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**O Lord,  
grant that we,  
who cannot please you  
by our own deeds,  
may be saved  
through the intercession  
of the Mother of your Son  
and our Lord.**

*From the Opening Prayer  
from the Common of Our Lady*

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Cover: **The Madonna in Prayer**  
Giovanni Battista Salvi,  
1609-1685  
Palazzo Ducale, Urbino, Italy

## From The Editor's Desk

DO NOT DISTURB!

A faded notice cello-taped to the door of his office indicated to the young scholastics the times when our dear Father Bursar was available to deal with their financial needs: 8.00 to 8.30 in the morning. Any foolish virgins who tarried along the way and tried to transact business outside these hours were sure to be given short shrift and told to come back later. And the wiser virgins fared no better.

As soon as they entered his well-ordered den they were often greeted by a weary sigh of resignation: 'Not you again!' or 'What is it now?' And that was on his brighter days! For when he descended into one of his blacker moods he would forgo his usual greeting and adopt an aggressive, non-conformist style. Those who asked for shoelaces were likely to be given some cord dipped in black ink and told to make do with that. While the hapless young fellow who asked for a pair of slipper straps, was given two straps of different colours with the accompanying comment: 'What's the difference? You only have to wear them.' Admittedly, there were some occasions when the poor Father Bursar tried to improve, especially in the wake of his annual retreat. Latecomers especially would be taken aback when asked, 'What can I do for you?' but they soon discovered that, even when his manner was tolerably civil, the same unwelcoming message 'Do Not Disturb' was etched into the furrows of his sagging jowls.

Not surprisingly, his fellow confreres had abandoned all hope of seeing him change, but change he did - dramatically and permanently - when he reached the Silver Jubilee of his ordination and decided to mark the occasion by embarking on a guided retreat. Typically, he hedged his bets by asking an elderly quiet priest from the nearby seminary, who was not familiar with his reputation, to act as his director, but this gimlet-eyed gentleman soon detected the traces of intolerance in Father Bursar's make-up and insisted that he spend two full days reflecting on Matthew 14:13-15.

This short but evocative passage of scripture records the moment when Jesus hears of John the Baptist's death and withdraws by boat to a lonely place to come to terms with his loss, but the people get wind of his departure and track him down by foot. It concludes with a touching scene where Jesus graciously accepts this untimely interruption; he takes pity on the crowd and heals their sick.

Somehow the power of the Spirit working through these simple words of God changed our Father Bursar for good. Later that year when he preached at his Jubilee Mass he drew some wry smiles from his confreres when he reflected that, 'God's designs do not always follow the contours of our tidy little plans. We can be so intent on exercising control, so attached to our own selfish interests that we miss the opportunity of finding God in the chance encounters of our lives.'

*Fr. Ian Doulton sdb*

# DISCOVERING ONE'S VOCATION

CEL SERIES

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

**A**fter finishing high school in Mendham, N.J., Maggie Doyne wasn't sure what she wanted to do. She had been an ambitious and driven student (the editor of her school yearbook, a varsity athlete, and the class treasurer) but as she weighed her options for college, she felt increasingly burnt out, and decided that she should take some time off.

"I took what is called a gap year," she ruminated, speaking to *The Huffington Post* from her family's home in Mendham. "I was about to make this investment in my life, but I didn't have a strong direction. I wanted to figure that out more leisurely." So, for the first semester of her sabbatical, Maggie travelled with a backpacking expedition programme called LeapNow, which leads students on service missions and cultural projects across the globe for a semester. And when it came time to decide on her Spring plans, Maggie asked a mentor how she could best 'make an impact on others!'

"I insisted that I wanted to be of use and I wished to work with kids," Maggie recalls. "So I headed off to India, the first place that appealed to me, to work for an organization there." Arriving one bright summer's day in Northeast India, she met countless young Nepalese refugees who had fled the country after the recent Maoist uprising and civil war. One teenage girl she met had escaped Nepal six or seven years earlier, and hadn't



returned home since. So she and Maggie decided to take a trip together - back to Nepal, to look for the girl's family.

"We sat on a bus for two and a half days," Maggie recounted. "At the end of the trip, we just came to a stop on the road, and the bus driver quipped, 'Alright girls, you can't go any further.'" The two beleaguered teenagers then trekked for two more days through the Himalayas, ultimately finding the girl's former village. They received details about her dispersed family and where many of her relatives had ended up.

## More Challenging Experiences

"The devastating effects of human neglect on the whole area were very, very disconcerting," Maggie reported, remembering the experience. "But mysteriously I immediately felt attached to the region, as if I were destined to be there." She soon grew enamoured of Nepal's natural beauty, as well as the sense of community and

optimism that stood out in its people, but she was also deeply affected by the orphans she met in the villages. She often saw one young Nepalese girl, Hema, breaking rocks on the side of a dry river bed. She had no school, no family; she had literally nothing, but she still smiled and waved every time Maggie walked by..." "It was really this rude awakening that decided my future" Maggie recalls. "I thought to myself, it only takes \$5 for admission and \$5 for a uniform to put her into school. Why can't I do that?"

And that is what Maggie did. And then she put a few other young girls into school, too. And she realized she could do so much more by staying in Nepal and dealing with the refugee problem at its source, rather than waiting for these kids to flee to India, or, worse, get stuck at the border and find themselves victims of human trafficking or domestic servitude. She realized she wanted to give these kids a real, permanent home.

That was when Maggie reached the turning point in her life; calling her parents from a 'rickety phone booth in the middle of nowhere' she asked them to wire her life savings - \$5000 she'd earned from babysitting in High School - over to Nepal. After a lengthy conversation (in which they made every effort to dissuade their young and inexperienced daughter) her parents finally agreed to send the money.

### **A New Home and Life**

Maggie bought a piece of property in Surkhet, Nepal, and formed a team from the local

community to help her dig the initial foundation for an orphanage that would double as a home for herself. But it didn't take long for her to realize that she would need more resources if she actually wanted to get it built. So she flew back to New Jersey and worked. She babysat, dogsat, house-sat, held garage sales, bake sales, and anything else she could possibly do to raise more money. Local papers eventually picked up her story, and soon cheques from admirers started pouring in. In the brief space of just five months, Maggie succeeded in raising close to \$60,000.

With this added financial support, Maggie and her team in Surkhet were able to continue the construction and finish the home. She next formed a Nepali board of directors and established her orphanage, which she called the Kopila Valley Children's Project and it was eventually registered as an NGO. She was only 22 years old then.

Her school in Surkhet — the Kopila Valley Primary School, currently enrolls 230 students and 14 full-time teachers. The kids eat a full, nutritious lunch every day, sometimes their only daily meal, given that they live in an area where 50% of children under five are malnourished and malnutrition is the cause of 70% of deaths under the age of five.

Maggie's work is all done under the banner of her non-profit, BlinkNow. Its mission is to "Empower young people to become pioneers in developing their own solutions to world poverty... I feel there is a big shift going on in the world, and people are not comfortable with the way kids are

living... I think they are really starving for hope."

Barely 25 years old Maggie has formal custody of 40 Nepalese children, all of whom originally came to her with no family, no money, and no education. Several were abused. She has provided all of them with basic medical care and food, and she has taught them to read and write. "The first little girl I took in is a genius," Maggie confides with obvious pride showing clearly on her happy face. "She learned English in only a couple of months and she reads every book I give her. I could see her going to Harvard or something like that."

### **Genuine Gratitude**

In the case of Maggie as with so many others, the discovery of her life's challenge came step by uncertain step, almost as if by accident or chance. And yet, in hindsight we could say that the Almighty had a very definite plan both for her and also for the children she espoused. In fact, we can say with absolute certitude that the Lord wants every one of his beloved children to be happy even while here on earth. However, his approach seems to be that those whom he, in his providence, has blessed abundantly would share their blessings with the less fortunate, and in this way not only would every single person be cared for, but they would all be bonded together into one big family!

However, for this marvellous plan of the Father to see the light of day, it is important that certain ground rules be followed. First of all, there has to be a general acknowledgement that people are

here on this earth not permanently, but as sojourners. Once this principle is accepted, then the temptation to hoard the blessings showered on us becomes less attractive and dangerous. Secondly, perhaps the harder principle to accept is that no matter what our background of colour, language, race or religion be, we are truly children of the one Father and so need to live in love and fellowship. If we cannot see ourselves as equals, then all kinds of artificial divisions and barriers get erected and mankind is doomed to self-destruction.

Again, if we could "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35-36) as being the solution to all our interpersonal problems, there would inevitably be a lot more of happiness all around. Of course, there will be the odd person/s who chooses to act in a lazy fashion, doing no work, but claiming the lion's share of the earth's blessings, and this could lead to a lot of unpleasantness, yet our presumption is that all would want to sacrifice themselves at least a little for the benefit of others less fortunate.

### **Utopia or Ground Reality?**

Perhaps all that we have outlined above would seem to most people as mere 'wishful thinking' or dreaming of an Utopia or a Shangri-la! That could very well be the case, but perhaps the more challenging thought is that our God and Father has left it to us to make of the world the kind of heaven or hell we choose to make of it! He

has already provided us with all the possible materials we need to build our heaven here on earth itself and that too with our own limited gifts and talents. And isn't that what Maggie has done and shown us in a small little way? If we are courageous enough to take up the challenge, there is no reason why our world cannot be a far better place than it is at present.

The numberless Maggies who have responded positively so far show us that it is possible for all to live peaceably in this world. And especially, that it is not only the select few who are prepared to make sacrifices for the other, but even the vast majority of humans who are ready to give it a reasonable try – if someone can only give them the lead! All this fund of goodness seen in millions of ordinary people around us gives us hope for a self-centred world like ours.

## A Shot in the Arm

But the movement of blessing one another by our sharing would receive a much greater impetus if examples of such positive goodness are shared freely. Most people seem to be fascinated more with stories of negative actions, selfish exploitation of the poor and the needy. It is not that there are fewer and less appealing examples of such goodness, but simply that we don't care to make them as widely known as the evil that is around us.

Besides, of course, together with this encouraging example of others, if we could also avail ourselves of the extra spiritual impetus that the God and Father of us all grants us through the Eucharist, our enthusiasm would know no bounds. Would you care to help? Remember, it is far better to be "a part of the solution than to be a part of the problem". □

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## walking with the Church



### Visiting Cemeteries

*from St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland*

**Q.** *Why do some people visit cemeteries so often? I know people who go to the cemetery every week. I can understand people going to clean up the family grave but, if we can pray for our deceased in Church and at home why go to the cemetery? It seems unnecessary and a little morbid to me.*

**A.** Apart from looking after and cleaning up the graves of relatives, I think a good reason for all of us to

go to the graveyard at least once a year is to honour the memory of our deceased relatives and friends. Visiting a cemetery also reminds us of our mortality - that one day we too will go to our graves. Finally while we can and do pray for the deceased at Mass and at home, a visit to the grave is a more forceful reminder not to forget to pray for them. □

## LUIGI GUANELLA 1814 - 1915

**L**ouis Guanella was born in Fraciscio di Campodolcino in Val San Giacomo (Sondrio) on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1842. The particular geographical location where he grew up formed in Louis a solid character - firm, temperate and with a spirit of sacrifice. He was always distinguished for his great faith strengthened by popular piety, a faith that demonstrated itself in his closeness to the poor and simple. In 1866 he was ordained priest and dedicated himself zealously to young people, helping them in their studies and revitalizing Catholic Action.

He was in contact with Don Bosco at the time. Fascinated by the Salesian charism, he tried opening a College for youngsters but it did not succeed. However he wanted to stay with Don Bosco and so in 1875 he became a Salesian. He was in charge of the "Saint Aloysius" Oratory in Turin and later he was appointed Rector of the "Dupraz" College in Trinità (Cuneo). He remained in the Salesian Congregation for just three years because the Lord had planned otherwise: the bishop in fact called him back to the diocese. Louis fearlessly defended youngsters and the poor even before powerful politicians.

Later he organized a group of Ursulines into a Congregation: the Daughters of Holy Mary of Providence. The new Congregation was dedicated to the education of youth especially those who were



poor and on the margins of society but he also assisted poor elderly folk. In Como he founded the House of Divine Providence, at the centre of which he built a Shrine to the Sacred Heart. With support from the bishop he also founded a male branch: The Servants of Charity, with the same aims.

His Congregations flourished in Italy, Switzerland and the United States. In support of the dying he founded the *Pia Unione del Transito of Saint Joseph*. What he gained from his experience with Don Bosco was not only a love for the young that he carried with him all his life, but in particular the blind obedience and sacrifice in his relationships with his superiors. Like Don Bosco he was obedient to the bishop even when it meant suffering and misunderstanding. He died at Como 24 October 1925. He was beatified on 25 October 1964 by Paul VI □

# DEATH: MEETING THE LORD OF LIFE

by Pier Giuseppe Accornero

*Death is a natural occurrence but in today's cultural climate, speaking about it is taboo - it only generates resistance. The "Funeral Rites" of the Catholic Church emphasize the belief in the resurrection and the joy of the Father who always looks forward to meeting us.*

**P**roclaiming the Gospel of Christ's resurrection in a cultural and ecclesial context has undergone significant changes so as to respond to various trends arising in urban areas where there is a tendency to hide death, camouflage the burial and shroud mourning in privacy. Though cremation is also permitted the Church believes that the burial of the body is most appropriate.

These are some of the highlights of the Funeral Rite: The liturgical texts respond to widespread pastoral needs in the wake of the implementation of the liturgical reform after the opening of the Council. The first edition was published in 1974 on the basis of the typical edition of 1969. It offers a wider and more articulated ritual for the priest from the first meeting with the family of the deceased to the burial of the coffin. A few pointers are provided in the appendix on cremation too. There are numerous changes introduced keeping in mind that it is a time for the pastor or the priest to share the pain, listen to the families, getting to know some of the aspects of the life of the deceased with a view to correct and

personalize memories that may be used during the celebration of the funeral. A second new feature is the revised and enhanced "Prayer at the closing of the coffin" in the light of the Word of God and of Christian hope - because that is a very painful time.

## THE BURIAL OF THE BODY IS STILL MOST SUITABLE

At funerals, at Mass or in the liturgy of the Word there is a richer and more varied choice of exhortations for the rite of the last commendation and farewell - a gesture which is also the last gesture of the family and the Christian community to one of its members before the burial. And what is to be said about cremation? Bishop Alceste Catella, the bishop of Casale Monferrato and president of the Italian Bishops conference for the liturgy responds: "The Church, even though it no longer opposes cremation of the body except when one dies '*in odium fidei*' (hatred of the Faith) continues to believe that the burial of the body is most appropriate." It is particularly important - in the case of cremation - to state that the deposition of the urn should be in a cemetery, to counter-





believe that the burial of the body of the deceased is the most suitable expression of our faith in the resurrection of the body, in order to strengthen the faith of the faithful concerning those who have passed from this world to the Father and to promote remembrance and prayer of suffrage by the family and friends of the deceased.”

For Monsignor Domenico Pompili, Director of the Office of the CEI for social communications adds that “Christian funerals are not a show, even if they use the richness and plurality of options that the liturgy offers.

practices that are becoming increasingly popular in several countries and among several cultures – scattering of the ashes into the atmosphere, at sea or on a mountain, in a meadow - or storing them in different places other than the cemetery, for example in homes. This practice “raises many doubts about its congruence with the Christian Faith, especially when it (this action) implies pantheistic or naturalistic convictions.” He insists that “It is important that a catechesis for pastoral reasons be conducted to educate the people of God about faith in the resurrection of the dead, the dignity of the body, the importance of remembering the deceased and witnessing to the hope of the final resurrection.”

### **CHRISTIAN FUNERALS ARE NOT SPECTACLES**

Archbishop Angelo Lameri of the office of the Liturgy for the Italian Bishops Conference adds that “The Church continues to

The new rite can contribute to humanize the time of death, subtracting its invisibility and its individuality and if possible preventing it from becoming a spectacle.” To explain the same idea in today’s terms: “In a ‘post-mortal’ society death is silenced and erased from the horizon of life while the media propagates death as a kind of fictional violence that leads to death or death is understood as an event that should be discussed in solitude or as a private matter for mere mortals, to be made public only for celebrities. One dies alone in a hospital; children do not see the body of their grandparents because it might upset them. So they are ignorant and speechless before an event that is part of life. This being the perspective we urgently need to rediscover the immanent character of the mystery of death in the Christian perspective and the family and the community help us to rediscover it as an event that challenges life.” □

# Witnesses in & for Our Times



## ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA (1971-1990) (NOVEMBER 13)

*By Fr. Richard Brennan SJ*

Stanislaus was of a quiet nature. Very early in life he seems to have realised that nobility does not consist in showing off but in living one's life according to God's plan. After all, God had created him for something: he must find out just what that something was and, knowing it, he must have the strength to carry it out. To know what he should do and to have the courage to do it, required more than human strength so he sought guidance and help from God. He could never have been satisfied with drifting through life. He was ambitious because he knew that God makes every man for greatness.

Paul (his brother) undoubtedly regarded Stanislaus' violent reaction to off-colour stories as prudish and childish though in reality it showed rather his strength. Stanislaus was mature enough to realise how dangerous such stories and conversations can be. He knew that poisonous stories are to the soul what poison is to the body. No one is likely to suggest that one who breathes in poison gas should be regarded as more adult than one who tries to prevent the gas from



entering his system. One who risks his life to save others is a hero but one who takes risks without reason is a fool.

As Stanislaus Kostka was a very normal boy, nothing much has been reported about his early years except some references to his habits of prayer, his consideration for others and his popularity.

He was not yet fourteen when he was sent to Vienna to study. The first eight months there seem to have been among the happiest of his life. He enjoyed the boarding school life with its regularity and opportunities for prayer and study. He enjoyed the close friendship of the Fathers and his companions.

Many of these contemporaries gave evidence of Stanislaus' holiness after his death. He was not a great talker; his expression was calm and pleasant. He was a very modest boy. On weekdays he used to attend three Masses, the first and second before and after the first lecture and the third at the end of the morning classes. On Sunday he spent most of his time in church and heard as many Masses as he could.

Stanislaus had an extraordinary love and devotion to the mother of God. At a later stage of his life he was asked by Father de Sa, "Do you really love Our Lady?" "What a question, Father! Mary is my dear Mother." Though the Sodality of Our Lady had not yet been canonically established there was a sodality of Our Lady in the college at Vienna with St. Barbara as its secondary patron. Laurence Pacifici, who was the personal servant of Stanislaus Kostka, while also attending the Jesuit college with them, wrote of his young master later, when he himself was a Canon of San Mose in Venice: "Stanislaus was extraordinarily given to prayer, and though he went to the school of the reverend Jesuit Fathers, and was at that time in the class of Rhetoric, he never cared for worldly eloquence. Hence his speeches, such as students were accustomed to deliver, were generally about Our Lady, to whom he had a great devotion in the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin and St. Barbara, which is held there in great reverence and of which he and many other students were members." Stanislaus took part in all the normal school activities, in the recreations and games, he did his work very well, prayed at any

time he had free and endeared himself to all. Though the other boys knew that he differed from themselves in his long hours of prayer and his penances, they were not in any way antagonised because he did not try to impose his way of life on them and he was always most considerate and obliging.

While realising that his elder brother Paul was living dangerously Stanislaus knew that he could do nothing about it so he kept his peace. Paul found fault with Stanislaus because the latter would not dress up as he did. No one at the college, neither masters nor boys noticed anything unusual about Stanislaus' dress but then Paul wanted to be unusual. For a year and nine months Stanislaus health held out.

In December 1566 his health was poor. He could scarcely eat and he had to drag himself out in the morning. Stanislaus was fasting and that was making him difficult to be with. They were not sufficiently interested to realise that he was ill.

On December 18th they got a surprise. For the first time since they had come to the house they found that Stanislaus was still in bed when they woke up. One look at him convinced them that he was very ill. His face was pale and haggard. He was feverish and in obvious pain. They got doctors for Stanislaus who did not seem to achieve much. Seeing that a priest was not coming to him Stanislaus had recourse to prayer. He sought the intercession of St. Barbara who was not only the patroness of his Sodality, but also the special patron of those who desire to die fortified by the Last Sacraments.

God does not leave his most devoted friends in grave distress of soul and one night when Bilinski (his guardian) was dozing at Stanislaus' bedside St. Barbara appeared and with her, two angels, one of them holding in his hands the Blessed Sacrament. Stanislaus managed to get out of bed and to kneel down telling Bilinski to kneel too. Three times Stanislaus repeated the words, "Lord, I am not worthy" and then opened his mouth to receive the Eucharist. Shortly afterwards Stanislaus was favoured with another divine visitation.

This time it was Our Lady carrying the Divine Infant. Our Lady put the Infant Jesus into Stanislaus' arms and told him he was to enter the Society that bears her Son's name. It might be easy to question these divine apparitions, in spite of the evidence, but for the fact of Stanislaus' sudden cure. When Bilinski looked at the boy in the morning Stanislaus was awake and normal colour had returned to his cheeks. He asked for his clothes so that he could get up and go to the church to thank God for his cure but Bilinski would not let him up until he had permission from the doctors. These could not understand how the boy who had been at death's door the previous day was now fully recovered.

When he returned to health, his brother Paul repeatedly knocked him down, mercilessly kicked him and stamped on him so that Bilinski more than once had to drag him away and insist on him letting Stanislaus alone.

It was after a day of particularly brutal treatment that Stanislaus had warned Paul: "Your rough treatment will end in my going

away never to return and you will have to explain my leaving to our father and mother." Paul was so infuriated that he had told him to clear off, never dreaming that Stanislaus would take him at his word. The next morning Stanislaus was gone on his first long walk. Though Father Nicholas Doni his confessor was surprised, not at the fact that Stanislaus wished to be a Jesuit priest but that he was told that he could be accepted on condition that his parents approved.

Stanislaus' spiritual director advised him to go to Augsburg and agreed to give him a letter of introduction to Father Canisius. How far away was Augsburg? Stanislaus was faced with a three-hundred mile walk. It was early one Sunday morning when Stanislaus quietly left the house carrying the bundle of clothes that he would wear on the road.

Stanislaus never told the details of the journey to Augsburg perhaps because it was uneventful. When he got to Augsburg Stanislaus went directly to look for the Jesuit Father Provincial. He agreed willingly to admit Stanislaus on probation. He knew what Stanislaus had suffered for his ideal but wished to make sure of his obedience and humility. He sent him to work in the kitchen. Stanislaus was never more content. He wrote afterwards "I found heaven in the midst of pots and pans."

To be as far away as possible from the danger of his father's wrath Father General, St. Francis Borgia explained why he was sending him to Rome.

The journey to Rome was not only a long one but it was also

dangerous. The peril of travel in those days was expressed in the saying that the would-be traveller had better do two things: make his peace with God and make his will.

Stanislaus had already come a long way: from Dillingen to Munich, from Munich to Innsbruck, across the Brenner Pass to Bolzano, Salerno, Trent, Verona, Mantua and Bologna. Bologna was half-way to Rome.

At last after a weary month of travelling, from September 25th to October 25th 1567 on which day Stanislaus and his companions entered the Eternal City. Truly now, was Stanislaus Kostka an experienced traveller.

Stanislaus and his companion had arrived in Rome after an incredibly fast walk. They had done over eight-hundred miles in thirty days, an average of over twenty-six miles a day. That speed would be fast for any human being. It was really astonishing for a boy of seventeen and there is no doubting its having happened.

After a few days rest St. Francis Borgia allowed Stanislaus to begin his novitiate. His arrival did not cause a stir for there were many other novices and he had not even the distinction of being the only Pole nor the only nobleman in the Novitiate.

Once he was admitted into the novitiate the hardest part of his struggle was over. He was now with others who were trying like himself to do the will of God in all things and the will of God was made clear in the minute and detailed order of time and the directions of the Master of Novices.

Those who lived with him in the novitiate had no doubts about his

sanctity. His love of God and of Our Lady had that utter sincerity that cannot be hidden.

He was always kind in his dealings with others but strict and hard on himself.

He prayed always and lived constantly in the presence of God. He was entirely absorbed both in God and in the task assigned to him, combining prayer and work, work and prayer.

His favourite topic of conversation was two-fold; he loved to speak of the Blessed Virgin Mary constantly referring to her as "My Mother."

Towards the beginning of the month of August of this year, after listening to an exhortation given in our novitiate by our Father Peter Canisius, he began to be consumed with a great desire to suffer martyrdom and he no longer cared to live. The cause of Stanislaus' death is somewhat mysterious. He was a healthy young man and physically capable of great endurance as we know.

Stanislaus became ill on the 10th August but not very seriously so. He affirmed that he would not recover but the Infirmarian told him that it would be a miracle if he died of such a mild indisposition. Yet Stanislaus affirmed that Our Lady would take him to heaven for the feast of her Assumption. He died as he had said, shortly before midnight on the 14th August, with the smile of one who was going home.

The mystery and the explanation of St. Stanislaus' life is found in the words of our Saviour to His own mother: "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" □

# IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

## Good News

\*Good News\*

The parachute company says you'll get a full refund.

They say the house didn't float very far at all.

The "National Enquirer" just loved those pictures of you at work.

The reward for your capture has reached fifty thousand dollars.

The thieves left the push lawn mower and hedge trimmers.

Those Grand Juries always over-react. Don't worry about it.

The boss said while you're sick, he'd do all your work personally

## Cats

*Cat's guide to caring for your human.*

Cats are beautiful, sophisticated, intelligent creatures. And with a little love and caring, they can keep a human being alive for upwards of seventy to eighty years. If you follow these simple instructions, you can have your human housetrained in no time.

**CLEANLINESS:** For some reasons, humans seem to enjoy immersing themselves in running water. Attempts to get humans to lick themselves clean have proven interesting, if unproductive.

**COMMUNICATION:** Humans are unable to speak a proper language. Therefore, you should communicate a point loudly, repeatedly, and if at all possible, at about three in the morning. Any attempts at human-to-cat communication can be dealt with by simply ignoring it until it stops.

**FEEDING:** Morning feeding

should start promptly when your human is fast asleep, preferably three or four minutes before the alarm is supposed to go off. Recommended methods of waking your human include: sitting on its face, screaming in its ear, and biting its hair.

**TOILET TRAINING:** A human's natural tendency is to not change your litter box. Although experts in human behavior believe it can be attributed to the "laziness reflex," this can be easily corrected through what is called "shoe therapy." Just remember that a human shoe looks a lot like a human toilet, and you should be fine.

Following these simple tips is the first step towards a long and productive cat/human relationship.

## Why Teachers Go Gray

These are reported to be actual test answers from various schools in the Huntsville, Alabama metropolitan area:

Q: Name the four seasons.

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: How is dew formed?

A: The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q: What is a planet?

A: A body of earth surrounded by sky.

Q: What guarantees may a mortgage company insist on?

A: If you are buying a house, they will insist you are well endowed.

Q: Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.

A: Premature death.

Q: How can you delay milk turning sour?

A: Keep it in the cow. □



## BURIED IN THE EARTH

by Carlo Broccardo

**T**hroughout the month of November too we were accompanied by passages from the Gospel according to Luke and the Gospel on 23 November 2013 we have this passage. It is undoubtedly a difficult passage, but if we listen to it in the context of the Mass we grasp its meaning! It is the word of Jesus, the Word of God.

We are in the twentieth chapter from the Gospel according to Luke. Jesus comes to Jerusalem and he goes daily to the temple to teach. Once more we witness the hostility of the official representatives of Israel. In particular we witness here a discussion between Jesus and the Sadducees. They were part of a kind of religious movement (originally with a strong political bias but at the time of Jesus not that much). They came from the wealthy and aristocratic Jerusalem families who usually ran all the business around the Temple.

From the point of view of their faith, the Sadducees relied only on the Torah, that is, the first five books of the Bible (Pentateuch, we call them). They did not accept the traditions or the popular spirituality that had developed over the centuries. In particular, since the Pentateuch never referred to the resurrection of the dead, the Sadducees held

that with death everything was over. They did not believe in the resurrection! It may seem strange today, but that was how it was.

The entire discussion with Jesus was based precisely on this point: they tried to embarrass the Master by attacking him on the theme of the resurrection. They invented a hypothetical case, difficult to achieve. They said: if a woman during her life marries seven husbands (legally, she could marry the second only after the first had died, and so on...), "at the resurrection, whose wife would she be, because she had been wife to all seven?"

The case is certainly exaggerated and perhaps not really relevant to us. Let us try to think of a similar case: a man and woman fall in love, they get married, have kids, a few years later she dies, he waits, but then finds another wife, they love each other and together they have children. In the kingdom of heaven, after his resurrection, whose husband will he be? Who will he love, the first or the second wife? On earth he loved both... If eternal life is just a continuation of this life here on earth, that is something ridiculous! The question that the Sadducees posed to Jesus and all of us was an attempt to make the teaching of the resurrection seem



ridiculous.

Jesus responds to this first objection theoretically: Dear Sadducees, if eternal life was simply a continuation of our life here on earth, then you would be right and it would be ridiculous. But eternal life, the life of one who is risen is something more and different. Writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul uses a very concrete allegory to explain the same claim (cf. I Cor 15): think of a seed, when it is planted in the ground it is very small. Then it dies and begins to rise to become a plant. The plant is not a big seed; it is something more and something different. Now, we are a seed planted in the earth. At the resurrection we will be born as a plant. Now we are corruptible, limited, finite, then we will be incorruptible, unlimited, infinite, new and resurrected.

The first part of Jesus' answer is a bit theoretical. He tries to explain to the Sadducees that they are wrong. Eternal life is not simply a continuation of this life. Unfortunately he does not give us many details but he gives us the essentials that we must not forget. He states this clearly. We must not imagine eternal life as simply a continuation of our present existence. He went deeper with a very practical reflection: the resurrection from the dead exists because God is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, so he is God not of the dead, but of the living.

Remember Abraham, how he left his land and all his people to go to the Promised Land? Have you heard or read the words with which God made him the covenant with him? Can you imagine Isaac when Abraham was commanded to kill him on the Moriah and then

the same God saved him? That day was still etched in his memory. Then do you remember the night when Jacob wrestled with God and won, at the Yabbok? There you have it, throughout history God lived together with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – and the list goes on – and it did not end with their deaths! God did not disappear after the death of Abraham. God remembered him because he *is* alive and his story goes on.

The first response of Jesus emphasizes more the novelty of the resurrection. That is something different from this life and the second response emphasizes the continuity: a plant comes from a seed. That will be *my* new life, new but it will be *me*. In eternal life my story will blossom. St. Paul writes to the Colossians (Col 3:1-4, it is the second reading of Easter): imagine the most precious things of your life, the most beautiful people, the best and dearest friendships; they are all buried in the coffin. That is where we are now hidden under the earth, with all our riches, but still hidden, with our limitations (our character, mistakes, shortcomings...). Then with the resurrection our coffins will be unearthed and opened wide and all our wealth will be made manifest and it will all be limitless.

All our beauty and goodness will no longer be hidden by our great and small defects that surrounded us. Everything that has enriched our lives on earth will live on in heaven with the resurrection. Our God is the God of the living. All that we have sown in the earth of our lives, all that we continue to sow every day will be reborn to new life forever by the power of God, who is the God of life. □



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This celebration has a very beautiful name: the Gospel of Life. Let us thank the Lord for the gift of life in all its forms, and at the same time let us proclaim the Gospel of Life.

On the basis of the word of God which we have heard, I would like to offer you three simple points of meditation for our faith: first, the Bible reveals to us the Living God, the God who is life and the source of life; second, Jesus Christ bestows life and the Holy Spirit maintains us in life; and third, following God's way leads to life, whereas following idols leads to death.

1. King David wants to hide the act of adultery which he committed with the wife of Uriah the Hittite, a soldier in his army. To do so, he gives the order that Uriah be placed on the front lines and so be killed in battle. The King is forced to face his deeds of death; what he has done is truly a deed of death, not life! He recognizes what he has done and he begs forgiveness: "I have sinned against the Lord!" (v. 13). The God of mercy, who desires life and always forgives us, now forgives David and restores him to life. The prophet tells him: "The Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die".

What is the image we have of God? God is the source of life; thanks to his breath, man has life. God's breath sustains the entire journey of our life on earth. I also think of the calling of Moses, where the Lord says that he is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the God of the living. When he sends Moses to Pharaoh to set his people free, he reveals his name: "I am who I am", the God who enters into our history, sets us free from slavery and death, and brings life to his people because he is the Living One. I also think of the gift of the Ten Commandments: a path God points out to us towards a life which is truly free and fulfilling. The commandments are not a litany of prohibitions - you must not do this, you must not do that, you must not do the other; on the contrary, they are a great "Yes!": a yes to God, to Love, to life. Dear friends, our lives are fulfilled in God alone, because only he is the Living One!

2. Jesus allows a woman who was a sinner to approach and not only does he let the woman approach but he even forgives her sins, saying: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little" (Lk 7:47). Jesus is the incarnation of the Living God, the one who brings life amid so many deeds of death, amid sin, selfishness and self-absorption. This was the experience of the woman who anointed the feet of the Lord with ointment: she felt understood, loved, and she responded by a gesture of love: she let

**MERCIFUL GOD**

Mass on Sunday 16th June 2013

*gelium Vitae* (ed.)



herself be touched by God's mercy, she obtained forgiveness and she started a new life. God, the Living One, is merciful. Do you agree? Let's say it together: God, the Living One, is merciful! All together now: God, the Living One, is merciful. Once again: God, the Living One is merciful!

This was also the experience of the Apostle Paul, as we heard in the second reading: "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). What is this life? It is the Holy Spirit, the gift of the risen Christ. Are we open to the Holy Spirit? Do we let ourselves be guided by him? Christians are "spiritual". This does not mean that we are people who live "in the clouds", far removed from real life, as if it were some kind of mirage. No! The Christian is someone who thinks and acts in everyday life according to God's will, someone who allows his or her life to be guided and nourished by the Holy Spirit, to be a full life, a life worthy of true sons and daughters. They are also fruitful; their lives bring new life to birth all around them.

3. God is the Living One, the Merciful One; Jesus brings us the life of God; the Holy Spirit gives and keeps us in our new life as true sons and daughters of God. But all too often, as we know from experience, people do not choose life. It is the eternal dream of wanting to build the city of man without God, without God's life and love – a new Tower of Babel. It is the idea that rejecting God, the message of Christ, the Gospel of Life, will somehow lead to freedom, to complete human fulfilment. As a result, the Living God is replaced by fleeting human idols which offer the intoxication of a flash of freedom, but in the end bring new forms of slavery and death. Let us always remember: the Lord is the Living One, he is merciful. The Lord is the Living One, he is merciful.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us look to God as the God of Life, let us look to his law, to the Gospel message, as the way to freedom and life. The Living God sets us free! Let us say "Yes" to love and not selfishness. Let us say "Yes" to life and not death. Let us say "Yes" to freedom and not enslavement to the many idols of our time. In a word, let us say "Yes" to the God who is love, life and freedom, and who never disappoints (cf. 1 Jn 4:8; Jn 11:2; Jn 8:32); let us say "Yes" to the God who is the Living One and the Merciful One. Only faith in the Living God saves us: in the God who in Jesus Christ has given us his own life by the gift of the Holy Spirit and has made it possible to live as true sons and daughters of God through his mercy. This faith brings us freedom and happiness. Let us ask Mary, Mother of Life, to help us receive and bear constant witness to the "Gospel of Life". Amen. □

## GOD AND THE GAMBLER

*From Fr. Ian Doulton's collection of stories*

**W**hen is a man a failure? When does he, or anyone else, have the right to say that he has sunk too far down to be saved? For an answer we give you the true story of Camillo de Lellis, gambler, tramp and by grace of God: a Saint.

Camillo is one of the world's myriad children of misfortune. He is born in the Italy of the 1550's, a rough time and a rough country. His mother, poor woman, does her best to raise Camillo in the right way, but she is quite outmatched by the father, one of those light-headed, good-for-nothing, gentleman rogues, who have been the heartbreak of their families since time began. By profession, a soldier, he has the gift of throwing a cloak of high adventure over his shiftless gambling ways and Camillo, of course, worships this father. The boy lives for the father's random, unannounced visits and each time the mother sees her patient teachings blown away like thistledown. The boy grows up in the image of his father. It isn't long before the two of them, father and son, finish their job and break the mother's heart. She dies when Camillo is only twelve.

From a sense of duty, relatives take him in, they feed him, clothe him; they give him no love. Nobody wants him. At seventeen he runs away. He heads straight for an army camp, lies about his age and joins the same regiment to be with his glorious father. And there it is, spread out before him the life of the army, the life of his

dreams. When armies were filled with thieves and bandits. The bold free life of a common soldier and the voices of the camp are in his ears.

"Camillo, come on, bring out the dice." "Camillo, come on, let us have a game with the cavalry, they got pay today." "Ho, ho, this is a good time Camillo, come on, the wine is strong and the women are weak. Ha ha!"

Camillo listens and he learns fast. By the time he is nineteen, he knows everything. That is, everything bad there is to be learned. His father teaches him to cheat with dice and cards. But neither he nor Camillo is very clever and they are very bad losers. Everywhere they go they become centers of trouble. Often, they get half the regiment fighting. Finally their commanding officer comes to the end of his patience. He has Camillo and his father marched to the edge of the camp and he puts it plainly: "Go and list with the enemy, which is the greatest favour you can do to us."

Camillo and his father go swaggering off, one army pays as well as the next. They hear that an army is forming in Venice to fight the Turks so they are off to Venice. But there happens to be a plague in the district they are passing through and the father comes down with it, for a week fights a losing battle. Camillo watches, dazed and hopeless beside his bed. For the first time the boy has met an enemy who

cannot be run through with a dagger. His father makes his peace with God then he dies. Poor Camillo, the world crashes around him. To get this wasteful father of his a last resting place he has to beg a grave in a potter's field. He and the priest are the only ones who pray beside that grave. Camillo lingers there, a lanky raw-boned youth who realizes now, the meaning of the word 'alone.' Where can he go now, what's he to do? He keeps hearing his father's voice. The strange words of a dying man: "Camillo, don't go back to the army. Stay away from gambling and the camps. Don't throw your life away as I have. What have I ever done, except hurt you? I killed your mother. I ruined you, God forgive me. Sixty years and all wasted. Camillo, do something good with your life."

Poor Camillo, he does not know what to do. To make matters worse, he has developed an ugly running ulcer on the right leg. He couldn't go back to the army if he wanted to. And there is no use returning to his hometown. Nobody there wants him, but what to do, he hobbles a few steps down the road. Then he sees two men coming toward him. Two Franciscan friars in robe and sandals, they swing by him with a smile and a 'God bless you'. Camillo stares after them and he thinks wistfully of their well-ordered life. They seem to know what to do. They have peace and security. Suddenly an idea takes hold of him. He thinks of his father's plea for him to do something good with his life. He remembers that he has an uncle,

who is the superior of a Franciscan monastery not too far away. And then and there he makes a vow - he will become a friar! He starts off to the monastery as fast as he can hobble.

"No Camillo, you're not ready to enter a monastery. You are still upset by your father's death. Now the best thing for you to do is to find an honest job and work at it, say, for a year. Keep away from gambling and get over your other bad habits. Then come back and we'll see. You don't become a friar by taking off a soldier's coat and putting on a robe and besides there's that leg of yours. No order could take you in until that is healed."

Camillo wanders off again. He has never worked in his life. As you might guess, he goes back to gambling. But luck, you remember, was never with him. Before long, he has nothing left to gamble with, besides an ulcerated leg gives off an odor. Nobody wants you around. He becomes desperate. He limps and hobbles his way to Rome. Someone tells him about the hospital of San Giacomo, where sick people with no money can work for their treatments. The hospital accepts Camillo and sends him to serve in the wards. These are packed with the sick and dying poor. The only attendants are patients like Camillo. They are rough and untrained, they hate their work. The place is called a hospital. It is an inferno! Camillo goes to work. In the ward something happens to this hard-fisted trooper, this tavern brawler, when he touches

the sick his hands become soft, like those of a mother, the voice softens. He holds the dying in his big arms until they fall asleep like children. When someone asks him in some surprise how he can work so cheerfully in this house of horror. He says only: "I was a soldier, I know what it is to be alone, to be in pain." He does not say, that for the first time in his life he knows that he is doing something worthwhile and that he is wanted and needed and that it feels very good.

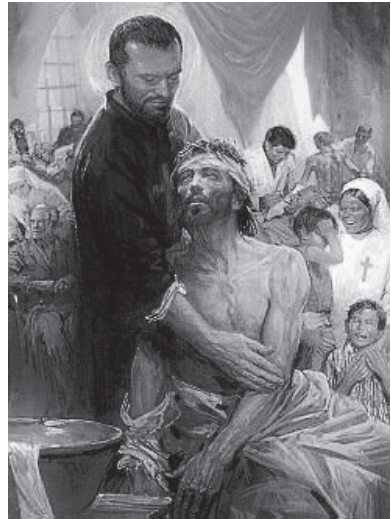
Then he spoils it. He has some free time and he does not know what to do with it. What's the harm in a little game of cards? It's against the hospital rules, but then nobody is going to find out and night sessions begin in Camillo's room. Attendants start sneaking off duty and huddle in corners and shoot the dice after that, it's the old story. Camillo gets into fights, he disobeys orders, he neglects his duty, he is warned, he pays no attention and they at last, throw him out.

Well, so much for work and trying to lead an honest life. His leg has healed enough for marching and its back to the army again. But somehow the life of the camps doesn't bring the old thrill. He is sick of it and disgusted with himself. He stays with it, because it is all that this man knows. And then one day, he puts an end to that too. He gets into a dice game where he loses all his pay as usual, and to try and win the pay back he puts up his guns and his sword and finally his coat. He loses them all. And he is not a soldier anymore!

He is down to one torn shirt, one pair of ragged trousers and the last reminder of his military life: a soldier's belt. He is a tramp. Along the road he falls in with another ex-trooper named Tiberio, this Tiberio is loud and bold as Camillo's father had been. He acts as if he knows where he's going so Camillo follows blindly after him. It doesn't seem possible that the two of them can sink lower but they do, in a little town called Manfredonia. Camillo loses the last thing he values, which is his pride, for he stands at a church door and he begs.

He does not even make a good beggar. People take a look at this big hulking fellow and put him down as a bum too lazy to work. One man finally stops. The man studies Camillo. "I have a job for you. My name is Antonio Di Necastro. I'm building a monastery for the Franciscans just outside of town. I need all the help I can get. Now if you want a job, you come to my house this afternoon and I'll give you a note to the foreman." But as we might guess by now, Camillo doesn't come for that note. Oh, he means to all right. He merely goes to say goodbye to Tiberio. Tiberio laughs into his face: "You work? A crazy soldier you've turned out to be. Come on, let's get out of the town." That night Tiberio and Camillo bed down at a farm nine miles outside Manfredonia. But there is no sleep for Camillo. Two voices keep sounding in his heart. "Turn back, Camillo, turn back." "There's honest work for you in Manfredonia. There's the good clean life." "Gambling is in your blood, you'll never get away from

it. You've tried you've failed, what's the use? And you couldn't stand being shut up in a monastery. Oh, you're young yet, the whole world's ahead of you. The fine free life." "It's God who's offering you this chance Camillo. You don't deserve it, but he's being good to you. Are you going to turn your back on his mercy? What will become of your soul?" When Tiberio wakes up in the morning he is alone. He knows where Camillo has gone. He shrugs 'Alright, be a fool!' But for Camillo de Lellis this morning is the dawn of a new world. For the first time in his life, he has the courage to make up his own mind.



The rest is history. It would be unbelievable if it weren't true. Camillo works for a year at the monastery. He is so faithful, that the friars accept him into the order. But the ulcer on his right leg breaks out again and he has to go back to the hospital at San Giacomo. At first they don't want to take him in, as they remember him entirely too well. They finally give him a chance and what happens after that is incredible. This wasteful, this tramp, this weakling whose whole life was undermined by sin has become the most devoted, the most expert attendant at the hospital. In a few short years he is chosen director of the entire institution. He turns the inferno into a house of peace. He finds that souls need healing more than bodies. So in his late thirties, hardly able to read or write, he goes back to a classroom with little boys and forces his slow brain to master Latin, Greek, philosophy, theology and is finally ordained a priest. Back at

the hospital, the other priests rally to him. He trains them, organizes them into a religious order of hospital clergy. They spread out everywhere, rescuing thousands upon thousands from epidemic, fire, flood and starvation. War strikes and they rush to the battlefields to save the wounded and on their cloaks they wear a red cross, the sign of Christ's sacrifice. For the first time in history, the red cross shines as a light of mercy through the smoke of battle and long before Camillo de Lellis dies everyone knows that he is more than a hero of charity, more than a savior of countless thousands, that he is, a saint! What changed this shiftless hollow beast-man into a saint? What lifted him up from the gutter to heaven? The grace of God, the love of God. How can anyone despair, how can the lowest give up hope in God's mercy when there is a Camillo de Lellis? □

# THE EDUCATIVE METHOD OF DON BOSCO SOME TOOLS AND ATTITUDES

## 9

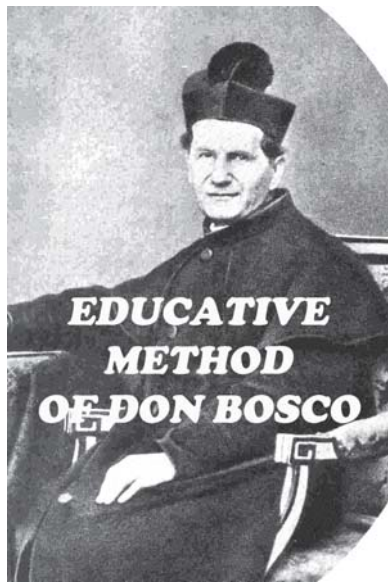
by Fr. Elias Dias

**His apostolate and setting:** After moving to various locations in 1856, he established his own school. Due to industrial revolution, vocational training was very important. He started vocational training school and work shops. Don Bosco used Educative Method in all these structures.

**Religious dimension:** His aim was to make "Good Christians and Honest Citizens." He gave great importance to the Holy Eucharist and devotion to Blessed Sacrament so that the boys may always live in the presence of God and draw strength from this Sacrament. The Sacrament of Confession according to Don Bosco was an important instrument in the hands of the educator for guidance and counselling. Don Bosco, following the Catholic tradition, placed a great emphasis on devotion to Mary.

**Family environment:** Don Bosco very clearly felt that education is also the work of the environment and that a youth learns much from the society in which he is brought up. He believed that the young is more naturally actuated in an educative structure which is essentially that of a family.

One of the basic elements in the preventive system of education of



Don Bosco is charity or loving kindness. There cannot be any loving kindness in practice if it does not create an ambience of a family, a climate of cordial and affectionate confidence in which the dominant note is joy.

The working of Don Bosco's system of education in his various institutions and especially at Valdocco, where there were nearly one thousand boys, provided spectacle of a happy family to the visitors. Don Bosco admitted these children because he loved them and wanted to exercise his priestly ministry on behalf of the neglected in the society. He realized that they needed a family atmosphere and he provided for their needs.

**Atmosphere of joy:** One of the impressions which an attentive person receives from a visit to a Salesian Institute is the atmosphere of joy which is

prevalent everywhere. Don Bosco considered cheerfulness as an indispensable factor for education. In his early school days in Chieri he founded with a few of his friends the "Company of Cheerfulness." When he started his educational activities he considered joy as a basic need of life, especially for youth.

Joy emanates from a pure soul provokes, maintains and expands honesty, stability, confidence, and simplicity. Joy is the educator's helper and ally because it makes the child be approached, understood and formed almost without his noticing it.

**Playground and games:** Long before Don Bosco great educationalist Pestalozzi gave very much importance to playground and games. Don Bosco recognized not merely the utility of play but its necessity for the young person's development. It helps the youngster to sublimate certain drives, to achieve self-awareness by vying with others, and to recognize and control one's power.

The presence of educator at the recreation boosted the moral, fostered the family spirit and mutual confidence. It brought joy, cheerfulness and happiness.

**Walks and excursions:** Right from the beginning of the Valdocco festive oratory, excursions and pilgrimages flourished and they continued in a more or less reduced form. Later the autumn outings are classic examples. Don Bosco with his boys went on excursion in every autumn from 1847 to 1864. They were big events and very noisy too, accompanied by a great bustle

and organization, band, theatre, shows, religious services and songs.

**Instrumental and vocal music:** Don Bosco's educational system had a function strictly connected with his conception of education through joy and an atmosphere of both serene and harmonizing. The music and songs were used in religious rites, processions, outings, and excursions. They also complemented theatrical shows. Don Bosco used to say "An oratory without music is a body without a soul".

**Dramatics and entertainment:** had a vital and integral part in the educational system of Don Bosco. It was meant to preserve cheerfulness and performed educative and didactic functions. The first theatrical show was at Valdocco Oratory on 29 June 1847, the occasion of the visit of Archbishop Luigi Fransoni who came to administer Confirmation to the Oratory boys. A group of boys prepared, "A Corporal of Napoleon" a dialogue-comedy written by Don Carpono a collaborator of Don Bosco.

**The "good night" talks** for the students who lived in the Oratory of Don Bosco or who went home after their activities, often followed by night prayers had very many aspects of group guidance as we have today. Since these short talks or meeting always ended with the words "good night" they came to be known in Salesian houses as "good night" talks.

Don Bosco gave great importance to such talks where plans for the future action of processing and evaluating of some events of the day were made.



Such daily good-night talks help the Salesian educator to establish a friendly relationship between the students under the guidance of the Salesian educator.

**Word-in-the-ear:** A new practice which Don Bosco introduced in his institution and upon which he placed considerable importance for the direction of youth was whispering a few words, privately, at an opportune moment to individuals who required special counsel. This was called "A Word-In-The-Ear".

**Small written notes:** Don Bosco was not satisfied with oral confidential suggestions, he very often used to jot them down on slips of paper which he gave out on very many occasion. His suggestions and advice were always quite timely and effective.

**The youth associations** were another important educational tool for the educator. Don Bosco used them to help in the Oratory and also for the personal growth of the students.

In 1854, a great plague of cholera took the life of thousands in Turin. Many died because no one was found to take care of the sick. On this occasion volunteers from the company of St. Aloysius and a group of boarders joined the Conference of St. Vincent caring for the victims of the epidemic. The Company of the Immaculate Conception was founded on June 8, 1856 by Dominic Savio with an aim to ensure the protection of the Mother of God now and at the hour of death.

**Presence and assistance:** Don Bosco had a comprehensive concept of presence and

assistance. By presence and assistance he meant the total charitable activity on behalf of young people.

**Guidance** is the process of aiding the development of each individual to help him to increase his self-understanding, achieve reasonable responsibility and acquire self-direction.

**Counselling:** For Don Bosco, counselling formed an integral part of education and every educator is a counselor in his system of education. "All those who hold office or have a care of boys, whom Divine Providence has entrusted to us, have the duty also of giving advice and counsel to any boy of the House every time there is reason to do so."

**Spiritual direction:** Don Bosco in his own life experienced the benefit of such a spiritual direction, especially on two occasions. The first was when he was fourteen in the meeting with Don Colosso who understood the conditions of Don Bosco and Don Bosco surrendered himself into the hands of Don Colosso. Later, Don Cafasso became his spiritual director who knowing the qualities of Don Bosco advised him not to become religious but carry on the work for the boys.

**Spontaneity:** In his Educative System, Don Bosco recognized and used spontaneity and youthful exuberance of the young. He realized that the educators' work is not to change the child's originality but to make it blossom, not to suppress its energy but to channel it in the right direction.

Don Bosco did not come to Turin to establish an oratory. He studied the situation under the guidance of Don Cafasso. He

regularly visited the prisons, streets of Turin during the rambling that he made the discovery of crowds of youngsters who were left entirely to themselves. Something should be done for them. The Salesian is a realist. His activities and works must be adequate and timely answers to the needs of the time and the place. The realist Salesian must have initiatives he takes up any work under the spur of urgencies.

**Flexibility** and easy adjustment to persons: Don Bosco made it a point to update his Regulations in line with whatever his experiences suggested to him. In this way he sought to be as responsive as possible to the needs and situation of the young. He considered the Regulations of the oratory for the sake of the students and not students for the sake of the Regulation.

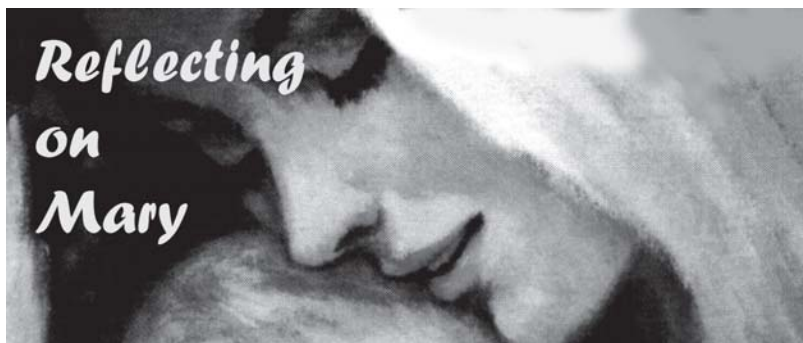
**Flexibility** and easy adjustment to persons: Don Bosco made it a point to update his Regulations in line with whatever his experiences suggested to him.

To promote the education of young apprentices he at first made work contracts, then at a later date he organized workshops himself. In 1850, he established a society of Mutual Help Society for the boys belonging to the oratory but later was prepared to abandon this and fall in with the initiatives of the workers union. Between 1864 and 1874 he organized external members of the society and later took up the idea again under the form of the Union of Salesian Cooperators.

**Availability:** In the educational



system of Don Bosco, the educator is always at the disposal of the boys at any time. Generally no appointment is needed to see the educator. In those cases where appointments are needed, it is because of great number of students who wanted to meet a particular educator. According to Don Bosco, "Availability" at any time of the day for talk and help is must for an educator. When pupils came to Don Bosco despite of his many important occupations, he always received them with fatherly affection and gave them his precious time. Everyone went willingly and open-heartedly because he never showed surprise or impatience. He was calm and self-possessed. When they came to see him they never overlooked their good manners or neglected to show respect to their superior. He received them with the same respect he showed distinguished visitors, asking them to sit on the sofa while he sat at his desk and listened very attentively as if what they told him was most important. When the interview was over he would send them out with joy saying, "We will always be friends." Don Bosco used these and many other tools in order to practice his educative method. □



## **ANXIOUSLY LOOKING FOR JESUS**

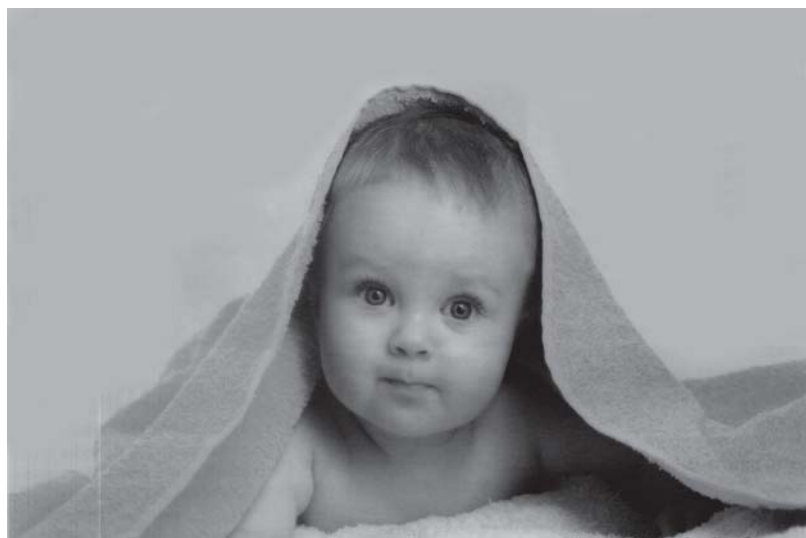
*by Maria Ko Ha Fong*

*From the maternal gesture of anguish  
when he was wrapped in swaddling cloths,  
to being lost in Jerusalem, from not understanding  
his words to realising that he is not only her son.*

**I**n the story of the birth of Jesus, Luke records Mary's delicate gesture of motherly affection: "And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapping him in swaddling clothes she laid him in a manger" (Lk 2:7). It is a simple gesture that expresses all Mary's maternal love for this child who was the Son of God and her son too. It was tender and respectful. According to the custom of the time, tight bands wrapped around the baby protected its spine from damage and helped it to grow correctly. And when the angel announced the good news of the birth of the Child to the shepherds, this was the sign he gave them: "You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (Lk 2:13). Even after twenty centuries today our nativity scenes still present

the Child vested in this sign of its mother's love.

In Bethlehem, Mary together with Joseph were involved in this mystery hidden for ages in God and which became a reality before their eyes: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14). Mary and Joseph were the first witnesses of this birth which took place in humble and poor conditions, the first step of that "nothingness" (cf. Phil. 2:5 to 8), that the Son of God freely chose for the salvation of humankind. And this child was entrusted to their care. When the child's life was threatened by Herod, Mary and Joseph bravely undertook the flight into Egypt, fortuitously facing the dangers and fatigue, the hardships of migration and exile, the unknown and the uncertain.



### **A CLEAR LINK WITH THE PASCHAL MYSTERY**

That mother's tender love, gentle care and thoughtful protection expressed at the time of his birth would accompany the child at every stage of his life. The long period of the "hidden" life in Nazareth, during which Jesus prepared for his messianic mission is summed up in a few words by Luke. He recounts one episode in the life of the young Jesus: that of the Passover in Jerusalem, when Jesus was twelve years old. The narrative is framed by two verses that emphasize the idea of the growth of Jesus: "The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him" (Lk 2:40). "Jesus grew in wisdom, age and grace before God and men" (Lk 2:52). In Jewish culture, the age of twelve represented the beginning of maturity of each human being.

It is a turning point in the growth of Jesus. His journey to the holy city on the occasion of the Passover marking a stage of his life is the anticipation of another trip to Jerusalem that would culminate in his Passover.

The episode also marked the growth of the mother. For three days Mary and Joseph thought he was lost and "anxiously" looked for him. They found him in Jerusalem, in the temple, in the midst of the doctors of the law deep in discussion. It was there that he revealed the true face of God who is love and mercy. The whole episode shows a clear link with the paschal mystery. In a similar way, three days after the death of Jesus, he tells the grieved and discouraged disciples that it was useless to look for the teacher among the dead: he was alive, risen and exalted in the glory of his Father.

**MARY ALSO HAS A  
“CONCERN” FOR  
THE THINGS OF  
THE FATHER**

When Mary found Jesus in the temple, she naturally asked him a question that spontaneously sprung from her motherly heart, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.” (Luke 2:48) The “why” of Mary gathers up the why of so many of us in the face of the mystery of the cross and the anguish of so many who earnestly seek God. At the request of his mother, Jesus answers these two questions: “Why are you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s



Then there is a verse that disturbs readers of Luke’s account: “And they (Mary and Joseph) did not understand his words.” The plan of God transcends all human understanding. “Thus even his Mother, to whom had been revealed most completely the mystery of his divine sonship, lived in intimacy with this mystery only through faith!” says John Paul II (*Redemptoris Mater* 17). Standing beside her son and living in intimate union with him, together with the sweet and singular joy, Mary also experiences the darkness of the mind and the fatigue of the heart as she gradually advances “in her pilgrimage of faith.”

Day after day, Mary grew to accept the identity of Jesus. This child who she had wrapped in swaddling clothes at his birth was not only her son; she became aware that she was a trustee of the mystery of God who she knew from the moment the annunciation of the angel. Now everything seemed more alive and real and at the same time more difficult and incomprehensible. Next to her Son even Mary began to be “concerned” for the things of the Father. □

*Day by day Mary  
grew to accept  
the Baby that  
she had given birth to:  
not only was her son,  
but a gift of the Father  
to all humankind.  
A gift and a mystery  
to be discovered,  
guarded in order  
to reveal to all peoples.*

business?” (Lk 2:49). He had a “concern” which was the plan of the Father and as he grew in age and wisdom this consciousness of his mission would also grow.

## NEWSBITS

### CHINA

**Beijing** - Several Catholic communities in mainland China created the position of itinerant priest to provide sacramental services during Lent this year. The priests of the diocese of Bayanur Meng (Shanba) of Inner Mongolia went into remote communities of the diocese to celebrate the Eucharist as well as to carry out catechesis and spiritual direction for the faithful. From February 17 to 21, 2013 the community of Tian Xing Quan, which has over 800 faithful and is led in spiritual direction by two nuns, welcomed a priest who for 4 days celebrated the Mass and the sacrament of reconciliation for the people. In the parish of San Sheng Gong from 13 to 17 February 2013 a Lenten retreat was held, which was attended by two to three hundred faithful. This was only possible thanks to a group of itinerant priests. *Agenzia Fides*

### SOUTH SUDAN

**Agok, South Sudan** – Father Biong Kuol's parish is a sprawling collection of temporary huts made from sticks and sun-bleached plastic sheeting. A few skinny cows and goats wander about. The huts contain few personal belongings, as most of the displaced families living here fled from villages to the north with nothing but the clothes on their backs. They've lived almost two years in a camp that the world is trying hard to ignore. "People want to go home. Agok is crowded. The ground turns to mud when it rains. Back home, everyone has a plot of their own to farm. But they're afraid of another attack from

the North, so they remain here. As long as they are here, the church will be here with them, even if the rest of the world doesn't seem to notice," said Father Kuol, one of two priests based in the parish in the town of Abyei. "Our job as priests is to give hope to the people. In our preaching, we often talk about all the trials that Israel passed through, but God was always with them. History repeats with us. God remains with us," Father Kuol told Catholic News Service. Agok was a small village on the southern edge of the contested Abyei region, yet when northern militias and Sudanese soldiers attacked villages in the rest of Abyei in 2011; most of the more than 100,000 people who ran for their lives stopped their flight here, transforming the fields around the village into a refugee camp. Displaced along with the people they serve, Father Kuol and Father Karlo Kaw built their own mud-walled huts beside an open-air chapel and erected some tattered tents to house classes of the church-run primary school. *CNS*

### PAKISTAN

**Lahore:** During the present Year of the Faith, proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI, little children are among the protagonists in evangelising activities of the local Catholic Church in Lahore. Learning what it means to be a Christian and growing in the faith, Pakistan Catholic children soon become "real evangelisers". To mark the annual "Missionary Childhood Day", hundreds of children, led by Fr Francis Nadeem, OFM Cap, gathered at St

Joseph's church, and renewed their promise to live the faith by taking part in catechesis and by bearing Christian witness in the family, at school, and in society. "Our children have an important role to play within the Christian community and in efforts to help other less fortunate children", stated Fr. Nadeem, who added that he had encouraged to children to be "ever more involved in missionary activity, helping poor or disabled children or those who are forced to live on the streets and in this way help to improve society in Pakistan". "You are the light of the world - he told the children you are the light of the faith and the love and the peace which must spread throughout our society". At the end of a special Mass the children recited a simple prayer, attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, "Make me a channel of your peace", and also offered special prayers for Pope Benedict XVI. *Agenzia Fides*

### **BAHRAIN**

**Manama** - Mgr. Camillo Ballin, mccj, Apostolic Vicar of north Arabia, (a vicariate which includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia) has announced that, "Bahrain will soon have a new church!" Shaykh Ahmed Bin Ateyallah Al Khalifa, the Minister responsible for monitoring whether the decisions taken by the king or the government are put into practice, handed over the title deeds of land measuring 9,000 square meters where the new church will be built.. The document, dated February 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, in Bahrain corresponds to Our Lady of

Arabia. "Our prayers have been answered," writes the Bishop. "Our Lady of Arabia is capable of doing miracles!" "During this meeting -adds the Apostolic Vicar -the Minister invited me ...to the royal palace for a meeting with King Hamad bin Issa al-Khalifa with all the religious authorities, adding that I would be seated next to the king as a guest of honour! I will have the chance to thank him for the land that was donated." The new church will be a Cathedral and will be dedicated to Our Lady of Arabia. *Agenzia Fides*

### **HONDURAS**

**Yojoa** - A large crowd gathered on Sunday, February 10 in the town of Yojoa to see up close the old adobe floor of one of the oldest churches in Honduras. The community expressed with great applause their joy the decision of His Exc. Mgr. Angel Garachana Perez, C.M.F. to restore as a parish the ancient church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which dates back to the sixteenth century. The priests of the Fraternity Missionary of Mary will be in charge of the new parish.

The parish was erected in 1575 and the church consecrated on July 16, 1600. Father Fabian Rodas expressed his joy for this pastoral start in a new area. "We as a Fraternity Missionary of Mary have a threefold charisma: the importance of living in community, the missionary charism to go to the Churches in need and the Marian charism, which puts us where the Church asks of us." Yojoa, is located in north-western Honduras. *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.*

Thank you Mother Mary for blessing my daughter with a good life partner. Through our devotion to the THREE HAIL MARYS our prayers were answered. Mother Mary, please continue to intercede always for my family and for me.

*Joyce Correia, Goa*

Our sincere thanks to the Divine Mercy, the Holy Spirit and Our blessed Mother for all the favours received. We pray the Three Hail Marys daily.

*Mrs. Ammini Rodrigues, Chennai*

I was suffering from severe bleeding for eight long years. Several doctors said it was risky to perform a surgery but I firmly believed that through Our Lady's help and praying the Three Hail Marys which directed me to the right surgeon who relieved me of this problem. My sincere thanks to Jesus our Lord and Our Lady.

*Mrs. Margaret Kanthan, Nagercoil*

Belated, but sincere thanks to Mother Mary for all the favours and blessings received through praying faithfully the "Three Hail Marys". Mother, please do continue to bless our family.

*Rose Coelho, Goa*

My sincere thanks to Our Lady for the many graces I received through faithfully praying the Three Hail Marys.

*Mathias Pinho*

My sincere thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mother Mary for all the favours received and for good health after severe cold and cough.

*Bernadine Pinho*

My grandson who was supposed to play for a recital left his expensive Mac Laptop in a taxi. He frantically called home and asked his mother to pray for the immediate recovery as it carried all his music. My wife and I immediately prayed the Three Hail Marys and though more than an hour had elapsed since he had alighted the taxi, my grandson saw the same taxi standing idle awaiting a fare. Our deep gratitude for this great favour.

*A. G. D'Mello, Mumbai*

Our heartfelt thanks to Mother Mary for a safe and normal delivery of baby Michelle and for all the other favours.

*Ms. Sonia Pavey and Mrs. Lira Coutinho, Goa*

Thank you Mother Mary for keeping me and my families in good health by the devotion to the Three Hail Marys. Don Bosco and Dominic Savio also pray for us.

*Marcela C. D'Gama, Goa*

Thank you dear Jesus and Mother Mary for the safe removal of a gall bladder.

*Eric Lopez, Mumbai*

My beloved thanks to Our Lady for saving me from a fatal accident. L. Sequeira Our sincere and heartfelt thanks to Mother Mary for all the favours and blessings received.

*Ernie Pais, Navi Mumbai*

I am grateful to Our Blessed Mother and her Divine Son for giving my son a very good job. Thank you Mother for your blessings.

*I. D'Souza, Mumbai*



## LOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER

In May 2013, whilst travelling by car on the highway, it skidded and went off the road, turning turtle. We got out safe, without a scratch. We always pray the three Hail Marys and have great devotion to Mary Help of Christians. Many thanks to the Holy Trinity and our Blessed Mother for saving and protecting us under her mantle. *Mr. & Mrs. Pereira, Goa*

A million thanks to Mary Help of Christians for the safe and fruitful return of my daughter from Delhi after a training programme. Jesus and Mary bless her with good health and safe travel to work. Thank you also for granting my elder daughter a good job. *Annie Lemos*

Thank you for all the favours we received and please keep us under your guidance and prayer. *Mrs. Shirley Thomas, Gujarat*

Our belated thanks to Our Lady for the many favours granted to us, especially for my daughter's success in her board examination and for her admission into college. *N. Parkar, Vasai*

I sincerely thank Jesus, Mother Mary and all the saints to whom I prayed when I was desperately in need and I was going through a bad time. I am grateful for the graces received. *Benedict Pereira, Mumbai*

My sincere and grateful thanks to Our Lady for curing me of recurrent fever which lasted for about 20-25 days. All my tests were found normal. Thank you very much and please continue showering your blessings on us. *C. Sequeira, Bhayandar*

When my son decided to get married we were not financially prepared but I turned to Our Lady and she provided the amount required. *Mrs. Barbara, Rodrigues, Mira Road*

## THEY ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR LADY AND DON BOSCO

Through the intercession of Our Lady Help of Christians my son got a promotion at work and my son-in-law got a new job. Mother, enlighten their minds in their work. *C.R. Mumbai*

Sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for all the favours received. *Mrs. Mathilda, Mumbai*

My heartfelt thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for saving our son from a serious accident and for getting him through his examinations. *Mr. & Mrs. Fernandes, Mumbai*

Glory and praise to the Most Holy Trinity and Mother Mary for the many graces, healings and blessings granted to my parents and me. Thank you for your constant intercession. *Z. Fernandes, Mumbai*

Our sincere thanks to our Blessed Mother and Don Bosco for the successful completion of our son's studies, for guiding and looking after him while away from home and for all the favours received by our family. *Mr. & Mrs. R. Pereira, Jabalpur*

My belated but heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Mary my dearest Mother for the successful spine operation after which I am much better even though there is still slight pain. I trust Mother Mary will give me complete relief. Mary our Mother, bless and protect us always. *Joe & Flora Mendes*

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary for the many favours and blessings received through praying of the three Hail Marys especially when I was feeling sick and uneasy. And for getting down my high BP to almost normal. And also for getting back our Goa House original papers and completing some paper work before leaving for Mumbai. *S. Mascarenhas, Mumbai*

## THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Many thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for a successful surgery and the gift of a baby boy. *Devotee*

My thanksgiving to Jesus, Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the wisdom given to us in a moment of great need and for the gift of a beautiful baby girl.

*Jacinta D'Mello, Mumbai*

Thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Dominic Savio and Don Bosco for the safe delivery of a healthy baby boy.

*Rochelle Aparna Miranda Agnihotri, Mumbai*  
My sincere thanks to Jesus, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all the favours received.

*Lemma Fernandes, Goa*

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby boy.

*Mrs. S. Fernandes, Goa*

Sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my god-child and the gift of a baby boy.

*Mrs. M. Colaco, Goa*

My sincere gratitude for being saved from a heart attack and for a successful heart operation. For helping my husband to give up the habits of drinking and smoking.

*Angela D'Souza*

Thank you dear Jesus, Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for the beautiful gift of a baby girl to my daughter-in-law and my son.

*R. H. Menezes, Mumbai*

Our grateful thanks to our Blessed Mother the Virgin Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a job to a member of my family. Please grant that the job be a permanent one as he has a young family to support.

*C. D'Souza, Australia*

My heartfelt thanks to Our Lady and Dominic Savio and all the saints for helping me to come out of the trouble I was facing at work and also for many favours received.

*Marcelline Ides, Goa*

My son Joel passed with distinction and got a job through the campus recruitment programme. I am most grateful to Our Lady and Dominic Savio.

*Mr. Joseph Wilfred Martis, Mumbai*

Many thanks to Mary Help of Christians through the Three Hail Marys, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the successful surgery for a blood clot in my husband's brain.

*Ms. G. Miranda, Mumbai*

### APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

NOVEMBER 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 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2013, my wife, a close friend and I set off for Goa in our car. Some hours into the journey unexpectedly, one of the front tyres burst and the car went out of control. It skidded off the tar road, onto the mud road, just before a narrow bridge. I panicked. The car sped off the road, plunging head first towards the river, hitting big rocks in its way. The car had plunged through a rocky terrain, more than thirty-five feet below the road. We were extricated only from the left side which was accessible. There was not even a scratch on the three of us. We always say the 'Prayer for Protection' and the 'Three Hail Marys.' Because my foot was unknowingly on the accelerator, all the time, the car remained upright, in spite of the repeated falls. Even my mistake was the work of My Lord to help me in the worst situation.

I am grateful to Jesus and to His Blessed Mother for saving us from a horrific death.

*Frank Pereira, 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:

**Rs 5000/-, 10,000/-, 15,000/-** for a boy studying for the priesthood;

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

Send your offerings by Payee cheque or Draft on Mumbai banks;

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