

CONTENTS

From The Editor's Desk: <i>Easter</i>	3
God And the Family - <i>Ian Pinto, sdb</i>	4
Youth on the Move: What is Shared is Multiplied - <i>Giuliano Palizzi</i>	8
Salesian Saint: Ven. August Hlond	10
Vocation Promotion: Cl. Sachin Tribhuvan sdb.....	12
Witnesses In And For Our Times: St Isidore of Seville.....	13
Lectio Divina: Jesus Appeared to Them - <i>Ian Pinto, sdb</i>	16
Quietspaces: God of Surprises - <i>Pope Francis</i>	18
The Destiny is 'Yes.' - <i>Fr. Ian Doulton's Collection</i>	20
Don Bosco And His People: Thrift and Frugality - <i>Natale Cerrato</i>	24
Reflecting on Mary: Authentic Marian Devotion - <i>Bernardina do Nascimento</i>	27
Walking With the Church: Elderly Care, Sunday Mass, etc. St Martin's Messenger.....	29
NewsBits.....	31
In a Cheerful Mood.....	32
The Devotion of the Three Hail Marys.....	33
Loving Children to their Loving Mother.....	34
They Are Grateful to Our Lady & Don Bosco.....	34
Thanks to Dear St. Dominic Savio.....	35



*Turn then
those eyes
of mercy towards us
and
after this our exile
show unto us
the blessed fruit
of thy womb
Jesus*

From The Editor's Desk

EASTER

Easter! This single day in the history of Creation is the reason for our faith. It was the triumph of Easter morning that gave birth to the hope, dreams, beauty, and self-giving love that we know as Christianity, but we still have difficulty explaining what Easter means to those who have not recognized the gift of Easter in their own lives.

Mr. Holland's *Opus* is one of my favourite movies. It is the story of an aspiring musician. This young man was captivated by the dream of becoming a professional jazz musician, and of composing one truly memorable piece of music. Like many young people who aspire to become professional musicians or actors, Glenn Holland earned a teaching certificate along with his degree in music. At some point in his young life he married and found it necessary to take a "day job" as a high school music teacher to support his family. As the years went by, Mr. Holland became more and more distressed with the contrast between his dream and his life. Every school year his responsibilities became greater at home and at work, until finally it appeared that he would never attain what his heart told him he could become. As each new class came and went, it felt as if opportunity and time were slipping away. Toward the end of the story Mr. Holland loses his job. If I were to offer an interpretation of this story, it was at this point that Easter came to Mr. Holland.

The reason the Easter Vigil contains a series of readings that retell the story of God's original acts of Creation is because Easter is considered the eighth day of Creation. Genesis tells the story of how God created the cosmos and humanity in six days, and on the seventh, God rested. The Biblical account of the time between the seventh day and the first Easter morning is the story of a creation waiting and longing in its imperfection for its completion. That completion arrives on Easter, the eighth day.

The resurrection of Jesus on the first Easter morning was the day on which all that had passed before was given its meaning. Every human heart has been born with dreams. These dreams are as unique as each individual child. Yet, somewhere between birth and Easter, all humanity has shared something of Mr. Holland's sense of loss and frustration. Life seems to take its own direction. The dreams a person follows (or not) and those not of our choosing, seem to become our destiny. The gift of Easter is this. Our past, our present, and our futures have been embraced by God in the one redeeming act of Jesus. It was the discovery of the empty tomb that gave the first disciples new hope in the face of death. They gained an understanding of how all they had experienced tied together to bring them to that moment. In some mysterious way, God has given meaning and purpose to each of our lives. Mr. Holland discovered the meaning of his life in one expression of love. I pray that we discover a little more of ours this Easter season.

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

GOD AND THE FAMILY

by Ian Pinto, sdb

A woman was asked by a full-time volunteer to join an organization. "I am sorry," she replied, "but I don't have the time." "Are you that busy?" she was asked. "As a matter of fact, I belong to another group and am Co-President along with my husband, and I take care of most of the work, and my work doesn't leave me any free time." "Really, and what's the purpose of your organization?" "Its sphere of activity is very great: it is devoted to the promotion of Christian life, the rearing and training of children, their subsistence and hygiene, the spread of culture and other related goals." "What's the name of that organization," came the response, with a deep sense of admiration, "I've never heard of it!" "That's quite possible" said the woman, "It's called *the family*."

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

The genesis of a family, within the Christian context, is when a man and a woman unite themselves in marriage. What distinguishes Christian families from other families and characterizes them, is the Christian spirit. Only the family that is formed and nurtured according to the teachings and example of Jesus Christ and of His Church can be described as a Christian family.

The Old Testament begins with the story of a family, the story of God creating the family of Adam and Eve. The first two chapters



of Genesis which speak of the Creation of human beings uphold the greatness and dignity of family life. "Let us make man in our own image and likeness... He created them male and female... and blessed them... be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:26-28); these statements regarding the creation of human beings clearly asserts that the family is divinely instituted. God not only creates and unites man and woman but blesses their family life and commissions them to fruitfulness. God created the family in His image and likeness. The image and likeness of God is love (1 Jn 4:10). Then the basis of the family must also be love.

Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, writes, "God created man in His own image and likeness: calling him to existence through love. He called him at the same time for love... Creating the human race in His own image and continually keeping it in being, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and res-

ponsibility, of love and communion. Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being" (FC, 11).

The Holy Family of Nazareth stands at the centre of the New Testament. The covenant in the Old Testament is made to the family of Israel and it is to this family that the Messiah is promised. God chose to incarnate himself in order to save the world and be born in a simple, ordinary Jewish family. Jesus began revealing the immense love of God the Father through a family. He lived in the family, obedient and submissive to His own parents. Under their care he learnt human values and grew up in wisdom and stature. Possibly, he even learnt about the Divine at the knees of his parents. The Holy Family was devout followers of God, as is visible from their lifestyle described by the Gospel writers.

The Church in the New Testament began and grew up in the family. It is in families that the early Christians gathered for *the breaking of the bread* and sharing (Acts 2:46; 5:42; 12:12). So it is plausible to state that the early Churches were the families and the houses of early Christians (Acts 16:15; Rom 16:5; Philem 2; Col 4:15).

GIVING GOD TO KIDS

Helping children from the very earliest years to develop a really meaningful relationship with God is not only important but also vital. As per Canon Law, it is the obligation of parents to educate their children in the faith (Canon 226.2). It states: "It is therefore primarily the res-

ponsibility of Christian parents to ensure the Christian education of their children in accordance with the teaching of the Church." The Church emphasizes the important role of parent's vis-à-vis their children. They are primarily responsible not just for the child's physical and spiritual needs but also her/his cultural, social, intellectual and other needs.



A mother was teaching the rudiments of religion to her four children. One day, at the end of the lesson, she said to them with profound tenderness: "How happy I would be if one of you would become a saint!" The youngest threw himself into his mother's arms, and said: "Don't worry, mother. I'll be a saint." The child kept his word; he became a great Pope and a great saint: Saint Peter Celestine. One of the best gifts parents can give their children is the gift of faith.

Spirituality comes naturally to most kids. From a young age, they feel a connection to other living creatures. They have no trouble believing in things they can't see, and they're intrigued by God and religion. Preschoolers think it's fun to say grace before a meal, and grade-schoolers eagerly speculate about whether their favourite cartoon character will go to heaven when he/she dies. But that doesn't

mean kids really understand what religion is all about. "You need to bring spirituality into your everyday life, not just check it off your list when you drop your kid off at Sunday school," says Mimi Doe, coauthor of *10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting*. Centuries of experience have shown that a strong spiritual foundation can be central to a happy, purposeful, and ethical life.

PICTURING GOD

God must not be presented as a bearded Santa Claus who gifts everything and anything we ask for; neither must He be seen as a despotic father, waiting to pounce on any wrongdoing. God must be presented in terms of love, mercy, joy, understanding, warmth, beauty and peace. Children must be reassured that though God cannot be seen, He is there all the time, assisting, caring, listening and co-operating with us. Children must also be shown that God needs us. This is a wonderful and inspiring thought to develop. A young mother was once asked by her daughter: "How could God need me, hasn't he got everything he wants?" And she narrated the prayer of St. Theresa of Avila: "Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which his love looks out on the world. Yours are the feet with which he goes about doing good. Yours are the hands with which he blesses men now."

God loves people through me. He may want very much that

someone be loved today. I can refuse to let him work through me today since he respects my free choice. What a tremendous responsibility I have, being able to love as Christ loved, and also being in the position that I can refuse the commands of the Creator of love. Parents who talk to their children like this can inspire in them feelings of the tremendous possibilities inherent in each human being. Each one can change the world and a little love can make everything better.

It is also good to help them see the small ways in which they can bring God's love to other people. Everybody can play a part in creating God's Kingdom of love here on earth. Simple things like helping your brother or sister get ready for bed; bringing daddy's slippers to him when he comes home tired from work; helping mommy set and clear the table at meal time; sharing your tiffin with a classmate who didn't bring anything; befriend the girl who is unpopular at school because everyone thinks she is fat and dull.

Children must know that loving is hard and it takes trouble and sacrifice to do things for the people we love. They must also experience the happiness of doing so. Pain and self-sacrifice can be fruitful and sweet when they are made part of love. When a mother comes home from the shopping and finds the tea ready and the kitchen tidy and clean, she smiles and hugs her children and tells them how much she appreciates their love for her, and how really good it makes her

feel to see them turning out to be such caring people. Her warm appreciation more than repays them for the trouble they went through.

Becoming a Praying Family: Teaching Our Kids to Pray



PRAYING TOGETHER

One of the basic requirements of Christian life is prayer. St Paul invites us to "pray without ceasing and give thanks to God at every moment" (1 Thess 5:17-18). Prayer should never be turned into a formality or a chore. It is the glue that keeps a family united and the instrument of blessing and sanctification. Jesus, who has promised to be present when two or three gather in prayer in His name, enters into every family and sanctifies it when they pray together. "Far from being a form of escapism from everyday commitments, prayer constitutes the strongest incentive for the Christian family to assume and comply fully with all its responsibilities as the primary and fundamental cell of human society. Thus the Christian family's actual participation to the fidelity and intensity of the prayer with which it is united with the fruitful vine that is Christ the Lord" (FC, 62).

It's important for every member to learn to be cheerful, spon-

aneous, and relaxed in the presence of God. If a family kneels down in the evening, there could be a formal prayer to start with, and then each member of the family could, if he/she wished, say aloud his own personal prayer, a simple talking to God, thanking him for the good things of the day, asking him for the needs of tomorrow, requesting his grace or healing on certain individuals, and telling him of special plans. This is a wonderful platform to encourage children to develop a familiar relationship with God. When I look back at my life, I realize that it was such prayer that helped me develop a healthy relationship with God that eventually blossomed into a religious vocation and vocation to the priesthood.

Endless are the opportunities for bringing God to children, and children to him, but it is our own witness more than our words, or our own obvious love of God and of our neighbor, more than the rules we make, which are the most worthwhile contribution to the faith of today's young people. If a family is living in the presence of God there need not be formal prayer everyday for the members to encounter God. It is possible to meet God in each other. □



WHAT IS SHARED IS MULTIPLIED

by Giuliano Palizzi

You remember that wonderful passage we call "the multiplication of the loaves and the fish"? I think it's the episode that is most narrated by the evangelists as compared to others that have been mentioned by one or other of them. For example, the washing of the feet is mentioned only by St. John but this story is further mentioned twice in Luke and again in Mark! That means it's been mentioned totally six times! It could certainly be because the incident means to give us a precise message beyond the simple extraordinary fact of the multiplication of the bread and fish that's not just enough for everyone but there's still an abundance left over.

THE PROBLEM OF HUNGER

The various texts don't speak of "multiplication" but what is said that it's a moment of great "sharing." It's important to grasp the difference. To say that there's been a multiplication means that someone has finally solved the problem. To say that there's been a moment of great sharing means that someone was invited to take charge of the problem. To say that there's no solution is a way of saying that no one wants to get invol-

ved. The apostles (that's all of us) have a lot of doubts of how to deal with the problem. Philip says: "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to have a piece." The twelve came to him and said: "Send the crowd away to go into the villages and surroundings to find food. We're in a lonely place." In short, they seem to tell Jesus that the problem of hunger was not their problem. It had nothing to do with faith. Don't we think in the same way too? Faith is: believing in God, praying, going to Mass, not *doing* this or that... it's the politicians and the professionals who have to resolve this hunger issue, or should all of us get involved!

JESUS' SOLUTION

Jesus says the Kingdom of God is not "somewhere else." Paradise is not something separate from concrete everyday life. It is not a 'point of arrival' because "the kingdom of God is at hand, the time has come, repent and believe in the Gospel!" We must stop making little sacrifices to go to heaven. We should take care to build Heaven - the Kingdom of God - by doing all we can to feed those who are hungry or give drink to those who are thirsty, clothe those

who are naked, care for the sick, welcome migrants whatever their colour. Because in the end we'll have to give an account of this; and if we fail, (Lord, when did we see you hungry, naked, a migrant?) nothing we say will be able to save us. We can't bring to our defense the fact that we attended Mass on Sundays... or some story like that. We've got to answer just one question. Did we recognize Jesus every time we met someone who could not live with dignity because of material, mental or moral problems because we reduced the Gospel to something that looked forward to the future but ignored the present? The Kingdom of God is at hand... the time has come... so?

BLESSED ARE THE POOR

It is clear that Jesus isn't worried about the hunger for bread that is why he offers us a very different kind of bread from the manna of Moses. "I am the bread of life. Though your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, they died. But here you have the bread which comes down from heaven so that you may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that has come down from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever. The bread I shall give is my own flesh and I will give it for the life of the world." After the resurrection the disciples were afraid at first if they

"Jesus reasons according to the logic of God which is the logic of sharing. How many times have we turned away from someone so we don't see a brother in need? We've looked somewhere else and in our white gloves we've said: 'look after yourselves.' This is not like Jesus: This is selfishness."

Pope Francis,
Angelus 3.8.2014

would be able to act like Jesus. Peter said: "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk!" Having nothing is poverty but giving everything is sharing. One day Mother told a journalist who asked her if she thought about solving the problem of poverty in India. She replied that she was just a drop but if many drops came together they would become an ocean and there would be enough for everyone. Blessed are the poor in spirit. The more one is - really speaking - evangelically poor, the more one lives everyday sharing so that everyone eats and then you collect the leftovers and fill twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. ☐



AUGUST HLOND

1881 - 1948

August Hlond was born at Brzeczkwice, in Poland on July 5, 1881 to Jan a railway worker and Maria Imiela. He was the second of eleven children of who four became Salesians. His parents gave him a firm foundation in the Faith and inculcated in him a filial love for Our Lady. At 12, attracted by the fame of Don Bosco, he followed his elder brother and went to Italy to consecrate himself to the Lord in the Salesian Society. August was accepted at the college at Lombriasco to complete his secondary studies. After this he proceeded to the Novitiate and received the cassock from Bl. Michael Rua (1896). Having made his religious profession, the superiors sent him to the Gregorian University in Rome for Philosophy where he graduated. He returned to Poland after that and had his first taste of the Salesian apostolate at the Salesian college of Oswiecim.

He completed his theological studies while frequenting the University of Krakow and Lviv in the Faculty of Letters (1905). He was ordained in Krakow by Archbishop Nowak. In 1907 he was appointed rector of the new house of Przemysl (1907-09), from where he moved on to Vienna (1909-19). Here his talent and his personal abilities had an even greater reach considering the particular difficulties where the institute was



located. Fr. August Hlond's holiness and his kindness were quickly able to remedy not only the economic situation but also to enliven the Salesian youth work which earned him the admiration of people from all walks of life.

In 1919 the development of the Austro-Hungarian province was advised about a proportionate division houses. Superiors appointed Fr Hlond as Provincial, entrusting him with the care of the German and Hungarian confreres with his seat in Vienna (1919-22). Within two years the young Provincial led the province to establish ten new communities, guiding them according to the true Salesian spirit and thus attracting many vocations.

He was elected bishop and consecrated by the Archbishop of Warsaw Cardinal Kakowski in the presence of ten bishops and political, civic and military digni-

ties. There was great joy in all the dioceses because in the three years that Monsignor Hlond was administrator he had visited all the parishes, administered confirmation everywhere where there had been no confirmation for over 20 years. On June 24 of that same year Pope Pius XI promoted him to become the Archbishop of Gniezno and Poznan and appointed him primate of Poland. The following year on June 20th he was created cardinal and awarded the titular see of Santa Maria della Pace.

Unfortunately the Second World War disrupted his pastoral plans. Poland was indeed invaded and the Cardinal was one of the first victims of the Nazis. They found him a fearless and influential defender of human rights, the freedom of the fatherland and the Church. Then began his Calvary: he was forced into exile till the end of the war. Persecuted step by step, he escaped with the diplomatic corps and crossed the border. He first headed for Rome and was received by Pope Pius XII. After this he began a courageous defense of his country which intensified; while in France where he took sanctuary in Lourdes. There he strengthened the organization of the resistance. The Nazis interned him first in Lorraine and then in Westphalia. During these years of forced exile in France (1939-1944) Cardinal Hlond raised his voice repeatedly in favour of the Jewish population in Poland who were severely tested by the Nazi occupation, especially after the adoption of the "final solution of the Jewish problem" (extermination) by the authorities of the Third Reich.

Finally with an advanced surgical attack the Allied troops managed to free him. He was taken to Paris and then to Rome where he received a most joyful welcome. After an audience with the Holy Father, he returned to Poland to the See of Warsaw where he was first appointed archbishop, maintaining his old seat of Gniezno and Poznan and appointed him primate of Poland. With pastoral vigour he defended his faithful from Bolshevik atheism, striving to protect the oppressed, advocating the solution of social issues and comforting the hungry and the homeless. He died in Warsaw on October 22, 1948 and his funeral was an apotheosis.

In the history of the Polish Church, Cardinal August Hlond was one of the most outstanding figures because of his religious life and witness, the extent, variety and originality of his pastoral ministry and for the suffering he endured with intrepid Christian fortitude for the Kingdom of God, making one of the most heroic periods in the life of the Polish people shine with brilliance. His life intimately intertwines both the spiritual values and the secular situations of the life of the people entrusted to him and whom he loved and served as a true shepherd and father. As Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the Primate of Poland and successor to Cardinal Hlond said: "He was, without a doubt, a man of State! But what stands out in the life of Cardinal Hlond was his religious soul, his profound faith, a sincere soul like the people of Silesia, perhaps hard as coal, the fruit of the land, but burning with the simplicity of his deep faith and his total dedication to God." □



CL. SACHIN TRIBHUVAN

A Salesian Student of Theology at Don Bosco, Koregaon Park, Pune

I am from Don Bosco Parish Savedi, Ahmednagar. I have two brothers (Nitin and Pramod) and loving parents. I learned many of my religious habits from my mother. She would always pray to Jesus, Mother Mary and to St. John Bosco. For the family, especially for me and for my brothers, the morning prayers and the family Rosary in the evening were compulsory. Even today if I go home I do the same thing.

I finished my Primary education at the Government School. Fr. Thomas D'costa, sdb was the Rector, Parish Priest and the Principal of Don Bosco Savedi, Ahmednagar. Under his guidance I was admitted in Class 5 at Don Bosco School, Savedi. There I completed SSC. During those years Fr. Thomas guided and inspired me to join Don Bosco Lonavla in order to become a priest. I finished my board exams in 2006. In the month of April I was free and had forgotten about going to Lonavla. Fr. James Nigrel, sdb was visiting the houses of the parish and when he came to my house he advised me to go for the Lonavla camp. Since I was free I said to myself "let's go and have some fun." I went for the camp and was amazed by the Salesians who were playing, praying and studying so well.

In 2006 I joined Lonavla. The one who had sown the seed of a vocation in me was already the Rector of the house of Lonavla and therefore I felt at ease.

On the way I met many Sales-



ians who became my friends and who supported me in my vocation. My parents were my greatest support and even today they support me. The last two years of Practical training were very significant for me because that was the time when I actually felt driven to go ahead and to say Yes forever to Jesus. I was in Jhabua (MP) for my Practical Training where Fr. Christopher Valentino and Fr. Pratap Damor really gave me space and time to think and reflect. They gave me the taste of Salesian life. It's always difficult to prepare for one's Final Profession but the fathers shaped and moulded me in such a way that today I'm really convinced about my Salesian vocation.

I made Final Profession on May 24, 2017 at Don Bosco Shrine Matunga, Mumbai. Presently, I'm doing my first year of Theology at Koregaon Park Pune, Maharashtra. I hope that Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco will continue to bless me in this journey of

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE April 4

Mario Scudu

When many Christians think of the saints they are still obsessed with an established stereotype that saints are people who endure lengthy penances and say long prayers and perform great works of charity. This is true, but a bit simplistic. Saints are all the above but not only that. There's no need to scroll through the lives of saints to prove this. Just consider St. Isidore for example. He was, for many years, the zealous bishop of Seville, but he was also a man of culture, a great scholar, perhaps the most learned man of his time. Thanks to his works, he enjoyed unquestioned authority on many subjects and his works were studied in many schools of theology. In fact, he was called the 'Teacher of the Middle Ages.'

He founded a school that had a profound influence on the culture and teaching practices of Western Europe. His writings concerning Spain of his time and the Barbarian Invasions are believed to be reliable even today. But the work (among many) that made him most famous throughout Europe is the



Etymologiae, a work of great erudition. It contains subjects such as grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, medicine and history, information concerning religious practices and theology. Today, thanks to him, this work is considered the first real encyclopedia of knowledge.

The writings of Isidore not only have historical value but also show a man deeply interested in culture in general and spiritual subjects. He was eager to educate not only the clergy but the faithful too. He gave great importance to the study of Scripture. In fact he said: "If a man wants to be always in God's company, he must pray regularly and read regularly. When we pray, we talk to God, when we read, God talks to us."

In iconography he is depicted (mostly in León) as a bishop holding a book and a pen in his hand. St. Isidore's symbol however, is a beehive, for his incredible effort in putting together ancient doctrine.

Another detail: Blessed John XXIII was inspired by the portrait of the saintly bishop of Seville. Isidore wrote in *De Officiis Ecclesiasticis*: "He who is given the authority to educate and instruct people must, for their sake be holy and blameless in all things. (...) Every bishop should distinguish himself as much through his humility as through his authority... He should also cherish that charity that surpasses every other gift and without which all other virtues have no value." Didn't Isidore unintentionally pen his own spiritual portrait?

Our little brother Isidore

There is no precise information about Isidore's infancy and childhood. His Father Severianus came from Cartagena and was of noble Hispano-Roman extraction. When the Visigoth invasion was about to take place the family, to escape the horror and devastation, moved to Seville where Isidore was probably born. He was already preceded by his brothers (St.) Leandro, (St.) Fulgentius and Florentina (also a saint). He was orphaned but his brother Leandro especially took care of his education.

This was what Leandro wrote in the epilogue to the Rule prepared for his sister Florentina a nun, "Finally, I beg you, my dearest sister, to remember me in prayer and not to forget our little

brother Isidore; because our parents, leaving him under the protection of God and of his surviving brothers, quietly and without concern for his tender age, fell asleep in the Lord. As I truly consider him a son... I dedicate myself entirely to love him and pray for him with much affection as if he were tenderly loved by our parents."

He probably frequented the school at the cathedral of Seville founded by his brother Leandro and whom he later succeeded as bishop (601). Isidore also inherited a rich library. By now an intellectually mature man, he was already writing works of great erudition always moved by pastoral zeal.

Isidore was not only a man of culture he was also an effective pastor of souls. He was so renowned and esteemed that other bishops came to consult him and request his intervention on ecclesiastical and even civil matters; also to organize local synods and councils.

Isidore and the "Filioque" question

Isidore also deserves a place in the history of the Church for presiding over to two Councils: the first was the provincial council in Seville and the second was the national council in Toledo in 633 (the IV Council). Both contributed to promote and implement relevant decrees and in both cases Isidore stood out before everyone as an administrator and an intellectual.

But his most important contribution was at Toledo. In fact, the Creed drafted there was based on the theology of the Trinity and

the Incarnation and was accepted as a correct definition of the faith even by the councils that followed. In particular he is admired for being able to get the so-called Christological issue of the *Filioque* accepted also in the West. In this Council an agreement was also reached among the bishops for a liturgical uniformity throughout Spain; it was an important step given that the discrepancy in the liturgy was a source of continual doctrinal diatribes among the clergy. Each diocese would have to start a school for the formation of the clergy modelled on the one already present in Seville.

An important detail relevant today: the Council decided that none of the Jews, and there were many in the territory, should be forced to become Christian.

The Exercise for a Happy Death

Also worthy of note was his strategy of dealing with the issue of preparation for death. In fact on his journey to God there is a detailed account which critics judge reliably reveal the depth of his sanctity and how much he was esteemed.

He died in 636 and this was what was reported by one of his deacons. "Realizing that his end was approaching, he opened his

hands, always generous, but then even wider and for the next six months or more, everyday he distributed his wealth to the poor (...). When his stomach disease became acute he called two of his bishops to assist him in his last hour. They took him from his palace to the basilica of St. Vincent. A great multitude of poor people, clergy and religious and the citizens of the city wept loudly as they accompanied him.

In the basilica he was placed in the middle of the choir, near the gate where he made his Confession. Then he asked one of the bishops to dress him in sackcloth and the other to cover him with ashes. Then raising his hands he prayed..." He asked pardon of the bishops and the lay people present and received the Eucharist. Four days later, on April 4, 636 he died.

Two more important dates: At the Council of Toledo in 653, Isidore was declared "distinguished doctor, the most recent glory of the Catholic Church."

The second was in 1063: his mortal remains were transferred to León where they remain to this day. This transfer was providential because it is easier for countless pilgrims to visit them as they journey to Santiago de Compostela. □



We, as Catholics are not permitted to believe anything of our own will, nor to choose what someone has believed of his. We have God's apostles as authorities, who did not themselves - of their own wills - choose anything of what they wanted to believe, but faithfully transmitted to the nations, the teachings of Christ."

- *Isidore of Seville*



JESUS APPEARED TO THEM

by Ian Pinto, sdb

The Resurrection is the foundational to Christianity. It is so important that the entire Christian religion rests on its truth. St. Paul eloquently and candidly states, *“If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is empty and our belief comes to nothing. And we become false witnesses of God... if Christ has not been raised, your faith gives you nothing, and you are still in sin”* (1 Cor 15:14-17). Paul wrote this to refute the claims that some people were making that the Resurrection was simply a hoax. He answers, *“If the dead are not raised then neither has Christ been raised. Also those who fall asleep in Christ are lost”* (1 Cor 15:16, 18). The point of the Resurrection is to provide hope – hope of things to come. Paul mentions it in verse 19, *“If it is only for this life that we hope in Christ, we are the most unfortunate of all people.”*

What sets Jesus apart from any other famous religious personality? It's his Resurrection. No other religious leader can boast of dying and rising. On the other hand, the evidence for the resurrection of Christ is undeniable. Scholars

and historians have come to the conclusion that Jesus did indeed die on a cross, lay buried in a tomb and rise to life again. The famous atheist turned theist, Anthony Flew had this to say about the resurrection, *“The evidence for the Resurrection is better than for claimed miracles in any other religion. It's outstandingly different in quality and quantity...”*

Did the Resurrection Really Happen?

Skeptics down the ages have asked for proof of the Resurrection and recent studies have shown through modern techniques of investigation that the Resurrection was a fact. One of the standard rules of evidence is consistent eye-witness from multiple credible witnesses. This serves as a very strong form of evidence and since the resurrection is an event so far in the past, credible eye-witnesses accounts are the best bet. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-6, Paul establishes the following: *“I have passed on to you what I myself received that Christ died for our sins, as Scripture says; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day, according to*

the Scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas and then to the Twelve. Afterwards he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters together; most of them are still alive, although some have already gone to rest.”

Manuscript studies indicate that this was a very early creed of the Christian faith, written within a few years after the death of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Paul was not simply writing a concocted story that was making the rounds in early Christian circles rather he was quoting from an early source. It is also intriguing to note that he mentions *“most of them are still alive”*. In other words, he was inviting his readers to check the facts for themselves. If they didn't believe him, they could ask any of the 450 plus eye-witnesses about the resurrection of Jesus. He wouldn't have included a statement like that if he was trying to hide something like a conspiracy, hoax, myth or legend.

The resurrection of Jesus was also declared in numerous other accounts, including the appearance to Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:10-18), to other women (Mt 28:8-10), to the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-32), to eleven disciples and others (Lk 20:19-23), to the apostles (including Thomas) (Jn 20:26-30), to seven apostles (Jn 21:1-14), to the disciples (Mt 28:16-20), and to the apostles on the Mount of Olives (Lk 24:50-52 and Acts 1:4-9). The ultimate test of credibility for these eye-witnesses was that many of them faced martyrdom for their eye-witness testimony. This is astonishing! These witnesses knew the truth. They were followers of Jesus who chose to die rather than

give in to lies, for a historical event – the resurrection that established Jesus as the true Son of God.

Jesus Appears Still

While there are numerous accounts of Jesus appearing to people immediately after his death, there are also accounts of individuals who claim that Jesus appeared to them. Some of the well-known ones are St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, who spread devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and St. Faustina, who spread devotion to the Divine Mercy. Even till the present day, there are individuals who claim to have seen Jesus. Perhaps some of you have also had that experience. Such experiences help to back the belief that Jesus Christ is alive. The best proof, according to me, that someone has encountered Jesus is to check their lifestyle.

Those who encountered the resurrected Christ, were not the same people who saw the mortal Christ. St. Paul is a powerful example in this regard. Nearly every one of the disciples who claimed to have 'seen' Jesus post-mortem, were ready to go to their death rather than recant their witness. They were bold enough to stand for the truth. They were unlikely to give in to their past weaknesses. They had to struggle to live holy lives but their focus sharpened. Many of us perhaps, have never had the experience of seeing Jesus but we have experienced His presence and His power in our lives, that's why we still believe. What if somebody closely observes our lifestyle? What will they find? Are we different people because of Jesus or are just people with a Christian name? □

Quiet Spaces

GOD OF SURPRISES

Pope Francis' homily (edited) at Domus Sanctae Marthae on Monday, May 8, 2017

Peter had the courage to be surprised by the novelty of the Holy Spirit, to break the rigid response of "this is the way it has always been done". He was not afraid of creating "scandal" or of not fulfilling his mission as the "rock". He had the freedom not to hinder "God's grace", and not to "silence the din that the Spirit makes when he comes to the Church". Pope Francis invited the faithful to ask the Father for the "grace of discernment", and urged them not to commit the "sin of resisting the Holy Spirit".

"In these chapters that we have read in the last few weeks from the Acts of the Apostles" (11:1-18), the Pontiff began, "we can see the Christian community is moving; and what moves the community is the Holy Spirit".

"The Spirit is the gift of God", the Pope explained, "of this God, our Father, who always surprises us: the God of surprises". This is "because he is a living God, a God who abides in us, a God who moves our heart, a God who is in the Church and walks with us; and he always surprises us on this path". Thus, "just as he had the creativity to create the world, so he has the creativity to create new things every day", the Pope continued. He "is the God who surprises".

"Before the Lord's many surprises — after this, the Apostles have to meet and discuss and reach an agreement in order to take the step forward that the Lord wants — before so many things", the Holy Father had "two words" in mind: resistance and closure.

"Always, since the time of the prophets until today, there has been the sin of resisting the Holy Spirit: resistance to the Spirit", Pope Francis stated. "This is the sin for which Stephen scolds the very members of the Sanhedrin: 'You and your fathers have always resisted the Holy Spirit'". This resistance can also be expressed by saying: "No, this is the way it has always been done", almost as if to say: "do not come with these novelties; Peter, calm down, take a pill to calm your nerves, keep calm", the Pontiff added.

But this is actually "closure to the voice of God", Pope Francis warned. "In Psalm 95[94], the Lord tells his people: harden not your hearts as your fathers did at Meribah". Instead, "Seek the Lord's will, the Lord's voice, what the Lord wants", the Pontiff stressed. "What the Lord wants is other people; we heard this in the Gospel: 'I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd'" (Jn 10:11-18). Instead, the Gentiles were judged, as if "condemned", and even the "proselytes, the Gentiles who became

believers" were seen as "second class believers; no one said it but in fact", it was so, Francis explained.

"Closure, resistance to the Holy Spirit", the Pope continued, also occurs through "that phrase that always closes, that stops you: 'This is how it has always been done'". However, he pointed out that this way of doing things "kills; it kills freedom; it kills joy; it kills faithfulness to the Holy Spirit who always moves forward, leading the Church forward". After all, the Pontiff continued, "how can I know whether something is of the Holy Spirit or of worldliness, whether of the spirit of the world or of the spirit of the devil?"

The only way is "to ask for the grace of discernment", Pope Francis explained. "The instrument that the Spirit himself gives us is discernment: to discern, in any case, as one must do". Indeed, "this is what the Apostles did. They met, they spoke and they saw that this was the path of the Holy Spirit". On the other hand, "those who did not have this gift, or who had not prayed, so as to ask for it, remained closed and still". Christians "must know how to discern, especially at a time with so much communication, with so many novelties, to know how to discern: to discern one thing from another, to discern which is the novelty, the new wine that comes from God; which is news that comes from the spirit of the world and which is news that comes from spirit of the devil".

"Some may wonder", the Pope suggested: "if these Gentiles were sinners and were damned and then they changed, then does faith change?". The answer is "no", the Pope responded. "Faith never changes. Faith is the same, but it moves; it grows; it broadens", he explained. Saint Vincent of Lérins, an elderly monk from the 5th century, said these words: 'the truths of the Church go forward'; *ut annis consolidetur, dilatetur tempore sublimetur aetate*'. That is, Francis explained, "they strengthen with the years, develop with time and become deeper with age". That is, "they become stronger with time, with the years; they broaden with time and grow with the age of the Church". This is the way, he stressed. "It is the same truth, but it helps us understand better". Jesus' words come to our aid: "there shall be one flock". In fact, "the disciples did not understand what Jesus was trying to say", which was "the Gentiles will also receive the Holy Spirit".

The Pontiff ended by inviting the faithful to ask "the Lord for the grace of discernment so as not to take the wrong path and not to fall into idleness, into rigidity, into the closing of the heart".
(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 21, 26 May 2017)□

THE DESTINY IS 'YES'

From Fr. Ian Doullon's collection of stories

Imagine you're on the seashore, with the wind your hair, the smell of sea salt in your nostrils and the sound of ocean surf roaring defiance leaping upon the land where man clings to his bit of solid earth; his brain baffled by a power which it can never control. This is a force that holds man at its mercy; vainly he brandishes his little sword of science; the power of the deep snatches it out of his hand and leaves him helpless: the sea, the strong ever moving sea. If in place of sound it uttered words it might say: "When I am angry I make alliance with the wind. I swallow the greatest of ships. I reach to the sky and pull down flames. When I am in the height of my fury I dash on to the land and I tear away houses and in the frenzy of a single tidal wave I smash entire cities. Man may use me but never rule me; never for an instant curb my ebb or my flow." But then he has to be reminded: "Yes, but once you did know complete submission. For one moment, you, the unconquerable obeyed." He has to admit it but it was a long time ago and for one moment only.

Then I go on: "Remember that night on the sea of Galilee, when you began to trouble a boat that carried twelve men...and one other?"

In the pitch darkness Peter looks out and feels the wind rising. It seems to come upon that boat all of a sudden. It was dead calm when they put out from the shore. The Master was fast asleep in the stern. It had

been a tiring day for him as it was for all of them. They could all do with a few hours of peace. As he was musing the water seemed to get rougher and the waves seem to be rising higher. "We're in for a storm!" Peter exclaimed. There was nothing they could do, they couldn't turn back now. They just had to run for it. They couldn't imagine how the Master could sleep through this. Their little boat began taking on water. Now there was panic written large on Peter's face and he screamed: "James, James stop bailing...the rest of you try and help him. Andrew, Andrew head to starboard...get the bow into the wind." All of a sudden they realized they were breached. Another wave could simply topple them over. They would flounder at any minute. Peter turned around: "Look at the Master, he's still sleeping. How can he? We're sinking!" Water had entered the boat and any time now they would go over. Peter shouted to John: "Wake the Master, John, wake him."

John went to the stern. Shaking the Master by the shoulder he shouted: "Master, master...Lord, don't you see, we're going to drown! Lord save us, we're perishing."

The Master simply sat up, looked around and raised his hand: "Peace, be still." Then he turned back and lay down again.

All of a sudden there was a dead calm...they were astounded. He just spoke and there was not a breeze on the horizon! It was so still they would have to

take to the oars, Peter started giving orders: "James...all of you, start rowing."

When you walk into the foyer of any hospital you'll hear moans and groans of pain...I am disease...those are the voices of my victims. I stalk man from his first breath to his last. From the ancient times he's warred against me struggling to learn the secrets of my power. Science promises to conquer me...in a while...in a little while. But still I slow man's footsteps, cripple his hands, fasten him into wheelchairs, throw him groaning on to his bed." Then once more he has to be reminded: "But there was once when you bowed to a master." He had to admit: "There was, a long time ago." Then I went on: "He had the power to release your prisoners." Disease responded weakly: "Yes." "And he did. Do you remember the time outside a certain town when he and his friends saw one of your victims creeping toward him?"

I took him back to the scene of that defeat. There was a crowd milling around the village wall and suddenly there was a tinkling sound and a weak reedy voice pleading: "Unclean...unclean..." There was hush and a stir. Peter noticed the leper and he had come so near the town and he was walking directly towards Peter and his companions still trying to loudly scream: "Unclean...unclean." He was so close to them that the foul stench now seemed so repugnant. People were covering their faces...but not before they noticed that the poor leper had no toes

or fingers. His face too seemed to have been devoured by the dreaded disease. The Master was standing there looking at him and not moving at all. The leper made his way toward the Master and the Master placed his hand on Peter's shoulder and whispered: "Peter stay here;" and he moved toward the leper.

The leper crawled right up to Jesus' feet and his stubby hand barely brushed the Master's feet. The Master in turn touched him. He put his hand on the leper's shoulder and he heard the leper's heartfelt plea: "Lord, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." The Master immediately whispered: "I will, be made clean."

There was complete silence all around as the crowd watched in hushed amazement. The leper looked at himself, his hands...his feet...then he screamed as loudly as he could: "I am clean! I am clean...!" He was so unrecognizably disfigured...and now there was not a trace...of the dreaded disease! He was cured.

All is quiet in the little sleepy town and then above the chirping of the birds and lowing of the cattle can be heard the mournful sound of the church bell. "Never send to know for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee." Then I pause and I hear deep within me: "This is my word to every man, for I am death. When I call, man comes; when I knock all doors fly open. However science may work to spin out the thread of human years there comes always a point at which I say: 'stop!' And a life ends. In all the world there is no power that can stay my hand."

But that can't be! I pluck up courage and contest his boasting: "But even you met one who was your master." And he replies: "I walk the earth and lay my hand on every man." I know my Scriptures and so I retort: "But you have bowed to one stronger than you." Then he had to admit: "Yes, once."

I recall it in his hearing: "Yes, in a town called Nain where you had laid your hand upon a young man and now the litter-bearers were carrying his body out to the tomb and they ask people to step aside to let the funeral pass. Someone asks in a whisper: 'Who is it you are burying good woman?' 'The son of Anna, Jacob's widow's only son;' the only son of a widow...what a blow! Death is cruel... I watch her as she comes past sobbing her heart out. She's all alone in the world. Then all of a sudden someone halts the procession. That never happens. The funeral procession makes its way to the burial ground as swiftly as possible...I've never heard of such a thing. Then I recognize him: It's Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth. He goes up to the body and says, loud enough for everyone to hear: 'Young man, I say to you, arise!' To the shock of everyone, the man sits up as if he's been woken from a deep sleep. He turns around and looks for his mother. Jesus helps him alight from the bier and leads the lad to Anna his mother. 'Mother, here is your son,' he whispers.

That's another feat...I feel quite bold...even proud that Christ has such power the wind and the sea, disease and death itself; Christ gave orders and they obeyed. Then

I hear a whisper rather shrewd sounding: He had command over the strongest of forces except me..." I ask: And who are you?" "The will of a man," he replies. "He did not command me because he would not. Of God's own choice he made me and left me free. I am the most powerful of all created things because I alone can say 'no' to God. He does not force me even when I am the will of a man named Judas. Even when he knew that I had settled for the thirty pieces of silver he could only reveal to me that he knew that I wanted some revenge for the three years I had wasted. He would never restore the kingdom. I had to get something out of this for myself. Thirty pieces of silver that was small exchange for a throne but it was better than nothing. He could only warn me that he knew. He said once: "*Had I not chosen you twelve and one of you has a devil?*" And the last time the eleven and I ate with him he kept referring to what only he and I knew. First he washed our feet; a fine thing for a leader to do I thought. And I was gladder than ever that I was finished with him. Throughout the meal he kept making remarks that only I understood.⁹ Then the Lord spoke: "*Amen, amen I say to you, the one of you who eats with me shall betray me. The hand of him who betrays me is with me at the table.*" "*Is it I Lord?*" "*Lord is it I?*" "*The Son of Man indeed goes his way as it is written of him but woe to him by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man had he never been born.*" "*Is it I Master?*" "*Yes, it is you. What you are set on doing do quickly.*"

Judas went on: "My mind was

made up. His words couldn't stop me. To the very last he tried to change me with words; even when I led the mob into the garden..." "The one whom I kiss, that is he. Arrest him and lead him away carefully." Jesus heard me coming and looked at me: "Friend, why have you come here?" I said: "Hail, Master!" He shook his head regretfully: "Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

It hit me only later and I felt awful. Afterwards when I was going out to hang myself I could hear him saying 'it would be better for that man had he never been born. And I wished I had never been born. I wish I had been a dumb beast with no mind of its own. It's better to have no will.

Suddenly some else spoke: "No it isn't." I asked: "Who are you?" "A thief," I was shocked: "A thief?" He went on: "Yes, at the time this man was hanging himself other men were hanging me on a cross on Calvary. I had it coming, I'd led a rotten life and I knew it, but I didn't know what to do about it now. They crucified three of us on that day: me another thief and Jesus of Nazareth. I was surprised to see him there with us. I'd always heard that he was a good man - a kind of a prophet, some people said because he could cure the sick and even bring the dead back to life. Now he was in the same fix I was and it didn't seem right. There was a whole mob around his cross jeering at him and yelling but he never answered them. All he said was: 'Father forgive them, they know not what they do.' I put everything together; the way he called God

his Father; the things I'd heard about him, the way he was taking this now; and I knew I had a choice to make. I could hang on to my old life with its sins; die hard as I had lived, the way the other thief was doing or I could accept the grace that was stirring within me. I could surrender the few minutes left out of a rotten life to my Lord and Master. The other thief started screaming: "Save yourself and us if you're the Son of God." I shouted back: "Don't you even fear God, seeing that you're under the same sentence? We're getting what we deserve but this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then I turned to him: "Lord, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

He turned to me and very calmly said: "This day you shall be with me in Paradise." And so, when I died, I went with him to Paradise.

I'm glad I was born a man even though it meant I could make mistakes. I could still change things with my last breath. And I tell you, Paradise is worth a thousand, thousand times the agony of the hardest choice.

Our free will is the strongest power in God's creation because God himself will never force it, never overrule it. This is our key to destiny. This is our claim to glory, that we who can sin, do not or if we have sinned, we who could have despaired like Judas have not. We use our freedom to cry: 'Lord remember me, Lord forgive me.' And our choice is rewarded with his answer. "Come possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." □

FRUGALITY AND THRIFT

by Natale Cerrato

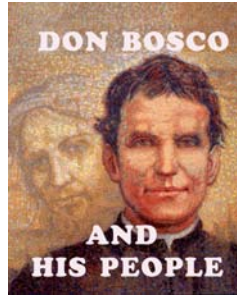
Don Bosco's Appeal

Don Bosco, always short of money to feed and clothe his large family at Valdocco, found himself particularly distressed in 1868 when he discovered a new expense that would further deplete his meagre resources. The intimation regarding the land tax would force him to sacrifice to the government a sizable amount of the money he had received in charity. So he proceeded to petition the Ministry to grant him a waiver. We found this petition in his correspondence addressed to the Minister of Finance, Quintino Sella on August 15, 1870: "Excellency,

The predicament faced by the youngsters lodged at the house of the said Oratory of St. Francis di Sales urges me, the undersigned, to resort to your Excellency's consideration. In all our institutions together they number around 1200. The decrease in charities,



April 2018



the increase in taxes and the crowds of abandoned children from all over Italy who ask for shelter, leads us to hope for a total if not at least for a partial reprieve of the state tax on flour which exceeds 12000 francs.

This is the plea that this applicant makes in the name of these poor children and which he hopes will receive a sympathetic consideration in this exceptional case.

With gratitude to Your Excellency, Your humble applicant,
Father John Bosco
Turin, 15 August, 1970

The reply communicated to Don Bosco by the Tax agent of Turin on September 17, said;

"The Minister of Finance has decided to reject the request. Although the economic conditions of the Oratory are to be deplored. However, it is not in the power of this executive to remit the taxes established by law and to grant. Knowing the not-so-prosperous condition of the

24

Don Bosco's Madonna

exchequer the aforesaid Ministry cannot accede to the request."

Therefore, the Minister considers it unlawful and impossible to exonerate Don Bosco and so impose the burden on the whole nation."

QUINTINO SELLA

Quintino Sella (1827-1884) belonged to a family of wool merchants. A mineralogist, alpinist and a well-known politician known as "a soldier of the Right." He was thrice Minister of Finance: in the government of Rattazzi (1862), the government of Lamarmora (1864-65) and the government of Lanza (1869-73).

The chronic state deficit, the scary debt and the monetary crisis of the 60's threatened to paralyze the economy of the country. Because of the loss of credit on the international markets it became indispensable that the citizens within the nation make sacrifices and find the necessary resources to prevent financial collapse. Quintino Sella was a man with "economics in his blood." He looked at expenditure with "a miser's lens" and renounced any kind of popularity regarding measures that he took, auctioning state-owned and church property and introducing tax hikes. Among the latter, the most discussed and opposed was the tax on flour which was nothing new in Italy. This tax which he proposed in 1865 was one of the causes of the fall of the Lamarmora Ministry. The law was hastily promulgated at Cambray-Digny Finance. The quick collection of taxes hurt everyone since everyone consumed bread but those

April 2018

who most resented it were the poor, especially in the countryside. Agitations and revolts followed. That was how Lanza and his government fell. In December 1869 Lanza was called to form a new government. Sella was called once more to the Finance ministry where he remained till 1873 bringing his ingenuity and expertise and a real moral crusade to save the situation. He did not abolish the tax on flour but adjusted it without removing the penalty.

It is not our task to judge the fiscal policy of Quintino Sella. But we know that he did to try to square the circle, and we also know that he was a man of moral integrity. He chose severe reforms for everyone with the sole purpose of saving the country and, after many efforts he managed to achieve a balanced state budget. He worked silently through enormous administrative and financial setbacks. He himself recalled that in 1880, those difficult years of the land tax, he said: "We have only one desire and it is that this instrument be sent to the museum of antiquity to remember a period of history where we resorted to most serious and severe means just to provide for the needs of the fatherland," and he concluded by assuring all that he had done "everything, so that in the future it would not be necessary for another Sella to do so again; which would be far worse than the unhappy situation we are now have" (63). Through his example and his rigour he made Italians aware of the need to save. He instituted, among other things, postal-savings banks,

25

Don Bosco's Madonna

giving added incentive to a campaign for building the economy. He shouted “down!” which became the object of caricatures against him. There were caustic anecdotes written about him. Among other things people said he extinguished candles in the corridors of the Ministry; he travelled only in economy class and ate only a loaf of bread with salami he had brought from home. But through his relentless labours he contributed immensely to the development of Italy. Faithful to his conviction, even in death he wanted to be buried like a pauper, without any civic ceremonies in the mountains of Oropia.

PIEDMONT AND PARSIMONY

The sense of saving was not specific to Piedmont of the time of Quintino Sella; it was the result of a centuries-old tradition. The Piedmontese, throughout their troubled history were driven to parsimony and a sense of thrift.

In those days, a farmer, with all the risks he faced, was forced to put aside what he had saved through the sweat of his brow and to consume less in his family and to always spend in great moderation. The frugality at table was another aspect of this same attitude. An ordinary meal consisted of bread, soup and wine. A few onions and peppers were served on the side.

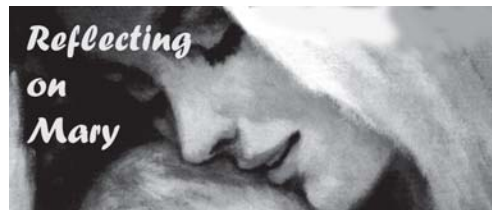
In the municipal archives one can still find inventories of agricultural and household items valued as testamentary provisions. Every corner of the house of the deceased was scoured, drawers were opened and with the

help of a notary every tiny little thing of value was listed and valued including empty bottles, pots and ladles, even tea towels. Indicative in this regard was the inventory of Francis Bosco. What was listed were: “three towels of a lire each, two brass lamps and a small dish rag, a hundred by seventy-five” (64).

From his childhood, Don Bosco breathed the atmosphere of frugality and thrift. In his Memoirs of the Oratory, speaking of his parents he described them as “peasants who worked honestly and earned their livelihood through their hard work and thrift” (65). In the same Memoirs, referring to the terrible famine of 1817 he makes a note of his mother’s effort to feed her family through the crisis: “tireless work, constant economy, care for the most minute things” (66). He always kept before him the lifestyle of his mother.

Don Bosco a rigorous saver was faithful to the practice of spending what was only strictly necessary. He used to say: “If we save even a cent, when we don’t really need to spend it, Divine Providence will always be extremely generous with us” (75).

A benefactor brought to Valdocco some new shirts for Don Bosco. On Saturday night the guest-master placed one of them on Don Bosco’s bed but to his surprise he found them in the same place the following morning. He asked Don Bosco about it, and Don Bosco replied: “Are these shirts given to a poor priest?” To which the guest-master replied: “If I don’t give them to you, then to whom should I give them?” “Give them to those who love to enjoy life!” (73). □



AUTHENTIC MARIAN DEVOTION

by Bernardina do Nascimento

It is good to dwell briefly on the meaning of real, genuine Marian devotion, letting ourselves be guided by the saints and by Vatican II. Today we have the impression, in fact, that the uncritical adherence to many of the messages to many wonderful souls by alleged seers or by the preaching of exalted prophets, lay and clerical, have sadly polluted and dimmed the simple evangelical witness of Mary of Nazareth.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SAINTS

All the saints were in love with the Mother of Jesus. I shall limit myself to presenting what Teresa of Lisieux, doctor of the Church and a passionate devotee of the Virgin wrote. These are words that should always be kept in mind, especially by guides and pastors of the faithful. Teresa wrote: “You should not allow improbable things to be spoken about Our Lady in the church. A sermon on the Blessed Virgin, in order to bear fruit, should reveal her true life, that which has been left to us in the Gospel, not an imagined life. Yet it is well understood that this

life of hers, in Nazareth and later, must have been quite ordinary.” The miracles of Grace that Yahweh wrought in the heart of that Jewess who was chosen to experience the Incarnation did not exempt her from experiencing in her flesh all the emotions, fears, labours and the loneliness that every mother experiences. The spiritual graces bestowed by God are never anti-suffering, or an elixir of longevity and happiness. To recognize Mary as a model means to be willing to follow her example always and everywhere, in silent solidarity, in discreet prayer and docility. Mary is a masterpiece of grace, not a “freak.”

TEACHING OF THE COUNCIL

Fifty years after its conclusion, we would do well to re-read what *Lumen Gentium* says in Chapter VIII. The Council Fathers recognized in the Madonna “truly the Mother of God and Mother of the Redeemer.” For them she “is the beloved daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit.” Through the grace of God “she far surpasses



all creatures, both in heaven and on earth." "Because she belongs to the offspring of Adam she is one with all those who are to be saved," "and is hailed as a pre-eminent and singular member of the Church, and as its type and excellent exemplar in faith and charity." The witness that the Virgin presents to us is anchored in the most radical existential consent to the Word; a total offering of herself as a servant to the person and the work of her Son. Her life is like a kerchief in the hands of God. Her amazing docility was never at the expense of her intelligence or her freedom. There was nothing 'fideistic' (blind faith) about her. She possessed a transparent spirituality

and a rock-solid obedience. She was not a 'whiner,' she was a strong woman. Even at the foot of the cross her excruciating sorrow left no room for despair or funeral hysterics. In an attempt to contextualize her life with the reality of her times it is important that we be guided by numbers 56-59 of the document. Her assumption was not the result of some magic trick of fate. It was nothing more than the testimony to her complete attachment to her Son (the Conqueror of sin and death). Number 61 marvelously synthesizes the essence of the life and the "core" of our devotion to her. "She conceived, brought forth and nourished Christ. She presented Him to the Father in the temple, and was united with Him by compassion as He died on the Cross. In this singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Saviour in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore she is our mother in the order of grace." The task of any true Marian spirituality is to teach us to recognize her as a mother who follows us with the same solicitude, perseverance, restraint and care as she watched over Jesus. Our Lady is not a deity, but an incarnate being as anyone of us; she knew how to respond fully to divine grace. So, there is nothing 'demonic' if we engage even more deeply to very respectfully know her socially, humanly and culturally like all the people of her day and how she learned to live, to face reality and to be continuously aware that she was only "the humble servant of the Lord" nothing else. □



walking with the Church

Silence, Praying for Others, Offering Masses

From St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland

Q. My uncle is a bachelor in his late sixties living alone. He is in bad health although he is not housebound. However, he has not attended Mass, gone to Confession or received Holy Communion for over twenty years. He can be very contrary and rude at times so I am reluctant to ask a priest to visit him. I am concerned that if he were to die suddenly without him having a chance to repent for his turning away from God - would he still be considered a Catholic? Could you also give me some advice and tips on how he could be encouraged to return to God - bearing in mind that he is not a very cooperative person.

A. Thank you for your question. Like your uncle there are many baptized Catholics who, for reasons known only to themselves and God - perhaps a row with a priest or in recent times the scandals in the Church or whatever - do not go to Mass or Communion. It does not mean that they have turned away from God or disowned God. I would venture to say that most, if not all of them, still have faith in God.

Faith is nourished and deepened by our participation in the Mass and the reception of the Sacraments. So the faith of those who

for their own reasons do not go to Mass or receive the Sacraments may be weak and their relationship with Christ (whom we meet in all the Sacraments) not very strong, but that does not mean they have rejected Christ. They have not turned into non-believers, and our hope in a loving God tells us that in His great love for all of us He will find a way to nourish and keep alive their faith and lead them safely to final union with Him.

It is not always easy to speak to people like your uncle but, should he become housebound, you might ask if he would like to see a priest. Sometimes it is better to say nothing but rather continue to do our best to live a good Christian life ourselves - giving witness in that way to our own strong belief. Very often silent sincere witness to our faith can influence people far more than hours of conversation. Our sincere prayers are always answered, so keep praying for your uncle entrusting him to God's merciful love.

Q. Are Catholics still bound to attend Mass on Sunday?

A. Yes they are. The Catechism states that ... 'on Sundays and

other Holy Days of Obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.' (CCC 2180). In recent years as we all know only too well attendance at Sunday Mass has declined. In some parts of the world, especially the larger cities, the drop in attendance has been quite high.

But because we are a community, meeting other Christians and sharing our faith with them at Sunday Mass is helpful to all of us. We support one another. We need that support. If we are isolated from one another we will find it very hard to remain Christian in today's secular world. We need the strong faith of the community gathered together in worship to carry us along when our own faith is weak.

May we always use the Sunday as a day for giving more attention to God and to share more of ourselves.

Q. Is the last day a totally fixed date? Can it be speeded up?

A. The Church has no teaching whatsoever about the specific time of the second coming of Christ - which we believe heralds the end of the world. However the end of the world for which Jesus asked us to be ready and to prepare carefully for, is not the day the world ceases to exist for whatever reason, but the day each of us leaves it. About that day Christ tells us to be prepared "because we know not the day or the hour."

Q. I recently read that science has exploded many Bible statements. How true is this?

A. This is a brief resume of what you wrote. The document of Vatican Council II on Divine Revelation (paragraph eleven) says that "all the Books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully, and without error "the Truth which God wanted to put into the Sacred Writings for the sake of our salvation."

The Bible teaches us how to go to heaven and not how the heavens go. We do not look for botany, astronomy, zoology, medical lore, anthropology or any other science. The TRUTH the Bible gives us is the meaning that the sacred writers intended when they wrote that particular part of scripture. To grasp that truth we must discover whether the writer offers us history, poetry, fable or moral lesson, or the accumulated wisdom of a people in proverb form. May the Holy Spirit breathe on us and lead us into all Truth.

Q. How old was Mary when she died?

A. The answer to this is very simple. We do not know and we have no way of finding out. We do not even know if she died. When defining the dogma of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady into Heaven. Pope Pius XII did not say whether she died or was assumed while still alive. □



NEWSBITS

ROME/SANTIAGO FLIGHT

"The fruit of war...". To the journalists who accompany him on his flight from Fiumicino to Santiago de Chile, the first stop of his apostolic journey to Chile and Peru, the Pope wanted to distribute the photo of the child who, after the atomic bombardment of Nagasaki, in 1945, is carrying his dead brother on his shoulders to a crematorium.



A brutal image taken by American photographer Joseph Roger O' Donnell, that the Pope already wanted to be printed and distributed at the end of this year. His bit-ter caption were the words, "The fruit of war". Followed by another caption in Spanish that emphasized the despair of the child "in his gesture of biting the lips that ooze blood". Finally, his sig-nature: "Franciscus".

A strong message from the Pope to denounce the devastating results of the conflicts - of every conflict - and his concern for this "piecemeal Third World War" that today, as he has said once again, is unsettling our world.

(Andrea Tornielli)

JORDAN

Catholic Churches in Jordan marked on Friday, January 12, 2018 the 18th Christian and national pilgrim-

mage day to the Baptism Site which is located on the eastern bank of the River Jordan. This tradition has been followed since 2000. It is the most prominent Christian religious site in Jordan.



During a press conference which was organized by the Catholic Centre for Studies and Media (CCSM), Most Rev. Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, highly valued the pioneering role played by Jordan in maintaining common living among its citizens. He also thanked His Majesty King Abdullah II Ben Al Hussein for supporting the Christians in Jordan and Palestine and for his role in the Holy City.

The Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate also expressed appreciation for the efforts exerted by His Majesty the King for the Holy City, according to which Jerusalem became the most outstanding issue in the region in the past days. He also reiterated that the Church views Jerusalem as a mother for all and that it cannot be confined to one people. He also stressed the importance of having the Israelis and the Palestinians reach agreement on the future of Jerusalem through negotiations. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Gender Economics

The difference between a man and a woman is that the man will pay two dollars for a one dollar item while a woman will pay one dollar for an item she doesn't want.

Lapse of Time

A sad faced man came into a flower shop early one morning. The clerk was ready to take his order for a funeral piece, but he guessed wrong. The customer wanted a basket of flowers sent to his wife for their anniversary. "And what day will that be?" Glumly the man replied, "Yesterday."

A Fatal Bet

"If any man here," shouted the temperance speaker, "can name an honest business that has been helped by this club, I will spend the rest of my life working for the liquor people."

A man in the audience arose, "I consider mine honest," he said, "and it has been helped by the club."

"What is your business?" asked the orator.

"I, sir," replied the man, "I am an undertaker."

Trial by Jury

Judge: "Do you challenge any of the jury?"

Defendant: "Well, I think I could lick that little fellow on the end."

Perfect Fit

The second grade teacher strained to help a pupil don his rain shoes. After five minutes of

grunting and struggling, the boy panted. They were hard to get on because they're not mine.

In despair, the teacher struggled to get them off, the boy said, "They're my brother's, but I wear them because I don't have any."

A Matter of Opinion

"All really intelligent men are conceited" decided a girl. Her boyfriend shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, I don't know - I'm not."

In the Nick of Time

Barber: "Your hair is turning grey, sir."

Customer: "I'm not surprised, hurry up."

Hatch Matched

"But darling," said the prospective bride, "If I marry you I'll lose my job."

"Can't we keep our marriage a secret?" asked her fiance.

"But suppose we have a baby?"

"Oh we'll tell the baby, of course."

Short-Age

"There was a Japanese Millionaire whose cheque was returned from the bank, marked: "Insufficient funds - not you, us."

Excellent Returns

This is a country of faith. On the installment plan you can buy what you can't afford. On the stock market you can sell what you don't own, and on the tax form they take away what you haven't borrowed yet. □

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



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

I thank you most Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Blessed Mother for the countless blessings received and for the

favours granted. *Antonieta Simoes*

My heartfelt thanks to the Lord Jesus and Mother Mary. We prayed the powerful three Hail Marys to secure the job for our son Joshua and for a new job for our daughter Samantha and son-in-law Erwin and our prayers were heard. Our dear Lord and our Blessed Mother please keep us in your care always. *Daisy D'Souza and Family, Mumbai*

Dear Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco...thanks to our devotion to the three Hail Marys for so many years now (I'm 65 years old) I was suffering from blood in my stools and the doctor told me that the treatment would cost me 3 to 4 lakh rupees which I could not afford. I began praying the three Hail Marys earnestly at any time of the day. My dear Mother heard my prayers. I am much better now. The bleeding has decreased and I feel better now. I am unable to do all my house work. I still ask mother to shower her graces on me and heal me completely of my sickness as I live alone and take care of myself by taking tuition. I thank Our Blessed Mother for blessing me in so many ways and keeping me under her protection always. *A Devotee*

On October 27, 2015 at about 1 pm my husband, daughter, grand daughter and I were on our way home from hospital after consulting a cardiologist concerning my sickness. We made some purchases on the way. My daughter was driving the car, my husband was seated in front, my granddaughter and I were seated behind. Suddenly the door near my granddaughter swung open and she was thrown out. Using all my strength I pulled her in. There were many speeding vehicles behind us. Had I not acted in time it might have been a fatal accident. We were all shocked for a moment. We all thanked Mother Mary who was definitely there. We always recite the 3 Hail Marys at night and on our journey. *D. Joseph* A very big thank you to Our Lady. My brother was diagnosed with dengue and his platelet count was 36,000. The next day when he did the blood test it had dropped to 28,000 which was very alarming. We are devoted to Our Lady and we kept reciting the 3 Hail Marys. After three days another test found that the platelet count jumped from 28,000 to 82,000. We are grateful to Our Lady for her constant intercession. *R. Poppen, Mumbai*

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

I am 89 years old and I am a diabetic. In Marcy 2017 I went for a complete check up. It was discovered that I had a tumor. I was operated and the tumor removed and sent for a biopsy. It was found to be malignant. I was recommended a long course of radiation but a friend of mine immediately arranged for an appointment the next day with one of India's leading cancer specialists. The good doctor taking into consideration my old age and that I could not walk without assistance ruled out radiation and put me on a course of medication. On completion of the course in October 2017 when I went for a check up it miraculously showed that the cancer had been cured. I thank the Lord Jesus and our beloved Mother Mary and the good doctors who attended on me and cured me of my cancer giving me a new lease of life. "More things are achieved by the power of prayer and the mercy of God."

Alan Cardoso, Mumbai

We are grateful that we found the Rosary of my late husband Gerald Traynor in tact when his remains were transferred to a niche. It certainly showed us that Our Lady was there watching over my husband. Thank You Blessed Mother for your constant reassuring presence.

Mrs. Colleen Traynor, Mumbai

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

My sincere thanks to the Most Holy Trinity, Mary Help of Christians, the saints for healing me of vertigo, sciatic pain and injuries from a fall. I am now 90 years old.

Mrs. Marie Pearce, Mira Road, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary and all the saints for healing my leg pain; for my daughter's success in her mid-term exams, for helping her find accommodation and a good room mate; for summer academic activities for my children; for healing me and giving me hope; for helping me in writing my assignments; for my husband's job; for Vijana's health, smile and blessings; for Sonia's safe delivery; for healing Amini and uncle and Penama, uncle Kunjamom; for Hemant's job, fellowship and awards.

P. Samagond, USA

Thanks dear Mother Mary and all the saints for favours granted through their intercession. Continue to bless our family.

Mrs. Kathrina

My daughter in Canada suddenly got "Bella Palsy" and her face was disfigured. The Mercy of Jesus and Our Mother Mary healed her within 15 days. I'm very grateful. My grandson Roger Guerra met with a serious accident but Mother Mary saved him. He had a concussion and several complications but he has recovered thanks to Our Blessed Mother.

Mrs. C.E. Wasdell

**THANKS TO DEAR
ST. DOMINIC SAVIO**



My grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio and all the saints in heaven for helping my son Rihan Peter Gonsalves to pass his chaf mate's examination in the UK and also belated thanks for helping my son and daughter to find good life partners in their married lives. Guide and protect us always.

Cedric Gonsalves, Goa

My sincere thanks to Our Lord Jesus, dear Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for the gift of a healthy second child, a baby boy. Bless our family.

Maria Pontis, Mumbai

My sincere gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ, Mother Mary, St. Dominic Savio and all the saints for answering my prayers at each time I call for help.

Violet, Mumbai

My sincere and heartfelt thanks to the Holy Trinity, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio and all the saints for curing me of a severe attack of colitis, urinary tract infection and grant me and my family many other favours. May they continue to bless me and my family always.

Mrs. Philomena D'Souza, Goa

Thank you Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of twin baby girls.

Tina and Leon Coelho, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Our Blessed Lord, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for graces and favours received by my family.

Marie D'Souza, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady, through the powerful intercession of the three Hail Marys and St. Dominic Savio my son completed his SSC and his graduation; and for the gift of a son.

Belinda Ferreira

My grateful thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco, Dominic Savio for granting me the favours I asked for.

A. Serrao

Thank you Abba Father, dear Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for gifting a baby boy to Elroy and Roseline. Guide and protect them every step of the way. We have named him Evon Ezekiel Pereira.

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

APRIL 2018

*For Those who have Responsibility in Economic Matters
That economists may have the courage to reject any economy
of exclusion and know how to open new paths.*

Regd RNI no. 9360/57;
Postal Regn. MH/MR/North East/089/2018-2020
posted at Mumbai Patrika Channel Sorting Office
on 1st & 2nd of every month

Subs: (one copy Rs. 20/-); **Inland Rs. 200 p.a.**; **Airmail: Rs 500 p.a.**

MARY WAS THERE

On July 11th, my husband and I were taking our son (19 months old) for a short walk in his stroller. Suddenly my husband moved the stroller away from me and he shouted: 'move.' Before I could react I was hit by a car from behind and was flung onto a patch of grass nearby. The impact also made the stroller fall onto the road. I lay on the ground in pain and shock. Thankfully, a few people came to help us and called 911. They also tried to keep me conscious by talking to me. My son got a few minor bruises, while I suffered minor injuries. We have made close to a full recovery. It is only because of the hand of protection of our Lord Jesus and Mother Mary that we are safe today. I remember saying a small prayer and three Hail Mary's before we left on our walk that day and we are so grateful for this protection. *Libereta Dalgado-D'Souza, Canada*

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:

MO/PO/INTL MO/BPO/Bequests, Wills, Perpetual Burses, all favouring Don Bosco's Madonna or Bombay Salesian Society or Rev. Fr. Edwin D'Souza, (Trustee).

Please address all correspondence to:

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

Phone/Fax: 91-22- 2414 6320, email: dbmshrine@gmail.com