

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

MUMBAI

JUNE 2018

VOL.20 NO. 2

CONTENTS

From The Editor's Desk: <i>Living in the 'Now'</i>	3
Family Etiquette - <i>Ian Pinto, sdb</i>	4
Youth on the Move: Mercy, not "Little Flowers" - <i>Giuliano Palizza</i>	8
Salesian Saint: Ven. Antonio de Almeida Lustosa	10
Vocation Promotion: <i>Dn. Vicky D'Souza</i>	12
Witnesses In And For Our Times: <i>St. John Fisher</i>	13
Lectio Divina: The Eucharistic Table - <i>Ian Pinto, sdb</i>	16
Quietspaces: How To Safeguard your Heart - <i>Pope Francis</i>	18
Blessing For A Father - <i>Fr. Ian Doulton's Collection</i>	20
Don Bosco and His People: Commonsense and Pragmatism - <i>Natale Cerrato, sdb</i>	24
Reflecting on Mary: Mary's Apron - <i>Bernardina Do Nascimento</i>	28
NewsBits.....	30
Walking With the Church: Easter The Gregorian Calendar	31
<i>In a Cheerful Mood</i>	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 <i>St. Dominic Savio</i>	35



*Mother dear,
protect thy child
and cheer my path,
with
thy sweet smile
of love.*

From The Editor's Desk

LIVING IN THE 'NOW'

It's that time of year in this Eastern Hemisphere where schools reopen after the summer holidays...and children and their parents, teachers and school managements look back on the holidays gone by with varied emotions: parents probably with relief that the kids have gotten out of their hair and the house is at peace once more...even at midday; and the children upset that they've got to get back to the 'board' once more; whiteboards or blackboards as the purses afford...but sadly and unfortunately no one or at best, hardly anyone, looks at the 'present' at the *Now*.

I have noticed as I get older, that "what goes around comes around." All the prophets have been vindicated - "As you sow so shall you reap," "there's nothing new under the sun." There is only incessant change from decline to renewal and back over again and again. History repeats itself. We never seem to learn that *the time is always 'Now!'* *Now* is the stuff of eternity! *Now* is all we ever possess although our minds have difficulty in grasping the full implication of such a simple fact - the past and the future bamboozles us with images of other *Now*s.

Only very young children and animals (as a matter of fact) are content and at peace in the *Now* (and saints, of course). 'Unless you become like little children you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' What does Christ think of the precocious children of today? Have we scandalised them with our wanton ways and our confused thinking and in so doing, corrupted their spirituality. Now I've got to pause as I write these lines and ask: Who or what has corrupted my spirituality?

As a child I used to be simple enough to believe that I better be in bed before... (*our parents were amazing at getting us to 'jump through their hoops'*) and that baby Jesus was my playmate! Unfortunately I am bored by the 'holiness' of simple things and the reality of beauty now becomes obscured and unattainable! In our civilized world our intellects complicate everything - analysing everything that exists - and this fact just 'hurts' more than amuses me. Was it devious of God to have complicated His creations by giving us our brains as a free gift? There is, after all, a sting in the tail in this gift and I, for one, have to confess that I am confused - and I admit I'm far from simple! I have much to unlearn in order to keep living and breathing God's good air before I die. I want to get back to that simple spirituality that can wonder "at the birds of the air and the lilies of the field who never spin or weave," and be at peace with my God and myself and with all whom I pass on the way because they are God's messengers to me. Above all I am trying to recover a sense of that ever present *Now*. It's the only moment I have and it's a gift - the 'present.' So, "Help me Christ," I pray.

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

FAMILY ETIQUETTE

by Ian Pinto, silb

A smile abroad is often a scowl at home", said Alfred Lord Tennyson. What he meant by that is open-ended. One thing it could mean is that good people outside of home may not always be good within. The smile is a crafty instrument. It can be used for good and also to mask evil. Despite those umpteen quotes that tell you the value and power of a smile, it isn't as easy as that. It's not too difficult to smile at a stranger but it is considerably tougher to smile at someone you know, especially if that person is unpleasant to you or has harmed, shamed or embarrassed you in one way or another. The same is a case with a family member with whom your relationship is tense. Smiles hide as much or perhaps even more than they reveal.

Smiling inspite of the pain is the mark of a strong person. It is one of the many things we are taught or pick up along the way of growth and maturity. The family is the primary place where training of a child takes place. It is there that he/she learns values and etiquette that shape his/her character. Educating a child to proper etiquette is a vital responsibility of parents. Parents can bark orders all day long, but the children rarely hear what is being said if the parents' actions are in direct opposition to the commands. When we tell our kids to be polite, say "please" and "thank you", and take their turn in line, yet forget to perform

those acts at home, the children get a mixed signal that is likely to send them toward a state of misbehavior. If you constantly chatter on your cell phone, they might not pay much attention to you when you tell them to put theirs down during a meal. Parents shouldn't expect anything from their children that they don't do when it's just the kids and them.

WHY IS ETIQUETTE IMPORTANT?

Smita Basu pointedly brought out the relevance of etiquette in an article for the *Readers Digest* a few years back. She wrote, "In the world we live in now, survival is victory. And we're not talking about surviving wars, or earthquakes, or epidemics, but getting through an average day without whatever hair you have left standing completely on end. How long does it take, on any given day, before you're gritting your teeth and reminding yourself not to lose your cool and unleash your inner Genghis Khan? Under the constant onslaught of other people's everyday intrusions, from spam SMSes to intimate strangers on public transport, are we all turning into grumbling misanthropes? Has the world always been like this, or have things been getting steadily worse? And are the people around us as befuddled by us as we are by them? What, in the name of civilization, has happened to people's manners?"

In a world that's constantly changing, shrinking, flattening, and always in a hurry, a world where diverse cultures, regions and generations are being mashed together, and where the omnipresence of technology changes human behaviour regularly, it has become hard to define manners... manners would mean basic civilized behaviour, civic sense, a general empathy and concern for other people, and following very basic rules to make sure we don't ruin the days of people around us."

Manners is a part of etiquette which is a much more formal and comprehensive way of talking, doing and living. While manners are basic and important, etiquette is even more so. Nowadays, not only has "trash-talking" become increasingly common but so has "trash-relating" - where we treat another like a piece of trash. With the advent of smartphones, face-to-face communication has been replaced by face-to-screen or even screen-to-screen communication. The need for etiquette is as great if not greater than it ever was before.

It is extraordinary how unfeeling and uncontrolled the members of some families are to one another. Children answer their parents back with no respect; parents interrupt their children in the middle of a sentence with no apology, criticisms are cruel and unkind; table manners are ignored unless there are visitors. In such families, life could so easily transform into an endless stream of bickerings, naggings, and a 'when-will-it-end- attitude.

It is never too early to teach children good manners. In fact, it is better to start when they are young so that they may grow to practice them. Manners and etiquette in children show that they have been nurtured well in their families. Although, instilling good manners can be difficult with some kids, you should not give up and be particular about following them. Some deliberate teaching and modeling at home by the adults will help inspire them in the children.

An Assumption sister recounts, "I am to a great extent what my parents, especially my mother, made me. We were taught to be grateful for little things, and to do services for others without expecting any recognition or reward. My mother used to tell me that if we had expectations we would get hurt. For sometimes we would not get any gratitude. Nay, there would even be cases where those for whom we did a good turn, might turn against us.

She told us that when we gave, the left hand should not know what the right hand did. My mother used to send me with this or that gift to a neighbour or an aunt. I enjoyed doing it. We children were told never to tell anyone that we did this. She would add, "If you speak it out, you will have no reward in heaven."

We were taught to eat whatever food was prepared at home. My mother used to tell that there were so many who didn't have anything to eat.

We were told never to take revenge. Only God, who knew everything, had the right to judge anyone. We were taught that God is great and that He could

and would do whatever He wanted. So we could count on Him.

My parents were very generous. They used to help people even unasked. My father used to tell us: "Stand for truth. Then no one will be able to trample you underfoot." My mother taught us to forgive. We were told not even to ask for an explanation. We were corrected for our mistakes. But before we were corrected we were asked to say what we had to say. After that we were told why such and such behaviour was wrong. Then alone were we corrected or scolded."

Clarence Thomas has rightly said that "Good manners will open doors that the best education cannot." The most brilliant intellectual would be worth very little without a healthy etiquette. Sometimes I wonder when I see parents and their kids spending so much of time and money on trying to score the highest marks whether they spend even a quarter of the amount on shaping character. It is awfully simple to lose sight of the importance of etiquette in the blind pursuit of success, wealth or happiness. Intelligence can take you far in life but only character can take you all the way. It has benefits not only here on earth but even in the world to come.

ETIQUETTE SCHOOLING

The family is a group of individuals who are not only biologically connected, but who love, cherish and are willing to do anything for one another. How we interact with strangers begins with how we interact with our family at home.

It is important to understand

that even though you may be in the comfort of your own home around people who have seen you at your very worst, etiquette does not disappear. Instituting good manners and proper etiquette at home is an important piece of the family unit and helps children grow into poised adults. The Bible exhorts, "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray" (Prov 22:6).

Since children are maturing daily and spend much of their childhood at home, it is important to teach them proper etiquette so that when they are out on their own, they continue to use the tools learnt at home. As a parent, one should highlight situations when you are engaging in proper etiquette and good manners so the children are not only being told what is right, but also witnessing it. It is important that parents think about how their actions are influencing the children and teaching them proper behaviours.

Here are few things that must be held in mind before a child is schooled in etiquette:

1) Good manners are a good habit. "Behaving politely is a way of life, not just something you pull out when you're at a wedding or fancy restaurant," says Robin Thompson, founder of etiquette-network.com and the Robin Thompson Charm School in Illinois, USA. "It's important to start as early as you can so manners become something a child does automatically, whether she is at home or away."

2) Polite behavior will help the child's social development. Kids who aren't taught social

graces from an early age are at a distinct disadvantage, say experts. An ill-mannered child is a turn-off to adults and kids alike; while children aren't likely to be offended by a playmate who neglects to say "excuse me," they don't relish the company of a child who doesn't know how to share or take turns. "You wouldn't send a child off to preschool without a healthy snack," says Sheryl Eberly, author of 365 Manners Kids Should Know. "Sending her into the world without knowing social graces is equally problematic."

3) Learning manners is a life-long education. "It won't happen overnight, and you need to take it slowly," says Eberly. Introducing one new social skill a month – teaching your 2-year-old to say "hello" when another person addresses him, for example, and rewarding him with praise when he does so – makes the process manageable for everyone.

Equally important is keeping your expectations in check. "There's only so much a small child can do," reminds Eberly. That same 2-year-old is not going to curtsy when ancient Aunt Dorothy comes over for Sunday dinner. But she can greet her at the door and sit happily at the table for a limited period of time.

4) Your behavior counts. "That means that when you ask your partner to pass the salt, you do it with a 'please' and a 'thank you,'" says Eberly. But it goes beyond that. Think about it this way: How would you feel if your child gave a fellow tricyclist the finger when he cut her off on the sidewalk? If the thought doesn't

thrill you, keep your hands and fingers on the wheel while driving. Inappropriate expressions of anger are rude, too.

5) Consistency is important. Acquiring good manners takes lots of practice and reinforcement, so make sure that you, your partner, and your caregiver are encouraging (and discouraging) the same behaviors. If your husband lets your kid fling food during meals and you don't, your child won't know what's expected of him.

Some of the basic etiquettes that every child ought to know are: Greeting family members, knocking on closed doors before entering as a sign of respect for the other person's privacy, asking before you borrow things and not assuming that everything belongs to everybody, resisting the temptation to riffle through other's things be it a diary or drawer, learning to use inclusive language and replacing "I" or "me" as far as possible with "we", eating meals together and interacting transparently with one another.

One of the most important things that parents ought to keep in mind while teaching etiquette is to be a role model and display the behaviour you want kids to exhibit. I think in this regard the words of Jesus must be taken very seriously, "Do whatever they (Pharisees and scribes) teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them" (Mt 23: 3-4). □

MERCY NOT 'LITTLE FLOWERS'

by Giuliano Palizzi

THE SERMONS OF JESUS

In "the sermon on the mount," Matthew (cc. 5-7) brings everything together saying: "but I say to you" compared to the "you have heard it said" of the Old Testament. Jesus doesn't alter the law but "fulfills" it as he focuses on the soul, making it not only the standard to be observed but a life project that becomes one's responsibility. Is it a great revolution: the Law? Yes, for sure, because loving a person comes before the law and before everything else. It is from God only if it is at the service of the person and never against a person. Luke (c. 6) also takes up this theme in his "sermon on the plain" and focuses on some statements.

PERFECTION IN MERCY

Matthew says (5:20) "If you are not more righteous than the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." After describing some key points of righteousness he concludes (5:48): "Therefore be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect," Luke in turn, (6:38) "Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate" and "Do to others what you

would have others do to you" (Lk 6,31) because "Anyone who comes to me and listens to my words and acts according to them is like the builder who dug deep and laid the foundations of his house on rock. The river flooded and the torrents dashed against the house, but could not shake it because the house had been built on rock" (Lk 6,47-48). Matthew's goal is the perfection of God, Luke's instead is mercy. But the conclusion is simple, the proof for the atheist: the novelty brought by Jesus that he himself is the image of God is revealed in his deepest soul it is that of a "merciful father" (Lk 15) who is willing to do anything in order to save even the least of his children who are trying to return because the door is always open in order to come to the feast and to joy. Don't you remember? "He was still a long way off when his father caught sight of him. His father was so deeply moved with compassion that he ran out to meet him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him." And then "Quick! Bring out the finest robe and put it on him... Take the fattened calf and kill, we shall celebrate and have a feast, for

this son of mine was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and is found." And much more!

A "STONE-FREE" CATECHISM

You must go from a catechesis that favours words like sin, hell, fear, prohibition, strict observance of even the smallest details, "little flowers"... to a fresh and liberating message: "A new commandment I give you, love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another." (Jn 13,34). Only Jesus is not opening a door that can lead to faith because faith is an encounter with Jesus and not formulae. Faith must fascinate not indoctrinate. Faith is not giving explanations that God exists but that God became man and loved us as only he could. Faith means remembering that we will be judged on the love lived out in our lives and not on dogmas that we profess: "No one who says to me 'Lord, Lord...' but the one who

does the will of my Father" (Mt 7,21). "In truth I tell you, whatever you do to these little ones, you did to me" (Mt 25, 40). Let us recall the meeting with the adulteress when everyone had stones in hand ready to mete out justice, victims of a short-sighted and discriminatory law and there was Jesus with his bare hands restoring dignity to that woman. No one is authorized to believe her better than he. He threatened those who clung to the law and he said to them: "Woe to you also, teachers of the Law. For you load on people unbearable burdens, while you yourselves do not move a finger to help them" (Lk 11,45). Rather: "You call me Master and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also must wash one another's feet. I have given you an example so that you also should do as I have done." (Jn 13,15). □

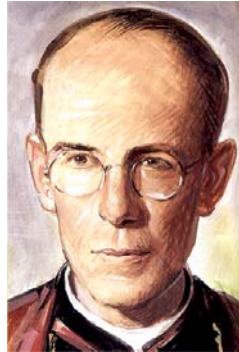


ANTONIO DE ALMEIDA LUSTOSA 1886 - 1974

Salesian Bishop, Servant of God

Born on February 11, 1886, the anniversary of the apparition of the Immaculate at Lourdes into a family of rural bourgeoisie, of São João del Rei (Minas Gerais - Brazil), Antonio was marked by this occasion. This fact disposed him to have a filial devotion to Our Lady and even nourished his poetic vein right into his twilight years. He came to be known as "the poet of the Virgin."

At sixteen, he entered the Salesian College of Cachoeira do Campo and at nineteen he went to Lorraine as a novice and an assistant to his peers. He was ordained priest in 1912 and was almost immediately appointed Master of Novices at the age of 26. In 1916 the novitiate moved to Lavrinhas and there too he was the novice master as well as the rector and professor of theology and philosophy. He was not even 30 years old. His passion for literary, philosophical and theological studies, together with a keen spirit of observation gave him the rare capacity for assimilation which



he was then able to translate into various apostolic and pastoral initiatives.

In 1924 he was appointed Bishop of Uberada, referred to as the diocese in the "Mining Triangle." He wanted to be consecrated on February 11, 1925 in memory of the Madonna in his life. He entered the diocese and his arrival was referred to as a double celebration: the arrival of their new shepherd after a two-year vacancy and the flood of torrential rain after months of draught and heat. He found the minor seminary empty and the major seminary with only a single deacon. The following year he had around thirty seminarians and secondary students. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to his pastoral ministry, visiting all the parishes and the other centres in the extremely exten-

sive area, enduring long and not very comfortable journeys.

In 1928, not even three years later he was transferred to Corumbá in Mato Grosso, the most extensive and difficult place for evangelization. Three years later he was appointed bishop of Belém do Para, in the vast diocese of Norte. He remained there for ten years spending himself generously. His pastoral action was particularly effective because it was always enriched by his experience. The apostolic nuncio Aloisi Masella called him one of the most eminent figures for sanctity and pastoral dedication of the Brazilian episcopate.

In 1941 he was transferred to the all-important see of Fortaleza, the capital of the state of Ceara. He reached there at the height of his maturity and spiritual experience and he gave the best of himself, leaving after twenty-two years a most significant imprint of his apostolic zeal and holiness. If this zeal could be expressed in statistical terms, the list of the works and foundations started by him would suffice: the pre-seminary *Curato D'Ars*; the Institute of *Cardinal Frings*; the hospital of *St. Joseph*; the shrine of *Our Lady of Fatima*; The Radio Station *Assunzione Cearense*; the house of *Bambin Gesù*; various local schools, clinics, workers' groups, etc. His special concern was his constant preoccupation in preparing and forming a conscious and responsible Catholic Laity who followed *suaviter et fortiter*, (sweetly and strongly)

even in moments of conflict and misunderstanding. The expression of his effective spiritual and pastoral work was the foundation of the congregation of the "Josephites," currently present in various states of Brazil. Monsignor Lustosa was a prolific writer in various fields: theology, philosophy, spirituality, hagiography, literature, geology and botany. He was also very gifted in the arts. One has only to see the stained glass windows of the Cathedral of Fortaleza.

In 1963, after 38 years of episcopal activity he asked and was granted release from his pastoral ministry. He chose to reside in the Salesian house of Carpina where he spent the last eleven years of his life. He kept busy researching and writing biographies. He wrote articles, translated from Italian, French and Spanish. He also published a book of meditations. Death took him on the eve of the feast of the Assumption on August 14, 1974. His body now rests in the Cathedral of Fortaleza.

Monsignor Lustosa was a great ascetic and that's how he appeared even outwardly. "Enshrouded in air" that was how his physical person was described. He was endowed with an adamant temperament which often betrayed the fire that burned within him. He lived poor: "I have nothing," he wrote in his will. He was a man of prayer, humble and dedicated to penance. He knew how to approach everyone especially those most in need. □



Apriest is a man sent by God. As a child, I was always fascinated to see priests celebrating the Eucharist and receive their blessing. When I was asked the question "What are you going to become?" my answer was always, "a Priest." During my schooling in a diocesan school (St. Joseph's Karwar, Karnataka) many religious priests and brothers visited our school. That was when I said to myself that I want to become a religious priest. When I was in class 8th a Redemptorist priest visited us, and when it came to filling the slip at the end of the session I wrote: "I want to become a priest." The priest followed me up for 3 years by sending greetings cards and letters and that was where I saw my vocation to become a religious being nurtured, and strengthened. After my 10th when I expressed my desire to my mother, she told me to complete my 12th and then go. During the next two years there were no outward traces or signs. I even planned and was thinking of completing my graduation. I don't know what happened, but one afternoon, after my rest, I told my mother: "nothing doing I want to become a priest and I don't want to do my graduation." My dad came home early to help me discern. I still think it was God who whispered "Come, I need you." Next morning after Mass, my sister told Fr. Allwyn Cardoza about my desire to become a priest. He called me and I



talked to him about my desire and my interest in the work. He asked me whether I knew about the Don Bosco Congregation and asked me to go and meet Fr. Bernardino Almeida, the then Rector of Don Bosco, Sirsi. Accompanied by my dad I went and met Fr. Bernardino and he explained to me what it meant to be Salesian and the following day he took me to Fr. Provincial, Loddy Pires. Fr. Provincial sent me to Don Bosco, Tuem as a boarding master. After six months I was asked to go to Panaji as an Aspirant. During that one year I picked up many traits and I learnt a lot from the Salesians that I met. I made my application for the admission to Pre-Novitiate in the year 2007. Presently, I am doing my 3rd year of theology and I am grateful to God for giving me this Priestly calling. So with His grace and assistance I am looking ahead to have a fruitful experience as a Salesian Priest. □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. JOHN FISHER (1469-1535) JUNE 22

As Far as the Law of God Permits

It was 5 in the morning of June 22. After knocking gently, he pushed open the cell door which opened gently. Even the jailers have a heart, John Fisher mused. The jailer of the Tower of London did not want to bother the prisoner more than he should. He was a strange prisoner that one! He was more docile than the others, much kinder and calmer than the others and poorer. He also knew that he was more important than the other "tenants" in the Tower. He was really a "big shot." A Catholic bishop, having been recently made a cardinal. His name was John Fisher. Unlike the others, he prayed a lot almost all the time and above all he was very calm and serene.

This calm and serenity impressed him particularly. He gave no signs of anxiety even though he was a condemned man. There were no signs of nervousness or despair in his behaviour even though he was nearing the end of his life. It was his last day, June 22: he was to die at ten o'clock. The orders had come from above. The jailer was bringing him bad news



...or was it brutal? But no, for John Fisher it was not bad at all, it was indeed beautiful.

And for that reason he wanted to reach the most important appointment of his life rested and relaxed. Since he had not slept enough that night due to his ill health and other ailments, he

kindly requested the jailer to let him sleep for another two hours; the kindly jailer did not deny the prisoner's last wish, gently shutting the cell door he walked away very pensive.

So calm in the face of death...

How strange those two convicts! John Fisher was not afraid. He was not anxious even on that last day, during those last few hours. Truly, death did not traumatize him that much because he had "fathomed" its presence and "its sting" daily, throughout his life. He had often thought about it and had meditated and existentially accepted it while meditating on the passion of Jesus Christ. It was Jesus Christ, going through his agony in the garden of Gethsemane and then his death which gave him this courage and serenity which he seasoned with a bit of humour.

10 o'clock arrived and John Fisher was ready for his big appointment. Rested and relaxed thanks to the two extra hours of sleep he was even fully dressed in his best clothes (very poor even though he was a bishop). While still on the way to the gallows they asked him three times if he accepted the Act of Supremacy desired by Henry VIII and three times very affably he answered: 'no.' Then turning to the crowd he said in a loud voice: "Christian people, I die for the faith in the Holy Catholic Church of Christ."

He first forgave his executioner and, falling to his knees he recited the 'Te Deum' and Psalm 30 with these words: "In you Lord, I have hoped, let me never be put to shame."

He was beheaded and his head

stuck on a pike and placed on London Bridge where it remained for 15 days. Then it was thrown into the Thames to give way to that of Thomas More (St. Thomas More) who was executed on July 6. Thus the bishop of Rochester, John Fisher died.

The poor bishop who didn't want a change

John Fisher was born in Beverly, Yorkshire in 1469. His father Robert, a prosperous merchant in the city, died when he was eight years old. After attending the local grammar school, John was sent to Cambridge in 1482. There he completed all his studies up to his degree in theology. At the age of 22, with a special dispensation because of his age, he was ordained a priest. But already in 1494 he received an important position at the University of Cambridge. During this time he met Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby, grandmother of King Henry VIII (who would still behead him). She was a great lady, extremely intelligent and sensitive. It did not take her long to discover the qualities and spiritual depth of the young priest, John Fisher.

In 1504 he was consecrated bishop of Rochester, one of the smallest and poorest dioceses in England. He used to say that becoming a bishop was like being married and that the diocese was his bride. He often referred to her as "my poor bride." Well, to this "poor bride" he remained faithful up to the end even though he had the possibility of changing and accepting larger and more famous, beautiful and richer bishoprics.

One of his first biographers wrote: "As a good shepherd, he never neglected his flock. He always fed them by preaching the word of God and by the good example of his life." He remained poor. When he was taken to the Tower of London and an inventory of his personal property was made, one realized how true that was.

When Lent came around there was no talk among his collaborators; they did not even appoint committees or community meetings to decide what should be done for Lent. The reason was very simple: it lasted all year. John then added to his penance a discipline of his choice: He wore a hair shirt on his skin.

Lover of books and culture

The only "luxury" that he conceded to...was books. He was a great lover of culture. He was also a great friend of a great scholar of the time, Erasmus of Rotterdam, who initiated him into a study of Greek. His personal library was well stocked. John was first and foremost a theologian and he used his in-depth knowledge of theology to write various books in defense of the Catholic Faith against Luther who had begun to preach on the continent.

But the crisis came when John Fisher had to make a radical choice whether to work for King Henry VIII and his matrimonial choices that were not in keeping with the law of the Church. The king, for reasons of the state had divorced Queen Catherine of Aragon (who had Fisher as her confessor) and married Anne Boleyn.

He strenuously defended Queen Catherine and the indissolubility of the marriage bond and therefore refuted the new marital choice of Henry. The clash became irreparable when Henry promulgated the Act of Supremacy in 1534 which required the submission of the clergy to the power of the crown. Fisher was also invited to take the oath. Refusal was considered connivance with the enemies of the king and therefore betrayal. John Fisher declared that he was willing to swear loyalty to the king "as far as Christ's law permitted" of course this caveat was rejected.

On April 26 he was imprisoned in the Tower of London. In the same year 1534 parliament, intimidated by the king, approved the Act which declared that the King was "the only supreme head of the Church of England on earth." Thus the Anglican Church was born.

On June 17, 1535 the moment of the great decision arrived. John Fisher appeared before a court where he refused the Act of Supremacy declaring it contrary to "Scripture and our Faith," and the death sentence was promptly issued.

A few months earlier he was created cardinal by Pope Paul III as a final attempt to stop the king and to save him. But Henry was furious and took the gesture as a challenge and declared that the new cardinal would carry the red hat, a gift of the Pope of Rome, on his shoulders... because he wouldn't have a head to put it on. He was condemned to be beheaded and executed on June 22, 1535 at 10 o'clock. □



THE EUCHARISTIC TABLE

Ian Pinto, *sdB*

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE

The festival of Unleavened Bread was prescribed by God to be observed for seven days (Lev 23:6) as a reminder of the salvation that Yahweh wrought for His people, Israel, from the hands of the cruel Egyptians (Ex 12:17).

It was on the first day of this important Jewish festival that the disciples of Jesus came up to him and asked him where he would like to celebrate the Passover meal. Usually, the meal was to be had in one's own house, surrounded by one's own kin. But Jesus and the disciples had left their homes and families and thus had to look for a place to be together and celebrate the mercy and salvation of God. Jesus gave two of his disciples clear instructions as to where they should go and what they will find to aid them in their preparation (Mk 14:13). The disciples were amazed to find things just as Jesus had said (Mk 14:16).

At the meal, Jesus took bread,

blessed it, broke it and gave it to them saying, "Take this, it is my body." Then he took a cup, and after he had given thanks, he passed it to them and they all drank from it. And he said, "This is my blood, the blood of the Covenant, poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not taste the fruit of the vine again, until that day when I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God." (v. 22-26)

SIGNIFICANCE OF A MEAL

Tables are one of the most important places of human connection. We're often most fully alive to life when sharing a meal around a table. We shouldn't be surprised, then, to find that throughout the Bible God has a way of showing up at tables. In fact, it's worth noting that at the center of the spiritual lives of God's people in both the Old and New Testaments, we find a table: the table of Passover and the table of Communion. New Testament scholar N. T. Wright captured something of this sentiment when

he wrote, "When Jesus himself wanted to explain to his disciples what his forthcoming death was all about, he didn't give them a theory, he gave them a meal."

Sharing meals is a very important part of Jewish family and community life. So important, that special blessings are said at the start and end of the meal. On the first night of the Passover feast, it is traditional that families gather together for a special dinner called *seder* (derived from the Hebrew word for "order" or "arrangement", referring to the very specific order of the ritual). During this meal, the family had to follow a stringent set of rituals that included recounting the Passover from slavery to freedom, eating specific herbs and bread, drinking wine and educating the children in the history of the faith.

A significant action that is performed during this meal is the "breaking of the bread". One can hardly imagine the "breaking of bread" except within the context of a meal. Therefore, what Jesus did was nothing extraordinary. He was merely following the ritual prescribed by Jewish Law. What was special however, were his words and actions which divulged from the prescription and instituted something novel and profound, viz. the Holy Eucharist and the Catholic Priesthood. It is for this reason that Maundy Thursday or the celebration of the Lord's Supper is also known as the Feast of the Institution of the Holy Eucharist and the Feast of Priesthood.

THE EUCHARIST AS A MEAL

In the days of Jesus, a 'comm-

unal meal' was a common practice, particularly among the Jewish Sect of the Essenes. The Essenes, a community living mostly in the Judean hills, were known for their absolute community of goods. As Christianity developed a "Communion" ritual was introduced as part of Christian worship. This ritual involved the reconstructing of the 'sacrifice of Christ', where the worshipers partook of bread and wine, which represented the body and blood of God. This process of change from bread and wine to the body and blood of Jesus is called *Transubstantiation*. This means that though the bread and wine appear to be simply bread and wine, they change substantially (not physically) into the body and blood of Christ. Therefore, when the priest utters the words of Jesus, "This is my body"... "This is my blood", in faith, the bread and wine become so. This is why the Catholic Church upholds and teaches the "real presence" of Jesus in the Eucharistic bread and wine.

It is wonderful that Jesus chose a meal as the form by which His followers were to keep his memory alive. The Holy Eucharist, just like the Jewish Feast of Unleavened Bread is full of significant rituals and gestures. The entire Mass, from the opening sign of the cross to the final blessing is sacred and divine. It is a profound mystery of God's ineffable love and willingness to be with Man. It is not merely a sharing of food but a sharing of God's divine life itself and therefore is worthy of highest respect and personal participation. □

HOW TO SAFEGUARD YOUR HEART

*Pope Francis' morning meditation in the chapel
of Domus Sanctae Marthae on Monday 15 June, 2015*

To understand God's time, the heart must be free of negative influences, in order to receive the gift of grace and not to be overwhelmed by worldly "noise". We must safeguard our heart in order to perceive when God passes through it. Pope Francis said this in his homily during Mass at Santa Marta on Monday.

Today, the Pope pointed out, "Paul returns to this topic and in the Second Letter to the Corinthians (6:1-10) he writes: 'we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain'. This is "the gratuitousness of God". Thus, Francis continued, we must not "accept it in vain" but "accept it well, with an open heart." Paul adds: "God says, in fact: 'At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation.' Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Thus, he continued, "Paul advises us not to let pass the acceptable moment, namely the moment in which the Lord gives us this grace, gives us gratuitousness, not to forget this: that he has given it to us and gives it to us now."

In fact, Francis explained, "in every age the Lord again gives us this grace, this gift: the gift that is gratuitous." Therefore, Paul exhorts us "not to accept the grace of God in vain." This is "because if we accept it in vain, we will put an obstacle in the way." This is precisely the obstacle "of the Christian who calls himself a Christian, even goes to Church, goes to Mass on Sundays, but does not live as a Christian: he lives as a socialite or a pagan." And "when a person is like this, it causes scandal."

After all, the Pope said, "How many times have we heard in our neighbourhoods, in the shops: 'Look at him or her, at Mass every Sunday and then he or she does this, this, this, that...'" This is how "people are scandalized." This is what Paul is referring to when he says "not to accept the grace of God in vain".

But then, "how should we accept" the grace? First of all, Francis explained, with the knowledge that it is "the acceptable time," once again quoting Paul. Essentially, "we must be attentive to understand the time of God, when God passes through our heart".

In this respect, "St. Augustine said some beautiful words: 'I am afraid when the Lord passes' - 'But why are you afraid if the Lord is good?' - 'No. I am afraid of not welcoming him, of not understanding that the Lord is passing, in this trial, in this word that I have heard, that moved my heart, in this example of holiness, so many things, in this tragedy.'" Thus, the Pope emphasized, "the Lord passes and gives us the gift." But it is important "to safeguard the heart in order to be attentive to this gift of God."

So, "how does one safeguard the heart?" Francis asked. He then explained that we do so by "pushing away every noise that doesn't come from the Lord, pushing away so many things that take peace away from us". And "when these things - these passions of ours - are pushed away, the heart is prepared to understand that the Lord is passing" and therefore "to receive him and the grace."

Thus it is important "to safeguard the heart, safeguard the heart from our passions." And we have "so many passions." But "even Jesus, in the Gospel, speaks to us about our passions." In particular, Francis repeated the words of Matthew in the Gospel offered in the day's liturgy (5:38-42): "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil..."

This, the Pope said, is about "being free of passions and having a humble heart, a meek heart." And "the heart is safeguarded by humility, meekness, never by fights." Instead, he continued, "this is noise: worldly noise, pagan noise or the noise of the devil." The heart should be "at peace."

For this, Francis said, returning to Paul's words to the Corinthians, it is important "to put no obstacle in any one's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry." He then added: "Paul speaks of ministry but also of the Christian witness, so that no fault may be found with it; and of peace and humility 'in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labours, watching, hunger."

These "are unpleasant things," Francis remarked. From all of this "I must safeguard my heart in order to welcome the gratuitousness and the gift of God." But "how do I do it?" he asked. The answer is again found in the words of Paul: "by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit." In short, with the space for "humility, benevolence, patience which looks only to God and with the heart open to the Lord who passes".

Before continuing the Mass, the Pontiff asked the Lord that we "not accept the grace of God in vain, not accept the gratuitousness of God in vain, and for this," that we may "learn how to safeguard our heart." And he asked "Our Lady for the grace of meekness, humility and goodness, which really safeguard our heart, in order not to let the Lord pass, in order not to accept in vain the gift, the grace, that the Lord gives us."

(by L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly ed. in English, n. 25, 19 June 2015)

BLESSING FOR A FATHER

From Fr. Ian Doullton's collection of stories

John Reynolds, whose story you're about to read, was the most successful businessman in town. At the end of five years with his firm he owned stock in the company. One afternoon he parked his shiny little sedan in front of the parish rectory and walked briskly up the front steps. He was here to see the parish priest because he wanted his son to be baptized. Fr. Gilbert opened the door and smiled at his guest. He didn't remember having seen John Reynolds before. With a shy smile he took his hand: "I'm Fr. Gilbert." Astute businessman that he was, John insisted that being rather busy having taken over as general manager of the Independent Manufacturing Company he still found time to attend the 12 o'clock Mass on Sundays.

The two men sat in the parish office and John came right to the point: "Now, about the baptism, I'd like to have it next Saturday." Fr. Gilbert was amused: "Saturday?" John wanted it on Saturday because as he said: "You always have several baptisms on Sunday afternoon. I'd like to have my son baptized on Saturday. There isn't any reason why the day can't be changed, is there?"

Fr. Gilbert took out his diary and looked over his week: "On Saturday, that means you want him baptized alone... It can be arranged." John Reynolds even had the time in mind and prompted Fr. Gilbert: "One thing would suit me perfectly."

Father wanted to know the names of the godparents and John mentioned the Kirkwoods adding:

"Kirkwood, you know? The real estate people." And John went on: "He built Lakewood Manor and he bought the Riverview development last week."

Fr. Gilbert seemed to think that name rang a bell and said: "I know they are in the Parish, but I don't believe I've met them personally. You see, it's important that both the godfather and the godmother are faithful in their own practice to their religion. They have an obligation to the child you know," he added.

John was quite confident that he had made the right choice: "Oh, don't worry about them, they're fine people. They're friends of mine." And then they came to the name of the boy and John Reynolds said sitting upright and with a twinkle in his eye: "He's going to be John, after me, John Reynolds Junior." Fr. Gilbert just smiled and said: "Of course - I'll make a note of that, John... Reynolds Junior to be baptized next Saturday afternoon, not Sunday."

Everything seemed to have been settled. Both men stood up and John shook Fr. Gilbert's hand: "I've got to run along, I have to be going, I've several calls to make." As they walked to the door Fr. Gilbert added: "Well, Mr. Reynolds, I'm glad I had this chance to meet you. I hope I'll see you more often." All that John Reynolds said as he turned to look at the priest: "Saturday Father?" Fr. Gilbert reminded him: "Well, it will be a big day. You know a child really isn't born until he is baptized. That gives him his Father in heaven." Of course, John

Reynolds hadn't thought of it that way. He didn't have any other children.

Showing him out Fr. Gilbert finally said: "Well, I hope your son will be a blessing to you." John Reynolds just smiled and added as he walked down the steps: "Of course, he will."

II

It was fourteen years later when John Reynolds appeared at the parish rectory. He slid his new convertible to a stop and marched up the front steps. It was a fine day when he reached up the steps and rang the bell. Fr. Gilbert opened the door: "Good afternoon Father, I'd like to speak to you for a moment." Fourteen years had been a long time and Fr. Gilbert was no longer that young. He squinted a bit and said: "Ah, certainly, come in. Sorry, I'm getting so poor about names." "I'm John Reynolds Father," said John Reynolds. Of course Fr. Gilbert remembered his face at the 12 o'clock Mass most Sundays. Once more, coming directly to the point he said: "My son is being confirmed this Sunday." Fr. Gilbert seemed to vaguely remember Johnny Reynolds in the Parish School. "We never call him Johnny at home. I thought surely you'd recognize the name; I had him baptized here." John added with a smile.

Fr. Gilbert smiled and said: "Yes, yes, I remember now...yes, it's all of fourteen years ago. You haven't changed Mr. Reynolds. You don't look a day older." John Reynolds seemed fit and bright and so, cutting out the small talk: "Now, about this confirmation deal on Sunday...I have a party of friends coming so I want to reserve two pews in the centre aisle,

middle section." Rubbing his chin Fr. Gilbert gave him a sort of embarrassed smile and said: "I'm sorry but none of the seats are reserved." "No reservations?" John was surprised. The place would be crowded. John pleaded: "Can't you make an exception? These are important people I have coming." Fr. Gilbert added apologetically: "I'm afraid you'll just have to get here early."

Looking down at his palms he added: "Oh, that's a nuisance. I naturally wanted my friends to see what my boy can do. I understand the bishop asks the children questions in the church during the ceremony. My boy knows all the answers in the book. I made sure of that. I've heard his lessons every night." Fr. Gilbert was impressed at John's interest in his son's progress. "Yes, I told him there wasn't any reason why he shouldn't do well in this as in anything else. He tells me he's at the head of his class." Fr. Gilbert knew that Johnny Reynolds was a bright boy. The earnest father tried once more: "So, if my boy can be in the front row and the bishop asks him questions he'll be a credit to the class and the school. It's what you want; with all the people there." Fr. Gilbert informed him that the boy was already assigned to the front row. This news pleased John Reynolds. He took an envelope from his pocket and handed it to Fr. Gilbert: "Here Father, take this." Fr. Gilbert's eyebrows went up as he discovered that there was money in the envelope and asked innocently: "What for?" John was a bit embarrassed and simply blurted out: "It's a donation to the church."

Fr. Gilbert was moved and informed John Reynolds that there

were a good many ways that the money could be used and then he added: "But, you know, sometimes money isn't as important as other things, for example I've been trying for months to get some representative man to head the board of the Dads Club. It means everything to teenage boys to have leaders to look up to. But it's hard enough to get men for even a few hours a week. Perhaps you Mr..." John Reynolds seemed to catch the drift and added: "Yes...yes...I know there are some boys who need help. But I will say I have brought up a son who's a credit to me." The two men stood up and walked to the door. Fr. Gilbert added: "I hope he's been a blessing to you." John Reynolds smiled and added: "I'm proud of my boy." This conversation was over and so Fr. Gilbert simply said: "Well, I guess there's nothing I can do for you?" Walking out John added: "No, not a thing!"

III

It was another eight years before John Reynolds came again to the parish rectory. He drove up early in the morning in the new station wagon he had bought for trips to his country estate. He planted his feet on each step as he mounted to the front door of the parish rectory and rang the bell. Fr. Gilbert, now greying and a bit stooped opened the door and saw the smiling face of John Reynolds: "Oh, good morning Father. I want to see you about an important matter." Fr. Gilbert recognized him: "Mr. Reynolds isn't it? Come in. I haven't seen you in a long time." John said that he had been busy and had just acquired a ranch. The two men sat down. John Reynolds mentioned that he

spent a great deal of time at the ranch and his Spartan lifestyle did him credit. Then as if John had just remembered why he was there, he added: "Oh, my son is getting married next month." Fr. Gilbert was glad for him and John went on to mention that John Junior was marrying Elsa Kirkwood, the daughter of his good friends...the estate people. He was pleased and he mentioned that the Kirkwoods had now bought up practically the whole west side of town. Fr. Gilbert wondered as he said: "I haven't seen him, in I don't know how long." Dodging any more questions from Father Gilbert John mentioned that the wedding was planned for the following month. "I'm sure we can arrange that; the church should be available then," Fr. Gilbert mentioned eagerly.

But John interrupted: "Father, I didn't intend them to be married here. I thought the cathedral would be the appropriate place." Fr. Gilbert was surprised: "The cathedral?"

John had already done his homework. His son and Elsa his fiancé thought there might be some red tape and so John was supposed to see Fr. Gilbert to get that cleared up right away. Of course Fr. Gilbert mentioned that the parish needed to give them permission to get married anywhere outside your own parish church. John thought it was becoming a little tedious and so added: "Well, if you can't handle it Father, I'll take it up with the bishop." Of course Fr. Gilbert would give them permission and that relieved John Reynolds and he smiled brightly: "Well, that's that. Oh, I have something here for you Father,"

and he handed him a cheque.

"A cheque; what's it for?" Fr. Gilbert was surprised. Again John simply added: "Well, consider it a donation to the church."

Fr. Gilbert suggested that he make an offering to the cathedral but John simply said: "I'll give them something at the cathedral."

They had reached the door and Fr. Gilbert opened it and said rather casually: "Let's see, this is the third time, isn't it? The third time in twenty years..." John corrected him with a smile: "Twenty two years." Fr. Gilbert added: "Three times in twenty two years you've come to see me and each time it's been about the boy." John took this as a compliment. Then he added as he walked to his car and turned as if to confirm what had been spoken of: "You did say, you'd give the permission to have the wedding at the cathedral. Yes? That does it. Good bye Father."

IV

A week later, John Reynolds took his son fishing on the lake at their ranch. The water was cold but the day was sunny and quiet. They had just finished their picnic lunch and were starting to fish again. They were on the lake and in their little boat. John Junior was a bit restless in the bow looking for something and suddenly he tipped over and before his father could get up, Junior was in the lake gasping for breath. John senior tried to hold out his oar but it didn't help. John senior jumped in after seeing his son struggling to stay afloat but it was soon over. The lake was quiet once more.

A man on the bank saw the tragedy. He ran and phoned for help. They dragged the lake the rest of the day and throughout the night.

John Reynolds stood on the shore. He did not eat or rest. In the morning they found the body. John Reynolds took it in his arms and carried it to the ambulance. After the funeral he locked himself in his house. He refused to talk to anyone. At night he went out walking alone. He walked for hours. Late one evening Father Gilbert at the parish house heard the sound of feet climbing heavily to the door. He opened the door and saw a grey haired man, his shoulders stooped and his face lined with grief. Rather softly Fr. Gilbert said: "Won't you come in? It's John Reynolds isn't it?" The two men sat down quietly in the light of a table lamp. John Reynolds took out a cheque from his pocket. Fr. Gilbert was truly surprised:

"This cheque; but it's such a big cheque." John mentioned that he had sold his ranch and the house on it. This time again Fr. Gilbert asked once more: "What is the money for, Mr. Reynolds?" In rather measured tones but not looking up at his parish priest John Reynolds said very clearly - meaning every word he was saying: "It's in memory of my son. It's for the school, for the other children I never had, never wanted and it's for the poor; the poor I never noticed or cared about; it's for the church because I didn't appreciate what she wanted; it's for everything that I have not done and it's to make up to God for trying to take his place." Fr. Gilbert placed his hand on the man's drooping shoulder and said: "John" "Yes, Father."

"I think your son has at last been a blessing to you."

John nodded: "Oh yes, now I know he has." □

COMMONSENSE AND PRAGMATISM

by Natale Cerrato

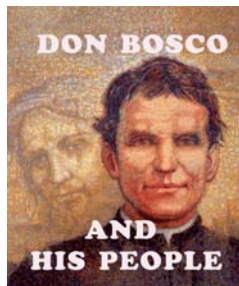
CHAPTER II

Born in Turin in 1820, Victor Emmanuel II had the appearance of a good-natured king although perhaps not as honest as traditional iconography depicts him.

D.M. Smith, in a recent biography is not very kind towards him and tries to debunk the legend that he possessed a strong character and was capable of great decisions. Yet he states that: "Undoubtedly in the behaviour of Victor Emmanuel there was a considerable dose of common sense."¹

The commonsense and Pragmatism of King Victor are undisputed characteristics of the authentic Piedmontese. He looked at the facts, the concrete situations of life. He went right to the point, to its concrete reality, to the substance of things. He always kept his feet on the ground, in the little things of everyday life as also on the great affairs of state.

But even the ordinary man, who lacked culture and ordinary ingenuity usually had the right perception of reality which urged him to examine things well before acting, to examine the pros and cons to overcome or to avoid obstacles and to aim only at attainable goals. To make sense of this just reflect on the language of the elders of the time in various circumstances of life. If a project was very challenging they would say: *'d nen fé 'l pass pi long che la*



gamba ("don't bite off more than you can chew"). If the effort of an enter-prise did not correspond to its optimal success, they were content with partial results obtained, because *a l'é nen dit che lòn ch'a l'é nen bianch a sia near* ("it's not said that what is not white is black"). In case of mistakes they consoled themselves by saying *gnun a sbaglia mai d'autut* ("No one went completely wrong"). And they tried again without delay because *chi a guarda tute le nivole, as buta mai an viaggi* ("he who stops to observe all the clouds, never sets out on a journey." They never demanded the impossible nor did they want to own what was not theirs by right. They used to say: *Sette a tò post e gnun at farà aussè* ("Sit in your place and no one will make you get up"). When they could not do it differently, they accepted people and things as they were: *A venta pié 'l temp com'a ven e la gent coma ch'a l'é* ("You have to take the weather as it comes and people as they are").

They did not get lost on the ironies of the defects of others

because *dèstissand 'l lum ad j'autri, 'l nòstr a fan en pi ciatr* ("extinguishing the light of others doesn't make ours brighter"). They never forgot the fact that in life there are joys and sorrows, like *a-i é gnun autar sense cros* ("there's no altar without a cross"). They knew well that *tut liss a saria fin-a tröp* ("everyone has his troubles") and that in the end *a l'é question 'd nen piessla* ("the question is not to be overwhelmed") and *tut as rangia* ("everything can be fixed").

Mamma Margaret punctuated her conversations with commonsense and pragmatism. And her way of dealing with the vicissitudes of life shows that it was not just her way of speaking but a reflection of her way of thinking and acting. During the terrible famine of 1817 "she fed her family as long as she could." Then she took her money box where she had scrupulously saved money and handed it to a neighbour and asked him to go and look for food for everyone. But he returned empty-handed. There was nothing left in the markets even if you paid a high price. Mamma Margaret tried again but in vain to ask someone to loan them some food. Then she made her decision: "Drastic circumstances demand drastic means" she said and, with the help of her neighbour, "She killed a calf. Part of that calf was immediately cooked and then worst of the family's hunger satisfied."² You can imagine what this meant to a poor peasant, killing a calf which was her fortune. But now was not the time for lamentations. It was a question of survival. The decision was timely, courageous and concrete.

Of these qualities Don Bosco

gives us undisputed proof. His whole life can confirm this, from the first dream at the age of nine. In the morning he narrated the dream to the family. His brothers laughed at him: "You're going to become a keeper of goats, sheep, and other animals." My mother commented, "Who knows but you may become a priest." But my grandmother, though she could not read or write, knew enough theology and made the final judgment, saying, "Pay no attention to dreams."³ We'd imagine John sided with his mother's opinion. His mother had understood the dream; yet John remained, like his grandmother, with his feet on the ground. The dream would be understood little by little in the light of the reality as it unfolded. He grew into an adult and became a priest. He took every initiative in this light. His life was a "yes," a generous response to the divine call, but also a 'yes' to the concrete needs of everyday.

Those abandoned boys from the outskirts of Turin needed to be gathered in a quiet environment for recreation and religious formation and for this Don Bosco opened Oratories. They needed some education and he founded Sunday and day schools. Many of them needed a home and a family and for them Don Bosco opened boardings. They needed mutual help because they were helpless apprentices, shop-boys and so he organized mutual aid societies and also solicited employment contracts for them. They needed to learn a trade without being exploited and he opened workshops, and so on. To every concrete need, a concrete answer, even if he had few funds. He started with a little,

but he began and immediately without unnecessary discussions.

In 1853 he opened the first tailoring workshop and he, who himself was a student in Castelnuovo and Chieri, had learned a little of that trade was the first teacher of his tailors. So too, a little later he started the shoemakers. In 1854 it was the year of the binders. At that time there was not a single boy in the house who knew a thing about this craft, and no money was available to hire a craftsman. Nevertheless, one day Don Bosco put the printed signatures of a book entitled *The Guardian Angels* on a table; then, picking a boy he said to him:

- You're going to be a bookbinder! - Me? I don't know a thing about it!"

- Sit down and I'll show you. Do you see these sheets? Start by folding them."

Don Bosco sat with him, together they folded all the signatures, readying them for sewing. At this point Mamma Margaret came to their assistance and their united efforts were successful. Next they made some paste with flour and applied the paper covers to the book. The pages then had to be trimmed, but they were at a loss as to how to do it. All the boys had crowded around the table watching this performance. Suggestions flowed freely, most of them in favour of a knife or scissors since nothing else suitable was available. However, Don Bosco was never at a loss when an ingenious idea was needed. He went to the kitchen and with mock solemnity returned holding the steel crescent-shaped cleaver for mincing vegetables. With this tool he began trimming the book amid the boy's

laughter.

"Laugh all you want," Don Bosco exclaimed, "but we need a bookbinding shop and I want to make a start!"⁴

Those who've seen the present Salesian Schools of graphic arts can only marvel at these origins.

For such initiatives what is needed is the pragmatism and commonsense of a practical and ingenious man like Don Bosco. He was able to extricate himself out of any embarrassing circumstance by finding a solution.

It is known that all his life he was compelled to seek funds. In 1873 he launched another drive to solicit enormous funds for his works. He also asked for small donations of ten francs, offering an assortment of attractive prizes. Among these was a precious re-production of the *Madonna of Foligno* by Raffaello. This handsome painting adorned the sacristy wall, and the Salesians were grieved to think that it would soon be taken away. [Joseph] Buzzetti, the good Salesian lay brother, faithful to Don Bosco let him know this and he laughed:

- Well, tell them that from now on, at dinner time, they can look at the painting!"

We shall have occasion to speak later of Don Bosco's wit and good humour. Here we are interested in the manner in which he acted when he was in need. Of course, he relied on Divine Providence, but, like his mother, he did not neglect those practical and concrete decisions within his power necessary to solve the problem. Not only that, but he took away the unwarranted, and unjustified scruples by making clear to them more stringent and serious needs.

Mons. James Costamagna recounts another incident even more charming:

Toward the end of 1874, the first offshoot of the motherhouse at Mornese was transplanted in the Salesian School of Borgo San Martino. Some months later, Don Bosco went for a visit. Sister Felicita Mazzarello (the sister of the superior general) promptly went to him, rather upset. "Don Bosco, what shall we do?" she asked.

"What's wrong?" asked Don Bosco.

"The director insists that we serve two courses at dinner. He claims that if we do not eat a little more, we shall not last long here because there is so much to do. But at our house in Mornese only one course is served and everyone is happy and content. What are we to do - listen to the director or do as we did at the motherhouse?"

"This is a grave matter," Don Bosco answered with mock seriousness. We must think it over well before giving a definite answer. Of course, the director is to be obeyed: on the other hand, the customs of Mornese also demand respect. I too am puzzled. Anyway, before I decide, let me see today's two courses."

They brought them to him at once because it was almost dinner time. Don Bosco emptied both plates into one and gave it to the sister. "This should rid you all of fears," he said. "The two courses are now one. Neither the director nor the mother-house will have reason to be hurt."⁵

The same pragmatism that Don Bosco displayed in the little things of daily life was evident in the

more daring initiatives such as Catechesis, youth and popular education, technical and professional training, good literature, Catholic action and the missions; even the founding a religious society that was profoundly Christian and contemporary, was further confirmation of his mindset. His were concrete solutions to the needs of his times; prompt fulfilment of ideas even to the extent of being marginalized by a society in flux.

A man of great equanimity, Don Bosco was able to build his project day by day, juggling through the most risky situations without compromise or connivance with anyone, but also keeping his mind on the lessons of history. His activity cannot solely be explained by his inherited qualities but also by his style of action which reveals the typical commonsense and pragmatism of his people.

John Paul II had given this authoritative testimony in a speech he gave to youngsters in the Piazza of Mary Help of Christians in Turin on April 12, 1980 when he said: "Today, if 'Don Bosco' were among you, with his mature experience, as an educator and with his Piedmontese commonsense he would know well how to identify and distinguish the echo, never shrinking from the word that Christ addresses to his disciple: 'Come, follow me.'"⁶

(Footnotes)

¹ D.M. SMITH, *Victor Emmanuel II*, Bari, Laterza 1983, pp 160, 167 ff

² MO 8.

³ MO 8-10

⁴ EBM V, p. 22-23

⁵ EBM X, p. 295-296



MARY'S APRON:

by Bernardina Do Nascimento

A Day of Celebration

Carefully reading John's narration of the wedding of Cana one realizes that the presence of the "mother of Jesus" is not accidental. Mary participates in the wedding uninvited. Jesus and his disciples were guests only because they were explicitly invited. This means that the couple was closely connected by family ties to the Virgin. Not being a guest she would have rolled up her sleeves and got involved in making the celebration a success. This would be linked to the good name and the honour of the whole family.

The Newly Weds

There's total silence about their identity. According to the tradition of the time the girl must have been about fourteen while the boy around eighteen. The Spanish mystic Maria di Agreda claims that "they were fourth degree distant relatives on the side of St. Anne." Maria Valtorta identified the bride with Susanna, a very close relative or a very close friend of Mary. She could have been the same Susanna mentioned by Luke about the disciples of Jesus (Lk 8:3).

THE LOCATION OF CANA

The geographic location where the wedding took place is also unknown. Cana in Hebrew means "reed" or "cane." In the immediate vicinity of Nazareth there were three places that could identify themselves as the village mentioned in the Gospel story. They all lie within a radius of fifteen kilometres of Nazareth. They are Kafr Kenna, Ain Qana and Qanat el Galili.

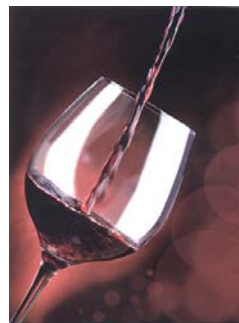
MARY

It is interesting to note that John does not call the Virgin by her name but merely "the mother of Jesus." Even if he uses the name Mary in his Gospel five times and ten times Mariam, he never does so to allude to the Madonna. Nine times he refers to Martha's sister; five times he refers to Mary of Magdala and Mary of Cleophas. When immersed in the mood of the wedding feast it's not surprising that the wine ran out. Jewish weddings lasted three to seven days, peaking at around fifteen. All the relatives and friends of the village participated in the celebrations and so it was difficult to pre-

dict the consumption, especially of wine. The success of the wedding was always directly proportional to the satisfaction of the thirst of the guests. A failure in this obligation would mean a disgrace to the entire family. For this reason Mary was present and attentive understanding the tenuousness of the situation that had arisen and without being prompted she took the initiative. Her presence appeared to have been essential to a positive outcome for what could have been an embarrassing *impasse*. It was her intervention that motivated Jesus to perform his first Messianic sign and it is important to underline that the evangelist speaks of signs not of miracles as preachers often forget that signs are rooted in spirituality while a miracle is often wrapped in a cloak of magic. John is aware of the sources that link wine to the cult of Dionysus and others.

PRESENCE IS NOT SERVICE

With her timely intervention, the mother of Jesus tells us that it is not enough to be witnesses by being good we have to become protagonists in person. You cannot be a Christian by merely wearing the livery of respectability or of philanthropy you must gird on the robust apron of concrete commitment. Through love she wins over the rebelliousness of her son: "What has this to do with me, woman? My hour has not yet come" (Jn 2:4). The heart of a mother watches even when the Son is so busy partying and unwilling to get away from the festivities. But wherever there is a need a mother goes into action without caring about anything else. She does not hesitate to instruct the ser-



vants: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5). Having gotten the Son involved she withdraws behind the scenes. The apron means service, not presence. The incidence of the sign is inversely proportional to the chatter, the debates and round tables. The "they have no wine," requires an equally prompt and precise response: "Draw some of it and take it to the head waiter" all with a simple glance. Everything is reduced to the mere essentials. The charity of Jesus and Mary is wrapped in the gratuitousness of silence and concrete immediacy. There is no trace of interest or self-importance. No one needs to say thanks because no one has noticed anything. The wine is great, the result of an attentive apron, making all marvel at its goodness, warming the heart, increasing joy and above all, saving the good name of the young newlyweds. Mary does not send out monthly invitations or colourful messages. She is simply there, present and involved. □

ROME

The official recognition of the 70th miracle that took place in Lourdes was announced today, Sunday 11 February 2018, by the Bishop of Beauvais, Monsignor Jacques Benoit-Gonin. The miracle involves the healing of a nun, Sister Bernadette Moriau, who had been suffering from severe paralysis for many years.

The clergywoman, who is now 70 years old, had been suffering since the late 1960s from the "Cada equina syndrome," caused by a spill of the softer central portion of the disc that causes pressure on the bundle of nerves below the end of the spinal cord. Since 1987 she was unable to walk.

The miracle took place on 11 July 2008, but announced only ten years later, on the day of the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes (11 February), on the 160th anniversary of the apparitions of the Virgin Mary to the visionary Bernadette Soubirous. Sister Moriau is a religious of the Oblate Franciscans of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is her story from a video broadcast by the diocese of Beauvais.

"In February 2008 my doctor invited me to the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes scheduled for July 3-7, 2008... I had never been there since I became ill... In the cave I felt the mysterious presence of Mary and of little Bernadette... In no case have I ever asked for healing, I had asked for the conversion of my heart and the strength to continue my path as a sick person".

On her return to her community in Besles, near Beauvais, the



healing took place. "On July 11th, during our time of adoration in communion with Lourdes, I lived in my heart the strong moment of the blessing of the sick with the Blessed Sacrament and I really felt the presence of Jesus... At the end of the adoration, I felt a feeling of warmth in my body... I felt good".

Bishop Benoit-Gonin, in the diocese's communiqué, adds, "On 11 July, at the end of the afternoon, Sister Bernadette Moriau spent some time in adoration in communion with Lourdes and the pilgrimage she had just made. Going back to her room, she felt called to get rid of her prostheses: the corset, the crutches, and stopped the neurostimulator... She immediately started to walk without any help, in a totally autonomous way. As witness, she called her sisters who saw the change".

The religious' doctor took note of the healing, which was subsequently presented to the *Bureau Médical International de Lourdes*. The case was examined at the annual meeting of the Medical Committee on 18 and 19 November 2016: the verdict was approved by all but one doctor, who concluded that Sister Moriau's recovery "remains unexplained in the current state of our scientific knowledge."



Easter, The Gregorian Calendar, Doing Enough for God

From St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland

Q. *I would like to know why does Easter fall on a different date each year. Last year Easter fell on 16th April, this year it is on 1st April...*

A. Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the Spring equinox. Using the calendar as revised in the Gregorian reform, named after Pope Gregory 13th (1482) the date this year is April 1st.

Q. *Did Pope Gregory XIII really develop the annual calendar the entire world seems to use? It seems amazing in this day and age that a pope had that kind of influence, over an issue doesn't seem religious.*

A. Imposing a calendar may seem an odd exercise of authority, but Pope Gregory XIII appreciated accuracy and precision. He assembled scientists to remedy defects in the calendar established by Julius Caesar, and their work was welcomed, at least in Catholic countries, because it brought the actual days of the year closer into harmony with the seasons. English-speaking countries embraced the calendar in 1752.

Modern Catholics hardly expect their pontiffs to be expert in science. Pope Gregory, who est-

walking
with
the Church

ablished the Vatican Observatory was no exception.

Q. *I worry sometimes how little I do for Christ and his Church. I live alone. I am shy, quiet, diffident person and I find it hard to mix with others and as a result stay at home most of the time. I pray a lot for others but that seems too little. Please advise me.*

A. Put your mind at ease. You are doing a lot. Your prayer might seem too little but all sincere prayer is answered and your prayer is contributing to the good of the Church. Remember the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. Christ took what was offered to him - the five loaves and two fishes - and having prayed over them handed them back and all ate and were satisfied. He took what was there already, used it to do what he did. What was given to Jesus was given back by him transformed.

Likewise He will take the little we can offer him and transform and magnify it and use it for the good of the Christian community to which we belong. Every small act of good we do is used by God for the good of His Church. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

The Merrier

Visiting an Indian reservation to buy some curios, a tourist asked an Indian chief about the size of his family, and was amazed when the chief said he had 14 children. "Well," said the tourist, "with a family that large, don't you have an endless stream of squabbles and arguments?" "Oh, no," the Indian replied, "We're just one big Hopi family."

Forewarned Forearmed

A boy was a witness in court, and the lawyer said, "Did anyone tell you what to say in court?"

Boy: "Yes sir."

Lawyer: "I thought so. Who was it?"

Boy: "My father, sir."

Lawyer: "And what did he tell you?"

Boy: "He said the lawyers would try to get me all tangled up, but if I stuck to the truth I would be alright."

Safety First

Boy friend: "I'm not saying she's a bad cook, but I know why her family prays before every meal."

On A Wing and a Prayer

A passenger in a plane sat relaxed at a window observing the spectacle of the heavens. Suddenly a parachutist appeared and drifted by.

"Going to join me?" cried the parachutist.

"No, I'm very happy where I am." "Just as you like," called the parachutist, "but I'm the pilot."

Human Relations

Said one cannibal to another

cannibal after the jungle party dinner. "I get so fed up with people sometimes."

Spirit of Lightning

When several vats in a London brewery were struck by lightning, but undamaged, the beer in them was found to have improved considerably in quality. This is believed to be the first recorded case of a storm actually brewing.

The Tall Order

The ace sales agent returned after six weeks on the road and presented his expense account to the manager. "What's this big item here on your account?" growled the boss.

"Oh," replied the salesman,

"That's my hotel bill."

"Well, grunted the boss, "don't buy any more hotels."

Amorous Invitation

The social worker, visiting the inmates of the local jail, asked a variety of questions as she went from cell to cell. Finally, one of the prisoners who was enjoying a long stay in the workhouse, asked: "Was it your love of liquor that brought you here?"

"Gosh, no, lady," he replied. "You can't get nothin' in here."

No Favourites

"She's mean, all right," said the boy about his teacher, "but she's fair."

"What do you mean by that?" asked his mother.

"Well," he replied, "She's mean to everyone."

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



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

My sincere and heartfelt thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco, St. Dominic Savio and all the saints

for the many graces and favours received through the recitation of the Three Hail Marys, especially for my daughter's resident permit which she got after eleven months in the UK. Mrs. Filia Dias

My sincere and heartfelt thanks to Jesus Christ and Mother Mary for the favours received through the recitation of the Three Hail Marys. Sweet Mother tell Jesus to keep me under thy care.

Anna R. Pinto, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians for a speedy recovery after a successful operation of the urinary tract in relation to prostate cancer (TURP). Dexter Assey, Sydney Australia

The first time my son was laid off his job in a very renowned company, he was totally heartbroken. The company wasn't doing well due to mismanagement, heavy losses had been incurred. The company that took over wanted a cut in manpower and was in no mood for interviews and the like, but Mother Mary helped him get a good job in a startup company. Now, this company wants to wind up. My son, who never faced failure, was in for a shock again. As always, Mother Mary came to his rescue. He was not laid off from the company but was given a year's time to find a job elsewhere. He has already started getting calls for interviews from well-established companies. Thank you Infant Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Joseph. Anita D. Mumbai

HOSPITALITY Sr. Stan Kennedy

Hospitality is love. It is an openness to the unknown and the unfamiliar, it is being open to the stranger, to what frightens us, to what we may not like. It is being prepared to accept people who may stand on our toes or rub us up the wrong way - because of course there are differences between people, and those differences may be the source of irritation, or even pain.

We can start enthusiastically enough, but sometimes it is hard to remain open when we come up against our own insecurities. So the spirit of hospitality needs to be cherished and cultivated and fostered.

It will be worth it because hospitality, as well as being challenging, is life-giving.

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

My wife was driving me to the doctor for couple of minor surgeries on my two fingers of my left hand. About 100 meters from my house on a left turn, our Alto K10 collided on the right side of an Innova Crysta. As a result of which the forward part of our vehicle was very badly damaged and so was the right side of the Innova but all three of us which includes the driver of the Innova remained totally unharmed. Mary was there and will be always. *Joel Morais*
In 2015 my son R. Kiran Babu was riding a motorcycle and a lorry was reversing. The lorry went over his right leg but by God's grace nothing serious happened to him. On January 13, 2018 my son went with his friends to Kerala by car. On their return home they met with an accident. The car rolled over several times and fell into a bush. Our Blessed Mother saved all of them and they escaped with only minor injuries. My son fractured his left shoulder and he suffered a small cut on his head. Thank you, dear Mother Mary.

S. Rajendra Babu

Our heartfelt thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady for making the impossible a possibility. *Sandra Bartholomeusz*

I am grateful to the Infant Jesus and Mother Mary for a new job and the countless blessings received. *Kerin Lewis*

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

I am grateful to Mother Mary and Don Bosco for my recovery from bilateral knee surgery as well the favour granted for the business improvement of my son. I am eternally grateful.

W Monteiro Canada

Thank you dear Lord Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for helping my son pass his C.A. final exam and for many graces and favours granted to our family.

Mrs. Florinda Mascarenhas, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Sts. Dominic Savio and Don Bosco for the safe and normal delivery of a healthy baby boy Tyler and baby girl Teegan. Please continue to shower your abundant blessings on them. Keep them always under your protection.

Travis and Josette

We are sincerely grateful to Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for all the graces showered on Tina and Alex.

Juliet Paul, Australia

I am sincerely grateful to the Infant Jesus and Our Lady for healing me. I'm 79 years old and I had severe pain in my left hand and my back. Even after visiting doctors I had little relief. I made a novena to the Infant Jesus and Our Lady and I'm practically healed. I'm very grateful for their presence in my life.

Mr. Pascal Nunes, Thane

**THANKS TO DEAR
ST. DOMINIC SAVIO**



I am grateful to Mary Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for granting my daughter a safe delivery and the gift of a cute baby boy. I am also grateful for healing this new born baby from infection. Dear Mother heal this child from all his problems. Please continue to protect and bless him and his parents always. *Angela*
My sincere thanks to Almighty God, Jesus, Mother Mary and Dominic Savio and through the recitation of the Three Hail Marys, for the safe and normal delivery of my daughter and for being blessed with a baby girl.

R. Rodrigues, Goa

Sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a granddaughter. *Viola Rebello, Mumbai*

Our grateful thanks to the Holy Trinity, Mother Mary, Don Bosco, St. Dominic Savio, all the angels and saints for all the graces and blessings received. In particular for a safe and normal delivery and the gift of a healthy baby girl. Thank you Mother Mary for the favours and graces received through the recitation of the Three Hail Marys.

Mr. & Mrs. R. Coutinho, Mumbai

My deep gratitude to the Infant Jesus of Prague, Our Blessed Mother and St. Dominic Savio for many favours received. *Julie*

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

JUNE 2018

Social Networks

That social networks may work towards that inclusiveness which respects others for their differences.

The Holy Scriptures

'By reading the scriptures, I am so renewed that all nature seems renewed around me and with me. The skies seem to be a pure, a cooler blue, the trees a deeper green. . . The whole world is charged with the glory of God and I feel fire and music. . . under my feet.'

Thomas Merton



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MARY WAS THERE

This amazing story surprised the whole parish of Ratnagiri and has deepened our faith in God's love for us and the intercession of Mother Mary.

My mother-in-law, Philomena, is a diabetic and for the last few months she has been losing weight and her appetite. Her eyesight started declining also. One morning she had a heart attack and we rushed her to the nearby hospital and she was put on a ventilator. Her chest was full of fluid. Her chances were dim.

My entire family, relatives and our parish community were informed and were requested to pray for her, reciting the rosary. To our great surprise after 24 hours the doctor declared her out of danger. She has recovered completely and is back in good health again. Thanks to Our Mother Mary for interceding for us.

Godwin Noronha, Ratnagiri

Don Bosco's Madonna, has developed to its present form from a folder published in 1937, by late Fr Aurelius Maschio, on behalf of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Bombay.

The magazine is sent to all who ask for it, even though there is a fixed subscription (*Rs 200/- India & Rs 400/- Airmail*). We trust in the generosity of our readers/benefactors.

Whatever you send us will help cover the expenses of printing and mailing; the surplus if any, is devoted to the support of orphans and poor boys in our schools and apostolic centres.

To help a poor lad to reach the priesthood, is a privilege

You can help by establishing a Perpetual Burse with:

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Please address all correspondence to:

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

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