

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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***Grant, we pray,
that, always attentive
to the things
that are above,
we may merit
to be sharers
of her glory.***

*From the Opening Prayer
of the Solemnity of the Assumption*

**Cover: *The Assumption
of Our Lady***

From The Editor's Desk

HARMONY RESTORED

It does not happen very often but when it does, I turn terribly edgy, frustrated and at times close to screaming! Why? Because of my virus-prone computer! Everything seemed right with the world... except for this unfortunate PC.

Now things are back to normal. But I can't help wondering how a device that's meant to be so helpful to save so much time can create such havoc with my inner life.

I suppose it's all part of the woes many of us face these days, that is if we are fortunate enough to be able to afford the up-to-date gadgets and think we are in the so-called efficient minority. And that's just it. Some of us have too much nowadays, while others have too little. And yet, isn't it true that they are sometimes much more joyful than we are?

Joy is defined by the late Leo Buscaglia in his book, *Living, Loving and Learning*, as something that 'keeps you songful and laughing and dancing.' I like that. Many people who have few enough comforts in life beyond a roof over their heads and food on the table are joyful. There is room in their lives for gratitude to God and devotion to him. They have peace and harmony too.

This time, when my computer wasn't working, I began savouring life and praising God. I became more appreciative of the simpler things in life, like carpentry, reading and listening to (*what I still call*) music. There was also more time to talk to God and listen to him telling me to slow down.

When I was a child and we had no television, we played outside in fine weather, and when it was raining or too cold we had lots of fun indoors. Our technicolour imaginations had not yet been tainted. We were nourished by the many books we read. On rare occasions we ambled over to *Tin-pot Talkies*, the local cinema, for a film.

Occasionally I look back with nostalgia at those simpler days, but I'm also thankful to be living in this modern age rich with resources of all kinds. But in our frenzied society, we somehow get swept along by the rush and often despite ourselves, it enters our hearts and souls, contaminating our whole lives. And that is when we fail to hear God's voice speaking gently in our hearts.

If we pay attention to God some time each day, we will gradually realize that the power and control we think we have over our lives is an illusion. Then we will be more able to cope with broken computers and other inconveniences.

Looking back on it now, I realize that I have been neglecting to spend time in solitude with the Lord each day. The late Henri Nouwen summed it up well in his book, *Clowning in Rome*. 'In solitude we can gradually be led to the truth that we are who God made us to be,' he writes. 'There, we are converted from people who want to show each other what we have and what we can do into people who raise our open and empty hands to God in the recognition that all we are is a free gift from God'.

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

REFLECTIONS ON LIFE AFTER WALKING 900 KMS

CEL SERIES

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

It is a wonderful thing when a person makes it a habit to reflect deeply after completing a task set for oneself, or even after finishing a task assigned to him/her. There are valuable lessons to be learnt from such a practice, and so we take up here the reflections of Guri Mehta made on completing a walk of nine hundred kilometres, a task she set for herself as a challenge and educative experience.

“Taking the first step with *full conviction* almost always guarantees that the destination will be reached, provided one perseveres through the middle part with full sincerity.”

This follows the line of the famous adage, ‘Well begun is half done!’ Everyone knows from experience that the toughest part of any assignment is the beginning. For one thing, there are numerous fears that seem to make one hesitate to take the step. It recalls the experience of the man who wanted to be a genuine welcoming neighbour to the family that just moved into the house next to his. But at the end of two weeks, he had still not crossed the threshold of the neighbour’s front gate. So, he decided that he would throw his hat across the fence dividing the two properties – this would force him to go over, at least to retrieve his hat and also while there, to say a ‘hello’ and extend a warm welcome to the neighbouring family!

“After the longest day of the entire walk – 38 kilometers – my feet finally touch what the Romans thought was the end of the world. It’s been a long and interesting journey from St. Jean Pied de Port



in France to Cape Finisterre, the western-most tip of Spain. One can never imagine the impact of such pilgrimages on our lives. Sitting on a rock by the lighthouse watching the most glorious sunset of my life, it seems like a perfect ending to a journey of 900 kilometres.”

It has often been said that life itself is a journey. In fact, St. Luke portrays the life of Jesus as a great journey which began in heaven. Leaving his heavenly abode, Jesus came down to earth and grew up in the northern part of Galilee. But all through his public life and ministry he sojourned southwards towards his final destination - Jerusalem where he met with his untimely and cruel death! This beckoned him to the last part of his journey: from Jerusalem back to the Father!

“There’s so much that I’ve learned from walking the thirty-seven days. I’ve learned that *if you take the first step*, and keep going no matter how slowly you go, limping or crawling, rain or shine, sick or healthy, happy or sad. – *you will get there.* The distance might seem long and

wide at first, but step-by-step, day-by-day, you slowly bridge the gap between the beginning and end.

This is indeed a good remark to remember when setting out to build a useful habit like desisting from gossip! While taking the first step is of paramount importance, keeping up one's decision to undertake the task is equally crucial. Invariably, one temptation after another will crop up as if from nowhere. Experience shows that if one were to try and argue with the Tempter, the battle would inevitably be lost. If one wants to succeed, one must say a firm No right from the start – that is relatively easier than struggling to resist after entertaining the temptation for a while. Each passing second makes it that much more difficult to resist and more often than not, the encounter will end disastrously for you!

"I also learned that one needs to have *clarity about where one is going*. There should be no doubt in one's mind, so when distractions crop up along the path, they won't last for long because one knows exactly where one wishes to go. One is grounded on one's path. Also, once the clarity of vision is present, nothing can stop one from enjoying the journey. The destination is never as sweet as the journey. The focus always has to be on *each day*, each moment. There's no improving tomorrow, it's all largely in the now. Life is taking birth right now.

This principle of 'one day at a time' has proved highly effective in the lives of those who made themselves into victims of chemical and drug abuse. When seeking to beat the habit, they find that they cannot guarantee that they will remain sober once they have initially kicked the

habit. One hears of 'slips' ever so often – and so with them the effort is simply to remain sober just for this one day – one day at a time! And this remains true even years after they have begun to taste victory! At no point of their reconstructed lives can they say that they have totally beaten the habit, so that they are completely free of it. "Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic" they keep reminding themselves frequently.

"And if you wander off the path, don't ignore the signs. Don't try to take *the easy way out*, don't look for shortcuts. You will have to face the path at some point. There's no difference between uphill and downhill. They're both critical to the journey, two identical wings of the same bird. Remember that sometimes the path will be full of beauty, nature, and rivers that flow effortlessly. And sometimes you will find yourself walking on the highway going against traffic; trying not to get run-over and just hoping to make it through the day. It's all the same, neither of the roads is permanent – the terrain will keep changing. The most important thing is to *keep going in the same direction*."

A great help at this time of turning over a new leaf is to believe in oneself, particularly that the Lord stands by us as we take our faltering steps towards final and complete freedom from the tyranny of our death-dealing habit.

"Each day has its surprises; it is essential to remember to *embrace the good and the bad*. Take moments to enjoy the beauty around you. And always stop and lend a helping hand. It's more important to *arrive in good spirits* than to arrive on time"

This practice ensures that one does not miss out on rich experiences like the priest and levite in the Story of the Good Samaritan! Making provisional plans for the day is very important as the Lord could call us in different directions as we move along. The important point is to be alert and ready to do his bidding because he leads us in mysterious ways along the path of life!

“Be good to your body and mind. You will get from it what you put into it. Don’t over-indulge in food, but make sure you nurture the body enough. Never underestimate the power of a good night’s sleep. And for the mind – don’t for any great length of time hang around the naysayers and the gossipers. Don’t let the mind get habituated to that. It’s much better to be silent and alone.”

In our day we are much more conscious of the need of a holistic approach to life – and we realize too that integrating all the various dimensions of our life is not an easy task, nor one to be taken lightly.

“Don’t try to walk at the *speed of others*; if you walk faster than your legs can go, you’ll quickly burn out. If you walk slower, you will tire of that too. Find your own pace in life. And walk to the rhythm that allows you to hear the beat of your own heart, and keep yourself tuned into the quiet songs coming from your soul.”

It is important to realize that each person is unique and that each one has to live life at the level at which s/he is called. The challenge before each person is to become the unique person that God has planned us to be, not a carbon copy of another person called to another level and way of life!

“Have focus, but be *flexible*. Being rigid can make you brittle. Flexibility

in the mind makes life more durable. Let the negative things pass through you quickly and be grateful for all the good in life – for that is the magic formula to multiply it. Try to remember that when you have blisters on your feet, pain in your knees, and your back aches – your lips still hold the capacity to turn into a smile.”

We need to look on our bodily contribution as an ally who supports the general thrust of our life, and not as an onlooker or worse still, an enemy. While commitment and consistency are important, so is adaptability. As was said above, each day tends to be different from the previous one, and so we need to learn how to adapt to the demands of the moment, but keeping the goal in mind, we work towards achieving it as best we can.

“Above all, the answer is always – love. Always.”

It is interesting to read this final comment of the author. It links up beautifully with what our founder, St. Peter Julian Eymard himself discovered and taught, viz. love is the answer to all our human problems. Undoubtedly, his conclusions were based on St. Paul’s insights where he asserts, “If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing! If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing... And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor 13:1-13).

Every success to you on your life’s journey – one day at a time! □

walking with the Church



Real Presence, The Jews, The Transfiguration

from St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland

Q. *Is Jesus really present in the Eucharist?*

A. Yes, Catholics believe that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist. So every time we receive Communion we partake of the body and blood of Christ. The Catholic Catechism has this to say about it. "At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit become the body and blood of Christ." The doctrine of the Real Presence asserts that in the Holy Eucharist, Jesus is literally and wholly present – body and blood, soul and divinity – under the appearances of bread and wine.

Q. *What do members of the Jewish Religion believe?*

A. A 12th century Rabbi named Maimonides put together '13 Articles of Faith' that are widely accepted as a proper expression of the Jewish faith. Here are five of these articles.

: God exists

: God is eternal

: God will reward the good and punish the wicked.

: The Messiah will come

: The dead will be resurrected..

The Jewish people were 'the first to hear the word of God.' They believe that their promised Messiah has yet to come. The Catechism of the Catholic Church has a paragraph on this which reads:

'And when one considers the future of God's people of the Old Covenant (the Jewish people) and the new people of God (Christians) tend towards similar goals; expectation of the coming (or the return) of the Messiah. But one awaits the return of the Messiah who died and rose from the dead and is recognised as Lord and Son of God; the other awaits the coming of a Messiah whose features remain hidden until the end of time.'

Q. *Who was present at the Transfiguration of Christ?*

A. The gospels clearly indicate that Peter, James and John were present on the mountain when the Transfiguration took place. The gospel tells us what happened saying that 'his face did shine as the sun: and his garments became as white as snow.' Moses and Elijah appeared with him. The event strengthened the faith of Jesus' three friends and prepared them for the death of Christ of which they were to be witnesses in Gethsemane, by giving them a foretaste of the glory and heavenly delights to which we attain by suffering. At Christ's baptism in the Jordan, the voice of God the Father was heard to proclaim that "This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17). During the Transfiguration, God the Father pronounced the same words. (Matthew 17:5) □

LAURA MEOZZI 1874 - 1951

Laura was born in Florence on January 5, 1873 to Alessandro and Angela Mazzoni. Her wealthy, noble family moved to Rome soon after. Here Laura finished her studies and went on to study medicine. Her spiritual director was a Salesian and invited her to respond to the Lord's call by working for poor girls.

Laura became a Salesian Sister in 1898. She spent 23 years working in Italy, especially in Sicily until 1921, when she was chosen to lead the first group of Sisters sent to Poland.

She had a kindness which came from her Salesian loving-kindness and from the simplicity of Mornese. The Polish children had a nickname for her: Mateczka, mum.

In 1922 Sr Laura went on a journey with five other Sisters to Rozanystok, to found a house for war orphans. They took in 80 poor children. One of the little ones said: "When I was seriously sick mateczka looked after me as if I was her own daughter."

The local government inspector was so impressed that he sent a further two hundred orphans. The sisters increased in numbers and they opened a novitiate and new orphanages.

During the Second World War the Consulate invited her to go back to Italy but she stayed in Poland, living at an orphanage in the forests at Sakiszki, dressed as a peasant woman. She led her



Sisters through those years via secret letters written in the style of Mother Mazzarello.

At the end of the war, when the new borders of Poland were defined, the Sisters and 104 children had to leave Vilnius by special train, to go to the 'new' Poland. There were partisans and unauthorised children hidden on board, with their families. Sr Laura ran the risk of being shot. She prayed incessantly and obtained the grace of safety from the Mother of God.

Mother Laura started out again and opened another 12 Houses. She got the novitiate going again, gave everything a new sense of energy, joy. People got their smiles back again.

But she now felt exhausted. With her Sisters around her and accompanied by everyone praying for her, she died on 30 August 1951 at Pogrziebień. □



VOCATION PROMOTION

THE LORD IS MY MIGHTY HERO

Fr. Ivan Rodrigues sdb
Secretary to the Salesian Provincial of Mumbai

Born to Chiquita and Domingo Rodrigues, Ivan was the fourth of five children who were all brought up by their very loving and self-sacrificing parents.

It was the Rector, Fr. Benedict Furtado who summoned the young Ivan and eventually sent him to Don Bosco, Lonavla to complete his final years of high school. He was growing up into a real Salesian aspirant at Lonavla.

In his own words: "Lonavla was dominated by the 'Bombay culture' and it was an awesome task to adjust to different people, food and the language.' He went on to his novitiate in Nashik where, on 24th May 1987 he made his first profession in the presence of Fr. Chrys Saldanha.

He was ordained ten years later on 20th December 1997. He has traversed the length and breadth of the province like few others have. He has encountered and earned the respect, the admiration and the affection of the people of various cultures which is no mean feat. That shy youngster from the quiet recesses of Goa had the courage to face the furthestmost outposts of the Province in places like Ahmednagar, Beitul, Suket and Alirajpur.

Anyone who has worked closely with Ivan calls him a "simple and dedicated Salesian priest". That can truly sum up the life of this exceptionally talented but extremely 'humble' and self-effacing Salesian. He is truly a missionary in every sense of the term and a Salesian with a



pastoral heart who is ever eager to make himself available to exercise his ministry whenever and wherever he has been called.

In his own quiet way he has truly been an asset wherever he has been but there is one place that has stolen a piece of his heart it is the missions of Ahmednagar.

He is not one to raise his voice but Ivan does make his views known. When I asked him what were his achievements in the 25 years he has been a Salesian, without hesitation he said: "None!" That truly speaks of someone who - like the blessed Mother - believes that "The Almighty has done great things" through him. Ivan only wishes to be able to radiate Christ's love for young people, a truly Salesian trait. This is how he envisions his future in these words: "the Lord has been a mighty Hero (for me) it is he who continues to lead me." □

AN INDECENT AGE

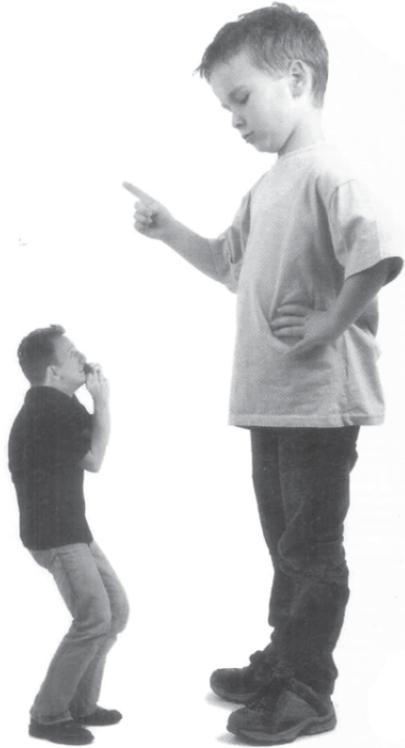
by Ermete Tessore

Youngsters are asking for more evidence

For centuries humankind was condemned to sterile territorial "stability" because of the lack of appropriate tools for communication and movement. First the industrial revolution and then modern information technology have provoked an indispensable acceleration and facilitation of the means of travel and communication. The impact of this phenomenon has caused fear and anxiety in social and educational institutions. The exponential growth of available mobile applications has been the cause of much admiration but much concern too.

The younger generations are becoming more and more distant from their parents and teachers in the use of technology while adults are often reluctant to venture into the world of social networking. Youngsters are already abandoning their elders, fascinated as they are by the universe of cloud computing which makes their online personal data available and at their disposal in real time and from anywhere on earth. This is contributing to the emergence of the so-called "parallel generation," like "parallel youngsters," such as the students of Notre Dame University of Belmont, California who have left Facebook and Twitter behind and are daily building a personalized internet, strictly off limits to outsiders with applications freely sourced from

the Apps Store and only shared with close friends. It is expected that this new mode of communicating will revolutionize the world of hardware (Tablet instead of PC) with the attached corollary of new memories, displays, various entertaining options and business...



Children and teenagers are keen observers of reality and often express with naive sincerity the hypocrisy of adults

Have Parents and Teachers been "fired" by youngsters?

This increases the perplexity of adults. The journalist Marida Pajola Lombardo did not hesitate to title one of his publications: "The Indecent Age." How would youngsters become indecent? Look at the language use in normal conversations. The words youngsters use smack of loneliness and aggression, often they become as hard as stone and give rise to a foul and indecent lexicon. Youngsters disdain real life relationships and take refuge in virtual ones like *chat* and *blog*. Family relationships are either characterized by volatility or interspersed with silence. Cultural and educational aspects are ignored, the heart gets stung by emotional miserliness, relationship is controlled by service appointments aimed at survival and active technological dictatorship undermines authority. Parents and teachers feel as if they are being "dispensed with" by their children without any acknowledgement. Is that true?

Outraged and motivated by practical needs

In May of 2010, this indecent age was incarnated by "Indignados 15 de Mayo" in Madrid and it spread through half of the piazzas of Europe demonstrating that they were inspired by other indecent



"There's an ocean between saying and doing," says a proverb and youngsters don't want adults to say "nice things." They want concrete gestures

sources. They asked not to be treated as the hypothetical future of the world but as concrete and real. They demanded consideration, professionalism, equal opportunity, work, justice, functioning institutions, and the abolition of unjust socialites, politicians and coherent and honest priests would be reasons for hope. Suddenly a thought popped up. Perhaps the youngsters do not reject education but "our" education. They were not turning their backs on the Faith, but on "our" way of living it. They were not resisting or refusing work, but "our" way of working with fixed recommendations, favouritism and rights acquired more or less justly. They were not insensitive to values but to "our" way of living them. Is it perhaps true that even we adults, parents, teachers and members of the Salesian family, have over time become a bit "indecent" in our witness to the extent that we go to our youngsters repeating words without courage or conviction?□

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. MARY MACKILLOP (1842-1909) (AUGUST 8)

Abridged from the Monks of St. Joseph de Clairval Abbey, France

"If we cannot excuse everything we can at least excuse the intention." These words reveal a benevolence rooted in the Gospel's teachings, facilitating human relations and building peace in society. They were written by Mother Mary MacKillop at a time when she was suffering greatly because of certain prelates of the Church. She was born on January 15, 1842 in Fitzroy, close to Melbourne, Australia. Her parents were Scottish immigrants. The new apostolic vicariate that included all of Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand had 28 priests to serve 40,000 Catholics, in an area nearly as big as Europe!

A Look that you could not forget

Mary grew up in a difficult context, in which her father's lack of common sense, her mother's sometimes excessive demands, and the birth of many brothers and sisters forced her to carry heavy loads. Sent in 1860 to live with her uncle, she became a governess for her young cousins, who would later testify to her beneficial influence: "You could not face cousin Mary' with ill-done work; she would give you a look you couldn't forget."



At this time, she made the acquaintance of Father Julian Tenison Woods, who was trying to create a congregation of teaching nuns in Australia to provide an appropriate education for young Catholics, especially the poorest. Mary felt that God was calling her to devote her life to Him, and this encounter with Father Woods was decisive. In 1866, she opened, with two of her sisters, a school in Penola, South Australia, under the direction of Father Julian. On August 15, Mary—who took as her religious name Sister Mary of the

Cross-and her companions made their vows. Thus was born the first Australian religious congregation for women: the Institute of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, who would be known as "Josephites."

It was a bold undertaking. Father Julian wrote in his journal: "God would have His work succeed by His aid alone and not from the human elements of success... I had at my disposal what the Government with all its resources could never buy, and that was zeal and disinterestedness for the glory of God, which were eminently conspicuous amongst those who gave themselves to the institute of St. Joseph." In fact, God sent numerous vocations. In 1869, the institute numbered 70 members, most of whom were teachers in twenty-some schools in Adelaide and other towns in this vast diocese. In addition, the Sisters devoted themselves to other activities-caring for the elderly, the sick, orphans, vagabonds, and endangered young women.

A fundamental right

Father Julian and Sister Mary of the Cross were convinced that the unique qualities of Catholic education should in no way be compromised by unwarranted intervention from the State. They preferred to be poor and remain faithful to the principles of the faith, rather than have all the financial means and lose their freedom to educate, which is essential to providing truly Christian formation.

For Sister Mary and her companions, the educator must perform her task in a great spirit of abandonment to God, following the example of the foster Father of the Holy Family: "St. Joseph's

schools are humble, but strictly and purely Catholic-intended only for the humble poor, and having nothing to do with the great and learned.

"He invites us to rest in Him"

In May 1867, Father Julian drafted the constitutions of the institute, which would be approved by the bishop of Adelaide the following year. In December 1869, the Sisters founded a house in Brisbane, Queensland. But soon difficulties appeared. Mother Mary wrote to Father Julian: Ah! if it were not for the love of the Sacred Heart-and the ever-watchful and tender care of our Immaculate Mother, we would be weak and lonely indeed; but near them we are strong and without fear-no matter what storms threaten..."

Even worse storms were brewing. During Mother Mary's absence, the difficulties in Adelaide increased: a group of priests from the diocese, fiercely opposed to the new institute, wished for it to be dissolved. He took an extreme step - on September 22, 1871 in the presence of the community, he pronounced the foundress' excommunication. The Sisters almost unanimously preferred to be released of their vows and in a matter of days, they were scattered, stripped of their religious habit, and forced to rely on the charity of the faithful.

Closer to God than ever

Mother Mary described in these words her feelings when the bishop, surrounded by several priests, pronounced the sentence on her: "I felt, oh, such a love for their office, a love, a sort of reverence for the very sentence

which I then knew was being in full force passed upon me. I do not know how to describe the feeling, but I was intensely happy and felt nearer to God than I had ever felt before.

The following February, Bishop Sheil fell gravely ill. Shortly before his death, he realized that he had been ill-counseled, repented of the injustice he had committed against the Sisters, and lifted the censure he had pronounced on Mother Mary. For the feast of Saint Joseph, March 19, 1872, the Sisters had the joy of taking up their religious habit again.

On March 28, 1873, Mother Mary embarked for Rome to request the Holy See's approbation for her Congregation. She relates her meeting with Pope Pius IX in these words: "I had the happiness of seeing the Holy Father, and of obtaining a warm blessing from him for myself and my dear Sisters...the Pope had a father's heart."

An admirable charity

As she had anticipated, there was no lack of difficulties, in spite of support from Rome. Having gone to Sydney, Mother Mary was pleasantly greeted by the new archbishop, Cardinal Moran, who became a great friend and protector of the Institute. The Cardinal was soon appointed by the Holy See to study the charges brought against the foundress by Bishop Reynolds. In a letter to her Sisters, Mother Mary showed an admirable respect and charity toward the bishop who had treated her unfairly: "Let us all believe that everything was done with a good intention...."

In fact, Providence would reward the Sisters' patience. On July 25,

1888, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda confirmed the central government of the Sisters of the Institute of Saint Joseph and transferred its mother house to Sydney.

In the years that followed, Mother Mary visited the various houses of the Congregation in Australia and New Zealand. However, her health was deteriorating. In 1902, she suffered a stroke that left her unable to walk and paralyzed on her right side. Slowly she regained the use of her limbs, and was able to walk again with the help of a walker. However, her strength was declining. She rendered her soul to God on August 8, 1909. Today, there are about a thousand Sisters of Saint Joseph, scattered across Australia, New Zealand, East Timor, Europe, and South America.

"In the vastness of the Australian continent," Pope John Paul II emphasized, "Blessed Mary MacKillop was not daunted by the great desert, the immense expanses of the outback, nor by the spiritual 'wilderness' which affected so many of her fellow citizens. Rather she boldly prepared the way of the Lord in the most trying situations. ...Just as in Mother MacKillop's time, so too today the Christian community is faced with many modern 'deserts': the wastelands of indifference and intolerance, the desolation of racism and contempt for other human beings, selfishness and faithlessness and the scandal of sin magnified by the means of social communications."

Let us ask St. Mary of the Cross Mackillop to lead us, through humility, forgiveness and a profound charity towards everyone in the way of true peace, Who is Jesus Christ! □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Rejected Invitation

Mrs. Jones was reading a letter at breakfast. Suddenly she looked up suspiciously at her husband.

"Henry," she said, "I've just received a letter from mother saying she isn't accepting our invitation to come and stay, as we do not appear to want her. What does she mean by that? I told you to write and say that she was to come at her own convenience. You did write, didn't you?"

"Er, yes, I did," said the husband. "But I couldn't spell convenience, so I made it risk."

Foreign Pizza

An American businessman goes to Japan on a business trip, but he hates Japanese food, so he asks the concierge at his hotel if there's any place around where he can get American food.

The concierge tells him he's in luck, there's a pizza place that just opened, and they deliver. The concierge gives the businessman the phone number, and he goes back to his room and orders a pizza.

Thirty minutes later, the delivery guy shows up to the door with the pizza.

The businessman takes the pizza, and starts sneezing uncontrollably. He asks the delivery man, "What on earth did you put on this pizza?"

The delivery man bows deeply and says, "We put on the pizza what you ordered, pepper only."

Fourth Grade Logic

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

"Here is the situation," she said.

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

A girl raised her hand and asked,

"To draw out all his savings?"

Tough Teacher

A school teacher injured his back and had to wear a plaster cast around the upper part of his body. It fit under his shirt and was not noticeable at all.

On the first day of the term, still with the cast under his shirt, he found himself assigned to the toughest students in school. Walking confidently into the rowdy classroom, he opened the window as wide as possible and then busied himself with desk work.

When a strong breeze made his tie flap, he took the desk stapler and stapled the tie to his chest.

Discipline was not a problem from that day forth!

Positively Wrong

A linguistics professor was lecturing his class.

"In English," he explained, "a double negative forms a positive. In some languages, such as Russian, a double negative is still a negative."

"However," the professor continued, "there is no language wherein a double positive can form a negative."

A voice from the back of the room piped up. "Yeah, right." □



"ON THE ROAD" AFTER JESUS

by Marco Rossetti

Is there anyone who wants to follow Jesus on the way of the Cross? Peter, the twelve, even James and John had shown they were not mature enough to make that choice. Bartimeus will be the first to teach them the meaning of getting "on the road" behind Jesus.

JERICO, THE OASIS OF ENCOUNTER

Jericho is a very ancient settlement whose name in Hebrew means "moon" and in Arabic it means "intense perfume." It is a great city-oasis of palms situated 300 metres below sea level from where a steep climb takes one up to Jerusalem. All the pilgrims from Galilee – like Jesus – or those from the other northern regions, who wanted to go the Holy City congregated there, and then resumed their journey upward. Not without reason does Mark significantly point out that, at that hour, the Lord was not only surrounded by his disciples but also by a great crowd of people. On the road to Jericho, before reaching there, Jesus three times reiterated the news of his impending passion and resurrection. Several times that admonition had fallen on deaf ears, been misunderstood or even downright rejected. How could

anyone follow Jesus given the radical nature of his proposals and the fate that awaited him?

We however will continue to accompany him because it will be at Jericho that an encounter of the utmost importance for every disciple of all time will take place.

BARTIMEUS AND JESUS

A few days before Easter, the time when the teaching on the passion and resurrection was going to be verified, a man – hitherto never named in the story – entered the scene: he made the Nazarene open his eyes, the physical ones and those of faith; it was the curious and surprising Bartimeus. He was a blind beggar who could not support himself which was why he was squatting on "the edge of the road" begging. Jesus' presence in the city was an occasion not to be missed. Maybe a person of such fame would do something for a person like him! And behold, the blind man began to cry out in faith and hope: "Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me!" In vain did they succeed in silencing him – presumably the twelve – but the son of Timeus only shouted louder! Jesus heard and called for him. This was what he was waiting for; nothing bothered him, not even his cloak which he hastily left and ran so that he could be liberated by Jesus. To the question of Jesus, Bartimeus confidently responded: "Master, I want to see again."

WORDS AND ACTS OF FAITH

Let's stop for a moment at this point in this narrative. It is clear that this extraordinary encounter touched the man and for the evangelist it became an occasion

to make a gentle comparison between the faith of this man full of hope and the repeated dullness that the apostles demonstrated.

To understand this we must attentively reread some parts of the story: First of all consider the titles that Bartimeus used to draw Jesus' attention. The first was: "Son of David;" calling him by this title demonstrated that he recognized and accepted that the Nazarene was a descendent of David, the Messiah, promised by God who worked wonders. After this the blind man called Jesus "Rabbuni". Everyone remembers that Mary Magdalene used the same title to greet the Risen Lord near the empty tomb (Cf 20,16). "Rabbuni" means "my Lord," it is an expression full of love and devotion.

The blind man's words go together with the determined actions of standing up and throwing off the cloak. To fully appreciate this gesture it must be noted that the beggar's cloak was his only possession, the only garment that would shelter him from both heat and cold. He threw it away demonstrating that he knew what to value more, in absolute terms it meant an encounter with the One who could change his life. The words and actions of this blind man clearly denoted the deep faith that he placed in Jesus. Bartimeus was willing to do anything to be able to meet the Son of David, his Lord.

THE VISION OF THE EYES AND THE VISION OF THE HEART

Jesus heard and was profoundly impressed by the blind beggar to whom he said:



"Go, your faith has saved you." It was only the word of Jesus that restored Bartimeus' sight. Not only that. The end of the story is much more surprising than the comparison made at the beginning. The point of story is that Mark writes that the blind man was sitting "on the edge of the road," meaning by that, that he was someone who had even run out of hope except for a few coins or a piece of bread given in alms.

Instead, the conclusion we read is that he followed Jesus "on the road" not that he received his sight. It is a concrete gesture of a highly symbolic value. Bartimeus did not want to stand on the edge of life any more but at its centre, where wonderful and complex events were unfolding. The Son of David gave him a double gift: sight to his eyes and the joy of following him on the path he himself was taking. It was the complete restoration of his dignity. He could even confidently raise his head very high, meaning that the gesture of one who surrenders himself into the hands of the only One he knows can give him more than sight to his eyes but also vision to his heart: a faith that will save him. □

IN PRAISE OF GENTLENESS

Pope Francis' homily at the morning Mass at Santa Marta on 9th April 2013

Quiet S

The temptation to gossip about others and batter them with words is always just round the corner. These "are daily temptations, enemies of gentleness" which "confront us all and me too". Pope Francis put the faithful on guard against them at Mass on Tuesday morning, April 9, in the chapel of the Domus Sancta Marthae, and pointed to the way of gentleness.

"We asked the Lord," the Pope said in his homily, "to show the world the fullness of new life." After Jesus' Resurrection a new life begins: as Jesus told Nicodemus, who, Pope Francis explained, "a little earlier had answered Jesus: 'but how can a man be born again, return to his mother's womb and be born anew?' Jesus was speaking of another dimension: 'to be born from on high', to be born of the Spirit" the Pope said. "It is the new life we received in Baptism but which we must develop".

"We must do our utmost to ensure that this life develops into new life" the Pope said. And what will this new life be like? It is not that we say today: 'Yes, I was born' today, that's that, I am starting 'again'. It is a journey, an arduous journey we must toil to achieve. Yet it does not only depend on us: it depends mainly on the Spirit and we must open ourselves to the Spirit so that he creates this new life within us".

"In the First Reading", Pope Francis said, "we have as it were a foretaste, a preview of what 'new

life' will and should be like. The multitude of those who had become believers were of one heart and one soul: that unity, unanimity and harmony of feelings of love, mutual love, thinking "others are better than me", and this is lovely, isn't it?"



But this does not happen automatically after Baptism. It must be brought about within us, "on the journey through life by the Spirit". "This gentleness is a somewhat forgotten virtue: being gentle, making room for others. There are so many enemies' of gentleness, aren't there? Starting with gossip. When people prefer to tell tales, to gossip about others, to give others a few blows. These are daily events that happen to everyone, and to me too". "They are temptations of the Evil One", he continued, "who does not want the Spirit to create this gentleness, in Christian communities. In the parish the ladies of catechesis quarrel with the ladies of Caritas". These conflicts always exist, in the family, in the neighbourhood, even among friends. And this is not new life. When the Spirit causes us to be born to new life, he makes us gentle and kind, not judgmental: the only Judge is the Lord". The proposal to

be silent fits in here. "If I have something to say, let me say it to the individual, not to the entire neighbourhood; only to the one who can remedy the situation".

"This", Pope Francis concluded, "is only one step. If, with the grace of the Spirit, we succeed in never gossiping, it will be a great and beautiful step ahead and will do everyone good. Let us ask the Lord to show us and the world the beauty and fullness of this new life, of being born of the Spirit, of treating each other with kindness, with respect. Let us ask for this grace for us all.

NO GOSSIP, NO FEAR

Homily at the morning Mass at Santa Marta on 13th April 2013

If you want to solve life's problems you have to look reality in the face. Like the goalkeeper of a football team, you have to be ready to catch the ball from whatever side it comes. And you have to do this resisting fear or the temptation to complain, because Jesus is always beside us. Pope Francis said this at morning Mass on Saturday, 13 April, 2013 in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

In the passage from the Acts of the Apostles (6:1-7), proclaimed in the First Reading, "there is", the Pope explained - a piece of the history of the Church's early days: the Church was growing, "the number of disciples was increasing," it was at this very moment that the problems arose".

Indeed, "those who spoke Greek murmured against those who spoke the Hebrew language because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. "Life", he continued, "was not always calm and beautiful", and "the first thing they do is to murmur, to gossip about each other: "But look, the thing is ..." But this does not lead to any solution".

"The Apostles", on the contrary, he said, "with the help of the Holy Spirit, reacted well. They summoned the group and spoke to them. This is the first step: when there are difficulties, it is necessary to examine them closely, to take them up and to talk about them. Never hide them.

Life is like this. Life must be taken as it comes, not as we would like it to come". "It is", the Pope said, using an effective metaphor that is dear to him "a little like the goalkeeper of the team, isn't it? He grabs the ball wherever it comes from. This is the reality". Thus the Apostles "spoke to each other and came up with a lovely proposal, a revolutionary proposal, for they said: "but we are the Apostles, those who Jesus chose". However, that was not enough. They realized that their first duty was to pray and to serve the Word. "And as for the daily assistance to widows, we must do something else". This is "what the deacons decided to do".

Pope Francis ended his homily with an invitation: ask "the Lord for this grace - to have no fear", to be able "to take life as it comes and to try to solve problems as the Apostles did, and to seek the encounter with Jesus who is always beside us, also at life's bleakest moments". □

DON'T BLAME ME

From Fr. Ian Douulton's collection of stories

John and Mary Smith are spending an evening at home. They have finished supper and have taken their battle stations. John is in the living room sprawled in front of the TV set. Mary is in the kitchen standing in front of a sink full of dishes.

"Mary, Mary, come here quick..."

"What's, the matter?"

"Come here, hurry up."

"Just as I got my hands in the dish water..."

"Look, look on TV..."

"Oh, no, not another one of those investigations."

"Shh, listen..."

"They're going to lower the boom on this guy."

(TV) 'In view of the facts, do you still deny that 45% of the rent of each of the parties that were collected from the apartments of this housing project....'

"I wouldn't call it 'extortion' I just told them how much they had to pay if they wanted an apartment."

"In the matter of critical housing... where families are desperately..."

Mary switches off the TV set.

"Hey, what did you do that for?"

"Because, you're getting 'investigation fixation'. All you do night after night is lie there and watch investigations. What good does it do you?"

"Well, I...I like to see the government on the job, nabbing those racketeers. Now they had that 5% fellow in the hot seat and was he squirming?...I'd hate to be in his shoes...oh brother...I'm not

getting to the 5% or anything else...on my conscience."

"You are...you didn't read that first editorial in the paper tonight, did you?"

"No, I was watching TV and...till you spoiled it all. With you it's only the cops and robbers stories. This is the real thing."

"Listen to this editorial: "Mary reads the paper aloud: "Conditions in our country will not improve until the average citizen, Mr. Ordinary Jones begins to investigate himself. He gets the kind of leadership in government and business that he deserves. When every citizen honestly examines his own conscience, to see how he's handling his responsibilities, to his family, his local community, his national ..."

"Oh...that's for the..."

"What's the idea in reading me that stuff?"

"You wouldn't know."

"I don't like the way you said that."

"I was hoping...but it's no use."

"Now I don't know what you're driving at... and I don't understand why you aren't interested in these investigations."

"You're not civic minded that's all. I hope these committees go right on digging until they put all the crooked politicians and all the racketeers and the juvenile delinquents behind bars."

"Sure"

"They're wrecking the country."

"Yes."

"It's time somebody lowered the boom."

"Mommy when are you coming

to put me to bed?"

"John... why don't you go up and hear Billy's prayers?"

"Oh, Mary, I'd go to sleep listening to him."

"Mom..."

"Billy you'll have to wait a few minutes..."

"You're dead! Its nearly nine and I'm still washing dishes..."

"John turn up that music so that I can hear it in the kitchen..."

"OK, OK..."

The music begins to blare...

John drifts off into sleep and dreams...and he hears the main door open...and a strangely dressed crew enter with all the state of the art broadcasting equipment...and some faces that are familiar to John.

"This is the house. Men, walk right in."

"Hey, hey..." John shouts...

"TV crew set up your cameras and...take it all the way to the dining room. Radio crew you can pick up from here. Push that sofa out of the way."

"Hey wait a minute...what are you doing in my house?" John says.

"Face the camera, please."

"Sir, what's all this about?" John tries again.

"It's the investigation, Mr. Smith, on a universal hook-up. Everybody in the world is going to know all about you."

"You can't investigate me, I haven't done anything. Who gave you the authority...?"

"We're acting under an authority higher than any government. You've been given every chance to check on yourself. You haven't done it, so we're taking over. This is one investigation in which nothing

can be hidden and the truth is always told. We have a complete record in sound and pictures of all your past words actions and thoughts."

"Oh no!" He's afraid.

"First witness: Ms. Ellen Thompson, please?"

"Ms. Thompson, kindly take this chair?"

"Yes, sir"

"Ms. Thompson, as registrar of voters and as secretary of 'The Better Government League' of this city will you tell us all you know of John Smith's political activities?"

"His political activities? He doesn't have any."

"Please explain your statement, Ms. Thompson."

"Well, he never votes, at least in the five years since I've been registrar. He joined the 'Better Government League'. We had a drive four years ago, but he attended only one meeting."

"Mr. Smith, aren't you interested in better government?"

"Of course I am. But how are you going to have good government if the big racketeers..."

"Mr. Smith, are you a good citizen?"

"Well of course I am."

"What do you mean by a good citizen Mr. Smith? What is your definition?"

"Well, a good citizen...he is a man...a good citizen...takes interest in government...and I'm always interested in the government. I listen to all the investigations..."

"You have not voted in the last five years!"

"Well, has it been that long? Well, I...I...haven't had time...I'm busy... I'll find time after this...I'll

vote in the next election..."

"That's what he's been saying for five years."

"Thank you Ms Thompson, you may leave the stand."

"Next witness: Officer Alexander Stephens."

"Here...sir!"

"Take the chair please."

"Officer, do you know John Smith?"

"Yes, I'll say."

"You've met him in the performance of your duties as motorcycle patrol officer?"

"Too often. He's the fellow who always jumps the red light at the 43rd street that turns to the freeway."

"I do not always jump that light."

"Yes, sure he denies it. That's what he does when I catch him. Then he calls me all the names in the book."

"I do not! I've never been disrespectful to an officer."

"Will you repeat that statement, Mr. Smith?"

"I have the greatest respect for the law...I have never insulted an officer."

"Let's look at the record...we have everything here in sound and picture."

"Projector 4, picture and sound please?"

"Say, that's my car..."

"That's him alright. There he goes right through the red light."

(sound of sirens)

"Alright, pull onto the curb, mister."

"What for?"

"Pull up, please, I'll tell you."

"Listen officer, I am in a hurry."

"I'm sorry to stop you, but you went through that red light."

"That light was amber when I saw it."

"Yes? When did you see it? I've warned you three times already. I have to give you a ticket..."

"Oh, you're picking on me, that's all. Why don't you clear the drunk drivers off that road, why don't you chase the criminals in this town. They're too smart for you cops. That's all."

"Here's your ticket..."

"You could have saved yourself the trouble...nice guy...you think you're big stuff...you think...you can...you can chase people on that motor cycle. Off that machine you're just another flatfoot. You couldn't catch a cold."

"Cut sound and screen please?"

"Well, Mr. Smith, this film shows you jumping that red light."

"Well, anybody can make a mistake."

"Do you consider your language respectful?"

"Well I was worked up. Did you pay that ticket?"

"No, I had it fixed."

"Had it fixed?"

"Oh sure, I know somebody, everybody gets their tickets fixed. It's understood everybody does it."

"Officer Stephens, thank you. Thank you for your cooperation."

"Next witness, Mr. Collins take the chair. Mr. Collins you are an employee of Mr. John Smith are you not?"

"Yes, sir, I'm a senior foreman in the machine repair division."

"Mr. Collins will you tell this committee the details of the conversation you had with Mr. Smith on the 15th of last month relative to the Patterson Engine Company?"

"These people and a lot of other people send their machines back to us to have them repaired. I'm

supposed to check them out. I notice that the parts going into the machine weren't new. The specifications call for new parts and the invoice say they are getting new parts, but they are taken from junk so I went to see Mr. Smith."

"And what was Mr. Smith's reaction?"

"He didn't seem to care."

"Well, let's look at the record."

"Oh, no, don't play anything back, don't show any pictures, I can explain everything."

"Yes, go on..."

"It's true that department has to show a margin of profit, it's true. I've got to give two raises in the past year. The stock holders are on my neck."

"What about the people who pay for new parts and get old ones?"

"Well, every business has these little shortcuts."

"Mr. Smith, when you pay for new parts in anything you buy, you expect new parts, isn't that true?"

"Well, yes...but..."

"Mr. Collins you may step down."

"Next witness please, son, take this little chair."

"Billy, what are you doing here?"

"You'll find out in just a minute. Now, Billy you know this man do you not?"

"Yes, he's my daddy."

"Is he a good daddy?"

"When he isn't mad, he is."

"Does he get mad very often, Billy?"

"No, only in the morning before he goes to work and when he comes home from work and watches television."

"What does he do when he gets mad Billy?"

"He yells at mother, then he tells

me to take all my toys and get out of the living room because he's dead. He doesn't look dead."

"But does your daddy ever read stories to you or play games with you, Billy?"

"No, I bring him my books. He doesn't like the stories I like. He tells me to go play by myself, because he's dead!"

"Does he ever teach you anything like your prayers?"

"No, I don't think daddy knows any prayers. I never heard him say any."

"Billy, does your daddy love you?"

"He says he does, mother says he does. She says he's just 'busy' - I think my mother likes my daddy an awful lot. She makes me say, 'God bless Daddy,' every night when I say my prayers. Mother says he's the only daddy we have. He looks awful scared now, like he's going to the dentist. You're not going to hurt my daddy are you? Don't hurt him, mister, he's a nice man when he isn't mad."

"Don't you worry, your daddy can take care of himself. You go and sit beside your mother now."

"Mr. Smith take the stand please. You've heard the testimony of these witnesses and of our records. You may now call your own witnesses. Proceed Mr. Smith."

"I...I..." He hesitates...

"Certainly you can find someone who can testify to your being a good citizen and a good father. Well, You can't?"

"Mary, come tell them I'm alright." John pleads

"He means well, he really does...he just doesn't think...I can't say the things the other

Continued on pg. 30

ACTIVE PRESENCE & ASSISTANCE IN THE SALESIAN EDUCATIVE METHOD

6

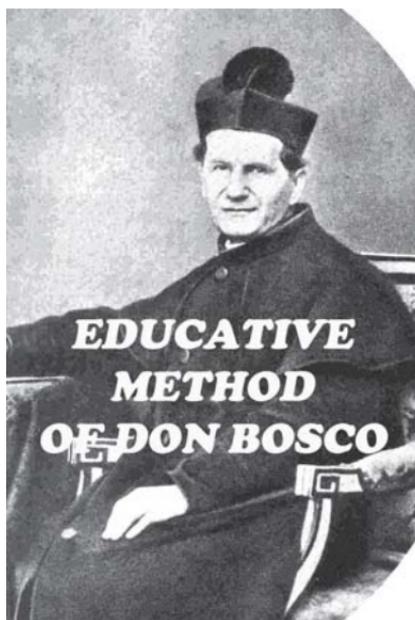
by Fr. Elias Dias

In October 1864, Don Bosco narrated a dream which he called "The Dream of Ten Hills." A voice told him to take this crowd to the summit of the tenth hill. The summit of the hill is heaven and climbing the hills is the journey of the pupils with their problems. The boys reached the place because of the help of Don Bosco and the assistants. In Don Bosco's Educative System, "Presence and Assistance" play a very important role. It is the soul in the method of Don Bosco.

In the Old Testament we read that God was always present to his people to guide them, help them and to protect them. Jesus intimately shared his daily life with his disciples. Through out the centuries Catholics believed in the presence and assistance of God and that God gave us Guardian Angels to guide us, direct and protect us. In the Educative method of Don Bosco the work of the Guardian Angel is entrusted to the educators and assistants.

Presence and assistance according to Don Bosco

In a classical booklet on Preventive System by Don Bosco in 1877 he defines his concept on



this topic. "It consists in making the prescriptions and regulations of an Institute known and then watching in such a way that the pupils have continually the vigilant eye of the educators who as loving fathers speak, guide in every circumstance, advice, and lovingly correct. In this way the pupils are prevented from committing faults." Certainly in the idea and practice of Don Bosco's system the aspect of watching, preventing, defending, forestalling and protecting is visible.

Assistance is a) *Taking the first step:* Going out to meet the young person, taking initiatives. b) *Being with the young:* Going among them, sharing their lives. Don Bosco always lived with his boys. c) *Conversing with them:* Entering into dialogue with the young on themes of interest to them aiming to lead them to critical reflection. d) *Empathizing:* Showing an

ability to understand deeply the feeling of the young. e) *Proposing*: S u g g e s t i n g activities, offering advice, and motivations. f) *Bearing witness*: Manifesting in his attitudes and in his words the values he has incarnated in his life to justify the faith he professes. g) *Forestalling*: Being aware of the limitations and risks involved in the development of the young and therefore being attentive to prevent whatever might seriously compromise it. h) *Creating a climate*: Building up an atmosphere of invigorating values to stimulate growth to maturity. i) *Accompanying*: Through patient dialogue helping the young to internalize values and convictions. j) *Promoting the group experience*: Helping the young person to develop a social and community skills. k) *Making responsible*: Getting the young to be responsible in their own group or association. l) *Establishing new meeting points*: Encouraging socialization and celebration through free-time activities, outings, and youth activities.



way of life. The Church recognized by canonizing him a saint in 1934.

This loving relationship prompted the boys to give Don Bosco their confidence and love. Confidence led to trust. And trust to education and education to sanctity. Our main aim is not just to provide services but to help them to grow spiritually. True love is based on love of God. The educators use the institutions, their resources and qualities to bring the educand to God.

The Salesian Educator is continually and actively present to his pupil all the time. His work starts early in the morning and ends late at night. Don Bosco wrote: "Education is a matter of the heart. God alone is Master of the heart, and we will not be able to do anything if God does not teach us how to get at the heart and if God does not put the key of the heart in our hands."

Assistance does not consist in looking after boys. The task of the assistant is to understand well the interests of the boys and help them to fulfill these interests. Since they live and work in the midst of young educators feel the need to keep their youthful spirit and continue liking what

Don Bosco assistant

The picture of Don Bosco among boys surrounded by smiling and happy faces of varying ages and descriptions is very charming and vivid. Whether in imagination or in art Don Bosco the apostle of youth gets his true stature only when he is pictured with boys. This is because he loved them dearly and spent his life totally for their welfare. He became a saint by following the

youngsters like.

This Presence and Assistance is formative assistance. The assistant is the visible guardian angel of the boys and fulfils the same office. He should be friendly with all, intimate with none. Example is more powerful than big speeches and advice.

In a conference to the Salesians Don Bosco gave them the example of the gardener. The gardener puts all his efforts into cultivating a seedling. His hope is, that given time, the seedling will produce abundantly. Hence, regardless of effort, he toils and sweats to till the soil. Happily he watches the seedling grow. It is only the hope of success which makes him to do all that work.

“Presence and Assistance” has an animating aspect. The word animation or motivation is often used in the modern world. The people in the world today realize that animation or motivation is very important to do any efficient job. All animations basically aim at making persons responsible for their process of growth in which they are involved.

Don Bosco was realistic humanist:

Don Bosco did not have an unbridle optimism about his boys. He was optimistic when he appealed to their sense of responsibility for he believed that even the most callous boys have a soft spot. He knew that some were good while others were corrupt and even morally dangerous. Therefore he insisted on assistance. In a goodnight talk of February 13, 1865 after sadly denouncing certain moral disorders in the house he

concluded saying that those who had authority over the boys were not entirely guiltless. If everyone had done their duty, certain disorders would not take place.

Criticism

In the recent years Don Bosco’s system of education with its notion of continuous assistance has been criticized on various grounds. Dutch Jesuit, P.N Perquin has been the most consistent critic. According to him, through his system Don Bosco says that the educand should do the will of the educator. This domineering relationship weakens the relationship, and makes him an extension of the educator. For healthy growth auto-determination is of the ultimate importance, because ethical and religious values spring from self determination and self-expression.

Perquin suggests that any excessive rapport between the educator and educand hinders the educational work but in Don Bosco’s system it is the greatest force. According to him, Don Bosco’s way of education destroys the much desired freedom of youngster whatever interpretation we might give to defend it. In essence it consists in preventing the wrong moves that might be made by the pupils. If the boys always live under the eyes of the superiors they will be deformed rather than formed.

In recent times even the Salesians have begun to share the above mentioned idea. This gave rise to unwillingness to assist and the eagerness to give the boys freedom so that they become more

responsible persons.

Go back to his time

In order to understand the pedagogy of Don Bosco one has to know the history, culture and religious ambient at the time of Don Bosco. Till lately the notion of sin was wedded to the sixth and ninth commandment. This was the ambient in which Don Bosco was born and exercised his priestly ministry. He spoke and shielded his boys to preserve the virtue of purity, the pearl of great value.

Fr. Peter Stella has remarked that as a young shepherd boy at the Moglia farm and later till he joined the seminary Don Bosco read all types of novels. Later he mortified himself to the extent of not looking at his cousins in their face. He exalted the young Aloysius Gonzaga and St Philip Neri and his teaching made a great impact on Don Bosco.

Moral theologians of that time including St. Alphonsus taught that impurity was the chief culprit populating the realms of hell.

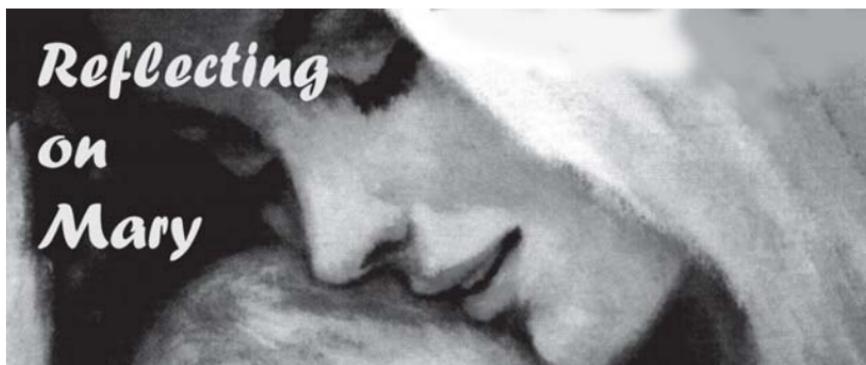
The social life at the time of Don Bosco was in a state of upheaval and disequilibrium. In this complex situation, influenced by the ambient and urged by divine inspiration, Don Bosco tried to give material and spiritual aid to the poor and abandoned boys of Turin. He was not the inventor of presence and assistance. St Alphonsus in his rules for the seminarians recommended it.

Some may think that Don Bosco was a helpless man who was consumed by the mentalities and ideologies of his days. People wondered what special system he employed to evoke such positive

response from such a large crowd of boys and keep them exuberant, disciplined and happy. He made the Christian love the key of his system. Assistance devoid of love arouses the resentments. Because of this type of assistance Don Bosco could allow maximum freedom to his boys which they expressed in various ways.

Concept of presence and assistance today:

Fr. Giovenale Dho has pointed in today's context; Salesian assistance has to be an authentic interpersonal relationship between the assistant and the pupil. It calls for an unconditional acceptance of the pupil. All preconceived ideas and judgments, condemnations and labels that may be tagged on a pupil should not stand in the way of this acceptance. Assistance should educate the pupils to freedom and self determination. In this context assistance should be a living experience avoiding all regimentation and develop the critical sense of the pupil which should save him from slavery to ideas, systems and people. Presence and Assistance should lead the pupils to generosity. In education the pupils have experienced and received so many values through the self-donation of the educator. Now that they are matured they should give to the world what they have received so that the world may enrich especially the poor and those who live at the fringe of the society. They should learn to work for the transformation of the persons and society so that everyone may get their share and live in peace and harmony and above all they should live a life of integrity. □



WE FLY TO YOUR PATRONAGE...

by Luigi Parit

That great bard of the Madonna, St. John Damascene (d. 749), speaks tenderly and trustingly to Mary: "You are the comfort of those who suffer, the consolation of those who mourn, healing balm for the sick, safe refuge for those tossed about by storms, pardon for sinners, sweet comfort to those who are afflicted, wise counsel to those who fly to thee." (IV homily on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary)

These last words remind us of one of the most ancient and popular prayers that we so often say when we turn to Mary: a prayer of supplication, which is the title of this article: "*We fly to thy patronage...*" which dates back to the late third or early fourth century and which continues to be ever popular.

Vittorio Messori has so rightly reminded us in one of his books *The Mary Hypothesis* that the Latin word *praesidium* - which is found in that Marian prayer: *Sub tuum praesidium* - and which has been translated into English as patronage does not correspond exactly to the original Greek word in the original prayer:

splangcna. This word can be translated with different meanings: affection, heart, bowels, compassion, emotion or soul. The Evangelists use this term to express the innermost feelings of our Lord. For example, when Jesus "feels compassion" for the multitude because they are like sheep without a shepherd (cf. Mt. 14:14); when he "feels compassion" on seeing the widow of Nain who was going out to bury her only son (Lk 7:13); when he was "moved" and restored sight to the blind man (Mt 20:34) or when "moved with compassion" he healed the leper (Mk 1:41); and when Jesus identifies himself with the Samaritan who "out of compassion" took care of the unfortunate traveller who lay forgotten on the road (Lk 10:33), or when the father "moved," in other words, "stirred to his very bowels with mercy" welcomed home his wayward son (Lk 15:20). In all these passages the same word is used. This variety of meanings always alludes to the same Greek word translated here as 'patronage.' This term, therefore does not clearly reflect the depth of

the meaning of the word used in the original prayer. From this little philological analysis we arrive at the desire to understand the spiritual significance of the Greek word used in this famous prayer of supplication addressed to Mary.

It is fascinating to discover the richness concealed in this prayer, that for sixteen centuries, the Church used to turn to Mary. Its importance is evident when we realise that the eighth chapter of *Lumen Gentium* of the Second Vatican Council is dedicated entirely to Mary and quotes almost in its entirety this prayer. "In fact," the Council says, "already from ancient times, the Blessed Virgin has been venerated with the title of 'mother of God' and the faithful have sought her protection imploring her in all their difficulties and necessities." (n. 66)

Earlier we mentioned how the Fathers of the Church, out of love for the Virgin Mary, turned to her with that same solicitude with which the author of that prayer implored the Mother of God.

From this coincidence of the original word (*splangca*) of that Marian prayer with the texts analyzed, what conclusion can we draw, given that both the words might be translated identically: "bowels," "heart," "love"?

Mary, the Mother of God, to whom Christians have been turning to with their petitions, from the very first centuries, would experience the same compassionate mercy of God the Father, of course, proportionately subject to the infinite distance between God and Mary. On the one hand, there exists an inseparable and intimate relationship between the mother and the Son and on the



*The Assumption by
Tiziano Vecellio (detail)
Venice, Santa Maria Gloriosa
dei Frari*

other hand if man was created in the image and likeness of God, who is love, the creature who most resembles the heart of the Creator is the mother of the Son of God, Jesus, who was incarnate in the womb of Mary. It is therefore understandable and justifiable that Christians turn to Mary the mother of Mercy and pray that she may receive us with the depths of compassion, a gracious heart and a loving and fervent soul, ultimately with a maternal love in which we may find our strong defense, our implored protection and our coveted refuge.

Mary reflects the mercy that the Lord has for the needy, the abandoned, the hopeless and the helpless because he never denies his mercy to the needy when they cry out to him from the depths of their misery, misfortunes, difficulties and afflictions.

This brief and heartfelt plea has inspired many very beautiful liturgies, compositions and Marian prayers.

In Coptic literature there is a feast called the "Covenant of mercy" which is celebrated and which reminds us of a promise that Jesus made to his mother that all those who entrusted themselves to her at the time of the final judgment would attain salvation through her intercession.

In the Byzantine Night prayer liturgy we read: O thou, the only hope of the hopeless, comfort of the afflicted and ever ready protector of those who have recourse to thee...Be always by my side, merciful, compassionate and kind protector at the hour of my death."

And with these same sentiments the Blessed Enrique Seuze had recourse to her: "O precious treasure of the poor! When we are

lost because of sin, O Supreme Judge, when we are gravely damaged and find ourselves not knowing what to do, only to be able to raise the miserable eyes of our body and our souls to you, seeking your counsel and your refuge... To you I come, O holy Virgin, with broken heart and tears streaming down my face, because I have offended God...and surrounded by enemies but with your help I will overcome every danger."

This appeal invites us to turn to Mary with the certain hope that Christians have had resort to her in their many needs both ordinary and urgent. When the Second Vatican Council reminded us that Mary was not taken to heaven and disinterested in her children, it intends to remind us that Mary's feelings are those of a kind and good mother, who is not entirely happy until all her children are fully blessed. □

DON'T BLAME ME *from pg. 23*

people say about him aren't true. But John just doesn't think. Oh, please let him go, I'm sure he'll do better. At least I hope he will." Mary tries to plead.

"Mrs. Smith, your husband has been surrounded and bombarded by people who have tried to make him think. We can't wait any longer for him to wake up. His country, his community, his child, they've waited for him to act like a citizen and a father. He says he hasn't done anything."

"I haven't..." John snaps back.

"That's exactly, Mr. Smith, you don't care enough to do anything. You won't go one step out of your way. You wink at the little craft that grows into the big corruption. You sleep while your wife tries single

handedly to raise your child. You think this investigation is embarrassing? This is only a preview... a slight taste... of the final judgement of God. Well... now we can't wait any longer..."

Well, it's time... Mr. Smith...

"Oh no..." John's scared

It's time... it's time... it's time...

Then from a distance John hears: "John, John stop making those noises... you're sleeping on you back again."

"Mother... aren't you coming up to hear my prayers?"

"Yes, Billy, in a minute."

"No, no, no... you stay here, I'll go and hear Billy's prayers."

What? John roll over and go back to sleep. You're not awake yet...

"Yes, I am... I woke up just in time..." □

NEWSBITS

KALYANI - W.BENGAL

Sanjay, his wife and two children live in their little house made of tile and bamboo. They are Hindus and devotees of Jesus. His son studying in class VII at a local high school also attended music lessons at Don Bosco Youth Centre Gayeshpur Checkpost.

On April 14, there were some thirty people in his house. Eight men sat in the courtyard on hired plastic chairs, and women sat on a mat on the cemented floor of the house, as well as the bed, while his wife cooked aloodhum and puri in the mud-floored room attached to the house. They had come for a prayer meeting to install the picture of Jesus - the Divine Mercy.

The event was organized by Br. Sushanto Biswas, a great friend of Sanjay's family. He brought along Anjali and Anu as well as Subir and two Missionaries of Charity Brothers Prosanto and Michael and driver Ashok.

A local Catholic family of Sukdev also had come with wife and their two children. Some 20 of Sanjay's Hindu friends, all devotees of Jesus joined the gathering later in the evening.

The programme started off with a hymn followed by the blessing of the picture of Divine Mercy by the assistant parish priest of Don Bosco Church, Kalyani, Fr. C.M. Paul; the recitation of the chaplet of the Divine Mercy; a reading of the Easter narration from John's Gospel and a brief instruction by Br. Sushanto.

This was followed by the blessing of the house and a fellowship meal consisting of puri, aloo-dhum (dry

potato curry) and sweets.

The event was part of the Year of Faith outreach programmes being held in the parish. *The Herald* (29/04/13)

TAIZE

For young Italians who have their eyes set on Taize their summer started in May already. The website for Taize (www.taize.fr) had this invitation: "Like every year, young people organize themselves to come up to the hills this summer. All the necessary travel information is available at Venice, Bologna, Turin and at Puglia."

The Christian community and the International Ecumenical Monastic centre which is based on a hill in the centre of Taizé was created in 1940 by Brother (Brother) Roger Schutz. Since the death of the founder - assassinated by a deranged woman on August 16, 2005 at the age of 90 years. The prior of the Community is Brother Alois Loser, who today leads a hundred friars of different Christian denominations, from more than twenty-five countries. There are small fraternities in Africa, North America and South America, and Asia.

Every week from around the world thousands of young people come to Taize with the aim of meditating on the theme of "inner life and human solidarity." These youngsters are looking for meaning in their lives and they realize comes from the responsibility they take up in the places where they live. And the first of these responsibilities is to contribute to peace and reconciliation in their own parish, community and city.



VATICAN

Obvious, one might say, thinking about the charisma of the character. A charisma, and a history that will soon end up on the big screen. To bring to the cinema, the figure of Jorge Mario Bergoglio will be the 57-year old German producer and director Christian Peschken. That, according to reports from the U.S. site National Catholic Register, has already been achieved by a group of European investors who have put up a loan of \$ 25 million.

Peschken, who was recently converted to Catholicism, was born in Germany but now lives and works in Hollywood. The title of the film would be ready, "The friend of the poor: the story of Pope Francis." "When I saw him looking down from the balcony of the loggia of blessings, I thought: this scene would be the perfect climax for a film. The idea was born at that time and since then I have never stopped working on it."

The project involves several people. Andrea Tornielli, a Vatican Press and the Vatican Insider, the author of several books including a biography of the pope just published - "Francis: The Life, the ideas, the Pope's words that will change history" (publisher Piemme) - has given its availability for advice. The German director has also contacted Sergio Rubini,

the author of a book-length interview with the then Cardinal Bergoglio, the Spanish director Antonio Cuadri and the Italian Vittorio Storaro as director of photography.

Our wish is that we want the film to speak to everyone" said Peschken. It will be the story of a man who followed God's call to become a pastor for so many. "

The plan is to shoot the film in Argentina, but especially in Rome. "We want to be close to the source, so to speak, and the tomb of Peter. Who knows, maybe we'll have some extra help from the Holy Spirit ... ". Filming is expected to begin early next year. "We hope that the film will receive the blessing of the Pope and it would be great if it reaches theatres on December 17, 2014, the birthday of the pontiff. Given the history and qualities of the main character we are sure that it could be an international success.

BEIT JALA - PALESTINE

The Christian Palestinian Community of Beit Jala wrote an open letter to Pope Francis to ask him to intervene against the construction of the wall of defense in the Valley of Cremisan and timed it with the visit of President Shimon Peres to the Holy Father. They wrote: "We are a Christian village called Beit Jala, near the city of Bethlehem. We are threatened by the construction of the famous "annexation wall" that the Israeli military occupation intends to build expropriating the majority of Palestinians and Christian lands with the intention of separating Bethlehem from Jerusalem and the other holy places. They were requesting the intervention of the Holy Father. □

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



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

Thank you so much Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Joseph for all that you blessed us with and for all the miracles you have done in our lives. Jesus, Mother Mary and Joseph please continue to shower your blessing upon us, keep us under your care and protection, lead and direct us always in the right way. Never leave us alone be there always with us. Thank you Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Joseph. Please pray for us.

Antonieta Simoes, Macao

Heartfelt thanks to Mother Mary for the graces and blessings received. May the Blessed Virgin Mary continue to intercede for us and keep us in her loving care.

H. Crasto, Canada

Thank you, dear Lord Jesus and Mother Mary for helping my daughter pass her entry examination and for getting a place in the school. Thank you dear Lord Jesus and Mother Mary for the numerous graces received and special thanks for helping us solve most of our problems and difficulties and for blessing us with your love, peace, happiness and protection.

Antonieta Simoes, Macau

My sincere and heartfelt gratitude to our Mother Mary for helping my daughter secure the marks in her HSC examinations. I would like to thank Our Mother for all the favours and graces received through praying the three Hail Marys. Thank you Mama Mary and continue to intercede for us.

F. D. D'Souza

My belated but loving and grateful thanks to Our Mother Mary through whose intercession and the daily praying of the 3 Hail Marys I have received major favours for me and my family. Thank you dearest Mother.

Mrs. A.C. Pune

Thank you Mother Mary for saving me from what could have been a fatal car accident. Thank you for being there and protecting me.

Fiona Toscano, Canada

Sincere thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for all the favours and blessings received especially my the normal reports of my sons medical reports, for a good job for my elder son. Do continue to bless us.

Anna D'Souza, Mumbai

I have received numerous favours through faithfully praying the 3 Hail Marys and my devotion to Dominic Savio too.

R. Carvalho, Goa

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Thanks to Our Blessed Lord and Our Blessed Mother for solving our family's problems.
Neil, Ahmedabad

Thank you dear Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Mother Mary for granting me a safe trip to Bombay and help to procure my medicines.
Mark W. Dodd, Pune

My niece, Lovia and nephew Lionel were inflicted with a rare skin disease which required both of them to be hospitalised for more than a week. On praying the 3 Hail Marys they were healed completely. A million thanks to Mother Mary for granting my sons success in their examinations.
Remetina Moraes

My grateful and sincere thanks to Our Heavenly Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and Mother Mary Help of Christians for helping my daughter pass her B. Pharm degree with a good percentage and for getting admission for her M.Pharm after having prayed the three Hail Marys. Mother Mary always protect her in your arms.
Dorothy Fernandes, Goa

My sincere thanks for a successful eye operation of Mr. Edwin Lobo and for other favours received by the family.
Edwin Lobo, Mumbai

Thanks so much Mother Mary for helping my son Christopher find his chain and for Mr. Ahmed being able to understand mother.
Argentina Fernandes, Mumbai

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

Our sincere thanks for the favours received during the last 37 years.
Mrs. W. Roche and Family, Belgaum

Thank you dear Jesus, Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Jude for all the support, mentally, physically and emotionally to all at home in our hour of great need.
Indu Balakrishnan

I am immensely grateful for the complete cure of my sister Gladys from her hip surgery and enabling her to get on her feet without further complications.
Clerie Coelho, Mumbai

My most sincere thanks to Don Bosco for two special favours received and for successful eye implants.
M. Fernandes, Mumbai

I am grateful to Don Bosco for all the graces received.
M.F. Fernandes, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary, and Don Bosco for helping us to sell our house peacefully and to get a better price.
Molly Pirna, Vasai

My sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for my daughter's wedding and for curing my mother of asthma and me of a back ailment.
M. Antao, Goa

My sincere thanks to Don Bosco for obtaining for me the favours I prayed for. Thanks also to Our Blessed Mother for blessing me and my family.
Philo D'Souza, Mumbai

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Our sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for all the favours and blessings bestowed on our family.

Victor and Afra Fonseca, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the blessings bestowed on our family through your intercession, especially for helping my nephew to pass his HSC examination. Mother Mary we always need your help and please continue to intercede for my family.

Mrs. Susy Sebastian, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Abba Father, Jesus, Mary help of Christians, St. John Bosco

and St. Dominic Savio for bestowing on us the gift of a healthy baby boy and for a safe and normal delivery and the other graces showered on our family.

Raul C. Fernandes, Mumbai

My belated but sincere thanks to the Infant Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a grandson. I was longing for a grandson after two granddaughters. My daughter-in-law was wearing the scapular of St. Dominic Savio throughout her pregnancy. May St. Dominic be a model to our children.

Mrs. Anastasia Fernandes, Goa

My sincere thanks to Jesus, Our Lady Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for a safe operation and relieving me of my stomach pain and for many other favours received.

A Devotee

My sincere thanks to St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery and the gift of a healthy baby boy. May Mother Mary continue to bless us all.

Catherine Dias, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Jesus, Our Lady, Mother Mary Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for curing my grandson of his sickness and helping him to become a good and obedient child.

A Devotee

My daughter was in a critical condition during her pregnancy. I thank the Lord, Our Blessed Mother and St. Dominic Savio for a safe delivery.

Thelma, Goa

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

AUGUST 2013

The Holy Father's General Intention: *That parents and teachers may help the new generation to grow in upright conscience and life.*

Missionary Intention: *That the local Church in Africa faithfully proclaiming the Gospel, may promote peace and justice.*

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MARY WAS THERE

On the night of 29th December 2012 at about 10.45 pm. the jeep in which 7 of us were travelling hit a tree which was in the middle of the road due to the road widening. My uncle who was driving was blinded by the headlights of the oncoming cars and lost control of the jeep which hit the tree. None of us was seriously injured. My uncle and aunt in the front row did get hit in their chest, stomach and legs, my cousin, husband and myself were only slightly injured on the legs and hands. We were able to go home from hospital within 2 days. The fire brigade had to axe the jeep to get my aunt out of the debris. Looking at the state of the vehicle I can only acknowledge that Mother Mary was there and I am most grateful to her for protecting us. Praying the 3 Hail Marys to Mary Help of Christians kept us safe.

Mrs. Alida L. D'Souza, Mumbai

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

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

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