

CONTENTS

From The Editor's Desk: <i>The Door of Humility</i>	3
Newly Weds - Jeannette Brimmer.....	4
Youth on the Move: Are You Doing Lent Right? - Melanie D'Souza	7
Salesian Saint: Ceferino Namuncura 1886 - 1905.....	10
Witnesses In And For Our Times: Bl.Leonid Federov.....	12
Lectio Divina: From the Garden to the Desert - Carlo Broccardo.....	16
Quietspaces: A Disarming Response - Pope Francis.....	18
Standing Up For Your Faith - Fr. Ian Doulton's Collection....	20
Don Bosco's Identity: Don Bosco's Madonna (24) - Fr. Elias Dias, SDB.....	24
Reflecting on Mary: Patient in Tribulation - Sergio Pellini.....	28
NewsBits.....	30
In a Cheerful Mood.....	15
The Devotion of the Three Hail Marys.....	33
Loving Children to their Loving Mother.....	34
They Are Grateful to Our Lady & Don Bosco.....	34
Thanks to Dear St. Dominic Savio.....	35



***O God, you chose the
Blessed Virgin Mary
to become the Mother
of the Savior,
grant that we may
follow her example,
for her humility was
pleasing to you
and her obedience
profitable to us.***

- From the Common
of Our Lady, in Advent

From The Editor's Desk

THE DOOR OF HUMILITY

"Remember you art dust, and to dust you shall return." It is a very humbling experience. Christians are invited to come forth and receive the sacred symbol of the cross on their foreheads to begin their Lenten journey. Lent begins with the sign of the cross in ash on your forehead. It is the most profound outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ. I wonder what was heard when the noticeable mark was seen on your foreheads after you left the church. Whether you were at the bank, the market store, at school, or at the train station, you were most likely to be met by inquisitive looks. This provided an excellent teaching moment about the entrance into Lent. It is a journey about what it means to be a Christian. It illustrates how we move from the private introspection of Lent to the public, jubilant exit, forty days later – into Easter.

From the scripture readings on Ash Wednesday, the prophet Joel said we were to blow our trumpets as an alarm when the day of doom approaches. Lent has the connotation of darkness getting ready to overtake us. Yes, Lent is a time when we remember or live out the worst. In the gospel, Matthew quotes our Lord, who says we are not to blow our horns nor show ourselves on the street corner like the hypocrites boasting about our faith or praying out loud. We are not to look dismal or disfigure our faces. We are instead to go to our rooms, shut the door, and pray to our Lord in secret.

Look at Lent and Easter as two significant sides of a door. On one side you enter, the other, you exit. Lent is indeed a time of privacy, a place to do personal inventory of the soul. You must first enter through the door of humility into the room known as Lent. Through this door, you and God share an intimate, earnest time together. It is private and it is a safe place to encounter the things that separate you from Christ and for you to make things right with him. You know how...

We cannot stay in Lent forever, nor would we want to do so. After making our confession, we eventually must pass through the door of humility and exit into the room of Easter. Something is learned through this passage. We go public into the world, where there are great temptations, but we continue to speak and listen to God, exercising humility. There is also a bit of caution. Remember, "what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Luke 12:3).

If Lent is the movement from – the private intercessions and confessions, then Easter is the passage into the public assembly of awe and reverence that lead us, and others, most certainly to heaven. Continue to seize the opportunities to be a witness for Christ. During these days of Lent, and building up to the Great Easter Vigil, may God bless you and keep you. May God help you to always take on a servant attitude by passing through the door of humility, and living for his Son, Jesus Christ.

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

NEWLY WEDS

by Jeanette Brimmer

I was introduced to my husband of over forty years ago at a friend's party. It was impossible for our eyes to meet romantically across a not-crowded room for I was standing beside him just a few feet away. Although I found him attractive, I suspect he hadn't seemed to notice me until my friend, the hostess, finally introduced us. Once we began talking and dancing, something magical occurred. In other words, we clicked! I became hopelessly lost in his intelligent green eyes and when I heard him recite a poem by Kipling his voice was soft, yet manly and I was hooked. Later, as we learned more about each other during the next several weeks, he admitted he only knew two poems and that he was a scientist with an analytical mind and had little use for poetry. However, my dreamy outlook on life and his logical mind meshed and we've been together for many sometimes not-so-smooth years.

We had a lovely time on our honeymoon in Northern Ontario and then we returned to a tiny apartment we had found



March 2017

near the University nearby. Jim was working on the last year of his Doctorate in organic chemistry and needed to carry out research during the day and sometimes at night. I kept busy teaching kindergarten at a school within walking distance.

It was not long though, before we became acquainted with each other's shabbier side when the rosy mist we saw each other through during the honeymoon days, began to ebb. My handsome student prince slurped his soup and left his socks and Kleenex under the bed and his beloved occasionally left pans in the sink to soak overnight and left a mess in the bathroom after showering. In other words we both realized we had married people who weren't quite as perfect as we had thought before marriage.

Then we had our very first argument. I can't remember much about it but Jim ended up stomping out into a stormy night, I went after him with our creaky car. Thunder rumbled and lightening flashed to add to the drama. When I finally caught up with him, hail was pelting down on the windshield and it didn't take long for me to persuade Jim to let me drive him home.

After we took off our soaked coats I apologized to Jim for having been so grouchy all day. He sat on the bed and looked pitiful. "It's my birthday today."



He said and my heart fell into my stomach.

"Oh no," I wailed. "I thought your birthday was on the twenty-eighth, not today!"

How could I have made such a stupid mistake? The rest is history!

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* Pope Francis makes this wonderful reflection: "The experience of love in families is a perennial source of strength for the life of the Church." "The unitive end of marriage is a constant summons to make this love grow and deepen. Through their union in love, the couple experiences the beauty of fatherhood and motherhood, and shares plans, trials, expectations and concerns; they learn care for one another and to mutually forgive. In this love they celebrate their happy moments and support each other in the difficult passages of their life together..." The beauty of this mutual, gratuitous gift, the joy which comes from a life that is born and the loving care of all family members - from toddlers to seniors - are just a few of the fruits which make the response to the vocation of the family unique and irreplaceable," both for the Church and for society as a whole." (#88)

During the first few months of

March 2017

our marriage we learned to better understand the similarities and differences...in our backgrounds temperaments and life-experiences. Jim was raised on a farm and I was a city slicker. He cherished the tranquility and informal atmosphere of a small village while I found the rural area where we had settled too slow-paced, and longed for the dazzle and convenience of city life. Eventually I too came to enjoy the atmosphere of rural life and he agreed to take me to visit the city when I wanted a break or to visit relatives who lived three hours away. Sorting out financial problems was simple. Nowadays it's not possible for many newlyweds to exist on one income. Then, it was slightly easier. I was fortunate that Jim and I, by being frugal, could afford to live on my part-time teaching salary for the first few months. And after he earned his Ph.D. he found a job at an Agricultural College in a small town. Since I'm bad at math, Jim handled the finances while I co-operated by being content with second hand furniture, few frills and not wasting food.

Switching my loyalties from my family to Jim seemed more difficult for me than for him. Our large family was close-knit and I had a strong bond with my mom who could be controlling. It took me awhile to learn to think for myself and to realize that Jim and I were a family now. We had to rely mainly on each other and God and Mary to make our marriage work.

Pope Francis reminds us again: "Naturally, love is much more



than an outward consent or a contract, yet it is nonetheless true that choosing to give marriage a visible form in society by undertaking certain commitments shows how important it is. It manifests the seriousness of each person's identification with the other and their firm decision to leave adolescent individualism behind and to belong to one another. Marriage is a means of expressing that we have truly left the security of the home in which we grew up in order to build other strong ties and to take on a new responsibility for another person. This is much more meaningful than a mere spontaneous association for mutual gratification, which would turn marriage into a purely private affair. As a social institution, marriage protects and shapes a shared commitment to deeper growth in love and commitment to one another,

for the good of society as a whole. That is why marriage is more than a fleeting fashion; it is of enduring importance. Its essence derives from our human nature and social character. It involves a series of obligations born of love itself, a love so serious and generous that it is ready to face any risk. (# 131)

Since Jim is easy-going and I'm more emotional and impulsive, I gradually learned that he was not indifferent to our difficulties but dealt with them in his own placid way. Like many men he did not feel comfortable talking about his emotions. He helped me to reign in my emotional outbursts by listening to me talk out my feelings and to realize that with God's help there was a solution to nearly every problem. For instance if a roast burned we'd get a take-out and if I had an issue at school that seemed impossible to deal with we would talk it through and with his logic and well-honed sense of humour we would find a solution.

Newly-married couples usually learn by patience, trial and error how to better communicate with each other. Since I chatted too much it was hard for Jim to express his opinions without squeezing them in whenever I paused to take a breath. He not so subtly brought this fact to my attention a few times and I soon learned the skills of being a good listener and occasionally Jim began to express his feelings which eased his stress.

In reflecting on Patience in marriage Pope Francis, once

more gives us some practical reflections from his apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*: "Being patient does not mean letting ourselves be constantly mistreated, tolerating physical aggression or allowing other people to use us. We encounter problems whenever we think that relationships or people ought to be perfect, or when we put ourselves at the centre and expect things to turn out our way. Then everything makes us impatient, everything makes us react aggressively. Unless we cultivate patience, we will always find excuses for responding angrily. We will end up incapable of living together, antisocial, unable to control our impulses, and our families will become battlegrounds. That is why the word of God tells us: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, with all malice" (*Eph* 4:31). Patience takes root when I recognize that other people also have a right to live in this world, just as they are. It does not matter if they hold me back, if they unsettle my plans, or annoy me by the way they act or think, or if they aren't not everything I want them to be. Love always has an aspect of deep compassion that leads to accepting the other person as part of this world, even when he or she acts differently than I would like.

Many years ago a married woman was expected to be subservient to her spouse and be absorbed into his identity. He was often the sole breadwinner and she was expected to be the parent who cared for the child-

ren, kept the house immaculate and refrained from working outside the home. Thankfully that is changing and in many modern marriages both parties command loyalty and are expected to both care for the children, share the housework and be more in touch with their partner's needs. Even when we were married in 1970, many couples we knew were both working but several were fortunate to have a choice in the matter. Women were realizing even back then that they could contribute their skills and talents to their family and society. When I married I knew I could work full or part-time but I still felt that once the kids came along I wanted to stay at home with them. During that time though, I sang in the choir, took some University courses at night and attended a few art lessons while Jim babysat. When the children were older I began writing and my dream of being a professional writer has come true.

Jim and I entered marriage wanting the best for each other and we are still contributing our skills to make our marriage work after all these years.

In the book "*The Good Marriage-How And Why Love Lasts*" authors Judith S. Wallerstein and Sandra Blakes-lee state: "A good marriage is always being reshaped so that the couple can stay in step with each other and satisfy their changing needs and wishes." (p. 331)

We'll keep this in mind as we continue on our journey together. □

ARE YOU DOING LENT RIGHT?

by Melanie D'Souza

As Lent is already upon us, a thousand thoughts may run through one's head. Another set of 'resolutions' that seem negative. Another period of forcing myself to suffer a little bit. Perhaps another time to be complacent about the reason for the season because I work hard anyway?

It is no secret that as we grow older, we become complacent about our sins. Complacent enough that our Confession frequency dips. It sure is easy to become too busy to pay attention to our own engagement with Lenten activities. And that is okay.

To an extent.

As normal humans, we don't necessarily like sorrow. And Lent is a time that reminds most of us of His sorrow, betrayal and ultimate suffering, despite the joy that comes after.

Perhaps it is time we thought about Lent differently. It may seem like a dry and challenging period of in comparison with the other purple preparation time on the Liturgical Calendar: Advent. However in reality, they are not all that very different. While Advent sees us waiting for a new



Christ, Lent helps us prepare for a renewed Christ. We therefore need new approaches towards a period that can be an excellent opportunity for growth and re-evaluation.

Here are some things that we can consider this season of Lent:

Reflect on His Passion!

As a child, I dreaded witnessing the Stations of the Cross or watching one of those horrifying movies about His Passion. I saw nothing good about Good Friday! But now we can surely invite each other to rethink the Passion of Christ and understand that those events were planned. That is precisely why Holy Week becomes such an important time for us as He wanted us to comprehend the reasons behind

His Sacrifice. The Triduum thus helps us witness in succession the sacrifices within the essential sorrowful narrative that was necessary for the conversion of souls and spreading his message

What's your Passion story?

Like Jesus, Lent can be our time to revisit our own Passion stories - how we have either already or are in the process of emerging as diamonds-in-the-rough. Throughout his Way, he not only experienced mockery and betrayal but also loyalty and discipleship. Similarly, let us use this time to reexamine the milestones we face and how we can ease the Way for ourselves as well as for our dear ones.

Choose actions with an intended target

If we only suffered during Lent, it would render Christ's sacrifice meaningless! Therefore the typical practice of giving up something we like temporarily for Lent, only to resume it steadily after the season of Lent doesn't render actual growth. Instead, let us find growth in actions, rather than in the absence of pleasure. Rather than 'giving up' our desires, let's try adopting attitudes that help us understand his mercy and sacrifice. We want to see results; we want to see change.



Chh..Chh..Chh...Changes!

It is time for changes. Much as



we hate to admit, changes are what we hate to love. Lent can be a brilliant chance at not only renewal of baptismal promises, but also at New Year's resolutions. Just as we kickstart the new year with a new Christ, let us use Lent to prepare for the celebration of a risen Christ - and our renewed selves. Because we are born sinners, Lent renders itself as a perfect opportunity to revitalise ourselves as Catholics.

Don't beat yourself up- just learn!

We all make mistakes, right? Confession is a great vehicle - for this renewal. It is a chance at growth - to feel free and clean. That being said, Confession, although a necessary sacrament, isn't the only vehicle for sharpening the saw. Let our actions with intended targets be seen with our honest hearts and minds - while we actively set out to achieve the growth we want to see in ourselves and others!

Lent has historically never been easy. But just think, what a joyful time Easter has been for us and the beginning of our Faith! The key only lies in us rethinking how we *do* Lent. So let us strive to stick it through with our old rugged Cross till we exchange it for a crown! ☐



SALESIAN SAINTS

CEFERINO NAMUNCURA 1886 - 1906

The sanctity of Ceferino is the fruit of Salesian Youth Spirituality, comprising of joy, friendship with Jesus and Mary, the faithful fulfilment of one's daily duties and helping others. Ceferino is convincing proof of the fidelity with which the first Salesian missionaries carried out the mandate of Don Bosco in Argentina which was to replicate what had been done at the Oratory of Valdocco to form young saints.

Ceferino's life is a parable of just 19 years but rich in content. He was born at Chimpay (Argentina) on August 26, 1886 and was baptized two years later by Fr Milanesio, a Salesian missionary who had brokered the peace agreement between the Mapuche (indigenous population located between Chile and Argentina) and the Argentinean army, making it possible for Ceferino's father to keep his title of "Great Cacique" (chief) and also the territory of Chimpay for his people. Ceferino was eleven years old when his father enrolled him in the government school in Buenos Aires. He wanted the young Ceferino to become the future leader and defender of his people. But Ceferino found himself out of place and so his father took him to the Salesian College of "Pius X". It was here that his "rendezvous with



Grace" began. It would transform him into a heroic witness of the Christian life. He immediately showed much interest in studies and was fascinated with the practices of piety. He loved his Catechism and was very popular among his companions and his superiors. There were two instances that launched him on the path to holiness: reading the life of Dominic Savio of whom he became a fervent imitator and his First Holy Communion at which he made a vow to always be faithful to his great friend Jesus. From that time on this youngster who found it so difficult "to get in line" and "to obey the bell," became a model student.

He chose to imitate the life of Dominic Savio, taking up the "simple recipe" for holiness that Don Bosco, the "Father and Teacher of Youth," had given

Dominic Savio one day when he said: "Be always cheerful; do your duty of study and pray well, and always help your companions." He organized various competitions and taught his companions the best way to make bows and arrows and then assisted them in target-practice. During the recreation he took up the role of referee and his word was accepted by his companions whenever a contention arose. Ceferino's piety was characteristic of his Salesian surroundings, solidly rooted in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, considered "a pillar" of the Preventive System.

In 1903, when he was seventeen and a half, Monsignor Cagliero accepted a group of aspirants at Viedma the capital of the vicariate to begin their study of Latin.

It was during those years when his interior life was blossoming that he became ill with tuberculosis. He was sent back to his home but that was not enough. Monsignor Cagliero was of the opinion that there were better treatments in Italy. His presence did not go unnoticed: the newspapers were speaking admirably of the *Prince of the Pampas*. Fr Rua invited him to sit at table with the superior council. Pius X received him in a private audience, listened to him with interest and presented him with the medal *ad principes*. At the Salesian College of Villa Sora in Frascati, Ceferino encountered some difficulty with Italian but in a few months he started coming second in class. The school records reveal that he excelled in Latin: an important requirement for the priesthood. On

March 28, 1905 he had to be admitted to the hospital of the *Hospitalier Brothers* the Isle-on-the-Tiber where he passed away on May 11 that year leaving behind the odor of kindness, diligence, purity and inimitable humour. In this regard there is a striking testimony of the Salesian Father Iorio who had visited him just three days before he died. The young Ceferino, who was sinking told him: "Father, I will soon have to go, but I recommend to you this poor youngster next to me. Come back and visit him...he suffers so much! He is awake most of the night coughing."

That was the ripe fruit of Salesian Youth Spirituality. His remains lie at Fortin Mercedes in Argentina, which has become a place of continuous pilgrimage because of the great reputation for holiness that he enjoys among the people of Argentina. Ceferino embodies in himself the sufferings, anxieties and aspirations of his people, the Mapuche, who were the same people who were introduced to the Gospel and were open to the guidance of wise Salesian educators. Here is an expression that sums up his programme of life: "I want to study to be useful to my people."

In fact, Ceferino wanted to study to become a priest and return to his people, contributing to their cultural and spiritual development as he saw the first Salesian missionaries do. A saint is never like a meteor that flashes suddenly across the skies of humanity, but rather the fruit of a long and silent gestation in a family and among a people, expressing their best qualities. □

Witnesses in & for Our Times

**BL. LEONID FEDEROV
(1879 - 1935)**

With contributions from the Monks of St Joseph de Clairval Abbey, France

In 1928, Catholic and Orthodox priests who had been deported to the far north of Russia held ecumenical conferences of exceptional merit and cordiality. With the help of books borrowed from Orthodox monks, a Catholic priest Father Fedorov, explained the doctrine of papal infallibility. After a long discussion, Archbishop Hilarion, former auxiliary to the Patriarch of Moscow, declared, "Understood this way, I no longer see why this dogma would be repugnant to the Orthodox world." On June 27, 2001, the Pope beatified Leonid Fedorov, a man for whom Christian unity was a constant concern.

Leonid Fedorov was born on November 4, 1879, into an Orthodox family. His father died prematurely, and Mrs. Fedorov continued to operate the family restaurant in St Petersburg by herself. Leonid was a gentle and sensitive adolescent. His mother did all she could to introduce him to Christian piety. Possessed of an independent and idealistic temperament, the young man was an avid reader of French, Italian, and German authors. Under the influence of an

March 2017



Orthodox priest whose combination of virtue and learning made him a great teacher, the young man's soul was pacified and, upon leaving his secondary studies, in which he had been a brilliant success, he entered the Ecclesiastical Academy, the higher school of theology.

A wished-for reconciliation

Mrs. Fedorov's restaurant was

12

Don Bosco's Madonna



a meeting place for intellectuals. One of them was a young and brilliant professor of philosophy, Vladimir Soloviev, who stressed the responsibility of Christians, preaching passionately on the return to a complete Christianity and Russia's reconciliation with the Papacy.

In his search for the truth, Leonid spoke with the rector of the main Catholic Church in Saint Petersburg. The young man then decided to become Catholic and to go abroad to do so. On June 19, 1902, he set out for Italy. In Lviv, Ukraine, he visited the Catholic Metropolitan of the Eastern rite, Andrej Cheptitzky, who gave him a written recommendation addressed to Pope Leo XIII. Leonid arrived in Rome in July 1902 and on the 31st, the feast of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, made his profession of Catholic faith in Il Gesù, the Jesuit mother church. Shortly thereafter, the Holy Father received him in private audience, blessed him, and gave him a grant for his priestly studies.

Leonid went to the seminary in Anagni, 50 kilometers south of Rome and run by the Jesuits. The exuberance of his young southern companions irritated him sometimes, but he took pains not to grumble and submitted to rules that were completely new to him. "My years of studies," he would later write, "were a veritable revelation to me. The austere life, the regularity, the rational and profound work that was required of me, the companions full of joy and life who were my acquaintances, uncorrupted by the atheistic writings of the age, the Italian people themselves, so lively, so intelligent, and so completely immersed

March 2017

in a true Christian civilization, all this got me back on my feet again and injected a new energy into me." But in Russia, there were rumblings of revolution.

Immediate departure

In 1907, Leonid obtained by pontifical decree official recognition of his membership in the Byzantine rite. This decree by Pope Saint Pius X marked a turning point in the apostolic activity of the Catholic Church in Russia, in that Russian Catholics could from then on be officially recognized by Rome while retaining their own rite, the Byzantine-Russian rite. In June 1907, when Leonid requested an extension of his passport, the Russian government responded, "If Leonid Fedorov does not immediately leave an establishment run by the Jesuits, he will be forever barred from returning to Russia!" Leonid left Anagni for the Propaganda Fide College right in Rome.

Getting rid of a diabolical work

On March 26, 1911, Leonid was ordained a priest. On July 27th, he participated in the Congress of Velehrad. The absence of Orthodox prelates at this congress pained him.

For several years, Father Leonid had felt attracted to monastic life. In May 1912, he was received into a monastery where life was divided between celebration of the Divine Office according to the Byzantine rite and working in the fields. Thanks to his robust health and his accommodating nature, he submitted to the austerity of the environment without too much trouble.

During the summer of 1914, the

13

Don Bosco's Madonna

First World War broke out. Father Leonid returned as quickly as possible to Saint Petersburg, which had become Petrograd. A painful surprise was waiting for him—the government exiled him to Tobolsk, Siberia, because he had ties with enemies of Russia. A provisional government under the presidency of Prince Lvoff proclaimed complete amnesty for violations of edicts pertaining to religion, and abolished all restrictions on freedom of worship. Metropolitan Cheptitzky, who himself had been exiled, was freed, and reorganized the activity of Russian Catholics. He chose Father Leonid as his exarch (representative of his religious authority for the Russian territory). Freed in his turn, Father Leonid returned to Petrograd. The Metropolitan planned to confer episcopal consecration on him, but Father Leonid refused.

Catholic, Russian, or Byzantine Rite

The new exarch tackled his pastoral work with concern for the unity of Eastern and Western Christians. For him, the real solution must be sought in reconciliation through hierarchies. His little community demonstrated through its works that one could be Catholic while remaining completely Russian and preserving the Eastern rite. But on October 25th, the Bolsheviks overthrew the government and implemented a radical upheaval of the social order.

But the government intensified the persecution. Father Leonid was accused of having stood up to the decree stripping the churches of their sacred vessels, of having maintained criminal rela-

tions with foreign countries, of having taught religion to minors and of having indulged in counter-revolutionary propaganda.

No matter what the law says...

The trial began on March 21st, and lasted five days.

In the middle of September 1923, Father Leonid was transferred to another prison with much harsher regulations, where he was placed in complete isolation. But in June, he was arrested again and then sentenced to three years' interment in the Solovki Islands in the White Sea, in the far north of European Russia.

The islands of the Solovki archipelago are in a very cold and humid climate, and are covered with forests. The Soviets transformed the Orthodox monastery that had been there since the 15th century into an immense prison.

On Russian soil, for Russia

He spent the last years of his life among farmers of the far north. In January 1934, he moved to a city 400 kilometers south, to the home of a railroad employee. At the beginning of February 1935, he was exhausted and overcome by a constant cough. On March 7th, he rendered his soul to God.

Heeding the example of Blessed Leonid Federov, let us have our hearts set on Christian unity, and follow the exhortations of the Second Vatican Council: "All the faithful should remember that the more effort they make to live holier lives according to the Gospel, the better will they further Christian unity and put it into practice. This merits the name, 'spiritual ecumenism.' (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 7-8) □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Strong Faith

"There goes a woman who suffers much for her beliefs."
"Why, what does she believe?"
"She believes she can wear a number five shoe on a number seven foot."

Keep it a secret

"Phyllis, this is my birthday."
"Congratulations, Mabel, How old aren't you?"

Slightly deaf

"Mrs Lalita, did you say, in the presence of my little girl, that I was a great rusty cat."
"No, my dear Mrs Jaya, I said you were a great aristocrat."

Nothing to be surprised at

Parvati: "I don't see how you could get yourself engaged to that old Mr Srinivasan. He hasn't a tooth in his head and is pretty near bald."

Sundari: "Well, my dear, you shouldn't be too severe on him: after all he was born that way."

Extra cautious

"Do you save up money for a rainy day, dear?"
"Oh, no! I never shop when it rains."

Taking too long a time

Susie was making the usual female search for her purse when the conductor came to collect the fares. Her companion meditated silently for a moment, then said: "Let us divide this, Susie; you fumble and I'll pay."

It works both ways

"Bothered with time-wasting guests are you? Why don't you try my plan?"
"What is your plan, Mrs Jones?"
"Why, when the doorbell rings, I put on my shoes and my shoulder-bad before opening the door. If it proves to be someone I don't want to see, I simply say, 'So sorry, but I'm just going out.'"
"But suppose it's someone you want to see?"
"Oh, then, I say, 'So lucky, I've just come in.'"

Almost the same

Explorer: "D'ye know, I once went about in South America for months with a price on my head."
Hostess: "Dreadful! I know the feeling. I came home from a sale once with the price-tag on my hat."

How very rude!

The members were attending the annual picnic of the United Association of Lady Vegetarians. The ladies were comfortably seated, and waiting for the vessel to boil, when, horror of horrors! A savage bull appeared on the scene. Immediately a wild rush was made for safety, while the raging creature pounded after one lady who, unfortunately, had a real umbrella. By great good fortune she jumped over the fence before it could reach her. Then, regaining her breath, she turned around.

"Oh, you ungrateful creature!" she yelled. "Here I have been a vegetarian all my life. There's gratitude for you!" □



FROM THE GARDEN TO THE DESERT

by Carlo Broccardo

The first Sunday of Lent is traditionally called the Sunday of Temptations because of the Gospel narration of the temptations of Jesus in the desert after his baptism in the river Jordan.

This year we are fortunate to also have as our first reading speaking of temptations. We will hear some verses from the second and the beginning of the third Chapter of the book of Genesis in which Adam and Eve succumb to the temptations of the serpent.

But let us go in order. In the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis, the second chapter, we are taken back in time to an era when there still were no human beings on earth. The bible account invites us to image a lonely and deserted land that no one had yet cultivated or plowed. In the middle of this barren land God planted a garden. He created Adam and Eve so that they could enjoy a long life there.

This garden was like an oasis: very different from the rest of the

planet, it was filled with luxuriant vegetation. In ancient Persian there is a word *paradeisos*, literally meaning a “park,” “a wooded place.” This was called the “earthly paradise” where God had planted all kinds of fruit trees including the tree of life.

The book of Genesis says that God planted a garden in the East, in *Eden*. *Eden* probably meant “delight.” All the trees in the garden were in fact, wonderful to see and their fruit delicious. The word *Eden* was not meant to indicate a particular place, but extremely beautiful. Therefore what should be understood is that God placed man “in a garden of delights.”

While death was all around, God had given man life and not just life, but a life filled with every good thing. But then what was it that urged human beings to abandon the garden of delights to live in the desert? It was the consequences of sin as described at the end of the third chapter in which man and woman were compelled to live outside the

garden! What could have had such great power over them?

It all began with the appearance of a serpent; in itself a good creature of God that at a certain point – who knows why – urged man to evil. The theme will return again in the future, when the woman “saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes and desirable in gaining wisdom,” and so she ate the forbidden fruit. Evil never looks ferocious like a lion but sneaks up on the goodness of creation, like a snake slithers making its way when no one expects it.

Notice the very clever strategy (unfortunately that’s the way of evil) of the snake. It says nothing about the garden of delights that God has planted precisely for man and pretends not to know that Adam and Eve could eat of all the trees but one. Creation is a wonderful and plentiful gift that God has made for man, but in the words of the serpent it becomes a conviction, a minefield full of prohibitions and constraints.

The snake instills a doubt while discussing the word of God; worse, suggesting that God is

devious: not wanting them to eat of the tree because he knew that in doing so they would become like him. He is a fraud. He had lied to them because he did not want them to become like Him. In the words of the serpent the Creator didn’t seem to care; the protagonist of the first verses of the passage, he did not want them to see the true face of God – according to the serpent – that of a trickster who tells lies so that he will not to be forced to share his wealth.

How was it possible that the woman believed such a lie? That is how evil gradually under-mines certainties by eventually convincing the person till s/he completely rejects something that was perfectly good and beautiful.

The Genesis account does not describe to us a particular sin, but tries to make us understand the root of all sin; a lack of trust in God leading us to consider void all that He has done for us convincing us of our attractive life would be without Him, without his unnecessary prohibitions and his oppressive rules.

In addition, Genesis warns us because this way of thinking is

something that creeps upon us slowly, crawling like a serpent, till it gets us to believe in things we have not really considered. Temptation is like a wedge that slips into a crack and in a short time it widens it, thus distancing us from God without us realizing it. □



Mosaic of the temptation:
On the central nave of the Palatine Chapel, Palermo

Quiet Spaces

At the Angelus the Pontiff speaks of the episode of the adulteress

A DISARMING RESPONSE

And he gives the faithful St Luke's Gospel of Mercy

"Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." Upon hearing Jesus' words, the scribes and pharisees dropped their stones, unable to meet his condition. This inspired the Pope's reflection at the Angelus on Sunday March 13, 2016, in St Peter's Square, where he called the faithful to free themselves from the slavery of sin and "walk on a new path." The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection which he gave in Italian:

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

The Gospel of this Fifth Sunday of Lent (cf. Jn 8:1-11) is so beautiful. I really enjoy reading and rereading it. It presents the episode of the adulterous woman, highlighting the theme of the mercy of God, who never wants the sinner to die, but that the sinner convert and live. The scene unfolds on the Temple grounds. Imagine that there on the parvis [of St Peter's Basilica], Jesus is teaching the people, when several scribes and Pharisees arrive, dragging before him a woman caught in adultery. That woman is thus placed between Jesus and the crowd (cf. v. 3), between the mercy of the Son of God and the violence and anger of her accusers. In fact, they did not come to the Teacher to ask his opinion — they were bad people — but to ensnare him. Indeed, were Jesus to follow the stringent law, approving that the woman be stoned, he would lose his reputation of meekness and goodness which so fascinated the people; however, were he to be merciful, he would be flouting the law, which he himself said he did not wish to abolish but fulfil (cf. Mt 5:17). This is the situation Jesus is placed in.

This wicked intention was hidden behind the question that they asked Jesus: "What do you say about her?" (Jn 8:5). Jesus did not respond; he kept silent and made a mysterious gesture: he "bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground" (v. 7). Perhaps he was drawing, some said that he wrote down the sins of the Pharisees... however, he was writing, as if he were elsewhere. In this way he helped everyone to calm down, not to act on the wave of impulsiveness, and to seek the justice of God. But those wicked men persisted and waited

for him to answer. They seemed to thirst for blood. Then Jesus looked up and said: "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her" (v. 7). This response confounded the accusers, disarming all of them in the true sense of the word: they all lay down their "weapons", that is, the stones ready to be thrown, both the visible ones against the woman and those concealed against Jesus. While the Lord continued to write on the ground, to draw, I don't know.... The accusers went away, one after the other, heads down, beginning with the eldest, most aware of not being without sin. How much good it does us to be aware that we too are sinners! When we speak ill of others — something we know well — how much good it will do us to have the courage to drop down the stones we have to throw at others, and to think a little about our own sins!

Only the woman and Jesus remained: misery and mercy. How often does this happen to us when we stop before the confessional, with shame, to show our misery and ask for forgiveness! "Woman, where are they?" (v. 10), Jesus said to her. This question is enough, and his merciful gaze, full of love, in order to let that person feel — perhaps for the first time — that she has dignity, that she is not her sin, she has personal dignity; that she can change her life, she can emerge from her slavery and walk on a new path.

Dear brothers and sisters, that woman represents all of us. We are sinners, meaning adulterers before God, betrayers of his fidelity. Her experience represents God's will for each of us: not our condemnation but our salvation through Jesus. He is the grace which saves from sin and from death. On the ground, in the dust of which

every human being is made (Gen 2:7), he wrote God's sentence: "I want not that you die but that you live". God does not nail us to our sin, he does not identify us by the evil we have committed. We have a name, and God does not identify this name with the sin we have committed. He wants to free us, and wants that we too want it together with him. He wants us to be free to convert from evil to good, and this is possible — it is possible! — with his grace.

May the Virgin Mary help us to entrust ourselves completely to God's mercy, in order to become new creatures. □



STANDING UP FOR YOUR FAITH

From Fr. Ian Doulton's collection of stories

There's one sure way to stay at peace with everybody, that's not to have any principles then you get in nobody's hair and nobody gets in yours. Only, you can't honestly live like that. But sometimes you make it hard for people to understand your principles because you carry them like a chip on your shoulder.

I'll tell you what I mean. I'm a Catholic. A while back they organized the Downtown Good-Fellows Club. I joined and it turns out that I'm the only Catholic in the bunch. Well, that part's alright with me. They hold a luncheon meeting every other Friday in a private dining room in a pretty nice restaurant. At the first meeting I'm getting organized with the gang. Then we sit down at the table and they start passing the roast lamb. I'm getting my teeth all set for mine when suddenly it strikes me: this is Friday! Well don't excuses go racing through my mind like fast filly on derby day? This is my first meeting; I don't want to look like a freak. The chairman must be embarrassed or something.

Then I get a grip on myself: I'm a Catholic and this is Friday, so, when the waiter starts to slip me my plate of roast lamb (the one that's supposed to be mine) I shake my head: "Gravy sir?" he asks and I say: "No, no lamb, not for me. Can I have a grilled mackerel?" He's apologetic: "I'm sorry sir, there's no grilled mackerel." "Oh, I'll take some sweet and sour prawns." "Oh, sorry sir, there are no prawns today."

March 2017

"Would there be some other fish..." I ask in desperation. The waiter whispers: "I'm sorry, I might be able to get you a Friday special from the coffee shop: A tinned-tuna sandwich."

A tuna sandwich! By this time fifty eyes are looking sideways at me. Everybody's wondering what's up? The fellow on my right seems to be getting a particular thrill out of it. During my little hassle with the waiter he's begun to smile. And now, he's splitting his face with a grin.

The waiter comes back with what looks like a wash tub filled with lawn clippings "Your tuna sandwich, sir!"

I try to duck behind my lettuce hedge but the fellow with the great big grin takes this as his cue...

"You're not having roast lamb are you? Don't like roast lamb?"

"I like it fine."

"Ah, but you're not having any?" "No!"

"Oh, you like fish?"

"Oh, I don't like fish, unless it's a grilled mackerel."

"But you ordered tinned-tuna sandwich, I heard you."

"Today's Friday!"

So, with an irritating grin he goes on: "Oh, today's Friday, Friday all day. Say, I bet I know, you're a Catholic."

"Yes, I am, so what?"

"So this is what you have to do to get to heaven, eat fish on Friday? Heaven's sure going to smell kind of fishy?"

"That's not the idea, that's not the idea at all."

"Well, while you're way up

Don Bosco's Madonna

there I'm going to be way down here barbequing with the rest of my friends."

Then this character laughs and laughs till I think he's going to fall off his chair. I try to concentrate on my salad but I'm pretty hot about this thing. What's so funny about a guy eating fish on Friday? I decide this is a real bigot! He just doesn't like Catholics. He could at least be polite like the other fellows. They probably don't understand any more than he does, why I'm passing up the roast lamb. Before he gets on his high horse, he ought to find out the reasons, for instance ... for instance... I'm struggling to remember and all I can recall is my mother saying 'tomorrow's Friday,' - fish, egg, cheese day and everybody making faces. But still that leaves it as none of the laughing boy's business. But just the same, when I go home I start looking around for something to refresh my mind on the answers and I find some pretty good ones.

Like: we all owe God something to make up for the wrong things we've done. Giving up something we like is one of the best ways of doing it; also, it's a kind of training, like an athlete, giving up things to keep himself in condition; so we get ourselves in better spiritual shape by making sacrifices. Any Christian knows that Christ himself said that unless we do some penance we'll all perish. The reason that the Church picked Friday as the day of penance is the simplest of all: it's the day Christ suffered and died. What better way is there to remember that day than by making some sacrifice; going without what we enjoy, like meat?

So, I get the reasons down pat and

March 2017

then I figure... no, what's the use?... This character, I found out, his name is Charlie Meddows; he isn't looking for information. I have a hunch he's elected me dodo for his gags.

I only wish he isn't around on the day of the meeting. At the next Friday meeting of the club I try for a different place at the table. Well, this charter member of the Jolly Boys' Club planks himself right down beside me.

The rest of the gang has bread crumbs and veal cutlet. For me it has fillet-of-sole. Good old Charlie is ready and waiting. He takes one look at my plate and his eyes light up like neon.

"Hey Jim, what's that on your plate, that mackerel-snapper special?" "It's fillet-of-sole." "Sole is right. It's the nearest thing I saw to shoe-leather on a plate!" He's going on proggins: "Say Jim, are oysters fish, they don't have any fins?"

"They're fish I guess, anyway they belong to the fish family."

"It's all in the family. Well, why don't you order oysters?"

"Because I don't like oysters anymore than I don't like fish, except grilled mackerel. They don't have grilled mackerel."

"Well, how about frog legs, frogs live in water just like fish?"

"Never had them, don't want them."

"Well, there are sea gulls, they live on fish and smell like them too..."

"I suppose so, I don't know."

"Oh, I get it. You can eat anything on Fridays except what has four legs and flies."

I'm so upset! This guy is a real character - he thinks this is the funniest thing since the Adam and

21

Don Bosco's Madonna

Eve joke and he has to add his own wit and humour, real cornball. This guy wrote Joe Miller's Joke book, at least the gags about Friday and fish.

Then he starts again: "Jim, you ever heard the one about the Irishman who went to the restaurant on Friday and said: 'Bring me some fried octopus.' The waitress says: 'We don't have any fried octopus.' So he said: 'The Lord knows I tried...give me prime rib.'" Jim I heard you Catholics don't eat any meat during Lent. I heard about one guy who ate so much fish that his stomach used to rise and fall with the tides." And he ends up laughing heartily, enjoying the joke himself while I just look bland.

I try sitting on a different table next time but he's after me like a bloodhound on the trail. So I make like deaf and dumb, or almost while he chatters away with that silly grin all over his fat face. But I can't shut him out completely and I find myself dreaming up all kinds of rude things.

In my dream he tries one of those corny jokes. 'Hey Jim...did you hear about the Irishman who wouldn't eat...halibut-steak on Friday...?' I scream in my mind: 'Shut up! Shut up!...button your lip...close your mouth before your teeth catch cold... I'm fed up to the ears with you cracking sick jokes. I scream it out in my head: "This is a free country, I've got a right to practice my religion in peace and quiet. Eating fish on Friday is part of my religion, so I've got a right to eat my tinned tuna sandwich and fillet-of-sole without any of your cornball humour on the side. If I had ulcers

or something and I was on a diet and couldn't eat meat, you wouldn't crack wise. You'd think that was bad manners. Oh, I know how you are, when it comes to religion, you're the wild-and-wooly, don't-fence-me-in kind. You said you would let anybody tell you to go to church on Sunday, or pass up the roast lamb on Friday. So, listen brother, every time you turn around, some guy is telling you what to do and you're taking it: the traffic cop, your boss, your wife and the shoeshine boy, he says: 'Put up the right, put up the left...' and you put them up. God's the only one who hasn't got the right to tell you what to do." And my anger is rising: "Well, if I'm willing to do what my religion tells me, that's my business and don't you forget it." Then forgetting myself I imagine something terrible: "Just so that you don't forget me and Friday here's something to remember me and ...I imagine give him a whack across the head. When I am dragged out of my reverie:

"Jim, Jim..."

"What?" "You feel alright?"

"Yes, why?"

"You were just sitting there, your eyes, kind of fixed and glassy. What's the fish-eater's special today: Wall-eyed pike?"

I'm still seething. I hold on to the table with both hands. What good's it going to do to me if I'm going to give up meat on Friday if I'm going around wishing I could knock guys under the table? So, that's the way it is every Friday. This character is in the wrong business, he could make a million writing lines for

TV comics. He never runs out of corn.

It comes time for the annual outdoor barbeque of the club. Well, just my luck...this barbeque which they're going to have has barbeque pork chops and is set for - Friday!

I dream up twenty good excuses for not showing then I decide I can't back down now. Some of the fellows may think Charlie's really got my goat.

So I show up at the barbeque, and enjoy myself until it's time to get in line to show up for lunch. Oh, I smell that gorgeous aroma of chops... I move closer and I see those great big juicy chops... sizzling away. I also know what I'm going to end up with: beans and a nice little pile carrot and cucumber sticks with mayonnaise. Well, I guess I can take it. Then I see something that chases my appetite into the next town. Who should be handing out the steaks, but my old pal Charlie! All I want to do is find a hole in the ground and cover myself quickly with leaves. Already I know what this character is going to say in front of all those guys. Even just the thought of it sets me off.

Charlie looks up from behind the counter: "Well, look who's here. Say Jim, what's more out of place than a fish out of water? A Mackrel-Snapper at a barbeque on Friday." I go into one of my imaginary escapes and I think: "Charlie, old boy, you look hungry. You've got to have your chops now and I'm going to give it to you right around your fat neck and I see myself swinging at him. Just then I have to step up quick to the barbeque counter. I

take a deep breath, this is it. Here comes the laugh of the century. I try to look Charlie squarely in the eye. He gives me a great big smile - oh aw, this is going to be worse than I thought. But there's something different about this smile. Even on his face it looks friendly. Then he reaches under the counter and holds out a plate with a great big beautiful salmon steak. "Jim, I remembered you can't eat meat today, so went down to the wharf this morning and got this. I've been keeping it warm for you. Here you are then."

At the next meeting of the Good-Fellows Club I get Charlie aside and I thank him for the favour he did me at the barbeque and I also ask him how come he was so irritating before? He's surprised. He thought we were just having a little fun. Maybe he was not too bright about showing it but underneath he thinks I'm a great guy. He says that a guy who sticks to his principles is the only kind he thinks is worth having for a friend.

Well, you could have knocked me over with a feather but that's just what he said. It made me sure of two things: I was glad I had stuck up for what I believe in but also, you've got to watch out for putting the wrong interpretation on what another guy does.

Well, to make a long fish story short, Charlie Meddows and I have lunch together every Friday, even if we don't go to the Good-Fellows Club. And Charlie always sees to it that we go to a place that has good salmon steaks.□

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA 24

by Fr. Elias Dias

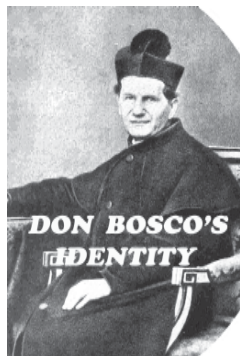
When we study the unfolding of the history of the Church across the centuries, we discover that Mary played a great role in salvation history. The Mother of Jesus gradually presented herself on the horizon of the Church, until we reach the times in which Don Bosco was born, lived and died. The period from the definition of the dogma of Mary Immaculate in 1854 to the dogma of Her Assumption in 1950, is called the Marian age. Don Bosco lived the seven decades of his life in this era of Marian piety.

He learnt devotion to the Virgin Mary on the lap of his mother. At the age of nine in his dream, he saw the Great Shepherdess, who showed him the mission and gave him her advice.

When he entered the seminary his mother advised him, "*When you were born I consecrated you to the Blessed Virgin; when you began your studies I exhorted you to be devoted to this Mother; now I ask you to be all hers; love those fellow-students of yours who are Mary's devotees. And if you become a priest, always recommend and spread devotion to Mary.*" It is here we have the roots of Don Bosco's devotion to Mary.

Don Bosco was a Marian saint and founded a Marian Family. His love for Mary overflowed from his heart to his boys, and to his spiritual sons and daughters, who would carry his mission to the ends of the earth.

March 2017



As a young boy Don Bosco practised a simple devotion to Mary, taught by his mother, just like any other village boy. His devotion was based on Scripture, the Fathers of the early Church, the Tradition and the History of the Church through the centuries. According to him, Mary is the Mother of the Incarnate Word and hence she is the Mother of God. She is given to us by her Son Jesus and she is the mother and helper of the Church and of every Christian in all circumstances.

Don Bosco's devotion to Mary was traditional like that of the common people. He expressed his piety by reciting prayers, practising nose-gays, fasts, visits to the churches, and celebrating traditional feasts. At a deeper level his devotion consisted of awareness of her presence in his life, practising her virtues and experiencing her special help in

Don Bosco's Madonna

time of need.

In the dream at the age of nine, Don Bosco was conscious of Mary as a mother, mistress, queen and intercessor in heaven. The dignified person told John, "I will give you a teacher; under her guidance you can become wise. Without her all wisdom is foolishness". She gave him the ultimate goal, to teach them

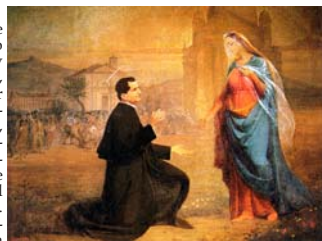
the ugliness of sin and the beauty of virtue, and to do this he had to become humble, strong and robust.

His devotion to Mary Immaculate had personal, ecclesial and pedagogical values. For personal and ecclesial reasons devotion to the Immaculate Conception became very important in the life of Don Bosco. The devotion of the Immaculate Conception and its symbols flourished in France after the Protestant Reformation. The work of Don Bosco in 1841 and 1844 started on the feast of Mary Immaculate.

In 1847 the Piedmontese bishops requested prayers for the speedy promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Don Bosco regularly offered prayers at the Oratory. Shortly before 1854 cholera broke out in Italy. While tending to the victims of cholera, the boys at the Oratory and the people as well, fervently prayed to Mary Immaculate.

In 1854 Pope Pius IX in his Bull "*Ineffabilis Deus*" proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The Oratory boys lived through a period of incredible joy

March 2017



and fervour. Don Bosco did all in his power to celebrate this event. The Sodality of the Immaculate Conception, founded by Dominic Savio, one of the boys at the Oratory of Don Bosco, was an offshoot of this devotion of Mary Immaculate.

Don Bosco was inspired by God to educate the young in their faith so that they could take their place in society. In this work he needed help to fight against the forces of evil. The Immaculate Virgin Mary provided him with the perfect symbol for his educational system. She helped him to protect the good boys in the Oratory, thus playing a key role in the running of the Oratory, sweeping away the unsuitable elements from the oratory. Don Bosco observed that it was during the novena and the feast of the Immaculate Conception, that Mary would sweep clean the Oratory of the bad elements among his boys.

Don Bosco's observance of the month of May in honour of Mary Immaculate (1858) is a milestone as well as a watershed in inculcating true devotion to Our Blessed Mother. It was meant to

25

Don Bosco's Madonna

improve one's Christian, moral and spiritual life. Don Bosco took up this practice in right earnest. He emphasized a spiritual-devotional programme and how to live a good Christian life. In the month of May in 1858, Don Bosco spoke about Mary Immaculate, as the Help of Christians and used the invocation '*Mary Help of Christians Pray for us*'.

Don Bosco knew about the title of Mary Help of Christians, but did not make use of it before 1860. He knew that the people of Turin honoured Mary under this title. When he was at the Con-vitto, Don Cafasso assigned Don Bosco to celebrate mass at St. Francis of Paula, where the altar and the statue were dedicated to Mary Help of Christians. In 1848, a fellow seminarian placed a holy picture of Mary Help of Christians in his room. Don Bosco wrote under it 'From her we await our consolation.'

In the Almanac of the Catholic Readings for 1860 Don Bosco noted for the first time, that 24th May was observed as the feast of Mary Help of Christians.

Spoleto was an ancient and historic city located at the geographical centre of Umbria and of Italy itself. Archbishop Giovanni Battista Arnaldi of Spoleto issued a pastoral letter to the people of Spoleto to pray to Mary the Help of Christians to crush these rebellious people. On the hillock located outside the city of Spoleto, at La Fratta, in a crumbling wall of a church there appeared a fresco of the apparition of the Virgin Mary. She spoke to a five year old child, named Righetto (Enrico) Cionchi. This place, abandoned for some time,

became the spot in which a miraculous cure took place on 9 March 1862. A 30 year-old peasant had recourse to that image and was instantly cured from a chronic illness that had plagued him for a long time. People began to flock to this place. Some called her the 'Madonna Unsheltered', others called her 'Our Lady the Star', and still others called her 'Our Lady of Spoleto.' The Archbishop bestowed on her the title of 'Help of Christians'.

The Catholic newspaper *L'Armonia* flashed the news. At the goodnight talk to his boys and Salesians on May 24 1862, Don Bosco spoke about the Spoleto event.

On May 30, 1862 Don Bosco related to his boys the dream of the Two Columns. A stately flagship escorted by a flotilla escort was attacked by a fleet of enemy ships. The two columns symbolized devotion to Mary and the Blessed Sacrament.

Don Bosco confided his intention to build the Church of Mary Help of Christians, to seminarian Paul Albera and to Father John Cagliero and began to solicit funds. Don Bosco pointed out the site of the Basilica. He had seen this site in a dream in 1844. The ground referred to, was the place of the martyrdom of SS Solutor, Adventor and Octavius.

Don Bosco requested many architects to submit their plans. At the end Architect Antonio Spezia's design was chosen. Don Bosco engaged contractor Charles Buzzetti for the building. In April 1864 he laid the first stone and started the building. On April 27, 1865 Bishop John Anthony Odone of Susa blessed

the cornerstone. The work proceeded at a steady pace and by the end of 1865 the whole building was almost ready. The altarpiece held a great picture of Mary Help of Christians and it was Don Bosco's idea, executed by the painter Thomas Lorenzone and placed at the centre of the Church. The consecration of the Church dedicated to Mary Help of Christians by Bishop Ricardi di Netro, took place on June 9, 1868.

Don Bosco built three living monuments to honour Mary Help of Christians: The Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians founded by him in association with Maria Domenica Mazarello in 1872; the work of Mary Help of Christians for adult vocations founded in 1875; and the Arch confraternity of the Devotees of Mary Help of Christians based at the Basilica itself, established in 1869.

Don Bosco authored a number of booklets to spread devotion to Mary Help of Christians. Life for Don Bosco would have turned out to be very different, if it had not been for Mary. She showed him ways even when he thought there were none.

On November 25, 1856 after the funeral mass of Mamma Margaret, Don Bosco knelt down at the feet of the Madonna in the Shrine of Consolata and murmured, "Now my boys and I are without an earthly mother. You be near us now, and be our mother."

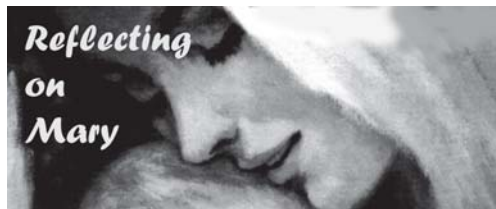
Don Bosco's devotion to Mary consisted of fascination and imitation of her virtues. When he recovered from a serious sickness in 1846, he said to the boys, "I

owe my life to you. But be sure of this, from now on, I will spend it entirely for you".

His devotion to Mary was active and alive. He felt her real presence in his life and work. In August 1885 Don Bosco went to Nizza Monferrato for the vestition and profession of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. After the ceremony exhausted, he sat down and spoke a few words to the sisters. Fr Bonetti acted as his spokesman. "I want to tell you only one thing: Our Lady is really here, here in your midst. The Madonna walks in this house, and covers it with her mantle." Don Bosco lived in the shadow of Mary. His words, his sermons, his writings, his prayers all bore witness to how much he loved the Virgin Mary in his life.

To the first Missionaries who left for Argentina on 11 November 1875 he said, "Leave everything to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and to Mary Help of Christians and you will realize what miracles are".

At the good-night talk of June 20, 1864, the eve of the Feast of St Aloysius Gonzaga, Don Bosco said: "I want you to make use of two spiritual wings - devotion to the Blessed Virgin and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament - These two wings, you may be sure, will soon help you to raise yourselves towards heaven". Don Bosco gives us these two devotions; without them it is impossible for a Salesian to attain Christian perfection. In Salesian history we know always that "Mother of Jesus is there." And she tells the Salesians, "Do whatever He tells you." (Jn2:5)☐



PATIENT IN TRIBULATION

Jn 19, 17-18, 24-27

by Sergio Pellini

So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place of the skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha. There they crucified him...

Next to the cross stood some women, the mother of Jesus, his sister, Mary of Cleophas and Mary of Magdala. Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple he loved standing nearby and he said to his mother: "Woman behold your son." Then he said to the disciple: "Behold your mother." "From that hour the disciple took her into his home."

Mary stood beneath the cross, devastated! Her face, a picture of disbelief at such hatred and such evil; but with a firm faith the mother of the Saviour was incapable of hatred, eager to forgive and forget, to plead with her Son for forgiveness because they "did not know what they were doing."

The Council affirmed that this happened "not without a divine plan;" as she suffered deeply with her only begotten Son. Her maternal heart was united to his sacrifice and she consented to the immolation of the victim that she

gave birth to," and in this way she persevered faithfully, united with her Son unto the Cross." She was united through faith, that same faith with which she received the Angel's revelation at the Annunciation when heard the words: "He will be great..." "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David... he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom will have no end."

Now standing there at the foot of the cross, Mary was a witness, humanly speaking, of the complete denial of those words. Her son was dying on that wooden cross like a condemned criminal. "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows..." He was despised and no one esteemed him, they nearly crushed him.

How great and how heroic then was "the obedience of faith" that Mary showed in the face of the inscrutable judgments of God! Abandoning herself to God unreservedly, offering the full submission her intellect and will to him whose ways are inscrutable! And together, how powerfully grace acted in her soul, how all-

pervading was the influence Holy Spirit with its light and virtue!"

Obedient to this faith Mary was perfectly united with Christ in his self-emptying... in fact, Jesus Christ... "while being God, did not consider equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men;" right up to Golgotha, "he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even death on a cross."

At the foot of the Cross Mary participated through faith in the shocking mystery of this abandonment. And this is, perhaps, one of the most profound realities of faith in human history. Through faith, the mother shares in the death of her Son, his redemptive death; but unlike the disciples who fled, hers was a far more enlightened faith. On

Golgotha, Jesus through the Cross definitively confirmed that he was the sign of contradiction foretold in the words that Simeon addressed to Mary and they were fulfilled: "And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Only in the light of these facts does it become easier to understand what "PATIENT IN TRIBULATION!" truly means. The mystery of suffering that scars the lives of people becomes a lighter burden and much easier to accept when united to the sufferings

of Christ. It is with Mary that we carry our daily crosses because she was able to persevere in spite of everything, and she is our guide, our comforter, our help and especially our mother! Mary's whole life, like that of Jesus was a cross and a continuous martyrdom.

Noting the universal and meritorious value of the sorrows of Mary, Pope Pius XI affirmed: "Through the wonderful union she had with Christ and by a singular grace, she came to be known absolutely as our "REDEMPTRIX."

Mary fits into the overall plan of Redemption, offering on behalf of humanity, her sorrow, and her love, which for God is a new motive to grant humanity the salvation merited primarily by Jesus in a much superior way.



Giovanni Francesco Barbieri called Guercino (1591-1666) Church of the Holy Rosary at Cento

It is the united martyrdom of Jesus and his sorrowful Mother that brings us salvation. She is therefore entitled to be called the new Eve, the first place after Jesus, the New Adam, and the Co-Redemptrix, recognized by all nations, who rightly call her blessed. Our gratitude must consist above all in Christian solidarity with all those in pain and struggle and in our effort to put into action our love of God and neighbour. □

NEWSBITS

ROME

"Dear Pope Francis, sometimes my mum doesn't eat at night because she says she's on a diet, but it's not true, she eats our leftovers," Matteo says. Another little boy, Raffaele, ends his letter by telling Francis: "Remember, you and Totti are my heroes". "I'm really sorry about the Christian couple who were burned alive... please forgive me and Pakistan," writes Aziz.

These are just some of the thousands of letters written by children that reach the Vatican from all around the world every week. All addressed to Francis. An anthology titled *"Letterine a Papa Francesco"* ("Little letters to Pope Francis") (published by Carlo Gallucci editore, pp. 156, •12,50/\$13,88 approx.), edited by Italian Vatican correspondent Alessandra Buzzetti, will soon be available in bookstores. **All copyright proceeds will go to the Santa Marta Dispensary**, which provides medical assistance and other forms of help to children and families in need and is located right next to Francis' residence in the Vatican.

The book's main characters are children. Its pages reflect their simplicity and concreteness. They are the Pope's little "pen pals." The letters are hand-written, filled with drawings and spelling mistakes and accompanied by little gifts or soft toys. Every morning at 8 am, a priest, a nun and two Italian mums from the Correspondence Office open up the sacks and sort through the letters. They send those written in various different lan-



guages to the relevant sections in the Vatican Secretariat of State and only hang onto the ones in Italian. Priority is given to children who confide their problems or ask for prayers for their health. The world's difficulties are seen unfiltered, through their simple eyes. **There is Aiden, who writes from Erbil refugee camp, saying he was very sad to have had to leave his bicycle in Qaraqosh, the main Christian city in the Nineveh Valley, which is occupied by the Islamic Caliphate.**

Then there is Matteo, from the outskirts of Naples, who writes: "I am 11 years old. You should know that my dad was arrested because he was forced to earn money illegally for us... My mum is always crying and when I ask her why, she says it's



because she has burning eyes. But I know why she cries, she misses my dad and my brother because he also worked for bad people to earn money... Can you help my father find a job when he gets out of prison?"

There are children who ask for prayers of healing for their sick parents or themselves, like Monica from Franciacorta, Italy, who writes: "Dear pope Francis, I have done this drawing hoping that you will say a special prayer for me to get better. But I'll probably have to wait a long time till I'm 18. Now I'm 9. When I was really ill, my granny and my little cousin who is 3, went to mass every Thursday to worship with the rosary. Jesus made me feel better. On television I saw some children getting into the Popemobile. I thought how nice it would be if I had been there too to hold your hand for part of the way so you could protect me."

Giuliana from Valganna, Italy, talks about her grandparents'



arguments: "In the evening I always pray for the world to become a better place, but above all, for those who do not believe in God, I pray that they find a lot of love. Granny often gets angry at grandpa because he swears. It's not right to call the person who protects you a pig but when grandpa is angry he doesn't know what he's saying."

Meanwhile, Lucio, another



Italian child from Messina, expresses his concerns to Francis: "What can I say, I'm so happy to be writing to a person I admire a great deal for what he does. But I am worried about you because those ISIS men want to kill you and I'm really sorry about that but I hope nothing will happen to you. A huge kiss to you and I hope you have a nice day, I hope my letter didn't bore you." □

Form IV

Statement of ownership and other particulars about the newspaper*:

Don Bosco's Madonna

1. Place of Publication: St Paul's Press, 58.23rd Rd., TPS III, Bandra, Mumbai - 400 050
2. Periodicity of Publication: 1st & 2nd of every month
3. Printer's name and nationality: For Bombay Salesian Society
Fr Edwin D'Souza sdb (trustee)
Indian
Don Bosco Shrine Office
Matunga, Mumbai 400 019
4. Publisher's name: - do -
5. Editor's name: Fr. Ian Doulton sdb
6. Name & address of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than 1% of capital

The magazine is a non-profit publication

I, Fr. Ian Doulton, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: March 1, 2017

Sd/-
Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

March 2017 32 Don Bosco's Madonna

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.

On April 29th 2016 I was riding my Scooty on the busy station road in Hubli at about 12.30 in the afternoon when the traffic was at its peak. The strap of my helmet gave way and the helmet rolled away on to the road. Luckily the traffic around me took a detour. People rushed to help me and I only bruised my elbow. I thank you Mother Mary Help of Christians for saving my life. We never miss reciting the 3 Hail Marys during our morning and night prayers.

Mr & Mrs Edward O'Connor, Hubli
Thank you Mother Mary for helping me have good seasons in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. *S. de Souza, Goa*

On 17th May 2016 we were travelling by car from Chennai to Thoothukudi, to celebrate the marriage of our second son, Roshan which was fixed for 20th May 2016. While nearing a toll booth near Tindivanam, all of a sudden a tourist van hit our car from behind and in the impact the back windscreen was damaged our belongings were strewn on the road. It was raining heavily and no one came forward to help us. The car was jammed and we could not move. After five hours, we were able to get a tow vehicle and loading our belongings into a taxi we were able to proceed to Thoothukudi safely. Even though our car was damaged badly none of us had even a scratch. We believe it was the protection of Our Lady. We always say the Rosary as we start our journeys and listen to hymns to Our Lady. We sincerely thank her for her protection. *Benilitus and Family, Chennai*
Through the powerful intercession of Mother Mary and Dominic Savio and also through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys daily, I gave birth to a bonnie baby girl. Dear Mother keep her under your protection always. *Greg and Dominica Roberts of Visakhapatnam*

Our sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians for keeping my son Jesus away from the temptations of a mobile phone and the TV. He scored 91% in his SSC examinations. Thank you and Praise you Jesus. *John M. D'Souza, Kalyan West*

Thank you, most Sacred Heart of Jesus and dear Mother Mary for curing my son of a stroke and for granting many other favours.

M. S. Castellino

March 2017 33 Don Bosco's Madonna

LOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER

My sincere thanks to the Infant Jesus for helping me find my jewelry that I thought was lost/stolen. Keep me and my family and grand children under your protection always.

Mrs Emily D'Gama, Mumbai

Dear Jesus and your beloved Mother Mary, many thanks for granting all our wishes.

John and Debra, Mumbai

In 1993 my father gave me a green scapular and warned me to be careful as I was to leave for an overseas job in 2 weeks. While travelling home in a rickshaw the next day, a child with a bicycle suddenly crossed us. The rickshaw swerved into a divider and the driver went tumbling out. The child and the bicycle fell on to the road but the back of the rickshaw where I was sitting remained intact. I felt as if the rickshaw had broken in two even though none of us was injured. I enjoyed the special protection of Mother Mary.

Caren Rozario, Mumbai

My belated thanks to the Most Holy Trinity and Mother Mary for the many favours I received.

Violet Pereira, Mumbai

Thank you Almighty Father, Jesus and Mamma Mary for healing me of my throat problems.

Dorothy Monis, Mangalore

My son was searching for a job for two years; now he's working in Bombay with a good job. Thank you Lord and Mother Mary.

Mary D'Souza, Mangalore

THEY ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR LADY AND DON BOSCO

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now n forever. Mother Mary, thank you for protecting me always under your mantle of blue.

From A Devotee, Australia

My heartfelt and sincere thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for all the graces and favours and blessings received.

Lucie George, Pune

Thank you very much, Mother Mary for the favour of an unexpected success in the SSC exam of our grandson "Verlen," through your intercession.

Mrs Besa Mascarenhas, Goa

My heartfelt thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for taking care of my aged mum who was suffering from yet another severe chest congestion for which she had to be hospitalized this time. In a few days, due to some other complications, a catheter had to be used. I prayed fervently for her total recovery from both ailments. She recovered soon. Also, during our holidays, I am grateful to Mother Mary for protecting me from a fatal fall when the ATV that I was on toppled on me. The impact on my head and lower back was quite severe but I survived. My son too was saved when the axle of the ATV got loose when speeding and he was saved just in time from a major mishap. Thank you, Jesus and Mother Mary.

Zarina

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Our sincere thanks for the blessings and favours received through the intercession of Jesus, Mary Help of Christians, St John Bosco and St Dominic Savio, my favourite.

Gladys Almeida, Canada

Thank you, Most Holy Trinity, Mother Mary, St Dominic Savio and all the saints for helping me clear my CA examinations.

Savio, Mumbai

Belated but grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary and St Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby boy after nine years of marriage, also for a successful gall bladder operation and for all the other favours received.

Mr C.F D'Souza, Mumbai

My heartfelt thanks to the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus, Mother Mary, St John Bosco and St Dominic Savio for hearing my prayer and blessing my niece with a good job in a good company. I also thank them for protecting her and keeping her in your love and care.

Josephine David, Pune

My heartfelt thanks to Mother Mary and Dominic Savio. I had difficult moments during my pregnancy but the recitation of the three Hail Marys and the intercession of Dominic Savio and his scapular caused me to have a safe delivery of a baby boy. Thank you Mother Mary and Dominic Savio.

P.S. Mungad, Pune

My heartfelt thanks to Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter because she had pregnancy diabetes. When we came to know this we were shocked. She was in her 7th month. We prayed the three Hail Marys to Mother Mary and to Dominic Savio and our prayers were heard and she had a safe delivery of a baby boy. Thank you Mother Mary and Dominic Savio.

M.L. Somani, Pune

My son was very ill and I prayed to Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio and my prayers were answered. I am immensely grateful.

Mrs Mo Lin Fernandes, Quepem, Goa

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER MARCH 2017

*Support for Persecuted Christians
That persecuted Christians may be supported by the prayers
and material help of the whole Church.*

Regd RNI no. 9360/57;
Postal Regn. MH/MR/North East/089/2012-2014
posted at Mumbai Patrika Channel Sorting Office
on 1st & 2nd of every month

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

MARY WAS THERE

It was 17th May 2016 and Baroda was experiencing a 'heat wave' of 48°. My husband came back from the market drenched in perspiration and pain in his right leg. That night he had a disturbed sleep. His BP had risen but presuming it was the heat we neglected the symptoms of a stroke. For the next three days he rested but in between, his speech slurred. He started dropping things from his right hand and he walked with a slight limp. Not seeing him out on his rounds our neighbours inquired about him. Hearing of his symptoms they advised us to see the doctor. On the 21st May we visited our family doctor. His sugar levels and his BP were high. The MRI indicated that he had had a mild stroke. He was immediately admitted. The next 48 hours were critical but thanks to Mary Help of Christians and the 3 Hail Marys he responded well to the medication and the stroke was averted. A million thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco.

Philomena D'Silva, Gujarat

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 Bursar with:

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

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

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

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

Please address all correspondence to:

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

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