

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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*And Mary
said 'Yes'
when she knew
that it was
the will of God.*

(from a Popular Hymn)

**Cover: St. Joseph,
Foster Father of Jesus**
Traditional



From The Editor's Desk

Forgive just as we Forgive!

Have you ever noticed how much easier it is to say 'I am sorry', than to say 'Please forgive me'? The former does not require a response, whereas the latter needs a response. Forgiveness has to be given, and we fear it might be withheld. You cannot take forgiveness for granted. Maybe that is why I remember so well conducting an interpersonal-skills workshop where I was conducting a session entitled "The Gift of Happiness." The group I was working with was pretty close-knit. They had known each other for a couple of years. The instructions were: to write a positive note to each of the other members of the group and sign it with their names. These were then exchanged and the members sat in silence, reading their notes. It did not take long before sounds of sobbing and running noses were heard. Most of the members later shared that what touched and relieved them most was the fact that someone in the group had forgiven them for a hurt that they had caused in the recent or distant past. That simple gesture moved them immensely and there they were...strapping young men, in the prime of their lives with tears in their eyes...but smiles on their faces. That was how moved they were by this gift of forgiveness.

In this Lenten season we are moved to ask God's forgiveness and we are reassured that God is always ready to forgive us. I wonder: have I ever felt the joy and relief at being forgiven the way those young men felt at that workshop? And if I have never experienced the joy of being forgiven in that way, can I want to offer it to others who have offended me in some way?

Not forgiving others is some kind of curse, and forgiving them is a blessing and a joy for them. It is uniquely Christian that we forgive just as we hope to be forgiven. I remember the funeral of a man who had deserted his wife and family, causing great pain and unhappiness. His eldest son spoke briefly when offering a prayer. He told God that the family forgave their father for his cruelty to them and asked God to do likewise. He was in tears as he asked this through Christ, Our Lord.

Forgiveness as we forgive those who trespass against us can be consigned to the small print as it were. Often we give up something for Lent. Maybe this Lent we might try forgiving those who have trespassed against us. It might not be as easy as it sounds but it will do us a great deal of good, and be a real Easter joy for those who have to wait for forgiveness.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

3. HOPE: A CHANCE AND A DECISION

by Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

By now, Hurricane Katrina is well-known to all as one of the most devastating tragedies in recent American history. When Katrina swallowed the Gulf Coast and ravaged particularly the city of New Orleans in August of 2005, Christy Johnson was working for HUD in Oklahoma City. Katrina hit precisely when she had her own personal pressing issues, adding to the chaos and confusion she faced in the office. *'How could I help others when I was struggling myself?'* was her main concern. Yet, the office phone lines never quit ringing.



She and her associates spoke with numberless victims who desperately kept trying to locate family members lost in the flood. They all urgently needed assistance with housing, food and clothing. The monumental task of immediate relocation was overwhelming.

Very few had jobs they could return to which meant that paychecks would quit coming and money inevitably run out. Devastation set everywhere like blocks of solid concrete. It took weeks before any federal assistance was available to the majority. Some received none at all!

Even though several agencies were there to help, the trauma made some callers demanding, others rude or even belligerent. Most were impatient and hysterical. Some were even openly suicidal. The going was tough, but just when Christy thought she had heard it all, she got a call from Brenda, a single woman in her early fifties with no children. Brenda was all alone and had been sheltering in a crowded home in Houston for the past month. When asked how she was coping she calmly replied: "I've heard that my house is still underwater and at this point, I have no idea if rebuilding is even a possibility. The hardest part of all of this, though, is seeing the elderly suffer. The young have longer to recover, but many of the elderly have no other resources." She had been hit hard but her heart still overflowed with compassion for others, especially the elderly. "I know that recovery lies ahead," she continued placidly. "I believe that if we were the ones chosen to endure this hardship, then God will give us the grace to endure. The destruction of our city has given birth to a spirit of unity... My hope isn't based on my cir-



cumstances," she added, "my hope is based on my decision to hope. Hope is a choice."

Wow, thought Christy. Never had she heard such rocklike faith in the midst of a near total loss. Brenda had been storing trust and confidence in her spiritual pantry for a rainy day... and what a rainy day it was! Moments later, as she got back to her computer, the realization hit Christy like a thunderbolt: Brenda couldn't edit her past. Her tragedy was impossible to revise. There was no delete button, no escape key to press. The only thing Brenda could change was her attitude. She had been involuntarily transplanted, but she made a decision to thrive, not just survive!

Silently Christy ventured a heartfelt 'thank you' to Brenda hundreds of miles away. 'Thank you for showing me how to maintain hope — even in the face of adversity.'

Attitudes Make All the Difference

The faithful and the faithless face the same vicissitudes of life, but the faithful at least have the assurance that their lives are in the hands of a caring God — thus goes a paraphrase of Ps. 32:10-11. Or

as Marian Zimmer Bradley put it, "The road that is built in hope is more pleasant to the traveller than the road built in despair, even though they both lead to the same destination!" The calamities of life hit all of us at some point or other, but what a difference in the way different people face these calamities!

To the unbeliever or the one who subscribes to Reincarnation, disasters natural or otherwise are but the result of the whims and fancies of the gods, or the outcome of our own sinful past life. To believers whose faith is but skin-deep, suffering of this kind is no more than a punishment for one's present sins — divine justice catching up with our sinful escapades. To people with a deeper faith, adversities are God's way of testing our endurance — there will, of course, be a reward for the persevering, but right now that is not too much of a solace. It is only those whose faith in God's loving providence is unshakable who will see it as none of the above, but as an expression, mysterious



though it be, of the loving providence and care of a personal God. They see it as the opportunity for God to manifest his tremendous, unbelievable love for his own. As Paul put it, "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose... If God is for us, who is against us?"

³² He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?" (Rom 8:28-32). As Brenda herself pointed out in the story above, Katrina helped to bring people closer in that city of New Orleans!

The Power of his Risen Presence

The coming of Jesus as Saviour, and especially his redemptive dying and rising, will not change Nature's vagaries but his unshakable trust in the Father's love as demonstrated in his peace-filled death on the Cross makes it possible for us to adopt a more positive attitude towards every unpleasant occurrence. And the greater the depth of our grasp of this mystery of God's love, the more outstanding will be our way of accepting it and benefiting from it. To some it is at best something to be taken with a philosophical shrug saying, 'From the time we are born till we ride in a hearse, there is nothing so bad that it could not be worse!'

To others it is a time to prove one's spiritual growth, to perhaps grit one's teeth and hang on for dear life till the storm rides by. To very few, however, would it be the occasion to say a heartfelt 'thank-you' to God or to bless God for the gift! But strangely, it is only these last who come out of the

most scathing difficulties joyful and triumphant or as the apostles did, "rejoicing that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonour for the sake of the name" (Acts 5:41).

Average Christian Attitude

Most Christians, however, seem to have chosen to adopt the attitude of 'fight or flight' with regard to the crosses that come their way as they journey through life. Unfortunately, with such an attitude all that they finally get is more suffering or mental agony - with no reduction in the actual painful situation. But what they really miss out on is the thrill of meeting the Risen Lord in the midst of the suffering and sharing also in his triumph. Only once they have experienced the thrill of sharing the Cross with Jesus and because of that sharing also the glory of his resurrection, will they consciously choose to opt for a change of attitude.

However, we need to remember that even this change of attitude is not something we achieve through our own skill and ingenuity. That too is a gift from the Father and he has already poured it out on all of us in abundance through the Spirit he has sent to us. The power to change our approach to life's problems is already within us, if only we care to search for it. Unfortunately it is only found by those who start off by not placing any obstacles to all that the Lord ordains for us. When we start off with a conscious or unconscious aversion for suffering, strangely enough we seem to bring more of it upon our-

(Continued on pg. 22)



OUR GENTLE PIONEER

Fr. Michael Mascarenhas sdb,

Legal Consultant for the Salesian Province of Panjim-Konkan

Last year 2010, I kept the 40th anniversary of my ordination and 50th anniversary of my Salesian profession.

My eldest brother Hector opted to join the Jesuits. He was a student of St. Xavier's and I was a day-student of Don Bosco's Matunga, and opted to join the Salesians.

We come from a middle class home in Dadar, Shivaji Park, a totally non-Christian locality. I was one of 8 children, 6 brothers and 2 sisters. My father, Mark, an extremely pious man, found time for personal prayer in spite of putting in 8/10 hours of clerical work at his office. My mother, Dolly, as you may imagine had her hands full with domestic chores, looking after 8 growing children, and yet instilling a sense of the sacred and insistence on the daily rosary. It is this prayerfulness in our home, that helped two of us follow the priestly call.

At Don Bosco's Matunga because of the great Salesian stalwarts: Fr. Casarotti (Rector and later Provincial), Fr. Mcfarren, the disciplinarian and Fr. Restelli, the live wire among the day-scholars. almost 8 boys left for the Vocation house at Tiripattur in distant Madras State (now the state of Tamil Nadu).

Fr. Restelli had a magical way with the day scholars. His football and cricket and bubbling spirits were a great draw amongst both Catholics and non Catholics.

What was impressive was the attractive Salesian Spirit. The holiday camps at Khandala (long before Don Bosco, Lonavla was bought), played a great part in giving a vi-



sion to many a youngster.

Tiripattur was an oasis of Salesian spirit. Among the staff there, was Bro. Vincent Vaz, Bro. Salu and Bro. Benedict Furtado, so every Bombay boy felt at home.

I thank the Lord that my priestly ministry carried me into Gujarat, South Maharashtra, South Goa and North and South Kanara. Today, at the request of the Provincial I am trying to complete the pending legal and land issues in the newly formed Panjim-Konkan Region.

Now we await a green signal to launch out into our first work in Mangalore City at Jeppu (a shelter home for underprivileged boys).

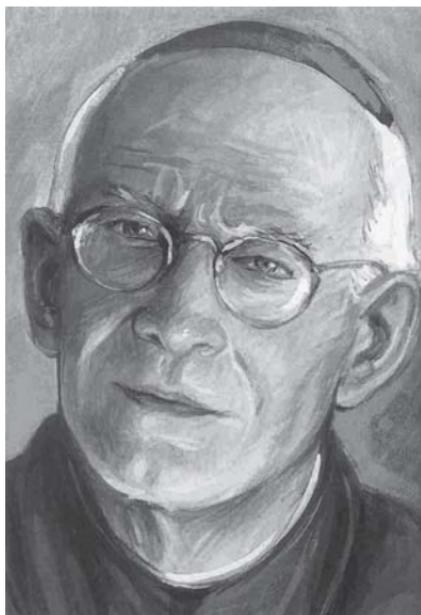
My dear youngsters and parents, it is important to be daring today and discern God's call in our lives. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a small step, take the first step, and trust God. In all things the greater glory of God. □

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

SALESIAN SAINT OF THE MONTH

OCTAVIO ORTIZ 1879 - 1958

Octavio Ortiz was born in Lima on 19, April, 1879, the eighth son of Manuel and Benigna Coya. In 1892 the Salesians opened the first vocational school in Peru. Octavio, who had been attending the Salesian Oratory for a year, entered as a student carpenter. He was very diligent and attentive. One day in the kitchen, while he was stirring the soup with one hand he was reading the Catechism which he held in the other. One day Bishop Costamagna saw him and inquired: "What is that boy reading? Instead of training to be a carpenter he could be a priest" and so it was. He was sent to the novitiate at Callao and made his perpetual vows into the hands of Fr. Albera, then the extraordinary visitor. He completed his regency in the same house. In 1907 he became the first Salesian priest of Peru. He started a professional school in Piura and Callao was highly respected and esteemed as director. In 1921, much to his surprise, he was appointed Bishop of Chachapoyas, in the north of the Andes. The territory was as large as a third of Italy. It was rugged terrain and very isolated, not linked to any other cities. Octavio wanted to be a Salesian bishop using the methods of Don Bosco. He chose as his episcopal motto: "Da mihi animas" (The Salesian motto) expressing his zeal for souls. Just like Don Bosco he convinced the city authorities of his time to give Chachapoyas roads, hospitals, water and electricity. He



promoted many cultural initiatives and good literature. During his time he wanted Catechism to be taught in all the city's churches every Sunday and for this he established the Union of Catechists with whose help he organized religious instruction in schools. He was also solicitous about the formation of the clergy. He was constantly travelling either on horseback or on foot through dense forests and over mountains and across rivers to meet his flock. Once in five years he was able to meet every one in the diocese of 120,000 souls. In 1953 Pius XII appointed him assistant to the papal household. Following an operation on March 1, 1958 the good bishop died. He is buried in his cathedral. He was revered for his sanctity by so many and the fame of his holiness spread far and wide.

The diocesan process was initiated on 8 July, 1992 and it concluded on 22, December, 2001. □

CARRYING THE CROSS WITH FAITH AND COURAGE

by Tommaso Marferra

Does it still make sense to practice the devotion of the Stations of the Cross?

History is life's great teacher because it permits us to distinguish the essentials from the ordinary in order that we may understand the true meaning of life. This also applies to the Way of the Cross but let us proceed step by step. Did not Jesus say: "If anyone wishes to come after me...let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me"? Although this admonition refers to all the moments of our life it also finds its resonance in the practices of Christian worship that have been influenced by the spirituality of every age.

In Jerusalem they celebrated the events of the life of Jesus in the places where they actually took place, especially the events that took place during that first Holy Week. It is easy to imagine the pilgrimages to the Holy Places and the powerful experiences especially along the Via Dolorosa, from the Praetorium (of Pilate) to the Basilica that was built by Constantine over the sight of the Crucifixion and sepulchre of Jesus. This was not yet the "devotion of the way of the Cross," but a pilgrimage to the holy places that was deeply moving. To confirm this, there was also an apocryphal text from the fifth century wherein was stated that the Virgin Mary, after the ascension of Jesus daily visited the places that

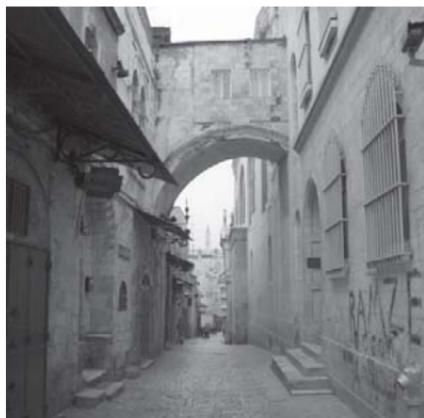


had been sanctified by her Son.

But the devotion of the *Via Crucis* as we know it really began after Holy Land had been conquered by the Turks in the XV Century. The impossibility of some to undertake the pilgrimage to the Holy Places led them to build some kind of reminders of those places around Europe.

This was how Holy Mountains came to be established beginning with the one at Varallo in 1491, where each stage or "station" of the life of Jesus was represented by the foundation of a little chapel. The evolution of the spirituality of that time brought into focus the passion of Christ. That is how we find, during the same period, the outdoor *Via Crucis* in Germany consisting of seven "stations" (meeting Mary, the Cyrenean, the women of Jerusalem, Veronica, the fall, death and placing in the arms of Mary).

From then on the devotion



The Via Dolorosa

spread throughout Christendom. In the beginning these "stations" were celebrated only in the churches that were administered by the Franciscans - who were the custodians of the Holy places. In 1731 Pope Clement XII extended the devotion of the *Via Crucis* throughout the Church setting the number of stations at 14, which until then varied according to local traditions.

Even this brief historical survey reveals several insights, and hints at many answers. For example, it shows that the *Via Crucis*, which in recent centuries has been a characteristic devotion specific to the season of Lent was not linked to any particular liturgical season but rather associated rather with 'baptismal catechesis' that punctuated the Sunday and the weekday lectionary throughout the year. While enjoying popular support, the *Via Crucis* was not even most specific or significantly associated to the celebration of Good Friday when the Passion and Death of the Lord was celebrated with a very ancient liturgical ritual.

Since all the pious practices of

the *Via Crucis* are essentially a meditation on the passion of the Lord they always have profound significance. A sound and comprehensive answer to the meaning and the value of the *Via Crucis* was given by John Paul II on Good Friday of 1994 at the Coliseum when he significantly altered the 14 "stations:" Jesus in the garden, he is betrayed, condemned, denied by Peter, sentenced by Pilate, scourged and crowned with thorns, he carries the cross, Simon of Cyrene helps him, he is approached by the women of Jerusalem, he is crucified, he promises the kingdom to the good thief, he turns to his Mother and the disciple at the foot of the cross, Jesus dies and is laid in the tomb - a very moving and eloquent model that speaks for itself.



The 9th Station on the Via Dolorosa, Jerusalem

This does not mean we lose sight of the essentials, because, while we respect the sensitivity of people we should not 'canonize' the formula of that devotion which is simply an instrument to aid Christians reflection on their sufferings in the light of Christ's passion as they carry their crosses with faith and courage. To this end, these devotions ought to be valued as instruments of devotion. □

walking with the Church



The Crucifixion, Born Again, Lk 21, Purgatory

from St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland

Q. *Crucifixion seems to me to be a horrific form of death. Where did it originate? Did the Romans think it up themselves or did they get it from somewhere else?*

A. Crucifixion was an eastern custom that was taken up by the Romans. It meant being scourged first, then taking up your cross (or crossbeam at least) and carrying it to the place of crucifixion and then being put to death. Not all criminals were crucified. Torture and death on the cross were inflicted in Roman society on only two classes of people—rebels and slaves. Roman citizens were never crucified. Such a death would be beneath their dignity. Only the lowest forms of life (in Roman eyes) were subjected to a form of execution that was compounded in its cruelty by humiliation and disgrace.

Q. *I often hear the expression 'Born again Christian'. What does that mean?*

A. Catholics do not normally use the term 'Born again Christian', but for them it describes how a person conceived in sin (original sin) is reborn by Baptism as a child of God and is therefore an heir to the kingdom of heaven. (Jn 3:5) Catholics speak of the infusion of Divine grace and being incorporated into Christ—it is a supernatural rebirth. We become sharers in the life of God. For other Christians it usually means a new ex-

perience of Christ brought about through Baptism or some instant conversion from sin to a dedicated service of God.

Q. *What does Christ mean when he says 'Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words will not pass away'? (Lk 21) I thought heaven would last for eternity.*

A. Yes, heaven as we understand it (The Beatific vision and eternal happiness with God and all the saints) will last for all eternity. This is our faith. The heaven spoken of here means the 'sky and earth shall pass away but my words will not pass away.'

Q. *What do Catholics mean by Purgatory?*

A. The whole idea of Purgatory is that even though we can be forgiven of our sins through the death of Jesus Christ, we still committed them and infinite justice demands some sort of atonement on our part. It is our final purification. We sinners are not quite ready to be ushered into God's **presence without** first being purified. The Councils of the Catholic Church in all their official teachings have not given us any description of Purgatory. In the medieval ages they conjured up all sorts of punishment by fire, pain and torture but there is no foundation either in scripture or in our tradition for these imaginings. □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. NICHOLAS OF FLUE GRANT ME ALL THAT DRAWS ME TO YOU (1417 - 1487)

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

Saints, sanctity and sanctification are three simple words that are widely used in Church circles and beyond; words branded today as outdated, not modern (or post modern). They are words with very different meanings but words that leave us uncomfortable with our attitudes, beliefs and lifestyles. Speaking of saints and of holiness is not a very "in-thing." It may even be annoying or even taboo. Can you imagine a TV "talk show," or a commercial being dedicated to the life of a saint or how to grow in holiness? This would get very popular audience ratings. Listening to someone speak about the life of a first-century saint or someone recent like Padre Pio of Pietrelcina or perhaps Mother Teresa of Kolkata, would make us do an involuntary examination of conscience of our Christian life or simply of our human lives. That is true because saints were real people who lived as disciples of Christ up to the very end of their lives and - from a purely anthropological point of view - they were individuals who lived their humanity to its full potential. Therefore they were not in-

dividuals for just one era of the Church. They continue to challenge us even in to day.

Who, then, are the saints? This is a question that Susanna Tamaro (of the famous Catholic Italian magazine - *Famiglia Cristiana*) has addressed. Here are her thoughts: "Who really are the saints? This is a frighteningly huge task which refers us to something even broader: **What is holiness?**

First, we need to clarify one thing. In the saints, there is nothing soft or mawkish, because saints, above all else, are people who go "against the grain." There can hardly be anything weak or timid about that.

Unfortunately, the images of popular devotions are often misleading. The lives of saints must be read. Only then will we become aware of their vitality, their unconventionality or the total loneliness and deep despair that they may have experienced. Saints are not first class individuals, blessed with a kind of superiority because of which they lived effortlessly, protected from the world. On the contrary, saints were individuals who lived with immense intensity, dili-

gence and total dedication. Surrender and commitment seem to be contradictions, but they are not. The diligence and total dedication of the saints were seen in their struggle against the forces of evil which they were able to overcome by surrendering themselves in love because "of the Love that created them."

From the Father of a Family to a Monk

Susanna Tamaro's definition of holiness quoted above seems to perfectly fit the saint we propose for this month of March: St. Nicholas of Flue. He was a Swiss national who was not just someone significant for his contemporaries of the fifteenth century but he is very relevant for us today. Nicholas of Flue was certainly not weak or submissive. He renounced the secular world with the socio-cultural environment in tow. He did not just exist, he lived. He was not influenced but he influenced others to take up just and courageous causes. He built himself up conscientiously and responsibly to live in his world which was Switzerland of his era. He was able to go "against" the popular trends of thinking and acting by witnessing to deeply Christian ideals of peace and reconciliation. He constantly sought dialogue and consensus over the need for (armed) action. Others promoted less dialogue and more action. He retorted with patient dialogue in place of armed conflict. He knew how to live alone without falling to pieces because he was supported by strong convictions and a clear determination to surrender himself to God, writes Susanna Tamaro. The two elements that seem to feature prominently especially during

the last two decades of his life (which coincide with his life of solitude) were his fervent surrender to God and his love for Christ, to live only for Him as he presents himself to us in the Eucharist and who remains the sign and summit of Christ's love for us and the world.

Nicholas was born in Flue, Switzerland in the Canton of Obwald in 1417 in the same year that the Council of Constance was convened to bring about an end to the great schism of the West thus raising the hopes of Christendom. Alas, hopes were ephemeral because "in the Christianity of the time, linked as it was to the feudal state, was now on the decline and there was a widening gap between church institutions that were attached to their powers even though their leaders were either unworthy or unfaithful and who followed a fossilized scholastic theology as opposed to a new spiritual current that emphasised personal piety" (Ph. Baud).

On the political front, the small Swiss Confederation was looking for an identity, independence and trade. In this ecclesiastical and political environment, though there was a severe crisis in vocations, Nicholas matured with a determination that was disconcerting. At age 50, he gave up farming and being the head of his family, embraced solitude and began to live the life of a monk. Prior to this he was married to Dorothy and had 10 children by her. Everything seemed to be fine but within himself he was struggling. He heard God calling him to leave everything, family, farms and his earthly security. When he became certain about the call he asked his wife's

permission and that of his grown up children and withdrew into solitude. So, "his beloved wife" (as he always referred to her) and his grown-up children granted him their permission. He was now free to follow his call to prayer and penance. His destination was the region of Alsace where he joined the "friends of God" (Gottesfreunde). There he flourished. Was this the will of God? Was God really speaking to him? It was not the voice of some well known theologian or scripture scholar, but the voice of an illiterate peasant. The Gospel says that "the Spirit blows where it wills", may be even in the voice of an illiterate farmer. That was how it was in 1467 and that is how it is today. Nicholas was told that he had to serve God anywhere but not among his own people. Nicholas was welcomed as a sign. He thought no more of Alsace but returned quietly to his people and went to live in a remote valley not far from his own house. There he lived in solitude, poverty, prayer and penance. The fame of his sanctity spread quickly throughout the entire Confederation. This was partly due to the extraordinary fact that Nicholas lived only on the bread of the Eucharist. There was no other natural food that he ate. This was a grace from God and he was blessed with several visions. Even though he lived in solitude he was not unaware of the fate of his countrymen. In fact, he was called to mediate during a civil war that was brewing in 1481. Bruder Klaus (his brother) was sent to ask him for a message of peace and dialogue in order to seek the common good. For Nicholas "mercy in all things is more precious than justice" and "wisdom is more precious



According to many Nicholas' life was endowed with copious visions and apparitions

than wealth." **"Peace always comes from God because God is peace which cannot be destroyed."** And then urged his fellow countrymen, saying loudly: "So try to keep the peace." Because of his successful mediation and his record of peace and harmony his brother, Bruder Klaus is considered the "Father of the Nation." Today we refer to this as the bi partisan approach, that is, Catholics and Protestants. Interestingly that was what he offered Zwingli (1484-1531) one of the founders of Swiss Protestantism (along with Calvin). Years after his death they said of Nicholas: **"You certainly know what the pious Brother Nicholas of Flue said about the federal government. There is nothing you should reject more than oppressive selfishness or self-interest. Selfishness is the enemy."**

Nicholas, the holy hermit, who lived only on the Eucharist and the contemplation of the Passion of Christ, died in 1487. He was 70 years old, 20 of which he lived in solitude away from the world but praying for the world and thus contributing to his own salvation. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Wake Up Call

An elderly gentleman checked into a New York hotel. The clerk mentioned the phone service the establishment made available for calling guests who wished to rise at an early hour.

"No need for that, young man," snapped the old timer. "I always wake up at five A.M. sharp without an alarm clock."

"Very good, sir," the clerk replied, then asked, "Would you mind calling me at six?"

Cell Phone Find

An employee of the airport found a cell phone in one of the boarding areas. She switched it on, hoping a caller would identify the owner. It rang, and she answered it, but there was no response. When it rang a second time, another female employee answered, and the same thing happened.

Moments later, a supervisor came by and picked up the ringing phone. "This is Bob. May I help you?"

"Bob," the bewildered woman caller finally spoke. "Where is Bill, and who are those two women he's with?"

Pupil's Question

A young pupil asked, "Master, what is fate?"

"Ah, my son, it is what has brought great nations together. It has made the world a smaller place in which to live. It has inspired men of worth to work endless hours. It will some day enable men to span the universe and light years of travel will soon become mere seconds in time."

"And that, my master, is fate?"

"Oh, fate! I thought you said

freight."

Better Preaching

After the visiting preacher finished, a woman came up and said, "You were much better than the preacher we had last Sunday. He spoke for an hour and said nothing."

"Thank you," the visiting preacher replied.

"Yes," she continued. "You did it in fifteen minutes."

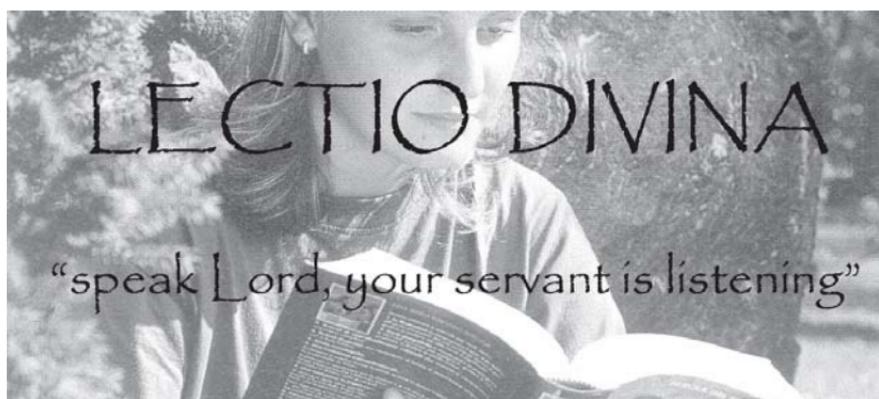
Drum Problem

There was once a small boy who banged a drum all day and loved every moment of it. He would not be quiet, no matter what anyone else said or did. Various attempts were made to do something about the child.

One person told the boy that he would, if he continued to make so much noise, perforate his eardrums. This reasoning was too advanced for the child, who was neither a scientist nor a scholar.

A second person told him that drum beating was a sacred activity and should be carried out only on special occasions. The third person offered the neighbours plugs for their ears; a fourth gave the boy a book; a fifth gave the neighbours books that described a method of controlling anger through biofeedback; a sixth person gave the boy meditation exercises to make him placid and docile. None of these attempts worked.

Eventually, a wise person came along with an effective motivation. He looked at the situation, handed the child a hammer and chisel, and asked, "I wonder what's inside the drum?" □



I DO NOT CALL YOU SERVANTS ANY LONGER, I CALL YOU FRIENDS (Jn. 15, 15)

by Antonio Rudoni

There are several people who do not believe in God because they do not want to “depend” on Him. They believe that they cherish their independence so much that they do not want to be subservient to anyone!

Being autonomous today seems to mean living in opposition to Christian heteronomy or dependence. Why did Jesus the perfect man say: “That which the Father has commanded me I proclaim” (Jn. 12:49) and “I do all that he commands me” (Jn. 14:31).

That is what the Teacher tells his disciples: “If you remain faithful to my word you are truly my disciples” (Jn. 8:31), and he goes further and says: “Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a little Child will never enter it,” because he himself lived as the son of his Father, in a very childlike manner. He even called him *Abba*, meaning, *daddy* (Mt 26:39, Lk 22:42, Jn 14:31).

Thus dichotomy between the modern mindset and the Christian mentality seems irreconcilable. Yet, for a long time Christians have been saying “to serve God is to reign.” How can this be possible?

Cardinal Martini, a great scholar of Sacred Scripture writes that the obedience of Jesus and his disciples is not servitude. It is an expression of a perfect love!

In fact, the Divine Son, incarnate in Jesus, obeys the Father because he fully supports the Father’s plan for humanity. In accepting this plan, he accepts the Father’s will out of love for and for the salvation of man. Embracing the Father, the Son accepts him as the limitless source of every perfect gift. Thus, the infinite gift of the Father is unconditionally accepted by the Son. The Father’s gift of boundless love meets the warmth of the infinite Son who is fully God and equal to the Father!



The Last Supper, The French School of XVII Cent - Musee des Beaux Arts, Lille

On that last evening, just before he died, Jesus revealed his deepest confidences. He told his disciples what they needed to know about their vocation: "I no longer call you servants but friends" (Jn

but because of his divine goodness we are invited to be his friends equally sharing his dignity and his life. Therefore since we are his friends we view him in a new light because we now share his divine love.

***Obedience,
then, is not
a kind
of dependence
but
the fruit of love
and a yearning
to be united
to (God) him.***

So, just as he is uniquely linked to the Father, we too are called to be linked to both of them! God gives himself completely to us when we receive him. When we are united to him, his will becomes our will, his life, our life, his freedom, our freedom, his fullness, our fullness.

Therefore, obedience to God's commandments really means truly embracing him, his light and his warmth. This obedience, then, is not a kind of dependence but the fruit of love and a yearning to be united to him. Thus, the holiness of God becomes the holiness of man and when we embrace God we do not surrender our independence but we realize our full potential because only God can give us that latitude to live a boundless life. □

15:15). This revelation gives life and demands a change in the destiny of all created things. By our very nature we are only servants

DEDICATED TO
THE HOLY FAMILY

Quiet

WE ARE MAD

by His Holiness P

On the occasion of the opening of the 10th International Youth Forum - on the theme "Learning to love" - which began in Rocca di Papa, near Rome, on 24th March, the Holy Father addressed a Message to Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, for those taking part. The following is a translation of the Pope's message which was given in Italian

I am pleased to send my cordial greeting to you, to the collaborators of the Pontifical Council for the Laity and to all who are taking part in the 10th International Forum for Youth, which is being held this week at Rocca di Papa on the theme "Learning to Love".

"Learning to Love" this theme is central to the faith and to Christian life and I am delighted that you have the opportunity to examine it together. As you know, the starting point of any reflection on love is the very mystery of God, for the heart of the Christian revelation is this: *Deus caritas est*. Christ in his Passion, in the total gift of himself, has revealed to us the Face of the God who is Love.

Contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity leads us into this mystery of eternal Love, which is fundamental for us. The first pages of the Bible say, in fact, that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him"; that is, "male and female he created them" (Gn 1:27).

For the very reason that God is love and man is his image we understand the person's profound identity, his vocation to love. Human beings are made for love; their lives are completely fulfilled only if they are lived in love. Thus, after many years of searching, St Therese of the Child Jesus came to understand the meaning of her life: "My vocation is Love!" (*Manuscript B, folio 3*)

I urge the young people to put their whole heart into seeking their vocation to love, as people and as baptized people. This is the key to their entire existence. They can therefore invest all their energy in drawing close to this goal, day after day, sustained by the Word of God and by the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

The vocation to love takes different forms according to the state of life. I wish to recall the words of the holy Cure d' Ars: "the priesthood is the love of Jesus' Heart". In the following of Jesus, priests give their lives so that the faithful may live by the love of Christ. Called by God to give themselves entirely to him with an undivided heart, consecrated people in celibacy are also an eloquent sign of

DE FOR LOVE

Pope Benedict XVI

God's love for the world and of the vocation to love God above all else.

I would also like to encourage the young delegates to discover the greatness and beauty of Marriage: the relationship between the man and the woman reflects divine love in a quite special way; therefore the conjugal bond acquires an immense

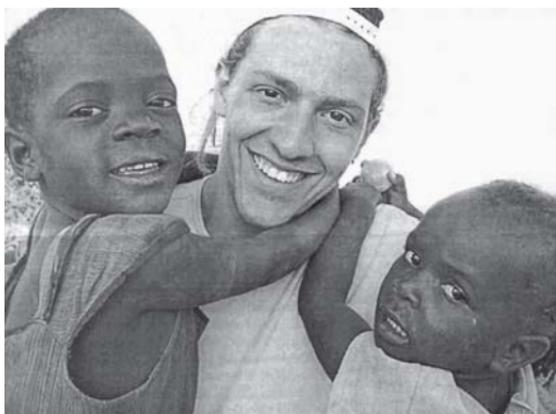
dignity. Through the Sacrament of Marriage the spouses are united to God and with their relationship express the love of Christ who gave his life for the salvation of the world.

In a cultural context in which many people consider Marriage as a temporary contract that may be violated, it is vitally important to understand that true love is faithful, it is the definitive gift of self.

Since Christ consecrates the love of Christian spouses and is committed to and with them, this fidelity is not only possible but is the way by which to enter into ever greater charity. Thus, in the daily life of the couple and of the family, the spouses learn to love as Christ loves. To measure up to this vocation a serious educational process is necessary and this Forum also fits into this perspective.

These days of formation through encounter, listening to conferences and common prayer, must also be an encouragement to all the young delegates to make themselves witnesses among their peers of what they have seen and heard. It is a real responsibility. The Church is counting on them to ensure that they respond with joy and faithfulness to Christ's commandment: "that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12).

I assure all the young people of my prayer and warmly send a special greeting to all the participants in the International Forum.



From the Vatican, 20 March 2010

A Short Story

THE LUNCH HOUR

by Michelle Mach

*Time is an illusion
and lunch time doubly so.
- Douglas Adams*

I clutched a yogurt in one hand as I tried to eat and catch up on customer e-mail during the noon hour. Even fifteen minutes in the employee lunchroom seemed too much of a luxury. My company, like many companies, had cut costs by not replacing people as they left. The survivors were expected to take up the slack.

For me, this meant no lunch hour, plus taking work home in the evening or on the weekends. I didn't feel I worked at a job; I felt I was my job. I wanted to quit, but given the economy, I felt I couldn't until I had another job in hand. Nice in theory, but given how cranky all the extra hours made me feel, it was difficult to convince potential employers to hire me. I felt trapped. Then a chance conversation with a stranger's six-year-old daughter changed my outlook. The young girl was positively bouncy, standing in line with her mom at the grocery store.

"Good day at school?" I asked.

A nod.

"What's your favorite subject?"

"Lunch."

I smiled at the answer. I remembered when that had been my answer. At lunch, there were no adults to tell you what to do and when to do it. You could sit and talk with your friends or play an exuberant game of four-square.

You could draw pictures or swing on the monkey bars. The time was yours to do whatever you wanted. Sometimes we planned our time, bringing stickers to trade or Chinese jacks for a weeklong tournament. Sometimes we were more spontaneous, only deciding what to do while we were eating our peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and slurping our little paper cartons of milk.

That brief encounter left me wondering: What had happened to lunch?

I knew that by law I was entitled to a lunch break at work. So I decided to simply start taking it. The office was located in the downtown area of a small town and I set out to explore it. A few blocks away was a local art museum with free admission. At the end of another street, I was startled to discover some horses grazing in a field. A cute gift boutique made for pleasant and sometimes humorous browsing, particularly looking through the leftover holiday items and laughing at the sometimes funny things, like jack-o'-lantern sunglasses and temporary Santa tattoos that no one had the foresight to buy.

When the weather turned cold, I visited the used bookstore or public library. Near the library

was a small man-made pond that attracted ducks and small children with their parents, all of whom provided much amusement as they demanded to be fed. Even running errands at lunch to the bank or the post office brought me a small measure of joy. Doing those errands during the week freed up some time on the weekends for fun activities.

When I decided to take back my lunch hour, I braced myself for catty remarks or stares from my co-workers, but they never materialized. In fact, I watched in

amazement as some of my co-workers started to drift away occasionally from their own desks during lunch. We started inviting each other out for walks during good weather and discovered that we had other topics of conversation beyond the now common complaints about work.

I'm still looking for a new position, but with less stressed-out urgency than before. You can't always change your circumstances, but you can always change your perspective. □

Form IV

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

Dated: March 1, 2011

Sd/-
Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

(Continued from pg. 6)

selves. On the other hand, when we can trustfully say to the Lord that we are ready to accept whatever his infinite love prescribes for us, we allow his divine power of surge within our spiritual veins and what a difference we experience. The peace and joy we receive are unbelievable, yet palpable enough for all to see!

Eucharist – the School of Loving Acceptance

It is for this reason that we need to understand better what we are called to do in each Eucharist we celebrate. In the Early Church, the Eucharist was commonly known as 'the breaking of the bread.' But this breaking was not done just in view of the meal that was to follow. The breaking signified precisely the readiness of those celebrating Eucharist to break of themselves, of their convenience and comfort particularly in favour of their poorer brethren. In symbol, that of breaking the bread and sharing the Cup, participants in the Eucharist signify their total readiness to accept lovingly and joyfully all the crosses the Father has planned for them.

Having expressed this readiness of theirs in symbolic fashion, they then go out and live it in their daily lives. Thus, rather than be surprised at adversities dogging their steps throughout the day, the Christian actually anticipates their being a part of his/her daily schedule; spiritually prepared for them s/he grabs them by the horns, thus transforming them into occasions for sharing in the glory of the Risen Lord. Having lived this positive approach for a short while, the dedicated Chris-

tian is also able to pick up the signs of the presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of this suffering. This could be a tiny little kindness by an unknown person coming at the right moment and most unexpectedly or a suggestion that changes the course of the entire situation making it shorter and lighter. Or it could be a stranger offering to share the burden with us, even without our suggesting it. Whatever it be, the best part is that we do recognize with a thrill perhaps even saying within ourselves, "It is the Lord" as John did nudging Peter when they began to haul the nets in with the huge catch of fish!

The Risen Lord does not hide from his chosen ones; rather he reveals himself plainly but generally in a challenging manner, offering us the added joy of discovering his presence. One of the unmistakable signs that we have met the Risen Lord is that we cannot be at peace until we have shared the 'good news' with those who are close to us. And in the very sharing we further experience his presence for he here uses us as his witnesses, offering the Kingdom blessings to many more persons.

Conclusion

Whether we like it or not, calamities are going to be very much a part of our lives. But the next time we are hit by one, could we consciously choose to remain silent and still – listening deeply for signs of the presence of the Risen Jesus? Having caught at least a few examples of these, we find ourselves calm and serene, enjoying the marvelous goodness of the Lord. "I am with you even till the end of time" (Mt. 28:20). ◻

AT THE PINARDI COTTAGE

Natale Cerrato

In the first decade of the Oratory of Valdocco (1846-1856) the Pinardi cottage still stood alongside a new house that was built by Don Bosco which was attached to the church of St. Francis de Sales. In those years Don Bosco and his apostolate for poor and abandoned youngsters won the sympathy and admiration of Abbè Rosmini and the Rosminian Fathers

The House of Urchins

While writing to the Rosminian Fr. Joseph Fradelizio, who had moved from Stresa to Sacra di San Michele, Don Bosco said: "I was sorry you did not find a place when you passed through Turin. Now, however, you're not staying in Stresa but a short distance from me. I hope to see you soon at The House of Urchins" (E35).

"The House of the Urchins" (*Casa birichinòira* - in Piedmontese) was used to describe the Pinardi Cottage that was full of urchins.

This was a Piedmontese term. The word "House" is not used except to indicate the title of nobility like "The House of Savoy" and



The Pinardi Cottage at the beginning (Crida)



CHARACTERISTICS

DON BOSCO'S

"The House of Cavour." That was also how Abbè Rosmini's family was referred to as well. He was a famous philosopher and theologian and the founder of the institute of Charity (called the Rosminians).

In Piedmont, the Italian word "house" in its simplest sense, is simply referred to as 'ca.' So, when Don Bosco referred to "The House of Urchins" and as his own humble 'family,' which he simply referred to it in an abbreviated way, which in Italian was "Birichinesca" - as a joke.

Inexperienced Ways

One Sunday evening in the spring of 1848, Don Bosco was teaching catechism to his boys in a room near the chapel. His back faced the window that opened on to the street. Suddenly a dark hooded figure appeared armed with a gun which he fired at Don Bosco. He then disappeared immediately. No one will ever know who

IN TURIN, THE POLITICIANS UNLEASHED A BAND OF BRIGANDS AGAINST THE NOBILITY AND PRIESTS. THEY EVEN CAME TO THE ORATORY OF DON BOSCO WHILE HE WAS TEACHING CATECHISM NEAR THE CHAPEL



would certainly have got me. But he was a bad shot." Then, looking at the rip in his cassock he exclaimed: "Oh, my poor cassock! The only one I've got!" (cf EBM 3, 211-212)

"To Do Much Good!"

Years later the sons of Don Bosco spoke of his penance while eating. Card. John Cagliero, one of his first disciples testified: "Don Bosco's meals were always very

that figure was but it was easy to imagine the terror in the eyes of those youngsters as they saw the hooded figure in the window behind Don Bosco, aiming and firing the pistol.

The bullet had pierced the window without shattering the pane, and had passed harmlessly under Don Bosco's armpit, slightly tearing the side and sleeve of his cassock and embedding itself into the wall, causing a few inches of plaster to fall to the floor. All Don Bosco felt of the bullet was a slight pressure as if someone was tugging at his robe. Not in the least disconcerted, he showed such calm and presence of mind as to allay the fear gripping the boys. He reassured them with a smile, "What? Are you afraid of a joke in poor taste? Some scoundrels don't know any better. Look they've ripped my cassock and damaged the wall! Oh, well...let's get back to our catechism." Seeing him unhurt after the attempt on his life, the boys soon became their usual selves. Meanwhile Don Bosco kept remarking: "If the Blessed Virgin had not made him miss his aim, he

frugal, if not downright meagre. As a boy I was present at his meals in 1852 - 1853. He ate the same soup and bread served to us; the main dish which Mamma Margaret prepared for him generally consisted of vegetables, sometimes mixed with tiny pieces of meat or an egg; sometimes it was only pumpkin with a little seasoning. The same dish, warmed up, would be served again at supper."

Don Bosco generally preferred potatoes, turnips and vegetables, provided they were well-cooked, because they were easier for him to digest. He ate so frugally that we were amazed how he could stand his arduous tasks.

In drink, too, Don Bosco was a model of temperance. What little wine he took came from the samples and leftovers from the market which was sent almost weekly to the Oratory; red and white, sweet and dry, were all mixed together; sometimes good wine was mixed with sour. If the wine was good, he would then instantly reach for water to dilute it and "make it even better," as he would say. With a smile he would



Monsignor Cagliero visits his mission on horseback (detail from a painting by Mario Bogani)

add, "I've renounced the world and the devil, but the pumps." (The pun Don Bosco intended is perfect in the original Italian since the word *pompe* means both "pumps" and "pumps") alluding to water pumps (cf EBM 4,133-134).

In the Bread Basket

This was how Card. John Cagliero described his entry into the Pinardi Cottage on 2nd November 1851:

"I shall always fondly remember the moment I arrived at the Oratory on the evening of 2nd November (1851). Don Bosco introduced me to his mother, saying, "Mamma, here is a small boy from Castelnuovo. He wants to become really good and go to school." Mamma Margaret replied, "you're always bringing in boys when you know very well that we have no more room." "Oh, you'll find a little

corner for him," replied Don Bosco smiling. "In your own room perhaps," she replied. "that won't be necessary," continued Don Bosco. "He's so small he can sleep in the grissini (slender breadsticks about three feet long) basket. We could hoist it from a beam just like a birdcage." Laughing at the remark, Mamma Margaret left the room to find a place for me. That night another boy and I slept at the foot of Don Bosco's bed (cf EBM 4, 202-203).

Who would have thought that, that youngster would become one of the first Salesians and then the head of the first missionary expedition to Argentina and later he would become the first Salesian bishop and Cardinal? At the age of 88 he exclaimed:

"If I were reborn 88 times I would be a Salesian 88 times over!" □



Don Bosco presenting the Constitutions to Fr. Cagliero who is leaving for the missions

NEWSBITS

VATICAN CITY

Pope Benedict XVI praised the millions of Catholic women in the world who inspire their husbands and children to live truly Christian lives.

At his weekly general audience on Oct 27, 2010 the pope said he wanted to recognize "the many women who, day after day, enlighten their families with their witness of Christian life".

"May the Spirit of the Lord raise up holy Christian spouses today to show the world the beauty of marriage lived according to the Gospel values: love, tenderness, mutual help, fruitfulness in generating and educating children, openness and solidarity with the world, and participation in the life of the Church," he said.

The pope's remarks about women in the Church and in family life were part of his address about the life and influence of St. Bridget of Sweden, who lived in the 14th century. Bridget and her husband, Ulf, were the parents of eight children.

"Often, as happened in the life of St. Bridget and Ulf, it is the woman who, with her religious sensitivity, delicacy and sweetness, is able to make her husband mature in the faith journey," he said.

After Ulf died, Bridget sold her possessions and dedicated her life to prayer and good works, which makes her a model for Christian widows, the pope said.

St. Bridget also received divine revelations, many of which were addressed "in the form of harsh admonitions. To believers in her

time, including religious and political authorities so that they would correctly live their Christian life," Pope Benedict said.

But she always shared the revelations "with an attitude of respect and full fidelity to the magisterium of the church, particularly the successor of the Apostle Peter", Pope Urban V, he added. *OR*

USA

Fr. Schiffer and seven other priests survived Hiroshima by praying the Rosary daily...

"Realize the power in your hand with the Rosary, for in your hands you hold the power of God. If you do not recognize the Rosary, can you expect to be recognized by My Son? How much can you expect? Why do you hide My Rosary? It was with a Mother's loving heart that I chose to give you these pearls of Heaven that you reject.

"Woe to all dedicated who seek to remove these from the little ones' hands, for their punishment will be metered in accordance to it!

"Why has sophisticated man cast aside these tokens of My love? Those who remain true to My Rosary will not be touched by the fires. Gather these treasures, My children, for the time will come that you will not find them on the counters of your stores." - Our Lady of the Roses, October 6, 1970

Eight Jesuit priests survived the searing hurricane of blast and gamma rays during the atomic bomb explosion in Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945. They were in a rec-

tory only 8 blocks from the blinding centre of the nuclear flash. Although everyone within a mile radius perished, all survived and they attribute their survival to the Rosary and living the Fatima message.

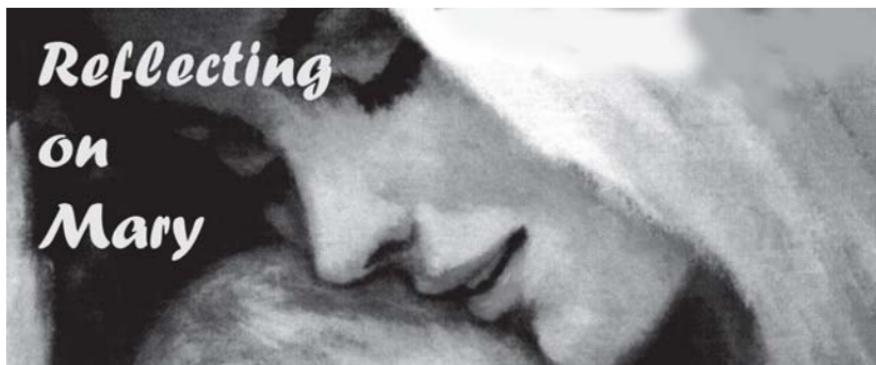
At 2:45 a.m. on August 6, 1945, a B-29 bomber took off from the island of Tinian to drop the first atomic bomb on Japan. At 8:15 a.m. the bomb exploded eight city blocks from the Jesuit Church of Our Lady's Assumption in Hiroshima. Half a million people were annihilated. However, the church and eight Jesuit fathers stationed there survived (four of the priests were Fathers Hugo Lassalle, Kleinsorge, Cieslik and Schiffer. According to the experts they "ought to be dead," being within a one-mile radius of the explosion. Nine days later on August 15, Feast of Our Lady's Assumption, U.S. forces were ordered to cease fire.

This is the incredible story of the late Fr. Hubert Schiffer, as retold by a priest who met him:

I met Fr. Schiffer in the late 70s at the Tri-City Airport in Saginaw, Michigan, as he was going to give a talk for the Blue Army Novena/Triduum. As I chauffeured him around he told me stories of his life, especially of the atomic explosion at Hiroshima. On the morning of August 6, 1945, he had just finished Mass, went into the rectory and sat down at the breakfast table, and had just sliced a grapefruit, and had just put his spoon into the grapefruit when there was a bright flash of light. His first thought was that it was an explosion in the harbour (this was a major port where the Japanese refueled their submarines.)

Then, in the words of Fr. Schiffer: "Suddenly, a terrific explosion filled the air with one bursting thunder stroke. An invisible force lifted me from the chair, hurled me through the air, shook me, battered me, whirled me 'round and 'round like a leaf in a gust of autumn wind." The next thing he remembered, he opened his eyes and he was laying on the ground. He looked around and there was NOTHING in any direction: the railroad station and buildings in all directions were leveled to the ground.

The only physical harm to himself was that he could feel a few pieces of glass in the back of his neck. As far as he could tell, there was nothing else physically wrong with himself. Many thousands were killed or maimed by the explosion. After the conquest of the Americans, their army doctors and scientists explained to him that his body would begin to deteriorate because of the radiation. Many of the Japanese people had blisters and sores from the radiation. To the doctors amazement, Fr. Schiffer's body contained no radiation or ill-effects from the bomb. Fr. Schiffer attributes this to devotion to the Blessed Mother, and his daily Fatima Rosary. He feels that he received a protective shield from the Blessed Mother which protected him from all radiation and ill-effects. (This coincides with the bombing of Nagasaki where St. Maximilian Kolbe had established a Franciscan Friary which was also unharmed because of special protection from the Blessed Mother, as the Brothers too prayed the daily Rosary and also had no effects from the bomb.)*gloria.tv*



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE MOTHER OF JESUS

by Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm.

The *Chicago Tribune* in its issue of November 3rd 2001 showed a picture from California of a group of people looking up at a four-story mural of Our Lady of Guadalupe in downtown Los Angeles, unveiled on November 2nd of that year. It was on the wall of a building, 35 by 50 feet, one of the largest religious images in California.

The blind Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli made his American debut in Detroit at the end of October 2000, in the operatic role of Werther. He has been featured in a number of PBS TV shows. Some of his recordings are on sale, both CD and DVD: one is the classical album 'Sacred Arias: Timeless Arias of Hope and Devotion,' advertised as including some of the most beautiful music and inspired 'Ave Marias' ever written, and as well the hymn of the Great Jubilee 'Gloria a te, Cristo Gesù.' It is difficult to make a correct listing of the many settings of the Ave Maria.

As I write I have before me an advertisement from the Christmas catalogue of the Ave Marie Press of Notre Dame, Indiana, for a recording available in both stereo cassette and compact disc, with the title Ave Maria by the Santa Barbara Regional Choir with Sue Ann Pinner the soprano soloist and director. Among its 17 Marian hymns are ten Ave Maria's 'presented chronologically from Gregorian Chant through Bach-Gounod, Mozart, Schubert, Brahms, Verdi, Rachmaninoff and more.'

On June 2nd 1999, 'Skylark,' the name of a 13-member consort of Women's voices, new to the Chicago scene, gave an opening concert in Evanston. Calling their programme "Ave" they presented 16 hymns to the Virgin Mary from the 1500s to the present. One was Schubert's familiar Ave Maria that the composer set to a poem by Sir Walter Scott. Almost miraculously, as a reviewer noted, the Latin text also fits the tune. Other offerings



THE VIRGIN OF THE MASS by Roger van der Weyden (1399-1464)
Detail of the "Seven Sacraments" Royal Museum, Antwerp

Santissima de la Estrella (Most Holy Mary of the Star). Little known here in the United States, there is a recent splendid liturgical ritual for such coronations, fully approved by the Holy See: Order of Crowning an Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary (English edition 1986.)

For over a year 'best-seller' books have included Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation* (Random House, New York, 1998), essays about

Roger van de Weyden does not separate the Eucharist from the Mass, nor the Mass from the Sorrowful Mother of Christ, offering herself as a victim co-jointly with her Son. St. John, in the habit of a cleric supports, her

included a Magnificat by Vaughan Williams, also one by Michael Haydn, an Angelus by William Mathias, a Regina Coeli by Brahms and the "litanies to the Black Virgin" which the French composer Poulenc wrote after a friend's sudden death.

There is a society of philatelists who collect stamps devoted to the Blessed Virgin. One such example turned up in my recent mail from Madrid, Spain: a 115 peseta stamp for the canonical coronation of the statue of Maria

people who lived through the Great Depression and Second World War. The first, under the section ordinary people, is 'Thomas and Eileen Broderick' with the subhead 'Chicago, Illinois-Insurance Agency Owner-82nd Airborne.' Broderick lost his eyesight from a German sniper's bullet. On the first page of the article are the words "What's a handicap? I don't have a handicap." It tells of his long recovery, determined effort to learn Braille, and entry into the insur-

ance business. One of his seven children is quoted on how he used to tell them of his injury in the war and how he went with his mother to Lourdes to pray for a miracle. Before she put the water on his eyes this was the favour he asked the Lord: 'If I can't have my eyesight back, could you find me a girl for me to marry?' His prayer was answered.

When I was telling this story to a man I know, who was also in the war, he told me that was also his prayer, and it too was heard. Our Lady gets her way: no one is closer to the heart of her beloved Son.

Back around the time of the First World War, there was found in Egypt a papyrus fragment with a prayer written in Greek. It ended up in an English museum and was not published until 1937, when it was immediately recognized as the earliest form of the familiar prayer: "We fly to thy patronage, holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer us." Scholars debate on how old it may be, perhaps as early as A.D. 300, from an area where the title 'Mother of God' was in use. It is the earliest prayer we have that explicitly calls on the Blessed Virgin for her assistance. Subsequently it became very well known everywhere. The Latin is *Sub tuum praesidium*, often set to music. In the chapter on our Lady in the 2nd Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church, (No. 66), this beloved prayer is quoted.

Another ancient prayer used in the Church's liturgy is the invocation "*Vignare me, laudare te,*

Virgo sacrata. Da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos." On my 50th anniversary of ordination, I put on a holy card the first line: 'Make me worthy to praise you, holy Virgin.' I left off the continuation: 'give me strength against your enemies.' Harsh though that second line may sound, 'da mihi virtutem, , the 'enemies' referred to are those who deny the truths about her Son, Jesus. Refusing to call Mary 'Mother of God' may mean denying that her son is the Son of God. That title was canonized at the ecumenical Council of Ephesus A.D. 431 using the Greek word for Mother of God, *theotokos*, the very word in the ancient prayer: We fly to thy patronage.

Both traditional prayers, 'We fly to thy patronage' and 'Make me worthy to praise you,' have been used as inscriptions for beautiful holy cards from Germany (Beuron) that came to my notice recently. The scene is our Lady seated on a throne, her small son leaning forward to give the scapular to the kneeling Saint Simon, an angel standing in attendance behind him. In one case the inscription runs: We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. The other card has the same scene with the Latin inscription 'Make me worthy to praise you' and has also the Latin ejaculatory prayer '*Regina, Decor Carmeli, ora pro nobis*' (Queen and ornament of Carmel, pray for us) and a prayer for the feast of St. Simon Stock (May 16): 'O Lord, let the people consecrated to Thee, and to Thy Virgin Mother, rejoice in the feast of Saint Simon, whom Thou hast given them for their father and guide; and since they

have received through him a mark of protection so mighty, may they reach the eternal fruits of predestination. Amen.'

John Paul II dated his masterly letter *The Gospel of Life* for March 25th 1995, the feast of the Annunciation of the Lord, commemorating the conception of Jesus the Life of the world. Central to that mystery is the Virgin Mother of the Saviour, to whom the Holy Father addresses the closing section of his letter. Students of history customarily come across the abbreviations O.S. and N.S. They stand for 'old style' and 'new style.' The styles intended are before and after the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar in 1582. Papal astronomers corrected the imbalance of the Julian calendar by dropping ten days. For example St. Teresa of Spain died on October 4, 1582, but her feast is kept on October 15. It took a long time for the whole world to accept the Gregorian calendar, in part, out of anti-Catholic reluctance. For many Christian centuries both the civil and the religious year

began on March 25, and the spring tax dates still reflect that custom. George Washington was born 1732 O.S., as England and her colonies did not accept the Gregorian Calendar until 1752. The Catholic Church did not change the beginning of the year from March 25 to January 1st, 1622.

The 1927 book by the American author Willa Cather *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is based on the life of French-born Archbishop John Baptist Lamy of Santa Fe (died 1888). It has some beautiful pages describing Latour (her fictional substitute for Lamy) reflecting on the meaning of our Lady to his life and priestly work. Mary was very special, as Cather writes: "Once again this has been his month: his Patroness had given it to him, the season that had always meant so much in his religious life," (203) Again (256): "A life need not be cold, or devoid of grace in the worldly sense, if it were filled by Her who was all the graces; Virgin-daughter, Virgin-mother, girl of the people and Queen of Heaven..." □

To My Mother

*Dear Mother, Lady clothed in white,
At your head a halo bright,
An angel came to you one night,
To tell you of your joyous plight.
Chaste St. Joseph you did wed,
And laid your Babe in manger bed.
St. Joseph, you and Baby fled,
But came back when the king was dead.
Mary, Lady clothed in light,
Help me be radiant in your sight.*

(Hannah Polk Age 14)

LOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER

Thank you, Mary Help of Christians for giving me a beautiful house which I was praying for. We managed to buy the house while I was undergoing treatment for breast cancer. I am happy to say that through your powerful intercession I have been able to resume my normal activities and am on the road to recovery. Thank you also for many other favours that I received. *June Achar*

I am grateful to Our Lady for the many favours received, especially for the marriage of my son. *P. Kulandaisamy and Family, Chennai*
In the month of June my son was travelling by bike at dawn. Due to bad light he went over a speedbreaker and fell off the bike suffering severe head and face injuries. Thanks to Mother Mary, some passing vehicles stopped and took him to a very good hospital. He was in the ICCU for some days without having to undergo any surgery. I am most grateful to Our Lady and to all our heavenly protectors for saving him. *Johnson, Bangalore*

We are grateful to Mary Help of Christians for her constant protection and intercession especially in helping our mum to gradually recover from her recent serious illness.

Mr. & Mrs. T. Moraes, Mumbai

Thanks to the Virgin Mary for the fulfillment of all my wishes.

Mrs. Susan Raju, Baroda

Many thanks to Mother Mary for the graces and blessings showered on us. Thank you for a job and for saving me from a heart attack in time.

Abraham D'Souza, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to God our Father and Mother Mary for curing me and giving me another life.

Arnold Soares, Mumbai

My granddaughter developed a boil on her scalp which appeared repeatedly again after application of medicine. The doctors suggested an excision. We were frightened and turned to Mother Mary and prayed before the Blessed Sacrament. It eventually disappeared and there has been no sign of it again. We are most grateful to Our Lady for this favour.

Rita & Fly, Goa

My son met with a car accident and was knocked down but he escaped with minor injuries. I am grateful to Mary Help of Christians for protecting him.

Elizabeth Mathias, Mumbai

Many many thanks dear Mother Mary for the successful operation of my son.

Mrs. S. Fonseca

Mother, thank you so much for your blessing and mercy for my son Clint who passed his Std. XII without tuition.

Argentina Fernandes, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary for the favours I received.

Alice D'Souza, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians for a successful hernia operation.

John F. D'Souza, Mumbai

Many thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and all the saints for helping me out of a minor depression and a brain surgery. *A Devotee*

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 granting my husband employment through the recitation of the three Hail Marys and for many other favours received.

A. Cota, Mumbai

I am grateful to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady Help of Christians for answering my prayers. The three Hail Marys works wonders for me and my children and their spouses and also my grand children. I am grateful for all the favours I have received and I continue to receive and I continue to pray for all our illnesses. Keep us Mother Mary, in your loving care always.

Mrs. Gracy Abreo, Mumbai

I am most grateful to Our Blessed Mother through the faithful recitation of the three Hail Marys both my sons passed their Std. X & XII examinations and secured good results.

Jennifer D'Souza, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians for all the favours received.

Delialah Mascarenhas, Goa

Thank you Mother Mary for blessing my sister with a beautiful baby girl through the powerful devotion to the three Hail Marys.

Helen, Bangalore

Our sincere thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and our Blessed Mother for all the favours received. We sincerely seek your blessings and graces on us, our children and our grandchildren.

Marshal and Rose D'Cunha, Thane

Our grateful thanks to the Infant Jesus and Mary Help of Christians for the many favours received especially for helping our daughter throughout her pregnancy and for blessing her with a healthy baby girl.

S & P Pereira, Australia

Our heartfelt thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for a good medical report and for many blessings and favours received.

A. Mendonca, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for a safe delivery and the gift of a baby boy granted through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Cecilia & Frady Fernandes, Goa

Thank you dear Mother Mary for the blessings and favours received through the recitation of the three Hail Marys.

Sunita Gomes, Mumbai

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

Dear Mother Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio thank you for giving my children good health and for a partner for my sister-in-law's son.

A Devotee

Our grateful thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping our daughter Vernar to completed her Std. X and now and her XII and helping her get admission into a good MBBS college.

Alice Stella Verginia, Kerala

Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the gift of a lovely daughter, Riona. She is now 5 years old.

Rajan & Cynthia Xess, Mumbai

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

Mrs. Claudette D'Abreo, Italy

My grateful thanks to Mother Mary and Don Bosco for the settlement of an insurance claim. Thanks also for freeing me from cramps during my dialysis. I am praying to be dialysis free.

S.K. Alexander, Chennai

Thank you, dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for granting me overwhelming success in my IP examinations.

Wayne D. D'Almeida, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Our Lord Jesus Christ, Mother Mary, Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all the favours received.

Jesley Fernandes, Goa

I am most grateful to Our lady and Don Bosco for our good health and wellbeing.

Debra & Kirk Claremont, Australia

My sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mary Help of Christians and St. John Bosco for the blessings of good health, a successful retirement and a good family.

Rosalind Moreira, Canada

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary for all the favours received.

Mrs. Godinho, Mumbai

We are most grateful to Mary Help of Christians for all the blessings and graces received. Dear Mother, do continue to bless us.

Effie Rodrigues, Mumbai

On 10 November 2010 we were in Thailand and were parasailing when suddenly the engine of the boat my son was in failed and he was plunged into the sea. He remained beneath the water for quite some time. He was rescued by some boatmen and was unharmed. It was a miracle Our Lady protected him. We say the prayer of protection to Our Lady whenever we leave home. Thank you Jesus and Mother Mary for your protection.

Mrs. Betty D'Silva, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery and for looking after our baby throughout the troubled pregnancy.

Mrs. Nisha Maria Barretto, UK

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for a very great favour received.

Ingrid C. D'Souza, Karwar

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Our sincere thanks to Our Lady and to Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter-in-law and the gift of a beautiful baby girl.

Mrs. R. D'Souza, Pune

Thank you, dear Jesus, Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for a safe delivery and for blessing us with the gift of a healthy baby whom we named 'Osha' and for all the graces received.

Oswald and Shamin Fernandes, Mumbai

My grateful thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for my safe delivery and the gift of a normal healthy baby girl. Thank You Mother Mary for all the favours granted to my family.

Mrs. Christine Gomez, Cochin

My heartfelt thanks to the Infant Jesus, Mother Mary, St. Dominic Savio and St. John Bosco for blessing us with a good life partner for our daughter. Please keep us all under your protection always. *Toni, Goa* Our heartfelt thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Dominic Savio for protecting our son from a window which came crashing down just a few seconds after he had entered the school building.

Richard & Evelyn D'Souza, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to the Lord Jesus, Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the many favours received.

Ms. Samantha Fereira and Mrs C. Dias., Mumbai

I am grateful to Our Lady and Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby boy.

Mrs. Michelle and Bosco D'Souza, Melbourne, Australia

My sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for two successful operations and a speedy recovery as well and for all the blessings bestowed on me and my family.

Mrs. Amita Gracias, Goa

Our heartfelt thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby girl after 7 years and a quick and normal delivery.

I am also grateful for an admission for MBA. *Merlin Pramod, Mumbai*

Thank you Heavenly Father, Jesus, Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby whom we named Tomas Savio. Please continue to protect our cousin's child.

C.N. Rebelo, Goa

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

MARCH 2011

General Intention: *That the nations of Latin America may walk in fidelity to the Gospel and be bountiful in social justice and peace.*

Missionary Intention: *That the Holy Spirit may give light and strength to the Christian communities and the faithful who are persecuted or discriminated against because of the Gospel.*

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MARY WAS THERE

My 20 year old son Nikhil met with a major car accident on 22nd October 2010 at 11 PM while returning home after dinner with three of his friends. The car he was driving hit the median while he was trying to avoid some stray dogs on the road. The car turned over thrice and was completely damaged. All of them escaped without any major injury. Surely we felt our Beloved Mother's protection that night. It was the month of the Rosary and the whole family prayed the Rosary every day during that month. We are grateful for Our Lady's protection in saving the lives of those boys.

Shanti Anand, Puducherry

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

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

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

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Please address all correspondence to:

**Rev. Fr. Edwin D'Souza, sdb.,
SHRINE OF DON BOSCO'S MADONNA,
Matunga - MUMBAI - 400 019 - INDIA
Phone/Fax: 91-22- 2414 6320, email: dbmshrine@gmail.com
<http://www.donboscosmadonna.org/www.dbmshrine.org>**