

CONTENTS

From The Editor's Desk: - <i>The Breaking Bread</i>	3
5 - Learning From Creation - <i>Fr. Erasto Fernandez. SSS</i>	4
The Pope Blessed Our Union - <i>Karen & Carlyle Laurie</i>	8
Salesian Saint of the Month Leonardo Murialdo (1828-1900)	10
Send Me To Sudan - <i>Fr. Jacob Thelekkadan, sdb</i>	11
Witnesses In And For Our Times: <i>St. Joan of Arc (May 30)</i> - <i>Mario Scudu</i>	12
Lectio Divina: The New Commandment - <i>Carlo Broccardo</i>	17
Quietspaces: - <i>Pope Benedict XVI</i>	18
Short Stories: <i>May Time Memories,</i> <i>You have No Messages</i>	20
Don Bosco's Characteristics: Don Bosco and His Salesians - <i>Natale Cerrato</i>	23
NewsBits.....	26
Reflecting on Mary: Mary On A Journey - <i>Maria Ko Ha Fong, FMA</i>	28
<i>In a Cheerful Mood</i>	15
<i>Loving Children to their</i> <i>Loving Mother</i>	32
<i>The Devotion of</i> <i>the Three Hail Marys</i>	33
<i>They Are Grateful to</i> <i>Our Lady & Don Bosco</i>	34
<i>Thanks to Dear</i> <i>St. Dominic Savio</i>	35



*The Mother
looks at us
as God looked
at her,
a humble
young girl
of Nazareth.*

(Pope Benedict XVI)

Cover: **The Painting
of Mary Help of Christians**
above the main altar at the Basilica
of Mary Help of Christians,
Turin, Italy



From The Editor's Desk

Breaking Bread

In our busy city we have become a civilization that has suddenly adjusted itself to a 'fast-food' culture. For whatever they're worth, there's a lot to be said for these *fastfood joints*: they are useful when you're in a hurry or in need of a quick meal or snack or they provide a cheap form of refreshment and most of the higher end 'joints' are also clean and hygienic.

Whether it's a snack or a fast meal I find it hard to sit and relax in such surroundings. Everyone around seems to be in a hurry and on the go. Worthwhile conversations are difficult and the emphasis seems to be on the meal as a time for the tummy to be satisfied rather than an accompaniment to recreation, restoration or refreshment.

I suppose that's become the accepted norm today. Take-away cafes, frozen foods, pre-cooked snacks, micro-wave cooking - all these have made us accept this 'instant' culture. Hurriedly prepared meals are often eaten alone and in a hurry. Sitting together for meals has become a thing of the past. Few, if any families, sit down together for a daily meal anymore. Don't even mention a Sunday meal that's been consigned to the dusty pages of *The Good Old Days*. Today's teens and young adults may not have even heard of such mores. The pace of life, the needs of efficiency, increasing traffic problems - all these aspects of today's world seem to be squeezing out the opportunities that were once taken for granted - to gather to share a joke, chat about the day, discuss problem while breaking bread together. That's old fashioned...that's out of the question!

It's striking just how often Jesus is seen in the Gospels sharing a meal with his disciples, with sinners, the poor, with Simon the Pharisee. For the Jews of that time - and even to this day - a meal was not just about food being imbibed. A meal was an expression of fellowship, a communal celebration of shared hopes and faith, an expression of commitment to one another and an act of gratitude to God who provides us with all we have. To share a meal was to share life. After the resurrection when Jesus prepares breakfast for the tired apostles following their futile night's fishing he doesn't hand them a takeaway. He offers them fellowship with him in his risen glory: 'Come and have breakfast.'

And of course, it's not by accident that Jesus instituted the Eucharist during a meal. In the Eucharist we share together the Bread of Life. The Eucharist is our communion with the Lord Jesus. It is the great cry of thanks to God from his people and our resounding 'yes' to Christ who on Calvary offers the sacrifice which sets us free.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

5. LEARNING FROM CREATION

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

Most people would believe that cooperation by which individuals work together in order to create a benefit for the entire group, is an utopian dream, especially if they are conversant with the basic forces of evolution. After all, isn't it a jungle out there and only the strongest survive? aren't human beings naturally selfish? And hasn't one heard of the theory of the 'selfish gene' and so on? Yet most scientists today don't share that view of evolution and collaboration. "The role of unbridled violence in evolution is greatly overestimated," claims Danny Grunbaum, a pioneer in revealing the ways that ocean life cooperates in order to survive.



Danny Grunbaum

"When we see animals like elephant seals fighting each other, as we do in Nature documentaries, we are really seeing only a very thin small slice of time. Most of the time they are accommodating towards one another and respectful of where the boundaries are - and that is cooperation. There is a tremendous amount of cooperation in nature."

Across several fields, scientists like Grunbaum have come up with exciting new discoveries about the nature of cooperation - progress which, they say, is enabled and made easy by new observational and computational technologies. This has resulted in a small but exciting revival in the science of cooperation, which reveals that collaboration is not unique to humans. It is not even unique to animals. Cooperation is part of Nature, down to even the cellular level. And the reason is quite simple, according to evolutionary biologists: "Cooperation is one of the most important and beneficial behaviors on Earth. We literally would not be here without it."

Live and Let Live!

Humans, plants, and animals are made up of cells that learned to cooperate centuries ago. Together they formed multi-cellular organisms, increasing each individual cell's chances of replication and survival in the process. From these biological blocks, cooperation prevails at

every level of the animal kingdom. And so, ants that march to the same drummer move faster. Besides, has anyone ever seen an ant stuck in traffic? Intricate studies show that ants have evolved a three-lane, two-way traffic system: As many as two lakh ants pour out of their nest once a day in search of food, splitting into two groups to form two outgoing lanes; they return in a single centre lane, sometimes carrying more than thirty thousand edible grasshoppers and such insects. Scientists theorize that the ultra-cooperative ability of these simplistic organisms stems from their living in large groups for millions of years.

Among fish, cooperation is motivated by a simple trade off: food for cleanliness. "Cleaner" fish swim into the mouths of the bigger fish called "clients": their mission is to eat parasites and harmful bacteria. The cleaners get a meal, and the clients get a healthier mouth. Why don't predators eat cleaners? Cleaners are small, hardly a satisfying meal, and a good, trustworthy cleaner is difficult to find. Once they've established trust between themselves, predators want to keep their cleaners around.

Small birds protect one another from predators. When a predator enters the area of a sparrow-like bird called the pied flycatcher, the flycatcher will alert others by screeching at the top of its voice. It is a risky and costly approach certainly, for screeching draws the predator's attention all the more surely. However, risks can have their benefits too. Thus, when other flycatchers hear the distress

call, they 'mob' together around the predator, chasing it away. Further, it was discovered that flycatchers engage in a typical 'tit-for-tat' behavior. They only answer the battle calls of birds that have come to fight for them in the past. They don't answer the calls of birds that heard their call but chose to ignore it.

For some animals, cooperation seems absolutely essential. Biologist Gerald Wilkinson has shown that groups of vampire bats have a system of food sharing that helps ensure their survival as a species. Bats die if they are forced to go two nights without a meal, and hunting for blood, which is their only source of food, is a risky business. Yet hunger is rare among them because bats that find blood share it with others that don't. But they do this only as long as the favour is someday returned. If a colony didn't share food at all, four out of every five bats would die each year. But by cooperating, the death rate is slashed down to one in four.

Of course, 'cheaters,' who receive blood but never share it, also abound but bats that cheat eventually build up a reputation for doing so, and others stop sharing with them. In the long run, cheating isn't profitable at all, something that research suggests is also true in human society.

Are Human Beings Different?

Most human beings don't share food that directly and openly, at least not any more, but people do cooperate in innumerable ways, from writing Wikipedia articles to forming lines for buses, toilets, at paying counters and other facilities. Still, as is clear to anyone

who has ever been stuck in rush-hour traffic or tried to do some last minute Christmas shopping, human cooperation can break down, sometimes suddenly and ruthlessly.

To foster cooperative success in human organizations, some scientist-philosophers believe that we should look to Nature for inspiration. "Nature nurtures life through communities," observes physicist and best-selling author Fritjof Capra. "This is a process that started with the first single-celled organisms. Life, from its beginning more than three billion years ago, took over the planet by networking, not combat." To Capra and several others, this calls for cooperative social organization that nurtures networks of communication, encourages sharing and experimentation, and fosters a climate of mutual support.

This doesn't mean that cooperation eliminates conflict altogether. "Cooperation never means the absence of conflict of interest," notes Grunbaum. "It means a set of rules is in place for negotiating a conflict of interests in a way that resolves them." In the 21st century, argue both Grunbaum and Capra, learning to cooperate is more critical than ever before in human history. "That is in part true because our society is becoming so much more integrated and communication is happening much more rapidly all over the world," confides Grunbaum.

Grunbaum suggests that people look to Science as an example of a human community in which cooperation works. "Cooperation in general is a very good strategy

in Science," he concedes. "It is exceedingly rare for someone to take advantage of you if you choose to share your work in an unguarded way. I'd say that human beings are extraordinarily cooperative, and we're getting more cooperative all the time."

Speeding Up the Process

While it is true that we can learn from Nature, given our condition today especially in the large sprawling and ever-expanding cities, one would hardly have the time or the inclination to learn from Nature. Rather, we have an easier way to learn the much-needed lesson of cooperation, and that is to celebrate each Eucharist with meaning and purpose. Paul wrote to the Corinthians to say, "When you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it... When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's Supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?... Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you! (1 Cor 11:18-22).

After recalling the inspiring example of Jesus who broke of himself and gave his very life-blood for the salvation of mankind, Paul suggests that each celebrant at Eucharist should examine the motives for which s/he celebrates - else s/he could be eating and drinking condemnation unto her/himself.

While it is true that there is a lot of sharing among human beings, yet, the ruthless taking advantage of others, especially of the weak and poor gets greater publicity in the mass Media. And so, unconsciously we begin to feel that 'the law of the jungle' is here to stay, and is, after all, the best and surest way to make a profitable living today. One need only take any newspaper and skim through its pages to realize that reports of evil deeds generally get front page extensive coverage. But, one would have to search hard, literally with a magnifying glass to find even a brief fine-print report of some heroic good deed done at the risk of losing one's own life!

Why is evil generally more attractive than good? Have we, as a human family opted for a return to the Jungle while the rest of Nature continues to work in splendid collaboration with others effecting a better harmony? What do all our spiritual practices, devotions, prayers and the like achieve? Are these only skin-deep, or have these too been sucked into the general pattern of seeking one's own gain at the expense of others? Every single person has the power to turn the tide - beginning with life in one's own family! How long shall we 'leave it to George' and be content with only applauding someone else's efforts?

Once we put our minds to it, there is no gainsaying how much we would be able to achieve by way of cooperation with others. Examples abound and are plain for all to see. If, for example each of us were able to reduce the wastage of electricity and water in our daily consumption of these amenities,

what a difference it would make to our present generation and those of the future as well? And what about the indiscriminate use of plastics, the deliberate rape of Nature in terms of illegal mining, despoliation of forests, criminal waste of paper for which acres of trees have to be felled each day?

When God commanded human beings to master and subdue the earth, it was so that with the use of their intelligence and free-will, they could guide the rest of Creation in making this world a place where all live in peace and harmony and happiness. But when selfish motives are given free rein and that too by deliberate choice, one can expect the worst! The irony of the situation is that we can make our world into a beautiful place for all, if only we choose to forego a little of our self-centred interests! We can't have our cake and eat it too! Could the example of Jesus in his totally selfless giving which we celebrate in the Eucharist spur us to action? And also, could the example of Creatures with lesser intelligence like birds, bats and ants teach us this valuable lesson, not only of the necessity and advantage of collaboration, but also of the process of ostracizing of offenders so that an equitable balance is always maintained? All it takes is a genuine listening to our truest selves! □



THE POPE BLESSED OUR UNION

by Karen & Carlyle Laurie

January 19, 2011, exactly a month after we walked down the aisle in Mumbai, God had planned something beautiful for us: a blessing by Pope Benedict XVI.

Both Karen and I, met at our first internship at *Indian Express* in 2004 and from the first month itself God was the centre of our relationship.

I remember the first movie we watched together was *'The Passion of The Christ'*. Little did we know then, that six years later, we would be blessed by the man Christ himself chose to be his Vicar on earth and to lead his Church today. God's ways are great! We believe this was his wedding present.

We planned our honeymoon around Lourdes, Venice, Padua, Assisi and Rome, all places with a deep religious significance.

Two days before we left Mumbai for France, Karen sent an email to the Vatican, requesting passes for special 'Newly weds' for an audience with Pope Benedict XVI. Married couples can procure these passes free of charge within six weeks of getting married.

The next day we struck gold! The Vatican replied, saying two *Sposi Novelli* (Newly weds) tickets were reserved for us. Front row seats at the audience with the Holy Father!

God's miracle was becoming more and more apparent. When we left for Paris on January 6, 2011, we could not imagine just how blessed we were.

Day one in Paris: and we met a woman on the street who invited us to visit the Basilica of *Notre Dame* (French for Our Lady of Paris).



In Paris

We were awestruck as we walked over to this, the second largest Basilica in the world. There we realized just how 'awesome' our God is. Here's how: It is in the Basilica that the relic of Jesus' crown of thorns is kept. Being the first Friday of the month the faithful could venerate and kiss the relic! We waited our turn and kissed our Lord's crown of thorns. That, though, was just the beginning.

From Paris we made our way to Lourdes. A night-train journey brought us to a 'story-book' little town in Southern France. It was by far the most beautiful and peaceful place we've ever visited.

We stood for hours at the grotto, placed our intentions at the feet of Our Lady, drank from the spring and took the holy bath. The icy breeze and the constant drizzle could do nothing to dampen our spirits. We spent the day between St. Bernadette's home and the basilica.

We moved on from Lourdes to Venice on the eastern tip of Italy. A city with no traffic, no pollution, no crowded streets – in fact it has no streets at all, it has canals. We took the only mode of transport, a water bus and made our way to St. Mark's Basilica and prayed at the tomb of Jesus' apostle and the evangelist - St. Mark.

The next day we visited Padua, the birth place of arguably one of the most powerful saints, St. Anthony of Padua.

We even heard Mass at the Basilica of St. Anthony, near the body of the saint. After Mass we visited the various niches in the numerous chapels within the basilica. In one of the niches we saw the incorrupt tongue and the vocal chords of the saint who was known to be a great preacher.

With each passing day we were uncovering Christianity's great treasure trove which only served to strengthen our Faith.

From Padua we moved on to Assisi, the birth place and final resting place of St Francis and St. Clare of Assisi.

In that picturesque little town, perched on a hill, we had the opportunity to pray at the foot of St. Francis' tomb which was metres away from the incorrupt body of St. Clare who died in 1253.

In spite of all these wonderful experiences treasured in our hearts, it seemed that Jesus had saved the best for the last. From Padua we proceeded to Rome where we were guests at the *Sisters of Maria Virgine Immacolata*.

On January 18, 2011, we received our front row passes for the Papal audience which was to take place on the 19th at 10.30 am.

The following morning we



The Pope addressing the Sposi Novelli

dressed in our wedding attire and headed St. Peter's Square.

The Swiss guards directed us to go to St. Paul's hall where we sat in the front row. An hour later we saw Pope Benedict XVI just metres away from us.

He smiled, waved and blessed us. It was a feeling unlike any other. Sitting beside him were a group of Cardinals. His message was simple and touching. He stressed on the importance of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

After the blessing and audience, both Karen and I were given something that money couldn't buy: two Papal Rosaries, blessed by the Holy Father himself.

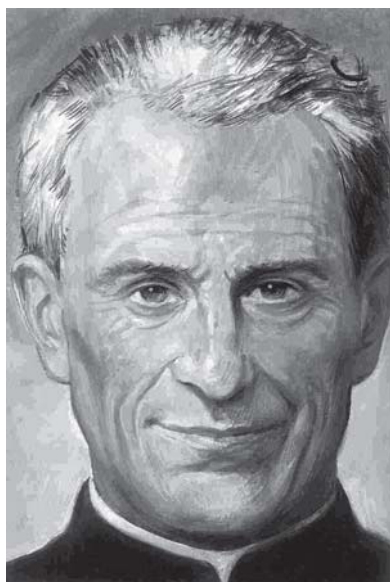
Our six year long courtship, our wedding, our honeymoon, our pilgrimage indeed had a fairytale ending. □

'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.' Matthew 7:7

SALESIAN SAINT OF THE MONTH

LEONARDO MURIALDO 1828 - 1900

Leonardo Murialdo was born in Turin on October 26, 1828 into a wealthy family. He lost his father when he was just four years old. During his youth he went through a profound spiritual crisis which led to his conversion and the consequent discovery of his priestly vocation. He completed his philosophical and theological studies in Turin. It was during this time that he began to work at the Oratory of the Guardian Angels under the guidance of his cousin Canon Roberto Murialdo. He was ordained a priest in the year 1851. Now he began to work closely with Fr. Joseph Cafasso and Don Bosco and the latter put him in charge of the Oratory of St. Aloysius. Leonardo absorbed the preventive system (of Don Bosco) and incorporated it into his future work of education. In 1866 he accepted the post of director of the *Collegio Artigianelli* at Turin which was dedicated to accepting poor and abandoned youngsters and training them in the human, Christian and professional skills. He made several journeys around Italy, France and England in order to get to know various kinds of educational and welfare institutions to learn, compare and improve his system of education. He was among the first to promote popular libraries, the Catholic Union of Christian workers and he would be their chaplain for many



years. In 1873, with the support of his colleagues he founded the Congregation of St. Joseph (Josephites of Murialdo). Its main purpose was the education of youth especially the poor and abandoned. He opened Oratories, professional schools, group homes for young workers and agricultural colonies. He was a very spiritual person and given much to prayer, contemplation and action like Don Bosco. Around the year 1884 he suffered several bouts of pneumonia. Don Bosco visited him and gave him his blessing. He died on March 30, 1900. The loss of his father very early in life inspired Leonardo to become a father and guide to the youngsters that the Lord entrusted to him. His life and his style of work was similar to his friend and model St. John Bosco. □

He was beatified on 3 Nov 1963, and canonized on 3 May 1970 by Pope Paul IV



SEND ME TO SUDAN

Fr. Jacob Thelekkadan, sdb

Rector and Parish Priest St. Joseph's Parish Wau, South Sudan

In the garden of my 'St. Thomas Parish,' in the village of Malayattor in the State of Kerala, there were many gardeners who helped me to flower into a 'PRIEST'. My 'Salesian vocation' is purely God's initiative as at the age of twelve when I left home for the junior seminary in Tamil Nadu I could not distinguish between a diocesan and a religious vocation. The Salesian vocation promoter Fr. Philip Thayil sdb who passed through my village attracted me.

During the years that I studied theology in Kristu Jyothi College, Bangalore, my priestly vocation took another direction. I began to hear more about the African missions. But the interesting talk given by Fr. Tony D'Souza, the then-Provincial of the Salesian Province of Mumbai and Superior of the East African Salesian Missions captivated me much and made me ask 'Why not volunteer as a missionary to Africa?' Thus even before my priestly ordination I expressed my desire to Fr. Tony D'Souza to serve as a priest in the East African Missions. I was ordained on 29th December 1983 in my home parish in South India and left for Kenya on 6th June 1984.

Then, there came the next call from God to be a missionary in the Sudan! I knew that it would be very challenging and at times risky. Well if that was what God asked of me I did not need to hesitate. Thus I went to Juba, the capital of the South Sudan on 25th October 1985. From then on I secretly developed such a great love for the Sudan and her people particularly the African people



in the South Sudan, and I must surely confess that I do not regret the 27 years that I have spent in the Sudan and Kenya serving in different capacities in the various Salesian communities in both countries.

I must say that our God is a great CHESS player. He made and still makes many moves in my priestly life that make me wonder sometimes in astonishment and at times in dismay. But I trust Him whole-heartedly though many times it is difficult and demanding, he is the source of all WISDOM and POWER! And He just needs a HUMBLE and AVAILABLE INSTRUMENT! And that is what I want to be and this is what you too could be!

For 'We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose' (Rom 8: 28). □

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Witnesses in & for Our Times



"To be near her was a great joy." ST. JOAN OF ARC (30 May) (1412 - 1431)

by Mario Scudu

Picture a scene: A trial is taking place in a large, bare, cold and dimly lit room. The atmosphere is celebratory but tense. Who are the protagonists? Very simple, on one side there were about fifty men among the most learned in France (there were also Englishmen). Many in attendance were from the University of Paris. There were nobles, clergy and laymen, who had laboured hard at their books, experts in theology, trained through numerous debates, conferences and lengthy discussions, very academic, hardly trivial. Theology and philosophy were their daily bread. They felt confident, prepared and ready to defend the truth against anyone. Who was the one being questioned? Someone they were even ashamed to look at. This encounter would certainly not set their theological teeth on edge. She was a simple girl of 19 who could neither read nor write, born in Domremy. Her name was Joan. One of the questions was: "What did St. Michael look like when he appeared to you?" Joan: "I did not see some kind of a crown on his head. I can't say anything about his clothes." The response, with some hint of

malice, "Was he naked?" Simple answer: "Do you believe that Our Lord would leave him undressed?" The court remained stunned. Then there was another more subtle question just to draw her into a trap. The interrogator asked: What was the difference between the Church militant and the Church triumphant? Joan's response was not dictated by the big books of theology, but the commonsense of a simple, baptized Christian who went to church and to confession whenever she could make the time: "Given that we are all the Church of God the difference between the two is not really important." All her answers were right (i.e. there were no heresies). They certainly were not answers that fitted into the refined minds of those men trained in theology. They did not wish to sound defeated, they wanted to frame her. There was next a political question with the motive to extort evidence of her presumed disobedience to the Church. They asked her if she should obey the pope, the bishops and the cardinals. To this Joan responded: **"Yes, God is to be first served."** Then it was the turn of a senior

cleric, an academic, a member of the faculty of the University of Paris. He asked her if she thought she was in a state of grace, to which she replied: "If I am, then God preserve me, if I am not **then I would rather die than remain far from the love of God.**" Those "scholastic foxes" (Bernanos) did get their way. On a technicality, a "formal defect" they found their way (or they invented it).

"Sweetest God, in honour of your holy passion..."

In the face of such theological expertise Joan defended herself with simple faith and humility. The minutes of the process also reported this prayer: "Sweetest God, in honour of your holy passion, I ask you, if you love me, show me how I must answer these men of the Church." (*PCon*, 1, p. 252) Regine Pernoud, a scholar on Joan of Arc said: "They were words of painful intimacy and expressed everything she needed at that precise moment, nothing more. **It was the prayer of a Christian who knows that every grace is the grace of the present moment.**"

Jane died at the stake at the age of nineteen years, looking at a cross and whispering the name of Jesus. It was a spring day: May 30, 1431.

25 years later the *Trial of nullity* which opened under the authority of Pope Calixtus III, ended with a solemn sentence that declared the condemnation null and void (7 July 1456 *PNul* II, pp. 604-610). It was certainly one of History's darkest pages. Joan of Arc was one of the many innocent victims of history, victims of certain clergymen and politicians of the time. They manifested the injustice perpetrated by the British invaders of France. The prosecutors and judges who stood before Joan presumed that they were the ultimate repository of

culture, historical, biblical traditions and of the primacy of the Pope of Rome. In fact, when Joan asked that her case be referred to the Apostolic See her request fell on deaf ears.

"We need to do battle, since God will give us the victory."

Joan was born at Domremy in Lorraine in France on 6 January 1412 to Jacques and Isabelle. Up to the age of thirteen she lived an absolutely ordinary life. In their testimony her neighbours all said that Joan's life was like theirs, very monotonous. She did her usual chores, very mundane and very ordinary ones. She helped her father plough the fields and sometimes she fed the animals too. In those days women did all those tasks. She was taught the elements of her faith by her mother. She herself said: "**My mother taught me the Pater Noster (Our Father), Ave Maria (Hail Mary) and the Creed. Besides my mother, no one else taught me about my faith.**" Even that was normal.

Her spiritual life was nourished by the "usual means" that were promoted by the Church down the centuries. She prayed, went to Mass on Sundays, she frequently went to Confession and did her duties willingly and with joy for the love of God. This was another special dimension of Joan's sanctity. There was a little word that persistently returns again and again in the testimonies of people who had lived close to her for years. It is the adverb "gladly" (in Latin *libenter*) that the chronicler who was writing the minutes often used. **All that Joan did, said her contemporaries she did "gladly."** She did spinning gladly, she sewed gladly, she did all her other chores around the house willingly and gladly. She also found comfort in the sacraments of Confession



*Dante Gabriel Rossetti,
Joan of Arc 1863*

and the Eucharist. That was why Regine Pernoud noted: "With this very simple word *"libenter"* those poor peasants enunciated Joan's most valuable features." By then she had, in her everyday actions not only reflected her simple faith but she also grew in holiness.

At the age of thirteen she told her parents: "I often hear the voices of saints: the Archangel Michael, Catherine of Alexandria, Margaret of Antioch..." Her parents, Isabelle and Jacques did not understand this. They gave her the usual warnings and sincere admonitions. Later, at the age of 17 there was much more. She said, "The 'voices' command me to liberate France." Her father not only did not believe her, but he was furious and Joan fled the house. They thought she was going mad. But when she accurately predicted the defeat of France, the nobles of the area believed her and took her to see the weak and nervous King Charles VII. In 1429 Joan dragged the reluctant young king to Reims to have him crowned king of France. That was Joan's greatest "political"

victory. She would recognize that she was always and only a humble instrument in the hands of God. Because of that she would answer the judges: "I have done nothing without God's command... everything I did, I did at God's command. I have done nothing on my own." Even this was sanctity – not taking advantage of the gifts of God for one's own glory and prestige. But she was wounded outside Paris and captured by the Burgundians, the allies of the British, at Compiègne and "sold" to them. (There is always a Judas in every story). They rigged up a mock trial with friends from the academic world and the Church and sent her to the stake on charges of witchcraft. A girl, Joan, their great enemy was sacrificed on the altar of nascent British imperialism and that would remain a black page in the military history of these people.

There are still two small points. Perhaps the most beautiful eulogy concerning the sanctity of Joan

Joan of Arc's signature

came from a merchant from Orleans: "Being with her was a great joy."

The second, was the response she gave one of the judges who asked her why God, if he as Almighty, had to use "her" help to conquer. She replied: "**You have to do battle for God to grant the victory.**" It is a profound thought. Our faith in God does not dispense us from doing our duty, our work, our sacrifices and our risks. God decided to do nothing alone and that means He makes a great act of faith in us. It costs us much sacrifice like it did for Joan of Arc. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Optomist's Hunting Dog

Friends, one an optimist and the other a pessimist could never quite agree on any topic of discussion.

One day the optimist decided he had found a good way to pull his friend out of his continually pessimistic way of thinking - the optimist owned a huntin' dog that could walk on water.

His plan? Take the pessimist and the dog out duck hunting in a boat.

They got out into the middle of the lake, and the optimist shot down a duck. The dog immediately walked out across the water, retrieved the duck, and walked back to the boat.

The optimist looked at his pessimistic friend and said, "What do you think about that?"

The pessimist replied, "That dog can't swim, can he?"

Bedroom Traffic

On their way home from attending a church service, little Johnny asked his mother, "Is it true, Mommy, that we are made of dust like the minister said tonight?"

"Yes, darling," his mother answered.

"And is it true that we go back to dust again when we die?"

"Yes, dear," his mother replied.

"Well, Mommy, when I said my prayers last night and looked under the bed, I saw someone who is either coming or going?"

Mom's Clarinet

My Dad bought my Mom a piano for her birthday. A few weeks later, I asked how she was doing with it.

"Oh," said My Dad, "I persuaded her to switch to a clarinet."

"How come?" I asked.

"Well," he answered, "because with a clarinet, she can't sing."

Hair Mission

In dire need of a beauty makeover, I went to my salon with a fashion magazine photo of a gorgeous, young, lustrous-haired model.

I showed the stylist the trendy new cut I wanted and settled into the chair as he began humming a catchy tune and got to work on my thin, graying hair.

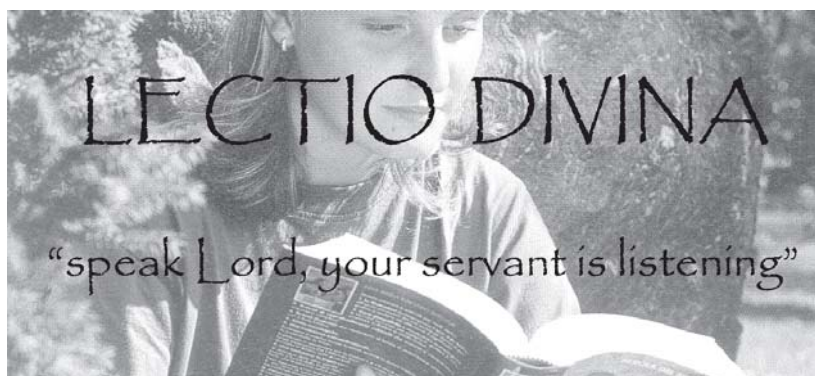
I was delighted by his cheerful attitude until I recognized the melody.

It was the theme from "Mission: Impossible."

Who's the Boss?

The boss was complaining in our staff meeting the other day that he wasn't getting any respect. Later that morning he went to a local card and novelty shop and bought a small sign that read, "I'm the Boss". He then taped it to his office door.

Later that day when he returned from lunch, he found that someone had taped a note to the sign that said, "Your wife called, she wants her sign back!" □



THE NEW COMMANDMENT

by Carlo Broccardo

*This is no time for trivialities, it is the final farewell,
and in fact, Jesus delivered to his disciples
what he thinks is essential: “As I did, so you too must do.”*

This passage from John’s Gospel is not one of the easier passages to explain nor is it among the most familiar. But let us try to understand it! Since the other Gospels during this month of May are pretty similar to the passages found in the Gospel of John maybe it is time we try to leave the familiar shores (of miracles and parables) and venture out into the open sea.

Why venture out into the open sea? Because every now and again the words of Jesus take the form of long speeches which are very reflective and the concepts are repeated perhaps with some nuances in words or phrases. They seem to read like the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament. Recall for instance, the long (and very repetitive) discourse on the bread of life (Jn. 6) that comes every third year during the Sundays in August.

When listening to these long reflections of Jesus we could get lost in a sea that is far too large for us. So it is important for us to overcome our fear of this first impression and get to grips with a passage such as this. If we do it calmly, weighing every word, it becomes easier than we first imagined and we begin appreciating the simple but enduring flavour of these passages. And if there is something we have not understood, patience! So much the better, we have reason to reread some time later.

So, let us start at the beginning: “When Judas had gone out....” Last month we reflected on the emotions and attitudes that prevailed during the Last Supper after Jesus had washed the feet of his disciples and made that shocking announcement: “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me....” “Tell us who it is?”

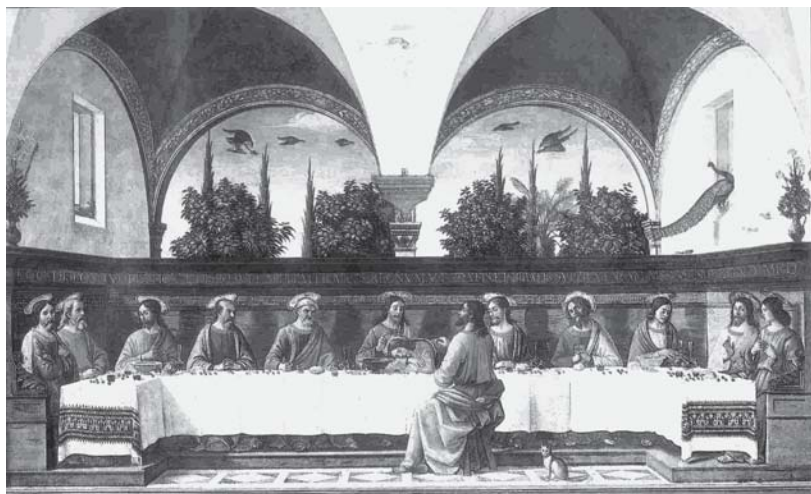
"It is he to whom I shall give this morsel when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel he gave it to Judas Iscariot. "So after receiving the morsel, he immediately went out; and it was night." (Jn 13.21-30)

It is in this context that Jesus speaks the words that we are about to read. He has just said I know that it is one of you whose feet I have washed who will betray me and immediately he added: "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and in him God is glorified." How is this possible? - Jesus is overcome by the news of the betrayal of Judas and he goes on: "This is the hour of glory"? It is not surprising that both actions come together: the approach of his death and his glory. Remember what we reflected on during the month of April: The cross was the moment of Jesus' glory because it was there that he revealed his splendour. He is great because he gave his life for us.

Not only that, Jesus adds: "Even God is glorified in him." God the Father reveals himself in the face of his Son who dies on the cross. How does this happen? Try to think of the cross: it is because of the power of God that the cross is transformed from an instrument of torture to a source of life. In that sense the cross of Jesus proclaims to us who God is and how great he is. It also tells how capable he is of transforming death into life. In the same strain we should also understand the following sentence: "If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and glorify him at once," and if the cross is an instrument of glory it is because God made it so.

John the evangelist tells us that at this moment Jesus is very serious and solemn since he becomes fully aware of what will follow and his impending death, but he is also very serene knowing that he is part

(Continued on pg. 23)



The Last Supper (1486) a fresco by Ghirlandaio, Convent of St. Mark, Florence. Judas is the only apostle without a halo opposite Jesus

SHE TEACHES

by His Holiness -

On Wednesday, 8 December 2010, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the Holy Father went to Piazza di Spagna, the square near the Spanish Steps, for the traditional act of veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On his arrival in the square around 4:15 p.m., the Holy Father blessed a basket of roses that was then placed at the foot of the Pillar surmounted by the statue of Mary Immaculate. The following is a translation of the Pope's Address which was given in Italian:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year too we have arranged to meet here, in Piazza di Spagna, to pay homage to the Immaculate Virgin on the occasion of her solemn Feast. I address my cordial greeting to all of you who have come here in great numbers, as well as to those who are taking part via radio and television. We are gathered round this historic monument, which today is surrounded by a mass of flowers, a sign of the love and devotion of the Roman People for the Mother of Jesus. The most beautiful gift, the most pleasing to her and which we are offering to her, is our prayer, the prayers we carry in our hearts and entrust to her intercession. They are invocations of thanksgiving and petition: thanksgiving for the gift of faith and for all the good we receive from God; and petition for the various needs, for the family, for health and for work, for every difficulty that life makes us encounter.

But when we come here, especially on this occasion of 8 December, what we receive from Mary is far more important than what we offer her. In fact, she gives us a message destined for each one of us, for the City of Rome and for the whole world. I, who am the Bishop of this City, also come to listen, not only for myself, but for everyone. And what does Mary say? She speaks to us with the Word of God who was made flesh in her womb. Her "message" is nothing other than Jesus, the One who is the whole of her life. It is thanks to him and for him that she is Immaculate. And just as the Son of God became a man for our sake, so too she, the Mother, was preserved from sin for our sake, for everyone, in anticipation of God's salvation for every human being.

Thus Mary tells us that we are all called to open ourselves to the action of the Holy Spirit in order, in our ultimate destiny, to attain an immaculate state, fully and definitively free from evil. She tells us this with her own holiness, with her gaze full of hope and compassion which evokes words such as these: "Do not fear, my child, God loves you; he loves you personally; he thought of you before you came into the world and called you into being to fill you with love and with life; and

US TO BE HOLY

Pope Benedict XVI

for this reason he came to meet you, he made himself like you, he became Jesus, God-man, like you in all things but without sin; he gave himself for your sake to the point of dying on the Cross, and thus he gave you a new life, free, holy and immaculate" (cf Eph 1:3-5).

Mary gives us this message and, when I come here on this Feast, it impresses me because I feel it is addressed to the whole City, to all the men and women who live in Rome: even to those who do not think of it, who do not even remember that today is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception; to those who feel lonely and forsaken.

Mary's gaze is God's gaze upon each one of us. She looks at us with the Father's love itself and blesses us. She acts as our "advocate" and we invoke her thus in the Salve, Regina: *Advocata nostra*. Even if everyone were to speak badly of us, she, the Mother, would speak well of us because her immaculate Heart is in tune with God's mercy. So it is that she sees the City: not as an anonymous agglomeration but as a constellation in which God knows each one personally by name, one by one, and calls us to shine with his light. And those who in the world's eyes are the first, to God are the lowliest; those who are little to God are great.

The Mother looks at us as God looked at her, a humble young girl of Nazareth, insignificant in the world's eyes but chosen and precious to God. He recognizes in each one his or her likeness to his Son Jesus, even though we are so different! But who knows the power of divine Grace better than her? Who knows the message we receive here, at the feet of Mary Immaculate.

It is a message of trust for every person of this City and of the whole world; a message of hope not made of words but of her history itself. She, a woman of our lineage, who gave birth to the Son of God and shared her whole life with him! And today she tells us: this is also your destiny, your own destiny and the destiny of all: to be holy like our Father, to be immaculate like our Brother Jesus Christ, to be loved children, all adopted in order to form a great family with no boundaries of colour or language, because God, Father of every human being, is one.

Thank you, O Mother Immaculate, for being with us always! May you never cease to watch over our City: comfort the sick, encourage the young and sustain families. Instill in them the strength to reject evil in all its forms and to choose good, even when it comes at a cost and entails going against the tide. Give us the joy to feel loved by God, blessed by him, predestined to be his children.

Immaculate Virgin, our sweetest Mother, pray for us! □

Short Story

MAY-TIME MEMORY

from Fr. Ian Douulton's collection

*This is a true story, and it is given here in the words of Max,
the man who lived it.*

Every man has his own sound, a noise, a sound, a melody that makes his heart vibrate with the memory of a certain occasion. My sound is the hymn they sing at the community procession on the first of May. The voices of the choirboys rise and fall like the sound of the sea. – *Immaculate Mary thy praises we sing... Ave Maria*. They sing it while the young girls in white, the altar boys, the young men and women and the rest of the congregation march through the town.

“Whenever I hear it I see two pictures, a battlefield furrowed with trenches, the sunlight falls sadly on the sprawled figures of the dead, a mild breeze stirs the leaves of the few remaining lindens: and across no man’s land, I can make out the ruins of the farmhouse we have been attacking for about a week - Presieux Ferme, where we have left the dead by the hundreds around the shell blasted house. It was the first of May... Just as I was brooding, one of my comrades interrupts me to ask me to bring water, and so, reluctantly I will have to go. But it is daylight. I will be exposed to the enemy gunfire if I go towards the water fountain. It would not be so bad if I go to the fountain on the right for, it is covered by the lindens. I climb out of the trench reluctantly and go out picking my way among the

dead. The warm spring breeze gently brushes my face as I move towards the house then I realize that I am not listening to my friend Karl. Was it the fountain on the right or the one on the left? The one on the left looks more inviting. The linden trees are filled with the evening sun and the shade seems so good. It could not be under enemy observation, so I go there. The fountain is housed in a pavilion, with four wooden posts supporting a gabled roof. Inside the shelter there is a stone tub, into which the water pours, I fill the canteens. A strange quiet prevails. The sun shines through the trees... not a sound. Only the water gurgles as it flows gently into the tub. Suddenly what I want most in the world is a bath. And why shouldn’t I take one? I have time it is safe here. So I pull off my clothes and slide into the tub. The water is pleasantly cool. It is the first bath I have in weeks. I frolic and splash like a boy. I almost forget the war!

“Then I catch sight of my uniform on the ground. This is war! I am a soldier! Reluctantly I get dressed and I prepare to leave and then I notice something. On one of the posts is an old weather beaten statue of Our Blessed Lady. If I were at home I would be going every night to the May devotions with my father and mother. The statue in church would be

surrounded with flowers. This poor battered statue still stands for the Mother of Christ. I break off a few twigs of shrubbery and a few flowers and decorate the statue. The flowers I place in the Mother's arms. And then I kneel down and pray. I ask the blessed mother for peace, for a safe return home, for a good death... if it is the will of God. Then I pick up the canteens to leave.

"Suddenly a terrible and nameless fear seizes me. I begin to run. As I fling myself into the trench our own guns open up. The French artillery had opened fire on the other fountain the one on the right, a few instants earlier..."

Max had not been listening and good for him, since the French shelled the fountain that seemed safe. Max's friend Karl thought to himself: - "This must be Max's lucky day."

"Seven years later on the first of another May, I am in a town on the French side of the Rhine. Ten thousand men march through the streets honouring the Virgin Mary, their Queen and Mother in heaven. A choir of little boys passes by singing their hymn: "Immaculate Mary... Ave Maria." There is a French officer standing at my left, I notice that he is staring at me. He continues to stare at me and I become nervous. I start to move away but he comes after me.

"Wait, pardon me, tell me whether I am dreaming? Were you an infantry man in the last war?"

"Yes. I was but not in your army. I am a German."

"Of course, on the other side. Were you at a place called Presieux Ferme about seven years

ago the last year of the war?"

"Yes. I was."

The officer went on to ask Max whether he had come for water to the farmhouse on that day the first of May and decorated the statue of the Madonna? Max agreed that he had been there. But Max had never seen him before.

"That is it! You did not see me. If you had you would not be alive today perhaps I would not either. I was there at Presieux Ferme at the fountain itself hidden behind the shrubbery."

Max was amazed that he had been followed. He did not realize it till the French soldier told him the story of how he was followed and how his men itched to shoot him. They saw him pray to the Madonna and then leave. After Max had left the soldier and his platoon came up to examine the decoration, just then three shells crashed into the bushes where they had been hiding."

The French soldier continued: "If we had not gone to see your Madonna we should all have been blown to pieces. We were talking about you for months afterwards, you were our hero!"

Max remarked after this: "Some people could call this a marvelous coincidence."

The French officer replied: "But you and I know better!"

"Now you see," continued Max. "Why my thoughts go back to two pictures: a farm in France and a procession in a little town on the Rhine?"

"When I hear the hymn to Our Lady of Lourdes my heart rises in gratitude to the Mother in heaven whom God has made the Mother of us all too." □

Another Short Story
YOU HAVE NO MESSAGES

No one appreciates the very special genius of your conversation
as the dog does.

~Christopher Morley

We were visiting our daughter when we adopted our Boston terrier, Tad. An adorable puppy, just three months old, he became the family's centre of attention. Each morning, as soon as he heard my daughter Kayla moving around downstairs, he had to be taken down for playtime before she left for work. When she came home from work, we had him waiting for her at the door.

After three weeks we left for home. On the drive, we let Tad talk to Kayla on the phone each night. Once home, every time we called Kayla or she called us, we always put Tad on. He scratched the phone and listened intently and tried to look into the phone to see her.

One Saturday, Kayla called while we were out. She left a message. Tad was standing beside me when I pressed the button to listen to the message. He listened to her talking and cocked his head, grinning at me. I played it again for him.

A few days later, I was taking my shower when I heard the answering machine come on and Kayla leave a message. I thought it was strange when I heard her message repeat and the machine announce, "End of messages." A few seconds later Kayla's message began yet again.

Wondering what was going on, I climbed out of the shower, wrapped a towel around myself and headed into the living room.

There stood Tad, listening to the answering machine. I stopped and watched. When the message finished, he stood up with his feet against the edge of the low table, reached over with one paw and slapped the answering machine. The message came on again. He dropped back on the floor and listened happily.

I told him "no," and distracted him from the answering machine while I erased the message. A few days later I was in the kitchen when I heard, "You have no messages." I headed for the living room. Tad had started the machine again. I watched as he cocked his head and looked at the answering machine. Then he stood with his feet on the edge of the table and tapped the button again: "You have no messages." He walked around to the other side of the table and repeated the process with the same results. This really irritated him. He returned to his first position, took both paws and began slapping and clawing the answering machine. It repeated: "You have no messages."

I said, "Tad, leave the answering machine alone." He looked at me and then turned back to the answering machine, digging at it furiously. When it repeated the same message, he ran to me and then ran back to the answering machine, waiting for me to do something. I realized he wanted to hear Kayla talking, but

I had erased the message.

I called Kayla that night and asked her to call Tad and leave him a message. I explained that Tad had listened to her message, but I had erased it. When he tried to listen to it again and didn't hear her

message, he had been unhappy.

Kayla called Tad and left a special message for him that he can play and listen to whenever he wants to hear Kayla's voice. We call it puppy love, twenty-first-century style! ☐

(Continued from pg. 17)

of a greater plan, the plan that the Father has for the life of the world. He faces death with the serenity of one who knows that he is in the strong arms of God. We see a serene and resigned Jesus; at the same time one who is very realistic: while speaking to his disciples he calls them "little children" an appellation filled with much affection. Moreover, there are people who have been with him for a long time, during the years of his public life, those who are "his family," his beloved followers. He knows that for them too the days are running out and so he says: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you."

This is no time for trivialities. In fact Jesus tells his disciples what he thinks is essential according to him - you must do to others what I have done to you, all the rest is superfluous. After washing their feet he said: "I have given you an example, so that you do as I have done to you" (Jn 13:15), and he added: "love one another as I have loved you."

Is that it? A proclamation that's both solemn and so down to earth? This may sound like a trite verse when taken alone, but reading the passage at this point after hearing of the washing of the feet and knowing how near Jesus is to his death on the cross it assumes profound significance. This is not some kind of general suggestion: "do-good!" It is a commandment

that Jesus gives urging us to love one another as he has loved us to the point of giving one's life for others. It is a distinctive trait of being Christian, all the rest follows.

Not without some difficulty we have reached the end of these few verses. Perhaps we may wonder that so many words or phrases have not been addressed and who knows what new insights we might find when we do! The gist of this passage is similar to what we have dwelt upon last month... Should we repeat it? We live in a world in which so much is consumed, one thing after another and we are afraid of repeating ourselves. But John wrote at a time when there were a few things and his audience cherished these repetitions. People could not read nor write - all they did was to listen to the Word and listen again and again and learn it by heart and then when repeating it, it began to 'sound a bit different' and they begin to sense its nuances.

That was what John did: he does not narrate many incidents in the life of Jesus but he reflects on much in his own way because - in his style - we could savour the content. During this month of May we too are invited to do this - not to rush quickly through the Easter season, not to be content to say that Christ has died, is risen and that his most important commandment is to love one another. It is not enough to repeat it once; it must be repeated again - till we begin to savour it. ☐

DON BOSCO AND HIS SALESIANS

by Natale Cerrato (T/A:ID)

If Don Bosco happily joked with his boys it was in order to see them happy and serene. With his Salesians, however, his humour took the form of jokes of esteem to make them aware that they formed one big, poor family that trusted in Divine Providence and which was united in faith and charity.

Don Bosco's Estates

In 1830, Margaret Occhiena, the widow of Francis Bosco divided the property and the assets that she had inherited from her husband between her stepson Anthony and her two sons Joseph and John. It was, among other things, eight portions of field, lands and the vineyard. We know nothing about the criteria that Margaret employed to make these divisions into three portions of their paternal inheritance. But among the allotments of land was the vineyard near Becchi (the *Bric dei Pin*), a field at Valcapone (or *Valcappone*) and another at Bacajan (or *Bacaiiau*). However, these three properties were jokingly called the 'fiefdoms' of Don Bosco.

Becchi, we all know, was a humble village where Don Bosco was born; Valcapone (or Valcappone) was a plot east of the hill near the valley of Capriglio but further downstream at a place called *Sbaruau* (meaning haunted), because of dense



CHARACTERISTICS

DON BOSCO'S

undergrowth some cottages were hidden among the branches and served as a wash place or even a refuge for bandits. Bacajan (or *Bacaiiau*) was a field east of the hill between the property at Valcapone and Morialdo. Those were the "fiefdoms" of Don Bosco!

In the *Biographical Memoirs of Don Bosco* it is mentioned that for some time Don Bosco had given titles to his lay collaborators. For instance, there was the Count of Becchi, the Marquis of Valcappone and Baron *Bacaiiau* after the three properties that were part of Don Bosco's inheritance. He used to call Rossi, Gastini, Enria, Pelazza and Buzzetti by those titles not only when they were at home but even when they were in the city and especially when they were travelling.

Among those 'noble' Salesians, we know for sure that the Count of Becchi (or *Bricco del Pino*) was Giuseppe Rossi, the first Salesian

Lay Brother who loved Don Bosco like a son and who remained affectionate and faithful always.

One day when Don Bosco was at the Porta Nuova train station, Joseph Rossi accompanied him, carrying his suitcase. They reached the platform just as the train was about to leave. The carriages were overflowing with people. He could not find a place and so he turned to Rossi and in a loud voice said, "Oh, my dear Count, I am sorry that you have to take so much trouble for me! Rossi replied: "For me, Don Bosco, it is an honour!" Some passengers at the windows were amazed at what they heard and they shouted: "Don Bosco, dear Count, jump in, there are two places here." "But don't put yourself to such inconvenience," replied Don Bosco. "Climb in! It will be an honour for us. Take my bags. Its alright!"

Pumps and shacks

Don Bosco lived and died poor. At table he was content with very little. Even a glass of wine was already much for him, and systematically watered it down.

"Often he forgot to drink, taken up by quite different thoughts, and his table companions would have to pour wine into his glass. If the wine was good, he then would instantly reach for water to dilute it and "make it better," as he would say. With a smile he would add, "I've renounced the

world and the devil, but not the pumps" (The pun Don Bosco intended is perfect in the original Italian since the word *pompe* means both "pumps" and "pumps" (cf EBM 4,134).

We also know something about his personal tastes. On January 12, 1873 a general conference of the Salesians was convened for the election of the economist and three councilors Don Bosco uttered these memorable and prophetic words. In a humorous vein he said: "Were it possible I would like to set up a shed (read *sopanta* = shack) in the middle of the playground for the chapter members so they could be isolated from all other mortals. But since they are still entitled to live on this earth, they may choose to reside in whatever house it may seem best." (cf EMB 10, 464)

Otis, botis, pija tutis

Don Bosco also had a mysterious answer for a cleric or a student who asked him how he could know the future and guess so many secrets.

"I'll tell you," he would reply. "The key to everything is *Otis, Botis, Pia, Tutis*. Do you know what that means?"

"No, Father!"



"Pay attention. It's Greek. And slowly he would repeat: "*O-tis, Bo-tis, Pi-a, Tu-tis*. Is it clear now?" "No!"

"I know the words are hard to understand. That's why I never reveal their meaning. No one knows it and no one ever will because it would not be wise for me to reveal it. It is the big secret to all my wonders. With this magic formula I can read consciences and solve any mystery. Let's see how smart you are. See if you can make something out of it!" He would then repeat the four words while placing his forefinger successively on the questioner's forehead, nose, chin and chest, ending with an unexpected little tap on the cheek. The boy or cleric would laugh, and while kissing Don Bosco's hand, still insist, "But, Father, at least translate those words."

"I could, but you still wouldn't understand." And then playfully he would add in Piedmontese dialect, "When they give you a beating, take it like a man!" This conclusion would set them all laughing heartily." (EBM VI, 236-237) What he meant to say was that, in order to become a saint one should be ready to accept whatever sufferings life has in store for you.

Patron of Tinsmiths

Every year the young boarders from the Oratory of St. Leo in Marseille went on an outing to Monsieur Olive's villa, a generous cooperator, already known to us. On this occasion, the father and mother waited on the superiors while their children waited on their pupils. In 1884, they went while Don Bosco was in Marseille. While the boys were playing in the gardens, a servant came running up to Madame Olive, greatly agitated:

"Madame, the pot where the soup is cooking for the boys is leaking badly and there is no way to stop it. We will have to go without soup." The mistress of the house, who had immense faith in Don Bosco, had a sudden idea. She summoned all the boys and told them, "Listen, if you want to have some soup, kneel down here and pray a Pater, Ave, and Gloria to Don Bosco, so that he may resolder the soup pot."

The boys obeyed instantly and the pot stopped leaking. When Don Bosco heard it, he laughed heartily saying: From this day on, people will say that Don Bosco is the patron of tinsmiths. (cf EMB 17,36-37). □



walking with the Church



The Catholic Church and Other Religions, The Kingdom of God

by St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland

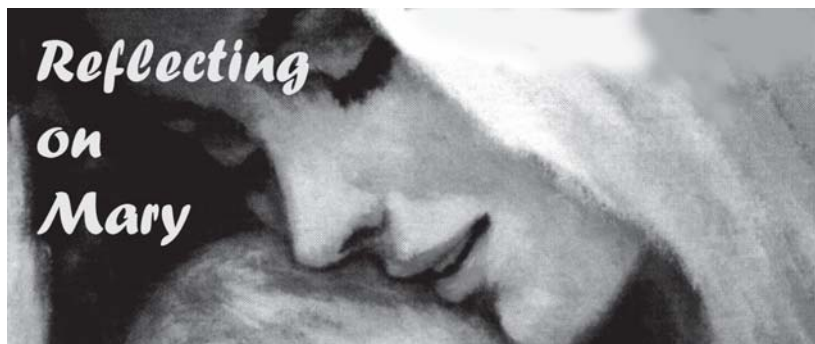
Q. *Our Catholic Church is the 'One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church'. Now what religion are the following, Jews, Greek Orthodox, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Quakers, Anglo Catholics? I do not know how there can be so many different religions.*

A. Thank you for your question. There is a Penguin book on religions which is the size of a large novel. There are thousands of other religions apart from the ones you mention. But among the various religions there are a number which are called Christian religions because their members believe in Jesus Christ. He is the head of their Church and they are his followers. In what way do these differ? There are many differences between the various Christian denominations. Take just two. Catholics believe the Pope is the Vicar of Christ and head of the Church and also believe that Jesus Christ is wholly present in the Eucharist. These beliefs are not shared by the great majority of other Christian denominations. However there are constant talks and meetings between the various Christian religions seeking the unity for which Christ prayed - "that they may be one as we are one." Every year we devote a whole week to praying for Christian Unity. Please God the oneness for which

Christ prayed, may one day be realised.

Q. *What did Jesus mean when he said the 'Kingdom of God is within you' and yet on another occasion he said 'My kingdom is not of this world.'*

A. For centuries the Jewish people had awaited the Messiah who would fulfil God's promise to establish a kingdom that would overcome all its foes and that would endure forever. In their understanding the promised Kingdom would be a political kingdom. When Jesus came on earth he said (Mark 1:15) 'the kingdom of God is at hand.' This implied that he was the messiah, the one sent by God to establish this kingdom. But Jesus explained 'my kingdom is not of this world' - making it clear to the Jewish people that his kingdom was not a political kingdom like the Roman Empire which ruled over the Jewish people at that time. For Jesus the kingdom of God was the reign or rule of God over people's minds and hearts. God sent his son, Jesus, to set people free from anything that would prevent God from ruling over their lives. He also encouraged his hearers to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom by repenting of their sins and by believing the Good News that he had come to establish God's reign. (Mark 1:14) □



MARY ON A JOURNEY

by Maria Ko Ha Fong, FMA

On one of his journeys, the Mexican writer and diplomat Carlos Fuentes was headed for a village he did not know so well. So he stopped and asked a farmer how far it was to the village. The reply he got was: "If you had started walking there at dawn, you would have already reached there." That farmer had another way to measure time and distance, not in hours or miles, but through the dynamics of walking and the rhythm of nature.

A Life on the Go

During her earthly life Mary travelled much, probably more than any Jewess of her time. The pen of the evangelists described Mary like they described Jesus, always on the go, dynamic. Jesus was born while she was on the road, he died by the roadside and his missionary life was lived on the road and what was more, he called himself "**the way**" that leads to the Father. His mother was often found on the road too. She travelled from Nazareth to Ain Karim (the home of Elizabeth and Zechariah), to Bethlehem, to Cana of Galilee, Jerusalem, Egypt and her

footsteps must have been heard everyday, along winding mountain paths, in crowded city streets, on the steps of the temple and all this movement must have been accompanied by an inner journey that was far more intense.

Try and ask Mary how far it was and or how long it took to go from Nazareth to Ain Karim, to Bethlehem, to Jerusalem ... What would Mary's reply be? Not in hours or miles surely. She might have spoken of the hurry to reach the house of Zechariah and Elizabeth to lend them a helping hand. She would tell us about her anxiety mixed with sweetness when she went with Joseph, her partner and the Son of God hidden in the silence of her womb to be enrolled to the city of David - Bethlehem. She might tell you of her palpitations when she went looking for her twelve year old Jesus in Jerusalem and she would confide in you the excruciating pain as she watched Jesus hang from the cross on Calvary and then on the third day she would tell you of her unspeakable joy.

To Go and to Stay

Mary's eagerness as she makes her way to Ain Karim like her solicitude at the wedding at Cana, reveals Mary as active, enterprising, creative and determined. Her travelling in haste is an image of the missionary Church that, immediately after Pentecost, anointed by the Holy Spirit, sets off to spread the Good News to the ends of the earth. Paul grasps this immediately, "It is the love of Christ that urges us" (2 Cor. 5, 14).

Mary does not measure distances or the possible risks involved. She does not calculate the time or effort it would take. The yearning in her heart puts wings on her feet. She feels the urge and is impelled by the God she carries within her. Mary's journey is not just external activity but also an action motivated by the Lord whom she carries within her. It is this inner life that moves, directs, surrounds and gives meaning to all that she does. It is in silence that the Word matures. She unites contemplation of the mystery with concrete action reflected in service. She blends this harmony in a great transport of love for God and a greater concern for the world and its history.

Progress or Regress

External care and solicitude are offshoots of a vibrant interior life. Mary "kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." Luke wanted to emphasize Mary's thoughtful and wise attitude in the presence of this mystery and so he repeats this phrase twice (Luke 2, 19;51). This expression gives us some insight into Mary's profound interior life. She is a woman with a large heart, able to ponder on the "great things" that God has

wrought in her life, recalling all the wonders that God has done down the centuries right up to the present day and how they have a bearing on the future of humanity. She does not understand everything immediately but she lets everything rest in her heart. She allows herself to be open to the mystery as it unfolds, respecting the rhythms of God's revelation throughout history.

"Keeping things in one's heart" means having the ability to recall or remember them (from the Latin re-cord). It means: to bring back to one's mind what has been there in one's heart. Jesus teaches his disciples this attitude of Mary when he tells them: "But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them." (Jn 16:4) "And as for the seed in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Lk 8:15). He sends them (his disciples) the Spirit because it will "bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." (Jn. 14, 26)

Mary teaches us how to advance on life's journey while developing the art of reflecting, being able to 'remember' or 'go back' in one's mind. She teaches us the secret of combining the interior life and external activity, being and doing, believing and practicing, praying and working, memory and creativity, recollection and the dissemination of the Word of God, "pondering everything in the heart" and "going in haste," between accepting God's gift and being God's gift to others. □

MUMBAI

A Jesuit management institute in Mumbai has launched a centre for its students to study emerging markets in Africa. The Xavier Institute of Management and Research (XIMR) opened the "Centre for African Studies" in collaboration with the Markere University Business School in Uganda.

The centre was opened by E.M. Barine, Kenya's deputy high commissioner and Waswa Balunywa, principal of Markere University's Business School. Together, XIMR and Markere University Business School will shoulder the responsibility of enhancing the development of people from emerging nations," said Father Paul Vaz, director general of the institute.

He said the centre is currently intended for students but would soon be open to firms wanting to understand Africa and learn how to conduct business there. It will launch certificate programmes and in-company tailored programmes for corporate professionals in due course, he added.

K.N. Vaidyanathan, director of XIMR, said the centre aims to serve as a bridge between the people and cultures of India and Africa, and contribute to the economic and social development of both. "We believe Indian multinationals will have location-based and company-based strategic advantages in these regions," he said.

The students will develop case

studies on topics such as African cultures, anthropology, African religions, consumer behaviour and market structure.

Initially, the centre will offer a course on "Country studies - Africa" for XIMR's students, which will run for about two semesters. After six months, the centre will offer a certificate programme for corporate professionals on "Doing Business in Africa." (*UCANews*)

BANGALORE

St. Alphonsus Liguori was a diocesan priest in Naples, Italy, who decided to become a missionary. Fr. Arul Anandam Selsus fondly known as Fr. Arul was called to the Diocesan priesthood as a seminarian followed in the footsteps of St. Alphonsus. He did his seminary studies at Morning Star College, Barrackpore, W. Bengal. he was ordained a priest for the diocese of Raniganj in Bengal. After some village ministry he received a higher call to join a Missionary Congregation. He entered the Novitiate at Bangalore and professed as a religious in the Redemptorists Congregation. After a short period of training in Mt. St. Alphonsus Seminary in Bangalore and imbibing the charisma of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, he set out to preach Redemptorist Missions. During his first Mission in a nearby slum, Bagalur, he brought many a couple living together, to the sacrament of Matrimony.

Being a lover of the poor he was posted to the southernmost house of the Redemptorists in India viz. Periyavillai, a fishing village on the border of Tamilnadu and Kerala. He immediately set about improving their lot. He managed to get good drinking water from a distance, through pipes and an overhead tank using the funds allotted to the fishermen from the Block Development Officer. He also built a parish church and a hall.

He was requisitioned to serve the Bangalore Province in administration as Vicar Provincial. During this time, he took in hand St. Alphonsus school being run by the Redemptorists exclusively for the children of slum dwellers. Together with the sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes he brought the students to cent per cent results in their final board exams.

He did his LLB in Bangalore and began serving in the Court of Law. He helped many poor people get their rights. As bursar to the Provincial, he set right many of the property papers that were missing or in disarray.

He was the rector of a community of senior aging Redemptorists, at St. Gerard's in Bangalore. During this time he was elected by the Redemptorists and approved by their General Michael Brehl as the Provincial for the Quadrennium. He took over the Office handed over to him by the outgoing Provincial Fr. Paul Pazhangattu, on 14th January 2011 during the Eucharist. Together with his team of Consultors Frs. Thomas Jayaraj, the new Vicar Provincial, Xavier Sanjivi, Assisi Saldanha and Edward Joseph he hopes to lead the Redemptorists in India to *Preaching the Gospel*

anew. the vision he has set for the next six years. (Fr. Francis Pinto CSSR)

OLD GOA

The parishioners of Old Goa stormed the ancient Bishop's House complex to stop "unauthorized" construction activity carried out by a federal government agency. The trouble began when the parish priest Fr. Leonard Correia returned from home and heard some noise of construction activity in the complex on January 23rd.

The parishioners, who had come for Sunday Mass also noticed sand, cement and plywood in the church premises. They claimed that the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) was constructing staff quarters without the permission of the church authorities. The labourers had to stop work after a police complaint was filed by Fr. Correia but they resumed work the next day. Annoyed by this, about 100 parishioners stormed the construction site, drove the workers away and threw out their belongings.

ASI Deputy Superintendent archeologist K. V. Rao said the premise was occupied by the ASI 25 years ago. "Since we have shifted our main office to Old Goa from Panjim, the gardener (of the complex) requested us to see the condition he was living in because of the humidity of the walls and the floor. Rao said they had decided to put plywood on the ceiling but the locals came and threw his things out and accused him of being a dictator. (*The Herald*)

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Thank you Mother for the many blessings received through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys: for Brian my nephew, for success in his examinations and for the gift of a child to my daughter, Marianne. Dearest Mother please continue to guide and protect my family.

Savariamah Arokiam, Malaysia

In the month of August three boulders came crashing onto my dining room and bathroom. There was much damage but we were spared. I still shudder to think of what could have happened to my husband, my daughter and myself. My most grateful thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for this miracle.

Philu Carvalho, Vasco, Goa

Dear Jesus and Mother Mary we give thanks for the many blessings that you have bestowed upon our families. Always keep us under your maternal care and protection.

Tony and Jennifer Aguiar, Australia
I am grateful to Our Lady for saving my husband and me from sure death. Our flat was closed (windows and doors) and we were inside. I lit the gas and it began to leak. The flame was huge and my husband seeing this rushed and turned off the gas. Trembling we ran out of the flat, praising God and our Blessed Mother for protecting us.

Mrs. Olinda Alfonso, Mumbai

My sister who has dementia was referred to a neurologist who prescribed some medicine that had an adverse effect on her. She could not even take water. When the doctor refused to come and assist I had recourse to Our Lady and began interceding for my sister. In two days she improved and gradually returned to normal. I thank our heavenly Mother a million times. I recommend the Rosary Novena to anyone in trouble.

L. Rebello, Goa

Thank you Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Joseph and all the saints for your blessings and favours.

Liz Pires, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to the Infant Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of a healthy baby girl in spite of several complications during our daughter's pregnancy.

Lynn & John Leitao & Annie and Armando Pereira, Bahrain

I am very grateful to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for protecting and saving me from a terrible scooter accident on New Year's day in Mangalore. It was a great miracle that I survived.

Felix Castelino, Mangalore

My sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for granting us many favours.

Effie Cabral, Goa

My heartfelt thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for helping my nephew to pass his SSC Board Examination with more than 90% marks.

Monica, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Our Lady for the complete recovery of my husband from Chronic constipation. He is well now. Thanks for the successful operation of my granddaughter. She was operated for a small lump on her head. She is fine now.

Irene Gonsalves, Goa

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



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

Thank you dear infant Jesus and mother Mary for granting my family a very special favour and many other blessings.

A Devotee

I have received numerous favours through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. So many times my family and I were in trouble but the 3 Hail Marys have helped us at all times to get out of trouble. I apologise for delaying my acknowledgement of these favours. I have made it a habit now to recite the 3 Hail Marys not only in times of trouble but everyday whenever I remember mother Mary.

Evelyn Albuquerque, Goa

I was at Crawford market and in order to avoid being hit by a speeding motorcycle I threw myself headlong on the road. I hurt my chin and my knees, if Mother Mary had not been there to help me I would have been mowed down by the traffic. To my surprise I could stand steady and there was no pain, nor bruises either. I attribute this miraculous escape to the daily recitation of the "Three Hail Marys."

Oswald Rebello, Thane

I would like to testify to the fact that I was working in Oman and went through a very tough time during the past month. I lost my job. I was penniless and was being harrassed. I prayed the three Hail Marys and watched a miracle take place. I received some money and now I am safely back in India and with Our Lady's help I will soon be employed. I am grateful to Our Lady.

Ram Charan Alva, Mumbai

I had a lot of complications during the nine months of my pregnancy. I prayed continuously to Our Lady and St. Dominic Savio and through their intercession I delivered a healthy baby girl. That was 23 years ago. I am so sorry for the delay.

Mrs. Anita Rodrigues, Mumbai

It was 15th December 2006 and I had made some purchases from the local market and the road was narrow and crowded. In my hand I had a walking stick and a bag. A truck was reversing and I was behind it. There was no one to alert the driver. I saw the truck coming towards me but I was too feeble to get out of the way. I was struck on the thigh and fell forward out of the way of the vehicle. I firmly believe I was saved by the help of Our Lady and the powerful intercession of the 3 Hail Marys.

Francisca A. Lobo, Mumbai

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

Our heartfelt thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the grace of a good and peaceful death to my brother. The intercessory prayers of seminarians, relatives and friends brought about a dramatic turnaround after years of separation. He was indeed saved by the grace of God. *Mrs. M. J. John, Kerala*
Baby Netanya was gifted to Amneeta and Bruce after 7 years. Suddenly, a month later the baby contracted meningitis and was hospitalised. Everyone had recourse to Mother Mary and prayed the 3 Hail Marys. Thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio the baby recovered. *A Devotee*

Thank you Mother Mary for all the favours granted to my family. Thank you for the transfer of my job which I was desperately waiting for. I am sorry I am sending my thanksgiving so late. Thank you Mother Mary for curing my younger sister from the fibroid problem. Due to your intercession and the medication my younger sister is better now. *Rita Pinto, Mumbai*

As most of us are anxious about visiting dentists, so was I. The previous dentist I visited advised me that a tooth had to be surgically removed. I was terrified. I changed dentists and while waiting to be called in I chanced upon a copy of Don Bosco's Madonna and read "Mary was There". With faith I prayed the three Hail Marys and felt comforted. To my disbelief, when I was called in there was no surgery needed and the tooth was extracted painlessly. Mary was indeed there and I thank and praise God for that. *Brenda D'Mello, Auckland*
My belated but grateful thanks to Mother Mary, Help of Christians for her assistance in protecting my eyes when wrong drops were administered and when I was struck with a pebble on my left eye.

V. Mascarenhas, Goa

Belated but sincere thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ and Our dearest Mother Mary for being with us at the time of need. Please continue protecting us. *Mrs. Evelyn Amaral, Mumbai*

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary and St. John Bosco and St. Anthony for helping us find a buyer for our property in Goa and having the deal signed off gracefully. *Minguel Fernandes, Mumbai*

Our heartfelt thanks to the Lord Jesus, Our Blessed Mother, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery to my wife and for blessing us with healthy twin girls.

Andrew and Maria Fernandes, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to our Blessed Mother for curing me from a very painful illness. *Mrs. Ukachukwu, Mumbai*

Our sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother and Don Bosco for protecting us from a furious mob that came at us while we were in an autorickshaw. They beat the driver and burnt his rickshaw. We had to run for our lives but we were unhurt and safe and we owe this to the protection of our Blessed Mother. *Mrs. Fatima, Hyderabad*

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Thank you Jesus for guiding us and St. Savio for giving us a handsome baby boy. *Robert Paul*

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to St. Dominic Savio for protecting our child inside her mother's womb as he had several cords around his neck. Moreover she had a very safe and peaceful delivery. Thank you, once again St. Dominic Savio for your fervent intercession for our family. *Thomas & Family, Mumbai*
My infinite gratitude to the Infant Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the precious gift of a beautiful healthy baby girl. I believe

it was the miraculous novena to the Infant Jesus and the three Hail Marys and the scapular of St. Dominic Savio. *Mrs. Tricia - Maree D'Souza, Mumbai*

Thank you Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for giving me a wonderful husband and a loving daughter. Keep them in good health and happiness. Bless my family and protect them always. *U.A. Rodrigues, Vashi*

I am grateful to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all the blessings and graces received. *Mrs. M. L. Noronha, Goa*

Our grateful thanks to Mother Mary Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for your love, for your protection during the pregnancy and for the safe delivery and the gift of a normal baby girl to my daughter on 18 May 2010. *Vincent Pereira, Goa*

My sincere thanks to our Blessed Mother, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all the blessings received through their intercession. *Nora D'Sa, Mumbai*

My sincere thanks and gratitude to Almighty God, Jesus Christ, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for blessing me with a normal baby girl, Marissa and for a safe delivery. *Helen Johnson, Bhayandar*

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

MAY 2011

Holy Father's General Intention: *That those who work in the media may always respect truth, solidarity and the dignity of each person.*

Missionary Intention: *That the Lord may grant the Church in China the capacity to persevere in fidelity to the Gospel and to grow in unity.*

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MARY WAS THERE

One afternoon I was returning from church with my daughter. On the way home we stopped at a store. My daughter stopped the car and I got off and stepped out of the car, but to my surprise the next thing I knew, I was on the floor. I fell down quite hard on my knees and I also hit my face against the sidewalk. I thought I had fractured my knees since I suffered from Osteoporosis. But thankfully, a good Samaritan - a lady passerby gave me a hand and I straightened up and got off the ground with minor bruises on my knees and my lip. By that time, my daughter rushed to my rescue. I firmly believe Mary was there by my side as I always say the 3 Hail Marys in the morning and at night. It was Mother Mary who lent me a hand and prevented any fractures. Thank you Mother Mary for being with me and for all the other graces and favours.

B.E. USA

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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