

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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*Mary the first
missionary is
Queen of the
missions because
she is the Mother
of all peoples and
she can lead them
all to Jesus.*

Cover: **Madonna And Child**
Alinari/Art Resource, NY



From The Editor's Desk

What Love Does

Many years ago I was admitted for a considerable period of time to a hospital in the city. It wasn't long after my surgery that I began to notice someone who seemed to be almost a permanent visitor. After some weeks I was permitted to move around in a wheelchair and each time I passed the children's ward she was there, sitting by the bed of a still child. Her gaze seemed fixed, and she seldom moved except to stroke the child's hand, or wipe his brow, or whisper in his ear. Once or twice I could hear her humming a tune for him. She was obviously the mother of a very sick child.

Sometimes she was joined by other visitors, particularly the child's father, but much of the time she was alone, keeping her silent vigil faithfully. When I got to know her I was impressed by her gentleness, her quiet strength, her serene hope. She wasn't a Catholic, but was pleased to have me stop for a chat occasionally. She had a profound faith in God, and we sometimes prayed together for her three-year-old son, who was struggling for life after an accident.

Prema, as she was called, had three other children considerably older than her ailing youngest, Rohan. He had fallen down some steps, and had been unconscious ever since. Now, at last, he was showing signs of recovery with an occasional flicker of his eyes or squeeze of his hand. It was to be my joy to see him recover consciousness fully, and return to being the vivacious child his mother loved to describe.

Prema seldom left her son's side. She would snatch a few hours' sleep or slip down to the canteen only when she was sure that her husband or someone else could take over. Although she looked tired and her features were drawn, she never complained or showed any sign of irritability. Once, when I suggested to her that she should take more care of herself, she smiled at me knowingly. "Yes, I know," she said, "Everyone tells me I'm crazy. And I'm sure I am. But where else could I be except here with Rohan?" Then she added, "That's what love does."

I think Prema taught me more about love than years of reading or a lifetime of study ever could. She showed me how love comes not with a furrowed brow or a weary groan, but with a smile, and a light step, and much patience. She taught me that love has a logic of its own, warmer and deeper than the detached logic of reason. And in her love too I caught a glimpse of the love of the heart of God. He waits by our side in our immense patience, to strengthen us in our pain and to whisper words of comfort in our ear. It's what love does.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

10. HOW TO DANCE IN THE RAIN

by Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

It was a busy morning, about 8:30 and the place was just being opened up, when an elderly gentleman in his 80s arrived to have stitches removed from his thumb. He said he was in a hurry, as he had an appointment at 9:00 am. The nurse whom he approached for help saw him looking nervously at his watch every now and then, and decided, since she wasn't really busy with another patient, that she would attend to his wound first. On examining it she saw that it was well healed, so she talked to one of the doctors, got the needed supplies to remove his sutures and re-dress his wound.

While attending to his wound she entered into casual conversation with him, enquiring if he had another doctor's appointment that morning since he was in such a hurry. He mumbled something to the effect that he needed to go to the Nursing Home nearby to share breakfast with his wife. When the nurse inquired about her health he nonchalantly confided that she had been there for a while as she was a victim of Alzheimer's Disease. As the conversation continued, she asked if the wife would be upset if he was a bit late that day. To which he replied candidly that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now. Surprised, the nurse continued 'And you still go faithfully every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?' He smiled as he patted her hand and said, 'She doesn't know me, but I still know who she is.'

Deeply touched, the nurse had to hold back tears as he left. She had goose bumps on her arms and thought, 'That is the kind of love I want in my life.' True love is neither largely physical nor purely romantic. True love is acceptance of all that is, has been, will be, and will not be. But how rare to find that kind of love anywhere in the world! Love is perhaps the most talked of thing in our lives, one sees it bandied about everywhere, on hoarding advertisements, in short stories, in films - you name it and yet everyone seems to be hungering for it, as there is such a short fall of the genuine product!

Strangely enough, that is the one commandment which Jesus felt he had to give his disciples before he sent them out on their own, and he called it 'the new commandment' because it had something to do with the way he himself had loved us. 'Love one another as I have loved you!' The "as I have loved" is what makes all the novelty, difference and difficulty. Most of us love others the way we feel like, 'doing what comes naturally,' and believe that we are all pretty good at it. Nevertheless if genuine love is to last, and if it is to be the way Jesus loved us, then it must have at least these three sterling qualities in large quantities: Intimacy, Passion and Commitment. It is only when all these three qualities are present and in the right proportion and balance that love will last and fulfill all who engage in it as did the love of this elderly gentleman. If any one of the three is missing or not present in

the right proportion, then there is really no love worth talking about.

Intimacy, Passion and Commitment

Intimacy is born out of the time spent with another person seeking to plumb the depths of the mystery which is the other. Each person is a mystery and in spite of the millions of people who have walked this earth, we can say with a measure of certainty that no two are absolutely alike. Hence, a mere superficial knowledge of the other will not suffice, as each one is unique. It is when two people have spent a long time together, and held on to each other through thick and thin that this kind of intimate knowledge develops. We often see this quality of love in elderly couples who have spent well nigh fifty years or more in each other's company. They know each other like the back of their own hands! Or in a more scriptural way of putting it, one needs to have eaten several bushels of salt with another before one can be called his/her true friend! The implication here is that life shared together, especially round the table brings about an intimacy which bonds people together at great depth. However, in this kind of exchange there has to be both speaking and listening, sharing and under-standing, give and take on both sides in more or less equal measure. We need to approach the other not with acquisitive love but appreciative love – the kind that takes the time and the trouble to appreciate the beauty of the other, not just use the other for one's own gain!

Passion is the fiery aspect of love, that element of 'madness' that makes one ready even to lay down

one's life for the other – not because the other is highly qualified, worthy or superhuman, or because one is infatuated with the other, but simply because that is how genuine love behaves. It is this aspect that makes love a thrilling experience, brings joy to both when they are in each other's presence, makes them blind to the faults and limitations of the other, renders one capable of forgiving the very same fault even seventy times seven, enables one to hope always for the best even if what one actually sees is the worst, makes it possible to forget past hurts and cause them to disappear altogether, rejoices in the good that befalls the beloved and works to bring out the best in the other!

Commitment needs no explanation – the story given above about the elderly gentleman exemplifies what it involves. It issues a statement in action saying that "I am there for you, no matter what!" Again, this commitment is not based on what the other does or doesn't do for me, it has nothing to do with pan-scale love which measures out one's response according to the behaviour of the other. It flows from the richness of one's character and the emotional strength that one has within and is present even when the romance and emotional thrill of love have eventually dried up. No wonder this man could love his wife and be present for breakfast with her come rain or sunshine, day after day! What strength of character it reveals in such cases when it is not duty or pity for the other that prompts the response, but an inner necessity of wanting to be faithful to the other.

One of the 'best love stories of

the year' in China is that of a man who married a widow ten years his senior. Since the village would not accept such a union, they left the place and found refuge on a mountain range far away from all civilization. Over the next fifty years and more, the man hand-carved all by himself more than five thousand steps along the entire slope of that mountain so that his wife could go up and down in comfort whenever she needed to. Eventually when he expired, he passed away holding her hand in his and for days nothing could release his grip on his beloved wife's hand! Truly, love is stronger than death!

Eucharist, the Source

How does one cultivate such marvelous qualities in one's relationships with others, especially in the home? We need to go back to the source which is the Last Supper and Calvary in which Jesus 'showed the depth of his love - he loved his own unto the very end!' (Jn. 13:1-12). That is where we hear the encouraging and inspiring words of Jesus, 'Take and eat/drink - this is Myself given for you, poured out for you; Do this as a memorial of Me.' We come to the Eucharist to be filled with this love, to recharge our spiritual batteries, as it were, so that we can go back and begin to love again, no matter how often we have failed in the past. The Lord is prepared to give us as much of his love as we are ready to take, and what is more to use in the rest of the day. Unfortunately most of us are interested in so little, and don't even realize that in this instance, the ball is in our court. What we mean is that if we bring

five hosts to the altar at the time of the presentation of gifts, Jesus will be able to transform only those five. If the next day we bring five hundred, he will likewise transform those five hundred only - even though this time there are five thousand hosts on the side table nearby. These he will not transform simply because they have not been brought or presented at the altar.

The lesson then is: whatever we present to the Lord, only that much will he be able to transform and give back to us. So, if we come to the Eucharist with a miserly little measure, Jesus will fill it to the brim for us, yet we go back with a very weak impetus to love. But if we were to bring our entire selves and generously place them all at his service, what would he not be able to do with us? The more we give away of this love, the more room we make in ourselves to be replenished. And incidentally, the more we share such love with everyone we meet, the happier would the Lord be too, for this is why he came into our world, and this is the reason he chose and called us, to transform the whole world into a place where all live happily as brothers and sisters, as children of the one Father in heaven.

The happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the best of everything they have. "Life isn't about how to survive the storm, but how to dance in the rain". The genuine love which the Lord provides for us not only enables us to endure all the storms of life, but it also helps us enjoy life in all its dimensions. "I came that you may have and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10). □

CALLED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL!

Fr. Basil Thoranaplackal, sdb

In charge of the quasi-parish of St. Anthony, Vyasarpadi, Chennai

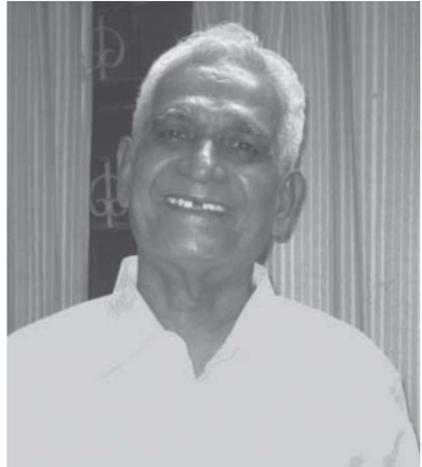


My mother who died at the grand old age of 105 would often remind me of my daddy dedicating me to the Lord at the age of three. This was how it happened:

My mum had gone to the well, with me, a three year old baby trudging behind her. For some reason she left the bucket and the rope at the mouth of the well and was distracted with some work. I was curious even then to imitate my mum drawing water. The bucket and the rope slipped off my hand with me jumping behind the bucket to catch it. The bucket and I landed at the bottom of the well full of stones and very little water. I was unhurt and it was miraculous. My father rushed down into the well to rescue me. He was astounded that I did not have even a scratch. "Who protected you?" were his astonished words. I said that someone or something held me. He raised me up on his shoulders and offered me to God, saying, "You have protected him for a reason. I dedicate him to you."

This then was the beginning of my vocation journey. Called at the bottom of the well is what my mum would often assert. There were numerous other instances which humbly remind me that I am in the hands of God and they are good hands. God has a purpose for my life; which I am discovering every day.

I joined Sacred Heart High school (later called Don Bosco Tiripattur), Tamil Nadu, in fourth form (Std. IX). My family always supported my



desire. My boarding life was enjoyable so I naturally joined the Salesians. I was ordained in 1963 at Shillong by Bishop Ferrando.

I was sent to the Assam Missions for around 10 years with the Khasis and the Gharos. Preaching Christ in the hills and the plains of Assam.

Later, in Chennai, I would preach with my video projector using religious Movies like 'Life of Christ, Don Bosco and our Lady.' They left a deep impression on the people.

My younger sister has joined the Missionary Sisters of Ajmer and is currently posted as Superior in the community at Sophia School, Jaipur, Rajasthan.

I must say that it is worth working in the Vineyard of the Lord, spreading the Gospel message. He takes care of us and all we need to do is to put ourselves at his disposal. □

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My son wants to know the meaning of

FIDELITY

by Giovanna Colonna

Mummy, why do daddy and you not separate?

Almost all my friends' parents are separated.

And this is a question that my friend heard from her fourth grade son.

A dear friend of mine who has been a teacher for several years confided to me: "It's very difficult to be a teacher today - family situations are becoming more and more precarious. When I think of the lives that some of the parents, I am amazed at the resilience and the performance of my students."

What's My Opinion?

I am a little uncomfortable. We have been married for twenty-six years. Is that much too many years? Should we keep up with what's happening today? I ask - Shouldn't they just separate without stopping to discuss their issues? Shouldn't they try to find some common ground? Why highlight only their differences? Don't they have anything in common? And so they separate, becoming independent and free but alas their marriage is over. They might remain good friends, but how good is that for the children? They become innocent victims who grow up to realise that their parents don't love each other anymore.

I believe in the value of the family!

What hypocrisy! What a farce!

But fidelity, keeping one's promises or one's word is a

fundamental value spanning all kinds of relationships: friendship, work, social service, international relations, medicine, politics, education, etc. When fidelity is betrayed that is not the only value that falls, with it come down values like sincerity, consistency, sacrifice and everything else. The entire beautiful bouquet of virtues comes down! Everything falls like a stack of dominoes, crashing down on one another.

What a fine mess! The one who betrays is certainly disloyal but he or she is not the only coward or liar, the list is long and so are the consequences. With infidelity you lose credibility which may not be easily restored. When sincerity is lost it is replaced with a lie that is often cloaked with a hollow apology that may be called human weakness, misunderstanding, the fragility of the relationship. But there is no excuse for infidelity: it is the result of having petty morals, selfishness, narrow-mindedness, laziness, seeking one's own advantage, one's own pleasure...or one's own wellbeing.

Does being faithful mean being stubborn, obstinate or holding on to one's point of view until proven wrong? Being faithful means above all being true to one's self. Its great test is sincere honesty, moral rectitude and the humility to recognize and admit one's

mistakes and errors in judgement. In marriage, in work, in friendship, in education as in other fields, the key is to continually review our positions and adapt to the situation by proposing one's willingness to sacrifice one's own interests for the common good and not being influenced by some underlying selfish beliefs or being pressured to ignore the distinctions between good and evil, right from wrong.

Christian Fidelity

Christian fidelity lasts forever. This can be seen in the witness and lives of the saints. God's fidelity goes beyond the unimaginable and his example has always proven to be true especially in the face of the infidelity of his creatures. He is ready to begin again. He has been faithful to the end even to dying on the Cross. He gave his life for us but his death led to his resurrection and because of his fidelity he bought our salvation. Fidelity leads to salvation.

The fidelity of God is universal,



The Betrothal of Mary and Joseph
(Raffaello)



gratuitous and constructive.

Why is God faithful? Why, even when we deny his existence and call to him only in our moments of anxiety and fear or at key moments of our lives, does he hear us? Why can we not lead peaceful and fulfilling lives without constantly seeking some gratification from God? The awareness of living without hope is very painful, it makes life difficult and we lose our sense of balance. We experience a sense of disorientation and we become aware of how fragile and vulnerable we are. How can we be faithful to ourselves and others when we cannot clarify our doubts, our fears and our anxieties? God exists and because we acknowledge his presence we can continue our dialogue with him, constructively engage him in a conversation, experience his forgiveness and receive his gifts that constantly renew and restore us. Man cries out and discovers that God has preempted his needs by opening ever wider horizons. We can therefore commit ourselves, make promises and feel urged to keep our vows with God as our guarantor. He will lead us and hold us close to his heart.

He will never betray us, he remains faithful always. □

walking with the Church



Your Sunday Best

by M. Meehan C.Ss.R

It is wonderful to see so many Catholics going to Mass each week in their Sunday best as they hear God say in the Third Commandment: "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day: The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, your God.

In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh day he rested. No work may be done on the Sabbath". (Exodus 20:8)

"Sabbath" is the Hebrew word for "rest". Why do Catholics keep their Sabbath or Rest Day on Sundays instead of Saturdays like the Jews? Vatican II Bishops in

their 1963 Document on the Liturgy; No 106, explains why beautifully:

"By an apostolic tradition which took its origin from the very day of Christ's Resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day; the Lord's Day or the Day of the Lord. On this day Catholics should come together into one place, so that hearing the Word of God and sharing in the Eucharist, they may call to mind the Passion, Resurrection and glorification of Jesus. The Lord's Day is, the original feast day and should be preached to the faithful as a day of joy and of freedom from work."

Catholics are not meant to be "workaholics", working every single hour and day of the week for their material needs. Time must be taken out to think more easily about God their Creator; time to re-create and renew their spiritual and physical life; to join with the community; with the parish, in praying together, and coming to know each other's needs, like the Apostles and early Christian communities. When you put your work and pleasures before God and family and parish seven days a



*Sunday Mass -
a true sign of a
practising Catholic*

week, you tend to become stale, when God would like you to rest and refresh yourself as He did at least one day in the week, the Sabbath.

"Sunday or the Lord's Day should be preached to the faithful as a day of joy and freedom from work" says Vatican II.

"A day of joy" to spend with your family and come ever closer to them in prayer and around the dinner table with music and song and good talk. So often during the week there's no time for the family, especially the little ones. Sunday should be family day for all.

"A day of joy" in good reading, good visiting, good cards, good art, good music, good sports, to lift and lighten your hearts, after a week of hard work. Sunday is a day of sunshine and laughter, and never a day of gloom and darkness and prohibitions as some Puritans and over-strict Catholics once made it, with closed blinds and no pleasures

allowed. Sunday is a day of joy; of "freedom from work" you don't have to do.

Every Sunday and Holy Day; Catholics are "obliged" to go to Mass wherever they are in the world, at home or abroad. They are obliged to go to Mass "out of love" for the Risen Christ each Sunday. They are obliged to go to Mass each Sunday and Holy Day "by the law."

"Sunday is the day when Mass is to be celebrated and observed as the foremost 'Holy Day of obligation' in the universal Church" (Canon 1246). And again: "On Sundays Catholics are obliged to share in the Mass" (Canon 1247). There are only two Holy Days of Obligation in India now; Christmas and Assumption of Our Lady.

Mass every Sunday is the true sign of a practising Catholic. Pray God and His Mother never to miss it. □

Hearing God

The young man had lost his job and didn't know which way to turn. So he went to see the old preacher. Pacing about the preacher's study, the young man ranted about his problem. Finally he clenched his fist and shouted, "I've begged God to say something to help me. Tell me, Preacher, why doesn't God answer?"

The old preacher, who sat across the room, spoke something in reply - something so hushed it was indistinguishable. The young man stepped across the room. "What did you say?" he asked. The preacher repeated himself, but again in a tone as soft as a whisper. So the young man moved closer until he was leaning on the preacher's chair. "Sorry," he said. "I still didn't hear you." With their heads bent together, the old preacher spoke once more. "God sometimes whispers," he said, "so we will move closer to hear Him." This time the young man heard and he understood. We all want God's voice to thunder through the air with the answer to our problem. But God's is the still, small voice...the gentle whisper. Perhaps there's a reason. Nothing draws human focus quite like a whisper. God's whisper means I must stop my ranting and move close to Him, until my head is bent together with His. And then, as I listen, I will find my answer. Better still, I find myself closer to God. □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



WITNESS TO THE LOVE OF CHRIST ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE (1647-1690) 16th October

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

This month we present the life of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, a sister of Visitation Order (founded by St. Francis de Sales and St. Jeanne de Chantal). She lived in France from 1647 to 1690 and died at the age of 43 at a convent in Paray-le-Monial where she lived for 19 years. It was there that Our Lord spoke to her through some extraordinary revelations.

Many Christians, even those who possess a scanty religious background, immediately associate the name of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque with devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus especially to the Novena of the nine first Fridays of the month.

In fact, this Saint, (together with St. Claude de la Colombiere) was responsible for the spread of the devotion to the Sacred Heart in the past. Today (at least in recent decades) this devotion seems to be on the decline. It no longer attracts today's "modern" children of the digital age. Christ's message does not appeal to them and they do not see the relevance of his call any longer and so they ignore, snub and even openly criticize it. They



seem to think that this devotion is steeped in sentimentality and is extremely exaggerated. They even allege that it borders on magic, a kind of spiritual utilitarianism that is not a little suspect (especially with reference to the "great promise" of the Sacred Heart). Critics of the spiritual life argue that this devotion is based on this world's problems with an admixture of enigmatic human emotions. How does one counter

these arguments? Are they all exaggerated or baseless? Not really. Unfortunately the text of the "promise" has been greatly simplified and reduced, devoid of any theological substance and detached from its historical context. They are sometimes published in the form of 'catch phrases' or slogans that have been erroneously adapted to read like some simple and easy, low priced recipe for eternal life, intended to obtain the grace of salvation. "We seek the promised miraculous results without stressing the demanding conditions that Christ himself required. Theological imprecision has crept into this devotion and this imprecision leads the believer to easy fall prey to sentimentality and a few external practices. True devotion to the Sacred Heart is really a school of holiness requiring a re-education of heart in order to reform one's thoughts and feelings conforming them to those of the Saviour" (G. Bettan). We could say that this devotion has become a cheap way of selling Christianity, offering a spiritual solution based on a few simple external practices. Actually this devotion is steeped in the spirituality of the Gospel of Christ.

Caretaker of the convent ass

The life of Margaret (she was confirmed at the age of 22 and took the name Mary) was very simple. She was born in France in the canton of Loire in 1647. Her parents were devout Christians and respectable members of society. From her childhood Margaret was endowed with special graces. She developed a burning love of God and offered herself totally to Him. She was always attracted to prayer,

solitude and silence despite being of a very vivacious child. She demonstrated a great love for the Eucharist and a great sensitivity towards the poor and the suffering. But adversity was never far away. At the age of eight she lost her father and thereafter her mother was tormented when she was in the employ of some selfish relatives. Margaret suffered much as she witnessed all this but she accepted this situation with great patience maintaining an attitude of respect and kindness towards her mother's persecutors. As she grew up she enjoyed the pleasures that came to her because of her social status. She frequented parties and receptions and wore beautiful clothes too - all very normal for a girl of her age. Her close relatives constantly brought her proposals for marriage which at first she did not mind but after some time she flatly refused, stating that she wished to commit herself to God. Eventually she entered the Order of the Visitation at the age of 24 at the monastery of Paray-le-Monial and she lived there for the next 19 years until her death.

Margaret's novitiate was difficult despite the fact she was a mystic.

She had become a devout disciple of Christ, her teacher, and she attained a high degree of contemplation. The superior and the community became aware of this but they did not fathom those mystical graces. Only because of her obedience, humility and her total and unflinching submissiveness was she admitted to her religious profession (1672). But her difficulties did not end. The superior and her fellow sisters put her through many trials. They wanted to know if she was really

endowed with supernatural and mystical grace. In short they wanted to know if she was a visionary. They found the perfect test (according to them). She was given a very mundane task: to look after – what seemed to be – a rather enterprising donkey that was donated to the community. It always seemed to stray far from the convent grounds as it grazed. Sister Margaret was disappointed not because she was made to look after the ass but because her superiors and sisters distrusted her and because of which she was prevented from telling the world about the visions of Jesus' great love for humankind by propagating the devotion to the Sacred Heart. She brought this problem to the Sacred Heart and he himself gave her his reassurance and the solution to her problem in (1675) the arrival of "his faithful servant and perfect friend:" the Jesuit Claude de la Colombiere who became her spiritual director (later a saint).

"Behold this heart...!"

Father de la Colombiere accepted Sister Margaret's visions. Unfortunately he was to remain there just for a year after which he was transferred. After much suffering he died in 1682. Sister Margaret (who came to know of his death earlier), said she would not pray for him, she said: "He must pray for us because he is in heaven. The Sacred Heart has much power in heaven."

The central message that Sister Margaret received in her revelations of Jesus can be summarized in a few simple and direct words: "Behold the heart that has loved men so much...but has met only with

ingratitude, irreverence and sacrilege in the Most Holy Sacrament." The main thrust of message of the Sacred Heart that Sister Margaret proclaimed to the world centred on the fact that "God so loved the world that he gave His Son." Christ showed his heart as the symbol of His infinite love for humankind and requested that this particular devotion be coupled with an upright way of life. The details of this revelation – as written by St. Margaret were as follows: "*I promise an excess of the mercy of my heart and through my all powerful love I will grant to all those who communicate for nine consecutive first Fridays, the grace of final repentance. They will not die in disgrace without receiving the sacraments...*" What a tremendous promise, it seems like a safe and eternal life-insurance policy!. However there is nothing magical or automatic about it. We know well from divine revelation that every gift of God to humankind and every grace always presupposes man's response, which is to live a life in consonance with 'the will of God' as expressed in His commandments. The promises of God and those made by Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque are firmly bound to the divine demands especially to living daily in conformity to the will of God, in total fidelity to his Word and to willingly take up one's daily cross (which is sometimes rather heavy) and walk behind Christ.

Devotion to the Heart of Jesus is a devotion that consists in being united to him and identifying oneself with him, responding to the demands of his love, whatever the cost. All else is pseudo-spiritual sentimentality. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Horse Looking

One day a man passed by a farm and saw a beautiful horse.

Hoping to buy the animal, he said to the farmer: "I think your horse looks pretty good, so I'll give you \$500 for him."

"He doesn't look good, and he's not for sale," the farmer said.

The man insisted, "I think he looks good and I'll up the price to \$1000!"

"He doesn't look so good," the farmer said, "but if you want him that much, he's yours."

The next day the man came back raging mad. He went up to the farmer and screamed, "You sold me a blind horse! You cheated me!"

The farmer calmly replied, "I told you he didn't look so good, didn't I?"

10 Questions

Our local paper runs a popular column called "10 Questions" that spotlights people who live in our community.

In addition to the usual inquiries about occupation and age, people are asked the questions that give a snapshot look of their personalities.

Recently one woman was asked, "What's the 'strangest' thing you ever bought?"

She answered, "Dog toothpaste."

Next question, "What is the 'most common' thing people say to you?"

Her answer: "Where did you get such white teeth?"

Pants Dilemma

A young man came home from the

office and found his bride sobbing convulsively. "I feel terrible," she told him. "I was pressing your suit and I burned a big hole in the seat of your trousers."

"Forget it," consoled her husband. "Remember that I've got an extra pair of pants for that suit."

"Yes, and it's lucky you have," said the woman, drying her eyes. "I used them to patch the hole."

Sister Repair

My sister has the courage, but not always the skills, to tackle any home repair project.

For example, in her garage are pieces of a lawn mower she once tried to fix. So I wasn't surprised the day my other sister, Pam, and I found our sister attacking her vacuum cleaner with a screwdriver.

"I can't get this thing to cooperate," she explained when she saw us.

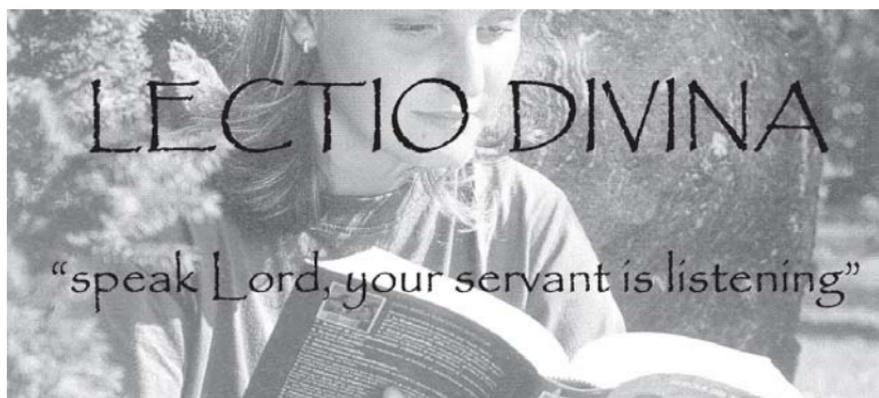
Pam suggested, "Why don't you drag it out to the garage and show it the lawn mower?"

Dear Dog

I am so sorry about you being sent to the dog pound for the broken lamp which you did not break; the fish you did not spill; and the carpet that you did not wet; or the wall that you did not dirty with red paint.

Things here at the house are calmer now, and just to show you that I have no hard feelings towards you, I am sending you a picture, so you will always remember me.

Best regards,
The Cat ☐



GOD SPEAKS

by Stefano Martoglio

After reflecting on the meaning of the Word of God, our second step is to know the structure of lectio divina.

A word cannot exist unless someone speaks it. God spoke and continues to speak to us. In fact, the letter to the Hebrews states: “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power.” (Heb. 1:1-3) We need words to communicate with someone, to “get through” to them. These Words are used in various ways, but their author is always God. The “*Lectio Divina*” is primarily a relationship with a Person, or rather with the three Persons of the Trinity and this relationship leads to a communion with them. The Apostle John writes: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and

touched with our hands, concerning the word of life...which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn 1, 1-4).

Our Relationship with God

The purpose of the Word is to help us to develop a relationship with God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is how Jesus summarizes it in the Gospel of John: “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full” (15, 11). What a beautiful thought! But we do not believe it sufficiently? The entire Word of God is meant to help us to develop a personal relationship with God. John observes once more: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may

believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (20, 30-31).

To create this "relationship" with us, it is God who takes the first step, and he did it not just throughout salvation history. Think of the sacraments that each of us receives. They are effective signs that whatever happens within us is not just hot air!!!

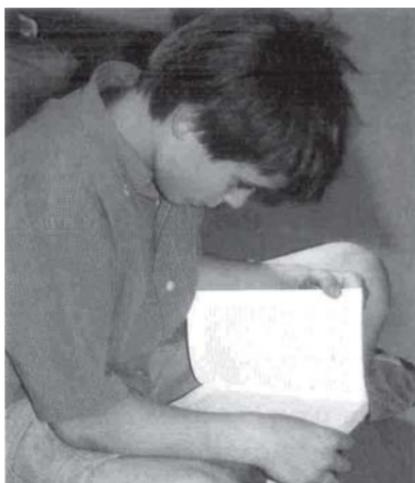
The "*Lectio*" is the tool that makes this communion concrete, helping us to understand what God is trying to say to us long before we realize it. It is God who, in the first place makes this one-to-one contact through the Word. Sometimes the Word is not effective till the community reaches that level of intense love generated by the Holy Spirit.

Lectio, going through the stages

Even though it has been difficult we have set the scene. Let us now go through the various stages of the "*lectio*."

First of all: "*Contemplatio*". We first need to contemplate on the love God has for us. People in a hurry, or too preoccupied, are never very good at this. Even when we love God, we immediately become aware of the fact that we do not know how to love Him... When contemplating on the love of God we realise that it is He who takes the first step towards us by relating to us through the Word.

Then there is "*Oratio*" - prayer, through which we become aware that it is the Lord who speaks to us through Scripture and breaks it like bread for us. Why should we pray? Because in the presence of these gifts we are like the blind man of Jericho, remember him? "They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."



And he cried, "Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "'Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.'" (Lk. 18, 37-42)

The "*Meditatio*": is our commitment to remove anything that impedes our vision. The love of God that seeks us out does not leave us indifferent. "But their minds were hardened; for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains un-lifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed." (2 Cor 3, 14-16)

Finally, '*Actio*': is seeking to obey the Lord who invites us to "Go, wash your eyes in the light of my Word and you will see." It is then that we discover the love that urges us to bring down the inner barriers that prevent us from wanting to build this relationship with Him. □

REFLECTION
ON THE ROSARY

Quiet

**A TRUE HOMELAND
WITH A WINDOW**

by His Holiness P

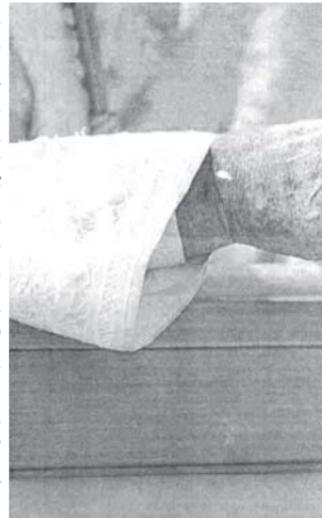
On Wednesday evening, 12 May, 2010, the Pope was at the Chapel of the Apparitions for a Prayer Vigil, where he blessed the candles of the faithful and led the recitation of the Holy Rosary. The following is a translation of the Pope's Address which was given in Portuguese.

Dear Pilgrims,

All of you, standing together with lighted candles in your hands, seem like a sea of light around this simple chapel, lovingly built to the honour of the Mother of God and our mother, whose path from earth to heaven appeared to the shepherd children like a way or light. However, neither Mary nor we have a light of our own: we receive it from Jesus. His presence within us renews the mystery and the call of the burning bush which once drew Moses on Mount Sinai and still fascinates those aware of the light within us which burns without consuming us (cf. Ex 3:2-5). We are merely a bush, but one upon which the glory of God has now come down. To him therefore be every glory, and to us the humble confession of our nothingness and the unworthy adoration of the divine plan which will be fulfilled when "God will be all in all" (cf. 1 Cor 15:28). The matchless servant of that plan was the Virgin full of grace: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).

Dear pilgrims, let us imitate Mary, letting her words "Let it be done to me" resound in our lives. God ordered Moses: "Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground" (Ex 3:5). And that is what he did: he would put his shoes back on to free his people from slavery in Egypt and to guide them to the promised land. This was not about the possession of a parcel of land or about the national territory to which every people has a right; in the struggle for the freedom of Israel and in the exodus from Egypt, what appears central is above all the freedom to worship, the freedom of a religion of one's own. Throughout the history of the chosen people, the promise of a homeland comes more and more to mean this: the land is granted in order to be a place of obedience, a window open to God.

In our time, in which the faith in many places seems like a light in danger of being snuffed out for ever, the highest priority is to make God visible in the world and to open to humanity a way to God.



Spaces

AND IS A PLACE W OPEN TO GOD

ope Benedict XVI

And not to any god, but to the God who had spoken on Sinai; the God whose face we recognize in the love borne to the very end (cf. Jn 13:1) in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. Dear brothers and sisters, worship Christ the Lord in your hearts (cf. 1 Pet 3:15)! Do not be afraid to talk of God and to manifest without fear the signs of faith, letting the light of Christ shine in the presence of the people of today, just as the Church which gives birth to humanity as the family of God sings on the night of the Easter Vigil.

Brothers and sisters, in this place it is amazing to think how three children entrusted themselves to the interior force which had enflamed them in the apparitions of the Angel and of our heavenly Mother. In this place where we were repeatedly requested to recite the rosary, let us allow ourselves to be attracted by the mysteries of Christ, the mysteries of Mary's rosary. The recitation of the rosary allows us to fix our gaze and our hearts upon Jesus, just like his Mother, the supreme model of contemplation of the Son. Meditating upon the joyful, luminous, sorrowful and glorious mysteries as we pray our Hail Marys, let us reflect upon the interior mystery of Jesus, from the Incarnation, through the Cross, to the glory of the Resurrection; let us contemplate the intimate participation of Mary in the mystery of our life in Christ today, a life which is also made up of joy and sorrow, of darkness and light, of fear and hope. Grace invades our hearts, provoking a wish for an incisive and evangelical change of life so that we can say with Saint Paul: "For me to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21) in a communion of life and destiny with Christ.



The devotion and affection of all of you, the faithful who have come here from all around the world, is clear to me. I bring with me the worries and hopes of our times, the sufferings of our wounded humanity and the problems of the world, and I place them at the feet of Our Lady of Fatima: Virgin Mother of God and our own dear Mother, intercede for us before your Son, that the family of nations, both those called Christians and those who do not yet know the Saviour, may live in peace and harmony, in order that they come together as the one people of God, to the glory of the most holy and indivisible Trinity. Amen. □

Looking for that Dream House

by Dixie Laslett Thompson

Sally had made up her mind this Sunday would be the day they would find the perfect house that she and Don had been dreaming about, ever since they had married. At church that morning she had even included this in her prayers. As soon as they came home she didn't even take time to look at the Women's pages in their Sunday paper, she was so eager to study the classified section. Surely, somewhere, there would be a house advertised that they could afford.

As she pored over the alluring sounding advertisements, her heart sank as she read the prices asked. How could any average family possibly buy a house in this day and age, she fumed.

"Find anything interesting?" Don asked, taking a brief moment away from the Sports section.

Don always seemed to know what she was thinking, and she hadn't realized he'd been watching her. She knew he was beginning to become just as discouraged as she was. He works so hard all week, she thought dispiritedly, I mustn't let him know just how much this means to me.

"They all seem to be either ranch-type or split-levels," she answered. "Somehow I've always longed to have a house with both an upstairs and a downstairs. I just won't settle for anything less." She was trying to keep it light, but it was an effort.

Responding to her somewhat bantering mood, Don chuckled. "I know you also insist on a back

door as well as a front door...nothing less will do. Tell me, how can you be so sure just what you want?"

"That's easy," she assured him. After this pokey apartment, it would be heaven to have a place with two doors. She didn't add that it was just the way she had known Don was the only one for her as soon as they met. Don, with his dark good looks, his habit of teasing her about her freckles. She had to find the house that would be meant just for them. She had the feeling if Don couldn't get it for them, it would be a serious blow to his pride. Even though he didn't talk much about it, she knew he wanted the house just as much as she did.

Don was trying so hard to better himself, going to school three nights a week, poring over his studies every night at home, as soon as five-year-old Jeffrey and three-year-old Janey were safely tucked into their beds, in the only bedroom they had.

Sally prayed silently that today would be different from all the other Sundays when they had piled into the car to make their weekly trip to the suburbs. Searching for the right house they could afford was a way of life for them. As soon as they returned from church, they never made any other plans.

As Sally looked around the crowded room with toys piled in corners, books stacked on tables, she decided something must be done. There was no point in making the usual round of real

estate offices and developments. That simply meant constant calls from salespersons all week that never amounted to anything. Either the houses offered were too high-priced or required a down payment much more than they could afford. Or they just didn't happen to be the type of house they'd been dreaming about.

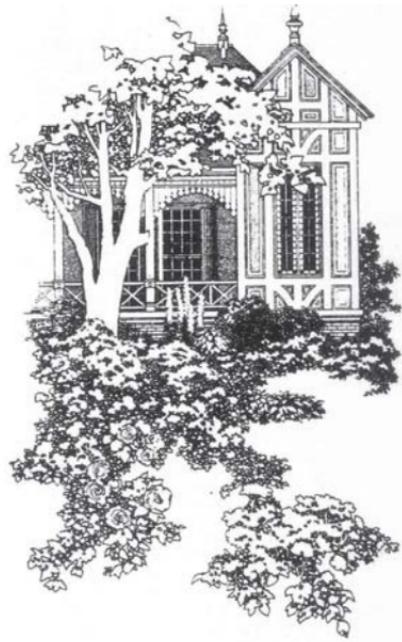
"Don," she asked suddenly. "How about just driving up and down streets this time and trying to find someone who wants to sell privately? That would eliminate the commission, and we just might be lucky that way."

When Don agreed, Sally hastily packed a picnic lunch and they all piled into the car, with Sally saying another silent prayer that this Sunday would be the day. It *had* to be.

One thing they both agreed upon was a fenced-in yard for the children. The house could be small, but it must have at least two bedrooms, so they wouldn't have to worry about opening up their sleep sofa every night before they could go to bed. And closets! What luxury it would be to have plenty closet space so everything wouldn't look so cluttered. And Don insisted upon a street without too much traffic.

Perhaps, Sally pondered, if they drove farther out in the suburbs the prices wouldn't be so high. But no, that wouldn't do, because the commutation for Don to reach his office in the city would be much higher.

When they reached a little village with only a few stores, Sally said impulsively, "Let's try this place. It looks like the kind of town I've always thought would be nice to raise children in. If we



just ride around the side streets, we might be lucky and find one with a private sign."

Noticing Sally's disconsolate expression, Don tried consoling her. "These houses are all too big for us anyway," he said. "They'd either cost too much or be too expensive to maintain."

"Don!" Suddenly Sally's voice sounded different somehow. "Turn around. You know we didn't go all the way down that street on the right. It seems to me there was a house there with a sign in front. It's so much smaller than the others, and set back from the road, you probably didn't even notice it."

The house was pale yellow, with green shutters, with a small, screened porch on one side. Sally's heart leaped as she saw the small, inconspicuous sign, "For Sale by Owner, Inquire within". Dared she hope this

might be it?

An attractive, middle-aged woman greeted them. Showing them through the house, Mrs. Reed chatted constantly, hardly giving them a chance to say anything. She told them what a good neighborhood it was for children, quiet, with very little traffic, yet close enough to the village for churches and stores.

Her price wasn't out of line either, and Sally was beginning to think it was too good to be true until she mentioned the down payment, twice as much as they were able to pay.

Mrs. Reed seemed oblivious of the sudden silence that followed. She explained she was anxious to sell because, being a widow, even keeping the tiny yard in shape was getting to be too much for her. Besides, her son and his wife wanted her to live with them.

By this time Sally had come down from 'cloud nine' she had reached when she first saw the house. She tried avoiding Don's eyes, knowing how he must be feeling too. As she watched Janey and Jeffrey playing happily in the fenced-in yard, Sally couldn't bear the idea of not having this house.

"It has the upstairs you wanted," Don said. "And two bedrooms...even space for a possible third in the attic."

What was Don trying to do, Sally brooded. He should be making excuses to get away from this chatty woman. If they couldn't buy the house, what was the point of talking any more about it?

As though reading her mind, Don interrupted Mrs. Reed's constant flow of talk. "We both love your house," he said, "but let's face it, we just don't have nearly enough

for the down payment you need. I'm sorry we've taken up so much of your time, but I just don't see how we could swing it."

Mrs. Reed was very understanding as she helped Sally get the children back into the house, over the cries of protest.

When they finally were able to get back in the car, Don seemed not at all anxious to leave. He sat staring at the house, his shoulders drooped, his lips set in a grim line. Sally's heart sank as she watched him.

Suddenly, just as Don turned on the ignition, the front door opened and Mrs. Reed hurried toward them, waving her arms.

"I can tell you both love my house just as much as I do," she gasped. "And you're just the type of family I'd like to see in it. You know I wouldn't want to sell to just anybody." She was talking so fast she had to pause to catch her breath.

"It seems so *right* for your dear little family, so I have an idea. Why don't you consider renting it from me...with an option to buy, of course. That way you could do just what you're doing now, and save toward the down payment."

It didn't take long for Don to make up his mind. As he hastily left the car to join Mrs. Reed, Sally couldn't help noticing the sudden straightness of his shoulders, the erect way he carried himself, so very different than a few moments ago.

She gave a silent prayer of thanks. She was remembering how she had prayed so hard in church that morning. Something surely must have guided them to this particular house, and the Lord had answered her prayers at last. □

TRUTH AND LIES

by Gianni Asti (T/A:ID)

Humility: Basis for Sincerity

Continuing our reflections on virtues that need to be sown in the hearts of youngsters we dwelt on the virtue of obedience that Don Bosco taught his boys. Here we deal with another virtue, one that is also 'out-of-fashion' today: humility.

Jesus is the model par excellence of humility. Just imagine, after he is found in the temple, he returns to Nazareth and for the next thirty years he is subject to Mary and Joseph, two human beings. Humility pleases God immensely and makes us acceptable to one another.

If the virtue of humility is so difficult for us as adults, it is much more difficult for youngsters, especially teenagers. At their age they yearn to move away from home to find refuge in the world of their friends and peers. As they try to assert themselves they begin to have conflicts, disputes and little outbursts with their elders. They rebel against any advice and shrug off any kind of parental control by lying. They constantly hide their wrongs, their poor performance at school, their questionable friends, loose language outside the home, stealing money and perhaps their first experience of smoking or trying some soft drugs.

Over the years their little lies grow much bigger and have greater consequences that will affect their relationships with their spouses, families, their employers or political affiliates.

It was for this reason that Don Bosco put these recommendations into the prayer book he wrote for his boys.



ADVICE TO HIS BOYS

DON BOSCO'S

Two Recommendations

"Here are two things that I earnestly recommend to you. First: be honest with your parents and your teachers. Do not try and cover up your shortcomings, much less deny them. Always candidly tell the truth: lies, not only offend God, they make you children of the devil, the prince of lies. When you know the truth and you still choose to lie, you become a disgrace before your companions and you earn the displeasure of your superiors. Secondly, I recommend that you take the advice and heed the warnings of your superiors as a rule for your life and your work. Blessed are you if you do these things. You will always be happy and all that you do will be done with a pure motive and to the edification of those around you. So in conclusion let me just say: give me an obedient youngster and I will make him a saint and on the other hand a disobedient youngster is

on the road to lose all the other virtues as well" (from *The Companion of Youth*).

Therefore, sincerity is a very precious virtue to cultivate in youngsters who are often inclined to hide things that would get them into trouble or they might invent some story to draw attention to themselves among their peers. They also fear telling the truth about themselves because they are afraid of losing the esteem of their friends, their superiors and often their regular confessor.

It was for this that Don Bosco insisted that the boys be sincere because he knew they would find it difficult. In this connection here are two dreams that he had.

The Crystal Doors with curtains

On the evening of 3rd May 1868 Don Bosco told his boys a dream he had when he went down to hell accompanied by an unknown personage....

"Come inside," my friend went on, "and see how our good and almighty God lovingly provides a thousand means for guiding your boys to penance to save them from eternal death."

Taking my hand, he led me into the cave. As I stepped in, I found myself suddenly transported into a magnificent hall whose curtained glass doors concealed more entrances.

Above one of them I read this inscription: The Sixth Commandment. Pointing to it my guide exclaimed, "Transgressions of this commandment caused the eternal ruin of many boys."

"Didn't they go to confession?"

"They did, but they either omitted or insufficiently confessed the sins against the beautiful virtue of

purity."

This is precisely the main obstacle for many teenagers and for which reason they ignore confession altogether. We need to find the opportunity to educate them on the subject of sexuality and affective maturity in order to help them to find ways to confess their sins especially those that they are ashamed to mention by name and for which they resort to lying as they have done in earlier confessions. Adults often recall some of their bad confessions from the time they were children or teenagers when they deliberately withheld grave sins out of shame.

Don Bosco continued his dream: "Others were not truly sorry or sincere in their resolve to avoid those sins in the future. There were even some who, rather than examine their consciences, spent their time trying to figure out how best to deceive their confessor. Only those who die truly repentant shall be eternally happy. Now do you want to see why our merciful God brought you here?"

He lifted the curtain and I saw a group of Oratory boys – all known to me – who were there because of this sin. Among them were some whose conduct seemed to be good.

"Now you will surely let me take down their names so that I may warn them individually," I exclaimed.

"It won't be necessary!"

"Then what do you suggest I tell them?"

"Always preach against immodesty. A generic warning will suffice. Bear in mind that even if you did admonish them individually, they would promise, but not always in earnest. For a firm resolution, one needs God's grace which will not be denied to your boys if they pray.

God manifests His power especially by being merciful and forgiving. On your part, pray and make sacrifices. As for the boys, let them listen to your admonitions and consult their conscience. It will tell them what to do." (EBM 9:95-96)

Youngsters with padlocks

To emphasize the difficulties that youngsters have in being honest here is another dream that we can only summarise. It is the famous dream of the padlocks. Don Bosco said that he was on the road that leads from Becchi to Capriglio when he met a distinguished looking gentleman who invited him to take a look at the wheel of his large contraption. This was what he saw:

"I immediately looked through the lens. What a sight! All the Oratory boys stood there before my eyes. I saw seven other boys, defiant and distrustful, their lips padlocked. Three were also clamping their ears shut with their hands. Painfully amazed to see these boys in their predicament, I asked why their lips had been padlocked.

"Can't you see for yourself?" the stranger replied. "These are the boys who refuse to tell."

"Tell what?"

"They won't tell; that's all."

I understood then that he meant confession. These are boys who, even when questioned by their confessor, will not answer or will answer evasively or contrary to the truth. They say "no" when they should say "yes."

When Don Bosco heard those comments he recalled several instances concerning his boys! He was able to ascertain this fact with the priests who taught his boys and the confessors in the house. Initially

one does not know much about a youngster. The confessor does not ask questions that would tempt the youngster to lie. Only after earning the confidence of the youngster, after a few months or even years does the young penitent reach complete sincerity and only then will the confessor be able to assure him of peace of soul.

"His friend went on:

"Do you see those three clamping their hands over their ears? Aren't they a sorry sight? Well, they are boys who not only do not tell their sins, but even refuse to listen to their confessor's advice, warnings, and orders. They hear your words but pay no heed to them. The other four boys, instead, listened to your exhortations and warnings but do not put them into practice.

"How can they get rid of that padlock?"

"Let pride be cast out of their hearts" (EBM 6,533-534).

What has just been said about sincerity in confession can be applied to other situations in the lives of the youngsters who wish to be upright and honest. This is absolutely necessary if we want to train youngsters to be honest citizens in our society. But youngsters should have before them adult models who are sincere and transparent in all the areas of their lives. How harmful it is for youngsters to have before them models who lie, who are corrupt in the fields of business, politics, economics and communications media!

The lies of youngsters become much larger in adults and they lead up to devious schemes deceiving nations that are smaller and weaker than themselves. These become the basis for many of the wars that are unleashed upon our world. □

NEWSBITS

PATTAYA

The Pattaya orphanage, home to abandoned children for almost 40 years, is taking in more children from teenage pregnancies, says its director.

"Now, more and more of our residents are children born to secondary school girls out of wedlock," Father Michael Weera Phrangrak told UCA News.

"Due to the many entertainment places (in Pattaya), many Thai women from poor regions of the country come here to cater to sex tourism. These women are not ready to bring up children," he said.

There are increasingly unwanted children due to domestic problems. "A few months ago, we received a one-month-old baby born of a girl who was raped by her father."

At present there are 182 children at the orphanage, from new born babies to university students.



Fr. Weera Phangrak

Children of school-age attend Catholic schools and healthcare is provided by a full-time nurse.

"I'm very thankful to the orphanage for taking care of me, said Wanida Kunrak, a 12th grade student who has been living here since birth. "When I graduate I hope that I will have an opportunity to help people like what this orphanage is doing." Father Weera says the orphanage also accepts children whose parents have died or gone to jail. "Many times we have received requests from hospitals asking us to accept abandoned children." The orphanage started as a result of the Vietnam War, when many American soldiers had children with Thai women.

"After the soldiers went home leaving their children behind, the mothers were too poor to bring them up. Thus the orphanage was started," said Fr. Weera, who succeeded orphanage founder, American Redemptorist Father Raymond Brennan.

The American priest died in 2003.

VATICAN CITY

Pope Benedict has erected the new Myanmar Diocese of Kalay and announced Bishop Felix Lian Khen Thang as its first prelate.

Bishop Lian is presently auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Hakha from which the territory of the new diocese has been taken, Fides reports. The Kalay Diocese will be a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Mandalay.

The new diocese of Kalay is bordered to the east by the Diocese of Myitkyina and to the south by the Archdiocese of Mandalay and

the Diocese of Hakha.

The parish church of St. Mary's Parish in Kalaymyo will become the Cathedral of the newly erected diocese. *Cathnewsasia*

GOA

Delays of up to 14 years in processing marriage annulment cases are forcing some Catholics to opt for a live-in relationship or civil marriage, a Goan church leader has warned.

Father Rosario Oliveira, judicial vicar of Goa and Daman, says the archdiocesan court has seven qualified judges, which is not enough to handle the ever increasing caseload.

In 2007 and 2008 the court received 50 applications, but the figure jumped to 71 in 2009 with many more expected this year.

Father Oliveira points out that annulments should be completed within 12 months but many cases have dragged on for years. The situation is further complicated by a rule that individual cases cannot be transferred between one judge and another, and it is difficult for the court's senior priests, because of health problems, to all assemble for the sittings that are mandatory to ratify a verdict. *UCAN*

HONG KONG

The Red Cross Hong Kong is honouring the late Maryknoll missionary Father Sean Patrick Burke with its Humanity Award for his dedication to the marginalised in the country.

The Red Cross, in conjunction with the public broadcasting organisation Radio and Television Hong Kong, made the announcement at the presentation of the third annual Humanity



*Fr. Sean with his sister
Sr. Maureen Burke*

Awards.

A statement released by Red Cross praised Father Burke, who had "worked for the betterment of life of the disadvantaged in Hong Kong for three decades."

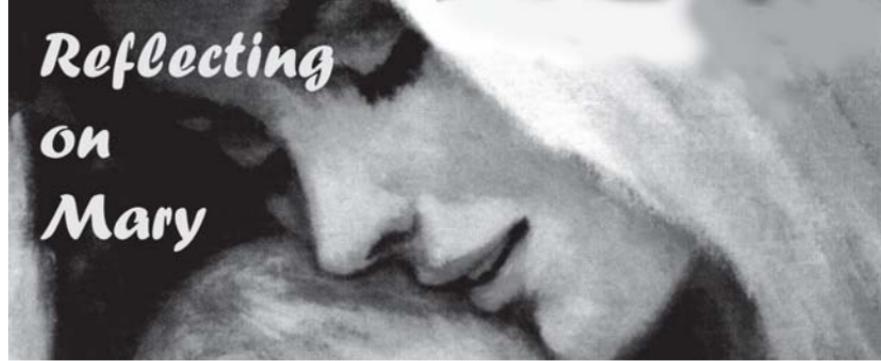
In 1978, the year he was ordained and sent to Hong Kong, Father Burke founded Helping Hand a charity that houses and cares for the homeless and impoverished elderly.

The Red Cross also mentioned that Father Burke had helped to advocate for "the new concept of palliative care" and to run the Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care. While at the society, he planned and built the first independent hospice, the Bradbury Hospice, in Hong Kong.

"His tireless and passionate services toward humanity should definitely guide us to the spirit of humanity," the Red Cross said.

Born in Croyden, England Sean moved with his family to Ohio at the age of 11. He joined the Maryknoll missionaries in 1971.

In addition to founding Helping Hand, Father Burke was the head chaplain for Hong Kong's prisons since 1994, and served as the local, and then regional superior for the Maryknoll missionaries from 2000-2007. *UCAN* □



**Reflecting
on
Mary**

QUEEN OF HEAVEN'S ROSARY

by Crusader of the Divine Child

(This article first appeared in Don Bosco's Madonna in June 1974)

In the year 1884, in Naples, (Italy) an Italian girl 19 years old named Fortuna Agrelli, lay on a bed of intense suffering. She had been in that condition for more than a year, and was now pronounced hopeless by her doctors. Her family therefore began a Novena of Rosaries to beg the Mother of God to cure her.

After a few days the Queen of Heaven appeared to the dying girl, in company with St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena. In her left arm the Holy Virgin held the Infant Jesus, and in her right hand a rosary. The girl exclaimed eagerly, "O Queen of the Holy Rosary, cure me!"

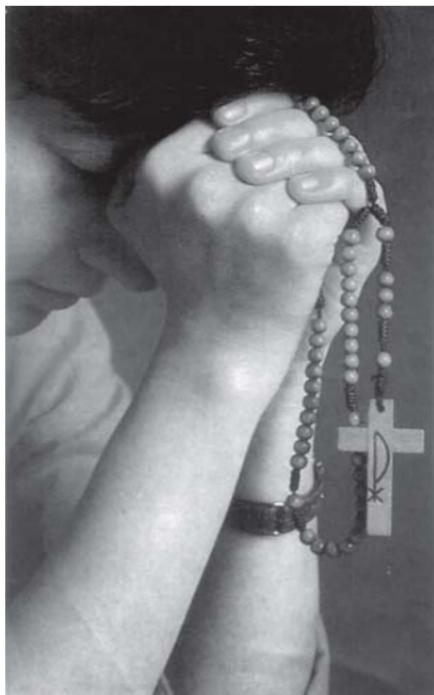
The Blessed Virgin answered, "Because you invoke me by that title so pleasing to me, I cannot refuse you. Make three Rosary Novenas, and you shall obtain what you ask and make it known to everybody that whoever desires to obtain favours from me should make three Rosary Novenas and three more in thanksgiving. Remember that the title 'Queen of the Holy Rosary is

most precious and dear to me."

Needless to say, Fortuna Agrelli was soon completely cured. Pope Leo XIII was so deeply impressed by this incident that no fewer than twenty encyclicals came from his pen during his lifetime, urging the clergy and the faithful to love and recite the Rosary everyday.

The saintly Pope Pius IX who had a remarkable devotion to Our Blessed Lady, when asked one day by a group of Catholic pilgrims to bless a quantity of rosaries, drew out of his pocket his own bead and said, "The Rosary, my children, is the greatest treasure of the Vatican. When you go home, tell your friends that the Pope does not only bless rosaries, but recites the complete rosary of fifteen decades each day, and he wants all Catholics to pray this great prayer everyday. Treasure up these words of mine as precious mementos of your visit to the Pope."

When the Blessed Virgin



appeared repeatedly at Lourdes (France) in 1858 and likewise at Fatima (Portugal) in 1917, she, as Queen and Mother of all mankind exhorted us all, through her little messengers to say the rosary daily. It is a bad sign to neglect seriously this great form of prayer!

Encouraging promises

The Holy Virgin revealed to St. Dominic and Blessed Alan 12 promises in favour of those who recite the Rosary daily. The 12 promises are as follows:

1. To all those who shall recite my rosary devoutly, I promise my special protection and very great graces.
2. The Rosary will be a very powerful armour against hell; it will destroy vice, deliver from sin and dispel heresy.

3. The Rosary will make virtue and good works flourish, and will obtain for souls the most abundant Divine mercies; it will substitute in hearts, love of God for love of the world, elevate them to desire heavenly and eternal goods. Oh, that souls would sanctify themselves by this means.

4. Those who trust themselves to me through the Rosary will not perish.

5. Those who shall recite my Rosary piously, considering its mysteries, will not be overwhelmed by misfortune, nor die a bad death. The sinner will be converted; the just will grow in grace and become worthy of eternal life.

6. I will deliver very promptly from purgatory the souls devoted to my Rosary.

7. The true children of my Rosary will enjoy great glory in heaven.

8. What you shall ask through the Rosary, you shall obtain (see above, her promise to Fortuna Agrelli)

9. Those who propagate my Rosary will obtain through me aid in all their necessities.

10. I have obtained from my Son that all the members of the Rosary Confraternity shall have for their intercessors in life and death, the saints of heaven.

11. Those who recite my Rosary faithfully are all my beloved children, the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.

12. Devotion to my Rosary is a special sign of predestination.

REJOICE, SO HIGHLY FAVoured!

by J. Patrick Gaffney, SMM., STD

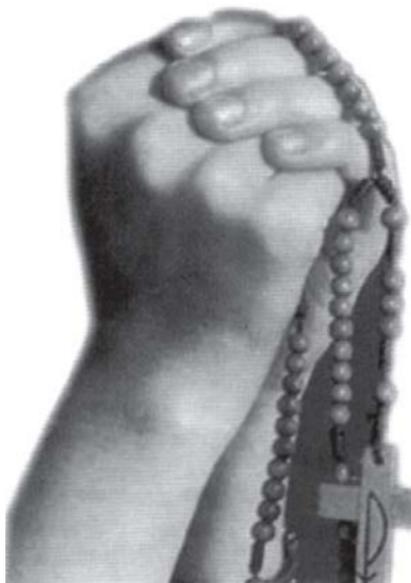
The Month of October is the month of the Rosary. Throughout the Church, Our Blessed Mother will be saluted innumerable times as we tell the beads while praying the words of the Angel Gabriel, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Lk. 1:28).

The beauty of the Angelic Salutation is a predominant theme of Saint Louis de Montfort:

*Let all sing out and proclaim
With lofty; noble voices,
The greatness of the Ave
In praise of Holy Mary
By the Ave Maria
Sin will be destroyed.
By the Ave Maria
Great Jesus will Reign!*

*The Ave ravished Mary
And her faithful consent;
And now she is still ravished
When she hears the Ave prayed.*

But is *Ave* or "Hail Full of Grace," the best translation of the Greek original of Gabriel's salutation? Saint Jerome (387-420?) surely thought so, for his Latin Vulgate edition of the Lucan annunciation narrative contains the words *Ave Gratia Plena*. However, many if not most Scripture scholars today prefer what appears to be a more faithful translation: "Rejoice, So Highly Favoured...."



Notice that God in His opening greeting calls this teenager not Mary, but by a new name: *kecharitomene*, which literally means "so highly favored," or "so greatly gifted." A Scriptural change or addition of a name often discloses God's gift to an individual which is to be manifested in a new vocation. Remember Gideon, that terrified Old Testament leader? God gave him a new name: "Mighty Man of Valour" (Jdg 6:12). This was a gift of God to Gideon and signified his new vocation: he is to be the invincible warrior for the cause of God. And so it happened. When Simon was named Peter ("Rock") by Jesus, a new grace and

vocation is bestowed upon the apostle. Henceforth he and his successors are to be the solid rock on which the Church of Jesus Christ is to be built. And so it happened.

Mary's new name, "so highly favoured," indicates that she receives from God a new grace, a new vocation. Her title denotes that she is gifted, graced, favoured. This is her vocation, her very being. What precisely is that favour or gift which God bestows upon her? "You have found favour with God...you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and shall call His name Jesus...He will be called the Son of the Most High" (Lk 1 :30-33). The Father gifts Mary with His All, His Eternal Word, His Son: Jesus. Her vocation is to be the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God. And so it happened.

This favour defines Mary and to such a point that her entire being forever cries but one word: "Jesus"! Mary's grace is unmerited, unearned. As any gift it must be freely accepted so that its reality can be experienced. And to this infinite, free Gift, Mary lovingly surrenders herself entirely: "Let it be done unto me according to your word." She bears within her soul and womb, the favour, the gift of God which surpasses all: His Eternal Wisdom, His Beloved. No wonder that the first word spoken by Gabriel to Mary, the first word of Redemption (*chaire*) is literally translated as "Rejoice!"

During this month of the Rosary, we are even more conscious of our privilege of praising Our Lady with all the angels and saints as we repeat the beautiful music of "Rejoice, So Highly Favoured. ..."
It is the wedding song of the Spirit

to His Immaculate, beloved Bride, the Church in all her beauty. At times during our private recitation of the rosary, we may want to substitute these words for the traditional "Hail Mary, full of grace..."

St. Louis de Montfort tells us that it is through the song of the Angelic Salutation that the redemptive Incarnation takes place. How powerful then is our daily rosary with its Gospel mysteries and peaceful background melody of the effective announcement of Salvation: "Rejoice, So Highly Favoured..."

It is especially through the rosary that Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, shares her Gift with us. Imitating her and influenced by her maternal love, Jesus becomes more and more our Gift also, for the only thing Our Lady can do is to share Jesus with us. Dwelling in her heart, we too lovingly surrender all, so that we may like her, live Jesus and share this infinite Gift with everyone whom we meet. □



**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Many thanks to our Lady for the gift of a baby boy to my brother after 9 years of marriage. *Mrs. Delphine Sequeira, Mumbai*

Dear Mother Mary thank you for blessing us with a normal baby.

Diago George Philip, NY, USA

I am grateful to Our dear Lord, Our Lady and Don Bosco for the safe C section of our daughter and the gift of a healthy baby boy. Thank you for always protecting our dear family and for the many blessings bestowed on us.

Mrs B.R. Corrie, Bangalore

Thank you, Mother Mary for helping me find a new job.

Christopher, Mumbai

My sister-in-law was diagnosed with a malignant tumour of the breast and had to undergo an operation. Our fear was that the surrounding area would be infected or the breast would have to be removed. We are sincerely grateful to Our Blessed Lord and Mary Help of Christians through whose intercession not only was the tumour removed but not a single tissue or cell was affected. Mary, do keep us under your constant care.

Rosemary Morris, Lucknow

It was Wednesday April 21, 2010. I was reciting the Legion of Mary Tessera prayers when I suddenly heard a loud noise. A part of the wooden frame from the ceiling (5 feet long) had fallen on the floor at the feet of my four year old grandson. He was bending and looking at it absolutely unhurt. It was the miraculous intervention of Our Blessed Mother who protects and looks after her children as she looked after her son Jesus. Thank you Mother Mary and continue to protect us always.

P. Fernandes, New Zealand

I am grateful to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Mary Help of Christians for their constant help and protection and especially for gradually helping me recover some money that two people have borrowed from me.

M.W. Dodd, Pune

Our heartfelt thanks dear Mother Mary for standing by us to shield and protect us from a landslide during our visit to Arunachal Pradesh, for protecting our son and for bringing us safely out of a drastic situation when our vehicle was stranded and we were assisted by three men who came to assist us.

A Devotee

My belated and most sincere thanks to our dearest Jesus and Mother Mary for helping my son to achieve success in his studies, for curing my husband of his fractured arm and for the innumerable other favours and graces received. Do continue to keep us in your care.

E. Barretto, Goa

On September 13th we were out shopping by car. Suddenly a car came from the opposite direction and collided with us flipping our vehicle. By God's grace we were both safe. We are most grateful for the protection of Almighty God and his Blessed Mother.

Flaviana, Fatima, Leicester, UK

We are most grateful to Our Lady for guiding us through the time of waiting and for the gift of twins Yohan and Simone.

Elvis and Chhaya Traynor, Mumbai

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



The devotion of the THREE HAIL MARYS is a very simple yet most efficacious devotion. Everyday, recite Three Hail Marys, adding the invocation: "O Mary, My Mother, keep me from mortal sin." Many people recite the Three Hail Marys as part of their morning and night prayers. To practise this devotion in time of danger, stress, special need or temptation, is a sure means to obtain Our Lady's help.

Thank you Mother Mary for giving me a healthy baby boy and for helping me solve my problems instantly through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. Do bless my baby with good health and my family too.

Michelle Julian, Pune

I am grateful to Our Blessed Mother, through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys my son passed his Std. X examinations. Mrs. Jocyleen I am most grateful to Our Blessed Mother. Through the faithful recitation of the three Hail Marys my daughter Joycelyn passed her board examinations with good results.

J. Fernandes

Thank you dear Mother Mary for granting my petitions.

Neeta Natrajan, Mumbai

Thank you, dear Lord Jesus Christ and Mother Mary for helping me solve a huge problem of mine and giving me peace of mind. Thank you for good health and the numerous other blessings.

Mary Felix

I am grateful to Our Lady for all the favours received, especially for having received healing from my sickness through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Mary, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Our Lady for her protection during the time I was feeling upset and unwell and after praying the 3 Hail Marys I began to feel much better.

Filomena Vas, Mumbai

On my way home from work I was caught up in a major accident. A tempo in front of my car stopped suddenly. I braked in time to avoid colliding with the vehicle but a mini-bus coming full-speed crashed into me from behind. It could have been dangerous but I came out without a scratch. I am grateful to Jesus and Mother Mary. I always recite the "Our Father" and "3 Hail Marys" every morning before I leave for work.

Venny Vincents, Goa

Thank you dearest Mother for granting my daughter a clean report and for giving her a speedy recovery from her infection. Dear Mother keep her always under your divine protection.

A. Noronha, Goa

I have faithfully been praying the 3 Hail Marys and my knees were healed even though the doctors could not heal me. My son had a nasal problem and because of our faith in Our Lady an operation was averted.

F. Soares, Goa

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

I am most grateful to Our Lady and Don Bosco for helping me get a job in the Gulf.
Ajit Pinto, Mumbai

My sincere and wholehearted thanks to Our Lord, Jesus Christ, Mother Mary, Help of Christians and Don Bosco for all the graces and favours my sons and I have received. Please keep us in your dear care and protection.
Mrs. Sheila Clarke, Trichy

Our sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and all the other saints for all the favours received through your intercession and grant us good health and peace to all our families.
Ophi Rodrigues, Thane

Our sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for the successful results of my son in his SSC examinations.
Mrs. Jessi G, Mumbai

We are extremely grateful for the many favours received: for the successful operation of my second son and for the success in the examinations of my third son.
Alyamma, Kanam, Kerala

We are sincerely grateful to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all the blessings and graces received.
Sylvia Bosen, Bangalore

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for all the favours received. Please continue to grant us good health, peace and happiness.
Amarals, USA

We were travelling by road from Gangtok to see lake Tshangu, on the way our axle broke and the vehicle we were travelling in was tilted precariously to one side. A million thanks to Our Lady that we did not fall completely on one side. That could have resulted in severe injuries to some of us. We are grateful to Our Lady for her protection.
Mrs. Recca Pinto, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Our Lord, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for all the favours granted to me and my family especially for healing our sicknesses and protecting us from danger.
Martha Mandis, Jamnagar

My belated and sincere thanks to Jesus and Mary Help of Christians for a successful operation and for clear medical reports.
M. Castelino, Mumbai

Thank you Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for all the favours granted to us and for a job to my son Philip.
Mr. & Mrs. Harry and Espy Xavier, Ahmedabad

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

OCTOBER 2010

Holy Father's General Intention: *That Catholic Universities may more and more be places where, in the light of the Gospel, it is possible to experience the harmonious unity existing between faith and reason.*

Missionary Intention: *That the World Mission Day may afford an occasion for understanding that the task of proclaiming Christ is an absolutely necessary service to which the Church is called for the benefit of humanity.*

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



My grateful thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter-in-law and the gift of a normal healthy baby boy. Thank you Mother Mary and all the saints for the blessings bestowed in us.

Mrs. Angela Soares, Goa

Our sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all the graces and blessings granted to our family.

Mr. & Mrs. Godwin, Mumbai

Our belated thanks to St. Dominic Savio for blessing my brother and sister-in-law with the

gift of a baby boy.

Sandra D'Costa, Mumbai

Our heartfelt thanks to our dear Blessed Mother, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for a safe delivery and the gift of a healthy baby boy. Please continue to guide us in bringing him up to be pleasing in the eyes of the Lord and bestow your blessings on our family always. Thank you for all the many blessings and graces we have received.

Marcellus and Cyndrella Aleckal, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby girl.

Mrs. Andrea D'Souza, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to dear Dominic Savio for the gift of beautiful grandchildren, a baby boy and girl to Mrs. Flory D'Sa. *Devotee, Mumbai*

A MEETING ON A TRAIN

Over a hundred years ago a university student found himself seated in a train by the side of a person who seemed to be a well-to do peasant. He was praying the rosary and moving the beads in his fingers. "Sir, do you still believe in such outdated things?" asked the student to the old man. "Yes, I do. Do you not?" asked the man. The student burst out in a laughter and said, "I do not believe in such silly things. Take my advice. Throw the rosary out through this window, and learn what science has to say about it". "Science? I do not understand this science? Perhaps you can explain it to me", the man said humbly with tears in his eyes. The student saw that the man was deeply moved. So to avoid further hurting the feelings of the man, he said: "Please give me your address and I will send you some literature to help you on this matter." The man fumbled in the inside pocket of his coat and gave the boy his visiting card. On glancing at the card, the student, lowered his head in shame and became silent. On the card he read: "Louis Pasteur, Director of the Institute of Scientific Research, Paris." A few years later when Pasteur died he held a Rosary in his hands.

Louis Pasteur was a chemist, founder of physio-chemistry, father of bacteriology, inventor of bio-therapeutics. Born 1822 and died 1895.

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MARY WAS THERE

On April 19th 2010 I was on board a very crowded train on my way to work from Wadala to Vashi. I work in a bank and I had the vault keys with me, so I wanted to reach in time. After the train crossed the Vashi Creek I lost my grip and fell off the moving train. I landed in the mangroves beside the tracks. All this time my shoulder bag took the impact of the fall. I was in quite a mess when the motorman of the following train stopped and took me into his cabin. He gave me a drink of water and informed the Vashi Station-Master that he was bringing in an injured passenger. I was then taken to the Vashi Municipal Hospital where they found no fractures, just a torn knee ligament. I am most grateful to Our Blessed Lord and His most Holy Mother for their protection. I always pray the 3 Hail Marys, the Memorare and a prayer to St. Michael before leaving for office.

Mr. Hermes Gonsalves, Mumbai 37

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

The magazine is sent to all who ask for it, even though there is a fixed subscription (*Rs 200/- India & Rs 400/- Airmail*). We trust in the generosity of our readers/benefactors.

Whatever you send us will help cover the expenses of printing and mailing; the surplus if any, is devoted to the support of orphans and poor boys in our schools and apostolic centres.

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