

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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*Let us all rejoice
in the Lord,
as we celebrate
the feast day in honour
of the Virgin Mary,
at whose Assumption
the Angels rejoice
and praise
the Son of God!*

*(From the Entrance Antiphon of the
Solemnity of the Assumption)*

**Cover: *The Statue of Our Lady
of Fatima* - at Fatima**



From The Editor's Desk

THE ONE NECESSARY THING

Mark's version of the dramatic encounter between a rich young man and Jesus starts off at an almost breathless pace. 'As Jesus was setting out on a journey a man ran up, knelt down before him and put this question to him: "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

In these few words a picture is painted of an impulsive youngster who looks like an ideal candidate for discipleship. But Jesus' reaction to him is not exactly encouraging: 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone'. And as if that were not enough to dampen his spirits, he adds abruptly, 'You know the commandments,' and this provokes the young man to respond defiantly: 'Master, I have kept all these from my earliest youth'. Isn't that typical of the 'young man' who seems to want to project himself as a *know-it-all*?

Obviously, Jesus sees something in this young fellow which is not recorded in the gospel. No doubt, he is a conscientious, law-abiding citizen, but perhaps there is something in his manner that reeks of that self-righteous arrogance which, all too often deceptively gives him what he thinks is the moral high ground. No doubt, too, he is a wealthy member of one of the leading families, but perhaps he has been seduced by this privilege of birth and is inclined to swagger around the town with an air of superiority with his bunch of perpetual 'hangers-on' or why else would he kneel but to add some 'drama' to his pretentious plea.

Whatever it is, it prompts Jesus to push him to the limit. 'There is one thing you lack,' he says starkly. 'Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor; then come, follow me.'

Confronted by this radical choice, between the true freedom that flows from faith and the false security that rests on wealth, the young man now experiences, maybe for the first time in his life, the anguished loneliness that arises whenever a critical decision has to be faced. He now realizes that true freedom does not come cheaply. There is a price that has to be paid, a risk that has to be taken, a loss that has to be accepted and a threshold of fear that has to be crossed.

As the moment of decision draws closer, he can feel the dead weight of resistance increasing within him and he baulks at the prospect of giving up everything. In the end, it is all just too much for him. His face falls and he goes away sad.

For us, however, the story of this young man lingers on in the memory. We would like to know what became of him afterwards, but Mark is not in any mood to indulge our idle curiosity. He wants us to focus instead on God's gracious invitation to identify ourselves as closely as possible his poor so as to enter into a deeper relationship with his Son, Jesus disguised therein.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

A FRIEND IN NEED

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

Only one act of kindness that British writer, Bernard Hare, experienced on a fateful night changed him profoundly! Then a student living just north of London, he tells the story of how the police called at his student hovel one night. Remembering that his mother hadn't been too good recently he rang home without any delay only to learn that his mother was in fact in hospital and was not expected to survive the night. "Get home, son," his dad pleaded.

Having rushed to the railway station he found that he had missed the last train. Another train was going as far as Peterborough, but he would miss the connecting Leeds train by twenty minutes. Anyway he bought a ticket home and got on. He was then a struggling student and didn't have the money for a taxi the whole way. Yet, he just knew from his dad's tone of voice that mother was going to die that night and he intended to get home even if it killed him.

Once on the train, he found himself wandering, half dazed. "Tickets, please!" he heard, as he stared blankly out of the window at the darkness whizzing past. Fumbling for the ticket he gave it to the guard who stamped it, but then just stood there looking at him. He realized that he had been crying, had red eyes and must have looked a fright.

Angel in Disguise

"You look awful," the guard said. "Is there anything I can do?"

Not at all in the mood for talking, the guard got a rude reply. Undaunted he continued, "If there's a problem, I'm here to help. That's what I'm paid for."

The only other thing the distressed young man could think of to get rid of the guard was to tell him his story. "Look, my mum's in hospital, dying, she won't survive the night, I'm going to miss the connection to Leeds at Peterborough, I'm not sure how I'm going to get home. It's tonight or never, I won't get another chance, I'm a bit upset, I don't really feel like talking, I'd be grateful if you'd leave me alone. Okay?"

"Okay," he said, as he began to withdraw. "Sorry to hear that, son. I'll leave you alone then. Hope you make it home in time." Then he wandered off down the carriage back the way he came. Thinking that he had got rid of the man for good, the lad was surprised a short while later to see him touch his arm saying, "Listen, when we get to Peterborough, shoot straight over to Platform One as quick as you can. The Leeds train'll be there."

The distressed young man looked at him dumbfounded. It hadn't really registered. "Come again," he said, stupidly. "What do you mean? Is it late, or something?"

"No, it isn't late," he said, defensively. "No, I've just radioed Peterborough. They're going to hold the train up for you. As soon as you get on, it goes.

Everyone will be complaining about how late it is, but let's not worry about that on this occasion. You'll get home and that's the main thing. Good luck and God bless." Then he was off down the train again. As if



awakened from a stupor, the young man chased after him and blurted, "Oh, er, I just wanted to..." He was suddenly speechless. "I, erm..."

"It's okay," he said. "Not a problem. If you feel the need to thank me, the next time you see someone in trouble, you help them out. That will pay me back amply. Tell them to pay you back the same way and soon the world will be a better place."

He was at his mother's side when she died in the early hours of the morning. Ever after that he cannot think of her without remembering the Good Conductor on that late-night train to Peterborough. His meeting with that Good Conductor changed him permanently from a selfish, potentially violent hedonist into a decent human being - but it took time. "I've paid him back a thousand times since then," he tells the young people he works with, "and I'd give you the same advice the Good Conductor gave me. 'Pass it down the line'."

Important Truth

One thing that strikes us as we listen to this story is that people who are deeply wounded

emotionally generally follow a downward spiral spewing out more and more hatred and violence as they go along, unless, of course, they are stopped short in their tracks by a show of genuine unselfish and extraordinary love. And isn't this exactly what the Conductor had done in his own simple way - unasked and without looking for as much as a decent 'Thank-you' in return. We would have to admit that the number of people who would have acted in the way he did could literally be counted on the fingers of one hand! Recognizing the genuine and urgent need of the young man, the Conductor was able to use his influence to bend the rules a little to make it possible for him to satisfy his urgent need. And this is what touched the young man to the core and changed his otherwise aggressive nature.

As we reflect on the life of Jesus we see that this is exactly the strategy he followed when working out the redemption of mankind. Realizing mankind's need, Jesus realized that just an ordinary show of love and compassion would do mighty little to transform humanity from

inside out. And so, all through his Passion, he offered an extraordinary measure of selfless love – uncomplainingly and even to the last drop of his precious blood. No wonder then that the Centurion who stood face to face with Jesus on the Cross and seeing the manner in which he died exclaimed, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’ The thief on the right too surrendered to the power of such love when he cried out, ‘Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom!’ And he was assured of a place in Paradise that very day. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who hitherto had been afraid to manifest their loyalty to Jesus openly, now come forward and do what not even the devoted Apostles were prepared to do – give Jesus a decent burial.

Do we not see numerous examples of how heroic, selfless love triumphs in the end, even when it is a question of a slithery wily customer like an Augustine. His mother Monica’s persevering love triumphed in the end – and what a triumph that was! Captured totally for a mission by Christ, Augustine rose to become a Bishop and more than that a Saint who brought so many others back to Christ. The religious congregations he started and animated are witness to the power of such unselfish love that Augustine received and passed on.

Starting a Chain of Love

The Conductor showed one more praiseworthy trait. Not only did he not crave for any recognition or gratitude, but he asked the young man to pass it

on to others, thus training him also to be a channel of God’s love and one more link in a great chain of love. Such a chain brings about an increase in arithmetic proportion. For if one person who receives such love passes it on to a hundred others and each of those hundred to another hundred, what a huge unbroken chain results! But as the story goes, our young man who was transformed not only passed on the practice to several others, but also exhorted them to follow this path which would have borne even greater fruits.

Did not Jesus himself do the same when he said to his disciples at the Last Supper, ‘Do this as a memorial of me’ or in St. John’s version... ‘If I your Lord and Master have washed your feet, then you too must wash one another’s feet; I have given you an example that you may do the same!’ How many would not have followed the example of the Master all down the centuries? And yet, somehow we see that we still run short of the real avalanche of good deeds needed to change the world from the abyss of evil that it is, to the ocean of goodness and love that it ought to be! Perhaps the reason for this is that somehow evil spreads much faster than good for as Jesus reminded us, “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Mt 7:13-14).

As a matter of fact, the more often we celebrate Eucharist the easier should it be for us to be

persons who spread goodness and love all around us. But this will be true only if we consciously enter into the dynamic of the Eucharist, which is that Jesus took the bread in his sacred hands, and identifying it as his very own person (my body) he freely and lovingly broke of it and gave it to his disciples to eat! The power of selfless love lies in its being given consciously and freely, without any need or compulsion; only then does it have the inner vitality to change people's hearts. The story of the Good Samaritan is an outstanding story precisely because there was no need for the Samaritan to have gone out of his way to help the wounded man. But he did - not out of a sense of

duty or compulsion, but from an inner necessity arising out of a common vulnerable humanity in need!

While the outpouring of such love is extraordinary, the occasions for its use are ordinary and innumerable. This simply means that any and every one of us would have countless opportunities to manifest such redemptive love - if only we dare to step out of our comfort zone and reach out to our needy neighbor. However, the force is all the greater when we ourselves have received such generous love unasked and undeservedly! Such love awaits our approach each day in the Eucharist - it is ours for the taking! Take and eat ... and pass it on! □

walking with the Church



The Holy Rosary

The teaching of the Church and the Popes:

1. The Rosary is a Gospel prayer centred on Jesus, the Way to the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit.
2. Without meditating on the mysteries, saying the Our Fathers and Hail Marys of the Rosary is like a corpse without a soul. The Our Fathers and Hail Marys are the body, meditation is the soul, the life.
3. Reciting the Rosary during Holy Mass is a mistake.

Do we celebrate Christmas only once in a year and not every time we meditate on the Joyful Mysteries? Do we celebrate His Baptism, Transfiguration and the

Institution of the Eucharist only once in a year and not each time we meditate on the Luminous Mysteries? It is the same with the Sorrowful Mysteries and the Glorious Mysteries too.

Is not everyday, every week and every month, a Rosary day, week and month?

Every Rosary must not just be recited but prayed properly and perfectly by meditating on the mysteries?

Will not the Heavens rejoice if every Rosary recited is prayed properly and perfectly?

Prayer: LORD JESUS grant that we pray the Rosary properly. Our Lady of Fatima pray for us. □



HE LED ME...AND HE STILL LEADS ME
FR. ROSARIO KRISHNARAJ, SDB
from the Salesian Provincial House, Chennai

I hail from a pious Hindu family in Chennai. My parents were devout Hindus. They prayed and fasted regularly. My father passed away when I was 8 years old; it is to him that I owe my initial religious sense.

My first personal contact with Christians came when I joined Class VI at St. Gabriel's High School, Broadway, Chennai, in June 1942. In the school which was run by the Salesians of Don Bosco, I was touched by the kindness of the Fathers and Brothers. I loved the school environment. Something that drew my attention was the notice board displaying Bible stories in pictures. The lovely illustrations and the accompanying stories captivated me, and I read them avidly.

The turning point in my life, I should say, began in 1944 with the arrival in our school of a young Salesian priest named Fr. Francis Schlooz, full of zest and zeal. He loved youngsters and was able to fire their imagination with great ideals of service and commitment. Two new things he started in the campus were Scouting and the "Oratory".

Scouting was something that everyone knew about, but the idea of the "Oratory" was something quite new. How do I describe it? It was a sort of youth centre that welcomed young people of all sorts - school children, school dropouts, college students, young workers and, of course, the jobless ones



from the neighbourhood. They usually came to the Oratory after school hours. They were divided into groups according to their age. There would be games, study, entertainment, and a host of other cultural, educational and spiritual activities. In other words, the Oratory was a home that welcomed the young, a school that prepared them for life, a parish that looked after their spiritual needs and a playground where they could meet friends and have lots of fun.

It was in the Oratory and through scouting, more than through the school, that I came closer to Fr. Schlooz. Looking back I realize that for Fr. Schlooz scouting was never a profane activity; it was a platform for the total formation of young people, particularly for helping them to make sense of the turbulent and critical years of their adolescence. For me, and I guess for many of

my companions, scouting was an opportunity to look at ourselves and understand, at least to some extent, the mystery within, to make sense of our ceaseless yearnings and our conflicting questions. I would say, Fr. Schlooz made scouting and all the activities of the Oratory into a platform for "spiritual direction," gracing our topsy-turvy adolescent years and keeping Christ as our role model. I frequented the Oratory regularly and played table tennis, a game I loved much. In fact, in 1947 I came to the finals of the under-16 State level tournament and narrowly lost to Raman, the Madras State No. 1, in a hard-fought five-set thriller.

Fr. Schlooz, though he knew Tamil pretty well, would often ask me to be a translator for him. I once translated the life of St Dominic Savio into Tamil and Fr. Schlooz made me teach the life of this youthful saint to my own classmates during the moral classes, even though I was not a Christian. I then began to read the lives of saints, particularly the martyrs, and this thrilled me. While reading the Passion of Christ I used to be filled with awe and moved to tears. I slowly began to feel an attraction for Christ. Rather, I now believe that it was Christ drawing me closer to Him.

My mother, brothers and an aunt soon began to suspect something was amiss; they began to sense my shifting loyalty - from the home to Christ and the Oratory. My mother in all sincerity warned me that Baptism meant drinking some stagnant water from a leather

bag, dirty and filled with insects. I knew, of course, it was her fear of losing me that made her say such things. But I did not as yet have the courage to opt for Christ! My brother was about to get married and my baptism, at that juncture, would probably have ruined the marriage, because in those days to be a Christian meant to be an outcast! In fact, when Fr Schlooz, who, by then, was my mentor, asked me if I really wanted to be baptized, I immediately replied that though I loved Christ, I would not want to break my mother's heart.

Meanwhile, I finished my High School and went on to Loyola College for my higher studies. While in the second year of college, one day, I went to the Oratory and told Fr. Schlooz that I wanted to be baptized. He later met my mother and brothers to share with them my decision. There broke out a storm - protests, threats, tears and what not. I was given strict orders not to meet Fr. Schlooz or go to the Oratory.

But my mind was made up - I wanted to receive Baptism by all means. I continued my studies and faithfully carried out whatever work I was given to do at home. One day Fr José Carreño, the Salesian Provincial, (the Provincial House in those days was in our school campus), made arrangements for me to meet Fr Schlooz secretly at the Archbishop's House. It was then that Fr Carreño told me that, if I wanted, I could get baptized secretly so that I could get added strength from the Sacrament. I agreed. Thus, on the night of

October 6th 1949, as October 7th (Feast of the Holy Rosary) was just beginning, I was baptized and given the name Rosario, in addition to my original name Krishnaraj.

For 8 months I lived without revealing my new Christian identity, all the while practising my faith secretly and receiving Holy Communion daily on my way to the College; once I received communion even at midnight! That was my first vocation - a vocation to the Christian life! Later, when my family learned about my conversion, they surprisingly did not reject me; they were at that time passing through a lot of difficulties and probably my presence in the family had a positive influence on the situation. I knew that it was God's intervention that resulted in their acceptance of me.

I went on to complete my B.Com. at Loyola College, Madras. In the meantime my mother, who had mellowed down a lot, seeing that I had not left her, accepted my status as a Christian! I was in a position to find a job and settle down and some plans were afoot at home for my marriage too! But my mind was set on following the way of Fr. Schlooz, the Salesian way.

"Would my dream of becoming a Salesian Priest ever materialize?" I kept wondering. One day, Fr. Schlooz advised me to talk to the archbishop, who was thinking of sending me to the diocesan seminary at Poonamallee. Fr. Schlooz had told me, "When you go to the archbishop, if he asks you to join

the diocesan seminary at Poonamallee, tell him, 'No, Your Grace, Tirupattur'." (Tirupattur was where the Salesians had an institute for candidates aspiring to join them). I did as I was instructed and got the OK from the Archbishop!

Naturally there wasn't any family get-together to send me off to Tirupattur. Instead, I had to slip away quietly, telling my people that I was going for a Scout Camp! Fr. Schlooz gave me a ticket and a few little things and I reached Tirupattur on 20 September 1951 after an emotion-filled journey by the West Coast Express. I tried to adjust to the new situation as best as I could, feeling a little proud of myself that I had done my part for Christ, even to the extent of breaking away from my mother for whom I always had a strong attachment.

Within two days, it was no more a secret! My people at home were all up in arms. They were bent on getting me back. But this time they used another ploy. I received a post card from my brother informing me that my mother was very seriously ill and that I would be held responsible if she should die. That was too much for me to bear. Sad and utterly confused, I presented myself to my Rector Fr. John Med and told him I wanted to go back home immediately, and I would think about my vocation at a later stage. But Fr. Med, slowly and very calmly, told me to wait just for a week and then decide. I will never be able to thank the Lord enough for prompting him to give me that reply. Well, a week passed, and when I met him

again, I had only one answer for him, "I am not going back."

In 1953 I joined the novitiate and professed as a Salesian on 24 May 1954. Nine years later, on 1 May 1963, I was ordained a priest by Archbishop Mathias in Chennai. That same evening (May Day), I celebrated my First Mass for a group of workers at Royapuram. On the following day, to my great surprise, at my

second Mass at St. Francis Xavier's Church, Broadway, I found my mother and family, seated in the very first row.

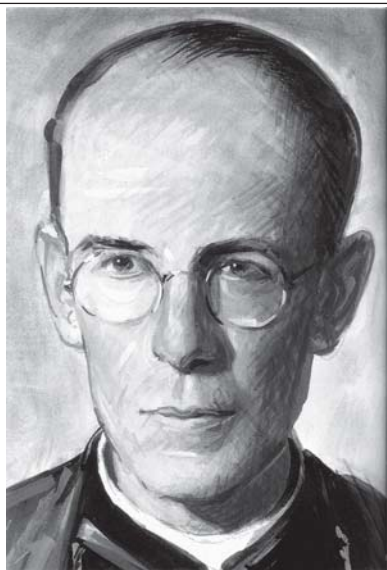
Today I am 81 years old. The Lord who brought me to his fold through Don Bosco's sons and he has been equally generous in giving me extraordinary Salesians to guide me all along. I have received much... I have to give much... □

SALESIAN SAINT OF THE MONTH

ANTONIO LUSTOSA DE ALMEIDA 1886 - 1974

Antonio de Almeida Lustosa was born on 11 February 1886 and entered the Salesian school of Cachoreira do Campo at the age of sixteen. Two years later he decided to become a Salesian. He was ordained a priest at 26 and chosen as Director of Novices. He was appointed Bishop of Uberaba and was concerned for people who were marginalised and took up the cause of social justice. In 1928 he was transferred to Corumbà in Mato Grosso, which was a bigger diocese, but also with greater problems. Barely two years passed before Bishop Almeida was again transferred, this time as Archbishop of Belem do Pará, a very extensive diocese in the North. There the zealous Pastor spent ten years, generously spending himself as he always did, working for God's glory.

In 1941 he was transferred to the diocese of Foraleza, the



capital of the state of Ceara. Here he gave his very best working for 22 years. He founded a Congregation called the Giuseppine who today can be found in several states in Brazil.

Like Don Bosco Archbishop Almeida was a prolific writer in various fields: Theology, Philosophy, Spirituality, Hagiography, Literature, Geography and Botany. He died on 14 August 1974. His mortal remains rest in the Cathedral of Fortaleza. □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. ROSE OF LIMA (1586-1617) (AUGUST 23)

Saint Rose of Lima was born, as her name implies, at Lima, in Peru on the 20th April, 1586. Her father was Gaspar Florez and her mother Mary Olivia, both persons of inconsiderable fortune. The very circumstances of the birth of Rose were miraculous.

As a child she was singularly patient and docile and bore a marked resemblance to Saint Catharine of Siena. It is recorded of her that when she was yet an infant, she already gave proof of that heroic patience under suffering which was soon to be the rule of her life.

Her little brother was the instrument under God to teach her to despise the vain things of this transient world. One day playing near her, he accidentally threw a quantity of mud on her hair. Being neat and orderly in her attire, she was naturally vexed at this and was on the point of going away in a sullen mood, when he said to her with unexpected gravity, as though the voice had come from God: "My dear sister, do not be angry at this accident; for the curled ringlets of girls are hellish cords



which enchain the hearts of men and miserably drag them into everlasting flames." Rose hearkened to those words as if they had been pronounced by a holy preacher of God, or as an oracle from Heaven.

From that moment she received the gift of prayer. Day and night did she devote herself to this holy converse with God, and not even did sleep interrupt her prayers; for during her repose, her imagination painted so many lively images of her

Lord and Saviour, with which her mind entertained itself.

We are taught in the fourth commandment that we should honour and obey our parents in all things lawful; and no saint has set us a brighter example of exact obedience to this law than saint Rose of Lima. She managed so well, and herein she is especially worth of our imitation, that she executed with perfect obedience whatever her father and mother commanded her, without omitting the least part of her duty towards God but there are some things we cannot do even to please our parents; and Saint Rose has taught us how to act in such perplexity. Her mother, like many other mothers, who value too highly the fleeting things of this world, often begged her to take care of her beauty, and even desired her to use washes and paint to preserve her freshness; but Rose, rightly deeming this to be contrary to the modesty and simplicity which became a Christian maiden, entreated her so earnestly not to oblige her to do this, and not to imitate those mothers who sacrificed the salvation of their children to further their own ambitions, that she by degrees persuaded her mother to think differently.

The uncommon beauty of Saint Rose, joined to her agreeable manners and conversation led many to desire her hand, and captivated admirers from all quarters. In order to extinguish the flames of passion which burned in the hearts of others, she used many artifices to disfigure herself. She made her face pale and livid with fasting, she washed her hands in hot lime

to take the skin off them. She retired to Canta, a little village near one of the most celebrated mines in Peru, and remained there for four entire years without leaving the house.

Saint Rose was both humble and chaste to a pre-eminent degree. Humble, for she always chose for herself the meanest occupations of the house, and considered herself infinitely below a servant, she would frequently cast herself at the feet of a poor country girl named Mariana, who worked in the house, and entreat her earnestly to beat her, to spit upon her, to trample her under her feet, and treat her as the most contemptible creature in the world.

Pure she was to such a degree of perfection, that eleven learned religious, six of the order of Friar Preachers and five of the Society of Jesus, who several times heard her general confessions, have deposed upon oath, that she attained to a purity of heart similar to that of the angels in Heaven, and that, during the whole course of her life, which lasted thirty-one years, she never was guilty of any venial sin of impurity; and, what is something miraculous, she was never assailed with impure thoughts, from which even the most cherished and favoured Saints of God have not been exempt.

Her fasts and austerities were truly astonishing, and such as only the grace of God can enable the greatest of Saints to impose upon themselves. At six years of age, she began to fast three times a week on bread and water. At fifteen she made a vow never to eat meat, unless compelled by

those who had authority over her, and whom she thought she could not disobey without sin. Her mother, seeing her face pale and emaciated with long fasting, used to blame her conduct, and even wished to persuade her that she committed a mortal sin, by denying herself the necessary nourishment for the preservation of life.

Nor was she content to emaciate her delicate body by fasting alone. She daily drew from her flesh streams of blood with her iron chains, and other instruments of penance.

By means of mental prayer, in which she exercised herself with the most ardent love of God, she attained to the closest and most intimate union with Him, and was never out of His holy presence. The very birds felt the influence of her holiness, and joined, as it were, in her devotions.

Our Saint loved Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, and Saint Catharine of Siena and her guardian angel, with so fervent a love, that they, to reward her, often visited her, and conversed with her in a familiar manner. She had, in this way, learned that she would die on Saint Bartholomew's day. Having attained her thirty-first year, she not only knew that her hour was come, but also that in her passage from life to death she must endure incredible torments. Though she suffered so much, she besought her Divine Spouse not to diminish her pains; on the contrary, she begged Him with all the affection of her heart to increase them, in order to punish her rigorously for the crimes of which she believed herself guilty

in the sight of His divine majesty.

During her illness she usually confessed her sins every day; and to dispose herself better for death, she made a general confession of her whole life, with such marks of deep contrition, that her sighs and groans were heard in the room adjoining. On the third day she received the holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, with interior dispositions suited to the excellence of these two sacraments. When the Blessed Sacrament was brought to her, she changed colour; her face became shining and inflamed, and amidst the transports of joy which filled her, she fell into an ecstasy; and after receiving this bread of angels, she remained motionless and totally absorbed in God.

On the midnight of her death she heard a mysterious noise, which announced to her the coming of her Lord; she received it with joy; and requested her brother to remove the bolster from beneath her head, and to place pieces of wood instead. As if she had only waited for these pieces of wood to die upon a sort of cross, she said twice: "Jesus be with me, Jesus be with me," and immediately afterwards her pure soul quitted her mortal body, and took its flight into the bosom of God to take possession of that heavenly inheritance prepared for it from all eternity. She passed away on the 24th August, the feast of Saint Bartholomew, in the year 1617, at the age of thirty-one years and five months.

According to the custom of the religious of the third order of Saint Dominic, and by her own request, she was buried in the church of Saint Dominic. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Visiting Grandma

Grandma, who appeared to become an ever-more intimidating personality as the years went on, was giving directions to her grown grandson who was coming to visit with his wife:

"You come to the front door of the apartment complex. I am in apartment 14T. There is a big panel at the door. With your elbow push button 14T. I will buzz you in. Come inside, the elevator is on the right. Get in, and with your elbow hit 14. When you get out I am on the left. With your elbow, hit my doorbell."

"Grandma, that sounds easy, but why am I hitting all these buttons with my elbow?" the grandson asked.

"You're coming empty handed ... ?"

What A Hoot

Each evening birdlover Tom stood in his backyard, hooting like an owl - and one night, an owl 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 neighbor.

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

"That's odd," the neighbor

replied. "So does my husband." Then it dawned on them.

Back Seat Johnny

A woman was driving her old beat up car on the Highway with her 7 yr. old son, Little Johnny.

She tried to keep up with traffic but they were flying by her. After getting caught in a large group of car's flying down the road she looked at her speedometer to see she was doing 15 miles over the speed limit.

Slowing down, she moved over to the side and got out of the clump that soon left her behind. She looked up and saw the flashing lights of a police car. Pulling over she waited for the officer to come up to her car.

As he did he said, "Ma'am do you know why I pulled you over?"

Little Johnny piped up from the back seat, "I do! Because you couldn't catch the other cars!"

Taxi Grad

A young man had just graduated from Harvard and was so excited just thinking about his future.

He gets into a taxi and the driver says, "How are you on this lovely day?"

"I'm the Class of 2001, just graduated from Harvard and I just can't wait to go out there and see what the world has in store for me."

The driver looks back to shake the young man's hand and says, "Congratulations, I'm Mitch Class of 1969." □



THREE DAYS WITH THE BAPTIST (1)

John 1: 19-27
by Mario Galizzi

The prologue of John's Gospel concludes thus: "the only Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." But we will have to wait until Jn. 3:6 to hear Jesus speak of the Father because, as in the Synoptics, John's testimony develops from Autumn 27 AD to Spring 29 AD. It is the Synoptics who offer us the beginning. Our evangelist assumes so already from the time that the Baptist carried out his ministry we are presented with the first scene (from 1:19 - 28). The leaders of the Jews feel the need to inquire into his actions that were totally out-of-sync with the religious institutions of the time.

The First Scene (9:19-28)

In the first scene (9, 19-27) the Baptist is presented, if I may say so, as being judged. The second scene (1:29-34) presents him in the act of giving his testimony about Jesus. Then, the beginning of the third scene (1:35-37) describes how two disciples leave the Baptist and follow Jesus. I am of the opinion that this event must have filled the Baptist with great joy (cf. 3:29) because he saw that the purpose of his witnessing was realized.

In this meditation we are left fascinated by the image of the

Baptist not only because of what we said earlier but because he becomes an archetype of all the witnesses who came before him by the way he went about, his way of living and the values he upheld. He is filled with humility, sincerity and loyalty. He is fully aware that his mission very accurately defines him as a witness of Christ. In him we find the real model of apostolic action. So reading his testimony we are faced with the true model of who a real witness is and how he ought to act.

The First Day: "Who are You" (1, 19-28)

v. 19-21 To the Jews who had seen John's actions they thought that perhaps he was the Christ (Lk 3:17); others thought he was Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the many prophets (cf. Mt 16,14; 21,26). The authorities wanted to positively know and so they sent some people to question him: "Who are you?" He replied: "I am not the Christ." Saying this did not seem to have given them the answer to their question, yet it was relevant because it reveals the real object of the investigation by the Jews concerning Jesus (7,26s. 31, 41s, 10,24 and 12,34). By doing this, the Baptist immediately diverts the focus to the identity of the Messiah and indirectly directs the listener towards the One who was to come, the one they were waiting for.

And so they would ask: "Are you Elijah?" And he responded: "No, I am not," an answer that raised many arguments because Jesus said: "He is that Elijah that was to come." (Mt 11, 16) That is why in Luke we read: "And he will go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah." We think it is

pointless to ask why, because John could only respond if you asked him what his mission was and who entrusted it to him and he would soon mention that.

Along the same lines is the answer to the following question: "Are you the Prophet?" To which he would respond with a curt: "No!" He was more than a prophet, but he was not the Prophet, a title that was reserved only for Christ (Acts 7, 37).

v. 22-23 When questioned by investigators John continued to deny without alluding to himself. Now forced to try to explain, he tried to discredit himself as the protagonist and identified himself only as "a voice" that echoes the prophecy of salvation. What a difference from the Synoptics! There he passes for a fiery preacher, a threatening precursor, a baptizer who draws crowds, challenges the establishment and dies a martyr. Nothing remains but a "voice" that comes from afar that fulfils a promise and makes an appeal. He was not the Light, he was: "He who was the Word," was Jesus and yet he was a prominent voice that made the Word present.

Think back a bit to the question and answer session between the Baptist and the investigators. Everything that the Baptist says tends to look away from him, waiting for another, looking forward. The Baptist knows that he must accept him. He tries to divert everyone to Christ. Is that not the purpose of all those who proclaim the Word?

v. 24-27 The Baptism of John continues to be a problem. The



The Baptist - Caravaggio (1573-1610) Kansas City USA

question of the Pharisees supposes that the act of baptizing should be linked above all to Christ. Recall the great prophecy of Ezekiel 36: 25: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness... a new spirit I will put within you." Perhaps it was for this that the Baptist did not speak of baptism in the Spirit as the Synoptics did. They limited their response to "I baptize you only with water," probably to make clear once more that he was not the Christ.

But he adds: "*but among you stands one whom you do not know, even he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.*" With these words the Baptist has already begun to proclaim Jesus, announcing him as one who comes from among his people and one whom they would not accept (1,11). They are words that make us think: Jesus is always in our midst, but do we recognize him? □ (to be continued)

A WORLD OF BROT TO BUILD A CIVIL

Benedict XVI calls on Mary Queen of PE

On Sunday, 22 August, 2010, the Memorial of the Queenship of Mary, the Holy Father introduced the Angelus with comments on the Blessed Virgin Mary's title of "Queen". The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A week after the Solemnity of her Assumption into Heaven the Liturgy invites us to venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary with the title of "Queen".

We contemplate the Mother of Christ crowned by her Son, in other words associated with his universal kingship, as she is portrayed in numerous mosaics and paintings.

This year too the Memorial falls on a Sunday, receiving a greater light from the word of God and from the celebration of the weekly Easter. In particular, the image of the Virgin Mary as Queen finds important confirmation in today's Gospel, where Jesus declares: "Behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last" (Lk 13:30).

This expression is typical of Christ as it clearly reflects a theme dear to his prophetic teaching, because the Evangelists recorded it several times - although differently formulated. Our Lady is the perfect example of this Gospel truth, namely that God brings down the proud of this world and raises the humble. (cf. Lk 1:52).

The small and simple young girl of Nazareth became Queen of the world!

This is one of the marvels that reveal God's Heart. Of course, Mary's queenship is totally relative to Christ's kingship. He is the Lord whom - after the humiliation of death on the Cross - the Father exalted above any other creature in Heaven and on earth and under the earth (cf. Phil 2:9-11).

Through a design of grace, the Immaculate Mother was fully associated



Spaces

HERS AND SISTERS CIVILIZATION OF LOVE

Peace to end the senseless logic of violence

with the mystery – of the Son: in his Incarnation; in his earthly life, at first hidden at Nazareth and then manifested in the messianic ministry; in his Passion and death and finally, in the glory of his Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven.

The Mother did not only share the human aspects of this mystery with the Son. She also shared, through the work of the Holy Spirit within her, his profound intention, the divine will, so that the whole of her poor and lowly life was exalted, transformed and glorified, passing through the “narrow door” which is Jesus himself (cf. Lk 13:24).

Yes, Mary was the first person to take the “way” to enter the Kingdom of God that Christ opened, a way that is accessible to the humble, to all who trust in the word of God and endeavour to put it into practice.

In the history of the cities and peoples evangelized by the Christian message there are many testimonies of public veneration - in some cases even institutional - of the queenship of the Virgin Mary. Today, however, let us as children of the Church above all renew our devotion to the One whom Jesus bequeathed to us as Mother and Queen.

Let us entrust to her intercession the daily prayer for peace, especially in places where the senseless logic of violence is most ferocious; so that all people may be convinced that in this world we must help each other, as brothers and sisters, to build the civilization of love. *Maria Regina Pacis, ora pro nobis!*

Today's Gospel reminds us that the way to Heaven is through the narrow door. May we enter through this narrow door with prayer, humility and service of our neighbours, and thus live the joy of the Kingdom even now. Upon you and your loved ones, I invoke the blessings of the Almighty God. □



MY SON WILL WALK

From Fr. Ian Douulton's collection of stories

This is how Mrs. Louise Benson told this to me and here is how I give it to you in her own words:

My son Pepper is a soldier. He does not wear a uniform or carry a gun and he's only sixteen; but he is a soldier of a special kind. When he was born he was a big healthy baby and my husband Ted and I always thought he would grow up to be an athlete, have some type of military career. We never had a serious worry about him until he was six years old. Then one day, Miss Taylor, his teacher from Kindergarten came to see me.

In the course of conversation she said: "And all the teachers have tried to stop the children from teasing Pepper, Mrs. Benson, but, you know how hard it is to watch forty children," said Miss Taylor rather helplessly.

"I can imagine" I replied. "I have a hard time keeping up with Pepper and his two sisters."

Miss Taylor continued: "Children can be so unconsciously cruel. They think it's fun to push Pepper because he falls down so easily. They just touch him and he loses his balance." "Mrs. Benson," Miss Taylor asked, with some concern in her voice. "Has Pepper had any childhood illness that might explain his tendency to fall so easily? Did he walk at the usual age?" I confidently told her that he began walking at the usual age of fourteen months and then I added: "but now that I think of it, we did rather worry but not seriously. He did seem to wobble when he was four. But I thought Pepper might

outgrow the whole thing and he's quite big and heavy."

Like a good teacher motherly Miss Taylor advised me: "If I were you, I'd take him to a child specialist as soon as possible." I was beginning to worry. "You don't think there's anything seriously wrong with him?" I said. "Well, only a doctor can tell."

As she got up to leave that afternoon, she assured me: "Now don't worry Mrs. Benson, it may turn out to be something as simple as wearing lifts in his shoes for a while."

But I did worry and when I told my husband he agreed that Pepper should be taken to a child specialist immediately. I was expecting another baby in a month and I felt ill and so Ted took Pepper to the doctor and when they returned, Ted said it was nothing serious but he looked evasive and later I heard him speak to one of the children as he'd never spoken before and I knew that something was wrong.

Pepper was playing with his older sister Barbara. She gave him a pat on the arm and he fell over. Ted shouted: "Barbara, don't you dare push your brother." Barbara was hurt and began to cry: "I didn't. I just..." Then with a particular tone that I had never heard Ted use with the children before. I heard him say: "You do that again and I'll spank you". He called Pepper to him and held him in his arms and Pepper said through his tears "But daddy I'm not hurt." I heard all this from the kitchen and came out into the yard and asked what

all the fuss was about and went up to Barbara and gently said: "Now Barbara, don't start crying, take Pepper out into the yard and play with him nicely." Barbara agreed and off they went.

I was a little concerned with Ted's tone and so I went up to him as he sat reading the papers and I asked him: "Ted, what is the matter?"

He tried to put me off. "Nothing, nothing Louise, really."

I was not put off so easily. I insisted. "Why were you so angry with Barbara? She didn't hurt Pepper." Then I looked straight at Ted and asked him: "Ted, what did the doctor say?"

Again Ted tried to look away: "Well, he gave him a thorough check up."

I was not going to let him off the hook: "What did he say, afterwards?"

Ted started rambling through the papers shiftily: "Oh, you know how doctors are, kind of indefinite. Anyway they are discovering new cures all the time."

I had had enough and so I raised my voice a bit and said: "Ted, what's the matter with Pepper? You might as well tell me now, I'll have to know sometime."

Ted looked down, defeated as it were: "He has muscular dystrophy."

Muscular dystrophy! My husband and I cried together. The next few days were a blur of agony. A battle raged between our faith and our rebellious hearts. This could not happen to Pepper. Was it perhaps, the will of God? Slowly our faith ran low and then our prayers that had

been routine began to have new meaning and power. We started to plan what was best for Pepper. First we enrolled him in a school for handicapped children. We were just getting used to the mystery of his illness when he woke up one morning.

"Ma, I don't feel good." He whined. I was confused "You don't? What hurts, Pepper?"

"I feel sick in my stomach." Tears began to roll down his sleepy eyes I tried to cheer him up. "Oh, you ate too much for dinner. I told you to leave those last six cookies."

He insisted and then amidst some real cries of pain he said: "My neck hurts too" My heart beat faster. "Your neck?"

He tried to describe how he felt. "I have this terrible pain and my stomach hurts terribly." Ted was already off to office so I had to organize something soon: "Well, I guess, I'd better get the doctor take a look at you." I said and trying to sound confident I added: "He'll probably say, 'no more cookies for that young man.'"

When the doctor had finished examining Pepper and came into the morning room I asked rather hesitantly: "Doctor, is Pepper very sick?"

He looked down at his hands and said: "Well, Mrs. Benson, this is something I wouldn't take a chance on. You had better get him to the hospital immediately."

Shock was the first reaction: "Hospital?" He continued: "First, we'll have to take the routine tests, but for the sake of the other children I'm afraid, Pepper has a case of Polio."

The doctor was right. So I

drove him to hospital after I had called Ted who was already waiting at St. Joseph's Nursing Home. A week later they let us take Pepper home. A nurse wheeled him in a chair down the long corridor to us. When we arrived home. Ted carried him into the house and placed him in an armchair.

Trying to be very cheerful Ted said: "There you are Pepper, home safe and sound."

"Now lie there and rest darling." I said.

But Pepper insisted that he wanted to get up. I tried to prevent him but he wanted to prove that he could walk and before he knew it, his spindly legs gave way and he came crashing down like a matchstick doll. He was discouraged and depressed and rather withdrawn for some time. The next day Pepper tried again and failed. He seemed to understand that he'd never walk again and he wept.

Then in the midst of the agony the curtain of mystery began to lift.

One night I was putting him to bed. These used to be happy times when he knelt down and looked up at the cross by his bed while I taught him his prayers. In those days the only pain he knew was feeling the pain of a cut finger or a bruised knee. Now he had to be propped up with pillows while he said his prayers. He finished. He looked away from the cross and asked me very candidly.

"Mom, why can't I walk?"

I gave him the simple common sense answer: "Pepper, you've been sick."

He was not a kid anymore and so he tried to reason it out: "I don't have Polio anymore. That's why they let me come home from the hospital."

Not very convincingly I tried to put my rusty Catechism into practice: "Pepper, it's Our Lord, who's asking you to stay in your wheel chair."

Then came the adolescent: "Why?"

And I retorted: "Because... because, he knows you're brave."

This set Pepper thinking as he looked out of his window: "Am I brave?"

It was getting late and I had had a full day so I tried to round off the conversation: "Of course, you are, or Our Lord would never have asked you to do this. He knows how hard it is. Oh, Pepper, he went through much worse himself. Look up there at Our Lord on the cross." I said, pointing to the crucifix.

He seemed more serene now, I noticed: "I see him."

I began to feel a tingling sensation within me, as if I were sharing in his suffering: "See those nails in his hands and his feet? Those thorns on his head?"

Pepper whispered: "Yes,"

"Those were real nails and real thorns and they hurt our Lord terribly." I continued "But he didn't cry. He was braver than anybody in the world and he's asking you to be like him. Pepper?"

His thin pale hands were now joined on his sheets and his head was down: "He is?"

I continued: "Yes, he's asking you to be a good soldier, to follow him along the way of the cross. Like a brave soldier

follows his leader. He's given you a little cross so you can be like him.

Now I was feeling a lump in my throat: "It's a great honour to be chosen by our Lord. I'm proud of you Pepper, very proud." I was learning to accept this after all.

Caught up in the dim night light I heard Pepper say to me: "Alright mother, I'll be a good soldier."

He said his prayers faithfully. Everyday I took him down the street to St. Anthony's Church for a visit. And on the day of his first Communion he was radiantly happy. Every Sunday he was at the altar rail in his wheel chair.

When Pepper was twelve years old he was still well enough to attend the special school for the handicapped. And one day at recess, Betty, an older girl was wheeling his chair for him. The path was going downward and she said to Pepper: "Oh this path is very bumpy"

"I wish I hadn't come on this path" and as she said this she lost control of the wheel chair and Pepper and the chair went sprawling down the path his wheel chair on him. Being handicapped herself, Betty could not do much and so she went to call the teacher. Pepper, in the mean time was moaning in pain under the wheel chair. He was crying: "My leg, my leg."

But Pepper was hurt. Badly. His left leg was broken in two places and he spent an entire summer lying flat on his back in a plaster cast that covered his entire body. When the cast was finally removed, he could no longer sit up. Patiently and without

complaint he kept trying until he could manage it for an hour at a time. And still those were happy days. Pepper was now looking forward to his Confirmation.

"Mom I can't get all those big words in the book yet, but I know what Confirmation is. It's when the Holy Spirit comes to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ." Pepper seemed to have a certain conviction in the way he said it.

I was secretly proud. "That's fine!"

Pepper too was happy, very happy: "It's going to be terrific being a soldier." I tried to tell him that he had already been a soldier and a brave one at that. Pepper seemed rather embarrassed at the flattery: "Ho, ho, that was just pretending. Then one evening as I was sitting with my knitting Pepper said: "Mom? I was talking to some of the kids. They thought it was funny I was excited about being confirmed. They said it doesn't do anything to you."

I did not look up but I thought it seemed almost true. Most students hardly took the sacrament of Confirmation seriously and I said: "They don't have the time to think about it and appreciate it the way you do, Pepper."

His Bible was open and he looked at me and said: "I guess, I'm just lucky."

Pepper went to his Confirmation in his wheel chair but with a spirit in his eyes that was brave and strong and it has stayed that way; although in the next few months he became completely helpless.

(Continued on pg. 31)

THE SALESIAN FAMILY

8

by Fr. Elias Dias

It was said that once Signor Carlo Buzzetti an architect and a musician by profession visited the Oratory of Don Bosco. He was amazed to see poor boys playing music. He opened his wallet and offered Don Bosco some money. Don Bosco smiled and said "Signor Buzzetti, what I really need right now are few people like you whom I could use more than their money." Don Bosco wanted people to carry on his work. He called many people, rich and poor, young and old, male and female to collaborate with him like members of a family.

The Salesian family refers to the assembly of groups, institutes and associations that share Don Bosco's charism, spirituality and his mission for the youth. These units were either founded directly by Don Bosco or came into existence after his death. Today, there are 28 groups in the Salesian family. We shall deal with only three branches of the Salesian Family at the time of Don Bosco.

The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Italy was going through the effects of National Unification. At the same time Jansenism was making inroads especially in Piedmont. As a consequence the Christian Faith was growing weak. A certain Fr. Dominic Pestarino, from the little



village Mornese, in the diocese of Acqui, was forced by the revolutionaries to leave the seminary. When he returned to his village he began to work zealously, taking particular care of young people. With his help, a certain girl named Angela Maccagno started the *Pious Union of Mary Immaculate* for girls who did not want to marry and who desired to live like consecrated religious life but remaining in their own families. On May 20, 1857 Bishop Modesto Contratto of Acqui official recognized the Pious Union. Mary Domenica Mazarello at the age seventeen joined the Pious Union.

Under Fr. Pestarino she learnt to live a holy life. In 1858 while the members of the Mazzarello family were in the vineyard their house was robbed. Mr. Mazzarello decided to leave the farm and move to Mornese. In 1860 typhoid

broke out there, claiming many lives. Mary's uncle and his entire family were stricken. Fr. Pestarino begged Mr. Mazzarello to send Mary to nurse the victims. All were cured but she contracted the disease and was on the threshold of death. Weeks later she recovered but was too weak to work in the vineyard. She learnt to be seamstress so that she could be useful to the family.

One day while passing through Borgo Alto she saw in vision a large edifice and many poor girls playing without any help. She wanted to help them. She shared her desire with her friend Petronilla Mazzarello she too was interest in this type of work. The village folk of Mornese turned to Mary and Petronilla to stitch their clothes. They gathered young girls and taught them stitching. First they began in a small room then they moved near the Church of St. Sylvester. They started an Oratory and kept four boarders and gave them catechism instructions.

We do not know when Don Bosco got an idea of working for girls. He had a dream on July 5, 1862 in which he told Marchioness Barolo that Our Lord came to save both girls and boys. Don Bosco told Fr. Francesca that he had a dream in which he saw number of poor girls playing in Piazza Vittorio. He was not interested in this apostolate but a resplendent Lady appeared to him and told him to take care of them for they were also her children. Fr. Francesca said that Don Bosco wanted a female congregation to do what the Salesian do for the boys.



In 1864 Don Bosco attended a clerical conference organized by Bishop Modesto Contratto of Acqui. There he met Don Pestarino who told him all about his Sodality at Mornese. A few months later Don Pestarino visited the Oratory of Don Bosco and was very impressed and decided to remain with Don Bosco. Don Bosco advised him to take care of the Institute. On October 7, 1864 Don Bosco visited Mornese with his boys. The town folk gave him a rousing welcome. Don Pestarino introduced him to the *Daughters of Mary Immaculate* and asked him bless them. Don Bosco stayed there for five days and spoke to the members of the Sodality. He was moved by the kindness and spirit at Mornese.

On April 24, 1871 he explained to the council members about the Institute for girls. On June 23, 1871 Don Bosco went to Rome. He consulted the Holy Father about the foundation. In his next

visit the Holy Father advised him to follow the rule of the Vincentians. Having the approval of the Holy Father, Don Bosco began to work on the project. The Constitution was based on the constitutions of several existing female Institutes.

Towards the end of 1871 Don Bosco gave Don Pestarino a plan and Constitutions for the future novices and asked them to elect a leader. In 1871 Don Bosco was sick at Varazze. Don Pestarino went to see him Don Bosco asked him to organize the group. Fr. Pestarino called a meeting on January 29, 1872 to elect the superior and the council of the Institute Mary Mazzarello was elected the superior but she refused to be superior later she accepted with Petronilla as her vicar.

Don Bosco asked Don Pestarino to prepare the Daughters for their investiture and profession. August 5, 1872 was a great day for the new congregation. Monsignor Sciandra of Aquiri celebrated the Mass, blessed the habits and gave them to the candidates in the presence of Don Bosco. They were fifteen but eleven made their profession among them was Mary Mazzarello. After the profession Don Bosco told them hence forth they will be called Daughters of Mary Help of Christians as a living monument of Mary Help of Christians. On February 18, 1873 Don Bosco went to Rome. The Holy Father gave them advice to keep uniformity in food, in dress and in mission. In case of necessity the superior could make exceptions. Don Bosco asked the

superior of St. Ann, Mother Mary Dominici to send a few exemplary sisters to Mornese to help the newly formed congregation. Don Bosco sent Fr. John Cagliero to Mornese to act in his stead.

The year 1874 was very important to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians when the Congregation was approved on April 3, 1874. It was from this time onwards that Don Bosco began to call them "Our sisters."

The Salesian Cooperators

Don Bosco's work grew and he needed the help of priests, lay people of all kinds, young and old, rich and poor, priests and lay. In 1849 he invited his own boys to help him in the Oratory. He also turned to lay people of various backgrounds. They not only helped him financially but taught catechism at the Oratory. Women folk were not less helpful to Don Bosco. They help in the kitchen, dormitory and various places. In 1850 he called them the Congregation of St. Francis de Sales. In the same year on November 17th he gathered seven trusted men and explained to them the abuses by the press on religious matters and the sacrilegious war against the Church. He proposed to set up a provisional Pious Union under the protection of St. Francis de Sales.

In 1855 the government suppressed religious orders. In 1857 Minister Urban Ratazzi gave Don Bosco some suggestions on how to start a society. Don Bosco decided to lay the foundation of a religious congregation whose members, ecclesiastical and lay, would lead a common life and

bind themselves by vows. Those who lived together in common were called Interns and the others were called Externs. In 1858 he made a clear distinction: interns who lived permanently with him and externs who lived in their own homes and helped him according to their means. In 1858 Don Bosco went to the Pope with the Constitutions. It differed in two ways, it contained Ratazzi's suggestions and Chapter 16 was titled Externs. The Roman Congregation for Bishops and regulars had never seen such a Constitution. They told him to delete the chapter.

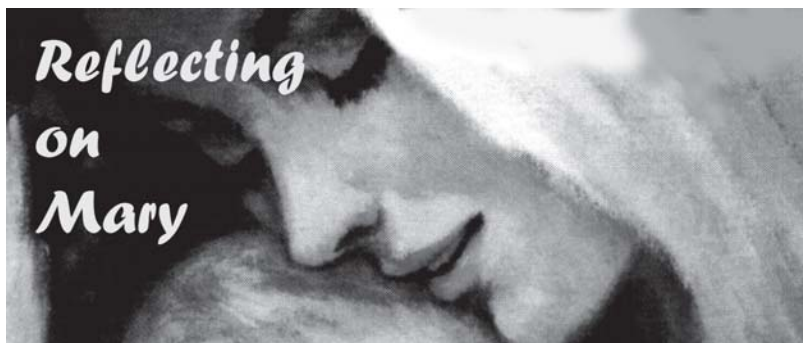
In 1876 Don Bosco again rewrote a set of regulations which were made up of eight chapters and he called them Salesian Cooperators. Many joined the Cooperators through the Salesian Bulletin. Pope Pius IX and Leo XIII were delighted to put their names as Cooperators. Today the Salesian Cooperators are spread all over the world. Don Bosco on his death bed wrote to the Cooperators *"You have helped me with so much good will and perseverance and now I ask you to continue the works that I have began with your support. You have no longer any need of me but they continue to need you. On that account I confide them to you all and I recommend them to you."*

The Arch-Confraternity of the Devout Clients of Mary Help of Christians

The Arch-Confraternity of the Devout Clients of Mary Help of Christians may be regarded as the third living monument raised up by Don Bosco to his heavenly Mother and Mistress. Ever since the time when the basilica, then

a sanctuary, was being built, the faithful made repeated requests for the establishment of an association of devout persons united in a mutual spirit of prayer and devotion to offer loving veneration to the great Mother of God under the title of Mary Help of Christians. When the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians was consecrated, many enrolled themselves in the register as members of Fraternity.

Don Bosco explained to the Holy Father Pius IX his project of spreading the devotion of Mary Help of Christians in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christian in Turin. The Holy Father in a Brief dated March 16, 1869 granted rich indulgences for a period of ten years and in the following year these were confirmed in perpetuity. On April 18, 1869 the Archbishop of Turin approved the rules presented by Don Bosco and declared the Association of Devout Clients of Mary Help of Christians as canonically erected at the sanctuary at Valdocco. On April 5, 1870 His Holiness, Pope Pius IX deigned to erect the Association to the dignity of Arch Confraternity. In a Brief dated January 18, 1894 Pope Leo XIII granted Don Michael Rua and his successors the faculty to erect the Arch Confraternity in all Salesian Churches and to affiliate them to the Arch Confraternity at the Sanctuary at Turin. The same Pope in a Brief dated February 25 1896 granted to the superiors of the Salesians in perpetuity to affiliate the Arch Confraternity of Mary Help of Christians to the Salesian Family. □



SHE IS OUR JOY

by Luigi Parit

Contemplating on the Assumption we become aware that death is not the end but an entrance into a life that knows no death.

Every year at this time the celebration of the solemn feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary - the oldest Marian feast - leads us to raise our gaze towards heaven. It is not be an abstract heaven or imaginary like the one created by artists, but the real heaven which is God himself. *God is Heaven* and *He is* our destination and eternal home, from whence we came and towards whom we tend.

When the Virgin Mary lay down to sleep in this world she woke up in heaven, in fact, for the final time, she simply followed her Son Jesus on that last and most decisive journey "from this world to the Father." Like him and with him she departed this world in order to "return to the Father's house." And this was not in order to distance herself from us as it might at first appear, because we are all children of the Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus. We are also Mary's children and she is our

Mother. All of us strive for happiness and the happiness to which all of us tend is God himself, and this happiness we call heaven, which, in reality, is really God himself.

Mary helps and encourages us to ensure that at every moment of our existence, our every step on this exodus tends towards God. She helps us to do this by making the reality of heaven and the greatness of God present to us here in this world.

What a great mystery of love is presented to us for our contemplation! Jesus Christ has conquered death by his omnipotent love. And Mary followed her Son and shared his glory after sharing his passion. She comes with an irrepressible rush, keeping the path open behind her for all of us, her children. And that is why today we call her "Gate of Heaven," "Queen of Angels" and "the Refuge of Sinners."

The arguments to substantiate this sublime reality are pretty vague but a simple and trusting faith and a silent and intense prayer connects us to this Mystery

that infinitely transcends us. Prayer helps us to speak with God and to listen to him speak to our hearts.

We ask Mary to give us the gift of her faith, that faith which already makes us live here and now between the finite and infinite, which transforms even the passing of time and our existence, by which we feel deeply that our lives are sucked away from the past but drawn strongly to the future towards God where Jesus Christ has gone before us and immediately after him, Mary.

Looking at Mary's Assumption into heaven we understand our everyday lives better, though marked by trials and difficulties, like a river it flows towards the

divine ocean, to the fullness of peace and joy. We begin to realize that our death is not the end. It is the entrance into a life without end, where there is no death. Our sunset on the horizon of this world ushers in the dawn of an entrance into the dawn of a new world, an eternal day.

"Mary, while accompanying us in our everyday struggles of living and dying, keep us constantly directed towards our true homeland of eternal bliss. Help us to live as you did." Before the sad spectacle of so much false joy and with it so much distress and pain that spreads over the world, we should learn from her to become signs of hope and consolation, we must announce by our lives, the Resurrection of Jesus.

THE MADONNA OF SNOWS

by Alfredo Pescante

This special Marian feast is closely linked to the construction of the Roman basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore - Saint Mary Major.

The particular feast of Our Lady of Snows has its origin and current vitality in the Roman basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore - The basilica of St. Mary Major. Although no longer remembered today, there is indubitable evidence of this devotion. They say the name that was given to the chapel there - at least since 1832 - was the chapel of the Madonna Mora, which came to be translated as "Santa Maria Maggiore"; and a series of manuscripts found in the nearby



Franciscan Library recalls the existence of such a feast. The most significant document is the one marked number 88 (see photo), "*Ordo Breviarii Fratrum Minorum secundum consuetudinem Romanae Curiae*," written expressly for the convent of the Friars Minor. It was for the first time that in 1466, the feast was described as the feast of "The Madonna of Snows." A

miniature shows snow falling covering the area where the church was to be built. This piece of documentation hastened the spread of the devotion around the fifteenth century.

There was just a single church that existed in the city which was

dedicated to Our Lady of Snows and it was also called "Santa Maria Maggiore" - Saint Mary Major. It was consecrated on June 17, 1792. Actually, it was a chapel that was attached to the hospital. The other centre of this devotion which already existed from the ninth century was the church of the Holy Cross (where there exists yet another chapel) administered by the Somaschi fathers and which possesses a painting of the Madonna.

It is from this devotion that several Christians name their girls 'Bianca,' or Biancamaria or Nives. That was the title of one of the most ancient friezes of the Madonna closely linked to the establishment of the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

In the fourth century, during the pontificate of Pope Liberius (352-366), John, a noble and wealthy Roman patrician, had no child so he and his wife decided to leave their inheritance to the Virgin desiring that a church be built and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. In response to this Mary herself appeared to them in a dream on the night between the 4th and 5th August, the warmest time of the year in Rome and pointed out a place with a miracle where the church was to be built.

The next day the couple went to the Pope and told him of the dream and they were not surprised that he too had the same vision in which the Esquiline Hill was indicated as the place for the future construction. As they went up there they found the place covered with snow. Pope Liberius traced the perimeter of the church, following the surface of the ground covered with snow and

built there a church with the legacy of that devout couple.

Pope Sixtus III (432-440) rebuilt it and made it much larger giving it the title of "the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore" because it was the most prominent of all the churches dedicated to Our Lady. Since 1568 the official name of the liturgical feast was "Our Lady of the Snows." It was later changed to "the Dedication of Santa Maria Maggiore" and left on the 5th August.

The miracle of the snow - not proven historically - was forgotten even though there was no objection to its validity. When I visited the basilica some years ago I witnessed the beautiful ceremony of the "shower of petals" that takes place every year on the 5th August. "The miracle of the snowfall" is in fact reenacted before the eyes of the gathered congregation by means of a cascade of white petals that fall from the ceiling over the main altar, blanketing the ground below creating an almost ideal union between the congregation and the Mother of God. The petals fall through a trap door on the coffered ceiling of the basilica and last as long as the "Gloria" is sung. Cyrus, a young altar boy there kindly provided me with a photograph of the 'shower of petals' though I had some difficulty identifying the white petals on a pale floor. It was an impressive ceremony, preceded by a night vigil attended by several worshippers from the city of Rome who had come to honour the Mother of God under the title of "Salus Populi Romani" - "Help of the Roman people." □

(Continued from pg. 23)

Pepper had already learned to accept the will of God. He believed that God should have his way, not we our way. And now we began to realize that the tragedy in our home had the power to bring out the best in all of us.

Pepper seemed concerned about Johnny his elder brother who brought him his dinner every night. He felt he was depriving him of his time with his friends and so he complained to me one night: 'Mom, I wish Johnny hadn't to feed me every night. He ought to be out playing with the other kids.' I told him how Johnny begged to be allowed to feed him. I told Pepper: "He says you and he have so much fun."

In the afternoon after washing the dishes Mitsy the maid used to read to Pepper; again he thoughtfully tried to discourage her, thinking it was a burden to be reading to a sick boy day after day. I had to admit to him what Mitsy had told me recently: "Oh, she enjoys it Pepper. She says it's the easiest way she knows of getting educated." Pepper piped in: "She reads so well, I can't ever fall asleep."

His concern for everyone seemed to increase. He turned to Ted, my husband one Saturday morning and said: "Dad, let me stay out in the other room when the kids watch TV tonight."

Ted asked him why. Pepper gave him the most amazing answer a fourteen-year-old could have given: "I just like to find out what programmes they'd turn on if I wasn't there."

And so it went with Pepper. It's strange how things so sad can bring such happiness. And yet,

Pepper accepts each day's pain with the utmost calm. And the secret of it all is summed up in the Way of the Cross that he makes when he says his prayers every morning and I'm there with him so he starts: "The First Station: Jesus before Pilate. Second Station: Jesus bears his cross." and Pepper accepts his cross for the day, the lying in bed, the weakness and the pain. "Jesus falls the first time." My son knows the shock of falling. "Jesus meets his mother" And Pepper also tries to hide his pain from me. "Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross." All of us are blessed in helping Pepper. "Jesus is nailed to the cross" as helpless as Pepper lying in his bed. "Jesus dies on the cross." I have to look away from my son. "Jesus is laid in the arms of his mother." So, Christ's mother understands my sorrow.

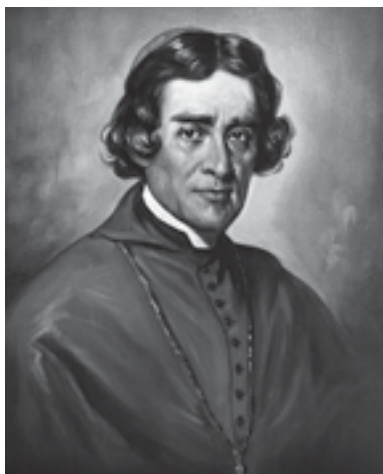
Sometimes I think of what might have been. What a handsome tall young man my son would have been. How well he could have worn good clothes and played football in high school and gone on to college and a career. But then I realize that Pepper has found a sublime mysterious career beyond that given to most people. He suffers for the rest of us. His patience and his courage have transformed our home into a house of prayer. In deepest faith, I believe that Pepper is God's tremendous blessing on our home and on the lives of all who know him. He is a soldier of the cross and he will continue his brave battle until the day that his spirit walks straight and tall into heaven. □

Vatican City

Pope Benedict XVI met the four Catholic bishops of Russia as part of their "ad limina" visit. Catholic-Orthodox differences involving theology, church structure and practice make formal dialogue a challenge, the pope said. In Russia, marked by more than 1,000 years of Orthodox tradition and culture, "it is essential to take into account the necessity of a renewed commitment to dialogue with our Orthodox brothers and sisters," Pope Benedict told the Catholic bishops he understood the challenges of ministering in Russia and he praised their efforts to "relaunch liturgical-sacramental participation, catechesis, priestly formation and the preparation of a mature and responsible laity" after decades of communist repression of church activities. Pope Benedict told the bishops not to be discouraged when results do not seem to match the amount of effort they put into pastoral programs. "Nourish in yourselves and in your collaborators an authentic spirit of faith," he said. *Cindy Wooden, CNS.*

Michigan

The Diocese of Marquette is investigating a possible miracle attributed to Bishop Frederic Baraga (1797-1868). Father Ronald Browne, appointed to lead the canonical tribunal described the miracle as, "a case involving what was thought to be a tumor on a patient's liver



that showed up on various tests, including a CT scan and an ultrasound. However, when exploratory surgery was done, there was no tumor to be found." The cure seems to have taken place after the patient's family invoked the intercession of Bishop Baraga and placed his stole on the sick person's abdomen. Following the prayers, the patient said that the pain in the abdominal area went away.

Bishop Baraga was born in 1797 in Slovenia and came to the United States as a missionary to the upper Great Lakes Region in 1830. Ministering to the Odawa and Ojibwa Native American tribes, the bishop is said to have traveled throughout the 80,000 square mile territory by means of boat, canoe, horse, dog sled, and even snowshoe. Often called the "Snowshoe Priest," he was consecrated as Bishop of Marquette in 1853 and served there until his death in 1868. □

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



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

I started praying the three Hail Marys after a lapse of several years and to my surprise, though the problems might have been small ones all of them were solved. Thank you Mother Mary, you were definitely not forgotten.

Rudy D'Souza, Pune

My heartfelt thanks to Jesus and mother Mary for favours recieved by our family through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. Mother Mary continue to intercede for my family and protect us always.

Maria N. Gomes, Mumbai

On 8th October 2011 while I was traveling with my family of six, our car went off the road and fell into a steep ravine. At this stage we were on the 4th decade of the Holy Rosary after saying the Divine Mercy prayers. A dead stump of a cashew tree prevented it from rolling down and that would have been fatal. Crowds of good people came and pulled us out of the car and we were miraculously safe and sound. The owner of the land, a muslim gentleman began to thank Allah. He said that a week back he came to chop off that stump for firewood. As he was cutting it wild ants came in their hundreds and chased him away. Look at the mercy of the Lord through the intercession of Mary Help of Christians. We thank Jesus held in the arms of Mary Help of Christians.

Kurien Ouseph, Kerala

I work at Sacred Heart Theological College as a Library Attendant and I regularly read *Don Bosco's Madonna*. I also pray the Three Hail Marys, everyday and every night and miracles do happen. For three years our family has tried to sell our plot of land. Many people came to see the plot but no one would buy it. Then I started praying to the Madonna, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio. Recently on a single day three groups of people came to buy our plot of land, we were confused and finally decided that we do the deal on a first come first served basis. I am grateful to Our Lady for her intervention in the life of my family.

Virginia Mawlong, Shillong

Belated thanks to Jesus and Mary for showering abundant blessings on all our family members and being with us at difficult times and granting us a house in Goa.

Ms. Flory Fernandes, Mumbai

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Thank you almighty Father, loving Jesus and Mumma Mary for the good reports of my blood. *Mrs. Dorothy Monis, Kolkata*
Whilst riding my motorcycle the tyre burst and we fell on the road. My cousin escaped with no injuries and I had a cut on my face due to some glass pieces lying on the road. thanks to Our Lady, my eye sight was not affected. Another time my two wheeler brushed against the fender of a truck. My wrist watch was damaged but I didn't suffer any injuries. Once again my heartfelt thanks to Our Lady for protecting me.

Catarina Alvares

On March 13, 2012 I underwent a surgery for ductal carcinoma of the left breast and was advised weekly checkups thereafter for aspiration of any gathered fluid. On the eve of Easter Sunday I discovered a lot of fluid gathered and prayed to the Lord: "*I can offer you nothing but my sinfulness whereas you can dry up this fluid as an Easter gift to me.*" To my surprise I was really blessed with this favour on Easter day. I am grateful to Almighty God for this favour granted to me.

F.E.D. Mumbai

On April 28th April 2012 I was travelling by road with my grandson and my sister-in-law from Rajahmundry to Vijaywada. On the way we decided to pay a visit to the chapel of Our Lady of Cherole. While we were on the highway we had a head-on collision with another speeding car. I was sitting in the front seat and I screamed *JESUS SAVE US!* Our car came to a halt, the tyres burst, the car was very badly damaged but none of us was hurt! We thanked God and Our Lady when we went to the little chapel of Our Lady. Our sincere thanks to Our Lady for her protection.

Mrs. Jennifer Waring, Rajahmundry, AP

My most sincere thanks to the Holy Spirit and Our Blessed Mother Mary for two special favours received. *Mrs. A. deSouza, Australia*
I am grateful to Our Blessed Mother for the success in examinations.

Mrs. Mary Joseph, Mumbai

My belated but heartfelt thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for granting my son a visa, a good job, for the cure of my fractured ankle and for all the other favours received.

A. Lobo, Mumbai

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

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter and for the gift of a baby boy, through the faithful recitation of the three Hail Marys.

Maria Jose Noronha, Daman

A heartfelt 'Thank You' to Our Lady and all the Saints for the positive outcome of the reevaluation of my examination paper.

Simone Lobo, Mumbai

We prayed to Don Bosco for a job and I received a job offer on his feast day.

Mervyn, Canada

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Many thanks for the scapular and prayer to St. Dominic Savio. My daughter Tanya's Thanksgiving testimony is attached. Do continue to bless our family.

Ashok Pereira, Chennai

Our sincere thanks to St. Dominic Savio, Don Bosco, Mother Mary for blessing us with a healthy baby girl and for other favours received.

Peter and Melita Vaz, Goa

My sincere thanks to the Lord Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for success in my B.Ed. Exams.

Mrs. Trinie Roy, Mira Road

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter and for the gift of a baby boy, through the faithful recitation of the three Hail Marys.

Maria Jose Noronha, Daman

Thanks to our dear Mamma, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for a safe C-section and the gift of a baby girl.

E. D'Souza Mumbai

Thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the blessed marriage of my daughter and for many other blessings received.

Lorna Pinto, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to the Infant Jesus, Mother Mary, Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping both my sons find suitable life partners and also for the countless favours received and blessings bestowed on my family.

Louis Nogueira, Mumbai

Thanks be to God! To Our Lady, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio whose miraculous scapular my daughter held tightly throughout her dangerous delivery on 4/1/12 and for pulling both mother and daughter from the jaws of death. The baby was born before the due date.

Albertina P. Pinheiro, Mumbai

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

AUGUST 2012

The Holy Father's General Intention: *That prisoners may be treated with justice and respect for their human dignity.*

Missionary: *That young people, called to follow Christ, may be willing to proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel to the ends of the earth.*

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MARY WAS THERE

I was driving a Honda Activa with my son and nephew and our family was seated in an SUV which was crusing ahead of us. To catch up with the Tavera I accelerated, but couldn't control the two wheeler when the Tavera suddenly brokeed. We hit the vehicle but were miraculously saved by the protective armour of our mother. We make it a point to pray for her protection especially when we are travelling. Thank you dear Lord Jesus, Mother Mary and Saint Christopher for the special protection at all times and for your infinite mercies and favours.

Allwyn Sequeira

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

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

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

You can help by establishing a Perpetual Burse with:

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But any amount, however small, will be gratefully received.

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Please address all correspondence to:

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