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**"Mary
treasured
all these things
in her heart"**

*She is a model and guide
for those striving
to listen and meditate
on the Word of God*

Cover:
The Sacred Heart of Jesus



From The Editor's Desk

Return to the Ordinary

Come June and there's a whiff of the monsoon in the air – or there used to be – what with climate change and global warming. It was noticeable even in the stillness of our muggy Mumbai days when the gentle sea breezes began to have a whiff of moistness in them. It's still noticeable in the skies over the Arabian Sea where clouds play canvas to the brilliant hues of the setting sun. The parched earth and the few bare trees in the barren parks of our seething metropolis seem like tired civil servants desperately looking for some respite. And while the days are becoming noticeably more humid, the evenings are becoming insistently more windy.

For us humans as well, there's a sense of change. Somehow the rains bring with them a certain note of seriousness that was not apparent in the heady days of high summer. The holiday season is now well and truly over and it's back again to work or to look for work. The children and teenagers are flocking into the bookshops to buy their guides and texts. Umbrellas and waterproofs begin to appear to add colour to what will hopefully be our long-awaited monsoon.

June brings with it a sense of a return to the ordinary as we settle down again to the important business of living. There may be regrets for the passing of summer but there can also be in us a certain satisfaction at getting back to the solid concerns of life. Summer, like a good holiday, is welcome while it lasts, but it would be tedious if it lasted forever. We need a solid fare of life if we are to enjoy its lighter moments to their full.

For us believers, prayer is part of that solid fare of life. Prayer is not some added luxury reserved for the few. Prayer is for us the very stuff of our life, without which we lose our vitality and sense of purpose. 'Without a taste for God through prayer, life would be intolerable,' wrote St. Francis Xavier. That's true for all of us, not just for saints.

For, we all have the gift of prayer. It is given to us with our baptism when the Holy Spirit is poured into our hearts. The Holy Spirit is the one who teaches us to pray. And he teaches each one of us differently. Some of us find it best to say prayers that we know by heart. Others like to read the psalms or the Gospel stories slowly. Other people like to repeat a short phrase over and over, letting its meaning sink in ever more deeply.

For others the best way of praying is to sit still in front of the Blessed Sacrament or in a quiet corner and allow God's love to sink in. For yet others, the best way to pray is to think over the events of the day in the presence of God.

We all pray differently, but we all have the gift of prayer. As we return to the ordinary business of living, let us make room for what makes life tolerable for us all.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

6. HOW DO RISEN CHRISTIANS PRAY

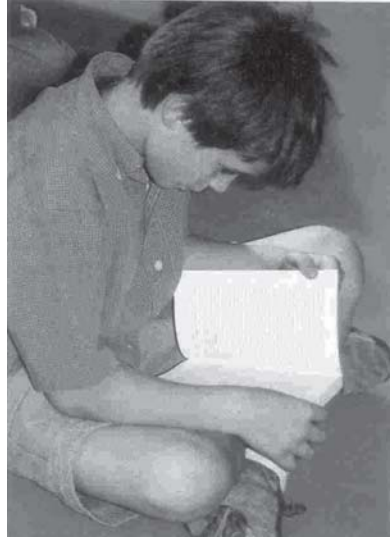
Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

A sea captain who in his retirement plied a boat taking day-trippers to Shetland Islands tells this story. On one particular trip with the boat packed with young people, he devoutly said a prayer as was his custom, before sailing out. But the boatful of youngsters derisively laughed at him because the day was fine, the sea was calm, and there was no evident sign of impending danger!

However they weren't long at sea when a storm suddenly broke out and the boat began to pitch and roll violently. The terrified passengers hurried to the Captain to request him to join them in prayer, but he calmly replied, "I say my prayers when it is calm. When it gets rough I attend to my ship."

God - at our Beck and Call?

This charming little story poses for us the question, "Why do people pray?" and also more importantly perhaps, "How does a risen Christian pray?" Since prayer is familiar to every Christian and all of us do pray at regular intervals, it would be good to reflect on some of the issues concerning prayer. Most people pray only when they are in need as did the youngsters on this trip. This stems from an image of God as being primarily a Benevolent Helper, a Fire-fighter or a Problem Solver whose interventions come into play only when his creatures find themselves in dire straits.



Others see God as a 'spare tyre' that is available in every vehicle – no one thinks of it until there is a puncture. Once the damaged wheel has been repaired and replaced, the old spare is conveniently forgotten until the next crisis strikes!

A little deeper reflection reveals that this approach to God does him grave dishonour and is in fact an insult to who He really is! People who harbour this vision of God actually place themselves at the centre of Life; everything else has to revolve around them, including God, who is basically considered as being at their service, meant only to rescue them from crises! So many of the psalms that the Israelites pray

frequently, are of this kind! They are actually a SOS sent out in times of acute distress. Now without a doubt, God does come to the aid of his loving children at all times and not only when they are in need, but for us to think of him only in such circumstances speaks of a very commercial attitude towards God.

Only Petitionary Prayer?

Further, when the major part of our prayer consists of petitions again we spot a faulty conception of God's nature and of our own identity. If we are his beloved children as Scripture repeatedly informs us, then speaking to our gracious Father should come naturally to us at all times, especially when good things come our way. Wouldn't God be the first Person we would want to share our good fortune with, no sooner we find ourselves blessed? If our relationship with God was correct, then the prayer of praise and thanksgiving would form a large part of our spiritual arsenal, wouldn't it? Strangely enough, even when we do choose to thank God have we noticed how brief and fleeting these prayers of praise and thanksgiving are? We seem to run out of words when dealing with this kind of prayer, while with petitions we are adept enough to go on for hours!

There are besides other faulty assumptions behind such an approach. Is it true that we are sure that God thinks of us only when good things happen or that bad things befall us because He has somehow forgotten us? For that matter, can God ever forget us, even for a fleeting moment? "Can a woman forget her nursing

child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands..." (Is 49:15-16). So, God does not need to be reminded that we are in trouble. Jesus alerts us: "When you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Mt 6:7-8).

Will be - or Already Granted?

Since it is true that the Father does not need to be reminded of our needs, it is equally true that He does not wait for us to ask in order to give us what we require to live life happily. In fact, Paul in Ephesians provides us with a very compelling reason to bless God in all circumstances, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *has* blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places..." (Eph 1:3). This simply means that every possible blessing we could ever need has already been granted to us! So, all we require to do is to align ourselves with God's plans, ascertain his will for this particular moment and do what he commands us. If our constant concern is the building of the Kingdom, 'all the rest will be added unto you...' (Mt. 6:33).

Our prayer in no way changes God, but is rather directed towards changing us petitioners. Particularly, it aims at making us ask ourselves more clearly whether we are in line with God's designs for his kingdom. It stands

to reason that God cannot grant us anything that goes against his kingdom, for then we would have a kingdom divided against itself! Besides, so often even while *we* think we are in line with God's designs that may not be true at all – the Self/Ego invariably surreptitiously creeps into everything we do. And so, our prayer is directed more towards purifying our intentions, for Jesus assures us that whatever we ask for “in his name” has already been granted to us. To ask in the name of Jesus is to ask as He did, especially at Gethsemane – “Father take this cup away, but not as I will; let your will be done!” If we can make this stance of doing God's will not ours, as explicit as possible each time we pray then we need not fear any trial or trouble - He will always be with us, even till the end of time.

A Risen Christian Prays

A Christian who shares in the risen-ness of Christ is on a different plane from the one who does not in practice attend to this fundamental truth of Christianity. The Resurrection has ushered in the definitive “kingdom” that Jesus came to establish. As Scripture puts it, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe

every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away” (Rev 21:1-4).

Reflecting on this St. Paul says, “From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us” (2 Cor 5:16-19). So, to share in the risen-ness of Christ means to adopt a new attitude and approach towards everything, prayer included.

Putting it briefly, we do not pray in order to inform God, or to cajole Him into favouring us in some way. Especially the adversity facing us should make us pause and ask ourselves, “Am I going in the right direction? Does this obstacle seek to tell me something?” Our prayer then becomes a seeking for the right direction, as Jesus sought at Gethsemane. Having asked God for directions, we then *listen* attentively and do all he tell us, as the servants did at Cana (Jn. 2:5-7). The focus, we notice, is not on ourselves and our problems, but on God and his Kingdom. Further, asking for directions is of no use unless we are genuinely prepared to follow the suggestions given.



And so we never ask unless we are consciously ready to do God's will unquestioningly! Again, we don't seek ready-made answers, but rather offer to work to obtain what we prayed for!

Listening, a Major Element in Prayer

This approach makes us realize that in prayer we need to listen more than give suggestions to God. Hence it is that great teachers of prayer recommend that we very simply place our difficulty before the Lord and then remain in silence and stillness, allowing God a free hand in our lives. We place ourselves in His hands like clay in the hands of a potter, (Jer. 18:6-12) or like a surgery patient in the skillful hands of the surgeon. In fact, during surgery we are on purpose 'knocked out' before the surgeon even begins, so that he can work uninterruptedly. We don't give any suggestions to the surgeon but with total faith accept all that he does for us believing that we will be the better for it. And in prayer it should be the same.

Now we would certainly have realized that this kind of prayer is different and difficult too! We generally tend to act as if we know what is best for us and hence rattle

off a string of suggestions to the Father while all He says to us is, "Be still and know that I am God...(Ps. 46:10). Once we accept the practical meaning of the Resurrection of Christ, we notice that our approach to prayer changes automatically - less petitions and much more of praise, blessing and thanksgiving! We need to also realize that this kind of shift in our

method of praying will not happen automatically or easily for that matter! It takes repeated conscious efforts for us to remember the background and meaning of the Resurrection for us: "This is all God's work; we are a new creation; the purpose of our lives is to establish God's kingdom and not so much to somehow make our way into heaven; everything around us works for our good when we are aligned with God's will! (Rom. 8:28).

Maybe we could sum up the powerful lesson of this simple skipper's response to the youngsters he ferried across: "If we cannot seek God in the quiet moments of our lives we are not likely to find him when trouble strikes. We are more likely to panic. But if we have learnt to seek him and trust him in quiet moments, then most certainly we will find him when the going gets rough." Prayer is not a panacea for all evils, prayer is a daily vital necessity if we wish to live our Christian lives more effectively. It is almost as vital as breathing - stop it (consciously or otherwise) and you are dead!

How would you want to pray from now? □

A PASSIONATE LIFE

by Maddalena di Spello
(T/A - ID)

I've always been a passionate person. That was what singled me out from my peers. They wanted a normal life, one that had a familiar environment motivated by the idea of spending their life making money, finding a wealthy husband and a beautiful home – the result of a good job. To me, just listening to this kind of talk made my hair stand on end (I have very long hair!).

After reading this very highbrow stuff, well-meaning and sober according to François Mauriac, I discovered the world of Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and others of their stature, and they seemed to have been my saving grace. Eventually I left that hypocritical and deformed world!

Today, more than ever, I met people of intensity, capable of suffering, sacrifice and passion. Maybe this can help us to rediscover the music of Beethoven, or the writings of Camille Claudel, or the paintings of Van Gogh. All of them with a zest for life infused with hope where nothing needs to be reduced to something disgustingly tepid!

Certainly in many of these situations not everything is holy water, but neither is everything bigotry or mere fervour. We are faced with the entrails of fire, and we can hear God the Father crying out through the prophet: "Since you are neither hot nor cold but lukewarm I will spit you out of my mouth" (Revelation 3.14 to 16).

I think it's healthy to be

passionate, it is necessary and it is a gift of God. Knowing how to live in community without being slaves to one another is another problem.

I reprint here the words of a great saint from whom I have profited much: "The one who walks to the West walks away from the East." The Lord who is with me has used this method to help me regulate my passions, that's all I can say.

That is if one wishes to respond to the subtle voice that lures him to seek the truth, to understand himself and to follow Jesus all the days of his life, he must undertake this quest with determination and love that draws him day after day towards this goal. This truth is God Himself and He knows how and what to do to lure you!

We have only to walk and walk and keep on walking and be intelligent enough not to wait and look for some relief or gratification or some consolation...

But we are small and we are human and we all need some candy every now and then.

If we have been bestowed the gift of being warm and passionate there is an innate need in us to reciprocate it and to pass it on with much affection. However, it is at this point that suffering comes in because we expect something in return. But suffering is a gift that allows our love to grow and spread onto the shores of graciousness even though it

goes against our nature.

Saints were not beings devoid of passion, on the contrary. They never let the dust of disuse settle on their lives but they were spurred on by a strong determination, profound tears and intense joy.

Just look at Don Bosco and his struggles with the self-righteous clergy of his time; so many of them thought he was out of his mind.

He never accepted social benefits and neither did he compromise especially when they tried to push him into the carriage to be driven to the asylum because the charity of bourgeois propriety thought they would be more comfortable if he were there.

A Passion for Following Christ

Don Bosco was great and genial, yet he had his moments of loneliness and depression. There are so many others whom we know who even being confined to their beds of sickness and pain always remained true followers of Christ. Think of the last days and the last hours of our dearly beloved Pope John Paul II.

To be like such people we have to desire holiness and this desire involves passion!

Those who do not have the spine to follow Jesus and who are not willing to follow him passionately should remember these words of warning that commentators simply try to water down to mean mediocrity. "He who does not hate his father, mother, brothers... he who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is not worthy of me... foxes have their holes but the Son of Man



"Behold, the chariot of fire and the horses and Elijah was taken from Elisha And he went taken up in a whirlwind into heaven. (2 Kgs. 2,11)

has nowhere to lay his head...." These words are like sharp stones that strike at our mediocrity and our lack of passion for God.

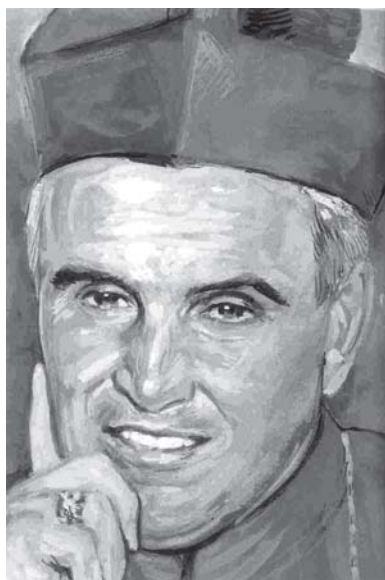
God asks us to choose the absolute and the unique consolation of walking behind him constantly keeping our eyes on his back as he leads us onwards.

*My Lord,
I see you from behind, but I see you!
And so, with your grace
I shall be able to love you always.
I know that without you
I can do nothing!
But I also know that you are with me
till the end of my days.
You said so and I believe you. □*

SALESIAN SAINT OF THE MONTH

STEPHEN FERRANDO 1895 - 1978

Stephen Ferrando was born at Rossiglione, in the province of Genoa on September 28, 1895 to Agostino and Giuseppina Salvi. He was fascinated by the life of Don Bosco and asked to become a Salesian. In 1912 he made his profession at Foglizzo Canavese (Turin). During WWI he was awarded a Silver Medal for bravery. In 1923 he completed his theological studies and was ordained a priest. He was assigned to Assam in India. For ten years he was Master of Novices and the rector of the students of Philosophy and Theology and he went to the villages that dotted the hills and organized holiday Oratories for the children. To his surprise, in 1934 Pius XI named him bishop of the diocese of Krishnagar. On November 10 he was ordained bishop in Shillong. A year later he returned to Shillong as Bishop. Whenever he took charge of a new diocese he kissed the ground and entrusted it to Jesus Crucified. His ministry was characterized by his Salesian spirituality: joy, simplicity and direct contact with people. He spread devotion to Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco. He wants Indians to be first evangelizers of their land. He founded the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians from a group of catechists. They were to teach the people to love Jesus, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco, the



missions and the poor people. He returned to the diocese on 26 June 1969 after taking part in Council and resigned from his diocese. In Italy the old retired missionary bishop stayed in the Salesian house of Quarto (Genoa). In 1970 he wrote: "Here in Italy I often ask myself: Why did you leave Assam after 47 years of missionary life?" The answer: "Because finally the day has dawned after 47 years which the Church in India can look after itself." He died on June 20, 1978. Nine years later the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians requested that the mortal remains of their founder be returned to them. The urn containing the remains of Msgr. Ferrando was placed in the chapel of the Convent of Santa Margaret in Shillong, the land that had become his second home. □

The Diocesan Process was opened on 8 October 2003 and concluded on 13 August 2006

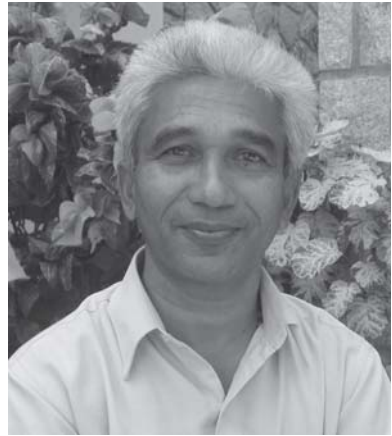
**WHAT MUST I DO TO RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE?***Fr. Jolly Kavilaveetil, sdb**Salesian Province of Trichy, South India*

Good master, what good work must I do to receive eternal life? This question was in my mind from my younger days. I hail from Alleppey district of Kerala. I have two brothers and two sisters.

My father was a teacher who spent his spare moments supporting the parish and the parish priest, planning and helping out in the parish activities. My brothers and I were altar boys. My sisters taught catechism in Sunday school. The way in which my brothers took part in the church activities, spurred me towards wanting to become a good priest.

I never stop studying and searching for the will of God. This has led me to a life of happiness and helped me to face life with courage and contentment'.

As a teenager I was curious about the cases of satanic possession. As a seminarian I wanted to know if my belief is true or not. My desire to find an answer made me speak with many whom I considered men of God. During my theological studies I cycled long distances to attend lectures even as far as 30 kms. I visited a centre of 'Bahai' faith. I visited some shrines where many devotees gathered. But the place where I found something special was the house of Mr. Mariadas. Every Saturday I went there to take part in a simple prayer, preaching and healing programme. It was there that the Lord touched me and I resolved to be His faithful servant because



I found there, in that assembly of simple people a lot of faith and the wonderful works the Lord was doing.

A Salesian priest, who was rather advanced in years and who my friends considered an active person attracted me to the Salesian priestly life.

I am delighted to be a Salesian priest, able to touch the lives of many youngsters by sharing my faith in God and helping them find peace, joy and happiness in life and in the family and the community.

I hope you discover your destiny in the Lord by searching for it in your own family. John Paul II of happy memory would say, the family is the first seminary. - How true this has been in my life!

Take pride in your faith in Jesus Christ and the fact that you are a member of our Mother the Church. □

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

Witnesses in & for Our Times



"I tried all the philosophies...then" ST. JUSTIN, Philosopher & Martyr (1 June) (+ 166)

by Mario Scudu

In chapter I of the "Acts of the Martyrs" of St. Justin we find these truly autobiographical words which read like a kind of 'visiting card' describing his personality and his life. **"I tried to study all the philosophies; then I sought true doctrine in order to worship the God of the Christians...who believe there was one Creator from the beginning and who made the universe, everything visible and invisible. I also believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God who was foretold by the prophets and who lived among men and taught them the Good news."** These few words were a synthesis of everything that sustained him throughout his life and strengthened him in the face of death when he was condemned by Rusticus, the Prefect of Rome.

Seeking a Reason to Live and a Reason to Die

Justin was born at the beginning of the second century in Samaria, not far from Shechem. He was, apparently, from a wealthy Roman family. Proof of this comes from the fact that he travelled extensively and

immersed himself in various philosophies in the several schools that he attended. He was a philosopher and a martyr and a rather complex figure, difficult to define, because he lived in an era characterized by the first real cultural impact of Christianity on the surrounding Greek and Roman world. (Today we would say that was the first real attempt at inculturation). Justin was a young philosopher engaged in an ardent search for truth. He was brilliant, acutely critical enough to perceive the weaknesses in mainstream philosophies of his time. He describes this in his work *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*: "After having frequented a stoic teacher for long enough and having found nothing to enrich my knowledge of God whom I did not know and unaware of how necessary it was to know him - I walked away and went to another teacher (of the Aristotelian school) which was considered rich in talent. **There I was tolerated only for a day and the teacher immediately claimed his fee and sent me on my way because he**

said our relationship was useless. In his opinion I was not a philosopher." Already two disappointments! But Justin continued his quest. He approached the famous philosopher Pythagoras "a man who prided himself on his wisdom." As predicted, there came the third disappointment. Before studying his philosophy Justin was advised to study music, astronomy, geometry (and of course the theories of Pythagoras). He abandoned this course because he was troubled by a theological problem, namely the truth about God. The other sciences only discussed problems about problems.

His fourth attempt was an encounter with Plato: "In my recklessness I decided to listen to the Platonists, they too had a good reputation. As a city scholar I found I was well accepted among them and I made much progress. I was interested in spirituality and **in a short time I thought I was wise enough and hoped to see God because that was the goal of Plato's philosophy.**" His search seemed to have come to an end when he thought he had reached the harbour of definitive peace and truth. Just so that he was not disturbed and left in peace he retired to a lonely place near Ephesus by the sea. It was there that he had a chance encounter with an elderly sage who opened his eyes to the truths of Christianity. After some time the old sage said, "But you're a lover of smooth talk, not a friend who is genuinely seeking the truth." These words struck him like bolt of lightning. He followed the advice of old man and began reading the prophets about the coming of the Saviour Jesus Christ.

Once again he wrote in his *Dialogues* about the consistency of Christians who were even ready to face martyrdom for witnessing to the truth. He soon became convinced that Christianity was "**the only true and useful philosophy.**" At this point he reached his cultural and existential conversion.

Justin's constant search for the truth earned him a mention in the encyclical "*Fides et Ratio*" of Pope John Paul II (1998). The Pope wrote: 'As a pioneer of positive engagement with philosophical thinking – albeit with cautious discernment – was Saint Justin. Although he continued to hold Greek philosophy in high esteem after his conversion, Justin claimed with power and clarity that he had found in Christianity "the only sure and profitable philosophy."' (n. 38)

His defense of truth unto martyrdom

After arriving at the truth found in Christianity and in the person of Jesus Christ, the supreme *Logos*, Justin lived the rest of his days immersed in this Truth. Finding this was not enough, he felt it his mission to make it known to others. That was why he became an apologist and a teacher at a school he founded in Rome. That was the rule most other philosophers followed. Did not Marcus Aurelius follow the same philosophy and Epicurus too? Why should Christians be prevented from following and preaching Christ? Just to claim this right, he brought this to the attention of the last two emperors and the intelligentsia of Rome through his two *Apologies* in favour of Christianity.

In Justin's great perception of the Incarnation he also gave an



The Martyrdom of St. Justin

important place to Mary. She is seen as the protagonist in the climax of salvation history: the Incarnation of the eternal Logos, Christ. Among the prophecies he particularly focused on that of Isaiah (7:14) - the virgin who gives birth to a son. Justin, through Mary's (woman-virgin) birth, enunciated the principle of the reconciliation of humankind with God. Disobedience and death had come through a woman (Eve) but through Mary came life. The Annunciation then becomes the beginning of salvation, the antithesis of the fall in the Garden of Eden (see the book of Genesis). This is the famous antithetical parallel of Eve-Mary appearing for the first time in his writings and it will be a great help to the Fathers of the Church. One can sense these small contributions of this

converted philosopher which will have a tremendous influence on the future of Mariology.

Do not forget that in the Bible, the Devil is called the "father of all lies." Justin, who was this apostle of Truth, ran into difficulties, even open hostility. He had enemies and they soon made their presence felt very decisively. Justin was officially denounced because he was a Christian. He had to appear before the court and he was sentenced to death. The Acts of his Martyrdom have been preserved and have great historical value. The Truth that Justin sought with such persistence and courage most of his life demanded his supreme sacrifice, the shedding of his own blood. For Justin that truth was found in the Truth - Christ who was worth living for and even worth dying for. It was the year 166. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Efficient Breakfast

The efficiency expert concluded his lecture with a note of caution.

"You don't want to try these techniques at home."

"Why not?" asked someone from the back of the audience.

"I watched my wife's routine at breakfast for years," the expert explained. "She made lots of trips to the refrigerator, stove, table and cabinets, often carrying just a single item at a time. 'Honey, I suggested, 'Why don't you try carrying several things at once?'"

The voice from the back asked, "Did it save time?"

The expert replied, "Actually, yes. It used to take her 20 minutes to get breakfast ready. Now I do it in seven."

There's Teacher

The children had all been photographed for school pictures, and the teacher was trying to persuade them each to buy a copy of the group picture.

"Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say, 'There's Jennifer; she's a lawyer,' or 'That's Michael, he's a doctor.'"

A small voice at the back of the room rang out, "And there's teacher; she's dead."

Keep Your Seat

A radical feminist is getting on a bus when, just in front of her, a man gets up from his seat.

She thinks to herself, "Here's another man trying to keep up the customs of a patriarchal society by offering a poor, defenceless woman his seat", and she pushes him back onto the seat.

A few minutes later, the man tries to get up again. She is insulted again and refuses to let him up.

Finally, the man says,

"Look, lady, you've got to let me get up. I'm two miles past my stop already."

Exam By Chance

A young student reports for a final examination that consists of only true/false type statements.

The student takes a seat in the hall, stares at the question paper for five minutes, removes a coin and starts tossing the coin and marking the answer sheet. Heads means true, tails means false.

The young student is all done in 30 minutes while the rest of the class is sweating it out.

But, suddenly, during the last few minutes, the young student is seen desperately throwing the coin and sweating profusely.

The moderator, alarmed, approaches the student and asks what is going on.

"Well, I finished the exam in half an hour," says the student, "but I thought I ought to recheck my answers."

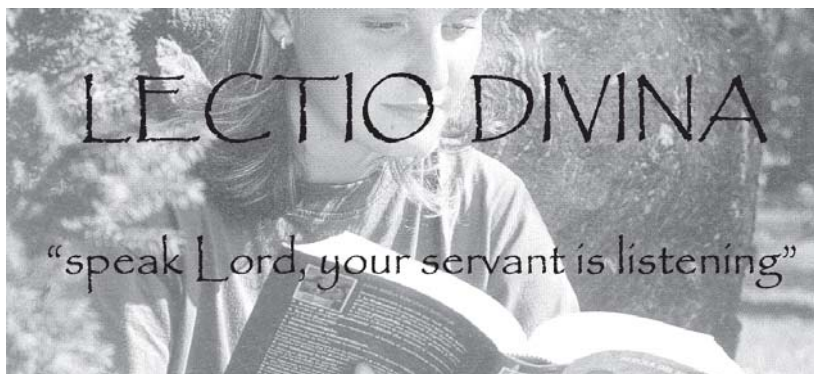
In Need of Prayer

A young boy called the pastor of a local "corner" church to ask the pastor to come by to pray for his mother who had been very ill with the flu.

The pastor knew the family and was aware they had been attending another church down the road.

So the pastor asked, "Shouldn't you be asking Brother Simon down the road to come by to pray with your mom?"

The young boy replied, "Yeah, but we didn't want to take the chance that he might catch whatever this is that Mom has." □



"I WILL BE WITH YOU ALWAYS"

by Carlo Broccardo

We shall close this parenthesis of reading John's Gospel and return to it once more, after two months and return to the characters in the Gospel of Matthew. Actually even this is not easy, because even during the month of May the liturgy will almost always propose the Gospel of John with the exception of June 5 for the feast of the Ascension when we will listen to the last verses of the Gospel according to Matthew.

We are in the time after the resurrection of Jesus. The way the story begins is disarmingly simple: "The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go." On the surface everything is normal, a familiar scene: in Galilee, Jesus is surrounded by his disciples. What's wrong with this picture that appears so often in the Gospel? It is that the number is "eleven." That is the problem...it's like a scar on the company of the disciples or rather a wound that has perhaps not yet healed. It says that those whom Jesus called are

The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him, even though some of them doubted. Jesus drew near and said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." **Matt. 28, 16-20**

no longer the same group.

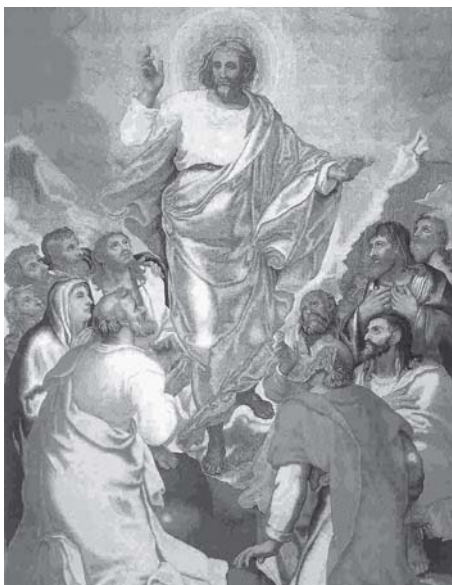
From the time he performed his first miracles in the seaside town of Capernaum Jesus has been surrounded by so many people; among them were those who were taking a break from fishing – and he had called some of them to be his disciples and from these he chose twelve apostles to whom he gave authority of all kinds of sicknesses. They had to care for

the people and do exactly as he had done.

They were a good group. One day Jesus would shower them with words of praise: "You can be sure that when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne in the New Age, then you twelve followers of mine will also sit on thrones, to rule the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matt. 19:28) There was a special

relationship that bound them to the Master as he made his way to Jerusalem. He took them aside and told them about his passion, death and resurrection (cf. Mt 20:17-19). They shared with him the awareness that he would die and yet one of them would betray him, Judas Iscariot who would leave the others and side with the enemy.

This brief reflection on the group of the twelve in this Gospel allows us to feel the full brunt of the simple words with which Matthew opens this passage, "The eleven disciples went to Galilee..." The twelve have now become eleven because one of them was a betrayer. When they accept the invitation of the Risen Christ to come together in Galilee "like the good old days," the Apostles are a wounded body. They are not the same as they were before. There is



*The Ascension of Jesus
by Giuseppe Folli (1779-1784)*

something wrong in their relationship among themselves and with Jesus.

Just look at how they behave: "When they saw him, they worshipped him, though some of them doubted." Some time earlier after they saw Jesus walking on the water the disciples prostrated themselves before him and

exclaimed: "Truly, you are the Son of God!" (Mt 14:33), and now, despite having seen the risen Christ still have doubts. Here we have a new translation that is making its rounds: "though they doubted." This is a more correct translation. Not some of the eleven but all the eleven doubted. As long as Jesus worked his amazing miracles they felt secure. Now they saw him crucified, one of them had betrayed him, now their hearts began to waver, they were feeling uncertain. They are not superheroes or perfect followers. They fall at the feet of Jesus (like the Magi did at Bethlehem), but at the same time they doubted...

But be sure they did not lose their faith, God forbid! The act of bowing down in adoration only says they believe in Jesus and they worship

(Continued on pg. 23)

THERE IS NO CHURCH

by His Holiness

At noon on Sunday 23 May 2010, the Solemnity of Pentecost, before leading the recitation of the Regina Caeli with the faithful in St. Peter's Square, the Holy Father reflected on the role of the Holy Spirit, without which the Church is "like a sailboat without the wind." The following is a translation of the Pope's Reflection, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Fifty days after Easter we celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost, in which we recall the manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit, who - as wind and as fire - descended upon the Apostles gathered together in the Upper Room, and enabled them to preach the Gospel to all nations with courage (cf. Acts 2:1-13).

The mystery of Pentecost, which we rightly identify with the event of the Church's true "baptism", is not, however, exhausted by this. The Church in fact lives constantly from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, without which she would exhaust her own strength, like a sailboat without the wind. Pentecost is renewed in a special way in certain powerful moments, whether this be at the local or the universal level, whether it be in small assemblies or in large ones.

The Councils, for example, had sessions graced by special outpourings of the Holy Spirit, and among these is certainly the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. We might also recall that famous meeting of the ecclesial movements with Venerable John Paul II, here in St Peter's Square, precisely on Pentecost in 1998. But the Church knows countless "pentecosts" that vivify the local



'Pentecost' by Ste

WITHOUT PENTECOST

- Pope Benedict XVI



fano di Stasio, 1998

communities. Let us think of the liturgies, particularly those experienced in special moments of the community's life, in which the power of God is perceived in an evident way, infusing joy and enthusiasm in hearts. We may think of many other prayer gatherings in which young people clearly feel the call of God to root their lives in his love, even consecrating themselves entirely to him.

Thus there is no Church without Pentecost. And I would like to add that there is no Pentecost without the Virgin Mary. This is how it was at the beginning, in the Upper Room, where the disciples "with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren", as the Acts of the Apostles says (1:14).

And this is how it always is, in every place and in every time. I witnessed it a short time ago at Fatima. What did that great multitude on the square in front of the Shrine experience, where we were truly all of one heart and one soul? It was a renewed Pentecost. In our midst was Mary, the Mother of Jesus. This is the typical experience at the great Marian sanctuaries - Lourdes, Guadalupe, Pompeii, Loreto - or even in the smaller ones. Wherever Christians gather in prayer with Mary, the Lord grants his Spirit.

Dear friends, on this Feast of Pentecost, we too would like to be spiritually united with the Mother of Christ and of the Church, faithfully invoking a renewed outpouring of the Paraclete. We invoke this for the whole Church, for all the ministers of the Gospel, that the message of salvation be proclaimed to all the nations. □

Short Story

THE SHADOW OF HIS HAND

from Fr. Ian Doulton's collection

I am at your hospital bed and I know you cannot hear me now, but I wish I could tell the whole world your story, Fr. McMillan. I know you would want to tell it yourself, especially to the sick, but you have the strength now only to say: "Goodbye." - I am going to tell the story of your battle, because this isn't your struggle alone. It is mine, and that of every man born into this world since Adam.

I can still see you, Fr. McMillan, at the peak of your triumph more than thirty years ago. You dominate your farewell as President of the famous college, you sit in handsome dignity with the united admiration of all present while the new president climaxes his eulogy with a forecast of your future: "We aren't losing Fr. McMillan. We know his heart will always be here with us. But a greater opportunity for service calls him. He has given me permission to tell you the wonderful news. Fr. John McMillan has just been appointed as the next bishop of this diocese."

For all your dignity, your smile grows broader and your face blushes with a flush of triumph. At this moment you hold everything a man needs for happiness. Great talent to use in the work you love! - Suddenly you frown, your right hand goes up to the back of your head with a gesture that is becoming a habit. Strange, strange how this headache persists. You've never

had a headache before. Thank God your health has always been perfect but now... now for nearly a month...this pain has slowly been getting more severe.

That is why a week later you find yourself in a doctor's office for the first time since you were a child. You're impatient, angry, unable to believe that an invasion of your strong active body has already begun. "Your general condition is perfect, Father, perhaps there is some eye strain." Then at the optician's: "No, I wouldn't advise glasses, Father, your vision is perfect." The general physician's opinion: "The discomfort in your spine certainly doesn't come from arthritis, Father." Perhaps a bone specialist? "Father, you're suffering from a definite condition of an obscure disease of the bone structure." "Well, what can you do for me, I must be relieved from this pain and discomfort, I can't concentrate and I can't let anything interfere with my work."

The doctor went on: "Father, I know you work the whole day." Fr. McMillan replied irritably: "Of course, I do. I can't keep wasting time running from one doctor to another and I don't care how expensive the treatment is." The doctor went on: "All the bones in your body, in simple terms, Father, are turning to chalk! As the best medical knowledge stands today, this disease is incurable." Fr. McMillan could not believe it. "You may live to an advanced age,

but long before the end, you will be completely bedridden. We can relieve the pain to an extent, but that is all."

Your eyes widen with horror, your lips tremble, Bedridden? Impossible, you have work to do, you are going to be a bishop. But the Church doesn't make bishops of incurable invalids.

Your face flushes and your jaw sets. "I'm going to Lourdes, hundreds of sick people have been cured there," said Fr. McMillan thoughtfully. The doctor tried to discourage him by telling him he could pray as much here. Fr. McMillan was very determined and thought of the man who was healed by Christ when he went and washed in the pool of Siloam.

Lourdes: Fr. McMillan, you are now one among a thousand sick. The sick, the lame, the blind, huddled in wheelchairs, while attendants gently lower them into the pool. A cry goes up all around: "Lord that I may see...Lord that I may walk...heal my son of tuberculosis ...heal me from cancer..."

You, Fr. McMillan are one of the incurables, but only for a few moments more. You talk confidently to William, your nephew, who has come all the way with you. "How do you feel, uncle Jim?" asks William. "Wonderful, I feel as if I were cured already," comes the immediate reply. "I certainly hope you will be." Fr. McMillan retorts, "You must do more than hope William, you must be certain. I know that I will be cured, I have perfect faith. I promised Our Lady, that when I become bishop I would consecrate

my entire diocese to her." The attendants come and carry Fr. McMillan and lower him into the pool and he keeps saying with as much faith as he can muster: "Lord I believe, Lord I believe." Then they remove him. He asks why they did not let him stay in the pool longer...

He is not cured...Five years later you are still Fr. McMillan and there is still work for you to do. You will not be helped by this, you will return to Lourdes. Almost penniless, you beg help from your relatives. The first time it was a test of faith, now you have passed the test. At Lourdes, you go down into the water with a prayer of thanksgiving already falling from your lips, but they still have to carry you away on a stretcher.

Fr. McMillan sees the doctor: "Doctor, if you can't cure me, can't you do something to make it possible for me to go on working? I can't go on lying here like a piece of wood." The doctor says he's tried everything. Fr. McMillan is angry: "Medical science hasn't made much progress in the last twelve years. I should think it should have made some progress after all the experimenting done on me." He could hardly reconcile himself to lying in bed like a guinea pig for the rest of his life.

The doctor tells him that even Lourdes had no better luck than medical science. With great determination, he decides to go to Lourdes again. The doctor is frightened. He thinks that Fr. McMillan will not live through this. Yet stubbornly Fr. McMillan says he must go. The first person in the United States to go to Lourdes three times! His family helped him the last time and he is

sure that they will help him again. He, Fr. McMillan is sure his is the faith that produces miracles.

When was there a stronger will and a weaker body, Fr. McMillan? He found skeptical relatives to finance this journey with a tremendous sacrifice. His nephew William had to go with him and he endured the racking agony of a journey by rail and sea. He talked to William as he waited and told him of his perseverance. The attendants came once more and they seemed impressed to see him again. They too wanted to see the miracle. "O Blessed Mother," says Fr. McMillan. William asks if he is cured and Fr. McMillan turns his head and tells Bill that he would never be cured. "I don't want to be cured. I want to suffer. I was blind and now I see. Now I know what I've to do." Eighteen years, seemed so quick, your world is a sick bed now. You must lie like a living skeleton. In spite of all care, your back is one mass of bedsores. You know the full meaning of the word "incurable," helpless. And you were going to be a bishop! You had so much work to do. And yet something has happened to you. Now that you have accepted your sickness, you are a different man, you never complain, you never ask for any service. For eighteen years no one has ever heard you say that you could be cured. Your room is the busiest spot in the neighbourhood. There are always people coming, going, waiting to see Fr. McMillan.

Priests come from all over the countryside. The archbishop has spent hours in your room. You will never say Mass again, you will never preach, write, but your words, your patient wise counsel,

gives light and fire to those who carry your spirit back to their people. The Archbishop himself has never seen nor helped so many of his priests or his people.

(This was my final conversation with Fr. McMillan) "Tell me, Fr. McMillan, why weren't you cured at Lourdes?" "Why was I never cured? Because I did not have faith." "But you went to Lourdes three times..." "I never had faith, I made myself think I had because I did not want to suffer, but all that I had was pride, fear. I always prayed with a demand." "You had such important work to do..." "I thought so then," went on Fr. McMillan, "that was my pride again. I thought God needed me as a bishop. I was terrified of becoming an invalid, that's why I persuaded myself that God would never let such a thing happen to me. God certainly moves in mysterious ways. That's why we must be content to walk in darkness, following him without seeing him. Faith is humble and trusting. I did not entrust my future to God. I would have given my life for him, but in my own way."

"What happened at Lourdes that third time, Fr. McMillan?" "A miracle." "But you weren't cured..." "My soul was. The eyes of my spirit were opened... It was a miracle of grace. I saw what I had been struggling against. Whom I had been resisting. Then I surrendered and I have been perfectly at peace ever since. I have been perfectly happy."

"What did you see that third time at Lourdes, Father?"

"The will of God...that's what I saw...the will of God!" □

(Continued from pg 17)

him as God but their faith is no longer as clear as it once was. The evidence proves that they doubted, their faith had suffered a scar. However, we must pay particular attention to what is written in the rest of the passage. Seeing how they behave we would naturally judge the disciples, criticizing them for this step backwards but that was not how Jesus judged them. It is important to watch his interactions with them because he understands the situation clearly and so he tells them what is really important and what is secondary.

Firstly, the Risen Lord says: "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth." The defeat of the disciples was not a defeat because Jesus the risen Lord is almighty! He is Lord of the universe, the saviour of the world. His authority is hardly affected by the betrayal of Judas or rendered even partially ineffective by the doubt of the apostles.

Jesus' power is unaffected even with the unbelief of his disciples. Even after his Resurrection they find it difficult to believe in him but for Jesus, that is not important any more, not at all. The important thing is that Jesus continues to stay with them. "I am with you always, to the end of the age." That is what makes the difference and that is what really counts. Jesus is with us always. Matthew began his Gospel commenting on the birth of Jesus in this way: "Now all this happened in order to make what the Lord had said through the prophet come true: "A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called 'Immanuel' which means 'God is with us.' (Matt. 1, 22-23) Even after the betrayal, even if his intimate



friends doubted him, Jesus remains the 'Immanuel.' He will always be with us. This is the heart of our faith experience.

One final point completes the picture. And again we note this in a new translation, which in this case is very beautiful. In the earlier versions we read, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" but now, very rightly the text translates as: "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples." Perhaps, our faith gets clearer; maybe it was tinged by doubts and fears; maybe, we have come from a place where our faith has been shaken or weakened. It does not matter. We are not here to speak about ourselves.. Jesus simply asks us to accept his invitation to follow him, he is Lord, don't worry, he won't leave you." □

DON BOSCO WITH COMMON FOLK

by Natale Cerrato (T/A:ID)

The feast of St. John the Baptist which falls on June 24 was chosen as the day to celebrate Don Bosco's name feast even though he took his name from St. John the Evangelist. The Turin weekly paper "*La Stella Consolatrice*" of June 30th 1883, reporting on the occasion, expressed its astonishment at the crowds who came to Valdocco: members of the nobility, peasants, students, labourers, young and old...all had come to see Don Bosco!

Everyone had come to celebrate this very popular person, whom some called impudent.

In Turin there were only two really popular heroes: Gianduja and Don Bosco.

Gianduja was a popular character from a well known comedy show common in Piedmont.

In fact one of singular characteristics of Don Bosco was that, in contrast to the greatness of his works was the simplicity of his gestures and the way he spoke. So often he had an appropriate joke ready on his lips.

"When they are as deserving as you are!"

In July 1887, at Valsalice, the older boys of Don Bosco's Oratory came over to recall with him the old days. One evening at dinner, Fr. Garino recalled the time the police came to search the Oratory and a newspaper was being sold in the streets to the shout of: "Don Bosco in Prison! One cent a copy!"



CHARACTERISTICS

DON BOSCO'S



Gianduja

and Don Bosco, who was walking down the street gave the lad a cent and bought the paper. Another time he was walking with Fr. Garino and he encountered two street women who declared

loudly: "All of these priests ought to be strung up." To which Don Bosco replied quickly: "When they are as deserving as you are!" (cf EBM 18,309-310)



Fr. Celestine Durando

"I dye my hair myself"

But Don Bosco, with his typical humour tried to tone down the esteem, admiration and the fame with which people held him. In 1879 he went to Farigliano with Fr. Celestine Durando. Lunch was prepared with the participation of priests of the parish and the neighbouring counties who wished to see the much-talked-about priest. At table someone remarked that Don Bosco, already over sixty, still had black hair, while Fr. Durando, not yet forty, was already graying.

Fr. Piacenza, Fr. Durando's old teacher, suggested that a certain Fr. Amaldi, ask Don Bosco his secret. When he heard this strange demand, he said with typical Piedmontese wit:

-Mi im jë tenzo ij cavèj (I dye my

hair myself).

His sense of humour immediately put everyone at ease (cf G. B. Francesià, *Memorie Biografiche del Sac. Celestino Durando*. San Benigno Canavese, Scuola Tipografica Salesiana 1908, p. 39-40).

Abbé Bonomo

While at Nice he took a public coach one day and when he got to his stop he realised that he had no money. He told the coachman that he had left his wallet at home and asked him kindly to drive to St. Pierre's Hospice, and there he would be paid his fare.

"Whom should I ask for?" the man inquired.

"Ask for me."

"What's your name?"

"Abbé Bonhomme."

The coachman drove there toward evening. Don Bosco had forgotten to notify anyone so that when the man was asked whom he wished to see, he replied as he had been told. "We have no Abbé Bonhomme here" the secretary said, rather annoyed, and showed him the door. The coachman raised his voice, so that Don Bosco heard the commotion and, understanding what it was all about, rushed over. "There is l'Abbé Bonhomme!" exclaimed the coachman in triumph. With a hearty laugh Don Bosco paid him and added a generous tip (cf. EBM 14,336).

He was always a good natured saint, kind and friendly!

"My boys like the bread"

During his trip to France in 1883, Don Bosco boldly went to preach in the pulpits of well known churches of Paris such as:



Don Bosco at 63

the Notre-Dame des Victoires, Mary Magdalene, and St. Lazarus. His sermons were popular, the so-called *sermons de charité*, in order to solicit the charity of his audience while he explained the purpose and necessity of his charitable works. If French had to be understood it had to be spoken with some aplomb, glossing over the vocabulary and grammar. But he spoke from his heart and, despite his difficulty with the language he managed to keep his large audience hanging from his lips.

But among the things he said he had some trouble with French expressions: Very good-naturedly he said:

“Now I’d like to address my listeners in Piedmontese: Ai mè Masna a-j pagnòte pias! (I love my boys like loaves of bread), and they all understand (G. Angrisani).

“Adam’s Stick”

Don Bosco knew how to strike

up a humourous conversation with anyone. One day, accompanied by one of his boys from Valdocco he took the train from Varazze to Genoa-Sampierdarena. Among the passengers in the second-class carriage there was also a certain Mons Bianchi, from the Curia, sitting in front of him. Don Bosco, who was holding a gnarled stick, to break the ice, he said smiling at his fellow passengers:

This is Adam’s stick!

The Monsignor, feigning astonishment, exclaimed: Wow! It looks really well for an antediluvian stick!



Don Bosco after a sickness

But Don Bosco assured all present: This stick belongs to my assistant and he’s called Adam. Look, here he is!

- This made every have a good laugh! Giovanni Battista Adamo was accepted at the Oratory and later at the college at Alassio (cf MB 10,1258). □

walking with the Church



Does God love Me, An Earnest Request for Prayers

by St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland

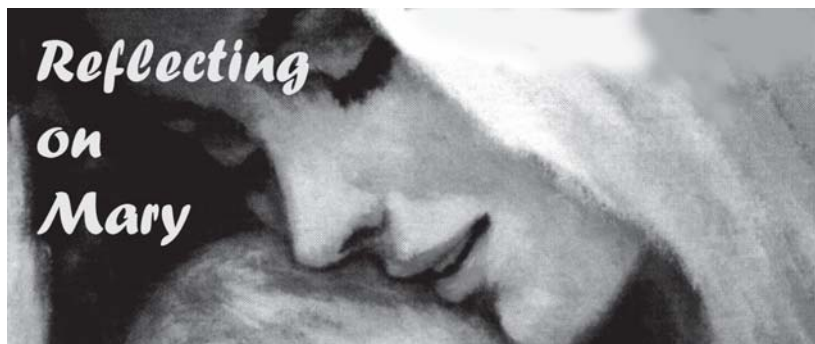
Q. *I am told that Jesus wants us to love ourselves but I know there is nothing in me that is lovable. I sin a lot. I am a failure. I have no talents. How can anyone love me?*

A. Thank you for your letter. It is clear that you have a very low opinion of yourself and, as you seem to understand, this is preventing you from giving or receiving the love of others. If we perceive ourselves as worthless then we will find it very difficult to believe that anyone could love us or even have any time for us. What does the Bible tell us about ourselves? "God saw everything He had made and found it very good." (Gen.1.31) God does not make rubbish. Furthermore we know that Jesus, the son of God, loves us - He died on the cross for us. I am, you are, we all are very special to Him and He loves us all. We are children of God, all made in His image, and consequently all loved by God. Each of us is God's unique creation, all of us with the unique dignity of being God's children. You must start off with this truth and pray for a deeper understanding and a greater faith in God's love for you. Pray for the grace to see yourself as Christ sees you - a child of God, created by Him, recreated in the waters of Baptism, and ask for the grace to love yourself as Christ loves you. Your self image is poor - it will change for the better the more you believe God loves you, and you will become more open to giving and

receiving the love of others. You are loved. Remember that. You are in our prayers.

Q. *I have been writing or phoning various Congregations of Nuns or priests in Religious Orders for prayers which I badly need. Am I right in doing this because I know I am a sinner especially with sins against the sixth commandment and I feel a hypocrite at times.*

A. One of the beliefs of our Catholic Faith expressed in the Creed is that the Church is a Communion of Saints. The faithful on earth, the souls in Purgatory and the Saints in Heaven are all part of the mystical body of Christ and being part of the one spiritual body whatever we do has an effect on the rest of the body. Our good actions and our prayer for others has an effect for good on those we pray for and on the other members of the church. So because we are one in Christ and in communion with one another, we can help one another by our prayers. The prayers of the faithful here on earth can help the souls in Purgatory and also be a help to those who are still on their pilgrim journey through life. So when we ask others to pray for us we are acknowledging our belief in the communion of saints. Daily in the mass we pray for all others in the Church with the belief that our prayers will help them. We are all sinners, all in need of prayer, all in need of its great power. Let us pray for one another. □



Reflecting on Mary

DESTINED FOR ETERNITY

by Maria Ko Ha Fong, FMA

In the Jewish Hassidic tradition there is this little story. The angel Gabriel was sent from God to present those who were ready at that moment of time, the gift of Eternity. But the angel returned without being able to fulfil his mission. He found no one who had the time.

It may sound absurd but looking at the hectic lives many of us lead it does not sound too far from reality. We are frantically trying to keep pace with what is happening at the moment, we are simply suffocated by information and after that we are so bogged down with so many little things that demand our attention that we have no time to receive the gift of eternity. Yet, what sense does time have if it is disconnected from eternity?

In Zen Buddhism there is this enlightening conversation:

The disciple asks: "Master, how does one stop a drop of water from trickling away?" "It must return to the ocean," the teacher replied.

Time, outside the orbit of eternity, dries up. One who cannot accept eternity is empty. He is

condemned to the boredom of which Quohélet speaks in very vivid terms: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?" (Eccl 1.2 to 8)

Mary, however, has time to embrace eternity. She knows how to see time in context of history, indeed in Salvation history. Her whole life was imbued with eternity. Her whole existence was a perpetual Passover, a continuous passage to the things that do not pass away.

Mary, the heavenly stairway, who chose the Lord

The Byzantine liturgy, in its beautiful hymn Akathistos to the Mother of God, salutes Mary as "the heavenly ladder that chose eternity." Mary is the meeting place between heaven and earth, between eternity and time, between God and man. She is the conjunction between human finitude and God's infinity. She is absolute emptiness who is able to welcome the fullness of God's riches and free love which she

gratefully and sincerely accepts. She is a fragment that lets wholeness in.

When eternity descends to earth it does not just stop at Mary. She is also "the stairway." Oh how she continues to sing of the fact that she is "the bridge that leads humankind to heaven." With her "fiat" (her 'yes') to the angel she introduces humanity to a new acceptance of her God in the flesh and into history. At Ain Karim, Mary brings joy to John the Baptist who is still in his mother's womb. When she presents Jesus in the temple she brings joy to two elderly souls in the twilight of their lives. Life begins and life ends; everything assumes a sense of eternity in Jesus and in his mother who carries him to others.

Now and at the hour of our death

Mary is particularly present at the moment of our passage from this life to eternal bliss. In the second part of the 'Hail Mary' we pray: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." It is a simple request, but a sincere one. We know that at the hour of death we are sinners and we need help. We know that that hour is crucial, because it is the final moment when we totally rely on our Creator.

The hour of death marks our transition from our temporary existence to eternity. It makes complete in a total and irreversible way our story of freedom and now prepares us to appear before the Lord. In the hour of death we lose our finitude - we are de-finite. It is a difficult passage that terrifies us because



In the Angelus and the Rosary Mary is reminded to come to our aid . The Annunciation by Paolo De Matteis (1712) in the City Art Museum, St. Louis

we fear the unknown. We are sure it will come, but we do not know how or when or where.

We need Mary's help. She is the expert in that hour. She herself faced that with serenity. She had prepared herself for it throughout her life, living each moment as if it were an eternity. Mary was present at the hour of Jesus' death before he said: "it is finished" and bequeathed all humanity to his mother as her children. It was the will of her son that she should take care of us throughout our lives and at the hour of our death. Just as she took care of Jesus she will take care of all the children that Jesus has assigned to her. We pray for this everyday. Three times during the Angelus we pray and fifty times during the recitation of the Rosary she is reminded to come to our aid at that unknown but decisive hour. Mary will certainly not miss her appointment. □

NEWSBITS

SAN SALVADOR

The current archbishop of San Salvador has called U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to the tomb of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero a "global event" that could help to improve the image of the slain archbishop worldwide.

Archbishop José Luis Escobar Alas said this in a statement ahead of Obama's visit on the night of 23th March 2011, to the resting place of Archbishop Romero, located in San Salvador's Metropolitan Cathedral. The U.S. president lit a candle at the archbishop's tomb, accompanied by Salvadoran President Mauricio Funes and Archbishop Escobar Alas.

The visit took place in the context of Obama's tour of Latin America, during which he stopped in Chile and Brazil before spending two days in El Salvador. The president, who left today for Washington, spoke to the region of economic development, immigration and drug-related violence.

Archbishop Romero was assassinated March 24, 1980, when celebrating Mass. He was a defender of the poor and a staunch critic of the U.S.-backed El Salvadoran government, who he rebuked for violating the human rights of its citizens.

Obama said after the visit that he "was honoured to visit the cathedral [...] and pay my respects to Archbishop Romero, who remains an inspiration to people all around the world."

Ahead of Tuesday's visit,



Archbishop Escobar Alas had called on Obama to expedite the legislative work to achieve comprehensive immigration reform that "benefits Salvadorans and citizens of other nations who do not have permanent resident status in the American nation."

The prelate asked for a more dignified treatment to thousands of Salvadorans who seek to enter the United States in search of better opportunities in life and work and, and to do away with "laws that unjustly criminalize innocent people simply for the act of crossing a border."

The archbishop said that he knows the task is difficult, but that he hoped to be able to speak to Obama about it, and that the president would "commit himself" to immigration reform.

Archbishop Escobar Alas also called for permanent status to be given to the 250,000 Salvadorans who have been allowed to stay in the country under Temporary

Protected Status.

Regarding Archbishop Romero, the current archbishop of San Salvador said the president's visit would not "affect the process of beatification," which is under way in the Vatican.

Archbishop Romero is currently considered a servant of God. The prelate would need either a declaration of martyrdom or heroic virtue to pass to the next stage in the canonization process.

In 2005, the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith reported that it found no erroneous teachings in the writings of Archbishop Romero. In 2008, however, it was reported that Archbishop Romero's cause was stalled because of concern that the figure of the prelate is politicized and a source of disunity in El Salvador.

That same year, Benedict XVI recalled Archbishop Romero in an address to the Salvadoran envoy to the Holy See as one of the "pastors full of love for God" who has helped to root the Gospel in the Central American nation, "bringing abundant fruits of Christian life and holiness."

LAHORE, PAKISTAN

The bishops of Pakistan appealed to Pope Benedict to officially recognize Shahbaz Bhatti, a Catholic official in the country who was recently assassinated, as a martyr.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of Pakistan, which met from March 20 - 25 in Multan, unanimously decided to make a formal request to the Vatican to name Bhatti as a "martyr and patron of religious freedom."

The 42-year old Bhatti - a leading voice for religious freedom and peace in Pakistan - served as federal



minister for religious minorities. He was shot to death by three masked men on March 2 as he left his mother's home in Islamabad by car.

Al-Qaida and the Punjab-based Pakistani Taliban Movement claimed responsibility for Bhatti's killing, according to the AP.

Rome-based Fides news reported that Bishop Andrew Francis, delegate for the Pakistan conference's Inter-religious Dialogue, presented the official request for recognition of Bhatti's martyrdom, which was approved unanimously by the bishops. The bishops also paid tribute to Bhatti during the meeting, recalling his work on behalf of religious minorities and Christians in the country and his willingness to give his life for his mission.

In a video he recorded to be released in case of his death, Bhatti stated: "I want to share that I believe in Jesus Christ, who has given his own life for us. I know what is the meaning of 'cross,' and I follow Him to the cross."

"Pray for me and for my life," Bhatti told Fides ahead of his murder. "I am a man who has burnt his bridges. I cannot and will not go back on this commitment." □

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

My most grateful thanks to the Holy Spirit and our Blessed Mother Mary for granting me two special favours.

Mrs. A. de Souza, Australia

On behalf of my parents, my family and myself, I am sincerely grateful to Our Blessed Mother for having protected us during our journey from Velankanni through Chennai via Bangalore to Belgaum during which a bag with all our valuables was being stolen by a fellow passenger. We were able to retrieve it after some anxious moments and certainly through the powerful intervention of Our Lady.

Maria Andrea Gracious

Thank you Jesus, Mother Mary and all the saints for curing me of my vertigo.

M. D'Souza

Many thanks to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and Our Blessed Mother for all the graces received through your intercession.

Hubert and Family

Thank you, dear Mother for giving us baby Tiara on 29th July 2010.

Sharon Irwin Rego, Bahrain

Thank you, Infant Jesus and Mary Help of Christians for the safe delivery of my sister-in-law and the gift of a beautiful baby boy on 16/12/2010.

R. Portia, Nirmala, Chennai

Thank you, Mother, for keeping my family safe and in good health. Keep us always under your mantle.

Patsy Serrao, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Jesus and Our Mary Help of Christians for blessing my daughter with a baby girl after her marriage. I prayed for a baby girl and Jesus and Mama Mary heard my prayers.

A.D'Souza, Mumbai

In May 2007 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. It is almost four years now and I am in good health. I thank Jesus and Mother Mary very much for being with me all through my treatment and every moment till today, I can feel her presence.

B.V. Tari, Mira Road

Thank you dearest Mother for helping me secure excellent marks in my board exams and for all the other graces received. Thank you for blessing me with a job too.

Thomas & Steffi Chacko, Thane

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for my mother, Priscilla Faleiro's successful eye operation and healing of her retina.

Avellino Faleiro, Goa

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping our son Dominic get a job on a ship.

Osborne & Indu Andrade, Poona

Thank you, Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for granting us so many favours.

Mrs. Pamela Rose, Erode, TN

Our most sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the gift of a beautiful baby girl to my daughter.

Juket D'Souza, Bamanwada

My thank you to Our Lady, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the favours and blessings granted to our family.

Mrs. Antoneth Coutinho, Mumbai

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



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

I am sincerely grateful to Our Mother Mary. She answered my prayers. When my husband was critical and had to be hospitalised I called for help and prayed the three Hail Marys. *Mary Faustina, Bintulu, Sarawak* My sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for I have been blessed in so many ways through their intercession.

Ishwar, Vadodara

I am sincerely grateful for Our Lady's protection. She was there with my daughter and our servant who met with an accident on a two-wheeler. I prayed fervently the three Hail Marys and when the reports of the scans and Xrays came we found she was normal.

Mrs. & Mrs. F.M. Lazarus

Thank you dear Mother for the successful operation (stomach) of my daughter. I pray for a complete recovery. *S. M. Mascarenhas*

My sincere gratitude to Jesus and Mother Mary for granting me a good job through the faithful recitation of the Three Hail Marys. *Diana V., Goa*

On May 17th 2010 I was on my way to attend the Novena at Matunga together with my husband and kids. We were caught in slow moving traffic when all of a sudden we were struck by a BEST bus from the rear. I was seated at the back with my 4 month old son. With the impact the entire rear screen was shattered but not a piece of glass came near us. It was Our Lady who protected us. We always pray the 3 Hail Marys and I continue to recite these 3 Hail Marys every time I embark on a journey.

Carol Titus, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and all the Saints for a clear report and for the graces received through the recitation of the Three Hail Marys.

Rubertina Carvalho, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary for saving me from burns and curing me from all my sickness.

Mrs. Cynthia D'Souza, Mumbai

I am grateful to Our Lady Help of Christians because I prayed for the vocation of a young sister who is still persevering and doing well in the congregation. I am sorry I have delayed this long in acknowledging this favour.

Sr. Michael, Kerala

A sincere thank you to Our Lady for the safe delivery and the birth of a healthy baby girl to my nephew after 11 years of marriage.

Anthony De Bono, Malta

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

My sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother Mary and Don Bosco for the favours granted to me.

Austin Fernandes, Karwar

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for helping us get 2 professional accounting designations and for all the other favours received.

Dudley and Angela Philips, Calgary, Canada

Thank you, dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for being with me during a very crucial time in my life. My family also thanks you for your guidance and protection.

L. Rebelo, Nuvem, Goa

My sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for helping me to pass in my 3rd Sem BE examinations and all the other favours received.

Cleta D'Souza, Mangalore

My sincere and heartfelt thanks to our Infant Jesus, MOTHER Mary and St. Dominic Savio and all the saints for the favours received. Please continue to shower on us your blessings and keep us in your care.

Gloria Rodrigues, Goa

Thank you, dear Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and Dominic Savio for blessing us with a baby boy.

Severina Tavares, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery and the birth of a healthy baby girl to my daughter Sherell.

Mrs. E. Pinto, Mumbai

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

Ronald & Winnifred & Arnold Sequeira, Mumbai

Our heartfelt thanks to the Infant Jesus, our dear Blessed Mother and St. Dominic Savio for a safe delivery and the gift of a healthy and beautiful baby girl. Please continue to guide us in bringing her 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.

A Devotee, Mumbai

My belated and most sincere thanks to dearest Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for helping my son achieve success in his 3 board exams and also for granting him a good job. Thank you also for all the other favours received. Do continue to protect us always.

Mrs. L. D'Costa, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mary Help of Christians, St. John Bosco. My daughter got her visa and a good job in New Zealand. Thank you for blessing us with good health. My son secured a job in Dubai and has been successful in his studies.

Celine Rodrigues, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary and Don Bosco for helping me undergo a successful cataract operation.

Presna Mendoza, Kerala

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the favours received and also for the gift of a grand daughter.

OAM, Pune

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary and Don Bosco for the gift of twins - a beautiful baby boy and girl on 20th November 2010.

Zina D'Costa, Goa

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Thank you, dear Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for helping me succeed in my exams and throughout my life.

Norma Fernandes

My sincere and grateful thanks to Jesus, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for seeing some improvement in my child's medical report.

M. Noronha, Bahrain

My sincere thanks to the Infant Jesus, Our Lady and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby girl and the several graces received.

Sujata, Glen Lemos, Vasai

Our heartfelt thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for protecting our family and all the other favours received.

Victor & Afra Fonseca

Our sincere and heartfelt thanks to God, Jesus our Saviour and St. Dominic Savio for a safe and normal delivery and for the precious gift of a beautiful, healthy baby girl who we named Naysa, meaning "Miracle of God" or "special one" and indeed she is a miracle and a special child for us.

Simkie Yash Rana, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady and St. Dominic Savio for a safe and normal delivery and for the gift of a normal, healthy baby born on 24th December, 2010.

Orin A. Pereira, Goa

Our heartfelt gratitude to Mother Mary for granting our daughter, Luianne a suitable partner and to St. Dominic Savio for granting Luianne a safe confinement and a normal pregnancy and a safe delivery.

Zua and Olencio Almeida, Goa

I am really grateful to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my sister and the gift of a healthy baby girl.

Marcia Fatima De Souza

Our heartfelt thanks to Our Lord, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for a miraculous delivery after a serious illness.

V. Fernandes, Pune

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

JUNE 2011

General Intention: Priests:

That priests, united to the Heart of Christ, may always be true witnesses to the caring and merciful love of God.

Missionary Intention: Missionary Vocations:

That the Holy Spirit may bring forth from our communities many missionaries who are ready to be fully consecrated to spreading the Kingdom of God.

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MARY WAS THERE

During her two pregnancies, my daughter aborted her child following the doctor's advice. She became pregnant for the third time and the doctors advised her to terminate her pregnancy in her fourth month. The sonography showed that the baby was deformed. Moved by a sermon we heard on the feast of Our Lady 8th September we placed our trust in her. We prayed on our knees and made pilgrimages to Our Lady's shrine full of trust and confidence. My daughter went through her pregnancy without any problem and she was blessed with a healthy baby born on 21st March 2008. Two years later she was pregnant again and gave birth to twins on 7th May 2010. We named them Jade and Shavon. We are at a loss for words to thank Jesus and Mother Mary for these favours that we have received.

*Mr & Mrs. Danny Rao & Elettra Mc Donald,
Secunderabad*

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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**Phone/Fax: 91-22- 2414 6320, email: dbmshrine@gmail.com
http://www.donboscosmadonna.org/www.dbmshrine.org**