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**Grant us, protection  
in our weakness,  
as we, keep the  
Memorial of  
the Immaculate Mother  
of God.  
With the help  
of her intercession, may  
we rise up from  
our iniquities.  
Through our Lord Jesus  
Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with  
you in the unity  
of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.**

*Opening Prayer for the Feast  
of Our Lady of Lourdes*

## From The Editor's Desk

### WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET?

*The world says, "The more you take – the more you have..." Christ says, "The more you give – the more you are..."* Frederick Buechner

I recently had to make a quick trip to the *Sahakari Bhandar* to pick up something essential for my monthly trip to Nashik. Each time I go there I have to take just the minimum: a shirt, my PJs, my toothbrush and my razor blades and maybe a book for the journey. They all fit nicely into my little backpack. It's just for a couple of days and besides, the rest of the stuff is all lying in a suitcase at the other end. My world is in the bag I had left there in Nashik, except my razor blades that I ran out of this time.

So I made the trip to *Sahakari Bhandar* as soon as it opened at 9am for my razor blades. Walking through the aisles I found what I needed and then stepping up to the counter I patted my hip to identify that my wallet's there and looked into it. There, in a flash, I perceived for the briefest moment, how my wallet was not unlike the bag I left in Nashik. Everything in this leather pouch that is snuggled against my hip is a small snapshot of my life. There are just a few bits of paper, a bus ticket, a list of jobs I need to attend to, my PAN card and other identification that I need when I get on to the train, plus a couple of photos, all of which someone might arrange into a rough portrait of the person named Ian Doulton.

Standing there, wallet in hand, I also had a tiny glimpse of how God holds our lives in his hands. All I am, all I have, all I call "me, myself, and I," the sum total; are all in the hands of another. The work, the identity, community and good health, are merely on loan for a season coming through God's loving hands; and everything is returned at the exit.

Sometimes I am guilty of carrying my life and God's blessings the way I carry my backpack and my wallet; items packed for personal travel. I forget that I am a steward of the good things that have been sent in my direction. Joy and freedom comes from giving them back to the one from whom they came... It is a matter of becoming a good steward, as Christ is a good and courageous steward to each of us. Every season of this life is a season of unpacking the blessings we thought were our own and offering them back to God with gratitude.

"Where am I sharing what I have received in this life?" Our duty, our opportunity for joy, lies in answering that question faithfully. Everyone's path will be different. For some it is open wallets, portfolios, our best laid financial plans. Everyone's gift will be unique, but common to all is that we each have a gift to bring. In the end, our lives become our own when we have given them to God.

In the words of C.S. Lewis, "Nothing is really ours until we share it."

*Fr. Ian Doulton sdb*

## LOVE IS NOT ENVIOUS

by Gianpaolo Gianin

*Envy hides like a worm within that very special relationship, marital love and within every other relationship as well. It's hard to detect, except for the sadness it displays, it pervades everything.*

In his commentary on Paul's hymn to charity, after reflecting on patience and kindness, Pope Francis focuses on envy which, he says has the characteristics of a woodworm gnawing love from within (*Amoris Laetitia* 95-96).

In Greek we find the term "zelos" that can be translated as envy but also as jealousy. The Pope reminds us of some of the characteristics that distinguish the envious: their inability to get out of themselves; their sadness at the good fortune of others; their envy on seeing the gifts of others and their frustration at being unable to accept that others possess these gifts which they madly covet.

Such a person is incapable of self-giving in love, of appreciating the qualities of the other. Those who read this might just say: "What is love if one doesn't appreciate the person loved?" The question is obvious but the answer leads us to repeat what is mentioned above: envy lurks like a woodworm within that precious gem called marital love and more broadly within every relationship. Lovers sometimes

do not realise. Notice hints of envy in the slightest tinge of sadness that sometimes cloud their relationship.

The envious person is pained at seeing the gifts the other possesses while being unable to acknowledge his/her own gifts. S/he is constantly coveting the other's gifts out of envy. That is why envy shuts a person in because s/he is jealously guarding what s/he owns, believing that the other has much more. This attitude turns the person into a grumbler who is not necessarily expressive verbally but who reveals envy through prejudicial gazes, judgments and sometimes even sharp comments. grumbling turns into constant resentment and fault-finding.

Here are a few examples: I'm grumpy while you're sweet and patient; I'm angry with myself because I'm so grumpy. Your kindness and sweetness is a daily reminder of the fact that I am not like you. What happens then? Instead of celebrating who I am, I get angry and even come to accuse you of being fickle, insecure and condescending.

Another example in reference

to commodities: You have a nice car while I can't afford something as expensive; it's too hard on my pocket. I cannot be happy for you because I'm focused on myself and what I'm missing. Envy, like a woodworm leads me to criticize you. I consider you as a boaster, someone who flaunts his wealth...and so on.

In an envious person there is this perverse mechanism that constantly looks for defects in the other without confronting one's own. It is, as if, my envy leads me to always look for the faults of the other in order to comfort myself that the other is no better than I.

That is why the envious person is constantly living in an eternal confrontation with the other. In a marital relationship an envious partner can become carefully calculating of what one does and what you do in the name of presumed justice. When there is envy love becomes calculative: what I put into the relationship and what you put in, what you renounce and what I renounce. That is why it becomes difficult to give freely of oneself and 'give without charge.' Consequently there is painfully a kind of contractual logic - a logic of a supposed commutative justice that robs the relationship of the generous nature of love which does not calculate and is unafraid of investing whatever one has, even if at the moment the other has "just a few coppers" because "that is all s/he has."

On the other hand, when love is not envious, when I look at



you and I see that you're beautiful and full of gifts, I rejoice! I appreciate who you are and what you have. I feel that is the gift you bring to the relationship which I too can celebrate. And then I think that if you love me you say that even I have beautiful gifts and we are grateful for each other's preciousness.

You gift me with that trust and that self-worth that I didn't think I had. Sometimes our differences hit certain bumps and we're hurt, but it is precisely because of those differences that we were attracted to each other in the first place and that was what we liked about each other.

Mature love is the ability to get out of oneself; to look for and to desire the good and the happiness of the other. And when I see that you are well and happy, all this comes back to me and gives me great joy too. "Whoever would save his life will lose it," Jesus taught us. We believers know that we are all loved and cherished by God, with our talents and our limitations. We don't find it easy to love ourselves, to be content with and to accept ourselves, even to recognize our limitations. Envy blocks us, while love opens us to enjoy the gifts and talents of others because they too enrich us. □

## THE RIGHT ANTIDOTE

by Maria Chiara Bregolin

Men do not know their own happiness but that of others never escapes them" says author Pierre Daninos (1913-2005).

The theme of envy and jealousy in the family is really close to my heart and in its marvelous sensitivity and knowledge of the human soul, it is also close to the heart of Pope Francis as seen so clearly in *Amoris Laetitia* where he tells us of the need to rediscover in the family a love that is free, open and mature.

After having read the reflections of the Pope, my thoughts went to some of my couple-friends who ended up letting their feelings of envy and jealousy of one another get the better of them such that their relationship turned so sour and worn that they thought that separation was their only solution. But

then, comparing them with my husband, I realized I sometimes find it a little hard to be happy at the joy of the other, or that the other is having a 'simpler life' than I. Such thoughts also pass through our married life.

I am a little worried when I see that Pope Francis alludes to models of family and perhaps even our family!

I notice that sometimes my children are jealous of one another. I see my colleague is jealous when I reach office late. I see my littlest one gets jealous when she sees my husband coming up to kiss me...I see my own envy when my husband is with his friends or when he seems more relaxed or much fitter than I.

Envy acts like a mild poison but administered in strong doses: It does not kill you immediately but

gradually weakens you. The eye of the envious is vitreous and sometimes I reserve this gaze for my husband.

We know couples in eternal rivalry and competition: at work and at home. I strongly believe that this feeling can only be overcome through love and commitment. Efforts need to be made to actively contribute to the development of the other's happiness, because that happiness becomes our own. We should reach out in love to our spouse for who he is and for what he strives for, helping him to realize himself as a person because that enriches us as a couple.

I recently read the story of Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi, a married couple. They were raised to the honours of the altar by St. John Paul II. I was impressed by their commitment and their total trust in God's benevolent presence in their lives. "A halo for two," the first couple beatified together, an example of holiness that can sustain so many families facing daily life as they keep their eyes

on their "home" above their roofs.

Let me leave you with a passage from a letter written by Luigi to 'his' Maria. "My soul, how grateful I am for how good your love makes me feel. It encourages me in life and in life's struggles because living, working and struggling seems to be my only purpose! You are my great benefactor, the one who saved my soul from skepticism and in exchange you became my 'madonna' the person I cherish and admire. Love me always, Maria, and you will find in my affection and my devotion greater comfort than any man can give, since all my life I have dedicated and set aside for you. I feel that because of your love I will be driven to greater goodness and diligence, because in that love I will always find the noblest and most precious reward for all my efforts."

I believe that this love, extraordinarily woven into the fabric of everyday life, constitutes a powerful antidote to the poison of envy. □

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## NEVER AGAIN

One Sunday I was entertained in a farm home of a member of a rural church. The intelligence and unusually good behaviour of the only child in the home, a little four-year-old boy, impressed me. Then I discovered one reason for the child's charm. The mother was at the kitchen sink, washing the dishes when the little boy came to her with a magazine.

"Mother," he asked, "what is this man in the picture doing?" To my surprise she dried her hands, sat down on a chair, and taking the boy in her lap, she spent the next few minutes answering his questions.

After the child had left, I commented on her having interrupted her chores to answer the boy's question, saying, "Most mothers wouldn't have."

"I expect to be washing dishes for the rest of my life," she told me, "but never again will my son ask me that question." □



Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi

## THE POPE THINKS OF YOUNGSTERS

by Cesare Bissoli

One might say that Pope Francis' relationship with young people is not just pastoral (in the sense of being the object of concern for the pastors of the Church). He has an existential relationship with them. He freely meets them, he offers them suggestions right where they are. He does this earnestly and enthusiastically and thus getting their intellectual and critical attention and of course their admiration.

It is also true that they experience a serious silence as if in the presence of a reality (God, man, morality, society...) that fascinates them. But it is difficult and therefore it requires them to think before making a choice like just after sowing a seed, it is necessary to know how to wait for the fruition. There are also those who are "far away," those who normally don't participate in these rallies but being outside they too are affected by the Pope's gestures towards those on the periphery (the poor, migrants, prisoners, the sick...) but their interests are somewhere else. More than being opposed to him, they seem indifferent or rather - like in the parable - they wait for the good seed. Let's specify more clearly how Pope Francis was listened to and how he acted recently. I will just highlight two events.

First and foremost there are the inevitable meetings with young people on his apostolic journeys. The recent speeches he made to them in Latin America (Chile and Peru, you should reread them if

you have the time). In those regions of great social upheavals he offered the youth a 'manifesto': an invitation to take a hard look at the future and to have the courage to build up their country through the power of the Gospel and their inner resources.

The second, a very original and unprecedented event was the announcement of the next Synod that would be held on Youth: *Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment* (October 2018). Pope Francis wanted a sort of pre-synod to be carried out by the young people themselves. Two sub-events should be highlighted: a questionnaire in 2016-2018 that was sent out to all the churches and to which the replies duly came in on the youth reality in relation to the theme. Second, subsequently, during the week before Palm Sunday in 2018, a pre-synod really took place with the physical presence of over 300 participants from around the world and thousands of others online. The material collected would form the so-called basis of the "working document" that would guide the Synod Fathers. There appears to be a clear purpose: it is the Pope's wish to make the Synod not so much *on* the young, but *for* the young and indeed *with* the young themselves. Here he was sowing the seed across the board. It was going to be a daring challenge to be grasped at with much joy and yet with some trepidation.

In truth, since John Paul II, no Pope ever had so much sympathy,

confidence and hope in youth as Francis.

In short, "what does the Pope see when he thinks of youth?" This was the question that a journalist recently asked Francis in a beautiful book-investigation: *God is Young* (Piemme 2018). Here are a few lines of his answer:

"I see a young boy or girl who's seeking out his own path, who wants to fly on his feet, and who is gazing out on the world, looking to the horizon with eyes full of hope, full of the future and even full of illusions. The youngster goes about on two feet like adults do but adults walk around with two feet side by side. The youngster goes about on two feet with one foot ahead of the other, ready to dash forward; talking about youth means talking about promises, and talking about joy. Young people are strong, so strong that they are able to look ahead with hope. A youngster is a promise of a life with a certain degree of tenacity; sometimes foolish enough to be able to delude oneself but with a certain capacity to be able to recover from a disappointment when lessons are learned. We cannot speak of young people then, without touching the theme of adolescence because one must never underestimate this phase of life, it is probably the most important phase of his existence. Adolescence marks the first really conscious contact with his identity and represents a phase of transition in life, not only of the youngster, but of the entire family; it is an intermediate phase, like a bridge to cross over. It is the youngster's first revolution, the first transformation in life, the one that changes so much that friend-

ships, affections and even daily life might be upset. When you are a teenager, the word "tomorrow," can hardly be used with any kind of certainty. Teenagers are more aware of the present moment and its importance. For the adolescent the present moment is the world that can upset his entire life, it is probably thought that the present is more important than the rest of his existence. Teenagers seek confrontation, inquiry, discussion about everything. They are constantly looking for answers. I want to emphasize how important this whole debate is. Teenagers are eager to learn, to be able to launch out and become autonomous, and it is at this time that as adults we must be more understanding than ever, trying to demonstrate the right kind of behaviour without pretending to teach them only through words...(...)

Adolescence is not a disease and we cannot face it as such. A youngster who lives his teenage years well - however difficult it might be for his parents - is a teenager with a future and with hope. I am often worried about the current tendency to "medicate" our children early. It seems we want to solve everything by "treating" or controlling everything, with the slogan, "make the most of the time," making the youngster's agenda very much more demanding. I insist: Adolescence is not a disease that must be fought. It's a normal part of growth in the life of our children. Teach them that life is movement, where there is movement there are changes and uncertainty but there is hope and joy and even anguish and desperation" (pp. 16-19).□

## SALESIAN SAINTS

### Laura Vicuña 1891 - 1904 Teenager, Blessed

This young girl was beatified on September 3, 1988 during the centenary celebrations of the death of Don Bosco on the "hill of the Youth Beatitudes," at Castelnovo Don Bosco, as a testimony of the fecundity of the educational charism of the Saint of the Young. A thirteen-year life span is easy to narrate but what is more difficult is to fathom the secret that made the brief existence of this little girl so heroic.

Laura del Carmen Vicuña, that was her full name, was born in Santiago del Chile on April 5, 1891, the first child of José Domingo and Mercedes Piño. In those days the Chilean capital was overrun by political and military tensions because of which her baptism had to be delayed. It took place almost two months later on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Laura's ancestors included a number of illustrious political personalities for which reason Laura's family became a target in the prevailing revolution. Her father was forced into exile and so he moved South across the border over the Andes into Argentina. The entire family moved to Temuco where they suddenly found themselves in a sad state of insecurity as a result of their father's death in 1893. A few months later another daughter,



ter, Julia Amanda was born. Laura's mother found herself alone with two daughters and distraught, hungry and desperate.

In 1899, what remained of the family, moved to the nearby Argentinian region of Neuquén. There Laura's mother was able to find work on the farm of Manuel Mora, one of the many settlers who had undertaken the exploitation of the uncultivated lands of Patagonia. Having been pressured by her employer, Laura's mother became his companion. This condition had a negative influence on the education of her two daughters. Laura, though little, was aware of her mother's moral and religious situation. Despite this, her mother never completely abandoned her daughters but tried to educate them in their faith. In

order that they be suitably educated, in January 1900, she entrusted them to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians who were running a little school in Junin de los Andes on the border with Chile. As she handed the little girls to the mother superior (speaking of Laura) she said: "She has never given me any trouble from the time she was little; she has always been obedient and submissive." There in the convent of the sisters Laura began to flourish.

The girl's life had now turned a fresh page: In the four years of life that still remained, she learned the secret of holiness. She proved to be a model student, recollected in prayer and attentive to the promptings of the nuns and always alert to the needs of her companions. She was cheerful and ready for any sacrifice. She joined the Association of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Once, while one of the sisters was explaining the Sacrament of Matrimony, during a catechism lesson, Laura understood the gravity of her mother's sinful situation and she fainted. Even while she was on holiday at the farm where her mother worked, she prayed in secret because her mother did not approach the sacraments. From then on, Laura increased her prayers and sacrifices for her mother's conversion. On June 2, 1901 she received her First Holy Communion, but on that day her sufferings grew more intense since she saw that her mother wasn't going up to receive Holy Communion. She could there-

fore not refrain from praying more intensely for a peaceful conclusion to this state of affairs. Unfortunately, her desire was not fulfilled, but Laura was not discouraged. In fact, it became a great turning point in her life which her biography later described: "From that day on, we noticed in her much determined progress." On the day of her First Holy Communion, she wrote some resolutions, many of them were similar to those written by the saintly pupil of Don Bosco, Dominic Savio: "O my God, I want to love and serve you throughout my life, so I give you my soul, my heart, my very being. I would rather die than offend you by sin. Therefore I intend to mortify myself in everything that would draw me away from you. I propose to do as much as I can to make you joy known and loved and to repair the offences that you receive from men, especially from the people in my family. My God, help me live a life of mortification and sacrifice." With these resolutions Laura surrendered herself totally to the Lord in order to obtain her mother's conversion and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians immediately realized that in their presence was an exceptional little girl.

Already from her first year in the school, she distinguished herself by her willing application to study and her intense interior life. In the second year, the Vicuña sisters were sent for their vacation to visit their mother. They were visibly shocked by her

mother's cohabitant. Laura suffered deeply in her soul but she never revealed the great pain she was suffering as she watched her mother refrain from attending the popular mission being preached at Junin de los Andes. The following year the two sisters visited their mother once more at Quilquebué for their vacation. Mora seemed to be very interested in Laura who promptly noticed his malicious intent and wrapped herself in an iron-like breastplate to fight of his evil intentions. Mora reacted with cruel ruthlessness - he refused to pay their tuition fees. Moved by a sense of compassion the director welcomed the two sisters back, all the same. On March 29, 1902, the two little sisters received their Confirmation; their mother was present but still abstained from approaching the sacraments. On another such occasion Laura asked to be admitted among the postulants of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, but she received a negative reply because of the situation of her family. She resigned herself to this state of affairs but she did not give up her intent. The following month, in fact, she privately took the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, consecrating herself to Jesus and offering him her whole life. Referring to this her biographer, Fr. Crestanello wrote: "Laura suffered in the silence of her heart [...] One day she decided to offer her life and willingly accepted death in exchange for her mother's conversion and she asked me to bless her ardent desire." The events

that followed unfolded exactly according to this logic; towards the end of the year Laura began to experience a slight deterioration in her physical sight. She spent all of the next year sequestered in the college. She was even unable to attend the spiritual retreat that took place in September 1903, her health had deteriorated so badly. Hoping her health would improve she returned to Junin and her mother moved there, but stayed in private. In January 1904 Mora came to visit her and wanted to spend the night with her. Shocked, Laura threatened him: "If he remains, I'm going to the sisters' boarding school." The atmosphere for her felt so evil. Mora chased her and when he caught up with her he beat her violently, leaving her traumatized. When she reached the boarding school she admitted all this to her spiritual director and renewed the offering of her life for the conversion of her mother.

On January 22, she received the Viaticum and that night she called for her mother to tell her about her great dream: "Mother, I'm dying! I myself have offered my life to Jesus for the past two years in order to obtain the grace of your return to the faith. Mamma will I have the joy of seeing you repent before I die?" Her mother promised that she would completely change her life - Laura could serenely breathe her last with the joyful words: "Thank you, Jesus! Thank you Mary! Now I can die happy!" At Laura's funeral her mother returned to the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. □

## Witnesses in & for Our Times



**ST. VALENTINE**  
**180 ca - 273**  
**(FEBRUARY 14)**

*Mario Scudu*

**L**ike all sweethearts, he was madly in love with Christ till he was lost in him alone. He was beheaded and died during the reign of Emperor Aurelian on February 14, 273, a martyr and a witness of total love for Christ.

As a martyr he not only died for love of Christ and his message of love contained in the Gospel, but before that, he lived his life for all those in any kind of need in Terni where he was the bishop for several years. It was this love that guided him wherever he went and whoever he met. The words of Jesus became his motto: "Greater love has no one than to lay down one's life for one's friends." He loved the poor, the weak the sick and he was especially fond of children; he played with them and enjoyed their cackle in his garden. He healed several people and always in the holy name of Jesus.



wanted to remain always in God's presence experiencing his goodness, generosity, creativity and understanding with everyone. Even sweethearts intending to get married and crown their love before God encountered some difficulties.

### **An Eternity of Love**

His urge to work miracles came out of an immense love for Him who had done so much for Valentine and that was why he

Like a couple of young lovers in Terni, one a Roman centurion called Sabino, a pagan and the other a Christian girl called Serapia. (There are many legends that surround the life of Valentine) Valentine was very kind to them and he understood their situation well. He realized that their love was no 'summer breeze' or some superficial 'love story' between a boy and a girl. Their love was serious and they decided to get married in the Faith. Unfortunately as preparations were being made for Sabino's baptism before the forthcoming wedding, Serapia became very ill. The relatives of the couple were very desperate. They called Valentine to the bedside of the dying girl. Sabino pleaded with him not to allow his beloved Serapia to abandon him because without her his life would be meaningless and he would suffer immensely. So it was that Valentine prayed to the Lord for them and a blissful sleep fell upon them both and took them off to eternity. Valentine entrusted them to the mercy of God who is a good Father and to his infinite love which is the foundation and support that nourishes every human love.

This incident made Valentine famous and he was named patron of young sweethearts (of course there are other stories that are told as to how he became the patron saint of sweethearts).

Or there is another episode about him that says that once he heard two sweethearts having a furious quarrel. You know, there's something about these

quarrels that are not so uncommon among those in love or those who are already married. Valentine was saddened by this quarrel and so what did he do? Very simple, he took a rose from his garden and gave it to them as a present as a symbol of an invitation to reconciliation. His smile and his words had magical powers that put an end to the quarrel between the two of them. When he realized this he invited them to squeeze the stem together without being stung. And all the while he was praying for them that they pledge their loyalty to each other forever. They returned happily and wanted him to bless their marriage. When the people heard this they all came in a procession to Valentine to ask for his blessing and his prayers on all future families and those preparing for marriage. It was from here that the blessing of the engaged originated on February 14, the liturgical memorial of St. Valentine.

In Anglo-Saxon countries on the other hand, a slightly different version of the story is told. It is said that Valentine used to give all the young sweethearts who came to his garden a flower. Love then blossomed between the couples and they eventually got married.

#### **Infatuation and Love**

Maybe, today we talk too much, but from the news we see and read there isn't much talk about true love. Instead there's more talk of violence and intolerance, cynicism and indifference, aggression and exploitation in society and in families;

marriages in shambles, couples breaking up after brief romances and others without the courage to get married...so as not to "lose their freedom."

Instant freedom is one of our modern idols to whom everything is sacrificed, often even one's own dignity. To many young people these sacrifices and a serious commitment are concepts they don't want to hear about because they have become slaves to a life that is very materialistic, selfish, hedonistic and narcissistic.

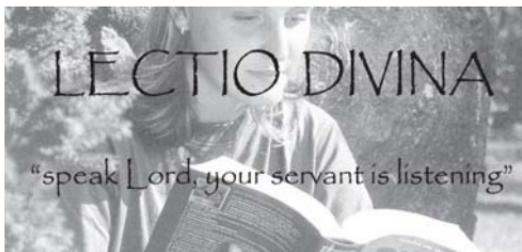
"It takes courage to talk about love, because it's scary" (Robert Benigni). St. Valentine said: "That's true! You will have noticed, my dear young sweethearts and even you married couples that what I am talking about is love; a real and serious love that endures, which demands commitment, sacrifice, dialogue, forgiveness, trust, mutual respect and a lot of patience. Without patience, only another word for love, nothing important in life can really be achieved. You must have already realized by now that I am not speaking of the many love songs or the many shows or novels where love is only synonymous with sex." To the same young lovers who came to Valentine for some advice he said: "If your love is based on sexual drives rather than respect and mutual trust, that great project of yours won't last long. Of course, in deep love, there is a deep knowledge of sexual love and it is important but that should never be the fundamental attitude."

#### **The Road Map of Love**

True and lasting love requires effort, a lot of effort; too much effort for someone who prefers the usual 'story' of love lived selfishly by two people. I once read in a newspaper a beautiful definition of love. "Love is the breath of eternity."

That was what Valentine thought of when he was bishop of Terni. In fact, at the foundation of his long apostolic commitment as the pastor of his community, was the love of God. St. Valentine always recommended to all lovers who approached him or asked for his advice to hitch their love to the solid love of God because after all He alone is the source of the first love that created the universe which began around 15 billion years ago and of all the love imaginable that has existed on earth since creation.

Valentine's recommendation to lovers of all time is to take in hand a copy of the Gospels and read a little everyday, letting yourself be inspired and guided by Christ present there. The Gospel must be your rule book for love, not like the other books that advertise sex then your love has therefore more need of theology so it transforms your love and your life. By doing this you will grow in mutual love and already begin on earth your experience of Paradise which I guarantee you, after so many centuries, is an experience of total, indescribable and inexhaustible and unspendable love of God. Infinite Love. □



## THE DEAF WILL HEAR AGAIN

by Ian Pinto, sdb

**T**hey brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him” (Mk 7: 32). Deafness is a congenital illness that can also arise during the course of life, and which, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), afflicts around 466 million people worldwide of which around 34 million are children! This means that around 5% of the total population of the world suffers from some kind of hearing disability. It is also estimated that by 2050 the number will rise to 900 million which translates into a one in ten chance of a person being or turning deaf!

Deafness cuts off a person from society since he/she is unable to listen and properly communicate. Of course, nowadays it isn't very hard for deaf people to live independently with the kind of awareness, sensitivity and education we have. Everybody is able to communicate in at least rudimentary sign language. So, deaf and mute people don't have to feel overly self-con-

scious and insecure. Some news and entertainment channels reserve a corner of the screen for a sign language expert to translate the words into signs. Also, almost every channel now runs with subtitles so that one can follow the action on the screen even in the absence of sound. But these are only ways of coping with deafness, they aren't solutions to the increasing deafness of our race.

Even though life for an auditory impaired person is tougher than it is for the rest of the able-bodied population, it is probably far better than the lives people of bygone generations were able to lead. One can imagine the state of a deaf and mute during the time of Jesus, when medical knowledge was scarce, and sensitivity, awareness, and education were nowhere compared to the kind we have today. Of course, we have no right to assume that the people of those times just neglected or maltreated their auditory challenged fellows. However, a little

reflection on what life then might have been like will help us approach the Gospel passage with renewed empathy and sensitivity.

Today, our world is not short on deaf people. I'm not just referring to the WHO statistics. Those statistics concern those who are diagnosed medically as being deaf. However, there are so many others who are 'deaf' – those who have plugged their ears with their headphones and are unable to hear their responsibilities and duties calling out to them; those who are unable to hear the cries of the poor, weak, oppressed, discriminated, neglected, abused and violated; those who have risen so high in the skyscrapers of their selfishness that they cannot hear the calls of their loved ones who are hurting or in need; those who have closed their ears to the Word of God.

Deafness, is far more than a congenital medical condition. It also appears to possess the ability to be deliberately brought on. Of course, this is not medically sound but is quite evident in ordinary life. I'm certain, that everyone, even the best of us, at some point or another have turned a deaf ear – to use the familiar phrase – to certain individuals or situations, for whatever reason. Thus, we can go a little further and say that all of us suffer from deafness, albeit in varying degrees. Some of us might be profoundly deaf to the needs, feelings and sensitivities of others, of nature and perhaps even of our own selves! Some others may suffer from milder forms of deafness, but I think it

would be presumptuous on our part to deny unreservedly that we don't have hearing issues at all.

Jesus offers us hope. In the healing of the deaf man, he shows His willingness to heal all those who come to Him. It doesn't matter if we go to Him directly, or are brought to him like the deaf man (v. 32); He is ready to set us free from our weakness and infirmity. He never forces anyone to come to Him, neither does He force His way on anybody. It wasn't Jesus who went out and healed the man, it was his social support group that brought him before Jesus and “begged him to lay his hand on him” (v. 32).

This tells us something about the kind of people we ought to be. First and foremost, we must be people who run to the Lord for healing because, let's face it, we are in need of it! Secondly, we ought to form a social support group that is concerned and faith-filled like the group that brought the man to Jesus. It was probably their faith, perhaps even more than the man's, that allowed Jesus to perform the healing. Can you imagine what could happen if we Christians form such a support group for one another? We would truly be able to move mountains with our faith (Mt 17:20). We would set the ground for the Kingdom of God to manifest itself among us (Mt 6:10). We could build a new world, one that is not deaf to the needs and situations of the weak, downtrodden, exploited or neglected, but a world that is truly *Ephphatha* – ‘open’ to hearing the voice of God and to receive His healing grace. □

# Quiet Spaces

## A MASS WITHOUT A WATCH

*Pope Francis at Mass at Domus Sanctae Marthae on Tuesday, February 10, 2014*

One does not attend Mass looking at the watch, as if they were at some performance, counting the minutes. One goes to participate in the mystery of God. This was the theme of Pope Francis' homily at the Mass he celebrated in the Chapel of Domus Sanctae Marthae. This "is not a tourist excursion. No! You came here, we are gathered here, to enter into the mystery. And this is the liturgy."

To explain the meaning of this encounter with the mystery, Pope Francis said that the Lord has spoken to his people not only with words. "The prophets", he said "recounted the Lord's words. The prophets proclaimed them. The great prophet Moses gave the commandments, which is the Word of God. Many other prophets too have told the people what the Lord wanted." However, "the Lord," he added, "also spoke in another way and in another form to his people: with theophanies. That is, when he comes close to his people and makes them feel, feel his presence among them." The Pope referred to the First Reading (1 Kgs 8:1-7, 9-13) which speaks of other prophets.

"The same thing happens in the Church", the Pope said. He does this through his Word which is recounted in the Gospels and in the Bible; he speaks through catechesis, through homilies. He not only speaks to us but "he makes himself present in the midst of his people, in the midst of his Church. The Lord's presence is there. The Lord draws close to his people; he is present with his people and shares his time with them." This is what is taking place during this liturgical celebration, which is certainly "not a social affair, nor a gathering for the faithful to pray together. It is something else," because "in the Eucharistic liturgy God is present" and, if possible, he makes himself present in "the closest way." His presence, the Pope said, "is a real presence." "When I speak of liturgy," the Pope explained, "I am mainly referring to the Holy Mass. When we celebrate the Mass, we are not representing the Last Supper." The Mass "is not a representation; it is something else. It truly is the Last Supper; it is truly living again the redemptive passion and death of Our Lord. It is a visible manifestation: the Lord makes himself present on the altar to be offered to the Father for the salvation of the world."

Pope Francis then gave examples, as he usually does, of actions that are common among the faithful: "We hear and we say, 'I can't now, I have to go to Mass, I have to hear Mass.' But you do not hear Mass, you participate in it. And you are participating in a visible manifestation, in the mystery of the Lord's presence among us." It is something that is different from all other forms of our devotion, he pointed out, using the example of the living nativity scenes "that

are organized by parishes at Christmas time, or the Way of the Cross that we celebrate during Holy Week." These, he explained, are representations; the Eucharist is "a real commemoration, a theophany. God draws near and is with us as we participate in the mystery of redemption."

The Pope then referred to another very common behaviour among Christians: "How many times", he noted "do we count the minutes... 'I only have a half an hour, I have to go to Mass...'" This "is not the right attitude that the liturgy asks of us: the liturgy is God's time and space, and we must put ourselves there in God's time, in God's space, without looking at our watches. The liturgy is precisely entering into the mystery of God; bringing ourselves to the mystery and being present in the mystery."

The Holy Father continued, looking at the faithful who were gathered there for the celebration, saying: "For example, I am sure that all of you have come here to enter into the mystery. But perhaps someone has said: 'I have to go to Mass at Santa Marta, because it is one of Rome's tourist excursions, to go and visit the Pope at Santa Marta every morning... No! You came here, we are gathered here, to enter into the mystery. And this is the liturgy, God's time, God's space, the cloud of God that surrounds all of us.'"

Pope Francis went on to share some childhood memories: "I remember as a child, when we were preparing for our First Holy Communion, they made us sing 'O holy altar guarded by angels,' and this made us realize that the altar is guarded by angels, and it gave us a sense of God's glory, of God's space, and of his time. Then, when we were practicing for our First Communion, we brought forward the hosts and said 'these are not the hosts which you will receive; they are not worth anything, because the consecration comes later'. It was good for us to distinguish one from the other: it is a memory of the commemoration." Therefore to celebrate the liturgy means "to be willing to enter into the mystery of God," in his space and his time.

Concluding his homily, the Pope invited those present to "ask the Lord today to give us all this sense of what is sacred, to understand that it is one thing to pray at home, to pray in Church, to pray the rosary, to pray many beautiful prayers, to do the Way of the Cross, and to read the Bible; but it is quite another to celebrate the Eucharist. In this celebration we enter into the mystery of God, on that path which we cannot control: he is the only one, He is the glory, He is in power. We ask for this grace, that the Lord may teach us to enter into the mystery of God." □ (by L'Osservatore Romano)

## USELESS SUFFERING

From Fr. Ian Doulton's collection of stories

This article is based on a true story that appeared in the *Reader's Digest* by Constance J. Foster is presented to you with no other desire but to present the values of Christianity and the profound wisdom that undergirds it into our busy and complicated world or perhaps, even to the heart of just one reader.

Is the easiest way of doing anything, always the best way? Most people will reply, yes – that's efficiency. Well, the funny thing is that God often seems to answer 'No.' Of course, the best way must be his way but often, it's pretty hard. Dr. Thaddeus Marlin thought some of the ways of God were entirely too hard. From his first days in medical school Dr. Marlin objected to what he called 'useless suffering.' He would argue earnestly: "People ought to get better or else die quickly and easily. Don't tell me that it is God's will that the world should be loaded with crippled, crazy people. I want to know why God does things that way."



God is never so busy running the universe that he can't pay attention to one man. He gave Dr. Marlin an answer. He started the answer going one day in the

middle of summer when Dr. Marlin dashed up the steps of a tenement house on an emergency call. This migrant from Germany lived with his nine children and when he saw Dr. Marlin at his door all he could say was: "Oh doctor, my wife is in here." He asked Mr. Miller to get all those children out of the room. There on a sagging untidy bed lay Mrs. Miller, perspiring and groaning. "Alright now, you just wait outside." The husband nodded and moved out. Dr. Marlin sighed sadly as he listened to the moans of the woman lying on the sagging bed in the dirty room. He thought to himself: "What do they want another kid for? They can't feed the ones they have." It was a long hard two hours before he held in his hands – the infant, a boy, – it was not breathing. He started the routine of blowing into its mouth. Then he stopped. His years of training urged him to go on. *What's the matter Dr. Marlin? You know what to do. Go ahead, breathe in his mouth.* He looked and saw his leg, his right leg – it was so much shorter than the left. He was a cripple. *Hurry Dr. Marlin, start him breathing.* He would have to go all his life with that awful lame leg. The other kids would call him 'Limpey.' He held the little bundle in his hand and then ... *Dr. Marlin, doctor! You're supposed to make him live.* "Why should I? They've got too many kids already. They'll never miss him; nobody in the world will ever miss him." That's what Dr. Marlin thought. Again: *You're a*

*doctor; you're supposed to save life. You didn't give this child life; you don't have any right to take it away. Doctor, are you going to let him die? Alright, alright...* he blew into the baby's mouth again and again... He was beginning to get frustrated: "Oh, what's the use?" *Go on doctor, go on!* He was exasperated and so: "Alright...go ahead and live...God knows what for." The baby started crying.... He shouted to the door: "Alright come in." Mr. Miller was thrilled: "Doctor, doctor..." Holding up the squealing bundle Dr. Marlin said: "He's a boy!" Mr. Miller was concerned about his wife, but Dr. Marlin assured him: "She just made it this time. You better not let it happen again." The husband was grateful and all he could say was: "God bless you doctor, you have saved my wife. What is your name?" Dr. Marlin said: "My name is Thaddeus Marlin." The little boy's father simply said: "That is good. I'll call the baby after you: Thaddeus."



Ten years later Dr. Thaddeus holds in his arms his own baby, a daughter. Dr. Marlin is now a happy man; he has a fine family and a growing practice. And his desire to rid society of those who are a burden has grown with his stature. 'Euthanasia' – the mercy

death, is often on his tongue. He addresses medical meeting after medical meeting....

"To you I say Euthanasia is the only answer to our problems. Why should a man be made to suffer for years and years with a painful disease that is absolutely incurable? I say it is a shame that cries to heaven itself. I say that it is a sin against man and God. I say ..." Dr. Marlin's cause grows.

Then one day he addressed a huge meeting which included a number of clergymen and prominent physicians. They listened quite attentively: "It is indeed gratifying to see so many of you here. Now my friends, in closing, I call upon you to sign a petition asking for a legislation concerning euthanasia. There is no place in society for cripples, for the insane, for those who are incurably sick. Let us put them out of the world in a modern, merciful, religious way and my friends, God will thank us for it."

They crowded around Dr. Marlin shaking his hand, congratulating him on his great step forward in the interest of science, that is, all except his old friend Dr. Charlie Morrison. Dr. Marlin walked up to him and smiled almost triumphantly and said: "Well Charlie, what do you think?" The old grey haired doctor just shook his head and looked straight at Thaddeus: "Well, I'm afraid I'm sorry to say it: You're a disgrace to the profession and to the God that made you. I'm sorry I can never call you a 'friend.' What you've done stinks to heaven and one of

these days you're going to realize it." The old doctor turned and walked away



Dr. Marlin was one of life's lucky ones. He had a good practice; he was honoured in his community and the years had been good to him. Then one day, with one skid of car tires on a wet road, he lost both his daughter and son-in-law. And now, as a consequence his granddaughter had come to live with him and his world centred around the little girl. One day when she was ten, little Barbara woke up with a stiff neck and funny pains in her arms and legs. *No, it isn't polio.* Dr. Marlin couldn't accept that. He was afraid to trust his own diagnosis; he called in physician after physician only to learn the same thing: little Barbara was a victim of the strange virus infection that occurs so seldom that it gets only a brief reference in medical textbooks. All of Dr. Marlin's colleagues shook their heads. There was no known cure for Barbara's disease which would progress slowly to a greater and greater degree to paralysis. Dr. Marlin called in even his old friend Charlie for help. "What can I do Charlie? What can I do?" The old man smiled and said: "Euthanasia Thad?" Thaddeus was hurt

and shot back: "Don't use that word to me Charlie." Charlie Morrison went on: "Is it different when it applies to you?" Thad was distraught: "Don't needle me. I called on you for help, Charlie, not to get a lecture. What can I do?" The old doctor got serious and scratched his jaw and looked pensive: "Thad, I don't know, I...I don't know..." Then he looked at Thad and said: "Wait a minute. I think I do. Ever hear the name of a doctor out west, by the name Miller? He wrote an article not long ago for the medical journal about his success in handling cases like Barbara's. If I were you, I'd see what he has to say. If he can't..." Thad was desperate and couldn't accept that but he said: "Oh, he'll have to help. She can't be paralyzed, not Babs. Look, I'll have him flown here." Arrangements were made; phone calls and plane tickets arranged and the good doctor came to Thad's consulting rooms and took Babs in. Charlie Morrison and Thad Marlin were outside...Thad pacing up and down in the foyer.



Charlie called out: "Sit down, Thad, sit down...Dr. Miller will be through with his examination in just a minute. I'm crazy to have you meet him; very remark-

able fellow." All Thad wanted was to get his little granddaughter better." Charlie simply added: "And, he's the only one I know who can." Thad was beginning to realize what it must feel like in his waiting room when they wait for him to come out of a room. It must have been awful, being on the receiving end of it. Thad was getting impatient: "What's he doing in there?"



The door opened and here he came. Dr. Miller walked slowly with a very pronounced limp. Thad looked at Charlie and asked: "What's wrong with him, accident?" Charlie said that he was born that way." The old doctor rose and walked toward Dr. Miller and introduced Thad: "Dr. Miller, I'd like you to meet Dr. Marlin Barbara's grandfather." Thad was nervous: "I'm delighted to meet you. How's Babs, is she going to be alright?" Dr. Miller had a gentle voice and soft and he smiled: "Yes, I think so. It will be a hard pull, but I don't think she'll be crippled." A sigh of relief came from Thad as he shook hands with Dr. Miller: "Thank God! And Doctor, I don't know how to thank you." The doctor simply replied: "Please don't mention it. I like to think I'm doing something useful while I limp through life. I used to mind this leg awfully when I was young but it turned out to

have its uses like other forms of adversity. I used to sympathize with every cripple I met and that's the thing that made me think of trying to help crippled children. The kids called me *Limpey*." Thad asked: "I don't think I caught your first name, doctor." Dr. Miller said: "Oh, well, it's a funny kind of name. My dad gave me the name of the medical student who delivered me so that's why I'm called Thaddeus." Thad was dumb struck; thoughts flashed through his mind and he said: "Thaddeus! Were you born in New York?" The doctor nodded. "1915?" Now Dr. Miller was surprised: "Why, yes!" Then Thad said it loudly: "Thaddeus, Thaddeus Miller." Thad's mind raced back to that morning when he dashed up the steps to the tenement and went into the little room and his struggle with his conscience: *Start him breathing - he's a cripple - the other kids will call him Limpey. You're supposed to make him live. Why should I? Nobody will ever miss him. I will call the baby after you: Thaddeus.* Dr. Miller admitted: "You seem to know all about me...sounds almost as if you were there." Thad just nodded and muttered: "I...yes...I was there. And now Thaddeus, now I know why. □"



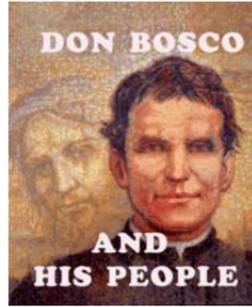
## DON BOSCO'S LOVE FOR HIS MOTHER TONGUE

by Natale Cerrato

At the end of 1847 big demonstrations took place in Turin: parades with chest ribbons, the carrying of torches and the singing of patriotic songs. Amidst such enthusiasm Don Bosco was able to maintain his usual calm. He neither opposed nor supported them despite the pressing invitations from the authorities who knew he was capable of mustering up hundreds of youngsters. One day Angelo Brofferio met him and said: "There's a place reserved for you and your boys tomorrow at Piazza Castello." "Others will be there to take it if I don't show up," replied Don Bosco. "I have to attend to some very urgent business that I cannot put off." "Do you really think it wrong to give public witness of your patriotism?" the lawyer went on somewhat sarcastically. "I didn't say that," rejoined Don Bosco, "I'd like to point out that I am just a simple priest, that before the State I am no one in particular and that my duties are preaching, hearing confessions, and teaching catechism. I cannot order my boys about, once they are out of my chapel, I cannot take any responsibility for them in such an important matter." (EBM 3, 193ff)

That was not the only time Don Bosco had encountered Brofferio. They held very different positions although both of them held a common love for their native land and their mother tongue.

Angelo Brofferio was born on December 6, 1802 at Castelnuovo



Calcea in the region of Asti, the son of a country doctor. He graduated in Law in Truino and successfully practiced law. A journalist, playwright, poet and member of the extreme left in Parliament. He had an eclectic and brilliant talent, but not the same seriousness and courage.

The song, *Mè Ritorn*, inspired by Brofferio's return to prison due to a conspiracy, was on everyone's lips and was also popular in Valdocco, so much so that, Carlo Gastini took advantage of it to adapt it in honour of Don Bosco.

Gastini's rendering sounded instead, like this:

*Good morning, dear boys,  
Dear boys, good morning,  
See, I'm back!  
Look again,  
Long live papa, Don Bosco,  
Our dear dad, and good friend  
One dark evening,  
He got me out of trouble,  
He took me by the hand,  
He told me: Let's go home  
I am the Salesian!  
Don Bosco is your Father."*

That's what was sung in the Salesian houses when we were young.

It's not very close to the verses of Brofferio but the content is very revealing since it recalls Gastini's life as an orphan and barber's boy who had been taken in by Don Bosco at the Oratory of Valdocco. This Carlo Gastini later came to be known as the "minstrel of Don Bosco" precisely because on one occasion at the Oratory he appeared on stage to entertain his audience with poems, songs and tricks. He was the first President of the Salesian Past Pupils and he died in 1902 as the Saint had predicted.

The song recalls the flavour that Don Bosco tried to infuse into Piedmontese declamation and song. He himself spoke and wrote in his mother tongue with great facility.

In May 1887 Don Bosco went to Rome for the very last time for the consecration of the Church of the Sacred Heart, the permanent monument of his love for the Pope. He was at the end of a long and active life which the consecration of this shrine helped to shorten. On Sunday May 8, a reception was given in his honour at which civic and ecclesiastical dignitaries were present, both Italian and foreigners. The international character of the gathering pleased Don Bosco who had already launched out his Congregation beyond the borders of Italy and even Europe to the rest of the world. At the end of the reception many guests were heard speaking in different languages. At which point someone had the bright idea of asking Don Bosco what language he liked most. Don Bosco smiled and replied: "The

language I like most is the language my mother taught me, because it takes very little effort to learn and I find it very easy to express my ideas in that language. I don't easily forget it as I would other languages!" His welcome response aroused much laughter and applause. That response not only revealed the Saint's refined prudence but it also helps us better understand the priest of Becchi. At the end of his life, he willingly turned his thoughts to his origins, to the land of his birth and to the roots from which he had sprung; candidly stating that he could express his ideas more easily in Piedmontese. Not for nothing was it said that we think in our mother tongues, the language we have learnt in our families. Piedmontese was the language in which Don Bosco routinely spoke for at least 50 years of his life and he never abandoned conversing in it even after he had introduced Italian at the Oratory in Turin. At Valdocco, Piedmontese was used in daily conversations, on the playgrounds, the refectory and even in sermons from pulpits and the talks he gave to his boys before he went to bed at night (the famous 'goodnight' talks). Then, a situation was created by the national unification movement and the ever-increasing influx of youngsters who, came to the Oratory and after their studies would return to their own regions, but Don Bosco, decided to insist on the use of Italian. It was not a matter of ostracizing Piedmontese, but of promoting bilingualism, that was necessary and functional. In doing so, Don Bosco didn't discount his love for his mother tongue, nor did he lend himself to the game of

those who sought to demonize the dialect in the name of national integration but because of the need of the times.

Up to the end of his life, he continued to speak Piedmontese at home and abroad, above all in the intimacy of personal conversation with some 'sons of the soil' that he happened to meet. Even on his many trips around Italy and abroad, whenever he met friends from Piedmont of any social class, he immediately conversed with them in his own language and enjoyed it as if he were at home. In 1858, during his stay in Rome, he attended a lunch hosted by Count Rodolfo De Maistre. The guests conversed in French and Italian but Don Bosco continued to speak to the Count in Piedmontese. Some of those invited were surprised and asked what language the two were speaking in. In jest, the Count replied, that it was Sanskrit (cf. EBM V 593).

For Don Bosco, Piedmontese was anything but Sanskrit. He spoke it better than he spoke Italian or French. Curious in this regard was a particular detail regarding his trip to France in 1883. He boldly ascended the pulpits of some of Paris' most famous churches from where he preached his familiar so-called *sermons de charité*, in which he appealed to his audience for charity, telling them how much he needed their support for his charitable work. He spoke French enough to be understood and did so with some ease, easily glossing over his grammar and his vocabulary. He spoke from the heart and despite the difficulties of the language, large audiences hung on his lips.

He spoke French as if he knew it, one day he told a curious bystander who asked him how he was able to do this with such confidence without knowing the French nuances and he replied good-naturedly: - As I tell my listeners in Piedmontese: "*Ai mé masnà a-j paiso le pagnote!*" (My boys like bread"), and they all understood. Truly Don Bosco thought in his mother tongue.

Unfortunately, there are only fragments of Don Bosco's writings in Piedmontese. There are conversations and skits and some letters in Piedmontese that appeared in the *Almanac Il Galantuomo* together with some of the sermons preached to his boys.

*The Memoirs of the Oratory*, the autobiographical memoirs of Don Bosco remained manuscripts until 1946 and the Piedmontese used only explains the fact that Don Bosco wrote it with no intention of publishing it.

So many who don't have a sufficient grasp of the Italian language would find his Italian peppered with Piedmontese absurd, but Don Bosco was no fool. He had written his *Memoirs* when he was about 60, and he had already had a hundred publications in good Italian to his credit. Therefore, it would be logical to expect a more correct Italian. If this did not happen it was precisely because Don Bosco, when he spontaneously wrote something personal, he left traces of his thinking in Piedmontese. These handwritten *Memoirs*, left in the hands of the Salesians, should serve as a rule "to overcome future difficulties, taking lessons from the past," to contribute to the atmosphere. The dialect,

in fact, is an expression of a culture, a lifestyle and an identity. With Piedmontese scattered all over the place, Don Bosco inadvertently used the language of his people as an instrument to narrate his childhood memories and to express his thoughts. Italian was a language he had come to learn to love. The language in which he thought was his mother's.

We are happy to close our review by presenting what might be considered an 'ignored' document. It describes Don Bosco's religious spirit and his love for Piedmontese. In his characteristic style, through his deeds and not his words, he quietly acceded to a request to assist in this project of the translation into Piedmontese of the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* by Pope Pius IX when he defined as a dogma of Faith, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The *Biographical Memoirs* mentions that Don Bosco became interested in this translation. The Abbot Dominic Sire of the Seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris had conceived of the idea of translating the Bull in all the languages and dialects spoken in the Catholic world. It was Don Giuseppe Apollonio, a Venetian priest, then Bishop of Adria and Treviso who turned to Don Bosco to ask him to do the Piedmontese translation. We wanted to investigate the Sire project so we resorted to the Vatican Library where we found a brochure with the illustration of a large volume compiled by Abbot Domenico Sire and published in 1904 which describes how the compilation came into existence and above all, the precious

manuscript of the Piedmontese translation. To have an idea of the project and then, view Don Bosco's contribution we referred to the publication of the Sire of 1904.

In the volume cited he described all the phases of the enterprise, on page 180 of the Volume that Sire titled as "*Traduction Piémontaise tout entière ornamentée par Madame la Comtesse Charles de Maistre*" we found this precious manuscript still exhibited in the Hall of the Vatican Museums and gently had it moved at our request to the reference room. We were thus able to transcribe the entire Piedmontese text and examine carefully all the details of the book and its ornamentation, hoping to find some trace indicative of the interest of Don Bosco. We were not disappointed.

It did not take long to realize that Don Bosco is evident throughout the Piedmontese project. The details of the decoration on the parchments confirm this. In fact, we found not only typical symbols of the city; the Consolata, the Shroud and the Blessed Sacrament, but also images dear to Don Bosco such as the Miraculous Medal and invocations such as "*Nos mortis hora suscipe*" and "*Auxilium Christianorum*," which especially in the 60s referred to here were continually on the Saint's lips.

In our humble opinion, Don Bosco sought out Prof. Gaetano Costamagna for this translation but he himself provided De Maistre the details for the decorative writing. Once again, he manifested all his love for the Madonna and the Pope, but also for the language of his people. □



## WHAT'S IN A WOMAN'S HEART

by Giuliano Palizzi

*"His mother kept all these things in her heart" (Lk 2, 51)*

**L**uke the evangelist tells the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus who gets lost in Jerusalem and his parents have to go back all the way to look for him. They finally find him after three days among the doctors in the temple (Lk 2). The episode ends with the statement that "His mother kept all these things in her heart."

### A WOMAN'S HEART

There is so much said about a woman's brain. What can that mean? Is it smaller than men's brains? How much smaller? Etc. But we never question a woman's heart. When you hear it said that behind every great man is a great woman, how do you interpret it? Is it that she pushes her stallion out front of the field, flattering her ego so as to make even little Narcissus blush? Or do we mean that she supports, encourages, and stands aside but is always there because she knows male fragility which fails to build on sacrifice. She is there so that he doesn't stumble but strives...not like at the races? The Gospel says

that Mary kept all these things in her heart.

### THE HEART OF MARY

What would you feel when faced with the possibility of physically losing your son who has just disappeared? What would go through your mind when this brat returns and you hear that sibylline comment, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" yet she was so glad just to have him back and that Jesus "came down with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them," but she treasured all these things in her heart. I can understand her joy at having found him again because with my own eyes I saw the joy of a mother who had lost her son on a beach and after ten minutes of indescribable panic she could hug him. For a while she couldn't even speak, her heart was so full of her child. And Jesus learned those things from none other than his mother when he said things like (Lk 15) a father who saw his son return-



ing home and "When he was a long way off, he was moved with compassion, he ran to meet him and throwing his arms around his neck he kissed him." Then he said to the servants, "Quick, bring the best robe and put it on him, put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and kill it, we must celebrate for this my son was dead and is now alive, he was lost and is found."

### JESUS, BORN OF A WOMAN

Jesus works so many miracles; almost always on request. The

blind men were on the fringes of the town, so they shouted to him and to draw his attention called him "Son of David" so as to entreat him to heal them. The lepers who came to him and threw themselves at his feet in spite of the prohibition to enter the town; then there were the lame, the possessed and others...even Peter's mother-in-law! But one day (Luke 7) Jesus meets a funeral procession. We're at the town of Nain and a dead man is being brought out for burial, "the only son of his mother who was a widow, and there were many people with her." Jesus knows what the heart of a mother goes through and without being asked he returns the child to his mother. How many things he learned from his mother! Certainly a great trust in God. That was the God to whom she had said: "Here I am" blindly trusting him and being encouraged by the angel that "nothing is impossible with God." She received a heart attentive to those in need. The concern for her cousin Elizabeth; and the attentiveness at the wedding where the bride and groom ran out of wine when she prodded Jesus to get busy. And when Jesus was on the cross he saw his mother at the foot, faithful to the end, she it was who had given him the strength to remain faithful to overcome the desperation of Gethsemane. She had learned to rejoice in the wonders that Father wrought for her every time and that a "humble servant" let herself be look on by him to allow him to do "great things" for her. □

## NEWSBITS

### TURIN

Enshrouded in mystery, the Shroud of Turin, one of the world's most famous relics, goes on display on Saturday for the longest time in history – 70 days in total.

There have been only four exhibitions of the shroud in the 20th century. It last went on display in 1998.

The Shroud, a piece of herringbone twilled linen cloth measuring 14.5 feet by 3.9 feet, is believed by many Roman Catholics to be the cloth in which Christ's body was wrapped after his crucifixion. The Vatican, which now owns it regards it as a powerful aid to faith.

On its first day on display (August 9<sup>th</sup>), about 9,000 youth visited the shroud for prayers led by the Archbishop of Turin who is also custodian of the shroud, Monsignor Severino Poletto.

The next day Poletto presided over a Mass celebrated with other

bishops from the region, and more young Catholics visited through the day. The young Catholics largely comprised delegates and visitors for the World Youth Day ceremonies in Rome. The shroud was on display for the general public on Aug. 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Approximately 345,000 people from all over the world had reserved tickets to see it. The number of people visiting last year exceeded the 2.5 million who came to see the shroud in 1998. (ABCNews)

*La Stampa reported* L. "The enthusiasm has increased more and more and eventually two thousand five hundred young people paraded and stood in prayer in front of the Shroud". From Saint Michael's Abbey, on Wednesday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, Father Luca Ramello, director of the diocesan Youth Pastoral, took stock of the final race for the following day, August 9<sup>th</sup>, when the youth pilgrimage ended before the Cloth which, ac-

ording to tradition, wrapped the body of Christ. The Shroud was exhibited in the Cathedral for only a few hours and only for them, as a sign of the Love that saves and gives hope.

### The day before

The day before was a day full of emotions and opportunities for reflection for at least 950 youngsters – scouts, groups, associations, individuals from all the dioceses of Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta – who would, the following day, join with all the others who arrived from different paths in their respective territories. In the night, after the veneration of the Shroud, they left for Rome where on the weekend they met Pope Francis in preparation for the Synod of Bishops – dedicated to young people – held in the fall.

From the early afternoon on the 8<sup>th</sup>, after a journey that started from Monginevro to Turin – "93 kilometres on foot", stressed Don Luca, who was with the youngsters from the start – the youngsters met at the Reggia di Venaria, where at 5 pm the Archbishop Monsignor Cesare Nosiglia greeted them and at 7 pm he presided at Mass with the bishops of the two regions.

After the Mass, a large community dinner with music involved all the participants in the Courtyard of the Carriages and, following, an artistic-spiritual journey, a very fascinating theatrical presentation in the Reggia recalled the hour of the Passion of Christ. The youngsters went to bed, serenely, in the Sports Hall, made available by the City. The following morning,

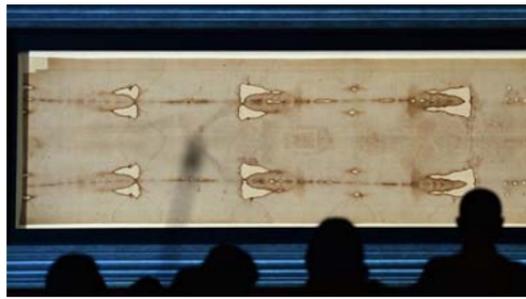
the scheduled stop was Valdocco, the shrine of Our Lady Help of Christians, then the youngsters split into groups to visit some places of Turinese spirituality. At 6 pm that evening the solemn Mass with all 2500 people of the pilgrimage "Love leaves its mark," celebrated by the bishops. Finally, they assembled at the Royal square.

### In the Cathedral

We were not given all the details of this extraordinary and "exclusive" exposition. There was confidentiality on the part of the Curia, also for security reasons. What was certain was that the relic, which remained in the chapel below the royal tribune of the Cathedral, where it is preserved, was exposed in the high-tech conservation case (in traditional exhibitions it is transferred to another one built specifically for its ostension). People started to walk past the sacred relic at sunset, which was essential for having the ideal lighting conditions to be able to identify all the signs on the Shroud, starting from the mysterious and tenuous body marks.

### The meeting

At 8:30 pm, in front of the relic, the authorities paid their respects and, shortly after, the long procession of the youngsters began, divided into groups of two hundred. As they entered, they were greeted by a quote from the Gospel projected on the facade of the Cathedral. The pilgrimage lasted some hours, and as the groups come out, they continued their material and spiritual journey to Rome. □ *Maria Teresa Martinengo, La Stampa*



## IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

### Culinary Delight

Two cannibals were sitting around chatting amiably after a hearty meal. "That was some meal," commented the first, licking his lips.

"Yes, my wife makes a wonderful soup," replied the host, "but I'm sure you're going to miss her."

### A Matter of Digits

"I'm sorry sir," said the telephone operator, "but that number has been taken out."

"Oh, is that so?" came the man's voice indignantly. "Well, can you give me any information as to just who has taken her out?"

### Feeling Cut-Up

After the doctor checked the patient over, the physician asked, "Have you been living a normal life?"

"Yes, doctor," replied the patient.

"Well, you'll have to cut it out for a while."

### What Confidentiality

"Please remember," said the irate female, "that I'm a lady!" "Your secret is safe with me."

### What a Face Lift

An old man from the hill country took his first trip to a large city. Walking into one of the skyscrapers he saw a doorman standing by a special kind of door. "An old woman stepped in, a light flashed red, and she was gone. A few seconds later the elevator descended, the door opened and a beautiful young lady stepped out."

"Begorra," said the old man, blinking his eyes. "I should have brought my old lady with me."

### Great Penmanship

"Doctor, doctor, please come over right away. My little boy has swallowed his daddy's fountain pen!

"I'll be there in five minutes," said the doctor, "but in the meantime, what are you doing?" "Writing with a pencil."

### Deadly Chances

Mr. Smith staggered in, wide-eyed. "I shall have to sack that chaffeur of mine," he gasped.

"That is three times this week he's nearly killed me."

"Oh, my dear," soothed his wife, "just give him one more chance."

### The Nut Behind The Wheel

The lady walked out of the grocery store and saw a driverless car rolling slowly down the street. Thinking quickly, she ran to the car, jerked open the door, slid behind the wheel, and pulled the emergency brake with a hard yank. As she stepped out, feeling proud, a man walked up. "Well, I stopped it," she beamed.

"Yeah, I know, I was pushing it."

### Hellish Business

The salesman breezed into the office one sultry afternoon. "Hi, Willie," he greeted the office boy, "haven't seen you in a long time. How's your boss standing the heat?"

"Haven't you heard?" came Willie's terse reply. "He's only been dead a week." □

## 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 just received the September 2018 issue of Madonna and on reading one of the testimonies, as a result of reciting the 3 Hail Marys, I could relate it to my own situation. I lost my beloved husband 4 months ago, and have been very depressed, nervous and unable to sleep. My doctor recommended various medications and even suggested counselling. I put my trust in the Merciful Jesus and Mary and I continued to pray the devotion to the 3 Hail Marys. I am slowly on the mend. Thank you Jesus and Mary. The devotion to the 3 Hail Marys is indeed very efficacious.

*A devotee, Adelaide, Australia*

Over the years I have read of the many blessings that our Mother Mary has bestowed upon those who sought her powerful intervention and intercession. The 3 Hail Marys is an easy and powerful way to reach Her loving heart. I wear my rosary round my neck and have tangibly experienced Her manifold blessings. I attend Mass and partake of Holy Communion on a daily basis and this too has been an awesome blessing to me. The Blood of my Jesus has touched my life and healed my body.

*Maureen de Zilwa, Sri Lanka*

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

Thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for the many graces received. *Violet Pereira, Mumbai*  
I am grateful to Our Lord, Our Blessed Mother and Don Bosco for helping my children complete their education successfully and for all the graces and favours received. *C.J.*

## APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

FEBRUARY 2019

Universal

*For a generous welcome of the victims of human trafficking, of enforced prostitution and of violence.*

**LOVING CHILDREN TO  
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Thank you, Mother Mary for helping me over the past 24 years which happened when you prompted me to attend a retreat and I felt the renewal of the Holy Spirit within me, soon after which I passed my engineering exams (after much difficulty earlier). I got a job, accepted a fantastic marriage proposal after turning down some 30 odd ones prior to that; I moved to USA. In 6 months or so found a well-paying job against all odds and excelled so much so that I became confident enough to move to a better company. I had my first child and was able to manage my work and my life and also pursue my MBA from a good University close to my place of work. I graduated, had my second child (a miracle in itself when the doctor told me that I couldn't conceive naturally). Soon after that switched careers with my newly earned MBA degree to become a manager. Soon I prayed and was blessed with the wisdom to handle a crisis at work and at home in a much more calmer manner than earlier. Slowly but steadily climbed the corporate ladder while bringing up two boys in a Catholic environment. Mother Mary gave me the grace to come closer to God through attendance of daily morning Mass, First Friday Masses and the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament without fail, and later the First Saturday Masses too. I was able to consecrate my family to Mary's care. When there were challenges in my marriage or with my kids, she slowly but steadily taught me to live Proverbs 3, to trust in God and not to lean in to my own understanding, to acknowledge God in all my ways and have him direct my path so much so that my motto in life when things go wrong (or good), I chant to myself "all for the good and God has a plan." My family has also learnt this principle which gives them hope when everything seems to be dark. Recently, she has given me the grace to pray more, especially to recite 2 to 3 rosaries a day. Slowly but steadily she undoes all the knots in my life and I just know that she is interceding for me. Thank you Mother Mary for your love and constant care and for leading me to your son. Since she is at my side I know that I only get the best of best, be it a home, opportunities to serve, kids finding admission in schools. She has taught me not to be anxious but pray and leave the rest to God. It amazes me how much grace is needed to trust in God. Thank you sweet Mother for guiding my steps in this life ensuring that I continue to strive to learn to keep God first in my life under all circumstances.

*Deepa*

*We are not human beings on a spiritual journey.  
We are spiritual beings on a human journey.*

**Stephen Covey**



**THANKS TO DEAR  
ST. DOMINIC SAVIO**



My sincere and heartfelt thanks to Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio. I had several complications during my pregnancy but finally I had a safe and normal delivery. I am grateful for the gift of a healthy baby girl and please continue to shower us with your abundant blessings.

*Mrs. Maria D'Souza, Bantwal*

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for curing me of my gas problem, heart burn and cramps in my feet.

*A Devotee*

Thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for miraculously curing my husband's urinary problem and also for blessing my son with a suitable life partner. Please continue to bless our family and our home. *Barbara Alphonso* Our sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco, St. Dominic Savio and St. Gerard Majella for a safe and normal delivery and for blessing Craig and Neha with a baby boy on August 23, 2018.

*Mrs. P. Fernandes, Pune*

*I am but a prayer away...*



**T**his is God. Today, as with every day, I will be handling all your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help. If the Devil happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, do not attempt to resolve it. Kindly put it all in the SFJTD box (*Something for Jesus to do*). It will be answered in MY time. ..not yours. ..please be patient.

Once the matter is placed in the box, do not hold onto it. Do not become impatient and take it back out to see if you can find a solution. Holding on or removal will delay the resolution of your problem. You must surrender the problem to me for proper resolution. If a situation that you think you can't handle arises, please consult me in prayer.

Together we will come up with the proper resolution. If you do not receive what you anticipate as a proper response from Me ... Remember. ...some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.

Because I do not sleep, there is no need for you to lose any sleep.  
*Rest My Child...if you need me, I am but a prayer away.☐*

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**MARY WAS THERE**

My most sincere thanks to Jesus and the Blessed Mary, Mother of Jesus for helping me to recover from my recent illness of severe Rheumatic Arthritis. I was not able to get up from my sitting position and severe restrictions to my movement. I fervently prayed to Jesus and Our Blessed Mother to help me recover. My prayers were heard and I am back on my feet again. I also wish to thank Our Lord Jesus and His Blessed Mother for the miraculous recovery of my son-in-law from his recent illness.

*B. Rangel, Goa*

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