

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

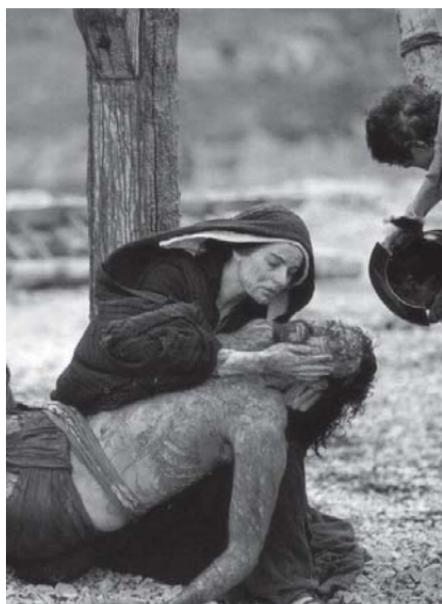
MUMBAI

APRIL 2011

VOL.12 NO. 12

CONTENTS

From The Editor's Desk: - <i>A Hungry World</i>	3
4 - It is Best Passed On - <i>Fr. Erasto Fernandez. SSS</i>	4
Bro. Thomas Puthur (1934-2010) - <i>Fr. Michael Fernandes sdb</i>	7
Carlo Della Torre.....	8
Sorrowful to Death - <i>Eithne Murphy</i>	9
Walking With The Church: Candles, Easter, The Risen Body of Jesus - <i>St. Martin's Messenger</i>	10
Witnesses In And For Our Times: <i>St. Bernadette Soubirous (Apr 16)</i> - <i>Luigi Melotti</i>	13
Lectio Divina: Dying Our of Love - <i>Carlo Broccardo</i>	17
Quietspaces: From Betrayal to Pardon, From Hatred to Love - <i>Pope Benedict XVI</i>	18
A Father's Persistence - <i>Michael J. Segal, MSW</i>	20
Don Bosco and His Boys - <i>Natale Cerrato</i>	23
NewsBits.....	26
Speaking of the Blessed Virgin Mary - <i>Eamon J. Carroll, O. Carm</i>	28
<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



*Holy Mother,
pierce me through,
in my heart,
each wound renew,
of my Saviour
Crucified*

Cover: *The Risen Christ*



From The Editor's Desk

A Hungry World

A little more than a year ago when the world watched with horror the devastation of the earthquake in Haiti, it was shocked, and aid poured in or at least it was pledged immediately. Such scenes were repeated over and over again about various human and manmade disasters all over. Last year, in the wake the floods in Northern Pakistan we saw people fleeing in their thousands, leaving behind them their homes and livelihoods. In the biting cold and in hostile surroundings we saw their humiliation as they scrambled for food from lorries and planes, desperate for any scrap that would alleviate the pangs of hunger. But those scenes no longer shock or move us. Thanks to that wonderful 'cop-out contraption' the remote-control, we flip channels and *voilà!* we're in tinsel town watching starry-eyed brides chasing hunky beaus and we snuggle a little deeper into our comfy couches ready to satiate our appetites with another serial hoping to drive out the images of emaciated men, women and hungry children hardly more than skeletons, staring blankly into our living-rooms.

Hunger is a terrible thing. It not only saps our energy, but it strips away our human dignity as well. We have every reason to be grateful that most of us have no experience of the pain and indignity of mass starvation.

But we do have another type of starvation here in our comfort-driven culture, no less real for being hidden from the television cameras and the newspaper photographers. In many of our wealthy neighbourhoods today there is a kind of spiritual famine, a hunger for some meaning to life. In the midst of all the opulence, many people are lost and afraid, frantically searching for a purpose in their lives.

Some people turn to New Age therapies in the hope of finding what would make sense of life. Others look to psychological fads to overcome their feelings of despair. Still others hope to escape from their hunger and pain in the abuse of alcohol or drugs or sex.

And all the time the food we crave is there for the taking: '*I am the bread of life,*' Jesus says; '*no one who comes to me will ever hunger.*' What St. Augustine discovered for himself is still true for us today: '*You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts will always be restless until they come to rest in you.*'

Lent is a time for our hearts to rest in the Lord. That's why prayer is particularly important in Lent. It is a time too for letting go of our false gods: our reliance on wealth or pleasure or success or power. We express that by some gesture of fasting or self-denial. And Lent is a time when we remember especially those who still want for the necessities of life: the poor in our own country and maybe in our neighbourhoods and those still starving in our own hinterland. The little we can give in alms can help alleviate, not only their hunger, but ours as well.

Fr. Ian Doultton sdb

4. IT IS BEST PASSED ON

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

One weekend when all their four grown children were home visiting, the grandparents decided to take the entire family out for brunch mainly because of their youngest grand-daughter. She had never eaten pancakes before and so all were excited about seeing her reactions as she tried them for the first time. At the restaurant when all were seated round a large table, they decided to order every kind of pancake available and requested that they be served on one big family-style platter!

Occasion Seized

As this delectable family meal was in progress, the grandmother, even while enjoying the antics of her favourite little grand-daughter, noticed from the corner of her eye, a gentleman at a nearby table. Relishing his own breakfast alone quietly, he frequently looked over and smiled as the toddler entertained the entire family with her antics. As the grandmother too enjoyed the scene, she suddenly was struck by a novel idea: digging out a Smile Card from the stack she always carried with her, she called for the waitress and explained to her that she wished to pay that man's bill anonymously and asked whether instead of the usual bill she could give him the Smile Card.

After a while, as the gentleman was leaving the waitress came over to say that he was very grateful for the gift and had

passed the Smile Card on, paying for another table before he left. That was just the tip of a very pleasant surprise. Not many minutes later, the waitress returned with another message: the second table had now paid for someone else and passed the Smile Card on too! Unbelievably, this pattern was repeated at the third table. And what was really amazing was that by the time the original family left, half the room had ended up paying for a different table! What an unbelievable chain reaction of kindness and fellow-feeling! That would surely have cheered quite a number of loveless and love-filled lives!

Chosen for Apostleship

When people are enlightened that the primary reason why Jesus chose his disciples was that they may act in a manner similar to the way these people in the restaurant had done, they seem more than surprised. After the first few centuries of Christianity, it has somehow been presumed that Jesus called people to discipleship, or that a person becomes a Christian, for one's own individual benefit only. Yet, a closer look at the call narratives will convince anyone of the opposite. Almost all the Gospels note Jesus' words: 'Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of (men) people!' Doesn't this mean that each is called precisely to be a tiny link in an endless chain,

each passing on the blessing s/ he has received to another only to have it passed on again, till there is a huge catch of "fish" - all enjoying their little act of sharing God's goodness with those around them!

Self-oriented Christianity

How simple the process, and yet how rarely done! All it takes is one selfless person who thinks of others and is prepared to start the ball rolling, by making a small sacrifice so that someone else might be the happier for it. What is so heart-warming in this story is that each of the participants consciously chose to remain anonymous - which simply means that Self was not all that prominent in at least the one who started the chain. How often do we not see persons making generous donations of fairly large sums of money, but with the condition attached that the donor's name be mentioned, at least discreetly! Yet Jesus advises us that when we give alms, we take care not to let the left hand know what the right is doing! (Mt. 6:3). Or else, we will have received our reward already, with nothing awaiting us on the Last Day.

Why then have we Christians become so self-preoccupied? Why do our Christian lives revolve only round ourselves, or at most around those closely connected with us? And even then, it is mostly about our material needs that we show great concern - becoming apostles of God's good news to us hardly ever enters our mental horizon. And yet, that is the primary reason why we are Christians in the first place!

Example of Our Master

When Jesus himself chose to give

us not just the cost of a meal or some such ephemeral thing, but his very Self, he did not ask that his name be mentioned. He did add, though, that the recipients should continue to "do this in memory" of him. And that is what Eucharist is all about. Yet, how often does it happen that we receive the greatest gift possible from God himself in person (the gift of himself as a piece of broken bread) but don't feel the least inspired to pass it on even to our loved ones at home! It should make us stop and ask: 'why is it that the chain reaction of paying for another's meal and passing on the Smile Card caught on so easily and rapidly, but the mighty example of Jesus' self-giving at Eucharist doesn't ignite our minds and hearts to do the same?

The reasons could be several: first, that we have never stopped to reflect that this is actually what the core of the Eucharist is, that Jesus gifts himself to us with the explicit command (not suggestion or recommendation; it is even called 'the Eucharistic Command') that we pass it on to someone else - and that too in a manner that would keep the chain of self-giving unbroken and lengthening. Second, it could be that we have not fully appreciated Jesus' gift to us in the Eucharist, partly because it is given in symbolic fashion. Most of us find it difficult to figure out this whole question of 'symbolism' in our lives. We fail to appreciate that symbolic language and expressions can be far more powerful, spurring one to action, than straight-forward speech! Further, our minds could have been so blocked with habitual self-

centred attitudes – (like that of wanting to ‘save my soul’, or to derive the maximum spiritual benefits for one’s self for the entire week ahead, or to personally thank the Lord for his blessings of the past week and a host of others), that we have no time to think of anyone else but ourselves and our well planned out agendas.

But perhaps the greatest reason could be that we have totally misunderstood the purpose of our calling to be Christians. If we were to see our very Christian life in terms of passing on God’s gifts to others with as little of the Self as possible involved in all these actions, our behaviour would have been radically different in that our attention would be more on others than on ourselves. However, experience shows us that it isn’t sufficient to merely know what the purpose of the Christian calling is; we need to be reminded of it fairly frequently before it becomes our habitual way of thinking and acting. Yet, hardly anyone reminds us of this apostolic angle precisely because from the highest authority to the lowest in the Church, the vast majority seem to be obsessed with securing only their own eternal salvation. And even that we find extremely difficult and challenging; for the majority of Christians this path takes the shape of a broken arrow – three steps forward and two backward; then again a few forward with a retracing of more than half of the ground gained!

A Good Start is What Matters

Strangely enough, in this matter of sharing the Good News with others, be it in words or especially

through example, it is the first few attempts that are crucial and decisive. If we approach the matter with determination, courage and reliance on the Risen Lord always present to us, we soon gain the confidence needed to make this our habitual attitude. However, if we could have a support group around us, all attempting the same basic technique, the venture cannot but be a success! We cannot afford to forget that Jesus has assured us of his victorious presence, and so, given our goodwill and genuine effort, we cannot really fail.

From another angle we could say that all this boils down to how seriously we take our Baptism. For, in this sacrament of Christian initiation we commit ourselves to die to Self and live for Christ in three distinct symbolic expressions. There is first the symbolic divesting of one’s garments standing for the ‘old, sinful self’. Then comes the verbal commitment to renounce Satan and all his empty promises and finally the immersion in the water, expressive of a total dying to oneself. Had these been meant consciously in that baptismal ceremony, the chances are that our Christian living would take on a different expression altogether.

Daily Exercise at Home

Our task would be a lot easier if each day we could make a determined effort to practise this kind of altruistic giving in our very own families. In one sense it is even more difficult doing this at home than practising it among outsiders because, naturally speaking we tend to take one

(Continued on pg. 22)



BRO. THOMAS PUTHUR, SDB (1934 - 2010)

*Excerpts from the funeral oration by Fr. Michael Fernandes,
Salesian Provincial of Mumbai*

Bro. P.M. always came across as being a man of principles, with a delicate conscience and integrity. I am certain there were some things that he could not stomach, but he took them in his stride and never became bitter.

He was a father figure and a great teacher, a point of reference to all. He had a unique way of making a point in the discussions and at meetings he spoke his mind but only because he loved Don Bosco and the congregation.

In 1984 he was invited to be an observer at the General Chapter in Rome. In February, 1999 he represented the brothers at the World Congress of Brothers in Australia and later during the year he published a small booklet on *The Spirituality of Salesian Assistance*. The University of Mumbai conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Arts) in 2004, for his thesis entitled "*The Don Bosco Method of Education for Schools – Building Teacher-Pupil Relationship the Don Bosco Way.*"

Brother was truly interested in vocations. His love for his vocation was reflected in his love for vocations. It was only right that his Salesian life reached its finale at Don Bosco Lonavla, the cradle of Salesian vocations for the province. Bro. Santi from Chennai sent me a condolence message: "We have really lost a great Salesian, a true Son of Don Bosco who did bring glory to the congregation and to the province."

He was concerned about formation and more especially the loss of vocations. He loved the province deeply and was concerned



about the welfare of confreres and the missions.

A religious is one who not only tells others what Christ says, but in a unique way shows others who Christ is. This was an apt definition of Bro. Thomas who was happy to be a salesian brother.

In his last years at Lonavla, weighed down with age and health concerns, slightly blind and quite deaf, he would teach English to the students of the English academy and visit Maria Ashiana and give them a good morning talk. This speaks volumes of his grit, determination and spirit of self sacrifice. His failing health did not deter him but spurred him to do more, to give more of himself.

Fr. Maria Arokiam, our Regional superior writes: "In Bro. Thomas Puthur we have truly incurred a big loss for Salesian India, even beyond the province of Mumbai, particularly for the Salesian Brothers." □

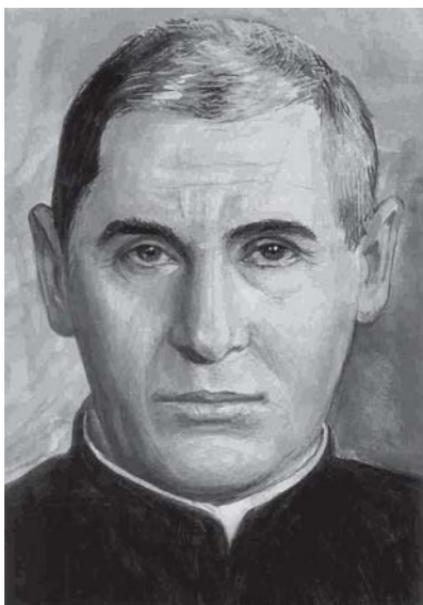
For further contact Fr Brian Moras sdb: frbrian@rediffmail.com

SALESIAN SAINT OF THE MONTH

CARLO DELLA TORRE 1900 - 1982

Carlo Della Torre was born on 9th July, 1900 at Cernusco Sul Naviglio, in the province of Milan to Anthony and Philomena. He was the fourth of seven brothers of the Della Torre family. In 1917 at the outbreak of World War I, the young Charles was called up to serve in the army. He returned home after the war to find that his father had died. He looked after his family until 1923. Then in order to pursue his missionary vocation to the priesthood he entered the Salesian College of Cardinal Cagliero in Ivrea where he spent three years completing his secondary school. In 1926 he bade farewell to his family for the last time and left for China. The superiors sent him to the new Salesian mission in Thailand. Carlo made his first religious profession there at Bang Nok Khuek. In his contact with young people and with young women workers he said: "I was inspired by the Madonna to found a local congregation of sisters to look after the maintenance of churches, parish schools, kitchens and the laundries of the college besides teaching Catechism to children while preparing them to receive the sacraments.

In 1936 the cleric Carlo was ordained a priest. After World War II Fr. Carlo took the sad decision with the help of his superiors to leave the congregation so that he could devote himself fully to the



fledgling work and he was incardinated into the diocese of Bangkok. Those were really difficult years for him and for his followers. They found themselves in a most difficult situation, penniless, homeless and jobless. They earned their keep by sewing clothes which they sold for a pittance. Fr. Carlo sent the first draft of the rules of his congregation of sisters to Rome. In the year 1955, after many difficulties, the first seven sisters made their first profession in the nascent "Secular Institute of the Daughters of the Queenship of Mary Immaculate." In the meanwhile Fr. Carlo asked to be accepted back into the Salesian Congregation. He died at Bangkok on 4th April 1982. Today, the Daughters of the Queenship of Mary Immaculate have five foundations.

*The Diocesan Process for
Beatification and Canonisation*

- 14th July 2003 □

SORROWFUL TO DEATH

by Eithne Murphy

I have never been good at long prayers or meditation: the best I can achieve is short bursts. Some scenes from the Gospels I find particularly helpful, however, and when I try to meditate on the passion of Christ I find I do it best when I think about the agony in the garden.

Of all the afflictions we have to bear, one of the worst is mental anguish. It may be caused by guilt, or depression, or mental illness. Perhaps we are feeling guilty because of an immoral way of life we have become addicted to, or some injustice done to another long ago and now irreversible. Or depression can descend on us because we are worried about someone we love, or because we are afraid of what the future may hold, or occasionally - for no apparent reason. Or we may be tormented by some form of mental illness. Any of these things can make life miserable.

An Overwhelming Grief

That is why I often think that the worst time for Jesus throughout his entire passion may well have been those hours he spent in the garden of Gethsemane. There Jesus faced in all its horror what he knew was about to happen to him. 'My soul is sorrowful to the point of death,' he said to his disciples. "Wait here and stay awake." *Sorrowful to the point of death*: what terrible words. He experienced not only fear, but an overwhelming mortal grief.

Jesus was like us in all things except sin. Apart from guilt he must have felt all that anyone



'If we are in great mental distress we should with assurance turn to Jesus in Gethsemane. He will understand.'

would experience facing a cruel execution. He must have been deeply pained at the thought of his mother's grief. The presence of so much evil in the world must have caused a profound sadness in him, made worse by his knowing that, in spite of his death, it would persist until the end of time.

The horror of what awaited him made him long for some escape from the pain and humiliation. He felt deeply the loneliness of being betrayed by Judas and forsaken by his closest friends. Is it any



believe, but I promise you it is true. What is to come will not be nearly as bad as this moment. The worst is over. From now on nothing will be as bad as what you are now suffering. Please believe me, because I know it is true.' I have never forgotten that social worker for her kindness and her depth of understanding. She knew that mental suffering is the worst of all.

I remember too the time my brother said, 'I would willingly have an arm or a leg amputated without an anaesthetic if I could lose this depression.' He had suffered from years of depression. He spoke from the heart.

wonder that he was overwhelmed by mental anguish, sorrowful to the point of death, caught in the grip of mortal grief?

The Worst is Over

Many years ago I read an account of a social worker visiting a young girl in prison who was awaiting execution for a murder she had committed. Each day she sat and talked for hours with her, trying to bring some measure of peace to the poor girl's tortured mind. The night before the execution she went to visit her as usual. She found the young girl unable to speak, shaking in distress, blind with terror, numb with shock.

The good woman, herself very shaken by this time, leaned over, took the girl's hand in hers, and said earnestly, 'Mary, listen to me. I know you'll find this hard to

Turn to Jesus

Our lives are peppered with small fears and sometimes big ones: fear of the future, even of the dentist! We often fear for our children, and even for the safety of the whole world. Fear can come crowding in, blotting out the sun, casting shadows over everything.

Perhaps that is why, when I try to meditate on the passion of Christ, I can most easily identify with the agony in the garden. Not for one moment should we forget any single detail of the long road to Calvary which was to follow, or ignore the physical torture which Christ was to endure. But especially if we are in great mental distress, we should with assurance turn to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. He will understand. □

walking with the Church



Candles, Easter, the Risen Body of Jesus

by St. Martin Magazine, Ireland

Q. *Is it beneficial to light candles for myself or for other people's benefit? Can you please tell me if it is a worthwhile and good practice?*

A. Thank you for your question. The answer is yes, it is a worthwhile and good practice. It is a practical and visible sign of our faith in the powers of intercession of the saint or blessed before whom we light candles. On lighting a candle we should say a short prayer for whatever intention we have in mind. We are asking the saint to intercede for us and for those for whom we pray. One might say that the burning candles – signs of our faith – continue our prayers after we have left the Church.

Some believe that our present practice of lighting candles may have begun with the custom of burying lights at the tombs of the martyrs in the catacombs. These lights were kept burning for periods of time as a sign of unity with the Christians who remained on earth.

Q. *What is the most important feast of our Catholic Faith? Is it Christmas or Easter?*

A. The most important feast of our faith is Easter. In celebrating Easter we rejoice in Christ's victory over death. We commemorate God's great act of raising Jesus from the dead. Because of the Resurrection of Jesus we believe that our own death will not be the final word. We will enjoy a new life with

God in Heaven. We rejoice also in the fact that by our baptism we already share the life of God and we believe that when we leave our bodies, when we die to this world, we will enjoy the fullness of that life in God. This is our belief. This is our great hope.

Q. *A question often asked at Easter time is...what was the risen body of Jesus like?*

A. The gospel accounts tells us that Jesus could be touched and felt but also they also speak of his sudden appearance in locked rooms. The gospels imply that Jesus' risen body was the same as that which was buried but different in some ways (e.g. the body of the risen Jesus could pass through walls). The Catholic Catechism speaking of it says that his risen body possessed "the new properties of a glorious body; not limited by space and time but able to be present how and where he wills." (CCC645) St. Paul talking about the resurrection of our bodies and speaking also of the body of the risen Christ says: "What is sown (buried) is perishable, what is raised is imperishable ...what is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Cor. 15, 42) And concerning our resurrection St. Paul says, "the Lord Jesus will change our lowly bodies into copies of his own glorious body." (Phil 3.2) □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS - 16 APRIL BERNADETTE AND THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

by Luigi Melotti (T/A I.D.)

Few Calendars show 16th April as the feast of St. Bernadette. Yet that was the day that corresponded with her *dies natalis* (her birthday into heaven). It was 16th April, 1879 and she was just 35 years old! A careful reading of the seventeen apparitions of Our Lady to Bernadette and a profound meditation on the key ideas of those apparitions reveals a fascinating insight into the main stages of her life in the light of the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries of the Rosary.

To add greater credence to this invitation to meditate on the story of the apparitions in the context of the Rosary remember that at Rue de Bac (The miraculous medal) and La Salette, even at Lourdes and Fatima Our Lady is seen holding a Rosary. At Lourdes, while Bernadette recited the Hail Mary - Mary stood in silence. She listened. Bernadette not only revered the radiant Virgin for the rest of her life but she remained intimately united with her from those teenage years right up to the time she became a religious, sharing with the mother of God, her joys, her accolades and her sufferings too.

The Joyful Mysteries of Bernadette

From the first apparition when in a sudden and powerful gust of wind Bernadette saw standing in an aura of golden light, a beautiful smiling young lady, she seemed to be from another world. She did not speak at all. The little shepherd girl, pale with fear and on her knees gazed up wide-eyed to a point above the grotto. Then the miraculous vision said: "Will you do me a favour of coming here for the next fifteen days?" At this point Bernadette could no longer forget about the Lady. An invincible power forced her to think about her. The same powerful force drew her repeatedly to the grotto of Massabielle.

She would be immersed in that joy for the next fortnight, a joy that no one could steal from her. It was a joy whose source was 'out-of-this-world,' from a source she did not know. She was suddenly filled with a joy such that she had never experienced before. It was a joy beyond anything she could express or yearn for. Those who have received a special grace will probably understand such a feeling.



Her Glorious Mysteries

This overflow of happiness that Bernadette momentarily experienced was a kind of anticipation of the glory of Heaven. The Lady said: "I do not promise you happiness in this world; in the next, yes!" In her mortal body Bernadette already experienced a kind of anticipation. With all her senses Bernadette already felt transported into the next world. According to eyewitnesses her face gleamed with an otherworldly glow. Her eyes began to sparkle and her lips broke in a seraphic smile. Around her there was an aura of indefinable grace beyond any everyday experience. She had become totally 'someone' who had come from 'another realm.' She would be a kind of stranger to this world, totally transformed because of an inexplicable change. Her whole being had been immersed in an ocean of light that seemed to completely envelope her. Bernadette had no sensation at all, considering the large candle she held in her hand and which burned through her fingers without leaving any trace of burning. She was deeply immersed in contemplation and she would later realise that this young girl

was the Immaculate Conception wore a white brightly shining robe that was gathered at the waist with a blue sash and she had a white veil covering her head. On each foot rested a golden yellow rose. How beautiful! It was a beauty no human tongue could describe. This experience could not last forever. It was not meant to last forever. The Lady - ever so beautiful - more

splendid than anyone had ever seen - *the apotheosis of beauty*, when she smiled for the last time, it was a farewell smile, a smile that seemed to say: "Goodbye, till we meet in heaven."

After the splendour the darkness returned to Bernadette and she began to face the harsh realities of everyday life.

Her interminable sorrowful mysteries

No one believed her visions. Society in general spoke against her and her poor family. They were a very poor family of seven, living in a kind of damp closet ten feet by four feet. It was called le Cachot; actually it was an old prison. Her father was considered a good-for-nothing, a wimp. Bernadette herself suffered from asthma. She was intellectually not really bright. She had a poor memory and from a scholastic point of view she was very dull with little religious knowledge. Heaven could not have chosen someone so unsuitable and backward, weak and ill-equipped to entrust such a message. That was why the townsfolk told her mother, a level-headed woman: "Don't

choose the season of Lent to celebrate carnival."

That was what even the very stern pastor of Lourdes thought when he came to call. He was very angry with the Lady for the same reason: "Your lady in white! Your carnival of apparitions! A woman without a name, from an unknown place, living in a hole in the rock and barefooted! ... What a disgrace to have a family like this to bring such disorder to our town and intending to spread this news to the people! Take hold of her and don't let her out of your sight," he ordered her aunt Basilia who accompanied her to the rectory.

The people began to speak hysterically after the experience at the grotto. Bernadette scratched the soil at her feet and drank the muddy water that came out that was mixed with a grass. The pastor was informed of this and he resumed his angry reproaches: "Now there's even a spring! And you ate grass like a cow! Get out of here. You did not see anything. I'll beat you with a broom if you return to that cave. I'll tell the police to arrest you."

Bernadette returned home very discouraged. There was even talk of her being arrested by the police! And that was what happened. She was summoned by the police commissioner Jacomet who threatened to imprison her and then the imperial procurator Dutour said the same thing. Neither of them could find any contradiction in her stories. Therefore it's true to say: "God chooses what is foolish in the world to confound the wise?" (1 Cor. 1, 27)

What was more: On February 22nd, the Lady did not keep her appointment. Was she afraid of the

police? Did she have an aversion for the authorities or the crowd or the young visionary? On March 3rd once again, the cave was empty. Bernadette waited in vain, with a heavy heart. "I cannot come back here again. She did not appear to me because there were too many people." However, later that morning the Lady explained her absence: "There were people who spent the night in the cave and desecrated it." Heaven was closed again. Bernadette's ordeal was going to continue.

Remember that the eleven years of her life that she spent as a religious sister would be a time of constant suffering for her. Heaven's favours are paid for by tears from the heart and tears of blood. Moreover, if one tries to fathom the mystery of suffering then God answers not with explanations but by presenting to us his own beloved Son who should not have died but who did die a terrible death. When man protests against God's omnipotence he sees God's hand covered with blood, man's blood, the blood of his Son. All of us experience the same predicament depending on our vocation. Our joys and sorrows are counterbalanced so providentially. With great spiritual joys, mystical effusions there are also an accompaniment of purifying sufferings. Bernadette had to pay dearly to have been chosen as a messenger of the Immaculate Conception and she paid it fully. After this she entered the great silence, the blissful eternity of God. Through Bernadette's sufferings and her painful adventure Our Lady of Lourdes tells us: "I do not promise you happiness in this world but in the next, of course" and that is what counts finally. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Planning Ahead

A woman decided to have her portrait painted. She told the artist, "Paint me with diamond rings, a diamond necklace, emerald bracelets, a ruby brooch and gold Rolex."

"But you are not wearing any of those things," he replied.

"I know," she said. "It's in case I should die before my husband. I'm sure he will remarry right away, and I want his new wife to go crazy looking for the jewelry."

Hi Tech Watch

A man is at Grand Central Station waiting for his train which leaves at 6:00 PM but he has forgotten his watch. So he looks for someone to ask the time. He spots this guy walking past carrying 2 suitcases and sporting this fabulous hi-tech watch, so he asks him for the time.

The guy replies "Sure, which country?"

The fella asks "How many countries have you got?", to which the reply is "All the countries in the world!"

"Wow! That's a pretty cool watch you've got there."

"That's nothing. This watch also has a GPS facility, fax, e-mail and can even receive NTSC television channels and display them on its miniature active colour pixel LCD screen!"

"Boy, that's incredible. I wish I had a watch like that one . . . You wouldn't consider selling it by any chance?"

"Well, actually the novelty has worn off for me, so for \$900, if you want it, it's yours."

The watchless traveller can hardly whip out his check book fast enough, and hands over a check for \$900.

The seller takes off the watch and gives it to him. "Congratulations, here is your new hi-tech watch" and then, handing the 2 suitcases over as well he says, "and here are the batteries."

Screaming patient

A woman went to the doctors office. She was seen by one of the new doctors, but after about 4 minutes in the examination room, she burst out, screaming as she ran down the hall. An older doctor stopped and asked her what the problem was, and she explained. He had her sit down and relax in another room.

The older doctor marched back to the first and demanded, "What's the matter with you? Mrs. Terry is 63 years old, she has four grown children and seven grandchildren, and you told her she was pregnant?"

The new doctor smiled smugly as he continued to write on his clipboard.

"Cured her hiccups though, didn't I?"

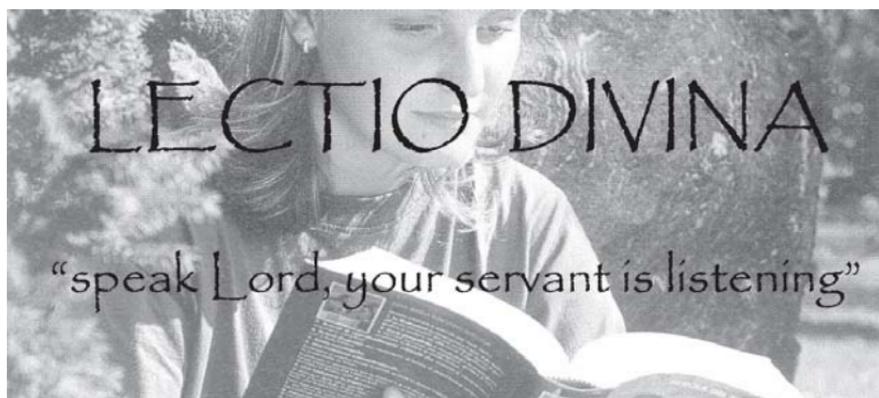
Frugal - to save

Mary's fourth grade homework assignment was to make sentences using the words in her spelling list, along with the definition. Coming across the word "frugal" in the list, she asked her father what it meant. He explained that being frugal meant you saved something. Her paper read:

Frugal: to save
Sentence:

Maid Marion fell into a pit when she went walking in the woods so she yelled for someone to come get her out.

She yelled, "Frugal me, Frugal me!" □



DYING OUT OF LOVE

John 13:1-15

by Carlo Broccardo

Every year on the evening of Holy Thursday we begin the Easter Triduum with the “Mass of the Lord’s Supper.” In fact, the second reading (from 1 Cor. Chap. 2) takes us back to that night of the Last Supper – before Judas betrayed Jesus – when he took the bread, broke it and gave it to his disciples and then gave them the cup of wine. He said to them: “this is my body and this is the cup of the new covenant in my blood.” Even the Gospel passage from St. John is always the same every year. It does not recall institution of the Eucharist but the washing of feet – a gesture that seems to be apparently different but in reality has the same meaning as the breaking of the bread.

Let us begin to delve deeper into the first verses of this passage: “Jesus, knowing all that was to come upon him, that he was to pass from this world to the Father...” It is a solemn beginning, official in nature, but no less tragic. Jesus knew that the hour of his death on the cross was approaching. He was aware of this. The cross for him was not a mistake, something meaningless. It did not come as a

surprise but it was the conclusion of a project: “I came from the Father and I came into the world and now I leave the world and go to the Father.” He tells this to his disciples. (Jn. 16, 28)

Chap. 13 (from which our selection is taken) is a critical stage in the Gospel of John. So far Jesus has made gestures, gave ‘signs,’ i.e. actions (which were mainly miracles) which more or less proved his true identity. Now the time for signs is over, it is time for his full disclosure through his death on the cross. John the evangelist describes this: he simplifies things, to save time. He still has some chapters before he deals with the crucifixion but even now his attention is focused on Christ’s death on the cross. So, everything that happens between the Last Supper and the crucifixion is meant to be a “rite of explanation.” In other words they are a way of giving meaning to his death on the cross.

Even the washing of the feet is a reflection on the significance of Jesus death. John says: “Jesus, having loved his own who were with him



great detail, down to the very last detail, no wonder you cannot see what Jesus is doing especially since it is an action that was reserved for slaves, never to be performed by a teacher who wanted to wash the feet of his disciples! This is Jesus, as he speaks of himself in the Gospel of Luke: "For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or the one who serves" (Luke 22:27). It is with

the utmost solemnity that John describes this gesture: "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded." Jesus, knowing that everything had been given to him by God, he bends down to wash their feet. It is really he: we recognize him in this action.

in the world, he loved them to the end." Literally this could be translated as: he loved them completely, he loved them to the maximum extent. What does that mean? The last words of Jesus on the cross before he died could throw some light on this statement. He said: "It is finished." (Jn 19:30). The cross gives meaning to the life of Jesus. He loved those who were with him to such an extent that it was time he died for them. That is the measure of his love for us; even unto death, completely, to his very last breath. "It is finished." "Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." (Jn 15:13): a statement that tells us that the teaching of Christ is not mere theory.

Therefore, the cross tells us the significance of Christ's life. He gave us everything, his very life for us. So, the washing of the feet which seems to be an apparently simple gesture in reality gives a profound explanation of the death of Christ. He died for us "because he loved us to the very end. Death was a logical conclusion of a life spent entirely for us, even getting down on his knees before us, not only because it is required by the liturgy of Holy Thursday...

In this Gospel passage, the washing of the feet is described in

We have paused at these opening verses and it was important that we did so because otherwise we would run the risk of reading the washing of the feet as simply a pious moral exhortation or a "simple" invitation to be of service to one another. We should never forget the context, "service" here means being ready to die, "to wash the feet of one another" means loving so much as being ready to die for others. Ours is not a religion of good deeds, we are brothers and sisters, disciples of the one who was tortured and killed, and after he performed that action he said: "I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." (Jn. 13:15) □

FROM BETRAYAL FROM HATRED

by His Holiness Pope Francis

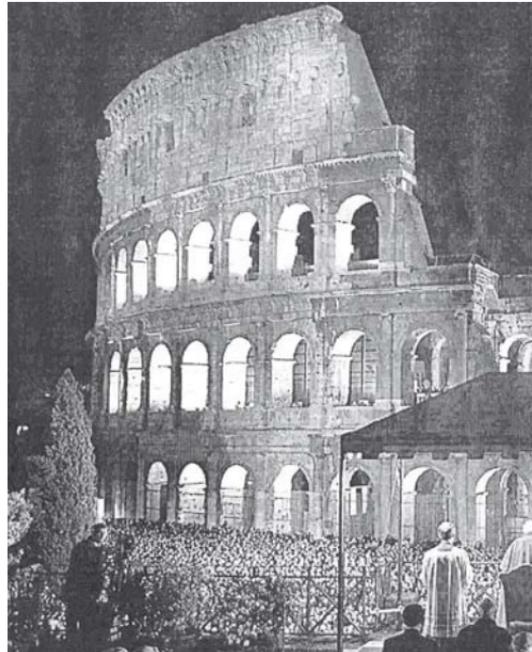
On Good Friday evening, 2nd April, 2010 the Holy Father led the traditional Way of the Cross at the Colosseum for which Cardinal Camillo Ruini, his Vicar emeritus of Rome, had written the meditations. At the end, the Pope spoke briefly to the faithful present. The following is a translation of the Pope's Reflection, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This evening, in stillness and moved in heart, we have journeyed in prayer along the Way of the Cross. We have gone up Calvary with Jesus and we have meditated on his suffering, rediscovering how deep his love was and is for us. But let us not limit ourselves to a compassion dictated by weak sentiment; rather, we wish to participate in the sufferings of Jesus, we wish to accompany our Master, to share his Passion in our lives, in the life of the Church, for the life of the world, since we know that it is precisely in the Lord's Cross, in love without limits, that he gives everything of himself, is the source of grace, of liberation, peace, of salvation.

The texts, the meditations and the prayers of the Way of the Cross have helped us to consider the mystery of the Passion in order to appreciate the great lesson of love which God gave on the Cross, that there might be born in us a renewed desire to change our hearts, living each day that love which is the only force able to change the world.

This evening we have gazed upon Jesus and his countenance marked by pain, derided, outraged and disfigured by the sin of humanity; tomorrow night we will look upon the same countenance full of joy, radiant and luminous. From the moment Jesus goes into the tomb, the tomb and death are no longer a place without hope where history stops in the most complete failure, where man



AL TO PARDON ED TO LOVE

Pope Benedict XVI

touches the extreme limit of his powerlessness. Good Friday is the greatest day of hope, come to fruition upon the Cross, as Jesus dies, as he draws his last breath, crying out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46). Entrusting his "given" existence into the Father's hands, he knows that his death is becoming the source of life, just as the seed in the earth must be destroyed that a new plant may be born: "If a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn 12:24). Jesus is the grain of wheat that falls to the earth, is split open, is destroyed and dies, and for this very reason is able to bear fruit. From the day on which Christ was raised upon it, the Cross, which had seemed to be a sign of desolation, of abandonment, and of failure, has become a new beginning:

from the profundity of death is raised the promise of eternal life. The victorious splendour of the dawning day of Easter already shines upon the Cross.

In the silence of this night, in the silence which envelopes Holy

Saturday, touched by the limitless love of God, we live in the hope of the dawn of the third day, the dawn of the victory of God's love, the luminous daybreak which allows the eyes of our heart to see afresh our life, its difficulties, its suffering. Our failures, our disappointments, our bitterness, which seem to signal that all is lost, are instead illumined by hope. The act of love upon the Cross is confirmed by the Father and the dazzling light of the resurrection enfolds and transforms everything: friendship can be born from betrayal, pardon from denial, love from hate.

Grant us, Lord, to carry our cross with love, and to carry our daily crosses in the certainty that they have been enlightened by the dazzling light of Easter. Amen.



Short Story

A FATHER'S PERSISTENCE

by Michael J. Segal, MSW

The difference between perseverance and obstinacy is that one comes from a strong will, and the other from a strong won't.

~Henry Ward Beecher

Whenever I was distraught as a teenager, my father, like most parents, shared in my pain. Nothing, however, could compare to his agony when my life was dramatically changed forever.

I was at the wrong place at the wrong time, an innocent bystander at an armed robbery. I was shot in the head, execution style by one of the thieves. Very few people thought I would survive, much less be a productive member of society. In the hospital waiting room, my father believed that I might die and his thoughts were of the past. What could he have done differently? Could he have spent more time with his son?

My parents met with the neurosurgeon in the morning, who told them that he was surprised I had made it through the night. Now that I had, he needed to operate. He then proceeded to say that there was only a 40% chance of my surviving the surgery, and if I did survive, almost a 100% chance of my living in a nursing home, not being able to walk or communicate.

My father was devastated. The surgeon was talking about his second son, a young man. An honour student at the University of Texas. He wondered when this nightmare would end. My mother refused to listen to the pessimism. She told my father, "We need to rent a storage space to keep Mike's

furniture until he returns to U.T."

But my father, still stunned, replied, and reminded her of the grim prognosis. "Toby, did you hear the neurosurgeon? Mike will be lucky if he spends the rest of his days in a nursing home."

My mother quickly and angrily barked back, "That doctor does not know my son, my Michael."

My father did not want to argue, especially not at such a delicate time. They rented a storage space in Austin. My father never believed the space would be opened again. But I beat the neurosurgeon's odds and survived the surgery. I was in a coma and with each day that I showed no progress, my father agonized even more.

Then, miraculously, I woke up. I was completely paralyzed on my right side, could not speak, and was hallucinating. When the doctor informed my parents that I was stable enough to fly home to a rehabilitation hospital in Houston, my father finally had reason to hope. My rehabilitation in Houston was steady, but also (especially for my father) very, very slow. He was not a very patient man. He became extremely frustrated when he could not understand what I wanted. When my mother had no problems understanding me, my father's frustration grew even more.

Then, seven weeks after being hurt, I began to utter some words.

My father thought this was the perfect time for him to work with me. At first he would drill me on simple things, such as pointing to a 1, then a 2, then a 3. He was so happy when I accomplished each goal, only to be devastated the next time when I was unable to repeat the task.

As time progressed, I continued to improve. My verbal skills grew steadily each day, and after my father's busy day at work, he would come to the hospital, ready to work with me. I still remember his bag filled with flash cards. He drilled me on math and spelling. He stretched my limp leg. Anything and everything that might help.

The hospital staff worried that he was working me too hard, that I would grow frustrated working with them all day, and with my father all evening. None of that mattered to my father. He knew what was best for his son and no one would be able to persuade him otherwise. Very few of the medical staff at either hospital believed that I would ever be able to return to college. But that is

exactly what I did almost a year and a half after the shooting. I could not have made this recovery without my father. He always encouraged me to look for the positive, even when there was very little to feel positive about. He held me up mentally and physically, pushing me as hard as he could and believing that I would have my life back.

Four years after returning to school, I graduated at the top of my class with many honours, including *Phi Beta Kappa* and *summa cum laude*. I was one of twelve students named as a Dean's Distinguished Graduate.

As I limped up to the stage to get my diploma from the Dean, I received a standing ovation. One of the many thoughts racing through my head was of my father – the man who helped me throughout my ordeal. The man who has always been there for me, no matter what, and who believed I would one day reclaim my life. Even though I could not see his face in the huge auditorium, I knew he was smiling at me. I will always love him. □

The Face and the Mask - Two Classes of People

In the world there are two classes of people: those who are respected for what they are, and those who are only respected for the positions they hold or the titles they possess.

The first are already complete persons. They gain nothing from positions or titles, nor do they lose anything when they leave positions of importance. The day they die they leave an emptiness in the world. Their going leaves a void. People of integrity and completeness, they are missed.

The others are like a clothes stand which serves no purpose unless there are coats or overcoats hanging on it. They only exist and stand out when they are appointed to positions of rank or importance in human society. One might say they wear a mask. They return to being nobodies or a sort of non-existence the day they lose their rank or their titles.

(Continued from pg. 6)

another for granted in the intimacy of the family. But with the daily opportunities every family offers us, coupled with the correction and encouragement that we support one another with at home, we would soon be experts at the game, growing in self-confidence day by passing day.

But for our families to be formation centres of true Christian living, we would need to make a conscious effort to break out of the consumerist pattern set for us by the un-Christian Society around us. We would have to be like the leaven in the dough, or salt of the earth and light of the world, if we are going to do this successfully. But if we ourselves succumb to

worldly pressures around us, then instead of leading others, we would find ourselves being led to places and situations we would rather not go (Jn 21:18) – to the detriment of the Kingdom of Jesus and its values.

Coming back to our original story, Smile Card or not, we need to train ourselves to grab every opportunity that presents itself to pass on the positive power of Christ's resurrection, his triumph over everything evil and sinful. With this approach, we can be sure that every single Christian can make a difference in the world, or at least in the little world around one! The Risen Lord waits for our response and collaboration – when will we answer and what will it be? □

We need to sit quietly and reflect

by Sr. Stan Kennedy

Sometimes we need to sit quietly and reflect in order to sustain our spirit, but this does not mean that spirituality is all about turning inward to attend to God and one's inner self. On the contrary, living a truly spiritual life is about living in the world with the conviction that God is to be found in everyone and everything. This conviction makes us engage with the world rather than turn away from it.



Time out from the cares and anxieties of our everyday lives is something we all need, but, in order to take this time to be still with ourselves, we also need special places. You can use your bedroom or your workshop or your kitchen to make time out for prayer or meditation, but it is also good to have a place apart that you can visit, even if not every day – a place like a beach or a mountain walkway, a chapel or a quiet room, where you can feel truly at peace. Places apart are special because they give us space as well as time to reflect.

DON BOSCO AND HIS BOYS

by Natale Cerrato (T/A:ID)

Don Bosco was a great educator, genuine and comprehensively spiritual but simple and founded on commonsense and charity, a living example of love.

We know this from the way he spoke to his boys of Valdocco. Those conversations were witty, humourous yet informative and interesting.

The Art Of St. Rafaél

A typical custom at Valdocco was the so-called "Good Night" of Don Bosco. This was a kind of short sermon that he gave to the youngsters after their evening prayers. Climbing on a small chair in the portico adjacent to the chapel of St. Francis de Sales, he first mentioned some lost articles that he had picked up around the house: a pencil, a penknife, a hat, a kerchief of some youngster. After this he told them the time-table for the following day and finally he told them a story from which he



CHARACTERISTICS

DON BOSCO'S

derived a moral or a good thought. Many of those 'good nights' were transcribed by some fervent young Salesians and are well documented in the famous *Biographical Memoirs of Don Bosco*.

So, on 7th November, 1872 Don Bosco announced that two youngsters had been expelled for bad behaviour and disobedience. Then he told them of some lost articles, adding: "Regretfully, some boys are beginning to take their schoolmates' books; they will end badly, like a certain former pupil who began with books and then gradually became a skilled thief, was caught red-handed, and was expelled in disgrace" (EBM 10, 441).

The art of "sanrafél" is a

phrase in Piedmontese (*Fé San Rafaél*), which means "to steal." It has nothing to do with St. Raphael, only the first two syllables "raphe" seems similar. In Piedmontese it means - to grab, to sneak. It was a funny expression which Don Bosco used, smiling innocently, while provoking the guilty one in his audience to reflect on his actions. He did this with his characteristic wit and good humour.

Sparrows do not toil

Humourous comments and stories flowed easily and pleasantly from Don Bosco's lips. This was a constant characteristic in his conversations especially with his boys even when he was suffering terribly or overcome by serious concerns. One day a young man remarked: "In the explanation of the Gospel, the preacher said that the sparrows

did not labour. They never do anything, yet God provides them with food and clothing. How lucky they are!" Don Bosco replied swiftly, "Yet Our Lord also allows them to grow fat, my good fellow, and to be fried in the pan to nourish those who labour!" (*EBM 17, 515*)

On the "Imperial"

Even in his letters Don Bosco did not fail to include some jokes especially when writing to his boys, as he did on 21st July 1862. That day one of his boys of the Oratory wrote to him from Lanzo, telling them of the fun he had playing in the rain. He had gone, as usual, to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and it had begun to rain. It must be noted that Don Bosco suffered immensely whenever he went by carriage and he was often forced to take his place on the carriage top with the driver. The place was called "the imperial" - actually it was far from being the seat of the emperor. Listen to his words:

"I was in the imperial but there were two others as well. They had opened their umbrellas on either side of me but being in the middle I benefited little except to receive the water that was draining from the two umbrellas. So I reached Lanzo



completely drenched and frozen to the bone. My dear young friend, you should have seen Don Bosco descend from the carriage so soaked like a bandicoot that often happens to peep out of its burrow in the courtyard (cf E 267).

That “University” of Don Bosco

It is curious to become aware that though Don Bosco was unparalleled as a teacher and educator he did not have any qualifications. In the academic year 1943-44 I was in Castelnuovo Don Bosco and I often went to a farmhouse of Sig. Giovanni Andriano where his brother, Canon Angelo, a professor at the Seminary of Giaveno, spent some quiet time. From them I was able to learn about something quite curious... the university where Don Bosco did his studies.

The brothers John and Angelo were two of the ten children of a certain Luigi Andriano whom the newly ordained Don Bosco had baptised on 27th June 1841 at Castelnuovo. He also became the boy's godfather. Luigi knew the Bosco family well because they had stayed with his parents at Val Martina in a house near “Renenta” below “Sussambrino” from 1830 to 1839. Don Bosco's mother and Joseph, the brother of the saint stayed there.

John, then a student and cleric in Chieri went there for his holidays to be with his brother at Sussambrino where he had the freedom to go through all the books in the family library. But not wanting to be a burden to his brother, he would lead the cows out to pasture and help in the farm as well. Sometimes, with book in hand, he would assist a Turkish



A very early photograph of Don Bosco hearing the confessions of his boys.

family that was employed to guard the grapes. He would also climb up the hill and spend several hours in the shade of the trees engrossed in reading.

Don Bosco would often take his boys on hikes to Becchi and to the villages of Monferrato passing below Sussambrino where he had spent many happy hours. When he arrived there Luigi Andriano would run to the foot of the bridge across the road to Buttigliera to meet the group but especially to meet his godfather. Pointing to the trees of Sussambrino Don Bosco would say: “There is the University of Don Bosco.”

The cleric Francesca (Don Bosco's biographer) at Valdocco, thinking of those early days, would wax eloquent and speak about frequenting the University of Turin. □

NEWSBITS



The Vatican

Pope John Paul II will be beatified on May 1 after a miracle attributed to him was agreed to by the Pope.

Pope Benedict XVI, in a decree, said that a French nun's recovery from Parkinson's disease was miraculous, the last step needed for the late pontiff's beatification.

A second miracle will be required for the Polish-born Pope John Paul II to become a saint. "This is a huge and important cause of joy," Warsaw Archbishop Kazimierz Nycz said.

Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, Pope John Paul II's long time secretary and friend, expressed "huge thanks" to Pope Benedict for the decree. "We are happy today," he said.

Once he is beatified, Pope John Paul II will be given the title "blessed" and can be publicly venerated.

Many people, especially in Poland, already venerate him privately, but the ceremony will make it official.

Pope Benedict had put Pope

John Paul's sainthood process on fast track just weeks after he died in 2005, responding to the chants of "Santo Subito!" or "Sainthood immediately!" that erupted during the late pontiff's funeral.

The beatification, which Benedict will himself celebrate, is expected to draw hundred's of thousands of pilgrims to Rome. AP



Ahmedabad

The Indian Postal department has released a commemorative postage stamp on the Gujarati magazine Doot, which is published by the Catholic Church since 1911. The stamp was released on Jan. 15 in Ahmedabad.

The magazine, which has completed a century of uninterrupted publication, has contributed in bringing many words spoken in Central Gujarat to the mainstream and Gujarati dictionary.

Jesuit Father Herman Zurhansen of Germany started the magazine in Gujarati with only 12 pages. The first issue came out in January 1911 and was printed at the Examiner Press,

Mumbai. It was initially named as "Ati Pavitra Antakaranno Doot" (Messenger of the Sacred Heart) which was in 2000 shortened to the present name – Doot.

Editors from different countries such as Switzerland, Spain and Germany took charge of the magazine during its last 100 years.

Jesuit Father Basil Lala Parmar was the first Indian editor of the magazine from February 1956 to June 1969. The magazine has also earned the unique distinction of being the second Gujarati magazine to complete a century of uninterrupted publication after Gujarat Vidyasabha's 155-year-old magazine "Buddhiprakas". (PIB Press Release)

Chennai

Apostolic Nuncio to India Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio has released a Bible in Braille language to benefit the visually impaired.

The nuncio released the first copy of the Tamil inter-confessional version of the New Testament and Psalms during the 23rd plenary of the Catholic Conference of Bishops in India on January 9 in Chennai. The Institute of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus based in Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu started this project in 2006.

The first copy was received by Xavier and Regina Mary, both visually impaired teachers of Amalarakkini School for the Blind in Susainagar in Tamil Nadu. The congregation manages the school.

Jancy Rani, a student of the school, did the second reading from the newly released Braille Bible during a mass led by the nuncio.

Kerala

A Hindu businessman, based in Qatar, is constructing a mosque in Kerala, aiming to promote communal harmony in the state.

"Construction is going on. The mosque will be ready in two or three months," Cheril Krishna Menon, a prominent businessman in the Gulf, said.

Menon said that he is planning to build a church after the work of the mosque gets over.

"God is one and people should respect and work for the promotion of other religions also," Menon, who has got a Padma Shri in 2009, said.

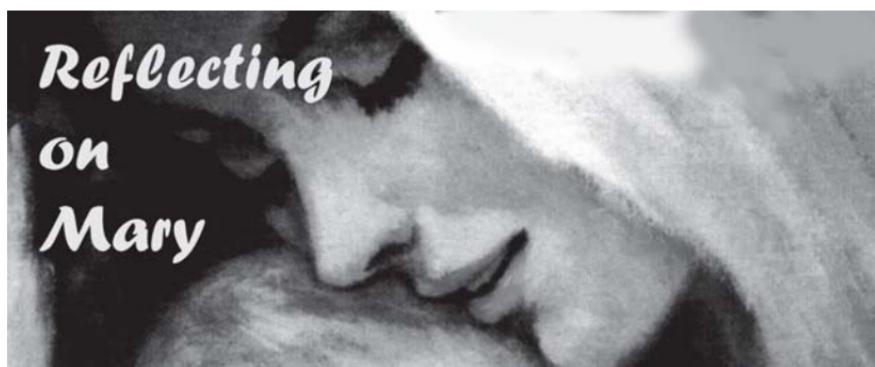
Menon said that he has taken permission from the Muslim religious leaders and scholars to build the mosque in Kozhikode which can accommodate 400 people at a time. "They are okay with it," he added. He claims that it will be the first mosque in 1200 years to be built by a Hindu.

So far, the Cheraman Mosque, constructed in the late eighth century by Chera ruler Rama Varma Kulashekkhara, is the only mosque built by any Hindu in Kerala so far.

Menon, who is chairman and managing director of the Doha-headquartered Behzad Group of Companies, said he would continue to work for the promotion of all major religions. He said that land for the church has already been identified but the final decision is not taken yet.

Menon is also involved in the establishment of a study centre in Thiruvananthapuram to spread awareness of the Bhagvad Gita.

Sifi.com



SPEAKING OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

By Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm.

Painters and sculptors, poets and musicians, keep finding new ways to depict the simple young woman God the Father chose to be Mother of his Son.

Some years ago I came across the phrase 'the inescapable woman' to describe the holy Mother of God. Not only Catholics, not just Christians, but people in general keep referring to her in respectful ways. She is a part of the history of Christianity from the start. Even her many titles in the Litany of Loreto still fall short of the chorus of praise from her grateful children.

Painters and sculptors, poets and musicians, keep finding new ways to depict the simple young woman God the Father chose to be Mother of his Son. At the consent of the humble maiden of Nazareth there occurred the greatest event in all human history: the incarnation—perhaps we would be more strongly impressed by its Saxon equivalent 'the enfleshing of the Son of God,' recalling the words from the prologue of St John's Gospel 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.'

In this article it is my pleasure to offer readers some of the many instances of the wide influence of our Lady. One Holy Thursday in 1975, I happened to catch a radio broadcast on the BBC, one of a series on Gospel witnesses. Reverend Elsie Chamberlin, minister of a Free Church in Essex, spoke of the Virgin Mary, nothing that "the Gospel that St. Luke saw in her Son's teaching was already part of his Mother's understanding of the faith of his followers."

The Rosary

Not an article or two but whole books could be built around the Rosary. The Jesuit weekly, *America*, September 30, 2000, had an article by Gallaudet Howard, adult convert from Episcopalianism. She grew up, she writes, familiar with the "spare beauty of Anglican chant and the compressed poetry of Anglican collects." Then, she

continued, "Since I began praying the Rosary, I have learned more about the power of meditative, repetitive prayer to focus my mind on holy mysteries, and shed light on all my daily, personal crises and petitions."

The Canadian Mary Jo Jeddy wrote of the death of her father in the book *The Eye of the Catholic Storm: The Church Since Vatican II* (Harper Collins, Toronto, 1992). She said that the only thing that seemed to give him peace was when the rosary was said, which has the very powerful words "pray for us now and at the hour of our death." She wrote "yes, Mary was with him at the hour of his death. But I also realized that the prayer he'd said all his life had gone way below any conscious level, and that when you're not conscious any more that is the level you pray out of..." Publishers continue to bring out new books on the Rosary. Two current examples are Liz Kelly, *The Seeker's Guide to the Rosary* (Loyola Press, Chicago, April 2001, recommended by the Family Rosary). And Teresa Rhodes McGee, *Ordinary Mysteries: Rediscovering the Rosary* (Orbis, Maryknoll, advertisement March 2001): certainly a catchy title, like other Rosary descriptions of recent years, 'praying by hand' and 'prayers you can count on.'

Icons

The word *ικον* is used these days in several ways, for example in computers. But its basic Christian usage is for an image of our Lord, his Mother, the saints in glory. We associate the veneration of icons with eastern Christian churches. The word

'icon' comes directly from Greek, meaning an 'image.' To a degree somewhat difficult for westerners to understand sacred icons are centres and occasions for prayer, in both churches and homes. I recall visiting with a brother priest an art museum in Virginia, which boasted a display of historic eastern icons, principally from pre-revolutionary Russia. They had come into the possession of the museum because of their artistic and hence financial worth.

Ideally, icons are occasions and invitations to prayer, and the priest in my company who was bi-ritual (both western and eastern) made the sign of the cross almost automatically before each of them as we made our rounds in the art gallery.

A Russian icon of our Lady and the Christ Child is featured in the January, 2001, issue, of the *National Geographic Magazine*. The cover legend is 'The Body in Space: Surviving The Odyssey.' The lead story 'The King of Space Travel' is about the physician-cosmonaut Valery Polyakov.

There is a picture of him with his family, and in the background the icon of Mary and the Child Jesus. The story tells of an emergency he survived, during his 437 days in space, and continues "when the fire was extinguished he took the icon into an adjoining room and began to pray."

Obviously, our Lady is not limited to this earth!

Storm Petrels

The English language has a good number of expressions reflecting Christianity. The Florida paper *The Herald Tribune*, for

November 13, 2000, ran the article by Mina Walther: 'Tide Lines: These birds spurn the land and spend their life at sea.' It is about 'storm petrels.' They follow ships as scavengers even far out at sea; their name comes from St. Peter who walked on the water. Sailors used to call them 'Mother Carey's chickens,' from Mater cara (dear mother) the Virgin Mary. They are seen as forecasting storms, for the shift in weather drives them closer to ships.

The weekly US News & World Report March 3, 2001 had the story 'Did Christianity thrive in China?' subtitled 'digging for evidence at ancient sites.' For many years tourists to China have seen 'the Nestorian stone,' found in the 17th century and telling of the coming of Christianity in AD 635. Recently, the head of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation, based in England, Martin Palmer, made the astonishing discovery, in a tumbled-down pagoda, of fragments of a nativity scene with an image of the Virgin Mary, illustrated in the magazine account. It is at the oldest surviving Christian site in China. From the seventh to the ninth centuries Christianity was permitted by the emperor, regarded as 'religion of light.'

Further excavation may reveal much more and a museum be built to house the artifacts. Palmer is quoted in the U.S. News story about the moment of discovery: "We all stopped suddenly in front of the Nativity scene and realized we would tell the world, and this was the last time it would be our secret. Then we all bowed and

went out." (p. 51, story by Bay Fang, section Science & Ideas-Religion)

Mary's "Yes" to God

In 1999 was published: *My Grandfathers House: A Genealogy of Doubt and Faith*, by Robert Clark. Descendant of a New England family, he has some beautiful passages about the influence of our Lady on his writing and finally his entering the Catholic Church. Here is one example: "I have come to learn that Mary is, in addition to her other qualities, the human exemplar of assent; of waiting for God's grace to come and, against all our proclivities, of saying yes to it - acknowledging God's 'you,' returning his love with what love we, in our poverty of spirit, can muster." (Picador of New York is the publisher. America reviewed it March 25, 2000, pages 30/31.)

"...Not the Empty Cross"

Commonweal magazine for March 9, 2001, has an article by Gregory Wolfe, founder-editor of *Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion*. His article is "I was a teenage conservative, the dead end of politics and the possibilities of art." Among the factors that brought him into the Catholic Church, he mentions the communitarian ethos and sacramental vision of Catholicism" but puts special emphasis on the 'tragic sense of life,' awareness of the ambiguities and divisions within the human heart, accompanied by a stress on suffering and prayer. He writes: 'I came to understand why Catholics



verebrate the crucifix, not the empty cross, why they are haunted by the words to Mary that 'a sword shall pierce your own Soul also.'"

Our Lady of the Highway

The New York Times for December 29, 2000, featured on the front page a story about long-distance truckers on Interstate 95, which runs down the eastern seaboard. It is a monotonous run, so drivers welcome diversion, and the newspaper story told of the 'stone lady,' a floodlit white marble statue of the Blessed Virgin

overlooking the highway at Childs, Maryland. 'Our Lady of the Highway' is on the grounds of the retreat centre of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, and I well remember seeing it on the north side of the road driving between Washington and New York.

An airborne example of our Lady's inescapable capability opened before my delighted eyes in the October 2000 number of the Sky magazine on a Delta flight: an article on the historic Book of Kells (1200 years old, treasured at Trinity College, Dublin) carried a full-colour reproduction of one of its pages 'Virgin and Child.'

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Recently 'Our Lady of Guadalupe' was added to the calendar of the American Catholic Church for December 12. The weekly *Time* for December 11, 2000, in the article 'Spirituality in America' had a headline 'If Jesus had been born in San Antonio,' about Father Virgilio Elizondo, noted authority and apostle of Guadalupe. In his apostolic exhortation 'The Church in America,' Pope John Paul II proposed this prayer for families: "Teach us to love your Mother Mary as you loved her. Give us strength to proclaim your word with courage, in the work of new evangelization, so that the world may know new hope. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America, pray for us!" (Mexico City, January 22, 1999) □

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Thank you so much Our Lady for helping to cure my father of Herpes and bouncing him back to good health. Continue to protect your son Mother Mary, love you always. *Helen Pinto, Mumbai*

Dearest Mother Mary, thank you very much for your loving intercession. Our daughter Nathania graduated with honours from the University and has successfully gained employment in a graduate position. We are extremely grateful for all your help. Please continue to guide her and keep her in your loving care.

Randolph John Pereira, Australia

During the Diwali vacation my daughters were playing in the house while I was busy in the kitchen. I heard the sound of breaking glass and to my horror I found my younger daughter Maryanne standing near the broken centre table and she was covered with glass though she did not have a scratch. I owe this escape to the protection of Our Lady. I am grateful to her for protecting my daughter from serious injury.

Annie Gomes, Nerul, Navi Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady 'Mary Help of Christians' for saving us from a serious car accident.

Mrs. Linda Dias, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary Help of Christians for favours received. I am making an offering for a poor boy on his way to the priesthood.

Sybil Williams, Pune

Thanks to Our Blessed Mother for the countless blessings bestowed on my family and the great gift of a grandson Dominic born to my daughter on the 6th May 2010.

Tony Loto, Jaipur

My sincere thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary for all the graces received.

Irene Coelho, Mumbai

My grateful and sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians for a safe delivery of my daughter-in-law and the gift of a baby boy. Bless them and keep them in good health.

Maria A. Fernandes, Goa

We are extremely grateful to Our Lady for the successful completion of our daughter Shilpa's education. Please help her to find a suitable life partner.

Mrs. & Mr. A.L. Mathew, Kerala

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary for all the blessings and a good job.

Rosemary Coutinho, Thane

My grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and His Blessed Mother for the innumerable blessings showered on me and for sparing me with good health these 90 years.

May DeCouto, Bangalore

Grateful thanks to the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit and Mother Mary for all the blessings and graces received through her intercession.

Lydia Lobo, Australia

I am grateful to Our Blessed Mother for all the graces received. Do continue to preserve us in good health.

Matilda Johnson, Goa

My most sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother Mary for granting me special favours and for helping both my sons to pass their Std. X exams and for getting admission to the ITI for my elder son.

Anna Rosario, Goa

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



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

Thank you dear Mother Mary for protecting us in all our troubles. *Melissa, Mumbai*

I am most grateful to Our Blessed Mother. Through the recitation of the three Hail Marys I passed the N.E.T and got a job as an Asst. Professor in a prestigious college. Thank you dear Mother Mary.

Mrs. Sheeji Bastian, Kerala

My sincere and heartfelt gratitude for the many blessings and favours received through the recitation of the three Hail Marys. Mother Mary please continue to intercede for my family. *Mrs. Victoria Rebelo, Goa*
With a sincere heart I thank Mother Mary for my husband's clear spinal reports and for the many other favours received. *Mrs. R. Barbosa, Mumbai*
My sincere and grateful thanks to Mother Mary, Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for the good health and success in examinations of my children, especially for averting severe problems in my health.

Mrs. F. Fernandes, UK

Our sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother for all the graces received through the faithful recitation of the Three Hail Marys.

D'Mello & Fly, Mumbai

I thank Our Lady for the great miracle of curing my husband. He went into a diabetic stroke on 16th Dec. 2010 and had to be taken to hospital where the medicine seemed to work and he recovered and returned home. Again on the 8th January he suffered again from bleeding and was on the verge of being operated again. I prayed that he be spared of the operation. I prayed the three Hail Marys and the operation was averted. I ask our blessed Mother to help him recover completely.

Mrs. S. Pereira, Mumbai

While returning from visiting a friend in the hospital I went to board a bus which suddenly started moving and I was thrown back. People shouted for the bus to stop and when they came, they found that I had only a few bruises. I am accustomed to pray the three Hail Marys before I travel. No doubt, Mary was there. *P.G. Jacob, Cochin*

Our sincere thanks for the graces and blessings received through the recitation of the three Hail Marys. *Bridget Fernandes, Ajmer*

Our sincere thanks to our dear Lord and his Blessed Mother for successful operations. *Mr. & Mrs. D'Souza, Mumbai*

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

I am grateful to Our Lady and Don Bosco for the success in my son's education.

Mr. John Vaiz, Mumbai

Our heartfelt thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for a happy marriage of my daughter. Now she is 2 months pregnant. Mother Mary, protect her family and grant them all good health, peace and harmony.

R. Fernandes, Goa

I am sincerely grateful to Our Saviour Jesus Christ, Our Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and Dominic Savio for saving us from a terrible accident. My husband and I were coming on to a main road from one of the side roads. I thought I had looked carefully for oncoming traffic, but when I came on to the main road, I collided with another vehicle that was coming in our direction at full speed. None of us in either car was hurt though the car was damaged so badly it cannot be repaired. I am grateful to Our Lady for her protection.

A Firm Devotee of Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio

My sincere gratitude to Our Lord, Our Blessed Mother and Don Bosco for the many favours I have received.

Mr. Ignatius Lobo, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for constantly protecting my father who was going through many complications because of his diabetes. I am grateful to them for constantly assisting him.

Sr. Francy, SCC, Madurai

Our sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude to the Infant Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the happy marriage of our son Castro on 27th Oct. 2010.

Antonio & Netty Sequeira, Goa

Thank you dear Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for granting me a safe delivery of my son and for his successful surgery.

Jennifer & Benedicta Aranha, Mumbai

My sincere thanks and gratitude to our Almighty God and Father, Jesus Christ, Mother Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery and the gift of a baby boy.

Morgan E. Pereira, Thane

My heartfelt thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for protecting me in an accident and helping my children get good jobs.

A Devotee

My thanks to Mary Help of Christians for a long and happy married life, for good health, for the gift of a baby girl, Regina Fernandes.

Simon Fernandes, Mumbai

Thank you, dear Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for granting my husband a job in Doha, Qatar.

Mrs. Sacramenta Fernandes, Qatar

A million thanks to you dear Mother Mary for helping my son in his studies and for helping him pass with a good percentage. Do continue to shower your blessings on him.

Remetina Moraes, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and St. John Bosco for blessing my daughter with twin daughters after eleven years of marriage. We ask for their good health.

Sylvia Menezes, Mumbai

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Thank you, dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the favours received through the recitation of the three Hail Marys. They have saved me from many hurdles and hindrances.

Dominic Savio Aranha, Dubai, UAE

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to our dear Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for a safe delivery of our baby boy. God's wonderful gift to our family. I am extremely sorry for the delay. *Delma and Franco D'Silva, Goa*

Sincere thanks to the Most Holy Trinity, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco, Dominic Savio and St. Mary MacKillop for favours received. Please continue to

protect and bless us. Keep us in good health.

Hector and Stephen Nigli, Sydney, Australia

Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for freeing me from acne and other skin problems.

Mrs. V. Chamala, Bangalore

My heartfelt thanks to Our Lord, Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio. My grand daughter had a terrible job and she was harrassed by her boss. I prayed earnestly and she suddenly got a better job where she is very happy.

Mrs. Annie D'Silva, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for curing my son's severe stomach pain and many other favours received. Mother Mary continue to protect us always.

Devotee, Mumbai

My younger brother was very sick and admitted to hospital. I prayed for his recovery and within a few days he started showing signs of improvement. I am grateful to Mother Mary and Dominic Savio and I pray for the good health of my brother and also bless him with a good life partner.

Annette D'Souza, Goa

My sincere gratitude to Our Blessed Mother, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter who has been blessed with a healthy baby girl.

Violet Rozario, Baroda

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

APRIL 2011

Holy Father's General Intention: *That the Church may offer new generations through the believable proclamation of the Gospel, ever-new reasons of life and hope.*

Missionary Intention: *That missionaries, with the proclamation of the Gospel and their witness of life, may bring Christ to all those who do not yet know Him.*

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
Date of Publication: 1st of every month

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

MARY WAS THERE

My husband, my son and I were on a vacation to Manipur. From there we decided to visit the Indo-Burma border. We started off early in the morning by car. There was heavy fog on the road and the border road passed through mountainous terrain. On the way there were military check-points. We stopped and then as soon as we started again we found our vehicle sliding down a slope. We saw trees slipping by. We had descended about 2 metres. The windows were shut so no one heard our screams. The car however was prevented from sliding further because of some logs of wood. We emerged unhurt. It was certainly the intercession of Our Lady and the recitation of the three Hail Marys that saved us from a fatal accident.

Jessie Andrade, Vasai

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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