

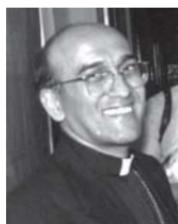
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*The Mother of God shows us that our attention must always be on Christ, himself.*

**Cover: Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, (1499) found in the Church of St. Matthew - Rome. Painted in Crete.**



## From The Editor's Desk

### Breaking Bread "TOGETHER"

For some time now there has been an amazing proliferation of Fast Food Joints. I suppose there's a lot to be said for them: they are 'fast' in more senses than one...but strangely you find people lounging around there eternally...sometimes with friends, sometimes alone...so I have always wondered what was 'fast' about them. Probably it was the quickest way to close ourselves into a shell of our own or in a shell with someone else.

And yet I have my doubts about this trend. Fast foods are supposed to encourage fast meals, but I find it hard to sit and relax in such surroundings when everyone is blabbering to someone else or into the cell phone. I believe there can be hardly anything intimate about such a casual ambience. Can anyone be satisfied albeit biologically or recreated socially at such venues?

I suppose that's what seems wrong with this growing trend of take-away cafes, frozen foods, pre-cooked snacks, microwave cooking. All these short-cuts have gotten us used to the idea of instant satisfaction: meals quickly prepared and ingested, either alone or with others and done with. I could hazard a guess that, as time goes by, fewer and fewer families will sit down together for a daily or at least a weekly meal. Is there such a thing as a Sunday or family dinner anymore or has it become a thing for the history books? (*I can almost hear a teenager asking his/her mom: "Hey mom, what's this 'Sunday dinner' thingy?"*) The pace of life, the need for efficiency, increasing traffic congestion - all these characteristics of today's world seem to squeeze out any opportunity that was earlier taken for granted; like gathering to share a joke, chatting about the day, discussing a problem within the family while "breaking bread" together.

It's striking how often Jesus is seen in the Gospels sharing a meal with his disciples, with the sinners, with the poor, even with Matthew the tax gatherer. For the Jews then - and even to this day - a meal was not just about food. A meal was an expression of fellowship, a family celebration of shared hopes and faith, an expression of commitment to one another and an act of gratitude to God who provides us with all that we have. To share a meal was to share life. After the resurrection when Jesus prepares breakfast for his tired apostles following their futile night's fishing he doesn't hand them a take-away. He offers them fellowship with him in his risen glory: *'Come and have breakfast'*.

It was not by accident that Jesus instituted the Eucharist at a meal. In the Eucharist we share together the Bread of Life - Jesus himself! If our families returned to celebrate family meals together more often, they would find the Eucharist more meaningful. Christ draws us closer to one another at Mass like the family meal does at home. If we were not eager or able to come home to the family meal, would we be half as eager or able to come to the Eucharist, the "family meal" of the People of God?

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

## 6. BE DIFFERENT AND NEW

*Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss*

**W**e were a typical single-parent family," began JT, a severely physically handicapped person, in her interview with Patricia. "You know, busy all the time. Life was so good, in fact, that I was seriously thinking about adopting another child - the third! One Sunday in November of 1989, I was playing my trumpet at the front of my church when I suddenly felt weak, dizzy and nauseous." JT then continued to explain in a matter-of-fact manner, that by the time she arrived at the hospital she was dangerously comatose. Her blood pressure had dropped so much that various functions of her body were already beginning to quietly shut down. She had been felled by a lethal attack of pneumococcal pneumonia. One of the disastrous side effects of this killer disease is the activation of the body's clotting mechanism, which causes the blood vessels to plug up. Because there was suddenly no vital blood flow to her hands or feet, she quickly developed gangrene in all four extremities. Two weeks after being admitted to the hospital, JT's arms had to be amputated at mid-forearm and her legs at mid-shin.

Just before the surgery, she recalled that she had desperately cried out, "Oh God, no - not this! How can one live without arms and legs, feet or hands? Never walk again? Never play the trumpet, guitar, piano or any of the instruments one would so dedicatedly teach? Besides, I'll never be able to hug my children

or take adequate care of them. Oh God, don't let me end up a hopeless, dependent on others for the rest of my life!"

Six weeks after the amputations as her dangling limbs healed, a doctor talked to JT about prosthetics. She said JT could learn to walk, drive a car, go back to school, even go back to teaching. JT found that hard to believe so she picked up her Bible. It fell open to Romans, chapter twelve, verse two: "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you."

### **Journey Towards Newness**

As she struggled with the prosthetics JT reminded herself repeatedly yet firmly: *Take it slowly. Be a new person in all that you do and think, but take it one step at a time.* Although the beginnings were excruciatingly painful and difficult, yet within a few months, JT learned she could do almost everything she used to do - only in a new and different way. "Still, when I finally got to go home after four months of physical and occupational therapy, I was terribly nervous about what life would be like with my boys and me alone in the house. But when I got there, I got out of the car, walked up the steps to our house, hugged my boys with all my might, and we haven't looked back since."

As JT continued to talk to Patricia who had come to interview her, she often laughed like a woman who is blessed with tremendous happiness, contentment and unswerving faith in God. Since that interview, JT has taken giant strides in several directions: she has completed a second college degree, this one in communications, and she is now an announcer for the local radio station. She also studied theology and has been ordained as the children's pastor at her church, the Triumphant Life Church. Simply put, JT says, "I'm a new and different person, triumphant because of God's unending love and wisdom."

After meeting JT, Pat who later wrote about her dramatic discovery of a new and different kind of life, was herself a new and different person as well. She learned to praise God for everything in her life that makes her new and different, whether it is struggling through one more part-time job to keep the kids in college, learning to be a grandmother for the first time or having the courage to end a relationship with a wonderful friend who just wasn't the right one for her. Jan may not have real flesh-and-blood arms, legs, hands or feet, but she has more heart and soul than anyone you've ever met before or since. She teaches us to grab on to every 'new and different' thing that comes into our lives with all the gusto we can muster... to live life triumphantly.

### **Jesus – Risen to Newness**

Through his own dying-rising, Jesus has obtained the fullness of life in God's presence. But he also shares that new life with anyone who is courageous enough to cast off the old skins of tradition and

habit, and put his new wine into new wineskins. That is exactly what a person does through baptism: s/he symbolically casts off the old way of life by throwing away his/her old garments. After descending into the pool of water and rising to a Christ-like life, the newly baptized person dons the new white baptismal robe befitting a child of God, indicative of his new status as a member of the household of God. It is in this context that Paul's advice to the Romans makes most sense: 'be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think' (12:2). This new beginning is so important for Paul that he returns to this theme again in his letter to the Galatians: "May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!" (Gal 6:14-16).

Having wiped out the old un-Christian paradigms from one's existence, the Christian adopts a new stance to life, a consciously chosen, more loving way of relating to all people and every situation in life. Unfortunately, in actual practice, we hardly see this kind of effort being made by most people – the result of the now universal practice of infant baptism. Ideally, this is the new kind of life that prevails in a Christian family. And so, from infancy the infant Christian should be picking up only the new Christian paradigms of behaviour. Even when s/he encounters un-Christian attitudes among people of other faiths, s/

he is quick to recognize where these come from and resolutely puts them aside as unbecoming of children of God. We recall what Paul reminded his Christians of: "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints. Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk; but instead, let there be thanksgiving" (Eph 5:1-4).

### **Christian – A New Creation**

Had we Christians been more diligent in practicing this newness of life in every aspect, what a powerful example would we not be able to give to those around us? Recalling Paul again: "Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer live as the Gentiles live... They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. That is not the way you learned Christ! You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another... Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give

grace to those who hear... Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you" (Eph 4:17-5:1). We would truly be like stars shining in a dark and corrupt world!

One way to ensure that we are continually being renewed, is to consciously choose to do at least one thing or action each day in a different way. By way of example, habituated as we are to using only the right hand for all important activities, could we try using the left hand on some occasions? E.g. we could one day choose to brush our teeth, or write a letter or sweep the floor with the left hand rather than with the right. The initial attempts to do this might be disastrous and difficult, besides being embarrassing to some extent. But not only will it make us new, but would also develop greater skills which would come in handy some day. This attitude of being new and different could be extended in different directions: warmly greeting a person whom I usually do not associate with, delaying the angry or harsh word or criticism, attempting gardening or driving or any other activity which I habitually shun or avoid. Once we have taken on this habit, then life would no longer be dull or boring; rather each hour, each minute would have us looking forward to something new, something challenging – and how much of hidden potential would it not release in us?

"Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (Mt 13:52). □



"I HAVE NEVER GONE WRONG WHEN I PUT MY TRUST IN GOD"

Fr. Anthony J. Fernandes,

Vocation Promoter and Asst. Youth Director, Mumbai Archdiocese

**W**hy am I a priest is not an easy question to answer but as I look back on my journey it seems clear to me that God played the major role, all I had to do was to trust him.

I grew up in Goregaon - St. Thomas Parish, I had wonderful parents. I have three sisters and two brothers all very supportive. We are a God-centred family thanks to our parents especially my mother who is a very spiritual person. As a youngster I went to church every day, attended Sunday school, served Mass and was a member of the Legion of Mary. When I finished school I became more active in the Church and started teaching Sunday school and occasionally attended the Charismatic Renewal meetings. Later when we shifted to Poin-sur I went to work in the Gulf there I involved myself with more activities i.e. youth group, choir, Parish councillor, etc. After graduating and doing my Master's degree I joined the Seminary in 1997.

So, why did I become a priest? The short answer to this question is that I have never gone wrong when I put my full trust in God. The longer answer goes all the way back to my childhood. At various times in my life I had felt an attraction towards the priesthood. I also realized that the many gifts God has blessed me with pointed in that direction. I developed wonderful relationships with various priests throughout my life and I admire them very much. With a good Catholic foundation, a time-tested faith, I found in these wonderful priest friends good guides along life's journey.

It still amazes me how much joy



comes in living for God. During these past three years as a priest I have realized that God knows exactly what makes me happy. As a priest I can collaborate with the laity and work 'miracles' in the ministry. I felt unworthy when the Bishop appointed me to be the Vocation Promoter and Asst. Youth Director but the prayers of my family and friends, the guidance and support of my brother priests makes my work easier. Prior to this I had two enriching years in Orlem - Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. It has become clearer to me that living for God brings great joy. There are days when I do worry, but I am encouraged when I realize that everything I have has been given to me by God, and my life is in His hands.

For those who are discerning a call to the priesthood or religious life: stay open to the call, grow through the Eucharist, and always pray to have the courage to do God's will. ☐

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# POPES WHO BORE THE NAME OF PAUL

by Fr. Mario Morra

**I**n the history of the Church there were only three who bore the name of Paul and one of them was canonized a saint, Paul I.

## St. Paul I (757-767)

By birth, he was a Roman and he succeeded his brother Stephen II. He began his pontificate on May 29, 757. A short time later he made an alliance with Pepin the Short, one of the Frankish kings. Thanks to this alliance, the Pope succeeded in warding off the advances of Desiderius, king of the Lombards, who wanted to take back some of the property that was given to the Papacy by his father Liutprando after the defeat at Pavia in 756.

The East constantly struggled with the problem of *Iconoclasm*. At the Council of Constantinople in 754, Emperor Constantine V succeeded in securing the approval of the sentence against the cult of Images. It was a difficult decision that was vehemently opposed by the patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem. Paul I, with the help of Pepin the Short succeeded in resolving this conflict. Representatives from Constantinople and Rome peacefully resolved this dispute at the Synod of Gentilly in 767.

The Pope died on 28 June, 767 of a fever at St. Paul outside the Walls and his remains were transferred to the Vatican Basilica only three months later.

## Paul II (1464-1471)

Upon the death of Pope Pius II who was the great humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Cardinal Peter Barbo was elected and took the name Paul II. Hailing from a rich but now impoverished family of

Venetian merchants he was guided towards an ecclesiastical career by his uncle Pope Eugene IV. This twenty-year was soon installed in the College of Cardinals. He possessed a rather complicated temperament, generous and liberal on one hand and hard, severe and unrelenting on the other, as Pope he made decisions very authoritatively thus creating many enemies especially among the Curia.

Paul II was strongly inclined towards the cause of the Crusades in which he fought very zealously like his predecessors Nicholas V and Pius the II. The Turks were proving a grave danger, they had conquered Constantinople in 1453 and even Athens fell to the hands of the Sultan. However, Belgrade was saved in a heroic battle thanks to the assistance of St. John of Capistrano and the brave Hungarian Warrior John Hunyadi. From the Balkans, the Turks advanced quickly northwards and threatened to conquer Europe. The European sovereigns saw the gravity of the danger. Once more, the Pope renewed his appeal for a Crusade but his efforts were useless as there was much selfishness and in-fighting among the Italian States.

In 1470, when Venice, the last bastion to face the East fell to the hands of Mohammed II the Italians were routed at Negroponte in Euboea, the Pope called for a new Crusade and a Congress at Rome but this time too the Crusade did not succeed. By now it became clear Europe wanted no more Crusades.

A man of culture, a lover of the arts, promoter of scholars, he restored the antique monuments like the arch of Titus, of Septimus

Severus and the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. Besides this, he was also exceedingly aware of the hidden dangers of a naturalistic vision of reality and of pagan streak of humanism. As a man of the Church he saw it necessary to oppose certain influences of the Renaissance. Because of this he had no dearth of enemies who did not understand him.

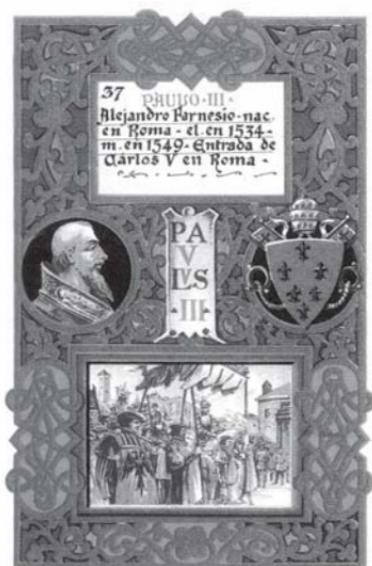
### Paul III (1534-1549)

On the death of Clement VII, after a very brief Conclave of just two days, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese was elected and took the name of Paul III.

Disturbed by the power of the Turks and the Lutheran heresy in Germany, the Pope decided to mend relations with Emperor Charles V and Francis I, king of France and so he succeeded in signing a truce with them at Nice in 1538. It would last for ten years. The truce permitted the Emperor to intervene in the internal affairs of Germany and defend the Catholic Faith. The Emperor also sustained a resistance at Venice that was being threatened by Turks who with Suleiman the Magnificent took some of the last Venetian domains in the Aegean Sea and the Peloponnesian Archipelago.

One of the main thrusts, close to the heart of the Pope was the reform of the Church and religious tolerance in Germany. Therefore he decided to convoke a Council that would bring about some concord. The work began in 1545.

The name of Paul III would indissolubly be linked to the convocation and the realization of the Council of Trent. It was the most important Ecumenical Council in the West and thanks to it the deep reform that was so needed by the Catholic Church and so greatly appreciated by



*Paul III was mainly responsible for the reformation of the Church and the religious reconciliation in Germany*

successive Popes, finally became a reality.

During the pontificate of Paul III, the Council of Trent went through nine sessions and treated subjects like Sacred Scripture, Tradition, Original Sin and Justification. It also promulgated the decree that compelled Bishops to reside in their own dioceses. Against the Lutheran doctrine of "Justification by faith alone," it affirmed that man is not saved just by faith but also by Sanctifying Grace that comes through the Sacraments and renders one capable of doing good works, thus collaborating in one's own salvation.

After two sessions held in Bologna during which the Sacraments of the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Marriage were taken up, the work of the Council was suspended and taken up again two years after the death of Paul III. □

*(Tr. by Sr. Regina Joseph Puthota FMA)*

# walking with the Church



## *How Much of the Mass Must I Attend? Substituting for the Gloria*

From: "Petrus" January 2009

**Q.** *To fulfil the Sunday obligation to attend Mass, how long or for what parts must you be present? What is the penitential rite? Must you be present for that? When may you leave and still fulfil the obligation? If you left for the homily or while Communion was being distributed, then returned, would you fulfil the obligation?*

**A.** The present Code of Canon Law reads: "on Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass." It doesn't say part or parts of the Mass. The expectation is that the person will attend the complete Mass. *Catholic Catechism* quotes the canon and states, "Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin." Before Vatican II, moral theologians and canonists would talk about the three principal parts of the Mass as the Offertory, Consecration and Communion. If you missed anyone of those parts, they wrote, you would not have fulfilled the obligation of hearing the Mass. Today, canonists and liturgists do not use that



terminology. They speak of the gathering, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the commissioning as the main divisions of Mass.

And moralists are more likely to speak of substantial observance of the law and what that might mean. They would assert that the law imposes a serious obligation. But some would question whether a person seriously or gravely violates the law if on one occasion he or she does not attend Sunday Mass. And all moralists would acknowledge that to miss a few minutes would not be a serious matter.

If you look at your missalette or recall your experience on Sundays, the penitential rite is part of the Mass. It takes place after the entrance song, right after the priest has entered the sanctuary and greeted the people. It can take different forms. One commonly used is the confession of fault (*Confiteor*) and Lord, have mercy (*kyrie, elision*). So if you come after these prayers, you are late for Mass.

Just as there can be excuses for missing Mass, there could be excuses for coming late or leaving early or missing part of the celebration. A parent might have to take a crying child from the church. A person may feel ill or need to use the restroom. There would be no fault in leaving for such reasons. But to sneak a cigarette or step outside because of boredom would hardly be sufficient causes.

A hospital worker may have to leave early or a mother may have to hurry home to watch children while Dad takes a turn at going to Mass. A traveller may have to take a bus or plane. Surely such reasons would excuse from fault. But to be first out of the parking lot, no!

While an emergency may demand that a person leave before the end of Mass, one who has departed before the consecration and Communion can hardly be said to have attended Mass. But the emergency may excuse that person from further effort to go to Mass.



**Q.** *For the past few years, from midnight Christmas through Epiphany, the director of music in our parish has elected to use "Angels We Have Heard on High" instead of the Gloria. What is proper in this regard?*

**A.** The General Instruction on the Roman Missal says of the Gloria: "It is sung by the congregation or by the congregation alternately with the choir, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is to be recited either by all together or in alternation. The Gloria is sung or said on Sundays outside of advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, and in special more solemn celebrations."

Nowhere did I find a permission to substitute a hymn for the Gloria. I remember, however, reading that, in the Missal approved by Rome for the German Church, it is permitted to substitute some hymn of glory for the Gloria.

I might also note that the Gloria is also called the Angelic Hymn because its opening words are those of the angels at Christ's birth. So I can see where the organist is coming from in singing "Angels We Have Heard on High" in place of the Gloria in the Christmas season. □

# Witnesses in & for Our Times



## ST. PAULINUS OF NOLA (JUNE 22) NOTHING MADE HIM LOSE HIS PEACE

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

If the Italian postal system needs a patron saint, without much difficulty I could suggest St. Paulinus of Nola considering the amount of letters written and replied by him. In fact during his life he maintained an intense correspondence beyond the call of duty that was both, pleasant and, at times, entertaining.

The letters that have come down to us form a kind of spiritual and pastoral autobiography. Even if he followed the rules of ancient Roman letter-writing, his letters overflowed with sentiments of fraternal love and confidence. They described spiritual conquests and aids to sanctity. In them he not only spoke of his own (monastic) community but also revealed greater (and more serious) perspectives of the Universal Church of his time. He dealt with various prevalent issues from monastic asceticism to the biblical exegesis, from theology, ecclesiology, and even poetry.

Paulinus of Nola kept up an interesting correspondence with some of the luminaries of the Western Church of his time like



the bishop and theologian Augustine of Hippo, the researcher and translator of the Bible (the Vulgate) Jerome (at Bethlehem) bishop Ambrose of Milan and others.

An interesting detail: Messengers who arrived in the

autumn or at the beginning of winter could not leave immediately so they were treated to the gracious monastic hospitality by his community and when the winter had passed they returned, loaded once more with new letters, but also restored and refreshed spiritually by him. And so, thanks to their work, he remained in touch with so many of his friends all over the then known world.

### **From The Magistrate of Rome to The Governor of Campania**

**Pontius Meropius Anicius Paulinus** (his full name) was born in 353 at Bordigala (today's Bordeaux) into a rich and famous Senatorial family that owned vast properties in Southern Gaul (Aquitania), Spain and Campania. As his parents were Christian, Paulinus received a Christian education, but he was not baptized as was the custom. He would decide if and when he wished to receive Baptism. He was given the best private tutor of the time in the person of Ausonius, a poet, politician and a man of vast learning.

After a brief career as Magistrate of Rome Paulinus was offered a seat in the Senate of the empire who gave him the prestigious appointment as of Governor of Campania (380).

### **Towards Christ**

Paulinus did not appreciate this ugly political scenario and so he interrupted his political career and returned in Gaul, to Bordigala. On his journey there he visited Ambrose at Milan who fervently urged him to commit himself to the Christian life. The

saint's words fell on the fertile, well-prepared soil. In fact, Paulinus himself was passing through a period of serious reflection regarding his own future as a Christian. That meeting was not forgotten.

Between the years 380-390 researchers agree that, on one of his trips to Spain, he married a respectable woman named Therasia. By her he had a child who, unfortunately died after only a few days. To this pain was added the loss of his brother which convinced him to return to Aquitania. There, once more he found his teacher Ausonius and struck up a strong friendship with a certain young lawyer Sulpicius Severus. Everything seemed good except for a malady that tormented his eyes. His friend, Sulpicius Severus convinced him to visit Martin (of Tours) who was a very famous preacher. In fact, Paulinus was cured through the intercession of that saintly bishop.

### **Paulinus is Baptized and sells his goods**

After he was cured the two friends parted ways and went off in different directions. The young and brilliant lawyer Sulpicius was fascinated by the monastic community of Martin and joined him. Paulinus returned to Bordigala and was baptized by bishop Delphinus. Then, following the example of the great monk Anthony, Paulinus (in agreement with his holy wife Therasia) sold all his goods and gave the proceeds to the poor. Later he would write: **"With all my earthly goods I have bought the hope of heaven, since hope and faith are worth more than all**

### **wealth of this world."**

Because of this Paulinus received a torrent of criticism from so-called well-meaning friends, first of who was Ausonius, his ex-teacher. He resisted his criticism, saying that he had had enough of pagan mythology and he was none the better for it.

After his conversion Paulinus tried his hand at poetry. He seemed to be refreshed and commented that he wanted, together with his wife Therasia, a new life, a more serious relation that was more ascetically binding and more Christian. Husband and wife, always in holy agreement decided on a monastic life, a plan that they realized together: it was revolutionary then even as it is now!

The plan did not materialize because of the priestly ordination – (by popular demand) just like the great Ambrose who was proclaimed bishop while he was standing in the Piazza. This happened in Barcelona in 394. Paulinus described this in his own words: **"I was suddenly taken by force from the crowd, (...) and ordained a priest. I was very reluctant not because I scorned the dignity of the priesthood, but because my thoughts were elsewhere, so I was afraid of this weird and unexpected manifestation of God's will."**

Paulinus however, set one condition: that he be not bound by the clergy of Barcelona. He had another plan in mind which was elsewhere. He went to the south of Italy to "Campania Felix" where he was admired as a governor and where he would be close to his favorite saint, St. Felix.

So, in 395, Paulinus and Therasia, both husband and wife settled at Nola outside the city walls, near the shrine of St. Felix (known today as Cimitile). He began his monastic adventure, a plan they had dreamt about was becoming a reality.

Two distinct monasteries were built, one for men and the other for women. Both had one ideal. Paulinus and Therasia agreed to live in separate monasteries but they were one in heart.

### **Defender of the faith**

In 409 Paulinus became bishop of Nola, a service he exercised with great zeal and pastoral equilibrium for more than twenty years. He showed his special solicitude towards the poor and was firm especially during the invasion of Alaric and the Visigoths.

His innate equilibrium was demonstrated when he was consulted in the event of two serious heresies. The first was regarding Origen, that great intellectual of the Eastern Church. The second was regarding Pelagianism (which was later convicted as heresy). In both cases he was mild and very understanding about the human aspects, though he was inflexible with regard to Orthodoxy.

When Paulinus retired as bishop he was invited by Emperor Honorius to preside at the Synod of the Italian bishops in 419 at Ravenna but he declined due to his ill health. Bishop Paulinus died, at a ripe old age, but above all in the odor of sanctity on June 22, in the year 431. □

# IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

## Slow Train

A passenger train is creeping along, slowly. Finally it creaks to a halt. A passenger sees a conductor walking by outside.

"What's going on?" she yells out the window.

"Cow on the track!" replies the conductor.

Ten minutes later, the train resumes its slow pace.

Within five minutes, however, it stops again.

The woman sees the same conductor walk again.

She leans out the window and yells, "What happened? Did we catch up with the cow again?"

## Tree Faller

While working as a radiology technician in a hospital emergency room, I took X-rays of a trauma patient. I brought the films to our radiologist, who studied the multiple fractures of the femurs and pelvis.

"What happened to this patient?" he asked in astonishment.

"He fell out of a tree," I reported.

The radiologist wanted to know what the patient was doing up a tree.

"I'm not sure, but his paperwork states he works for Bob's Expert Tree Service."

Gazing intently at the X-rays, the radiologist blinked and said, "Cross out 'expert.'"

## Watermelon Mistake

Discovering too late that a watermelon spiked with vodka had accidentally been served to a luncheon meeting of local ministers, the restaurant's owner waited nervously for the clerics'

reaction.

"Quick, man," he whispered to the waiter, "what did they say?" "Nothing," replied the waiter. "They were all too busy slipping the seeds into their pockets."

## Razor Request

Ronnie goes down to the barber shop. He gets his hair cut and then he is getting a shave. After being nicked by the barber several times Ronnie says "Hey buddy, have you got an extra razor?"

The barber replies "Well yes sir I do, would you prefer shaving yourself?"

Ronnie said, "Well not exactly but I thought I might defend myself."

## Boat Compromise

My friend wanted a boat more than anything. His wife kept refusing, but he bought one anyway. "I'll tell you what," he told her, "In the spirit of compromise, why don't you name the boat?"

Being a good sport, she accepted. When her husband went to the dock for his maiden voyage, this is the name he saw painted on the side: "For Sale."

## Cute Baby

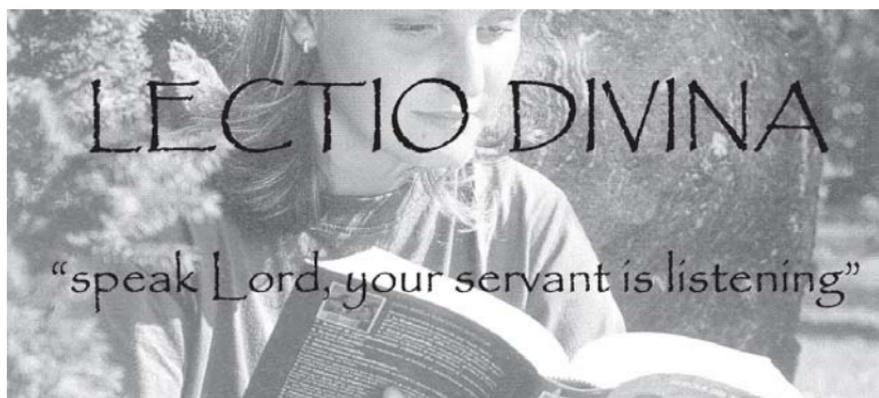
When we brought our new-born son to the pediatrician for his first checkup, the doctor said, "You have a cute baby."

Smiling, I said, "I'll bet you say that to all the new parents."

"No," he replied, "just to those whose babies are really cute."

"So what do you say to the others?" I asked.

"He looks just like you." □



## 'PRAY FOR US SINNERS'

by Roberta Forà

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

**T**he one among you who has no sin, let him cast the first stone..." That was what St. John wrote in his eighth chapter and the seventh verse. "Hearing those words they began to leave one after the other...."

It is really true! None of us, during our earthly existence is deprived of sin. It is a sickness that dogs us everyday despite our best intentions to constantly try to do better. The temptation is strong and the falls are frequent. We humbly admit that we are weak, fragile and in need of the mercy of God because we are sinners.

However, at this point, it is so consoling to reflect on the presence of Mary on our Faith journey. She, who is pure, is the only one "conceived without sin," the Immaculate Conception, and she watches over us, but above all she prays for us.



What an immense gift we Christians have in our Heavenly Mother! She intercedes for us at the throne of the Father and she prays for us and she assists us in our moments of temptation



whether we realize it or not, just as we are on the verge of slipping into sin.

At times we are unaware of the gifts that God, in his immense goodness showers on us during our earthly existence.

His grace pervades our lives. His inimitable strength assists us that we may joyfully begin again our spiritual journey after coming through our dark night of sin and Mary is the aid who will never abandon us to our destiny as poor

sinners. She continuously prays for us so that we truly rediscover God's grace in our lives.

"Pray for us sinners," is a phrase full of meaning: It is a powerful invocation that we should never tire of repeating.

Confident in the silent but extraordinarily real presence of Mary we can return to our spiritual path with renewed enthusiasm, aware that we will be able to confront evil with the powerful weapon of her prayer.

We thank you Lord, for having given us this sweet Virgin Mary who untiringly prays and intercedes for us. May we experience her precious help every day of our lives when temptations to evil try to ensnare us and lead us to sin.

With your constant help we hope to truly combat evil and so traverse joyfully and in God's grace along the mysterious and unpredictable paths of life. □



DEDICATED TO  
THE SACRED HEART

# Quiet HEART T

by Cormac C

**T**here's an amusing story told of a little boy who was asked in school one day by a visiting priest if he would recognize Jesus if he should appear to him on the road. "Easily", replied the boy, "he wears his heart outside his shirt." The familiar image of the Sacred Heart is dear to many people and it has evoked a spiritual response from millions of people over a very long time.

## Barriers of Sophistication

The significance of the image was brought home to me the other day when I visited a priest friend of mine who had undergone very serious brain surgery. My friend was one of those who could never express his feelings. He could discourse at length on theology or philosophy or the tenets of the faith, or on international politics for that matter, and sometimes in a very enlightening way. But when it came to feelings, especially his own, he was dumb. Emotionally he was hardly at kindergarten level. Indeed little boys rarely have as much difficulty expressing their sadness or anger or delight or loneliness as he had.

However, when I came to visit my friend I was not long in his presence when he opened up and shed many tears as he expressed his sorrow for not having understood his mother, his teacher, his fellow-priests. He told me of his warm gratitude for all that the staff had done for him in the hospital and of his genuine fear of stepping out again into the world. He expressed his appreciation of my care for him and the feelings of security he derived from my friendship. And while all this was going on the tears were pouring down his aging face. It was as if a dam had burst. It was as if the pent-up feelings of a lifetime had suddenly gushed through



# Spaces

## O HEART

*O'Connor*

the barriers of his sophistication so that he could now “wear his heart outside his shirt” for me to see.

### The Revealed Heart

At that moment I saw the significance of the painting, a significance which had been lost to me all my life and now suddenly was revealed. I saw the truth of the image of the Sacred Heart. It was trying to say that only when our compassion breaks the dam of our self-centeredness can it be seen by the world. Only when our feeling overflows the inhibiting structures of our defensive lives can we begin to live. Did he not tell Peter to put away his defensive weapon?



And the real significance of the Sacred Heart is that it is the heart of God openly displayed, the heart of God worn “outside his shirt” for all of us to see, indeed pierced to the death rather than be hidden from us. It is only when we can do this, show our compassion openly, that we are answering the call to love.

But there is another significance, and I learned this also from my convalescent friend. We show our hearts when we speak of our feelings, when we show our vulnerability, when we show our helplessness; and we are bravest when we show that we are afraid.

And, whatever we might think of the artistic merits of this renowned picture which one finds in so many Catholic homes, we would do well to gaze a while, in a heart-to-heart communion with the one who shows his heart, so that we can begin to know him and learn why we call his heart “sacred.” □

# Family Secrets

Helen Morgan

## The Story So Far:

*Sarah Williams, loses her parents in a car crash just as she was about to marry her fiancé Jonathan. Originally Irish, Tom and Bridie had always told her that they had no living relatives. Dr. Jim Brennan, an old friend from their past, arrives for the funeral and through him Sarah hears about her Irish relatives for the first time. Later, while visiting her mother's sister, Nuala, in Killpatrick, she is shown a photograph of her maternal grandmother whom she is supposed to resemble but she looks nothing like her. While visiting her Aunt Kate, she hears about baby Catherine, her mother's first baby who died shortly after birth following which her mother had had a hysterectomy. Knowing that she is adopted she breaks off her engagement to Jonathan. Later, while looking for her adoption papers, she finds a sealed box in the attic containing baby clothes and a newspaper photo. She enlists Kevin's help to trace the origin of the photo.*

**A**s soon as she heard Kevin ring the doorbell, fear registered in the pit of Sarah's stomach.

'This is not going to be easy for you,' he said, hugging her before taking a seat opposite her at the table.

'The photo came from a January 1954 edition of the *Liverpool Echo*. The baby was abducted from outside a house in Liverpool by a woman fitting your mother's description, wearing similar clothes to those you found in the attic. The little girl was dressed in pink.'

'Do you think I am the abducted child, Kevin?' asked Sarah horrified. 'My parents would never have done a thing like that!' she said vehemently.

'Sarah, I know it is sounds incredible, but think about it. We know you're adopted, you have no birth certificate or adoption papers, your age and colouring match the abducted child's, there are the clothes and then there's the

name. The child's name was Jane Braebourne. Sarah is the Irish form of Jane.'

Sarah sat bewildered as Kevin continued. 'Your parents lived in Manchester in the early '50s, not far from Liverpool. The woman was seen leaving the area with a man fitting your father's description in a green Ford Prefect.'

'I want you to pack a bag right away, Sarah. I'm taking you back to London with me tonight. I don't want you here alone,' said Kevin firmly. 'Once the election is over, we will travel to Liverpool together and start making enquiries. My colleague at the Echo is trying to get some more information for me.'

'I don't want the newspapers involved,' said Sarah firmly, anxious to protect the memory of her late parents.

'They won't be,' he replied.

'My colleague thinks I am writing a book about missing children.'



Sarah spent the next few days in London with Kevin in a flat he had borrowed from a friend. As soon as the election was over, they travelled together by car to Liverpool where they found the street on which the Braebourne family had once lived.

On arrival, they were disappointed to find that the area had been redeveloped and high-rise flats now stood where the terraced houses had been.

Kevin and Sarah spent the next few days visiting the churches in the area in an effort to find baby Jane's christening record but they found no trace of her whatsoever.

'We'll try the local post offices

in case the family remained in the area,' Kevin told her confidently.

They went from one sub-post office to the next but there was no record of a Braebourne family anywhere.

Unable to face any more disappointment, Sarah then remained in the car while Kevin visited the last post office on the list alone. The Asian postmistress informed him that she had only come to the U.K. fifteen years earlier and had no idea who ran the business before that.

With a heavy heart he returned to the car to break the news to Sarah. As he approached it, he suddenly heard a voice calling him from behind. He looked round and saw an elderly lady trying to catch up with him.

'Excuse me,' she said breathless from exertion, 'I heard you were asking about the previous postmistress. Are you a relative?' she asked cautiously.

'No,' replied Kevin. 'I am trying to trace a Braebourne family who lived around here in the '50s and I thought she might be able to help.'

'Oh yes she will,' replied the woman confidently.

'Jeannie Smith knew everyone. She spent her whole life in that post office. She moved to Blundell Sands years ago and still lives there as far as I know.'



When Kevin and Sarah finally tracked down Jeannie Smith at her retirement flat on the outskirts of the city, the old lady was only too pleased to help them.

'Yes, I remember the Braebourne family well,' she said.

'The father left a few years after the child was abducted; the poor

mother died from grief. Mrs. Fleming, the child's grandmother, is now in an old people's home suffering from Alzheimer's.

'Do you want me to go in with you Sarah?' asked Kevin as they drove into the car park of the old people's home where she had earlier confirmed that Mrs. Fleming was a patient.

'No, Kevin. This is something I have to do alone,' she replied.

With a sinking feeling in her stomach, Sarah walked slowly down the corridor to Ward 3A.

It was an ugly place with

shabby green walls, poor light and iron bedsteads. 'I'm looking for Mrs. Fleming,' she told the elderly bedridden lady nearest the door.

'She's in the day room, love,' she replied. Sarah pushed open the shabby green door and entered the day room.

Immediately in front of her she saw a small group of elderly people sitting around a table drinking tea. She quickly scanned the women's faces and recognized Mrs. Fleming immediately...

*To be continued*

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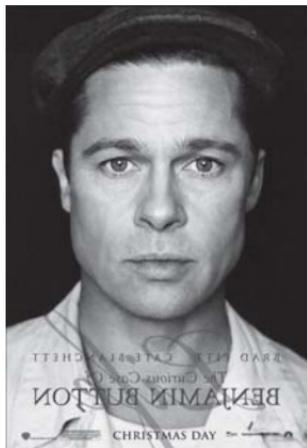
### Life's Message for Us

I was fascinated by the movie "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," which was a film adaptation of the 1920s story by F. Scott Fitzgerald and which won 3 Academy Awards. The story is set in New Orleans in 1918 at the end of World War I and progresses up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is the story of a man born in his eighties who 'ages' backwards! He is a man like any of us whose life is as plain and uneventful as anyone's. He meets people, goes places, he loves, he loses, and he finds joy in life. In short, he is a person who has learnt to live his life to the full in the midst of every kind of everyday experience.

You might call it fiction, drama or just another fascinating novel but it certainly has a hidden lesson to teach us.

As one looks around the world today one finds that loneliness, futile emotions, mental and physical debility and fractious human relationships are rampant. There is even a recession in the economy that adds to this depressing scenario. Enter Benjamin Button and he offers us a suggestion when he exclaims at his most bitter moment: **"It's never too late to be whoever you want to be."** To this I might add, "...whether you're an eternal optimist or a persistent pessimist."

**"Our lives are defined by opportunities, even the ones we miss."** What matters is how we perceive life. Could we learn a lesson from this simple story and see Christ's presence in his promise to us when he says: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10) □ *(Contributed by Cl. Savio D'Souza sdb)*



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

## **DON BOSCO AND TURIN'S MAYORS**

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

**I**t was accepted fact that Don Bosco was very respectful to all civic authorities though he was not given to displays of servitude. He never missed an opportunity to solicit their understanding and assistance in his work. He did not hesitate, at any given time, to write to the mayor of the city of Turin, when it seemed opportune, to request some assistance for his work for the poorest and most abandoned youth of the city.

This is probably best demonstrated on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the church of St. Francis of Sales on 20 July, 1851. The Mayor, G. Bellono was invited to put the first trowel of mortar on the foundation stone of that sacred temple and he accepted the honour gladly (cf. EBM 4,192).

It was to this same mayor that Don Bosco turned some time later, when he had to pay the freight duty levied by the municipality to obtain permission to build. The mayor waived this tax aware that Don Bosco was in an economic crisis. He issued a permit of exemption in his capacity as the mayor, a benevolent gesture on his part (EBM 4,224).

In May 1853, Mayor Giovanni Notta wrote to Don Bosco that the contractor of the church of St. Francis of Sales and the adjacent hostel did not have the permission to commence construction, for which



reason Don Bosco was compelled to suspend the work. However the Mayor was considerate and in order to express his respect for Don Bosco's work he asked for a hundred tickets of the new lottery be sent to him (cf. EBM 4, 416).

In 1854, when the city of Turin was struck with cholera, Don Bosco accepted into his Oratory the children of those who had died of the epidemic. Hearing this he received a letter of gratitude, respect and admiration from the Mayor (cf EBM 5,86).

In 1866 the Mayor of Turin, Galvagno, expressed his great admiration Don Bosco's work. Truthfully, there were, at Valdocco, teachers without certificates and this aroused an investigation by the office of Public Education. Don Bosco tried to defend himself by



*Dominic Berti*

explaining that his institutions were different from the other institutions in the city. On that occasion, the Mayor Galvagno wrote another letter in praise of Don Bosco's work.

Unfortunately Torre, the Prefect of the Province, in the name of the Minister Dominic Berti replied to Don Bosco, that his situation was not an exception contemplated by law and that it would be tolerated only for a year more (cf MB 8,307-311). Many of the teachers in the government schools only taught by the royal decree while others were without any diplomas. But they made him substitute one of his teachers with a qualified staff member. Here were two cases and two standards! (cf. MB 8,307). But this was no fault of the civic authority.

The incumbent mayors were not always so considerate towards Don Bosco. Some years later, in 1878, Don Bosco thought of building the church of St. John the Evangelist in Turin. But to lay the

corner stone he also invited Mayor Ferraris. But in a letter dated 31 July he received a reply stating that while he admired the zeal of the applicant he could not be present for the occasion because members of the city administration had to remain in the sphere of their own duties and he wrote: "The city administration, restricted to its own domain of action, lest it prejudice its own functions, applauds private initiative, neither obstructing nor encouraging it." In short, the Mayor Ferraris washed his hands in a Pilatesque fashion (cf. EBM 13, 456).

Something worse happened when Don Bosco presented a request for the annual 300 lire to support his work had never reached him. The Mayor replied communicating a decision of the Budget Committee of 1878 and also



*A corner of the Rora mansion*

severely warning him about neglecting the rules of hygiene at Valdocco (cf. MB 13,976). Who knows if those rules were observed at other civic institutions that were dependent on the city authorities!

Then there were also some mayors who were indulgent and sympathetic towards Don Bosco, but generally they were not so. In January 1871, for instance, Mayor Felice Rignon begged Don Bosco to accept three children of a poor widow of a coppersmith working at the Arsenal. Two were accepted



*Lanzo Railway Station*

free at Valdocco while a third was sent to the College of Lanzo and his fees were paid by Don Bosco himself.

Towards the end of July that year, Mayor Rignon together with the Mayor of Lanzo went to visit Fr. G. B. Lemoyne who was the Rector of the Salesian college at Lanzo and requested him to host those dignitaries who were being invited to the inauguration of the railway station that would connect Lanzo to Turin. The Rector asked Don Bosco's opinion and he was told not only to accept the offer but he promised that he himself would be there to receive

the authorities. This news was received by all with great delight.

Finally, it is interesting to note that already in 1862 when Marquis Emanuele Lucerna of Rorà was Mayor, Don Bosco approached him and requested that he accept to be head of a Committee of another great lottery that Don Bosco had launched. The Mayor gladly accepted. On the 2 July Don Bosco received him at the Oratory gate. After inspecting the exhibit, the boys' quarters and the workshops, the mayor took his place on a platform. A pupil stepped forward and greeted the honoured guests with a short, charming address drafted by Don Bosco, to which he responded with these charming words: "He organizes festivities in honour of others, but who deserves to be honoured more than he? He credits his imposing undertakings to others, but isn't he the author of them all? He generously praises others, but who should be praised, if not he? I am happy that I can thank him in the name of Turin, which has vastly benefited by his generosity." (cf. EBM 7, 127)

Very significant words that demonstrate that despite insurmountable difficulties and occasional differences of opinion, the Mayors of Turin were almost all friends of Don Bosco and his initiatives. This also reveals the mind and heart of Don Bosco and his fundamental option for the young especially the poorest. He was always ready to dialogue with those who were keen to help his mission of building honest citizens and good Christians. □

## NEWSBITS

### VATICAN CITY



On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the death of the Holy Cure d' Ars, John Mary Vianney, the Holy Father announced on 16 March that a special Year for Priests will be celebrated from 19 June 2009 to 19 June 2010 on the theme: **"Faithfulness of Christ, faithfulness of priests"**. The Holy Father will inaugurate the Year presiding at the celebration of Vespers on 19 June, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart and a day of priestly sanctification, in the presence of the relic of the Cure d' Ars brought to Rome by the Bishop of Belley-Ars; Benedict XVI himself will close the Year on 19 June 2010, presiding at a World Meeting of Priests in St Peter's Square.

During this Jubilee Year Benedict XVI will proclaim John Mary Vianney as Patron of all the priests in the world. (*Zenit.org*)

### WASHINGTON

Danny Boyle, who won the Academy Award for best director for his helming of the multiple-Oscar-winning "Slumdog Millionaire", has

a knack for revealing to audiences the good in his movies' lead characters.

Not that it has been easy to get his films to audiences.

The original U.S. distributor for "Slum dog" closed up shop before the movie was originally set to hit U.S. screens. There was talk about a direct-to-video release of the movie, but Fox Searchlight and Warner Bros. teamed up to distribute the film.

As of Feb 23 it had been in the top 10 of domestic box office receipts 15 weeks in a row, and its eight Oscar wins, including best picture, were sure to shoot it past US\$ 100 million in U.S. gross ticket sales before the end of February.

Four years ago Boyle did a film called "Millions", and he had a similarly hard time getting a distributor.

Set at Christmas, it was supposed to premiere in December 2004 in Boyle's native England - until exhibitors chose the same date to debut three other movies with Christmas themes. So "Millions" debuted in the States in March 2005.

"Millions" was a fable about a Catholic boy with a precocious fascination about the saints who finds a suitcase full of money and tries to make sense of this apparent great gift to him. While the boy's older brother would prefer making some prudent investments along with the occasional splurge, the boy wants to give it to poor people since he believes the cash was a gift from God.

"Slumdog Millionaire" tells the story of a slum-dwelling Indian lad who is suspected of cheating once he hits it big on Indian television's version of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire".

"As the portrait of a man who encounters evil in many forms yet

remains fundamentally innocent, and who gains wisdom from all he endures, 'Slumdog Millionaire' is an exhilarating celebration of humane values," wrote John Mulderig, of the U.S. bishops' Office for Film & Broadcasting, in a review in November.

"Slumdog" received a classification of A-III -adults for "beating and torture, fleeting rear nudity, crime and prostitution themes, underage drinking, brief scatological humour and occasional rough and crude language".

Boyle, in a 2005 interview with Catholic News Service, said even in his films with more severe themes there are moments of tenderness.

His last film before "Slumdog" was the 2007 movie "Sunshine", in which his characters are on a mission to the sun and meet, as Boyle called it, "the source of all being" before the closing credits.

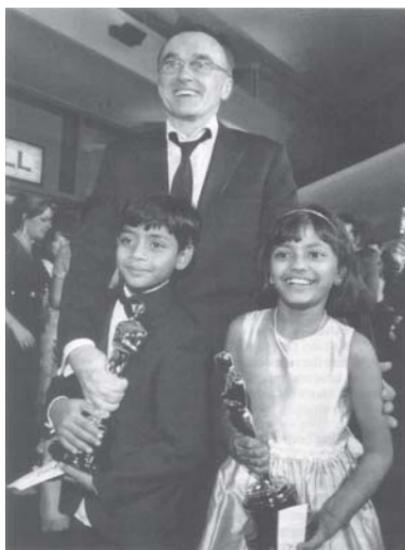
In the harrowing 1996 drama "Trainspotting", the main character, once a heroin addict, has escaped the drug subculture, and the dying friend to whom he loans money understands his transformation. In 2002's "28 Days Later", Brendan Gleeson's character knows he's got only 10 seconds to say goodbye to his daughter and manages to do so despite the gravity of the situation.

Boyle was born in Radcliffe, Lancashire to an Irish Catholic family and even applied to a Catholic seminary at the age of 14, he revealed in an interview with The Telegraph.

However he left after a priest suggested that he may not be suited to the calling.

"Whether he was saving me from the priesthood or saving the priesthood from me, I don't know. But quite soon after, I started doing drama," he told the newspaper.

David Schaefer, a film professor at the Franciscan University of



*Director Danny Boyle poses with "Slumdog Millionaire" actors Azharuddin Ismail and Rubila Ali at the Governors Ball after the 81st Academy Awards in Hollywood on Feb 22. (CNS photo)*

Steubenville in Ohio, said in a Feb 23 telephone interview with CNS that there are Catholic themes in "Slumdog" an audience would detect.

"The whole element of social justice is what the film focuses on all the way through thematically - the effect of poverty," he said. "In some ways, the game show, the outsourcing job Jamal (the main character) is working on is possibly a way of getting out of that (poverty)."

It also illustrates "the horrors that the children have to endure - and, clearly, the exploitation, the brutal interrogation that Jamal undergoes at the hands of his police interrogators. All of these are very social justice - oriented themes. If you would see it (the situation), you would want to change it," Schaefer said.

(CNS, CATHNEWS) □



## **THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE CHOSEN DAUGHTER OF ISRAEL**

*by Benedict D. O'Cinnsealaigh, STL*

**W**hen we look for the roots of the great woman of faith whom we know as Mary, the Virgin of Nazareth, our search first comes to the time and place of the earthly existence of that woman. Our search finds the place of her birth, it finds her ethnic identity and it finds her religious heritage. In these elements, which come together in the historical person of Mary, we find, not the beginning of a life, but rather a culmination of a journey. In Mary, the Virgin of Nazareth, we find the resting place of a faith, find the purest and clearest sound of hope and we find the place of final preparation.

She is the expression of an ancient longing; she is the manifestation of a people's hope, the fruit of a people's faithfulness. When we search for the character and the historical reality of the Virgin, our search goes beyond the woman herself; our search is directed to even more distant times and figures.

We are told to look for her roots, her meaning in the history, faith and hope of her people, God's "chosen people." To know Mary we must seek the elements that formed her identity in her people's unique relationship with the Creator, the Liberator, the Law Giver.

The Great ancestors of the Virgin, the Patriarchs of Israel, are constantly called to mind in the Liturgy of the Roman Rite. We call to mind and celebrate the merciful call of God to our Father Abraham, his wife Sarah and to the great Patriarchs. We remember how God called them and united them to himself in a covenant of love and hope. We remember how he raised Moses and the great prophets of Israel. Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and promised a time of peace, the reign of justice. Through the faithfulness of God's people, God's "faithful one" enters

history. Through God's "faithful one," God's children enter salvation.

The Liturgy not only remembers the events of salvation history, but makes those events a living reality for us. The Messianic promise is fulfilled; the sacrifice is made real and salvation is held out to us. God touches our lives. This is not some oblique mystical initiation, but the living reality of an incarnational salvation made possible through God's grace, embraced by God's faithful people. The History of this Faithful People leads to a person. The Savior will break into time from the midst of God's Chosen people; she is their daughter; she will be his Mother. The powerful Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, "Lumen Gentium" speaks of these things in its chapter on Mary the Mother of God:

*"The books of the Old Testament in foretelling the coming of Jesus, gradually bring into clearer light the figure of a woman, the Mother of the Redeemer" (Lumen Gentium 55).*

She is the Blessed Virgin Mary whom the Church proclaims as the joy of Israel and the noble daughter of Sion, the Theotokos, the Mother of God. The Preface for the Mass: "The Blessed Virgin Mary, Chosen Daughter of Israel" tells us that Mary is truly human, like us in everything, and that "she is by nature the daughter of Adam." Although, God in his mercy, by a unique miracle of preparation, a miracle that made the redemption of his Son affect his mother even before the work of his Son was begun; Mary was still subject to the redemption won by Christ. The Son redeemed the Mother even before the



Mother gave birth to the Son. This, the great Franciscan theologian Duns Scotus called the "foreseen merits" of the Son's redemptive action; it was an anticipatory miracle of redemption. So Mary can also be truly the saved daughter of Christ and become subject to him, the redeemer of all creation.

### **WOMAN OF FAITH**

Mary was also, like us, a person of faith, and in this faith, "She is by faith the true daughter of Abraham," Abraham is the first person in our history to believe in our God. Yet, like

Abraham, her father in faith, Mary becomes the model of Christian faith because she is the first to believe in God's Word. Through her faith she will conceive this same Word in her womb. It will be this conception, in faith first, that will raise Mary even above the Patriarch Abraham, for she will conceive not only in faith but also in her own flesh.

Mary also belongs to a people, a people of faith and hope, she belongs to the branch and root of Jesse. It is the fruit of that branch and that root, that she will be privileged to bear; that fruit, that most beautiful flower, will be Jesus, the Christ, her Lord.

God "destined" that one day Mary would be the Mother of His Divine Son. But this "destiny" was not the accidental collision of human events. This destiny was not simply the coming together of opportune moments. This destiny was not a fatalistic working out of events and processes. God destined that Mary would be the daughter of a particular people, God destined that Mary would be born of the Davidic Messianic line, God destined that Mary would belong to the faithful remnant of Israel, who believed in His promise to be with His people, those people who believed and who hoped in His Word and who rejoiced in His Salvation. Mary was destined to be ready to answer God's call to her unique mission of bearing in her body the Son of God. She was destined to be the first to believe in the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, and she was destined to receive the mission of universal motherhood.

How was it possible that this destiny should come about, and yet leave Mary free to choose or reject God? This destiny was possible because God had confidence in his own word and so God knew that a woman, living in faith, steeped in the tradition of His faithful people, living a life of prayer and dedication to the Lord God, would, when He "asked," when He approached, answer His call in loving, joyful and total submission and self surrender. The destiny that prepared Mary for her mission was the living and vibrant creative elements of love, hope and faith that were manifest in the lives, decisions and actions of those who preceded her, those who formed her, the remnant, the faithful ones of whom she is a descendant. From whom she inherits their spirit, their desire, their hope and their faithfulness. Mary is the offspring of the faithful remnants desire for God, their love for God, and their hope in God. She is the greatest example of their abandonment to God, of their total self-giving to God, of their slavery to God; as she says herself, echoing their sentiments: "I am the handmaid/slave of God" (Luke I :38). Mary, in a sense, was of culmination of everything good in God's relationship with His Chosen People.

### **PERSONIFIES FAITHFUL REMNANT**

The "destiny" that resulted in the person of the Virgin Mary was caused by the creative power of God's call to His faithful people and their loving response to

Him. Mary is, as it were, the physical realization of a people's longing and eventual readiness, after long centuries of trust, faith, hope, love, turmoil, anguish and pain. She is the personification of the faithful remnant's openness to God's holy will. And His will has now determined to establish His Kingdom on earth; and the Master of that new and beautiful Kingdom is destined to come forth from the womb of God's faithful people.

Mary sums up in herself the history of the faithful remnant from the time of Abraham to the proclamation of John the Baptist. She was subject to the Law, and gave it her sincere obedience, for she loved God with her whole being, and the Law was his first word. She was obedient to the Law for she hoped for salvation, and the Law was God's first path to life, speaking of her, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council said:

*"In her sincere obedience to the Law and her wholehearted acceptance of God's will, she is; 'exalted among the humble and poor of the Lord, who trustingly hope in Him for salvation and from Him receive it. After the long period of waiting for the fulfillment of the promise, in her at last the fullness of time is reached, and a new order of providence is begun, when the Son of God takes from her a human nature in order to free the human family from sin through the mysteries of his earthly life' (Lumen Gentium 55)"*

In Mary, the Chosen Daughter of Israel, the Daughter of Zion, we look back in time and even before time, and we see God's plan, gradually coming into clearer light, until eventually the great light of His Son "bursts" into human reality.



Standing in the warmth of that light is the figure of the faithful, obedient and humble mother. She stands as the fulfillment of the desire of Israel and the generations of faithful that preceded her and prepared her. She also stands as the first among those who will follow her. She stands as the first among those who hear the Word addressed to them by God. The first among those who will open their hearts and lives to that Word. The first among those who will conceive that Word, carry that Word, give birth to that Word, reveal that Word, follow that Word, love that Word with all of their being. She stands in the presence of her Son as the witness and embodiment of the New Israel. Standing within the presence of her Son, as she will always be, she too shines; she shines in the reflection of His great glory. □

**LOVING CHILDREN TO  
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Thank you, dear mother for curing my husband of his stomach aches and for my daughter who secured excellent results in her Std. XII examinations. *Yvonne DeSouza, Sydney, Australia*  
Dear Mother Mary, thank you for all the graces I received during the year 2008 and for clear medical reports.

*Ana Louzado, Canada*

My heartfelt thanks to Our dear Lord for healing my daughter, Mira and for keeping Maya safe, healthy and in joyful peace and contentment.

*Mrs. P. Samagond, Florida, USA*

Our sincere thanks to our Lord Jesus and Mary Help of Christians for all the favours received and for good health especially during our stay in India.

*Jessie and Lancy Andrade, Canada*

Our sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians for the many favours granted to us.

*Melliza D'Souza, Mumbai*

**MARY WAS THERE**

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2008 I was on my way to attend the Novena to Our Lady at the parish in Kirkee. At a crossroad I saw a green traffic light from afar and I sped up to make it. Suddenly I was caught up in the middle of the crossroad. I saw the call-centre cab speeding up! It was a matter of seconds to decide, I was totally confused but "someone" helped me to swerve the vehicle to the right. It saved me from what could have been a fatal collision. It was the motherly hand of Mary. I always wear the ring Rosary on my hand. I am most grateful for Our Lady's protection.

*Vincent Sequeira, Pune*

On August 27<sup>th</sup> 1996 my husband, my brother, my 7 month old daughter and I had gone to attend the novena at Mahim. After the Novena, we went to the nearby shops to buy some souvenirs. As we were leaving the shop, the sales girl insisted that my little daughter keep a small medal of Our Lady in her pocket.

We got into a taxi to return to Colaba but at the Dadar overbridge the taxi's brakes failed and it came hurtling down the bridge to a busy intersection. To protect my little daughter I brought her to the back of the taxi. The driver located a truck beside the road that had broken down and grazing the side of it, he managed to slow down the taxi. The collision caused the front of the taxi to be completely damaged, the driver had a few broken ribs. My husband had a bad fracture on his foot and a few stitches on his head, but my daughter, my brother and I were saved with a few light bruises.

I am certain that "Mary Was There" and the 'medal' in my daughter's pocket protected all of us, especially her.

*J. Thomas, 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, dear Mother Mary, for the numerous graces received and special thanks for helping us find a house and blessing us with your love, peace, happiness and protection.

*Sharon, Hong Kong*

Thank you, dear Lord Jesus and Mama Mary for helping me pass my examinations.

*Rohan Aranha, Mumbai*

Our grateful thanks to Mother Mary for helping our son to get a good job and for all the favours received through the recitation of the three Hail Marys.

*Thomas and Francy, Kalamboli*

My heartfelt thanks to Mother Mary for the favours received through the recitation of the three Hail Marys.

*I. Wadhvani, Mumbai*

Our sincere gratitude to the Most Holy Trinity, Our Lady Help of Christians, Don Bosco and through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys my daughter received a good marriage partner. L.C. Goa Thank you, Mother Mary for helping my son pass in his engineering examination and for the safe delivery of my daughter-in-law.

*M. D'Souza, Mumbai*

Thank you, dear Mother Mary for blessing my family.

*Audrey Fernandes, Mumbai*

For all the 97 years of her life my mother had spread the devotion of the 3 Hail Marys to all she came in contact with. Thanks to Mother Mary who helped and protected me in the recent stormy time I have had with my health. I constantly feel her closeness.

*Coral Lopes, Mumbai*

Thank you dear Mother Mary for helping my son in his project and his problems. Thank you Mother Mary for the success in the exams of my nephews and niece in their XII & X Std. exams. Thank you dear Mother for all the graces and favours we have received through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. Dear Mother do continue to bless and protect all the members of my family.

*Anthony & Celine, Mumbai*

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

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for blessing my daughter with a safe delivery and the gift of a healthy baby boy. *Violet Gomes, Mumbai*

I'm grateful to Our Lady and Don Bosco for my mother's clear medical reports. *Ajit Pinto, Mumbai*

Thank you to our Dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for granting me a job, for the miraculous recovery of my elderly aunt who was critically ill and also for numerous favours granted to us. *Riona James, Australia*

Thank you, dear Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all your blessings. *Mrs. Sheila Clarke, Trichy*  
My belated thanks dear Mother Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all the favours received and for the gift of a baby girl after six years.

*V.V. Andrade, Dharwar, Karnataka*

My belated thanks to Our Lady and St. John Bosco for all the favours received. Keep us always under your protection.

*Preeti Menezes, Gandhidham, Gujarat*

Thank you Mother Mary and Don Bosco for granting a favour to my daughter who passed the engineering examinations.

*Jessi, Mumbai*

Thank you, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for granting my petitions and for all the favours received.

*Marina Vincent Soares, Bahrain*

Thank you, dearest Jesus, Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for helping my son-in-law get a job after a whole year of unemployment and for many other favours received.

*A Devotee*

Our sincere thanks to Our Heavenly Father, Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for helping our son complete his four years of studies in London and for protecting him.

*Stanislaus & Bernadette, Mumbai*

My sincere thanks to Jesus, Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for the safe delivery of a baby girl.

*Mrs. Estrelina Lewis, Mumbai*

Special thanks to dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco for granting success to my children in their board exams. Thank you for granting us good health and for protecting us always.

*S.I. Mumbai*

My sincere thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mother Mary for helping me recover speedily from a serious illness.

*Roseline D'Souza, Mumbai*

Thank you, Mother Mary, for curing me of a cholesterol problem.

*Alice D'Souza, Mumbai*

Dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco thank you for a quick recovery after a fall and for the many other favours granted to me.

*Margaret Pereira, Thane*

## THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Thank you dear Mother Mary, and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a lovely baby boy after many years of marriage.

*Irene Mascarenhas, Mumbai*

Our grateful thanks to Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for blessing us with a healthy baby boy and for the safe delivery.

*Joyce and Femina, Virar*

Our sincere thanks to dear Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of our daughter and the gift of a healthy baby girl - Sarah Grace.

*Connie & Alex Fernandes, Goa*

Our sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for the gift of our grandson.

*Gregory and Angela, Mumbai*

Thank you for the gift of our son and a safe and normal delivery.

*Godfrey and Sharon, Mumbai*

Our heartfelt thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for having blessed our daughter with a baby girl.

*Mr & Mrs. W.N. Henricus, Australia*

Thank you to our Dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for granting me a job, for the miraculous recovery of my elderly aunt who was critically ill and also for numerous favours granted to us.

*Riona James, Australia*

### APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

JUNE 2009

**Holy Father's General Intention:** *That international attention towards the poorer countries may give rise to more concrete help, in particular to relieve them of the crushing burden of foreign debt.*

**Holy Father's Missionary Intention:** *That the particular Churches operating in regions marked by violence may be sustained by the love and concrete closeness of all the Catholics in the world.*

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### **MARY WAS THERE**

One evening, as I was taking a round on the oil rig which is under construction, at our Usgoan Shipyard, I was checking the lighting arrangement from the deck. As I watched I walked into what could have been a death trap. My leg slipped from the deck and I fell. My hand suddenly gripped the support of nearest bulkhead and I hung on to the bulkhead for fraction of second. I saw the depth of the tank, it was 33 ft. deep. There was no one nearby to help. I do not know but I realized that someone had helped me come up, for I soon found myself on the deck. I just had a few minor bruises on left leg and my arms. I was certainly saved by a miraculous power. Our Blessed Lord and his most Holy Mother certainly held me up in their arms. I shall forever be grateful for this Divine Assistance

*Godwin Noronha, 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.

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