

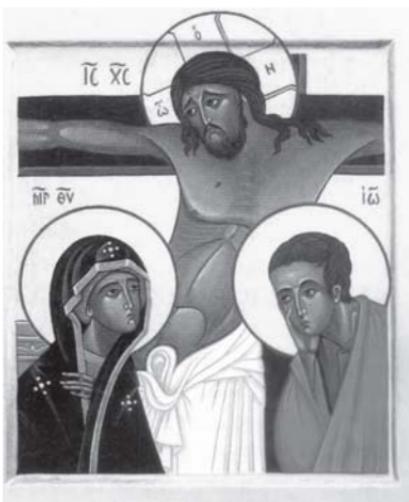
DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

MUMBAI

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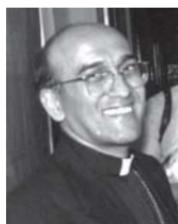
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*Father,
as your Son was raised
on the cross,
his mother Mary stood by him,
sharing his sufferings.
May your Church be united
with Christ in his suffering
and death and so come
to share in his rising
to new life.*

- *Opening Prayer*
15 September -

Cover: **Mary, the Virgin
at Prayer**



From The Editor's Desk

Standing and Staring

I'm sure many of you will remember a poem from your school-days that began like this: *What is this life if, full of care, We have no time to stand and stare?*

I was reminded of those lines early in the month of June when, together with a good friend I had gone for a short holiday to Lonavla. While there, I ambled through, what was left of the hills around. Every now and again I would stop and look at the countryside from atop a hill or a mound. As if for the first time, we gazed at the extraordinary variety of growth before us. Admittedly it was not the best time of the year, the monsoons were delayed and everything was dry and listless yet occasionally beside a humble waterway I noticed sturdy weeds poking up boldly towards the sky; shy shoots barely peeping up for a glimpse of the sun, and here and there a perfectly-shaped flower so gentle and yet so strong, standing out as if to challenge the dry summer's heat.

And then, to my surprise I gradually became aware that the whole scene was teeming with life: tiny insects crawling up dry tree barks, dung beetles tumbling down cascades of sand on arid mud flats; dragonflies like reckless helicopters flitting from weed to weed in what seemed to be a meaningless pattern; flies humming and skimming over our heads at dizzy speeds. When we chanced on a little pool, we even saw fish desperately dashing around their watery world.

It was as if I had been blind until that moment. Here was all this wonder and beauty before me, and I was only now beginning to see it, to relish it. Quite spontaneously I began to thank God. Indeed, it was good to just *stand and stare*.

So often we fail to see what is right in front of us: the perfection of a flower, the ever-changing pattern of clouds, the shapely splendour of an egret in flight, the majesty of gorgeous sunset over the Arabian Sea or the homeliness of a baby snugly sleeping in its mother's arms. We are too busy to notice: too busy rushing for a bus, or dashing to the mall or frantically making plans for next week or next month or next year. We don't have enough time to stand and stare, and we're the poorer for that.

Jesus knew how to stand and stare. He could relish lilies in fields and birds in the air; he marvelled at the way tiny mustard seeds grew into sturdy bushes; he knew how moth and woodworm could destroy, how yeast leavens the bread, how the weeds choke. He noticed people too: how the farmer scatters his seed lavishly, how the woman searches for her lost coin. He spotted Zacchaeus as he peeped from his tree. He noticed the widow with her two small coins. He had time to spend with little children, with beggars, with lepers.

And because he had time to contemplate the world about him, Jesus could sense in it the presence of God, the work of his Father. To be alive to the world about us is to be alive to the One who makes all things and who fills them with his presence.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

9. INSATIABLE THIRST FOR SERVING

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

Way back in 1988, Vaman Kadam then a BARC scientist, earned the distinction of becoming the first living liver donor in Mumbai when he donated a portion of his liver to his ailing daughter Pallavi. This transplant increased her lifespan by four years but after she died, he retired with the resolve to spend the rest of his life helping the ill and needy. Kadam describes Pallavi's death as the 'low point' of his life, but having experienced the problems of others he has realized that "very often, our problems are tiny compared to the enormous tribulations and difficulties that scores of families go through. A woman from Nashik I know of, has a 10-year-old child suffering from cancer. She leaves home at 4 am, to visit Tata Memorial 2-3 times a week, so that her child can undergo chemotherapy... Children suffer undoubtedly, but very often the pain of parents goes unnoticed," he says.

Kadam, now around 66, launched into his helping career by assisting the Jeet Association for Support to Cancer Patients (JASCAP), an NGO that helps educate cancer patients and their families. JASCAP was set up by Neera and Prabhakar Rao after they lost their 30-year-old son Satyajit, a software professional, to cancer. The booklets published by JASCAP are priced between Rs 10 and 20 and the proceeds are used for the benefit of cancer victims. This literature is primarily

a ready-reckoner on the various forms of cancer, on how they affect humans and what can be done medically to combat the disease. Those benefiting most from these booklets are poor patients coming to Tata Memorial Hospital; often, their families have not the slightest clue about the complexities of the disease, observes Kadam, who personally guides such people.

More Besides

His daughter's death and his love for children also led the scientist to volunteer some of his time at the 'Make A Wish Foundation.' Twice a week, he visits KEM and Tata Memorial hospitals after his work at JASCAP and interacts with children suffering from cancer. "We befriend them, try to win their confidence and strive to be their buddies. We seek to understand what the children like, what motivates them and what makes them really happy. There was this 16-year-old boy from Thane in an advanced stage of cancer. But when I became friends with him, I realized that he wanted a cycle so that he could go to school and then college. We got him a bicycle as a gift."

Not satisfied with these two already sufficiently demanding assignments, Kadam also volunteers two or three times a week at the Narayan Seva Sangh in Mulund where needy patients are given free medicines. His primary job at the Sangh is to liaise

between patients, hospital authorities and donors. He further helps out at the Zonal Transplantation Coordination Committee, which works in the area of cadaver organ transplantation in Maharashtra.

Added to all this, Kadam makes time to explore the country as an avid trekker. He has been on trekking trips to several places, including the enchanting North-East. Quietly supportive of Kadam is his wife who, he gauges, is more spiritually inclined than he.

Source of Inspiration

It is not hard to guess the source of Kadam's indefatigable service of the sick and needy. One's own personal tragedy (untimely loss of his own daughter) often releases a fund of generous giving in the hope that, what one would have wished most to get but did not get in one's own hour of need, may be made available to others. Characteristic of such people is their almost reckless giving, an insatiable thirst to keep on reaching out to whoever is in need. While it could be said that even with such generous giving, the ocean of suffering will never be emptied, yet to those who do receive timely help and guidance, it makes a big and unforgettable difference. How wonderful would it not be if a life like that of Kadam's relentless self-giving would spark off a chain reaction among the many people he helps, or even among those who read about it. Even if a small fraction of those assisted by him imbibe in a small way the attitude of the 'good samaritan' in their own neighbourhood, our world would certainly be a far better place to live in.

Christian Inspiration

Against the background of Kadam's untiring self-giving, for the Christian celebrating Eucharist frequently, the words of Jesus' Eucharistic command would burn into his consciousness: 'Do this as a memorial of me.' Jesus invites each of his disciples to remember him, not just in an empty, fleeting sort of way, but rather by setting up a memorial, something lasting for all to see and remember him! A drinking water fountain erected as a Gandhi memorial in a village sorely deprived of this precious commodity, would remind people of how the father of the nation worked hard and even sacrificed his life so that the life of the simple poor Indian would be radically different and infinitely better. Everyone drinking from that fountain would be drawn to recall the high ideals of Gandhiji and perhaps be inspired to carry his example further - reaching out to others in newer and more creative ways.

The same should happen each time we celebrate Eucharist. Jesus' ideal was 'that you may have life and have it to the full' which offers a wide scope or range of activities, in fact, any and everything that can provide a fuller life for people. To provide this fuller life, Jesus was ready and eager to surrender even the last drop of his precious blood. All one needs to do is just look around to see and empathize with the suffering majority, linking it with any similar suffering one has personally undergone. Besides this, of course, one needs to be convinced also that s/he has been blessed with the requirements for such a

reaching out. If one sees her/himself in the category of the indigent, certainly the urge to help others wouldn't even dawn on one's troubled mind. The Christian, however, is no navel-gazer; his/her eyes are fixed on the Cross, the source of all life and selfless love.

Eucharist: Word and Bread of Life

In the Liturgy of the Word where excerpts from the Bible are placed before the worshipping community, one is shown the 'length and the breadth, the height and the depth' of the love God has for us. Unfortunately, most participants in the Eucharist are not trained to hear this message as the readings are proclaimed in the Eucharist. All they seem to catch invariably is that they are sinners needing to be punished unless they reform their lives at the earliest possible moment. But had they been alerted and assisted to hear God telling them how much he loves them and every other human being, even in their sinful condition, they would certainly be inspired to step out with their heads held high, ready to volunteer wherever the Lord has need of them. Like the prophet Isaiah they would exclaim: 'Here am I, send me!' (Is 6:1-8).

The other aspect that one needs to keep firmly in mind is that in this reaching out to others, it is not we, mere humans, who are expected to do all the work by ourselves. In fact, Jesus has reminded us in the strongest terms, 'without Me you can do nothing... unless the branch remains in the vine, it produces nothing, but withers and dies...'

So, all we are called to do is to offer ourselves merely as instruments in his hands - and united with him nothing is impossible even for the weakest human being: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13). It is when we set out to achieve on our own steam, as it were, that we tend to get discouraged when we fail or meet with opposition; or we wear out with fatigue when the going gets tough; or we crave for gratitude when we have helped someone successfully. Like Peter on the morning after the fruitless night of fishing, we ought to be able to say to the Lord, 'We have worked all night and caught nothing, but if you say so, we shall let down the nets for a catch!' (Lk 5:5) - and what a catch that will be!

A Christian is a fearless person because he has seen what the Lord has done through the lives of even timorous people like a Gideon, through a youth like David before the mighty Goliath, through a frail woman like a Deborah or a Judith or an Esther. Even an erstwhile demoniac became his ardent apostle to the people of the Decapolis, the ten towns, to which Jesus sent him. If they could do great things because they worked with the power of the Risen Lord, why can't we? Time and again Jesus reminds us: 'Do not be afraid ... I am with you, even till the end of time' (Mt 28:20). Which will be the specially chosen area of work in which the Lord seeks your collaboration today? It must be not just one that you choose by yourself, but rather one in which he asks you to collaborate! 'Not my will but yours be done' is the catch phrase in all fruitful apostolate! □



A JOURNEY PLANNED BY GOD

Fr. Wilfred D'Souza, sdb

A Salesian at the Shrine of Don Bosco's Madonna, Matunga, Mumbai

The journey of my priestly and religious vocation began in my deeply religious home and in my spiritually active parish at St. Francis Xavier's, Vile Parle. My earliest reminiscences are of the daily Family Rosary and the First Friday "Act of Consecration" prayed in my family. The regularity of times for play, study, prayer and rest unknowingly prepared me for my future.

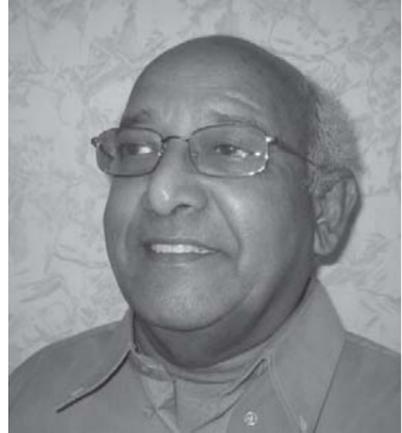
In my parish my active participation as an Altar Boy, the Legion of Mary, solemn celebrations of feasts and the month of May evening rosary at the Grotto, took care of my gradual imperceptible interest in the Church. This was only enhanced by the friendly presence and interest of the parish priests.

The seed of a Salesian Vocation was sown in a most unexpected manner. Don Bosco in 1957 was just a "big" name to me that appeared in the newspapers, winning school tournaments or in the Madonna that came home every month without fail from the Shrine at Matunga.

I considered it a privilege to be invited from my school with a few others to witness a grand play on the life of Dominic Savio. We were given a little booklet and I read the saint's life for the first time. Later I was awarded a prize for a quiz on the saint.

Then I received a very personal letter inviting me to consider God's call to be a Salesian. This only helped me to clarify a discernment that had already begun. I finished my SSC in 1959 and even before the results, I quite timidly confided to my Dad and Mum, "I want to be a Priest with Don Bosco."

It was as if they were waiting for this decision. It brought them



immense satisfaction. There was no hesitation and without losing much time, we came to meet Fr. Maschio and Fr. Casarotti.

Before I knew it, I was setting out by train "into the great unknown" – Tirupattur in South India alone with my Dad, since the batch of 'Bombay aspirants' had already left. Thus I had begun by long journey toward the Salesian Priesthood. God has held me by the hand and guided me through fabulous experiences. In May 2012, I will celebrate 50 Golden years of my Religious life.

The generosity of my parents had known no bounds. Next in the family my sister is today Sr. Marietta D'Souza rsjt, after her, is my brother, a happy Salesian Fr. Vivian D'Souza sdb. That leaves the last, my sister Clare, now happily married who looks after Mum, a nonagenarian who everyday delights and sings the praises of a great and good God. □

"The greatest gift God can give to a family is to call one to be a Priest/Religious." Don Bosco.

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Praying Ordinary Prayers

By Michael Paul Gallagher

PRAYER IS FOR YOU (3)

In the hectic and noisy world of today we feel a longing for moments of quiet prayer, to be simply present to God. Still, such prayer can often seem to be impossibly difficult. The author shows us how quiet prayer is possible for everyone.

Dear Tony,

Thanks for your letter, and for your frank comments on my recent articles. *"I don't want to complain," you write, but your letters on prayer to that married couple were a bit beyond me. They had done courses on Scripture, and have years of praying behind them. I'm just a young man who sometimes drops into the church for a few minutes on the way home from work. I only say prayers, like the Our Father, that I learned as a child and I add a kind of hello and goodbye to God. What else would you advise?"*

A Great Basis

Thanks for that. It's very real and honest. But it's also a great basis: like someone who is able to swim already but wants to do a bit of further training. For me the real key is something you already have, but don't really say in your letter. You have a sense of God (which leads you to drop into the church) and a desire to deepen your way of praying (that pushed you to write). That faith and that desire are more important than any practical suggestions I may make here. Without them all the books in the world on prayer would simply be useless.

But yes, I'd like to mention ways of building on what you already have. For instance, you seem to have a friendly approach to God: the 'hello and goodbye' you mention. Trust that and expand on it, praying in your own way and

your own words. That's something I'll come back to, perhaps in another letter.

But there is nothing wrong with those childhood prayers. How could we ever improve on the Our Father? What matters is how we say it. The easiest way to 'improve' is just to take your time. I think it's much better to say this great prayer as slowly as you can, pausing on each phrase, than to say it rapidly many times.

Praise and Petition

Recently I was present at a Mass when the priest invited the congregation to make two gestures during the Lord's Prayer. For the first half they were asked to raise their arms above their shoulders, as if reaching out towards the Father who is beyond us. Then during the second half they were to lower their arms to waist level, keeping their hands open, as if in a gesture of petition and of need for themselves and others. Those gestures brought out the difference between the two halves of the Our Father: at first we pray about God's reality and vision of things, and then we turn to our own humbler reality and needs.

With that in mind, I'd like to devote most of this letter to that prayer of Jesus. Perhaps because we learn it as children, we may, even as adults, be saying deep words that we have never paused to examine. I won't try to offer you

a detailed commentary on each phrase. Instead I want to express the prayer in more modern language, and to write it out as a little personal meditation. In this way I hope to suggest the richness behind those very familiar words.

A Personal Meditation

Our Father...

Jesus dared to call you 'Daddy', 'Abba'. You are a tender-parent, like a loving mother or father. I so easily forget that, making you impersonal, distant, cold.

And you are our *Father*. It only seems that I pray alone. I am really with so many others, all as sisters and brothers, everyone, everywhere.

...who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name...

You are also beyond us all. I ask to realize and reverence your otherness from us, to recognize the greatness and beauty that is you, to know who you really are in mystery and in intimacy.

...Thy Kingdom come...

You have huge hopes for us, what Jesus described in his stories as the coming of your Kingdom. That means a different approach to everything. May that seed find roots in me, growing into a tree of care where others can find some shelter.

...Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven...

You have a plan for our lives to be healed with love, even here on earth. May I find and follow your will where I am free to choose, and trust in our wisdom for all I can't control.

...Give us this day our daily bread...

Without your help I can't live your hopes. I need strength of many kinds, nourishment for the

journey of this day. Our whole world is hungry and full of cries. Give us the bread of your Spirit so we may better share the bread of this planet.

...and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us

But I damage myself by lack of love, by forgetting to grow, by narrowing the heart. Look on me with a love that heals and forgives, so that I may share your compassion, and have the courage to forgive the smaller hurts that others cause, and the bigger wounds that weigh on the memory.

...And lead us not into temptation...

I started by glimpsing your greatness, and end now by recognizing my weakness. Protect me in the struggles of each day. May all our hearts find their way, your way.

...but deliver us from evil...

From the traps and the lies within us and around us, liberate us for fullness of life, and for your great hopes. Amen. □



walking with the Church



"So Very Dry" Liturgy

by Fr. Edward McNamara

Q. *Nowadays there seems to be a shift from the spirit of the liturgy to mechanical and ritualistic performance. Since our liturgy is so very dry, many Catholics in several parts of India are going to Protestant churches where the worship is spontaneous, meaningful and gives them a sense of involvement and satisfaction. Some of the questions put to you and your answers seem to be not appealing to the soul. Should we not think of promoting meaningful liturgy in the light of the local culture and its needs? – P.J., Dindigul, India*

A. We occasionally receive questions of this type which touch upon fundamental issues regarding the purpose and nature of liturgy.

Over the years, this column has addressed many points of liturgy, some of which are admittedly technical and maybe even rarefied. But I always strive to give my readers the benefit of the doubt and presume that their inquiries stem from a sincere desire to celebrate the liturgy according to the Church's heart and mind.

I do not believe that it follows that an exact and precise liturgical celebration is thereby a soulless

and mechanical ritual. Nor is a cavalier attitude toward rubrics an inevitable proof of authentic Christianity. There can be both good faith and hypocrisy behind both attitudes, but these are the failings of individual human beings that do not touch the heart of the question.

I strongly defend fidelity to liturgical norms because I believe that the faithful have a right to be able to participate in a recognizably Catholic liturgy, a liturgy that flows from Christ himself and is part of the great stream of the communion of saints.

While not doubting the sincerity of my correspondent, I must take exception to his way of characterizing Protestant worship with respect to Catholic liturgy. I believe that we are before a question that goes much deeper than external forms. The crux of the problem is not that our separated brethren have more exciting performances but that we have failed to teach our faithful basic Catholic doctrine on the Mass and the Eucharist.

Any Catholic who has the tiniest inkling of what it means to assist at Mass; to be present at the

Lord's Passion, death and resurrection; to be able to unite his or her prayer presented to the eternal Father united together with Christ's supreme sacrifice; to have the possibility of sharing the Bread come down from heaven — how could such a Catholic ever compare this privilege to any Protestant service, even though admittedly it might have better music and more able preaching?

At the same time, the Church's liturgy is already endowed with flexibility and a richness that can readily respond to local characteristics as determined by the national bishops' conferences. Apart from the essential problem of lack of liturgical formation there is the question of the abandonment or lack of use of many treasures, both ancient and new, that can transform our liturgies into beautiful and deeply spiritual experiences.

When the full possibilities of genuine Catholic liturgy are used, the celebration is not a tad less

participative, spontaneous and meaningful than any non-Catholic service. The difference is that in liturgy, just as in sports, authentic spontaneity, participation and creativity are found within the rules and not outside of them.

Apart from the liturgy Catholicism has a plethora of forms of prayer and associations, from historic confraternities and sodalities to modern charismatic prayer groups and ecclesial movements. I believe that these multifarious expressions can satisfy all forms of spiritual sensibility and desire for involvement much better than any individual group of Protestants.

Therefore if some of our Catholic faithful are migrating to Protestant groups, I don't think we should be blaming the liturgy but rather double our efforts to celebrate it properly and proclaim the truth of the great mystery of faith. □

Pope Benedict XVI on the Family and Divine Mercy

The Gospel says that, in the moment of the Passion, when the Divine Master was arrested and condemned to death, the disciples were dispersed. Only Mary and the women, with the apostle John, remain together and follow him to Calvary.

Resurrected, Jesus grants a new unity to his followers, stronger than before, invincible, because it is based not on human resources, but on divine mercy, which makes them all feel loved and forgiven by him. Therefore it is the merciful love of God that solidly unites the Church, today as yesterday, and that makes humanity a single family, divine love, which through Jesus crucified and risen forgives our sins and renews us interiorly. Animated by such a deep conviction, my beloved predecessor, John Paul II, desired that the second Sunday of Easter, be named Divine Mercy Sunday, and pointed to the risen Christ as the fount of confidence and hope, welcoming the spiritual message given by the Lord to St. Faustina Kowalska, synthesized in the invocation: "Jesus, I trust in you."

As for the first community, it is Mary who accompanies us in life every day. We invoke her as "Queen of Heaven," knowing that her royalty is like that of her Son: all love, and merciful love. I ask you again to entrust to her my service to the Church, while with confidence we say to her: "Mater misericordiae, ora pro nobis (*Mother of mercy, pray for us.*)" □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINO (Sept 10) HE DID PENANCE AND RADIATED JOY (1245 - 1305)

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

Pope John Paul II said in 1997: "Only saints leave traces the others just make a noise." Holiness, is first of all, a gift of the Spirit that helps the person conform himself to Christ. It is also a daily commitment to respond to this gift with faith and patience, with goodness and love. Virtues are not practised for a day or a month (that is already difficult in itself) but always, not only in 'good times' but also in times of hardship (during illness for instance), but not just casually but to a heroic degree.

St. Nicholas of Tolentino's seventh death centenary was just celebrated in 2005. Already in life, but especially after his death, the "fame" of his holiness spread beyond the borders of Toletino and Italy too even to this day. In fact, a few years after his death the process of his canonization was begun and 371 witnesses came forward to testify to his holiness. They spoke about miracles or extraordinary interventions of God to alleviate human suffering and assuage human poverty or even his *post mortem* intercessions.

He was officially declared a



saint of the Church (because the people of God had already begun invoking his intercession) only on June 5th, 1446 because the Church was going through a political upheaval (the western schism and Avignon).

He Never Stopped Smiling

Nicholas was born at Castel Sant'Angelo (today Sant'Angelo in Pontano in the province of Macerata) in the year 1245. His pious parents who were married

for several years had no children. In those years they had a great devotion to St. Nicholas of Bari thanks to the translation of his relics to Italy in the XI Century. Finally their prayers were answered and they were blessed with a son whom they named Nicholas in his honour of the saint of Bari. From the time he was very young Nicholas showed an inclination to the religious life so he was admitted to the monks of St. Augustine in his town. A particularly beautiful point that came up at his testimony was "*libenter ibat ad ecclesiam...et ad scholas ac si esset magnus*" (he gladly went to church...and to school as if he was an adult).

He began his novitiate as he approached his fifteenth year and after completing all his seminary studies he was ordained a priest in 1269 at Cingoli da Benvenuto by the bishop of Osimo.

Having become a priest, Fr. Nicholas began his apostolate of preaching in the various towns of Marche. He was an effective and convincing preacher and his words were the fruit of a life of intense prayer and an extraordinary asceticism that took nothing for granted, not even long and tiring journeys, though his rules and good sense suggested otherwise. It was said that the rule could be mitigated when one was outside the house (the convent). But since Father Nicholas (as he was now called) felt at home wherever he went, he saw no need to mitigate his penances or shorten his prayers. The people noticed all this and listened to his teaching, admiring his sanctity and they were converted. Even those who were

used to the usual stereotypical face of an ascetic with a sad and pensive look were inclined to smile a little and they changed their opinion on seeing Father Nicholas. Those too, who undertook the fiercest penances (hours and hours of prayer and living only on bread and water) were able to smile at those around them. He not only succeeded in infusing a holy joy into everyone who approached him or heard his preaching but he also had them coming to him for their confession. That was true holiness.

One night he was found in an Augustinian monastery near Pesaro. While he was asleep he heard a voice calling to him and complaining: "Brother Nicholas, man of God, look at me. I am a fellow pilgrim from Osimo. Only you know if I am alive. I am tormented in these flames. God, having accepted my contrition, has not condemned me to eternal damnation but in his mercy he has granted me the pains of Purgatory. I therefore, humbly beg you to celebrate a Mass for the deceased so that I may be freed from these flames." Nicholas answered: "Dear brother, help yourself, Our Saviour who shed his blood has saved you. But me, I have been appointed to celebrate the Conventual Mass tomorrow and since tomorrow is Sunday I have to respect the liturgical rubrics. I cannot celebrate a Mass for the deceased." The pilgrim monk replied: "Come now, reverend Father, come consider whether it seems convenient for you to pitilessly reject the plea of so many poor souls who have come to me." He then showed him the plains of Pesaro, full of people

and added: "Have pity Father on this multitude who wait for your help. In fact, if you celebrate this Mass, most of us will be freed from these cruel torments." Nicholas woke up and began to pray. He went and asked the Prior's permission to celebrate a Mass for the souls in Purgatory. This episode inspired the "*Settenario of St. Nicholas*" which is the practice of seven Masses and the special prayers said in suffrage of the souls in Purgatory. It was also stated that Nicholas was invoked as the protector of the souls in Purgatory.

He spoke "sweet words and prayed always"

In 1274 while he was in Recanati he was informed of the violent death of Brother Gentile. He was disturbed by the news and began praying for his soul but he continued to be upset and worried because he did not know his final destiny. After fifteen days of prayer he heard a voice that said: "My brother, I thank Almighty God and Our Lord Jesus Christ who having heard your prayers and groans, in their mercy, I could have been condemned, but I was saved."

The year after this episode took place he was assigned to the convent of Tolentino where he remained till he died. He continued to carry out his ministry of hearing Confessions, of penance and prayer. His ministry was not just confined to the convent walls but he visited the sick, helped the poor and offered to be a peace negotiator among the many warring factions in the city. He was sought by one and all and many came to him for confession and spiritual advice. When he came to die on 10th

September in 1305 he was prepared.

Meanwhile his fame as a saint and a worker of miracle quickly spread. But where was the sanctity of Fr. Nicholas? We find the answer in the simple testimonies of those who knew him. Some affirmed that Father Nicholas "prayed always" night and day without ever getting tired. He was a man of a gentle disposition, humble, kind, cordial and discreet with one and all. He was a man who spoke "sweet words" - and the sweet words he spoke were words of encouragement and exhortation to everyone. Another trait of his was that he was a person with "good sense." He was certainly a saint with his feet well planted on the ground and with a sense of balance. Saints are not given to instability. They would otherwise be pathological cases. He was certainly a man of penance, who observed the rules of his religious order very strictly. He had a great devotion to Jesus crucified and the Virgin Mary. Besides this, he prayed fervently for all the deceased faithful (the souls in Purgatory). What of all those bodily penances that we moderns consider superficial, and which we label, unconscious expressions or just pathological masochism? How do we judge them? A witness who knew him also had the same doubts and wanted to verify the authenticity of those out-of-the-ordinary 'practices.' Finally he was convinced and declared that he was a saint who never strove to boost his own ego (his "flesh" in the broadest sense) but above all because he "wished to serve the Lord Jesus Christ with integrity" In this lay the source of Nicholas' holiness throughout his life: the love of Christ that moved him to be of service to everyone. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Coach Call

As a high school football coach, I'm aware that student athletes tend to focus too much on sports. Bob, a fellow coach, was talking about one such player, who called him at home one night.

When his wife informed the kid that Bob wasn't home, he became frantic and said he had to speak to the coach right away.

"Just calm down, and I'll have him call you as soon as he gets home," the coach's wife told him. "What's your number?"

The flustered kid replied, "Three."

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."

Preacher's Best Years

A preacher, who shall we say was "humor impaired," attended a conference to help encourage and better equip pastors for their ministry.

Among the speakers were many well known and dynamic speakers. One such boldly approached the pulpit and, gathering the entire crowd's attention, said, "The best years of my life were spent in the arms of a

woman that wasn't my wife!" The crowd was shocked! He followed up by saying, "And that woman was my mother!"

The crowd burst into laughter and delivered the rest of his talk, which went over quite well.

The next week, the pastor decided he'd give this humor thing a try, and use that joke in his sermon. As he surely approached the pulpit that sunny Sunday, he tried to rehearse the joke in his head. It suddenly seemed a bit foggy to him.

Getting to the microphone he said loudly, "The greatest years of my life were spent in the arms of another woman that was not my wife!"

The congregation inhaled half the air in the room.

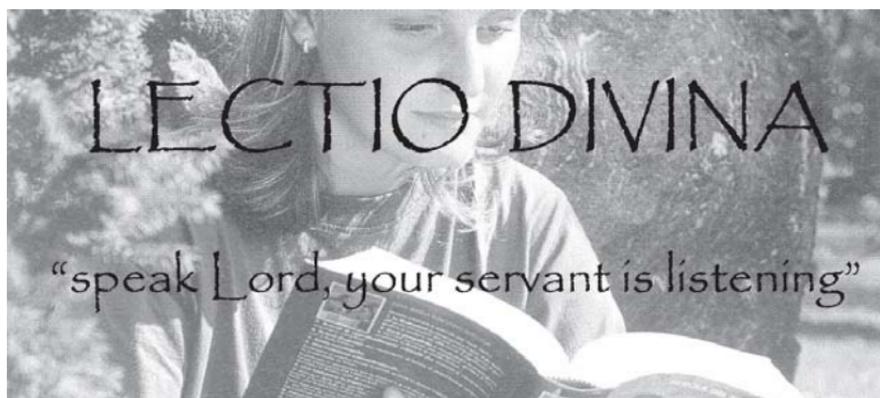
After standing there for almost 10 seconds in the stunned silence, trying to recall the second half of the joke, the pastor finally blurted out, "...and I can't remember who she was!"

Live to 100

When a grandmother was in her late eighties, she decided to move to Israel. As part of the preparations, she went to see her doctor and get all her charts. The doctor asked her how she was doing, so she gave him the litany of complaints - this hurts, that's stiff, I'm tired and slower, etc.

He responded with, "Mrs. Siegel, you have to expect things to start deteriorating. After all, who wants to live to 100?"

The grandmother looked him straight in the eye and replied, "Anyone who's 99." □



Bless the Lord, O, my soul!

by Roberta Forà

This is a very beautiful psalm. It is full of joy. It is a hymn of love for God who is father and who tenderly loves his children.

*He forgives all your iniquity,
He heals all your diseases... (v. 3)*

The love of God is great, it is eternal and strong, but he is also merciful because he forgives and heals man's weakness: his sin.

*The Lord is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abounding in
steadfast love. (v. 8)*

So, God who is omnipotent is also kind, pouring his love on us with tender affection.

He harbours no grudge, completely forgetting the evil we have done. He does not treat us according to our faults and he does not punish us because of our sin.

*For as the heavens are high above
the earth,*

*So great is his steadfast love toward
those who fear him,*

*As far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our
transgressions. (v. 11,12)*



This is beautiful and poetic imagery of the "vastness" of his love.

God our Father loves each of us immensely but this psalm also recalls the fragility of man, as is noted in the next verses:

*As for man, his days are like grass;
He flourishes like a flower of the field:*

For the wind passes over it, and it is gone,

And its place knows it no more. (v. 15,16)

But the fragility of man, like the flower of the field and the dust of the earth mysteriously attracts the attention of the Lord who gazes on his nothingness and fills him with his love.

*Bless the Lord, all his works,
In all places of his dominion.
Bless the Lord, O my soul. (v. 22)*

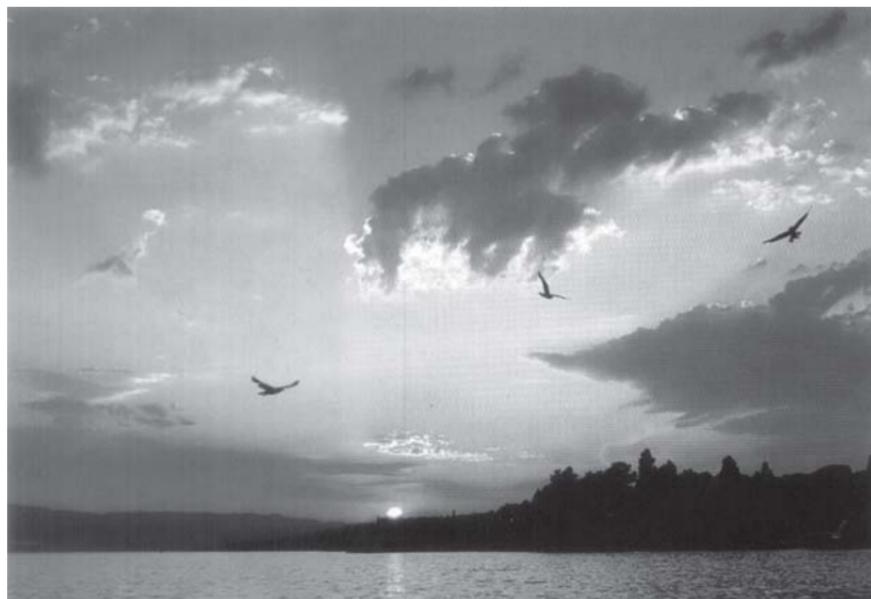
The eternal love of God that springs from his greatness draws us to praise him with the marvelous works of his creation.

Each day we praise God with our lives as we offer him all our preoccupations and difficulties but also all our joys and the beauty of everything around us that delights our lives.

Help us, O God, to discover the immensity of your love. Give us the ability to cherish the joy that comes from knowing that we are loved by you.

The awareness of our insufficiency keeps us humble and always draws us back to your presence.

The monotony of our daily lives does not weaken our desire for you. You anoint our souls, O Lord, and we yearn to live in the hope of eternity where we will joyfully be with you forever. □



DEDICATED TO
THE HOLY FAMILY

Quiet

OUR TWO

by Antonia

Sometime ago I believed in expressions like: "God was born, he grew up and he died..." and others that corresponded to this reality but in an indirect form. I thought that the "person" who was indeed born, who grew up and eventually died was Jesus - the man. However, since Jesus was both man and God, all these expressions were to be attributed to God out of a logical necessity, almost like a syllogism...

Now instead I believe that the Lord has made me understand that all these words are attributed to the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, because from the moment of his incarnation, God did not have only a divine nature, he also had a human nature!

Therefore, through his divine nature, God certainly could not be born, could not grow up nor could he die; but through his human nature he could be fully himself, which means he could really be born, grow up and die and this does not have to be logically correct, it is based on concrete fact that God became truly man!

The Trinitarian Son, who had only a divine life, infinite and eternal wanted to assume our human nature and be immersed in time, space, endure pain...and naturally then God dies in his human nature even though he remains infinitely alive in his divine nature: because he can never lose his divinity!

In his human nature, the Divine Word is Jesus the Son of Mary but not in his divine life but in his human life and this nature is absolutely real. For this reason, the Most Holy Virgin is truly the Mother of God and she will remain the Mother of God forever!

She is really the earthly mother of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity who was able to make himself human by becoming an embryo in Mary's womb, a newborn child, a teenager, a young adult...and after his life as an itinerant preacher he became the laughing stock of his executioners and he allowed them to crucify him after which he finally rose again! As then, so now, Mary most Holy continues to be the mother of the same God who lives and reigns in heaven with his glorified human nature while her son Jesus will exist in the consecrated bread and wine so that he can remain in the world to the end of time!

NATURES

o Rudoni

The Divine Life of Man

Therefore, we too can have two natures: the human nature that we received from the moment of our conception in our mother's womb like all human beings!

But then, by the immense gift of the Father, if we have begun living the life of Christ, we then belong to him, and have thus taken our first steps in becoming like God through our love for Him!

As St. Ireneus wrote already at the beginning of the Church: "God has become man so that men might become gods"

Doesn't Scripture affirm that we are gods? (see Psalm 82,6; John 10, 34). Then, if we are children of God are we not also heirs of everything because we are coheirs with Christ? (see Rom 8,17)

Thus, if we are united to Christ then, even if our human nature in serious torment (physical, psychological or other afflictions that can cause us anxiety), we can grow more and more in our divine life that calms our human natures!

Our Christian life is like a pair of scissors, as our humanity daily approaches its death while our divinity daily nears the fullness of its life until the time when our bodies go to rest in graves and our spirits go back to be with God. Of course, all this is in proportion to the choices we make out of love. At that time our spirits will be like God. Our entire bodies, our entire persons will be merged, both divine and human!□



Man is already immersed in the glory of God. His joy is to contemplate the presence of God in ineffable silence

Short Story

the mysterious staircase

by Pierluigi Menato

Spring seemed to have arrived early on the sprawling grounds of the park in the old castle. The lusty sound of boys' voices seemed to break the cold silence within those silent stone bastions. As their

young feet scampered around, their brightly coloured uniforms seemed to stand out against the dark green oaks that stood like sentinels along the main avenue. Luke Masterson was the only youngster of the group who did not seem to want to join in the fun. With a frown of curiosity playing on his little brow Luke wandered quietly, looking this way and that, along the shady avenue that wound its way through the park's grounds. Finally, unable to resist the temptation, he crossed the courtyard and entered the castle and found himself at the end of a long corridor that was dimly lit. As he stepped quietly into the semi darkness he stopped before a little door in the wall.

A little earlier, while going around the castle with his classmates and his history teacher, Luke noticed that the guide opened that little door slightly and said:

"And this, here, is the mysterious staircase."

"Why is it mysterious?" he asked the teacher.

"It is mysterious because no one knows where this staircase ends. I heard that there is a kind of 'trap door' somewhere down there. Legend has it that when Queen Giovanna of Angiu lived in this castle she was able to avoid the grasp of her enemies by escaping through that trap door.

The mystery surrounding that mysterious staircase excited the curiosity of young Luke. By now he was itching for adventure. He cautiously took out the flashlight



he had in his pocket, quietly opened the door and took his first steps down that cold dark staircase.

It was a spiral staircase and the feeble light from his little flashlight illuminated just the step in front of him. Luke descended cautiously trying not to bump into anything on the way. Suddenly after the seventy-first step he missed his foothold. Instinctively he stretched out his hands to catch something but there was nothing; he lost consciousness.

When he recovered he found himself looking out on a small stretch of beach. The sea seemed to extend itself as far as the eye could see and behind him he saw the dark and almost forbidding structure of the castle. It did not take any great effort to realize that what he had fallen through was a kind of trap-door through which he had been bundled down the dark stairwell and on to this beach. Because he fell on to the soft sand he was able to get up without any bruises and without any difficulty.

He paused for a moment to find his bearings and to try and find a way to get back into the castle. He shouted on the top of his lungs but no one heard him. The few small windows that were very high up on the castle walls were tightly shut. His voice was drowned by the sound of the waves crashing against the shore. He hoped for some boat to pass that way so he could draw their attention by waving his white kerchief but there was no sign of anything on the restless waves. So what now? He certainly did not want to stay on this beach forever. Besides, the tide was rising and very soon it would reach the foot of the castle walls and then what would happen to him?

Without getting really discouraged he started walking along that strip of beach looking for some possible perch from where he could climb up and save himself from the high tide. He was suddenly relieved when he saw a narrow niche in the wall leading into the darkness.

Fortunately for Luke he was slim and pretty agile, so without much difficulty he was able to slip through that niche and he found himself in a cave. By now his flashlight refused to work anymore but Luke like any young thirteen-year-old had a whole lot of rubbish in his pocket. Amidst all that he found a box of matches there too and stuffed into one of his jacket pockets he found his school newspaper. Rolling it into a kind of torch he lit one end of the paper and made his way downward. The ground beneath him seemed very damp and slippery so Luke clung to the wall on the side to steady himself. He noticed huge rats squealing angrily and scampering off when they heard his footsteps. He went down and turned left and found himself at the entrance of another cave. These seemed to be the underground passageways beneath the castle. He was certain that this passageway would lead him to dry land. But, lost as he was in these deep passages would anyone ever find him?

The paper torch that he made had burnt out into a stub and Luke was reduced to lighting up one match after another to see the way before him. He stopped for a moment and thought of what would happen when all his matches would run out and he would be left in the dark. This thought terrified him for a moment.

All of a sudden his eyes saw a huge dark shadow right ahead. When he reached the spot he found that it was a larger than life statue. Walking past it cautiously he went on.

Finally he was down to his last match and while it was burning out so was his hope of finding his way out. All of a sudden he saw a slight glimmer of light coming from somewhere ahead of him. He ran in the direction of the light and scampered up some stairs only to find himself in front of a niche that lead to a door. He opened it and the bright light of the afternoon sun hurt stung his face as he stepped out into one of the courtyards of the castle.

He was greeted by a rough voice: "From where have you come, boy?" The voice was that of Sir Lambert Samuels, the owner of the castle. "From there," Luke replied, pointing vaguely to the passage behind him.

"How did you manage that?" asked Sir Lambert, frowning with concern.

The boy told him what had happened from time he took the spiral stairway and how he landed on the beach below and then how he found his way through the passageways under the castle.

"Are you telling me the truth, young man?" asked the elderly Sir Lambert. "But did you know that you could have died, falling through that mysterious trap-door? Not to mention what would have happened to you if the sea was at high tide. You would have been drowned or swept away. Why did you try this prank?"

Luke shrugged his shoulders:

"I don't know... I wanted to see what others had not seen, and to go

where others would be frightened to go. It was fun, even though, at that time, I didn't know it was so dangerous."

"The lure of the unknown," mumbled the elderly gentleman pensively, "that is what draws explorers to dare to make daring discoveries. You'll do well some day. What do you want to become when you grow up?"

"A sailor."

"That's what I thought," replied Sir Lambert.

Luke told him about the extraordinary experiences he had had in the bowels of the castle. But his most beautiful experience was encountering that huge statue in one of the underground passageways. Sir Lambert was very surprised and relieved to hear about the statue. Later that day together with the boy and some workers he personally went down had supervised the statue being hoisted out of its underground chamber and brought into the daylight. It was the statue of the famous: Sir Walter Raleigh that Lambert Samuels had sought tirelessly throughout the castle.

Today it stands in one of the many state rooms in the castle with the plaque at its foot that reads: *Discovered by Luke Masterson.* The old gentleman took a liking to the lad and Luke came by the castle often to sit and chat with the old gentleman. Sir Lambert was deeply indebted to Luke and wanted to reward him in some way for having found the lost statue. A few years later he paid for Luke's entry into the naval academy. Luke would become a great sailor but he had already made his first discovery as he went down that mysterious staircase. □

Don Bosco: The Times, The Man, The Facts

DON BOSCO IN MILAN

by Natale Cerrato (T/A:ID)

Don Bosco wanted to visit Milan to study the influence of the Milanese Oratories that boasted of having inspired two great Borromeos, Charles and Frederick during three centuries of their existence. He reached there in the year 1850. That was the first time that Don Bosco left Turin to go abroad. This was still the time when Lombardy was under Austria and the political situation could make the Milanese suspicious and fearful of the Piedmontese. In fact, going to Milan was going abroad.

Don Bosco was invited to Milan by Fr Seraphim Allievi the rector of the Oratory of St. Aloysius at,



*Mons. Louis Nazzari
dei Conti di Calabiana*



what was then called, Via Santa Cristina. Fr Allievi came to know Don Bosco through Fr Blaise Verri his collaborator who had passed through Turin and met Don Bosco. The declared purpose of his visit was an invitation to preach and during this time to study the rules and the organization of the Oratory of St. Aloysius. Having been given the necessary passport, Don Bosco left Turin exactly at 2 pm on November 28th, and reached Milan at 11 the following (cf. MB 4,175-180).

Despite the general tense situation, the archbishop at the time, Mons Romilli permitted him to preach a mission at St Simplician, St Mary Nuova, St Charles, at St. Aloysius and St Eustorgius all under strict police surveillance. Everything went as planned. He even had the

opportunity to make a trip to Monza by train – a five and a half hour journey to travel just 15 km. (EBM 4, 122-126)

Further trips to Milan

After 1850, Don Bosco returned to Milan on other occasions so that his benefactors came to know and respect him and even appreciate his works. Already in 1850 he met two gentlemen, businessmen, collaborators of Fr Allievi and they became his great friends. They were, Charles Pedroglio and Joseph Guenzati, who were pioneers of the lay Catholic movement and they were significantly instrumental in preparing the way of the Salesians to come to Milan.

In 1865, as Don Bosco was being hosted at the house of Guenzati he miraculously healed his daughter (cf. EBM 8, 114). That was just one of the graces that his Milanese friends received at the hands of Don Bosco.

Another important figure was the Advocate Charles Comaschi. He had come to know Don Bosco when he visited him in Turin in the year 1859. From that day onward the saint and Comaschi developed a warm and firm friendship that lasted a lifetime.



The Oratory at Milan

Don Bosco was often a guest at the Comaschi residence in Milan. There are a few curious facts. He was a hatter by profession and an admirer of Garibaldi, so much so that he had a beret worn by the leader on display under a glass bell for many years. This beret was later replaced by two signed letters of Don Bosco!

The haberdashery of Joseph Guenzati, instead, was one of the main centres from where Milanese propaganda for the Salesian works was launched.

Through Fr Antony Sala of Olgiate Molgora (Como), who was the Bursar General of the Congregation from 1880 up to his death in 1895 an agreement was drawn up to open an agricultural school in Lower Milan, but this project was never realized.

In 1878 a Roman lawyer, Constantine Leonori, wrote to Don Bosco from Milan and encouraged him to start another foundation there. Among other things he said: "Milan is an important city and full of opportunity. It is truly the capital of Lombardy. Here your name is highly esteemed more than you can imagine because it is a city of art and industry." This dream of Don Bosco would be realized only after his death.

Even in 1877 the Saint received an invitation from Fr Joseph Uselli, the founder and manager of an institute for the education of youth asking him to take over the running of the institute. But because of the information received from the same archbishop Mons Nazari dei Conti di Calabiana, he was



*The Technical School
at Milan*

restrained from accepting it if he were not given exclusive responsibility.

Thus, Don Bosco died without being able to open a single house in Milan. But considering the external demonstrations of affection for Don Bosco, after Rome, there was no other city in Italy that yearned for the Salesians more than Milan" (Annals II, Part 1,408). But even if Don Bosco could not see the realization of his dream for Milan, nevertheless he had sown the seed silently and it sprouted and grew luxuriantly.

Don Bosco's Last Journey to Milan

"Feeble, exhausted and stooped," Don Bosco wanted to go to Milan in 1886. Archbishop Nazari of Calabiana, already a great friend of his, from the time he was bishop of Casale welcomed him as a guest into his own palace. Don Bosco told him that he desired to see him once more and to receive his blessing before he died, but naturally, his second desire was to arrange for his sons to enter Milan. In fact, in 1886, the zealous Cooperators were already making propaganda

for a Salesian house that would be established after the death of Don Bosco during the tenure of Fr. Rua - Don Bosco's successor (cf. Annals II, Part I, 389ss).

In 1892 the Cooperators started a committee for this purpose. To further intensify the thrust of this committee they launched a unique magazine: "*The Salesian Echo*" (*L'Eco Salesiana*) on the works of Don Bosco, by now already known there.

On Via Commenda the first small property was purchased for the institute. There the first three Salesians headed by Fr. Lawrence Saluzzo arrived on the evening of 7th December 1894, the feast of St. Ambrose after whom the house had been named.

The first Salesians could count on the generosity of the Milanese Catholics and on the encouragement of a great Archbishop, Card. Andrea Ferrari. Nine months after their arrival Cardinal Ferrari would bless the foundation stone of the Institute of St. Ambrose on Via Copernico in the presence Don Rua who so longed to see that day. It was 4th September 1895.

These were followed by foundation stones being laid for a festive oratory, the Basilica of St. Augustine, for the construction of the second wing of the basilica, in Via Copernico, for a professional school and workshops on the side of Via Melchiorre Gioia that was destined to be a large parochial complex with a Youth Centre and the Oratory.

The dream of Don Bosco was grandly realized! ◻

NEWSBITS

BANGALORE

Priests are the greatest benefactors of humanity because it is through them that Christ continues to re-enact his unique sacrifice for the salvation of humankind. They need prayer support to live heroically their priestly commitment and mission in today's challenging world.

Spiritual adoption consists in offering up of prayers and sacrifices, during this year of priests, for a specific priest who will be assigned to you. **Sign up by writing to the address below or by sending an email to adoptapriest@gmail.com if you or your family would like to adopt a priest spiritually** (your name, address, country, email ID required). The priest whom you adopt will pray for you in return. More details will be provided on request when you sign up.

Priests who would like to be adopted spiritually, please write to adoptapriest@gmail.com submitting the details: Priest's name, address, country, year of priestly ordination, present ministry, email. You will be informed about who would be adopting you spiritually.

The aim of this ministry is to strengthen the sanctity of priests through spiritual adoption by religious and lay people. We want to let every Catholic priest of the world know that someone has adopted him spiritually during this year of priests (June 19, 2009 to June 19, 2010) declared by Pope Benedict XVI.

KATHMANDU

The man who suffered most in the bomb blast at Assumption Church in Kathmandu on May 23rd is 41-year-old Balann Joseph, a Kathmandu resident originally from Kerala state, India. He lost his wife and daughter in the explosion.

Joseph, however, has stated that he considers the incident to be a "blessing" and has forgiven the woman responsible for the explosion during the main Sunday mass, held on Saturday, Nepal's weekly holiday.

"When I first heard of the arrest, I wanted to see the woman and go and literally kill her. But later I realized that as a Catholic, I should not be thinking like that," Joseph said.

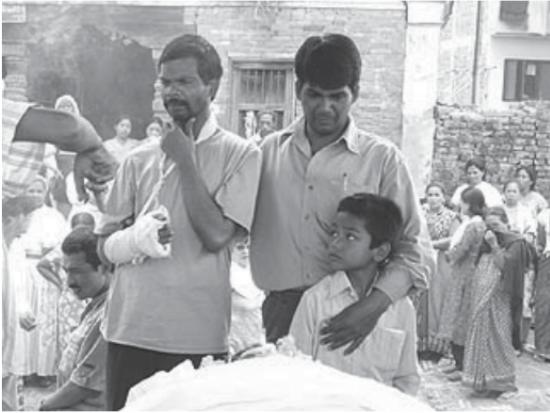
"Then I thought of what has been written in the Bible. I recalled Saul's life and his transformation afterwards, and I forgave her and prayed that she would also realize her mistake and change her life like Saul did," he added.

According to Joseph, the incident changed the Catholic community's routine life. "I am deeply moved that the whole world is now praying for my family and me, and the other unfortunate victims of this tragedy," he said.

"I hope and pray to God that Shreshtha stands here one day, asks forgiveness and testifies like I am doing right now," Joseph told the gathering. The parishioners were awestruck by the testimony.

While Joseph's daughter, Celeste Joseph was killed instantly in the blast, his wife Buddha Laxmi Joseph, died in a hospital on May 31st.

Assumption Church has set up



Balann Joseph (left), with a bandaged hand) at the cremation of his wife at the Teku Arya Ghat in Kathmandu on June 1

a fund for the treatment of the injured, at least three of them have already been discharged from the hospital. *UCAN*

NEW DELHI

About 2500 Catholics, Protestants, Hindus and tribals attended Mass at the tomb of brother Henry Gaikwad, popularly known as *Prem Bhai (Loving brother)*. The Benedictine brother died on June 28, 2008 while on a visit to Sri Lanka. He was buried in Banderdewa, a village near the capital of Arunachal Pradesh capital Itanagar.

Brother Gaikwad had covered more than 45,000 kilometers on foot, wearing sandals made from tires. He preached the Gospel, baptized more than 25,000 people and built 128 churches in the state.

Young people in the diocese commemorated the anniversary with a three-day Prem Bhai Memorial Youth Festival that ended on June 27. The brother specially worked for young tribal people, said Father Vaz, public

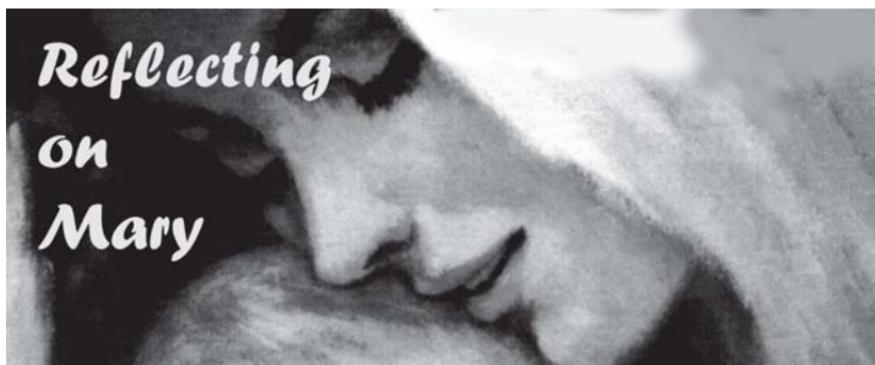
relations officer for the diocese. "Almost every Catholic home in the diocese has his photograph. For people, he is already a saint."

Bishop Kattrukudiyil said the "wandering missionary" was to Arunachal what Saint Paul was to the world of his times. Many legends about the Benedictine brother's accomplishments surfaced after his death, he added.

The bishop cited from Brother Gaikwad's writings about the difficulties he faced in Arunachal Pradesh where government regulations had prohibited Christian priests and missionaries from preaching or ministering there for decades. *UCAN* □



Henry Gaikwad



AT THE SCHOOL OF MARY - I

by Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm.

A recently received package of books was mailed from Rome with two Vatican City stamps, one 2.07 euro (the new currency of most of Europe) the other 2.58 euro, both issued in 2001. The larger rectangle shaped 2.07 value is a reproduction in colour of the "Sermon on the Mount" from a painting by Rosselli in the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican museum. Given that the Holy Father has made the "proclamation of the kingdom" one of the five new rosary "mysteries of light" the choice of subject and the timing were ideal for that new stamp. The same can be said of the square shaped 2.58 euro stamp, titled "Jubilee pilgrimage, Fatima May 12, 2000," showing (in color) the Holy Father kneeling before the statue of Our Lady of Fatima. As philatelists (stamp-collectors) and numismatists (coin collectors) well know, both stamps and coins are evidence of current events, for example political changes. So this pair of recent stamps juxtaposed on the envelope bear striking and beautiful witness to papal

leadership, and the pope's commitment to both Christ and his Mother.

"A Marian prayer with a distinctly Christological heart" was the pope's description of the Rosary. At the start of his 25th year John Paul II published on Oct 16 2002 a long letter on the Rosary, and announced the "year of the Rosary" to run from October 2002 to October 2003. He also proposed an additional 5 decades of new mysteries, to add to the familiar joyful, sorrowful and glorious ones. Jesus described himself as "the light of the world" (Jn 8, 12 also 9, 5). The new set is the "mysteries of light" and cover the public ministry of Jesus which was not taken up in the previous three sets of mysteries.

The five new mysteries (events in the lives of Jesus and Mary) are 1) the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the Jordan, inaugurating his public ministry (Matt 3: 16-17), 2) Our Lord's self-manifestation at the wedding feast of Cana (In 2 5), 3) Christ

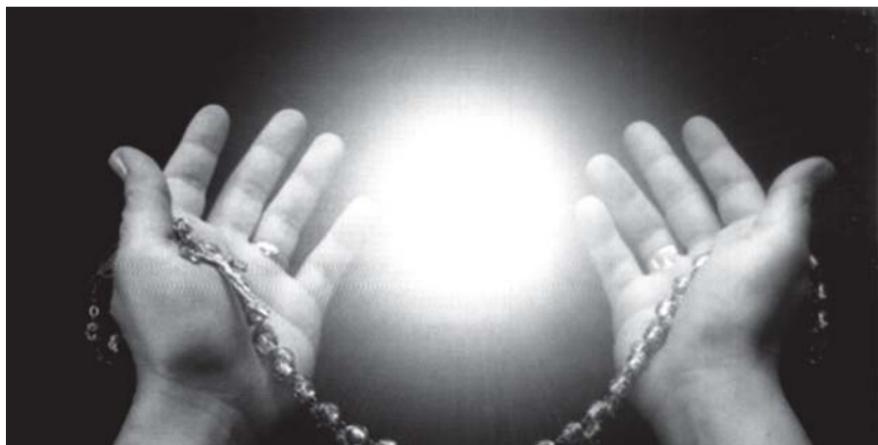
proclaims the kingdom of God and calls us to conversion (Mark 1:14-15), pictorially depicted in the new Vatican stamp of the sermon on the mount mentioned at the start of this article, 4) the Transfiguration (Luke 9:28), 5) Our Lord's institution of the Eucharist as the sacramental expression of the paschal mystery (Mt 26:26).

In their pastoral letter *Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith* (dated for the feast of the Presentation of Mary, November 21, 1973) the bishops of the United States offered a similar suggestion for the Rosary. They said (n. 97) "Besides the precise rosary pattern long known to Catholics, we can freely experiment. New sets of mysteries are possible. We have customarily gone from the childhood of Jesus to His Passion, bypassing the whole public life. There is rich matter here for Rosary meditation, such as the wedding feast of Cana, and incidents from the public life where Mary's presence and Mary's name serve as occasions for her Son to give us a lesson in discipleship: 'Still more blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.' (Lk 11:28)." At the time the bishops' words got a mixed reception. Some felt it was tampering with the time-honored Rosary. Others welcomed the suggestion, among them very enthusiastically the servant of God Frank Duff (d. 1980) founder of the Legion of Mary; his beatification is fervently hoped and prayed for. There are nearly limitless possibilities for new Rosary "mysteries." The public life holds various features of our Lord's teaching and preaching, as his fascinating parables, his healings and other deeds of kindness as he proclaimed the kingdom of God. In

1994 Bishop O'Rourke of Peoria published: *Jesus the Divine Teacher* with a new Rosary decade: Jesus' baptism, Cana, sermon on the mount, parable of prodigal son, Transfiguration.

Suggestions have also come from non-Catholic sources. A title by the English Methodist J. Neville Ward (d. 1992) went through several printings on both sides of the Atlantic: *Five for Sorrow: Ten For Joy: A Consideration of the Rosary* (Cowley Publications, Cambridge, MA, 1985). The British Anglican theologian Austin Farrer (d. 1968) had two relevant chapters in *Lord I Believe: Suggestions for Turning the Creed into Prayer* (Cowley Publications, Cambridge, MA 1989). One chapter is "The Heaven-sent Aid," the other "Twenty mysteries." He wrote that in the Rosary "I can have an unbreakable thread, not the gossamer of my ideas but jeweler's beads and wire, between my finger and my thumb." In addition to the regular cycle of "joy, grief and glory," he offered further sets of five: mysteries of obedience, mysteries of grace (based on the Gospel of John, wine, water, bread, light and life). On another occasion Farrer wrote of the Blessed Virgin "her will is a handle to lay hold of the will of God." *Praying by Hand* is the intriguing title of the book on the Rosary by the American monk Basil Pennington, OCSO.

Keeping count of prayers on a string of beads is an ancient custom, found in many lands and religions. The New Oxford American Dictionary for the word bead provides a short



meditation on the Rosary. The word comes from old English *gebed*, from the Dutch *bede* and German *Gebet*. The dictionary states that current usages of the word "bead" are based on the Rosary, each bead representing a prayer. For centuries the "beads" have been so much part of Catholic piety that many common phrases reflect the Rosary, for "*fingering the beads*," "*telling the beads*" as ways of keeping count. A recent book by Mary Higgins Clark and Carol Higgins Clark, mother and daughter team of mystery story writers, (*Deck the Halls*, 2000) has Nora, hospitalized with a broken leg, talking with her daughter Regan: "Nora reached into the drawer of the bedside table and took out her rosary. 'A lap around the beads' Regan smiled. 'A marathon around the beads,' Nora corrected her. Not from a novel but of the same homely character is the book by Teresa Rhodes McGee *Ordinary Mysteries: Rediscovering the Rosary* (Orbis, Maryknoll, 2001) fifteen stories relating aspects of ordinary life to the Rosary, especially the dedication: 'To my mother, Kathleen Kennedy Rhodes, whose

fidelity to the rosary has circled the earth.'"

The name, Rosary, comes from a garland of flowers. *Three Fold Garland* is the thoughtful title of a book on the Rosary by the Swiss theologian Cardinal Hans Urs von Balthasar (d. 1988). The complete Rosary now has 20 decades in groups of ten beads separated by a larger bead. The full Rosary is customarily divided into four five-decade segments. "*Praying the Rosary*" normally means one five-decade set. Each decade of ten Hail Marys begins with the Our Father and concludes with the Trinitarian doxology, Glory be to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. However, the Rosary is not simply a repetitive vocal prayer but also a meditative mental prayer: that is the point of the "*mysteries*," central truths about Our Lord and his Mother: the Saviour's birth and infancy, public ministry, passion and death (agony in the garden to the crucifixion), Our Lord's glorious resurrection and ascension and the sending of the Spirit, with the holy Virgin Mother of Jesus

entering into the glory of her Assumption and Coronation. The joyful mysteries are recalled on Monday and Saturday (traditionally Mary's day), the new mysteries of light (manifestations of Christ) on Thursday, the sorrowful on Tuesday and Friday, the glorious on Wednesday and Sunday. As Pope John Paul II summarized so beautifully, within Christian spirituality the Rosary is a "doorway to the depths of the heart of Christ, ocean of joy and of light, of suffering and of glory" (n. 18).

The best-known Rosary is the Dominican Rosary (n. 17 in the papal letter) recalling the successful appeals to the Blessed Virgin in defense of the faith by St. Dominic (d. 1221) and his religious family, the Order of Preachers, recognized by the O.P. after their names, such as the late Father Frederick M. Jelly, O.P. (d. 2000), remembered for his many writings and sermons and lectures about Our Blessed Mother and the Rosary. At the end of the 15th century the Dominican tertiary Alan de la Roche was a great apostle of the Rosary. He was a forerunner of the Irish born Holy Cross Father Patrick Peyton (d. 1992) of The Family Rosary, with its winning slogan (it's in the pope's letter (n.4 1) "the family that prays together stays together." The cause of canonization of the Servant of God Patrick Peyton, CSC has begun; prayers are urged for that intention; further information from The Peyton Society, 518 Washington St., North Easton, MA 02356-1200.

Historically, the Rosary grew gradually out of various ways of relating Our Lady to Our Lord, in order to assist and encourage greater lay participation in the liturgy, the official prayer of the

Church. The psalter is the collection of 150 psalms from the Bible, known as "psalms of David." Many people could not read, so for the psalms were substituted *Our Fathers*, which even ordinary folk knew by the opening Latin words *Pater noster*. Another indication of how deeply Christian prayer has enriched the English language is that the dictionary lists *paternoster* as a single word. The Hail Mary has also gotten wider meanings, as in its dictionary definition. Along with the first meaning as "a prayer to the Virgin Mary used chiefly by Roman Catholics, beginning with part of Luke 1:28, also called *Ave Maria*" *The New Oxford American Dictionary* has a secondary definition: "a recitation of such a devotional phrase or prayer: muttering Hail Marys under her breath."

One hundred and fifty paternosters stood for the same number of psalms, often divided into three units of fifty each. Strings of beads, known as paternosters, kept track. Devotees of Our Lady followed a similar format with the Hail Mary, echoing Gabriel's *Ave* at the Annunciation, weaving their prayers into chaplets of fifty to crown the Blessed Virgin. One hundred and fifty Hail Marys made up the "psalter of the Virgin." The first Marian mysteries to be commemorated were her joys, sets of five, ten, even more. Somewhat later attention turned to our Lady's sorrows, then to her heavenly glorious mysteries. □

(To be continued)

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Thank you dear Mother Mary for helping me get better and for granting me the grace of a peaceful life.

L. Almeida, Mumbai

My most humble and sincere thanks to the Holy Spirit and Mother Mary for healing me from a severe allergy.

Mrs A. deSouza, Australia

Our sincere gratitude to Our Lady, Help of Christians for having helped my son Joseph to be successful in his driving test. My family is grateful for all the favours we have received.

A Devotee

Thank you dear Lord Jesus and Mary our Mother for all the graces we have received.

Joseph S. David, Mumbai

On the 6th June it rained continuously and the roads were flooded. We had gone to attend a wedding in the heavy rain and on our return due to poor visibility I believe we went into a ditch and there was a loud sound. But when we came out of it, we discovered that everything was alright and we could return home safely. Thank you Mother Mary, we recite the Three Hail Marys regularly.

Mrs. Jenifer Fernandes, Goa

Thank you dear Mother Mary for saving my son from an operation. He had a lump in his throat that mysteriously dissolved.

C. Raymond, Bangalore

Thank you dear Mother Mary for protecting my little son who could have had a bad accident when he put his hand into the blades of a moving fan. I am so grateful to Our Lady and St. Dominic Savio for protecting him.

Cella Petras, Trichy

Our sincere thanks to the Infant Jesus and Mother Mary for miraculously healing Rita's kidney.

Cecilia, Kent, UK

Thank you dear Mother Mary for the numerous graces and favours and for helping us in our needs.

Nelson & Theresa D'Cunha, Mumbai

In the month of April my son Anand was saved from a ghastly collision. He was wearing a Rosary around his neck. He suffered two fractures but no head injury. I am grateful to Our Blessed Mother for protecting him.

Mrs. B. Gomes, Pune

Our grateful thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary Help of Christians for a safe caesarian operation that my daughter underwent and the gift of a lovely baby girl after 15 years of marriage.

Ms. Lovelyn Edwards, Australia

Thank you, dear Mother Mary for the numerous graces received and special thanks for helping us with your love, peace, happiness and protection.

Maria Akinyele, 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.

I am very grateful to my Mother Mary for all the blessings she has been showering on me and my family, and also my sincere thanks to the powerful intercession of the Three Hail Marys, that has never let me down.

Mary Joseph

Thank you dear Mother Mary for helping my son pass. Our heartfelt thanks to Mother Mary for the favours received through the recitation of the three Hail Mary's. Dear Mother do continue to bless and protect all the members of my family.

Antonieta Simoes, Macau (South China)

My son Russell had gone for a picnic with his friends to Green Hills Resort Nallasopara. He slipped and fell in the swimming pool and hit his head and blacked out for a second. He does not know how he came out and he was dazed and bleeding. He lost a lot of blood. He had a Rosary around his neck. Only Our Lady could have given him the strength to come out of the water. He had to take 8 stitches on his head. The C.T. Scan showed a slight swelling on the cervical spine due to which he has to wear a collar for sometime. Thank you Mother for saving his life and for letting him escape with only a minor injury. Thank you for being there with him. Please protect him and be there with him throughout out his college days which will be starting soon. I also never forget to say the Three Hail Marys and surrender my family to her. Thank you Mother once again for being there always with me and my family.

Valerie Cordeiro, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary for answering all my prayers.

Anna Seixas, Bahrain

My sincere thanks to Jesus, Our Blessed Mother and Dominic Savio for all the timely graces received especially for helping me find the job I needed to follow my dreams.

Leo Anthony, Fernandes, Goa

Thank you for helping me rise over the obstacles that came across my path.

Johny K. Poopallil, United Kingdom

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

Thank you Mother Mary and Don Bosco for all the favours received.

Natty, Mumbai

I am grateful to Our Lady, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the successful cataract operation of my mother. Dear Mother Mary continue to protect us with your motherly love.

Ajit Pinto, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for helping my son get a job and my daughter-in-law get a visa. Thanks also for the numerous favours received in the past. Please continue to bless us always.

Philomena D'Souza, Goa

Dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for success in my examinations and for the favours and blessings bestowed on me and my family.

Savio Pimenta, Goa

Our sincerest thanks to Our Blessed Mother and Don Bosco for curing my mother from bleeding gastric ulcers which sent her Hemoglobin level plummeting to 5gm %. We also thank our dear Mother for her maternal protection during the time when we were returning home after a family outing one night in April '09. Though the car was badly damaged, we escaped unhurt.

Dr. Leena Lopez, Goa

Our sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio. Our son cleared the CET examinations and he has got admission to the college of his choice.

Mr. & Mrs. J. Faleiro, Mumbai

My belated thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for helping me to pass the Std. XI examinations with a distinction, for getting me into a good engineering college and for all the other favours received. Please be with us always, O Mother.

Cleta D'Souza, Mangalore

Thank you dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco for granting me the special favour I asked for.

Rodney D'Souza, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco for granting my husband a successful by-pass operation.

Mrs Gracy Saude, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco for all the graces we have received and please keep my son Sunil and his family in the USA in good health and happiness.

Harold Fernandes, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping my nephew to pass his engineering examinations and for my niece too.

Blasia Gama, Goa

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Thanks sincerely, dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for helping my daughter to renew her visa and for the medical reports that were clear and for many other favours received through your intercession.

C. Rodrigues, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for my safe delivery and the gift of a baby boy child.

Mrs. Coral Rodrigues, Mumbai

Sincere gratitude and thanks to Our Lady Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for granting me so many favours. Please continue to shower your blessings on our family.

Maria Philomena Cordeiro, Goa

Sincere thanks to St. Dominic Savio, my son-in-laws, Lino Gonsalves was suffering from a mouth infection and was unable to talk, and Leo Macedo who recovered from a heart attack. Through the intercession of St. Dominic Savio he was cured.

Mrs. Lourdes Athaide

My nephew's wife had no children for eight years. This was a source of great sadness not only for the couple but also for their families. Last year they were blessed with twins Savio and Savianna. This was thanks to the intercession of St. Dominic Savio. We are most grateful.

Philippa Fিন্নamore, Sagar, MP

We thank Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for this miraculous cure of a lump being dissolved and thus escaping a surgery.

C. Raymond, Bangalore

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

SEPTEMBER 2009

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MARY WAS THERE

On 29th May 2009 we decided to spend a family weekend at Lonavla. After praying, we left home at 9 am in our own car. On the way my mum, as always, was praying the chaplet of Divine Mercy and the Holy Rosary. All of a sudden, while driving, I was distracted and while taking the handy-cam in my hand went off the road and hit the side rails on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway. Luckily I had the presence of mind to brake and gradually moved the vehicle back to the road again. We were five of us in the car, and thankfully we escaped without a scratch. I believe it was thanks to my mother praying the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet.
(Ryan Pereira, 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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