

# DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

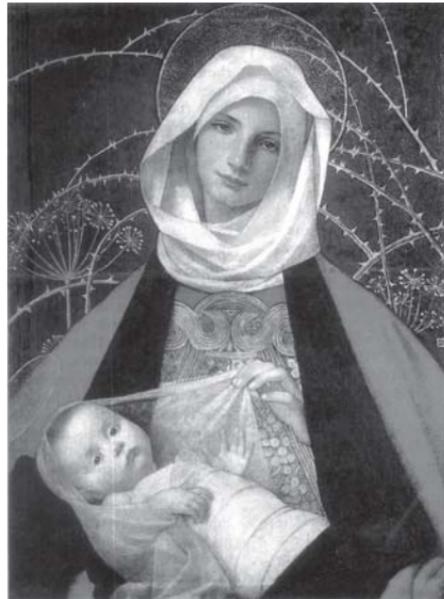
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***O Lord our God  
may we  
be made partakers  
in his suffering,  
that we may  
also merit  
a share  
in his consolation  
and his glory.***

*From the Concluding Prayer  
on the Feast  
of Our Lady of the Rosary*

Cover: **The Little Madonna**  
Roberto Ferruzzi (1854-?)  
Florence, Private Collection\

# From The Editor's Desk

## MY IDENTITY STOLEN

If there's one thing I hate when I travel (which is not often) is to have the misfortune to lose my luggage – a piece or all of it. When you hear about people losing their baggage you notice how startlingly simply it was. Sadly I was a victim - just once - but it has never failed to embarrass me each time the incident comes to mind. I was on a short journey and for convenience I was using a computer case to carry a change of clothes and some papers, my identification and something to read during the ride.

Through inadvertence a door was not locked, and in a matter of five minutes a thief entered, took what he imagined was a computer, and stole what he thought was my wallet and that was how I came to lose my identity.

That was a really serious matter, especially as I had printed out my ticket before I had begun to become environmentally sensitive. (I don't print out my tickets anymore.) So now I was an unidentified alien without any papers to prove who I was, and over and above that, I was attempting to travel. Suddenly I was transformed from being someone moving confidently to my seat to someone who probably would have to de-train altogether. It was not even impossible that I could be arrested!

In the event I was able to establish my identity; I continued my journey, though none of my belongings (meagre as they were) were ever returned. It was quite traumatic while it lasted but not as unusual as I had imagined. Thousands of people lose not just their money but their passports and other documents as well. In fact, in the course of that year several thousands had lost their 'identity' in one form or another, of which mine was only one.

Strangely in my confusion I was treated most kindly and helpfully, but I did not quickly regain my composure. The sense of being in control of my life was gone; my confidence, my sense of competence, of being capable of organizing my affairs, was in tatters. But I should not have been surprised. Such reversals are part of the human condition. It is a reminder that 'this-is-not-as-good-as-it-gets.' I wonder if Christ chuckled when he told the parable of the guy who thought he had it made. "My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come, take it easy; have a good time" (Lk.12:13-32). That very night he died and all that he depended on was gone.

The 'firm foundations' of our lives can suddenly disappear: we might lose our job, or discover we have a terminal disease, or have a car crash - any loss of identity. Maybe in that time of vulnerability and weakness we can be more alert to the words of Christ. We should not worry about what is outside of our control. "There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom" No fear of the loss of that identity! That's not as easy as it might seem...but I'm going to try to give God my vulnerability, even as I propose it to you.

*Fr. Ian Doulton sdb*

# AN UNUSUAL PIONEER

CEL SERIES

*Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss*

**A**t a time when women are coming into their own, showing conclusively that whatever a man can do they can perhaps do even better, we have the story of a novel way in which a woman chose her life's career. As we go through it we cannot but reflect: 'If one person could do this much, why can't many more take up the challenge and bring about a better world in which both men and women work as partners and as equals - an ideal which has been present from the very inception of human life on planet Earth - but hardly ever achieved to satisfaction!

## A Rare Decision

Aside from a thin coat of powder, there is nothing superficial about 32-year-old Sarah 'Bogi' Lateiner. Big-hearted and brilliant, Bogi graduated Phi Beta Kappa and did it in three years with a double major in pre-law and women's studies. Her plan was to go to law school and become a champion for women on a global scale.

However, in the end, she decided to go with her plan B, instead. "I had in my mind that this was a different way to save the world," she mused... "In other words, fix the world - by fixing cars. She enrolled in technical school right after graduation." Who doesn't go on to become a mechanic after pre-law?" she queried with a broad smile.

Today, she has her own shop in Phoenix called "180 Degree Automotive". Beyond quality service for all, she has taken on the added mission to educate women



specifically about cars and thus empower them for the rest of their lives. The concept arose out of Bogi's first car experience - at age 16 she bought an old VW bug that needed a lot of work. She soon realized that mechanics were taking advantage of her ignorance regarding the working of cars, so she learned how to fix things herself. "And really," she says, "that's what empowered her more than anything else!"

"I got over my fear of this big piece of metal and plastic that is our cars," she said. "And it became my passion for me to take that empowerment I got from learning about cars to teach it to other women eager to feel the thrill of breaking out of male domination." To that end, Bogi works all through the week and

on weekends teaches basic car maintenance classes. She also started a scholarship for women who want to go on to technical school - and hires mostly women mechanics.

Bogi says she knows from experience that for a woman, getting into law school is easier than breaking into this business. "When I was applying for jobs," she recalls, "I literally walked in once and he yelled back, 'Hey, Joe, we got a little girl here wants to be a technician, you've got to see this.'" Bogi says she discovered then that she picked the absolutely right path. She has remembered that almost daily - whether it is a grateful customer bringing in a gift of home-baked bread, or a 77-year-old student breaking loose her first lug bolt.

Bogi says she's more convinced than ever that she is making a difference - and that, if you (especially a woman) really want to change the world, you better first

know how to change your oil!

### **Learning from Experience**

Time and again it has proven to be true that Life's call to people comes through their ordinary daily experiences. The point is to be sufficiently disturbed by what one goes through currently, enough at least to impel one to want to remedy the situation. Too often, people just sit back and grouse about the lousy deal they get from others around them. But why should Life or others or the Universe for that matter, owe anyone an existence? Why should solutions to problems or other difficulties be given to anyone on a platter? The command God gave to Adam and Eve (to both equally) was: "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good" (Gen 1:28-31).

So, in many cases the rule would well be, not so much 'what cannot be cured must be endured' but rather, 'what cannot be endured must be cured!' It is only those who dare to venture to make





dares to come up behind Jesus in the crowd and merely touch the hem of his garment – and instantly felt herself cured of her ailment. On that one occasion Jesus favoured both the woman with the hemorrhage as also, the synagogue official!

At times the two sexes are shown up by way of contrast, and here invariably the woman

things different (better) for themselves and for others, who stand out as the real benefactors of humanity – in every situation, necessity is the mother of invention! And this is true equally of women as of men. Both possess the Spirit of God in equal measure, though each is endowed with a different set of gifts and talents. As we go through the Gospels, we notice that the evangelists were not only aware of this fundamental equality between the sexes as far as blessings and opportunities go, but actually set out to emphasize it, though in their own subtle and ingenious manner.

### Scriptural Examples

If we take only the Gospel of Mark as an example, we see that those who wished to benefit from God's generosity in sending Jesus into our midst had to take a leap of faith. This is shown powerfully in the case of Jairus, a synagogue official, who approached Jesus for the cure of his dying daughter (Mk. 5:21-43). But interrupting his story almost in the middle St. Mark narrates the experience of a woman suffering from hemorrhage for twelve years who

steals the limelight. Dining in the house of Simon the Leper, Jesus experiences an unusually challenging situation! "A woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she *broke open* the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, 'Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.' And they scolded her. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her'" (Mk. 14:3-9).

In this passage St. Mark emphasizes the contrast between the uncalculating generosity of the woman in giving not only the precious ointment to prepare

Jesus for his burial, but also the costly alabaster jar; (for once broken it could serve no other useful human purpose!) and the self-interested calculating approach of Judas and the rest of the apostolic band who suggested that it could have been sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor! It is quite obvious that Mark presents the simple guileless woman as a counterfoil to the shrewd and double-minded Judas.

The post-resurrection narratives also present the women who followed Jesus in the role of unofficial disciples in a far better light than the timid and incredulous apostles. It is the women who are constituted as the first heralds of the Good News of the Resurrection of Jesus and of his living presence among his people in a new and marvelous way! These are only a few stray examples randomly chosen to show that Jesus seemed to prefer women for the great work of evangelization more than the chosen apostles, though it was to the apostles that he gave authority in his Church. Unfortunately, as the Church journeyed down the centuries, women seem to have been relegated only to doing minor, odd jobs in the great work of redemption. Gradually, their valuable contribution to the life of the Church was almost totally lost – though at crucial moments in the Church's history they rose to the occasion and once again helped the Risen Lord to bring the Church back onto the rails.

We look forward to the time when, as in the early decades of the Church's missionary life, women

worked alongside men at this task, people like Priscilla and Aquila, (Acts 18), Paul who accepted to work and even stay with Lydia (Acts 16) and several others. For as Paul himself emphasized, "in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith! As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:26-28).

What needs to stand out in this kind of a set up is that both men and women are regarded as equals; no trace of competition or rivalry should exist in their dealings, particularly where Kingdom work is concerned. Each has his/her own set of gifts and talents that equip them for the work, and they need to complement each other's contributions. Where competition and domination prevail one can question whether the transforming and redeeming grace of Jesus has effected any change at all among us! "For when one says, 'I belong to Paul,' and another, 'I belong to Apollos,' are you not merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each: I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building" (1 Cor 3:4-9). □

## GIUSEPPE QUADRIO 1921 - 1963

**J**oseph Quadrio was born at Vervio (Sondrio, N.Italy) in a family of farmers, rich in Christian life. The grace of God took hold of his little soul and already at the age of eight, he had adopted a rule of life that concluded with the words, "I will try to become a saint!" He read the life of Don Bosco that was given to him by his Parish Priest and felt strongly that the Salesians would be his family.

In 1933 he entered the Missionary School of Ivrea where he excelled because he was clever but more especially because of his sanctity. Joseph became a Salesian in 1937 and considering his talents, he was sent for his philosophical studies to the Gregorian University in Rome, where he also, later did his theology, after a couple of years as teacher of philosophy for the students at Foglizzo. In these years of study, formation and of apostolate, his spirituality, deep interior life and goodness kept growing and began to be more and more evident, notwithstanding his desire to remain unknown. His success in studies and his high intellectual abilities did not in any way affect his cheerfulness and helpful character. He in no way manifested any pride.

After being ordained a priest in 1947 and having obtained a doctorate in theology in 1949, also in the Gregorian University, he started his career as teacher of



theology in the Pontifical Athenaeum in Turin. His precise and clear teaching left a deep impression on his many students. In 1960 an incurable sickness cut short his life.

Fully aware of his sickness he continued as long as he could, in teaching, taking part also in all the community activities. During his frequent and long stay in the hospital, the warmth of his goodness towards the other sick persons attracted the admiration of doctors as well as other members of the staff. "The greatest miracle Fr.Rua has obtained for me from the beginning", he wrote a few months before his death, "is the great and joyful peace which makes the days of my long waiting, the happiest and most beautiful of my life". He died on 23 October 1963. □

Diocesan Inquest began on 21 January 1991 and concluded on 18 July 1992.

# walking with the Church



## *Sale of religious objects, truth and freedom*

*from St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland*

**Q.** *I recently heard someone criticising the Catholic religion for selling religious objects. I was unable to answer her. Could you explain why we do use Rosary Beads, Medals and other objects? Can they help us on the road to Heaven?*

**A.** How can mere material things help us on the way to heaven? How can water, metal, holy pictures etc. help save our souls? First of all we must clearly understand that these objects in themselves have no power to help us. To attribute any such power to any one of these would be an act of superstition. But things like a crucifix, a holy picture, a statue, a medal, can and do excite spiritual thoughts and feelings in those who use them. The sight of a crucifix or a picture of Christ's mother or of Don Bosco may move us to prayer or to contrition or to a new resolve, anew determination to try to live a better life. Experience shows us that if we have rosary beads with us we may well take the first steps to reflect on the gospel mysteries and to pray. So too the scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel can speak to us of deep realities and remind us of truths that we tend to neglect. When these objects are blessed it means they have been set aside

by the Church for sacred purposes. In blessing any object the Church, through its ministers the priests, is asking God to accept the intentions of those who reverently use it.

**Q.** *What does Jesus mean when he says in John 8:32 "The truth will make you free"?*

**A.** When Jesus tells his listeners that the truth will make them free, they tell him they were never slaves - never slaves to the Romans even though the Romans had conquered and ruled their country. But Jesus was talking about a different kind of slavery - slavery to ones' passions and desires - slavery to sin. Jesus offers his disciples true freedom - freedom from the slavery to selfishness, freedom from the fear of what others might think of us when they see us trying to be as God wants us to be, freedom from the power of sin. In Baptism we received the power of the Holy Spirit and through that power we can choose to walk in Christ's way of love - to follow Christ and to live in love with God and our neighbours, to follow in his way of holiness and to avoid the slavery to sin which would cut us off from him. □

# WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHO TO PRAY TO!

by Ezio Risatti

*Christians know how to distinguish between faith and superstition especially in moments of suffering when life seems to turn barren and arid desert.*

**T**here are days where the ringing of the alarm is in perfect sync with troubles that begin to pile up. Sometimes they are minor trifles that can be resolved in an instant; sometimes they are major tragedies that cause us dismay, irritation and suffering which threaten to turn life into a barren and arid desert. Stress, anger, and fear gradually trigger an explosive mix: the heart seems on the verge of breaking while the mind ruffles through the calendar looking for a saint to whom - for the umpteenth time - we may entrust this "mission impossible" without succumbing.

## **FAITH IS NOT A MAGIC FORMULA**

Numerous studies carried out by teams of psychologists seem to show that faith is one of the best "medicines" to deal with stress, anger and fear caused by the small or large adversities that dot every life. Faith - however - is not a magic formula, an "abracadabra" that neutralizes the trouble by pastel-colouring reality.

Christians are very careful to separate faith and superstition. And they know that superstition is a close relative of magic, a 'shortcut' illusion that makes people believe they can dominate and control abstract entities and difficulties that can be harnessed by luck, fate, a game or love.

Superstitious rituals reveal common features that have

nothing to do with faith: strange practices, the more secret they are - even if they are entirely theoretical - are guaranteed (by them) to be effective. Who, for example, having lost the house keys hasn't turned to St. Anthony because a neighbour had "revealed" that he is the Saint who helps you one find what was lost thus confusing faith and superstition - thinking that it is the "power" of Saint Antony who tracks down the keys when you say certain prayers or recite certain prayer sequences?

Sometimes, it happens in our relationship with God. Here too Christians are tempted to take the path of superstition: it is one of the reasons that they sometimes seem frustrated and complain that God does not listen to them. But God will not submit to superstition and magic and, in the Bible, he even condemns it.

## **THE SAINTS, INDISPENSABLE TRAVEL COMPANIONS**

A pure, clean and limpid faith that is free from "the corruption" of superstition is for Christians an indispensable support especially when dealing with problems or negative emotions. We know that there a God - who is good and almighty - who loves and watches over us, helping us not to give in to despair but to find peace even when fatigue, difficulty and hardship will never

be enough to threaten their serenity.

Christians bet their lives on the fact that God has assured them that nothing "really bad" will ever happen to those who believe in him. And what is "really bad" is not losing your money or your life, the loss of possessions and, sooner or later, death, but losing God.

To encourage them never to doubt the promise of God, the Church proposes to them example of the saints: St. Anthony, St. Rita, St. John Bosco, St. Pio of Pietrelcina who had witnessed beyond all doubt the fact that God keeps his word. Reading their biographies and identifying with them and the many difficulties they had to overcome it is impossible not to accept how much importance the promise of God played in their lives.

Their example is like a friendly voice that accompanies and encourages us. They say to one and all: "Come on, don't despair! God is a good father: look at what it did for me..., see how many times he came to save me, how he helped me..." They are intermediaries between God and humankind. They exhort Christians to trust them and trust the confidence they had in the promises of God.

## **MARY, MEDIATRIX AND MOTHER**

Even more than the Saints,



Mary is the authoritative witness for Christians of the promises of God throughout her life. Through it all she lived, rejoiced and suffered testifying to her unconditional trust and love in God's providence

In addition to being the mother of God, Mary is also the mother of Christians. And her being "full of grace" is the highest attribute of her motherhood. In everyone's life, a mother is an important point of reference, not only in childhood but throughout life. Several studies on the life of couples show that the relationship between husband and wife or between boyfriend and girlfriend reveals the type of attachment each has had to his/her mother. When it exists in a healthy manner the couple is healthy. When it exists in an unbalanced manner they might not separate but their relationship is at best tenuous.

Mary, herself as both witness and mother asks Christians to trust her, to accept her advice as a precious gift. She asks us not to trust in others but in God alone. □

# Witnesses in & for Our Times



## BL. CHIARA "LUCE" BADANO (1971-1990) (SEPTEMBER 28)

**A** beautiful, extroverted, lively girl, in love with God. But the beauty of God's plan for her life becomes radiantly apparent in the last two years of her illness. 18 years of life: a model for people of all ages. Chiara Badano was born in Sassello, near Savona (Northwest Italy), on October 29, 1971, to parents who had been trying to have a child for 11 years. Her childhood and adolescence were serene: she lived in a loving, united family from which she received a solid Christian education.

Chiara had a generous, extroverted and lively personality. At four she chose carefully which toys to give to poor children ("I certainly can't give broken toys to children who don't have any!"). In the first grade she was attentive in all sorts of little ways to her desk-mate, a girl who had lost her mom; at Christmas she agreed enthusiastically to her mother's proposal that they invite her to celebrate with them. She asked that they use the most beautiful table cloth, "because today Jesus will be with us!" She visited the "grandmas" of a retirement home and, later, when they needed assistance, she would offer to



spend the night by the bed of her maternal grandparents.

**Her life was full of little acts of love.** One evening she wrote: "One of my classmates has chicken pox and everyone is afraid to go visit her. My parents have agreed that it's okay if I bring her her homework, so she won't feel alone. I think that love is more important than fear."

At 9 she encountered the Focolare Movement and embraced the ideal of unity by becoming a Gen (the

second generation of the Focolare). From then on she would rise and rise as if part of a rock climbing group in which everyone is tied together: her parents, Focolare founder Chiara Lubich, the young people with whom she shared her choice of life. She was active in her parish and diocese. In 1981 she participated with her family to the Family Fest in Rome, and international gathering of the Focolare aimed at families and addressing family life. This large encounter marked a new beginning for all three of them.

She began a correspondence with Chiara Lubich that got more and more intense. She confided all of her trials to Chiara until the very end. On June 12, 1983, she participated in her first international Gen convention in Rocca di Papa, near Rome. She wrote to Chiara: "I rediscovered Jesus Forsaken in a special way." She was referring to one of the key points of the *spirituality of unity*, when Jesus on the cross cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46). In November of that year she wrote again: "I discovered that Jesus Forsaken is the key to unity and I want to choose him as my spouse and be ready for when he comes. I want to prefer him! I realized that I can find him in those who are far from him, in all atheists, and that I must love them in a very special way, without expecting anything at all for myself." She would never doubt this choice.

From her letters and testimonies a special joy and wonderment at life emerged. Her vision of life was positive and sunny. Chiara was a girl like any other: joyful and lively, she loved music (she had a

beautiful voice), swimming, tennis and hiking. She had a lot of friends. To those who asked her if she talked about Jesus to her friends, she replied: "I must not speak about Jesus, but give Jesus with my behaviour."

At 17 she felt a sharp pain in her shoulder while playing tennis. The doctors didn't like it and sent her for tests. Soon she received the news that she had bone cancer. In February 1989 she had her first surgery. There was little hope to eradicate the cancer. The other Gen and friends of the Focolare took turns at the hospital to support Chiara and her family.

Soon she lost the use of her legs. She underwent a new painful surgery but it proved unsuccessful. Her union with Jesus Forsaken, who on the cross did not feel the comforting presence of the Father, supported her in her toughest moments. She said, "If they now asked me if I want to walk I'd say no, because this way I'm closer to Jesus."

Her doctor, a man who didn't believe in God and was critical of the Church, would say: "Since I met Chiara something has changed inside me. Here I find consistency. Everything about Christianity I see here makes sense to me."

In spite of the fact that she was basically paralyzed, Chiara was incredibly active. She followed by phone a group of Youth for a United World based in Savona, was present at congresses and other activities with messages, postcards, posters, and, eager to have her friends and classmates meet the Gen Movement, she invited many of them to the Genfest of 1990 (a large international gathering of youth that took place

in Rome). She herself followed the event live, thanks to a parabolic antenna mounted on the roof of her house.

Chiara persevered in offering all her pain: "I care only about the will of God, about doing it well, in the present moment: I want to play ball with God." When her mom told her that she didn't know what she'll do without her, Chiara told her, "Trust in God and you'll have done all you need to do!"

Her relationship with Chiara Lubich became closer and closer. She kept her up-to-date on everything. On July 19, 1990, she wrote: "The science of medicine has laid down its arms. Since we stopped the treatment, the pain in my back has increased and I can barely turn on my side!" Chiara Lubich replied immediately: "Don't be afraid, Chiara, say 'yes' to him moment by moment. He will give you the strength, be certain of this! I pray for this and I'm always there with you. I thought of this name for you: 'Chiara Luce.' Do you like it? It's the light of the Ideal that wins over the world. I send it to you with all my love..."

In a moment of particularly harrowing physical pain she confided to her mother that she was singing, "Here I am Jesus, today in front of you..." She knew that soon she would be able to meet him and was getting ready. One morning, after a difficult night, it came to her to say at short intervals, "Come, Lord Jesus." At 11, unexpectedly, a priest of the Movement came to visit her. Chiara Luce was extraordinarily happy: since she woke up she had felt a great desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

**Chiara Luce went to Heaven on October 7, 1990.** She had thought

of everything: the songs for her funeral, the flowers, her hair style, her dress (white, like a bride's)... with a special request: "Mom, while you are preparing me, you will have to repeat all the time: now Chiara Luce is seeing Jesus." When her father asked her if she was still willing to donate her corneas, she replied with a luminous smile. Then she said goodbye to her mother for the last time: "*Be happy, because I am.*" She smiled at her dad. The funeral was celebrated by the bishop of her diocese and attended by hundreds and hundreds of young people and many priests. Members of the Gen Rosso and Gen Verde performed the songs she asked. Her parents received a large bunch of flowers from Chiara Lubich with this note: "Let's thank God for this luminous masterpiece of his."

**The fame of Chiara's sanctity spread.** The bishop of the Acqui diocese, where she received her confirmation and who met her several times during her illness, initiated the diocesan phase of the beatification process on June 11, 1999. To Michele Zanzucchi, who wrote a biography of Chiara Luce, the bishop said, "*It seemed to me that her testimony was meaningful, especially for young people. We need holiness today, too. We need to help our young people find a direction, a goal, a way of overcoming their insecurity and loneliness, their queries in the face of failures, pain, death, all of their restlessness.*"

**On July 3, 2008 Chiara Luce was proclaimed Venerable,** and on December 10, 2009, the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI recognized a miracle obtained through her intercession. It opened the way to her beatification. □

# IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

## Young Man's Disorder

A young man was visiting a psychiatrist, hoping to cure his eating and sleeping disorder.

"Every thought I have turns to my mother," he told the psychiatrist.

"As soon as I fall asleep and begin to dream, everyone in my dream turns into my mother. I wake up so upset that all I can do is go downstairs and eat a piece of toast."

The psychiatrist replied, "What, just one piece of toast for a big boy like you?"

## Beauty Cosmetics

Todd's wife bought a new line of expensive cosmetics guaranteed to make her look years younger.

After a lengthy sitting before the mirror applying the "miracle" products, she asked, "Darling, honestly, what age would you say I am?"

Looking over her carefully, Todd replied, "Judging from your skin, twenty; your hair, eighteen; and your figure, twenty five."

"Oh, you flatterer!" she gushed.

"Hey, wait a minute!" Todd interrupted.

"I haven't added them up yet."

## Celebrating The Raise

My sister landed a good job with an accounting firm, and after a while she got a generous raise.

The day she found out about it, her husband picked her up from work, and they stopped for ice cream.

As they continued home, my sister blurted out, "Isn't it hard to believe that I have a job that pays this much money?"

Just then, she went to toss the last of her ice cream cone out the window.

However, the window was closed, and it smacked against the glass.

Her husband replied calmly, "Yes."

## Do It Yourself

When a guy's printer type began to grow faint, he called a local repair shop where a friendly man informed him that the printer probably needed only to be cleaned.

Because the store charged \$50 for such cleanings, he told him he might be better off reading the printer's manual and trying the job himself.

Pleasantly surprised by his candor, he asked, "Does your boss know that you discourage business?"

"Actually, it's my boss's idea," the employee replied sheepishly.

"We usually make more money on repairs if we let people try to fix things themselves first."

## Rejected Invitation

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

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

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



## **NO SHORTCUTS PERMITTED**

by Marco Rossetti

*What does it mean to follow Jesus who took on a life of weakness for our salvation? A terse dialogue between him and Peter informs us that the path that a disciple takes must be a complete sharing in the choice of the Master.*

### **JESUS IS THE CHRIST**

The disciples had tried very much to understand who Jesus was. At Caesarea Philippi, Peter on behalf of the others had professed that Jesus was "the Christ" - the Messiah. From that day on Jesus began making his way to Jerusalem, toward his Passover. However, the twelve would have to still have a long way to walk with him to understand what kind of a Messiah he was! For a Jew - as the Apostles were - one thing was clear: the long-awaited Messiah was a powerful figure who, with power granted to him by the Lord would restore to the chosen people their freedom from foreign domination. So it was their firm belief that one who could not be that strong and glorious or who was weak could not be in any way thought of as a Messiah. On two other occasions Jesus felt the need to repeat his teaching that the Messiah was beset with weakness (Mk 9:30-32, 10:32-34), but the twelve did not understand. Only

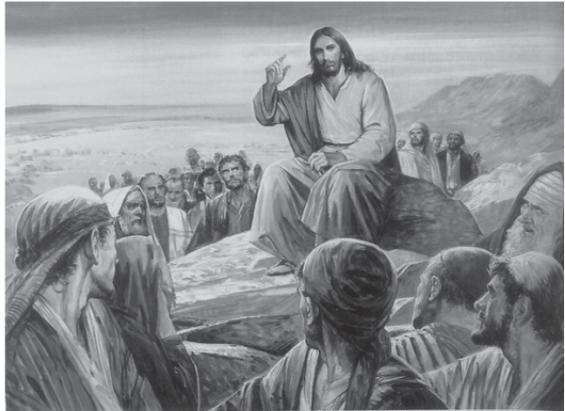
at the peak of the journey, illumined by the presence of the Risen Lord who sent them to proclaim the Gospel, their eyes were opened and they truly understood the meaning and the value of the path of weakness and the cross of their Lord and Master.

### **THE NEW TEACHING**

Anyone who has carefully read the Gospel of Mark will be surprised that only in the middle of this story he writes: Jesus "began to teach them." Was it perhaps that before then Jesus had never offered to teach the Twelve? Of course he had! The Evangelist rather wants us to understand that this teaching is to be considered important enough to mark a turning point in the history of discipleship and it must be considered as a (kind of) second beginning of his Gospel. So what could be the reason of such importance and novelty? Jesus feels the need to teach them that the Christ - who he really is - "must" suffer, be rejected, be killed and rise again. It's not just words from the path of greatness, but it must be one of weakness and suffering unto death: only then would he reach the Glory that God would give him. The decisiveness of this teaching is still emphasized by Mark when he writes that Jesus spoke those words "openly," clearly, speaking in no uncertain terms without watering down their intensity. The lesson of Jesus on his destined death and glory lies at the heart of his Gospel.

### **YOU CANNOT REFUTE A NEW TEACHING**

The disciple who does not share and accept the Master's words about his fate rejects the Gospel itself. The stakes are high! However, Peter, for the time being, either fails to accept or to share what Jesus has just said. Mark writes that the Apostle, after taking Jesus aside, scolds him for what he had just said, but his words are not mentioned. Matthew



mentions them. Let us read them: "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen" (Mt 16:22). This is the tone which Peter uses with Jesus. He does it because he is sure that the Messiah of Israel cannot be weak. He does so because he fears for himself. He knows in fact that the fate of the disciple is that of the Master! Peter ardently opposed Jesus, but with the same ardour Jesus responds. Unlike the Apostle, the Lord speaks now in front of everyone. Indeed, the Evangelist makes us understand that Jesus does not intend to blame only Peter but the other Apostles too because, deep down they too thought like him, and so he writes that Jesus "turning and seeing his disciples," speaks.

### **NO ONE WHO FOLLOWS THE LORD CAN TAKE SHORTCUTS**

We might expect words of reproach but Jesus does not do this, instead he says simply "Will you also go away?" True, he rebukes Peter and the Apostles: "Get behind me Satan! You think not as God but as man does."

It is a harsh expression but for one purpose: no one of those he has called to follow him should

be lost; no one, least of all Peter to whom he would entrust a dignity and a more complex and unique task. Jesus, however, must fulfill the Father's plan that has been entrusted to him: therefore Peter tries to prevent him by becoming an obstacle for him, a real tempter who tries in every way to reverse his decision of saving everyone, through weakness, suffering and death! All this is in obedience to his Father. Jesus cannot in any way allow Peter to take the place of God's plan for another more comfortable project, a shortcut. That is why he tells him: "Stay with me, but resume your place. When you follow me you take the place assigned to you on the shores of the Sea of Galilee when I told you: "Follow me."

To be a genuine disciple one needs to get totally involved in the plan of Salvation that Jesus Christ lived from the beginning to the end. One has to get into the situation completely and share the Master's fate: like the Master, one must even be ready to pass through the crucible of suffering. Are we ready to prefer the way of weakness? That is how we glorify God. □

## MONEY MUST S

*"Poverty is becoming more and more evident money and our acceptance of its power over our this in his Address at an audience with four n Antigua and Barbuda, Lu*

**L**adies and Gentlemen, our human family is presently experiencing something of a turning point in its own history, if we consider the advances made in various areas. We can only praise the positive achievements which contribute to the authentic welfare of mankind, in fields such as those of health, education and communications. At the same time, we must also acknowledge that the majority of the men and women of our time continue to live daily in situations of insecurity, with dire consequences. People have to struggle to live and, frequently, to live in an undignified way. One cause of this situation, in my opinion, is in our relationship with money, and our acceptance of its power over ourselves and our society. In the denial of the primacy of human beings! We have created new idols. The worship of the golden calf of old (cf. *Ex 32:15-34*) has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money and the dictatorship of an economy which is faceless and lacking any truly humane goal.

Human beings themselves are nowadays considered as consumer goods which can be used and thrown away. We have started a throw-away culture. This tendency is seen on the level of individuals and whole societies; and it is being promoted! In circumstances like these, solidarity, which is the treasure of the poor, is often considered counterproductive, opposed to the logic of finance and the economy. While the income of a minority is



increasing exponentially, that of the majority is crumbling. Moreover, indebtedness and credit distance countries from their real economy and citizens from their real buying power.

Concealed behind this attitude is a rejection of ethics, a rejection of God.

## ERVE, NOT RULE



"...; one cause of this "is our relationship with ourselves and our society." The Pope touched on new ambassadors to the Holy See - Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg and Botswana.

Ethics, like solidarity, is a nuisance! It is regarded as counterproductive: as something too human, because it relativizes money and power; as a threat, because it rejects manipulation and subjection of people: because ethics leads to God, who is situated outside the categories of the market. God is thought to be unmanageable by these financiers, economists and politicians, God is unmanageable, even dangerous, because he calls man to his full realization and to independence from any kind of slavery. Ethics – naturally, not the ethics of ideology – makes it possible, in my view, to create a balanced social order that is more humane. In this sense, I encourage the financial experts and the political leaders of your countries to consider the words of Saint John Chrysostom: "Not to share one's goods with the poor is to rob them and to deprive them of life. It is not our goods that we possess, but theirs" (*Homily on Lazarus*, 1:6 – PG 48, 992D).

There is a need for financial reform along ethical lines that would produce in its turn an economic reform to benefit everyone. This would nevertheless require a courageous change of attitude on the part of political leaders. The Pope loves everyone, rich and poor alike, but the Pope has the duty, in Christ's name, to remind the rich to help the poor, to respect them, to promote them. The Pope appeals for disinterested solidarity and for a return to person-centred ethics in the world of finance and economics.

For her part, the Church always works for the integral development of every person. In this sense, she reiterates that the common good should not be simply an extra, simply a conceptual scheme of inferior quality tacked onto political programmes. The Church encourages those in power to be truly at the service of the common good of their peoples. She urges financial leaders to take account of ethics and solidarity. And why should they not turn to God to draw inspiration from his designs? In this way, a new political and economic mindset would arise that would help to transform the absolute dichotomy between the economic and social spheres into a healthy symbiosis.

Finally, I extend to you my very best wishes and to this end, upon you and your families, I willingly invoke abundant divine blessings. Thank you. □

## MY LAP IS EMPTY

From Fr. Ian Douulton's collection of stories

**I**n this present day and age when life and living takes precedence over love and family life I'd like to tell you about a friend of mine who to this day suffers tragically, but not mysteriously not because of the decisions she made, but because of the decisions she didn't have the courage to make. The conclusions are for you to draw. Will you read this without thinking about someone you know?

*You sit in your living room alone, Grace Parker, staring out of the window, staring into the dusk that is deepening tonight. The room is growing dark and it's quiet, too quiet. Every other night at this time, you would have turned on the lamps. You'd be out in the kitchen starting dinner. Your husband George will be home in a few minutes. But tonight you do not move. Tonight you can only sit staring out of the window, thinking, thoughts of the past creep out from your memory, slow and dark, like the shadows growing in this room.*

*It all began so brightly twelve years ago when you married George Parker - handsome, charming George. You were too much in love to think, and you resented your family asking questions. Of course, George hadn't had much of a home life with his mother and father separated. It was just one of those things. And for a man who hadn't attended church regularly to start going out with you, was that good? Anyway you were in love and that was all that mattered. And then one evening, just after your*

*honeymoon:*

"George, what's so interesting in that old ad section? What? Are you thinking of changing jobs?"

"Why, no, I'm set where I am but listen to this - receptionist, some typing, 250 hours a month."

Grace did not understand.

"Here's another one, secretary, small office full charge - 375 hours a month. How's that sound to you, honey?"

It was beginning to dawn on her.

"Well, you mean you were thinking of just staying home? Now you're kidding, honey."

"No, I took it for granted. You said you liked children. George I just naturally..."

"Sure, honey, sure, I like children. But one thing at a time...there's no use tying ourselves down before we get ourselves off the ground. Look at this place, you wouldn't want to bring up a baby in this chicken coup?"

"I thought you liked our apartment."

"Well, it's the best we can do on one paycheck. For myself, I don't care. I'm thinking of you and our children. It isn't fair to kids to bring them up in a place like this. I don't want you to look old and work-worn before you're thirty. Now, look, I got it all figured out."

"How?"

"Well, it's simple. You work for a year, we get some money in the bank. We pay a down payment on a nice little house with a yard. Then we are all ready for our family. A year isn't long to wait,

is it?"

Half heartedly Grace walked away: "Well, alright, George. If you want it that way."

George came after her: "I'll show you just how it's going to work. If you make, say, \$350 a month, add that to what I'm making and I would probably get a raise..." so the planning began.

*So you went back to work, Grace Parker. It sounded so sensible, so reasonable, but it was a mistake! The first one, with care, management and trust in Providence. You could have had the down payment on the house with a yard before the baby learnt to walk. But you didn't think of things like that. You wanted, more than anything else, to please George. And besides, he had made you afraid of a future with only one paycheck. So you went back to work and you earned \$350 a month, but you hadn't thought of car fare, and lunch money and new clothes you had to have for the office and besides that both you and George had to pay, income tax so at the end of the year this is how you two sounded.*

"I know I said just a year, so it's going to take us a little longer than we expected. We ought to be sensible about this. We don't have any bank balance yet..." George sounded convincing.

"No, we will not with the rate we are going."

"So, how would it be if you stopped working?" asked George.

"I don't know where the money goes. We should draw up a budget, George."

"That's a waste of time. Look at the way things happen, like the picture tube of the TV going out"

Grace thought it was a waste:

"Now I still don't see why we didn't get a new tube instead of a new set."

"Sure, sure, we could have had a patch job and then the thing would cost us forever for repair. This is the time when bargains on a new model are better before it starts eating us up with repair bills."

"We ought to be able to save some times - If you'd stop bringing home those old guns."

George was irritated: "My one relaxation, after I spend all day at that desk, I have to do something different or I'd go crazy. You couldn't get by without a few less trips to the beauty parlor or a new dress every other week. You've got to keep those office folks whistling."

"You have to buying expensive whiskies every time we entertain."

"Okay, okay, we stop asking people over!" George was exasperated.

"George, it's just that putting off our family this way is not going to work. I suppose I'm getting anxious."

"You talk like you are Mrs. Methuselah! We've only been married a year."

"But the way we're going, it's not right." Grace felt genuinely guilty.

"Look, if it will make you feel better, we'll set ourselves a goal. We decide to save so much, we get it and we start our family. It's simple see? Suppose we save, thirty-five hundred dollars?" George thought he had calculated it.

"Well, that would give us something definite."

"I was reading in the paper the

other day, every couple should have 3500 dollars in the bank before they have their first baby. Now that's a down payment on a house and something for emergencies. That makes sense, doesn't it?"

"Yes, I suppose there isn't any reason why we couldn't do it. But we're really going to have to watch expenses, George."

"You will"

"There's no awful rush honey, we've got our whole life ahead of us. There's no point in getting tied down yet."

"Alright, George, I guess I was rushing things a little."

*This was your second chance to take a stand Grace Parker and you let it slip by. You told yourself you gave in because you wanted to keep peace in the family. You were getting to know George and the knowledge was a worm of fear gnawing at your heart. If you pressed him too hard, he'd leave you, and deeper down there lay another reason that you wouldn't admit even to yourself. You wanted to keep the independence that came with your own paycheck with the extras it bought, the really good permanence, the second car for going to work and shopping and visiting and the designer suits and you had to move to a bigger apartment with room for George's guns and your collection of books. And the new apartment meant, new furniture. There was the year when you had that once-in-a-lifetime chance to take a tour of Europe with the Richardson's and share expenses. But there were moments in those years, Grace Parker when you looked backward and forward and saw only more working days that began at six a.m. and lasted*

*until midnight. Every morning before George got up, you cooked a breakfast, packed two lunches after he left, washed the dishes, made the beds, got yourself ready for the office, worked eight hours at your desk, rushed home, cooked the dinner, washed the dishes and in the evening, always, sowing, mending or other odd jobs, often alone, because George was out with his friends. Saturday, clean the house, wash and iron, shop for groceries. Sunday, go to Church, alone! That was when the truth hit you like a blow, Grace Parker! In that hour each week when you knelt at the back of the church and bowed your head in your hands, no going up the aisle for communion for you - not with this kind of sin of willful childlessness on your soul. Was this marriage? Was this sharing? Was this living? And now it was already the twelfth anniversary of your wedding. George was late coming home that evening.*

"Hello sweetheart, I know I'm late, but you won't throw the book at me when you see what I stopped for."

"George you already gave me a gift."

"Ah that old electric rotisserie was just to throw you off the track. Look here what I got in this box."

"Well, don't tell me you don't like it, this stole is not Tibetan moose, or dyed bush-wear but this is genuine blue fox!"

"I don't want it."

"You don't want it?"

"No. I don't want a stole, I don't want a rotisserie!"

"What's eating you, snap out of it Grace? You've been carrying on like this for months. If you are sick or something, go and see a doctor."

"You know what I want."

"What?"

"Aw, well, now Grace, look..."

"George, we've been married now, twelve years. I'm thirty years old."

"But we're not ninety!"

"I can't go on like this. You know what we've been doing is wrong? You settle it by not going to church at all. I can't do that."

"Well, at least I'm not a hypocrite, and don't give me any of that holier-than-thou stuff. I never had to twist your arm." George found he had overstepped his rudeness: "Honey I shouldn't have said that. Now, now don't look that way."

Grace conceded: "No, you're right, you're right. It takes two."

"Now don't cry like that, Grace, you'll make yourself sick. Look, maybe you're right maybe we have been skimming along. Time, sort of, gets by you. But we're going to change all that I promise."

"George, so many times..."

"But this time I mean it. Let's see, I think we got at least, \$ 2900 in the bank, I got a couple of deals cooking. I'll close them right away, that should put us over the 3500 dollar mark. Grace when I get that money, I'll put it right down on a house."

"If I thought you meant that..."

"Cross my heart, I'd swear it on a stack of Bibles." Grace seemed convinced this time and George was relieved: "That's better. Big smile. Everything is going to be all right, everything is going to be all right."

*And it did seem that at least it was going to be all right. George's deals came through and this last Tuesday, only two days ago he had the 3500 dollars in the bank. Then*

*he got busy reading, 'house-for-sale' ads and you went to the doctor because you hadn't been feeling well for a long time. The doctor asked you to come back for more tests and that worried you a little but today, when you sat at the desk opposite him, he smiled briskly and his voice was hearty:*

"Well, everything's fine Mrs. Parker, nothing to worry about."

"Oh, I'm glad."

"Just one thing we will have to take care of, it will require some surgery."

"Surgery? You mean I need an operation?"

"Has to be done to avoid complications. But once it's over you'll feel better than you've had in years. It won't have any after effects except of course, not being able to have children."

"What! No children! You don't mean I'll never be able to have children?"

"Why yes, I'm sorry, perhaps, I shouldn't have put it so bluntly. You have been married 12 years, so naturally."

*That was at three thirty this afternoon. Now you sit here, Grace Parker, waiting for your husband. You'll have to tell him you had so many chances in the past twelve years to change all this, but now it's too late. You could have let your faith strengthen your weak will. You could have exercised your God-given privilege of bringing new life into the world, watching it grow, feeling it's love. Those children you might have had, you kept them waiting outside the door of your heart, so you sit here alone, your hands folded in your lap. Your lap is empty, now it always will be! □*

# THE EDUCATIVE METHOD OF DON BOSCO FOR SIMPLE PEOPLE

## 8

by Fr. Elias Dias

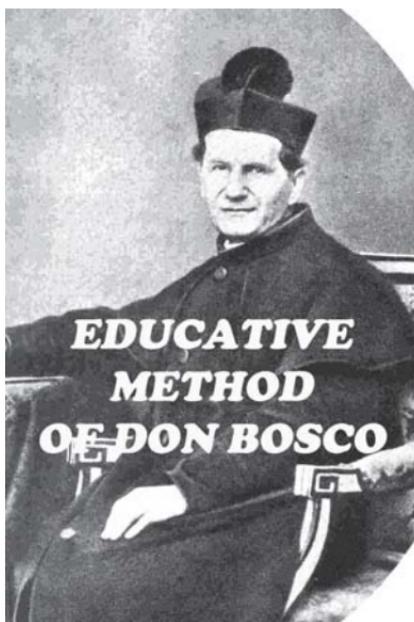
**Education in the Enlightenment period:** In 1782 (The Enlightenment Period) St. John de Crevecoeus wrote: "The easiest way of becoming acquainted with the rules of conduct and the prevailing manner of any people is to examine what sort of education they give their children, how they treat them at home and what they are taught."

In Puritan society the life for a child was a sobering proposition. One-half of the youngsters died before the age of ten. The adults coerced their children to become models of rectitude, dressed them like miniature adults and demanded maturity. Children were viewed as lonely little grownups.

**Rousseau:** By the middle of eighteenth century Rousseau wrote his book "Emile". The 19<sup>th</sup> century society thanked Rousseau's, 'Emile' which achieved at least one great goal: Children were no longer forced to walk around like miniature adults but were permitted to be children.

**Jahnn Pestalozzi:** In 1789 Jahnn Heinrich Pestalozzi brought in a revolutionary idea in education from a teacher-centred, to a child-centred system, in which the needs and psychological development of the child were stressed.

Pestalozzi had an unusual tact which the children at once felt and valued. Whenever he approached the children faces lit up for he



always had a kind word for each one of them. The children called him "Father Pestalozzi". All servants, teachers and his family lived together. All followed strict schedule and ended the day with a good night talk, a reflection on the event that happened that day. Pestalozzi had to close down his work for several reasons and he returned to his farm and continued his writings. He died at Brug on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1827.

**Ferrante Apporti,** educator and theologian was born in San Martino Argine, province of Mantua, Italy, November 20, 1791. After his ordination to the priesthood, he spent three years of study in Vienna. He had a special interest in the education of poor children and for their benefit he opened an infant school for children between three and eight. He firmly believed that manual work, at all educational ages was to give concreteness and rationality,

making it a process of educational involvement. The very young must accustom to discipline, friendly cooperation and piety. His theories soon reached their fruition. His works attracted the attention of many people and sprang many Asylums in Northern Italy and Europe.

Aporti was a friend of Don Bosco and visited the Oratory several times and attended functions in the oratory. Aporti died on November 29, 1858.

**Herbert Spencer** (1820-1903) challenged the classical tradition in education. He said that scientific education, not classical learning is the most worth because it prepares one for complete living. Spencer was accused of crass utilitarianism in that he would sacrifice what is higher in life, its culture, for that which is lower, its practical advantages. He believed in complete living. The whole purpose of his system was to produce a man who would live as a committed Christian and a responsible citizen.

**Educational laws in Italy at the time of Don Bosco:** The Restoration Period abrogated all the reforms brought by Napoleon and went back to the old regime. The aristocracy and the Church regained their ancient rights. King Charles Felix wanted to improve education in his kingdom. In July 1822 he promulgated an education act "**Regie Patenti**" it controlled the behaviour, minds, religious and moral principles of the students. The Church controlled the education.

The Piedmontese Ministry of Education legislation on education was introduced by Carlo Boncompagni in 1848. All

privileges of religious orders were abolished. This **Boncompagni Law** was the first attempt in Italy to make education a monopoly of the state and to disassociate itself from the Church.

**The Casati Law** promulgated on November 13, 1859. It was fundamental code for public and private instruction in education by Count Gabrio Casati (1789-1873). He was neither an educator nor an educationalist. This is apparent from this document.

At first the Casati Law made it clear that religion was not be banned from schools however in new secular state it was no longer to be the basis of education. In secondary schools it was tolerated. The Law was not against the Church but a moderate attempt to control education.

**Influence of personalities in the life of Don Bosco:** John Bosco's entire public education, as child and teenager, began first with Fr. Lacqua in Capriglio. Then John attended the public school in Castelnuovo from December 1830 to June 1831. John entered the school late yet he quickly caught up with his classmates. His teacher Fr. Emmanuel Virano was amazed to see John's success. John loved him and remembered him with reverence. The Convitto Ecclesiastico in Turin under the guidance of Fr. Joseph Cafasso influenced his life very much, he was not only taught theology but it helped him to live his priesthood. He went on educating himself throughout his life so that he may adjust and be useful to the situations and ambient of his time.

**Evening classes:** During his studies at Convitto Ecclesiastico Don Bosco was given the ministry

of teaching catechism to the youth. When he settled in the Moretta house he began to hold regular evening classes. The night classes produced two worthwhile results. First the youngsters were motivated to attend the classes since they were very keen on learning how to read and write and it gave Don Bosco an opportunity to instruct the poor youngsters in religion. Don Bosco saw his night school as an innovation to provide elementary education to poor children for whom any kind of schooling was completely out of reach.

**Boarding School:** Don Bosco responded to the pressing need of the youngsters. He opened a boarding house for the poor boys where, food, clothing, shelter and education was given to them free of charge. The students of the boarding were more stable and organized than the transit group of the Sunday Oratory. Don Bosco saw in an institution like boarding an ideal seedbed for vocation and helped to put into practice his Educative Method with the young.

**Lack of funds often stalled Don Bosco's battle against illiteracy.** It was a constant struggle for him to scrape up needed equipment and supplies. One of his principal frustrations was the scarcity of books suitable for his needs. There were scholarly books in the library but they were not suitable for the young people. This compelled him to compile his own Church History (1845). He added edifying episodes of saints, miracles, acts of virtues that dot the history of the Church. Two years later Don Bosco published Bible History (1847). He was dissatisfied with the existing text books on Bible History. The

young people could not follow the language of the books. The purpose of all his writing was to reach the young with simple language a determined goal to make them grow.

**Expurgation of Text books:** John Bosco started reading novels at the age of nine when he was the student of Fr. Laqua in Capriglio.

His love for books never left him. When the Oratory school became established, providing suitable reading material for the students presented a problem. Certain Italian and Latin classics which were required by the school authorities found little favour with Don Bosco who rigidly controlled the text books of the school's curriculum. He asked help of the educationalists of his time. This ambitious project was called "Italian classics for the young." It consisted of 100 volumes and was taken up by the oratory of St. Francis de Sales. He not only censored the classics but also dictionaries.

**A system of weights and measurements known as the "Metric system"** was first planned in France and adopted it in accordance with the law in 1799. The system was subsequently adopted by many other nations. In 1845 Carlo Alberto by royal decree, declared that the metric system would become the law by 1850 in Italy. Don Bosco quickly became aware of the huge practical benefits of the new system but he also realized that how disadvantaged the common folk and the youngsters were in their everyday affairs if they remained ignorant of the new system. A year before the law went into effect he published his little booklet "*Metric System made Easy*".

In this manual Don Bosco reviewed four basic concepts in mathematics operation- addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Great educators like Fr. Aporti and others appreciated and praised Don Bosco's effort to reach the common people. The audience laughed but at the same time they learnt the metric system.



**The 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw the rise of the so-called "Social Question" in European countries.** The Church was a latecomer in the arena of the debate of Social Question. Finally in 1891, Pope Leo XIII published the Encyclical Letter "Rerum Novarum". Don Bosco long before the Encyclical Letter understood the conditions and plight of the working man. He fought for the working man and demanded equal rights, fair wages, justice in the workplace and decent living conditions.

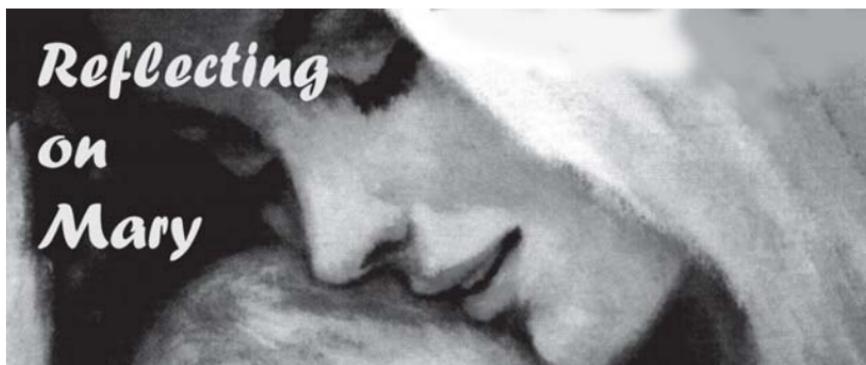
Child labour in Italy was a social fact. Every day Don Bosco witnessed the brutal treatment of the young apprentices by their employers. He would visit these children, speak to the employers, design working contracts and invite the children to the oratory, their only chance to enjoy the pleasures of childhood.

Don Bosco saw that by teaching these young people a trade in the protective environment of the Oratory, he could find a solution to these disturbing problems. Fr. Pietro Stella adds that another reason was economic necessity. Having a tailors shop, cobbler's

shop reduced the expenses and brought some income to the Oratory.

In 1844 workers guilds were abolished. In Piedmont Mutual Aid Societies were introduced. They were great help for the workers and young people. Don Bosco quickly recognized the need of a Mutual Aid Society. On July 1, 1850 he, with the help of some older boys established it in the Oratory. Its aim was not only social but also spiritual. Don Bosco made contract for his apprentices and visited his boys at their work sites.

In the year 1853 he started the first two workshops, the shoe making and cobbler's shop. Don Bosco himself taught the trades. Pleased with modest success of the first two a third bookbinding shop was opened. Eight years later in 1861 Don Bosco opened a print shop. In 1860 there was a sharp rise in construction and industrial products, 1862 he opened a metal shop. The artisans and students lived together. The artisans were given opportunity to read and write. In 1886 the Salesians decided to separate the artisans from the students. Hence today the trade schools have their own identity. □



## CANA AND TABOR, MARY AND THE FATHER

by Maria Ko Ha Fong

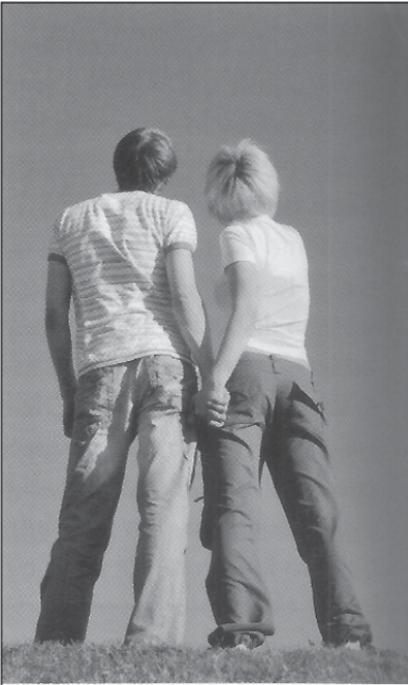
*For pilgrims visiting Galilee, Mount Tabor and the little village of Cana are inevitably on their route. In addition, their geographical proximity is curious. Are they somehow linked?*

**J**ohn presents the miracle of changing water into wine that took place at Cana as the first "sign" performed by Jesus (Jn 2:1-11). It is a word full of meaning. Chinese wisdom says this: "When I point out the moon to you, it is at the moon that you must look and not at my finger." The sign is not an end in itself, but it points beyond itself and signifying and pointing to a reality that transcends itself.

The event at Cana is a finger pointing to Jesus, to his divinity and to the novelty of the Gospel that he came to bring. Not only is it a fact in its entirety but also in its particular elements: the third day,

the wedding, the water, the wine and the six jars are all signs loaded with meaning. And the characters around Jesus, the disciples believe through that sign, and the servants who, by their obedience, have become witnesses and collaborators of the sign; the master of the banquet whose misunderstanding has emphasized the greatness of the miracle, all appear as signs or paradigms, have in them a surfeit of meaning, referring beyond themselves to represent several other people like themselves. What about Mary? Her concise words, her discreet attitude and in her consideration does she look like the finger pointing to the moon? While the miracle at Cana is situated at the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, the transfiguration on Mount Tabor when Jesus comes as Jesus is at the beginning of his way to the cross (Mt 17,1-5; 9.2 to 13 Mk, Lk 9:28-36). The mountain, the splendor, the white robe, the luminous cloud,





*Love needs signs. A couple finds in each other signs of the love of God, the loving face of the Father and at the same time a sign bearing witness to God's love for his Church. But man must not risk reducing his Faith to just a search for spectacular and miraculous signs. He must be open at all times to greater horizons of the love of God that these signs point to.*

Moses and Elijah, everything points to the glory of the Son of God and alludes to his paschal mystery. Peter, dazzled by the light and entranced by the beauty would like the time to stop and the glory remains. He naively believes that he must build three tents, but now the glory of God does not dwell in tents made by human hands. He stops at the finger, but Jesus pushes him over.

#### **A VOICE**

On Mount Tabor, beside the vision, a voice is heard from heaven. It is the Father who speaks: "This is my Son, my beloved with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him" (Mt 17:5). Jesus is the beloved Son, the Father's beloved. The relationship between Father and Son is characterized by love. The Father wanted to make public the love he bears for his Son in two important moments of his life: at the baptism on the banks of the Jordan River (Mt 3:13-17, Mk 1:9-11, Lk 3:21-22) and now on Tabor. From this revelation we perceive not only how much the Father loves the Son but also how much He loves humanity because He has given this beloved Son to us. The word of the Father recalls the beautiful reflections of John: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3:16), "In this was the love of God manifested in us, that God sent into the world his only Son so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us first and sent his Son" (1 Jn 4:9). Jesus is the gift of love from the Father to humanity. The voice from heaven is actually an epiphany of God as love: love for the Son in the Spirit and love for humanity and all his creatures. The affirmation is followed by an imperative: "Listen to him." All men and women, if they listen to the Son, are involved in mutual love and life-giving communion between Father and Son, and they themselves become the sons and daughters loved by the Father. The Father's voice on Tabor recalls the voice of the Mother at Cana. Among the few words of Mary recorded in the Gospel, there is only one addressed directly to



*The Mount Tabor, site of the Transfiguration is a place to contemplate on God who speaks to the heart of man and manifests himself in the beauty and grandeur of Creation and joy of heart.*

people, it is the word addressed to the servants at the wedding at Cana: "Do whatever he tells you" (2:5). A reason this word is considered "the Marian commandment" is also because it is the last word she uttered, almost a "spiritual testament" delivered to her children. As the



Father recedes into silence after declaring his love for Jesus and invites everyone to listen to him, so Mary will not talk anymore. She says it is essential to open one's heart to Jesus who alone has "the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68). Ad Jesum per Mariam. (= *To Jesus through Mary*). Mary leads us to Jesus, to obey his word and to consider him as our absolute reference. Mary helps to form the new community of Jesus, indeed she helps Jesus to become friends in the sense that He Himself said: "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (Jn 15:14).

"This is my beloved Son, listen to him," "Do whatever he tells you" these words are proclaimed with love and they are words that unite humanity to Jesus, the only Saviour. The Father's voice heard on mount Tabor is solemn and mysterious. The voice of the Mother at Cana, simple, discreet and gentle, permeated by maternal tenderness and feminine wisdom is just as powerful and effective. □

## NEWSBITS

### MALI

Bamako -The entire Catholic culture will be in danger if the conflict in Mali drags on because; although churches are still intact, people are becoming afraid to go and worship.

This is according to Catholic Bishop Augustin Traore of Segou, whose diocese lies in the path of Islamic insurgents. "People are hiding in their homes, unable to venture out. Until the havoc caused by the French bombing ends and the hostilities cease, no one will be in a position to know what has happened," he said after noting that the country's churches could face destruction if conflict continues. Bishop Traore said relations between Christians and Mali's Muslim majority remained "good at local level" and had not been damaged by the Islamist insurgency, adding that people of all faiths were "vigorously committed" to maintaining the country's secular way of life.

According to Traore, people are deeply anxious and longing for this turbulence to end, and needs are great everywhere and they include securing places of worship"

Ethnic Tuareg rebels seeking to establish a separate state overran most of northern Mali during 2012, operating alongside the al Qaida linked Islamist group Ansar Eddine. In a July statement, the country's Catholic bishops' conference and the Association of Protestant Churches deplored the robbing of Christian families and occupation of churches in Tombouctou, Gao and other northern towns.

Most of the stolen items - otherwise destined for the black market - were returned, leading to great joy and relief on behalf of everyone involved. Fr. Georges served Arabic coffee to the guests and many other people in the neighborhood joined the convivial moment. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 11/22/2012.*

### UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Young Catholics gathered to mark the Year of Faith in the Arabian Peninsula Abu Dhabi - More than 1,500 young Catholics in the Middle East met in Abu Dhabi, UAE, last November for three days of reflection and prayer. The theme of the conference, taken from the Gospel of Mark, was "Everything is possible for him who believes" (Mark 9:23). The conference was organized by the Apostolic Vicariate of Arabia and North and South Arabia and, was held at St Joseph's Cathedral in Abu Dhabi. Young Catholics living in the two Apostolic Vicariates of Arabia are mainly migrants from the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Lebanon and African nations) who are in the Arabian Peninsula to work.

On presenting the event, Mgr. Paul Hinder, stated that "The future of a community lies in the young. Mgr. Camillo Ballin added that "The youth of our territories are often isolated in their experience of faith, in the circumstances of the region in which they reside. We want to try to answer the many questions they have about their faith.." *From Agenzia Fides 11/07/2012.*

## **Pope Francis and the World Press**

Pope Francis overcame his timid and meek demeanour at a special meeting with the world's press still in Vatican City since the former archbishop of Buenos Aires was elevated to the throne of St Peter to lead the world's 1.2 billion Catholics. His message was succinct and soft-spoken, as Vatican watchers are coming to recognize as the style of the 76-year-old prelate who overcame losing much of his lung when he was still a young man. "To the surprise of some, his message was exclusively in Italian, apart from a closing greeting in his native Spanish. The Vatican says he also speaks English, French and German. Several times throughout his address, the pontiff was interrupted by rounds of applause. Some journalists yelled in Italian "viva Francesco" or "long live Francis". Others held up national flags so that even their small children could get a glimpse. After blessing the audience, Francis personally greeted a number of veteran Vatican correspondents ...Francis even patted - and perhaps blessed - a seeing-eye dog - unavoidable given his namesake, the patron saint of animals. It was a media tour de force for a man who knows he has to get off on the right foot with an international press still starved for answers to a number of pressing Church issues, ranging from the Vatican leaks scandal, to priest sex abuse and the troubled Vatican bank. "I wish the best to you and your families, to each of your families," said Francis. "I cordially impart to all of you a blessing". *Source ANSA See Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno, Aprile 12, 2013*

## **Breakfast with the Pope**

A bishop from the earthquake-stricken province of Modena in central Italy said he was surprised to find himself having an informal chat at breakfast recently with Pope Francis. Francesco Cavina, a bishop from the town of Carpi near Modena, says he was staying at the Vatican's at St. Martha's House, a guesthouse outside at Peter's, when Francis strolled up and introduced himself over breakfast. "I was sitting quietly when the Pope approached with great naturalness," said Cavina, adding he felt "very, very excited" to meet Francis, elected pontiff less than one month ago. Apparently the Pope, seeing a bishop he hadn't before met, asked around and learned Cavina came from the Emilia Romagna region of Italy, which was devastated last spring by an earthquake that killed 24 people. The June 2012 earthquakes also left thousands homeless and brought the region's economy to its knees, with the damage estimated at around five billion euros, Cavina said the Pope wanted to hear about reconstruction projects in the region and asked him to give his blessings to the people living there, Francis continues to reside in the guesthouse, which is open to bishops and priests passing through Rome as well as those working in the Vatican.

He has lived there since cardinals from around the world descended on the Vatican in March to elect a successor to Benedict XVI, and there are no immediate plans far him to move into the papal apartments. -*Source ANSA See Gazzetta del Mezzo Giorno* □

## 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.*

My thanks to Our Blessed Mother for my daughter's success in her SSC examinations and for several other favours granted to us. *Sabina Braganza, Goa*

Thank you dear Mother for a successful cataract surgery. Keep us always in your loving care. *Linda Gracias, Goa*

I am a marine engineer and I had submitted my certificate for re-validation but the office procedures delayed the re-validation and both myself and my family were very worried. We were in deep financial difficulties as I was jobless for 5 months. Through the intercession of Mother Mary and praying the Rosary and the Hail Mary I got my certificate re-validated. Tons and tons of thanks to the Infant Jesus and Mother Mary. *George Johnson, Kerala*

My mother, Maria Bernadette Spinola Paul developed cancer and passed away within 3 months of the diagnosis. Despite agonising pains and throughout the time of confusion and suffering she continued her devotion to Our Lady through the Rosary and the 3 Hail Marys. She died in a state of grace having received the final blessing and she went to her resting place dressed as Our Lady of Lourdes - an outfit she had prepared herself in advance. Since her passing from this world, tiny miracles have taken place for our family members who have asked for her intercession to Our Lady. Each nephew and niece was left a Rosary by her so that they could continue to honour our heavenly Mother. I, her daughter thank Mary, our Mother for her blessings upon my dear mum. *Fatima A. Spinola de Abreu, UK*

On 24<sup>th</sup> November, my daughter and I were walking home together after a get-together. I was hit by a car on my left side. I fractured my collar bone and my head. The car windshield too was damaged. My injury could have been disastrous. Thank you dear Mother for protecting my daughter and me who escaped unhurt. I was discharged from hospital in three days and I am recovering from my fracture. *Elvira and Melita, Goa*

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the blessings received with a baby boy to my grand-daughter after 5 years of her marriage. *Mrs. Bernadette Fernandes, Goa*

I came across many favours received through the 3 Hail Marys and so I prayed the 3 Hail Marys and I passed in my SSC exams with 73%. Thank you dearest Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio. *Valerie Fernandes, Mumbai*

Sincere thanks for all the favours and blessings showered on my family through my devotion of the three Hail Marys. Please, dear Mother Mary keep my children in peace and love always, they need your continuous favours and blessings. *Mrs. Fernandes, Hubli*

## LOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER

Thank you, Mamma Mary for curing the irritation in my eye. Please continue to keep your loving hand on our family. *Rini Aranha*

We had gone for a picnic to a resort. As I was swimming with my two daughters, suddenly my younger daughter landed in the adult pool which to our disbelief did not have a dividing line. As I was trying to rescue her I too got carried downwards. My elder daughter who was a good swimmer noticed our absence and rushed to help me. Luckily I managed to get my head afloat and I pulled my younger daughter by the hair upwards! That would have been a fatal day. Before leaving home we always pray the Hail Mary...surely Mary was there and protected us. My sincere and heartfelt thanks to Our Blessed Mother for this miraculous rescue and also for the numerous favours and special graces showered on us over the years. Dear Mother continue to bless and protect us. *P. D'Costa, Mumbai*

Our sincere thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for giving me courage during my bad and painful days (for almost three years) and for granting me a very big success in my work by giving me a new job through the recitation of the Rosary almost every day. *Aloysius and Hyacinth, Devlali*

Thank you dear Lord Jesus Christ and dear Mother Mary for many favours received and for all the help received during times of need for my family. Belated thanks! *P. Sagamond, Florida, USA*

A couple of days after my successful B1/B2 Visa interview I searched for the visa application in order to collect my passport. I could not find it. I prayed the *Memorare* fervently and the following morning I found it in my bag with all the contents. *Johnson, Mumbai*

## THEY ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR LADY AND DON BOSCO

My sincere and heartfelt thanks to Our Lady Help of Christians and Don Bosco for a successful cataract operation. Please continue to bless us. *Mrs. B. Abraham, Vizag, AP*

Thanks to Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the many favours received. *Vijay Aranha, Moodubelle*

Thank you Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for helping my nephew to do well in his studies always showering him with blessings. Keep him a good boy. *Maria Carvalho, Mumbai*

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for favours received. *Rosy Johny, Mumbai*

Thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Dominic Savio, Don Bosco for their intercession during my two eye-operations. I invoked them for their help. *Isac A. Dias, Panaji*

Thank you dear Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping my nephew Jason to recover from a severe attack of fever and for my sister Mary Jane who recovered in a short period from a brain injury caused by a serious accident. *Fatima Alphonso, Mumbai*

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for curing me from a frozen shoulder. *Theresa D'Souza*

Thank you dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for saving my flat which was undergoing a dispute. *O. Faleiro*

All glory and praise to the Most Holy Trinity, Our Lady and St. John Bosco for healing my parents and for your intercession and protection. *Z. Fernandes, Mumbai*

## THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Grateful thanks to Our Lady and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter-in-law and the gift of a beautiful baby girl. Mother Mary always keep my family under your loving protection. *Mrs. Rita D'Souza, Pune*  
My sincere thanks to the Infant Jesus, Mother Mary and Dominic Savio. After 3 years of marriage I got pregnant. I had a lot of complications (thyroid, low placents and gestational diabetes). Due to these complications I was advised complete bed-rest in the 7<sup>th</sup> month and also told by the doctor that I would have to go in for a caesarean delivery. I started praying to Mother Mary and Dominic Savio and wore the scapular throughout my pregnancy. I had

a normal and safe delivery and was blessed with a healthy baby boy. Mother Mary bless our little son Dominic and always keep him under your care.

*Janicelee Mascarenhas, Mumbai*

Thank you dear St. Dominic Savio for the success in my examinations.

*Savio D'Cunha, Vashi*

My sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for curing my grandson Delaune from high fever, infection, cold and cough and continuous vomiting.

*C. Rodrigues, Mumbai*

Our sincere and grateful thanks to Our Lady of health and St. Dominic Savio for the safe and normal delivery of a healthy baby girl to my granddaughter.

*Alexander Joseph, Coimbatore*

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a healthy baby boy. We have named him Daniel Savio.

*Dominic Savio and Sandra Fernandes, Mumbai*

I had a colleague who couldn't conceive because of medical reasons. I gave her the scapular and prayer of Dominic Savio and she began to pray to him; in a month's time she conceived and has now delivered a healthy baby girl. Thank you Mary Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for always blessing our family.

*Rosalind Josephe, Baroda*

Our grateful thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for your protection over.

*Judith. Basilia Fernandes, Goa*

### APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

OCTOBER 2013

**The Holy Father's General Intention:** *That those feeling so crushed by life that they wish to end it may sense the nearness of God's love.*

**Missionary Intention:** *That the celebration of World Mission Day may help all Christians realize that we are not only receivers but proclaimers of God's Word.*

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## **MARY WAS THERE**

On 27th September 2012 I slipped on the last step of an airport escalator and fell backwards hitting my head which resulted bruising and a lot of bleeding on the head. While waiting for the doctor my eyes focussed on a frame with the words "Praise the Lord and have faith." I was rushed to the hospital emergency. My wounds were cleaned and dressed and I was given a tetanus shot. The doctor commented that "I was one lucky lady." My shoulder length hair which was not tied up, miraculously did not get caught in the escalator. I was in shock but we continued on our holidays to Brussels with just a slight headache. I am back home, surprised to be alive. God is great! We always pray Psalm 91 and commend every minute into the loving arms of our Lord Jesus and His Mother Mary who is my constant companion. Before starting our vacation, we requested them to accompany us on our journey and they did. Thank you Jesus and Mother Mary!

*Ursula Cardozo, 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.

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