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*Today
a light will shine
upon us,
for the Lord
is born for us;
and he will be called
Wondrous God,
Prince of peace, Father
of future ages:
and his reign will
be without end.
Luke 1:33*

Cover: **Christmas at the Shrine
of Don Bosco's Madonna
Matunga, Mumbai, India**

From The Editor's Desk

ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION

Hang around the shrine after the evening Mass, if ever, on any given evening I might be met by some well-meaning devotees of Our Lady who come for a little 'post-Mass' banter and they usually end up saying something like: 'You must come and see us sometime.' Without realising that this invitation was for a certain day and at a certain time. When I plucked up the gumption and landed up there and they opened the door I recognized immediately that they had no recollection of ever inviting me, least of all, of inviting me *that* evening. All my efforts went into saving them from embarrassment and I was left to shoulder my own sense of rejection alone. No great harm was done, but looking back, I realized that I was chary of accepting invitations. I was not going to be embarrassed again.

Maybe it was sensitivity on this point, which left me astonished at the way Christ dealt with unmistakable rejection all his life. It wasn't as if his coming was not signalled well in advance by the prophets. Finally, immediately before he appeared, John the Baptist announced that he was already among them. All the same when Christ was born 'there was no room for him at the inn'. I wonder if that wasn't another effort to save his people embarrassment. The whole point of travelling to Bethlehem was to be among *his own people* when the census was taken, and in the Near East, as most of us too in the old days, you always stayed with relatives. Staying at a hostel did not come into question. Yet he was not welcome. 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not.' His own people could tell the Three Wise Men when and where he was to be born, but the information was used by King Herod in an attempt to kill him. It was the three strangers who came to meet him. As Christ began his public ministry, he was driven out of his own hometown of Nazareth, and as he ended his life on earth, Jerusalem gave him a brief welcome on Palm Sunday but reverted to rejection in a few days to the roars of 'crucify him!'

Remembering my own sensitivity to a single rejection, I wonder at Christ's courage in continuing to come into his people's lives with good news. You see how he favoured anyone who would listen: the publican friends of Matthew, the woman taken in adultery, the lepers, and the thief on the cross, in fact anyone who would listen. He instructed his disciples to bring down blessings on any house in which they were welcomed.

Especially there was the house of Martha and her sister Mary and her brother Lazarus. We know he loved them. Was it, I wonder, because here he found someone who did listen carefully to what he had to say? Christ had to defend Mary from her sister's efforts to distract her. Mary had chosen the better part. 'To those who received him he gave power to be made the children of God.' It is still the same: Acceptance and rejection.

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

WHEN KINDNESS COMES BACK AROUND

CEL SERIES

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

Doing good to others is like sowing a seed in the soil – when the soil is well prepared the seed inevitably catches, sprouts and grows into a big tree blessing the very person, among others, who cared to plant the seed in the first place. The following story is an example illustrating just this significant point. “Perhaps it was around forty years now that Sadie had left her drunk and violent husband. Needing shelter for herself and her young son she took up a job as a warden in a housing project for elderly people. The advantage of this job was that she could live ‘on site’ in one of the flats.

“It didn’t take her long to get to know the residents. One resident, Archie, didn’t have a family of his own but his nephew’s wife and her kids would pop in from time to time. The generous lady was there to help the old guy but the kids were probably more of a nuisance than anything else. Still, they would visit and Archie would give them a few pennies for sweets whenever he could. Sadie helped care for Archie as he battled illness and it was she who called the doctor who diagnosed his terminal cancer. She remembers him fondly as a sweet old man.

The Full Circle

“Several uneventful years passed and Sadie herself retired, settling into a cosy little home of her own. To ease the loneliness she took in a series of dog-shelter dogs over the years. One of these,

Muffin, was a cantankerous little terrier, always pulling at the end of his lead. So when a heavy fall of snow came some time ago she was greatly relieved when a neighbour offered to walk the dog; just until the weather improved; in this way she wouldn’t be pulled off her feet and break a bone or two.

“Long after the snow and ice went the kindly neighbour still faithfully kept up his dog walks. And each day he would spend a while talking to her, seeing she was okay, discreetly checking if she needed anything. Now, in her eighties, Sadie is being looked after like she used to look after her ‘old dears.’

“But in all the time she has known this kind-hearted gentleman, Sadie never really thought of asking what his last name was. One fine morning she did casually ask only to discover that his surname was the same as old Archie’s. As this fact stirred up a memory she remarked on the coincidence going on to tell him about working at the old folks’ flats. Imagine her surprise to discover that the man who had been ‘caring’ for her for the past year and a half had been one of the little kids who used to tramp mud up and down the stairs she had to clean, and ran screaming through the echoing corridors on his way to visit ‘Uncle Archie.’

“She had cared for his family, now he was caring for her. Neither of them knew it up until that moment but they are a living proof of the familiar old saying,

“What goes around comes around” - and the circle of kindness will now continue unbroken!”

Do unto others...

How true is the advice Jesus gives us when he says, “Do unto others as you would want others to do to you!” And yet, how often would we, on a busy day, even dream that the persons we treat kindly, or help generously and spontaneously, (without giving it even another thought) would one day be the very ones who would return the kindness to us, especially when we need it most?! Life has a strange way of bringing the very person/s we have helped long ago, and perhaps without any expectation of reward, back into our lives at the most opportune moment so as to enable them to repay the favour done.

Conditions Required

Nevertheless, one of the prerequisites for this to happen is that the kindness we do, in the first place, must be totally selfless, as far as possible. It is only these kinds of genuine acts of kindness that somehow touch the hearts of the people we serve. We pick up this condition clearly in the Last Judgment scene as described in the Gospel of St. Matthew: when the Judge says to those who are gathered on his right, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the



In short, if we did make the right use of the graces awaiting us in each Eucharist, our lives would be so much more fruitful and Christ-like.

world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me’ (Mt 25:34-40).

Again in another place Jesus reminds us, “Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s

reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple - truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward" (Mt 10:41-42). The basis of both these statements is the close relationship that exists between human beings and the God who chose to become one like us in all things except sin! - he, the Lord, accepts them, especially the poor and needy, as his very own! In other words, the people we interact with, no matter how simple or ordinary they may seem, are regarded as great in the eyes of God. And, in fact, they are precious in his sight - the more simple and ordinary they appear, the more we need to be wary - for they have a hidden richness! They are the work of God's hands, his work of art, his creation which he jealously guards and protects.

Unfortunately it often happens that we are so full of our own greatness, or perhaps even our own urgent needs, that we fail to recognize who it is that we deal with. Or again, the person before us doesn't meet with our expectations of him/her and so we tend to treat him/her casually or sometimes even brusquely - to our own detriment and shame. All this only goes to show that we would need to train ourselves rigorously to be constantly aware of the inner worth of each person who comes across the path of our lives. For, it will not help us to proffer the excuse that we did not realize that in the guise of that simple person, it was the Lord

himself we were dealing with. We need only recall the story of Abraham and the three visitors he received in Gen. 18. Abraham's sharpness in recognizing them as divine visitors and treating them accordingly brought him rich blessings! The opportunity once lost will not return again. As we seek to train ourselves in this regard, one useful scriptural text could be, "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me" (Rev 3:20).

Eucharistic Challenge to Faith

As we celebrate Eucharist each day or even on Sundays, it is amazing how we readily accept the fact that the Lord and King of heaven and earth, Jesus himself, comes to us in the form of a piece of broken bread, and a shared Cup of wine. So, the challenge for us at each Eucharist is to remind ourselves that the Lord comes to us in strange and unexpected ways, not so much to catch us out in our failings, as to offer us innumerable opportunities to encounter him and benefit from his presence among us. Church documents remind us that Jesus comes to us in seven different ways - some of which we have learnt to recognize over the years, while others still remain a big challenge for most of us.

Multi-faceted Presence

The Lord comes to us in the Eucharist, as also in the other Sacraments and as part of these or even separately, in the proclaimed Word (of Sacred Scripture). These are the

sacramental forms in which Jesus, Risen Lord, approaches us. Besides, there are the personal (in the guise of a living person) forms he takes, ever so often: the Christian community regarding which Jesus reminds us, "Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Mt 18:19-20). Next, he is equally present in the poor and needy, as noted above, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Mt 25:34-40). Further, he is present in the hierarchy as they fulfill their role of inspiring and guiding the Church: "Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me" (Lk 10:16). And finally, he is present in each baptized person who shares his life: "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me" (Jn 6:56-57).

Actually, we need to be tremendously grateful to Jesus for giving us so many different ways in which we can remain very close to him. We might even say that if we miss one avenue, there is always another equally close and effective for us to regain our vital contact with the Lord. The problem, however, always remains the same, viz. that of recognizing the Lord in these several 'disguises' he clothes himself with. The difficulty, of

course, lies in persons who are different from us culturally, economically, education-wise, or persons who don't seem to see eye to eye with ourselves, people of a different background, culture or language and so on. In fact, if we could train ourselves to be particularly careful with these kinds of persons, we would soon be able to overcome the hurdles involved in recognizing the Risen Lord present in our midst.

Another help would be for us to catch ourselves out when we fail, and before going any further, we need to backtrack a little and correct our mistake, even apologizing to the person concerned if need be. Catching ourselves, 'red-handed', as it were, and correcting the fault on the spot is a very effective way to remedy the situation, even if somewhat painful and embarrassing! Also along the same lines, it helps tremendously if we can stop and reflect on God's goodness to us when someone else helps us in our hour of need! It would be downright ingratitude on our part, if after the Lord has been so generous in helping us in our time of trial we refuse to be his instruments in helping others in their hour of difficulty!

In short, if we did make the right use of the graces awaiting us in each Eucharist, our lives would be so much more fruitful and Christ-like. For just as the Lord uses us as his instruments to help others, he would use others (not always the very same persons we helped) to come to our aid in time of necessity! □

walking with the Church



Communion under both species, Loss of Faith or not!

from St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland

Q. *I have noticed that at weddings and other special occasions the priest will give Holy Communion under both species. What is the reason for receiving Communion from the Chalice as well if we receive the body of Christ when we take the host?*

A. The answer to this lies in the words of the instruction of the Roman missal when it says "Holy Communion has a more complete form as a sign when it is received under both kinds."

The size of most Sunday congregations makes it impractical for all to partake of the chalice. Some people have suggested making the consecrated wine available in individual cups to avoid transmitting germs but the symbolism of drinking from the one cup is lost if this is done.

Q. *A cousin of mine is in very bad health. I know that he hasn't been near the Mass or sacraments for over twenty years. I am concerned that if he were to die suddenly would he still be considered a catholic? I am hesitant to ask the priest to go to him because he can be very abrasive and uses terrible language at times. Could you give me some advice on how he could be encouraged to return to God. He is not very cooperative.*

A. Thank you for your question. Like your cousin there are many baptised Catholics who, for

whatever reason, do not go to Mass or communion. It does not mean that they have turned away from God or disowned God. I would be very hesitant to say that they have lost the faith.

Faith is nourished and deepened by our participation in the Mass and the reception of the Sacraments. So the faith of those who for their own reasons do not go to Mass or receive the Sacraments may be weak and their relationship with Christ (whom we meet in all the sacraments) not very strong, but that does not mean they have rejected Christ or turned into non-believers. God, who loves us all and desires the salvation of all, can keep our faith alive in many other ways.

It is not always easy to speak to people like your cousin but, should he become housebound and his health deteriorates you might venture to ask him if he would like to see a priest. There is nothing much more you can do for him except to let him see your own faith. Very often silent sincere witness to our faith can influence people far more than hours of conversation. Our sincere prayers are always answered, so keep praying for him entrusting him to God's merciful love. □

**SALESIAN SAINT
OF THE MONTH**

**ANDREW BELTRAMI
1870 - 1897**

Andrew Beltrami was born in Omegna, in the province of Novara, on the 24th June 1870 into a family steeped in deep Christian virtues. He was vivacious by nature. His frequent reception of the sacraments made him a lad whom many held in high esteem.

He entered the Salesian College at Lanzo in 1883 and distinguished himself in his studies and the exercise of Christian virtue. On entrusting him to the Novice Master, said his mother said: "Make him a saint". In 1886 he received the clerical habit at Foglizzo from Don Bosco, who said of him: "There is only one Beltrami". He came to know the Polish Prince Augustus Czartoryski, who was ill with tuberculosis. It would be Fr Beltrami - who quickly became his spiritual friend and guardian angel. He wrote: "I am aware that I have been looking after a saint, an angel". Later, Fr Andrew himself took ill and, like his holy confrere, experienced his suffering with inner joy.

He lived out his motto: "Neither recovery nor death, but live to suffer." Fr Beltrami fully accepted the sacrificial dimension of the Salesian charism, as desired by Don Bosco. The Salesian Cleric Louis Variara, then a student of philosophy at Valsalice, was struck deeply by Fr Andrew, and here discovered the roots of the spirituality of the future Daughters of the Sacred Hearts:



Living joyfully with Jesus one's vocation as victim.

He was ordained a priest by Bishop Cagliari and gave himself to contemplation and the apostolate of the pen. His very strong desire for holiness took over his whole existence including the pain and ceaseless work. He was exact in his observance of the Rule, and had a burning love for Don Bosco and the Congregation. In the four years of life that were his after his ordination, he continued praying and writing.

It is worth noting his Italian translation of the first volumes of the critical edition of the works of St Francis de Sales. When he died on the 30th December 1897, he was 27 years of age. His body is laid to rest in the church at Omegna, his native village.

The ordinary process began on 21 April 1911. He was declared Venerable on 5 December 1966 □

KEEP THE FAITH

by Jeannette Brimmer

'We have a great deposit in children; let us attend to them with great care,' advised St. John Chrysostom in the fourth century. His words are just as pertinent nowadays, especially when our precious children and grandchildren are living in a world which seems to negate and even belittle Christian values.

Difficult Circumstances

I must admit that I'm even finding it difficult writing about passing on the faith to grandchildren. Despite my own and my husband's best efforts at raising them to be good Catholics, not all my children go to church regularly.

One consolation is that we know many other grandparents who are dealing with similar situations. All we can do is to continue to live our lives in a Christian manner. We must pray and attend Mass regularly in order to receive the strength we need to handle the problems and situations unique to our complicated world. Eventually, we hope that through our faith, prayers and example, our grandchildren will get to know and love God and learn to rely on Jesus in their life's journey.

Bible Stories

Lila's two young grandchildren are not taken to church regularly but at least their parents are teaching them to be kind to other people. They often read them Bible stories and books showing how children can show their love for one another.

Lila has given the parents a brightly illustrated book of the

Bible, written so that children can easily understand it. When walking with her grandchildren she points out, with their help, the many wonders God has created such as the plump robin plucking a juicy worm out of the garden to feed her ravenous babies waiting in the nest. During this sharing time the grandchildren also learn to be more observant and understand how precious the environment is and what we need to do to protect it.

When Lila babysits them for a weekend she takes them to Mass with her and answers any questions they want to ask about the ceremony or surroundings. Her grandchildren know that when they go to Grandma's, they say grace before meals and talk to God before going to bed. She is gently instilling in them the knowledge that God loves them very much and wants the best for them.

Role Model

My Grandpa Pat was a kind and gentle but mischievous person who played practical jokes on us and babysat all seven of us when Mum and Dad were away. He taught us by example to be kind to others and always made sure we all got to Mass on time on Sunday morning.

When I caught him saying the rosary while he was waiting for me to come home for lunch one afternoon, I realized how much he loved Jesus and Mary, even though he seldom talked about religious matters. Grandpa was always willing to take the nuns

who lived nearby on errands despite the inconvenience it may have caused him.

He also took part in community endeavours for the benefit of the local community. Grandpa's example of regular church attendance, prayer life, honesty, concern for others and his joyful outlook on life helped deepen and strengthen my own faith.

Imaginative Approach

There are so many ways grandparents can pass on their faith to their grandchildren when they visit. Grandparents can read to their grandchildren child-orientated and well-illustrated Bible stories and afterwards have the children re-tell the story in their own words or act the story out.

Also, they can take the youngsters to Church-sponsored programmes during the Easter and Christmas seasons. They can provide craft activities that encourage them to show what they have learned and felt after attending one of these special events. Teaching children by example by taking them with you to visit a sick person or having them make and send a card to an elderly relative will urge them to be thoughtful of others. Honesty and other traits are taught more by setting a good example than by preaching.

Pre-teens and adolescents, though more difficult to entertain, are more apt to want to do activities with their grandparents, things they really enjoy such as visiting a mall, beach or a sports event when they can bring their friends along. During these times there will be opportunities to teach spiritual values in ways that are both fun and interesting.



Discussions about life's issues such as school problems, difficulty with parents, falling in love and where to go for higher learning, can be carried out over hamburger and milkshakes at the local take out. Grandparents might seize opportunities to sprinkle a few words of wisdom throughout the conversation after carefully listening to the points of view expressed.

Good Example

The best we can do for our grandchildren is to be ourselves when they are with us, showing interest in their activities and ideas and staying in touch through letters, e-mail and visits if they must move far away. If our faith is strong and we are trying to live Christ-centered lives, then we can't help but influence our grandchildren in positive ways without being preachy or pious, which would certainly turn them off. As Benjamin Franklin wrote, 'A good example is the best sermon'. What better gift could we give our grandchildren, along with our daily prayers for them? ☐

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. PETER CANISIUS (1520-1597) (DECEMBER 21)

Taken from "The Saints: A concise Biographical Dictionary", edited by John Coulson, published by Hawthorn Books, Inc. 1960

"It was as if you opened to me the heart in your most sacred body; I seemed to see it directly before my eyes. You told me to drink from this fountain, inviting me, that is, to draw the waters of my salvation from your wellsprings, my Savior. I was most eager that streams of faith, hope and love should flow into me from that source. I was thirsting for poverty, chastity, obedience. I asked to be made wholly clean by you, to be clothed by you, to be made resplendent by you."

- St. Peter Canisius

This doctor of the church is often called the second Apostle of Germany. Both Holland and Germany claim him as their son, for Nijmegen, where he was born, May 8th, 1521, though a Dutch town today, was at that time in the ecclesiastical province of Cologne and had the rights of a German city. His father, a Catholic and nine times burgomaster of Nijmegen, sent him at the age of fifteen to the University of Cologne, where he met the saintly young priest, Nicolaus van Esch. It was he who drew Canisius into the orbit of the loyal Catholic party of Cologne, which had been formed in opposition to the archbishop, Hermann von Wied, who had secretly gone over to the Lutherans. Canisius was chosen

by the group to approach the emperor, and the deposition of the archbishop which followed averted a calamity from the Catholic Rhineland. Shortly afterwards Peter Canisius met Br Peter Faber, one of the first companions of St Ignatius, and made the Spiritual Exercises under his direction. During this retreat he found the answer to the question he had put to himself: how best could he serve God and assist the stricken Catholic church in Germany?

He was inspired to join the Society of Jesus, and, after his ordination in 1546, soon became known by his editions of works of St Cyril of Alexandria and of St Leo the Great. In 1547 he attended the council of Trent as procurator for the bishop of Augsburg, where



he became still further imbued with the spirit of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. His obedience was tested when he was sent by St Ignatius to teach rhetoric in the comparative obscurity of the new Jesuit college at Messina, but this interlude in his public work for the church was but a brief one.

Recalled to Rome in 1549 to make his final profession, he was entrusted with what was to become his life's work: the mission to Germany. At the request of the duke of Bavaria, Canisius was chosen with two other Jesuits to profess theology in the University of Ingolstadt. Soon he was appointed rector of the University, and then, through the intervention of King Ferdinand of the Romans, he was sent to do the same kind of work in the University of Vienna. His

success was such that the king tried to have him appointed to the archbishopric. Though he refused this dignity, he was compelled to administer the diocese for the space of a year.

It was at this period, 1555, that he issued his famous Catechism, one of his greatest services to the Church. With its clear and popular exposition of Catholic doctrine it met the need of the day, and was to counter the devastating effect of Luther's Catechism. In its enlarged form it went into more than four hundred editions by the end of the seventeenth century and was translated into fifteen languages.

From Vienna Canisius passed on to Bohemia, where the condition of the church was desperate. In the face of determined opposition he established a college at Prague which was to develop into a university. Named Provincial of southern Germany in 1556, he established colleges for boys in six cities, and set himself to the task of providing Germany with a supply of well-trained priests. This he did by his work for the establishment of seminaries, and by sending regular reinforcements of young men to be trained in Rome.

On his many journeys in Germany St Peter Canisius never ceased from preaching the word of God. He often encountered apathy or hostility at first, but as his zeal and learning were so manifest, great crowds soon thronged the churches to listen. For seven years he was official preacher in the cathedral of Augsburg, and is regarded in a special way as the apostle of that

city. Whenever he came across a country church deprived of its pastor he would halt there to preach and to administer the sacraments. It seemed impossible to exhaust him: 'If you have too much to do, with God's help you will find time to do it all,' he said, when someone accused him of overworking himself.

Another form of his apostolate was letter writing, and the printed volumes of his correspondence cover more than eight thousand pages. Like St Bernard of Clairvaux he used this means of comforting, rebuking and counselling all ranks of society. As the needs of the church or the individual required, he wrote to pope and emperor, to bishops and princes, to ordinary priest and laymen. Where letters would not suffice he brought to bear his great powers of personal influence. Thus at the conference between Catholics and Protestants held at Worms in 1556, it was due to his influence that the Catholics were able to present a united front and resist Protestant invitations to compromise on points of principle. In Poland in 1558 he checked an incipient threat to the traditional faith of the country; and in the same year, he earned the thanks of Pope Pius IV for his diplomatic skill in healing a breach between the pope and the emperor. This gift of dealing with men led to his being entrusted in 1561 with the promulgation in Germany of the decrees of the



the town of Nijmegen

council of Trent.

Shortly afterwards he was called on to answer the Centuries of Magdeburg. This work, 'the first and worst of all Protestant church histories,' was a large-scale attack on the Catholic church, and its enormous distortions of history would have required more than one mar to produce an adequate answer. Yet Peter Canisius showed the way by his two works, *The History of John the Baptist*, and *The Incomparable Virgin Mary*.

From 1580 until his death in 1597 he labored and suffered much in Switzerland. His last six years were spent in patient endurance and long hours of prayer in the college of Fribourg, now that failing health had made further active work impossible. Soon after his death on December 21st, 1597, his tomb began to be venerated, and numerous miracles were attributed to his intercession. He had the unique honor of being canonized and declared a doctor of the church on the same day, June 21st, 1925. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

A Male Mind

A wife asks her husband, "Could you please go shopping for me and buy one carton of milk, and if they have avocados, get 6."

A short time later the husband comes back with 6 cartons of milk.

The wife asks him, "Why did you buy 6 cartons of milk?"

He replied, "Because they had avocados."

(If you're a woman, I'm sure you're going back to read it again!

Men will get it the first time. My work is done here.)

Water in the carburetor

WIFE: "There is trouble with the car. It has water in the carburetor."

HUSBAND: "Water in the carburetor? That's ridiculous"

WIFE: "I tell you the car has water in the carburetor."

HUSBAND: "You don't even know what a carburetor is. I'll check it out. Where's the car?"

WIFE: "In the pool"

Tracking Device

A young man wanted to get his beautiful blonde wife something nice for their first wedding anniversary. So he decided to buy her a cell phone. He showed her the phone and explained to her all of its features.

Meg was excited to receive the gift and simply adored her new phone.

The next day Meg went shopping. Her phone rang and, to her astonishment, it was her husband on the other end.

"Hi Meg," he said, "how do

you like your new phone?"

Meg replied, "I just love it! It's so small and your voice is clear as a bell, but there's one thing I don't understand though..."

"What's that, sweetie?" asked her husband.

"How did you know I was at Wal-Mart?"

He Must Pay

Husband and wife had a tiff. Wife called up her mom and said, "He fought with me again, I am coming to live with you."

Mom said, "No darling, he must pay for his mistake. I am coming to live with you."

A Wise Thought

A Short Reading from the Bible from Genesis: "And God promised men that good and obedient wives would be found in all corners of the earth."

Then He made the earth round...and He laughed and laughed and laughed!

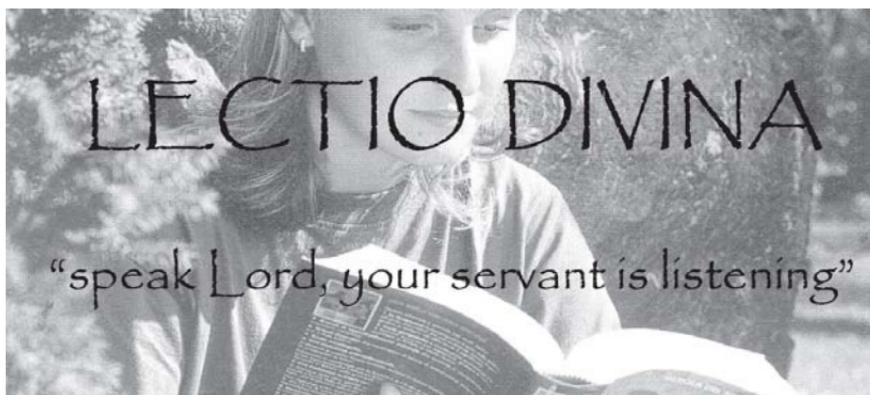
Check Your Bill

A corporate executive received a monthly bill from the law firm that was handling a big case for his company. It included hourly billing for conferences, research, phone calls, fax, photocopying, and everything but lunch hours.

Unhappy as he was, the executive knew that the company would have to pay for each of these services.

Then he noticed one item buried in the middle of the list:

"For crossing the street to talk to you, then discovering it wasn't you at all - \$125." □



AN INVITATION TO JOY

by Marco Rosetti

A CURIOUS LETTER

It is curious because it has the tone of deep intimacy between Paul and the Philippians and it is very different from the other letters he wrote. It is definitely very affectionate and this renders the text warm and confidential. After telling them about himself and thanking them for the financial support that he received from that Christian community, the Apostle urges them to be happy and joyful (4:4-7). To understand the power and truth of these words one has to note that such an exhortation came from the heart of a man who was writing from Rome (around 60-61 AD). He was reduced to a state of semi-imprisonment and was awaiting trial, yet he was truly happy because he knew that this was the choice that he had made for Christ. That is what Paul himself states in those unforgettable words found in the letter he wrote to the Galatians: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (2,19b-20).

EXHORTATION TO BE JOYFUL

The apostle vehemently exhorted them to be joyful because he was firmly convinced that such joy could only spring from the Lord Jesus who would in fact, take care of each of them until the day he returns (v. 5). Paul says that that day "is near." He writes this not because he knows when it will come but because he wants to renew in us the conviction that that day is already coming, and as it approaches it imprints on our daily lives an exciting prospect. At each moment we are walking towards the Lord who sows into the soil of our lives the seed of a new and eternal life a joy that is rooted in the people you love that you discover, that is directed towards eternity inserted into our lives by the Father through a plan of love and salvation that finds its strength in Jesus. To understand this I suggest you read the great hymn of Christ, the precious pearl of this letter. Paul writes that the Lord Jesus who, though being God, agreed to 'empty himself,' taking the form of a servant, becoming a man, being

obedient unto death, and for this God exalted him and made him worthy to be praised (Philippians 2:5-11).

TWO VALUABLE TIPS

However, the exhortation to joy that Paul makes should not be just a feeling and just personal but concrete and palpable. People need to see our joy and feel encouraged. How does one achieve this? The hint that directs us to making joy visible is through "amiability" (v. 5). It is a quality that makes a person luminous and reveals itself in gentleness, magnanimity, friendliness which facilitates relationship with others. The exhortation to joy then goes on by offering a second valuable suggestion. As we wait with joy for the day of the Lord's coming we know how our joy may be put to the test through the stresses of life, physical and moral suffering and the pain of the world that makes us afraid and we get upset, depressed and are likely to drift away from God. What should we do then? St. Paul tells us we need to ask for help through prayer of supplication and thanksgiving (v. 6). So that this joy may not fade away, or worse that we may lose the urge to wait for Christ we must strongly be sustained by prayer. Just like all the gifts that we receive from God must be nurtured, so too must joy be submitted to the rule of personal responsibility. Those who do not pray cannot be constantly joyful in Christ nor can they gradually unite themselves to him, reaching out to him to discover his love and salvation. Whoever does not pray with perseverance will always seek



The Ruins of Philippi

joy elsewhere, in others, in things, in the joys that will never be able to please us.

THE PEACE OF GOD

Finally, Paul assures us that if we feed our joy with prayer then the "peace of God" will be poured into our hearts (v. 7). It is an inner peace that will be able to guard us from every distress and worry that torments the mind and the heart and which gives us the ability to think and choose like Christ. It is such a superabundant peace that "surpasses all understanding," i.e. it cannot be humanly explained; it is of God; it is from God. It is his gift to those who combine joy with prayer.

Being filled with joy and becoming credible bearers is a matter that touches the heart of our being Christian. We must therefore find occasion to ask ourselves if we are sincerely joyful men and women; if we are true seekers of joy, a joy that comes only from the Lord Jesus and a joy that endures. Finally, do not miss out on the mutual support required to nurture prayer so that the joy and peace of God may remain in us. □

LIVING IN HOPE AND

*The Homily of Pope Francis at Mass
at the shrine of Our Lady of the*

What joy I feel as I come to the house of the Mother of every Brazilian, the Shrine of our Lady of Aparecida! The day after my election as Bishop of Rome, I visited the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome, in order to entrust my ministry to Our Lady.

When the Church looks for Jesus, she always knocks at his Mother's door and asks: "Show us Jesus". It is from Mary that the Church learns true discipleship. That is why the Church always goes out on mission in the footsteps of Mary.

Today, I too come to knock on the door of the house of Mary – who loved and raised Jesus – that she may help all of us, pastors of God's people, parents and educators, to pass on to our young people the values that can help them build a nation and a world which are more just, united and fraternal. For this reason I would like to speak of three simple attitudes: hopefulness, openness to being surprised by God, and living in joy.

1. *Hopefulness.* The reading of the Mass presents a dramatic scene: a woman – an image of Mary and the Church – is being pursued by a Dragon – the devil – who wants to devour her child. But the scene is not one of death but of life, because God intervenes and saves the child (cf. *Rev 12:13a, 15-16a*). How many difficulties are present in the life of every individual, among our people, in our communities; yet as great as these may seem, God never allows us to be overwhelmed by them. In the face of those moments of discouragement we experience in life, in our efforts to evangelize or to embody our faith as parents within the family, I would like to say forcefully: Always know in your heart that God is by your side; he never abandons you! Let us never lose hope! Let us never allow it to die in our hearts! The "dragon", evil, is present in our history, but it does not have the upper hand. The one with the upper hand is God, and God is our hope! It is true that nowadays, to some extent, everyone, including our young people, feels attracted by the many idols which take the place of God and appear to offer hope: money, success, power, pleasure. Often a growing sense of loneliness and emptiness in the hearts of many people leads them to seek satisfaction in these ephemeral idols. Dear brothers and sisters, let us be lights of hope! Let us maintain a positive outlook on reality. Let us encourage the generosity which is typical of the young and help them to work actively in building a better world. Young people are a powerful engine for the Church and for society. They do not need material things alone; also and above all, they need to have

AND JOY LIKE MARY

Mass on Wednesday 24th July 2013
 The Conception of Aparecida (ed.)



held up to them those non-material values which are the spiritual heart of a people, the memory of a people. In this Shrine, which is part of the memory of Brazil, we can almost read those values: spirituality, generosity, solidarity, perseverance, fraternity, joy; they are values whose deepest root is in the Christian faith.

2. The second attitude: *openness to being surprised by God*. Anyone who is a man or a woman of hope – the great hope which faith gives us – knows that even in the midst of difficulties God acts and he surprises us. The history of this Shrine is a good example: three fishermen, after a day of catching no fish, found something unexpected in the waters of the Parnaíba River: an image of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. Whoever would have thought that the site of a fruitless fishing expedition would become the place where all Brazilians can feel that they are children of one Mother? God always surprises us, like the new wine in the Gospel we have just heard. God always saves the best for us. But he asks us to let ourselves be surprised by his love, to accept his surprises. Let us trust God! Cut off from him, the wine of joy, the wine of hope, runs out. If we draw near to him, if we stay with him, what seems to be cold water, difficulty, sin, is changed into the new wine of friendship with him.

3. The third attitude: *living in joy*. Dear friends, if we walk in hope, allowing ourselves to be surprised by the new wine which Jesus offers us, we have joy in our hearts and we cannot fail to be witnesses of this joy. Christians are joyful, they are never gloomy. God is at our side. We have a Mother who always intercedes for the life of her children, for us, as Queen Esther did in the first reading (cf *Est* 5:3). Jesus has shown us that the face of God is that of a loving Father. Sin and death have been defeated. Christians cannot be pessimists! They do not look like someone in constant mourning. If we are truly in love with Christ and if we sense how much he loves us, our heart will “light up” with a joy that spreads to everyone around us. As Benedict XVI said here, in this Shrine: “the disciple knows that without Christ, there is no light, no hope, no love, no future” (*Inaugural Address*, Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, Aparecida, 13 May 2007).

Dear friends, we have come to knock at the door of Mary’s house. She has opened it for us, she has let us in and she shows us her Son. Now she asks us to “do whatever he tells you” (*Jn* 2:5). Yes, Mother, we are committed to doing whatever Jesus tells us! And we will do it with hope, trusting in God’s surprises and full of joy. Amen. □

REMEMBER WITH LOVE

From Fr. Ian Doulton's collection of stories

For all of us, in this day of keen and often cruel competition, I will narrate to you this time, the story of the supreme moment in the lives of two great singers made rivals by circumstance. It is also the high point of the progress of one soul towards that highest of all goals, the practice of heroic charity.

A famous old teacher of singing used to relate the incident in this way to each of his promising students usually after the first successful concert of their career.

He would be sitting by the piano where he would be training them for hours, but now, bent with age and his fingers gnarled with arthritis and with a quaint smile, he would look up into the eager eyes of his now successful pupil who had come in after a concert which evidently had received raving reviews. Then, making his way to his winged chair by the fireside he would say in a low voice:

"My dear, did I ever tell you about the most famous concert given by Jenny Lind?"

"No Maestro, I don't remember you telling me," would come the innocent reply.

"Then it's time I did. This happened in London a long time ago when I was a young man. The night that Jenny Lind sang I was back stage with Charles Gibbons, one of the most famous music critics of the day. Then, as if transfixed he would go off into another world.

It was the Royal Albert Hall in London and he was there,

backstage with Jenny giving her his last minute hints.

Charles Gibbons, a good friend, would come to see if he could pick up something from the celebrities in the privacy of their dressing rooms just before the concert. It was there he met the Maestro. Here's what happened that memorable night.

"Maestro, the royal family is here tonight." Gibbons said rather nervously, "as well as every critic in England."

"Every man and woman in London who loves music, Mr. Gibbons. Who would miss hearing Madame Grizzi and Jenny Lind on the same programme?"

"The manager who made up this programme was either a brave man or an utter fool! Grizzi: the greatest soprano in the world, and Jenny Lind a rising star. What a chance to compare their cadenzas and their trills!" Gibbons was all excitement.

"Yes, I can feel the tension in the hall. It is as tight as a violin string. The audience *knows* Grizzi but it loves Jenny Lind. Jenny's high F sharp is superb!" The Maestro was preoccupied.

"Grizzi has the experience and the pa..." just as he was finishing the manager came in. Gibbons immediately stepped aside: "The manager!"

A door opened and slammed shut. This was certainly the famous Madame Grizzi, all dressed in furs and a dark laced gown with embroidered pearls around the neck that would glow in the stage lights. Her face

bespoke her disgust.

"You call yourself a manager! This insult! It is all your fault!"

The Maestro and Gibbons were watching from the wings. Maestro commented with a worried look: "Grizzi, has also the temper of a Prima Donna!"

"Yes."

"Excuse me, Charles, I'd rather she didn't see me. She knows that I prefer Jenny's performance to hers," so saying the maestro slipped into the shadows waiting for the show to begin yet, his ear was on the barrage that the manager was receiving.

"Who, in this world, ever heard of a concert with two stars? Well, answer me, who ever did?"

"Madame Grizzi, you wish to sing before their majesties? This was the only possible engagement."

"Then why did you put me on the programme with this...this...Jenny Lind? This Swedish sparrow!"

"Nightingale Maam... The Swedish nightingale!" The manager tried to correct Grizzi.

"I said: sparrow! ...Did you think the royal family would not come to hear only Grizzi? I have sung before all the royalty of Europe. They have begged me...begged me to sing for them..." she said with her heavy Italian accent filled with caustic emotion.

"Jenny Lind was set to sing for this concert months ago."

"Then why was I not told? I would have refused to sing. I *should* refuse now, yes. I should go home. Perhaps I shall. Then what will become of your concert?"

"We would be left with only one star, Madame." The manager said



innocently.

"You idiot, you would be left with no star! Do you call this girl a star, this sparrow that learnt to chirp the scales? Do you think that I would insult their majesties with only Jenny Lind to hear? I have come to sing...and I *will* sing. I *will* be a nightingale, a thrush to a whole forest of birds." Grizzi said this with pride and a typical Prima Donna flourish! Her pianist Maestro Zanardi began to play the first notes of the aria she was supposed to sing.

"There is my music. Tell your Jenny Lind to listen. Grizzi is going to give her a lesson in singing." There was quite an applause as the Italian soprano walked onto the stage. Only the piano notes were heard while the soprano took her place beside the piano to begin her aria.

Her notes were high and low, there was versatility about her and a sense of confidence. She was singing the aria from 'The Magic Flute' by Mozart. She completed it and as the last chord of the piano is struck, there was a thunderous applause.

The door of Jenny Lind's dressing room opened and she came out into the hall looking toward the stage.

The maestro looked at his

young pupil by the fireside, now still engrossed in the story and said: "Oh, my dear, if you could have known Jenny, she was lovely, not beautiful, but she had a sweetness that touched the heart. Together we watched Grizzi take her bows.

"Maestro, wasn't she wonderful?" Jenny said.

"Yes, Jenny, Grizzi was superb, she has just made herself the second greatest soprano in the world! Her trills were excellent, her cadenzas perfection! But...the applause came too quickly. There was none of that little silence which comes when you touch the heart of your audience. Grizzi sang only to surpass you, Jenny. And the people knew that."

"To surpass me?" Jenny seemed puzzled.

"Here comes Grizzi now." They made way as Grizzi came in all smiles and sarcasm.

"Madame Grizzi, my congratulations." Jenny candidly came forward and curtsied slightly, for, the two had not yet met. Her praise was genuine.

"And mine, Madame, you were wonderful!" The maestro added.

"Yes, the audience has heard a Singer, tonight." So saying, she walked passed them and into her dressing room slamming the door behind her.

"Maestro, why is Grizzi angry? She looked at me as though she hates me!"

"She will hate you twice as much after you have sung, Jenny. Tonight, Grizzi hates everyone. Especially the man who matched you against her on the same programme."

"Oh, now I understand. That was not right, it was cruel. My voice is a gift from God. It is to

make others happy, not to make them hate me." Jenny turned away as she said so.

"Never mind. Jenny, everyone in the hall tonight loves you."

"But I don't want Grizzi to hate me. There's no place in art for hate." Jenny sounded hurt.

Jenny was walking towards her room and the maestro was puzzled. He called after her.

"There's your music, Jenny, good luck, although you won't need it."

She turned and said rather pensively, "Maestro, help me?"

"What is it Jenny?"

"Tell Otto my accompanist to continue playing until I come."

"Alright."

She disappeared into her dressing room. The maestro had no choice except to signal her accompanist to continue playing.

The maestro continued his story: "I heard the little restless coughs which mean a restless audience." Then the dressing room door opened.

"Thank you Maestro, for telling Otto to playing."

"Jenny you've changed your gown. You can't go on the stage in that plain white dress. You look like a country girl on her way to church." The maestro was appalled.

"Good, that is how I wish to look tonight."

His mouth was still open with surprise. From the wings he saw Jenny wave her accompanist away from the piano. She sat down and began to play.

"Guten Abend, Guten Nacht," The Weigenlied of Brahms, you could hear a pin drop, and her voice was strong yet gentle, clear yet with feeling. Her fingers on the piano

were like feathers stroking the keys as if to keep pace with so pure a sound.

When she was finished, there was that moment of silence. "She had lifted us all nearer to heaven. The applause was going on and on." That is how the maestro described that moment.

Jenny came walking slowly back into the wings and suddenly the door to Grizzi's dressing room opened. She rushed out and she was crying, she threw her arms around Jenny.

"Don't cry my friend" said Jenny stroking her hair. The two sopranos were in tears.

"But I must cry. Jenny Lind, your little song went straight to my heart. But who are you?" Grizzi looked at Jenny who looked like a child before Grizzi, the painted, perfumed Prima Donna.

Grizzi continued through her tears: "This, the greatest opportunity of your career, to sing for their majesties and you have thrown it away!"

"I could not sing the aria. I wanted to do something that would make us friends. When I sang, I prayed to God. 'Let Grizzi love me.'" Jenny said simply.

"Oh, I do, Jenny! Grizzi loves you with all her heart. We are friends, we will always be friends."

When the maestro finished his story he would look into the face of his pupil-turned-professional and smile.

"My dear, it is humility like Jenny Lind's which makes a great soul and a great singer."

"It was a beautiful story, maestro. I will try to remember it." The young pupil said.

"It is difficult. But you must



practice humility if you are ever to be happy. Only humility will keep you from hating and fearing, both your rivals and your critics. You must be humble enough to love so that you will touch the hearts of others and make them think of you with love. It's better to be entirely forgotten than to be remembered without love. Now my dear, here's a little gift, in honour of your first success. It will help you to remember."

The old teacher would hand his pupil a little envelope, then he would go away. When she opened the envelope she would find that it contained a little verse from scripture: "Love one another as I have loved you." (Jn: 15: 16-17). The pupil would begin to read and then would understand the lesson of Jenny Lind. For the verses read: "And everything you ask the Father in my name, he will give you all. What I command you is to love one another." □

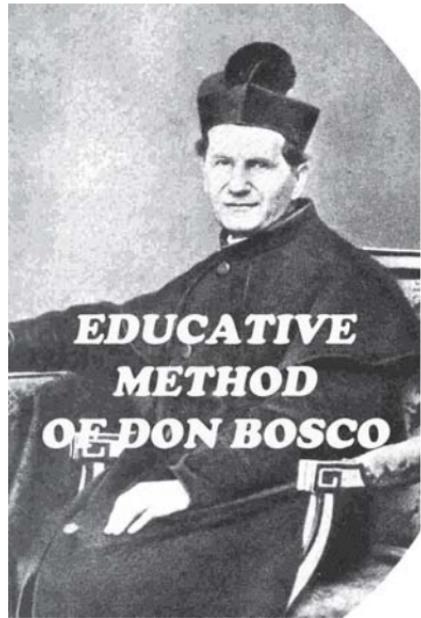
THE EDUCATIVE METHOD OF DON BOSCO FOR IN A NON-CHRISTIAN SETTING

10

by Fr. Elias Dias

The Missionary dreams: In 1874, Don Bosco had a dream in which he found himself into some wild and unknown region. The whole country around formed an immense, uncultivated plain whose flatness was unrelieved by either hill or mountain. The group of men, scattered over the plain, seemed to be engaged in various occupations. Some were hunting wild animals; others were marching along with large pieces of meat on the points of their spears. Some were engaged in fierce battles. The whole ground was strewn with dead and dying men. As Don Bosco stood aghast at this horrifying spectacle, suddenly he saw a group of missionaries belonging to various Congregations. The natives turned into a diabolic fury and slew them.

Almost immediately, he saw another group of missionaries approaching the savages. They were happy and joyful in their bearing and were preceded by a large crowd of lively and cheerful boys. Don Bosco looked at them and realized that they were the Salesians. Don Bosco was certain that they were coming to sure death. But Don Bosco was surprised to see that a wave of joyful enthusiasm seemed to penetrate through all those savage tribes. They threw down their



spears, changed their ferocious aspect and went to receive the Missionaries with every sign of esteem and contentment.

Don Bosco was astonished and saw the missionaries instructing and teaching the natives who listened to them with great attention and interest. The missionaries began to recite the Rosary and all the savages put down their spears at the feet of the missionaries and joined them to pray and sang hymns to Our Lady.

In his introduction to "Companion of Youth": Don Bosco says: "It's enough for me to know that you are young I love you all. In his spiritual testament we read: "Let us never forget that we exist for the poor and abandoned boys. Amongst those who know little or nothing of the true God, you will see wonders taking place. What do these words of Don Bosco tell us? They tell us that for Don Bosco there

existed just one way of approach as pointed out to him in his first dream. The prime aim of Don Bosco's education was the salvation of souls to make, "Good Christians and Honest Citizens." Salvation never pointed to the vertical dimension only but also demanded horizontal, taking care of every aspect of their life.



Education in ancient India: In Gurukula system there is a guru and the pupil they have intimate relationship. Don Bosco considered an educator or guru an upright person who had great influence on the pupil but he is not a human god but a father, brother and an animator. Perhaps we can say that Don Bosco's system in a way is an extension of the gurukula system of India from thousands of years ago.

The Educative Method of Don Bosco is based on Religion, Reason and Loving-kindness. Religion is an integral element of the educative system of Don Bosco. For Don Bosco Religion means Catholic practices of piety, Sacrament of Eucharist, Confession, Marian piety and belief that Church is the only ark of salvation without the Church there is no salvation. All these are means to attain the ultimate goal to make, "Good Christians and Honest Citizens."

Don Bosco lived at a time when the Church had a very negative attitude of the non-Christian religions and for all practical purposes it was considered that

there was no salvation outside the institutional Church.

Don Bosco was a Catholic priest working in a Christian context with Christian boys. Consequently, he used the Christian religion and the means offered by it in order to bring to maturity the religious dimension of the educand. Since he was working in the Christian context he did not give a thought as to how to bring to maturity the religious dimension of the non-Christian pupil.

This does not mean that Don Bosco had no concern for the Non-Christian youth. In 1844, Don Bosco wanted to join the Oblates of Mary and go to the mission, but his spiritual director, Don Cafasso did not allow him to do so. Though he did not become a missionary he sent his best followers to the missions. Don Bosco had only one passion to save the souls of the young irrespective of their religion. It was enough for anyone to be young to be loved by Don Bosco. Today those who are working in the Non-Christian religious context following new trends of theology and positive approaches towards Non-Christian religion and the mentality of the people, should reinterpret Don Bosco's mind and

use of religion in his Educative System in Non-Christian context.

General guidelines for Reinterpreting Don Bosco:

1. In the mind of Don Bosco religion is an essential element of the preventive system. Religion supports his system of education therefore without religion his system ceases to exist. We know that human beings by nature are not only rational and communitarian but also religious. Theologians, psychologists affirm this truth. Since human beings by nature are religious beings a complete education necessarily involves a religious dimension. Religion is an effective contribution to the development of other aspects of a personality in the measure in which it is integrated into general education.

2. Don Bosco certainly gave great importance to religion and especially to the Sacraments. Yet a close examination of Don Bosco's statements and actions show that what he was interested in was not merely the external forms and practices of religion, but developing in the pupils a deep sense of God.

3. It is interesting to note that in Don Bosco's dream at the age of nine the noble personality told him, "You will have to win these friends of yours not with blows, but with gentleness and kindness. So begin right now to show them that sin is ugly and virtue is beautiful." From here it is clear that he had to show that sin is ugly and virtue is beautiful. In non-Christian religion there is the concept of sin and virtue.

4. In doing all this we have to a) Respect the religious freedom of the

Non-Christian educand. b) Respect our duty to evangelize c) Acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found in Non-Christians also their social life and culture.

5. The ultimate goal of all our activities whether it be for Christians or for Non-Christians is to share with them the good news and lead them to the person of Jesus Christ, the risen Lord.

Don Bosco insisted on reasonableness in the religious practices. For us, reasonableness in religious practices also implies that we celebrate them in a way that is understandable as well as meaningful. This naturally calls for inculturation in liturgy. In fact when The Companion of Youth was being translated into Spanish for the use in the Latin American countries he wrote to the Salesians in Argentina asking them to make changes and modifications according to the need of the missions.

Don Bosco's loving-kindness is characterized by heartfelt affection, familiarity, Christ-like patience and filial and brotherly relationships. He wished that the educator's love for his pupils should be sincere and disciplined love, devoid of superficial sentimentality as well as selfish motives. This love always demands sacrifice.

Satyagraha: Satyagraha is a technique of action, employed to settle a conflict without violence and as opposed to physical force. The word "Satyagraha" is a Sanskrit word composed of Satya (Truth) and agraha (firmness). So literally it means holding on to truth or Insistence on Truth (God).

Satyagraha in the general sense of the word means the way of life of one who holds steadfastly to God and dedicates one's life to him. Since the only way to attain this is love or non-violence, satyagraha is the relentless pursuit of truthful ends by non-violent means.

The aim of satyagraha is not to defeat or punish the opponent. It is not even to harm or embarrass him, but is meant only to convert him. To attain this aim the satyagrahi uses both negative and positive means. Negatively the satyagrahi avoids all forms of violence in thoughts, words and deeds. Thus satyagraha is gentle, kind, not the result of malice. It is direct to opposite of compulsion. Positively a satyagrahi will always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, himsa by ahimsa. Suffering is the part of the satyagraha. If a satyagrahi wants to succeed in his aims then he must win the hearts of the people be trusted by them and have control over them. Gandhiji proposed to achieve this by doing constructive work for the people i.e., production of Khadhi by hand-spinning and hand-weaving, etc.

Don Bosco's Educative Method is based on love or loving-kindness. The idea of loving-kindness can be traced back to the dream which he had in his childhood days. The guide said to him, "not with blows but with gentleness and kindness you will win them." This admonition expresses well both negative and positive characteristics of "Ahimsa" The negative characteristic, not with blows and

the positive characteristic by gentleness and kindness.

Satyagraha excludes all forms of violence, direct or indirect, veiled or unveiled and whether in thought, word and deed. Don Bosco wanted every form of violent punishment to be avoided. Both Don Bosco and Mahatma Gandhi were aware that in order to succeed with non-violent methods one should win the love, esteem and trust of those for whom one worked.

We can see many similarities between loving-kindness and ahimsa as well as satyagraha. It is clear that the main principles that underline them are the same. The characteristics of the person who practices these principles are: He does not give vent to his emotions and he maintains "Equanimity" (Sameness) in pleasure and pain, in heat and cold, in success and failure, with friends and foes. (Praise or blame) He maintains an attitude of detachment in all his dealings. Finally he is available to his pupils. Availability to all are genuine expressions of love.

Educative Method of Don Bosco was being practiced in India many centuries before Don Bosco. Most of the values upheld by Don Bosco in his system are already deeply rooted in the Indian culture. The Educational Method of Don Bosco is not totally foreign to India. This certainly facilitates our task of incarnating Don Bosco's system of education in India. This indeed is a challenging task but more challenging task is to live authentically the Educative Method of Don Bosco as spirituality in our personal lives. □



THE MAGNIFICAT: A SONG THAT REJUVENATES

by Maria Ko Ha Fong

It is sung by the fresh voice of Mary, a youthful, prophetic woman whose heart overflows with joy.

It is a beautiful poem of youthfulness and life.

She creates a bond of communion between generations.

Mary helps us to rejoice, proposing to people of all ages the smiling face of God.

The *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55), along with the *Benedictus* (Lk 1:68 - 79) and the *Nunc Dimittis* (Luke 2:29-32) form the three songs of joy, three prophetic hymns that celebrate the new and surprising event of Salvation that breaks into history.

These songs are filled with joy and hope. They are songs that speak of a new life that is born. The Indian poet and Nobel Laureate Tagore has a beautiful expression: "Every child that is born is a sign that God is not yet tired of man." To every human being who comes into the world God joyfully repeats what he said through the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, I will do a new thing: now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Is 43:19)

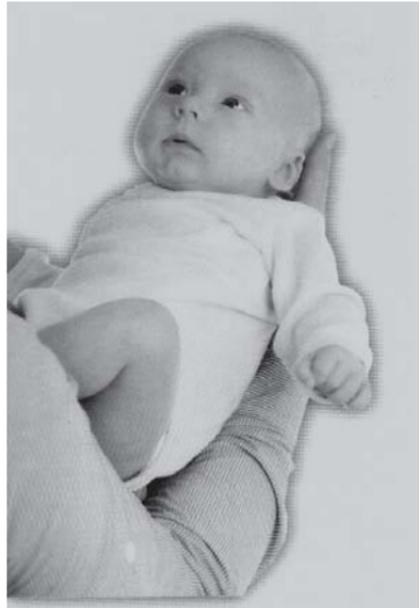
The Church desires that these three songs should flavour her daily liturgical prayer: the *Benedictus* is part of the morning prayer of Lauds, at Vespers, the *Magnificat* is inserted into the evening prayer and the *Nunc dimittis* into the Compline, which closes the day. These songs have remained intact throughout the centuries announcing the amazement of the God's interruption into Man's existence. Thanks to them - throughout the day of the Christian may assume a tone of gratitude, joy and hope.

The *Benedictus* and the *Nunc dimittis* were poured forth from the grateful hearts of two elderly couples who saw the new life that comes forth through fullness of their lives. Zechariah and

Elizabeth, before the miraculous birth of their son John, bless God, because “He remembered his holy covenant,” and “He visited and redeemed his people.” The time of the longed-for salvation is now at hand. Their son, a miraculous gift of God, marks the beginning of a new era in the history of salvation. John is his name that means “God has had mercy.” Simeon, accompanied by the prophetess Anna encounters the baby Jesus and praises God’s fidelity because he has granted him to “see the salvation.” The child he holds in his arms is “a light that enlightens the people,” and is fulfillment of the expectations of all the people of Israel. He can say with satisfaction and gratitude: “Now let your servant go in peace, O Lord.”

MARY INVOLVED IN THE EXUBERANCE OF LIFE

The *Magnificat* is sung instead by the fresh voice of Mary, a young woman with a prophetic gaze and a heart overflowing with joy. She is a virgin who becomes a Mother through the wonderful intervention of God. Her song is a poem of beauty, youthfulness and life. The *Magnificat* unites the songs of the two old men creating a wonderful bond of communion between generations bringing together a whole range of joys. The fresh and pure joy of the young Mary connects with the sober joy of the solemn Zechariah and the evident tender joy of Simeon. She who is “called blessed by all generations” is the



Every child, according to Tagore is a sign that God is not tired with the world.

bond of joy between the generations.

At Ain Karim the radiant presence of Mary fills the house with warmth, involving its inhabitants in the exuberance of life. The marvelous work of God for which Mary rejoices causes Elizabeth’s infertility to cease and stuns Zechariah into silence. Her youthful voice inspires Elizabeth with those beautiful words of blessing and recalling the promise made to Zechariah by the angel in the temple: “You will have joy and gladness” (Lk 1:14). Hearing the voice of Mary, John leaps with joy in his mother’s womb as he greets the Messiah who remains hidden but is already present and dwelling among men. Here we have to grasp the joy of the “friend of the



bridegroom" (John 3:29), the jubilation of the precursor towards the "one who is to come." Children who are born and the elderly who come to the fullness of their own existence come together and unite to rejoice and praise the same God who wants all his children, young and old, to be happy. "Then shall the maidens rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow" says the Lord (Jer 31:13).

YOU ARE YOUNG TO THE EXTENT YOU ENJOY LIVING

The joyful *Magnificat* that Mary sang as she encountered the other pregnant woman anticipates the emotion uttered by Simeon in the temple of Jerusalem as he encountered the long-awaited Messiah. The young Mary rejoices because God was faithful to his "promises made to

Abraham and to his seed" and because "his mercy is from generation to generation." Trusting in this God, mankind can live with confidence and hope. Old Simeon is grateful for the same fidelity and love of God whereby man can end his earthly existence in peace as he rushes towards life in its fullness.

The *Magnificat* is a song that rejuvenates. It is youthful in the measure that people hope and live joyfully. Mary helps us to rejoice by proposing to people of all ages smiling face of God. The Church, in order to be able to announce this joyful news, needs to be young, enthusiastic and full of vitality and inventiveness. For this reason she never ceases to join Mary in praising the Lord and every evening she is rejuvenated by Mary's *Magnificat* as she presents herself, beautiful and fresh to her Spouse to become once more, new and pure before the world. □

NEWSBITS

OCEANIA PAPUA NEW GUINEA

July 7, 2012 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Blessed Peter To Rot, a layman and martyr. To mark the occasion, the Bishop of Rabaul, Mgr. Francesco Panfilo, SDB issued a pastoral letter entitled "The Blessed To Rot, a sample of family life." In the text of the letter, the Bishop pointed out: "The sanctity of this simple and humble layman and reminds all the faithful Catholics of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, the importance of the institution of the family and Christian marriage." The Bishop hopes that "the celebrations in honour of the Blessed bring(s) more holiness into our families and especially, for young people to discover the importance of the sacrament of marriage." Pope Benedict XVI sent Cardinal Joseph Zen of Hong Kong to Papua New Guinea as his special envoy for the celebration of the centenary, remembering that the Blessed "gave his life to Christ as a husband and father." Peter To Rot was a catechist from Papua New Guinea who was killed in 1945 for his opposition to polygamy. During the Second World War, his village, Rakunai, was occupied by the Japanese who subsequently imprisoned all missionaries. Peter To Rot

assumed responsibility for the spiritual life of his fellow citizens. When the authorities legalized polygamy, Blessed Peter refused it. He was killed with an injection in July 1945 by a Japanese doctor. He is the first blessed of Papua, recognized so on January 17, 1995 by John Paul II. *Agenzia Fides*

The Philippines

On Sunday mornings, Franciscan Priest Pete Montallana says Mass before a crowd of bedraggled residents in an open space amid ramshackle homes. Montallana is no outsider; he himself lives in a 1,500-peso-per-month room (\$36) in the middle of this Quezon City slum. His bathroom is shared with dozens of others. Montallana belongs to the Orders of Friar Minor whose charism is to live with the poor. "... not every priest is made for this kind of life. It's a grace, a gift from God," says Montallana in his room on the second level of a makeshift, three-story hut. His mission is simple: to nourish the faith of these people and to help them realize their rights as urban poor settlers. In December last year, the priest gathered the people for Simbang Gabi, the nine-day dawn Mass that culminates on Christmas Day. He also held collections for families and, in between, gave seminars on human rights. Out of these

gatherings emerged a basic ecclesial community of leaders who meet every Saturday at Montallana's cramped room to reflect on the people's struggles in relation to the Gospel. "They're not that 'solid' yet, but they'll grow in time," says Montallana. "There is so much humanity here. And this is the mystery in lives of the urban poor," says the Franciscan priest. Montallana says he experienced a kind of "epiphany" in November last year after a fire razed a slum community not far from his convent. "I was listless. How could I sleep comfortably in the convent? The fire became a challenge for me to focus on the poor" he says. He asked for a one-year leave from his superiors to rejoin the informal settlers and live among the people. Montallana doesn't spend all his time in the slums. He goes to the mountains and works with indigenous peoples who are fighting for their land. "among the poor, I see God himself;" he says.

ucanews

INDIA

The Diocese of Mangalore in the Indian state of Karnataka has sent two new priests to share the gift of faith in Tanzania. This mission will be constantly monitored through the website: www.mangalore-africamission.org allowing the two missionaries to remain in contact and to share their experiences in real time with their

diocese of origin. The website will provide information on the development of the African mission. The web thus becomes an instrument for fostering communion between believers of different continents. On November 14, Fr. Alwyn D'Souza, former National Director of the Youth Pastoral, and Fr. Ronald Pinto, who was curate in the parish of Madanthyar, received the solemn missionary mandate for the new missionary venture; they left and arrived the following day in the Diocese of Same, in Tanzania. His Exc. Mgr. Aloysius Paul D'Souza, Bishop of Mangalore, explained why this region was chosen. "Given that there is a shortage of priests in that area, the Bishop of Same had asked us for help. Our priests leave as authentic apostles of Christ and go to places and persons unknown even without knowing the local language. It is Christ that inspires and will guide them in this new path, that of faith and proclamation." The Diocese of Same has had a mission of the Ursuline Franciscan Sisters of Mangalore in place since 2004. The Ursuline mission now has thirty nuns, seven convents, three houses and a formation centre in three dioceses in Tanzania. In addition, the Carmelite fathers of Karnataka have been working with rural missions and in the field of education in Tanzania and South Africa for 30 years and currently have 27 priests in Tanzania.

Agenzia Fides □

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



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

I wish to express my very deep and sincere gratitude to Mother Mary for granting me a very special and difficult favour by praying the three Hail Marys. It was the power of the three HAIL MARYS which brought me more closer to her and instilled in me a strong sense of faith that prayers can move mountains if prayed with utmost sense of feeling, concern and faith. It has now become a routine for me to pray the three HAIL MARYS everyday without which I feel incomplete. Please Mother Mary continue to intercede for me and help me and my family. Thank you so much.

Leticia, Goa
Angela

I am thankful for favours granted. Thank you darling Mamma Mary for helping me clear my first year engineering exams. Do continue to bless our family. *Rini Aranha, Mumbai* Thank you Mother Mary for all the favours and blessings bestowed on me and my family. A BIG thank you for offering me a good job after so many months.

A Devotee, Dubai, UAE

Our grateful thanks to you dearest Mother, through the intercession of the 3 Hail Mary's our daughter secured the 2nd rank in her MBA. Continue to watch over her always.

Mrs E. Pereira, Bangalore

Our sincere thanks to our dear Jesus and Mother Mary for all the favours granted through praying the three Hail Marys. The troubles we had to face in selling our plot were moved away and we were able to sell it in the best possible way. Our Lady, please continue to bless all of us.

Lawrel Gregory and Family, Kochi, Kerala

Thank you Mother Mary for a miraculous cure on my knees and for averting an operation.

Maria D'Silva, Mumbai

On behalf of the Vaz family I would like to praise and thank Mother Mary for being my guide and strength during a tough period of my pregnancy and for blessing us with a beautiful baby girl. May Jesus and Mother Mary continue to shower their blessings on our family and our baby. *Patricia Vaz, Mumbai* My sincere and heartfelt thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mother Mary for hearing my prayer and answering my plea for a safe delivery and the gift of a healthy baby girl.

Mrs. Maria and Family, Mumbai

On 15th November, 2012, I was riding my scooty at about 6.30 pm on the road above my house. I was riding slowly when all of a sudden a three-wheeler came from behind and dashed against the front right side of my scooty and threw me off. Although the scooty suffered some damage I escaped without a scratch. I owe my miraculous escape to the Three Hail Marys. I recite them every time before I leave home. I am profusely grateful to Our Lady.

Sunny Nazareth, Goa

LOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER

Thank you very much dear Lord Jesus and Mama Mary for giving me job offers from both SBI and IDBI. Please continue to bless us.

Rohan Aranha, Mumbai

God has blessed us with a lovely baby girl Twisha who is 4 months old. A few days back my neighbour wanted to hold the baby so I made her sit on her lap. She also urged me to go and change the channel so that the baby can listen to some songs. I was tempted to go but something kept me from doing so. Suddenly my daughter leaped so quickly that my neighbour couldn't hold her. I ran with some strange strengty an took hold of the baby with my heart beating so fast. There was a picture of mother Mary right at the side of the chair where she was sitting. Then I realized that it was not mine but our loving mother's hand which held her from that dangerous fall. My sincere thanks to Mother Mary. I pray that she continues to protect Twisha and every child and all of us. *Christy Joseph*
Thank you dear Mother Mary for granting good health and a speedy recovery to Nlgel Miranda. *Chris*

Our Lady has saved us from numerous major and minor accidents. Two years back our family was miraculously saved from a near-fatal car -truck collision which left our car totally mangled and I came back to life after 14 days on the ventilator. When all the doctors had lost hope Our Lady intervened. We are extremely grateful to her. *Mr. J. Valiyamattam & Fly.*

THEY ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR LADY AND DON BOSCO

My sincere gratitude to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady for a happy married life and gift of two children. *A Devotee*

My sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for helping me clear my 8th semester exams with a distinction and helping me to complete my graduation with excellent marks. Thank you for all the favours received. Do keep us under your protection always. *Cleta D'Souza*

I am grateful to Our Lady and Don Bosco for healing me completely of the cataract in both my eyes. *Mrs. Rita Dias*

Thank you for saving my son from a serious accident when the car met with a head-on collision and was simultaneously damaged from the rear. We are immensely grateful. *Ancilla Silveira*

Our sincere thanks to Jesus, Mary, St. Joseph and St. John Bosco for helping us to secure a job on the ship for my son and for getting his medicals done successfully. *Effie D'Souza, Goa*

I am most grateful to Jesus, Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for a miraculous cure. *Devotee, USA*

I am sincerely grateful to Our Lady, Don Bosco and all the saints for the speedy recovery of my mom from all her health problems. *Diedre Soares, Canada*

My brother's daughter-in-law was suffering from Cancer. She is now completely cured and we owe our thanks to Jesus, Our Lady and all the saints. *Amelia Pinto, Mumbai*

My heartfelt thanks to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady for all that they have done for me. *M. Dodd, Pune*

Right from the age of 10 (and now I'm 50) I have received countless blessings through the intercession of Our Lady, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio. I regret I have not acknowledged them thus far. *Mrs. Theresa Vaz, Pune*

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



I conceived in the month of July 2012. In August I was rushed to the hospital bleeding. The doctor advised me bed rest and said that I should be very careful. In the month of November, on the feast of Christ the King, I was again rushed to the hospital for bleeding. The baby was active and not harmed at all. The doctor said that I was lucky because in such situations the water bag bursts and many complications set in. Our family spent these months in anxiety and prayers so that I reach full term. On 20th March 2013 I gave birth to a healthy baby boy full term without any health issues. Our faith in Jesus, Mother Mary, our devotion to the three Hail Marys, St. Dominic Savio and

Don Bosco brought my baby and me safely through the 9 months. We are grateful for your abundant blessings. *The Fernandes Family, Mumbai*

Our sincere thanks to our Blessed Mother, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio. My husband aged 75 had to undergo two major operations within a span of three months - a hip joint operation and a brain operation. Dominic Savio's miraculous scapular and our prayers gave him new life. Our faith has grown stronger and our trust in the intercession of Dominic Savio.

Placida Lawrence Coutinho, Kalyan

Our sincere thanks to St. Dominic Savio for granting me a successful job and for keeping my son Savio in good health. *Jean Fernandes*

During my first pregnancy I prayed to Dominic Savio for a safe and normal delivery and I was blessed with a baby girl who I named Savia. She is now 25 years old. Through the intercession of Dominic Savio even a house problem we had was solved. We are sorry for this delay in acknowledging this favour.

Mrs. I. Fernandes, Goa

Our sincere thanks to Abba Father, Jesus, Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for blessing the family with the gift of a second child.

A Devotee, Mumbai

Thank you dear Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the heavenly blessings and for providing Andrey with a job. *Annie Thomas*

Our sincere thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for granting us a favour we prayed for. *Mrs. Maria Cherlyn Fernandes, Goa*

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

DECEMBER 2013

The Holy Father's General Intention: *That priests who experience difficulties may find comfort in their suffering, support in their doubts, and confirmation in their fidelity.*

Missionary Intention: *That as the fruit of the continental mission, Latin American Churches may send missionaries to other Churches.*

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MARY WAS THERE

On the 15th of June 2013 I was travelling from Fatima in Portugal to Lourdes. At Montparnasse station (Paris) while going up the escalator to board the train, I tripped and fell with my baggage.

I was shocked to say the least, but gradually stood up. My friends and other people at the station were worried. Praise God and Mother Mary I was not hurt or bruised. We left Lourdes on 17th of June for Paris, that night Lourdes grotto was flooded with rain and melting snow. A great devastation we were saved from. What miracles we received. Often we all sing the hymn "Be with us Mary along the way guide every step we take" I feel blessed and protected. Yes Mary was there to protect me all the way. *Sabrina Fernandes, 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

You can help by establishing a Perpetual Burse with:

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Please address all correspondence to:

**Rev. Fr. Edwin D'Souza, sdb.,
SHRINE OF DON BOSCO'S MADONNA,
Matunga - MUMBAI - 400 019 - INDIA**

**Phone/Fax: 91-22- 2414 6320, email: dbmshrine@gmail.com
<http://www.donboscosmadonna.org/www.dbmshrine.org>**