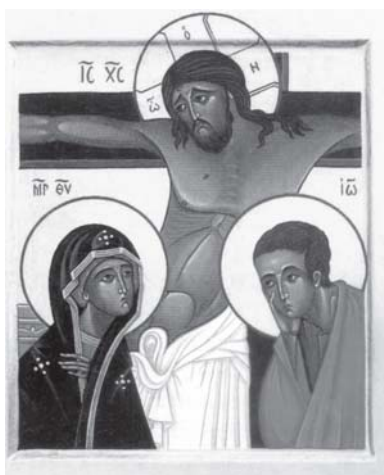


CONTENTS

From The Editor's Desk: - <i>So Hard to Accept Forgiveness</i>	3
3 - Hope - When All Seems Lost - <i>Fr. Erasto Fernandez. SSS</i>	4
The Story of A Simple Salesian Priest - <i>Fr. Dominic Lisboa sdb</i>	7
When is Prayer Genuine (9) - <i>Michael Paul Gallagher</i>	8
Shifting The Sunday Obligation - <i>Fr. Edward McNamara</i>	10
Witnesses In And For Our Times: <i>St. Cyril of Jerusalem (March 18)</i> - <i>Mario Scudu</i>	12
Lectio Divina: "I'll Be Watching You" - <i>Dermot Connolly</i>	16
Quietspaces: Transformation - <i>Rev. James L. Burns</i>	18
Waiting (2) - <i>Helen Morgan</i>	20
Don Bosco Advises His Boys: Prayer and Custody of the Senses - <i>Gianni Asti</i>	23
NewsBits.....	26
Reflecting On Mary: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Church's Liturgy For Lent - <i>Fr. Benedict O'Cinnsealigh</i>	29
<i>In a Cheerful Mood</i>	15
<i>Loving Children to their Loving Mother</i>	32
<i>The Devotion of the Three Hail Marys</i>	33
<i>They Are Grateful to Our Lady & Don Bosco</i>	34
<i>Thanks to Dear St. Dominic Savio</i>	35



*Mary
challenged
the system and
the soldiers and
remained at the
foot of the Cross
demonstrating
invincible hope.*

**St. Joseph
the husband of Mary
Protector of the
Universal Church**



From The Editor's Desk

So Hard to Accept Forgiveness

During this Lenten season one of the common themes that keep coming to us through the Word of God is that of conversion and repentance. You might be tempted to "switch off" as it comes to us once more this year. We are more likely not to want to face the fact that we are in need of conversion and repentance which becomes a prerequisite for forgiveness. Often the very thought of *being* forgiven seems to sound demeaning and the idea of forgiving sounds condescending and so we withhold the latter while ignoring the former. It was this quote that led me to this editorial and it went like this: "*Anger makes us smaller while forgiveness forces you to grow beyond what you are.*"

Why the theme of forgiveness you might ask? Because to forgive and to know oneself forgiven, is a life-changing, life-giving gift. Unless you witness it in a real and concrete way you will never be convinced that it is one of the greatest gifts we can give not only to others, but also, and more importantly, to yourself. This may sound selfish, but the reality is that if we cannot forgive ourselves, the harsh words we once spoke in anger or the wrongs we consciously committed against another human being, we reduce ourselves to something that is less than human, less than grace-filled, less than Christ like.

To forgive calls us to grow to new heights, it calls us to chart new waters, to go beyond ourselves and be all that we can be. It calls us to heal the wounds that hold us back from forgiving that one friend or relation who hurt us once upon a time. It gives us the excuse to stay in our comfortable shell, righteous in our indignation whenever a certain person is mentioned.

Sometimes we hold on to hurts or words spoken in anger for years and years. Even with elderly parents I am often saddened by the lack of forgiveness they experience. Often adult children, in many cases parents themselves, have major issues, again often no longer relevant, with their parents. If you are sensitive and even truthful to yourself you will see that in your own family and you will be amazed because the hurt felt seriously damages themselves, and often leads to terrible guilt when a parent dies.

Does Christ not call us to do better? Can we not forgive and move on? Should we not forgive and make allowance for the person who we feel wronged us? After all, we can only change ourselves, we cannot change any other human being. I am responsible for my behaviour and how I live a Christian life. So forgive! Learn to forgive. Take the steps to forgive yourself. But especially take the steps to forgive that one person who you really feel has hurt you, even wounded you deeply, and then witness the changes that forgiveness brings about in your life.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

3. HOPE - WHEN ALL SEEMS LOST

by Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

The 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens looked highly promising for Paul Hamm who did end up as the reigning world champion – the first U.S. athlete ever to win a world all-around title. But it wasn't 'roses, roses, all the way!' At that meet Hamm began well in the first three events and held a first place lead in the all-around by .038 points. Then, unexpectedly disaster struck. During his pole vault performance, having under-rotated and missed his landing, he found himself sitting down and almost fallen off the platform! This was a 'cardinal sin' in gymnastics and Hamm paid for it dearly by being pushed down to the twelfth place. It was pretty clear to all from his reaction to this misfortune that he knew he had blown his chance of making history!

Undaunted, Paul Hamm saw his uncalled-for blunder as a chance to demonstrate the difference between mediocrity and genius. He decided that the most sensible thing to do in that situation was to put his fall behind him and move forward, giving his best effort to what was left and to finish strong. In the next event, his great performance on the parallel bars coupled with the struggles of his competitors, helped him to move into fourth place in the all-around, with his last and strongest event left to play out – the high bar.

Paul calmly determined to capitalize on this positive turn of events. Convinced that he was a master of the high bar, he worked out a highly technical routine so as

to earn the most points possible. In this final event Paul was the last to perform and all eyes were glued to him as he approached the bar. One could not help palpably sense his purposeful energy, focus and determination as he drew near it and when he had finished, his accomplishment was electrifying indeed! Even before his score was revealed, one could see on his face that in his own mind Paul knew that he had won, regardless of the outcome.

He came back from a crushing mishap on the vault and proved to himself that he could execute beyond obstacles and setbacks. In one of the most dramatic comebacks in sports history he won the gold medal in the men's all-around by 0.012 points, becoming the first U.S. athlete to ever win the Olympic title. He showed the world what it means to finish strong!

Lesson from Life and for Life

Have you ever noticed in your own life and perhaps in that of others too, that no sooner a person sets out to do something positive and beneficial he meets with innumerable and sometimes insuperable obstacles? Actually these difficulties only serve to highlight one's faith in oneself and deepen it, for if at this juncture one does not really believe in oneself or lacks a firm strength of purpose, the negative outcome can well nigh be predicted. The Gospels give us the classic case of the four friends who bring a paralytic friend on a stretcher hoping to plead with

Jesus for his cure (Mk 2:1-12). Imagine their surprise, disappointment and frustration when they reach the place only to find it impossible to get the paralytic in before Jesus.

What would you have done in such a situation? Many in such circumstances would perhaps have decided to wait outside until the session indoors had ended and then attract Jesus' attention as he left the place. After all, he would not remain in that house for ever, would he? All they needed to do was to position themselves in a strategic spot and ensure that they did grab the first opportunity that came their way. Some others might have decided to return some other day, or meet Jesus at another location. But recalling Jesus' track record of moving around frequently and having large crowds around him, they would probably have concluded that this would be a pretty risky decision – they might end up never meeting him and indefinitely forfeiting their chance of a cure. Still others might have just sat there and cursed their luck or fate, or blamed their failure on others while a few perhaps might even have opted to return home dejected and beaten. But not these four – they were made of sterner stuff and were more resourceful, as the story reveals. And weren't they amply rewarded by the gift Jesus gave their friend: not only healing, but also forgiveness!

Blind Bartimaeus is another example: strongly chided by all around for calling out aloud after Jesus, he is asked to keep quiet, possibly because he wasn't one who was 'on the way' like the others. Whatever it be, having lost his eyesight perhaps due to his own fault, he was not one who would

let this golden opportunity slip by - he might never again get the chance of meeting with Jesus who, he was convinced, was the only one who could cure him of his blindness. His perseverance obtained for him the desired reward!

Obstacles in our Lives!

How do we handle the obstacles that we come across in our own life's journey? Do we treat them as stepping stones to glory, or merely as immovable mountains blocking our way to success? These blocks could be a power failure just when we have something urgent to complete, or a puncture precisely when we are already late and rushing to catch up with an appointment. In this connection we need to recall the experience of the women in St. Mark's gospel. Desiring to anoint the body of Jesus, they go to the tomb taking with them the spices they had prepared. But, their one big preoccupation along the way was: 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?!?' Yet, on arriving at the tomb they found that the stone, which was a large one, had already been rolled away posing no obstacle at all for them to enter in! (Mk. 16:1-4).

Who else could have done them that favour except the Risen Lord himself? And isn't he present in our lives too rolling away the obstacles that we presume are in our path preventing us from experiencing the fullness of life that he brought us? To proceed unhesitatingly in life towards the goal set for us by the Lord, we need first of all to believe in the power of Christ's resurrection. He himself reminds us 'Do not be afraid, I have overcome the world ... behold, I make all things new!' How often have we claimed this

victory that Jesus has obtained for us, and actually placed within our reach? Most of us behave as if we are Jews, still waiting for the Messiah to come into our lives.

Faith in Oneself Too

But besides having faith in the resurrection and victory of Jesus, we also need to have faith in ourselves. Here again we recall the words of Jesus: 'If you have faith even if it be the size of a mustard seed, and say to this mulberry tree, 'move and fall into the sea', it will obey you! (Mt 17:20).' Why then don't we have faith that we can do it? Perhaps it is because we still see ourselves as sinners, displeasing and distant from God, having to earn his love and forgiveness by dint of self-denial. How often do we not still see people, and sometimes even priests too, praying desperately as if God's forgiveness of our sins is still something that will be received only in the future? Theoretically they would affirm that Jesus has obtained the forgiveness of all our sins through his dying-rising (Eph 1:3-10), but in practice, that is for them yet a distant dream, and not a reality.

Is it surprising then that we still do not possess the 'faith *of* God'? What many of us have, if we do have any faith at all, is 'faith *in* God.' This simply means that we believe that God can do all things. And so we pray to him requesting God to do the job for us. But notice the words of Jesus: '*You* could say to this mulberry tree and it would obey *you*.' This approach becomes possible only when we actually live the Covenant through which we become one with God: 'God is dwelling in my heart, he and I are one!' Like Peter and John, we could then say to the

crippled beggar at the Temple gate: 'In the name of Jesus, *I* say to you, stand up and walk'. Most of us do not venture to go that far, again because we don't believe or realize that this is what the victory of Jesus really means in practice - 'that you who were aliens and sojourners are now members of the household of God!' (Eph 2:1-22)

Applied to all of Life

The victory of Christ spans the entire gamut or range of events in our lives, applying not only to spiritual matters, but also to our conquest over Self at every level. It enables us to achieve victory not only over our own failures and human limitations, but also over the obstacles placed in our path by the malice or vindictiveness of others around us or even by Nature itself. No matter what the response of others is, there is no reason for anyone to be reactive. One can choose a proactive stance and respond to the events of one's life very positively. As Paul put it, 'I can do all things in him who strengthens me' (Phil 4:13).

What a different kind of life would we not have if we believed in the ultimate, total and final victory of Jesus, our Saviour and brother! Would not the new world that he established be a visible reality around us? Rather, we have allowed the forces of evil to dominate us and have remained like the people of the Old Testament still awaiting the coming of the Messiah, simply because we do not have the courage to believe all that Jesus tells us! Could things be different from now on? It is worth remembering that this is a personal choice that each person needs to make. No one else can step into our shoes and do it for us! Wake up - and take the plunge! □



THE STORY OF A SIMPLE SALESIAN PRIEST

Fr. Dominic Lisboa, sdb

Rector, Parish Priest of the Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Nagpur

This testimony is of a little boy who grew up in a devout Catholic family in Vasai. It had the devout custom of reciting the Rosary every evening. But that was not the situation in the neighbouring homes. One day this young boy decided to teach the kids of the neighbourhood the evening prayers before they prayed their Rosary. His dad who worked for Johnson & Johnson had the habit of attending the first Mass in the morning and he encouraged his son to do the same. This habit went on for several years. As years went by the young boy got himself enrolled in "The Legion of Mary" of the parish and this opened up to him the possibility of working for the needy and the sick of the area. He also joined the "Altar Servers" team, but was not allowed to serve Mass because he did not know Latin. After Vatican II things were different. When he finished his SSC his brother and his cousin encouraged him to join Don Bosco as they were already pupils of Don Bosco's School, Lonavla. Assisted by his Assistant Parish Priest, Fr. Jacob Uttankar, the boy was sent to the Vocation camp with Fr. Oscar Misquitta and was selected. Frs. Desmond Paes and P.I. Jacob encouraged him to go ahead and so he applied for Novitiate. He made his first profession in 1976 at Yercaud and was ordained in 1986 at Giriz church, Vasai. He happens to be the only Salesian



priest from that Parish. God willing, very soon we will be blessed with two more Salesians from this Parish. That young boy is now a priest and he has worked in several places, some of which were rather difficult and challenging, but trusting in God's help and protection, he felt fulfilled in his vocation. He feels that he is constantly under Our Lady's protection."

I have prompted many youngsters to try the Salesian way of life. Most of them liked it and eventually joined the Salesian Congregation. I encourage those of you who read this to look within yourself and find out if God could be calling you to serve him as a Salesian Priest or Brother. We are all ordinary youngsters who, with God's help are able to do extraordinary things. □

For further contact Fr Brian Moras sdb: fbrian@rediffmail.com

WHEN IS PRAYER GENUINE?

by Michael Paul Gallagher
PRAYER FOR YOU (9)

Dear Paul,
I know that you are someone who has given time to prayer over the years. But now you have a new doubt about it all, one that you express very well. *'I wonder what I'm really doing when I pray,'* you write. *'Could it all be selfish, instead of spiritual? Or, in fact, could it be spiritually selfish?'*

You then go a bit further. *'How can I know if my prayer is genuine? I've occasionally noticed that when prayer "goes well" I end up pleased with myself, and afterwards I can be rough in my judgement on others, or unkind in various ways. I then begin to question the whole thing as having any Christian fruit.'*

Well, Paul, you are asking probing questions there, and they have to be asked. They echo those Gospel passages where Jesus made fun of false prayer. (Yes, his stories were often comic, but we are so used to them that we miss it.) Think of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Lk 18:9-14), or the description of the person who always prays 'Lord, Lord' but does nothing about it (Mt 7:21-27), or again the picture of people praying at street corners so that everyone will notice them (Mt 6:5-6).

Two False Notes

All of these satires show that prayer can fail to be 'genuine', as you put it, and that it becomes a sham mainly when we turn in on ourselves and don't enlarge our lives into love. Exactly these two false notes are present in the Pharisee of the parable. He talks mainly about the great things he

is doing, with a certain self-satisfaction and conceit. But he reveals his falsity most of all by looking down his spiritual nose at people who fall into obvious sins, like adultery or corruption.

Which of us, even in church, has not occasionally judged someone, just like the Pharisee judges the Publican in the temple? When I worship at the altar of my own goodness, I am not really reaching out to God; and when I find myself sitting with the judge's wig on, even in prayer, there is certainly something wrong. I need to move to the very different attitude of the Publican. He recognizes his own need to change, and he looks to God to convert his heart and life.

Knowing The Danger

So, am I agreeing with you that your prayer could 'all be selfish'? First of all, watch that word 'all'! I think you have latched on to a real danger for anyone who tries to pray: the danger of self-satisfaction and pride. But don't fall into the trap of throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

Don't dismiss the many good desires and fruits of your prayer simply because sometimes you catch yourself being 'spiritually selfish'. When that happens, the call is to recognize it honestly, and to come back humbly, like the Publican. Beware of doubting the whole business.

Negative Magnifying Glass

Let me share with you my favourite image about how we can be deceived, whether in prayer or

in other areas of life. I have a theory that the devil has a factory that specializes in manufacturing one object only: negative magnifying glasses! It exaggerates some things and distorts others. Since it is a negative magnifying glass, it will pick out all the failures and dark areas, and highlight them. The real damage comes from not being able to experience the good things in your life. So, certainly notice how prayer can sometimes get twisted into something self-serving. But don't let that occasional fall prevent you from trusting that to pray is deeply good, and usually, to use your words, 'genuine' in its fruits.

Yardstick of Love

How can you recognize the fruits of genuine prayer? Both St. Peter and St. Paul offer fascinating lists in their letters, and if we put them together, we have a way of measuring when the Spirit is working in our lives and in our prayer.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul lists some signs of the Spirit at work in us: '*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control*' (Gal 5:22-23). They are ways of measuring our lives: but don't worry, nobody lives them perfectly all the time.

When St. Peter offers his list at the beginning of his second letter, he seems to have in mind a kind of ladder with various rungs. Faith leads to goodness, and so on to understanding, to self-control, to patience, to genuine prayerfulness, to kindness, and finally to love as the crown of everything (2Pet 1:5-7).

Isn't it interesting that Paul begins with love, and Peter ends with it? Love is the Christian

yardstick given by Jesus himself at the Last Supper just after speaking of his 'new commandment'.

'It is by your love for one another,' he says, 'that everyone will recognize you as my disciples.' (Jn 13:35)

Jesus' New Commandment

I remember talking to a student once who said that all of Christianity is summed up in loving one another. I answered, a little to his surprise, 'Yes, but finish the sentence'. The ending makes all the difference: 'as I have loved you' (Jn 15:12).

Jesus' new commandment is not a new external law. Nor is Jesus himself merely a model to be imitated. It goes deeper than that.

It is a new power he offers us, of sharing his own attitudes. As a mystic of centuries ago put it, when you watch Christ attentively with the heart, you become like him almost without knowing it: 'love arrives at likeness'. In this sense, prayer is the great way into his heart.

I said just now that love is the yardstick for prayer. Yes, but that love - Jesus' love - included the self-giving of the cross. Although we are never asked to seek out the cross, our love, learned from him, will be able to carry the cross with him, whenever it comes.

Then prayer will surely be genuine, because it's impossible to fake that costly self-giving. There is a marvellous expression of this certainty in St. John's first letter. Speaking of how we share the journey with Christ, he says that 'We have passed out of death and into life, and of this we can be sure because we love' (1 John 3:14). Such love is the test of our prayer; it is also its goal. □

walking with the Church



ARRIVING AFTER THE GOSPEL, THE PENITENT'S IDENTITY

by Fr. Edward McNamara

Q: *My parish priest made a regulation that anyone who arrives in Mass after the Gospel is not allowed to take Communion. According to him, the reason is that Jesus is "the Word made flesh." Therefore we must recognize Jesus in the Word before we recognize him in holy Communion. Another priest, who is a professor of liturgy, has another opinion. He said that people who arrive late in Mass with a valid reason (for example, an unusual traffic jam, attending sick children, etc.) should not be denied Communion. Could you please give a clarification on this matter?*

— B.E., Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

A: I would agree more with the second priest: that someone who arrives late out of no fault of their own should not be denied Communion.

I also consider it unwise to set any barrier point; I continue to insist that the faithful should assist at the whole Mass.

It is quite possible that some members of the faithful could begin to see the Gospel as the cutoff moment and feel comfortable in habitually arriving for the second reading, thus assuring that the Mass is "valid."

It is true that the Mass is a whole and that we must first recognize Jesus in the Word before we recognize him in the Eucharist. But this would include the entire

Liturgy of the Word and not just the Gospel.

Also, while there is some certain logic in choosing the Gospel as such a moment, the reasons given are not sufficiently well grounded from the theological, canonical and moral standpoints to support such a blanket impediment to receiving Communion.

The pastor has a duty to direct and inform the consciences of the faithful entrusted to him. And while I disagree with his suggesting the Gospel as a demarcation point for receiving Communion, it is at least clear that he is trying to perform his sacred duty.

Therefore, the onus of the decision whether or not to receive Communion, in this particular case of a late arrival, falls primarily upon the individual Catholic rather than upon the pastor who can hardly be expected to be attentive to every late arrival.

It is therefore incumbent on those arriving late to examine their conscience as to the reason behind their tardiness. If the reason is neglect or laziness, then they would do better attending another full Mass if this is possible. Even those who blamelessly arrive late should prefer to assist at a full Mass although they would be less bound to do so in conscience.

At the same time, there are some

objective elements to be taken into account besides the reason for lateness. Someone who arrives after the consecration has not attended Mass, no matter what the reason for his belatedness. Such a person should not receive Communion, and if it is a Sunday, has the obligation to attend another Mass.

It is true that Communion may be received outside of Mass, so Mass is not an essential prerequisite for receiving Communion. This would not, however, justify arriving just in time for Communion at a weekday Mass, as all of the rites for receiving Communion outside of Mass include a Liturgy of the Word and one should attend the entire rite.

Q: *Is it permissible, and/or is there any good reason for a confessor to ask the identity of a penitent when the confession is anonymous; that is, it is not "face to face"?*

— L.L., Washington, D.C.

A: Anonymous confession, along with the confessional as we know it today, is generally attributed to an initiative of St. Charles Borromeo (1538-1584), the archbishop of Milan, Italy.

In order to ensure modesty and discretion, Cardinal Borromeo mandated in 1564 that the confessionals in his diocese be closed on both sides with a grill between penitent and priest. Pope Paul V's Roman Ritual adopted this provision, which helped spread its use, although it did not become a universal practice until the 17th century.

Anonymous confession remains the norm although current dispositions allow for the penitent who so desires to request face-to-face confession. And confessionals may be designed to allow for both

options.

Although the penitent may request face-to-face confession, the priest is not obliged to accede to the request and may insist on the use of the grill.

If a penitent desires anonymity, the priest should respect this desire and in the vast majority of situations he should never have any need or right to inquire as to the identity of the penitent.

Even if the priest recognizes the penitent it is usually more prudent not to make personal references unless the penitent makes some form of self-identification or the circumstances warrant it, such as could be the case of a regular penitent well known to the priest.

More frequently there may be situations when, in order to determine the exact nature and gravity of the sin involved, the priest may make a general inquiry as to the penitent's state in life, for example, if he or she is married, or a vowed religious, etc.

In some confessionals, where the penitent is almost invisible, it can happen that a priest may have to ask some detail of age, or even sex, in order to tailor his counsel to the penitent's specific characteristics.

Some very grave sins, such as abortion, also might incur excommunication reserved to the bishop or in some special cases, such as the deliberate profanation of the Eucharist, to the Holy See.

In such cases the confessor may not be able to grant absolution immediately, or only on condition that the penitent requests the lifting of the canonical penalty within a month from the competent authority.

(Continued on pg. 11)

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, (MARCH 18) THINK OF GOD AT ALL TIMES

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

Cyril of Jerusalem had a strange destiny. He was a peace-loving man but was still involved in several doctrinal controversies. He was a sincere man with a sterling character and yet he was accused of duplicity and ambiguity. He was a bishop who dearly loved his flock but because of false doctrinal motives he was sent into exile three times.

That was not all. He was a person of great and sincere charity toward everyone especially to the poor for which he was accused of squandering the possessions of the Church to help himself. In short, Cyril, that calm and mildest of men had to live in turbulent times standing by orthodoxy for the sake of the survival of the Church of Christ.

Despite his manifold difficulties he fought courageously and defended the truth in charity. He was an eloquent preacher and his doctrinal positions finally triumphed at the Council in the year 381. Thanks to him, the Church overcame the devastating and pernicious Arian heresy that flourished during his time and that had raged for several decades.

He is a person who deserves to be remembered today, and admired for the torments, not only psychological but also physical in defence of the orthodoxy of the Christian faith, for example, the Creed that we pray every Sunday at Mass was composed and defended by Cyril.

"Make your fold with the sheep; flee from the wolves: depart not from the Church," Cyril admonished catechumens surrounded by heresy. These were prophetic words for, Cyril was to be hounded by enemies and heretics for most of his life, and although they could exile him from his diocese he never left his beloved Church.

Cyril's life began a few years before Arianism (the heresy that Jesus was not divine or one in being with the Father) and he lived to see its suppression and condemnation at the end of his life. In between he was the victim of many of the power struggles that took place.

We know little about Cyril's early life. Historians estimate he was born about 315 and that he

was brought up in Jerusalem. He speaks about the appearance of the sites of the Nativity and Holy Sepulchre before they were "improved" by human hands as if he were a witness. All we know of his family was that his parents were probably Christians and he seemed to care for them a great deal. He exhorted catechumens to honour parents *"for however much we may repay them, yet we can never be to them what they as parents have been to us."* We know he also had a sister and a nephew, Gelasius, who became a bishop and a saint.

He speaks as one who belonged to a group called the Solitaries. These were men who lived in their own houses in the cities but practiced a life of complete chastity, ascetism, and service.

After being ordained a deacon and then a priest, his bishop Saint Maximus respected him enough to put him in charge of the instruction of catechumens. We still have these catechetical lectures of Cyril's that were written down by someone in the congregation. When speaking of so many mysteries, Cyril anticipated the question, "But some one will say, if the Divine substance is incomprehensible, why then do you discourse of these things? So then, because I cannot drink up all the river, am I not even to take in moderation what is expedient for me? Because with eyes so constituted as mine I cannot take in all the sun, am I not even to look upon it enough to satisfy my wants? Or again, because I have entered into a great garden, and cannot eat all the supply of fruits, would you have me go away altogether



St. Cyril of Jerusalem, icon of XVII Cent. Church of St. Athanasius, Tarnovo, Bulgaria

hungry?.. I am attempting not to glorify the Lord, but not to describe him, knowing nevertheless that I shall fall short of glorifying God worthily, yet deeming it a work of piety even to attempt it at all."

When Maximus died, Cyril was consecrated as bishop of Jerusalem. Because he was supported by the Arian bishop of Caesarea, Acacius, the orthodox criticized the appointment and the Arians thought they had a friend. Both factions were wrong, but Cyril wound up in the middle.

When a famine hit Jerusalem, the poor turned to Cyril for help. Cyril, seeing the poor starving to death and having no money, sold some of the goods of the churches. This

was something that other saints including Saints Ambrose and Augustine had done and it probably saved many lives. There were rumours, however, that some of the vestments wound up as clothing for actors.

Actually, the initial cause of the falling out between Acacius and Cyril was territory not beliefs. As bishop of Caesarea, Acacius had authority over all the bishops of Palestine. Cyril argued that his authority did not include Jerusalem because Jerusalem was an "apostolic see" – one of the original sees set up by the apostles. When Cyril did not appear at councils that Acacius called, Acacius accused him of selling church goods to raise money and had him banished.

Cyril stayed in Tarsus while waiting for an appeal. Constantius called a council where the appeal was supposed to take place. The council consisted of orthodox, Arians, and semi-Arian bishops. When Acacius and his faction saw that Cyril and other exiled orthodox bishops were attending, they demanded that the persecuted bishops leave. Acacius walked out when the demand was not met. The other bishops prevailed on Cyril and the others to give in to this point because they did not want Acacius to have reason to deny the validity of the council. Acacius returned but left again for good when his creed was rejected – and refused to come back even to give testimony against his enemy Cyril. The result of the council was that Acacius and the other Arian bishops were condemned. There was no final judgement on Cyril's case but it was probably thrown out when Acacius refused to testify and

Cyril returned to Jerusalem.

This was not the end of Cyril's troubles because Acacius carried his story to the emperor – embellishing it with details that it was a gift of the emperor's that was sold to a dancer who died wearing the robe. This brought about a new synod run by Acacius who now had him banished again on the basis of what some bishops of Tarsus had done while Cyril was there.

This exile lasted until Julian became emperor and recalled all exiled bishops, orthodox or Arian. Some said this was to exacerbate tension in the Church and increase his imperial power. So Cyril returned to Jerusalem. When Acacius died, each faction nominated their own replacement for Caesarea. Cyril appointed his nephew Gelasius – which may seem like nepotism, except that all orthodox sources spoke of Gelasius' holiness. A year later both Cyril and Gelasius were driven out of Palestine again as the new emperor's consul reversed Julian's ruling.

Eleven years later, Cyril was allowed to go back to find a Jerusalem destroyed by heresy and strife. He was never able to put things completely right. He did attend the Council at Constantinople in 381 where the Nicene Creed and orthodoxy triumphed and Arianism was finally condemned. Cyril received justice at the same Council who cleared him of all previous rumours and commended him for fighting "a good fight in various places against the Arians."

Cyril had eight years of peace in Jerusalem before he died in 386, at about seventy years old. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Transcribing Confusion

We were thoroughly confused. While transcribing medical audiotapes, my co-worker came upon the following garbled diagnosis: "This man has pholenfrometry."

Knowing nothing about that particular condition, she double-checked with Doctor Mike Wilson. After listening to the tape, he shook his head.

"This man," he said, translating for her, "has fallen from a tree."

Dewey Check

I walked into my sister's kitchen and found my nephew, Dewey, having a snack.

"Where's your mother?" I asked. "She said she was going to have a shower. Just a second, I'll see."

Dewey went to the kitchen tap and turned the hot water on full blast. An indignant yell came from above.

Dewey calmly turned off the tap and said, "Yep, she's in the shower."

Blind Date Slap

An 85-year-old widow went on a blind date with a 90-year-old man. When she returned to her daughter's house later that night, she seemed upset.

"What happened, Mother?" the daughter asked.

"I had to slap his face three times!"

"You mean he got fresh?"

"No," she answered, "I thought he was dead."

Fan Help

Although I have three sons, it

was always my daughter who helped me with chores around the house.

One day we decided to install ceiling fans in the bedrooms. We thought it would take about an hour, but the task turned into an all-day job.

"Thanks, Sweetie," I said gratefully when we were finished.

"No problem," she replied as she put away the tools. "Just think of me as the son you never had."

Found Cell Phone

When a customer left his cell phone in my store, I scrolled through his saved numbers, stopped at "Mom" and pushed send. His mother answered, and I told her what happened.

"Don't worry," she said, "I'll take care of it."

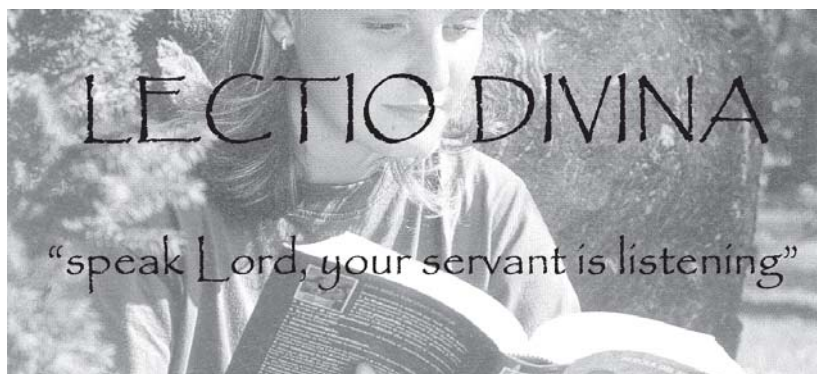
A few minutes later, the cell phone rang. It was "Mom."

"Martin," she said, "you left your cell phone at the convenience store."

Parking Solution

A pastor of a two-church parish had to drive every Sunday morning about 4 miles from the 9:30 service at one church to the 11 o'clock at the other. He would often find the parking lot of the second church full, and be forced to park down the road and race to the church on foot.

The problem was finally solved when he selected a parking spot near the side door of the church and posted a sign that read, "You Park - You Preach." □



I'LL BE WATCHING YOU

by Dermot Connolly

*Every move you make,
Every vow you break,
Every smile you fake,
Every claim you stake,
I'll be watching you.*

(The Police, 1983)

A slightly unsettling song, written by Sting and first performed in the early eighties by the Police - the band, not the guardians of the law, though in this instance at least the name, is appropriate enough. Job would have recognised the song's menace; in his experience God was the "tireless watcher of humanity."

Will you never take your eyes off me, long enough for me to swallow my spittle? (Job 7:19-20)

Most people don't like to think they are being closely watched, even by God. "Look away that I may

breathe again before I depart to be no more" (Psalm 39:14).

The greatest event in the story of the people of Israel took place in the dead dark of night, when God led them to safety: "It was a night of watching by the Lord, to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:42). Watching is a shepherd word and a shepherd work, and keeping watch is what the shepherds were doing on that other great night of passage, when the Saviour was born at Bethlehem (Luke 2:8). And the song from our own times? I think, "Someone to watch over me" (Ira and George Gershwin, 1926).

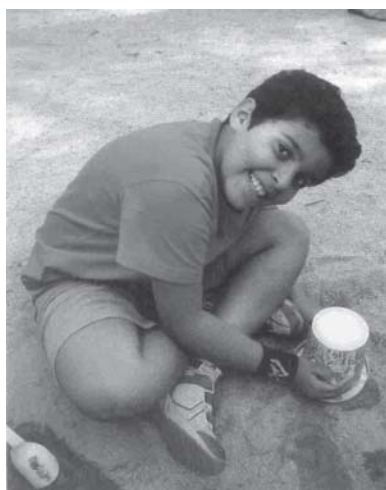
There is a song from the sixties

that, for me, best catches the wonder of watching:

*You're just too good to be true,
Can't take my eyes off you.*

I don't suppose Bob Crewe or Bob Gaudio had anything in mind when they wrote the song other than the fascination of falling in love. But just imagine it was God who was the lover, the same God who "saw everything he had made, and indeed it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). Too good to be true? Could God be so fascinated with us and all creation that he can't take his eyes off us?

Which brings me to a much older song, "*You search me and you know me*" - aka Psalm 139 ("A Psalm of David"). King David was a well known singer/songwriter, though this psalm may have been written



in his name some centuries after his time). It's an ambivalent song, swinging between scrutiny and care and wonder. And there's a dash of violence too, lest it be altogether too bland (verses 19-22).

At times in the psalm God seems too close for comfort: "*Your eyes saw all my actions, / they were all of them written in your book.*" Yet I can rely on God no matter how far I might stray: "*your hand would lead me, / your right hand would hold me fast.*" And in the end, I may learn why God is so enthralled with us, why God watches us: "*For it was you who created my being, knit me together in my mother's womb. I thank you for the wonder of my being, for the wonders of all / your creation.*"

(I wish there was a CD we could share for all this music! But I did have the help of a kind niece for the details of the modern songs.) □



DEDICATED TO
CHRIST CRUCIFIED

Quiet

TRANSFO

by Rev. Jam

The Resurrection of Jesus is at the very heart and centre of the Christian faith. It is the transforming event that gives meaning and purpose to all we seek, all we believe, and the direction of our lives.

On Good Friday we often meditate and reflect on the last words of Jesus on the cross. In the four Gospels there are seven sayings attributed to the dying Christ - one in Matthew and Mark, three each in Luke and John. Good Friday meditations focus on the passion and suffering of Jesus and on the loving compassion of our saviour. I propose a further meditation on Jesus' words from the cross - a meditation based on the transforming power of the resurrection.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? These words are recorded in both Matthew and Mark, and in them alone. They are from the opening verse of Psalm 22, and a text that Jesus would have known well. As he is nailed to the cross the words appropriately express the pain and abandonment that he must have felt. Throughout human history it is likely that everyone, at some time in life, will express the same sentiment. In the resurrection, God responds by saying that pain, and suffering, and death, do not have the final say. Though we may feel lost and without hope, God will transform all suffering in the eternal life that awaits us. Even though Jesus recites the opening verse of the Psalm, the resurrection responds with the concluding words: *"All shall tell of the Lord to the coming generations, and proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn, that God has accomplished it."*

Father Forgive them; for they do not know what they do. Luke records these as Jesus' first words as he is nailed to the cross. They show the extraordinary compassion of our savior, fulfilling his own instruction to his disciples and to us to forgive our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. In the resurrection, God agrees with what Jesus asks. All are forgiven. Easter bids us to remember, to accept, and finally, to live this out.

Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise. These words also are found only in Luke, an expression of hope and compassion given to one of those crucified with Jesus who asked to be



Spaces

FORMATION

es L. Burns

remembered by him when he was glorified. The man's faith in Jesus is met with a promise of fulfillment. In the resurrection, God affirms the promise which is extended to all. The condition of perfect harmony with God, damaged and lost in our fall from grace, is now restored in Jesus. Our ultimate and eternal destination is confirmed.

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. The final words recorded by Luke, a quote from Psalm 31, are also surely well known to Jesus. They express the other side of abandonment which is trust, even in the darkest hour. The resurrection affirms our trust in God is never misplaced, even if it seems that there is no apparent solution to our cares and struggles.

Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother. These words from the cross are recorded in John's Gospel. Jesus is speaking to his own mother and to the one known as "the beloved disciple." His concern is to establish a new family relationship for his mother, giving her someone to care for her. It is perhaps the most intimate moment recorded from the crucifixion. Our relationships, especially with those we love and with whom we share a life history, but also with all whose lives intersect with ours, matter. Jesus creates a new bond among us. The resurrection is an assurance that not only do our relationships with one another connect to our relationship with God, but also that we will never lose those we love.



I Thirst. These words found only in John, are related to John's account of Jesus' description of himself as "living water." There is at once, a very human and a spiritual aspect to this cry. On the one hand, Jesus suffers and thirsts as would all humans, but, beyond this, there is the theme of the deepest human longings for God and for God's transforming loving, and life-giving presence in our lives. The resurrection assures us that in Christ these longings are fulfilled.

It is finished! John's final words from the dying Jesus are a cry of victory. Jesus, the incarnate love of God, has loved to the very end. He has loved in spite of betrayal, torture, humiliation, and suffering. He has loved enough to die as we all will die. The resurrection is the final and total fulfillment of this love. □

Concluding Part
WAITING

by Pierluigi Menato

(T/A: ID)

Francesca lived with her aging mother. She was still studying and her dear brother Albert who had just graduated in engineering had a good job in the nearby town. He sent some money home to help support his mother and Francesca. Eventually Francesca graduated too, as a chartered accountant but her mind was on Carlo a young man whom she had come to love and cherish...but she was torn between her mother's demands and her love for Carlo...she would have to wait.

That was how it was.

Carlo had graduated and was away for some time but their souls were closer than ever. Carlo could see her penetrating black eyes where there was a new light and he could hear the music of her voice as she spoke to him when they were alone. But Francesca's heart was full of that love even though her mother's objection seemed to cause her some bitterness.

"We'll wait," they said, "but not for long."

"It's you or no one else," they promised each other.

She slowly raised her head and lifted her eyes towards him and saw that his eyes were full of tears. They also wrote to each other. Francesca kept all his letters to her and she reread them each time she felt a little lonely. "My little star," he wrote to her recalling those long days in April.

Months went by and then years. They had not seen each other again; they were afraid that they would not be able to bear the pain of separation much longer.

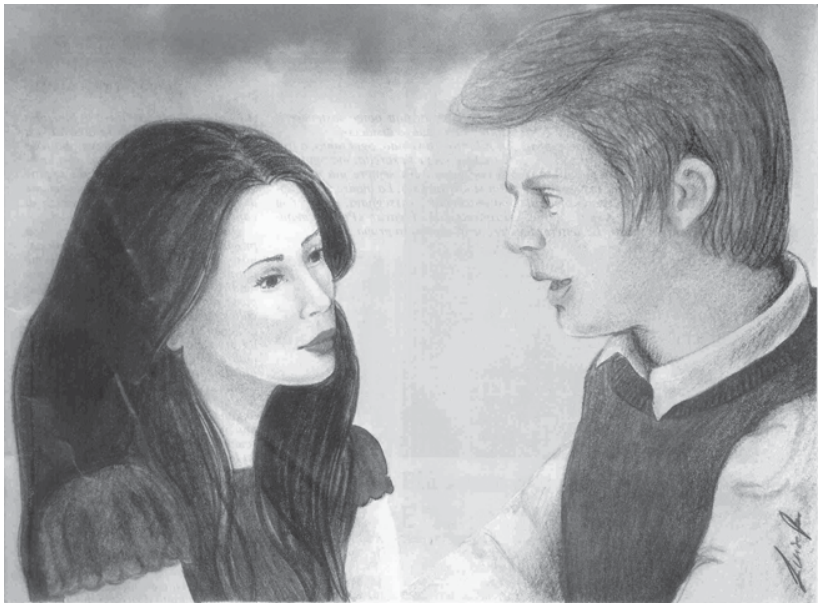
Albert visited his home to see his mother and sister but each time he found her missing. Was she married? Apparently her mother had given up but Francesca blurted out: "Poor mothers, if only they knew before hand!"

Then, Albert's visits became even fewer and he came for only a few days until he came just for a few days each summer. Yet his mother seemed to hold on to her right and imagined that she would see her son arrive.

"No mail, Francesca?"

"Nothing, mother."

By now, there was nothing even for Francesca, yet she still waited. Francesca was waiting for that young man with bright blue eyes with a smile as fresh as the dawn over the sea and Carlo was waiting for that girl whose innocent face with her lips draped in a smile. But every day that



passed a few wrinkles appeared at the corners of his eyes and the lustre about his temples grew dull and the spark in his eyes seemed to disappear.

When her mother died, Francesca felt a pain that was both sharp and deep. Her last words to Francesca were: "You've done your duty towards your mother." It seemed that her duty was as bitter as glass of bitter gall.

Carlo finally arrived as he had promised. His mother too had died. But, seeing her again was like looking at someone new. This seemed like some other soul that was waiting for him though he seemed to recall that someone was waiting for him. It was as if they had met in some previous life. Both of them realized that they had waited for each other as they had promised.

They sat beside each other and neither found the right word to hide their pain and to comfort the delusion of the other. Those long years of being apart surfaced in their thoughts - month after month, day after day; their whole youth - seemed like eternity. But Francesca only thought of Carlo and the thought of being loved by him. She felt so close to him and it was the thought of him that helped her do her duty towards her mother when perhaps loneliness would have discouraged her. Carlo for his part found each day at work a struggle and the thought of her made his sour struggle sweet and helped him to go through the drudgery of his days filling him with hope and strength.

Carlo raised his eyes and they met those of Francesca. They were filled with tears and great

uncertainty. Suddenly a surge of tenderness rose from his heart but he couldn't find words to put to his feelings. There was then a great love that passed through their souls and in the silence they delicately held each other's hands and whispered together:

"Thanks!"

That spring, from that infinite tenderness, that fervent gratitude there sprung forth love that easily united those two lives. How sweet it seemed to be that those two souls would be united in the coming Autumn. □

Continued from: Walking With The Church pg. 11

As most penitents would be unaware of how to go about this process, the priest may offer to help by contacting either the bishop or the Holy See as the case may be. This is always done without revealing any personal data or identifying circumstances (see Canon 1357).

If the penitent wishes to remain anonymous then he or she may make an appointment to return to confession to the same priest after a certain time in order to have the sanction formally lifted. But in some cases it may be necessary to reveal some personal data so that the priest can inform the penitent of the arrival of the proper authorization. □

Form IV

Statement of ownership and other particulars about the newspaper:
Don Bosco's Madonna

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Place of Publication: | St. Paul Press, 58/23rd Rd., TPS III,
Bandra Mumbai - 400 050 |
| 2. Periodicity of Publication: | 1&2 of every month |
| 3. Printer's name and nationality: | For Bombay Salesian Society,
Fr. Edwin D'Souza sdb (Trustee)
Indian
Don Bosco Shrine Office,
Matunga, Mumbai 400 019 |
| 4. Publisher's name: | -do- |
| 5. Editor's name: | Fr. Ian Doulton sdb |
| 6. Name & address of individuals
who own the newspaper and
partners or shareholders
holding more than 1% of capital. | Bombay Salesian Society
Don Bosco Shrine Office,
Matunga, Mumbai 400 019 |

The magazine is a non-profit publication

I, Fr. Ian Doulton, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: March 1, 2010

Sd/-
Fr Ian Doulton sdb

PRAYER AND THE CUSTODY OF THE EYES

by Gianni Asti (T/A:ID)

When a teenager or a young adult falls in love with a girl he yearns to constantly communicate with her. Text messages become more frequent and his mind is constantly occupied with thoughts of her.

Some teenagers admit that when a good girl enters their lives they study more willingly, they become more docile to their parents; they find it much easier to remain chaste and even to give themselves time to pray. They are already thinking about getting engaged and everything seems to blush like the colour of roses.

Something similar happens to a young man who encounters the Lord who calls him to the priesthood or to the Consecrated Life. He begins to feel as if he were constantly living in God's presence. He looks for moments to spend with Him and he spontaneously gives himself time to pray.

Prayer: thinking and loving God

To pray is to think about God and to love him. This, Don Bosco says, is the first means to safeguard one's vocation and to prepare oneself for his 'engagement' with the Lord. This is what he wrote on the subject when speaking about 'Vocation' in his book: *The Companion of Youth*.

"First, you need to pray. Talk to the Lord in the morning and in the evening, go and spend some time with him before the tabernacle in Church. Pray seriously to the Madonna everyday, because it



ADVICE TO HIS BOYS

DON BOSCO'S

helps one to grow more worthy of the Lord who calls you. Finally, go to Communion on Sundays and often during the week; that is the highest possible prayer."

Behind these expressions one envisages a teenager or a youngster kneeling in fervent prayer at the Cathedral of Chieri, before the picture of the Madonna of Grace, speaking about his studies and about his vocation. That was the young Johnny Bosco.

The spiritual rhythm of the daily schedule of students in those years included daily Mass and prayer before and after study.

Encouraged by his confessor Fr. Maloria, he began to receive Holy Communion frequently during the week and he increased his visits to the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. In the seminary he even renounced his breakfast in order to be able to receive Communion daily.

The seventeen-year-old Johnny candidly admits: "He encouraged me to go to confession and communion

more often...I do not remember any of my teachers ever advising me along those lines. I have to thank my confessor that I was not led by companions into certain uncertain pitfalls that inexperienced boys in large schools live to regret." (Memoirs of the Oratory, p. 72)

The most beautiful aspect of his adolescence was the fact that John would also live this love for the Lord with his best friends. He comments: "Louis Comollo, William Garigliano and I often went together for Confession and Communion; together we spent time in meditation, spiritual

reading, serving Mass and visiting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament" (Memoirs of the Oratory).

When explaining to his young Salesians the first rules of religious life he would write: "You need to be convinced that your vocation is only preserved by prayer. The one who abandons prayer abandons his vocation too. One who begins to pray and prays much, does not forget to pray in the morning and evening and around midday too. He does not miss a chance to visit the Blessed Sacrament and Mary Most Holy daily as a means of persevering in his vocation. A



religious who receives Communion frequently during the week will not abandon his vocation. Meditate often on your vocation; consider what a great grace it is that the Lord calls you to follow him. Your eternal salvation is assured when you are faithful to God in following your vocation... on the other hand if you are unfaithful you will be exposed to much grave danger."

The father of a young religious confided to his rector: "I don't think that my son will persevere in his religious vocation because when he comes home I never see him praying." A few months later the youngster left the seminary.

The Eyes: Windows of the Soul

Prayer is an encounter between the youngster and the Lord who calls him and it demands a transparency of life and a purity of heart. The second means that Don Bosco suggested for a youngster to preserve one's vocation was the mortification of the eyes.

"Second: The need to mortify one's eyes. They are the windows to the soul. It is through the eyes that certain images and programmes enter, deeply disturb and put at serious risk our purity of life and our faith itself. We need, with a spirit of sacrifice, to distinguish between what is good and what could harm us. We should definitely abstain from anything that could harm us."

Coming back to the first point of the initial approach of a fiancé and a youngster called to religious life, we note how a youngster, who is seriously committed to a girl, lives out his love through fidelity, getting rid of any other friendship or attachment that might put into jeopardy his fidelity.

This is especially true regarding

the eyes, which by now he has is for the person who will become his life partner. To set one's sights on other girls would be a grave indiscretion if not already the beginning of a betrayal. Therefore we should not be surprised that this is the indication also for youngsters who are preparing themselves to offer all the affections of their hearts to the Lord.

Perhaps, this was what Don Bosco meant when he wrote in Dominic Savio's biography concerning the mortification of the senses. He recalled, "He had lively eyes and he made no small mortification to keep them in check. From the beginning, he often told his friend: When I made a firm resolution to control my eyes, this has caused me much strain. Sometimes it even caused me to suffer severe headaches." The control of his eyes was such that no one ever realized that even to glance for an instant would exceed the limits of rigorous modesty. "The eyes" he said, "are two windows. They allow through only that which they are permitted to, so we could let pass an angel or the devil... allowing either one or the other to dominate the soul."

Consider how our youngsters and young adults are constantly bombarded by lurid images on the television, the newspapers, DVDs or from the internet. Imagine what a struggle it must be to preserve their purity and their love for the Lord in order to be able to serenely follow and persevere in their vocation.

About the third means that Don Bosco suggested to be able to safeguard one's vocation is to prepare oneself for some opposition from one's parents and relations. That is what follows in our next article. □

NEWSBITS

YANGON

Archbishop Charles Bo of Yangon hopes to see better relations among priests, and between them and bishops, during the Year for Priests.

He also expects the clergy to renew their spiritual lives and be more committed to their work.

"If we are able to animate priests and help them in the parish and in the diocese, the whole world can expect a transformation," he told UCA News as his archdiocese began the Year for Priests that Pope Benedict XVI promulgated on June 19, the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"I do not worry about other things – difficulties, obstacles and financial constraints. The main thing is that priests must be real priests after the heart of Jesus and be happy with other priests," he added.



*Arch. Charles Bo
at a meeting of Priests
in Yangon Cathedral*

Stressing the importance of priests' pastoral ministry, he said: "We are not supposed to look after our own flock only. We have to go out and look for the lost sheep. There is much to be done. If we

really work at evangelization, priests will need to go to other dioceses and even abroad."

Priests UCA News spoke to say they plan to embark on a renewal programme for themselves during the Year for Priests.

Father Richard Htun Htun Win, 37, assistant parish priest at St. Mary's Cathedral in Yangon said: "I plan to renew my priestly life especially during our monthly recollections. Personally, I've decided to give more time to adoration (of the Blessed Sacrament)."

Father Gabriel Aung San, 62, parish priest of St. Theresa's Church in Yangon, said, "I will encourage parishioners to have more devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and urge them to pray specially for priests."

Archbishop Bo admitted that much also needs to be improved in terms of formation for seminarians. "Candidates are preoccupied with their studies and after their ordination they face many crises when doing mission work." (UCAN)

BHOPAL

Churches in Madhya Pradesh have agreed to stop poaching each other's members, saying this threatens Christian unity in a state where Christians already face sporadic violence.

The practice of "sheep stealing" also confuses Christians and helps groups hostile toward them carry out their designs easily, concluded some 100 leaders of various Churches who met Dec. 12 in the state capital, Bhopal.

Archbishop Leo Cornelio of Bhopal, head of the Catholic Church in the central Indian state, chaired the meeting organized by the archdiocese's commission for ecumenism and dialogue.

The prelate urged participants to refrain from trying to attract members of other Churches to their own. This creates divisions among Churches, he noted.

The prelate also appealed for all denominations to refrain from badmouthing one another or other religious communities, especially during preaching, since this violates Christ's teaching of love, harmony and peace.

Asked about the gravity of the "sheep stealing" problem in Madhya Pradesh, Archbishop Cornelio told UCA News that no official survey has been conducted so far, but "it is very visible and threatening to Church unity."

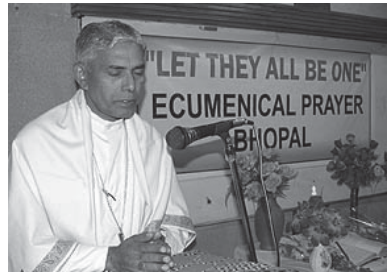
He said there is also a worrying trend of small Church groups suddenly appearing in the state. These preach against other groups and then disappear quickly, leaving "enough fodder for trouble."

He said the main victims of these groups are the mainstream Churches.

Reverend C.D. Singh of the Disciples Church, who attended the meeting, told UCA News that conversion attempts from other denominations were the "biggest challenge" he has faced so far. People keep moving from one Church to another, he noted.

"I went to the Churches where some of my parishioners had joined and I found the prayer services there very effective. So I changed the prayer service in my Church to deter believers from leaving," he said.

Reverend Singh blamed priests



Arch. Leo Cornelio at a session on Christian Unity in Bhopal December 9, 2009

and pastors for people changing their Church affiliations. Priests and pastors, he said, should lead exemplary lives and understand their people's spiritual needs. Otherwise they will look for an alternative, he warned.

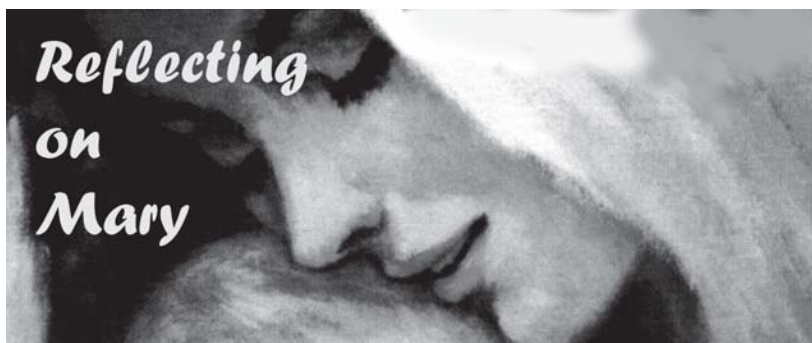
Church of North India pastor Reverend Timothy Bankhede noted "a dangerous trend" of people setting up small sects and encouraging people to join them.

He said Churches should work together to fight extremist groups that want to destroy Christianity in the state, instead of creating confusion among their people through the pilfering of followers.

Preaching the Gospel should target people who have not heard Christ's message and not those who are already Christians, he asserted.

Meeting participants agreed to set up a four-member committee to formulate measures to end interdenominational conversions and strengthen ecumenical harmony.

Madhya Pradesh has witnessed many instances of anti-Christian violence since the pro-Hindu ruling Bharatiya Janata Party came to power in the state in December 2003. □



THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN THE CHURCH'S LITURGY FOR THE SEASON OF LENT

by Fr. Benedict O' Cinnsealaigh

In celebrating Masses in honour of the Blessed Virgin during the Season of Lent, especially on Saturdays the faithful are encouraged to call to mind the Blessed Virgin's presence in the ministry and life of Jesus. During this Lenten Season, as we journey with the Lord through his last days, the figure of his mother is never far away. Mary walks in front of us, and behind her son. She is the model of the faithful disciple of the Lord.

Holy Mary, Disciple of the Lord

During the Lenten Season the Church reminds her faithful that they are called to be the People of God, the Disciples of Christ. Consequently, discipleship is the central theme to the season. Lent is a time of preparation and renewal when the faithful prepare for the celebration of Easter with prayer, penance and alms. They strive to conform their lives more closely to that of Christ and to follow in his footsteps along the

way of the cross. In an immediate way, the Lenten journey prepares Mary's children for the coming of Easter. And yet, every year, this journey also calls to mind that as disciples we are always preparing, and indeed should always be prepared, to meet the Easter Lord at the end of our life's journey.

The Church liturgy for Lent presents the Blessed Virgin Mary to the faithful as the model of the perfect disciple. Mary is the faithful listener. She faithfully conforms herself to the Word of God. Heroically, she follows in Christ's footsteps as He carries the cross. It is she who bears witness to Jesus' act of love as she suffers and dies within her heart uniting this most agonizing sorrow and pain with Christ's own. Mary is also her son's first and most faithful disciple. As soon as the Angel's greeting touched her ear and Christ's name was but whispered, Mary believed. Mary received Him.

Mary dedicated herself to Him.

Reflecting on Mary's womb the great Saint Augustine, declares that even though Mary was the Mother of God, it is as his disciple that she is even more blessed, for as his disciple she hears the word of Life and seeks faithfully to carry out his will. *"Holy Mary clearly carried out the will of the Father; and therefore it is a greater thing for her to be a disciple of Christ than to be his mother: She is more blessed in being a disciple of Christ than in being the mother of Christ."* (Saint Augustine, Sermo 25, 7: PL 38,937)

Mary at the Foot of the Cross

As the season of Lent progresses, the Church's liturgy is drawn more into the remembrance of, and meditation on, our Lord's last journey to Jerusalem and his profound sacrifice of salvation. The Lord's Passion, self-offering, love of the faith and death on the Cross, all become the central themes of the liturgy. Clearly, the Church's liturgy recognizes the presence of the Mother in the Son's passion.

Two major Marian themes dominate our meditation during this season with reference to Mary and the Passion. The first relates to Mary's faithfulness in following Christ and her sharing in His passion. The second acknowledges the part Mary plays in achieving our salvation. Mary like Saint Paul can say: *"I fill out in my own flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, for the sake of his Body, which is the Church."* (Col. 1:24) This has always been the understanding of the Church that Christ so profoundly unites us to Himself so that our suffering, as Christ's Body, is joined to Christ's suffering, and is offered to the faith for the redemption of all.

Consistently, Church tradition has seen Mary's suffering as the first and the most profound suffering of any follower of the Lord. She was his disciple and his mother. As the *Stabat Mater* (Sorrowful Mother) puts within her mouth the words: *"What suffering could be like to mine?"* If any suffering is to be added to Christ's for the sake of salvation can any suffering be as great or as powerful as Mary's?

At the Foot of the Cross, Mary is proclaimed as the Faithful Disciple, the New Eve, Handmaid of the Redeemer, the Mother of God's Children, Mother of Zion, Model of the Church, and Bride of Christ. As Mother of the Redeemer, Mary suffers with the High Priest and shares in his suffering. Christ made her the Mother of his disciples and all the faithful rejoice in her. She is the image and model for the Church, designed that the Church might look to her and see in her its own path to have courage in the face of passion and death and keep constant faith with the Bridegroom.

Partner in Christ's Passion

Again at the Foot of the Cross when Mary, though she was the mother of Christ *"by the power of the Holy Spirit,"* she became a further gift of divine love by being *"a partner in his passion,"* a mother who suffered with Him. Mary's participation in the passion and suffering of Christ is foretold in the prophecy of Simeon, *"He is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and a sword shall pierce your own heart."* (Luke 2:24-25) The destiny of the Son and the mother are joined

together. The joining of the suffering of the Son and the Mother is the fulfillment of the Father's plan of salvation. The New Eve, Mary, stands by the Cross of the New Adam, Jesus. It is the Father who places the "woman," this mother, at the side of the Son. It is the Father who decrees that she "should suffer with him."

The Church celebrates the suffering of Mary at the foot of the Cross, because she stands there with the Lord as the faithful servant of God, the faithful disciple of the Lord, and the representative of both the hope of Israel and the faith for the Church. She is "firm in faith," "strong in hope," and "burning with love." As her Son suffers, Mary does not spare her own life, rather, she stands with him. She suffers His every pain and torment. His death brings death to her heart. His resurrection restores her to life. Just as Mary brought forth the Christ child from her own womb, just as she gave birth to the Incarnate God, she now stands at the Cross bearing witness to the birth of Christ's body, the Church. "She endured the greatest of pains in bringing forth to new and divine life the family of the Church." Always, in Mary's suffering, has the Church seen the Blessed Virgin as a martyr: "How blessed was the Virgin Mary in her sufferings: she gained the palm of living martyrdom at the foot of the cross of her son."

Commending of Mary

As one of his final acts, Jesus turns to his mother and Saint John and says: "Woman, behold your son," "Behold your mother." (John 19:25) It is hard to believe that some Christians, theologians, and Biblical scholars see in this sacred action of Christ only a simple work

of "house-keeping." Is it reasonable to suggest that the Lord, in the final moments of his earthly life after preaching the profound sermon of his passion on the cross with his own sweat and blood, would now interrupt the act of salvation with such a mundane arrangement? That the Lord turns to his mother and his beloved disciple in the midst of the very offering of the Sacrifice of the Lamb, surely indicates the sacredness and absolute importance of his words and their meaning. Could any words, or action, coming as they do at this moment of Christ's passion, not be given more weight?

The Church sees in the commendation of the Virgin Mother to John, the decree of the Lord for the Church to make a home for the Mother in the midst of her children. The profound words of the Mass ring out the Lord's deepest intention when it states that, in John, Christ made all his disciples "living signs of his own love for her." They are to receive Mary "as a precious inheritance from their master." The Lord, the child of Mary, entrusts his disciples to His Mother, so they too may be the children of Mary. Present in the midst of the children of God, the Church, Mary is the mother of all. Mary does for all her children, what she did for her own Son. As her children we are to look to her with "great confidence in her unfailing protection."

Mother of Reconciliation

Reconciliation is one of the major themes of the Lenten Season and this theme of reconciliation is directed toward

the People of God as the Church's liturgy cries out in the words of Saint Paul: *"We beg you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled with God."* (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

There are so many themes that have been associated with the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in reconciling sinners with God. Mary is associated with reconciliation, for it was through her that the one who would bring reconciliation, or "peace," between God and man, came into the world. In fact, as the Church Fathers note, even in her womb the work of reconciliation had begun. It was through the Incarnation of the Son that "peace" was restored. This peace rested in the Virgin's womb, where the work of God's "peace" was fashioned. Medieval writers refer to Mary as *"the way of reconciliation," "the general cause of reconciliation," "mother of reconciliation," "reconciliation of sinners," "mother of sinners," "refuge of sinners,"* and *"mother of mercy."* Saint Anselm said of Mary: *"There is no reconciliation except the reconciliation you bore in purity."* In 1985, Pope John Paul II took up this theme when he said that the Blessed Virgin Mary *"became associated with God in the very work of reconciliation through her divine maternity."*

The Blessed Virgin is seen not only *"as the one through whom God's mercy comes to dwell among us"* but additionally, *"as one who will intercede with Christ, the Father, for mercy and forgiveness."* In both, Mary is the icon of the Church. She is called to be the channel through which God's mercy and peace are made present, and the one who offers sacrifice and intercession on our behalf to make peace and bring reconciliation between God and man. This peace is made present through the sacrifice of the Son and the will of

the Father. As well, it is available to those who seek it, to those who ask, and to those who intercede for it. The theme of intercession in the Lenten liturgy should not be underestimated. Constantly, the Church draws attention to this priceless work – to intercede for one another, to pray for one another, and to do good for one another. These are the spiritual recommendations of the Church.

Channel of Grace

Mary was given a "heart of compassion for sinners". This description is relevant for the whole of humanity. The whole of humanity is to have a "heart of compassion for one another". However, it is to be particularly relevant for Christians, whose mission it is to bring the saving action of the Cross to the whole world and to every age, to the end of time. We can further reflect on Her: *"Seeing her love as their mother, they (sinners) turn to her with trust, as they ask your (God's) forgiveness."* This speaks of the Church who is to be like Mary. The Church is to be the mother of all. She is to be the mother in whom we trust and the mother who loves us. It is also a message for all Christians. We are to be, to each other, as Mary is for us, a compassionate heart. Therefore, if this be true of us, the rest of the preface may also be said of us: *"Seeing her love as their mother, they turn to her with trust... Seeing her beauty of spirit, they seek to turn away from sin in its ugliness; taking to heart her words and example, they learn to keep your Son's commandments."* □

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary for blessing us with a baby after 6 years of marriage. *Prakash and Jean Fernandes, Mumbai*

Thank you dearest Mother for all the graces received. *Mrs. John*

Thank you dearest Mother for blessing my niece and her son Calvin Morel. Please continue to help him at school. *A Devotee*

Thank you, Mother Mary for all the graces received and special thanks for saving my mummy's life when she met with an accident in Goa. Dear Mother continue to protect us always.

Mrs. Roseline D'Souza, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Holy Spirit and Mother Mary, Help of Christians for all the graces received.

Mrs. D'Silva

Thank you dearest Mother for my husband's successful open heart surgery.

Mrs. Mary Xavier, Australia

My grateful thanks to the Holy Spirit and Mother Mary for healing me of a pain in the abdomen.

Mrs. A. de Souza, Australia

I am a third year engineering student. I had a drop in the 2nd year because of 6 KTs and I had given 3 of my papers for re-evaluation. I just wanted to clear another paper that would make me eligible for the 3rd year. I prayed to Mother Mary and she helped me to clear that one paper. I am most grateful to her. *Ronak Sequeira, Mumbai*

Thank you, Mother Mary for healing my mother and making her walk again. Thank you for all the help you always give us. *S. Salamati*

My thanks to Mary Help of Christians for all the favours received during the past year.

Joe and Flory D'Souza, Mumbai

Many thanks to Our dear Lord and Our Lady for relieving me of chest pains and for a clean test result. Thanks also for healing Maya of her headaches.

Mrs. P. Sagamond, USA

For six long years we have waited and finally we are excitedly waiting for our 'bundles' of joy (twins). We thank our Blessed Mother for answering our prayers in 'God's good time.' Dear Mother keep Chhaya under your protection during her pregnancy.

Elvis & Chhaya Traynor, Mumbai

Thank you dear Lord and Our Blessed Mother for curing me of my kidney stone problem and for showering on me and my family your blessings.

Mrs. W. Pinto, Mumbai

I came to the shrine and made a donation to Our Lady even though I did not have a job. After that I received a statuette from the shrine office. As soon as I reached home I received a phone call calling me back to work. I am grateful that Our Lady came to my home and gave me my job back.

Miss E. D'Souza, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady for all the graces we have received.

Irene, Mumbai

Many thanks to our Lady for the gift of a baby girl to my neighbour inspite of some complications also for many other favours received.

Sabina, Malad, 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.

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary and Don Bosco for all the blessings received through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Neema Soares, Mumbai

Thank you for giving my son and son-in-law a good job and all of us good health.

Mrs. Marina Coelho, Mumbai

I have received so many favours through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys and I am sincerely grateful to our dear Mother for all her blessings. Thank you so much, dearest Mother for the many favours received. Thank you for the safe valve replacement surgery of my sister and for the abundant blessings showered on my family.

Antonietta Simoes, Macau, South China

My sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother for carrying us through the darkest period of our life. May she continue to guide us through our dark moments.

Jincy, Kerala

Thank you dear Mother, for the good health of my husband.

Arnawaz Jeffrey Cabral, Kuwait

Thank you Mary Help of Christians, our dear Mother, for helping my son to get a job. We say the 3 Hail Marys every night. Continue to bless us dear Mother.

E. D'Rozario, Kollam, Kerala

Through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys and the invocation above our Mother has helped me on several occasions for which I am grateful.

Michael Xavier Travasso, Miramar, Goa

My sincere and heartfelt thanks Dear Mother, for all the favours received and for answering my prayers. Please continue to shower on us your blessings and keep us in your care.

Anita Mhatre, Mumbai

My sincere thanks for the gift of a new job since it is a year since I lost my job.

Francis D'Souza, Doha, Qatar

I am grateful to Our Lady for blessing my son with a beautiful daughter Gabriella Maria. She was one year old in January.

Mrs. Fila Dias

Dear Mary Help of Christians and Dominic Savio - I am grateful for blessing me with a healthy and beautiful baby boy.

S & P, USA

Thank you, dear Mother Mary for all the graces received.

Alice D'Souza, Mumbai

Sincere thanks to Mother Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for the lovely gift of a grandchild, Mia Agatha D'Souza.

Stanley & Marina D'Souza, Mumbai

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

My sincere thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for blessing my niece Jacqueline. Thank you for hearing my prayer and for the job that Jacqueline secured abroad. Keep her always in good health. *Devotee*

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco and all the saints for all the graces received through their intercession.

O. Rodrigues, Mumbai

Thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for all the graces received.

S. Fernandes

Thank you dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping us find a buyer for our Andheri house and for helping us to shift safely and comfortably to our new residence in Thane. I am also grateful for the numerous other favours received.

Philomena, Licinto D'Souza, Thane

Thank you dear most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for curing me of a throat infection. Do continue to bless my family and me.

Angelica Fernandes, Goa

My sincere thanks to the Divine Mercy, Mother Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for all the favours received.

R.J. Valladares, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco for helping my daughter pass in her HSC examinations and for getting admission into an engineering college.

Selina Falcao, Mumbai

Thank you, dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco for helping my nephew get a safe job in the States.

A Devotee, Mumbai

Thank you, dear Mother Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for granting my petition of bringing my daughter back from the USA after 8 long years and after having obtained a green card. I am also grateful to Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the innumerable favours granted to us and for giving our son a job in the gulf. Dear Mother do continue to bless and protect us always; and give us peace and unity.

Mrs. Maria N. Gomes, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians for all the favours received and for granting us all good health.

Mrs. B. Colaco, Mumbai

I was diagnosed as IV degree Cancer of the uterus and was undergoing chemotherapy. I was due to undergo an operation, but before that I was advised a blood test and a scan. Before that I paid a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and prayed earnestly for a cure. When I went for the tests they all returned absolutely clear and the doctors were amazed and so was I. I am so grateful to Our Blessed Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady and Don Bosco for this great grace.

Helena A. Braganza, Bangalore

My sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for saving my husband from a stroke and also for curing my vertigo problem.

Levita Fernandes, Virar

I am most grateful to Mother Mary for my daughter's success in her SSC examinations and for her admission to a desired college.

Maria, Mumbai

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Our sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the innumerable favours granted to our family. Do continue to be with us.

Victor and Afra Fonseca, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude to Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a healthy baby girl. *Mr. & Mrs. Dhanpal, Pune*

My sincere gratitude to Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for healing Mr. D'Souza of his pain in the stomach. Please cure him of all his ailments. Heal my daughter of her mental sickness and keep us all under your special care.

Mrs. C. D'Souza, Pune

My belated thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for saving my son from a fatal accident. I also thank Mother Mary for the safe delivery of my daughter and for helping my son obtain a good job.

Mrs. P. Melville, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for a safe and successful eye operation and please continue to protect our family.

I. Andrade, Goa

My sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for their mighty intercession and blessings. Our daughter passed her Std. X examinations with 86% and her Std. XII with 89.9%, without your intercession none of this would have been possible.

Vernas Shareng Timung, Calicut

My family and I thank you dear Lord Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the innumerable favours granted to me.

Mrs. Nora D'Sa

Grateful thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the safe caesarian operation of my daughter and the gift of twins, a boy and a girl. Thank you for all the many graces and favours we have received.

Mrs. M. Correa

I thank Our Heavenly Mother and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of our grandson. May they get to know and love Jesus daily.

Maureen Hobkirk, Australia

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER MARCH 2010

Holy Father's General Intention: *That the world economy may be managed according to the principles of justice and equity, taking account of the real needs of peoples, especially the poorest.*

Missionary Intention: *That the Churches in Africa may be signs and instruments of reconciliation and justice in every part of that continent.*

Regd RNI no.9360/57;
Postal Regn. No. MH/MR/North East/089/2009-2011
WPP Licence no. MR/Tech/WPP-105/NE/2009-11
posted at Mumbai Patrika Channel Sorting Office,
on 1st & 2nd of every month

Subs: (One copy Rs. 20/-); **Inland:** Rs. 200 p.a.; **Airmail:** Rs.400 p.a

MARY WAS THERE

I was returning by bus after attending the Wednesday Novena service at Mahim. I was praying the Rosary as I always do on my journeys. As I neared the stop I got up and prepared myself, standing behind the driver and holding on securely to the guide-bar. The next thing I was aware of was that I was thrown out of the bus head first with my feet in the air. When I came to, I heard the driver exclaim that he had to jam the brakes as a taxi came into his lane. My head, neck, shoulders and wrists were bruised badly and I was in much pain, but for that, I was safe, even my CT scan was normal. It could have been a terrible accident. I am most grateful to Mother Mary for protecting me from a terrible accident.

Mrs. J.C. Pinto, Mumbai

Don Bosco's Madonna, has developed to its present form from a folder published in 1937, by late Fr Aurelius Maschio, on behalf of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Bombay.

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

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

You can help by establishing a Perpetual Burse with:

Rs 5000/-, 10,000/-, 15,000/- for a boy studying for the priesthood;

But any amount, however small, will be gratefully received.

Send your offerings by Payee cheque or Draft on Mumbai banks;

MO/PO/INTL MO/BPO/Bequests, Wills, Perpetual Burses, all favouring Don Bosco's Madonna or Bombay Salesian Society or Rev. Fr. Edwin D'Souza, (Trustee).

Please address everything to:

Rev. Fr. Edwin D'Souza, sdb.,

SHRINE OF DON BOSCO'S MADONNA,

Matunga - MUMBAI - 400 019 - INDIA

Phone/Fax: 91-22- 2414 6320, email: dbmshrine@gmail.com

http://www.donboscosmadonna.org/www.dbmshrine.org