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***Lord God, may,
your servants,
rejoice in unfailing health
of mind and body,
and, through
the glorious intercession
of Blessed Mary
ever-Virgin,
may we be set free
from present sorrow
and come to enjoy
eternal happiness.***

From The Editor's Desk

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL

Morning has broken. It's time to rise and shine. So, with a moan and a groan I throw back the bed clothes and put one foot on the floor. This isn't a sacred moment but it is fast approaching. I wobble my way to the bathroom, step inside, in my *inner sanctum*, standing on holy ground. A sacred moment is about to occur. I look in the mirror. "Behold God's creation!" But I'm not impressed.

But that is where I'm am wrong. What makes the moment a sacred moment is that I ought to see myself as God sees me. I'm seeing in the mirror what God sees and with no frills attached. God has created me as a unique and precious human being, a complete original, a once-off, with personality and gifts that are only mine. He thinks of me more often than the grains of sands on the sea shore.

If people love me at 6.30 in the morning, there is one thing absolutely certain - they love me! They don't love my good looks. They don't love my reputation or my achievements or my position... they just love me.

We say, "No one messes up the way I do." And it's true. When I'm in a mess, and I know I'm in a mess, and everybody knows I'm in a mess, then God comes along and says, "I love you even when you are in a mess." There is no condemnation in God. God is not stumped by evil in the world or in the Church. God doesn't gasp in amazement at the depth of our faith or the depth of our failure. We can't surprise God by our sinfulness. God knows the condition of the world... and loves it just the same. A shockable God is a false God.

The teaching of sin is not as gloomy as many people are apt to believe. It has the happiest of endings. When the going gets tough we need to go back to basics. One of the most honest prayers found in the bible is the one that has me saying, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner."

When we stand in front of the mirror, God sees a reflection of his own image and likeness, and God loves what God sees. No wonder heaven applauds when you wake up in the morning. A masterpiece has stirred. Cherubs and Seraphs, and the whole court of heaven are breathless with excitement. They sing "Hosanna" and exclaim: "What a prodigy has God created." While you moan and groan, eternity gasps in awe and wonder. We have a sacred moment in pyjamas. God sees who I am. I am his creation, his masterpiece, and God is pleased. And God pronounces his work: "very good"

We weren't consulted beforehand on whether or not we wanted to be born. That was not our choice. The decision of life is God's. Even though couples decide when to make love, God decides when to make life. Having created us, and given us life, then we have a choice. The choice is how we live. I can't remember who said it but I know he or she won't mind me saying it: "Life is too short to choose the second best." □

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

LOVE'S TRANSFORMATIONS

By Gianpaolo Dianin

Feelings and emotions change over time and are expressions of the solidity of a bond that now feeds on other foods while maintaining a beauty that is not afraid of wrinkles

One of the precious pearls of *Amoris Laetitia* are the two issues concerning the transformations of love which cannot have the same nuances of the early years and after years of life together (AL 163-164). Our thoughts go to some very popular imagery that describes marital love as a crescendo of passion that culminates in the wedding day and the early years of life together and then inevitably and inexorably declines to boredom and repetitiveness. Respect would override desire; patient acceptance of diversity would be replaced by endurance and bored repetitiveness with novelty.

To this certainly exaggerated description we must respond with a firm 'no.' Not so, although this often happens when love is not cultivated but relinquished and becomes a field full of weeds when earlier it was a beautiful garden full of fresh, beautiful and attractive flowers.

But let's begin from the reality that forms the different seasons of married life: the first years together, the season of children and their education, the time when the children leave home which is followed by a much longer season than the previous seasons where the couple now find themselves a little more lonely within the walls of the house, even if it is often inhabited with grandchildren and different commitments than those they had

in the past. Beyond the activities that can occupy the life of newly married couples, the question now concerns the relationship between the two of them because caring for the grandchildren and helping support the families of their children cannot serve as an escape or a substitute for a relationship which over time has become impoverished and has lost its earlier freshness.

Pope Francis reasons with much realism characteristic of the whole Apostolic Exhortation, and gives some more precise reflections to more senior couples: "While one of the spouses may no longer experience an intense sexual desire for the other, he or she may still experience the pleasure of mutual belonging and the knowledge that neither of them is alone but has a "partner" with whom everything in life is shared. (AL 163). Words like these give us a beautiful overview of love. If at the beginning it could have been the passion and physical attraction that nourished life together, now it can turn into the solid and time-tested bond that nourished the desire to be with and for your loved one. Complicity now has the traits of understanding each other on the fly, knowing how that feels and going through together with the closeness and understanding that turns up in a thousand daily things. The Pope goes on: "There is no guarantee that we

will feel the same way all through life. Yet if a couple can come up with a shared and lasting life project, they can love one another and live as one until death do them part, enjoying an enriching intimacy. The love they pledge is greater than any emotion, feeling or state of mind, although it may include all of these." Feelings and emotions change in the different seasons of love and must not be judged by external criteria dictated by certain imageries of love. They are an expression of the solidity of the bond that now feeds on other foods while maintaining a beauty that does not fear the wrinkles. The Pope does not say that time obliterates emotion but that if it is less intense that does not mean that love has faded.

Love is not primarily an emotion

or a passion. If these were what nourished the beginnings of the relationship, that same choice to get married cannot be based on a feeling of love. The two spouses on their wedding day do not promise to always possess that strong feeling, but they promise to be there, next to each other in joy and in pain, in sickness and in health. Marriage is not based on a feeling but on a pact. Life together is not born on the waves of spontaneity but "a decision to love, to belong to one another, to share their lives and to continue loving and forgiving." (AL 163).

Why does the passing of years not necessarily impoverish the relationship of the two spouses? For a very specific reason: because you fall in love and marry a whole person for all that the man or



THE IDEAL SPOUSE



woman is. We fall in love with the physical aspect, but also with the personality, their values and interests, their originality and uniqueness, their history and the things they like, their intelligence and their spirituality in the broadest sense of the term. And all these qualities, if they change over the years, also become more intense, solid and mature. Emotions do not fail they take on new physiognomies and can be expressed in other sensitive forms. See an elderly couple holding hands no less tenderly than two young lovers who kiss each other passionately. Passion is beautiful, tenderness is equally beautiful; the attraction is strong and the awareness of belonging to one another is equally strong.

But none of this happens in a magical or spontaneous way. Love must be cultivated in every season not just preserved so that it does not deteriorate. It must also be made to grow. So, in every season new projects must be taken on, maybe goals to find common interests, to be open to new challenges; letting new challenges and new initiatives enter the walls of the house so that the heart and spirit remain young.

On this Pope Francis is very clear: "However, none of this is possible without praying to the Holy Spirit for an outpouring of his grace, his supernatural strength and his spiritual fire, to confirm, direct and transform our love in every new situation." (AL 164). Is this not the gift that God gave the couple on their wedding day? And isn't this the commitment and the covenant the two exchanged on that day? To love and honour you all the days of my life. ■

Mulla Nasruddin was sitting in a tea shop when a neighbour came to talk to him: "I'm going to get married, Mulla," said his friend. "I'm very excited. Have you ever thought of getting married?"

Nasruddin replied: "Yes, I have. When I was younger, I wanted to, very much. I wanted to find the perfect wife so I set off to find her and went to Damascus. There I met a beautiful woman, very graceful, kind and very spiritual but she knew nothing of the world. So, I set off again and went to Isphahan. There I met a woman she was both spiritual and worldly-wise and beautiful in many ways but we were unable to communicate with each other. I left and made my way to Cairo and after much searching, I found her. She was deeply spiritual, very graceful and beautiful from many points of view; she was at ease in the world and in realms that transcend it. I felt I had found the perfect wife."

His friend asked him another question: "Then why didn't you marry her, Mulla?" "Alas," said Nasruddin, "she was also looking for the ideal husband."

To love means to receive an "other" with his/her way of being, diversity and flaws, not some silly copy of a dream I have. The perfect husband is one who doesn't want a perfect wife.

THEN CAME JOHN XXIII

by Chino Biscontin

Angelo Roncalli was elected Pope on October 28, 1958 and in a span of five years caused an epochal turning point in the path the Church was taking, with the announcement of the Second Vatican Council.

He was born in Sotto il Monte (Bergamo), the eldest son in a large family who earned their living working in the fields; essentially a poor life. He inherited the patient tenacity of peasants in the various tasks he undertook, even those that were difficult and dangerous. He learned that there was a time to sow and a time to wait for the harvest; there could also be lean times although the earth always rewards a job well done.

Secondly, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli maintained contact throughout his life with the faith he received in the family and which had taken deep root within him. Subsequent studies and his priestly ministry never caused a break, but simply made the seeds of his familiar faith flourish, enmeshed with his daily life. Hence the freshness and genuineness of his Christian life which was striking and disarming.

In the third place, his spirit of solidarity spread out and the people observed it in his relationships, where ordinary poverty, was often painful to see. He was disarmingly spontaneous without humiliating anyone; being truly respectful in a spirit of true brotherhood. From this little Angelino inherited a deep good-hearted generosity which spread to all those who came in touch with him.



Furthermore, he maintained a long collaborative relationship with one of the most enlightened and committed bishops of that time, Mgr. Giacomo Radini Tedeschi. He wanted him as his secretary and developed a great admiration for him, even taking him as an inspiring model. He also shared with him the suffering he experienced because of the accusations regarding modernism that plagued them both.

And finally, his study of history which enabled him to take a broad view of the history of the Church and thus to put into context the contemporary scenario, opening horizons of renewal and freedom that characterized his brief papacy that left a powerful and indelible mark.

He had a confident and serene disposition, so that he was increasingly able to accept important and difficult assignments without letting them distort his personality either through vainglory of anxiety. He retained a clear sense of humility coupled

with an enthusiastic commitment to his responsibilities; that allowed him to be effective in his esteemed relationships which not rarely wrought extraordinary results.

He entered the seminary of Bergamo at the age of eleven thanks to the understanding and the help of a great-uncle Zaverio. He was sent to the Roman Seminary of Apollinare after which he passed a year in military service. Around the age of twenty-two he obtained his doctorate in theology and was ordained a priest.

The following year he returned to Bergamo and at the request of Mons. Radini Tedeschi became his secretary for the next ten years while simultaneously teaching in the Seminary.

At the outbreak of the First World War he was made military chaplain and for three years he dedicated himself to caring heroically for wounded soldiers and assisting those among them who had contracted tuberculosis aware of the possible contagion.

In 1920 he was called to Rome to see and to direct the Organization of the Propagation of the Faith which oversaw the animation and support of the missions. Roncalli also had the task of the Vatican coordination of missionary initiatives scattered throughout the world. His efficiency induced the Pope to entrust him with conducting the Apostolic Visitation of Bulgaria which also entailed the episcopal ordination.

During the Second World War he worked hard for hungry populations, overcoming every kind of division between Catholics and Orthodox and saved the lives of many Jews.

In 1944, Pope Pius XII named him

nuncio to Paris; a prestigious task but also very sensitive considering the wounds that were caused by the invasion of the Nazis who collaborated with the Vichy government. Once again, he manifested uncommon diplomatic skills which earned him great respect not just personally but for the Church as well.

In 1953 he was appointed cardinal and assigned the archdiocese of Venice. He made pastoral visits, convened and directed a diocesan Synod. He manifested a careful, respectful and generous paternity and had an unwavering dedication to his ministry.

After the death of Pius XII in 1958, the cardinal electors chose Roncalli to take on the difficult succession to the throne of Peter. He chose the name John, the XXIII, in the series of popes, convincing the cardinal electors that it would be a short and transitory papacy. It was not very short, since it lasted until June 3, 1963 the day Pope John died. But it was above all not a transition. On the contrary, John XXIII made an epochal change to the Church's journey with the convening of the Second Vatican Council and with the pastoral characteristics that he assigned to it.

The universal esteem that he enjoyed made him an irreplaceable man of dialogue. Thanks to his intervention, the extremely dangerous Cuban crisis was resolved, which could have triggered a conflict between the United States and Russia, with apocalyptic results.

On April 27, 2014, he was canonized together with John Paul II by Pope Francis and his memory occurs on October 11. □

THE LOVE I TOOK FOR GRANTED

Anastasia Dias

I knew David Adams from my days at university. He was unlike other professors. He had a warm, more humane side that made you want to attend all his classes.

In my university days I would think of him as any other person, only kinder. Little did I know that David would soon teach me a lesson that would last a lifetime.

It was all due to that one phone call that David received while taking class. He said it was urgent. After receiving the call, he never returned to class that day.

The next week, he came back and didn't take class. Instead, he said "Today I'm going to tell you all a story; my story. I was just like one of you. I sat in the same classes as you, dreaming of doing what I am doing today.

The story of how I got here is different, though. It's not a very pretty story and might even seem silly to some of you.

"I was an only child. My parents belonged to the lower-middle class and though we never struggled to make ends meet, our life was relatively simple. We didn't have an active social life and since my parents weren't very outgoing we had

few friends.

"Dad was a clerk. He left home early and came back late; after sundown. We then ate dinner and said our prayers. On Sundays, the three of us went to Church together.

"My father not being home most of the day didn't really bother me since I knew he worked hard to support us. But there was another side to him. I was never really close to my father; even when he was at home, he wasn't the kind to start a conversation with me. He preferred sitting by himself and reading his Bible or praying the Rosary.

"Even though Dad wasn't deeply religious, he always carried his Bible and Rosary with him everywhere. They never left his side; to him, it wasn't regimen or habit, rather something sacrosanct.

"For my birthdays, we never really had family parties or anything of the sort. However, for my 18th birthday, my parents decided to call our extended family to celebrate with us.

"After the party, I was supposed to be out with my friends. I was about to leave when I overheard my Uncle Peter ask Dad, 'Have you told him he's adopted yet?'



RICHES IN HEAVEN

The Rich Young Man and Jesus

By Ian Pinto, sdb

"I immediately felt a surge of anger and my blood began to boil. My mother shot a quick glance at me, sensing I had heard the conversation. I stormed out of my house.

"I couldn't believe I had been adopted. My parents whom I had loved for so long weren't my biological parents. I hated my life, hated my biological parents who had abandoned me and my adoptive parents for hiding this fact from me.

"When I returned home, Dad and Mum sat at the dinner table. Mum called me, 'Son, please sit down.' I looked at them with anger in my eyes. I said, 'I can't believe you did this to me. You hid this from me for 18 years and were planning to hide it forever. I am leaving right now.'

"Then I looked my father in the eye and said, 'Instead of clinging on to your Bible and Rosary you could've spent more time with your family and let your son know he's adopted.'

"Those words hurt, they stung, they broke my father's heart and crushed his spirit. He was never the same again. He now held on to his Bible and Rosary more than ever.

"I left home few days after that incident, joined university, started working and married the woman I loved. The day I received that phone call was the day my father had died. I was forced to go home.

"I took my family along with me. My mother was there, wrinkled and bony; age had caught up with her. She came running to me and hugged me. 'David, we've missed you. Dad thought of you so often before he



died.'

"After the funeral, my mother came up to me and held my hand. She whispered, 'Son, I'm sorry for everything that has happened. I'm sorry we hurt you. But, I want you to know that your father and I loved you very much. You have meant the world to us, and your Father's last wish was to see you so that he could give you his most valuable possession. Unfortunately, he passed away before he could, so here it is.'

"My mother handed me the Bible and Rosary. Inside the Bible was a note by my Dad written in shaky handwriting.

"To my beloved son David, I bought this Bible and Rosary the day we brought you home. And I clung on to them so dearly because they had given me a new life; they had given you to me.

I love you,
Dad"

"Today I am a father myself and I know how it feels to be hurt by your own children, knowingly or unknowingly. My father is gone and I never apologized for what I had said or done. Several times, I felt guilt, grief and regret in my heart. In those moments I clung on to the cherished memory of my Dad: his Bible and Rosary." □

Amassing Treasures

Life today is so different from life two thousand years ago. I mean, life is essentially the same. People two thousand years ago were as male and female as we are now; it's not like we have evolved physically or anything in the last two thousand years. It's just that we have evolved in other ways, like our ways of thinking, dressing and even living. Yes, our lifestyle is so different from our ancestors. Forget going that far back, lifestyle changes every other generation such that the lifestyle of parents and children sometimes turn out so different! While this change is not bad in itself, it has given rise to certain not-so-good things that have negatively impacted our lives. The one thing I would like to highlight in this article is the consumer culture.

The whole consumer movement sprang up with the Industrial age that took place a few centuries ago. With the dawn of new production technology, goods were produced, marketed and sold at a stupendous rate. This gradually gave way to the consumer culture which created persons who depended on possessions for their identity. Till today, the effects of consumer culture are still tangible. Just take a moment to evaluate our lifestyle. What are we doing? Aren't we spending ourselves, day in and day out, trying to make a decent living (at least, that's what we are telling ourselves and willing to admit). Look at our office culture.



We clock in at the least 8 hours of work, week after week and collect our due checks at the end of each month. As if this were not enough, we look for ways and means of augmenting our stipulated salary by working overtime, seeking bonuses, getting an extra job and so on. If we are happy with what we make, then we look for ways and means of spending that money. Thus, we go and purchase bigger and better houses, fancy vehicles, exotic holidays, trendy clothes and the like.

Wealth is not bad. In fact, it is necessary in order to live a comfortable life. The problem arises when greed sets in. Greed usually, comes softly. One might not even realize it but if one is not careful, it can take over one's life and lead one down the slippery path to destruction.

Keeping the Commandments

The rich young man of the gospel is an interesting character. On the one hand, he was rich. His riches were probably gained through hard work and smart

decisions. But what is fascinating is that on the other hand, he was a religious-minded guy. This I think is the fundamental difference in lifestyle. In the old days, religion possessed a certain value and people, irrespective of their status, recognized that value and saw the difference it made to their lives. Today, however, we have lost that sensitivity. I'm not saying we are not religious. We are very religious but we live in a world that has lost sight of the sacredness of religion. Religion is seen as an archaic structure that has outlived its tenure and is therefore redundant. Obviously, this is an erroneous notion and one that bears sad consequences.

It is heartening to see so many people, billions around the world who still, in the midst of such a cultural environment, make efforts to live religious lives and seek God's will in their lives. It is one thing to embark on a money-making venture but it is quite another to embark on a venture and make money. There is a difference, and it is all-important. The first case refers to a blind pursuit of wealth and luxury, while the second refers to a passion which yields monetary gain. Besides the difference of perspective, there is also a difference of quality and quantity. A person of the second category may not make as much money as a person from the first but he/she is more likely to feel satisfied, build relationships and even have time to pursue other interests, one of which is spiritual. A person of the first kind is focused entirely on making money; there is no room for God. At most, they may accommodate their family and a few like-minded friends. A person of the second kind is more likely to

perceive the need for God and for reaching out to others', especially those in need.

Finding Your Riches

The rich young man was brilliant. Jesus himself applauded him for his dedication to living a religious life in the midst of economic pursuits. The Gospel tells us that Jesus "loved him" (Mk 10:20). These words were not used for anyone else before him. Jesus loved the fact that the young man still desired God even in the midst of wealth. As a test of the ingenuity of his desire, he asked him to "Go, sell what you have and give the money to the poor...then come and follow me" (Mk 10:21). The Gospel ends on the sad note that the young man rejected Jesus' offer because he had a lot of wealth. Jesus has nothing against the rich, even though he speaks harshly about them. What he is dead against is greed and the setting of one's heart on one's wealth.

Like the young man, we have our own wealth; we might not be very rich but we certainly have enough to get by. The important question to ask is 'how attached am I to my wealth?' One can make a simple check by examining how much one contributes to the Sunday collection for example, or how much is given in alms. We must remember that our wealth here on earth is only temporary; we cannot take it beyond the grave. Instead of spending our whole lives amassing riches here on earth, let us make efforts to gain riches in heaven. How can we do that? By living in a spirit of faith, detachment and self-giving. This is what God wants of us; this is what will truly ensure heaven for us. □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. WILFRID (1386-1456)

Wilfrid was bishop of York, son of a Northumbrian thegn, born in 634; died at Oundle in Northamptonshire, 709. He was unhappy at home, through the unkindness of a stepmother, and in his fourteenth year he was sent away to the Court of King Oswy, King of Northumbria. Here he attracted the attention of Queen Eanfleda and by her, at his own request, he was sent to the Monastery of Lindisfarne. After three years spent here he was sent for, again through the kindness of the queen, to Rome, in the company of St. Benedict Biscop. At Rome he was the pupil of Boniface, the pope's arch-deacon. On his way home he stayed for three years at Lyons, where he received his tonsure from Annemundas, the bishop of that place. Annemundas wanted him to remain at Lyons altogether, and marry his niece and become his heir, but Wilfrid was determined that he would be a priest. Soon after, a persecution arose at Lyons, and Annemundas perished in it. The same fate nearly came to Wilfrid, but when it was shown that he was a Saxon he was allowed to depart, and came back to England. In England he received the newly



founded monastery at Ripon as the gift of Alchfrid, Oswy's son and heir, and here he established the full Benedictine Rule. The Columbite monks, who had been settled previously at Ripon, withdrew to the North. It was not until he had been for five years Abbot of Ripon, that Wilfrid became a priest. His main work at Ripon was the introduction of Roman rules and the putting

forward of a Roman practice with regard to the point at issue between the Holy See and the Scottish monks in Northumbria; to settle these questions the synod of Whitby was held in 664. Chiefly owing to Wilfrid's advocacy of the claims of the Holy See the votes of the majority were given to that side, and Colman and his monks, bitterly disappointed, withdrew from Northumbria. Wilfrid, in consequence of the favours he had then obtained, was elected bishop in Colman's place, and, refusing to receive consecration from the northern bishops, whom he regarded as schismatics, went over to France to be consecrated at Compiègne.

He delayed some time in France, whether by his own fault or not is not quite clear, and on his return in 666 was driven from his course by a storm and shipwrecked on the coast of Sussex, where the heathen inhabitants repelled him and almost killed him. He succeeded in landing, however, in Kent not far from Sandwich. Thence he made his way to Northumbria, only to find that, owing to his long absence, his see had been filled up, and that a St. Chad was bishop in his place. He retired to his old monastery at Ripon, and from thence went southwards and worked in Mercia, especially at Lichfield, and also in Kent.

In 669 Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury visited Northumbria, where he found Chad working as bishop. He pointed out to him the defects of his position and, at his instigation, St. Chad withdrew and Wilfrid once more became Bishop of York. During his tenure of the see, he acted with great vigour and energy, comple-

ting the work of enforcing the Roman obedience against the Scottish monks. He founded a great many monasteries of the Benedictine Order, especially at Henlam and at Ripon, and completely rebuilt the minster at York. In all that he did he acted with great magnificence, although his own life was always simple and restrained.

So long as Oswy lived all went well, but with Ecgfrid, Oswy's son and successor, Wilfrid was very unpopular, because of his action in connection with Ecgfrid's bride Etheldrida, who by Wilfrid's advice would not live with her husband but retired into a monastery. It was just at this juncture that Theodore, possibly exceeding his powers as Archbishop of Canterbury, proceeded to subdivide the great diocese over which Wilfrid ruled, and to make suffragan bishops of Lindisfarne, Hexham, and Witherne. Wilfrid, whether or not he approved of the principle of subdivision, refused to allow Theodore's right to make it, and appealed to the central authority at Rome, whither he at once went. Theodore replied by consecrating three bishops in Wilfrid's own church at York and dividing his whole bishopric between them.

An attempt was made by his enemies to prevent Wilfrid from reaching Rome, but by a singular coincidence Wilfrid, Bishop of Lichfield, happened to be going to Rome at the same time, and the singularity of the name led to his being stopped while Wilfrid got through safely. At Rome a council was called by Pope Agatho to decide the case, and Wilfrid appeared before it in person, while Theo-

dore was represented. The case was decided in Wilfrid's favour, and the intruding bishops were removed. Wilfrid was to return to York, and since subdivision of his diocese was needed, he was to appoint others as his coadjutors. He came back to Northumbria with this decision, but the king, though not disputing the right of Rome to settle the question, said that Wilfrid had brought the decision and put him in prison at Bambrough. After a time this imprisonment was converted to exile, and he was driven from the kingdom of Northumbria. He went south to Sussex where the heathen inhabitants had so inhospitably received him fifteen years before, and preached as a missionary at Selsey.

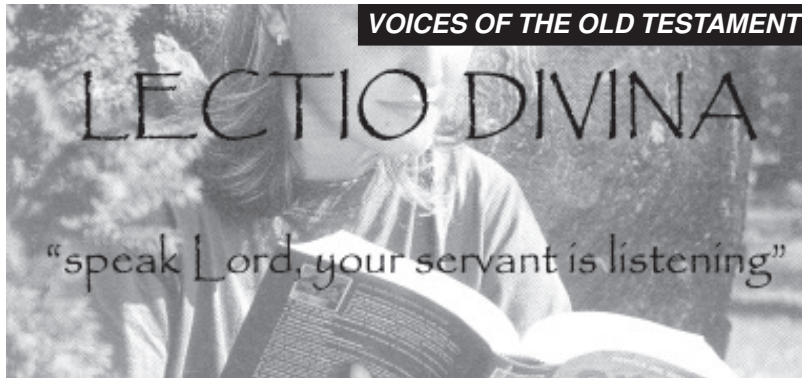
In 686 a reconciliation took place between Theodore and Wilfrid, who had then been working in Sussex for five years. Through Theodore's good offices Wilfrid was received back in Northumbria, where Aldfrid was now king. He became Bishop of Hexham at once, and before long, when York again fell vacant, he took possession there once more. For some years all went well, but at the end of that time great difficulties arose with the king because Wilfrid utterly refused to recognize what had been done by Theodore but annulled by Rome in the matter of the subdivision of his diocese, and he once more left York and appealed to Rome. He reached Rome for the third and last time in 704.

The proceedings at Rome were very lengthy, but after some months Wilfrid was again victorious. Archbishop Brihtwald was to hold a synod and see jus-

tice done. Wilfrid started again for England but on his way was taken ill at Meaux and nearly died. He recovered, however, and came back to England, where he was reconciled to Brihtwald. A synod was held, and it was decided to give back to Wilfrid, Hexham and Ripon, but not York, a settlement which, though unsatisfactory, he decided to accept, as the principle of Roman authority had been vindicated.

Beyond all others of his time, St. Wilfrid stands out as the great defender of the rights of the Holy See. For that principle he fought all through his life, first against Colman and the Scottish monks from Iona, and then against Theodore and his successor in the See of Canterbury; and much of his life was spent in exile for this reason. But to him above all others is due the establishment of the authority of the Roman See in England, and for that reason he will always have a very high place among English saints.

Eddius, the biographer of St. Wilfrid, was brought by that saint from Canterbury when he returned to York in 669. His special work was to be in connection with the music of the church of York, and he was to teach the Roman method of chant. He was an inmate of the monastery of Ripon in 709, when St. Wilfrid spent his last days there, and he undertook the work of writing the life of the saint at the request of Acca, St. Wilfrid's successor in the See of Hexham. The best edition of the work is in Raines, "Historians of the Church of York" (Rolls Series). □



BEHOLD THE FUTURE GOD HAS THOUGHT OF - FOR US

by Carlo Broccardo

Here on Mount Zion, the Lord Almighty will prepare a banquet for all the nations of the world - a banquet of the richest food and the finest wine. Here he will suddenly remove the cloud of sorrow that has been hanging over the nations. The Sovereign Lord will destroy death for ever! He will wipe away the tears from everybody's eyes and take away the disgrace his people have suffered throughout the world. The Lord himself has spoken!

When it happens, everyone will say, "He is our God! We have put our trust in him, and he has rescued us. He is the Lord! We have put our trust in him, and now we are happy and joyful because he has saved us." Is. 25: 6-9

The word "prophet" is derived from the Greek and can have two meanings. It can mean "the one who speaks on behalf of," or "the one who speaks in front of." In the Bible, the prophets perform both functions. They are men of the

word (don't ask them to lead an army to free a people from oppression!), but not their word. They have received a revelation from God and they pass it on to the people - or their representative, that is, the king. Their service to the people serves as a means for the word of God (which they receive) to reach everyone.

In the passage we will hear (or have heard) on Sunday 11th October, Isaiah does not report the exact words of God; rather, imagine that the prophet has a strong experience of God in which he "understands" his word, his plans for the future and he runs to inform the people immediately. These are plans filled with hope.

First of all, Isaiah speaks of the future. Let's look at the principal verbs: The Lord will prepare, will tear, will destroy, will dry up, obliterate and on that day it will be said: "Here is our God..." The present is not the best: the people can eat yes, what there is, once a day; a blanket covers the peoples of the earth, like a veil covers their



faces (the image is a little difficult to decipher, but it is certainly not a luminous reality). Death rules, their faces are streaked with tears. God's people are covered with ignominy. All this will end, says Prophet Isaiah. This is the word of the Lord; it marks the end of the suffering present, tracing the main line to a different kind of future.

This is how God thinks of the future for us: a world where there is no room for crying (as an expression of pain), for oppression, for faces covered with sadness, for empty bellies of those who have nothing to eat. Even for the people of Israel, the tiniest of all peoples, our days of abandonment will end and his name will return to be a blessing. Indeed, in the world as God imagines it, there will be no more room for death! It too will be defeated and it will no longer reign on earth.

When all this happens, it is clear that everyone will say: "Here is our God; let us rejoice and exult."

It is a beautiful future; one that can only be full of joy and gratitude for all those who will achieve it. Is a beautiful future too good to be true?

We Christians today have been given the task of the prophet Isaiah. We live in a world that is quite different from the one outlined on the page of the Bible we have just read, just like it was in Isaiah's time. We live in a world where injustices are too many; hundreds of thousands of people starve to death every day; people do not know one another - as if their faces were covered with a veil and they certainly do not respect each other and live in peace; too many people repeat the words of the Psalm: "My tears have become my bread by day and by night." Death seems invincible.

In this world today, if we let the words of Isaiah resonate within us; that it is God's plan, we will find in our hands, as did the prophet Isaiah, this word that does not come from us and is not for us; it is a word we are called to proclaim, to announce, to spread. It is a message of hope that does not allow us to remain silent.

It is a word that asks us to be converted, because it demands of us that we trust God. There is no proof that the future will be as he says it will be; the only certainty is that this word comes from God: "because the Lord has spoken," says Isaiah. We know it will be so because God said it, and we trust God. And the more we are able to transmit this trust, the more we will become builders of this new world; the world that the word of God is fashioning, as he did in the beginning when he created heaven and earth. □

Quiet Spaces

THE ICON OF THE FOOL

On the morning of October 17, 2017 Pope Francis broke the Word of God for the little congregation at the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

The way of folly leads to corruption” Pope Francis asserted while celebrating Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday, 17 October.

“In today’s liturgy of the Word,” he began, “the word ‘fool’ is mentioned twice. Jesus says it to the doctors of the law, to some of the Pharisees (Lk 11:37-41); and Paul says it to the pagans: ‘Claiming to be wise, they became fools’ (Rom 1:16-25). Francis however, also referred to a third case: Paul called the Galatians foolish because ‘they let themselves be misled, bewitched by new ideas.’ Consequently, ‘this word said to the doctors of the law, to the pagans and Christians who let themselves be bewitched by ideologies,’ Francis explained, ‘is a condemnation.’ Moreover, ‘it reveals the way of folly,’ which in turn, the Pope asserted, ‘leads to corruption.’”

The Pontiff proceeded to highlight the nature of the three kinds of fool subject to corruption. Firstly, the doctors of the law and the Pharisees, to whom “Jesus said: ‘you are like graves which are not seen’: on the outside they appear beautiful,” Francis explained, “but on the inside they are full of bone and rot. Corrupt.” Thus, the Pharisees “became corrupt, for they ‘emphasized only appearances, and not what was inside; they were corrupted by vanity, appearances, outward beauty, exterior justice. They became corrupt because they were only concerned with polishing, making beautiful the external aspect of things; they did not delve within: corruption is within, akin to the graves.’”

The second kind of fool refers to the pagans whom, in the day’s reading, Paul accused of having “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity.” In this case too, the pagans “exchanged the glory of God – which they could have known through reason – for idols.” Such corruption is one of “idolatry, of many idolatries” Francis concluded, then warned that the corruption of idolatry applies not only to ancient times, but has relevance in the present day, for example, in “consumerism” and “the idolatry of seeking a convenient god.”

The third kind of fool refers to the Galatians. Francis asserted that in “allowing themselves to be corrupted by ideologies, they renounce being Christian in order to become ideologues of Christianity.” Ultimately, however, the Pontiff concluded that all three of these categories, in their own manner, “end in corruption, by way of this folly.” From here comes the question: “What is this foolishness?” And the Pope’s essential reply was that “it is a failure to listen. It is literally a ‘nescio’, an ‘I don’t know how’,” he said, an incapacity to listen. “When the Word does not enter, I am not letting it enter because I am not

listening to it. The fool does not listen. He believes he is listening, but he does not listen. He does his own thing, always, and for this reason, the Word of God cannot enter his heart and there is no room for love.” Or, and this is often the case, the Pope observed, if the Word does enter, “it does so in a distilled fashion, transformed by one’s concept of reality.”

Therefore, Francis asserted that “fools do not know how to listen and this deafness leads them to corruption. The Word of God does not enter; there is no room for love and finally there is no room for freedom.” In this respect, “Paul was clear: they became slaves. ‘God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.’” They became slaves, the Pope explained, “because they exchanged the truth of God with falsehood, adoring and serving creatures rather than the Creator.” Indeed, he continued, “they are not free; and this failure to listen, this deafness leaves no room for love or freedom: it always leads to slavery.” Thus, it would be appropriate to ask ourselves: “Do I listen to the word of God? Do I let it enter?” the Pope asked. “The word of God is alive; it is efficacious; it discerns thoughts of the heart; it cuts; it goes inside.” He encouraged the faithful to question whether we let the Word enter our hearts, or if we remain deaf to it. Moreover, he inquired. “Do I transform it into idolatry, or do I transform it into ideology”, and thus it does not enter? This, the Pontiff cautioned, “is the folly of Christians”.

Finally, Francis recommended a further step, that is, “just as the icons of the saints do us so much good”, we should “look at the icon of the fools of today” – and there are many of these, he said. “There are foolish Christians and also foolish pastors”, those whom, the Pope recalled, “Saint Augustine ‘lambasted’ vehemently. For the folly of the shepherd harms the flock; the folly of the corrupt shepherd, as well as the folly of the self-satisfied pastor, the pagan, and the folly of the pastor ideologue.”

Thus the Pontiff came to his conclusion. “Let us look at the icon of the foolish Christian, and next to this folly let us look at the Lord who is always at the door: he knocks at the door and waits”. It is a matter of contemplating “the Lord’s nostalgia, when he remembers the good times: ‘I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown’; God’s nostalgia for the love he had for us at first”. In fact, “if we fall prey to this folly and we distance ourselves, he feels this nostalgia; nostalgia for us”. Just as “Jesus wept with this nostalgia; he wept over Jerusalem. It was the nostalgia for a people whom he had chosen, whom he had loved, but who had distanced themselves through folly; they had preferred appearances, idols or ideologies”. □

SUNSHINE OVER ROME

by Pierluigi Menato - adapted and edited by Ian Doulton sb

Her books under her arm, no cap on her head, she looked more like a student than a professor. The doctor noticed her anxious and confused look and felt very sorry for her.

"Sit down Clara, be brave."

Those few words were enough for her. Everything seemed to be crashing around her and outside the sun was shining on the prosperous city of Rome.

"Doctor, is it true that he doesn't know? He's got so many dreams, plans and hopes..."

She couldn't even cry. "Now, you have to be very brave and go it all the way. Just think of it, life has already given you a wonderful gift; you have been loved and been married to the love of your life, to a dear childhood friend, a teenage college mate, the boy of your dreams! You've had so many happy years; not many women can say that."

She had barely heard him; his words flowed over her stunned pain without leaving any trace.

"It's just one thing above all that frustrates me: George has not been able to carry through any of his plans. Must he go like this... without the world giving him the slightest sense of fulfilment? He's such a creative boy. This is cruel!"

She got up, picked up her books and went back home. She hadn't shed a tear. She didn't want George to see her tear-stained face and bloodshot eyes.

He got up and sat in an armchair on the terrace. Two days earlier they made him get a blood

transfusion to try to give him some strength, exhausted as he was from the pancreatic cancer that had been detected a few months earlier. Now he felt a new surge of energy. He was writing again. The folder was spread across his knees. Looking out from Via Nomentana, with its line of mansions, its palm trees, its burgeoning gardens, all a riot of life.

"Good morning, young man!" she said cheerily, sounding slightly strained.

He immediately noticed that strain and looked up.

"You tired, Clare? How lovely to be able to teach 'Ich bin, du bist! But all that will change, you'll see! I promised you a comfortable, happy life; I promised that I would become someone and I will succeed, don't doubt it. Today I've done a lot of work. I tried to modify the ending of my story."

Her eyes suddenly fell on the scratchpad on the table. Articles and short stories had been sent back to him. But that cinematographic "subject" that they had worked on, during their honeymoon in Tuscany was very close to his heart. With desperate tenacity and an almost foolish constancy he persisted in sending it to directors, producers and actors. Many times, he heard nothing from them; several times they sent it back with a few polite words and some trivial observation like the one that day: "It's good but it falls short at the end."

Clare knelt before him and looked into his face, a shock of blond hair falling over his eyes. She cupped his face in the palm of

her hand:

"Don't tire yourself, my love."

"Don't tire yourself? I'm doing nothing all day. But this must be accepted. It would make a splendid film, I'm sure, Clare. People pay a lot for this. I could get three hundred or three hundred and fifty thousand euros. It would give us some breathing space and then I could devote myself entirely to my novel... after that, one thing will lead to another..."

She caressed his outstretched palm, her eyes lost in his dear feverish gaze. The doctor had said: "If the transfusion doesn't work as I want, he will have just three months..." The life he yearned for so much, should give him something in these three months!

George leaned over and pressed his cheek against his wife's.

"One thing bothers me. And it is that you will think me a wimp, a failure. I wouldn't want to leave you before I gave you what I promised you for so many years: success and the fame of my name."

She closed her eyes: "Your name fills all my world, George. And I don't need others to tell me about your talents..."

But he was uneasy; nervously he turned away and started writing again.

It was another time. That day, she was in front of the Grand Palace. On the first-floor balcony she saw the hoarding: "Alma Films." A uniformed porter looked curiously at her. Clare pointed straight at his chest with her finger and said, boldly:

"The director, Finni?"

"Won't you sit down and wait a moment?"

She sat in an anteroom, crowded with people: there were two blond, chatty girls, a girl with an emaciated look and false eyelashes, reeking with perfume and some men. People who were living, waiting for tomorrow, not yet sentenced to death. Clare seemed to hate them all.

When it was her turn, after more than an hour, she was asked to go in. The room was very spacious and elegant. The director Finni was seated behind the desk, a man in his fifties, pale-faced and from his lips he seemed rather tired and bitter.

"I've come to ask for a favour."

Clare found it difficult to express herself without seeming like she was revealing the plot of a novel. But as she spoke, her painful words revealed the same cruelty of her fate; and she broke into sobs.

"I wish you can simply tell him that his subject has been accepted; that it is good and in six months he's going to make it. In six months, my husband will no longer be there..." And she went on sobbing.

The man hadn't said a word: his face was blank.

"How can I believe that all this is true?" he asked finally.

She stood up and bent over the desk a little:

"Do you know Dr. Penzi? He is known to be a man of integrity; he won't lie to you. You can call him right now, in my presence. My husband is called George Roghi."

The man chewed on a pencil, but didn't reply.

"Perhaps..." said Clare, "you don't remember...you've never seen it...I can send you a copy."

"We keep all the manuscripts they send us. They are all

catalogued and archived and I can find it immediately. We just don't deal with stuff like this. The public prefers subjects based on famous novels, comedies or original plots.

"So?"

The man looked closely at Clare. Her expressive face was transfigured by her suffering. Thousands of women passed through his office, all wanting to ingratiate him, (it was so funny) just so they could have a small part. But there he was in front of her, and he felt this; whatever she did or said would mean nothing to him. He was a harsh man and life in that industry had aged him prematurely. But, something tender and sweet about her touched him at that moment. Clare's eyes sparked a spirit of human compassion in him.

"Well, okay, I'll fix it with him. But remember, I'm a business man. Sit down and write down what I've just said; a statement in which you consider your husband's request useless and that your husband's cinematographic subject is worth nothing and not feasible."

This was a painful stab to Clare's heart! She thought she was being betrayed. For a moment she thought of running away without saying a word; instead she just sat there like a robot and wrote out the statement and signed it.

George was in bed, feeling very weak and exhausted, when he received the registered letter. "Dear Sir, we have read your material entitled "Land of the Sun," and we would like to negotiate to buy it if the sum you

request provided it does not exceed three hundred and fifty thousand euros. If you are willing to write the screenplay you will receive a separate fee. The film will be shot in September and the choice of cast and director will be entirely up to us. Pending your confirmation - Alma Films," the signature was of the president: Mr. Finni.

"Clare, Clare, come quickly...a wonderful surprise..." She heard his voice. She was in the kitchen making soup for him. She immediately sensed something and her knees seemed to buckle under her. She was afraid, now that the big moment had arrived. But it was easy for him to mask his dismay and pretend that it was a big surprise. He was stirring and restless in bed like a child, like a happy child.

"See? I told you! They ended up liking it! Three hundred and fifty thousand euros, think of it! Now the door to success has opened. We'll ask for another... You'll help me with the script, won't you? I'm fine now; I'm feeling much better! It was this discouragement that exhausted me. You need to answer immediately, right away. Now, do you see your George? Now you believe me, don't you?"

"I always have!"

"No... you were beginning to doubt."

Together they compiled a reply.

Clare promised that she would post it herself. Down in the garden she tore it into thousands of pieces, and yet she wasn't satisfied. There was evidence of a betrayal.

In the days that followed, work

on the script began; George's happiness was something radiant. He had reconciled himself with the world. He believed that life was good and so were people. Everything seemed easy and friendly. It was only this boyish joy that could comfort Clare's torment. As is often the case in Cancer patients, bronco-pneumonia occurs in the last few days. Fever was burning up his battered body; even in his delirium George only spoke happy words.

The fever suddenly left him, and it was like a collapse. A calm and resigned peace flooded the young man. He now knew. Clare was lying on the bed next to this young man, hand in hand, and it seemed to her, that if she left him she would take his breath away.

"Clare, listen to me. Did you tell me the whole truth...about this? Was it something you planned...to make me feel good? This suspicion just came to me with such strange clarity... You have to tell me the truth, Clare. It's not right to lie to a dying man. Besides, I would get the impression that you've been lying to me all along. It would be like destroying our entire past."

Her heart stopped; her lips trembled:

"What are you saying, George, my dear? How could I...have written a letter from Alma-Films...a signed letter?"

He took a deep breath:

"I'm happy...You will have to live with it, Clara, for some time at least...and take care of it, won't you?" "The Land of the Sun." They were his last words. Clare's despair was wild, something bitter and painful, something that his relatives and friends could not accept. She seemed to hate herself



for hanging on to that remorse, but for what?

They would never leave her alone; especially her college friends who had seen this young love bud and now, blossom.

Three days after George's death Clare received a registered letter. It came from Alma-Films.

She held it before her for a moment, her hands trembling. Then she opened it. She found her letter, the letter she had written on Finni's desk and there was a ticket too...included. And this: "Curiosity prompted me to read the subject of which you spoke of. There were some great points; a wonderful opening. We will make it happen, without prejudice to the conditions of which I had already written to your husband. Best regards - Finni."

At last, Clare cried, sweet tears of relief.

A tough and bitter man like Director Finni had done something so wonderful, so thoughtful without knowing it. □

FIORETTI OF DON BOSCO - 21

by Michele Molineris

58. Like Animals (1855)

Don Bosco's charming ways also succeeded in restoring Christian customs that had gradually been discontinued in many families, such as saying grace before and after meals – a practice very dear to him. Once when invited to dinner by one such family, Don Bosco decided to correct the situation. When dinner was announced, he lingered for a moment with the young son and then walked to the dining room where his parents were already seated. As they entered the room, Don Bosco remarked to the youngster: "Now let's say grace. You know why we do that, don't you?"

"No, I don't," the child replied.

"Well, it's to show that we are different from animals. They have no intelligence, and thus they don't know that food is a gift from God. But we do, and for that reason we thank Him. Besides, a crumb of bread or a fishbone might go down the wrong way and choke us; we pray to God to spare us from such dangers." He then said grace while the parents blushed in silence. The father and mother and the others looked at one another and blushed. From then on the family went on with the regular banter concluding with the beautiful custom of making the sign of the Cross and the grace, before and after their meals.

59. The Word is Bread or Poison (1855)

One day in 1855 Don Bosco paid a visit to a general, a friend and admirer of his. The latter met him with an air of deference, bowing respectfully, kissing his hand in a

gesture of profound respect.

The father was a good man, but somewhat careless in his parental duties, and he thoughtlessly had publications of all kinds scattered about the living room. He would not allow his son to read some articles, but he gave him full freedom with the tabloids that glorified the heroes of the revolution and described their struggles, triumphs, and setbacks, interspersed with comments hostile to the Church. Their anticlerical slant so impressed the boy that, notwithstanding the sincere religious spirit of his family, he began to despise religion.

The boy acted quite coldly.

"Charlie," his father said, "kiss Don Bosco's hand!"

The boy did not move.

"Don't you remember Don Bosco? He's no stranger here. We've spoken so much about him!"

"Don't I know it!" the boy muttered.

"You saw me kiss his hand. Why don't you?"

"Because I don't want to."

The boy's father was terribly embarrassed; Don Bosco was utterly astonished. As the conversation got underway, the boy, who was intelligent, well-mannered, and attached to his parents, joined in whenever the topic concerned history, geography, Italian independence or music, but he would become silent as soon as any reference was made to religion. Finally, he excused himself.

His father, heartbroken as he realized the extent of his son's deep-seated aversion to religion, asked Don Bosco: "Whatever could have happened to my boy? Until now he was deeply religious. I just can't understand it. He never got such ideas from us, nor did we give him bad example. We have always

watched over him carefully lest he fall in with bad companions or groups. What could have turned him so strongly against priests?"

Don Bosco who knew the general's permissiveness with regard to reading habits said pointing to the newspapers, "General, that's the cause of the trouble."

"It can't be! Those papers are way over his head. Besides, I've told him not to waste his time on them. He loves and obeys me; I'm sure he doesn't read them!"

"Perhaps, but..."

"The only papers I allow him to read are the tabloids that portray our outstanding contemporary figures."

"Then it's obvious that the reason for his aversion to the Church is to be found in those publications. You must realize that a boy's imagination is always fired by things which impress him, and one's first impressions are never forgotten."

"What can we do then?"

"Give him something to read that may act as an antidote."

The general followed Don Bosco's advice, but perhaps it was too late. Gradually, the boy became taciturn; then he fell ill and died at the early age of sixteen without ever indicating any change of heart. (EBM V, 209-211)

60. Sorry, I got the wrong door (1855)

On another occasion, when Don Bosco accepted an invitation to the home of Marchioness Dovando, a steady benefactress, he found that she had as guests a number of elegantly dressed ladies who wished to talk to him. Two of them immediately approached him as he entered the room. Their necklines were low and their arms half covered. As soon as Don Bosco noticed that, he lowered his eyes and



Portico in Don Bosco's Oratory
Turin

murmured: "Excuse me, I fear I've come to the wrong place." Then he turned to go.

"No, Don Bosco, you're in the right place. We were expecting you."

"It can't be," he insisted. "Where I go, a priest need not be embarrassed. But I know how it is, ladies; nowadays so much silk and linen go into pleats that there is hardly any left for sleeves!"

Hastily donning shawls and kerchiefs, the ladies ran after Don Bosco who was already on the stairway, begging him to excuse them and return.

"Of course," he replied with a smile. "Everything is alright now." The two ladies kept on their impromptu garb throughout dinner.

61. A lesson for a general (1855)

One evening, Don Bosco had dinner with the count of Camburzano, a distinguished speaker and a deputy of the



Don Bosco's Confessional

subalpine parliament. He often went to that house and was always received as a friend and a saint. During dinner and after, both the count and countess kept questioning him on spiritual matters.

On that evening, the conversation had been rather mundane, because the general had been able to steer the conversation and others with him. However, in bidding him farewell, they accompanied Don Bosco to the door showering him with questions one after another, without waiting for each other. Even the general who had begun the surrender the field, listened in wonder to these new conversations and wanted to question Don Bosco: - and me - he said, - what do you recommend?

Don Bosco paused a moment as he was used to doing at important moments and then he said: "You?

If you love Don Bosco, try to save your soul!

These words, pronounced so solemnly, which seemed impossible to him, produced an admirable effect on the general. The saint left that house, but the topic went on amid great admiration.

The general most of all, was moved and said in wonder: - Only Don Bosco could have given me this warning and in such a discreet manner. It seemed that he read my heart. For years now, I have not thought about my soul. I will try from now on, to change my tactics and strategies for new battles. (Francesca, *Don Bosco amico delle anime*, 195).

62. Johnny, don't trust those who don't celebrate Easter!! (1856)

In 1856, while work was going on for a new wing of the Oratory, Don Bosco chanced on a train of mules standing on a narrow, nearby dirt road. He drew near and stopped. "Don't be afraid!" the mule drivers reassured him. "They won't kick!"

"I believe you," Don Bosco replied with a smile, "but my mother used to tell me: "Johnny never trust anyone who doesn't go to confession." The mule drivers took the hint and smiled in return.

Another time, as he was walking along the road now known as Corso Regina Margherita, he passed too close to a large horse hitched to a wagon. The driver warned him that the animal might kick. "I've always known that I must be wary of those who don't make their Easter duty," Don Bosco remarked. One might say that he never missed a chance to recommend confession (EBM., V, 298-299). □

SALESIAN SAINTS

**TERESA
VALSE PANTELLINI
1878 - 1907
Sister - Venerable**

Teresa Valsé Pantellini was born in Milan on October 10, 1878 into a wealthy family. Her father, Joseph Valsé was a wonderful and conscientious Christian who owned several hotels in Egypt. He married Josephine Vaglino, a bourgeois of Italian origin. Teresa spent the first years of her life in Egypt being educated to love and always help the poor. In 1882 Joseph foresaw the xenophobic stirrings rising in the region and moved his family to Italy; first to Milan and then to Florence. In 1890 Joseph died at his home *Villa Riposo dei Vescovi* leaving behind his wife and three children, Italo, his first born, Teresa and Josephine. Under the sweet yet firm guidance of her mother, Teresa nourished a deep spirit of prayer and received an excellent literary and artistic education while cultivating the human virtues. On the day of her First Communion she felt the call to the religious state and very joyfully offered herself to the Lord. Her mother moved the family to Rome in order that her brother Italo could pursue his university studies. Teresa, on the other hand, entered the college of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart and took an active part in the Conferences of St. Vincent.

For some time, Teresa cultivated a profound spiritual life that seemed appropriate to her social



position but decidedly modelled on Gospel values: a preferential love for God that led her to profound moments of prayer; a strong sensitivity towards the poor, to whom she was very generous and compassionate; a strong propensity to study. Luxury, comfort and fun were not lacking, but beneath it all was a constant spirit of happy yet hidden mortification. Encouraged by her spiritual director Monsignor Radini Tedeschi, the future bishop of Bergamo, Teresa decided to ask to be admitted to the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Rome. She entered the Institute after she had to overcome tough obstacles and only after the death of her mother, on February, 2, 1901, when she was 22 years old. At the moment she had made up her mind, she wrote to her brother: "I have decided irrevocably." The attitude that she maintained throughout her life was the

choice to “pass unnoticed.” She made her religious profession in 1903 after training as a teacher with the Oratorians of Trastevere. She spent most of her religious life in Rome, at Trastevere, right from her novitiate onwards. The houses of *Bosco Parrasio* and *Via della Lungara* looked after the poorest girls of the neighbourhood; young girls who took in washing for the houses of the rich. Among the members of her community Sister Teresa was the favourite of the girls who were fascinated with her gentleness and cheerfulness. Her health started to deteriorate as she began working in that environment; but she did not mind making the sacrifices and bearing it all very bravely.

The poor came knocking at the door of the sisters but even the sisters had to beg. So Sister Teresa, even though she felt a strong repugnance did not escape this commitment. She had to knock on the doors of the rich whose homes she had once frequented in her earlier life. Teresa was a strong woman, dedicated entirely to the poorest of the poor, determined to defend their rights, especially when people of the neighbourhood opposed them working there or complained about the presence of rather coarse girls by not paying them fairly. Following the example of Don Bosco, she concretely identified herself with the tenuous situation of those young women who were entrusted to her. She taught music, directed theatre performances and invented games for the girls who came home after a heavy day’s work. In the community she was a caring and discreet presence. The sisters

of that time remember her thus: “Sister Teresa knew how to take the girls of Trastevere for who they were: in fact, she was skilled at keeping discipline, overlooking a thousand acts of rudeness from the uncivilized girls. Teresa was courteous and gentle with everyone, always offering herself to do the humblest and heaviest chores. It was as Don Bosco wanted: extraordinary in the ordinary.

The increasingly persistent symptoms of an illness – tuberculosis – that consumed her did not prevent her journey of sanctity. She felt her time had come to love suffering – not just to accept it – as a gift that unites her to the Crucified: “Whatever you want, O Jesus, I want it too and I want it for as long as you want it.” Mornese’s joy and simplicity, the silent sacrifice, her continuous union with God and her filial love for Our Lady were the pillars of her life’s project. In April 1907 Sister Teresa was sent to Piedmont for treatment. She had no illusions, she knew the illness was unrelenting. She herself, with an incredible sense of humour said: “The Lord has helped me and now I am ready for three things: to die, to stay sick for a long time or to recover.” Then, with a flash of a smile she added: “Well, it’s going to be one of the three, right? At Turin in the House of Mary Help of Christians, her life came to an end on September 3, 1907 as she herself had foreseen; her meeting with Jesus whom she had irrevocably chosen.

Teresa Valsé Pantellini: a young woman who, throughout her life in practical daily availability, gave herself totally to God and to others in imitation of the Virgin Mary, the poor and free woman. □



FROM “BEHOLD YOU WILL CONCEIVE TO “BEHOLD YOUR SON”

Maria Ko Ha Fong, FMA

Mary’s “pilgrimage of faith, from Nazareth to Calvary: She welcomes every child entrusted to her by her Son and introduces him/her to her maternal heart forever.

Mary, the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God, is the “epiphany” is one of God’s most disconcerting surprises of love made to humankind. The unique and prodigious experience of giving birth to the Author of life in the flesh filled Mary herself with wonder. The Church recognizes this mystery in its first and fundamental dogma on Mary and down the centuries contemplates her in the liturgy. Mary is the Mother of God. She is the only one in the entire universe and in all human history who can say, turning to Jesus, what only the Heavenly Father can say to him: “You are my Son; it is I who have begotten you!” (Ps. 2: 7; Heb. 1: 5) But for Mary, being a mother was (and is) not something static, that she acquired once and for all. All along her “pilgrimage of faith” she makes a journey of growing in the mature awareness of her



role as mother while experiencing a whole range of maternal feelings. There is the silent

expectation followed by the intimate joy at the birth and the loving tenderness towards her newborn child, the contentment and pride of being able to present him to the shepherds and the wise men. Then there is the pain of the flight and the exile; and the mysterious prediction of a sword that would pierce her soul. There was the sweet intimacy of those Nazareth years when she taught Jesus who "grew in wisdom, age and grace before God and humanity" (Lk. 2:52). After that there was the difficult and disturbing experience of losing the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple. Even during the public life of Jesus, the union of the mother with the son continues to grow, mature and deepen. And on Calvary, as she witnessed the death of her Son, Mary's motherhood reached its widest expansion and its supreme culmination.

Always and all for love

The death on the cross was the most striking sign of God's love for humankind. It was already an event of inconceivable greatness that God became man, a creature who puts himself on the level of his creatures; it is surprising that that this God-made-man wanted to share not just the most beautiful side of man but his darkness: the physical, psychological and spiritual trauma of human existence. The shock came to a climax when we saw this immortal God, who is life itself, wanting to do something so contrary to his nature: to die as a man and what a death; the most painful and ignominious death existing at

that time, a death that associated him with a curse, the death of a sinner! All this for love: a love "to the end" says John (Jn. 13:1), a love beyond all measure and limit, a love that "passes all understanding" (Eph. 3:19), a love that reached "insanity" and "scandal" (1 Cor. 1:23), says Paul. This is why the cross becomes a point of attraction through which God draws everyone to himself (cf. 12: 32). That is why the cross is the greatest and most startling revelation of the God who is love.

A multitude of children

Raised on the cross, the Son of God reveals himself as "the first of many brothers" (Rom. 8:29); and all around him are "the scattered children of God" (Jn. 11:52) who gather in unity and there Mary discovers herself as the mother of a multitude of children. Jesus entrusts them to her. As her "pilgrimage of faith" progresses so does the maturation of her motherhood. As her pilgrimage of faith culminates in the paschal event of the son so does her journey of motherhood.

At Nazareth Mary began her journey of faith and motherhood as she accepted the mysterious plan of God: "*Behold you will conceive and bear a Son.*" Now it is this Son who offers her a new universal motherhood. John's story ends with "*And from that moment the disciple took her into his home*" (Jn 19: 27). From that moment, while redeemed humanity welcomes its Mother, Mary welcomes each of the children personally entrusted to her by her Son and brings them into her maternal heart for all time. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Classmate Reunion

While waiting for my first appointment in the reception room of a new dentist, I noticed his certificate, which bore his full name.

Suddenly, I remembered that a tall, handsome boy with the same name had been in my high school class some 30 years ago. Upon seeing him, however, I quickly discarded any such thought. This balding, grey-haired man with a deeply lined face was way too old to have been my classmate.

After he had examined my teeth, I asked him if he had attended the local high school.

"Yes," he replied. "When did you graduate?" I asked. He answered, "In 1971. Why?" "You were in my class!" I exclaimed.

He looked at me closely and then asked, "What did you teach?"

Empty Nest Craft

I am a first-grade teacher and a new empty-nester. One night I was trying out an art project: making a person with simple materials. I took a coat hanger, attached a paper plate face, put a shirt on the hanger and stuffed it. Then I set it on the couch to see how it looked.

Later that evening, my son walked through the door, home for a surprise visit. Taking one look at my coat-hanger friend sitting on the couch, he said, "Mom, it's not that bad, is it?"

"Collect Call"

My mother was away all weekend at a business conference.

During a break, she decided to call home 'collect.' My six-year-old brother picked up the phone and

heard a stranger's voice say, "We have a Betty on the line. Will you accept the charges?"

Frantic, he dropped the receiver and came charging outside screaming, "Dad! They've got Mom! And they want money!"

What Don't You Have?

An elderly man went to the doctor for a visit. "Doc," he says, "I am so stricken. I have chest pains, headaches, back pains, nausea, arthritis, constipation, stomach cramps, earaches, burning in the eyes, congested lungs..." "Sir," says the doctor, "you complain you have so many things. What don't you have?"

The man answers, "Teeth."

Lobster Pets

After a day fishing in the ocean a fisherman is walking from the pier carrying two lobsters in a bucket. He is approached by the Game Warden who asks him for his fishing license.

The fisherman says to the warden, "I did not catch these lobsters, they are my pets. Everyday I come down to the water and whistle and these lobsters jump out and I take them for a walk only to return them at the end of the day."

The warden, not believing him, reminds him that it is illegal to fish without a license. The fisherman turns to the warden and says, "If you don't believe me then watch," as he throws the lobsters back into the water. The warden says, "Now whistle to your lobsters and show me that they will come out of the water." The fisherman turns to the warden and says, "What lobsters? □"

NEWSBITS

NEW YORK

COVID -19 will threaten life as we know it, or a similar headline, greeted me somewhere around the end of February. I had just returned from South America and felt disoriented. I wondered if I had missed something. I dismissed it as an overreaction by the media. Then, event after event began to get cancelled. The days passed and life did begin to change. So much has happened since then. The pandemic continues to unfold, and recent protests against racism are increasing. But I continue to find glimmers of hope in both scenarios.

My school building closed and I grappled with what I was going to teach, as instruction turned to an online format. My mind raced with a million thoughts, the most prominent one being, *how do you teach theology to high school students online?* So much of what happens in the classroom with a subject like theology is discussion. My favourite part of teaching is the interaction with students. The hours of planning and grading are worth it when I see a student understand a concept or when I have a conversation with them that clearly demonstrates they are growing in their understanding.

I was randomly scrolling through my email, avoiding my lesson planning, when I saw a

reminder from Global Sisters Report about GSR In the Classroom. I clicked on it, and after making a few small changes I had lessons for my students!

Once the students started turning in the lessons, I began to realize that their answers had exceeded my expectations. The lessons had provided me with a way to get them to think deeply, to process what was happening with COVID-19 and to think about God even if I was not in the classroom with them.

The lesson from March 26 entitled "Sisters Respond to Expanding Coronavirus Situation" was a thought-provoking lesson for my students. I marvelled at how a lesson about sisters responding to the needs of the COVID-19 pandemic helped them to make several connections to their own lives. They answered the question: *What is the hardest thing about living in isolation from other people?* with honest answers revealing how they were coping.

Maria said, "The hardest thing



Sr. Jenny with students at the University

for me is I miss social interaction with my friends, and I do not like learning from home; I would rather be in school."

Amy said the "hardest part is not feeling like I can go anywhere, and if I do, I have to avoid everyone."

Sara said, "I feel like there is now a barrier in my friendships because of not being able to actually be with people."

They were able to recognize what they were experiencing and when they answered the question: *What do you pray God would do to make things better?* their responses were not just focused on them. They included the needs of others as well.

Erin said, "I pray that God inspires others to make a cure for COVID-19. I also pray that God does not allow this virus to harm our generation's future. Lastly, I pray that God does not leave our side through this and that he stands by the families who are losing their loved ones due to this virus."

Kara said, "I pray that God helps all the health care workers stay strong, as well as the patients suffering. I also pray that people who do not take this seriously, start to."

Amanda said "I pray to God that none of the worst-case scenarios will occur like a stronger second wave and that he guides scientists to quickly find a vaccine."

I cried while reading their prayers. The tears were about missing them, missing the interaction and being grateful for the time I had already had in the classroom with them. My students were not just asking God to end COVID-19, they were asking God to lead people to helping it to end. They were truly praying. I

remembered the first day of the school year and the weeks that followed. There would be someone who would pray for a new iPhone or for expensive shoes, and I would wonder if teaching them to pray really mattered. During these times I would hold back rolling my eyes and gently remind them that their prayers are a way of bringing the needs of others into the classroom with us. I would tell them that this was a way to ask God to help us and heal the difficult places in our lives and the lives of others.

The GSR lessons always have a part that connects the lesson to Scripture. This particular lesson referenced Mark 4: 38-39 and related to what Pope Francis said during the early days of the pandemic:

We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel, we were caught off guard by an unexpected turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together.

The question the students were given was phrased like this: *"We're all in the same boat" can seem like a cliché. What difference does it make to have Jesus in the boat?*

Olivia said "to have Jesus in the boat, gives me hope."

Susan said, "with Jesus in the boat I am not as afraid, I feel comforted even though my life had changed, and I was expecting to have my life as it was taken away, but I know Jesus is with me and it helps me be less scared."

Michelle says "being in the same boat as Jesus matters because I feel protected, and I feel like I have



Sr. Jenny in happier times

someone to lean on through the most difficult times. No matter what happens, knowing that Jesus and God are with us through life and death gets me through.”

The words of Pope Francis – “We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together” – have

stayed with me. I wonder if change will really be implemented when the pandemic is over? Will we finally come together regardless of colour of our skin?

My students give me hope. They have grown and changed since the beginning of the school year and when they were thrown into the unknown, they took what they had learned about God and who they were becoming and continued to apply it. As the days go by and we continue to navigate our changing world, I hope that we take the lessons we are learning and use our creativity to implement change. □

[Jennifer Wilson is a member of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Before entering the congregation, she completed two years as a Mercy Volunteer corps member in Guyana. Her graduate degree is in education and special education. She has worked with homeless women and children as a social worker and presently is a theology teacher and the diversity, inclusion and equity coordinator at Mount Mercy Academy in Buffalo, New York.]

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 wife Sherly often complained about back pain and shoulder pain. She was diagnosed with Tendinitis for the shoulder pain and a degenerative disc disease in her back. I resorted to the devotion of 3 Hail Marys to the Holy Mother. In time she has been healed and is

rid of this pain. She was advised not to do even regular household chores but she is as healthy as before and leading a normal life. Thank You Mother Mary.

Elvis Pink

Four of us set out on our journey on 2nd Jan 2020. We left home in our Ford at 3.45 am, and after reached Belgaum around 6.30 am where we for breakfast. Post that we continued our journey quite comfortably on the NH4. I was at the wheel with my Dad next to me and Mom and my brother sitting behind; either napping or watching the pleasant scenery and the mist all around. An hour later a terrible thing happened. I could hear screams and sounds of the crash. I tried to control the steering wheel but the car was already way out of control. A few seconds later there was a loud sound of an impact against something and all of us inside were thrown forward violently. I when gained consciousness turned around to see if everyone was with me. I felt God's mercy and His presence at that moment. Mom was in a state of shock and crying, my brother was calling out my name, I saw Dad sitting shocked and only staring at the burning bonnet. My feet turned cold as ice.

Miracles do happen and I can testify to it for the rest of my life. No one was hurt, there were no casualties and no 3rd party damages. Everyone was protected by His precious Hands. The locals from the village of Sankeshwar stopped and came to our help. Everything was cleared and we returned home in Goa safe and sound. Although Mom sustained a minor injury on her forehead, the clot on her leg took a while to heal but today by God's grace she is back to her routine. Family, relatives and friends – gave us support and lifted us in prayers. This incident has given me a second chance. My faith in God is unshaken.

Shawn Rodrigues, Goa

I thank Mother Mary for the devotion of the 3 Hail Marys, I was able to undergo my cataract eye operation without a migraine headache or eye pain, I also thank mother Mary for all the other favour received.

Monica Fernandes, Goa

Father God, I thank you for the marriage of my son to a good girl in Jesus Christ. I thank you for this marriage in the name of Jesus Christ.

My son and daughter-in-law are now married since 7 years. I also lift them up in prayer and ask for your blessing on them for a gift of a child as it's now 7 years for their marriage.

Mrs. Leena Fernandes

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

OCTOBER 2020

The Laity's Mission in the Church

We pray that by the virtue of baptism, the laity, especially women, may participate in more areas of responsibility in the Church.

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GOLDENAVE MARIA

Hail Mary! Lily of
spotless whiteness
thou didst ravish the gaze
of the adorable Trinity
dwelling in the eternal
sojourn of light and peace.
Hail, rose of Celestial
sweetness, Virgin Im-
maculate, whom the King of
heaven and earth chose for
His Mother and Whom thou
didst nourish with the
virginal milk, pour into my
soul torrents of Divine
Grace. Amen



*Prayer of St. Gertrude to
Mary*

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.

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