

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

MUMBAI

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CONTENTS

From The Editor's Desk: <i>A Time of Terror</i>	3
2 - Remain In My Love - Fr. Erasto Fernandez. SSS.....	4
"With God, All Things Are Possible" - Br. Damodar Wankhede sdb...7	
Couple Love Modelled On The Trinity - Anthony Rudoni.....	8
Why "Yahweh" Isn't Used in Catholic Liturgy - Zenit News.....	10
Witnesses In And For Our Times: <i>Seven Serve Holy Founders</i> (February 17) - Mario Scudu.....	13
Lectio Divina: Hail Mary: - Blessed Are You Among Women - Roberta Fora.....	16
Quietspaces: Thinking About Lent - Raymond Maloney.....	18
Family Secrets (4) - Helen Morgan.....	20
Don Bosco The Great Dreamer - Natale Cerrato.....	23
NewsBits.....	26
Teaching Holiness With Don Bosco: Michael Magone Helps His Companions - Claudio Russo	29
<i>In a Cheerful Mood</i>	15
<i>Loving Children to their Loving Mother</i>	32
<i>The Devotion of the Three Hail Marys</i>	33
<i>They Are Grateful to Our Lady & Don Bosco</i>	34
<i>Thanks to Dear St. Dominic Savio</i>	35



*Mary is ready
to accompany us
out of
the deserts
of daily life
in order
to cross
the threshold
of life.*

Cover: **The Holy Family**



From The Editor's Desk

A Time of Terror

As I write this page it is nearing Christmas but you will only read it two months hence. The city is still reeling under the shock of the terror attacks and because my mind is still numbed by this horrid event I feel like reflecting with you on this scar left on our city of Mumbai.

Even though I was here at the Shrine and rather far from where the attacks took place I was still rather shaken. The scenes were like something out of the movies. As news filtered through the air waves I sensed the tension all around. For some time now even people who come to the shrine tend to look around when there is an unfamiliar sound of any kind. They are still rather edgy. Strange as it may seem, I became aware of the tragedy only in the wee hours of the following morning. People who had no idea of the geography of Mumbai were calling from many parts of the world to inquire how we were. They had already seen it on their TV screens, and in the hours and days that followed, like most others I watched the unfolding of that shocking tragedy for the next three days. It all felt so surreal: uncomfortably close, and yet eerily remote.

That sense of unreality remained with me in the days that followed. In some respects, Mumbai returned quickly enough to a kind of normality. Buses and taxis began operating again, streets became congested as usual, shops and offices reopened, even the "Bombay Locals" - suburban trains were back to a regular service, and people went back to their daily occupations. Yet, behind the apparent normality, one could sense the grief, the anger and the fear. People talked incessantly about how a son could have been at that station, or a mother at the hotel. They recalled the horror of having been so close to what had happened just an hour before it took place. And they were nervous. A police car zipped by: did it indicate another attack? That tourist with a suitcase: could he be another terrorist? And that young man hurrying nervously by: could he be trusted?

Alongside the pain and confusion, there was also stories of extraordinary bravery and kindness. The emergency services worked as best as they could in spite of all the post-fact incrimination. In what was a totally unprepared situation they worked heroically and with calm efficiency. Firemen braved the sweltering heat to rescue those trapped inside closed spaces and later, returned to retrieve bodies. Hospital staff worked round the clock to treat the injured. People worked together to give succour to the traumatized, and assured disoriented tourists and others who just happened "to-be-in-the-wrong-place-at-the-wrong-time." Everywhere people listened, consoled and encouraged one another. In a sense Mumbai became one big community during those weeks, a community in mourning, certainly, but a community of care and concern too.

Later that month, as I made my way to the south of the city to where those dastardly acts took place, I thought of the parable of the wheat and the cockle. Gross evil stalks our world certainly, but compassion and love are abundant too. And, in the end, it is love that will prevail.

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

2. REMAIN IN MY LOVE!

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

John and I strained forward,' recalls TF, 'as if to assist his rickety dilapidated Jeep, climbing precariously up a steep hill dirt road strewn with loose sliding rock.' A throbbing heartbeat later, they were suddenly catapulted to the ground, the Jeep's wheels spinning dizzily pointed skyward. She screamed repeatedly and frantically for John but her cries were met with a deafening silence. As a result of this devastating accident, TF became a paraplegic but her spirit wasn't yet beaten – she worked feverishly for several weeks in physical therapy. Every muscle and bone in her upper body screamed, but she would not stop. Struggling to hold herself upright on parallel bars, she swung her legs ahead or dragged them behind her, refusing to accept their nagging numbness. But before long she was told by her doctor: "You've given it all you've got, TF, but you've not shown the slightest improvement. I'm going to have to discharge you tomorrow."

An Uncertain Future

"I will walk. I know it," she resolutely and stout-heartedly prophesied to herself. Cradling her head in her hands, with misty eyes she recalled the sequence of events of her now shattered life. 'We had first become acquainted as pen pals. I so admired John's struggle to become a doctor and to serve his people with no thought of personal gain. It was not just a profession for him, it was a God-

given mission. So when he invited me to spend the summer with him as an assistant and traveling teacher on vacation from my regular teaching job, I could barely contain my excitement. Many of the families he treated lived in remote areas that often lacked roads, and the small children had no benefit of schooling...'

'While we were on one of these 'good-Samaritan' trips, abruptly, I cried out: "Stop, John! Stop!" Alarmed but calm, he listened to my excited cries. "Look up there!" I shouted. "Look, an eagle! Oh! It's my very first one." Overcome by its beauty and majesty, I wept. With quiet admiration he had said. "From this moment on, you shall be known as *Little Eagle*." In that moment we fell in love. Each morning after that, John would call, "Come, Little Eagle, it's time to soar. The children need you."

John and I had cared for them totally, their bodies, minds and spirits. Our recompense was at best a shared poor man's meal, a sincere heartfelt hug or a warm expressive handshake. Grateful women sometimes offered to patch our threadbare jeans with bits of colorful cloth. With the meager stipend we received from the government, we procured upgraded medical supplies and nourishing treats for the children... And then came that terrible accident in which he was no more and I myself was rendered a helpless paraplegic!

What Next?

These are the memories that sustained and tortured her once her dreams were shattered. John was dead and her personal career was over because none of the city schools provided wheelchair facilities. The principal of her last school had offered to build a ramp, but his request to have her return was denied by the authorities...

In the hospital, she cried herself to sleep. And then a strange thing happened: she awoke one night only to see John sitting on her bed, and she heard his gentle voice as if he were whispering in her ear: "The Little Eagle that I know and love would not give up so easily," he seemed to chide her. "You have to help yourself soar again - the city children need you. Imprisoned in their concrete jungle, they know nothing of the joys of nature. Share your bubbling joy with them; bring it into the classroom. You have this God-given gift, Little Eagle. Don't squander it away." Then he was gone.

Reality or Dream!

Brought back to the doctor's decision with a sickening thud, she repeated to herself softly: "I will walk. I know it," to which the doctor replied decisively: "Sweetie, you're in denial; at some point you'll be better off accepting the reality of your situation."

Reality, she mused, as she drifted to sleep that night. But then, it happened again! In her own words: 'About 3 a.m. a voice awakened me. "Come, Little Eagle - it's time to soar." John was once more standing over my bed, smiling. "Push your legs over the



edge and stand up." He knelt at my feet and gently rubbed my legs until they tingled. I swear I could feel his hands touching me. Then he stood with hands outstretched and backed away. "Walk with me now."

With hesitant, shuffling steps, I followed him out of my room and into the hall. My eyes were riveted on John, coaxing every step. A stairway loomed ahead.

"One step at a time, Little Eagle; you can do it."

The sensation in my legs was almost unbearable as I clambered one painful step after another. Suddenly, from the stairwell door, the excited voices of the resident intern and head nurse carried up the stairs.

"I'll always be with you," John whispered and with a kiss on my cheek, he was gone...

A Miracle of Love

For the next two hours, doctors poked and prodded; they mumbled to each other about 'a

spontaneous something or other,' and finally left. When all was quiet, a nurse came in and sat on her bed. "I saw the young man leading you up the stairs," she said quietly. "Is he your guardian angel?" "Yes, he is" was the confident and serene response!

Two months later, she returned to her teaching job with a gait sorely lacking in feminine grace, but carrying her forward nonetheless. Her classroom is now filled to bursting with all the wonders of nature. The walls are covered from ceiling to floor with colorful sights from the wild. Many teachers take pride in shepherding their charges to her room to view live creatures firsthand. In each child's eyes, wide with wonder, TF still sees her beloved John, smiling.

Love Endures Forever

A dreamlike story true, yet one that baffled medical science, though not the logic of love. This story is so much reminiscent of what Jesus himself does for each one of us. In his case though, he was aware that he was 'going to the Father' and so before he left his beloved disciples, he assured them of this abiding presence. Realizing how the shocking events of his passion and death would demoralize every one of his timid followers, he returned to reassure them: 'Do not be afraid, it is I... I am with you till the end of time.'

Further, Christ's risen presence among us today is not a mere static presence, although we tend to understand it precisely in those terms: 'Jesus is there - everyone to him!' However, in the abiding

sacrament of his love, he is not merely there, passively as it were; he is much more 'there-for-you/us.' The Risen Lord is the Son of God and so shares in the attributes of God himself. One of the outstanding qualities of God that Israel picked up way back during their desert journey, was that God is 'Yahweh', (I am who I am) the God who is always present, whose love cannot allow him to be absent to any given situation. And wherever he is present, he is actively present to save his chosen people. Our God and likewise his beloved son Jesus, our Risen Lord, is not like other deities that are the mere work of human hands: 'They have eyes but they cannot see, ears but they cannot hear... but our God is in the heavens, he does whatever he wills!' (Ps. 115:3-11).

With this powerful God as our friend and traveling companion, is there anything we would not be able to do if our faith in his presence is strong and alive? With God nothing is impossible and this would be our daily experience as often as we give him a chance! When we truly seek to belong to him, and he knows the sincerity with which we come to him, he will not let us down. 'Come to Me all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you strength!' (Mt 11:28-30).□



"WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE"

Br. Damodar Wanhkede, sdb

Administrator, Bosco Snehalaya, Baroda, Gujarat



My story begins at the home of the dear Missionary Sisters of Charity who took care of me ever since I could remember right up to the time they placed me in a boarding school in Amravati. When I was in Std. VIII a religious brother kindled in me a strong desire to become a religious, but when I expressed this desire to become a religious I was bitterly discouraged. Thereafter I was more determined to want to follow God's call to become a religious if it was God's will.

The year that I approached my bishop (a former religious) I had failed in my Std X exams (by one mark in one subject - English). So while trying to complete my Std. X I took up the job of a peon at the school. Finally, having completed my SSC, I was sent to Nagpur to do an ITI course. On completion of the course I taught at that same institute for two years...and once more expressed my desire to become a religious.

The dear Missionaries of Charity continued to encourage me to seriously consider my vocation once more. That was when I joined the MSFS but...three years later I discontinued. After that I came to Bombay to pursue my CTI to ensure that I would have a recognized technical degree. During that time I was directed to St. Joseph's Tech. School Kurla where I met the rector Fr. Romulo. He invited me to try the life of a Salesian Brother, many of who were working at the Institute there. I visited the community several times and some time later Fr. Vincent Rasquinha (Fr. Romulo's successor) suggested that I take a closer look at the life of the Salesian



brother. What I saw fascinated me. After Seven years in temporary vows I took my perpetual vows as a Salesian Brother.

At this moment all I feel is a sense of deep gratitude to the Good Lord and his Blessed Mother who guided me and sent into my life such wonderful people as the Missionaries of Charity, my adopted parents Mr. and Mrs. Gaikwad who loved me like their own child. And now for the past 21 years I have been a happy and fulfilled Salesian brother.

God works in his own wonderful ways in each of our lives. His plan for each of us is the right plan and it is always good. He puts this desire to follow Him into our hearts and all we need to do is to follow this prompting. When you trust God at the centre of your life He makes all things happen for you because you are fulfilling his design. □

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COUPLE LOVE MODELLED ON THE TRINITY

By Anthony Rudoni

The Father is God, but God is not only Father; the Son is God, but God is not only Son; the Holy Spirit is God, but God is not only the Holy Spirit.

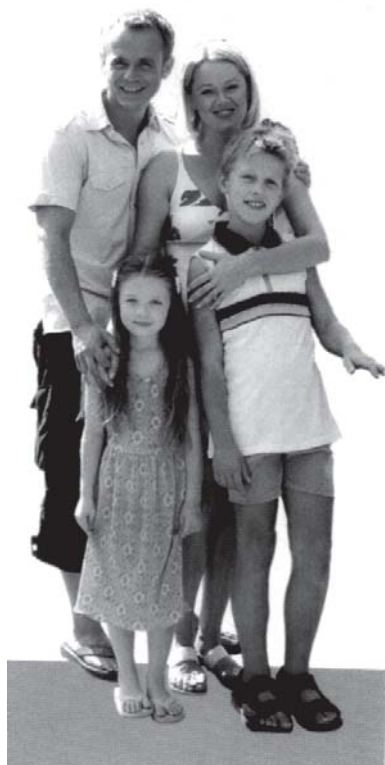
Because of this Christians believe in one God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, distinct from one another but each of the them can say that they are love *par excellence* because "God is love" (1 Jn 4, 8).

Speaking of the creation of man, the Bible says on its first pages "God created man" (Gen 1, 27). We note here that the verb is singular and at the same time we read a little further that God said: "Let *us* make man in our image" (Gen 1, 26). Note here that the verb is plural. It is only with the revelation of Jesus that we clearly come to know the Trinity, the plurality of the one God. It may perhaps be noted already when the Old Testament insinuates the Trinity while narrating the apparition at Mamre when Abraham welcomed the three mysterious characters. Note there the singular: "Sir, please do not pass by my home without stopping; I am here to serve you." Then notice the plural, "You (plural) can rest here beneath this tree. I will also bring a bit of food..." (Gen 18, 3-5).

We find this same uniqueness and plurality present in man too: "So God created human beings, making them like himself. He created them male and female" (Gen 1, 27).

It seems therefore that there is a similarity between God and man up to this point: Just as God is one and three so also man is somehow one and three. In this case from unity to divine trinity one can pass on from unity to human trinity.

But in what sense are we to speak of the human trinity? To comprehend this one must return





*Couple love reflects on earth
God's fidelity to man*

to God. He is triune, because Father and Son are like the two poles of the divine relationship and the Holy Spirit is the link in this relationship, the personified love between the Father and the Son.

So too with man, created by God in His image, he has two poles, male and female and between these two poles there is a relationship of love that again in the final analysis, is the Holy Spirit!

Thus, just as the Holy Spirit unites the Father and the Son He intends to unite the human couple who are willing and working to form a complete family of His children.

It is true that our selfishness often refuses the plan of the Father (that every human couple should

model itself on the Divine Trinity) but our refusal can never destroy the image that God had of man from the beginning. Man only prevents this image becoming resplendent. It remains dark, enshrouded in shadow. But Christ, God made man having redeemed us has given us back the ability to become resplendent once more like the Holy Trinity.

Considering things as they are, it would seem appropriate to reflect on couple love here. Couples intending to live their Christian marriage modelled on the Divine Trinity according to the plan of the Heavenly Father are made resplendent once more by the redemptive grace of the Incarnate Son under the guidance of 'love' in the person of the Holy Spirit. Through Christian marriage spouses are capable of becoming like God, one in three!

This order of couples seemed to have been prevalent from the early Church. The Pope St. Gregory the Great who distinguished various categories of religious placed on that list married couples as well. Even the Vatican Council II spoke of "Christian married couples...attain holiness in their married life and in the rearing of their children. Hence by reason of their state in life and of their position they have their own gifts in the people of God" (Lumen Gentium, 11).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church expresses this same thought more explicitly: among the orders of the Church are found spouses (1537). "Marriage introduces one into an ecclesial order and creates rights and duties in the Church" (1631). □

walking with the Church



Why "Yahweh" Isn't Used in Catholic Liturgy

from Zenit News

Biblical expert says it reflects Jewish tradition

To understand the Vatican directive reiterating that the name of God revealed in the tetragrammaton YHWH is not to be pronounced in Catholic liturgy, it helps to know the history behind the Jewish tradition, says a biblical expert.

Father Michel Remaud, director of the Albert Decourtray Institute, a Christian institute of Jewish studies and Hebrew literature, explained to ZENIT that the message published in June by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments reflects current Jewish practice.

The Vatican note explained: "The venerable biblical tradition of sacred Scripture, known as the Old Testament, displays a series of divine appellations, among which is the sacred name of God revealed in a tetragrammaton YHWH – hwhw.

"As an expression of the infinite greatness and majesty of God, it was held to be unpronounceable and hence was replaced during the reading of sacred Scripture by means of the use of an alternate name: 'Adonai,' which means 'Lord.'"

Father Remaud said that "until almost the year 200 B.C., the divine name was pronounced every morning in the temple in the priestly blessing: 'The Lord bless and keep you: The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you'" (Numbers 6:24-26).

He said this blessing originated out of the context of the next verse in Numbers: "So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them."

Left unsaid

Furthermore, the priest said that the Mishna, the Jewish law codified toward the end of the second century, specifies that the name was pronounced in the temple 'as it is written,' while another denomination (Kinuy) was used in the rest of the country. After a certain period, the divine name was no longer pronounced in the temple's daily liturgy.

"The Talmud leads one to understand that the decision was taken to avoid a magic use of the name by some."

According to Father Remaud's sources, ever "since the death of

the high priest Simon the Righteous, about 195 B.C., the divine name was no longer pronounced in the daily liturgy."

The expert compared the Talmud's testimony with the Book of Sirach, which mentions Simon the Righteous in Chapter 50. Chapters 44-50 remember all "godly men" since Enoch, including Abraham, Moses and David.

Father Remaud said the seven-chapter passage ends with the high priest Simon pronouncing the divine name: "Then Simon came down, and lifted up his hands over the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, to pronounce the blessing of the Lord with his mouth, and to glory in his name; and they bowed down in worship a second time, to receive the blessing of the Most High" (Sirach 50:20-21).

From the time of Simon the Righteous until the temple's ruin, the name was only heard "as it is written" during the Yom Kippur liturgy at the temple of Jerusalem, where the high priest pronounced it 10 times, continued Father Remaud.

"On hearing the explicit name from the mouth of the high priest, the 'cohanim' [Aaron's descendants] and the people present in the atrium knelt down, prostrated themselves with their face on the ground saying: 'Blessed be the glorious name of his Kingdom forever.'"

The Mishna does not say that the high priest pronounced the divine name, but that the name "came out of his mouth," he clarified.

A whisper

Moreover, continued Father Remaud, it seems that toward the end of the period of the second temple — 70 A.D. — the high priest now only pronounced the word in a whisper. This was explained in a childhood memory of Rabbi Tarphon (1st-2nd centuries), who recalls that even straining to hear, he could not hear the name.

The biblical scholar also noted that the formula of Exodus — "This is my name forever" (Exodus 3:15) — through a play of words in Hebrew is interpreted by the Talmud of Jerusalem as "This is my name to remain hidden."

"Today, the divine name is never pronounced," continued Father Remaud. "In the Yom Kippur office of the synagogue, which replaces the temple's liturgy by the recitation of what took place when the temple existed, the people prostrated themselves in the synagogue when recalling — though not pronouncing — that the high priest pronounced the divine name."

The Catholic priest noted that the first Christians called "Jesus by the term 'Lord' (Kyrios)," by which they "deliberately applied the term used in Greek to translate the divine name."

"In Judaism's liturgical tradition, this divine name was only pronounced in the liturgy of forgiveness of sins, on the day of Kippur," he continued. "One might see an allusion to this tradition and to the purifying power of the Name, in this verse of the First Letter of St. John: 'Your sins are forgiven for his names' sake' (1 John 2, 12)." □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



IN THE SERVICE OF GOD THE SEVEN HOLY FOUNDERS XIII CENT. THE SERVITES (17 FEBRUARY)

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

Let us take a leap back to the city of Florence in the first half of the XIII Century. The city was not large but it was already well organized. It was neither politically or strategically important yet but it distinguished itself for the resourcefulness of its citizens in fields of commerce and industry. News travelled quickly in cities and the countryside even though there were no sophisticated means of communication. Even those in the outlying villages were well informed. But the news they heard at this time travelled quicker than usual and most who heard it nodded in utter amazement and commented: "What courage!" But what were they so amazed about? This was something unprecedented in the history of the Church up to that time. - Some of the city's finest and most famous merchants, craftsmen and small entrepreneurs had withdrawn some 18 km outside the city of Florence to Mount Senario and formed a community. They devoted themselves to prayer and contemplation, to penance and the

apostolate. They were wealthy and had lived in luxury; they were well connected within and around the city state... yet they left everything - a gesture that raised many eyebrows. There were some who criticized them. (Who would not, when it came to people leaving so much to the Church?) They said: "Are they abandoning their wives and their children?" Not exactly, they did not abandon their families (those closest to them) to give themselves to contemplation. In fact those seven gentlemen left the world with the permission of their wives (not all of them were married, one was even a widower). Not only did their wives approve of the decisions of their husbands, they imitated them by withdrawing and forming a religious community of women. That was not uncommon in those times. They had even provided for their children (who had already grown up) with suitable inheritances. These seven gentlemen were well respected businessmen in Florence. Their names were:



Mary commissions the Seven Holy Founders to be models of service to God and Neighbour

Bonfiglio Monaldi, Bonagiunta Manetti, Manetto of Antella, Amadio Amidei, Sostegno Sostegni, Uguccione Uguccioni and Alessio Falconieri (who lived a life of penance for about 110 years).

The City of Florence in XIII Century

Their decision was neither sudden nor surprising. On the contrary, the seven were part of a confraternity that was prevalent at the time in Italy. They belonged to the Friars of Penance, a name that described their vocation. They lived in a community in penance and poverty and preached the message of Francis of Assisi who had died in 1226 but whose memory and fame were still very much alive drawing many followers and admirers, even in the city of Florence.

In the XIII century the city of Florence was undergoing a great cultural and commercial upheaval. It was growing rich both politically and economically. There were also many monasteries of mendicant orders (like the Franciscans and the Dominicans) and numerous groups of Christians faithful to the Church. Therefore the Franciscan (and Dominican) spirits were very much alive. The choice that these Seven holy men made was not matured in a desert culture but in the hectic and busy climate of the city. On the outskirts of the city, besides the mendicant orders (mainly Franciscans and Dominicans) there were numerous groups of holy men and women faithful to the Church. They lived their fidelity to the Church in a spirit of poverty and prayed for the reform of the Hierarchy that had been lured away from the Gospel principles by the wealth of the city state.

It is curious to note that these Seven holy men were never referred to individually but always as a group. Together they belonged to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance who were an association of laymen who remained in their own homes, conducting their temporal affairs from the confines of their families and in the midst of their businesses. Yet were committed to working for the poor and the sick while actively participating in the liturgical life of the Church and praying for the reformation of the Clergy. The teachings of Sts. Francis and Dominic (whose fame was still very prevalent) strengthened their resolve.



God as Mary's Slaves

While Florence witnessed the struggle for power over the city by two rival households, the Servites, with the approval of their bishop Ardingus (Ardingo) moved, in 1233 outside the gates of Florence to a neighbouring area called Cafaggio, into a house dedicated to Mary. There they lived a life of poverty, fellowship, and witness based on a literal interpretation of the Gospel. Seeking stricter isolation, they departed, at an unstated date, for Monte Senario, about 12 miles (19

km) from Florence, where they built a hermitage, continued their penitential life without distraction, and laid the foundation for what was to become their order. According to 15th–16th-century legends, on April 13, 1240, a second vision of Mary disclosed her wishes that they serve her, wear a black habit, and adopt the Rule of St. Augustine of Hippo; thenceforward they were known as the Servants of St. Mary (or Servites). They returned to Florence, where they built a church called St. Mary of Cafaggio (later, Santissima Annunziata). Bonfilius was chosen superior, and Ardingus approved their community.

According to the *Legenda*, however, in 1244, after prayer and with the advice of St. Peter Martyr, the Dominican preacher who was then preaching in Florence and who was later murdered by the Cathari, they adopted Augustine's Rule and the black habit, which became distinctive of the Servites; at this time also, they decided to retain the name of Servants of Mary, by which they were popularly known.

Pope Alexander IV formally approved the Servites on March 23, 1256. The exact date of birth and death and place of death of each founder is uncertain. At the beginning of the 16th century, however, it was recorded that the bodies of Bonfilius, Benedict dell' Antella, and Alexis Falconieri were buried on Monte Senario. In 1649, when the main altar of the chapel at Monte Senario was being remodeled, the remains of seven bodies were found, and, after being moved several times, they are now enshrined in the Chapel of the Seven Holy Founders, Monte Senario. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Apology Letter

Lisa, my co-worker at the travel agency, needed to send a letter of apology to a customer whose trip was a complete fiasco from start to finish. I reminded her of a similar situation a year earlier and dug out the letter I'd written then.

"All you have to do," I told her, "is to change the details, the date, and the name."

She looked it over and smiled wryly. "We won't even need to change the name."

Parting Words

A pastor was leaving his area and was saying farewell to his congregation at the Church doors for the last time. He shook the hand of an elderly lady as she walked out. She said "Your successor won't be as good as you."

"Nonsense", said the pastor, in a flattered tone.

"No, really", said the old lady, "I've been here under five different ministers and each new one has been worse than the last."

Captain Comeback

I worked in the biology department at a local State College. The Maritime Institute also stationed at the college, employed a licensed boat captain to man its research vessel. It was common knowledge that the captain couldn't swim. When newcomers learned of this, they would approach him about it.

"Is it true?" one of them asked incredulously. "You, a boat captain, can't swim?"

"No, I can't," he replied. "Can pilots fly?"

Milk Switch

To help a friend lose weight, I told her that she should switch to lower-fat foods, including skim milk. When she said her family would drink only whole milk, I suggested that she keep their regular container and refill it with skim milk. This worked for quite a while, until her daughter asked one morning whether the milk was okay.

"Sure, it's fine," my friend answered, fearing she had been found out. "Why do you ask?"

The daughter explained, "Well, according to the expiration date, this milk expired two years ago!"

Bulletin Bloopers

Several members who have been in the hospital are not on their way to recovery, for which we are thankful.

The Jack and Kill Daycare is looking for someone to help part time on Saturdays.

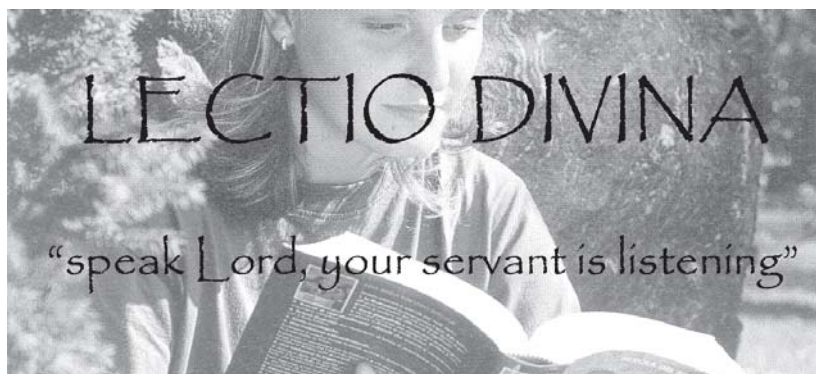
What are you doing for Lunch Tuesday? Local Funeral Director Barry Gilbert will talk about the benefits of cremation.

Leak Repair

My husband's skills with do-it-yourself home repairs are at best mediocre. After spending several evenings trying to fix a leak in the bathroom, he finally admitted defeat and called a plumber, who finished the job in ten minutes.

Watching him put away his equipment, my son asked what had been the problem.

"Well," the plumber replied, "seems that your father got hold of some tools..." □



'BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN'

by Roberta Fora

If God had to choose Mary from among the young girls of 2009 you would certainly expect her to be someone truly “special” someone worthy enough to welcome the Lord into her womb.

According to the world’s logic we would think that God would immediately find someone rich and important, popular and well accepted. But no! What happened was exactly the contrary.

He chose a poor young and

humble girl, but above all someone truly simple and with a pure heart. Mary was promised in marriage to Joseph, a descendant of David but she was pure...a virgin. She had no physical relation with any man. God is almighty and Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and with that began the plan of salvation of humankind.

Now we understand that Mary’s simplicity is actually her ‘greatness.’ She becomes a model and a constant reminder to us Christians who are so easily hurt and incapable of standing up to the temptations that surround us and lure us away from holiness.

Perhaps, Mary is also blessed among all women because she is the “Virgin of Silence.”

There are no passages in scripture when you find Mary particularly talkative.

She pondered all those things in the depths of her heart and she probably took her most important





decisions in a climate of that “productive silence,” a silence that was not only the absence of words, but above all an attentive contemplation of God.

Even today, the Lord does not speak in noise, chaos or confusion.

We will be able to hear His voice if we know how to quiet our hearts and our surroundings so as to let His peace descend on us.

In a world full of noise and care it is not easy to follow the example of the Mother of Jesus. Our days get more and more chaotic and tiresome as the hours fly by and we run between one job and another, looking after our children and spending time with our spouse or friend or client.

That is how we are swallowed up in the deafening roar of life and we risk finding no time to pause

and reflect. We cannot seem to close our eyes and spend even a little time in the dark corner of a church to all His Word to penetrate our souls.

Help us, O Mary, to discover the rare beauty of silence. Through your precious intercession may we learn to savour inner peace as we strive to take some time out of our busy schedules to be silent and contemplate on the Lord. □



DEDICATED TO
THE SEASON OF LENT

Quiet

THINKING A

by Raymond

Some time ago I was discussing the subject of fasting with a fervent Muslim friend. He had a lot to say. He asked me if we Christians had anything corresponding to Ramadan, the great annual month of fasting among Muslims.

Not to be outdone, I described our tradition of the Lenten fast but, in telling my story I was only too conscious that the current practice among Catholics was no longer the parallel to Ramadan which it once was. The Second Vatican Council had put it up to Catholics to have a more personal approach to such questions.

Penance and the Council

Penance in some Christian cultures were rather severe. There were stories of the 'black fast.' Though this was considerably modified in more recent times, yet the practice of 'one meal and two collations' was familiar to all prior to the Second Vatican Council. One of the basic concerns of that Council was to take account of the changed circumstances of modern times and of the non-European nature of a universal Church. Norms once right for Europe are not equally suitable in the diverse cultures that now make up the Church.

Practising Self-Denial

At the same time, penance remains an obligation on all. Our sins leave a residue of selfishness within us and, as a result, self-denial has to be part of any life of faith. Most of the necessary self-denial does not have to be sought out by itself: it is imposed on us by the ordinary demands of living. Nevertheless, every so often, it is helpful to prepare ourselves for these moments of difficulty by a self-imposed effort to say 'no' to those things we would like to have or do. St. Paul was already clear about this. He compared it to the way athletes have to keep exercising themselves long before the contest itself (1 Cor.9:24-27). This was the point my Muslim friend put to me when we discussed the benefits of fasting. Self-control is a necessary part of being human, but it is acquired only by practice.

Threefold Form

The traditional forms of voluntary self-denial are threefold: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These were identified already in the Old Testament (Tob.12:8), and have been continued in Christianity, as we see in the collect of the Third Sunday of Lent.

All prayer requires some self-denial, since at the very least it demands the sacrifice involved in setting aside the time for it. That fasting requires self-denial is obvious, though 'fasting' can be interpreted broadly as

ABOUT LENT

Maloney

referring not only to abstaining from food, but from other forms of pleasure too, such as smoking, theatre and cinema. It was often linked to almsgiving, in that the money saved by our abstaining can be given to some good cause.

Solidarity with Jesus

So far, we have stressed the human aspect of self-denial, such as my Swahili teacher would agree with, but of course for a Christian there is more to self-denial than that. For us it is part of the cross which we must take up daily if we are to follow Jesus (Lk.9:23). The daily crosses of life are just part of ordinary living, as we all know only too well. In the season of Lent, we bring that aspect to the fore in some voluntary self-denial, in order to show our solidarity with our Saviour.

Easter is the annual commemoration of Christ's death and resurrection. Lent is the annual commemoration of the way Our Lord, out of love for us, did not flinch from the sacrifice before him, but walked towards his death, knowing well how the die was cast (Lk.13:33).

St. Bernard went to the heart of Christian penance when he asked the question, 'How can we be the pampered members of a Head crowned with thorns?' For Christians, penance is ultimately a matter of the heart. It is part of our union with Christ in love. He is the 'tremendous lover' who, for our sakes, undertook all the self-denial in his life.

By voluntary self-denial during Lent, we undertake a token of all the self-denial involved in the following of Jesus; this helps us to integrate our sacrifices with his sacrifice and our crosses with his cross. There is always the aspect of exercising self-control, united with Christ.

Never Alone

United with Christ in his sufferings, we are united with him in his oblation on behalf of the world. Something of this overflows on our offering. Christian penance is never something we do only for ourselves; we do it for the sake of others as well.

Through our union with Christ, we can make to God an offering of our self-denial to help others as well as ourselves. We can offer it for other members of our family, for wandering sinners, for the souls in purgatory, for peace in the world.

A Christian is never alone. We are all members, one of another (Rom.12:5). The application of this truth to Christian penance opens up a whole new vision of what self-denial can mean. It shows the dignity Our Lord can give to the simplest actions of his followers. Self-denial enables us to make up what still remains to be done in Christ's oblation for the salvation of the world (Col. 1:24). □

Family Secrets

Helen Morgan

The Story So Far:

While she and her fiancé, Jonathan, were planning their forthcoming wedding together; Sarah Williams receives the news that both her parents have been killed in a car accident. Originally Irish, Tom and Bridie Williams lived in Britain for many years, where Sarah, their only child, was born. Sarah has always believed that she has no living relatives, but after the funeral she is astonished to learn that in fact she has cousins in Ireland. Following an invitation from her aunt, Nuala, Sarah arrives in Dublin Airport to meet her relatives for the first time. Suddenly she is stricken with panic, and decides to take the next available flight back home...

As she picked up her luggage from the carousel, Sarah noticed a young mother struggling with two small children and a heavy suitcase. Seeing this as a chance to camouflage her entry into the arrivals lounge, where she

intended to bypass the unknown relatives, she approached the woman.

'Can I help you?' she asked politely.

'Yes, thank you,' the woman replied. 'If you could take Julie's hand, I can manage the baby and the suitcase.'

Taking the little fair-haired girl by the hand, Sarah walked with the family towards the arrivals area, where a large crowd of people stood waiting behind a roped-off section. As she handed the child over to her grateful mother, she suddenly heard a familiar voice behind her.

'So there you are, Sarah.'

She turned round and saw Jim Brennan smiling at her. Her heart sank. There was no way out now.

'Did you have a good flight?' he asked, taking the suitcase from her.

'Yes, thank you,' she replied.

Just then her mother's sister, Nuala, arrived and, with a

beaming smile, hugged Sarah close to her. 'It's great to meet you at last, Sarah,' she said.

A tall, dark-haired youth nearby introduced himself as her cousin, Fergus.

'I was so sorry to hear about your poor mom,' said Nuala. 'What an awful shock it must have been for you.'

'Yes, it was,' replied Sarah, tears welling up in her eyes.

'Well, enough of that for now,' said Nuala cheerfully. 'We invited you over to cheer you up, not to depress you!' Sarah smiled at the stout, fashionably dressed, grey-haired woman who bore little resemblance to her mother.

On the journey to Kilpatrick, Sarah sat with her aunt in the back of the car, while Fergus sat beside Jim Brennan who was driving. Shy by nature, she was dreading having to make small talk with her new-found relatives, but she quickly realized that she didn't need to say much, since her aunt could talk for hours.

By the time the car arrived at its destination, Sarah had learned a great deal about her new family. She knew that Nuala and Con had five children, ranging in age from thirty-five-year-old Alfie, who was married, down to nineteen year old Fergus, who was a philosophy student at Trinity College. She also learned that her mother had another sister, Kate, who was a widow with a Down's syndrome son.

Some time later, the car pulled into the driveway of a large, well-lit two-storey house on the outskirts of Kilpatrick. Sarah was

stunned by the grandeur of the property in front of her, with its neat, manicured lawns and well-kept grounds. She realized that her mother could not have been a penniless emigrant, coming from a home like that. Suddenly the hall door flew open, flooding the wet tarmac with light, and illuminating the occupants of the house as they came out to meet her.

Her Uncle Con was the first to greet her. He was a quiet, gentle man with brown-grey hair and green eyes framed by heavy spectacles. Behind him came Alfie, a strikingly pretty woman with dark hair and blue eyes; then Maeve, a tall girl with red, curly hair. Last, but not least, came Kevin, a tall, thin, dark-haired man who bore an uncanny resemblance to her late mother. Two small children ran noisily between the adults. Sarah took one of the children by the hand as she was led into the hallway and down a long corridor to the dining room, where a table was laid for dinner.

It was a large, comfortable room with heavy oak furniture, magnolia-coloured walls and heavy, green velvet curtains. A huge coal fire blazed in the fireplace, which was surrounded by an ornate brass fender. The aroma of roast beef wafted up from the kitchen below.

After her Uncle Con had officially welcomed her, she joined the family at the dining table for a delicious meal served up by Alfie. The conversation flowed easily around the table, and very soon Sarah forgot her shyness and began to feel at home. Her cousins enquired about her life in England, and she answered with

enthusiasm, telling them about her fiancé, her work and her friends.

When the meal was finished and the dishes cleared away, they all gathered round the fireside in comfortable arm-chairs, while her Uncle Con went in search of the family photo albums. Sarah sat enthralled as her mother's young life was revealed to her through a series of snapshots. When they had finished looking through the stack of albums, her aunt produced a chocolate box full of old photos.

'There's one of your mother taken with Kate and me just before she got engaged to your Dad,' said Nuala, as she handed her an old black-and-white photo. Sarah

looked at the snapshot in her hand; the three sisters were by now easily recognizable, but she wondered who the fourth person was.

'Who is the lady on Mum's left, Auntie Nuala?' she asked innocently.

'That's your grandmother: your mum's mother,' Nuala replied. Sarah looked in astonishment at the large stern-faced woman, her grey hair swept back in a bun, her dark eyes sharp and piercing. She remembered her mother's words: 'You are the image of your maternal grandmother. She was small like you are, and very pretty.' She did not resemble this woman in any way!

To be continued

To such as these He gives His peace



Tertullian, an African theologian born about 155 AD, converted to Christianity about 193 AD. Except for St. Augustine, he is the most important and original ecclesiastical author in Latin. In 206 AD before abandoning the Church for a misguided sect he wrote the best of his three works on marriage, *To His Wife*. In this work he urges his wife to choose a Christian and not a pagan husband should she choose to marry again after his death. To encourage her to choose a Christian husband he describes the happiness to

be found when two people united in one faith are made one in the Sacrament of Matrimony: "How shall we ever be able, adequately to describe the happiness of that marriage which the Church arranges, the Sacrifice strengthens, upon which the blessing sets a seal, at which angels are present as witnesses, and to which the Father gives His consent?"

How beautiful, then, the marriage of two Christians, two who are one in hope, one in desire, one in the religion they practice. They are as brother and sister, both servants of the same Master. Nothing divides them, either in flesh or in spirit. They are, in very truth, two in one flesh; and where there is but one flesh there is also but one spirit. They pray together, they worship together, they fast together: instructing one another, encouraging one another, strengthening one another. Side by side they visit God's church and partake of God's banquet; side by side they face difficulties and persecution, share their consolations. They have no secrets from one another; they never shun each other's company; they never bring sorrow to each other's hearts.

Psalms and hymns they sing to one another, striving to see which one of them will chant more beautifully the praises of their Lord. Hearing and seeing this, Christ rejoices. To such as these He gives His peace. Where there are two together, there also He is present, and where He is, there evil is not." (*John M. Cunningham OP*)

Don Bosco: The Times, The Man, The Facts

DON BOSCO THE GREAT DREAMER

by Natale Cerrato (T/A:ID)

In the life of Don Bosco one finds that he had a series of dreams concerning his vocation to the young people of the Oratory, the Congregation, Salesian Missions and on religious and political events. Therefore one cannot understand Don Bosco unless one considers him as 'a dreamer.'

Actually, in a letter dated February 10th 1885, Don Bosco wrote to Mons. Cagliero: *"I beg you once more not to give too much credence to the dreams. If, however, they throw light on moral issues or on our rules then give them your attention, otherwise you need not take them seriously"* (E 2532). But considering the above one needs to examine the context keeping in mind Don Bosco's other comments. From these comments the reader will clearly deduce that when he mentioned that not much credence need be given to his dreams he meant that their contents should not be exaggerated as perhaps some had already done by considering all of them to have been divinely inspired. In fact, he never intended to speak of the dreams concerning his own vocation. He was always very silent about them.

Then what can be said of Don Bosco's Dreams?

Don Bosco's dreams were of

various kinds, from those that could not have but been from Heaven to those that he spontaneously had or imagined and which he narrated to prove a point. If one analyzes those about the missions that were written in his *Memoirs*, it would be difficult to refute that they were divinely inspired. About the dream he had when he was nine years old, for instance, and which he mentions in his *Memoirs*: "It was at that age that I had a dream. All my life this remained deeply impressed on my mind." (MO 18). After having listened to the opinions of his



*Fr. Ludwig Olive and
Mons. Louis Variara, the
first missionaries in China*

family, in conclusion his grandmother commented: "Pay no attention to dreams." Don Bosco adds: "I agreed with my grandmother. However, I was unable to cast that dream out of my mind. The things I shall have to say later will give some meaning to all this. I kept quiet about these things and my relatives paid little attention to them. But when I went to Rome in 1858 to speak to the Pope about the Salesian Congregation, he asked me to tell him everything that had even the suggestion of the supernatural about it. It was only then, for the first time, that I said anything about this dream which I had when I was nine or ten years old. The Pope ordered me to write out the dream in all its detail and to leave it as an encouragement to the sons of that Congregation whose formation was the reason for that visit to Rome (MO 20-21).

Regarding the dream of 1844 (that of the lambs that turned into shepherds and the vision of the great church with the inscription on it: "*Hic domus mea, inde, Gloria mea*" - (This is my house from here my glory goes forth), he wrote that it was "the second Sunday of October of that year (1844)... "The previous evening I had gone to bed with an uneasy heart. That night I had another dream which seems to be an appendix to the one



I had at Becchi when I was nine years old. The dream lasted most of the night. I saw it all in great detail. But at the time I understood little of its meaning since I put little faith in it. But I understood little by little as the dream began to come true. Later together with another dream (1845) it served as a blueprint for my decisions" (MO 209-210).

But even the dreams that he told the boys and his Salesians, writes Fr. Joseph Vespignani, a missionary in Argentina, the provincial of the Salesian houses in America and a member of the Superior Council:

"One day I dared to ask Don Bosco about his dreams and his extraordinary gifts and he told us: "Tell me: what would a poor man like Don Bosco do if help didn't always come from heaven? ... He would turn once more to his dreams..." Don Bosco gave this ambiguous



answer.' (G. Vespignani, *A Year at the School of Don Bosco* (1876-1877), Turin, 1932 p. 33)

There were times when Don Bosco himself doubted some of his dreams and in narrating them he added: "So give this dream whatever consideration you wish" (EBM 12,432), while on other dreams, like the one on Ludwig Olive, the young Frenchman who was sent to him by the doctors. Don Bosco dreamt that a mysterious personage had already informed him about the youngster's recovery when everyone else had already lost hope. While talking about this to Fr. John Baptist Lemoyne, he did not hesitate to tell him how to treat that vision. He candidly replied "that is true!" (EBM 18,213) Ludwig Olive, by then a Salesian priest, went in 1906 with Fr. Aloysius Versiglia (later St. Aloysius Versiglia) on that first mission to China where he died in 1919.

People could have doubted that Don Bosco actually said: "that is true." But Fr. Lemoyne still remembers the date and the moment: it was the morning of January 5th, 1887!

Fr. Cafasso's Assessment

Just as in the life of Don Bosco in general, so also in the case of his dreams in particular, God's intervention could not be denied. It would not be easy to classify these by categories and so caution is necessary in order to avoid any hasty judgements. But we may recall the opinion of St. Joseph Cafasso who played a great role in helping Don Bosco discern his vocation and his mission. During



his first years in Turin, Don Bosco narrated to Fr. Cafasso the dreams concerning his vocation and asked his opinion. The saintly priest answered him very carefully: "Go ahead. You may quite safely give special emphasis to these dreams. I am convinced they are for God's greater glory and the welfare of souls." (EBM 2, 322)

In the best sense of the term, Don Bosco was a 'holy dreamer'. Fr. Pascual Chàvez the Rector Major of the Salesians said: "Dreaming for Don Bosco was without a doubt another form of believing, a new way of living 'as if he saw the invisible'." And, to quote W. Nigg who said that our saint: "*was totally open to the supernatural and his communication with that world was manifested particularly in his dreams.*" □

NEWSBITS

NEW YORK

Three tenors, who also happen to be diocesan priests from Northern Ireland, have signed a recording contract with the RCA Victor label of Sony BMG for one million euros. (US \$1.27)

They are the Priests and their debut album, titled "The Priests", went on sale on November 18, 2008.

The Priests sing sacred music, including "Panis Angelicus" and "Ave Maria". Their album was recorded, in part, in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, during a break from their pastoral duties. Each priest is associated with a parish in the Diocese of Down and Connor.

Their arrangement with Sony BMG acknowledges the priority of their priestly duties. Their share of the proceeds will be used for their parishes and to support retired priests.

Father Eugene O'Hagan, his brother **Father Martin O'Hagan** and **Father David Delargy** spoke to Catholic News Service in New York on October 21, 2008 at the end of a promotional tour for their

album.

The three began singing together in high school, where their schoolmates called them "Holy Holy Holy" because of their shared goal to enter the priesthood.

They continued singing together while they studied at the diocesan seminary, St. Malachy's College in Belfast, and took voice lessons from renowned teacher Frank Capper. When the trio attended the Irish College in Rome, Father Eugene O'Hagan continued voice lessons and the three priests sang on many occasions, including a Mass celebrated by the late Pope John Paul II.

The priests, all in their 40's, said they were inspired by Pope John Paul to spread the Gospel in new ways.

In a blog about their experiences in Rome, Father Eugene O'Hagan wrote, "This has been a privileged time for us in many unexpected ways. We are, each of us, mindful of the exhortation of the late Pope John Paul II to 'put out into the deep' where, leaving the security of the familiar shoreline, we may have the chance of helping those at risk of being swept along by perilous currents and tides, mindful to avoid being caught up in them ourselves. This is a challenge made to every follower of Christ in every era and no less urgent in today's modern world."

Father Eugene O'Hagan said Bishop Noel Treanor of Down and Connor "is delighted that he has three priests putting the diocese on the map."

Richard Palmese, executive vice



*Father David Delargy,
Father Martin O'Hagan
and his brother
Father Eugene O'Hagan*



*The Three Tenors
celebrating Mass*

president for promotion for RCA Music Group, said that as an executive he is "excited about the great music and the vocal talents of our three artists."

"As a Catholic I'm proud to be able to support their ministry," he said. "It's a celebration of popular spiritual music and a celebration of the priesthood. The priests are bringing a message to millions through the ministry of song."

Palmese continued, "These are hit songs, spiritual classics we've grown up with, songs that we cherish. It's a very worthy product commercially and spiritually. We need evangelism in these times."

He acknowledged the Priests is not a typical group for RCA and joked that its members were the first artists in his more than 30 years in the business that he can promote without going to confession.

Father Delargy said the three priests were grateful for the encouragement of their confreres, whom he described as "a very strong fraternity of priests. They are delighted for us and very supportive."

The O'Hagan brothers added that their 93-year-old father was "over the moon" happy for them and convinced that their recently deceased mother "is having words with God" to assure their success.

TIANJIN – CHINA

St. Joseph's Cathedral in Tianjin has been placing advertisements in newspapers, inviting people to "come and see" the Catholic church.

The parish priest, Father Leo Zhang Liang said that he believes St. Joseph's is the first parish in mainland China to place such ads, which contain contact information and catechism class schedules.

The cathedral, well known among local people as Xakai Church, stands in a downtown area that was called Laoxakai in 1914, when construction on the church began.

Since the ads were placed in four dailies in mid-August, the cathedral has received about 20 phone calls every day inquiring about the Catholic Church or catechism classes, Father Zhang said.

The ad reads: "An encounter with Xakai", without mentioning religion or the Catholic Church. Church sources said that Catholic leaders had been advised to avoid using words like "Catholic" or "catechism" during the Beijing Olympic Games in August 2008.

In later ads, the text became more explicit, such as the invitation, "What to know Catholicism?" Father Zhang said some journalists of the papers in which the ads were placed approached the parish and became catechumens.

Father Zhang said the idea of advertising in local newspapers came from a lay person who had advertised his home for elderly people the same way.

Xakai Church, located behind several shopping malls, is open daily to the public. Posted on its gate is a sign with Jesus' words, "Come and see", in Chinese characters. During the holiday week around national day, Oct 1, the church was visited by as many as 5000 people in a day.

Parishioners said they also were considering other ways to evangelize. They plan to produce reusable bags with inspirational words such as "God loves you" printed on them.

With 30,000 Catholics Xaikai Church is the largest parish in the Tianjin Diocese, which is based less than 70 miles south east of Beijing. Last year, the church recorded 706 adult baptisms. (UCAN, CNS)

HALLE - GERMANY

German archeologists have stoked controversy by unearthing evidence that Reformation leader Martin Luther lived well and did not die as a pauper as commonly believed.

The Taipei Times reports German scientists have reconstructed a detailed picture of the domestic life of Martin Luther by trawling through his household waste uncovered during archeological digs on sites where he used to live.

Beer tankards, grains of corn, cooking pots, his wife's wedding band and even his toilet are among the finds dug up during the five year project in the three places in Germany where he spent his life.

But the Protestant Church in Wittenberg has called "religiously irrelevant" the evidence that the peace loving family used to throw dead cats into the rubbish bin and that the nails Luther used to secure



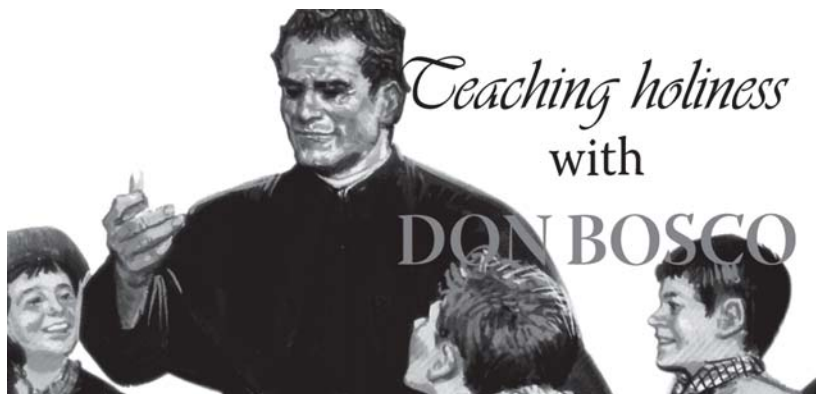
his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg - which led to his excommunication from the Catholic Church and launched the reformation - were in fact drawing pins.

"We've been able to reconstruct whole chapters of his life's history," said Harald Meller, one of the main researchers.

Protestants from around the world were expected to flock to an exhibition at the history museum in Halle, where the best of the discoveries are to go on display starting on Friday.

Despite the widespread belief that Luther lived in poverty, evidence suggests he was a well fed man, weighing a hefty 150 kilograms when he died in 1546 at the age of 63.

The most extensive research carried out at the family home in Wittenberg showed that Luther wrote his celebrated texts with goose quills under lamps lit by animal fat, in a heated room, which overlooked the River Elbe. □



Teaching holiness
with
DON BOSCO

MICHAEL MAGONE

Helps His Companions

by Claudio Russo

The Seven "Policemen"

From the "little rascal" of a couple of years earlier, Michael became the "guardian angel" of his companions.

One day he received a letter from a friend asking him for his advice on how to live a chaste life. Michael put pen to paper and wrote: "to give you an answer I would have liked to speak to you and tell you more than I can put down right now. I will only give you a few guidelines that my director gave me: stay far from bad companions. Do not pamper your body. Avoid idleness and pray often. Frequently approach the Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Confession." Then, remembering a chat he had with Don Bosco he added:

1) Put your trust in the protection of Mary and entrust yourself to her. Mary answers anyone who turns to her with trust and asks for her help. She is the best defence against the

devil.

2) When you realize you are being tempted, do something immediately. If you avoid idleness you will overcome temptations.

3) Respect and honour sacred images like the Crucifix. Make the sign of the Cross with faith saying: "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, help me to save my soul." The devil greatly fears these three names.

4) If a temptation persists, pray to Mary with the invocation: "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for me a sinner."



5) Do not take exaggerated care of your body. Keep all your senses in check above all your eyes and avoid any bad literature.

6) Stay away from bad companions. Spend your time with good friends and during recreation spend time talking with them and strive to imitate their dedication to study, in school, in the church and in the playground.

7) Approach the sacrament of Confession and Communion as frequently as your confessor suggests and visit Jesus often in church."

Michael Magone called these seven suggestions the "seven policemen of Mary," because they were a proven defence of purity.

A Pair of Gloves for Winter

As one of the seven "policemen" Michael himself did not pamper his body. He looked out for companions at the Oratory who were in need and he was always ready to help them. "At recreation Michael was so enthusiastic that he was oblivious of anything or anyone around him," wrote Don Bosco. But if he saw a companion who wanted to take part in the games, Michael would give him his place. "Very often I saw him give up his place at *Bocce* and give his place to another companion," Don Bosco said.

If he saw a boy sad, he approached him and sat close to him to comfort him. He would offer him some good advice and if it was necessary he even acted as a mediator between the boy and the superior or with someone who could help him.

In winter he would deprive himself of his gloves and in the terrible cold of the city of Turin he would lend them to someone who

didn't have any.

He gladly volunteered to serve the sick and sit by their bedside at night.

Michael's Feast Day

Among the many boys at the Oratory there was one who was very distracted and lazy. The superiors were worried about his behavior and one day they decided to tell Michael about it.

Magone took it seriously: first he made friends with the boy, playing with him during recreation, giving him little gifts; then he began giving him small suggestions to correct and improve his behavior. Through all these approaches Michael made no mention about religion, but he had a plan in mind.

As his feast day approached Michael thought of taking advantage of the occasion to put his plan into action: "In three days it will be the feast of St. Michael," he reminded his friend. "Would you give me a beautiful gift?"

"I certainly will but if you had not spoken of it I would have given you a surprise," replied the boy.

"I wanted to tell you because I would like you to give me a gift that I will cherish."

"Of course I'm ready to do anything to please you."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure."

"Even if it costs you a lot, would you be up to it?"

"I promise I'll be up to it."

"I would like that on the feast of St. Michael you bring the gift of a good Confession and if you are prepared, also a good Communion."

Surprised by this request, Michael's friend remained speechless, but he accepted since he had promised Michael. He realized that what Michael had asked of him was for his own good.

In the three days preceding the feast, Magone helped the boy to prepare himself for his Confession and Communion, and on the feast day Michael and his friend together approached both the sacraments.

It was both a day of joy and happiness. "We have celebrated a beautiful feast and I am truly pleased," Michael admitted to his friend at the end of the day. "Now, tell me, aren't you happy with what you have done today?"

"Yes, I am thrilled, especially because I was so well prepared. Thank you for asking me to do this and for the good advice that you gave me and which I gratefully accept and cherish."

"Of course, and I still have one more piece of advice for you. We have

come through just half the feast and now I would like you to give me the other half of the gift. For some time now your behaviour was not as it should have been. Your behavior did not please the superiors and it concerned your parents too. You even let yourself down, depriving yourself of peace of mind and heart... one day you will have to give an account of the time you have wasted. Therefore, now, before it is too late, avoid idleness, remain always happy and do not neglect your duties."

That is the other half of the gift. To satisfy Michael's request was not a problem for his friend.

The two became good friends in the eyes of each other and also to the other boys of the Oratory. He became a model to be admired and imitated. The Lord, through Don Bosco had caused the transformation. □



**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

I thank you Mother Mary for a grace-filled marriage.

Maria Wilbert, Chennai

My grateful and sincere thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for helping my daughter get a job better than the one she expected. *Mrs. Alphonsa Jose, Mumbai*

Thank you, dearest Mother for all the graces and favours received.

D. F. Colaco and Family, Mumbai

Thank you, dearest Mother, so much for the many favours received.

Betty Fernandes, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady Help of Christians for protecting our home from what could have been a terrible fire.

Mrs. A. Goveia, Thane

Thank you dear Mother Mary for the many favours received.

Mrs. E. D'Silva, Mumbai

Thank you dearest Mother Mary for all the favours received.

E. Menezes

My sincere thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for curing me from a troublesome sickness that lasted for more than a year.

J. Rodrigues, Mumbai

I am grateful to Our Blessed Mother for curing me of a sickness in my feet for eight years. I am most grateful. *P. V. Thomas, Coimbatore*

My sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother for curing me of an illness, for getting a job and for helping us in our difficulties.

Mrs. A. D'Souza, Mumbai

Belated thanks to Our Blessed Mother for saving my son from a terrible motorcycle accident and for a safe and successful operation. Do continue to protect us and keep us in your care.

Mrs. Correa, Mumbai

My daughter was prevented from starting her examination in time but thanks to the intercession of our Blessed Mother she passed her SSC examinations with a first class.

Mrs. N. Braganza, Goa

Recently while returning home I lost my wallet. I believe it was the medal of Our Lady Help of Christians that guided the person to return it to me and I am most grateful to Our Lady for this grace.

Bertha Lily Quadros, Thane

My sincere thanks for all the help and graces that I have received through the intercession of Our Lady.

Frances Menezes, Goa

Thank you, Mother Mary for all the support and help you have given me and my family over the years.

Mrs. Daisy N. Dias, Kalyan

Our sincere thanks to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and Our Blessed Mother for saving me from an accident.

O. Alemão, Mumbai

Thank you dear Jesus and Mother Mary for the safe and successful operation on both my eyes and also for a speedy recovery after a stroke and a hip operation and for all the other graces and favours that I received.

A Client of Our Lady

Thank you for protecting my family when a pressure cooker exploded in our kitchen. We were all safe thanks to Our Lady's protection.

Valeria Mascarenhas, Mumbai

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 Mother Mary for all that we received through you and the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Bernard Anderson, Sweden

I thank our Blessed Mother for the many favours and blessings received. Mama Mary thank you for blessing our trip to the WYD, Australia.

Pauline Abernathy, Dubai

Mother Mary is always with me guiding me and I can never be thankful enough for all the good she is doing with me in my life.

Sharon, Mira Road

Thank you dearest Mother for all the favours and blessings received through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. *Jasmine D'Souza, Mumbai*
Our sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians for granting us many favours and blessings including the cure from severe illness, migration, sale of the flat and for protecting us through the passing moments of life.

Florencio and Emily Coelho, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary for all the graces received through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

I. Godinho, Mumbai

I am most grateful to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus for the success in my M.Sc examinations.

John D'Souza, Goa

Thank you, dear Mother Mary for the safe delivery of a healthy baby boy through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Peter Lobo

I was once traveling with my husband, 7 year old daughter and 3 month old son in a cab. We took an unused road instead of the highway. It was raining and we lost our way. Imagine how we felt because there was no mobile signal, no mechanic, no one to ask for help. At first we blamed each other. I was afraid holding both my children in my arms. My elder daughter was enjoying the bumps. I was worried about my 3 month old son who slept peacefully on my lap. My husband continued grumbling while the driver and I prayed silently. I told my daughter to pray the Three Hail Marys with me asking our blessed mother to rescue us. Our driver prayed since it was his responsibility to take us safely to our destination. My husband lost his temper but we continued to pray and then we suddenly saw a smooth road ahead. We're most grateful to Our blessed Mother for getting us out of that situation.

Lourdes. Hubli

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

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the blessings received.

Mary Anne P. Nadaraju, Durban, South Africa

Thank you, dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the numerous favours granted to us.

Mrs. R. James, Australia

Thank you Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the various favours: (1) For saving me from a bike accident in which my wife, child and I escaped unhurt; (2) For helping me find a job; (3) For your continuous protection and intercession through life; (4) For good health and peace; (5) For the gift of a baby.

F.A. Fernandes, Mumbai

Thank you dearest Jesus, Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for helping us to go back to Kuwait and many other favours granted us, dear Mother please keep us under your care.

A Devotee

Dear Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco our sincere thanks for all the graces we have received.

W. Almeida, Mumbai

We are grateful to Our Blessed Mother, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of a baby boy named Ayden.

Savio and Angela Rodrigues, Goa

Dearest Mother Mary and St. John Bosco I had high BP for quite a number of years and with several other ailments I was very weak. I am grateful that all the test reports were negative. I am most grateful to Our Blessed Mother for that.

P. Pinheiro, Hubli

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

Mrs. Lily Cabral, Mumbai

My heartfelt thanks to dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco for the successful recovery of my husband.

E. Fernandes, Pune

Thank you dearest Mother Mary and Don Bosco for all the blessings and graces showered on our family.

Mrs. Lorna Coelho

Our sincere thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady, Help of Christians and Don Bosco for all the graces received.

Helen, Bhayandar

My heartfelt thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for curing my sister of her sickness and for many other favours.

D.M. Mumbai

Our heartfelt and grateful thanks to Our Lady Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the special favours received, may you continue to bless us.

Paula Carr, Bangalore

Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for a successful cure from Cancer.

Jayne Dharmai, New Zealand

I am most grateful to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for helping me survive in turbulent and difficult times and also for providing for all my needs, financially, physically.

Mr. Mark W. Dodd, Pune

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Thanks to the scapular of St. Dominic Savio I am happy to inform you that my grand-nephew's wife has given birth to a lovely baby girl on 20th October, 2008. I am so grateful to the Heavenly Father, baby Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for this beautiful gift.

Mrs Iris Roberts, Kirkee, Pune

Our sincere thanks to our dear Mother Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the favour received. *Mr. & Mrs. B. D'Cruz, Goa*

My sincere and loving thanks to my Mother Mary, Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for blessing my daughter and grandchildren through their family crisis in Canada.

Gemma Alvares, Bangalore

Thank you Dominic Savio for the grace of a successful operation of my son's hand and many other favours received. *Mrs. Jennifer Dias, Mumbai*

My sincere thanks to St. Dominic Savio for curing my neighbour's son of a serious illness and my son Savio from a chronic cold. I am sorry for the delay.

Mrs. A. Fernandes, Goa

Our sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery and the gift of a healthy baby girl - Hailey Brooke to our daughter Stephanie and son-in-law Collin.

Keith and Mercia de Sales, Mumbai

Thanks to Jesus, Mary Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for the favours granted.

M. D'Sa, Vashi

In thanksgiving to Jesus, Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for the gift of a lovely, healthy baby girl and for a quick recovery after a difficult delivery.

Mrs. Angela Philips, Calgary, Canada

My sincere thanks to Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping my daughter pass her Std. X examinations and for many other favours.

Mrs Leitao, Mumbai

My sincere thanks for the many favours bestowed on me through the intercession of Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio.

Mr. Andrew J. D'Mello, Virar

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

FEBRUARY 2009

Holy Father's General Intention: *That the Pastors of the Church may always be docile to the action of the Holy Spirit in their teaching and in their service to God's people.*

Missionary Intention: *That the Church in Africa may find adequate ways and means to promote reconciliation, justice and peace efficaciously, according to the indications of the Synod of the Bishops' Special Assembly for Africa.*

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MARY WAS THERE

Early in the morning of 5th July 2008 we were saved from a serious accident. A chandelier with heavy steel rod holding ten light shades got loose and crashed to the floor. My son and daughter-in-law who were sleeping in the room under the Chandelier got up with the sound of the crash and all that they experienced was flying splinters of glass. On one side of the room is a big glass fish tank and thanks to God's providence the wires of the chandelier while falling got entangled with the fan which was in motion and so the chandelier moved to the right and fell in between the fish tank and the spot where my son was sleeping and they both escaped without a scratch. This was surely the powerful intercession of our dear Mother as I recite the 3 Hail Marys every night for protection of my family and also my devotion to the Divine Mercy. Thank you Mother Mary.

(Jenny Azavedo, Mumbai)

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.

To help a poor lad to reach the priesthood, is a privilege

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