

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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CONTENTS

From The Editor's Desk: <i>Of Questions and Answers.....</i>	3
Becoming God's Instrument - <i>Fr. Erasto Fernandez. SSS...</i>	4
Walking With the Church: Decorum in Church.....	7
Prayer, A Precious Gift - <i>Fr. Tom Clancy.....</i>	8
Dorothea Chopitea (1816-1891)..	10
Fr. Tony D'Souza - <i>Fr. Savio D'Souza sdb.....</i>	11
Witnesses In And For Our Times: <i>St. Isidore of Seville (April 4)</i> - <i>Mario Scudu.....</i>	12
Lectio Divina: To See the Face of God (Mk 14:1 - 15:47) - <i>Carlo Broccardo.....</i>	17
Quietspaces: Beyond the Walls of Death - <i>Pope Benedict XVI.....</i>	18
The Second Chance - <i>Fr. Ian Doulton's Collection..</i>	20
Historical Aspects of Don Bosco: Don Bosco's First Mass... - <i>Fr. Elias Diaz, SDB.....</i>	24
Reflecting on Mary: Mary's Visits - <i>Roberto Spataro.....</i>	28
NewsBits.....	30
<i>In a Cheerful Mood.....</i>	15
<i>Loving Children to their Loving Mother.....</i>	32
<i>The Devotion of the Three Hail Marys.....</i>	33
<i>They Are Grateful to Our Lady & Don Bosco.....</i>	34
<i>Thanks to Dear St. Dominic Savio.....</i>	35



*Only
in the silence
of Holy Saturday
will we cherish
the love that
Good Friday
held for us
and the joy
that awaits us
at Easter!*

Cover: **The Crucifixion**
William Luberoff



From The Editor's Desk OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

A six-year-old girl once approached Monsignor Ronald Knox on a railway platform and asked, 'What time is it, please?' 'It is four o'clock, dear,' he replied, as he gently patted her on the head. The little girl paused for a moment to absorb this information and then continued her enquiries with a disarming innocence, 'But why, Father, is it four o'clock?' The learned monsignor was stunned into silence.

It is very easy to ask searching questions, but it is not so easy to find answers for them. Ever since we began our college studies we have been engaged in a profound intellectual conversion which has led us to question just about everything, not least the Christian values which we inherited from your family.

In many ways this development is healthy, and, indeed, necessary, but it is not without its dangers. There is always a risk that we may be overtaken by the demon of arrogance and restrict the truth to the limits of our own understanding. Or there is the greater risk that we may confuse naiveté with simplicity and abandon that child-like vision which penetrates the secrets of the Gospel.

If we want to understand the message of Christ, we must be prepared to see the Gospel as good news, and not just good advice. And the good news is that 'we have been called to liberty': to live as a son, not as a hireling; to live as a friend, not as a slave.

On the day we were baptized we were drawn out of the isolation of sin and into the Community of Christ, which we recognize as the Church. At the same time, we were drawn into the family of Jesus, which we honour as the Holy Trinity. We were given Jesus to be our brother. We were given his Father to be our father, and his Spirit to dwell in the heart of our being.

Ever since then the Holy Spirit has been guiding us to the Father by prompting us to live as Jesus lived and to love as Jesus loved. He has been urging us to do whatever is good; not just because it is commanded, but because it is good; and not just because we have to, but because we want to.

As the fox said to the Little Prince: 'It is only with the heart that one can see rightly.' I pray our searching continues and that it will lead us eventually to the point where knowledge and love converge in wisdom. For it is only at that point that we will be ready to open our heart to the friendship offered by Jesus, to the freedom offered by the Spirit, and to the eternal joy promised by the Father.

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

BECOMING GOD'S INSTRUMENT

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

It was a quiet Sunday morning at Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Church in Callahan, Florida.

Seated among other worshippers waiting for the Mass to begin was Jackie Hall who despite her calm exterior, was severely tormented within. She was thinking seriously of committing suicide and this was to be her last outing. Plagued by a prolonged depression which clung to her for several months, "I felt useless," she confesses. Her husband and children were at a loss to help her change from a morose and withdrawn woman back into the gracious, outgoing person they remembered. Now the emotional pain was closing in on her with a vice-like grip. She could bear it no longer, and there seemed no other way out.

Last Desperate Plea

"When we arrived at church, I knelt and prayed with all my heart. I told God how much I loved him and begged him to guard me against whatever was happening to me." She prayed for a sign, just a little hint of reassurance or comfort. Once again, God seemed lost in a cold stony silence.

Several pews back and across the aisle, Judy Davies also knelt in prayer. She usually attended Sunday Mass at another church. However, this morning Judy noticed a woman just within her line of sight. She didn't know her, but as Mass began, something

about the woman caught Judy's attention. "I sensed a presence there which was hard to describe, but the longer I looked, the more I seemed to see a light around her, like an aura." The cloudlike glow was particularly strong behind the woman, as if some kind of force was protecting her... But, from what?! There was no danger in this peaceful church. Judy was even more astonished when she realized that no one else was reacting to this strange light. Was she the only one who could see it?

"I struggled to keep my thoughts on the Gospel and the homily as my eyes kept drifting to her, to see if the aura was still there. It was." By the time Mass ended, the apparition had faded which threw Judy into a quandary. Should she stop the woman and tell her about it? "...a pretty hard thing to do," Judy says. "But I felt that I had to tell her." Judy followed the woman out and tapped her on the shoulder. When the woman turned, Judy plunged into her message. "You are truly blessed," she said all afire. "I saw a glow all around you during Mass. It looked like an angel was looking over your shoulder, protecting you. I just had to tell you!" A Stitch in Time...?

An angel! Jackie was almost speechless as she stared at the woman. "Well, thank you," she murmured politely and watched as Judy turned away. But her thoughts were racing. An angel,

watching over me, caring for me? Could this be the sign she had asked God for? Suddenly, she felt an enormous weight begin to lift and a small stirring of hope. Tears filled her eyes. She turned to her husband. "I need help. I want to live."

New Life

Jackie's life changed quickly. She found an effective medication and began to feel more like herself. One day at a meeting, she heard herself volunteering to visit a cancer patient in her parish, something unlike any activity she had ever participated in. It was the start of what would become a visitor programme, ministering to the sick and the shut-ins in the neighbourhood. The programme became extremely popular, and after some consideration, Jackie agreed to become its director. Gradually, she came to understand that her own suffering had prepared her for this kind of ministry; in God's eyes, there had been a purpose for it all! She had developed a wellspring of patience and tenderness for others in need, and she was constantly amazed and grateful when her work bore fruit. There was just one mystery left: who was the woman who had brought her the reassuring news that critical morning in church? And would she even recognize her if they were to meet again?

Mystery Solved!

One evening, Jackie attended a parish meeting, and a visitor asked the group a question about the Catholic Church's teaching

on angels. The host answered the question, and then Jackie spoke up. "I have an angel story. In fact, I think an angel saved my life!" As the audience sat mesmerized as Jackie described her illness and that desperate morning when she almost gave up. "I haven't seen that woman since, even though our parish is small. I sometimes wonder if she was an angel in disguise." From the back of the room, someone broke the silence. "No," she said hesitantly, "I think it was me!"

Jackie gasped as Judy stood up. Both recognized each other and then embraced as the rest of the group wiped away tears. How had they failed to become acquainted during the last several years? Neither had an answer! God's timing is perfect. Judy is enormously grateful that she took a risk and reached out to Jackie on that important morning. "Call it instinct, intuition, or a sign from God, but if someone feels the presence of the Lord - through his angel messengers - that person should share it."

God Needs You

What seems like a rare or strange miracle is actually pretty normal after God's momentous decision to send his Son in human form, so that anyone who believes in Him may be saved. While on earth Jesus went about making God's love and compassion visible in human form, even unto his cruel death on the Cross. But after his Resurrection, was that visible, tangible expression of God's love to cease? Not if other human beings, inspired by the example

of his Son Jesus, would come forward to offer their enfleshed persons to become His instruments so that He could continue to show people in need His compassion and love. Now, isn't this exactly what Judy had done for Jackie that fateful Sunday morning? She allowed herself to be alerted by God's Spirit that right in front of her was a desperately hurting person. Somewhat hesitant, Judy reached out to Jackie with perhaps just a sentence of two – but what a miracle ensued!

How does all this happen? It stands to reason that the Holy Spirit would not have much success had he to try alerting a person who by conscious choice was habitually thoroughly self-centred! It is because Judy was in the habit of availing herself of small opportunities to be aware of the needs of others and reach out to them, that she was able to literally 'save a life' without her even realizing it. Judy had achieved the very purpose of the Eucharist and of her coming to Church that Sunday.

For after all is said and done, why do we celebrate Eucharist on a Sunday? Not merely to pray for our own personal needs, nor to obtain peace, a job or whatever. We come in obedience to the call of Jesus, "Do *this* as a Memorial of me!" The '*this*' of this command is further elaborated in the words of the Institution Narrative: 'On the night before he suffered, Jesus *took* the bread, *said the blessing*, *broke* the bread and *gave* it to his disciples ...' After which is added, "*Do this ...*" And wasn't this exactly what Judy did, broke



of her very self by making the effort to stop Jackie and share her inner message, mysterious though it was?

Living More than Celebrating

It is almost a cliché now to say that the Eucharist is not so much for celebrating as for living! This simply means that unless we are authentic in what we do at the Eucharist viz. 'take the bread of our lives, and after giving thanks to God, breaking ourselves and sharing with our needy neighbours' our Eucharist remains truncated and incomplete. So, the major part of our Eucharist is what we do 'at the altar of the world' rather than at the altar in the Church. What marvelous opportunities do we not have all through the day to make God's care and compassion for his beloved children visible for those who are in need, sometimes desperately in need?

However, it is the symbolism of 'breaking the bread' that must be realized in our day-to-day lives. That bread stands for each minute of our lives in which we have the power to choose 'Self' over everything else. Yet, there is an excess of *self* all over the world and that is why our Universe is drowning in an ocean of pain and suffering. It is only when those who celebrate

Eucharist meaningfully live out their self-gift to the Lord and his brethren that the total amount of selfishness in the world will be substantially reduced, making the entire world a much better place to live in. While this seems a daunting task, in actual practice it can be very invigorating and transforming. Sometimes we might even 'see' the difference we make in the lives of others when we 'turn the other cheek and go the extra mile!' At other times, we might not, but even

then, our faith assures us that our positive Christ-like attitude does make a difference at least in sowing a tiny mustard seed which will one day grow into a great shrub.

Could we decide then never to celebrate the Eucharist without breaking at least one visible, tangible aspect of our self-centredness in favour of the others around us? Try it out and see the difference it makes primarily for yourself and for so many others! □

walking with the Church



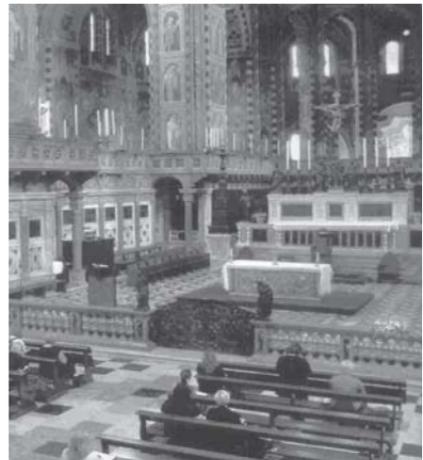
Decorum in Church

From St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland

Q *Do we really realise that the Lord of Lords abides 24 hours day and night, a prisoner in the Tabernacle just for us? People seem to have forgotten that there is an increasing lack of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament. MT G, Hamburg, Germany*

A The above is an abbreviated version of your letter. I understand your concern but I personally believe that the vast majority of people who come to Church will not intentionally behave in a way that is disrespectful to the Blessed Sacrament. A few quiet words with a neighbour after Mass cannot be classed as a lack of reverence. However we should all remember that the church is 'a place of prayer' and people should be allowed to pray in silence without distraction.

Silence facilitates dialogue with the Lord. In deference to those who wish to pray, those who, after Mass, wish to talk should try and do so in the porch or preferably outside the church doors and so allow others who want to pray to do so in peace. □



PRAYER, A PRECIOUS GIFT

by Fr. Tom Clancy

It was some time ago, and almost the end of the school holidays. Johnny was sitting on the parapet of the bridge fishing, when I stopped to chat. He liked fishing. His Dad had shown him how to do it. When Dad was free at weekends he often went fishing with Johnny. They talked a great deal about their shared hobby, and Johnny liked that a lot.

'It's great when we go fishing together,' Johnny said. 'We share all about it. We talk about the different baits, hooks and flies.' Then, with a serious look on his face, Johnny said, 'I often wonder why Dad doesn't talk to me about Jesus as he does about fishing. Nobody talks to me about Jesus. I'm told to say my prayers, of course, but it's not like fishing: nobody tells me how to pray.' Then, fixing his eyes on me, he said, 'You are a priest, aren't you? Do you talk to people about Jesus and about prayer? That is your job, isn't it?'

A Shared Adventure

It was a question that rattled me, and I went away challenged. The challenge is to share our awareness of God's love, thereby enabling one another to grow into a deepening appreciation of our awesome friendship with him. Each one of us is enriched when we share our own faith with another, and when we become part of another person's faith journey. A lone ranger Christian is a contradiction.

Prayer is at the heart of our

relationship with God, for it is a time when we focus our attention on him. True, prayer on one's own is vital, but learning from others and teaching one another how to pray is a lifelong shared adventure. To go it alone is to miss the fullness of God's plan.

God our Friend

Prayer is precious because we believe that God is a friend, and we desire to grow in this friendship. Friendship needs to be nurtured, since, as we know, it can live or die. But how is friendship nurtured?

It usually seems to happen, defying analysis. And yet we know that talking, listening, understanding, forgiving, accepting, appreciating the other, giving time, sharing high moments and low moments - all of these contribute to building up our friendship with each other. Things are no different between God and ourselves.

Friends need each other. We need each other to grow, to mature, to have a sense of belonging. We, who believe, need God in so many ways. We come as needy friends to the one who can answer our needs. In our prayer we come with open hands.

Friends fail each other. Misunderstanding, hurt and selfishness can corrode even the strongest bonds. There must be confession, forgiveness and healing in all our friendships. With God, the opportunity for a fresh start is at our heart's door

each time we come to pray.

There are friends and friends. Special friends are sacred. There are times and places in our lives and hearts for them alone. In turn, we know that we are special to them, and trust and depend greatly on their friendship. God's friendship is special in a way that no other friendship can be. He is special to each one of us in a unique way: that's what makes him God. For our part, we must put aside a special time for him each day. Helping people to find that time and to use it well is an essential task of every Christian parent, teacher and pastor.

Introducing Others to Jesus

To help people in this way demands that we ourselves live a life of faith, and that we enjoy sharing that faith without being overburdened with the responsibility. As teachers of prayer we are always excited by the unique development of each human person, accepting limitations as Christ does, and believing that it is all God's work and is safe in his hands.

Knowing that God is as powerfully at work in this generation as ever before gives us the confidence to let God surprise us, as the Spirit touches hearts in new and varied ways. It encourages us to recognize the presence of the Spirit in new forms of prayer, and to be touched by the enthusiasm of others.

Choices for the Young

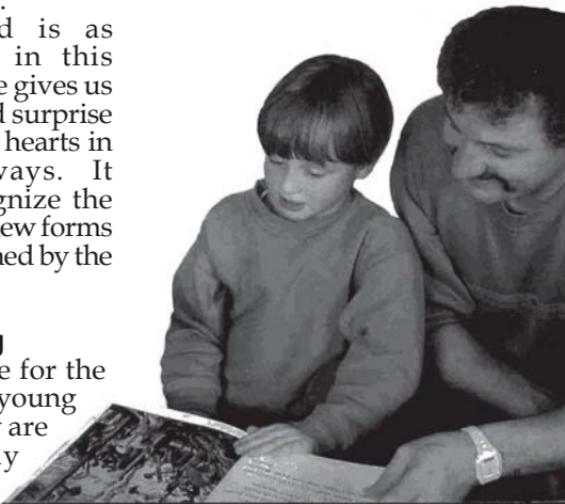
There is a great tussle for the minds and hearts of the young all over the world. They are presented with many choices. Some woo

them with the promise of total freedom and pleasure, suggesting drugs and license as the road to happiness. The example of others seems to say that the key to success is to grab what you can get. Still others offer violence as an acceptable and powerful tool.

Traditional leaders teach that conformity to the tried and tested ways of the elders is the only way the young can build a better world for themselves. They find it hard to see it that way, however, in view of the mess the world is in. It's no wonder they are often confused and unsure, experimenting with the different options and sometimes getting hurt or lost in the process.

The only lasting alternative is to introduce them to Christ as guide, teacher and friend. He guides to true greatness through the teaching enshrined in the Gospels. He leads by his own example of service to others and

(Continued on pg. 22)



DOROTHEA CHOPITEA 1816 - 1891

Dorothea was born in Santiago, Chile, on the 5th June 1816 to a rich Catholic family, rich in children (18 of them!) and worldly goods. Three years later, soon after Chile gained independence from Spain, don Pedro Nolasco Chopitea brought his family to Barcelona.

When she was 13 Dorothea chose Fr. Peter Nardò as her spiritual director and he guided her for around 50 years. She was well educated. On Fr. Peter's advice, she married an excellent young man. They remained happily and faithfully married for 50 years. In the end, Joseph would say: "Our love grew daily". Six children were born to them. Dorothea's main concern was to live mainly for God. She developed her piety: daily Mass, Communion, rosary. But the most extraordinary of all was her charity towards everyone, especially the poor.

Her love for the poor came first in her scale of values: "The poor will be my first thought". She was called "God's almsgiver". She went with her husband on his various journeys, and was received by Leo XIII who treated her with great deference. Some thirty foundations resulted from her and her husband's charity: kindergartens, schools, hospitals,



workshops...

On the 20th September 1882, already a widow for several months, she wrote to Don Bosco: "I would like to found a work for young workers and orphans in Barcellona's suburbs". Don Bosco accepted, and Dorothea thus became a Salesian Cooperator. In April-May 1886 Don Bosco met with the holy benefactress, ever ready to help him. When Don Bosco died, Donna Dorothea began three new works, amongst which was Santa Dorothea College in Sarrià, entrusted to the FMA, and for which she gave money that she was keeping for her own old age.

Don Bosco called her "our mamma of Barcelona". Dorothea, like Mamma Margaret before her, died poor on the 3rd April 1891. She is buried at Barcellona-Sarrià.

Process began on 4 April 1927. Declared Venerable 9 June 1983□

**FR. TONY D'SOUZA, SDB***"The Man For All Seasons,**Confessor, Divyadaan Institute of Philosophy, Nashik*

As he celebrates the Golden Jubilee of his profession, we salute this man who has been in the thick of the action in our province for the past five decades. Fr. Tony D'Souza was born in Mumbai on 25th January 1943, to Patrick and Mary D'souza.

Fr. Tony joined the Aspirantate at Tirupattur in 1956, and made his first profession on 24th May 1961. He was ordained a priest in 1970. Immediately after his ordination, Fr. Tony was posted at Lonavla. A year later he was transferred to Pune as the Rector and Vice Provincial. In 1976, at the young age of 33, he was appointed Provincial of the Mumbai province – youngest Provincial at that time.

At the request of the then Rector Major Fr. Egidio Vigano and on behalf of the SPCSA, he accepted to develop the delegation of East Africa. He headed the delegation and developed a flourishing Salesian presence. These were years of hard work which led him to better understand and cherish his Salesian vocation.

In 1992, as a result of his continual ill health, he decided to return to Mumbai and was warmly welcomed by the province. In 1996, he was appointed Provincial of the Mumbai Province for a second time. After which he spent a year in Sri Lanka. In 2003 he was asked to take up residence in



Kuwait and pioneer the Salesian presence in the Arab world. He managed to lay a strong foundation for the Salesian apostolate in Kuwait.

Presently, Fr. Tony D'Souza is in Nashik where he directs the young brothers in their initial formation administering the sacrament of reconciliation. Fr Tony has always been a good speaker, and his talks, good nights and sermons are eagerly looked forward to. Today, instead of preaching, he lives out his sermons and is an example to all of us. He now has the opportunity to sit in prayer and listen to the Lord speak to him; this enables him to interpret what the Lord is saying to each of his penitents, clients and community members. □

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Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE (560-636) Bishop and Doctor of the Church (April 4)

by Mario Scudu (TA/ID)

When thinking of the men and women saints, several Christians tend to put them into fixed stereotypes: as holy people who did long penances and performed great works of charity. This was true, but it is a bit 'reductive.' Saints were all the above but not only the above. There is no need to scroll down the entire hagiography (the story of the saints) to prove that. Consider, for example, the saint of this month: St. Isidore. For several years he was the zealous bishop of Seville, but he was also a man of culture, a great scholar, perhaps the greatest of his time. Thanks to the undisputed authority that his works enjoyed throughout the Middle Ages on many subjects, he was studied in various schools of theology. He founded a school that had a profound impact on culture and teaching practices in Western Europe. His writings on Spain and the barbarian invasions of the time are now considered to be reliable sources



of history. But the work (among many) that made him famous throughout Europe are *Etymologiae*, a work of great erudition, containing subjects such as grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, medicine and history and information concerning the rites and theology of the Church. Today this is

considered a veritable encyclopedia of knowledge: the first of its kind and it was thanks to him.

The writings of Isidore have not only historical significance but they also show us a man deeply interested in culture in general and spiritual matters, eager to educate not only the clergy but also simple folk. He also gave great importance to the study of Scripture. He said, "If one wants to be united with God he should pray and read (scripture) much."

In the iconography that records him, he is depicted in Leon in Spain and is represented as a bishop holding up a book or a pen. The symbol for St. Isidore, however, is a hive, for his incredible effort in collecting the doctrine of antiquity.

Another detail: Blessed John XXIII was inspired by a portrait of this ideal bishop St. Isidore, Bishop of Seville. He wrote in *De Officiis Ecclesiasticis*: "He who is given the authority to educate and train people for their good must be holy in all things and above reproach of any kind (...). Every bishop should be marked as much by his humility as by his authority..." He would also maintain that love surpasses in importance all the other gifts, and without which all the other virtues are worth nothing." Wasn't this a spiritual self-portrait of Isidore without reproach?

Our Little brother Isidore

There is no precise information about the childhood and youth of Isidore. His father Severiano came from Cartagena and was of

Hispano-Roman noble extraction. When the invasion of the Visigoths was about to take place, the family, in order to escape the horror and devastation left behind, (in addition to the Arian heresy) moved to Seville where he was probably born. Isidore was already preceded by his brothers Fulgentius (a saint) and Fiorentina (also a saint). He was orphaned but was educated by Leander (a saint), his elder brother. It is interesting to note what he wrote as an *epilogue* to the rule of Fiorentina his sister, a nun: "Finally, I beg you, my dearest sister, remember me in prayer and do not forget your little brother, Isidore; because our parents left him under God's protection and that of his living siblings and without concern for his tender age and they fell asleep in the Lord. He considers himself truly like a son... and entirely entrusts himself to your love, so that you will love him very much with the love Jesus and pray for him because you know that he was tenderly loved by our parents."

He probably went to school at the Cathedral of Seville, founded by his brother Leander and then when he succeeded him as bishop in 601, Isidore also inherited his rich library. He was now an intellectually mature man who already wrote works of great erudition, always moved by pastoral zeal.

Isidore was not only a man of culture but was also an excellent and effective pastor of souls. He was so well known and respected that other bishops came to consult or to request his

intervention on issues including civil and ecclesiastical issues or even to organize local synods or councils.

Isidore has earned a place in the history of the Church for having presided over two councils: the first, in Seville and the second a national council in Toledo in 633 (called the Fourth Council). Both helped to promote and implement important decrees and in both cases Isidore was outstanding before the entire assembly as an administrator and an intellectual. But he will be especially remembered for his work in Toledo. In fact, I believe that it was on the basis of his theology that the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation was accepted even by the subsequent Councils. In particular, he was greatly respected in the West because of his view on the Christological problem of the so-called Filioque... In that Council an agreement was also reached among the bishops for liturgical uniformity throughout Spain. This was an important step, since there was a discrepancy in the liturgy which was the subject of continual doctrinal disputes. Each diocese also had to adopt a school of formation for their clergy after the example of the one already he founded in Seville.

Of particular importance today: the Council determined that none of the Jews, in the various territories should be forced to become a Christian.

The Exercise for a Happy Death

Worthy of note was his strategy of facing death in readiness: of one's passage to

God. He gave a detailed account that critics deem reliable and that shows us once more the depth of his holiness and how greatly he was esteemed. His death occurred in 636 and was reported by his deacon: "He felt close to the end, he did not know how. He opened his hands, always generous, but then with greater width, and for six months or more, every day, he shared his goods with the poor (...)" Then, when his illness of the stomach became more acute he called two of his bishops to assist him in that last hour. "As they led him from his palace to the basilica of St. Vincent, a great multitude of poor, the clergy, religious and all the inhabitants of the city wept with loud cries and tears, as if each had a throat of steel and in the midst of weeping and wailing they welcomed him and accompanied him. In the basilica, at a place between the choir and the chancel he made his confession. Then, asking that one of the bishops vest him in sackcloth and ashes over his other vestments, he raised his hands and prayed..." He then asked pardon from the bishops and laity present and received the 'Eucharist.' He died four days later, on April 4, 636. There are two more important dates: At the Council of Toledo in 653, Isidore was proclaimed "an outstanding doctor and the most recent glory of the Catholic Church". The second was in 1063 when his remains were moved to Leon, where they are to this day. This move proved providential because it was easier for the countless pilgrims to visit it on their way to Santiago de Compostela. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Marriage Counselling

A husband and wife were at a party chatting with some friends when the subject of marriage counselling came up.

"Oh, we'll never need that. My husband and I have a great relationship," the wife explained.

"He was a communications major in college and I majored in theater arts."

"He communicates real well and I just act like I'm listening."

Owl Friend

Each evening bird lover Tom stood in his backyard, hooting like an owl - and one night, an owl finally called back to him.

For a year, the man and his feathered friend hooted back and forth. He even kept a log of the "conversation."

Just as he thought he was on the verge of a breakthrough in interspecies communication, his wife had a chat with her next door neighbour.

"My husband spends his nights ... calling out to owls," she said.

"That's odd," the neighbour replied. "So does my husband."

Tea For Two

Little Johnny was left to fix lunch.

When his mother returned with a friend, she noticed that Johnny had already strained the tea.

The two women then sipped their tea happily while having lunch.

"Was it hard finding the tea strainer in the kitchen?" Johnny's

mother asked.

"I couldn't find it Ma, so I used the fly swatter," he replied.

His mother nearly fainted, so Johnny hastily added:

"Don't get excited, Ma, I used the old one!"

Weather Forecaster

To tell the weather, go to your back door and look for the dog.

If the dog is at the door and he is wet, it's probably raining.

But if the dog is standing there really soaking wet, it is probably raining really hard.

If the dog's fur looks like it's been rubbed the wrong way, it's probably windy.

If the dog has snow on his back, it's probably snowing.

Of course, to be able to tell the weather like this, you have to leave the dog outside all the time, especially if you expect bad weather.

Sincerely, *The CAT*

Fourth Grade Logic

A fourth-grade teacher was giving her pupils a lesson in logic.

"Here is the situation," she said. "A man is standing up in a boat in the middle of a river, fishing. He loses his balance, falls in, and begins splashing and yelling for help. His wife hears the commotion, knows he can't swim, and runs down to the bank. Why do you think she ran to the bank?"

A girl raised her hand and asked,

"To draw out all his savings?" □



TO SEE THE FACE OF GOD

(Mark 14,1- 15:47)

by Carlo Broccardo

Palm Sunday is also called “Passion Sunday” because it is the beginning of Holy Week. That Sunday’s gospel of the Passion of the Lord was once called the “Passio.” Now we have the possibility of carefully analyzing the text of Mark which is the shortest among the four evangelists and that was what we heard on Palm Sunday this year (1st April). Those who were unable to participate in that Sunday’s liturgy may well have read it from their Bibles. It is the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of the Gospel (Mk 14:1 to 15:47).

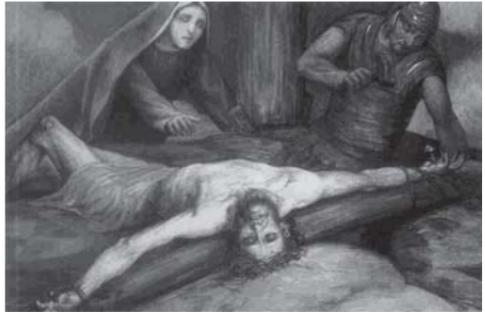
As usual, let us pick one character from this Gospel narrative among the many present in the two chapters. Let us pause at the Roman centurion who is present at the death of Jesus on the cross. He has a key role in the entire Gospel of Mark even though he occupies only a single verse: “The centurion who was standing there in front of the cross saw how Jesus had died, ‘This man was really the Son of God!’ he said.” (15:39) It was too short a short verse to understand a character! Absolutely not, at least not for Mark, who manages to condense into those few words his whole Gospel. But to deeply

know our centurion and the importance that he has, we must quickly look at the characters that precede him in the passion narrative.

The first ones to attract our attention are the disciples, but unfortunately they are a sorry sight. The worst of all is Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus for little money; but the others were not far behind; they, after having received Jesus’ ‘last will and testament’ at the Last Supper, could not watch with him one hour in the garden. Then, when the guards come to arrest him, they abandon him and ran away. Mark is merciless in describing the scene: “Then all the disciples left him and ran away” (14:50). That was exactly the opposite of what had happened on the first day along the Sea of Galilee: “At once they left their nets and went with him” (1:18). The disciples no longer followed Jesus, but left him, everyone of them.

The leaders of the people of Israel were no better. In fact, Jesus revealed himself openly to them but they did not believe him, “Again the high priest questioned him, ‘Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed God?’ ‘I am’ Jesus answered” (14:61 to 62); their only response: they tore their clothes. They accused him of blasphemy and led him to Pilate to be put to death. It was not over: later, when they passed before him they mocked Jesus as he was crucified: “He saved others, but he cannot save himself! Let us see the Messiah, the king of Israel come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him!” (15:31 to 32) To mock the crucified Jesus was for

them a triumph. They were able to eradicate an uncomfortable enemy, but more especially they eliminated him in order to show that he was not the long-awaited saviour because he was unable to save himself by coming down from the cross, implying that someone who could not work a miracle for himself was good-for-nothing.



So Jesus died: betrayed and abandoned by his own and vanquished by his enemies, tortured and killed like a criminal (let's not forget that crucifixion was the most painful and most ignominious punishment). His last words are the beginning of a Psalm of lament: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (15:34 cf Ps 22:2) The centurion was there and before him he witnessed what, to all intents and purposes, appeared to be a total failure. And what did he do? He would not join the mocking nor did he justify the death, but neither did he estrange himself from the episode. The Roman centurion made a profession of faith that was by far the most beautiful and the most sublime in the Gospel. He did something that so far, not even the disciples could do. He said, "This man was really the Son of God!" (15:39)

It was incredible, because he is the most unsuited person to have made such a complete act of faith: a centurion and a Roman soldier. For all we know from the Gospels he was not even a Jew; he did not know the Bible and had probably never encountered Jesus before. How was it possible for someone to go to such lengths as to repeat what only God had

thus far defined (that Jesus is His son: at the Baptism and the transfiguration)? Our task is not to guess but to read the Gospel of Mark, "the centurion who was standing there in front of the cross saw how Jesus had died. 'This man was really the Son of God!' he said." (15:39) He only saw Jesus die on the cross, and he understood.

This is Mark's message: The cross tells us who Jesus really is. To have had a blessed past (as the covenant people), to have experienced the mighty miracles of Jesus, to have been moved by his gracious words... was not enough! Even his disciples experienced that until a few days earlier but that was not enough. You have come up to the cross to understand who Jesus is, to truly know him. And there he will reveal to you his face. The Gospel according to John and Paul's letters delve into this subject a lot, trying to explain why the cross is called 'the glory' of Jesus: it was his love for us that was revealed in his cruel death on the cross. The Evangelist Mark does not elaborate, but only makes this announcement: those who wish to see the face of Jesus (and of God) have only to look at the crucifix. □

BEYOND THE WALL

by His Holiness P

Let the Resurrection of Jesus “break down the walls of death” and open a new land to humanity “united at last with God’s Heaven”. These were the words of the Holy Father addressed to the faithful in St. Peter’s Square before leading the recitation of the Angelus on Sunday morning, 10 April 2011. The following is a translation of the Pope’s reflection which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

There are only two weeks until Easter, and the biblical readings of this Sunday all speak of resurrection. They do not yet speak of Jesus’ resurrection – which will irrupt as something absolutely new – but of our resurrection, the one to which we aspire and that Christ himself granted to us, rising from the dead. In effect, death is for us like a wall that keeps us from seeing what lies beyond; and yet our heart desires to go beyond this wall, and even if we are unable to know what it hides, we nevertheless think about it, we imagine it, we express our yearning for eternity with symbols.

To the Hebrew people, in exile far from Israel, the prophet Ezekiel announces that God will open the tombs of the deported people and bring them back to their land, to lay them to rest in peace (cf. Ezekiel 37:12-14). This ancestral aspiration of man to be buried together with his fathers is a longing for a “fatherland” that will receive him at the end of his earthly toil. This notion does not yet contain the idea of a personal resurrection from the dead, which appears only toward the end of the Old Testament, and still at the time of Jesus it was not accepted by all of the Jews. After all, even among Christians, faith in the resurrection and eternal life is often accompanied by many doubts and much confusion, because it is a reality that goes beyond the limits of our reason, and requires an act of faith. In today’s Gospel - the resurrection of Lazarus - we hear the voice of faith speak from the lips of Martha, Lazarus’ sister. In reply to Jesus who says



WALLS OF DEATH

Pope Benedict XVI

to her: "Your brother will rise again," she says: "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day" (John 11:23-24). But Jesus responds: "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he die, he will live" (John 11:25-26). Here is the novelty that breaks and goes beyond every barrier! Christ destroys the wall of death, in him there dwells the fullness of God, who is life, eternal life. For this reason death did not have power over him; and Lazarus' resurrection is the sign of his complete dominion over physical death, which before God is like a dream (cf. John 11:11).



But there is another death, which cost Christ the most difficult struggle, indeed the price of the cross: It is spiritual death, sin, which threatens to ruin the existence of every man. Christ died to defeat this death, and his resurrection is not a return to the previous life, but the opening to a new reality, a "new earth," finally reconnected to God's heaven. This is why St. Paul wrote: "If the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit dwelling in you" (Romans 8:11). Dear Brothers, let us turn to the Virgin Mary, who already participates in this Resurrection, that she might help us to declare with faith: "Yes, O Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God" (John 11:27), to discover truly that he is our salvation.

(After reciting the Angelus the Holy Father addressed the pilgrims in various languages. In English he said:)

In today's Gospel, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead as a sign that he himself is "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Let us renew our faith in Christ's promises as we prepare to unite ourselves to the Church's celebration of the Paschal Mystery. Upon you and your families I invoke the Lord's abundant blessings!

(In Italian he said:)

I wish you all a good Sunday and a good week. Thank you, have a good Sunday. ◻

THE SECOND CHANCE

From Fr. Ian Douulton's collection of stories

The central character in the incident you are reading about happens to be a landlord. But the point isn't intended to apply solely to landlords. This story has a lesson for everyone who has any control over the living and working conditions of other human beings.

You may find this incident hard to believe. But everyone who knows Mr. Randolph Whitney finds it difficult to think he imagined it. Mr. Whitney has a somewhat ponderous, literary and pompous mind but hardly enough imagination to guess at tomorrow's weather. The story is entirely too logical to be the product of delirium.

At any rate according to the way Mr. Whitney always relates the incident, he left the Pioneer Club at 6.15 pm, walked two blocks to the town hall garage, got his car and started down Madison street. Just beyond the Municipal centre where the streets are lined with apartment houses, he saw a little red haired girl, in a yellow dress bouncing a ball on the sidewalk. The next thing he knew she was directly in front of his headlights and then she fell. Even as Mr. Whitney slammed on the brakes he knew the car could never stop within that distance. He swerved madly to the right. A crowd immediately gathered and so did

the police. The siren of the ambulance was already heard in the distance. All that Mr. Whitney could say was: "Little girl, little girl!" He was on and off into consciousness. He didn't seem to have much chance if he went into a coma.

Mr. Whitney slowly became aware that he existed in grayness. It seemed more like a cloud than a fog because it advanced and turned with him. The grayness contained an icy wind that bit through his bones. Finally the cloud lifted enough for him to see that he stood before a high gate. Beyond lay a region of light and warmth, which made Mr. Whitney's tardiness and cold unbearable. He pounded on the gate and asked to be let in. It seemed to be lonely there. No one at the gate? Then the gate yielded a fraction and out of the light a little girl appeared. She stood before the gate and it slammed it shut again. He was upset because she did not respond. He was still left outside. "Don't just stand there, go get the gatekeeper. In or whoever is in charge of this place. "Then he heard a gentle voice behind him asking him whether he was calling the keeper of the gate. "I've been waiting here for hours," said Mr. Whitney rather irritated. "Or two seconds, as it is measured in your time, and I'm the Angel of Entrance, said the person gently. Mr. Whitney

thought this was all a farce. "I don't care what you call yourself, I want some service. "You are Mr. Whitney, Mr. Randolph Whitney, of Whitney House, Bel Flora Estate?"

Mr. Whitney was pleased that he was known even here and so he expected to be let in immediately. He was mistaken.

He was told that the blood of the little girl at the gate was on his hands. He had killed her. Instinctively he denied it. He then remembered the red haired girl and then remembered that he had not even touched her, besides, she was red haired.

Then the Angel of Entrance went on: "Mr. Whitney, you're a man of considerable wealth and of far reaching power and influence. Do you admit that?" - "You make it sound like a crime...I'm proud of it..!" Mr. Whitney was offended.

Then he remembered a conference he had with his investment counsellor two weeks earlier. Mr. Conroy tried to discourage him from buying a ranch telling him that it was not within his financial capability. Mr Whitney could not stand that. It was like telling him, in short that he did not have enough money. But his friends Bob Mathews and Mr. Van der Greef had bought similar ranches two weeks earlier. "I didn't like the financial report you gave me two weeks ago. That wheat estate of mine isn't bringing in a dollar more than it was six months ago if you can't make it yield a profit, I've been approached by a lot of

other investment houses..." He yelled at Mr. Conroy.

It was the turn of Mr. Conroy to get down the line to Mr. Stafford and ask him to do something about the real estate. He was not worried how the financial report was going to show a rise, whether it was by raising the price of the flats or the rent. All he wanted from Mr. Stafford was a better financial report on the real estate of Mr. Whitney so saying he slammed the phone down. Mr. Stafford thought for a moment and then called for Dudley the gentleman who collected the rents. Mr. Stafford was told to cut down the expenses since he could not raise the rent. Mr Stafford went to the landlord of the particular apartment house and received complaints that the stairs were all broken and it would be hazardous for the little kids running up and down the flights. The landlord was told to just fix up the stairs and not send the bill, even for the nails. Just as he was fixing the stairs a little girl came running down. She missed her footing on the broken stairway and came tumbling down breaking her neck. She was killed instantly.

"That little girl" continued the angel "was the one you killed by your greed". Of course, Mr. Whitney said it was not his fault. "You wanted more money than you ever needed even to live in luxury," said the angel. "In fact, you even wanted more. No matter how much you had, you wanted more. You forced the people who worked for you to

get that money by any means. Mr. Whitney, if this child has the power to shut the gate of heaven against you what will happen to you when the full assembly of witnesses stand against you?" Mr. Whitney could not understand this concept. The angel went on, "The men, the women, the children you forced to live in buildings, unfit for living even for animals. The families of five or six you force to live in two rooms because they cannot pay your price to live in decency and privacy. The mothers whom you drive to kill their unborn for whom there is no room. The men you tempt to despair into the escape of drunkenness. The children you turn into criminals because of what they see in the crowded rooms and the filthy streets. They will be the witnesses against you. God's poor!"

The whole thing seemed preposterous. Mr. Whitney had not seen the people, neither the flats, nor the parents nor the children. "If I had known I would have done something about it. I didn't know." "God knows, God judges. Mr. Whitney" said the

angel gravely. So saying the angel turned and began walking away. "Don't go, don't leave me" pleaded Mr. Whitney.

In the hospital room, the doctor could only hear: "Don't go..." He asked the nurse to get the glucose ready. It was a tense moment. "He's pretty lucky to get a second chance" commented the doctor through his perspiration.

This isn't actually a true story about a real landlord. Certainly, we do not think that landlords as a group are greedy or vicious. We have used Mr. Whitney as an example because he is a graphic illustration of a wrong attitude, of a dangerous state of mind, by whom people are regarded as a source of so much profit. But people are not merely producers of income. Each one has dignity, self-respect and is of infinite value, because each one of them is God's own child. Anything which robs any human being of his dignity and self-respect, is vicious and evil. God our Father will one day demand a strict accounting from each one of us who has the power now to help or to hurt the least of these his children. □

PRAYER A PRECIOUS GIFT *(continued from pg. 9)*

respect for all. As a friend, he offers intimacy and strength through prayer and the Eucharist.

The Gift of Wisdom

Teaching people to pray is a task that is always changing, and yet is always the same. It remains constant because God's love never alters, but it is ever changing, because the world is in

a whirlwind of technological development. Change is never ending, especially in the lives of the young, where one change begets several more in rapid succession. As never before television, radio, canned music and advertising are clamouring for their attention.

God is a poor fighter in a crowd. He will not force himself upon us. He chooses to wait until

we make the time to discover him. To use that time well takes wisdom as well as goodwill, usually another's wisdom and our own goodwill.

There is a great deal of goodwill in today's world, especially among the young, but wisdom is in short supply. Wisdom is the vibrant appreciation of the true value of ourselves as sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters of others. Such wisdom is caught rather than taught. It comes from

sharing chat with the elderly, from reflecting together on adult experience as well as on the teenage culture, from respecting what God reveals to each one of us, young and old.

Wisdom brings with it the ability to recognize the hand of God at work in our world. It is a gift of the Spirit that enables us to know what to say and how to say it. It is especially needed by those who are called to teach others to pray. □

HEAVEN

The Rogers were a close and devout Christian family. The father took a very special interest in the spiritual state of each of his children and would often question them about it and on occasion he would ask them to share in their own words how they understood their relationship with Jesus Christ.

One day it was seven-year-old Jimmy's turn to express his faith and his hope in eternal life, and this is how he answered.

"I think it will be something like this in Heaven. One day when we all get to go to Heaven, it will be time for the big angel to read from the big book the names of all the people who will be there. He will come to the Rogers family and say, "Daddy Rogers?" and Daddy will say, "HERE!" Then the angel will callout, "Mammy Rogers?" and Mammy will say "Here!" Then the angel will come down to call out Susie Rogers and Mavis Rogers, and they will both say, "HERE!"

He paused, took a big deep breath and continued. "And finally that big angel will read my name, "Jimmy Rogers," and because I'm little and maybe he'll miss me, I'll jump and shout real loud, "HERE!" to make sure he knows I'm there."

A Tragic Accident

Just a few days later there was a tragic accident. A car struck down little Jimmy Rogers as he made his way to catch the school bus. He was rushed by ambulance to the hospital, and all the family was summoned. The little family group gathered around the bed in which little Jimmy now lay with no movement, no consciousness and no hope for recovery. The doctors had done all that was in their power. Jimmy would probably be gone by morning.

The family prayed and waited. Late in the night the little boy seemed to be stirring a bit. They all moved closer. They saw his lips move; just one word was all he uttered before he passed from this life.

In the clear voice of a little boy, loud and clear enough so all could hear and understand, little Jimmy Rogers said the one word: "HERE!" Just one word but what a word of comfort and hope for the grieving family he was to leave behind. □

DON BOSCO'S FIRST MASS AND LIFE AT THE CONVITTO ECCLESIASTICO

4

by Fr. Elias Dias

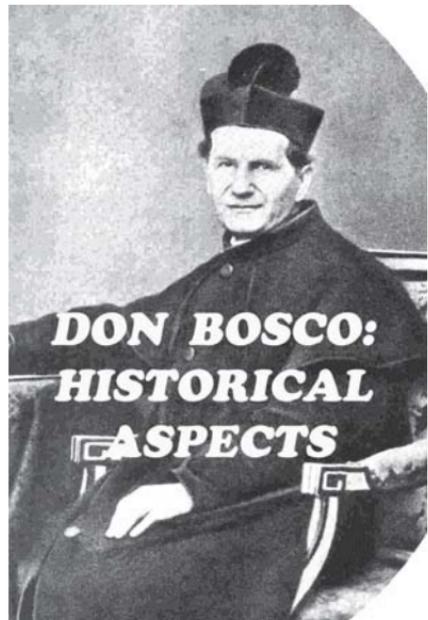
It was the feast of the parish and in the parish hall they were playing housie. On the table were three prizes: a pant piece, twelve bottles of beer and a small crucifix. A little boy got the full house. His mamma thought he would choose the pant piece, his daddy thought he would go for beer bottles but the little boy chose the little crucifix instead. What a foolish boy! - They thought. Why did he choose the little crucifix? ...Why did John choose to be a priest?

The End of Seminary Life

At the beginning of John's fifth and last year of theology (1840-41) he was appointed prefect, the highest possible appointment a seminarian could aspire to. On *Sitientes*¹ Saturday, March 27, 1841 he received his diaconate. In his assessment and his examination he received high marks, but not the highest. His examiner was Canon Lawrence Gastaldi.

His Ordination was preceded by a ten-day spiritual retreat from May 26 to June 4. Sixteen candidates from the three diocesan seminaries made their spiritual retreat in Turin at the "House of the Mission". This was

¹ The fourth Saturday in Lent and the name comes from the Latin word which begins the opening antiphon for the Mass.



a retreat house run by the Vincentians who were also called Priests of the Mission, a society founded by St. Vincent de Paul. Archbishop Columban Chiaveroti had especially entrusted the final preparation of candidates for the priesthood to these priests. It was for this purpose that in 1830 he handed over to them a former convent and the church of the Visitation which was placed under the leadership of the distinguished Vincentian Superior Fr. Mark Anthony Durando. He remained, for several years, a major influence in the Church of Turin. At the end of the retreat John kept a "keepsake" or souvenir and nine resolutions based on the themes of the Retreat Master's sermons.

In a touching passage in his *Memoirs of the Oratory*, Don Bosco described his feelings on leaving the seminary: "I found the day I had to leave the seminary for the

last time very difficult. My superiors loved me and showed me continual marks of benevolence. My companions were very affectionate towards me. You could say that I lived for them and they lived for me." (pg.166, Eng. Edn.)

John was ordained on the Ember Saturday, June 5, 1841 by Archbishop Louis Frasoni in the church of the Immaculate Conception at the archbishop's residence. The Archbishop gave him his "*Celebret*," i.e. the faculty to celebrate Mass. Don Bosco celebrated his first Mass in the church of St. Francis of Assisi on Trinity Sunday, 6, June 1841. It was attached to the Pastoral Institute where Don Cafasso resided. He celebrated his second Mass in the church of Our Lady of Consolation on Monday, June 7, 1841. On Tuesday Don Bosco travelled to Chieri and offered his third Mass at the church of St. Dominic where his old Professor Giusiana was lived. His fourth Mass was celebrated on Wednesday June 9 at the Chieri "duomo" the church of St. Mary of the Stairs, in the chapel of Our Lady of Grace. It was there that he had made a novena to discern his vocation. Don Bosco's solemn Mass was celebrated at his home Parish of Castelnuovo on the feast of Corpus Christi, Thursday, June 10. There he was assisted by his pastor Fr. Peter Cinzano. The pastor threw a festive banquet and a reception in his honour for his relatives, the local clergy and the dignitaries of the town.

After the festivities were over Don Bosco went home to his family. His mother drew him

aside and gave him this advice: "You are now a priest and you will say Mass. From now on therefore you will be in closer contact with Christ. But remember that to begin to say Mass is to begin to suffer. You will not realize this immediately, but after a while you will find that your mother was right. I am sure that you will pray for me everyday, whether I be living or dead, that's enough for me. From now on give your whole attention to saving souls, and don't worry about me."

Post-Ordination Assignments

After his ordination, a priest looked for some gainful employment such as an assistant in a parish or as a rural chaplain. Don Bosco preferred to bide his time before considering offers made to him. In the meantime he accepted the invitation of the pastor of Castelnuovo, Father Peter Anthony Cinzano, to spend a few months as a temporary assistant in that parish. Don Bosco spent nearly five months in that spacious and comfortable rectory. His pastor had two associates at the time, Fr. Giuseppe Roppolo and Fr. Giovanni Musso and yet he asked Don Bosco to spend a few months with him as a temporary assistant with a limited ministry. Fr. Lemoyne (his biographer) wrote that during this period almost all the male children were given the name Aloysius as either their first or second name. When Don Bosco was there the parish register revealed a different story. In those five months 40 children were baptized (26 boys and 14 girls). Don Bosco baptized three

boys. In few cases we find Louis as middle name, probably only because the name was suggested by the family.

It was also during this time, while Don Bosco was on his way to preach in Lauriano on St. Benignus' Day, that he was thrown off his horse and became unconscious. Mr. John Calosso (Brina) took him to his own farmstead. In the ensuing conversation, it emerged that this gentleman who had once received help from the Boscos when his donkey, loaded with supplies, had sunk into a quagmire on a cold winter night.

Five months after his ordination he had three offers: as tutor in the house of a Genoese gentleman with a salary of 1000 francs a year, the chaplaincy of Morialdo which was very lucrative and the post of an associate at Castelnuovo. Fr. Cafasso instead, advised him to join the *Convitto Ecclesiastico* and Don Bosco willingly followed the advice of Fr. Cafasso. He enrolled himself at the *Convitto Ecclesiastico* on November 3, 1841.

The Convitto Ecclesiastico

The *Convitto Ecclesiastico* was a residence for priests who were attending lectures on Moral and Pastoral theology, the art of preaching, Liturgical instructions while they were engaged in various ministries. The institute was started by Fr. Luigi Guala in his own room and later, with official approbation, it moved to the monastery and church of St. Francis of Assisi. Its main aim was to eradicate the vestiges of Jansenism. (a movement prevalent within the Catholic Church of the 17th and 18th



The bell-tower of the church of St. Francis of Assisi in Turin. The building with the arched windows belongs to the Ecclesiastical College

centuries especially in the Netherlands and in France that stemmed from an attempt to reconcile the necessity of working out one's salvation responsibly while always knowing it to be a freely bestowed gift beyond all human merit). They discussed other issues such as Probabiliorism which led to rigorism. They dealt with controversies of Conciliarism, Gallicanism and other controversial issues in the Church of the time. It was elite of society and some clergy who held this doctrine.

The Alphonsian system in moral theology was in opposition to the more rigorist system called "Equiprobabiliorism" was taught at the *Convitto* by Fathers Guala, Cafasso and others and Don Bosco

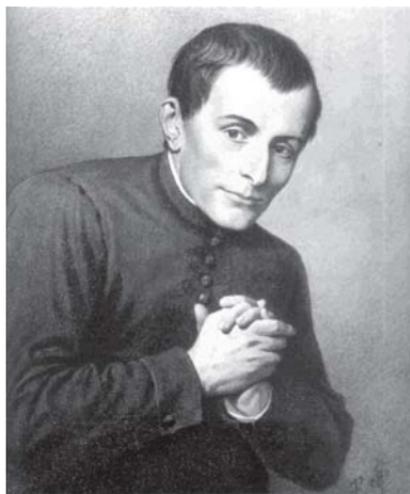
made it his own.

Fr. Guala died in 1848 and Fr. Joseph Cafasso officially succeeded him. During his rectorate a great number of priests joined the renewal programme. They were mostly the ones who undertook new ministries among the people, especially on behalf of young. Don Bosco wrote in his *Memoirs* "In the seminary we studied only dogma, and that which is speculative and in moral theology, only controversial issues. Here we learnt to be priests."

Fathers Guala and Cafasso noticed the socio-economic problems that were caused by industrialization especially among the young. Fr. Cafasso gathered young people and gave them catechetical instructions in the church of St. Francis of Assisi. He also visited the prisons and assisted the convicts awaiting their execution. He introduced Don Bosco to these ministries.

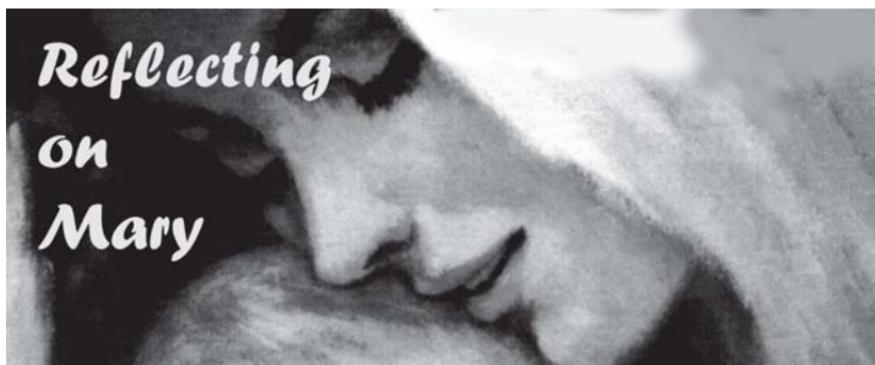
Bartholomew Garelli

In his *Memoirs* Don Bosco related his meeting with Bartholomew Garelli on the feast of the Immaculate Conception December 8, 1841, which took place while he was at the Convitto. This episode came to us from Fr. Rufino's chronicle entry of 1860. Don Bosco wrote his account sometime in 1874 without name and date. Before 1874, Garelli's story was not part of the Salesian tradition. Old Oratory boys such as Joseph and Joshua Buzzetti, two brothers who faithfully attended the Oratory from the earliest years, did not mention the name of Garelli. The parish and civil registers of Asti do not have



*Don Cafasso, teacher,
adviser, friend and
benefactor of Don Bosco.
This painting by Reffo is
in the Ecclesiastical College*

anyone by the name Bartholomew Garelli. Garelli's story appeared in public for the first time in the *Salesian Bulletin* of 1879. This came to be marked out as a tradition. From the *Salesian Bulletin* the story passed into d'Espiney's work "Don Bosco" of 1881. 1891 saw the celebration of fiftieth anniversary of that event. The story was retold in Bonetti's *Cinque Lustr* in (1891) and finally the *Biographical Memoirs* (Vol. II, 1901) became the chief vehicle whereby the Garelli incident was handed down to generations. A commemoration of the event also took place at the First International Congress of the Salesian Cooperators in 1895. It is absolutely true that Don Bosco worked for youngsters like Garelli, who were orphans, homeless, uneducated and who needed paternal assistance. □



MARY'S VISITS

by Roberto Spataro

France: 1830 Rue du Bac, 1846 La Salette, 1858 Lourdes. Mother Mary, always concerned about her children visits them three times to protect and encourage, to exhort and invite them to repentance, warning them about the dangers. "Do whatever he tells you."

The nineteenth century was called the Century of Revolutions. With the introduction of machinery the Industrial Revolution was born and with it, urbanization and conflicts between capital and labour so that the centuries-old rural civilization, with its rituals and symbols disappeared. Some of those phenomena continue to this day where truth and falsehood, good and evil no longer exist. Perhaps, it was because she was concerned about the consequences of those events that the Blessed Virgin chose three places in France to demonstrate her motherly care and convey to them her messages inviting us to prayer, penance and conversion.

THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

In 1830, in the Rue du Bac, near the monastery of the Vincentian nuns Paris, a young nun, Catherine Labouré, was

awakened one night by an angel who appeared to her in the guise of a child and led her to the church where the Virgin manifested herself and spoke to her. Our Lady asked Labouré to have a medal struck, promising graces to all those who wore it on their persons. The Virgin duly confirmed her presence by countless healings and spiritual favours. The faithful began spontaneously to call this medal "miraculous". On it is the invocation that we know so well: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee".

MARY'S TEARS AT LA SALETTE

A few years later, in 1846, Our Lady appeared again to two shepherd children, Maximin Giraud and Melanie Calvat near a mountain village 1800 meters high, at La Salette. While speaking to them she suddenly began to weep like a mother in

distress about the fate of her straying children, clinging to evil. As always, the Pastors of the Church prudently evaluated the events. The Bishop of Grenoble, in whose jurisdiction La Salette fell, after six years of careful reflection, declared: "We judge that the apparitions of the Virgin to two shepherds, on September 19, 1846, on a mountain in the Alps and situated in the parish of La Salette are genuine and the faithful have good reason to believe them." A shrine and a shelter were built there for pilgrims who have never ceased to go to La Salette and accept Mary's message of a greater commitment to live good Christian lives.

AT LOURDES AS THE IMMACULATE

Even more famous than this is the French shrine of Lourdes, known around the world. In this town at the foot of the Pyrenees, Our Lady appeared eighteen times to St. Bernadette Soubirous, in 1858. Confirming the dogma proclaimed by Blessed Pope Pius IX four years earlier, the Mother of God, spoke to the little visionary and presented herself as the Immaculate Conception. She was required to go to the River Gave to where the water miraculously gushed out in which millions of pilgrims bathe and are miraculously cured of many sicknesses, as has been established by a rigorous medical centre. Even at Lourdes Our Lady left a message: "Penance, penance, penance". Don Bosco - that great Marian saint of the nineteenth century - told his boys of Valdocco of these miraculous



events during the novena of the Immaculate Conception in the year 1858.

Therefore, while the world changed in the nineteenth century, Our Lady visited us. She presented herself in splendid, matchless and indescribable beauty as all the seers attested. She understood that history could take an unfortunate twist and that people could forget God, misuse their freedom, causing very grave suffering, destruction and death. Is that not what is happening today?

René Laurentin, a great Mariologist explains that Mary, being the closest to Christ, is, in the communion of saints, closest to the members of his Mystical Body, the Church. For this reason, she visits us in order to help prevent irreparable disaster from destroying Christians in particular and the whole world in general. She incessantly repeats, albeit in different words, what she said at Cana in Galilee: "Do whatever he tells you." □

NEWSBITS

KENYA

Nyaururu -situated on the equator, Nyaururu lies 280 km north of the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. It is here that we find Saint Martin, a community based organization with 1,300 local volunteers involved in six different programmes ranging from social rehabilitation of street children, care for the disabled, prevention of HIV/AIDS, promotion of micro credit projects and respect for human rights. Saint Martin community was started in 1997 by an Italian priest Fr. Gabriele Pipinato sent to Kenya by the diocese of Padua, and a group of local volunteers. Today it has developed into a non profit organization with over one hundred paid employees working on the different programmes together with a vast network of local volunteers active not only Nyaururu but also in surrounding villages, many of which can only be reached on dirt tracks through the forest. Each village has its own Saint Martin volunteers who visit the poorest families, report cases of illness, and assist disabled persons, all without recompense.

Social and Health Education is another key sector in which the St Martin is active. In recent months, St Martin operators visited 28 church centres, Catholic and Protestant, to promote awareness about HIV/AIDS: the specific aim was to help villagers realize that some of them may suffer from AIDS but that there are also other

villagers willing to care for them. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 05/06/2010.*

CHINA

It is impossible to say how many Christians there are in China today, but no one denies the numbers are exploding.

The government says 25 million, 18 million Protestants and six million Catholics. Independent estimates all agree this is a vast underestimate. A conservative figure is 60 million. There are already more Chinese at church on a Sunday than in the whole of Europe.

The new converts can be found from peasants in the remote rural villages to the sophisticated young middle class in the booming cities.

The Catholic Church in China operates in both state sanctioned churches as well as underground house churches. Protestants and Catholics are both divided into official and unofficial Churches.

The officially sanctioned Catholic Patriotic Association appoints its own bishops. However, it is not allowed to have any dealings with the Vatican. Catholics are allowed to recognize the spiritual authority of the Pope.

There is a larger Catholic underground church, supported by the Vatican. Inch by inch, the Vatican and the government have been moving towards accommodation. Most bishops are now recognized by both, with neither side admitting the greater sovereignty of the other. *Taken*

from a BBC News Magazine on-line report by Michael O'Loughlin, 09/14/2011.

POLAND

Czestochowa - "The Rosary, a treasure to be rediscovered", was the theme of the Rosary Congress of the Archdiocese of Czestochowa, dedicated to the Blessed John Paul II, which took place on October 1 at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Myszków Mrzyglód.

During the meeting, Don Jacek Gancarek, Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies of the Archdiocese of Czestochowa and custodian of the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary in Myszków Mrzyglód, presented the missionary catechesis on the theme: "The Rosary, a treasure to be rediscovered. History, ideas and testimonies". Don Gancarek presented the figure of the Servant of God, Pauline M. Jaricot, founder of the Pontifical Society for

the Propagation of the Faith, recalling that for her "the Rosary was a tool to help the missions and missionaries. Always, wherever the groups of the Living Rosary are, there has to be the prayer for the missions of the Church". *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 10/03/2011.*

WORLD

Nearly 70 percent of the world's people live in countries with high restrictions on religion Geneva - "In a number of countries freedom of religion is not yet fully guaranteed. Recent surveys indicate that nearly 70 percent of the world's 6.8 billion people live in countries with high

restrictions on religion, the brunt of which often falls on religious minorities." These were the words of Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the United Nations while attending the 13th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, on March 12, 2010.

The Archbishop denounced the fact that the rights of religious minorities are "seriously violated, their freedom of worship hampered. In some regions, followers of minority religions, that are not recognized by law, have to confess their faith in hiding and illegally, in fear of prison terms and persecution. In other places, while the right to freedom of religion is legally recognized, religious minorities are harassed and persecuted by members of the majority religion."

Archbishop Tomasi also mentioned that the authorities look on without doing nothing or are partisans in the conflict, so "victims are forced to desist from reporting the injustice done to them for fear of further negative repercussions," while the perpetrators "feel encouraged by the silent collusion of State authorities and by a judicial system that is ineffective or partial." The Archbishop called on all countries to "respect and promote the right to freedom of religion in all its aspects, through national legislation, including appropriate sanctions against violators to eradicate impunity effectively." *The complete text of Archbishop Tomasi's talk, in English, is available at: http://www.fides.org/eng/documents/Tomasi_13032010.doc □*

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Thank you dear Mother Mary for a partial settlement in a property matter, in helping me secure a good job and other favours.

Paul D'Silva & Fly.

My heartfelt thanks to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Mary Help of Christians for all that I have received and all that was given to me at Christmas and at New Year.

Mark Dodd, Pune

A million thanks to Mary, Help of Christians for helping us in times of distress and for taking care of us in bad times and helping my husband to get back his job. Thank you dear Mother.

Mrs. B. Colaco, Mumbai

Belated thanks to Mary Help of Christians for my daughter's success in her examinations and also for her good health and safe journey.

Marina Thomas, Vasai

Thank you Jesus and Mary for everything that is being done to us.

Marina Lobo, Mumbai

In the first week of September 2011 I was miraculously saved. My dressing table had got itself dislodged and smashed to smithereens. I had just left the place and come into the sitting room when it happened. The whole place was full of glass and could have hurt me rather badly. It was nothing short of a miracle. I thank Jesus of the Divine Mercy, Our Blessed Mother and St. Pio.

Mrs. O.V. Concessao, Chennai

Heartfelt thanks to Mary Help of Christians for the many favours received.

Sylvia Amaral, Mumbai

Thanksgiving to the Crucified Jesus and Mother Mary for curing my eyes of glaucoma and cataract without surgery.

Deodita D'Silva, Dahisar, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother for helping my daughter secure a permanent employment. Please be with us in all our needs.

Loretta Rego, Canada

My sincere thanks to Our Lady for the many favours received. Sorry for the delay in acknowledging them.

Francisca Lobo, Goa

We were driving back to Mumbai from our holidays on 3rd January 2012. The road was narrow and dark; while trying to avoid an oncoming car, I dashed against a trailer which hit us in the rear. In spite of such a collision and the extensive damage none of us were hurt, not even a scratch. We always read about "MARY WAS THERE" but today we personally experienced her presence among us.

Julie, Rohini and Victor, Mumbai

Thank you Mother Mary for the safe delivery and the gift of a baby girl to my daughter.

Irene Godinho, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to the Lord Jesus and Mother Mary for helping my daughter to pass her SSC and HSC examination with a good percentage and for getting admission in a good engineering college. Mother Mary please continue to bless our family always.

Mrs. C.Lobo, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary for blessing us with a baby girl.

Mr. & Mrs. D. Oliveira, 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.

Thank you dear Mother for helping me and my sister to clear our CA exams and for blessing me with a good job. Thank you for always being there during our studies and exams.

Anita and Sharita D'Souza, Bhayandar

My sincere thanks to our Lady, through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys I was granted my eligibility to appear for the final year university exam.

J. D'Souza, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for all the graces and favours received. I always pray the Three Hail Marys.

A Devotee

Thank you my mother, Mary Help of Christians for the safe and normal delivery of my daughter. And for many favours received by reciting the Three Hail Marys. I am very sorry for the delay.

Mrs. Fanny Misquitta, Mumbai

While driving to Goa, my son-in-law lost control of the car and hit a tree. The car was badly damaged but all my children escaped unhurt.

Thank you, mother Mary.

Mrs. A. Dias, Mumbai

My most sincere and grateful thanks to our Blessed Mother for granting us health and success and for many other favours.

Maria, Australia

My sincere thanks to the Lord Jesus and Mother Mary for curing my husband without an operation and for many other favours received.

Shalet, Kochi

Our sincere and heartfelt thanks to our dear Jesus and Mother Mary for numerous favours received and blessings bestowed on our family through the recitation of the Three Hail Marys.

Mr. Melvya Pereira, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all that they have done for me.

Colette, Jhansi

Mother Mary, thank you so much for the normal report of diabetes and for my son Christopher's knee which was normal too.

Argentina Fernandes

I thank the most Sacred Heart of Jesus and Blessed Mother for countless favours. For granting admission to my son in college after securing 89%. Please keep him always in your care.

Thomas & Sabina Mumbai

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

My sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary and St. John Bosco for all the graces received. *Marissa, Bhayandar*
Sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for all the favours granted. *J.N. Gomes, Mumbai*

Thank you Mother Mary and Don Bosco for curing me from a deadly toothache. *Mrs. Fanny Fernandes, Mumbai*

My sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for for my son's successful wedding in Gujarat. *PP. Talati*

We are grateful to our dear Lord, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for all the favours received. *Esperance Fernandes, Mumbai*

My sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for granting Eliza and Sameer a baby girl. *Eliza, Mumbai*

Our sincere gratitude to Mother Mary and Dominic Savio and Don Bosco for curing our daughter from health problems. No doctor's medicine helped. She was mentally harrassed by the family she was sharing the house with and had sleepless nights. She almost lost her job abroad, the job she tried so hard to get. But Mother Mary was there for her and now she is fine. We pray that our Mother Mary keeps her always under her protection, helps her get a suitable life partner, give her peace of mind, protect her from her enemies, visible and invisible. *Mr. Rosario and Mrs. Bridget Dias, Mumbai*

Grateful thanks to Our Lady Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the many favours granted to us. *Maria, Australia*
Thank you Mother Mary and Don Bosco for a safe delivery and for the good health of our child. We have named her Smyra.

Sameer and Michelle Patil, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to the Holy Trinity, Mary Help of Christians, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for helping my daughter to secure a good percentage in her exams and for getting admission for BSC in a college of her choice and also for the successful operation of my father. *Maria Agnel Fernandes*

Our sincere thanks for my father's sister's successful operation of hernia. Mother Mary continue to protect us always.

Fatima Pereira, Mumbai

Thank you dear Jesus, Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and all the other saints for giving my son a job and protecting my second son from the dangers of the sea and blessing me with a lovely family.

J. Dias, Thane

I was expecting my 2nd child and it was due at any time. I slipped and had a very bad fall in the bathroom. I was rushed to the doctor but thanks to Mother Mary both the baby and I were safe. Today 42 years later, my son is a healthy man!

Mrs. A. Dias, Mumbai

My sincere and heartfelt thanks to Jesus and Mary for the many favours, graces and blessings showered on me and my family and for my good health. *Mrs. Colleen Scott, Jabalpur*

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary and Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the renewal of my contract.

Mr. Jose Antonio Fernandes, Goa

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Our sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for many favours received. Please continue to bless our family.

Doraell Rodrigues, Mumbai
Sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians and Dominic Savio for the many favours granted.

Philip Pinto, UAE
My sincere gratitude to Our Mother Help of Christians and Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby boy to my daughter after 9 years of marriage.

Maria A. Crasto, Mumbai
Our sincere thanks and gratitude to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic

Savio for all the graces received. Dear Mother continue to protect and bless us especially all the children in our families.

Joseph & Family, Mumbai
Thank you, St. Dominic Savio for your intercession in making me a grandma. My daughter safely delivered a baby boy after a previous miscarriage.

Trupti, Mumbai
My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, St. Dominic Savio, St. John Bosco and St. Jude for helping my sons to do well in their examinations in spite of my son not keeping well. Thank you also for helping them to get admission in good colleges. Continue to protect and shower on them your blessing.

Mrs. Nancy A. Vaz, Mumbai
My sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the many blessings and countless favours received.

Sophie Pereira, Goa
Thanksgiving to Jesus, Mary Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of three grandchildren and other favours received.

Mrs. Inacina Dias, Vasai (W)
My belated but sincere thanks to Almighty God, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all the favours received.

A Devotee, Bhayandar

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

APRIL 2012

Holy Father's General Intention: *That many young people may hear the call of Christ and follow him in the priesthood and religious life.*

Missionary Intention: *That the Risen Christ may be a sign of certain hope for the men and women of the African continent.*