

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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**"Contemplating
on Mary
means
reviewing
the triumph of
her maternity."**

Cover:
**The miraculous image
of Our Lady
of Guadalupe imprinted
on the tilma of Juan Diego.**



From The Editor's Desk

Standing in the need of Prayer!

I usually celebrate the six o'clock Mass every evening and the congregation consists mainly of seniors, people coming in from work or youngsters on their way to or from some other appointment. It's the same people sitting in the same places and as I look at their tired faces I wonder what goes on within their souls and what it is that draws them to come to pray.

Over the years I gradually notice some who come in a little early. They pick their places, sometimes kneeling, sometimes sitting, but mostly they keep their eyes closed in quiet prayer. The time they spend in the shrine is *their* quiet time, it is very personal. But I did get a peek.

Once as I dashed from the sacristy to my quarters I was intercepted by someone who wanted to have 'a word.' After preliminary greetings were exchanged and introductions made I found that the face was familiar and the story rather sad. This middle-aged mother had three teenage children. The eldest, a son was going through a particularly rebellious phase at the time, and she was worried about his influence on the others. As a regular housewife she struggled to keep the home peaceful. Her husband was abroad on some assignment and he came home every couple of months. In his absence she was both mother and father, and from the lines on her face and the dark rings around her eyes I could see that it was a feat. She said that sometimes she had to wait up for her teenage son who got home late and that trying to control her temper and suppress her anxiety was not always easy.

When I told her that I noticed her regularly at Mass, she smiled awkwardly and said, 'Ah yes - prayer is a big help' - 'You're great, how do you manage it?' I asked. She looked at me in an embarrassed kind of way and shook her head. 'I don't see it that way at all. I'm not great. I *need* prayer.'

Then she told me how she was frequently at a loss to know how to handle her rebellious son. She easily lost her temper with him, she said, even though she knew that it wasn't going to help. The tension only spread to the others and a row followed leaving everyone miserable. She admitted that sometimes she had shown little understanding of their shortcomings, or concern for their problems. 'I am most hurt when they start avoiding me, and I fear that I am growing hard,' she went on, her eyes almost welling up. 'So now you know why I need this time of prayer in the evening. I need God to help me during the day to be less tense and more wise. And I think he does. I'm learning slowly.' Then she glanced at her watch, apologized and dashed off.

We pray, not because we are perfect, but because like this concerned mother, we need God's help in our daily struggles. Prayer is a way of bringing our lives to God and God into the messy heart of our lives. She needed prayer because she needed God; so do we all.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

8. ELIMINATING ALL THE DANDELIONS

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

A gardening enthusiast who took great pride in his lawn found himself saddled with a huge vexing problem: an uncontrollable crop of dandelions. No matter what he did to eliminate them, they continued to plague him. At his wits end, he wrote to the Department of Agriculture seeking their assistance.

He listed all that he had done and enquired if there were still something he could try because he had to get rid of them at all cost. He just could not enjoy his gardening until that was accomplished. In due course he got the following reply: 'We suggest that you learn to love them.'

Love Your Enemies?

Some might wonder what we humans could learn from this lesson of Nature – yet there is enough in it to keep us busy our whole life long. As we go through the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels, nowhere do we find him insisting that we should be perfect before we can be lovable to the Father. Rather, all his teachings emphasize merely this one point – that the Father accepts us just as we are, warts and all! Rather than wait for us to be perfect and then love us, he says to us that it is his unconditional love freely given that will provide us with the strength and motivation to be better and better each day. St. Paul puts this so powerfully when he says: 'and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has

been given to us. For, while we were **still weak**, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while **we still were sinners** Christ died for us' (*Romans 5:5-8*).

And yet somehow in the course of the Church's history the notion of perfection as an absolutely essential element has crept into our concept of the spiritual life. We have been told in no uncertain terms, and that too in season and out of season, that the goal of Christian striving is to become perfect, understood as 'sinless' – especially in matters of love and forgiveness. It was for this purpose that from around the fourth century onwards Christians fled the 'world' and retreated into the desert to live heroically austere lives seeking to master their evil habits even to the least detail. Their goal was 'Christian perfection.' Experience however, shows us that it is not possible for human beings to be faultless, at least not by our own efforts. Mother Teresa is well known internationally as a great saint and soon will be canonized. What she did for the dying destitute all over the world was proverbial indeed! And yet those who knew her intimately confessed that she was 'difficult to live with' – and that was putting it mildly. Did this trait which remained with her till her dying day make her less lovable to God or even to people?

Faultless = Lovable?

Nonetheless, most of us have it ingrained in our thinking that we must not be caught with faults or shortcomings, especially if we wish to live the spiritual life seriously. Now we do not in any way wish to insinuate that it doesn't matter whether we sin or not, or that how sinful we really are doesn't count because God continues to love us. If we understand truly the meaning and extent of God's love for us, we would never want to sin even once. Yet our desire to avoid sin should not end up as an obsession making us feel guilty or unworthy if and when we do fall because of our innate weakness.

The tendency to focus on our spiritual purity actually speaks a lot about our preoccupation with the 'Self' which still lurks in the innermost recesses of our being. If our attention were wholly focused on God, where would we have the time to worry about our petty failings? The only sin that matters before God is our conscious rejection of his love and forgiveness. Further, when we do focus on God and his love, wouldn't we also be a lot more aware of goodness, purity, love, kindness and other Godlike qualities all around us? Our paradigms are what govern our perceptions. So, when all that our paradigms portray for us is imperfection in ourselves, we are more likely to see the same or worse defects in other people and in every situation around us. But it works the other way around too. The more we focus on the faults in people around us, the more we become obsessed with our own failings too.

Remedies

But we may ask: Isn't it a good thing to be without sin? Shouldn't we strive to become more like God our Father? How then are we to get rid of our sins and failings? Perhaps the first thing we need to do is to realize that these do not make any difference in our relationship with the Father. While he does want us to be and act like him, the Father is not at all surprised that we fail or sometimes even consciously sin against his love. He knows our weakness, but in his unbelievable love and tender mercy, he pursues us with his love and will continue to do so until one day we finally wake up to the reality of his stupendous love and learn to respond generously to it. That will be the day of great triumph and rejoicing for the Father – for he will exclaim: 'This child of mine was dead and has come back to life, was lost and is now found – Come, let us celebrate!' Once we get rid of our phobia that our sins are going to bring us eternal punishment, or that God is simply waiting to catch us out at sin and then mercilessly punish us, it becomes easier to relate to God out of love.

In this connection we look again at the injunction in St. Matthew's gospel: 'Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly father is perfect.' This is perhaps the sentence that has led so many to make perfection their goal, their 'impossible dream'. However, we must realize that the statement is given to us as an ideal towards which we move – knowing all the while that we will never really attain it, certainly not on our own steam and by our own efforts. Besides, once we realize deeply that God has poured out his

own inner nature into our beings through his Spirit, it becomes obvious that our behaviour will be like his, even if it takes a long time. Further, the original could be translated in different ways, and Luke puts it rather as 'be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful. And in any case, the word "perfect" simply means 'complete', lacking nothing. Now, we can lack nothing either because we strive to obtain all that is necessary or even by our accepting as gifts all that we would ever need! Never should we read this text as meaning: 'Unless you become perfect (through your own individual striving) you will not be acceptable to the Father!'

The second help would, of course, be an enlightened reading of Sacred Scripture. We say *enlightened* because even in the Scriptures, we could focus only on the punitive aspects that are copiously mentioned there. These are certainly part of the Scriptures but distinctly the approach of the Ancient Testament. Jesus came with a totally different message and attitude. His inaugural speech was simply this: "I have come to announce to you all, that this is the year of the Lord's favour in which all your transgressions have been unilaterally forgiven – repent and believe the Good News!" But then, if we hear even this message with the mindset of the Ancient Testament (like that of John the Baptist), we will still stand in mortal fear of God. This inaugural statement of Jesus must be the foundation of our relationship with the Father and with one another. We need to focus more on parables like the Wheat and Cockle – notice

that in this parable, the Master is confident of his approach when he orders his servants to let both grow side by side. He is positively convinced that he will be able to handle the issue of weeds or cockle at the time of the harvest. No sin or ours is too great for God to cope with and eradicate from our lives – though sometimes he lets the cockle remain, and that too quite prominently to keep us from getting proud and self-reliant.

Genuine Love of Self

Thirdly, we need to train ourselves to 'love our dandelions', meaning that we learn to love ourselves imperfect as we are. We see our failings as reminders of how much more we need to experience God's forgiving, healing and transforming love. When we deliberately choose to sin (refuse God's love) we certainly will experience the evil consequences of this choice, but never as a punishment from God; rather we must learn to see our negative consequences as a result of our own stupidity in abandoning God's love. Once we accept that we are not perfect and that it doesn't really matter whether we are or not, as far as God is concerned, we will find ourselves more at peace – with God, with ourselves and with everyone around us. All that matters in life is that we love in the best way we can, or as closely as the way in which Jesus loved... then we can even laugh at our foibles and they will no longer disturb us. Then will we have come to truly love our dandelions. Only then will we be able to enjoy life here on earth to the full. □

“Happy the person who eats bread in the Kingdom of God”



"...PROVIDED I AM ASSURED OF GAMES TIME"

Fr. Ronald Menezes, sdb

Rector & Parish Priest, Don Bosco, Borivli, Mumbai

I was born in a lower middle class family at Parel, Mumbai. Both my parents were working, my father, a mill worker and mother, in the railways. I was a day scholar at Don Bosco, Matunga.

As a youngster I dreamt of becoming either a pilot or a doctor. Since I was seemingly smart, my parents thought this was a possibility. Today I realize that God's ways are not our ways. Ambitions apart, I was very fond of sports. I loved to play football and hockey. The sad thing at school was that only boarders were allowed to play on the grounds after school, so I didn't get a chance. I was determined to get into a boarding, no matter which one, provided I was "assured games time".

My elder brother was already in Lonavla so I too decided to join the same boarding in class VIII. When Fr. Alessi (of happy memory) came to recruit boys for Lonavla, I was interested. But my teachers discouraged Fr. Alessi from considering my name because I was termed mischievous. I don't know what he saw in me but his words still ring in my ears, "Even though you are termed as a trouble maker, I am taking you to Lonavla". Praise God for large hearted priests!

I thoroughly enjoyed myself at Don Bosco Lonavla; actually excelled in all activities - far beyond the expectations of my parents.

As I grew older, the desire to be a pilot or doctor faded. I began to ponder, "If the Salesian priests and brothers can do so much for me, why can't I do the same for others, especially the poor." I do not only mean the poor in the economical sense, but also the emotionally,



psychologically and spiritually poor.

After I completed my PUC I went for my Novitiate and having completed the necessary priestly studies, I was ordained a priest on 22nd Dec. 1984.

I still wonder at the designs of God. My brother, who initially wanted to become a priest, is now the father of three children, and I who did not even think of the priesthood am on the verge of celebrating the silver jubilee of my Priestly Ordination.

The words of the Prophet Jeremiah ring in my ears, "Yahweh declares, Yes, I know what plans I have in mind for you, plans for peace, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope" (29:11) Though we have our own plans God too has his plans for us. They may not be exactly what we have planned but they are always the best. It is important to discern God's plan for us. What is it that I feel really called to do or to be in life? Our lives have a purpose, it is a short life. We need to ask God to open our minds and our hearts to do His will. □

WHERE ARE THE OTHER NINE?

By Vincent Rocha

The Media Forays

The media industry has grown in all forms and dimensions. Its scribes have reached a near-saturation point having carried out surveys and other investigations into almost all possible subjects on earth. A story has it that three young journalists, frustrated with little or nothing left to delve into on earth, decided to venture out into an altogether new territory. They decided to go to Heaven to study the operations there and see if they could write a publishable story. Somehow they made their way to Heaven with their cameras and laptops and when they explained their mission to St. Peter, they readily got his nod to enter.

Heaven Surveyed

St. Peter led them into a very large hall, above the entrance door of which were the words 'Receiving Department'. As they walked in, the young journalists were awestruck not by its unspeakable ambience but by the flurry of activity. Throngs of angels filled the hall and were engaged in a hectic activity at a frenetic pace. They asked one of the busy angels what was happening there. He told them that they were sorting out the millions of petitions that come to Heaven every moment and then were putting them up to God for sanction. The journalists made their notings and moved on to the next hall marked 'Despatch Department'.

Again, they were swept off their

feet by what they saw. It was filled with countless number of angels, darting about at breath-taking speeds. With some effort, they got one of the angels to talk. He told them that they were packing, labeling and forwarding to earth the answers to petitions which God was pleased to sanction.

"Does God answer all the petitions?" asked the journalists. "Yes", came the reply "though not always as precisely as the petitioner wanted. Sometimes, He answers them in a way which He knows is best for the petitioner. If the petitioner scrutinizes closely all the blessings that come his way, he will find that the answer to his prayers lies somewhere in them. Did Jesus not tell us to ask and it will be given to you?"

The journalists quickly logged in their observations, took pictures and moved on to the third hall. This hall, though equally large and resplendent, was devoid of the hectic activity of the first two and manned by just a single angel. Bewildered by this anticlimactic scene, the journalists were tempted to ask why the activity there was dismally so low as compared to the feverish activity of the first two. "Well" the angel said, "this is the Thanksgiving Department and we receive very few acknowledgements from earth to keep us busy." The journalists spontaneously interrupted the holy one, "But there are numerous thanksgivings and psalms happening down below every moment." "Yes, we know," responded the angel, "but they are

quite out of proportion with the number of responses we send down. Besides, they are so tepidly done that many of them fizzle off on their way up. We would like you to take back to earth the message that God prefers to see the acknowledgements converted into action. He prefers thanksgiving in kind rather than in words.” “How do we do that?” asked the journalists. The angel replied, “Do you remember Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount?” The journalists nodded. “Then when you go back to earth, analyse the first part of each beatitude and you will find your answer.”

Well! Let us leave the young journos alone to write their piece and look at the implications of the interesting dialogue between them and the angels.

God answers all our prayers

If you have been praying for your son to become a medic, but instead he chooses to join the seminary, then that’s the answer to your prayer. If you have always hoped that God would bless you with a lot of wealth by the time you retire, instead you have been granted robust health, a good appetite and youthful exuberance with just your retirement benefits, then God has answered you. If we could sometimes reflect a little and see beyond our specific petition, we would ‘see’ that God answers all our prayers but in His ways, just as the angel said.

Does God want our Thanksgiving?

Of course, He does! Remember the incident when Jesus was asked by ‘ten’ men suffering from leprosy to heal them and they were all made clean. And only one of them, when he saw that he was



healed, came back praising God in a loud voice and throwing himself to the ground thanked Jesus. And Jesus said to him, “There were ten who were healed, where are the other nine? Why has only one come back to give thanks to God?” Does one need further proof that God expects our thanks and praise?

From Verbal Thanks to Action – à-la-Beatitudes

There is much wisdom in what the angels told the journos, that is to convert the verbal thanks and praise to ‘kind’. Didn’t Jesus say “whatever you do to the least of my brethren you do it unto me?” Let us then look at the first part of some of the beatitudes.

1. BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT... ‘poor in spirit’ means to be humble. Humility is the realization that all your gifts and blessings come from God. So, if we have been bestowed with abundant talents or a windfall of something, let us not go about with

bloated heads. If we do that, our thanksgiving will not reach heaven even though we may shout 'Hosannas' till our voices turn hoarse; instead let us give of our talents for the benefit of others and share some of our wealth with the not-so-fortunate, that will be appreciated.

2. BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN... This attitude of grief is one of recognizing our sins, which leads us to repentance; also we learn to recognize the sufferings of others which leads to compassion. In this way we follow Christ who identified himself with a suffering world. Joining the St. Vincent de Paul society, or an occasional visit to a hospital or a home for the aged and the destitute, or involvement in the SCCs will go a long way in pleasing the Almighty.

3. BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER JUSTICE... This attitude is one of giving fellow human beings what is due to them and speaking against injustice to the poor. On the other hand, when we take another's property or his good name or anything that is his and do not make restitution, then we are nullifying all our verbal thanksgiving, howsoever vociferous it is.

These and the other five Beatitudes declare the blessedness of people because of both their personal virtues and gratitude for God's special protection and interest in them. No wonder they are called the Eight Principles of the Kingdom of God.

Shall we then conclude with the prayer, 'Lord teach me to render thanks in ways more pleasing to thee.' □

walking with the Church

Sacramentals, Persistent Prayer, Temptations

by St. Martin's Messenger

Q. *Does Holy Water contain a special power? A neighbour of mine swears by it and sprinkles Holy Water in her house every night and is convinced that it preserves the house and all those in it from every kind of danger. Could you please explain a little about it?*

A. We have answered similar questions before about the sacramentals such as a blessed picture, a blessed medal, a blessed statue. Holy Water is blessed water and is a sacramental like all of these others. A Sacramental is just a material item over which the Church (as represented by a priest) has prayed asking God to accept the prayers of the Church for those who reverently use it. So in the case of Holy Water, the devotion, faith or charity of those who use it is augmented and supported by the prayers of the Church. There is no magic-like power in the Holy Water itself.

Q. *I have been praying for years for something which I believe is very important for my life. My prayers*



have not been answered^a Sometimes I am close to giving up^a Am I deluding myself in thinking that God loves me, or that He will answer my prayer?

A. Thank you for your question. I think many people have gone through and are going through what you describe. One of the most important elements in prayer is perseverance. To pray effectively we must persevere – we must keep knocking at the Lord’s door. Remember the widow (Lk 18) who kept nagging and pestering the unjust judge until the judge answered her and gave her justice. Even though he had no love or respect for the woman, her nagging got to him. If the persistence of the widow prevails with a judge who cares only for his own comfort and convenience, how much more will it prevail on a God who loves his children.

God loves us and we can believe with certainty that He will answer our prayer if we persevere in asking. The trouble with us is that in our present day world we are accustomed to getting everything instantly or almost instantly and not being kept waiting too long. So at times when we don’t get a quick answer to prayer we give up praying. Why does God not answer us immediately? God can delay answering in order to purify our motives so that we ask him for what we need, rather than for

what we want or what we think might be good for us. In one of his letters St. Paul says – God may delay in order “to reprove, correct, train us in holiness” so that our hearts are prepared to receive the gifts he chooses to give in answer to our prayer. We can’t ever forecast the way He will answer our prayers, but he will answer. We all know of times when He does not delay too long. Many people returning from Lourdes or Fatima come back feeling that the hand of God has touched them and healed them in some way. Their prayers were answered. People write in practically to inform us of some miracle they have received through the intercession of Our Lady or Don Bosco.

In the world in which we live there are people who refuse to take no for an answer and hope that their persistence will pay off in the long run. Often they are regarded as pests. In our society it may or may not pay off but in the case of our dealing with God, persistence does pay off.

Q. *Will we ever be free from Temptation?*

A. The simple answer is no. We are human, we are weak and unfortunately very easily tempted and put to the test. While temptation in old age may not be as frequent and as strong as in our youth it will always be there. St. Paul has very comforting words for us in 1 Cor 10:13 “God is faithful and will not let you be tempted beyond your strength. He will give you, together with the temptation, the strength to escape and to resist.” □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



'GUIDED BY LOVE IN ALL THINGS' ST. STEPHEN OF HUNGARY (AUGUST 16) (969 - 1038)

by Mario Scudu (T/A I.D.)

During the years 2004-2005 there was a vigorous debate in the European Union whether to insert the famous term "Christian roots" into the preamble of the future constitution. Unfortunately this debate amounted to nothing. Yet, we would be unable to imagine the history of Europe while ignoring its Christian influence. Europe would have no precise identity and we would never know Europe with its people as we know it today: proud to be vanguard of progress for the rest of humanity.

This seems particularly true for one of these European nations, Hungary that has recently joined the European Union. Already in the last decades of the first millennium while the conversion of the Magyar tribes was taking place, their first king was approved and consolidated by the Pope in Rome. From that moment, thanks to the farsightedness and holiness of its leader, Stephen, the history, politics and cultural identity of Hungary developed with the advent of Christianity that has since influenced its society even to this day.

A Crown Presented by the Pope

Before the year 1000 the Magyar peoples were united as a tribe and lived on the land between the Ural Mountains and the river Don. Under the leadership of house Árpád, they occupied Pannonia. They were called On-Ogur, (meaning Ten Arrows), from which the name Hungary was derived. For many years they lived with fierce racial and bloody skirmishes along the borders with Southern Germany and Northern Italy, until they were defeated in 995 at Lechfeld in Bavaria by Otto I (who then became emperor). Subsequently he helped them change from being fierce warlike natives to a race of peace-loving farmers and shepherds. The Bishop of Passau (Bavaria) then sent some missionaries and with their advent Christianity came too. Thanks to the interest of the Bishop of Prague (St. Adalbert), that same year Istvan (Stephen) barely twenty years old married Gisella a Bavarian princess, the sister of Henry II, duke of Bavaria (who would later become emperor and... a saint). Gisella was no ordinary woman. She possessed

rare political and diplomatic qualities. She was also noted for her integrity and holiness (in fact she is a 'Blessed'). She would turn out to be an excellent collaborator and councillor of that young nation.

At that time the concept of spiritual and temporal power was not yet clear and the two heads were the emperor and the Pope. At that time Stephen was also looking for allies and so he turned to the Pope. He came to Rome with two objectives: to give his approval to the planting of the Catholic Church in his own country and to receive his endorsement as king of Hungary. Pope Sylvester II accepted both conditions and sent him a beautiful and precious royal crown surmounted by a cross. On Christmas night in the year 1000 Stephen was crowned the first king of Hungary and he wore the precious papal gift of the royal crown.

"For Hungarians, this ancient crown is the symbol of their national identity, of their history and of the thousand-year-old culture of their kingdom and, adorned with the title of "Sacred Crown", it is venerated as a relic by the people. May the deep spiritual meaning help the members of the present generation to build a future filled with significant values on the foundations of the Christian institutions of yore" (John Paul II, at the Millennium celebrations of Hungary, Apostolic Letter, 25 July 2001, #2).



Stephen receives the Sacred Crown sent by Pope Sylvester II for his coronation, that according to tradition took place on Christmas night of the year 1000

A King at the Service of His People

Not only for Stephen, the first king of Hungary, but for all those who ascended the high social offices of politics, military, or economy (sometimes even religious) there was the strong temptation to be egoistic and manipulative. In short, the incumbent ran the risk of using power to serve themselves rather than using it for the common good. History tells us that Stephen of Hungary overcame this temptation heroically. In fact, John Paul II in the above quoted Apostolic Letter said, **"Stephen did not accept the crown as an honour, but a service; he**

therefore, always and in all circumstances sought the good of the community entrusted to him, both by organizing and defending the kingdom and by promulgating new decrees, as well as by fostering the development of the two cultures, the human and the divine.” (#3) King Stephen was untainted by the allure of his advantages and successes and having overcome the enticements of his time, he found a living source from which he drew strength to guide his people with faithful service. A writer has summed up this spiritual source concisely and with insight: *In always presenting himself as though he were before the tribunal of Christ, whom he contemplated with the eyes of his heart and a face such as to command respect, he showed that he had Christ on his lips and carried him in his heart and in all his actions.*^f

As king, Stephen still had to overcome some obstacles (the return to paganism) within his kingdom and combat it. His wife instead Gisella was contributing her experience and her precious knowledge to give a solid political and religious basis to the fledgling kingdom, always primarily with a Christian foundation.

One of his contemplated legislations was the construction of at least a church for every ten villages. Besides this, according to historians he organized the dioceses of Hungary and ordered the construction of numerous abbeys. In fact, he invited German, French and Italian Benedictine monks to help him to build and set up a new ruling class (political and religious) that followed Christian principles.

Being a good leader, Stephen also listened to the complaints of his

own subjects and he was available to all those who wanted to speak to him, especially the poor. He also wrote that he loved to distribute alms to the poorest disguised as a nondescript. Once while doing his act of charity he was robbed by a group of bandits. He succeeded in withholding his own indignation and affront at that misadventure with serenity and good humor.

Historians do not only refer to Stephen as an amazing sovereign but despite his political preoccupations he found time for daily prayer. Therefore it was not surprising to note that he wrote to (blessed) Emeric his son: *"The observance of prayer is the greatest conquest of true salvation" Continuous prayer is purification and the remission of sins.*

A final point: In the iconography that concerns him (among the richest in Hungary) Stephen is sometimes represented holding the "Sacred Crown" in his hand and consecrating his kingdom to the Madonna "the Great Lady of the Hungarians." This also explains why Marian devotion is part of the national fabric of this people.

His last years were difficult and bitter because of internal difficulties (succession to the throne, since his son Emeric died prematurely from a very painful illness). His luminous life ended on August 15, 1038 and in 1083 Gregory VII introduced a devotion to him (and with him all those who contributed to the conversion of Hungary to the Christian faith). Even to this day this devotion is very strong and has a popular imprint, coinciding with a national holiday. His mortal remains were brought to the capital Budapest and laid to rest in a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, "The Great Lady of the Hungarians." □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

The Good Samaritan

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was beaten, robbed, and left for dead. She described the situation in vivid detail so her students would catch the drama. Then, she asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?" A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd throw up."

Story of Elijah

The Sunday school teacher was carefully explaining the story of Elijah the Prophet and the false prophets of Baal. She explained how Elijah built the altar, put wood upon it, cut the steer in pieces and laid it upon the altar. And then, Elijah commanded the people of God to fill four barrels of water and pour it over the altar. He had them do this four times. "Now," said the teacher, "can anyone in the class tell me why the Lord would have Elijah pour water over the steer on the altar?" A little girl in the back of the room started waving her hand, "I know, I know," she said, "to make the gravy."

Lot's Wife

The Sunday school teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Johnny interrupted, "My Mummy looked back once while she

was DRIVING," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

Did Noah Fish?

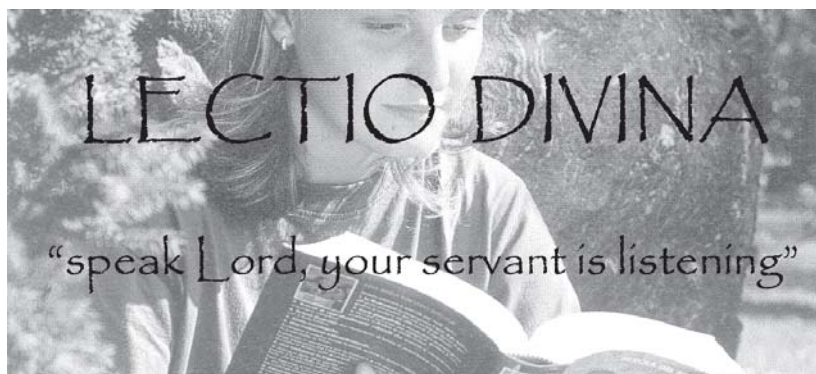
A Sunday school teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?" "No," replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms?"

Higher Power

A Sunday school teacher said to her children, "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in bible times. But, there is a higher power. Can anybody tell me what it is? One child blurted out, "Aces!"

Sunday School Version

Nine-year-old Joey was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday school. "Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then, he used his walkie-talkie to radio headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved." "Now, Joey, is that really what your teacher taught you?" his mother asked. "Well, no, Mom, but if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it." □



***Our Father...as we forgive those
who trespass against us!***

by Roberta Fora

The plea that we make of the Lord is a serious one, because we must then forgive the one who has hurt us and that calls for a heroic act of faith. It also calls for great humility and immense love.

Yet the statement in the Our Father is extremely clear: “forgive us our trespasses,” or rather, “you Lord, forgive us,” “as we forgive those who are in debt to us,” or “and we are committed to forgive those who have treated us badly.”

How often in life, we see difficult situations: a friend betrays us, we are unexpectedly blamed, calumny hurts us, malicious gossip causes us much suffering. Everyone of us has his/her own experience at sometime or other when we've had to forgive someone.

To forgive is not easy because human pride is very strong. It prevents us from “bowing our heads” and pushing out of our minds the sufferings others have inflicted on us.

Only Jesus truly knew how to forgive. As he was nailed to the



cross he turned to God and said: “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” (Lk 23, 34).

Before this sublime example we can only feel very 'small.' Christian life is certainly not easy. To live intensely the Lord's message in the Gospel means to daily reflect on what we have to do. Only a love that is true and totally free from any constraint is the right key that opens our hearts to God, and subsequently to our brothers. Forgiveness will then be a natural consequence of our love. The more sincere and deeply rooted is our love, the better will be our ability to promptly forgive the evil we have experienced.

Daily life with its real problems in the family, at school or at our places of work allows us

gradually to get accustomed to be internally willing to forgive.

Day after day, difficulty after difficulty, we can improve our relationships with those around us leaving our hearts open gradually to others, trying to forget all that has inevitably caused us suffering.

Help us, Lord, so that, tasting the fullness of endless joy of your pardon and rejoicing in the grace that you give us, may we be examples to our brothers and sisters, loving those who cause us harm and pardoning them from the depths of our hearts. Holy Spirit be always our tireless strength. □

POPE BENEDICT XVI *on the Our Father*

(Jesus of Nazareth p. 159 -160)

The idea that God allowed the forgiveness of guilt, the healing of man from within, to cost him the death of his Son has come to seem quite alien to us today. That the Lord "has borne our diseases and taken upon himself sorrows," that "he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities," and that "with his wounds we are healed" (Is 53: 4-6) no longer seems plausible to us today. Militating against this, on one side, is the trivialization of evil in which we take refuge, despite the fact that at the very same time we treat the horrors of human history, especially of the most recent human history, as an irrefutable pretext for denying the existence of a good God and slandering his creature man. But the understanding of the great mystery of expiation is also



blocked by our individualistic image of man. We can no longer grasp substitution because we think that every man is ensconced in himself alone. The fact that all individual beings are deeply interwoven and that all are encompassed in turn by the being of the One, the Incarnate Son, is something we are no longer capable of seeing when we speak of Christ's Crucifixion, we will have to take up these issues again. □

DEDICATED TO MARY
ASSUMED INTO HEAVEN

Quiet

REASON

by Angela

Recently, in my class of seven-year-olds, we experienced death for the first time. Three grandmothers died within the space of two weeks. As a teacher of religion, what was I to say to these three sad little girls?

I wanted to be honest, and acknowledge the finality of death, and the pain of being physically separated from those we love. Yet, as a Christian, I live with the hope that death is not the end, but a new beginning. In the future I trust that we will be reunited with our loved ones. How could I share my faith in a meaningful way with these little students?

Mary As Comforter

As always, we started the lesson with a prayer. That day we chose the Hail Mary, and ended with time for personal intentions. We prayed for Mums with flu, dogs who are too fat, cats with diarrhoea, kittens in need of a good home, and all the usual things children like to remember. On this occasion, we finished with special prayers for the three grandmothers. There were tears in the eyes of the three girls.

Suddenly I had a flash of inspiration. I decided that Mary could help me to comfort and console the little girls. I teach in a country far away, and most of my students are not Christian; they come from a variety of religions and nations. Nevertheless, Mary is seen as a very important person by all of them. She was Jesus' mother, and mothers are central figures in the lives of everybody in the class.

A Real Person

We pooled our knowledge about Mary, and of course the predominant image was of Mary as mother. For these children, Mary is a real person. We drew pictures of her, and gave her lovely colourful clothes and long hair, either in plaits or a pony-tail. In all cases Mary was perceived as being beautiful.

We discussed the birth of Jesus in a stable, his life on earth and his death on a cross. We imagined the sadness Mary must have felt to see her Son die in such a terrible way. Next we moved on to the joy of Easter and the resurrection. Finally, we came to Mary's 'taking up' into heaven, the assumption.

Spaces

TO HOPE

Cornyn

Death and Assumption

This was the core of the lesson. One little boy said, 'Well, of course Mary was taken up into heaven, because she was special. She was the mother of Jesus, and she's our mother too'. One of the bereaved girls shot up her hand and said, 'We pray to Mary because she's in heaven, and she cares for us, and will always help us'.

Yes indeed, I was reminded of the words of Jesus, 'Let the children alone, and do not stop them coming to me; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of Heaven belongs' (Mt 19:14). Children have the knack of getting to the kernel of issues without smothering them up in unnecessary details. All of these conclusions provided us with a springboard from which to discuss the assumption and death. Death and assumption are inextricably linked.

Reason To Hope

Mary's presence was a source of inspiration to the apostles in the early Church. Their sadness at her parting must have been tempered with joy at the thought of her presence in heaven. They knew that Mary would be reunited with her Son, and that her care for them would be no less in heaven than it had been on earth.

The assumption gives us reason to hope. In Mary we find a woman, a mother, who lived a faith-filled life, and who has preceded us to her eternal reward. Because of that we can afford to be optimistic, even in the face of death. Our beloved dead are all the hands of a loving Father. They also have in Mary a wonderful mother. In the meantime, she is our mother too, and she intercedes on our behalf. Let us ask her help in faith. □





CONFLICT OF INTEREST

by Colette Johnston

The story so far:

John Campbell hopes to marry Carol Martin. He fears, however, that if it is discovered that his uncle, Patrick McCarthy, was once jailed for theft, Carol's father will influence her to reject him and marry wealthy Gerald O'Rourke instead. John is appalled when his uncle suggests coming to live nearby, but is ashamed of his own attitude.

As they drove back into town, John and his uncle were quiet. John was thinking over what he had just heard. His uncle, it seemed, had only recently retired. While he was working, he had probably been able to keep loneliness at bay, but now that he had time on his hands he had been driven to seek out the sister

who had long ago rejected him. It couldn't be right to reject him now, again. And yet, this man's presence was putting John's own plans in jeopardy...

'We could, perhaps, help you out with money,' John said, ashamed that he and his mother were making this offer not out of kindness, but from self-interest. 'But we...well... we'd be happier if you'd live somewhere else, and we could come and visit you often. My mother will only give you the money if you go to live somewhere else.'

In the long silence that followed John glanced at Patrick. He saw that his face had gone white, and was pinched-looking.

'I don't want her money, or yours either. I came here because I wanted to find my family. You don't have to bribe me to go away again, when it's clear that none of you wants me. Now, let me out of this car at that bus-stop there.'

'But...' John began, not slowing down.

Patrick raised his voice. 'I said, let me out at that bus-stop.'

John slowed to a stop and, without giving him time to say anything further, Patrick got out of the car. John, too, got out. As he followed Patrick to the bus-stop, he saw Gerald O'Rourke's Mercedes draw up behind them. Carol Martin was in the passenger seat.

Why had Gerald stopped just now? Was it to let John see that Carol was with him? Or had he recognized Patrick as the man whose presence at last night's celebration caused John's mother such dismay, and was he anxious to find out more about this stranger?

'Please,' John said to Patrick, 'as a favour, don't let these people know that there's any quarrel between us.'

Patrick looked at him with set face, and John waited in desperation as Gerald and Carol walked towards them.

'You didn't introduce me to your friend last night,' Gerald said, his cold eyes viewing John with unusual sharpness. He turned to Patrick and held out his hand, smiling coolly.

'I'm Gerald O'Rourke. And you...?'

'Patrick McCarthy,' John said quickly. 'And, Patrick, this is Carol Martin.'

Carol shook Patrick's hand with unaffected friendliness, while John stood by uneasily. It was torment to see Carol here with Gerald, and to know that, while his own time and attention were taken up with the problem of his mother's brother, Gerald was

devoting all his attention to Carol. No matter how hard he tried to solve the problem of Patrick, it would remain as an ever-present threat to his prospects of marrying Carol.

'I haven't seen you around here before, that is until last night,' Gerald was saying to Patrick.

John's hands clenched, but he could think of no way to intervene.

Patrick's smile showed amusement. 'That's why John is driving me around: to view this unfamiliar countryside,' he answered lightly.

John felt a surge of gratitude. This was generosity he did not deserve from Patrick.



'We're on our way to the races,' Carol said. 'Would you both like to come with us?'

Gerald frowned. He spoke to Patrick. 'I see you're waiting for a bus to... Where is it you're heading for?'

Patrick looked up over the young forest that extended from the roadside to cover the low hill to their left.

'John and I are going for a walk

up that forest track to the top of the hill, to see the view from there. And we'd better be off now, and not keep you late for the races.'

As the Mercedes moved off, John and Patrick began to walk up the track.

'Thanks,' John said. 'I didn't deserve that, considering what I'd just been saying to you.'

'I don't think you liked having to say it.'

'I didn't. And I think that for the rest of this evening we should leave our problems aside, so that you can enjoy the walk and the view.'

'I'll think about my future when I go back to the town,' said Patrick. 'Maybe I'll pack up and leave tomorrow. I've been working in England these past few years. I may go back to live there, where I'd be near some of the people I used to work with. Most of the neighbours I knew in my old home town are gone now.'

Instead of relief at hearing this, John was overwhelmed by the conviction that human respect was making him and his mother behave in a way that was unchristian and cruel. This lonely man was their own flesh and blood, and they were forcing him to go away and live among strangers. Well, he too would think about the problem when he got home. Meanwhile he would make this outing as enjoyable as possible for Patrick.

From the top of the hill they admired the view that sloped gently eastwards to the sea, with rich plains to the south, and mountains and glens to the north

and west. After a while they returned to the car, and drove on through the varied countryside, which was bathed in a hazy sunlight.

'There's a hotel overlooking the sea about ten miles from here,' John said, 'where the food is splendid, and there's a magnificent view down along the coast. If we head for it now, we'll have our meal well over before it gets crowded with racegoers on their way home.'

As they drove up the winding avenue to the hotel, John said, 'There are lovely gardens here, beautifully landscaped, and terraced all the way down to the shore. We can go and have a look at them before we have our meal.'

He parked the Fiat, and he and Patrick walked across the tarmac in front of the hotel to a short flight of stone steps leading to the gardens. John, ahead of his uncle, turned to the left as the steps curved towards the sea. Just then a car, on its way up the drive, came into view. As it sped towards them John looked at it more intently, and then said sharply, 'It's Gerald!'

Behind him, Patrick, startled by his tone, swung around to look at the car, missing his footing on the first step. He fell just as Gerald's car swept around a bend, heading for a section of the car-park beside the steps. The Mercedes struck him and, as Gerald swerved violently, Patrick fell to the ground. □

To be continued.

Don Bosco: The Times, The Man, The Facts

DON BOSCO AND THE STORY OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

by Natale Cerrato (T/A:ID)

Don Bosco had the extraordinary ability of extracting from his followers whatever he desired without resorting to any coercion or manipulation. Rather, he would rely on his natural instinct and the affection they bore him.

That was also what he did, for instance, with John Cagliero, who was lively, candid, intelligent and characteristically prompt. These were the characteristics that made him the representative of the Salesian work in America. That was also how he got around John Baptist Lemoyne, who was a priest with a sensitive heart, an austere spirituality, a chosen talent for accomplished narration,



a poet and playwright. He was the first to compile the Biographical Memoirs of Don Bosco, a set of volumes that reflect the memories, impressions and sentiments of some of his illustrious disciples like Michael Rua, Fr. John Bonetti and Fr. Julius Barberis.



Christopher Columbus

An Arbitrary Appointment

By 1871 Don Bosco had already been publishing the "Catholic Readings" (*Lecture Cattoliche*), for 18 years. It was a monthly periodical of popular religious culture and he wanted to include in it the story of Christopher Columbus.

For this task, he approached Fr. Lemoyne, who was Genoese by birth. On the 4th March that year, Don Bosco wrote to him at Lanzo where he was the rector of the Salesian College telling him:



Fr. John Baptist Lemoyne

"It is only right that a job that is Genoese and maritime in nature be entrusted to a Genoese. You may execute the task at your convenience, but with that same mellifluous language, powerful thought and speed that has distinguished you in your other works (E 896)."

Fr. Lemoyne, lively and refined in his sensitivity for historical affairs, immediately set himself to work and in less than two years produced a work of 549 pages divided into three parts that appeared in the XXI volume of the "Catholic Readings" for the year 1873 under the title: Christopher Columbus and the Discovery of America.

The three books were printed at the printing press of the Oratory and they received a wide circulation. There followed various editions as a single unified volume that was entirely reworked in 1892 for the 4th Centenary of the Discovery of America. At Genoa it was commended at the Exhibition of

Christopher Columbus in that year.

Following the directions of Don Bosco, Fr. Lemoyne mainly referred to the Life of Christopher Columbus by A. Sanguinetti, but he wanted equally to quote sources in the footnotes from Ferdinando Colombo's *Historiae*, the *Historia de los Indios* of Bartolomé de Las Casas, the *Coleccion de viajes y descubrimientos* edited by N. Fernandez de Navarrete, etc.

Therefore, he was in no hurry to prepare a hasty compilation without proper historical documentation. He did not treat the subject like a novel or a fictionalized history that we come to know from the reading of a recent publication by the famed Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison's *Christopher Columbus, Man of the Sea* (Italian translation by T. Colusso, Milan, Longanesi & C. 1991).

On closer examination of the content of the book it appears that what Fr. Lemoyne substantially wrote about the great Genoese, reveals the true story of the figure of the man who was a deeply religious, intrepid and magnanimous, a true genius in navigation and it was never more exact.

Then, in his book, Fr. Lemoyne did not hide his love for Genoa, a love that Don Bosco knew he could use to induce him to take on the task. In the second chapter he writes of the glorious Christian traditions of his country that made Columbus great, moreover, in the second part of the book, after having described the terrible adversities of his third voyage, he quotes from Christopher

Columbus' Will or *Carta del maggiorasco* that was drawn up in favour of his first born son, Diego.

Order the same Diego, or whoever will administer the inheritance, to always approach every enterprise for the honour, prosperity and the glory of the City of Genoa and to employ every means and talent to defend and increase the prosperity and glory of this Republic, in all that is not contrary to the Church of God and the dignity of the king of Spain (G.B. Lemoyne, op. cit., Ed.1892, p. 276).

Don Bosco Prepared the Sign

As can be noted, it was Don Bosco who got the idea of entrusting to a Genoese Fr. Lemoyne the charge of writing the life of Christopher Columbus, the most illustrious son of the soil, a man that Morison did not hesitate to call "one of the greatest navigators, if not the greatest, of all time" (S. E. Morison, op. cit. nella trad. it. of T. Colusso, p. 8).

The cultural bad faith of certain anti-Colombian positions recently spawned certain controversies about the place of origin of Christopher Columbus yet without taking nothing away from the significance of this editorial initiative of Don Bosco and the intent of the research by the author for this purpose.

Fr. G. B. Lemoyne, nevertheless, is not known today for his history of Christopher Columbus but for many other things. In fact, he, "for his entire long Salesian life was a hard-working and diligent compiler of the Memoirs of our Saint, and a tireless bard who was inspired his actions. For almost forty years his name resounded

around the Congregation" (E. Ceria).

For Fr. Lemoyne the Oratory was Don Bosco. He was bound to him with affection and immense gratitude as to his own father. In 1883 Don Bosco wanted him by his side to fill the office of Secretary of the Superior Council of the Congregation. While calling him to that office, Don Bosco told him:

"I won't keep secrets from you, neither those of my heart nor those of the congregation."

You can imagine then how much Fr. Lemoyne was able to take advantage of this, more especially during the last years of Don Bosco's life when he found it impossible to read by the light of the oil or gas lamps and so they spent their evenings in prayer and conversation. For at least an hour every evening, Fr. Lemoyne stood beside Don Bosco while the latter spoke of his youth and the early days of the Oratory.

The saint died and Fr. Lemoyne continued to gather testimonies from those who had known him. That was how 45 volumes of documents served as the first compiled history of the Salesian congregation came into existence and later they came to be called the famous, Biographical Memoirs of Don Bosco.

In the last years of his life he had to suffer serious physical discomfort, and even personal penances. He used to repeat: "There was a time in the Oratory when we ate polenta but there was Don Bosco!"

He died in 1916 at the age of 77.

His name will always be a blessing to the Salesian Family. □

NEWSBITS

Honolulu

Theological consultants to the Vatican Congregation for Saints' Causes have ruled that the cancer cure of a Hawaiian woman was due to Blessed Damien de Vuester's intercession, Honolulu Bishop Larry Silva announced April 29th.

The decision represents a major step forward in Father Damien's cause for canonization. The final actions required to declare the priest a saint are the endorsement of the congregation's committee of cardinals and bishops and the approval of the Pope.

Father Damien, the 19th century Belgian missionary of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary who spent the final 16 years of his life caring for the Hansen's disease patients on the Hawaiian Island



Audrey Toguchi

of Molokai, was beatified in 1995 by Pope John Paul II.

Audrey Toguchi, whose cancer disappeared a decade ago after she began prayers to Father Damien that included pilgrimages to Kalaupapa where the priest worked and died, said that when she first learned she had cancer "I put everything in God's hands."

She decided to pray to Father Damien, who had given his own life in service to others. "Father Damien is not going to let me go," she thought at the time.

The sainthood process generally requires two miracles, one for beatification and one for canonization.

An alleged miracle – usually a healing – must overcome two hurdles. First, medical experts must declare it dramatic and unexplainable. Next, theologians must determine that it was caused through the intercession of the candidate for sainthood.

In Father Damien's case, the medical commission of the Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes ruled last October that the healing was "unexplainable according to available medical knowledge." In this latest judgement, the theological consultants determined that the cure was attributable to Father Damien.

The cure in question involved the disappearance of cancer, without treatment, from Toguchi's lungs in 1999. (*CNS*)

Toronto

Jim Caviezel, the star of the blockbuster film "The Passion of the Christ," told an interviewer

that he had been challenged by a friend who was not pro-life to live up to his professed pro-life convictions and adopt a disabled child.

The friend told Caviezel that if he did that, then he would change to the pro-life position. When Caviezel and his wife Kerri, went to China to adopt not one, but eventually two orphans suffering from brain tumors, the friend reneged on the deal. Caviezel, however said, "It didn't matter to me because the joy that we had from (Bo) – he's like our own."

The couple's first child, Bo, had been abandoned on a train, grew up in an orphanage until he was five and was diagnosed with a brain tumour. The Caviezels nursed Bo through his surgeries and he remains today at the centre of the family.

"We took the harder road," the actor said. "That is what faith is to me; it's action. It's the Samaritan. It's not the one who says he is; it's the one who does – and does without bringing attention to himself. I'm saying this because I want to encourage other people."

Handsome and a compelling actor, Jim Caviezel has taken leading roles in a number of mainstream feature films – "The Thin Red Line" and the "Count of Monte Cristo" being the best known. But it is his role as the suffering Jesus in the "Passion of the Christ" that he has become best known for.

About the adoption of his children, Caviezel was frank about his feelings, saying the challenge "completely terrified" him at first. "Yes, you do feel fear, you do feel scared but you have no idea the blessings that you have coming to you if you just take a



chance on faith."

When the Caviezels went to adopt their second child, they were first offered a healthy baby girl, but a five-year-old girl with a brain tumour from the Guangzhou region of China also needed a home. The Caviezels reasoned that a healthy baby would be more likely to be adopted by another family and that the child with the tumour had a greater need for a home.

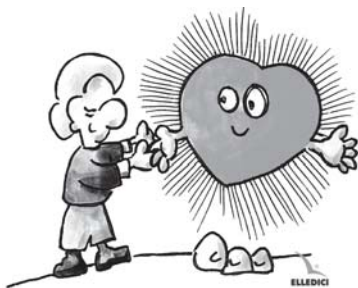
Caviezel's optimism and self-confidence showed early in his acting career. He was told that as a devoutly believing Catholic he should be prepared to keep his beliefs quiet. But it was his openness about his faith that attracted the attention of Mel Gibson and led him to offer Caviezel the role of Christ.

Asked about the challenges of being a publicly Catholic figure in Hollywood, Caviezel responded, "It's part of the cross you take up when you choose to believe in him (Christ)...we all have this desire to want to be liked...but what we should be asking God for is the desire for humility. □(Lifesitenews)

16 STEPS to GREATNESS

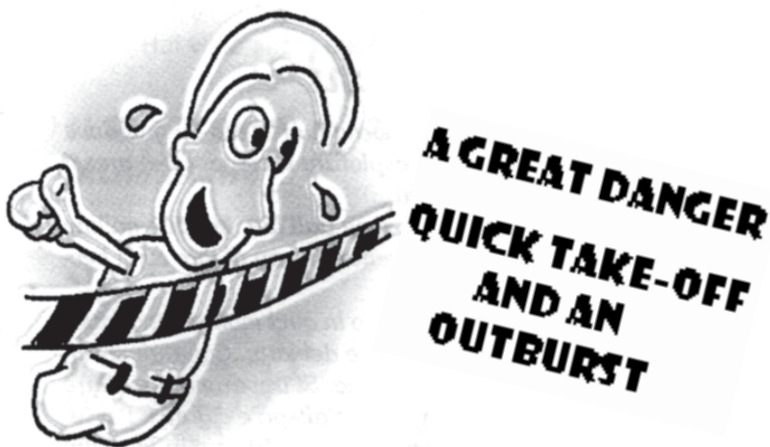
(Operation Wardrobe)

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



The age of 16

16 - PERSEVERANCE Part 1



It's so easy to have a quick 'take-off' but to fizzle out very soon. **Perseverance** is the virtue of the **marathon runner** who can stand the test of time, who can hold on even when the going gets tough...

**BEWARE
OF BEING
LIKE FIREWORKS!**



They are beautiful...but they last only a few seconds...

Therefore...

What are the qualities of a persevering youngster?

1) HE IS ONE WHO WILL HOLD ON TILL THE END, WHO WILL STAND FIRM, WHO WILL CLENCH HIS TEETH AND BE THERE, HE IS ONE WHO WILL NOT GIVE UP AND LET GO.

Now read the following parable...

THE THREE FROGS

Three curious and adventurous frogs one day dared to leave the pond in which they lived and explored the world outside. Near the pond was a prosperous farm. The three frogs began their adventure at the threshing floor. But two hens spied them and, thrilled with this variation in their menu, they chased them, with their beaks drooling with saliva.

The three frogs however were quick and agile. Just at that moment they saw a can of milk at the front door of the nearby stable. With two quick leaps the three frogs jumped into the milk can. They found that they had to swim in the milk. In the beginning they were thrilled at their escape. They were euphoric. Gradually they began to get worried. They really had to get out of the can pretty soon or they would drown. What was worse. The hens who were waiting outside were very angry...



They tried and tried again, but the mouth of the can was narrow and very slippery. The first frog was a fatalist. He tried to get out but then he exclaimed:

"We will never get out of this, this is the end!" So saying he slid down the side and drowned. The second frog was an intellectual who seemed to know something about the properties of liquids and the laws of physics. He quickly made some calculations estimating the distance from the mouth of the can to the surface of the milk, the acceleration required and the density of the milk and the force he needed to make the life-saving jump. His formula was correct but he had not calculated the handle of the can. With a tremendous effort he made his leap but he failed miserably and ended back in the can and drowned. The third frog was continuously swimming feverishly. He realized that the milk was turning into butter and as it thickened he was able to jump of the top and make his escape.

(From Bruno Ferrero, *L'importante è la rosa*. Elledici)

Have you seen these 3 frogs then? You would be able to them define them thus:



The fatalist



The theorist



The endurer

The third frog does not give up, he holds on till the end. **It is really true that the one who works hard and resists is the best and succeeds.**

This is what you should try to be: not like the fatalistic frog who suffers a little and immediately gives up, nor like the calculating frog who trusts in the calculations of the mind, but like the persevering frog who will not give in to defeat but will find a way out of the problem.

It is necessary to know how and when to proceed and not to be disappointed when one doesn't see results. It is also necessary to pass through that phase where there seems to be nothing happening and never to lose heart.

To be continued

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

My deepest gratitude to the Lord Jesus and dear Mother Mary for helping my son to go to Australia for his higher studies and better prospects and for the innumerable blessings showered on me and my family. Please continue to be with us always. *Charlotte, Cochin*
My sincere thanks to Our Lord Christ Jesus for having blessed and protected me and my family and having blessed me with a good job and for the many favours received. *Lloyd P. Daniel, Kuwait*
Thank you Mother Mary for the many favours received.

Abigail Rosa, Mumbai

My thanks to my beloved Jesus and Mary Help of Christians for helping me clear my Std. X board examinations with a first class though I used to fail in my school unit tests. *Herman Gomes, Goa*
Thank you Mother Mary, for protecting my family. *Fabia Pinto*
Thank you dearest Mother for protecting us on our journey to Goa and during our holiday and a safe return to Mumbai.

Mr. Joaquim Alemao, Mumbai

Thank you, dear Mother Mary for taking care of my daughter's admission into the university and for her US visa.

Shirley D'Souza, Mumbai

Thank you dear Lord Jesus and Mother Mary for the birth of a new child into the family.

Jerry L. D'Mello, Thane (W)

Thank you, dearest Mother for helping me find my wedding ring that I had lost while having a bath.

Mr. Martin D'Souza, Mumbai

Thank you dearest Mother Mary for a safe and normal delivery of a healthy baby girl and thank you for making the baby's heart scan read negative.

P. Shah, Navi Mumbai

Thank you Mother Mary for saving our lives on the 21st May as five of us were travelling by car from Vikhroli to Matunga for the novena on the 7th day. Our car met with a severe accident but all of us were unhurt. Our sincere thanks Mother for keeping us under your protection.

Jessi Ghosh, Mumbai

My belated thanks to dear Jesus and Mother Mary for a good sonography report of my stomach and for many other favours received.

Mrs. Dorothy Monis, Kolkata

Thanks dear Mother Mary for saving me on four separate occasions from what could have been fatal accidents. I know Our Lady was there and I'm grateful for her protection.

Mrs. N. Menzies, London

I am grateful to Our Lord and our Blessed Mother for the safe delivery of a healthy baby boy.

Mr. Naveen and Rita D'Souza, Mumbai

Belated thanks to the Lord Jesus and Mother Mary for all the graces and favours received.

Devotee, Mumbai

My belated thanks for all the blessings and graces received through the powerful intercession of Mary Help of Christians. *Eugenia V.*

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 dear Mother Mary, for all the graces received through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. *Hilda, Mumbai*

One of my friend's uncle had lost his passport and other documents on his visit to Mumbai from Goa. Some good people couriered it back and we all are happy and thankful to Mother Mary. *Susan, Mumbai*

Thank you Mother Mary for helping my daughter find a boy after 10 years through the fervent recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Mr. & Mrs. Nair
Sincere gratitude to Our blessed Mother for the gift of a baby boy through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. *Mrs. Diana Britto*

My sincere and grateful thanks to my dearest Mother Mary for a successful operation through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Martha, Mumbai
My mother was suffering from acute nerve pain in her left leg and through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys she is now feeling better. Thank you dearest Mother. *Sylvia Lobo, Goa*

Thank you dear Mother Mary for healing my daughter-in-law from an ulcer in the mouth and my daughter from an allergy through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. *A grateful devotee, Mumbai*

My grateful thanks to Mother Mary for a normal delivery of a healthy baby girl and also for my husband's job. *Graffa Dias, Goa*

Our belated thanks to Mother Mary for favours received and for being with us during our nephew's illness and we ask your help to heal him completely of his illness through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. *V & V Dias, Mumbai*

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady for all the favours received. *Rodrigues, Mumbai*

Thank you dearest Mother for granting my daughter the gift of a baby girl. *E. Noronha*

Thank you, dear Mother for the safe delivery of my daughter and the abundant blessings showered on the family. Thank you dear mother for the successful operation of fibroids of my daughter.

The Valladares Family, Mumbai

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

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio, and through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys for granting me the graces I received. I pray that you will continue to help me.

Mrs. W. D'Mello

Thank you dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for numerous miraculous favours granted to us and especially to my mother and me for granting us good health. *Riona James, Australia*
My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping my husband to secure a good job and special thanks for granting my son Movin a good job as a sales executive and thanks for many other favours received.

Jennifer Vaz, Mumbai

Dear St. Dominic Savio, thank you for the gift of a baby boy.

Mrs. Diana Britto

Thank you dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for a successful blood test and for all the other favours received.

Mary D'Souza, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for my ECG report which was normal.

Mrs. Hyacinth Smith, Trichy

My heartfelt thanks dear Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the favours granted to me and for my sister's marriage.

Lydia Rodrigues, Goa

Dear Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio my sincere thanks for curing me from cholesterol and corn problems.

Mr. Frederick D'Souza, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to our Lady Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for having a safe delivery of a lovely baby boy.

Sonia Lobo, Goa

My belated thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the gift of a beautiful baby boy and for saving him from illness.

Maros and Milagris Rodrigues, Goa

Thank you Mary Help of Christians and Don Boso for all the favours received.

N. Dias, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco for the many favours I received.

Alphy Lazar, Visakhapatnam

Thank you Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the safe journey granted to our granddaughter Aeryn back home to London. Please continue to protect her and our other grand children.

Mrs Maria Fernandes, Mysore

We are grateful to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for protecting and helping our son to complete his three years of studies in London.

Stanley and Bernadette Tavadia, Mumbai

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Thank you dear St. Dominic Savio for all the help in our necessities and do continue to protect us. *Hilda and Family, Bombay*
Thank you very much for helping me with a first class though I used to fail in my school unit tests and thank you for all the other favours. *Herman Gomes, Goa*

Thank you, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for saving me from a bypass surgery. *Richard D'Souza, Mumbai*

My sincere and heartfelt thanks to St. Dominic Savio for a safe and normal delivery *Kevin and Megan D'Souza, Mumbai*

of a baby girl.

My grateful thanks to St. Dominic Savio for immediate and favourable answer to my prayers towards my daughter Alison.

German Rebello, Goa

My grateful thanks for the safe delivery of a healthy baby girl and for many other favours received. *Capt Bosco & Darlette Menezes*

Thank you Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the many favours received. *Cecilia Monteiro*

Thank you dear St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby boy and girl and for the gift of health and peace in the home. *Glynis M. D'Abreo, Mumbai*

Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians and Dominic Savio for helping my sons secure a first class. *Mr. & Mrs. T. Moraes, Mumbai*

Sincere thanks to dear Jesus, Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for all the favours received. *Crista, Lyeza and Ajoy, Mumbai*

Our sincere and deep gratitude to Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the blessings and favours granted to our family.

Mr. & Mrs. Alleluia Gonsalves and family, Goa

Thank you dear Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for protecting me throughout my pregnancy. *Judith Lobo, Udipi*

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER AUGUST 2008

Holy Father's General Intention: *That the human family may know how to respect God's design for the world and thus become ever more aware of the great gift of God which Creation represents for us.*

Missionary Intention: *That the answer of the entire people of God to the common vocation to sanctity and mission may be promoted and fostered, with careful discernment of the charisms and the constant commitment to spiritual and cultural formation.*

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MARY WAS THERE

On the second Sunday in September, 2007, after hearing the 8 am Mass I dropped off my family at our residence and then proceeded to my work in the neighbouring county. It was drizzling and in the course of the drive I reached a narrow bridge. As I neared the bridge I slowed down and having crossed the bridge the car began to skid toward the opposite side of the road. I saw a Ranger Rover coming toward me from the opposite direction. Suddenly in resignation I closed my eyes and when I opened them I found that my car had moved to the edge and barely grazed the oncoming vehicle. I am certain that Our Lady was present in between the two cars. I make it a point to pray the 3 Hail Marys as I leave the house and before beginning a journey. I am most grateful for her intervention in what could have been a terrible accident.

Anthony, Teresa and Family, Ireland

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.

The magazine is sent to all who ask for it, even though there is a fixed subscription (Rs 200/- India & Rs 400/- Airmail)). We trust in the generosity of our readers/benefactors. Whatever you send us will help cover the expenses of printing and mailing; the surplus if any, is devoted to the support of orphans and poor boys in our schools and apostolic centres.

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SHRINE OF DON BOSCO'S MADONNA,
Matunga - MUMBAI - 400 019 - INDIA
Phone/Fax: 91-22- 2414 6320, email: dbshrine@vsnl.net
<http://www.donboscosmadonna.org>**