

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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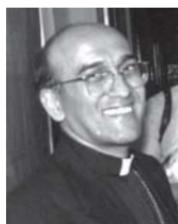
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*Hail Holy Queen,
show unto us
the blessed fruit
of your womb,
JESUS*

Cover: **The Last Supper**
by Carl Bloch
(1834 - 1890)



From The Editor's Desk

Such Great Love!

As a youngster I remember a story that was often told about a group of missionaries during the early nineteenth century who arrived in a remote village in the interior of India. No Christian had ever set foot there before and, naturally enough, their arrival caused quite a stir among the local population.

As they came down the road the villagers came out to greet them and welcome them into their homes with typical Indian hospitality. They were naturally curious about them, these men with pale faces and strange accents. Who were they? Where did they come from? Why had they come?

One woman showed a particular interest in the crucifix one of them was wearing about his neck. She asked him what it was, and he told her it was the symbol of their religion. She scrutinized it more closely for a time and then looked up with a puzzled expression on her face.

'Is that a man hanging there?' she asked, a bewildered look on her face; 'and are they nails in his hands and feet?' 'Yes,' said the priest, and went on to point out to her the wound in his side and the thorns on his head. Horrified by the sight, the woman asked in amazement, 'And is he dead?' The priest said, 'Yes, he is dead from all his torment.' 'And who is he?' was the next question. The missionary answered that he was the Son of God. 'And why did he die like that?' asked the shocked woman. 'To save us from our sins,' was the priest's reply. She was silent for a few moments and then, shaking her head, she whispered quietly, 'Such great love!'

That woman, seeing the crucifix with fresh eyes, understood the meaning of what she saw. She recognized the evil of the event. But she understood too the love of the one crucified.

For the cross is the scene of unspeakable evil and extraordinary love. It is evil because on Calvary the Son of God was tortured and killed to satisfy human hatred, envy, greed and pride. It is the greatest love, for on the cross Jesus died to save his enemies: all of us. The cross shows us the depths of evil of which we humans are capable, and the heights of love to which we are called by God's grace. Right through history we see echoes of the evil of Calvary, from the stoning of Stephen to the death squads scouring the forests of Khandamal district in Orissa. Pope Benedict XVI on February 8th, 2009, referring to the Nazi extermination of the Jews warned: "I hope the memory of the Shoah moves humanity to reflect on the unpredictable power of evil when it conquers the human heart."

But history reflects the love of Calvary too, from the missionaries who toil in strange lands to the everyday acts of kindness that we either experience or extend to others that seem to go unnoticed.

In every place and in every heart, that struggle between evil and good is still with us. Calvary is not finished yet. But we know that, whatever the appearance, love triumphs over every evil: for Christ is risen from the dead!

Fr. Ian Doultton sdb

4. A MODERN INDIAN ZACCHAEUS

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

We are all familiar with the story of Zacchaeus and how Jesus transformed his life during a simple meal together. Reading an account of the life of Mukesh Ambani, I couldn't resist comparing him to good old Zacchaeus, the man who discovered an alternative way of living - no longer just selfishly for himself, but as a channel of blessings for thousands of others. In the last century, M. K. Gandhi was India's most famous and powerful private citizen. Today, Mr. Ambani is widely regarded as playing that role, though differently. Mr. Ambani champions the cause of the city, has buried the past and deftly though sometimes ruthlessly wields unlimited financial power. He is the richest Indian and is envisaged by many to be the richest person on earth before long.

Vision for a Better India

Detailing his vision and goals he professes they are for India's benefit as much as for Reliance Industries. "Can we really banish abject poverty in this country?" he muses aloud. "Yes, in ten, maybe fifteen years we can say we would have done that substantially. Can we make sure that we create a social structure where we remove untouchability? We're fast moving to a new India where you don't think about this caste and that caste." Mr. Ambani is committed to channeling money from the affluent cities into the struggling backward agricultural heartland. He foresees that Reliance will provide incomes to around 30 million Indians within

the next five years by buying from farmers and employing new workers in its stores. And since Mumbai, Mr. Ambani's hometown and the commercial and entertainment capital of India, has grown ever more populous and ever less habitable, he projects that Reliance simply build a new, improved city across the harbor.

Tickling off one Indian problem after another, Mukesh proposes for each a Reliance solution. While India was once largely self-sufficient in oil and gas, it is now an energy importer. So he is building a world-class oil refining and petrochemical complex in Jamnagar. It is already one of the most profitable refineries in the world, and Mr. Ambani plans to double its capacity. Two-thirds of India's 1.1 billion people still live off the land, and to combat the cycle of poverty that ensnares most rural dwellers, while making a handsome profit for his company, he also wants to stir up an agricultural revolution. He has begun building a nationwide network of over 700 western-style supermarkets and other retail outlets, aiming to connect them directly with farmers who have traditionally sold only to middlemen. Through this scheme the poor backward farmers stand to profit enormously, while growing also in status and self-respect!

Even as these challenges are resolved one by one, some affirm that Mr. Ambani has already established himself as India's great

transformer, with a legacy that has much in common with many of the American industrialists of the 19th century. "When we talk about Rockefeller and Carnegie and others, they really each changed only one industry," observed Mr. Nilekani, the Infosys co-chairman. "But if you look at Ambani, he's really changing three or four industries."

Tough and Disciplined Upbringing

Mr. Ambani, 51, took control after their father died and maintained his family's dominance in its petrochemical, oil and gas and textile manufacturing businesses. He keeps a very low public profile; even those close to him describe him as inscrutable. On the one hand, he is recognized as a man whose heart bleeds for India. He is motivated by "the ability to change the face of the country," said K. V. Kamath, of ICICI Bank. "That is the biggest kick anybody would get today – that they could touch the lives of a large number of these billion people and make things better for them." On the other hand, Mr. Ambani is also known as someone who lets little stand in his or Reliance's way. The Ambanis always see life as, 'Oh God, better not miss an opportunity.' "When they were growing up," added the friend, "you didn't get a second chance!"

Times were tough in his youth, and Mukesh often went without an allowance. Friends say that growing up as he did gave him an edge over many of his business peers: while he would one day enjoy all the privileges of a second-generation billionaire, his early childhood instilled in him the combative mentality of an outsider typically found among first-

generation entrepreneurs. "The important thing which I've really learned is how not to give up, because you never succeed in the first attempt." His greatest talent is to be "in the clouds as well as in the details. In my life, I've only met a few people who are able to think on a staggering scale and take the risks to match it..." observes a close friend.

Breaking Barriers Unconventionally

Over the years, Reliance was gradually transformed from a small family business into a publicly traded empire, adopting new standards of corporate governance. "They set up world-class companies and facilities in spite of the restricting regulations of the times. By exceeding the limits and restrictions, they created the case for scrapping those regulations. They made it into a case for reforms."

Some observe critically though that the company routinely engages in political lobbying and covert monitoring to gain ascendancy over its rivals. To be sure, such practices are widely and ruthlessly practiced in India. And people in the Indian business scene say few companies match Reliance's record of having laws changed in its favor and of protecting itself from extensive outside scrutiny.

What is a critical success factor for Reliance is "relationships," a word that Mr. Ambani and his players relish. "We believe in relationships," he observes. If someone helpful to Reliance needs an introduction, consider it done. If they need to use the private jet or gain access to a coveted temple to pray, consider it done. What most distinguishes Reliance from its

rivals is his "intelligence agency," a network of lobbyists and informers in New Delhi who, it is said, collect data about the vulnerabilities of the powerful, about the minutiae of bureaucrats' schedules, about the activities of their competitors. Critics further allege that Reliance has been especially effective at managing the press. Although India's raucous news media have brought down many a powerful person and institution, Mr. Ambani and Reliance are rarely the subjects of hard-hitting Indian reporting.

A Brighter Future

But Mr. Ambani also thinks beyond his current portfolio. One of their more intriguing projects is an ambitious plan he has for making India a rival to China in manufacturing. Mr. Ambani's vision is to turn India's weakness on its head. If manufacturing in India remains small-scale and fragmented, let it stay that way, he says. "The next big thing is how does one create manufacturing with decentralized employment?" he enquires. "The Chinese have got very disciplined top-down systems. We have our bottom-up creative systems."

"In a country of more than a billion people how do you really bring about the individuality of every single person?" Mr. Ambani queries. "How do you make sure that you create systems that empower everybody and bring them to their true potential? This is what Gandhi actually taught us... The optimistic part to me," he adds, "is that now these goals look achievable." Given such passions, why not enter the political arena? He is sometimes asked. "I think I

can do much, much more in my particular job," he replies confidently.

Refreshing Reflections

It is encouraging to see how this thorough businessman thinks not just of himself but equally of the country at large. This is the kind of vision that the Eucharist fosters in a person of goodwill. Therefore maintaining the balance between self and others is something we learn only from Jesus as he breaks of himself for others.

When our celebrations of the Eucharist produce such a change of attitude in many of us we shall come to 'love our neighbour as we love ourselves!' While India is a nation that is surging ahead particularly on the economic front, for the country as a whole to benefit from this growth and advancement, we would need many more people with the Ambani mindset. Nothing short of a nation-wide revolution in thinking - from 'what's in this for me' to 'what can I concretely do for my poor unfortunate brethren so that all enjoy God's abundant blessings showered on us as a nation' would transform our nation making it the leading nation in the world.

Is this mere wishful thinking? Not really, given the vast religious and cultural heritage of our Indian population. Where the majority believe that each human being is a part of God's self or household, why should it be difficult to share God's blessings more liberally with one another? What we need most is many more persons who will show the way by practical example! Could we who celebrate Eucharist frequently rise to the occasion? □



REMAIN IN MY LOVE

Fr. Richard D'Silva, sdb

Vocation promoter of Uttan Region and Prefect of Studies
of St.Dminic Savio Boys Home Andheri, Mumbai

Each of our vocation stories is unique because each of us is unique and each of us is called personally by God. Let me share with you how I was called by the Master. I was the third among the five children. My parents brought me up and nourished me not only physically but mentally and spiritually. They made sure I attended Mass everyday and pray the rosary in the house every evening at 8.00. I was a member of the legion of Mary and the altar boys. I was regularly encouraged to help the parish priest in jobs like making hosts and counting the money. I grew up under the influence of fishermen and farmers who were for me, models of hard work and absolute trust in God. I studied in a Marathi medium high school. If it was not for the English camp, I wonder if I would have ever become a Salesian. One evening as I was saying my night prayers Bro. Cyril D'Souza came and asked me whether I wanted to become a priest. I said Yes! I did not even have even the money required for the journey to the vocation camp. Bro. Cyril gave me the money and sent me to the camp organized by Fr. Diego Nunes. Fr. Godfrey D'Sa the then vocation promoter of the province came to my home to see me and sent me to Baroda to learn English. Years rolled by. It seemed as if God had called me and then left me to find my way. I felt lost and discouraged at times. I wanted to give up. My parents and relatives encouraged me and prayed for me. My Salesian confreres (6 of them



now priests) guided and accompanied me throughout my journey to priesthood. My elder sister joined religious life and inspired me to remain faithful. She has dedicated her life to serving the aged in society, working with the Little Sisters of the Poor. In my family I was not the only one to say 'yes' to God's call.

The fifteen years leading up to my ordination were full of fun, growth and knowledge. I was ordained in the year 2006. When I said 'yes' I was raw, inadequate, unskilled, too young, small in stature, fearful and weak, but I loved to be with the young. Today I am happy to be a Salesian priest. God gave me the gift of life and the gift of Priesthood. I ask for nothing because He has given me everything. Do you seek true happiness? Do you seek peace and fulfillment? Try JESUS. He will never fail you. □

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PRAYER TRIUMPHS!

By Antonio Rudoni

The second chapter of Mark's Gospel (Mk 2, 3-5) tells of four stretcher-bearers who wanted to bring a paralytic to Jesus but were prevented because of the crowd. They then stripped the roof and lowered the paralytic who found himself before the Master. He (Jesus) seeing their faith (not the faith of the paralytic, but of those who carried him), said to the paralytic (not to those who carried him): "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

So, even that sick man, like everyone else, had some sins, small or great - which were forgiven by Jesus and he was healed!

What does this mean? That, when someone suffers for a dear one who is far away from God and does not profess to have a change of heart, that can change the person (Jer. 31, 18 says "Bring us back, Lord, we are ready to return to you"). When we believe, our faith is like the faith of the four stretcher-bearers and that will move God to heal that person (Mt 21, 22 writes: "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in

prayer.")

In other words, even if our dear one has not had a change of heart, with the prayer we make to God, we trust that his conversion will be certain because the Lord has sworn: "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For, everyone who asks will receive, and anyone who seeks will find, and the door will be opened to him who knocks (Mt 7, 7s). So, above all, we ask for the gift of faith so that we will be certain to receive anything we pray for, provided it is good for us. Therefore, let us confidently throw ourselves into the arms of the Father for the brother who is far away from Him: "For God, everything is possible" (Mt. 19, 26), "Everything is possible for the person who has faith" (Mk. 9, 23).

God's Timing

We certainly don't know *when* and *how* the Lord will cause this change in our dear one but we are certain that he will do it! So, it is not right that we pretend "with our earthly eyes" to see his conversion, but we absolutely do not doubt that, in this world or at least in Heaven we will be able to return him to God's embrace!

Even 1 Jn. 5, 16 says: "If you see your brother commit sin that does not lead to death, you should pray to God, who will give him life." This biblical step assures us of what we have written, even if we exclude someone who commits a sin "that leads to death." This sin is not identified with "mortal sin" in



actual categories, but it still indicates something worse such as the apostasy of the antichrists.

Even in this case, however, John does not say that “we should not pray,” as some translations may point out. Both in the Greek and the Latin translations it reads as: “you are not recommended to pray,” thus leaving to God the final judgement. In practice, the apostle does not prohibit us praying for this sinner, but we should not dare, given the gravity of the situation, here I could cite the example some kinds of excommunication.

After all, the New Testament presents analogous passages: like Mk. 3, 29 and its parallels, where Jesus says that “whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit (setting himself outside the light and love of God, thus setting himself outside the scope of salvation) will never be forgiven because he has committed an eternal sin;” but the Church explains this in these words: “There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit.” (CCC #1864) But this grave situation can always be changed and such a grace is possible when requested through prayer!

In the Sea of Mercy

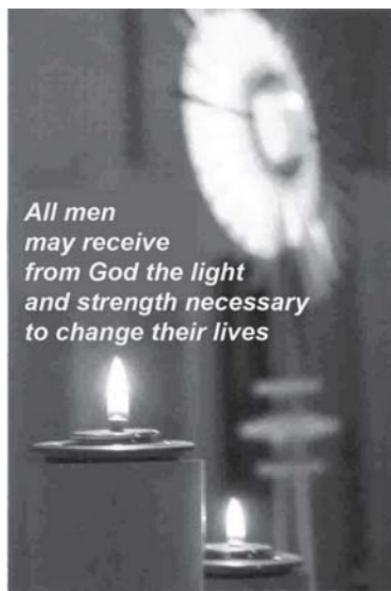
Also the words that Jesus is said to have spoken to Sister Faustina Kowalska indicate the universal and limitless value of prayer for sinners. He recommended that the saint lead all souls and immerse them in the sea of His mercy on the first day of the novena of the Divine Mercy. Jesus said: “Lead all

of humanity to me especially sinners, all these will I take into the house of my Father!”

Even here there are no limitations, rather on the fifth day Jesus asks her to bring these same heretics so that they too may be saved.

After all, even the official Church turns to God with these words: “Grant, O Lord, that all men may enjoy your everlasting light.” (Sunday evening in the second week and the evening prayer of Monday in the third week) and Pope John Paul II wrote in his Catechesis of July 28th 1999, “Damnation remains a real possibility, but it is not given to us to know, without a special revelation, who will certainly be.” We know of the existence of antichrists yet we do not definitely know their fate.

Therefore even for these people there is hope and so, prayer will triumph. □



*All men
may receive
from God the light
and strength necessary
to change their lives*

walking with the Church



The Causes of War, The Meaning of Lent, Our Sins and God, Stations of the Cross

by St. Martin Magazine, Ireland

Q. *Is religion not the cause of many of the wars or conflicts in the world over the centuries? The Islamic terrorists who brought down the twin towers believed that in doing what they did they would go straight to heaven. Christians on many occasions engaged in wars against people of other faiths. Could you please comment on this.*

A. Violence, killing and war in God's name is a contradiction. Our God and indeed the God of all major religions is a God of Love, a God of Peace, a God of Life. Hatred, greed, revenge and the violence resulting from these passions could never be said to be coming from God or true religion, but violence in the interests of 'legitimate self defence' (CCC2307) may well be justified. The people who brought down the twin towers in New York were extremists and were condemned as such by Islamic scholars and religious leaders of the Islamic Faith! Some present day terrorists of whatever religious persuasion, who are ready to sacrifice themselves and give up their own

lives for a cause try to justify their actions by appealing to religion. They believe they act in the service of the good against evil, in the name of God. Since many are very young people it is clear that they have been brainwashed to believe that their actions are just and noble. But for most observers the suicide bombers and others who sacrifice their lives for a cause do so motivated, not by religion, but by grievance or a sense of deep injustice. Christians and people of other religious persuasions would seem to have been ambivalent about violence in the past and indeed, in hindsight, some of the wars engaged in by Christian Nations (e.g. the crusades) would most likely not now be considered as morally justified. They would not fulfil the 'rigorous conditions for moral legitimacy'- better known as the conditions for a just war. But it must be remembered that having a just cause does not guarantee that our methods and means will be just. The noblest of causes can be pursued sometimes by the vilest of means, because violence always tends to corrupt users.

Q. *People I know say that during Lent we do not have to fast or to do penance any more, that all that was abolished in the sixties. Is that so?*

A. Jesus said, "Whoever wishes to be a follower of mine must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." I think that answers your question. As Christians we must practice self denial. However the people who told you that fast and abstinence was abolished in the sixties are right in one respect. The severe and obligatory (under pain of sin) penances imposed by Church Law on the faithful were revised by Pope Paul VI in 1966. Now during Lent the only obligatory days of fast and abstinence are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. However the Pope in reducing the obligatory days of fast and abstinence emphasised the essential role of self-denial in our lives. The Church now recommends all Christians to take on some act of self denial during Lent, and would suggest (not obligatory) that all Lenten Fridays should be kept as days of abstinence. Every Christian might reflect during Lent on the words of Our Lord 'deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me' and ask themselves what these words mean for them.

Q. *I commit sin so often that I feel these sins are a barrier between myself and God and while I want God to be part of my life I feel He is excluded and kept away from me by my sins.*

A. There are many people who think like you and are tempted to despair at times, but sins and failures and moral weaknesses are not in themselves a barrier to God. The gospel tells us how those who

were opposed to Jesus accused him of eating and drinking with sinners- of being in the company of sinners. Jesus himself said he came to save sinners. Our God is a God of the weak, of those who fail and who depend on Him to give them strength. This does not mean that He loves those who fail more than others but rather that He helps them more because He sees and understands their need. St. Paul boasted of his weakness, because as he says 'when I am weak then I am strong,'- strong with the strength of God who helps him in his weakness. Our Lord reassures us that "my power is at its best in weakness;" If we acknowledge our weakness before God then we give God room to work and to help us grow and mature as Christians.

Q. *What is the origin of the Stations of the Cross?*

A. From the very earliest times Christians have traced and walked in the footsteps of the Lord from Pilate's palace to Calvary, the place of the Crucifixion. The crusaders are said to have spread this devotion through Europe and so for those who were unable to make the journey to Jerusalem, the Way of the Cross was set up in Cathedrals and churches. Now you will find Stations of the Cross in parish churches all over the world. Few will know that there were 36 stations at the beginning until the 16th century when 14 Stations were chosen and approved by the Church. Since the Vatican Council in the 1960's an additional Station (The Resurrection of Jesus) may be added. □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



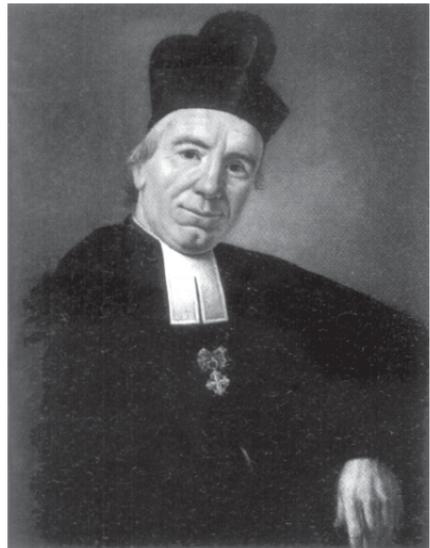
ST. JOSEPH BENEDICT COTTOLENGO (1786 - 1842) 30 APRIL

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

This month we bring you the story of St. Joseph Cottolengo, one of these "social saints" and his little House of Divine Providence. It is sometimes said that Turin is the city of the Holy Shroud, Mole Antonelliana, chocolate, Fiat, Don Bosco and Cottolengo. That may be true but certainly not exhaustive.

A Moon-like Face

Joseph Benedict Cottolengo was born to Bra (Cuneo) 3rd May 1786 into a large, religious middle-class family. From the time he was a teenager Joseph expressed his desire to become a priest, but he was unable to enter the seminary as it was temporarily closed because of a climate of the creeping hostility of Napoleon (and Piedmont was worried) towards the Catholic Church (in fact, he even had the Pope imprisoned). Given that the family's economic situation was barely comfortable, Joseph received a good private education. Finally the seminary at Asti reopened and he was able to take up his regular course of study. He remained there till his Ordination that took place in Turin on 8th June, 1811.



For about a year he was an assistant Parish Priest of Corneliano d'Alba where he immediately displayed an evident and convincing predilection for social and charitable work. In fact, he dedicated himself with all his might, to the material and spiritual support of the sick and needy, the poor and abandoned children. This was an activity that he carried out for 15 years with intense dedication till he left for Turin.

In 1818 he was welcomed into the Congregation of the Holy Trinity a diocesan congregation of the priests of Corpus Domini at one of the beautiful churches built in the city to commemorate the famous miracle of the Eucharist that took place on 6th June 1453. By now Canon Cottolengo began a period of preaching and working for the poor. Everything seemed to be falling into place and he jokingly wrote to his mother saying (cheerful and humorous that he was) that he possessed a "moon-like face." He was a learned canon, esteemed and sought after by many as preacher and a confessor. He had a comfortable room and a good salary but he was uneasy, uncertain and sometimes irritable and even gruff. He was often given to depression due to a personal crisis that he was suffering. He continued to zealously work for the poor but he could not understand them. He was still in search of the path he should follow regarding his own life. The main issue was that he was no longer a young seminarian.

"Grace is a fact": Blessed be the Madonna

He was 41 years old when his vocational crisis ended. On 2nd September 1827, Cottolengo witnessed the death of a French woman who had reached Turin with her family. During her pregnancy she had developed a fever. Assisted by her husband she was directed to the *Ospedale Maggiore* but she was refused admittance there. They told her to go to the "Maternity Hospital." Even there she received a second painful refusal, this time the reason was: they did not accept women with fever because it

could be a symptom of another (contagious) illness. The poor family was again refused and so ended up at the public dormitory. The woman's illness was getting serious and she called for a priest. This priest was Canon Cottolengo. He was deeply shocked at the death of the baby born after an operation and the mother soon after. Shaken by the pain he had witnessed and confused in spirit he made his way to the church and before the Blessed Sacrament he exclaimed: **"Why, my God? Why did you want me to witness this? What do you want me to do? I must do something."** He now understood. His illumination had come. He got up and lit all the candles on the altar and ordered the sacristan to ring the bells even if it was out of time. People hastened to the church and the Canon solemnly recited the Litany of the Madonna. At the end, without a word of explanation he dispersed everyone saying: **"Grace is a fact! Grace is a fact! The Blessed Madonna has done this!"** He finally understood his mission. He had become a new man.

He had just 15 years of his life left. He immediately rented some rooms overlooking the church of Corpus Domini. These would only be the beginning of a prodigious work (in Italy and abroad). In the truest sense of the term, from the number of foundations and religious congregations that would be born bearing his name and following his charism, and because of the supernatural assistance Cottolengo called these institutes the Work of Divine Providence.

A Family for the Sick

At his institutions he immediately wanted to welcome all those that were "turned away" from other places (orphans, deaf mutes, the insane and invalids). At these havens of mercy he was assisted by nuns and postulants, by men and women volunteers and working men and women who were enamoured by his particular methods and charisma. Cottolengo not only cared for the sick but also for Christ present in each person. The sick were not just non-persons who needed assistance but they were sons and daughters of God to be loved and cared for as much as possible. With such noble ideals no one could work for any salary.

A great difficulty came in 1831 that would prove providential for his future work. He was evicted from the city centre and sent to the outskirts (of Turin), to Valdocco. **There he began what today is still called the "Little House of Divine Providence" admired and famed for being a hospital and a nursing home.**

From the beginning, Cottolengo wanted his houses, nursing homes, and all who worked there to follow the concept of the family. Each one had to feel part of the group with a task to perform according to his state of health or sickness and so everyone would collaborate in the management of the Little House in his or her own way. They were not only those who just laboured, there were those who worked by praying. This was Cottolengo's idea. In fact, he said: "Prayer is your first and most important task. Prayer gives life to the Little House," and "the Eucharist and Prayer are the two wheels that take the Little House

forward."

Even above prayer what ruled the life of Cottolengo was his absolute and indestructible trust in "Divine Providence." It is said that a minister of the King of Sardinia who was visiting the Little House was worried where he (Cottolengo) would get the means to run such an enormous complex. **"This Little House survives under the protection of Divine Providence, and alms spontaneously arrive. If there are some miracles needed, we work them."** The skeptical minister responded: "the age of miracles is over!" And Cottolengo retorted: **"Your Excellency is worried about how the problem will be solved. Divine Providence never lets us down, it will never let us down. People will disappear, governments will come and go but the bank of Divine Providence will never fail! I am more certain of Divine Providence that whether the city of Turin exists."** Providence never missed an appointment with Cottolengo even in moments of great difficulty. Such was the proverbial faith of Canon Cottolengo in Divine Providence that his confessor once said: **"there is more faith in Canon Cottolengo alone than in the whole city of Turin."**

This giant of charity, this "genius of goodness" (said Pius XI when he canonized him in 1934) ended his "intense day of love" (from the Gazzetta Piemontese) on 19th March 1841 with the words: "Lord, Mercy, Lord! Good and Holy Providence... holy Virgin I now hand it to you." And Divine Providence, with the Virgin Mary, accepted his invitation and continue his work up to this day. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Treasure Hint

A customs official was examining a suitcase in which a traveller had hidden an undeclared bottle of perfume. As his hand roamed to the danger zone, the woman's small daughter clapped her hands in great excitement and squealed. "Oh, mummy, he's getting warm, isn't he?"

Hide and Seek

My five year old son went with me to see a young couple's new baby. He gazed at the small red, wrinkled face a long time, then murmured solemnly: "So *that's* why she hid him under her coat for so long."

Naught and Cross

A motorist, charged with driving over a crossing without due caution, explained: "I always hurry through to get out of the way of reckless drivers."

Professional Perspectives

Two English Schoolboys took a dislike to each other, and the hatred grew more intense as the years passed. One entered the Royal Navy and finally became an admiral; the other went into the Church and eventually was made a bishop.

Years later they met on a London Railway station platform. They had changed, of course, and the bishop had grown very plump, but they recognized each other. The bishop swept up to the admiral, who was standing there resplendent in his uniform with medals and gold braid glittering all over him, and said: "Stationmaster, from which

platform does the ten-five train leave for Oxford?"

The admiral promptly retaliated: "Platform 5 madam. But in your condition, should you be travelling?"

Labour of Love

Lady: "Have you ever been offered work?"

Tramp: "Only once, madam. Apart from that, I've met with nothing but kindness."

Weights and Measures

In a men's clothing shop a tiny slip of a girl was serving a man who must have weighed at least 250 pounds. He wanted to buy a belt but did not know the size, so the girl produced a tape measure. For a moment she stood eyeing her customer, a puzzled look on her face. Then she smiled in relief. "Here" she said cheerfully, "you hold this end while I run around."

The Point of View

One aimless shopper to another: "If you don't plan to buy anything in this shop, let's look at something more expensive."

For Peace Sake

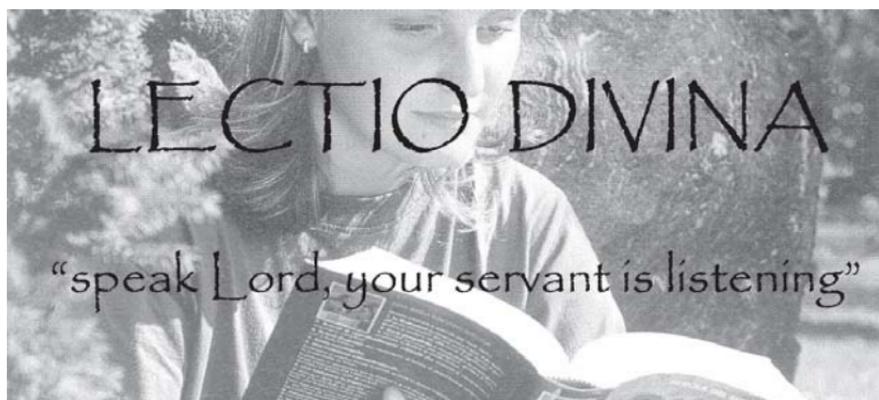
An Irishman hurried into the public house and said to the bartender: "A pint before the row starts."

He drank that up.

"Another pint before the row starts."

He'd drunk that halfway when the bartender asked: "What row?"

"I've no money." said the Irishman. □



HOLY MARY

by Roberta Fora

Meditating on this most common prayer is like meditating on the Word of God...may it touch our hearts. (ed)

Holy Mary, the perfect model of one who follows the will of God is indeed a model for every person who yearns follow the Lord Jesus!

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word.” Those were profound words from the mouth of an extraordinary and humble teenager who stood aghast and allowed herself to be led on her first steps toward holiness.

Among the thoughts that immediately come to mind when reflecting about holiness are the words of St. Dominic Savio: *“Here we make sanctity consist in being very happy.”* This statement becomes very gratifying and encouraging when we become aware that holiness is not just the goal for only a chosen few but can be

attained by every Christian who wishes to take the Gospel seriously. It even makes saints of us every day as we live out our particular vocation “in the good times and bad” of married life, in



the joys and difficulties of religious life, in the personal and unique journey of each one who tries to live a better life striving to grow closer to the Lord and consequently attain true happiness.

"Teach me to do your Will, for you are my God," we pray in Psalm 142. Perhaps the main ingredient that will really give us the best results in our "recipe for holiness" will be our ability to ask God daily, to help us discover his Will and thus find true joy, not in superficial and ephemeral things but in that which fills the depths of our hearts and endures forever.

When meditating on this we strive to make a space within ourselves, renouncing the gratification of mere appearances and all that is futile in order that His Word may take root in the depths of our hearts.



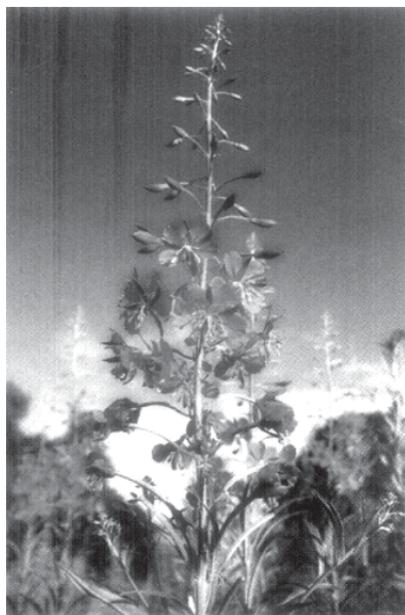
The Word of God is the seed that we must allow to take root and grow in each of us thus making us firm and faithful witnesses.

And who better can we seek as a "model" and "guide" than Mary most Holy?

Let us seek her maternal intercession because she will help us live our daily lives passionately desiring always to do God's Will and not ours.

Grant, O Mary, that we may know how to discover in the daily events of our lives the important plans that He whispers to our hearts and when they seem mysterious and unfathomable help us to simply say: "Father Your will be done."

Thus each day we will sow the seeds that will nurture our tree of holiness. □



DEDICATED TO
THE RISEN CHRIST

Quiet

THE RESURRECTION

by Michael

In a certain sense the resurrection is occurring in your life already. Of course the resurrection is something we look forward to in the future, but it's also a here-and-now event, at least in a partial sense. Limited though it may be, your life here is still a real resurrection, a real sharing in Christ's newness of life.

How does this resurrection enter your life here and now? Very simply, through the newness of life that God gives to you, and through you to others. Newness of life, unending life: this is what the resurrection after death means. And to some extent at least you can already be experiencing that newness in yourself, and helping others to experience it too in their day-to-day existence.

Beginning to Live Again

Some examples will make clear what I mean. Suppose you suffer a severe illness, or some tragedy enters your life. Initially you are shattered. You feel that life can never be the same again, that a part of you has died. And so indeed it has.

But then slowly, with the help of God's grace and the kindness of other people, you begin to live again. But now you are living at a deeper level. You are indeed a changed person, and a better one. The tragedy and loss you have endured have brought to life depths of your mind and heart that lay dormant. That newer and deeper life is the resurrection: life from death.

Growing as a Person

To take another example: you may be leading a shallow and superficial existence. Self-seeking and self-indulgence loom large on your horizon. Then you begin to grow dissatisfied with this way of living. You become aware of how life is slipping by and there is little to show for the passing of the years.

Again God's grace touches the heart. It may be through something you have read, or a



ACTION IS NOW

el O'Brien

sermon you have heard, or the example of a Mother Teresa: God can reach us in a million different ways. Somehow, you are inspired to live less for yourself and more for other people. In the process you grow as a person. That too is resurrection.

Or again: you may be in the grip of some sinful habit, something that you'd like to overcome but have never made the serious and sustained effort that's required. And then one day you are struck by how your life has been diminished and stunted by this barrier between God and yourself. A new courage, a new resolve is born within you. Through God's saving grace you break the chains that have bound you for so long. You have begun to share in the newness of life that is the resurrection.

Bringing Life to Others



Or it may be that you are instrumental in helping another person to cope with a great sorrow, to overcome a sinful habit, or to break free of some worry in life. You have become for another person the instrument of God's peace, sowing love where there was hatred, pardon where there was injury, faith where there was doubt.

With your divine Master's help, and following his example, you have learnt that it is in giving that you receive, in dying that you are born to eternal life. You have brought newness of life to another, and in so doing you yourself have also received a share in the resurrection.

It is by experiencing here and now this newness of life that you begin to desire the final resurrection, which is life beyond the grave. Because your life has already been touched by the light, warmth and power of the resurrection, you know that death is but the prelude to endless life, and holds no fear for those who walk in God's love. □

Family Secrets

Helen Morgan

The Story So Far:

Sarah Williams' life has been turned upside down. Following the tragic death of her parents in a car crash, she has discovered from an old family friend, Dr. Jim Brennan, that her mother and father kept the truth from her all her life. Instead of their having no relations, it has transpired that there is indeed, extended family back in the Irish village of Kilpatrick. Leaving behind her native English town of Kingsborough, Sarah has set out to discover the truth about her family. From her mother's sister; Kate, Sarah finds out that her parents' mixed marriage (her father Tom was Church of Ireland, her mother; Bridie, Roman Catholic) caused resentment in both families. Worse than that, Sarah has found out she was adopted after Tom and Bridie lost their firstborn...

As though in a dream, Sarah listened while Kate told her that a year after her parents' wedding, they had a baby girl,

Catherine, who died shortly after birth. Her mother was so ill that an emergency hysterectomy was carried out in order to save her life.

Tom had buried little Catherine in a small white wooden box in the Holy Angels plot in the local cemetery. Bridie and Tom were overcome with grief. They had wanted that baby so much and they knew there was no chance of them ever having another.

'It's God's punishment for marrying a Protestant,' our mother told Bridie.

'What happened then?' asked Sarah, numb with shock.

'Tom had a job as an insurance collector at the time, they tried to adopt but were turned down. You see, people in mixed marriages where not given children in those days.'

'That was very unfair,' commented Sarah.

'I know darling, but those were the times,' replied Kate before continuing.

'Some time later, Bridie told me that Tom had got a job in Manchester and that they were moving to England. She said they wanted a fresh start away from Killpatrick. She said they could adopt over there. I heard from them the following Christmas but nothing after that.

'When I was expecting Sean I wrote to Bridie to tell her but the letter was returned marked "No longer at this address". I tried every way I could to find them but nobody knew where they had gone, not even their former employers. They had left no forwarding address.

'I blamed myself. I thought I had upset Bridie by telling her my news. She probably thought I had a great life with a husband, a home and a baby on the way but the reality was very different. My husband never accepted Sean and until the day he died, never even spoke to the child. He was gambling as bad as ever and it was a struggle to make ends meet. I loved Sean so much; it was as if I had to love him even more to make up for his father.

I tried over the years to trace Bridie but I couldn't find her. It was as if she didn't want to be found. Then came the awful news of the accident.

'I'm so sorry you have had to hear all this now Sinead. It never occurred to any of us here that Bridie hadn't told you.'

'It's not your fault Kate,' replied Sarah devastated.

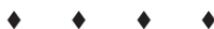


By the time Kevin arrived to collect her, Sarah had made up her mind to return home immediately. She felt she could no longer remain in Killpatrick. The fact that everyone

knew she was adopted made it even worse.

She told Kevin she was going to slip away quietly early the following morning and asked him to convey her apologies to the family. She couldn't bear to say goodbye to the people who had made her so welcome. Kevin insisted on keeping in touch as he was worried about her.

Her only family now was Jonathan and if he let her down she would have nobody.



Back home, Sarah immediately broke off her engagement to Jonathan who was distraught.

'But I love you Sarah. I don't care about your background. It's the future that counts,' he said.

'There must be something awful in my past for Mum and Dad to conceal it the way they did,' she replied.

'Can't we even be friends?' he begged.

'No, Jon. It's over,' she said firmly.

Since the disclosure of her adoption, Sarah's emotions had temporarily shut down but her mind remained crystal clear. She knew that by breaking up with Jonathan she had lost her future and her past.

Later, from somewhere deep inside her, a terrible rage rose to the surface. The violence with which she searched her parents' room for her adoption papers terrified her. She hadn't known she was capable of such feelings. She ripped the clothes from their hangers, emptied drawers and threw their possessions on to the floor. Later, when she saw the devastation she had caused, love briefly surfaced

and she wept bitter tears.

Despondent at not finding her adoption papers she sat down on her parents' bed. Suddenly she remembered the attic. With the aid of a folding ladder she climbed up, pushed open the trapdoor and turned on the light.

Inside, cobwebs hung down like dirty cord from the ceiling, a spider scuttled across the bare floor and there was a thick layer of dust everywhere. The room was empty apart from a heavy locked wardrobe which she prised open with the aid of a kitchen knife. Inside, an old fashioned red coat hung on a

hanger, a black hat and shoes were on the shelf. She wondered why her mother had kept these clothes as she had always given her cast-offs to charity.

'When you have two of anything always give one to someone who has none,' she had always told Sinead. Just as she was about to close the wardrobe door, Sarah noticed a buff-coloured cardboard box partially concealed behind the coat. With trembling hands she lifted it out.

Could this be what she had been searching for?

To be continued

Mobile Phones

If proof were needed today that we need other people, just walk along any street and count the number of people using mobile phones. While I can understand how useful one would be in certain circumstances, sometimes I am mystified by just how much they are used.

Recently I was in a restaurant with a lively group. We hadn't met for a while so there was much banter. At the table next to ours it was the same, but two tables away things were very different. The young lady facing me was looking down in silence looking at her hands, and fiddling with her napkin. I looked at her three companions and to my amazement I saw that each of them was talking into his own mobile phone. And each conversation was separate: between the four at the table at that moment there was no communication at all.

I found it one of the most depressing scenes I've witnessed in a long time. Were they still at work? But it was late in the evening. Were they phoning home because



someone near to each of them was at death's door? If so, they probably wouldn't have been out on the town at all. But why on earth had each of them joined three others for a meal only to ignore one another?

Incongruously perhaps, I began to think of the table fellowship which Jesus loved and practised. And I wondered what he would have made of mobile phones. What difference would it have made, for example, that evening at Emmaus, if any of the three present had one? Might the precious moment of the Breaking of the Bread have gone unnoticed? □ *by Betty Maher*

Don Bosco: The Times, The Man, The Facts

WAS DON BOSCO A DIOCESAN PRIEST?

by Natale Cerrato (T/A:ID)

In the November 7th 2004 edition of the weekly *"La Voce del Popolo"* one would read the following: "The family of Valdocco never forgot that Don Bosco was really a diocesan priest and remained so up to the end of his life." This journalistic statement was intended as a sign of affection but it certainly did not make historical or juridical sense. It is sufficient to historically examine everything that led up to the Pontifical approval of the Salesian Society that was initiated by Don Bosco not as an external founder but as the first member of the very society he founded.



Bosco's priestly life (1841-1859) were certainly those of a diocesan priest in every sense of the term.

Don Bosco the Founder

The first eighteen years of Don



Don Bosco with some of the first Salesians (photo 1870)

Having an understanding with his Archbishop he devoted himself to helping the youngsters of Turin, a practice that he had already begun at the Diocesan Seminary of Chieri where he was ordained a priest by Mons. Luigi Frasoni on the 5th June 1841. Immediately after that he frequented the Ecclesiastical College of Turin under the direction of Fr. Joseph Cafasso and there he started his ministry of the Oratories.

But on 18th December 1859 Don Bosco together with 18 of his young collaborators founded the Society of St. Francis of Sales. However, before proceeding with the secret ballot to elect the superiors, the young collaborators begged Don Bosco to accept the role of the Superior General.

On 18th May 1862 those Salesians who were now 23 in number with Don Bosco, made their profession before him and the Crucifix. Till then, the Congregation remained subject to the diocesan jurisdiction.

With the *Decretum laudis* (the decree of temporary approval) on 23rd July 1864, the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars officially recognized the Salesian Society as a Congregation "thus approving its existence and spirit. The approval of its constitutions, was however deferred to a later date. Furthermore in view of the exceptional times, Don Bosco was named Superior General for life" (cf EBM 7,425).

On 1st March 1869 the same Sacred Congregation promulgated the Decree definitively approving the Society of St. Francis of Sales as a Society "in the Pontifical right" and Don Bosco was invested with the ordinary authority of a

Religious Superior to the extent indicated by Ecclesiastical law granted to Major Superiors of Congregations. These privileges pertained specifically to Episcopal powers concerning the so-called Privileges. Nevertheless the Supreme Pontiff Pius IX benignly conceded to Don Bosco's request and granted him, as Superior General of the Salesian Congregation, the faculty of issuing dimissorials to all his candidates preparing for the priesthood prior to the age of fourteen if they were admitted or yet to be admitted to any house of the aforesaid congregation (cf EBM 9,257).

On April 3rd 1874 the Constitutions of the Pious Society of St. Francis of Sales were definitely approved (cf MB 10,956). On June 24th 1884, Don Bosco received from the Supreme Pontiff Leo XIII the "privileges" he so desired (cf MB 17,721).

As a result, in 1884 the Curia actually granted Don Bosco some of the faculties that had, till then been withheld, but this had no bearing on the fact that the Salesian Society had already been definitively approved by law as a Pontifical Congregation. Even Mon. Lawrence Gastaldi, the Archbishop of Turin was already aware of this. The approval was verified in the registers of the Curia and found in the Census of the diocesan clergy ordered by the Archbishop in 1873. The name of "Don Giovanni Bosco" no longer appeared on the lists of the priests of the diocese.

From this fact it was evident that the Church had officially recognized Don Bosco as the founder and superior of the Salesian Society which meant that it was not true that he remained a

diocesan priest up to his death but only upto 1869.

This article would not suffice to expound the reasons for the painful conflict that was stirred up between archbishop Gastaldi and Don Bosco. Those wishing to delve into this phase of the saint's life ought to research publications by expert Salesians like Don Pietro Braido and the diocesan Don Giuseppe Tuninetti.

Here, for us, it is sufficient to affirm that Don Bosco, being true to himself, thought it his right and duty to defend himself against the accusations made about him and subsequently conveyed to Rome. At no point of time did he display the least sign of rebellion or disrespect for his Archbishop. There were those who said he had disobeyed but that accusation holds no weight. Even if some believed that Mons L. Gastaldi the Archbishop of Turin from 1871 to 1883 interpreted certain legitimate initiatives taken by Don Bosco as signs of his disregard for Episcopal authority, and the allegations that certain libelous publications were made against the archbishop and were inspired by Don Bosco, they were absolutely false. Those who attentively read the official documents of the Canonical Processes for the beatification and canonization of Don Bosco would be able accept what we affirm above. Notwithstanding the above, the Salesians themselves always held the Archbishop in high esteem (cf EBM 16, 56-77; particularly p. 58).

The Anticlerical Press

The anticlerical press were not far behind in capitalizing on this

situation and so they took advantage of the prevailing gossip that was circulating and decided that it was opportune to cast some ridicule on the relationship between the Archbishop and Don Bosco.

The "*Fischietto*", in its 14th September 1872 issue wrote: "Don Bosco, the famous holy saint, who really knew what stuff Gastaldi was made of, in order to manipulate the situation to suit his ends, proposed him to the, 'not yet infallible' Pius IX, God's Vicar, as the bishop of the diocese of Saluzzo and so it was done. In the end, Don Bosco saw him move from the diocese of Saluzzo where there was no love lost, to the see of Turin."

The "*Pulce*" of 17th January 1875 carried a blasphemous headline on an article that read: *The vulture of Valdocco*.

The "*Gazzetta del popolo*" of 4th February 1877 said of the archbishop and Don Bosco: "They were two saints, both plunderers for the greater glory of God; and for their own greater glory. It was said that Gastaldi directed everything efficiently with a whip rather than a pastoral staff; the other was an amateur accountant who worked rather independently."

The "*Gazzetta Piemontese*" and other daily satirical papers also followed the same trend of blasphemy (cf F. Traniello, *Don Bosco nella storia della cultura popolare*. Turin, is 1987 p. 218-237).

Sectarianism of that kind can be noticed even today in some newspapers and TV programmes when it comes to speaking or writing about the Church and the hierarchy. **Old habits die hard!** □

NEWSBITS

VATICAN CITY

The Vatican and the United States quietly celebrated a silver anniversary in mid-January, marking 25 years of formal diplomatic relations.

The US Embassy to the Holy See observed the event with a symposium and a dinner, where about 50 guests raised their glasses in a toast to a milestone that today seems inevitable, but once seemed unthinkable.

The US ambassador to the Vatican, Mary Ann Glendon, drew appreciative laughter at the dinner when she read from an 1865 letter that described Rome as the perfect listening post.

But if the idea of having a full-time ambassador stationed at the Vatican seems like a no-brainer, that hasn't always been the case. In 1984, President Ronald Regan's decision to move from an on-again, off-again "personal envoy" to full-fledged diplomatic relations was

controversial, to say the least.

Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists and Protestant organizations criticised the move. Complaints came from Americans United for Separation of Church and State and even the National Council of Churches.

And of course, lawsuits were filed, although they were eventually dismissed.

President Franklin Roosevelt appointed the first envoy to the Vatican just before World War II. But when President Harry Truman tried to appoint a successor in 1951, he met with a storm of protest, and the post went vacant for nearly 20 years. Regan's decision to elevate the position to ambassador was considered a courageous one that might cost him politically.

It wasn't long before most of the criticism faded. One big reason was that under Pope John Paul II, who was a strong critic of East European communism, US and Vatican interests were seen to coincide.

It wasn't just a matter of moral support, but information-sharing as well. At one crucial moment in history, a few hours after a papal meeting with Soviet President Michail Gorbachev in 1989, the Vatican told the United States in a confidential assessment that Gorbachev could be trusted as a genuine reformer.

The late pope's high profile as a defender of human rights and human dignity, along with his frequent trips to the United States, also made the



On December 1, 1989 Pope John Paul II told the United States that Gorbachev could be trusted as a genuine reformer.



Dominic Cosslett, 36 and Ron Cosslett 70 were both ordained by Archbishop Nichols

Vatican seem more like a natural ally and less like a foreign planet. *CNS*

LONDON

In possibly the first such event in Britain since Pope Gregory the Great imposed mandatory celibacy in the Latin Church, a British man, Dominic Cosslett, has been ordained a Catholic priest - like his father, Ron.

Father Dominic Cosslett began his job as assistant priest at St. George's Church in Worcester mid January. The Independent reports. But what makes his ordination so unusual is that his father, Ron Cosslett, is also a priest at a church just up M5 highway nearby Darlaston. He was previously an Anglican priest before converting to Catholicism.

Father Dominic, who is not married, was ordained at a packed ceremony in January at Christ the King in Coventry by Archbishop Nichols, who also ordained Father

Ron three years ago.

Speaking at the ordination, Archbishop Nichols said: "This is a unique occasion and a great day in the life of the diocese. Both a father and his son, after his ordination, will be serving as Catholic priests."

But although their ordination might be deemed somewhat unorthodox in the modern Catholic Church, 900 years ago it would have been perfectly plausible. Although celibacy became an increasingly important issue for the Vatican during the 9th and 10th centuries, it was not until the First Council of the Lateran in 1123 that Rome officially declared clerical marriages invalid.

Father Dominic originally trained for the Anglican priesthood at the high church Mirfield College of the Resurrection. He then underwent a shortened form of training to become a Catholic priest

under guidelines agreed by the Vatican for the reception of Anglican clergy who converted to the Catholic Church.

In his ordination Mass booklet Father Dominic wrote: "I especially want to thank my parents and family for the support and unwavering love they have shown me over the years." *CATHNEWS*

TAIZE

The Taize Community will print and distribute one million Catholic Bibles in China during 2009.

The community will print 200,000 complete Bibles, and 800,000 New Testaments with the Psalms, using the Studium Biblicum translation of the Bible, a Catholic version that was completed by the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Hong Kong in 1968.

The texts will be printed in Nanjing, China and paid for by the Taize community.

In an earlier project at the end of the Second Vatican Council, the community responded to a petition of the bishops of Latin America and printed one million Bibles in Spanish and 500,000 in Portuguese. In 1989, the community also printed one million New Testaments in Russian for the Russian Orthodox Church. *CATHNEWS*

ENGLAND

England and Liverpool footballer Jamie Carragher has revealed that he owes his existence to his mother's Catholic faith and her refusal to have him aborted.

The Liverpool defender who this year made his 500th appearance for the Premiership club, wrote in his recently published autobiography, *Carra*, that doctors had misdiagnosed a serious handicap when he was in the womb.

Mr. Carragher wrote, "My book of Revelations begins with the most dramatic: "if my mum hadn't been a Roman Catholic, I might have been aborted.

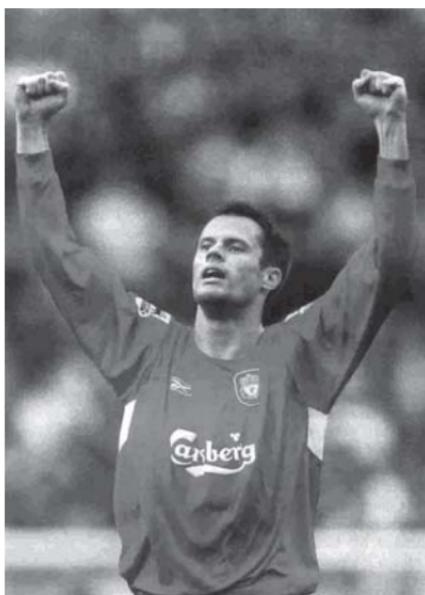
Paula Carragher was given the option of a termination due to complications halfway through her pregnancy.

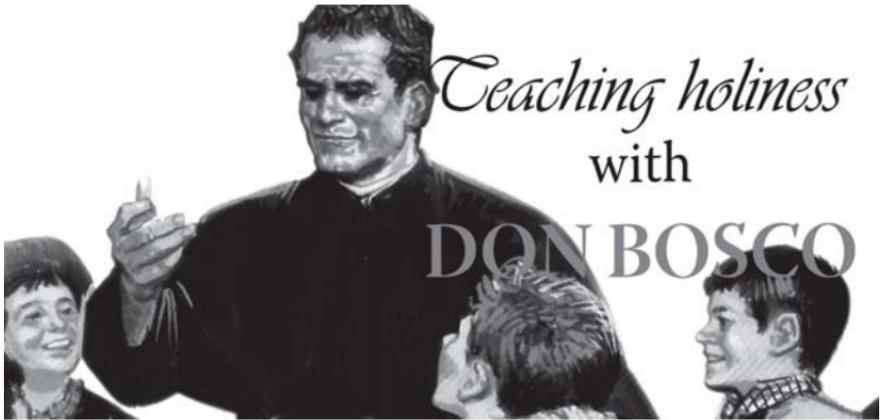
"She was told I had spinabifida - a birth defect that affects the spinal cord. She was too religious to consider abortion, no matter how disabled I'd be.

"Our Lord told me to have the baby" she still claims. She's the rock on which my family is built. I owe everything to that decision she took 30 years ago."

Mr. Carragher grew up in Sefton where he attended a Catholic school.

He was later given the freedom of the borough for his charity work and "the exceptional example he sets to youth today." *The Catholic Herald* □





Teaching holiness
with
DON BOSCO

MICHAEL MAGONE
Work and Play

by Claudio Russo

Young Michael Magone's Christian life was much brighter after he had made his Confession. Now his recreations seemed much more exuberant. At those times he was like an unbridled colt who never seemed to

get tired. In church too, he seemed to be more serene. From then on there was no place where he was not at ease.

Life at the Oratory, the learned advice of Don Bosco and the



suggestions of some his companions who were meant to be his "guardian angels," helped Michael to "calm" himself. In a few short months he became a model his companions looked up to. "He dutifully prepared himself for his Confession" wrote Don Bosco. "At the Confessional he let his companions go ahead of him while he always remained recollected and patient. He waited for an opportune time to approach the confessor." He learned to participate with faith and decorum in the long religious functions. "What you do in church, you do for the Lord," he told his companions, "and what you do for the Lord cannot afford to be distracted."

When the bell rang announcing the end of recreation, Michael left the games, wished his friends and moved to the next activity. "It is true that I would like to finish the game," Michael told his friends, "but then it would sadden me. My heart tries very hard to gradually find the greatest pleasure in fulfilling my duties as told to me by my superiors or the sound of the bell." One day a boy insisted that Michael remain back to play with him. "Yes," he replied quickly, "if you pay me as much as the Lord does." The boy was stunned and remained speechless. Even he left the playground and all of them went together into the church.

"This tongue of mine..."

Once, a companion asked him: "Don't you get annoyed when you find the church services so long?"

"Oh my friend, you are just as I once was!" Michael replied, "You

don't know what is useful. Don't you know that the church is the house of God? The more time we spend in his house here in this world, the greater the hope that we will spend eternity with him in heaven."

At the end of Mass or after his Confession, Michael often stayed back to pray before the altar of the Blessed Sacrament or in front of the statue of the Madonna. During those moments he was so recollected and concentrated that nothing or no one could distract him, not even his companions who were noisily leaving the church and walking past him, unintentionally stumbling at his feet.

Michael also undertook the study of music. In a short time he learned to sing in public and at the solemn functions too. "Unfortunately this tongue of mine was not used well in the past," Michael said, "at least in the future I shall make up for it!"

On a leaflet written by him, among many other good intentions, Don Bosco read the following: "O my God grant that my tongue remain firmly between my teeth before pronouncing any word that



would displease you.”

A Treasure Not to Be Lost

Externally, Michael seemed to be a very lively boy, creative and often restless. But after observing him for an entire day one would see how he demonstrated his ability to control himself from breaking out into an explosion of energy that had earlier characterized him during recreation: “In a few minutes Michael’s feet would have covered all corners of the playground,” wrote Don Bosco.” “There was no game or sport in which he did not excel. It was wonderful to see him, the soul of the recreation, keeping everyone moving as if he had a vehicle that got him first to any place where duty called him.”

His teacher John Baptist Francesia, recalled: “Michael was always well-behaved. Because of his application and his diligence in school he succeeded in completing two classes in the span of a single year. Therefore at the end of the year he was admitted to the third year (grammar). This was to acknowledge the progress he had made and it was no mean feat.”

Don Bosco explained to his boys that the time we had at our disposal was a treasure that we ought to use well. Michael listened, and put this suggestion into practice. He also reminded his companions: “Those who lose a moment lose a treasure.”

He was very attentive about helping his companions whenever they needed. He offered to write letters for them, clean their clothes, set the tables and bring the water to the table, to make the beds, to clean the common areas, leave his place

at a game to give a companion a chance to participate. He taught catechism to the youngest boys and taught his companions to sing. He helped his companions in the difficulties they had in understanding the more complicated lessons.

Something beautiful for Mary

One day Michael received a gift of a small picture of the Madonna which had the Latin inscription: “*Venite filii, audite me, timorem Domini docebo voi.*” (Come children and hear me and I will teach you the fear of the Lord). Michael read this several times attentively. That sentence and the teachings of Don Bosco helped him to take Mary as his teacher and the guide of his life. In honour of Mary, Michael forgave any offence he received. He bore heat and cold, sorrow, fatigue and a lot of other difficulties which he offered to God through the hands of Mary.

Before beginning his study or starting an assignment he took a picture of Mary out of a book with the words written on it: “Virgin Mother, always assist me in my studies.” He dedicated all his studies to her. He confided to his companions: “If I meet with difficulty in my studies I have recourse to my divine Teacher, and She explains everything to me.”

Through the practice of frequent Confession and Communion Michael witnessed to the others the power of trust in the Lord and devotion to the Madonna. □

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

I was commuting as usual to my office in auto-rickshaw. The driver sped past a red signal and to my horror I saw a vehicle take a 'U' turn. On a spur of a moment the vehicle hit the auto I was in. The impact was such that I was thrown out of the auto which overturned and came to a halt. I landed, head first on the pavement and I lay on the road shocked and confused till some passerby rushed to assist me. I was badly bruised and there was a bump on my head. I visited my doctor and after an examination was told that the bump on my head was only superficial. I am grateful to Our Lady for saving me from a near fatal accident.

M. Moses, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother for blessing my husband David with a job and also receiving a confirmation during this recession period. Thank you Mamma for your mantle of protection. Keep guiding our way.

Mr. & Mrs. David Fernandes, Mumbai

I am sincerely grateful to Our Blessed Mother for all her favours through my life.

Jerome Pinto, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary for all the blessings received.

Ms. Shimona Kumar, Kalyan

On 8th December 2007 a friend and I were returning home and after my bike hit a concrete pole we were thrown off unconscious. Thanks to a friend we were taken to the hospital where we were treated. Thanks to Our Blessed Mother and her rosary that I wore around my neck we were saved from a fatal accident.

Mario D'Rozario, Bangalore

Thank you loving Mother for helping my son pass his CA examinations and for all the favours received.

Mrs. Felicitas Martis, Mumbai

Thank you dear Lord Jesus and Mother Mary for all the graces and favours received.

Celina Paes, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary for granting a job to my brother-in-law and for also to my son.

Faye Parakh, Solapur

I was traveling with my daughter and grandchildren when our car was hit by another car. The car was badly damaged and almost overturned, but we escaped without a scratch. Thanks dear Mother Mary for your protection.

Mrs. Cynthia Rebello, Mumbai

Thank you, dear Jesus and Mother Mary for all your blessings and favours.

Mrs. Honeyla Lobo and Mrs. Dorothy Lewis, Canada

Our sincere thanks to the Infant Jesus and Mother Mary for the gift of a baby boy after three daughters.

Sharda, Mumbai

The 9th November '08 was a family day at our parish but we remained home for some reason. Suddenly our fridge exploded due to a leaking compressor. We managed to get the flame under control. There was not much damage. It could have been dangerous if it was not attended. We are most grateful to Our Lady for her protection.

Sandra Noronha, Mumbai

Thank you Mother Mary for all the graces and favours received and for our daughter Joyeane's success in her BPT examinations and for my brother-in-law's health which is much better.

Zira Almeida, 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 Lord and our Blessed Mother for keeping my family in good health of mind and body. Thank you Lord.

Fatima Fernandes, Mumbai

Two months before the rains we began building a small living room for our tenants. During this time we constantly prayed the three Hail Marys so that we would complete the construction before the monsoon and within our budget without any debt. Certainly Our Lady was with us and everything went according to plan and we are here to thank Our Blessed Mother for her constant assistance during this period and throughout our lives.

Dr. Rosario Gomez, Chennai

I thank Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for helping me pass my MA part I examinations.

Merlyn D'Souza, Mumbai

I suffer from severe and chronic stomach problems and was hesitant to under take a long journey. I decided to travel to the Holy Land and I began praying the 3 Hail Marys. Thanks to Our Lady's intervention the trip went off excellently. My gratitude to Our heavenly Mother for this grace and for protecting me from what could have been a fatal accident.

J.S. Moniz, Mumbai

Thanks dear Mother Mary for the graces granted to me through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Flavia Pereira, Kalyan

Thank you loving Mother Mary for the favours received through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Ely Dias, Goa

Thank you Mother Mary for a successful operation of daughter-in-law and myself and for taking care of my family.

Lourdes Mascarenhas, Bhusawal

Thank you Mother Mary for a successful operation. Two days later I was back in hospital with high diabetes but thankfully it was not serious. I am grateful for Our Lady's assistance through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Helen Anthony Rozario, Goa

My sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother for saving me from an accident on the 2nd January.

Mrs Louise Joseph, Kalyan

Thanks to the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys a nephew of mine reached in time for his wedding on 15th December, 2007.

S.S. Mumbai
Thank you for curing me of brohchitis through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Audrey Briggs, Bangalore

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

Thank you dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for my successful uterus operation and for a safe delivery and the gift of a baby girl to my daughter-in-law and for numerous other favours received.

Philomena Licinto D'Souza, Mumbai

Thank you, dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the safe return of my brother.

A Devotee of Our Lady

My grateful thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the favours received throughout 2008.

Mrs. M. L. Noronha, Panaji

My humble gratitude to Our Blessed Mother and Don Bosco for all the graces and favours received.

Anne Achettu, USA

For a successful operation and for many other favours I am grateful to Our Lady and Don Bosco.

C. D'Souza, Mangalore

Our sincer thanks to Jesus, Our Blessed Mother and Don Bosco for the many graces and favours granted to our family.

Lucas Blah, Shillong

Belated but grateful thanks to the Infant Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for the brilliant success in my final examinations. Dear Mother Mary, do continue to bless us.

Alistair D'Souza, Mumbai

Dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio our sincere thanks for blessing us with health and for all the other favours received.

Mella Raja Rani, Kadapa, AP

Dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco our sincere thanks for good health and prosperity.

Mr. & Mrs. Dennes Hollingsworth, New Zealand

My sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother and Don Bosco for a successful gall bladder operation.

Joan Nisari, Australia

Dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco thank you for curing my granddaughter from severe tonsillitis and for other favours received.

Mrs. Jackim Fernandes, Mumbai

Sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for interceding and helping me find my brother-in-law after 5 days.

Sandra Fernandes, Mumbai

We are grateful to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for a safe journey.

Flavia Dias, Australia

Our daughter was in a serious condition during the seventh month of her pregnancy. We prayed to Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio and she was granted a safe delivery through a caesarian and we received the gift of a healthy baby boy.

German Rebello, Goa

Our sincere thanks to dear Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby girl.

A Devotee, Mumbai

Thank you, dear Don Bosco for giving me a good job and for all the graces granted to me during my life.

F. D'Souza, Mumbai

We are grateful to Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for helping my brother have a quick recovery after his recent illness.

E. Menezes, Mumbai

Dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco we were granted the graces we prayed for through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Mrs. Cynthia Andrade, Goa

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Our sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby boy after a safe delivery. *Sam, Mumbai*

My sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother and St. Dominic Savio for curing my leg and hand.

Sophie Pereira, Mumbai

We are grateful to Mary Help of Christians, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for 35 years of togetherness and for blessing us with two devoted sons, loving and caring daughters-in-law and two precious grandsons Nathan and Calvin.

Mother Mary, do continue to bless our home and protect us always.

Bonny and Sally Noronha, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter after nine years.

Agnes, Goa

Dear St. Dominic Savio thank you for the many favours and blessings granted through your powerful intercession.

Mr. D. George

Our sincere thanks to dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for a safe delivery and for protecting our baby girl from all harm.

Allwyn and Vanita Menezes, Goa

Thank you dear St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter-in-law.

Mrs. A.C. Varghese, Kottayam

Thank you for a normal delivery and the gift of a wonderful baby boy - Ayden and for all the blessings received.

Melwyn and Shilpa Pinto, NJ, USA

Dear St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my sister and the gift of a healthy baby girl and for my son's success in his examinations.

Remetina Moraes, Mumbai

Thanks dear Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the favours and blessings bestowed on our family.

Mrs. Rainda, D'Silva, Mumbai

Dear St. Dominic Savio, our sincere thanks for the gift of a little brother and for a new job for my dad.

S. Athaide, Thane

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

APRIL 2009

Holy Father's General Intention: *That those who, because of wars or oppressive regimes, are forced to leave their homes and country may be supported by Christians in defending and protecting their rights.*

Missionary Intention: *That, faithful to the sacrament of Matrimony, every Christian family may cultivate the values of love and communion in order to be a small evangelizing community, sensitive and open to the material and spiritual needs of its sisters and brothers.*

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MARY WAS THERE

My sister has been married for six years and she did not have a child. She visited many specialists but to no avail. This led her to a deep depression and this tension and frustration took a toll on her health. She developed diabetes and arrhythmia. Being Salesian past pupils both me and my sister have great devotion to Mary Help of Christians and Dominic Savio. We turned our problem over to our heavenly patrons and within just two months, much to the surprise of the Doctors, my sister conceived. She was overwhelmed with joy after an almost problem-free pregnancy, she delivered a healthy, cute baby girl on the 22nd of October 2008. We are sincerely grateful to Our Lady and St. Dominic Savio for this marvelous grace.

Amrita Bhattacharyya, Guwahati,

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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