

# DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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"The memories of Jesus,  
impressed upon her heart,  
were always with her,  
leading her to reflect on  
the various moments of  
her life at her Son's  
side....they were the  
"rosary" which she  
uninterruptedly recited..."  
(RVM #11)

Cover:  
**St. Francis' apparition  
of Jesus Crucified**



## From The Editor's Desk

### The Gentle Month of October

In this part of the world, October is a month when we get out of our monsoon hibernation. The sun is trying desperately to make an appearance, to herald the end of the rainy season while our children are coming to the end of their first term at school and looking forward to their Diwali holidays. For the rest of us...we are amazed at how quickly the year has flown by, we have reached the last quarter! All in all, October seems to be a gentle month when evenings are getting longer and there is a kind of pensiveness in the air. It's probably a time to let go of our anxiety and feel once more the warmth of the sun after months of torrential rain that brought in its wake bouts of malaria, fevers and flus that so many of us had to cope with. Here in Mumbai, this monsoon was even more painful because of the bomb-blasts in July. Our hearts still go out to all those who have lost loved ones (*our readers or others too*). For the grieving and the injured, getting on with the business of living is not going to be easy but they try, putting one foot before the other and praying for the courage and strength to make it through another day.

No matter how young or old we are, we all need our Octobers. We need time to offer our lives - our heartaches and sorrows, our successes and the failures, the things we regret and the things we celebrate with joy, the areas of life that have been healed and those that are still hurting and await healing.

St. Benedict described Prayer as 'Praising God at work in our lives'. We tell our story of the ups-and-downs and recognise the hand of God at work on our journey and offer him our praise and thanksgiving as well.

As we pray our Rosary - during this month of October which is the month of the Rosary - even though we pray it with great fervour all the time - we still tell the story of Christ, past and present, his ups-and-downs and see where we fit our story into the story of Jesus.

At times of depression and maybe almost despair, when our sufferings seem unbearable and the pain of living gets too much, we are with St. Mark's Jesus, crying '*My God, my God why have you forsaken me?*' Or maybe there is joy in our lives like that of St. John the Baptist who leapt in his mother's womb at the sound of Mary's voice. We have all - at least I hope - we have all experienced the glory of coming through a very difficult patch and bursting through to a resurrection that seemed totally beyond us. The times when we are frightened to accept God's invitation and pray for the courage to breathe, '*Be it done to me according to Thy Word*'; the times when we sweat with fear of what is coming, that we can say with Jesus '*Let your will, not mine, be done.*'

No matter how or what we feel, we can find our story in the Gospels and see our lives in and with Mary as she leads us to her Son. October is a good month to make this journey.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

# 10. BLESS, AND YOU WILL BE BLESSED

*Fr. Erasto Fernandez, ss*

**W**e generally imagine that only the blessed, powerful and favoured ones are those who need to reach out to help the poor and unfortunate. As a matter of fact, experience shows that it is those who have the least who are perhaps the most eager and ready to help, even out of the little they have, sometimes giving all that they have to live on! We cannot but recall the Gospel story of the widow who put in two little copper coins into the Temple treasury – all that she had to live on! This example was so striking that Jesus himself noted it and drew the attention of his disciples to the widow's extraordinarily generous gift – that they might learn a lesson or two for their own lives. The following story is a similar instance – it makes inspiring reading indeed.

## **Open to the Inner Voice**

"Last fall, a little before Thanksgiving, as alone in my car I made my way out of the shopping centre parking lot, I noticed a woman laden with several heavy shopping bags and her two young boys, one carrying a huge pumpkin and the other weighed down under another massive bag.

Seeing them trudge along, I naturally assumed that they were heading in the direction of the bus stop across the major road. I knew the place well and realized that it was too far to walk with all those

purchases to any of the nearby apartment communities. On a sudden and inexplicable impulse, I rolled down my car window and enquired if they were indeed headed to the bus stop. 'Yes,' the mother responded shyly. When I further offered 'Would you like a ride?' all three burst out spontaneously, 'Oh yes, Thank you!'

I was delighted to be of some help, and so, after a while of deft manoeuvring over to the side, out of the way of other shopping traffic, I stopped and the boys gleefully piled into the back seat. The mother started to push in beside them but I quickly invited her to sit in front as I was alone in the front seat. And so after a couple of minutes of noisy adjustment, we took off to the obvious delight of the two boys.

I had already decided that rather than drop them off at the bus stop not too far away, I could afford to take them the mile and a half to their home. I had the time and they had all those bundles to negotiate with, over that long distance. The boys were friendly and communicative, and chattered away telling me about themselves, their hobbies and friends, and I had such a pleasant time listening and talking with all of them. It felt so good to be able to do this little trip even if it meant a small detour from my usual



shopping route, and know that with such a small effort I could make a big difference to a tired mother. I'm not sure who got the most out of that eventful journey – they or I!

### **A Handicapped Benefactor**

Incidentally, this trip was extra special for me and possibly for them too because, as a handicapped person, I'm almost always on the receiving end of help. This was the one time I realized how especially good it feels to be useful, giving of your little to someone more deprived than you! As the three got off the car, their gratitude was obviously sincere and heartfelt in the numerous Thank-you's they mumbled and the joy written all over their faces. I could tell too by that stunned look on their countenances that they just couldn't believe that a disadvantaged person would go out of her way to make life a little easier for them!"

But as I contentedly drove off home feeling happy for myself, I couldn't but recall what I had heard a few days earlier in one of the Church services I attended. The Scripture reading that day was that of the Feeding of the five thousand and the preacher

recalled how, knowing full well that they had only five loaves and two fish, Jesus asked the disciples to make the multitude (of altogether around forty thousand or so – there were five thousand 'men – not counting women and children!') to sit down on the green grass. The disciples had desperately tried to dissuade the Master from getting involved in that potentially disastrous situation – what if the little they had didn't really suffice and the mob began to get unruly?!

Yet, the disciples marvelled with bated breath as He took the bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them to distribute to the people. And without them fully realizing what was happening, as their minds were engrossed in seeing that no one was left out, each in that massive crowd seemed to get as much as s/he wanted and yet there was still more. And what was even more surprising, when told to gather up all the fragments of broken bread and fish, the disciples collected five huge baskets full of broken pieces!

The secret of this marvel seems to have been the spirit of selfless generosity that pervaded the entire group. The majority in the group were obviously aware of what was happening – that so little somehow sufficed for such a large crowd... and there was evidently such a lot left over!

### **Applications to Other Areas of Life**

I continued to muse on various other possibilities. What would happen among us today if we were able to apply this principle to all the areas of our lives –

involving, e.g. our time. So often it happens that precisely on the day when one is hard pressed for time, that someone comes to us with a request for help, and that too a time-consuming demand! One's instinctive answer in such a situation is to say, "Of course I shall help you, but first allow me to complete this urgent task – then I shall be totally at your disposal." But of course, their need is greater than ours and cannot wait till I've completed my task. It is only after we have grudgingly or not, set aside our urgent mission in order to attend to their more urgent one that we realize that are in for a repeat of the 'Feeding' episode in Jesus' life.

It is often said that the more we give, the more we get, but often this seems to be true only in theory. In practice, it seems foolishness to give when one has so little for oneself. Yet, God's ways are not our ways and when we can lose ourselves with sincere generosity the miracle of the Feeding does take place again and again. We find that we not only manage to help the ones in need, but have enough time and some to spare as well after finishing our own assignments to satisfaction.

### **Eucharist, the Key**

It is perhaps no coincidence that the example of the Feeding story from the Gospels came to mind, for this story is an obvious prefiguring of the Eucharist that we celebrate so often. The bread Jesus broke and shared is a symbol of his very life which he gave for the benefit of the whole of mankind. In those circumstances, he did not stop to ask whether those for whose sake he was pouring out his life would



appreciate his sacrifice and benefit from it, or whether they too would be inspired to do the same for the sake of others. He knew that if he were really giving us a gift it would have to be one with no strings attached. He gave because he believed that was the right and the best thing to do! Genuine love would do nothing less!

In actual fact, the example of Jesus' self-giving remembered in each Eucharist is the source and inspiration of so many other little acts of kindness to others, the world over, all down the centuries. It is true that not everyone who celebrates Eucharist is caught up in this chain of self-giving, but where it does catch entering the person's very life-pattern, the results are stupefying. There is something basically good at the core of every human being and they tend to respond with generosity when they are treated generously. Similarly it is said, trust inevitably begets trust! "Do not judge, and you will not be





judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Lk 6:37-38).

Sometimes the joy and thrill a person gets out of selfless giving to others comes well after the generous deed has been done, and is perhaps even forgotten. It might come weeks later and through a totally unknown person. Yet, the best part of the event is that one immediately recognizes that what is now received comes as a response to what was given freely and joyfully some time ago. The connection is unmistakable, for example, when the amount given tallies to the penny with what is now received! At other times, it is a better and more appropriate gift we receive for a tiny little favour thoughtfully and deliberately done, especially when done anonymously.

### Paul's Experience

Paul shares his own experience regarding the collection he made for the poorer churches: "We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe

ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the *privilege of sharing* in this ministry to the saints... Now as you excel in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you - so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking... For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich... For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has - not according to what one does not have. I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need... As it is written, 'The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little'" (2 Cor 8:1-16).

This kind of sharing seems rare nowadays, but if one cared to look there are far more examples of selfless giving than we would imagine. Practices like the "Smile Card" that have become so popular simply go to show that at heart most people are good. The recent period of economic recession has brought to light so many wonderful examples of people who gave even when it hurt - and as can be expected, the Lord does not allow himself to be outdone in generosity! □

# HOW TO BE FREE

*by Patricia Ducé*

**Y**ou're as free as you really want to be.' What do you think? Is this true or false? Or is it something which each of us must find out for ourselves?

In recent times we have learnt - to our astonishment - how some people have attained 'liberation' while still shut up in the gulags of Siberia. They found that elusive thing, inner freedom, when they renounced bitterness and hatred, humanly justified though they were.

Nearer to home, we know of Beirut hostages who have achieved that same kind of freedom - despite being chained for years to a radiator, in unspeakable conditions of ultimate imprisonment.

## Unfree Lives

Such traumatic circumstances are exceptional. Thankfully, in this part of the world we have never had to experience being dominated by a totalitarian ideology. But ordinary people in a free democracy can all too easily find themselves living unfree lives.

The entanglements arising from abuse of drugs and drink already get plenty of attention but the less publicised hang-ups of resentment, bitterness and antagonism need dealing with too, if we are to be as we are meant to be - genuinely free people.

Many such 'unfreedoms' have to do with relationships. For instance, I have found that inner freedom goes out of the window when I go



round trying to ward off adverse reactions from somebody I find difficult. It seems I am not alone in this!

## Not Speaking Up

It's all too easy to shirk speaking up and tackling a person or a situation, although deep inside you may know you should. One time, when my husband and I were living as guests in someone else's home, I lost my inner freedom because our host had a sharp, somewhat superior manner which made me feel inferior and stupid; consequently I behaved like that.

When I realized what was happening, and that I was in a sense also betraying the other person by continuing so, I felt I had to speak up. God gave me the courage to tackle that person and immediately I felt free again. The next day I received a most handsome apology (and in front of other people), and things were quite transformed from then onwards.

Another time, I was working for a top executive of a well-known

company. He was a formidable individual who didn't mind shouting at whoever was doing his secretarial work. I was afraid of him at first. But then I felt that if he did that to *me*, I should speak up and say as calmly as I could, 'Mr. X, I may be an employee, but I am also a lady. Why do you feel you should shout at me?'

I had the security them of feeling armed and ready, but in fact he never did shout at me – maybe something came across to him, and he sensed he was sailing near the wind!

***Fear of being hurt  
is one of the most  
effective blocks  
to inner freedom***

### **Fear of Being Hurt**

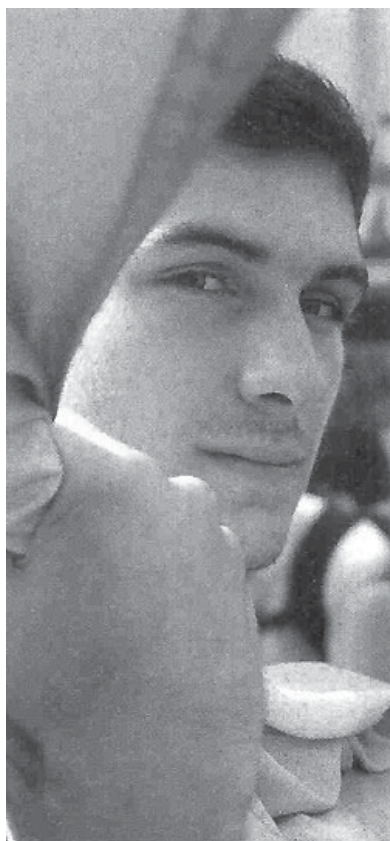
Fear of being hurt is one of the most effective blocks to inner freedom – especially if you have already been hurt in the past. That happened to me at one period in quite a big way, when someone I was keen on marked another girl. I didn't fancy getting hurt again, and as a result, without fully realizing what I was doing, I held people at arm's length.

Then a good friend of mine said to me quite simply one day, 'You know, I think you must have got hurt once and that's why you have got a closed heart.'

'Who – me?' I exclaimed.

But she said it so naturally, I couldn't take offence.

An essential step to freedom seems to be to call things by their right names. And when I thought more about it, I realized that was what she had done for me. *I did* have



a closed heart, and it came from a root of deep-down bitterness. Once I recognized this and wanted to be free of that ugly thing, God took it away immediately I asked him to. I knew right away that something important had happened to me because suddenly everything and everybody looked different and nicer. And life opened up in a whole new way.

### **Overcoming Prejudice**

Prejudice is another enemy of inner freedom. Who hasn't had experience of that at some time or

*(Continued on pg. 23)*



## SALESIAN SAINT OF THE MONTH

### ALEXANDRINA DA COSTA (1904 – 1955)

**A**lexandrina Maria da Costa was born March 30, 1904 at Balasar in Portugal. She remained with her family till she was seven years old after which she was sent to Póvoa do Varzim to attend the elementary school. She returned to Balasar and continued to work in the fields. She was lively, playful and affectionate and was very popular among her companions. She was paralyzed because of a fall she had at the age of 14 when she jumped out of a window into the garden to prevent some evil-intentioned youngsters who tried to violate her purity. She was confined to her bed for over 30 years. Her older sister looked after her. She prayed for the grace of healing but the Madonna granted her the grace of the acceptance of her suffering and a desire to suffer for the salvation of souls. The charism of being a Salesian victim that was practiced by Fr. Beltrami, Fr. Czartoryski, and Sister Eusebia inspired Alexandrina. Christ offered himself as a victim for the conversion of sinners and for world peace: "I have no other purpose than to give glory to God and save souls."

For four years (1938-1942), overcoming the usual paralysis, she got out of bed and 182 times she relived the passion of Christ for three painful hours every Friday. She asked and obtained from Pius XII the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart



of Mary (October 31, 1942). From March 27, 1942 up to her death that was 13 years and 7 months she only received daily Holy Communion. Her second spiritual director was a Salesian, Fr. Umberto Pasquale and she agreed to become a Salesian Cooperator. She said: "I feel a great bond with the Salesians and the cooperators around the world. How often I look at my certificate of membership and offer my sufferings, united to all of them, for the salvation of youth. I love the congregation. I love it so much that I will never forget it here on earth or in heaven" Thousands of people who came to her bedside were consoled by her words of advice. She died on October 13, 1955 at Balasar, where she is now buried facing the tabernacle. Huge crowds visit her remains. □  
*She was beatified on April 24, 2004 by Pope John Paul II*

**THE BEST IS YET TO COME***Fr. L.B. Anthony, sdb**Rector, Don Bosco Technical School, Shillong, Meghalaya, India*

**C**an anything good come from Nazareth?" (Jn 1:46). and I was born in Nazareth, in the diocese of Kochi. My parish had a lot of Catholics but priests were rather rare.

I ended my seventh standard before I was twelve and I remember my mother taking me to a Franciscan orphanage. She was trying to solve the problem of poverty at home as my father worked as a daily wager, but often he did not find daily work. We seemed to have knocked at the wrong door: the prior told us to come after the end of the scholastic year but before the end of the scholastic year, Fr. Mathew Baroi, (later Bishop of Krishnagar) came to my my class and asked who were interested in becoming "missionaries". We were instructed to obtain the permission from our parents. I waited eagerly for my father to return from work to get his consent. The only image I had in mind was that of our parish priest. I thought it was a good idea to become a priest like him. Eighteen boys from my class appeared for the interview but eventually only I was selected.

My first two years were spent in Bandel. It was an entirely new world but I knew I was in the right place.

I was among the first aspirants at the junior seminary in Shillong. On account of the Indo-China war in 1962, the whole community had to move away from the north-east to the Chennai province for 6 months. The missionary atmosphere of the entire north-east has always appealed to me as



something very special and unique.

As a Salesian now for 44 years and priest for 36 I have lived a contented life without regrets for joining the Salesian congregation. I was qualified in Canon Law and I trained myself to be a formator since I understood that my ministry would be in a formation house.

I consider myself very fortunate to have become a Salesian with the towering personality of Don Bosco and his charismatic intervention in the lives of poor and needy youngsters. I am fortunate also, to have contributed to the formation of a few hundreds of Salesians and diocesan priests for more than two decades and to have enjoyed the love and esteem of my own confreres and many others.

I may not have engaged in any spectacular or monumental works or projects in the congregation, but I do believe that I have lived a life of service according to the needs of the congregation. I still feel I have much to contribute wherever I may be sent and in whatever capacity. I am optimistic that the best is yet to come and will preserve my inner happiness. □

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# Witnesses in & for Our Times



## THE APOSTLE OF EUROPEAN UNITY St. John Capistrano

(17 SEPTEMBER: 1098 - 1179)

*by Mario Scudu*

Capistrano is a little town in the Abruzzi, which in those days, formed part of the kingdom of Naples. Here in the fourteenth century a certain free-lance - whether he was of French or of German origin is disputed - had settled down after military service under Louis I and had married an Italian wife. A son, named John, was born to him on June 24, 1386. From early youth the boy's talents made him conspicuous. He studied law at Perugia with such success that in 1412 he was appointed governor of that city and became known for his integrity and impartiality. He married the daughter of one of the principal inhabitants. He was to return to his hometown so that he could earn some money to finance his doctoral studies. It was during this time, in 1415 that a conflict broke out between Perugia and Rimini and he was taken prisoner. It was a few centuries later that St. Ignatius of Loyola would be converted during his incarceration but that was how it was for John of Capestrano too.

How he got over the difficulty of his marriage is not altogether clear. But it is said that he rode through Perugia on a donkey with his face to the tail and with a huge paper hat on his head upon which all his worst sins were plainly written. He was pelted by the children and covered with filth, and in this guise presented himself to ask admission into the novitiate of the Friars Minor. At that time, 1416, he was thirty years old, and his novice-master seems to have thought that for a man of such strength of will who had been accustomed to have his own way, a very severe training was necessary to test the genuineness of his vocation. (He had not yet even made his first communion.) The trials to which he was subjected were most humiliating and were apparently sometimes attended with supernatural manifestations. But Brother John persevered, and in after-years he often expressed his gratitude to the relentless instructor who had made it clear to him that self-

conquest was the only sure road to perfection. He was ordained a priest in 1417. Meanwhile he made extraordinary progress in his theological studies, leading at the same time a life of extreme austerity, in which he tramped the roads barefoot without sandals, took only three or four hours to sleep and wore a hair-shirt continually.

His life can be divided into two main parts. The first part includes his activities in Italy until the year 1451 and the second consisted of his years of preaching and his participation in the battle of Belgrade and his death in 1456.

During the first period John had three main interests: his preaching, his defense of Catholic orthodoxy and third his reform of the Friars Minor. From 1422 he began to preach in L'Aquila before large crowds who were enthralled by his words and his enthusiasm. Huge crowds would follow him from Rome, Siena, Perugia, Milan, Padua, Vicenza, Venice and other cities. He also preached in Spain and the Holy Land. His sermons, especially during Advent and Lent greatly helped the spiritual and doctrinal renewal of the Italian Church of the time. As his fame grew he came to know of another great preacher, Bernardine of Siena, who befriended him (and defended him when he was accused of idolatry). His devotion to communicate the name of Jesus urged him to condense the name into in the famous three letters IHS, (the Latin meant **Jesus hominum Salvator**, Jesus the Saviour of men). He became so famous that he was summoned by Popes as their envoy to sue for peace and as a diplomat to carry out other



delicate missions.

He was later appointed inquisitor of the Fraticelli, a certain sect of the Franciscans who claimed to practice the rule of St. Francis "to the letter and without glosses," while professing various doctrines that had been declared heretical by the Church.

Another position that he held with great zeal and efficiency, though without achieving the desired results, was his role as an inquisitor of the Jews (1427) or rather his battle against usury which was widely and efficiently practiced by them. Popes, princes, governors of cities, and especially by Queen Joanna of Naples, engaged him to enforce the laws against usury in general and especially against the Jews, trying to force them to comply with the provisions the ecclesiastical and civil law of the Kingdom. He had enjoyed great success because of

the support he received from those who mattered.

### A Preacher for Europe

1451 to 1456: the second period John's life was truly "European." When the Emperor Frederick III, finding that the religious faith of the countries under his suzerainty was suffering grievously from the activities of the Hussites and other heretical sectaries, appealed to Pope Nicholas V for help, St. John Capistrano was sent as commissary and inquisitor general, and he set out for Vienna in 1451 with twelve of his Franciscan brethren to assist him. It is beyond doubt that his coming produced a great sensation. Aeneas Sylvius (the future Pope Pius II) tells us how, when he entered Austrian territory, "priests and people came out to meet him, carrying the sacred relics. They received him as a legate of the Apostolic See, as a preacher of truth, as some great prophet sent by God. They came down from the mountains to greet John, as though Peter or Paul or one of the other apostles were journeying there. They eagerly kissed the hem of his garment, brought their sick and afflicted to his feet, and it is reported that very many were cured... The elders of the city met him and conducted him to Vienna. No square in the city could contain the crowds. They looked on him as an angel of God." John's work as inquisitor and his dealings with the Hussites and other Bohemian heretics have been severely criticized, but this is not the place to attempt any justification.

What message does John of

Capistrano have for us today? First of all, it was his total dedication to the cause of the Gospel through preaching in Italy and Central Europe and opposing the heresies of the time. He "he could remain an example of a man who during the final stage of the Middle Ages, was able to understand the problems and aspirations, anxieties and expectations of his listeners, and adapt the Gospel to that situation... and a message he left for preachers of all time, be proclaimers of the message to everyone, all the time, be researchers of the true meaning of divine revelation in order to make it relevant to every generation and to every culture."

John of Capistrano left a deep impression on the Church of the fifteenth century because of his preaching which was overwhelming and compelling (and his sermons were not really a show: they lasted two to three hours, with some exceptions ... even longer). He achieved much apostolic success and many conversions that were made possible because of the healing powers that he exercised especially for the poor, and not least for his multifaceted holiness. **"John appears to be a disciple of Christ, who follows him by example as closely as his human condition allowed him. His imitation of Christ was so primal and his adherence so Gospel-driven.** His love of peace, linked to an innate sense of justice and a burning charity toward his neighbour, put him in the category of the saints.

He is still a saint for today ... and he is relevant in many ways. □



# IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

## **Paid For Standing**

The owner of a manufacturing firm decided to make a surprise tour of the factory. Walking through the warehouse he noticed a young man lazily leaning against a packing crate.

The factory owner angrily said, "Just how much are you being paid?"

The young man replied, "A hundred dollars a week."

The owner pulled out his wallet, peeled off five \$20 bills and shouted at the young man:

"Here is a week's pay — now get out and don't come back!"

Without a word, the young man stuffed the money into his pocket and left.

The warehouse manager, standing nearby, stared in amazement.

"Tell me," the boss asked him, "How long has that guy worked for us?"

"He didn't work here," replied the warehouse manager,

"He was just the Fed-Ex guy delivering a package."

## **Parenting Tip**

Mary Siegel was almost crazy with her three young kids. She complained to her best friend, "They're driving me nuts!! Such pests. They give me no rest and I'm half way to the funny farm."

"What you need is a playpen to separate the kids from yourself," her friend said.

So Mary bought a playpen. A few days later, her friend called to ask

how things were going.

"Superb! I can't believe it," Mary said.

"I get in that pen with a good book, a chocolate bar, and the kids don't bother me for hours!"

## **The Half Cake Diet**

A woman in our diet club was lamenting that she had gained weight.

She'd made her family's favorite cake over the weekend, she reported, and they'd eaten half of it at dinner.

The next day, she said, she kept staring at the other half, until finally she cut a thin slice for herself. One slice led to another, and soon the whole cake was gone. The woman went on to tell us how upset she was with her lack of willpower, and how she knew her husband would be disappointed.

Everyone commiserated, until someone asked what her husband said when he found out.

She smiled. "He never found out. I made another cake and ate half!"

## **Getting To Heaven**

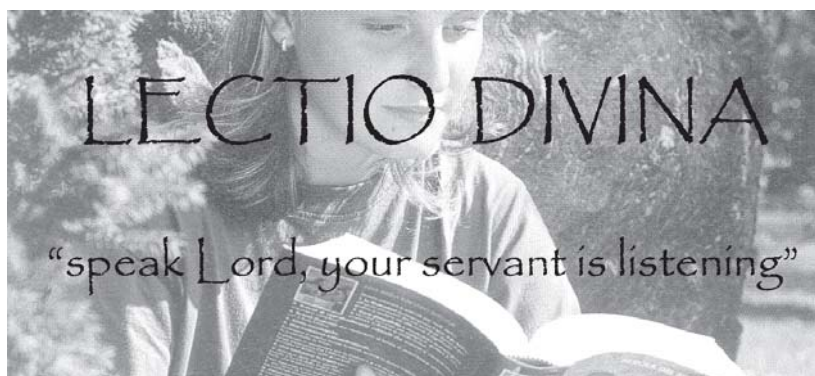
The pastor was talking to a group of young children about believing in Jesus and going to heaven.

At the end of his talk, he asked, "Where do you want to go?"

"Heaven!" they all piped up.

"And what do you have to be to get there?"

"Dead!," one boy yelled. □



## LOVE AND THE WAY

(Lk 10, 29-37)

by Marco Rossetti

**T**he lawyer asks: “Who is my neighbour?” And Jesus takes this issue and moves it from a theoretical standpoint to one of practical nature and asks in turn: “And on which side are you on?” He totally turns the problem over! As the story unfolds, the questioner now becomes the questioned. It is a parable of encounters between people on the move. Maybe it was the situation that suggested the context to Jesus. In fact, he himself was on a journey. He too was on his way to Jerusalem (Lk 9.51 to 19.28), where he would be the neighbour offering himself as a ransom for our salvation. In the figure of the Samaritan it is Jesus who gave himself to us forever in the highest measure of his love for others: he gave his own life.

### The road that leads to love

Twenty-seven kilometers: it was a long road from Jerusalem. It descended 750 meters down to the plains of Jericho and was built at 350 m below sea level. It was an impassable and dangerous road



that exposed the traveller to being lynched by criminals. For Jesus, the road becomes a stage on which two opposing scenes will be played out: one is painful, the other is moving. In the first scene charity suffocated, knocked down almost killed by those whose vocation should have been to practice the precept of loving God without neglecting

one's neighbour (Deut. 6.5; Lev 19.8). What is it that suffocates and kills the love?

However, the drama proceeds and in a touching manner charity comes alive and triumphs thanks to an anonymous individual, identified for the benefit of the people as a Samaritan – someone who was not allowed to interact with the Jews. It was a man of the tribe of Judah who now lay beaten and stripped naked on the road. Centuries-old prejudices and religious rivalries had raised an insurmountable wall between the two peoples who lived under the same skies and adored the same God. What is it that blocked and prevented love?

### **The road of love**

Verses 33-35 are central to the narrative. Looking more closely one finds a double set of verbs: the first set is foundational in character, the second more practical.

"Drawing near," "seeing" and "having compassion" are actions that we quickly measure ourselves. "Having compassion" is the kind of behaviour that makes the difference. The Greek form is *esplanchnisthe*, expresses the movement from one's bowels which are contracted because of a particularly strong emotion. It is usually expressed as a verb to mean the depth of the mercy that God has for his people. It very that perfectly describes God: someone who has compassion for humanity. Well, the Samaritan is a person who makes a place for God within himself so he can do the same. The Levite and the priest had passed the victim and had seen him, but their capacity to love had been blocked as they walked on the other side unlike

God. The Samaritan, however, made room in his life to imitate God and was urged into action by charity. Here, then, there is the second set of verbs: "draws near"; "pours oil and wine" - old remedies - on the wounds, "bound them up," set the poor man "on his ass," and pays from his own pocket to ensure that he was carefully provided for.

### **God's ways**

With the story of these encounters Jesus responds to the question "Who is my neighbour?" As if to say "Make no mistake: this is a false question! Everyone is your neighbour," and he concentrates on how one ought to love and he makes it abundantly clear why one should love: in imitation of God.

This is the love that Jesus intended. It was not meant to be a principle that needed a discussion, but a manifestation of God himself that needed to be practiced. God is love and no one can ever say that he loves God whom he cannot see if he does not love his brother whom he can see! All that has been said can be summed up in these words: "Go and do likewise!"

We ought to understand that reaching the heights of charity cannot be achieved unless one listens to the Word. That is what Jesus will teach Martha on the occasion of the great festive banquet that she gives at her house for her close friends and it is no coincidence that the story follows closely on the story of the "Good Samaritan," becoming a kind of prolongation but more especially a kind of relevant conclusion (10.38 to 42). □

## YOUR HEART IS A WINDOW

by His Holiness

*On June 20, 2011, after pausing for a moment in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Holy Father spoke to the youth of the Diocese of San Marino-Montefeltro in Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, the cathedral square.*

Dear Young People,

I am very glad to be here, among you and with you! I sense your joy and the enthusiasm that is characteristic of your age.

Today I would like to recall the famous episode in which as the Lord was setting out, someone — a rich young man — ran up and kneeling before him asked this question: “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mk 10:17).

Perhaps today we would not express ourselves this way, but the meaning of the question is exactly the same: what should I do, how should I live in order to live truly, to find life. We can therefore see in this question the broad and varied human experience that leads to the search for meaning, for the profound sense of life: how to live and why to live. Indeed, the “eternal life” to which the young man of the Gospel referred not only means life after death, he wanted to know: how must I live now in order to already obtain the life that can then also be eternal.

Therefore, in this question the young man expresses his need to find meaning, fullness and truth in daily life. A person cannot live without this search for the truth about himself — who am I, what am I living for — a truth that is an incentive to widen his horizon and to go beyond material things, not in order to flee from reality but to live it in an even truer way that is richer in meaning and hope, and not merely superficial.

Moreover, I think - and I have seen and heard in your friend's words - that this is also your experience. The important questions we bear within us remain, they always resurface. Who are we? Where do we come from? Who do we live for? These questions are the highest sign of the transcendence of the human being and of our innate capacity not to stop at appearances. And it is precisely by looking at ourselves with truth, sincerity and courage that we understand the beauty, and also the precariousness of life and feel a dissatisfaction, a restlessness that nothing material can assuage. In the end all promises often prove inadequate.



## HOW OPEN ON THE INFINITE

- Pope Benedict XVI



Dear young people, it is precisely in being open to the whole truth about ourselves and about the world that we perceive God's project for us. He meets the needs of every human being and enables us to know the mystery of his love. In the Lord Jesus who died and rose for us and gave us the Holy Spirit, we are also enabled to share in God's own life, we belong to God's family. In him, in Christ, you can find the answers to the questions that accompany you on your way, not superficially or easily but by walking with Jesus, by living with Jesus. The encounter with Christ is not resolved in adherence to a doctrine or a philosophy; what he proposes to you is to share in his life itself and

thus learn what I am. Jesus answered the young man who asked him what he should do to have eternal life, in other words, to live truly, with an invitation to detach himself from his possessions and added, "Come, follow me" (Mk 10:21).

Do not be afraid to face difficult situations, moments of crisis, the trials of life, for the Lord goes with you, he is with you! I encourage you to grow in friendship with him through frequent reading of the Bible and of the whole of Sacred Scripture, through faithful participation in the Eucharist as a personal encounter with Christ, through commitment within the ecclesial community, journeying on with a good spiritual director.

Do not give in to an individualistic or selfish logic! May you be comforted by the witness of the many young people who reached the destination of holiness: only think of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, of St. Dominic Savio, St. Maria Goretti, Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati and Bl. Alberto Marvelli — from this land — and of many others, unknown to us but who lived their time in the light and power of the Gospel, and found the answer: how to live, what they must do to live.

To conclude this meeting I would like to entrust each one of you to the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. Like her, you can say and renew your "yes", and always magnify the Lord with your life, because he gives you words of eternal life! So courage, dear young men and women, on your journey of faith and of Christian life. I too am always close to you and accompany you with my Blessing. Thank you for your attention! □



## MORTGAGE ON TOMORROW (II)

*from Fr. Ian Douulton's collection*

*Fred and Pauline have been married and they are getting off to quite a start. Pauline has great plans for the house she has in mind while Fred is worried about how he can make all her dreams come true. The reader will notice there is a lot that is left unsaid and how much happiness and peace of mind is at stake...*

**T**hey already had a living room couch, Fred reminded Pauline as the manager's back was turned. Pauline turned away. She thought they needed something smart. The manager overheard and added: "Buy your furniture a room full at a time. If you don't maybe you may never be able to match the pieces. They don't grow old together you end up well you know what I mean." Pauline jumped up and stood beside the manager as if she agreed with him. The manager already had them in his grasp. He exclaimed: "Exactly, it's a pleasure to meet somebody who appreciates quality. This is definitely your set." Fred seemed to look as if he was making calculations in his mind. The manager said in a low tone that if they were worried about terms, the installments came only once a month and they wouldn't even feel it. Pauline pleaded once more with Fred and in exasperation, which he tried to hide, he agreed. The manager was thrilled and

simply said: "Fine I'll put the 'SOLD' tag on it right now. You've made a very wise choice!" Evidently Fred made the mistake of reminding Pauline that they had come in to look at the Breakfast room set and so the manager simply decided to lead them to that section. Anyone seeing Fred would have thought that he looked like he was being led to the gallows.

The house was so easy to fix up and Pauline thought Fred would be proud of the way she filled it with lovely things. But she began to worry about her husband. He seemed to lose interest in everything. He worked steadily, he got his promotions, but he grew slow and stodgy he began to hump over like an old man. Time after time, Pauline had to prod him into getting ahead.

One evening while he was reading the papers Pauline was doing the dishes. From the kitchen she said: "Fred, you know that old car is beginning to eat us up with repair bills. It would be cheaper in the long run to buy a new one. Wouldn't it?" Fred simply said without looking up: "And what do we use for money?" Pauline seemed to have the ingenuity of a stockbroker as she said: "Oh, we'll get enough from the trade on the down payment and we'll save on something else. I'm just thinking

of you, Fred. The right car is important to a man in your position." Pauline tried to look concerned and said that Fred looked tired and Fred raised his voice for the first time in a long time: "Alright, I look tired, because I *am* tired." Pauline tried to sound rather concerned and Fred agreed that he had been under a terrible strain lately. Once more she offered to go back to work. Fred wouldn't think of it. He put his paper down and said rather sternly: "Seven years ago you were the girl who promised me we'd have a home and children." Pauline assured him they would but later.

Fred lost his temper and said that there was no need of the silver coffee service to which Pauline replied rather confidently: "Well, Fred, when people come, *your* friends, and I am paying for it with my own money if I'm willing to go out and work to provide nice things for our home." Fred went into the bedroom but not before he had the last word: "This isn't a home, it's a warehouse!"

This went on for three years more. And Pauline wondered where it would have ended if she hadn't stayed home from work that Monday with a cold and if that phone call hadn't come. A voice said: "May I speak to Mr. Fred Armstrong, please?" Pauline answered: "Mr. Armstrong isn't home. This is his wife speaking, may I take a message for him?" The voice continued: "If you would, please, this is the Security National Bank calling. We've discovered an error in his last deposit, there was a cheque not

listed. The balance should be \$1304." Pauline seemed confused and said: "I'm sorry, you must have the wrong party. We do all our banking at Federal Trust." The voice insisted: "Oh, no, we have an account in the name of Mr. Fred Armstrong, at 1535 Crestview Road, Echo Park. Is it the correct address?" Pauline hesitated: "Yes, it is. I'll tell my husband. What did you say that balance was? Was it about \$1500?"

As soon as Fred came home she confronted him: "Fred, why didn't you tell me about that account? Why did you let me think we didn't have any money?" Fred immediately told her that if she had known about it there would be nothing left. Pauline was amazed that there were almost \$1500 and Fred had not told her. She went up to him as said: "You cheated on me." Fred simply smiled sarcastically and said: "You make it sound as if I had gone with another woman." She was very upset and thought it was just as bad. "Yes, I guess, to you it's just the same." Pauline tried to get back at Fred by telling him that he wanted money more than Pauline. He told her it wasn't true and he has saved this up for emergencies they might both need." Pauline immediately thought of the many things they could buy with that money. Fred took off his coat and just fell into the sofa and with his head in his hands, he said: "Oh, Pauline, don't start that, I can't stand it tonight. You never rest, or let me rest till you get that money. It's like everything you want. You plan and scheme and pressure. If one

way fails you try another. You think of more and more and more and you're never satisfied. Why do you have to have all these things? What's driving you?" Then Pauline burst into tears: "Just because I like to have everything nice. All right I hate cheap things. I hate cheap places to live. I was brought up in them. Dark noisy apartments stuck up over a restaurant or a laundry full of smells, other people's dirty scuffed furniture. Sleazy clothes that made your skin crawl when you put them on. I hated them. Second hand bargains a 5 and 10 cent existence. I got out of it, now I won't go back to it." Fred simply looked up and just said: "So that's it. So that's all I am to you all I ever was a ladder to bring you out of the dumps." Pauline backed towards the dining table and said: "Fred that's not fair, you don't know what it was like. You didn't get away from it Pauline, you brought it here with you. And it's destroying us both." Fred continued. "It's ruined your chance to be happy; it's robbed me of my children. It's only what's made me hate you." Pauline was shocked: "Hate me? Don't say that you don't understand. I only..." Fred just picked up the car keys and walked towards the door. Pauline was rooted to where she stood and just shouted: "Fred, where are you going?" Without looking back he said: "Out, what's the difference." Pauline made an effort to come after Fred: "Fred, wait. I want to talk to you. Fred." But he was half way down the driveway.

The phone rang an hour after

Fred drove away. For a moment Pauline thought it was Fred calling to say he was sorry. But it was a stranger who spoke. It was a rather cold voice that said: "Mrs. Armstrong, this is Dr. Evans at the emergency room." Pauline was stunned: "Emergency Room? Has something happened to Fred?" The voice reassured her: "You try to be calm Mrs. Armstrong, your husband's resting comfortably now." And the voice continued: "Oh, he evidently had a heart attack at the wheel of his car. Could you come at once please?"

Now Pauline sat by Fred's hospital bed wondering that the cost of the operation that may save her husband's life was \$3,500. What more proof could she have that Fred's way was right and hers was wrong? She stole from her own husband to make up for the things she had missed as a child. She let her husband wear himself out in the struggle to satisfy her sick longings. It was she who put him in that hospital bed. She thought of the children she might have had. The children she traded for tables and chairs and she was sick at heart.

As an afterthought she heard her conscience say: "Pauline, you are one of those people who will not offer up to God as a sacrifice the things they cannot have. They turn their desires into debts that others must pay even at the price of tragedy. Pauline, you had better pray now. Pray that your husband's tired heart will take up its beat again so that you will have another chance to make this up to him." □

*(Concluded)*

*Continued from pg. 9*

other - against a person, a race, a place? A lady in our quiet little street showed real callousness and lack of consideration for neighbours because she allowed continuing noise. She could have dealt with it but didn't, in spite of complaints.

When I made a real effort to overcome my prejudice, and get to know her better and understand something of the many problems she had, I found myself becoming for her instead of against her. I ended up liking her! Because of this new freedom, I was able to raise this problem of noise nuisance with a good result - probably because I could do so without my blood pressure also being raised.

### **Obsessive Preoccupation**

Being 'set' on one's own plan or course of action can deaden creativity and smother fresh ideas, as well as ditching inner freedom. A friend of mine - at one point in life - had shown commendable courage by accepting what she felt to be God's guidance concerning an important relationship. Yet nowadays she doesn't seem to be open to anything other than an all-consuming determination to get back some property of which her family was dispossessed during the war. This absorbs most of her time, energy and money. While this continues, one senses there's not much chance for God's promptings to be heeded - in this or any other matter.

### **Shifting the Blame**

Blaming something or someone else, including even God himself, is certainly another dead end. Something happened to me once



that made me feel completely forsaken. The incident seemed to have left a scar on my faith, and it was some time before it dawned on me that I was actually blaming the Almighty for letting me down, and hadn't forgiven him for it. It came home to me; the sheer arrogance of thinking it was God who needed forgiveness, rather than my needing it because of my attitude.

I said sorry to God and promised that, even if there were further apparent setbacks, I would accept them as part of his wiser and better purposes for me. Freedom came alive again, and almost immediately there followed a profound turn for the better in our affairs.

Such experiences, though limited, have strengthened my conviction that full freedom is much more within our reach than we may have thought. □

# DON BOSCO THE CATECHIST

by Natale Cerrato (T/A:ID)

*"I had the bright idea to gather all the little children and teach them Catechism and I was barely five years old."*

**I**n keeping with the pastoral guidelines of the Church, let us reflect on Don Bosco as a catechist (a catechism teacher) so that parents, catechism teachers and young people themselves who want to talk about God to their peers may find herein some valuable suggestions that they can use as educators of the Faith.

Don Bosco himself often mentioned that his mission to young people was this, "I had the bright idea to gather all the little children and teach them Catechism and I was barely five years old. I was convinced that the only reason for which I had been placed on this earth was this."

His dream at the age of nine speaks of his call and the method he was to employ in teaching Catechism. It would be the method of Jesus the Good Shepherd and Mary. They had been given to Don Bosco as his teachers. While acknowledging that this was his special mission, the first model that was placed before him was the person of his mother, Mamma Margaret. If Mary was the first Catechism teacher of her Son we can say that Mamma Margaret followed in the same vein.

The first concern of this 29 year-old mother who was a widow with three children, (John 2, Joseph 4 and Anthony 9) and her semi-paralyzed mother-in-law,



CHARACTERISTICS

## DON BOSCO'S

was to instruct them in the Faith, teach them obedience and to educate them not to be afraid of fatigue and hard work.

### Parents must speak to their children of God

The little home at Becchi was a domestic church. Within those walls Margaret very competently taught her children the rudiments of the Faith.

Through the simplicity with which she expressed herself, she instilled in the hearts of her children a lively experience of the presence of God. She taught them to admire the wonders of creation, to be grateful to God for his gifts; she taught them to live according to His will and be wary of offending Him.

Today, since there is a conspicuous absence of religion in our society, children urgently need to hear their parents speak to them about God just so that it is from them that the children first



hear the truths of the Faith.

A recent document of the Italian Bishops about education to the Faith states that parents should share their Faith in the context of concrete experiences. The child lives within an educative network right up to the time that signs of a future personality reveals itself.

The child bears the image of God within himself/herself and this will be seen in its early religious experience. Hence it is important that parents show a keen interest in their child's progression in the assimilation of the Faith. An exemplary reference point is the holy family of Nazareth where Jesus grew in wisdom, age and grace before God and man (cf. Lk 2:52).

### **The Catechesis of Prayer**

This was how Margaret taught her children to develop these attitudes. She told them that their first thoughts in the morning should be directed towards God in the form of their morning prayers. It was also a very touching sight to see this poor mother gather her children every evening to pray the Rosary before the image of the Consolata that was above the hearth.

On feast days John followed his mother to church, that little church of St. Peter's at Morialdo. There his mother prepared him and his brothers to encounter the Lord. Keeping in mind some fond memories she reminded her children what the Word of God had said, the eternal truths and the Catechism that she learned



every Sunday from the chaplain of Morialdo.

John sought to imitate his mother's desire to repeat the priest's Sunday sermon that he could repeat it to his companions, to the elders and to those others who were curious enough to stop to watch the tricks that he performed in the courtyard of his house. On weekdays Margaret and her children busied themselves in the field engrossed with the rhythm of the seasons turning their work into a great liturgy of life. Perhaps, it was there that the contemplative dimension to Don Bosco's life was born and from where his union with God would transform his work into prayer.

How many parents today tell their children that prayer means talking to God? How many will educate them to get familiar and cherish the Word of God? Many catechists should see the need of prayer and the Bible in order to open youngsters to the things of God and the Faith? The Italian bishops in a recent document indicate that the Sacred Scriptures are the primary book of

Catechism.

### **The Catechesis of the Sacraments**

Don Bosco himself admitted: "I was eleven when I was permitted to receive my First Holy Communion. Though some of my companions had learned all their catechism they were not admitted to First Communion till the age of twelve. Since the church was far away I was unable to go to the parish priest. It was only my mother who gave me my religious instruction. She wanted me to receive this great Sacrament as soon as possible and for this reason she did everything she could to prepare me in the best possible manner."

It was moving to see how this mother prepared the heart of little Johnny for his First Confession and Communion. She confessed first and then she introduced her son to the confessor. After making three confessions the great day of his First Communion arrived and her only concern was that John should spend as much time as possible with God avoiding any kind of manual work.

How many parents would teach and accompany their children for their First Communion or their Confirmation like Mamma Margaret did?

John never forgot what his mother had taught him. Even when he was only twelve years old and had to leave home and move to Moncucco as a farmhand, he put into practice all he had learned and practiced. He became a catechist in his new adopted family. He led the prayers, promptly stopped work as soon as he heard the Angelus bell. On Sundays he reached the parish

church well in advance and he went for Confession. He even received Holy Communion. At Moncucco he even started his first Oratory. There he taught the little ones Catechism.

### **The Catechesis of Charity**

Mamma Margaret's catechesis helped him to recognize Christ in the poor and this was demonstrated in her willingness to assist the poor, vagrants, those who were sick and all those who needed her assistance. She made sure to involve her children in these works of mercy.

It was this model of sensitivity towards the poor that touched Don Bosco's heart and urged him to devote himself to the poorest of the poor.

It was his mother's sincerity and frankness that guided him to chalk out his plan of life which was to devote himself totally in the service of young people.

He was not discouraged by the coldness and the aloofness of some stern priests of his time. As a youngster he was hurt but his optimistic temperament did not allow him to wallow in self-pity. We are aware of how heroically Mamma Margaret supported the priestly vocation of her son. She even came to his assistance during the last years of her life as she helped the poor boys that her son had gathered at the Oratory of Valdocco on the outskirts of Turin.

Educating youngsters to encounter God, accompanying and assisting them in discovering the plan God has for them from all eternity is one of the most beautiful expressions of love that parents can show their children. □

# walking with the Church



## *The Beatitudes*

*by St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland*

**Q.** Tell me something about the Beatitudes.

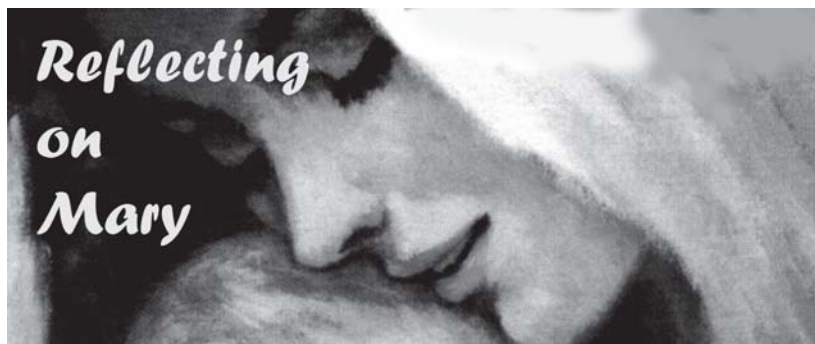
**A.** The Beatitudes are at the heart of Christ's teaching. I think you could describe them as being the central proclamation of his teaching. In the gospel of St. Matthew chapter 5 Jesus spells out what real Christianity is all about and goes on to add that only in such a way of living will we find happiness – true happiness. 'Happy the pure in heart, happy the gentle, happy the merciful, happy the peacemakers...

What Christ tells us in the Beatitudes is a complete reversal of what present day society tells us. The world in which we live today keeps hammering home to us that money, power, position, possessions, drinking a particular brand of beer or whiskey and all the other things that are glorified on T.V. and radio are the way to happiness but Christ tells us otherwise. Our true happiness he says lies in unselfish lives of justice, mercy, gentleness and peace.

God made us to be happy but he also made us free – and lest we go the wrong way about achieving happiness he gave

us the Beatitudes to be our guide – these happy attitudes are our guidelines. Be merciful, be peacemakers and so on. They are ideals – they are the heights we aim at and measure our standards by. We are very fortunate in the fact that the history of our church throws up examples of individuals who lived the beatitudes – like St. Francis of Assisi, St. Dominic, St. Therese of Lisieux. In our own times we have the example of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. There are millions of unseen others whom we know nothing about. □





## MARY, AT THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA OF TIME

*by Maria Ko Ha Fong, FMA*

**D**addy, what was God doing before he created the world?" Through this simple yet intelligent question, often uttered by children, little Mary Mazzarello unconsciously entered the realm that is normally the purview of philosophers, theologians and profound thinkers.

"The beginning" and "the end," the "proto-logy" and the "eschatology," the Alpha and the Omega of history are not matters of abstract speculation or idle curiosity, they are born in the depths of the human spirit. In his dialogue with humankind, God responds to these queries that he has placed in the heart of the creature he made in his own image. In the first book of the Bible - Genesis - in mythical and wisdom language he shows us something of what man was "in the beginning" and in the last book, - Revelation, in a prophetic and apocalyptic style, he alludes to the "end times." Above all, he offers us the key to these two extremities of time: Jesus Christ, who is "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (Rev. 2,

13) In him all time that elapses between these two extremities has become the "history of Salvation." Next to Jesus Christ, however, there is a mysterious presence, a discreet and a quiet presence: a woman.

### **From Genesis to Apocalypse**

In the account from the book of Genesis, after man's sin, God pronounces sentence on the serpent and at the same time announces the good news: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed: she will crush your head and you will wait beneath her heel" (Gn. 3, 15).

In the book of Revelation, the story is presented symbolically as a fierce struggle. On the one hand, there is the woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and twelve stars around her head (Revelation 12:1-2) and on the other, there is the destroying dragon, trying to devour her newborn child who is finally defeated.

Between the beginning and the end, the story is one complex plot

of a struggle waged between the Kingdom of God and the forces of evil. Yet from the beginning, this history is marked by the promise of salvation. Already at the moment of man's fall into sin and his punishment one hears the proclamation of the Good News and in the end God's promise of victory is assured.

But who is this woman? The tradition of the Church sees in book of Genesis and the book of Revelation the figure of the woman as Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Church. Thus, *Lumen Gentium* (LG) includes Mary as "already prophetically foreshadowed in that promise made to our parents after their fall into sin and her victory over the serpent." (n. 55) For John Paul II Mary is the one who from "the early chapters of Genesis to Revelation, accompanies the revelation of God's saving plan for humankind" (*Redemptoris mater* 47).

### **The Beginning and the Fulfilment**

Just like the woman in the beginning, Mary is a sign of hope, a bearer of the promise of salvation. Like the woman of the fulfilment, she is the sign of God's ultimate victory over Satan, of good over evil, of light over darkness, of love over hate, of hope over delusion, joy over sadness and life over death.

From the dawn before sunrise to the woman clothed with the sun, from creation "in the beginning" to "the new heavens and the new earth" of the final fulfilment, the whole of history is clearly imbued with hope. The Church, journeying through time encounters difficulties and trials and looks at Mary who shines as

"a sign of sure hope and solace." (LG 68) Mary ensures that the time is right and the end will be happy. She guarantees that God is faithful and will keep his word. "From the beginning I proclaim the end...my plan remains valid, I will fulfil all I intend." (Is 46,10).

### **Immaculate Assumed into Heaven**

Not only is the woman in the book of Genesis and the book of Revelation destined to fulfil God's plan of Salvation, but it is the vocation of every human being on the way to God. The two realities in the life of Mary that have been defined by the Church as a dogma of faith, the 'Immaculate Conception' and the 'Assumption into heaven' highlight that plan.

In Mary, most holy, conceived without sin, shines the original beauty of the human person planned and willed by God from the beginning of time. What Adam and Eve should have achieved, now shines in Mary in complete brilliance.

In Mary, assumed into heaven, we see the first fruits and the anticipation of humankind saved from death and fully configured to the resurrection of Christ. Mary reminds us of what it is to be human and if she was holy and faithful to God, her life prophesizes that it is possible for us if we accept to walk in the footsteps of Christ.

If you could ask God: "What was your first dream of us? What did you think of us "in the beginning", before the creation of the world?" He would probably have replied: "Look at Mary." And if we asked, "What do you think we will be like "at the end of time," his reply would still be "look at Mary." □



### VATICAN

The ordinations of 20 new priests for the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X are "illegitimate, period", said Vatican spokesman Jesuit Fr. Federico Lombardi.

Although Pope Benedict XVI lifted the excommunication of the society's four bishops in 2009, said Fr. Lombardi, he made it clear that until the society had reconciled fully with the Vatican – particularly regarding its position on doctrinal questions – its members have no official standing in the Church.

The group ordained four priests in mid-June in Winona, Minnesota, USA; 12 new priests in late June at its headquarters in Ecône, Switzerland; and four new priests on July 3 at its seminary in Zaitzkofen, Germany.

Responding to reporters' questions on July 5, Fr. Lombardi quoted from the letter Pope Benedict wrote in 2009 explaining the status of the society: "As long as the society does not have a canonical status in the Church, its ministers do not exercise legitimate ministries in the Church... In order to make this clear once again: Until the doctrinal questions are clarified, the society has no canonical status in the Church, and its ministers ... do not legitimately exercise any ministry in the Church."

Fr. Lombardi said, "The ordinations are, therefore, to be considered illegitimate."

The Vatican spokesman declined to comment on the

discussions that the society's leaders began with the Vatican after the Pope lifted the excommunications.

In February, Bishop Bernard Fellay, the society's superior general and one of the bishops whose excommunication was lifted, said, reconciliation talks with the Vatican would soon be coming to an end, but with little change in the views of either side.

In an interview published on the society's website he said that in addition to disputes over the changes introduced by the Second Vatican Council, new problems have been created by the beatification of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict's call for an inter-religious prayer meeting in Assisi, Italy in October.

Bishop Richard Williamson, another of the four bishops, reportedly did not participate in the ordinations in Germany. The lifting of his excommunication set off a way of criticism of the Vatican because of his denial of the extent of the Holocaust.

Just two days after the ordinations in Zaitzkofen, lawyers represented him in a German court-room, where he is appealing a conviction on charges of denying the Holocaust.  
CNS

### OXFORD

Catholic Church groups have joined trade unions in the European Sunday Alliance, which will campaign to protect Sundays and ensure fairer conditions for family life.

"Some people say there can

never be a return to work-free Sundays – but the many working together in this alliance don't share this view," said Ms. Anna Echterhoff, legal adviser for institutional and social affairs at the Commission of Bishops' Conferences of the European Community, one of the organisations supporting the alliance.

The alliance was launched on June 20 in Brussels by 65 Church organisations, unions and civil associations. Among them are Europe's Catholic Youth Network, the Central Committee of German Catholics, representatives of the German bishops and the European Jesuits, Poland's Solidarity union, France's Force Ouvriere and the Danish food workers union.

It also includes family organisations from a dozen countries.

In a July 4 interview with Catholic News Service, Ms Echterhoff said Sundays were protected under EU law as a rest day for children and adolescents. She said she hoped work-free Sundays would be reinstated under an EU directive now being prepared.

In a founding declaration, the European Sunday Alliance said decent working hours were of "paramount importance" to citizens of the European Union, which should uphold "the social contract of a modern European society" by encouraging "reconciliation of professional and family life."

"Only a well-protected, common work-free day enables

citizens to enjoy full participation in cultural, sports, social and religious life, to seek cultural enrichment and spiritual well-being," said the declaration." *CNS*

## VATICAN

Documents from the still-sealed World War II section of the Vatican Secret Archives will be part of a major exhibition of Vatican papers hosted by the city of Rome.

The exhibit marking the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vatican archives will be open from February to September 2012.

Bishop Sergio Pagano, prefect of the Vatican Secret Archives, said that "a very limited number" of documents related to World War II would be among the 100 documents and objects from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century placed on display.

The archives will present "four or five documents, accompanied by photographs" that will convey a sense of the drama of World War II, which marked the pontificate of Pope Pius XII, said the bishop at a July 5 news conference.

But a real picture of the Pope and his actions during the war will not be possible until the archives have organised and catalogued all the papers from his pontificate and the Pope has authorized their being opened to scholarly study and scrutiny, he said.

The Pope has been criticized by some for his "silence" during the Holocaust.

Bishop Pagano said the material, which is still being chosen for the exhibit, probably will consist of testimonies or diaries of Nazi victims. *CNS* □

## LOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER

We are grateful to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady Help of Christians. Our brother has returned to us on 18th June 2011 after 27 years. *Bertha Quadros, Thane West*

My sincere thanks to Our Lady for the successful completion of my CPA programme and advancement. *Ernest Gabriel Collins, Australia*

My brother was suffering from a certain skin ailment on his neck and he was shown to a skin specialist. Even after a long period there was no relief. During this time I prayed to Our Blessed Mother and my brother was cured within no time. I am very grateful to Our Mother Mary. *Fiona D'Souza, Mumbai*

Our sincere gratitude to Our Blessed Mother for the gift of a baby boy after 11 years. *Brigitte and Alex Fernandes, Mumbai*

Thanks to Jesus, Mary and Joseph for blessing our family at all times. Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians.

*Julius & Sandra Colaco, Goa*

I am Puneet Pandian and I am 10 years old. My parents, my sister and I were travelling in our car and we were visiting the house of a friend. On the way a truck collided with the car and it was destroyed completely. Only the driver suffered a few injuries. I am so grateful to Our Lady for protecting me and my family from this danger.

*Master Puneet Pandian, Belgaum*

I thank our blessed Mother Mary, through her intercession my family has been blessed with many favours. Thank you Mother, especially for helping my 3 children to get into the field of their choice and for success in their studies.

*Anna Q. Barneto, Goa*

Thank you dear Lord Jesus Christ for the gift of a life partner through the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary. *Priya D'Souza, Nerul*  
I am very grateful to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady for being with my daughter at a time of great need.

*Mrs. M.B. Paul, UK*

On our trip to Matheran we left a bag with all our valuables on Neral station and we realised it after 1 1/2 hour so we went back and by the grace of God and the protection of Our Lady we found the bag. We also thank Our Lady for the gift of a healthy baby even though the doctors predicted otherwise. All our prayers and requests were answered and we are so grateful.

*Rupali D'Souza, Mumbai*

My sincere thanks to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady for protecting me from a serious accident while I was traveling from Pune to Goa by car and for granting me a safe trip to Mulshi and back.

*M.W. Dodd, Pune*

I am grateful to Our Lady Help of Christians for helping my daughter to score 90% in her Std X ICSE examinations. I pray she gets into a good college.

*Flory, Mumbai*

## THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



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

Many thanks to Our Lady Help of Christians - through the intercession of the three Hail Marys - for the many favours granted.

*Angela, Dubai*

My sincere and heartfelt gratitude for the many blessings and favours received through the recitation of the three Hail Marys. Mother Mary please continue to intercede for my family 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.

*Antonietta Simoes, Macau, South China*

Thank you very much dear Mother for granting me an increment in my salary after 4 years.

*Arnawaz J. Cabral, Kuwait*

I am writing to say a big "Thank You to Jesus and Mary" for the numerous favours received all through life. Recently through the faithful recitation of the three Hail Marys we were protected from a very serious accident when we were standing in front of a gas stove and all of a sudden we heard a loud noise when the pressure cooker exploded but not the gas stove. It could have been very serious but we were protected.

*John Gregory, Chennai*

Thank you for the miraculous favour: I received my visa on time and I owe it to the faithful recitation of the three Hail Marys.

*Mrs. Catherine Dias, Mumbai*

I am grateful to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady Help of Christians for granting my son a good life partner, for success in my son's and daughter-in-law's examinations. Thank you for blessing my daughter with a child after a healthy pregnancy and a safe delivery. Thank you for blessing her with a house and a P.R. Visa to New Zealand.

*Celine Anthony Rodrigues, Mumbai*

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians for helping our family to get our family sponsorship renewed through the recitation of the three Hail Marys.

*Janet and Oscar Patel, Bahrain*

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary, through the recitation of the three Hail Marys my family and I have received countless blessings.

*M. Lobo, Mumbai*

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

Thank you Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for your special blessings, graces and protection on me and my family.

*Mrs. Vivian Ross, W. Australia*

My sincere and grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and all the saints for helping me succeed in getting the keys of my Colva flat at Goa as the tenant was not vacating the premises.

*Catherine L. Dias, Mumbai*

Sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco, Dominic Savio and all the saints for the favours received.

*Cassandra Kinny, Mumbai*

Thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for helping my son complete 7 years of studies in the UK and for protecting him from all harm.

*Mr. Stanislaus & Bernadette Tavadia, Mumbai*

Thank you Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and all the saints for granting my son a negative blood report. I also thank you for curing my second son of a spinal injury. Thank you also for all the graces received.

*E. Simoens, Mumbai*

**THANKS  
TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO**



Our heartfelt thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for granting our daughter a happy marriage.

*P.A. Joseph, Kerala*

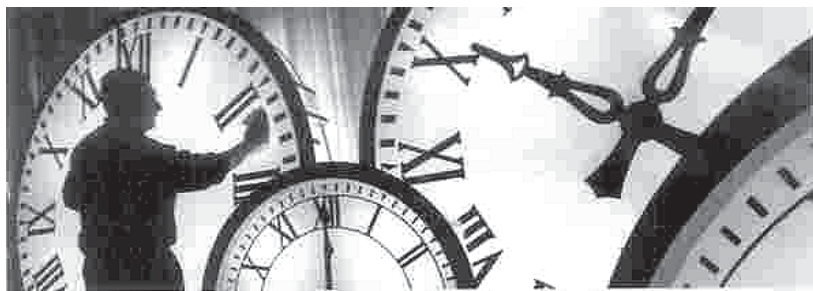
Our grateful thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the blessings showered on my family and our grandchildren for being successful in their field of sports and education. Please continue to bless our family.

*Ashlyn & Patricia Saxby,  
W Australia*

Thank you dear Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the delivery of my four children without any difficulty.

*Efrana & Ceney Monteiro, Goa*





## OUR TIME, RIGHT NOW

by Sr. Stan Kennedy

**I**n the midst of this fast, competitive, industrialized, consumer-driven world, people are starting to say that this cannot go on. More and more people are asking the question: What can be done to reverse this trend towards extreme individualism? How can we fill this gap between individualism and community? How can we live our lives caring for ourselves and being supportive and comforting to others? How can we make a difference in our time?

I believe we can only fill this gap and make a positive, constructive difference by taking responsibility for our time and our society and by developing a sense of ownership of the world and times we live in. This is our time and it is up to us to choose our destinies, just as it was the time of Francis of Assisi, Gandhi in India, Martin Luther King in America, Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Don Bosco... and the many other countless people who emerged against the odds in their own time.

This is my right time here, right now, in this isolated spot or in this village, town, city or suburb. What happens here and now is my responsibility. It is not a matter of doing great things; it is a matter of doing and saying small things with responsibility and courage. □

### **APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER**

**OCTOBER 2011**

#### **General Intention: *The Terminally Ill***

*That the terminally ill may be supported by their faith in God and the love of their brothers and sisters.*

#### **Missionary Intention: *The World Mission Day***

*That the celebration of World Mission Day may foster in the people of God a passion for evangelisation with the willingness to support the missions with prayer and economic aid for the poorest churches.*

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## **MARY WAS THERE**

Our family of four was returning home after a restful holiday. On the highway we were stopped by a traffic jam and our car came to a halt behind a private bus. We were suddenly banged by a truck from the rear. The impact smashed our car between the two large vehicles. Our children were squeezed at the back, my wife was unconscious with a head injury and the steering wheel was wedged into my chest and that prevented me from breathing. There was a full LPG cylinder at the back. We didn't think we would survive. Our sincere thanks to Jesus on the crucifix in our car and Mother Mary's protection our lives were saved. *Mr. Jude Everett, New Delhi*

**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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