes from his loving hands. Then will our joy spring from this trust and then, even if we don’t sometimes follow his teachings, he personally and infinitely loves us and draws us back to him.

At that point we may confidently proclaim with faith: “... As a child has rest in its mother’s arms, even so is my soul” (Psalm 103). □

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**POPE BENEDICT XVI** *on the Our Father*  
(*Jesus of Nazareth p. 144-147*)

**T**his is not a promise that we will enter the Land of Plenty on condition that we are devout or that we are somehow attracted to the Kingdom of God. This is not an automatic formula for a well-functioning world, not a utopian vision of a classless society in which everything works out well of its own accord, simply because there is no private property. Jesus does not give us such simple recipes. What he does do, is to establish an absolutely decisive priority. For “Kingdom of God” means “dominion of God,” and this means that His will is accepted as the true criterion for what is justly due among men.

With the petition “thy kingdom come” (not “our kingdom come”), the Lord wants to show us how to pray and order our action in just this way. The first and essential thing is a listening heart, so that God, not we, may reign. The Kingdom of God comes by way of a listening heart. That is its path. And that is what we must pray for again



and again.

To pray for the Kingdom of God is to say to Jesus: Let us be yours, Lord! Pervade us, live in us; gather scattered humanity in your body, so that in you everything may be subordinated to God and you can then hand over the universe to the Father, in order that “God may be all in all” (1 Cor 15:28). □

DEDICATED TO  
THE RESURRECTION  
OF CHRIST

Quiet

## A NEW WAY

by Brian

**L**et's imagine for a moment a scene in first century Galilee. A middle-aged woman from a small village, who considers herself ordinary, has heard of an extraordinary preacher who is travelling locally. He has healing powers – people have seen this – but more than that, he speaks of a different way of living; a way of living which involves a great deal of love.

She is caught by the story of this man and manages to slip away one day to listen to him. Hearing him, she falls in love with his dream and takes it home in her heart. She feels a little bit foolish when she talks of him but she can't stop herself. She listens avidly for news of him and his travels: perhaps he'll come this way again!

### Wanting to Know the Truth

And then she hears of his death. A great sadness fills her. He was special. Some people said he was the son of God. In her heart she could almost believe it. But now he's dead. Imagine her face when a few days later the rumour flies through the village that he has risen from the dead. People have seen him; the tomb is empty!

'I'll have to know the truth' she says; so she slips away again, this time to Jerusalem to listen to the apostles, who are proclaiming their extraordinary story everywhere: 'Jesus is risen and is still with us and invites us all to share in his eternal life.' They themselves seem transformed with wonder and totally convinced. She manages to speak to the women who discovered the tomb empty and were greeted by the risen Jesus as they returned home.

She wants to hear everything; how he had met the doubting disciples after rising and sharing meals with them; how he had shown them the marks of his cruel death on his risen body. Everything he'd said and done, where he'd come from and who his parents were; all these details have new importance for her because he has risen from the dead.

### Everything is Changed

As day follows day it dawns on her that his resurrection changes everything. When people die in her village she sees their death differently from before. The apostles have told her that because he has risen from the dead everyone will rise from death to share his glorious destiny. He promised that! Death then isn't the end of everything, but the beginning of eternal life. So there's hope for her loved ones, and for herself



too. She finds it breath-taking!

It isn't only death that she sees differently, but village life too.

Jesus, she knew, lived a life of total love for other people and she wants to live like that herself. To live the loving life in humdrum daily life is to share already in the life of God. She dimly catches on to the fact that the resurrection is not just something at the end but has its beginning here and now.

The years go by; life isn't any easier, in fact it has become more difficult. She believes Jesus is with her; He promised He would be, and His words sing to her, 'Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time' (Mt 28:20). But it is hard for her to live out his commandment of love when other people don't respond.

### Helped by Others

She often fails and gets mad with people; she feels badly about this but tries to trust that the love of the risen Jesus for her is a forgiving and healing love. The story of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32) means a great deal to her. She is helped by finding others in the village who have their own relationship with Jesus, and are willing to share their awareness of him.

Most of all, what helps to keep her going is a special meal called the Eucharist: Jesus began it the night before he died and asked his followers to do this in his memory (Lk 22:29). She loves this gathering because Jesus is so richly present at it – in herself and the others gathered there, in the stories concerning him which are told or read; in the sharing where his message throws light on her daily life; and in the meal itself where he meets her face to face and nourishes her and brings her into the mystery of his life and suffering and resurrection.

### New Energy

So back she goes to her little house with new energy, to the people who make up her daily life; she sees them as extraordinary immortals, destined for eternal glory and worthy to be treated with limitless reverence, because like herself they are all called, whether they know it or not, to share in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The woman in the story has no name. Let her have your name. The risen Jesus desires to relate with you as he related with her. As the poet G. M. Hopkins puts it: 'Let him Easter in us'. □



# A Touch of Death

by Tom Henderson

## **The story so far:**

*Father Redmond and his niece, Sara Nelson, are attending a Literary Weekend. At the opening ceremony John Ross, a leading murder/mystery writer, announces that he has a sensational idea for his next novel. He autographs his latest book for the hotel manager, Vincent Bradmore, and shortly afterwards collapses and dies.*

*Fr. Redmond suspects murder but when he begins to investigate he finds that anyone of a number of people could have been responsible.*

*Michael Bradley, another writer, whose stories involve death-by-poisoning. Mary Ross, John's widow, who is heartbroken but seemingly very friendly with Bradley. Dr. Peter Knowles, who is known to have aspirations as a writer and who maintains that John Ross's heart attack was due to excitement. Moran Tessington, the publisher, who seems to play down the merits of John Ross's future novel.*

*Having discovered that the original notes for Ross's novel were stolen, Fr. Redmond follows his intuition and asks the local Inspector to examine a certain object for traces of poison. He is now ready to name the murderer.*

**S**ara Nelson sat facing her uncle in the lounge of the hotel and shook her head in amazement.

'It's so hard to believe!' she cried. Father Redmond sat back in his chair and folded his arms. 'Yes, it is,' he agreed. 'But we must go back to the beginning of this.'

'When John Ross suffered his fatal heart attack after making his remark to me, I could not help but be apprehensive. Had he not made the remark I would not have seen anything at all suspicious about his death. However, it seemed most likely that if he had been murdered it would have been done through the use of some poison administered to his drink.'

'While we spoke to him he accepted a drink from Michael Bradley and it was possible he had accepted drinks from other people. Adding a poison to his drink seemed the logical means of murder as the glasses would have been returned to the kitchen and washed; so removing traces of the poison.'

'Michael Bradley, being a rival of John Ross and something of an expert on poisons, appeared a very likely suspect. He became even more suspect when I saw him in deep conversation with Mary Ross and I saw a possibility of a scheme between them to kill her husband and steal his idea for Bradley to convert into a novel. I learned later, however, that Bradley and Mary Ross are first

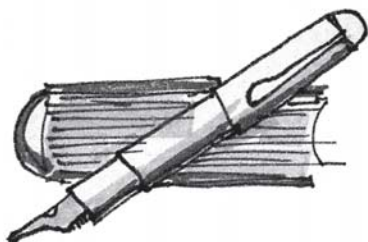
cousins and what I took for intrigue was nothing more than words of comfort and consolation.

'Somehow, when I had removed Mary Ross from my list of suspects, I was able to look back on what she had said in a fresh light. You may remember that she had told us that her husband had insisted that their hotel room door was kept locked at all times and had not even allowed the cleaning staff to enter. I soon realized, of course, that one person in the hotel would have a duplicate key; one person who would not arouse any suspicion if seen entering or leaving the room - the hotel manager.

'My mind went back to the evening of John Ross's death. Vincent Bradmore, I recalled, had given him a pen and asked him to autograph his latest novel. When John returned the pen to him, I noticed that Vincent threw it into the wastebin, remarking that it had run dry.

'Last night, when I visited the kitchen I met a former parishioner. This man told me that he had once worked with Vincent Bradmore, several years ago, in the manufacture of insecticides. Many insecticides contain a poison which can be absorbed through the skin and must be handled with great care. He told me that Bradmore had friends in that business and I was sure that he would have been able to obtain some of the poison mentioned.

'I then asked where the litter from the lounge would have been placed and this morning I rose early and went through the



relevant container. It was not a pleasant task, but I finally located the pen Bradmore had discarded. I lifted it carefully and placed it into a paper bag which I took to Inspector Brown for analysis. It was found that the pen had been coated in a concentrated solution of this very lethal toxin.

'John Ross had handled the pen and his skin had absorbed it into his bloodstream. A normal person might have survived this, but John Ross had a severe heart condition.' Sara leaned forward. 'But Bradmore also handled the pen?' Father Redmond opened his eyes. 'Yes, he did. But he had applied strips of clear adhesive paper to his fingers, which protected them. He immediately threw the pen away, feeling sure it would be disposed of with the refuse. I was fortunate to get there in time.' Sara nodded. 'And it was Bradmore who wrote the winning story in the competition?' she asked.

'Yes. Sometime ago he developed an interest in writing and joined a local Creative Writing class of which Peter Knowles was also a member. At some stage Knowles mentioned that John Ross had a heart condition, and, being a friend of



John Ross had heard about his new idea for his next novel. Meanwhile, Bradmore had entered for the short story competition, not really expecting to win. He had written a murder mystery as he greatly admired John Ross.'

The priest closed his eyes again and his voice was calm. 'When Bradmore learned he had won the competition, he told no one. He had, in fact, entered it in the name and address of a friend in Dublin. I contacted someone I know in Dublin and asked him to call this address. The man at that address was the person said to have won the first prize, but he admitted that the story had actually been written by Bradmore.'

His voice became speculative. 'I think that Bradmore now realized he had considerable writing ability in the field of murder mystery. He also remembered Knowles telling him about Ross's new idea. When he discovered that Ross was going to attend the Literary Weekend, he now saw an opportunity to steal the idea. After a time he would admit that it was he who had written the winning story and announce that he was about to write a novel – a novel based on Ross's idea and aided by his detailed chapter notes.

'Using his duplicate key, he entered Ross's hotel room and removed the key to Ross's home. Going there, he typed out an inferior storyline and substituted it for the original in Ross's room. He also took the copy and notes, then set about removing John Ross, who would have

recognized his idea if Bradmore had paraded it as his own. With John Ross dead and the idea in his possession, nothing would have stood in the way of Bradmore writing a best-selling novel which would have established him as a leading writer.'

Father Redmond paused and opening his eyes. 'What Bradmore failed to see was that he himself had enough ability to become an established writer. He did not need to kill John Ross. That is the awful truth in this, the awful sin.'

'It was almost a perfect crime,' Sara said. 'He almost got away with it. And what a terrible way to murder a writer – with a pen!'

Father Redmond sighed. 'I am afraid Vincent Bradmore used his imagination and his ability only in the name of evil. What a pity he had not used these things in the pursuit of good.'

They were joined by Michael Bradley, who shook Father Redmond's hand. 'You did a good job here, Father. I'm sorry we had that argument, but I was distressed at John's death. We didn't always see eye to eye, but I could never deny that he was a better writer than I will ever be.'

Father Redmond nodded in recognition of his honesty. Bradley smiled. 'I look forward to meeting you again, Father. Will you be attending the next weekend?' The priest looked at Sara and she grinned her approval. His smile was enigmatic. 'Perhaps,' he said quietly. 'Perhaps...'

**THE END**

# *Don Bosco: The Times, The Man, The Facts*

## **DON BOSCO'S LODGINGS**

*by Natale Cerrato (T/A:ID)*

**I**f we were to list all the places that Don Bosco lodged in, even for a few days, including when he travelled around the state of Piedmont, the various cities of Italy or abroad, this two-page article would not be sufficient. This article intends to dwell on Don Bosco's 'fixed' lodgings after he left the Biglione farmhouse (*which today forms part of the places that comprise the hill of the birthplace of Don Bosco on August 16, 1815*) and where he lived for the first two years of his life.



### **The Early Years**

In November, following the death of his father on May 12<sup>th</sup> 1817 the Bosco family moved to what came to be called the *casetta* f (little cottage) at Becchi.

After the pattern of most houses, this cottage was positioned from left to right. Seen from the façade there was a shed, a stable, a

kitchen and a portico on the ground floor. The bedroom that Mamma Margaret shared with her mother-in-law, the boys' bedroom (*also called the room of the dream*) and a hayloft was situated on the first floor.

Little Johnny actually lived there from 1817 to 1827.

For a short time in 1827, he worked as a farmhand at the Campora farm in Buttigliera. Then for the most part of two years 1828-1829 he was employed as a farmhand at the Moglia farm at Moncuoco. The little room that Johnny and little George the son of



*The poor little house of Don Bosco at Becchi*

Louis Moglia occupied is preserved intact up to today.

After he came back to his family, in 1830 Johnny lodged for a few months at the presbytery of Morialdo with the kindly Don Calosso.

Meanwhile in that same year his brother Joseph, after the division of the family assets, moved to Sussambrino as a sharecropper. He took up residence on the little hill between Sussambrino and Becchi. Mamma Margaret probably began to 'commute' between Sussambrino and Becchi, and from December 1830 to 1831 John began to frequent the school at Castelnuovo and return home daily (either to Becchi or Sussambrino) till he found lodging in the town with the tailor Roberto Giovanni.

And so it was that from 1831 to 1841 John remained in Chieri: From '31-'33 he was at the Marchisio house with Signora Lucia Matta on Piazza Giglielmo (now piazza Marconi N. 1); from '33-'34 at the Vergnano in a little place beneath the stairs at the Café of John Pianta at Palazzo di Città, N. 3; from 1835-1835 with the tailor Thomas Cumino on Via Maestra (now Via Vittorio Emanuele, N. 24)

Finally, from '35-'41 he was at the Seminary on the same via Maestra close to the church dedicated to St. Philip.

Then from November 1841 to September 1844 Don Bosco lived at the 'Ecclesiastical Hostel' (*Convitto Ecclesiastico*) that was adjacent to the church of St. Francis of Assisi at N. 11 on the street bearing the same name.

From October 1844 to June 1846 he stayed at the institute of the Marquise of Barolo, at first in a room at the 'Refuge,' then with the professor John Borel at the 'Clinic of St. Philomena.'"

### **Don Bosco's own home...from 1846 to 1861**

Finally on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1846, after spending a period of convalescence at Becchi, Don Bosco returned with his mother to Turin where they rented one of the rooms of the Pinardi shed. They would later buy the entire property together with the surrounding land.

After the construction of the church of St. Francis of Sales in 1852 and the first part of the boarding, he moved from the



*Lightning strikes Don Bosco's room destroying everything but leaving him unharmed (Mastroiani)*

Pinardi shed to the last rooms on the second floor in the new building in the wing that was parallel to the church. For eight years this humble little room served as his study, reception and bedroom all at the same time. It was within those falls that the Salesian society was founded on December 18<sup>th</sup> 1859.

But on the night of May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1861 a violent storm battered the Oratory of Don Bosco.

Between streaks of lightning there were dreadful rolls of thunder. It damaged the walls of that little room and threw an entire bookshelf to the floor, upset the table with whatever was on it. Another electrical discharge struck the iron bed of the saint, lifting him a meter from the ground and transporting him to the opposite side of the room amidst streaks of lightning.

After a few moments the lights went out and Don Bosco was thrown to the floor. He remained there for a moment unconscious. When he came to his senses he got up carefully and made his way through debris and bricks and looking for the walls of his room. He finally came upon the holy-water font that hung by the door.

Trapped in his room he called for help. Two of his boys, Reano and Rossi heard him and came to his assistance, assuring him that the boys were all safe.

Actually even the rest of the house had been damaged. The roof had caved in, and here and there were fallen tiles and debris.

Some cried out invoking the Madonna, others called Don Bosco. When he appeared and ascertained that all were safe, he

was relieved and thanked the Madonna, the Virgin most holy. The Oratory of Valdocco could now return to its former peace and serenity.

In the afternoon of that day, Don Bosco was in the playground under the portico surrounded by his clerics and students. While telling them what had happened he attributed it all to the devil and added: *The devil has again tried to stick his tail into our business! Never mind! Let s keep going without fear!* (EBM 6, 564,565).

### **From 1861 to 1888**

With the expansion of the Oratory in 1861, a workshop wing parallel to the church of St. Francis was erected. It was double in width and so the room Don Bosco had been living in for 8 years now became his antechamber and his waiting room. Don Bosco moved to a new room that would be his for the next 27 years. This small room served as his office and bedroom right up his last years when he began to sleep in the adjoining room that was built later, and where he remained till the time of his death.

One year, taking advantage of his absence they thought of embellishing his room a little with some simple decoration. On his return he made them cover everything with a coat of white paint.

When they insisted on redoing the floor that was half damaged, as it was made of bricks and sand, he refused to allow it. He wanted the rooms of the Salesians to be absolutely simple and he was their model all his life. □

## NEWSBITS

### USA

PEORIA, Ill. (CNS) — Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen was called “the kind of saint America needs today” during Feb. 3 ceremonies closing the diocesan phase of the famed media evangelist’s sainthood cause. At the cathedral where he was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Peoria nearly nine decades ago, more than 1,000 people — including about 60 relatives — gathered for a Mass of thanksgiving marking the end of five years of preliminary research into Archbishop Sheen’s life and virtues. A prolific writer and gifted orator born in nearby El Paso, Ill., Archbishop Sheen eventually left his central Illinois roots and became known nationwide as the host of pioneering radio and television programmes, including “The Catholic Hour” and “Life Is Worth Living.” The latter was a television series that aired from 1951 to 1957 and attracted an estimated 30 million weekly viewers. Archbishop Sheen received an Emmy Award as television’s “Most Outstanding Personality” in 1952.

### INDIA

BARAKHAMA, India (CNS) — Frustrated by police inaction to arrest the perpetrators of anti-Christian violence at Christmas time, some Christian youths in the Kandhamal jungles of eastern Orissa state seem to be pursuing the path of retaliation. Subrat Kumar Maji, a Catholic youth, was asked whether Indian Catholics felt sorry for setting on fire two dozen Hindu shops and houses along the wall of St. Joseph Church in Godapur. “Why should we compensate

them?” he asked. “These were the people who went to Bamunigam by bus and burned our church and Christian shops,” he told Catholic News Service. Two Christian youths, including the brother of a seminarian, were arrested in late January while carrying guns at night. When Cardinal Telesphore Toppo of Ranchi, president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India, visited St. Joseph Church on Jan. 30, he saw the charred remains of Hindu shops and houses near the church. “We can never justify this kind of response,” Cardinal Toppo told CNS. “This is not a witness to Christian faith.”

### USA

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Arun Gandhi, the grandson of pacifist Mahatma Gandhi, was forced to resign as president of the institute he founded in 1991, the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence at the University of Rochester, for saying that Israel and Jews are “the biggest players” in a global culture of violence. His Jan. 7 comments drew a torrent of complaints.

“My intention was to generate a healthy discussion on the proliferation of violence,” Gandhi told the Associated Press Jan. 25, a day after he resigned. “Instead, unintentionally, my words have resulted in pain, anger, confusion and embarrassment. I deeply regret these consequences.”

Gandhi’s resignation “was appropriate” because his remarks “did not reflect the core values” of either the university or the institute, said the school’s

president, Joel Seligman.

### INDONESIA

JAKARTA — The Wahid Institute, founded by former President Abdurrahman Wahid, and the Crisis Center of the Christian Church of Indonesia have developed a course to teach Christian youths about Islam and pluralism.

The course ran over four Friday evenings. The inaugural class was held on Jan. 18 and about 30 students, writers, broadcasters and social activists attended. The course ended with a three-day live-in program in a *pesantren*, or Islamic boarding school.

Course coordinator Moqsith Ghazali said the curriculum was set up in consultation with the Protestant School of Theology and the Jesuit-run Driyarkara School of Philosophy.

### TURKEY

Turkey's Catholic bishops marked the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of St. Paul in the southern Turkish city of Tarsus and outlined preparations for the Pauline year. "This event is for all Christian communities, since Paul is a teacher of all the disciples of Christ. However, the anniversary is of particular importance for us living in Turkey - the apostle of the gentiles is a son of this land, and it is here he exercised his ministry," said a letter from the bishops' conference, which includes bishops of Turkey's Armenian, Syrian, Chaldean and Latin-rite churches. "We are immersed in a Muslim world where faith in God is still very present, both in its traditional aspects and in the

assertion of new Islamic religious organizations," said the letter, which was to be read in Catholic churches Jan on 25, the anniversary of St. Paul's conversion. Pope Benedict XVI convoked 2008-09 as a special Pauline year of events marking the anniversary of the saint's birth. The anniversary would begin formally on June 21-22 and include a Mass in Tarsus celebrated by Cardinal Walter Kaspar, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. (CNS)

### USA

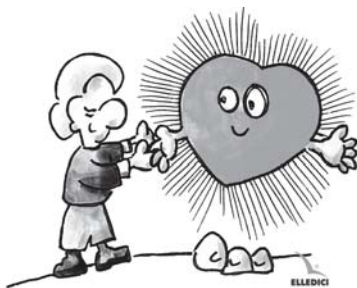
The renovation of the motherhouse of the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Monroe won a 2007 Energy Star award for small businesses and congregations from the US Environmental Protection Agency. This is the eighth environmental award given to the religious community for the motherhouse project, whose design has been incorporated into the curriculum of a half-dozen colleges and universities. It is the community's second award from the EPA; the first was the Clean Air Excellence Award in 2003. The motherhouse renovation was completed in 2003. It features a geothermal heating and cooling system, natural light throughout the building, reused doors and windows, and marble bathroom partitions reinstalled as countertops. In a press statement about the award, the religious community said all these features "focused on the three Rs of sustainability - reduce, reuse and recycle." □



# 16 STEPS to GREATNESS

(Operation Wardrobe)

Text by: Jimmy Rizzi  
Drawings by: Giovanni Gherardi  
Translation & adaptation: I.D.



## The age of Adolescence

### 14 - SOBRIETY Part 2

A true model of poverty

**ST. FRANCIS  
married "Lady Poverty"**

Brother Bernard replied: "Yes, we are poor, but our poverty is not a burden as it is to others. We have become poor by choice."

The poverty of Francis is not misery (poverty that has been thrust on one), but a choice.

**But why did  
Saint Francis  
ever choose  
to be poor?**





Francis was poor because:

**1) HE DISCOVERED A TREASURE:**

**THE REAL TREASURE, JESUS!**

To be free from money we have to discover another treasure to attract the heart...that makes money look pale...so that it loses its power of attraction on you. Listen to what the farmer in the next story says:

*From the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 13, 44-46)*

*Jesus said: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field that a man found and hid again and went away full of joy. He sold all he had to buy the field. The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; finding a pearl of great price he goes and sells all that he has and buys it."*

This farmer was ploughing while he was unaware of the marvelous treasure. There's an earthquake in his heart when he finds the treasure. In front of that treasure everything loses its value. He is prepared to lose everything in order to have that treasure. The same thing happened to Francis. He discovered in Jesus Christ the true treasure. So you too must be prepared to lose everything to find Jesus.

## and money becomes as the dung

### **This is an episode from the life of St. Francis**

One day a peasant came to pray at Santa Maria della Porziuncola and he put some money at the foot of the crucifix. As soon as he had done this, a monk came up and took the money and simply threw it on to the window sill. The incident was reported to the saint, and the monk, seeing that he was at fault, ran to Brother Francis to be pardoned and prostrated himself to the ground before him awaiting his punishment. The saint accused him and reprimanded him bitterly for having touched the money. He commanded him to pick up the money from the windowsill with his mouth and to always take it out of the house with the ass's dung. The monk gladly performed the order and all those present were full of fear. They all learned to always despise money that had been compared to dung, and they were inspired to this attitude by new examples everyday.

*from the life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano*

### **2) HE TRUSTS IN GOD AND**

#### **SURRENDERS TO HIS PROVIDENCE:**

He knows that God feeds the birds of the air who do not sow or reap and he clothes the lilies of the field who do not sow nor spin... (see Mt. 6, 25-36)

### **3) HE STRIVES TO BE POOR AMONG THE POOR**

He is careful if someone is poorer than him. One day, when Francis met a poor man who was poorer than he, he was ashamed and decided to become even poorer.

#### 4) GIVE TO ONE WHO IS POORER

Here is another episode from the life of St. Francis that tells you how he gave:

At another time, while he was returning from Siena, he came upon a man who was poorer than himself. The Saint said to his companion: "Brother, we have to return the mantle to this poor man, because it belongs to him. We actually only have it on loan till we happen to meet someone poorer



than us." His companion, who thought of the beloved Saint's need to be charitable, strongly opposed this because by doing so he would be neglecting himself. "I don't want steal," replied the saint, "and you will be accused of being a thief if you do not give it to him, because he needs it more than we do." The other conceded and gave the mantle to the beggar.

*from the life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano*

**Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
theirs is the kingdom  
of heaven**

To be continued

**LOVING CHILDREN TO  
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

My sincere thanks to Our Lady for granting me a normal report in my medical examination. *Ajit Pinto, Bombay*

Thank you dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the numerous favours granted to us. *Mrs. R. James, Australia*

Thank you dear St. John Bosco, whom I regard as my favourite saint for helping me secure the citizenship for both my wife and me.

*Georgekutty Meppurethu, Canada*

My son was returning home from V.Tech for the feast of Thanksgiving. His car swerved off the road and rolled over several times. It was totalled. He crawled out from the rear window and was taken to the emergency room. He was cleared after 4 hours. We attribute this to Our Lady. He always wears her medal and carries her Rosary.

*Francis and Bernadine D'Souza, USA*

Many thanks to the Most Blessed Trinity and to dear Mother Mary for a successful operation and for the many other graces received.

*Mr. & Mrs. F.O. Mazarello, Bombay*

Thank you Jesus and Mother Mary for the safe delivery of a baby boy and many other favours received. *Mrs. Ida Francis Bombay*

Thank you, Mary Help of Christians for a special favour received.

*Mr. M. D'Mello, Navi Mumbai*

By the daily recitation of the **3 Hail Marys** my eldest son Manoj was able to clear his CAC examinations successfully.

*L. Beniitus, Coimbatore*

Sincere thanks for the safe recovery of my mother Mrs Norita Corrie during her recent heart disease. *Mrs. N. Corrie, Bombay*

I thank you dear Mother Mary for the many favours received through your intercession. *Mr. & Mrs. Luis and Martina Rebello, Vasai*

My daughter had gone to Bombay from Goa for a 10 day computer course. One the way back to the Goa bus stop her rickshaw went into a ditch. The driver got off and so did she to help remove it. The driver got back into the rickshaw without her and drove off. My daughter was left with no option but to return to Goa with only her handbag. Her suitcase which was not locked contained a valuable camera, a music system and her course notes for which she had paid a lot of money. A few days later the course instructor telephoned and said that the suitcase had been surrendered to the police station and after checking the contents with her asked her to claim her baggage on her way back to the UK. We believe it was a miracle of Our Lady. We do pray the Rosary daily. *Celiza D'Souza, Goa*

## THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



*The devotion of the **THREE HAIL MARYS** is a very simple yet most efficacious devotion. Everyday, recite Three Hail Marys, adding the invocation: "O Mary, My Mother, keep me from mortal sin." Many people recite the Three Hail Marys as part of their morning and night prayers. To practise this devotion in time of danger, stress, special need or temptation, is a sure means to obtain Our Lady's help.*

Thank you dearest Mother Mary for helping me get a good job in the Gulf. *Ajit Pinto, Bombay*

I am grateful to dear Mama Mary for all the graces and favours I have received thus far. *Rohan Aranha*

I am grateful to Mother Mary for the clear medical reports that I received through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. *Ajit Pinto, Bombay*  
My sincere thanks to Our Lady for granting me peace of mind.

*Hansy Saju, USA*

Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians for the two successful operations. *Linus Ferreira, Bombay*

In Lisbon, due to wrong medication I took ill in the morning. I was scheduled to go to Fatima. I prayed fervently to Our Lady since it was my first visit to Portugal. By 1 pm I was slightly better and made the journey to Fatima. Along the way I prayed 3 rosaries and by Mary's grace I recovered completely and was able to make the entire tour.

*Mrs. Aurora Almeida, Bombay*

My wife and I were in a tour mini bus travelling with 5 other passengers. We were visiting Scotland. On the highway our driver signalled he was going to overtake a fully loaded 5 ton truck. In the process of overtaking the truck driver suddenly decided to swerve into our path. Thankfully our driver decreased his speed immediately and sharply turned the mini bus thus avoiding, what could have been, a dangerous collision. My wife and I had just finished praying the 3 Hail Marys for a safe trip. Does anyone need proof that **Mary was there?** *G.A. Hawes, London*

Thank you dearest Mother for the many favours received through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. *Salvita Saldanha*

Thank you dear Mother Mary for all the graces and favours I received and for helping my son, through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

*L Lourda, Goa*

My daughter had a lump on her neck and through the devotion of the 3 Hail Marys she has been cured. *Mrs. Hilda Sequeira, Bhayandar*



**THEY ARE GRATEFUL TO  
OUR LADY AND DON BOSCO**

My sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for granting me a clear medical report. *Ajit Pinto, Bombay*

My most heartfelt and sincere thanks to Jesus, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for delivering my son from his wayward ways and placing him on the right track. May our dear Saviour and his most holy Mother shower on him their countless blessings. *Coutinho family, Bombay*

I am most grateful to Our Lady Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for saving my son Hansen from a very serious accident on his way back from work in the early hours of 3rd November 2007. His colleague sitting beside him was killed on the spot and the driver died a few days later. My son escaped with a head injury and has had seven stitches, pain in the left leg, neck and chest. His jaw was dislocated. Dear Mother Mary do continue to protect my son and my entire family and cure my son of all his ailments.

*Mrs. Hazel Fernandes, Bombay*

Dear Lord Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio I am most grateful for a safe delivery and the gift of a healthy baby granted to my son and daughter-in-law.

*Flory Fernandes, Bombay*

My sincere though delayed thanks to dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the gift of a grandson to us and a baby boy to my son. Thanks also for helping us in our difficult moments. Do keep us in your loving care.

*Jacob P. Fernandes, Bombay*

Our special thanks to Our dearest Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for granting our eldest son admission into a college in Canada and for many other special favours received. Dear Mother, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio continue to bless and protect our sons always.

*Casmiro and Cynthia D'Souza, Kuwait*

Our gratitude and thanks to our Blessed Mother, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping my daughters secure good jobs. Please continue to extend your loving care and blessing on all of us. *Betty Menezes, Bombay*

Our grateful thanks to Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for granting my children good health.

*Mr. Joaquim Alemao, Bombay*

## THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



My sincere thanks to Our Lady for granting me a clear report in my medical examination.

*Ajit Pinto, Bombay*

Our sincere thanks to the Divine Mercy, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for having a safe delivery of a lovely boy, Aaron.

*Mr & Mrs Basil and Serafina*

*Fernandes, Mira Road*

My sincere and grateful thanks to dear Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for all the favours received.

*Lily C., Bombay*

Our sincere thanks to St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of a baby girl. Thank you also to Mother Mary and Don Bosco.

*Glen and Rosy Menezes*

My sincere and heartfelt gratitude to Our Lord Jesus Christ, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby boy to my daughter-in-law, the baby was born with calipers on both feet, the doctors advised us to take him to Bombay immediately, most probably an operation was needed. I prayed to Jesus and Mother Mary and through their intercession I took him to a bone specialist in Goa who suggested that I put the baby's feet in casts for 3 months. It would be possible to correct the defect without a surgery. My prayers were answered. Today my baby is 18 months old and is walking like a normal child. I am most grateful to Our Lady, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio.

*Mrs. Leandrina Rebello, Goa*

### APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER APRIL 2008

**Holy Father's General Intention:** *That Christians, even in the most difficult and complex situations of present-day society, may not tire of proclaiming with their lives that Christ's Resurrection is the source of hope and of peace.*

**Missionary Intention:** *That the future priests of the young Churches may be constantly more formed culturally and spiritually to evangelize their nations and the whole world.*

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### **MARY WAS THERE**

I was in the 9<sup>th</sup> month of my pregnancy and I had prayed intensely to Our Lord and Our Blessed Mother for their assistance. On 26<sup>th</sup> September, four days later at 4.30am I realized that the baby was due and I started experiencing labour contractions. Since my husband was out of station I was driven there by my brother-in-law. Even as we were driving I felt the baby pushing itself out through the birth canal. I practically had the child in my hands even before we reached the hospital. I am sure the powerful hands of Jesus and the maternal protection of Our Blessed Mother were there. As soon as we reached the hospital the nursing staff came to our assistance and I managed to walk up three flights of stairs to the labour room. I am grateful to Our blessed Mother for her assistance. Both the baby and I are fine. Thank you, most Holy Mother!

*Mary Jane D'Souza, Goa*

**Don Bosco's Madonna**, has developed to its present form from a folder published in 1937, by late Fr Aurelius Maschio, on behalf of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Bombay.

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