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*Through
the intercession of
the Blessed Virgin Mary,
may we be brought
to the glory of
Christ's
resurrection...*

*(From the opening prayer
on the feast of the Holy Rosary)*

**Cover: The Guardian Angel
of God's Children**



From The Editor's Desk

NAGGING PRAYER

We are quite a self-respecting lot and we never like to look foolish (at least not in public). Then you wouldn't really find this parable applicable to you... but you've done it secretly...you've desperately nagged!

Nagging means "to persistently irritate, urge, complain, worry, preoccupy...to ache dully but persistently." That is how the Oxford Dictionary defines the verb 'to nag.'

Jesus recommended nagging as a good way to get what you want out of his Father. If you nag Him enough, he suggested, the Father will gladly give you all you ask before long; for God has a low resistance to anyone who harps on and on at Him. And Jesus should know for he is his Son.

It's a curious way to think of prayer but it is the way Christ presented it to his disciples in the parable of the poor widow and the unjust judge (Luke 18:1 -18). If she had lived today she would probably have phoned him as well, written to his secretary, mailed his office and even spoiled his weekend with her own desperately creative strategies.

But because she was not important, he did not give her much attention. On the face of it, her chances were not good. Who else was there to plead her cause? She didn't know the kind of people who can pull strings. And yet she had one resource, this crafty widow, one asset which was greater than any other. She had determination. She would not rest until it was resolved. She made a nuisance of herself. What had she to lose? She pleaded and begged until he was sick of her.

Finally he could ignore her no more. *'Maybe I neither fear God nor regard man,'* he said to himself at last, *'yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.'*

'Consider what the unjust judge says, 'counselled Jesus, 'Will God not vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night?' Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily.'

Sometimes the message has to be spelled out for us, even though we know it makes eminent sense. And in the story about the nagging widow, 'he told them this parable to show the need to pray continually and never lose heart' - notice the voice of St. Luke chipping in to make sure we get it the first time.

Why do we all need reminding and encouragement in prayer? Because we are easily put off. We don't want to be seen pleading...let alone nagging. If straightaway, we give up; if other people stop praying, so do we; if we don't hear God's voice, we think He doesn't hear ours.

Think again, urges Jesus, and the gospel repeats his advice like an echo down through the ages: think again, think again. Has there ever been anyone who petitioned persistently and walked away empty? Do you imagine for one moment then that you are going to be the first?

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

THE ART OF GIVING

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

Indian sages have a wealth of knowledge often expressed in poetic form or through their hymns and other compositions. Sant Kabir, a well-known Indian saint has many gems of wisdom out of which we cull only one theme – the Art of Giving. This is what he has to say in connection with the often forgotten Art of Giving. “Rivers do not drink their own water, trees nor do eat their own fruit, nor do rain clouds eat the grains reared by them. The wealth of the noble is used solely for the benefit of others!”

Even after conceding that giving is a good and worthy practice, and that one must learn to give, several practical questions need to be answered.

Q. The first question that comes to mind when we are confronted with giving is *when should one give?* We are all familiar with the famous incident from the Mahabharata. Yudhisthir asks a beggar seeking alms to come the next day. On hearing this, Bhim rejoices that Yudhisthir his brother, has conquered death! Bhim argues that if Yudhisthir is sure that he will be around tomorrow to give alms to the beggar then he has conquered death! Yudhisthir was sharp enough to pick up the message. One does not know really whether one will be there tomorrow to give! So the answer is: *The time to give therefore is now!*

Q. The next question that is

pretty much at the top of the list is *'how much to give?'* We recall the time when Rana Pratap was reeling after defeat from the Moghals. He had lost his army, his wealth, and most important of all, he had lost hope, his will to fight. At that his darkest hour, his erstwhile minister Bhamasha came seeking him and placed his entire fortune at the disposal of Rana Pratap. With this, Rana Pratap raised an army and lived to fight another day. Hence, the answer to this question how much to give is *'Give as much as you can!'*

Q. The third question is *what to give?* It is not only money that can be given. It could be a flower or even a smile. It is not how much one gives but how one gives that really matters. When you give a smile to a stranger that may be the only good thing received by him in days and weeks! And so we learn that one can give anything but the key point is that it *must be given with one's heart!*

Q. One also needs to know to *whom to give?* Many times we avoid giving because we find fault with the person who asks. Or we are caught up with our own prejudices and preferences. For example, we often take for granted that all who beg in moving trains and at road junctions are bogus, or out to make a fast buck. But, there could be just once in a blue moon, a stray genuine person in need.

However, our outlook implies that we are judgmental and reject a person on the presumption that he may not be the most deserving – an assessment that is in some way justified but would benefit from a closer scrutiny. Hence it is more praiseworthy to *give without being judgmental!*

Q. Further there are times when we have to ask *'How should one give?* Here we touch upon the real crux of the Art of giving: whenever one gives, one has to ensure that the receiver does not feel humiliated, nor the giver feels proud by giving. When giving it is best to follow the advice of Jesus, 'Let not your left hand know what your right hand gives?' Charity without publicity and fanfare is the highest form of charity as it leaves very little room for the Self. Hence, *give quietly* and without seeking any return, not even a word of thanks!

While giving we must not make the recipient feel small or humiliated in any way. After all what we give never really belonged to us. We come to this world with nothing and will go with nothing. The thing gifted was only with us for a temporary period. Why then take pride in giving away something which really did not belong to us? *Give with grace and with a feeling of gratitude.*

Q. The sequel to the previous question obviously is, *What should one feel after giving?* Most Indians know the story of Eklavya. When Dronacharya asked him for his right thumb as part of "Guru Dakshina", he

unhesitatingly and generously cut off the thumb and gave it to Dronacharya. But there is a little known sequel to this story. Eklavya was one day asked whether he ever regretted giving away his thumb. He replied, and the reply has to be believed to be true, as it was asked to him when he was dying.

His reply was "Yes! I regretted this only once in my life. It was when the Pandavas were closing in to kill Dronacharya who was broken-hearted on the false news of death of his son Ashwathama and had stopped fighting. It was then that I regretted the loss of my thumb. If I had the use of my thumb no one could have dared hurt my Guru! The message: *Give and never regret giving!*

Q. And the final one is: *How much should we provide for our heirs?* Here the crucial question to oneself should be 'am I taking away from them the gift of work'? A source of happiness! The answer then is "*Leave your offspring enough to do anything, but not enough to do nothing!*"

We can sum up the Art of Giving, following the thought of Sant Kabir, as follows: "*When the wealth in the house increases or when water fills a boat - Throw it out with both hands!*"

Money, Greed – Root of all Evil?

Many wise people will warn us that money is the root of all evil. The more money or self-sufficiency we have, the greater is the danger that we will end up becoming victims of greed. That somehow seems to be the tremendous power that wealth

has over human beings: the more they possess, the more they want to have! But is the real problem in wealth by itself or rather in the people who desire to possess it? The answer seems to lie in the way we see or appreciate riches. To most of us, riches are something that give us a higher standing in society, the more rich we are the more we can enjoy the creature-comforts that money can buy and the more people around us admire our 'power' and good fortune. Soon we have several persons kow-towing to us and giving us all kinds of signs of respect. We can obtain almost anything we wish, simply by the force of the money we possess. What does all this say about ourselves? Anyone with a modicum of self-awareness would soon realize that what is really happening inside of ourselves is that we are horribly empty of self-worth, we seem hollow to ourselves and so we seek to cover that emptiness with the wealth we acquire.

However, the major problem with the approach of using wealth as a cover-up is that we can never be sure that our wealth will last. We read or hear of innumerable stories of how a person stashes up great wealth hiding it in places where he thinks it is absolutely safe – only to discover one fine day that someone has broken into his safe place and helped himself to all that wealth! No wealth stored anywhere in the world is really safe, and there is no guarantee that we who store it all up will be the ones who will finally benefit from it. Hence, this approach generates a lot of fear

and suspicion in our lives. The acclaim and acceptance our wealth brings us is superficial – and even we can sense that as we go strutting about – our minds and spirits are never at rest! No wonder Jesus reminds us, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt 6:19-21).

A Sign of Strength

For most of us, giving means losing, or better, 'giving up.' We see giving to others as an eventual loss to ourselves and that is perhaps the main reason why we seem to be so reluctant to share our good fortune with others. But there is another way of looking at riches – as a sign of our potential. From this angle, we reason with ourselves saying, "If I can give, it is because I have; and so the very act of giving to others proclaims my greater power!" Besides, the more I empty myself, the more space there is that can be filled up. And perhaps most important of all, no matter how lavishly we have lived while on earth, once we have departed from here, we will be remembered not so much for how much wealth and fame we had, but for how many hearts and lives we were able to transform through our kindness and empathy for the needy and the poor.

It would be most fitting to conclude this reflection with the

marvelous parable of Jesus ‘The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, “What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?” Then he said, “I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is

being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.” ... your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well’ (Lk 12:15-31).

A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes ~ Hugh Downs □

walking with the Church



The Sunday Obligation

From St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland

Q. *When I was growing up the law about abstaining from servile works on Sundays was very strict. Seeing the number of shops and businesses open every Sunday now it seems that the obligation is no longer in force. Is this correct?*

A. The Bible opens with the story of creation when God worked for six days and rested on the seventh. Obviously God stressed the importance of resting from work once a week. The day of rest was called the Sabbath. After the resurrection of Jesus, Christians celebrated the Lord's Day as a day of rest on the Sunday instead of the Sabbath. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life." (CCC 2177) This expresses the seriousness of the Sunday obligation. It is a day that is meant to be given over to God by prayer and meditation and

to our fellow human beings by visiting them, especially our families, and caring for the sick, the elderly and those in need.

The Code of Canon Law, the Church's legislation, explains how this day is to be observed - by attending Mass and by abstaining from those works and business affairs which hinder the worship to be rendered to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, or the suitable relaxation of mind and body.

The emphasis is on spending the day in prayer, leisure and with family. The Church accepts that certain people, such as those in public utilities, social services, essential services, must be called to work for others. The point is made that even those who have to work should have time to spend in prayer, leisure and with family. Everyone should abstain from unnecessary and burdensome work or business. □

ANGELS IN DISGUISE

by Blanche Lobo

I did not know what to make of angels until I encountered them in my life and I did not think I would encounter them in such quick succession.

Scripture says: "He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, so you will not dash your foot against a stone." (Ps. 91:11-12)

My family is not highly educated or rich, but we have been blessed by God in many ways. Most significantly, He has seen us through moments of difficulty and has given us the privilege of His presence in the several angels who touched and changed our lives in no small way.

The first of these angels were of course my own parents! My mama was quite ill when she was expecting me and went through all her pains, following her doctor's instructions to the last detail. I am most grateful to both of them! I was just a toddler but I learned early what love was all about.

The second set of angels were my dad's only sister and her husband, generous and kindhearted to the core. They lived in Nairobi and took my dad there to work till we joined him some five or six years later. Now he had a large family to look after and so my dad found that he had to get himself a better job. So he joined a supermarket in Nairobi as a supervisor. He suffered severely from asthma and the attacks came particularly when the climate changed.

This prevented him from attending work regularly but he was blessed with an employer who was both humane and down-to-earth. Two of his sons would carry dad up a hill for his asthmatic treatment, which was to drink donkey's milk before sunrise. They did this for a long time, hoping it would help my dad. This gesture of theirs, making such a sacrifice to rise early in the cold Nairobi weather, to help someone who was neither a relation nor belonged to their community, touched us children immensely.

At Christmas time, my dad's employer, a non-Christian, personally presented us with a large box of assorted biscuits, which, in subsequent years, became a box of assorted chocolates. What employer in those days (early sixties) would care to visit an employee's family? As kids, we felt as if was God visiting us and showering us with gifts. We have lovely memories of our dad's employer and his wonderful children.

In 1969 the political situation became rather uncertain and so my parents deemed it prudent to return to Bombay. Within two years of our leaving Kenya, a son of my dad's boss sent my dad some cash through a cousin who happened to be coming down



from Nairobi and then whenever he had an opportunity he sent us a gift-cheque or money. His thoughtfulness and generosity saw us through some very difficult times. Sometimes he himself would visit Mumbai he would shower us with cakes and chocolates from expensive hotels which made us feel loved and cared for. His generosity continued even after I got married and had a son.

On one occasion, a little before Christmas, this kind gentleman bought my son some very expensive clothes which touched us deeply and left us speechless.

For years after we came back to Mumbai, Dad's boss's son kept making every effort to keep in touch with us. When our son got married in the year 2006, he sent him a large cash-present as a wedding gift leaving me deeply moved. My cousins from abroad were also very kind. Further, this kind gentleman also gifted me the money to buy myself a computer! My family and I truly appreciate his large heartedness.

I must say my family is blessed with truly loving relations, but the ones who stand out among all of them are two cousins who live in London and their brother. She never forgets to send all of us cards for our birthdays, as also for Christmas and Easter. She also telephones us on each of these days, showing her care and concern. We are sincerely touched and appreciate her love and affection.

On my wedding day, 33 years ago in 1977, this cousin especially came all the way from London to lead me to the altar. As a result, my nuptials and wedding

reception took on a different hue with waves of happiness and excitement sweeping through the celebrations!

In Mumbai, I was again richly blessed with really kind-hearted and generous employers. While I worked for them from October 1981 to 1989 my employers not only got on well with each other but also treated us, the staff, with kindness and consideration.

It was tragic that, while I was pregnant with my second child, my firstborn baby girl was struggling with leukaemia for four months. During the time that I was with my little one in hospital, my bosses proved to be pillars of strength and support. They extended generous financial aid, even giving me extra paid-leave to be with my baby, who was on chemotherapy at the tender age of two years and four months.

For us, a middle-class family, the medical expenses were a big strain, topping which was the knowledge that, even after having spent so much, our little darling would eventually die. Had it not been for the goodness, kindness and generosity of my employers, both my husband and I would have been reduced to penury and depression. As soon as my baby died, my bosses urged me to resume work immediately so as to divert my mind from brooding. God bless these angels for reaching out to us so supportively and caring for us in our time of need.

There are other angels too, who have touched our lives from time to time, to record all of them would not be possible! I thank God for them and ask Him to bless them abundantly. □

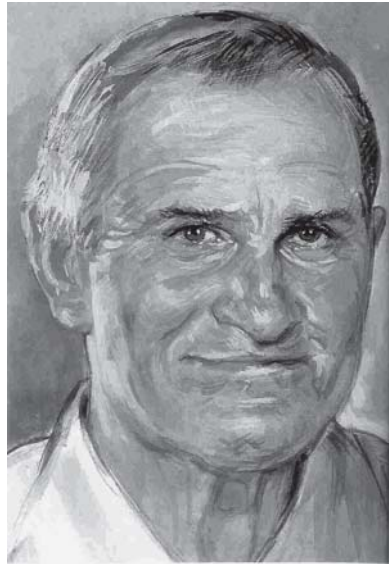
**SALESIAN SAINT
OF THE MONTH**

**JOSEPH VANDOR
1909 - 1979**

Father Vandor was born at Dorog in Hungary on 29th October 1909. His parents were Sebastián Wech and Maria Puchner. He did his early schooling with the Franciscans and joined the Salesian Novitiate in 1927-28 at Peliföldszentkereszt. He studied theology in Turin (Italy) and was ordained a priest there, in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, on 5th July 1936. That same year he was sent to Guanabacoa, Cuba as headmaster and chaplain until 1940. Then he became rector of the Agricultural School in Moca in the Dominican Republic. He was just 31.

He was known for his wisdom and prudence and so he was chosen as Master of Novices. In 1946 Fr Vandor moved as administrator to the College of Arts and Trades in Camagüey.

On 9 December 1954 he was put in charge of the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Santa Clara, which had been looked after till then by the Passionists. He was appointed to oversee the building of the school of Arts and Trades. When the school opened, Fr. Vandor was appointed rector, a post he held until 1961, the year in which all schools passed into the hands of the Minister for Education. He was named rector of the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. In 1965, he became its first parish priest when it became a parish.



He died on 8th October 1979. It is not easy to summarise Fr Vandor's moral stature. The Bishop wrote: "With Fr Vandor's death, the Salesian Congregation has lost a Son, the diocese an exemplary priest, the faithful a beloved father" and we can add: "Villaclara has lost an honoured citizen, who identified with the Corporation's educational concerns." In fact, the journalist Antonio Diaz Vázquez, in a piece entitled "a lamp that burns and shines brightly" wrote: "He was one of the most lovable, dedicated and noble souls of the clergy of Villaclara".

"Fr Vandor can be compared to St Francis de Sales for his patient docility, his prudent dedication, his enlightened wisdom as a spiritual director and to St John Bosco for his apostolic dynamism, his love of poor youth, his spirit of faith, his serene cheerfulness and his cordial manners". □



FR. BLANY PINTO, SDB

By Fr. Francis Kharjia, sdb

Blany Pinto was born to Maurice and Lucy Pinto on 7th December 1967, in Kurla, Mumbai. The eldest of three children. It was during his school years that he got to know Fr. Oscar Misquitta, who invited him to become a Salesian. Blany was greatly enamoured by Fr. Oscar and the other Salesians he met, and this led him to join the aspirantate in Lonavla in 1980. He made his First Religious Profession on 24th May 1986 in Nashik. Having completed his philosophical studies in Nashik and earning a Master's Degree in Philosophy. After his theology in Bangalore he was ordained a priest on 21st December 1996.

He served a few months in Mangalore after which he was appointed a teacher of Philosophy at Divyadaan, Nasik. After a long innings in the 'philosophical world', Blany moved to the 'pastoral world'. From July 2004 to May 2006, he was in charge of Our Lady of Light Church, Jyoti. During this period, he worked relentlessly to plan and construct a new church for the parish. Today, if Jyoti can boast of a magnificent Church, it is thanks largely to the efforts of Blany.

In May 2006, Blany was appointed as Parish Priest of Resurrection Parish, Virar. Those five years (2006-2011) will always remain one of the most memorable chapters of his life. Being a very loving pastor, his gentleness, patience and humility endeared him to all the parishioners. With his organizing skills, he also infused new spirit



into the parish, especially through the formation and development of Basic Christian Communities and other groups. A special talent that was clearly visible in him was his ability to bring people together and foster unity in the parish.

Blany is known for his calm and ever-smiling face, and for his soft-spoken demeanour. He is a multitasking person, one of his many talents being music. Over the past few years, he has been involved in the gigantic task of preparing the music notation for the hymnal 'Pray Sing'. But above all, Blany is a deeply spiritual person. He spends much time in prayer and many come to him and ask for his blessings.

When asked about his goals as a Salesian and his plans for the future, Blany-in his characteristic simple manner-replies, 'to serve the people who are entrusted to my care'. He has indeed been faithfully serving others these past 25 years, and will definitely continue to bring God's goodness to everyone he encounters on his Salesian journey. □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



BLESSED KARL I EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA & APOSTOLIC KING OF HUNGARY

Archduke Karl Franz Joseph was born on the 17th August, 1887, in the castle of Persenbeug on the Danube (Austria). He was the eldest son of Archduke Otto and the Saxon Princess, Maria Josepha. Hardly anyone then reckoned with the young Archduke Karl Franz Joseph ever becoming Emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary.

In 1894 Count George Wallis was appointed his governor. The Archduke began a rigorous course of studies with particular emphasis placed on languages. Unusual for a member of the imperial family, he also did two years' study at a public grammar school in Vienna. Karl grew up imbued with a deep personal trust in God and equipped with all the Catholic moral principles whose political application he would combine, as Emperor, with his appreciation for the Church's social doctrine. His military career began in 1903 with his formal appointment to the rank of 2nd lieutenant in the Ulan Regiment No.1. In 1906 he was promoted to full lieutenant.

His status, too, in the imperial



family had changed considerably. With the early demise of his father, Archduke Otto, in 1906, Karl found himself next in line to the throne immediately after the Heir Apparent, Franz Ferdinand. With an eye to his future status, the Emperor Franz Joseph indicated to the young Archduke that he was not prepared to countenance further mésalliances in the ruling house. He was consequently much relieved by

Karl's choice of the lovely Princess Zita of Bourbon-Parma.

The wedding was set for 21st October in Schwarzau in Lower Austria. After a glittering ceremony attended by the Emperor and after the traditional honeymoon, the newly-weds returned to Karl's garrison in Alt-Bunzlau in Bohemia. On 20th November his first child was born in Reichenau. He was named Otto after Karl's late father. The next few years were dedicated to his family and to his military duties. Archduke Karl continued to enjoy excellent relations with both the Emperor and the Heir apparent, his uncle Franz Ferdinand.

The murders in Sarajevo on 28th June, 1914, changed all that. The Archduke Karl, who received the bodies of his murdered aunt and uncle in Vienna's South Railway Station, was now the immediate heir to the throne. Austria-Hungary stood on the brink of war. Karl was not yet 27 years old. The Empire had only four more years to live, Karl himself had barely eight! During the first years of the war Archduke Karl got to know every front on which Austro-Hungarian troops were engaged. He saw the horrors of this war first hand. In June, 1915 he was promoted to major-general and in March of 1916 to lieutenant field marshal. The time between his military duties and his visits to the fronts was employed to initiate him into the business of governing by the Emperor Franz Joseph himself. On 21st November, 1916, the old Emperor passed away in Schönbrunn. Austria-Hungary had a new, young and relatively unknown couple on the throne. On the insistence of the Hungarian

Prime Minister, Count Tisza, Karl agreed to an immediate coronation and consecration in Hungary, which took place on 30th December, 1916.

The prospects in the last months of the war were dismal. The Central Powers were exhausted, while America's entry into the war infused new hope and strength into the Entente Powers. Overseas political émigrés (especially Czech) agitated in Washington for recognition as independent nations. Italy was demanding all of Austria's territory up to the Brenner Pass as well as the Adriatic coastline. The destruction of the centuries old Monarchy seemed increasingly inevitable.

In October, the Emperor issued his *Peoples' Manifesto* in which he transformed the Austrian half of the Monarchy into a confederation of the various folk groups. A desperate attempt to save that which still could be saved? Or was the Emperor determined, even at this late stage, to show his people where their true future lay? With the conclusion of an armistice in early November, he saw his Empire being torn apart. On 11th November, 1918, Karl signed a renunciation of his participation in government. He refused to abdicate! The imperial family left Schönbrunn for the hunting lodge of Eckartsau to the east of Vienna. From here they travelled on 23rd March, 1919, under the protection of a British officer into exile in Switzerland.

A monarchist counter-revolution in Hungary led to two unsuccessful attempts to regain the Hungarian throne. Karl was banished to the island of Madeira.

His health was already weakened and he was marked by the strains of war. The family had to live in an unheated and damp villa up on the mountain overlooking the town of Funchal. Emperor Karl came down with a dangerous bout of influenza that rapidly developed into pneumonia. He died on 1st April, 1922, not quite 35 years old uttering these words: "Thy holy will be done. Jesus, Jesus, come! Yes, yes, my Jesus, as thou willest it." To this day he lies buried in the church on the mountain.

It was the tragic fate of the Emperor Karl to be an able ruler with the very best intentions, to whom history denied the time and circumstances to realise his plans for the welfare of his people. He was forced to witness the dismemberment of his ancient realm in the heart of Europe. Involuntarily he had to put an end to one of history's greatest dynasties. He had to leave his beloved homeland to face an early death in a bitter exile. Catholic Church leaders have praised Charles for putting his Christian faith first in making political decisions and for his role as a peacemaker during the war, especially after 1917. They have considered that his brief rule expressed Roman Catholic social teaching, and that he created a social legal framework that in part still survives.

The Cause for his canonization began in 1949, when testimony of his holiness was collected in the Archdiocese of Vienna. In 1954, the cause was opened and he was declared Servant of God, the first step in the process. The "League of Prayers" founded by the mystic



Emperor Karl and his family 1930

and stigmatic Mother Vincentia Fauland in 1895 (advising that the young Archduke should be enveloped in prayers because he will become Emperor, have to suffer greatly, and be a target of Hell), continues to grow rapidly with members from all over the world. It continues to promote the life and values of Emperor Karl.

On the 3rd October, 2004, Pope John Paul II beatified Emperor Karl. In his homily, the Pope said; "The decisive task of Christians consists in seeking, recognizing and following God's will in all things. *The Christian statesman, Karl of Austria*, confronted this challenge every day. To his eyes, war appeared as "something appalling". Amid the tumult of the First World War, he strove to promote the peace initiative of his Predecessor, Benedict XV.

From the beginning, the Emperor Charles conceived of his office as a holy service to his people. His chief concern was to *follow the Christian vocation to holiness also in his political actions*. For this reason, his thoughts turned to social assistance. May he be an example for all of us, especially for those who have political responsibilities in Europe today!" □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Correction

Frustrated at always being corrected by my hubby, I decided the next time it happened I would have a comeback. That moment finally arrived, and I was ready.

"You know," I challenged, "even a broken clock is right once a day."

He looked at me and replied, "Twice."

Prescription Check

An old man strode in to his doctor's office and said, "Doc, my druggist said to tell you to change my prescription and to check the prescription you've been giving to Mrs. Smith."

"Oh, he did, did he?" the doctor shot back. "And since when does a druggist second guess a doctor's orders?"

The old man says, "Since he found out I've been on birth control pills since February."

Miracle Cure

Doctor Bloom who was known for miraculous cures for arthritis had a waiting room full of people when a little old lady, completely bent over in half, shuffled in slowly, leaning on her cane. When her turn came, she went into the doctor's office, and, amazingly, emerged within half an hour walking completely erect with her head held high.

A woman in the waiting room who had seen all this walked up to the little old lady and said, "It's a miracle! You walked in bent in half and now you're walking erect. What did that doctor do?"

She answered, "Miracle, shmiracle. He gave me a longer cane."

Van Problem

The fist knocking on the door belonged to a cop. Bracing for the worst, the yard foreman opened the door. "Is that yours?" asked the officer, pointing to a company van that was jutting out into the narrow street.

"Uhh, yes it is," said the foreman. "That is, it's our company's."

"Would you mind moving it?" asked the officer. "We've set up a speed trap, and the van's causing everyone to slow down."

Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen

A friend was lecturing in Latin America. He was going to use a translator, but to identify with his audience, he wanted to begin his talk by saying in Spanish, "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen." He arrived at the auditorium a little early and realized he did not know the Spanish words for ladies and gentlemen. Being rather resourceful, he went to the part of the building where the restrooms were, looked at the signs on the two doors, and memorized those two words.

When the audience arrived and he was introduced, he stood up and said in Spanish, "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen."

The audience was shocked. He didn't know whether he had offended them or perhaps they hadn't heard him or understood him. So he decided to repeat it. Again in Spanish he said, "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen."

One person in the audience began to snicker. Pretty soon the entire audience was laughing. Finally, someone told him that he had said, "Good evening, bathrooms and broom closets!" □



THEY SAW HIS GLORY

(Jn 1, 35 - 2,22)

by Mario Galizzi

Moving on from the Baptist to Christ, we begin our journey with Jesus. Here we marvel like the first disciples (Jn 1, 35-51), then we move to Cana in Galilee (2, 1-11) and later on to Jerusalem where Jesus drives out the merchants from the temple (2, 12-22). Notice how Jesus decisively organizes his mission; his guiding principle being always to seek the glory of the Father. Believing that we are disciples, we feel drawn to meditate on our journey of faith.

With His First Disciples (1, 35-51)

Here (1, 35 - 42), John is together with two of his disciples "and he looked at Jesus as he walked" and the section concludes by speaking of Jesus who "fixed his gaze" on Simon Peter. The 'fixing of the gaze' was not a simple "seeing." In Greek the verb suggests that John fixed Jesus penetratingly looking deeper into the mystery, while Jesus, fixing his gaze on Simon, as the future rock.

As John stared at Jesus he merely repeated: "*Behold the Lamb of God,*" a truth that he would have already discussed with his disciples and they, hearing him say this, understood that he believed in Jesus and that his words were meant to be an invitation to

become "disciples" of Jesus." So they leave him to follow Jesus. The verb "follow" is technical. In its most banal sense it means to "go after someone," but in its stronger sense it means: "becoming a disciple of someone," "choosing" him as the Master;" trying to share with him "a common life."

Jesus realizes that they are following him and so perhaps slows his pace because they are approaching and then, suddenly, he turns to them and says: "What do you seek?" He does not ask the question as an inquiry: he already knew what was in man's heart (2, 25). He just wants to provoke a response to make them aware of the true object of his co-seekers. And these are the first words that Jesus utters in the Gospel of John: "What do you seek?" And this is what Jesus says to each person who feels compelled to question his or her real motives for seeking Jesus.

In both of them there is the desire to become disciples of Jesus because they say: "*Rabbi, where are you staying?*" This expresses that they want to establish a Master-disciple relationship with him. But for this you need to know where he lives, where he meets his disciples. The information that the master gives does not satisfy them it is essential for them to enter into a communion of life with him. And he accepts this because he replies: "*Come and see.*" They were not going to see a house. They wish to physically check out this historical reality on which they are basing their faith. The invitation implicitly contains the offer to make contact with him, to get to know him more intimately and finally to be able to join him with conviction.

"They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day." This is an interesting insight of the evangelist. He says nothing about the experience they had with Jesus but he recounts what happened. Those who have had an experience with Jesus cannot keep it to themselves they must communicate it to others. And that was what Andrew, who was one of the two disciples, did. Well, it is said that he first went to seek out his brother Simon and told him: "we have found the Messiah, and he brought him to Jesus." And so Simon found himself in front of Jesus who "stared at him and said" You are Simon son of John you will be called Peter. Andrew was only confined to leading his brother to Jesus. Jesus entrusted Peter with the mission to be the visible rock on which the Church is founded, he would be invisible (Eph. 2, 20).

The following day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He met Philip and said: "Follow me." We do not know if Philip followed him but we do know that he had an experience of Jesus when he encountered him. Even Philip, like Andrew, felt the need to tell others about his experience. But unlike Andrew who said to Peter: "We have found the Messiah", Philip meets Nathanael perhaps known as a lover of the Scriptures, he said: "We have found him of whom Moses wrote, and also the prophets wrote: Jesus, son of Joseph of Nazareth." When Nathanael heard the word "Nazareth" he said "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" He could not believe it. Philip then said, "Come and see." The word

is followed by the "vision".

Now it was not Nathaniel who first sees Jesus, but Jesus who saw Nathanael coming toward him and immediately said, "Behold an Israelite indeed." Nathanael was surprised and said: "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him: "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree." The fig tree in Judaism symbolised the tree of knowledge. By what he said, Jesus insinuates that he was studying the Law. Nathaniel was prepared for his meeting with him. The result is magnificent. Nathaniel realizes he is in front of someone who is more than a rabbi and proclaims Jesus as the Messiah, saying: "*You are the King of Israel, Son of God;*" certainly not in the Christian sense but he was "Son of God," a Davidic descendant.

Jesus accepts the faith of Nathanael and brings him to look beyond: "You shall see greater things than these." Then, seeing Nathanael as a representative of many he passes over to the plural saying: "You will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." This is a clear reference to Jacob's vision. Only now there is no ladder, but just Jesus, Son of man and the angels descending from heaven. Jesus was fully aware that he had to definitively bring about the communion between heaven and earth, between God and the faithful. This was what would happen. Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures, but he does more than his contemporaries expect. Everything is in the future. The disciples therefore were to put on hold their contemplation of the "Glory of the Son of man." □

THE CONTEMPLATION DOES NOT DISTANCE

By His Holiness Pope

St. Paul's experience of contemplation and the power of prayer, as recounted in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, provided the central theme of Benedict XVI's catechesis, during his general audience held this morning in the Paul VI Hall.

Paul did not respond to the voices questioning the legitimacy of his apostolate by enumerating the communities he had founded, nor did he limit himself to recounting the difficulties he had had to face in announcing the Gospel. Rather, the Pope explained, "he pointed to his relationship with the Lord...which was so intense as to be marked by moments of ecstasy and profound contemplation." Indeed, the Apostle says: "I will boast all the more gladly of my weakness, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

Thus the Apostle of the Gentiles helps us to understand "that all the difficulties we meet in following Christ and bearing witness to His Gospel can be overcome by opening ourselves trustingly to the action of the Lord. ...St. Paul clearly understood how to face and experience each event in his life, especially those involving suffering, difficulty and persecution: at the moment we feel our own weakness the power of God becomes manifest, a power which does not abandon or leave us alone but becomes our support and our strength."

"As our union with the Lord grows and our prayer becomes more intense, we too come to focus on the essential and to understand that it is not the power of our own means that creates the Kingdom of God, but God Who works miracles through our very weakness", the Pope said.

The intense contemplation of God which St. Paul experienced was, like that of the disciples on Mount Tabor, "enthraling and tremendous." Contemplating the



THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST DRAWS US FROM REALITY

Pope Benedict XVI

Lord is “enthraling because He draws us to Himself, seizing our hearts and carrying them aloft to His heights where we experience the peace and beauty of His love. It is tremendous because it exposes our human frailty and inadequacy, the fatigue of defeating the Evil One who ensnares our lives.”

“In a world in which we risk relying only on the power of human means, we are called to rediscover and bear witness to the power of prayer, through which we grow day by day as our lives are conformed to that of Christ”, said the Holy Father. He then went on to recall the Nobel Prize-winner and Protestant theologian Albert Schweitzer who said that “‘Paul is a mystic and nothing more than a mystic’, a man truly enamoured of Christ and so united to Him as to able to say: Christ lives in me. St. Paul’s mysticism was not founded only on the exceptional events of his life, but also on his intense daily relationship with the Lord, Who always supported him with His Grace.

“In our own life of prayer we too may experience moments of particular intensity in which we feel the Lord’s presence more keenly”, Pope Benedict added. “But it is important to remain constant and faithful in our relationship with God, especially in

moments of aridity, difficulty and suffering. Only if we are seized by the love of Christ will we be able to face adversity, as Paul did, in the conviction that we can do all things through Him Who gives us strength.”

The Holy Father went on: “The more space we give to prayer, the more we will see our lives transformed and animated by the real power of God’s love. “The contemplation of Christ in our life does not distance us from reality”, the Pope concluded. “It makes us even more involved in human affairs, because the Lord, drawing us to Himself in prayer, enables us to remain close to all our brothers and sisters in His love.” □



OTHER CHILDREN I HAVE

From Fr. Ian Douulton's collection of stories

Each of us has only one life to live, the majority of us try to spend our days in the most agreeable manner possible and we stand aghast at certain men and women who seem, deliberately to throw away their only life in discomfort and danger. They follow some mysterious dream that leads them far from home and family and compels them to wear themselves out in the service of strangers who seldom fully understand or appreciate them. Why do these men and women live as if they march behind invisible banners to the call of a trumpet heard only by them? An old curio dealer, Rolf Stewart, brings the following story to you:

“This happened at a time when I had my headquarters on the banks of a river that everyone called just ‘The Dark River.’ One day I had to take a trip down river about two miles from my headquarters. The stupid boy who was rowing let the boat hit a rock in the water and we had to land at a village on the banks. I was walking toward a ring of grass huts when, out of one hut stepped a white woman – a nun. She was short, rather plump and had a smiling face and bright blue eyes. She was dressed in pure white and it took my breath away to see her standing in the middle of that black jungle and amidst those dirty huts. She came straight toward me: “Good afternoon,” she said cheerily, to which I replied: “Who are you?”

She continued unafraid: “I am sister Margaret, the superior of this mission.” I was surprised at the word: ‘mission’. She saw my surprise and said: “Yes, this is the mission of Our Lady of the Angels!” I tried to tell her: “Sister, certainly you’re not going to live here?” She said that she was not alone and had three other native sisters with her and they belonged to the missionary sisters of the Sacred Heart. She said that there was a priest there too Fr. Davidson. She smiled and continued: “He is here too, when he’s not out taking care of one of the other missions. What’s your name?” “Rolf Stewart, I have a trading station two miles upriver.” I paused and then said: “You’re American aren’t you?” Sr. Margaret was not afraid to say that she was from Chicago. I told her that I was from Omaha, originally. But I was curious as to why Sr. Margaret was still here. Sr. Margaret went on: “I volunteered for this mission. It’s our third one in Africa. We are so proud of it.” I was amused: “Proud! Sister, do you know anything about these natives?” Sister said she had trained for a year in Cape Town where they had their community. I tried to dissuade her. ‘You’ve picked the worst specimen in all Africa. There’d be plenty of tribes I’d be glad to say I was blood brother to, but these are just a lazy dirty pack of monkeys, devil worshippers, downright slaves to witch doctors. You might as well try to make Christians out

of a pack of Hyenas.' "Mr. Stewart, I don't expect the work here to be easy but not as hopeless as you make it sound." I tried to tell her this from my 20 years of experience. She listened intently while I concluded: "Alright, then, here's my advice, pack up and go home!"

She only smiled and that made me so angry. I walked off and left her. She would find out that I was right. I'd seen missionaries of every kind, but never in a spot as hopeless as this. She was far too young and attractive. She couldn't have been thirty and too well-educated to be stuck in this filthy hole. She should be back in America. Married and raising a family in some nice little suburb of Chicago. A month after I met Sister Margaret, the river flooded. Half the huts in the village and most of the sisters' belongings floated out to sea. I decided it was just the right time to carry out a plan that I had been working on. When the river went down, I made a special trip to the mission. Sr. Margaret came down to the landing to meet me. She looked tired, but she was still smiling. "Mr. Stewart come and see our dispensary." "Your what? I thought you people were flooded out. We managed to save that hut and most of the supplies but we are going to need a great deal from home." "Sister, you're just wasting your time and other people's money. These creatures are stupid but they're tricky. They'll come to you when they are sick and then they'll go to the witch doctor and if they get better he'll say he cured them and if they die he'll say it was your fault." She went on: "Our



patients think we have a new kind of black magic. If we ever get enough medicine and instruments we'll beat the old witch doctor at his own game." I said: "Sister, I've got something for you." "For the mission?" "No, it's for you and it's the best donation that you'll ever get." "Oh, Mr. Stewart we need it so much." I blurted out "Common sense for one thing... Well, here's some money, but you can use it for just one thing!" Sister's eyes opened wide: "All this money, what for?" I said emphatically: "A ticket to Chicago - one way." "But Mr. Stewart." I was getting upset: "If you think you have to play nursemaid or doctor, you can find plenty of our own kind of people at home who'd appreciate what you are trying to do for them." Sr. Margaret was not put out. She went on with a smile: "And I appreciate what you're trying to do for me Mr. Stewart. But I don't want to go home." She held out the envelope with the money: "Here, you keep your money." I said with a tinge of anger: "Now - you're going to keep on being stubborn are you? Well if you think this flood was bad you haven't seen anything yet." As I turned to go I said: "Yes, I'm going to keep this money and someday, you're

going to come begging for that ticket."

A half dozen times during the next ten years I was sure that the ticket money was going to be spent. There was the year when two of the native sisters died of fever and the time Sr. Margaret got bitten by a snake and the week of the flood that washed away the foundations of the new chapel. But Sr. Margaret would not give up. She got the clinic going and she finally opened the school and an orphanage. She would have done twice as much if money hadn't been so slow coming from home. I couldn't stand by and watch her killing herself with worry and hard work and so I started helping out here and there. Then she got along fine. Yes, she was always willing to take my advice on anything, except that ticket money. Almost ten years to the day I first met Sr. Margaret, I went over to visit the new chapel. She took me inside and up to the cross. "Mr. Stewart, look what we have above the altar. A friend of ours donated it." "Well, a cross!" "Our new crucifix." I was a curio expert and I was impressed: "Sister, it's beautiful, it's a work of art! I know wood carving and this is one of the finest pieces that I have seen in years." She nodded: "I knew you'd appreciate it." I tried to express my appreciation: "Yes, it took a real artist to show that look of agony on the face of Christ, and look at the tension in those muscles. But sister, what good is a work of art here, it's wasted on these monkeys." She was not put out. "It would be, if you think of

it only as a work of art." I countered: "What more can it be?" She said boldly: "A work of religion. It tells these people, better than any words of ours, how much God loves them. It helps them understand why we came here." I shook my head to express my discouragement: "They will never understand, they haven't got any brains. Sister, think what you could have done for your own kind of people who need some religion." Sister was now serious and very firm: "Mr. Stewart I have heard that same remark a hundred times, but our people at home have every chance to know the truth. You, for instance, weren't there any churches near you?" I mumbled: "Why yes, yes, certainly, but of course, but I was always too busy." She continued: "These people out here have never had any contact with the faith of Christ. They deserve their chance." I tried another time: "These people! That's all you think about. I still don't understand what you see in these savages that makes them worth what you're going through." Sr. Margaret was more convincing than ever: "Mr. Stewart, look at our crucifix again." I said: "I'm looking at it." She was not convinced: "But you still see it only as a work of art. Not as I see it. That Crucifix is the reason why I'm here. Almighty God thought these savages were worth his Son dying like that." I now became exasperated: "Ah sister, look aren't you about due for a vacation? I still have the money you know, for your ticket home." Sr. Margaret was not put off: "I've got too much to do here,

Mr. Stewart. Anytime you feel like spending that money for a good purpose it would just about pay for the tin roof we need on the chapel."

A week after that, I left for a long trip down river. It was six months before I got back. The mission territory looked strangely unfamiliar. When I reached the old landing place, I realized why. All the huts were gone. There was only a huge circle of burnt ground with a pile of burnt timber where the chapel had been. I stood on the riverbank trying to believe what I was seeing. Then I saw an old native come creeping out of the jungle. I recognized him as one of the workers around the mission. "Mr. Stewart, Mr. Stewart," he shouted. "Yes, yes, where is everybody? What happened?" I asked frantically. He put his head down and said: "Gone, all gone." I needed to know: "Where are the sisters?" He went on: "Gone, all gone." I asked, pointing out to the disaster: "Who did this?" He looked up with a strange fear in his eyes: "Bad man come, strange tribe from up Dark River, burn the mission. Sr. Margaret send other sisters away in boat." I asked: "Where is Sr. Margaret?" "We take her in boat down Dark River. Boat hit rock, turn over, Sr. Margaret fall in river go down in water. We don't find." His tears where now flowing freely.

I don't know how long I stayed on the riverbank looking at the burned ground and thinking the blackest thoughts I had ever had in my life. So this was the end of

Sr. Margaret's ten years of work, death in the Dark River, without even a decent burial. I had been right in the first place. She should have gone home, forgotten this crazy dream of making Christians out of a pack of savages. Well, they could go back to their dirt and their devil worship now. Finally I turned to say good-bye to the old native who was still moving about the ruins. All at once he let out a scream." "Pointed frantically down the river. I saw a boat moving along the river. In the boat sat a figure in white. "Ghost, spirit, Sr. Margaret!" I squinted and said: "Sr. Margaret!" The old native groveled in the dust. The boat came straight towards me and I couldn't move. My blood ran cold. The boat turned in toward the landing. The figure in white stepped out. She walked toward me. But this was not Sr. Margaret. This woman was tall, her eyes were dark. She came up to me. "I'm Sr. Teresa, the new superior of this mission." I know I stared at her with my mouth open. I saw in her the same expression that had puzzled me every time I looked at Sr. Margaret. It was an expression of peace and of complete confidence. At that moment I realized that these women loved something good and true that made any sacrifice worthwhile. I didn't offer Sr. Teresa money for a ticket home, instead I made a donation for a new house so the sisters can stay there on the banks of the Dark River. They are giving those people what every man has a right to: his chance to find faith in God. □

THE PROSPEROUS SALESIAN MISSIONS OF PATAGONIA AND TIERRA DEL FUEGO 10

by Fr. Elias Dias

A little boy with a mirror in his hands stood at the street corner. His mirror received the rays of the sun and was reflecting them up to a lonely apartment. A passerby asked him what he was doing. He replied: "You see sir, in that lonely apartment is my sick brother in bed. He never sees the light of the sun. From here I can reflect some of the sun's rays so that he may see the sunlight and feel warmed." There are millions of people on our planet who live without the 'sunshine.' It is the duty of every Christian to bring the sunshine of God's love into their lives. Don Bosco always dreamt of bringing the sunshine of God's love to our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

As far back as 1844, after completing his course in moral and pastoral theology at *Convitto Ecclesiastico*, Don Bosco contemplated on joining the Oblates of Mary to go to the missions. In 1826 the Oblates were established in the church of the Consolata in Turin. They took over a mission in Burma where a Vicariate was established in 1842. It was natural that Don Bosco should have come under Oblates' influence during his *Convitto* years but it was Fr. Cafasso who dissuaded him and set his mind at



rest. During recreation Don Bosco would stir up the enthusiasm of the youngsters with stories of the missions and adventures of the missionaries. He would talk about sending missionaries to evangelize distant regions like Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego.

Don Bosco's missionary awareness and his concern should be understood in the context of a general resurgence of missionary interest and activity in the Church at that time. After the setback of the French Revolution and as a reaction to it, the Church succeeded in reorganizing her structures for the pastoral care of the faithful by reopening seminaries, nourishing the faith of the people, by preaching and religious instructions it revived the missionary aspirations that invaded all strata of the Church and society.

One of the most amazing

manifestations of missionary resurgence in the Church during the nineteenth century was new missionary orientation taken by religious orders and congregations such as the Priests of the Foreign Missions of Paris, the Priests of the Missions, the Society of Jesus, and others who opted for the missions. On December 4, 1864 Fr. Daniele Comboni visited the Oratory and discussed the strategy for the missions. Fr. Comboni spoke to the boys on the missions and asked Don Bosco to establish the Salesian work in Africa. Card. Charles Lavigerie was well acquainted with Don Bosco and his works. He asked Don Bosco to send his missionaries to North Africa and the Sudan. After the adjournment of the First Vatican Council, Don Bosco had occasion to meet a number of missionary bishops and listen to their requests.

In 1872 Don Bosco had a missionary dream in which he saw a mountainous region with strange and huge naked natives with long hair who killed several missionaries in a brutal way. Finally a group of Salesians arrived. Don Bosco wanted to stop them but they were preceded by a group of youngsters. The savages welcomed them and laid their weapons down at their feet. The dream made a deep impression on Don Bosco. He did not know where the place was or who the people were. He asked several people about those savages. In 1874 the Argentine Consul at Savone, Commandatore John Baptist Gazzolo met Don Bosco. He saw the works and spirit of Don Bosco and gave him a description of the Patagonian

natives. He recommended Don Bosco's cause to the Archbishop of Buenos Aires and to several other priests.

The emigration of Italians at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century must be reckoned as one of the most significant processes at work in Italian society after the unification of Italy. Don Bosco had been acquainted with the migration problems long before official statistics were made available by the Italian government. He visited places in Piedmont and Liguria from where many had migrated to Argentina. He was also in touch with the past pupils who had migrated to Argentina. Some of the family members of the Salesians had also migrated to Argentina. At that point Don Bosco saw that the migration problem in Argentina was very serious.

The official Argentine proposal was made and accepted without any reference to the evangelization of the native tribes of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Archbishop Aneyros offered the Salesians only the Italian church of Our Lady of Mercy in Buenos Aires and Fr. Peter Ceccarelli offered them the school in San Nicholas de los Arroyos. Don Bosco however, was quick to see the specifically missionary possibilities and to respond to the missionary plans of his dream. He spoke to the authorities about his typical Salesian work for youth but to the Salesians he spoke about the great mission.

Don Bosco saw in the Argentine proposal opportunities that would

go beyond the church in Buenos Aires and the school in San Nicholas de los Arroyos. The church and the school would provide a base for a great development of the Salesian work in Argentina and the whole of South America. This missionary engagement would earn the Church's official recognition by creating Vicariates of Prefectures. Don Bosco began to make his own plans.

On January 29, 1875 he gathered his confreres in a hall. The Consul Gazzolo read the invitation letter to the gathering. Don Bosco accepted the invitation and decided to meet the Pope. He aimed at the evangelization of the *Indios*. They were a population without faith and morals.

Don Bosco chose Fr. John Cagliero to lead the expedition with nine others: five priests and four brothers. During holidays they learnt Spanish under the direction of Consul Gazzolo. On October 29, 1875 they were received by the Holy Father. On November 11, 1875 the church of Mary Help of Christians was a mass of emotions and prayers. After the service the people embraced the missionaries as they boarded their carriages and went to the station to take the train to the harbour at Genoa. On December 14, 1875 the ship reached Buenos Aires. Frs. Cagliero and Baccino and Bro. Belmonte remained in Buenos Aires to take charge of the church of The Mother of Mercy. This church was called the Church of the Italians where a number of immigrants from Liguria settled but there was no one to look after the parish. The others proceeded

to San Nicholas. Fr. Fagnano immediately set to work and in a few months the Salesians worked wonders in South America.

As the work became known, applications for new foundations multiplied. The Italians who lived in the suburb of La Boca were severely influenced by Freemasons. They hated priests and did not permit any church services. Cagliero dared to enter this place and the Salesians were welcomed. On November 7, 1876 a second expedition visited the Holy Father.

In April 1876 Don Bosco presented to the Italian Foreign Secretary a plan for the establishment of a colony of Italian immigrants. This colony would be established in the coastal area somewhere between the Rio Negro and the Straits of Magellan a region that was a kind of no-man's land and would welcome Italian immigrants from Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay. A few months later at the request of the Prefect of the Roman Congregation, a substantial essay on Patagonia and the Southern most region of the American continent was authored by Fr. Barberis and signed by Don Bosco dated August 20, 1876. In this essay Don Bosco gave base to every mission. The Archbishop of Buenos Aires offered to the Salesians the parish of Carmen de Patagones at the mouth of the Rio Negro.

The missionaries followed the Archbishop's advice and concentrated first on a solid foothold in Buenos Aires. They had their institutions in the Plata triangle, Buenos Aires, Montevideo and San Nicolas.

Here they put into practice their educational method while waiting for a call to go to the *Indios*. In April 1878 General Rocca headed a military expedition in which Frs. Costamagna and Fagnano joined as chaplains. They met the natives at Carchue and at Choele-Choel, the gateway to Patagonia. Contact with the natives was made at Choele-Choel and the trip ended at Carmen de Patagones and Viedma. Fr. Costamagna preached a mission. Archbishop Aneyros entrusted that parish and mission to the Salesians. On February 2, 1880 Fr. Fagnano was installed as pastor of Patagones and few months later Fr. Emil Rizzo was assigned to Our Lady of Mercy in Viedma.

In 1875 the Minister of Defence proposed the construction of a large canal on the edge of the Pampas to keep the natives out. But the natives kept coming back, suffering severely at the hands of Argentineans. The catalyst of the resistance was the Araucan Chief Calcutfura. He died in June 1873. But the resistance continued under his son, Manuel Namuncura. The problem of Indians ended with a change of heart of Manuel Namuncura.

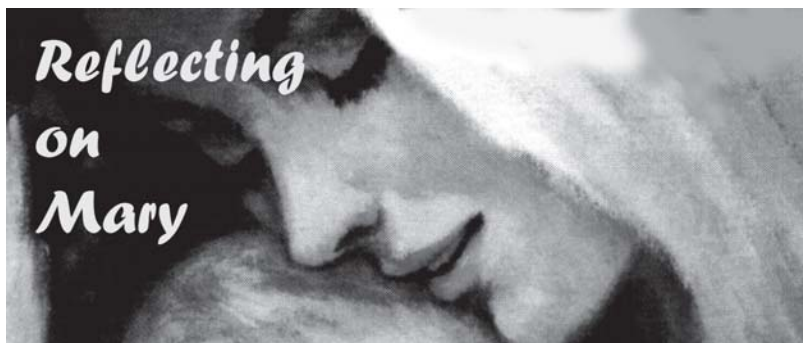
After the first stage of the project, Don Bosco set himself to the task of obtaining from the Holy See official recognition of the missionary activities of the Society. This would mean obtaining the erection of Vicariates or Prefectures by which the Holy See would confer "apostolic" status on the Salesian works in Patagonia. By a decree of



Don Bosco with the first missionaries (1875) and Commendatore Gazzolo in the centre at Savona

October 30, 1884 the Holy Father upgraded Patagonia to a Vicariate and made Fr. Cagliari vicar and bishop of Southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego with Fr. Fagnano in charge of the Prefecture .

Fr. Cagliari was ordained bishop with the title of Magida by Cardinal Alimonda on December 7, 1884. On February 1, 1885 the bishop was ready to leave for his mission at the head of a band of 18 Salesians and 6 Salesian Sisters. When Bishop Cagliari and the missionaries arrived in Montevideo, (Uruguay) they saw a crisis between the Salesians, their work in Rio Negro and elsewhere and the Governor of the Province of Rio Negro, General Winter. Bishop Cagliari after tarrying awhile in Uruguay took up his residence in a Salesian School of Almagro (Buenos Aires) waiting for the right moment to take official possession of his See. After some negotiation, on July 9, 1885, Bishop Cagliari finally obtained permission to enter his See in Patagonia. The Salesian Missions could now truly be said to be established in South America not only "*de facto*" but also "*de jure*". □



"ALL GENERATIONS WILL CALL ME BLESSED

Fr. Romolo Sbrocchi speaks to Alberto Frasson

In our contemporary age, filled with deep contradictory conditions due to revolutionary ideologies, Fr. Romolo Sbrocchi says that Our Lady appears as our last hope and our providential recourse. In fact, "if she has been visiting her children so frequently from heaven through her several messages she is certainly a definite part of God's providential plan for the salvation of humankind."

Fr. Romolo, a native of Puglia works in Veneto. He is a teacher of literature, the principal of a high school and a supervisor of the Ministry of Education but primarily he is a scholar on the Blessed Virgin Mary and has published numerous books on her.

When did the great 'cult' of the Virgin Mary begin and what were its earliest manifestations to the people of God?

"The cult of Mary has deep evangelical roots, arising from

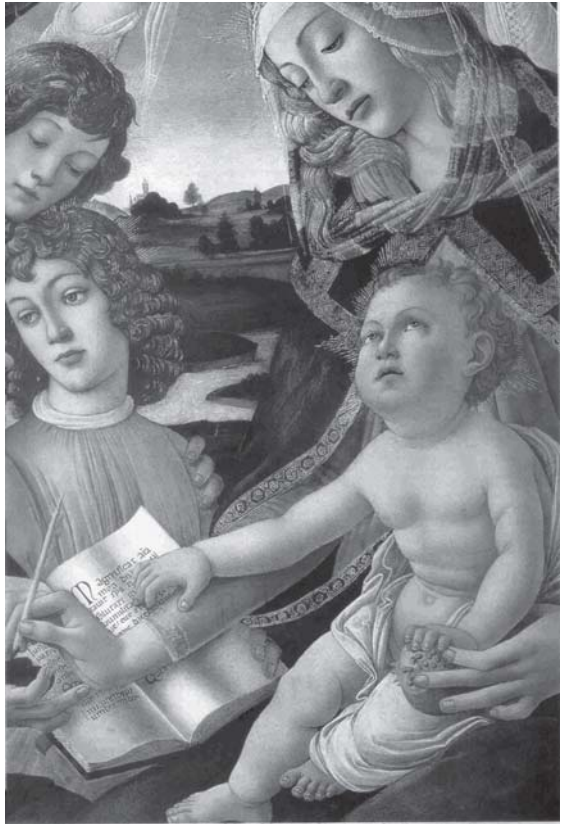
her lofty dignity as Mother of God (Lk 1:43), her "fullness of grace" (Lk 1:28), her cooperation in the work of Redemption (Genesis 3:15, Lk 2:35); her function as mediatrix (Lk 1:41; Jn 1:11) and her supernatural Motherhood with respect to us (Jn 19,26-27). Like the earliest manifestations of Marian devotion we recall the significant expression which Elizabeth addressed to Mary: "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" (Lk 1, 42) And the exclamation addressed to Jesus is very telling: "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that you sucked!" (Mt 11, 27) The Virgin herself attributes her ineffable greatness only to the mercy of God, and so she adds prophetically: "All generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1, 18).

Great devotion to the Virgin Mary had a fruitful and vibrant era of maturity characterized by an impulse to delve ever more

deeply into her ineffable and providential roles by such persons who figure as her devotees such as St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Bonaventure, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Louis de Montfort to name but a few and by the devotion of the faithful and frequent assertions in the Magisterium of the Church which have gradually become more frequent.

In this regard I should mention a symbolic episode highlighting the irresistible rise of the cult of Mary from very early times that is very enlightening. It was June 22nd and the year was 431.

The place was the city of Ephesus, in Turkey today, where 198 bishops had gathered together at the shrine dedicated to the Virgin. The gathering was presided over by the papal legate, St. Cyril of Alexandria. The subject was of supreme importance: they were to examine the unprecedented claim of Nestorius, patriarch of Ephesus, according to which Mary was only "Mother of Christ" not "Mother of God." It was not a simple matter of a name, Nestorius taught, that



The Madonna of the Magnificat by Sandro Botticelli 1481, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy

Jesus was two persons each with its own nature: the divine person with the divine nature, the human person with human nature. Mary, therefore, was mother only of the human person of Jesus. Nestorius had tried to prevent the celebration of the Council. However, though he was invited he did not attend. The faithful were upset and a large crowd thronged the gates of the church that was closed for

the work of the Council. Finally, late in the evening the doors were opened and the text of the dogmatic definition was promulgated and is here quoted. It read: "If anyone does not confess that Emmanuel is God in truth, and therefore the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God let him be anathema!" At these words the huge crowd burst into applause and shouts of joy. All Ephesus attended an impromptu procession, the first in history in honour of Our Lady. The Council Fathers were brought in triumph to their homes accompanied with torches. The following day, June 23, a large poster with the text of the promulgation of the definition of the divine Motherhood of Mary was posted in the piazzas of Ephesus.

Of course, from then up to the present day Marian devotion has been steadily increasing and deepening. There have been numerous Marian apparitions in all corners of the world. I should mention at least those recognized by the Church, which constitute the Virgin's preferential appointment with the modern world, oppressed and profoundly plagued - as never before - by several evils: the first in 1830 in Paris (Miraculous Medal), that of 1858 in Lourdes, and finally, in 1917 at Fatima."

Why such fondness for France where she appeared in the nineteenth century so repeatedly and was honoured by its people and several illustrious citizens?

"For a long time France was a country that was not at peace. It was already overwhelmed by a

devastating war which lasted for over a century. "The Hundred Year War;" and there was no lasting peace. It had endured several bloody civil wars and then the Revolution with all its problems, including the "Terror.: Then there arose that dazzling star Napoleon Bonaparte who proclaimed a restoration and even a revolution after which there was a Second Republic, a Second Empire and then a Third Republic... In short, it was a noble land but sadly tormented. It was for this that France became Our Lady's predilected son. In fact, she predicted to St. Catherine that there would be terrible misfortunes in France but added: "Have confidence, do not be discouraged, for I am with you." The "terrible misfortunes" really took place in 1871 and culminated with the surrender of Paris to the Prussians. We know the story of Lourdes, so we shall not dwell on it. I recall that the Miraculous Medal, linked to the appearance of Mary to St. Catherine Labouré was so named because of its phenomenal spread under such exceptional circumstances, involving not only the humble peasants but even celebrities, such as the former archbishop of Malines, who was miraculously healed, and the notorious Jewish anticlerical Alphonse Ratisbonne, to whom the Virgin appeared, and the Virgin of the Medal also appeared to St Andrew delle Frate in Rome in 1842 converting him. We do not need to mention the extraordinary diffusion of the medal around the world."□

NEWSBITS

TAIWAN

A weekend of spiritual formation for parish missionary animators took place in January in the Diocese of Hsin Chu and was attended by about eighty people. Father Felice Chech (M.I.), National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Taiwan, presented the draft document, *Via Lucis*, (the Way of Light). The document was finalized in early April and sent to all parishes in Taiwan. Over the weekend of formation Fr. Felice reviewed the lives of the four founders of the Missionary Societies, while Robert Marinaccio, an Italian lay missionary of the Archdiocese of Gaeta, encouraged the reflection concerning the role of the parish missionary animator. "The weekend proved to be a valuable opportunity to compare the problems inherent in both parish and diocesan missionary. One of the main activities conducted by the National Missionary Office in the first half of the Pastoral Year 2011-2012 was the Vigil of Prayer held in the mission month of October, which this year took place in all seven dioceses in Taiwan. The vigil was attended by many people belonging to the traditional religions (Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist) who, out of friendship and spiritual interest, are constantly involved in activities promoted by Catholics. In March, the dinner in favour of Missionary Childhood was held, which was attended by five hundred people, one third of which were Catholics, while

October 2012

others were Taoists, Buddhists and Confucians who care about supporting the works promoted by the Holy Childhood. AF

VIETNAM

Anger after Easter service ban "Religious freedom is not a favour but a fundamental and sacred right," stated Bishop Michael Hoang in a letter dated April 4 that 8 was sent to the country's top officials after Dak Ha district authorities in Kon Tum province refused to allow the celebration of Easter rites in the village of Turia Yop. District authorities said "security for the event could not be guaranteed." However, the bishop said this reasoning "is not convincing to people in the digital age."

Bishop Oanh said Catholics are hated, maltreated and discriminated against by authorities in this district where religious activities are limited. Catholics are also not allowed to build churches and are told to practice their faith at homes and without priests. "Thousands of Catholics in this area have not enjoyed religious freedom for forty years," he said. "They have no priests, no churches and no liturgical services," he added.

In February, Father Louis Gonzaga Nguyen Quang Hoa, a local priest, was attacked by three ex-convicts after he conducted a funeral service for an ethnic Sedang woman in Turia Yop. Villagers suspect local authorities may have been behind the attack. The diocese is home to many ethnic minority

Don Bosco's Madonna

groups who were introduced to Catholicism by foreign missionaries in the 19th century. UCAN

PAKISTAN

Fr. Mario Rodrigues, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Pakistan states that over 1,200 new missionaries, including religious and lay people, participated in courses on missionary animation throughout the country during the Year of Mission 2012. They now "are ready to be missionaries (not only) in Pakistan but also *ad gentes*". The lay people who participated in the training exercise included catechists, pastoral workers, and an encouraging number of youth. The Year of the Mission, which ends in October, was launched on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Pakistan. "Mission, for us Christians in Pakistan, means service and love for one's neighbour" explained Fr. Mario. The Director states that "there are already three young missionaries who, after a period of formation, have left for the mission *ad gentes* in Asia, a continent that awaits the testimony and preaching of the Gospel." AF

CHINA

The Catholic news agency Fides has reported that 22,104 people were baptised in China on Easter Sunday. The statistics were collected by the Study Centre of Faith in the Chinese province of He Bei. The newly-baptised Catholics, 75 per cent of whom are adults, belong to 101

dioceses. In He Bei itself 4,410 people were baptised on Easter Day, 615 more than last year, while in Hong Kong, which has more than 360,000 faithful, there were 3,500 baptisms.

In evaluating these figures, it should be borne in mind that some dioceses do not celebrate all their baptisms at Easter. For example, in Shang Hai there were 379 Easter baptisms but the total figure could exceed 1,500 by the end of the year. According to Sr. Li Guo Shuang of the Study Centre, "there are still some dioceses or communities which, due to communication difficulties, have not yet reported data to us. So we must emphasise that the figures are not complete, they may still increase". VIS

PAKISTAN

In the chapel of St. Joseph Convent School in Quetta, an historic event was celebrated on April 21st: The first ordination of a Catholic priest in Baluchistan. Deacon Gulshan Barkat of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) was ordained by the Vicar Apostolic of Quetta, His Exc. Mgr. Victor Gnanapragasam OMI. The missionary Oblates -currently 10 in Quetta, and over 30 in all of Pakistan -opened a mission in Quetta in 1982 and, after thirty years, the local Catholic community is thriving with schools, pastoral activity, catechesis in the villages, with now over 50 thousand faithful Catholics. The gift of the first priest ordained in Baluchistan, the deacon Gulshan told Fides, "has a high symbolic value: it ...give(s) a Christian witness and promote(s) priestly vocations and religious life in this province". AF □

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.*

Sincere thanks to our mother for all the favours granted and special thanks for helping my sister and brother-in-law with jobs and accommodation in Sydney. Please continue to bless our family.

Anita D'Souza Mhatre, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Jesus and Our Lady, through the devotion of the 3 Hail Marys our daughter was chosen to do an internship in the USA through the college. We regret the delay in sending this thanksgiving.

E. Pereira, Bangalore

I was going through the magazine 'Don Bosco's Madonna' and was touched by the wonders worked through the recitation of the three Hail Marys. I had severe pain in my two fingers and was not able to bend them. With faith and trust I recited the three Hail Marys twice a day and within two days the pain reduced and on the third day I was able to bend my fingers. My heartfelt thanks to the Lord and Mother Mary.

Mrs. Nelly Carvalho

My sincere thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ for saving my son from a critical operation as he had developed a tumor on his spine and to Mary Help of Christians, St. Dominic Savio and the intercession of the 3 Hail Marys for giving my children good results and for all the other favours received through the recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. Please continue to protect our family.

Gery Miranda, Goa

Due to a very painful swelling and nodes developing in the left breast I was advised to undergo a sonography, mammogram and a deep invasive biopsy to determine whether the growths found were malignant or otherwise. Going for the tests may only prayer was "Mother Mary I place myself in your care. You know best." The tests were clear but for a small lesion that was detected but which disappeared in due course. Yes, Mary was there for me.

L. D'Souza, Pune

I prayed to the blessed Virgin Mary to get a new job. My request was granted and I thank Mother Mary for hearing my prayers.

L. Rapoz, UK

I offer my gratitude and praise to the Lord Jesus and our Blessed Mother for helping my daughter to overcome great difficulties and travails in her life and securing very good marks in her ICSC exams.

Aneela Madar, Pune

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

My sincere thanks to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Our Blessed Mother for granting me a safe trip to Mumbai and back and for giving me food and shelter for the night while I was there.

Mark Dodd, Pune

In April 2012 we were able to sell our old home in Rajkot and purchase a smaller new home in a better locality. We were always harrassed by neighbours. Finally our prayers were heard and a miracle did happen. To our surprise everything went off peacefully. We are grateful to Jesus and Mother Mary and all the saints.

Mr. H.A. D'Cruz, Australia

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady for the many favours received through the intercession of Mother Mary.

Cheruparambil Family, Kerala

My sincere thanks to Our Mother Mary for saving me from being injured badly when I was on my way to the church on 29th May 2012 for Rosary at the grotto. I was accidently hit by a cricket bat on my cheek bone but I was told that I had only a hair-line fracture on my cheekbone which would heal on its own and there was no scar on my face. I am very grateful to Mother Mary and I ask her to continue to keep me and my family under her care.

Mrs. C. Sequeira, Bhayandar

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

Our sincere gratitude to Infant Jesus, Mother Mary, Dominic Savio, Don Bosco and all the saints for many graces and blessings bestowed upon our family, especially touching and healing me of cancer in a wonderful manner.

Mrs John, Secunderabad

Our sincere and heartfelt thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for the numerous favours received and blessings bestowed on our families. Please continue to bless our families.

Philomena Cardozo and Mitsy Fernandes, Mira Road

Our sincere thanks to the Lord Jesus and Our Lady for miraculously saving us from a fatal car accident on the Pune Nashik Highway on 20/2/12 especially for my son Anthony, his wife Anita and their kids Mark and Melissa. Thank you Jesus and Mother Mary.

Mrs. Rita Handa, Pune

My sincere and heartfelt gratitude for the many blessings and favours received through the recitation of the three Hail Marys. Mother please continue to intercede for me and my family. So also I thank God, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for protecting us in all our needs whenever we ask for them in prayer.

Luciano Barretto

My belated but sincere thanks to the Most Holy Trinity, Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for the innumerable graces and blessings bestowed on me.

Miss Miki D'Souza, Mumbai

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Thank you Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the many favours granted to us. *Kina D'Souza Mumbai*

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby girl to my son and daughter-in-law after many years. *Mrs. A. D'Souza, Australia*

Thank you Lord Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby girl and a baby boy to my daughter after nine years of marriage. The babies are now 5^{1/2} months old. *George, Mumbai*

My sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for my safe delivery and for the gift of a healthy and normal baby boy. I am sorry for the delay. My son is now 2^{1/2} years old. *Mrs. Hazel Vaz, Goa*

Our grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary Help of Christians, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the many favours received and for being a powerful help in times of distress. *V. Ferrando, Pune*

Sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the favours and graces received. *Julie Fernandes, UK*

Our grateful thanks to Our Lady and St. Dominic Savio for a safe pregnancy and delivery and the gift of a healthy baby girl. *A Devotee*

My sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of a lovely baby girl to my daughter-in-law one and a half-year back and for many other favours received. *A. Fernandes, Goa*

Grateful thanks to Our Lady Help of Christians, Don Bosco and also St. Dominic Savio for helping my daughter Mary Ana have a safe delivery of a beautiful baby boy. There were a lot of complications but both mother and son are well. Also fervent thanks for helping us to get some important papers and also for keeping my sister in good health. *Mrs. J.A. Conns, Chennai*

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER **OCTOBER 2012**

The Holy Father's General Intention: *That the new Evangelization may progress in the oldest Christian countries.*

The Holy Father's Missionary Intention: *That the celebration of World Mission Day may result in a renewed commitment to evangelization.*

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MARY WAS THERE

On 22nd of June, 2012, I was travelling back from Mangalore to Bangalore by a Volvo bus, after attending the funeral of my relative at Madanthyar. As I was totally exhausted, I dosed to sleep once inside the bus and did not even know when the bus started. I generally book a window seat for me during any journey. I was wearing a silver rosary around my neck and the edges of the cross are a bit pointed. As I was sleeping the crucifix got stuck in my armpit and it hurt me, so I just woke up and bent to set it right. At that moment a lorry hit my window pane and the glass splinters were shattered all around. I was saved, else I would have had splinters of glass all over my face. Mary saved me. Mary was truly there.

Nelson Almeida

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

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

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