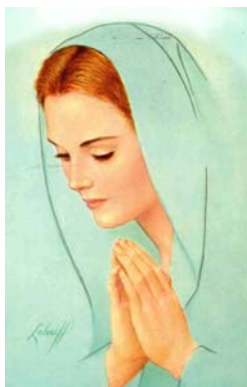


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**Impart to your servants,
we pray, O Lord,
the gift of heavenly grace,
that the feast
of the Nativity
of the Blessed Virgin
may bring deeper peace
to those for whom
the birth of her Son
was the dawning
of salvation.**

*The Opening Prayer
on the Feast of the Nativity of
the Blessed Virgin Mary*

From The Editor's Desk

SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND

I was fascinated by Stephen Covey's "*Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*." Trying to understand someone is not as easy as it seems. Often our own prejudices, agendas, priorities and above all our egos come in the way. Being able to understand someone is a short-cut to becoming a more content person (and you'll probably become more effective too).

"Seeking first to understand" implies that you become more interested in understanding the other and less in having the other understand you. To do this you have to convince yourself that if you want quality, fulfilling communication that nourishes you and others, understanding the other must come first. When you understand where the other person comes from, what s/he is trying to say, what's important to him/her, and so forth, being understood flows naturally; it happens with virtually no effort. When you reverse this process, however (which is what most of us do most of the time), we actually put the cart before the horse! When trying to get the other to understand you before you understand him/her, the effort you exert will be felt by you and the person or people you are trying to reach. As a result, communication breaks down, and you may end up with a battle of two egos.

I had blessed a marriage years ago and the couple came to see me some ten years later. I had heard nothing from them for that long, so I was pleasantly surprised when they suddenly walked in to visit. They had spent the first ten years of their marriage frustrated, arguing about their finances. He couldn't understand why she wanted to save every penny they earned, and she couldn't understand why he was a spendthrift. Any rationale on either position had been lost in their joint frustration.

Couples have bigger problems than that (I thought to myself) and come to think if it, I thought a solution was relatively simple: Neither of them felt understood. They each needed to learn to stop interrupting the other and to listen carefully. Rather than defending their own positions; each needed to seek first to understand. This was precisely what I got them to do. He learned that she was saving to avoid repeating her parents' financial disasters. Essentially, she was frightened of being broke. She learned that he felt embarrassed that he wasn't able to "take care of her" as well as his father had tried to take care of his mother. Essentially, he wanted her to be proud of him. As each of them learned to understand the other, their frustration with each other was replaced by compassion. Today, they have a nice balance between spending and saving. This doesn't happen only with couples. This takes place in all walks of life... As Christians the Golden Rule applies to all of us... "Do unto others as you would have them do to you," and St Francis prayed so fervently: "Grant Lord, that I may not so much seek to be understood as to understand...to be loved as to love." This will translate into better and more loving relationships all around.

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

WHY CREATIVE THINKING IS INCLUSIVE

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, ssb

Albert Einstein was once asked what was the key difference between himself and the average person in the world? He unhesitatingly replied that if an average person were asked to search for a needle in a haystack, s/he would stop no sooner the needle was found. He, Einstein added with a faint mischievous smile, would tear through the entire haystack looking for all the possible needles it might have hidden in the stack! That is what creative thinking is all about: it generates as many alternative approaches as are possible.

What is Creative Thinking?

Creative thinking is basically inclusive thinking. One considers the least obvious as well as the most likely approaches, and makes it a point to invent different ways of understanding a given problem. It includes as an essential element, the willingness to explore all possible approaches that are important, even after one has found a promising one that would suit one's immediate needs.

Unfortunately, most people are trained to think *exclusively* which means that we think out the bare minimum that it necessary by focusing attention on specific, precise information while excluding all else. Exclusive thinking is important and effective when we are absolutely certain which information is relevant and which is not. However, in life most

situations are ambiguous. In such instances, exclusive thinking leads us to neglect potentially important pieces of the puzzle. Exclusive thinking doesn't merely eliminate irrelevant facts and perceptions but what is worse, it can ruthlessly smother the imagination altogether in a matter of minutes!

An experimental psychologist on one occasion set up the task of making a pendulum. Volunteers who were adults with a fair amount of experience in life, were led to a table on which had been placed a pendulum-weight with a cord attached, a nail and some other objects. As the psychologist described the experiment, he held the pendulum and cord and let it swing back and forth demonstrating the movement of a pendulum. Then he asked the students to hang the pendulum on the wall within a given period of time. There was a nail among the objects on the table but there was no hammer in sight. Most of the students were baffled and almost paralyzed, as the seconds ticked by, totally incapable of accomplishing the assigned task. In their limited view, without a hammer it just could not be done!

Next, another set of equally capable volunteers was given the same task under slightly altered conditions. The cord was placed separately from the pendulum-weight and the term pendulum-weight was not used. The psychologist did not demonstrate move-

ment using the pendulum with the cord attached. He simply asked the participants to hang the pendulum on the wall within the specified time frame. All the subjects accomplished the task. They simply looked at what was available, realized that there was no hammer anywhere around, and then considered all of the available items to see what they could use to pound the nail into the wall. They used the pendulum-weight to hammer in the nail, then tied the cord to the nail and the weight to the other end of the cord.

The first group failed because in their minds loaded with a limited vision, the weight was firmly embedded in its role as a pendulum-weight and nothing else, because it had been verbally described as such and because visually it formed a unit with a cord attached. The visual categorizing of the weight-attached-to-cord, plus the verbal suggestion of their experimenter made it impossible for them to change their perception of a pendulum-weight into a hammer, even though it was the most likely thing present that could double-up as a potential hammer. Thinking exclusively they concluded that they needed a hammer and since one was not readily available they couldn't accomplish the task.

The second group had not been primed to think of the cord and weight as a single unit. Thinking inclusively they looked for ways to make something available work as a hammer. This is productive thinking as opposed to reproductive thinking.

Fixed with the Past

In general, when exclusive think-

ers find themselves confronted with something unfamiliar and strange, they automatically revert to and fixate on their past experiences to recall if they have had any similar experiences from which they can now learn to handle and solve the present problem. They think 'reproductively'. If they eventually discover nothing from their past that can be of help, they conclude that the present situation is meaningless or cannot be solved. By way of contrast, inclusive thinkers would be driven by their natural curiosity to find the hidden message by looking at the information in many different or even unusual ways!

Experimental psychologists enjoy telling the story about a professor whose hobby it was to investigate the ability of chimpanzees to solve problems of different levels of complexity. A banana, for example, was suspended from the centre of the ceiling, at a height that the chimp would not be able to reach it by mere jumping, no matter how hard he tried. The room was bare of all objects except several packing crates placed around the room at random. The test was to see whether one could teach the chimp to stack the crates and make them into steps in order to reach the banana.

The chimp at first sat quietly in a corner, watching the psychologist arrange the crates into steps and then distribute them randomly helter-skelter again. The chimp gave clear signs that he seemed to have understood the process and it did not take him long to come up with an ingenious way of performing the task creditably. While the professor next

invited his associates to watch the chimp, he began once more to conceptualize and build the steps to the banana slowly and deliberately. The wily chimp waited patiently until the professor, in the course of his various movements across the length and breadth of the room, paused just a fraction of a second as he reached the middle of the room. Since he was now directly below the fruit, the chimp suddenly jumped on his shoulder, then leaped into the air and triumphantly grabbed the banana and proceeded to peel and eat it!

Though the chimp had learned how to build steps out of boxes, when another more direct and easier alternative presented itself to its creative mind the chimp did not hesitate! The chimp had learned how to solve the problem but instinctively kept an open mind to other easier or more effective solutions. In other words, building steps was just one of many ways to reach the banana. Humans, on the other hand, once they learn something or are taught to do something a particular way especially by someone in authority (teacher, boss, coach, mentor, etc.), seem to keep to only a faithful repetition of the one authentic method learnt - excluding all others from their range of possibilities.

Spiritual Applications

Against this background one cannot help thinking about Jesus and the way he handled religious situations especially when he was questioned by the Pharisees and others with the obvious intention of catching him out in a legal or moral trap. The occasions that come to mind spontaneously are:



the incident of the woman caught in adultery. A straight forward answer in either direction would have landed Jesus in a tangle. So, what does he do? He begins to write in the sand with his finger, almost deliberately giving the impression that this time he was literally stumped by their question! But was he really deep down allowing himself sufficient time to let his creative mind free-wheel, confident that it would infallibly come up with a fool-proof solution which would not compromise his stance regarding the Father's infinite compassion for the sinner? And within a few minutes he did come up with a classic 'far-fetched' solution.

"When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he bent down and continued to write on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus concluded, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'" (Jn 8:7-11). Only a

genius would have solved this dilemma in such a positive yet simple manner!

Then there is the story of the lawyer who tried to test Jesus while also justifying himself regarding his own answer. The apparently innocuous question he put to Jesus was, "And who is my neighbour?" Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'" (Lk 10:29-37).

There are several other responses of Jesus spread out all over the Gospel which show conclusively that he was certainly a very inclusive kind of person, open to the

Reality around him. Besides, he was also in constant contact with the Father, eagerly attentive to do his will, which is always directed towards the good of his beloved children. In fact, Jesus' desire is that every one of us should be internally so free as to be inclusive in this sense at every moment, open to all the various possibilities that lie before us. It is only in this way that his Kingdom of love and compassion can be built here on earth. Another way of expressing the same truth is that a Christian who shares in the *risen-ness* of Christ cannot but be inclusive and open to the various possibilities that the Resurrection victory of Christ has made available to us who care to follow him wholeheartedly. In fact, isn't that the reason why Jesus asks his followers not to worry about how to defend themselves in a moment of crisis! "Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Mt 10:17-20).

However, we can be sure that none of us will be really open to Reality as Jesus was unless we allow him to develop this art in us through repeated practice. □

"Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw something."

— Steve Jobs

LEADING LIKE HE WOULD

Melanie D'Souza

Catechism days take me back to the story of the reluctant prophet Jonah. Jonah kept trying to run away from God, so he could avoid the 'difficult' mission of saving the people of Nineveh, simply because his intentions didn't line up with those of God. But no matter where he went, his escape would turn out to be God's plan! Nevertheless, he was finally able to preach to the Ninevites, although he wasn't too happy about it.

The story is clearly heart-breaking at times, because you and I can see how God wants to use Jonah despite how hard he tries to turn away. Jonah was clearly a reluctant leader, but are we any different?

Leading by Example

What's our leadership like, we wonder. Christian leadership exercises power through humility. It's a faith where a lowly shepherd, being born in a manger, leads a divine kingdom. While these may be metaphors for how Jesus, our Good Shepherd lived, they actually show us how the contradictory - sounding terms of 'service' and 'leadership' go hand-in-hand.

Jesus exemplified his leadership role to his disciples. He may have washed their feet and remained silent and 'powerless' during his Passion, but really he was showing his disciples the way to lead his future Kingdom, encouraging their bravery!

What does this tell us? When we want others to work towards a common goal, or we are trying to delegate tasks to reluctant workers, the only way to get through is to *show the way*. Aping Jesus' way of fishing for men is always applicable to us - as he **led by example**. No doubt, this can become frustrating and time-consuming, but wouldn't we rather be leaders than bosses? A boss manages people and generates fear, but a leader empowers and inspires his mentees.

Follow the Leader:

Preach through Action

Our attitude affects our leadership. That being said, giving up is not an option especially while we work towards a **common goal of God's glory**.

But how we can stay optimistic while promoting teamwork with a right attitude? Perseverance.



Identify your God-given talents among attitudes that you would like to adopt. Identify others' God-given talents (even harder!), and thus develop a learning plan for how you can help yourself and others. **Planning while keeping the faith** is what keeps us going forward when the going gets tough.

So acknowledging our Leader's role in our own lives is the way to go! Pour out to Him in Adoration, ponder on what He would do. Let His behaviours inspire you and pray with a calm heart. When we follow Jesus' ways as we see throughout the Gospels, we see how He engaged in strong leadership. In fact, St. Francis of Assisi once stated, "*Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words.*"

It's that simple. *We lead and preach through our actions.*

The Young, Fearless

Catholic Leader

Being a **young leader** comes with its fair share of challenges. In this respect, Pope Francis wants us to guard against *authoritarianism*. It's easy to make decisions faster, want things done quickly and so we must beware of being abrupt and bossy.

Slow down! Let's try to be kinder and allow folks to learn through mistakes and reasoning just like you've had the chance to.

Similarly, consultation is important, advises Pope Francis. There is nothing wrong in asking questions and taking advice; it only means that we're capable of valuing

others' opinions and God-given talents. The Holy Father constantly meets with auxiliary bishops and councils of priests to engage in discussion and arrive at more informed decisions. The formula? **Believe that whatever work you do, is for the glory of God as a whole, and not just your personal success.**

There's no doubt you've experienced first-hand the leadership of a priest, a cell group leader, a choirmaster, youth leader etc. in your parish. Truly, the Catholic Church thrives on the faith foundation of evangelical leaders. If you ever do begin to participate within the several ministries that the church has to offer for the youth, it helps to remember that youth learn best through *adventure* and that's what propels them to lead!

Claiming our roles as leaders with a Catholic spirit, reminds us to adopt a sense of humility and understanding with one another while we all work towards the mission of God's glory. For learning to serve is learning to lead, and our Good Shepherd never fails to lead his flock the right way. □



AUGUSTUS CZARTORYSKI 1858 - 1893

Augustus Czartoryski was born in Paris on August 2, 1858 in exile. In fact, for about thirty years, his noble lineage was linked to the history and the royal dynasties of Poland. The family migrated to France and stayed at the Lambert Palace on the banks of the Seine alongside the residences of his European compatriots who sought to bring unity to his motherland that had been fragmented in 1795 by the great powers of Europe. Prince Adam Czartoryski, a warrior and a politician, yielded the reins of the family, as well as the other patriotic pursuits to Prince Ladislaus, who had married Princess Maria Amparo, daughter of the Queen of Spain Maria Christina and the Duke Rianzaraz. They were the parents of Augustus. Being the eldest in the family he was looked up to by all those who dreamed of the rebirth of Poland after this tragic dismemberment. But God had other plans.

At the age of six his mother died of tuberculosis: a legacy that she would pass on to her son. When the sickness first manifested itself in him, Augustus began a long and forced pilgrimage in search of a cure but he never recovered. His search took him to Italy, Switzerland, Egypt and Spain. But his health was not the main focus of his quest: his youthful mind was directed to another much more precious research, his vocation.

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It did not taken him long to understand that the life at court was not meant for him. At the age of twenty, writing to his father he said among other things, alluding to worldly feasts at which he was forced to participate: "I confess that I am tired of everything. It is these useless amusements that disturb me. I was upset at being compelled to attend so many banquets."

It was his tutor Joseph Kalinowski who exercised a great influence on him. He had spent ten years of forced labour in Siberia and later became a Discalced Carmelite and was canonized by Saint John Paul II in 1991. He was Czartoryski's tutor for just three years (1874-1877), but they left their mark on him. He would direct the young prince in his quest using as his models mainly St Aloysius Gonzaga and St Stanislaus Kostka a compatriot. The latter's motto fascinated him: *Ad maiora natus sum* (I am meant for

Don Bosco's Madonna

greater things).

Meeting Don Bosco, was a significant moment for him. Augustus was 25 years old. This took place in Paris, right inside Lambert Palace, where the founder of the Salesians had celebrated Mass in the family chapel. Prince Ladislaus and Augustus served at the altar. *"I've wanted to meet you for a long time!"* But the priest from Turin was however always very cautious about the prince's acceptance into the Congregation. It would be the Pope himself, Leo XIII who would dispel any doubts from the Saint's mind. Complying to the wish of Augustus the Pope concluded: "Tell Don Bosco that it is the will of the Pope to receive you among the Salesians." "Well, my dear," Don Bosco immediately replied, "I accept. From this moment you will form part of us and I desire that you remain with us up to your death."

In late June of 1887, after having renounced everything in favour of his brothers, the young Augustus was sent for a short period of Aspirantate, before beginning his novitiate the same year under the guidance of Father Julius Barberis. Augustus would have to relearn several customs: the timetable, the food, the common life... and he would also have to fight against the attempts of his family to discourage him to go ahead but Augustus remained firm. On 24 November 1887 he received the clerical habit at the hands of Don Bosco in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians. "Courage, my prince," whispered the saint into his ear, "today we have achieved a magnificent victory. But I can tell you there will be great joy in your homeland when you

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become a priest." Don Bosco died two months later.

At Valsalice Fr Andrea Beltrami was completing his studies and the two struck up a deep friendship, studying foreign languages together they helped each other scale the heights of sanctity. When Augustus' illness increased the superiors requested Andrea to stay by his side to assist him. Today Andrea Beltrami is Venerable and he said of him: "I have cared for a saint."

He was taken to the Ligurian coast and there he took on his study of theology. When Cardinal Parocchi tried to dissuade him from pursuing the Salesian life, he wrote: *"I wanted to make my vows with absolute freedom and I made them with great joy in my heart. From that day I have enjoyed living in the congregation and great peace of mind. I thank the Lord for introducing me to the Salesian Congregation and having called me to it."*

Prepared through suffering, on April 2, 1892 he was ordained a priest at San Remo by Monsignor Tommaso Reggio, bishop of Ventimiglia. Prince Ladislaus and his aunt Isa did not attend the ordination. Don Augustus' priestly life barely lasted a year. He spent his time in a room overlooking the playground of the boys. He died at Allassio on Saturday evening, April 8, 1893, during the Easter Octave. He was seated on the chair that had been used by Don Bosco. His body was brought to Poland and buried in the parish crypt of Sieniawa, next to the family graves. It was here that Augustus had made his First Communion. Later the remains were transferred to the Salesian church of Przemyśl, where they still lie. □

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Don Bosco's Madonna

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST MOTHER TERESA OF KOLKATA SAINT OF LIGHT, SAINT OF DARKNESS

(SEPTEMBER 4)

By Bishop Robert Barron

Like so many others around the world, I was overjoyed to hear of the recent decision of the Vatican to canonize Mother Teresa, a woman generally recognized, during her lifetime, to be a “living saint.” Mother Teresa first came to my attention through Malcolm Muggeridge’s film and attendant book *Something Beautiful for God*. Of course Muggeridge showed Mother’s work with the dying and the poorest of the poor on the streets of Kolkata, but what moved me the most were the images of the saint’s smile amidst so much squalor and suffering. She was a very bright light shining in exceptionally thick darkness.

Mother’s life reveals so many aspects and pro-

files of holiness, but I would like to focus on three of them. First, she shows something remarkable about love, which is not a sentiment but rather willing the good of the other. I think it is fair to say that Mother Teresa went to extremes in demonstrating love in this proper sense. She renounced practically everything that, in the opinion of the world, makes life pleasant—wealth, material goods, power, comforts, luxu-



ries—in order to be of service to those in need. Further, for decades, she personally reached out to the most vulnerable in one of the worst slums in the world and sent her sisters to some of the most disagreeable places on the planet. Most of us, I imagine, manage to love to a degree, but few ever express this theological virtue more dramatically and radically than she did. This is not simply admirable, it constitutes a crucial witness to the nature of love. Unlike the other virtues, both natural and theological, love has no limit. Justice, limitlessly expressed, excludes all mercy; too much temperance becomes a fussy puritanism; exaggerated courage is rashness; unlimited faith is credulity; infinite hope devolves into presumption. But there can never be too much love; there is never a time when love is inappropriate, for love is what God is, and love constitutes the very life of heaven. Mind you, in heaven there is no need for faith and hope fades away. But in that supremely holy place, love remains in all of its infinite intensity and radicality. Mother Teresa’s way of life, accordingly, is an icon of the love that will obtain utterly into the very life of God.

A second feature of Mother’s holiness is her dedication to prayer. When I visited the Mother House of the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata some years ago, what impressed me most was a life-size statue of Mother Teresa in the very back of the chapel, in the attitude she customarily assumed when she prayed: legs folded under her, palms facing



upward, head bowed. From the very beginning of her community, Mother insisted that her sisters should engage in substantial amounts of prayer every day; and in time, she established a branch of her order dedicated exclusively to contemplative prayer. She understood something that is essential to the Christian spiritual life, namely, that the kind of love she and her sisters endeavored to practice could come only through the grace of God, only as a sheer gift. To get that gift, it was necessary to ask, to ask again, to beg one’s whole life long. Without this explicit connection to God and his purposes, their work, she knew, would turn into mere dogmatism, and the egos of her sisters would inevitably assert themselves. Saints, those who embody the love that God is, are necessarily beggars.

I remarked above that Mother Teresa struck me as a light in the shadows. How mysterious, therefore, that she herself once said, “If I ever become a saint, I will surely be a saint of darkness.” She was referring to something that only a handful of people knew in her lifetime, that for upwards of fifty years, Mother Teresa experienced the pain of the absence of God. The living saint often felt abandoned by God or even that God does not

exist. Once a visiting bishop was kneeling in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament with Mother and her nuns. A note was passed to him from the saintly foundress, which read, to his infinite surprise, "Where is Jesus?" That she lived through this crucible for decades, even as people routinely saw her as the very paragon of holiness, shows forth a third dimension of her saintliness. To be a saint is to allow Christ to live his life in you. Indeed, St. Paul said, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me;" and this means the *whole* Christ. Jesus was a person of service to the poor and needy, and Mother certainly embodied this aspect of his life; Jesus was a person who prayed intently and for long periods of time, and Mother participated in this dimension of his existence. But Jesus was also the crucified Lord, who said, at

the limit of his suffering, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" To allow Christ to live his life in you is, therefore, necessarily to experience, to one degree or another, the absence of God, to undergo the agony of the crucifixion in all of its dimensions. St. John of the Cross, the greatest mystical theologian in the Church's history said, quite simply, that there is no path to holiness that does not lead through the cross. Though it is a high paradox, the fifty-year darkness that Mother endured is, therefore, one of the surest indicators of her saintliness.

Saints exist for the Church, for in them we see the very *raison d'être* of the Church, and this is why canonizations are always joyful affairs. So let us rejoice in this new saint whose love, prayer, and very darkness, are light for us. □ Courtesy: www.uordonfire.org



IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

The right target

The average man's idea of a good sermon is one that goes over his head - and hits one of his neighbours.

Quite a way to save money

A bride was showing a friend the kitchen of her new seven-room house.

'We furnished the kitchen with soap coupons,' the bride said.

'With soap coupons!' the friend exclaimed. 'What about the other six rooms?'

'Oh, those!' the bride replied, 'they're filled with soap.'

Take it easy

Doctor: "You've simply got to have more diversion and relaxation."

Patient: "But, doctor, I'm too busy."

Doctor: "Nonsense! The ants are hard-working creatures, but they always take time to attend all the picnics."

Instant cure

Nobody has made much fuss about it, but the doctors in Beverly Hills, California, are pretty expensive these days.

Recently a man fell down a flight of stairs and hurt his leg. He went to the doctor who fixed him up. As he was leaving, the doctor said to him, 'Don't worry! You'll be walking before the day is over.' He was right. He took the man's car for his fee.

Enough to sniff

'There are advantages and disadvantages about this property,' said the honest real estate agent.

'To the north is the gas works, to the east a glue factory, to the south a fish and chips shop, and to the west a sewage farm. Those are the disadvantages.'

'What are the advantages?' asked the prospective buyer.

You can always tell which way the wind is blowing," said the agent.

Doctor's fees

There was a pretty young nursing student who 'broke her engagement to a doctor, and she was telling her girl friend about it. 'Do you mean to say,' exclaimed her friend, wide-eyed, 'he actually asked you to give back all his presents?'

'Not only that,' sniffed the young student, 'he sent me a bill for 36 visits!'

Just too colourful

"Your narrative is too highly coloured," remarked the editor, returning the bulky manuscript. "In what way?" inquired the disappointed author.

"Why," replied the editor, "In the very first chapter you make the old man turn purple with rage, then villain turn green with envy, the hero turn white with anger, the heroine turn red with blushes, and the coachmen turn blue with cold."

As simple as that

"How did you compile your dictionary?" the lexicographer was asked.

"Oh, it was something like having a quarrel with one's wife - one word led to another." □



FROM ADMIRERS TO DISCIPLES

Ian Pinto, *sdb*

Jesus was a crowd puller. Wherever he went he quickly gathered around him a crowd of curious and eager people. His words and actions had an air of mystery about them: he spoke in parables and did things that were unbecoming of a devout Jew. Yet, the people somehow felt attracted to him; they sensed something different in him.

Everybody has admirers and critics. Admirers are those people who 'Like' what you 'Share'. They enjoy listening to or reading what you have to communicate but do little about it. Some may feel inspired and graduate from being admirers to collaborators and friends, while the rest are content with admiring you and your work. Jesus was aware that wherever he went there were many who admired him and spoke well of him but among them were very few who believed in him. The admirer and the believer both admire Jesus for who he is and what he does. The difference between them is that while the admirer looks on from

afar, untouched and safe, the believer draws near, is touched and takes a risk in following the Lord. He/she is inspired by the Lord and is moved to follow Him. He/she knows not where this response will take him/her but is willing to trust in God's plan for his/her life.

Jesus Christ has plenty of admirers but relatively few disciples. Why is it so? There are many who admire his life of service and sacrifice, his teachings on love, non-violence, peace and service but they are unwilling to make the transition to believers and disciples. One popular yet weak reason for such unwilling-



*One cannot carry
much physical or
emotional baggage
without
endangering
one's pursuit*



ness is the lifestyle of believers. In the lives of believers, admirers see an inconsistency. The life and teachings of Christ are not reflected in the lives of his followers. This reasoning is weak because faith in Jesus is a personal decision. The above mentioned reason is not completely false. Christ's life and teachings are an ideal. Every Christian is striving to live up to the standard set by Christ. There are some who act in ways that are directly opposed to the Gospel but instead of judging them, one must realize that all of us are *sinners and fall short of the glory of God* (Rom. 3:23).

The path of discipleship is a narrow and risky one. One cannot carry much physical or emotional baggage without endangering one's pursuit. Hence, Jesus encourages all those who wish to follow him to lose their baggage. He asks those who have their hearts of riches to sell all they have, give the money to the poor and follow him (Mt. 19:21). Those who are very attached to their families are told that discipleship entails putting God and His Will before all else (Lk. 14:26). A disciple must not even be attached to his own life (Jn. 12:25). He

must be willing to bear suffering and rejection for the sake of the cause (Mk. 8:35, 38). Jesus is adamant on the necessity of fulfilling the above mentioned criteria in order to become his disciple. Discipleship is tough and demanding but by no means is it impossible. We have shining examples of disciples in the saints who have gone before us. We have examples in the people around us: the clergy, the religious and our own relatives and friends. One will realize that the discipleship Jesus calls for is counter-cultural. While the world praises and encourages the pursuit of wealth, power and prestige, Jesus asks for detachment and a life of simplicity. While the world exalts the need to keep around oneself a bunch of like-minded people who one can trust and with whom one can share the good things of life, Jesus asks to let nothing come in the way of working for the fulfillment of God's Will. While the world glorifies narcissistic tendencies and promotes ways and means of preserving and enhancing them, Jesus preaches readiness to lose everything so that one may gain the things that are priceless and lasting. Jesus is calling you to be his disciple. Are you willing to accept his invitation? □

Quiet Spaces

A REVOLUTION OF TENDERNESS

On the morning of Tuesday, 22 September 2015, Pope Francis celebrated Mass in the Shrine of Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre. The following is the edited homily of the Holy Father which he delivered in Spanish

The Gospel we have just heard tells us about something the Lord does every time he visits us: he calls us out of our house. These are images which we are asked to contemplate over and over again. God's presence in our lives never leaves us tranquil: it always pushes us to do something. When God comes, he always calls us out of our house. We are visited so that we can visit others; we are encountered so as to encounter others; we receive love in order to give love.



In the Gospel we see Mary, the first disciple; a young woman of perhaps 15 to 17 years of age who, in a small village of Palestine, was visited by the Lord, who told her that she was to be the mother of the Saviour. Mary was far from "thinking it was all about her," or thinking that everyone had to come and wait upon her; she left her house and went out to serve. First she goes to help her cousin Elizabeth. The joy which blossoms when we know that God is with us, with our people, gets our heart beating, gets our legs moving and "draws us out of ourselves." It leads us to take the joy we have received and to share it in service, in those "pregnant" situations which our neighbours or families may be experiencing. The Gospel tells us that Mary went in haste, slowly but surely, with a steady pace, neither too fast nor so slow as never to get there; neither anxious nor distracted. Mary goes with haste to accompany her cousin who conceived in her old age. Henceforth this was always to be her way. She has always been the woman who visits men and women, children, the elderly and the young. She has visited and accompanied many of our peoples in the drama of their birth; she has watched over the struggles of those who fought to defend the rights of their children. And now, she continues to bring us the Word of Life, her Son, our Lord.

"Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. September 2016 18 Don Bosco's Madonna

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Generation after generation, day after day, we are asked to renew our faith. We are asked to live the revolution of tenderness as Mary, our Mother of Charity did. We are invited to "leave home" and open our eyes and hearts to others. Our revolution comes about through tenderness, through the joy which always becomes closeness and compassion – which is not pitying, but suffering with, so as to free – and leads us to get involved in, and to serve, the life of others. Our faith makes us leave our homes and go forth to encounter others, to share their joys, their hopes, and their frustrations. Our faith, "calls us out of our house," to visit the sick, the prisoner and to those who mourn. It makes us able to laugh, and rejoice with our neighbours who rejoice. Like Mary, we want to be a Church which serves, which leaves home and goes forth, which goes forth from her chapels, forth from her sacristies, in order to accompany life, to sustain hope, to be the sign of unity of a noble and worthy people. Like Mary, Mother of Charity, we want to be a Church which goes forth, to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation. Like Mary, we want to be a Church which can accompany all those "pregnant" situations of our people, committed to life, to culture, to society, not washing our hands but rather walking together with our brothers and sisters; together serving and helping; all children of God, children of Mary, children of this noble Cuban land.

This is our most valuable treasure (*cobre*), this is our greatest wealth and the best legacy we can give: to learn like Mary to leave home and set out on the path of visitation. And to learn to pray with Mary, for her prayer is one of remembrance and gratitude; it is the canticle of



the People of God on their pilgrimage through history. It is the living reminder that God passes through our midst; the perennial memory that God has looked upon the lowliness of his people, he has come to the aid of his servant, even as he promised to our forebears and their children for ever. □

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Don Bosco's Madonna

THE THIRD DEVIL

From Fr. Ian Doullton's collection of stories

It is graduation day in Hell. All the devils have gathered in the auditorium where the graduating class of young fiends have just received their diplomas. Satan is delivering the commencement address: "So you see young devils, this is a critical period in our long and inglorious history. We face a long cold winter and if I may be permitted to coin a phrase: if there's anything as hot as hell, it's cold as hell." There is a nervous laughter all around, and Satan continues: "However, we are fortunate at having in the present graduating class three of the most corrupt and fiendish young demons our system has ever produced. I refer of course to our honoured graduates here: Brimstone, Sulphur and Hotpoint." Then turning to these young fiends he raises his eyebrows and says: "Boys, we expect big sins of you." The three of them look at each other nervously because they know his devil-of-a-temper. "In your senior year you have done special research work in the latest methods of temptation. There's no time to lose if we're going to make this place, the Hell it ought to be. The eyes of Hell are upon you!" As he stepped off the podium he said to the three: "I'll see the three of you in my office immediately after this."

Back in his office, placing his arms on the desk he looked up at his freshly graduated fiends and exclaimed: "And so, Brimstone, Sulphur and Hotpoint, I think you are thoroughly briefed. Each of you will have one week of practice-tempting. You'll check your findings and use the most efficient

methods in our advanced summer course." Then he rose and pointed outside: "Look out here, you see that freeway?" Brimstone, the one who always strove to impress the higher-ups shouted with glee: "All the way up to earth!" Satan gave him a scolding stare: "Brimstone, all the way down to Hell! We went through a lot of trouble designing and building this freeway system. We want to see a lot of traffic on it." Brimstone realized that he had bungled this first intervention and embarrassed he mumbled: "Sir!" "You'll be first to go up, and remember, the Hell of the future, depends on you." Those were the last words that Satan said as he ordered Brimstone up to earth. All was quiet in Satan's office and he was impatient so he pressed the intercom: "Satan, to freeway control tower..." The Prince of Darkness sat up: "Come in Evil Eye at the control tower."

The control tower responded: "Evil Eye at the control tower." A bit nervous Satan asked: "Anybody coming down yet?" The reply he received: "Not a soul." Then, as if to himself he muttered: "Brimstone has been gone two days and no sign..." Then suddenly the crackling sound of Evil Eye was heard: "Sir...I just caught sight of a soul." This was exciting: "Route it direct to my office, we'll process it later." A moment later the door opened and someone walked in: "Come in, and a warm welcome," Satan said kindly.

"Who are you?" came the cold reply: "The Prince of darkness, his Satanic majesty, Lucifer, I answer

to any of them" was Satan's standard reply with a wry smile thrown in for drama. "Why, that's impossible. There isn't any devil." Satan smiled: "No? That's interesting." The elderly professor went on: "There isn't any God or devil...or heaven or hell. So there can't be any devil." Satan seemed to be enjoying this: "And how did you discover that?" Proudly his first guest went on: "I'm an intellectual. By my own independent mind I freed myself from the shackles of tribal myths and medieval superstition..."

Satan was getting curious: "And did an individual by the name of Brimstone have anything to do with this?"

The professor seemed amused at that name: "Oh yes, Professor Brimstone energized my reasoning powers. He said, this is the age of science, and if I want to be intellectually progressive I should not believe in anything I can't see." Satan asked meekly: "Well, what do you see now?" Then he was suddenly interrupted by Evil Eye once more: "Freeway, control tower to Satan, tower to Satan..."

"Over and under," Brimstone is approaching the infernal turnout..." "Send him to me." Satan seemed rather irritated.

Bowing low and with a smug grin he announced: "Reporting in sire." "It's about time." Not too pleased, Satan turned to him.

"How was the man I sent you?" Brimstone was keen to know. "The man, a man, a whole week in the world and you sent me one soul!" Walking up to him with bitterness dripping from his flaming lips he screamed.

"Well, wasn't that what you wanted?" Brimstone began to

cower down near the door ready to make his exit if needed.

Frustrated with his first promising graduate he shook his head in disgust: "If you couldn't get quantity, you could at least have gotten quality. What a specimen that was. We raked him over the coals and he collapsed like a punctured balloon. He was a hollow man. We took him apart and there was nothing to him except a shell of pride wrapped around a few scraps of other men's ideas, and old musty ideas at that."

Eager to defend himself Brimstone countered: "But he denied that there was a God. I made him do that! That was my plan for getting people down here. Deny God, forget about Hell." He thought he had made a point. Satan continued: "No wonder you caught only this wind-bag. That line went out of date centuries ago. People today trace the design of the universe down to the atom. They know that there has to be a master designer, a supreme being, who's the cause of it all or even we wouldn't be here without God. You can't make atheists out of people who use logic." Hoping to score a point he added: "But I was just getting started."

"Do you think we've got all eternity to waste on outmoded methods? Go away, get out of here!" Satan pressed the buzzer in frustration and informed the office: "Postgraduate department: I'm appointing Brimstone commissar of fuel supply and outer darkness. Give him a new shovel and...send me Sulphur."

"Sulphur sir, at your service!" In came the subservient second fiend.

Satan, literally fuming mutter-

ed: "You'd better be...and a lot more than your classmate Brimstone." Not knowing what to Satan alluded to, he smiled waiting to hear something positive. "Oh, so Brimstone goofed?" Satan went on: "Yes, he goofed. Remember there are worse jobs here than shovelling coal. You get up to Earth and send me men!" Without waiting for another word, Sulphur, who knew what was good for him, slunk out the door and was off.

Barely had everyone gotten down to business when the hum of activity was interrupted: "Control tower to Satan, Control Tower to Satan..." Satan pressed the intercom and shouted: "Over and out..." "I spot one soul...no two, on the freeway." An excited Evil Eye whined over the public address system. "Roger!" Satan sounded a tad pleased. "Now it's three, four, five, six, seven, seven,... seven, sir!"

Things were literally heating up and Satan shouted: "Send me a sample and route the rest straight to the pits." In came the sample and Satan smiled his relaxed smile: "What's cooking man?" Satan whined. "Where am I?" came the confused reply. "Guess," Satan was amused. "You look like the Devil." The man seemed to have guessed right! "That's not surprising." The Prince of darkness came around to his side. "That's impossible. For you to be the Devil there has to be Hell." "That follows." Satan liked this line of conversation. "But there isn't any Hell" came the agonizing retort: "No, don't tell me..." Satan began playing the sceptic.

"There can't be, because there isn't anything as eternal punish-

ment. God would never make anyone suffer for ever, no matter what they did. I believe in a God who is all sweetness and light." This delighted Lucifer and he laughed, holding his sides: "Let us make God to our own image and liking...ha! And have you, by chance been listening to an individual by the name of Sulphur?" "Yes" came the interested reply, "He used to give us the most consoling talks. He showed us that God would not send anybody to Hell."

Now the Prince of Darkness became serious as he sat down: "What I am about to say, is not going to be consoling. Whatever gave you the idea that God sends people to Hell. I run an independent establishment. God is my competitor. He's trying to put me out of business. Would he be sending me customers? You bought your own ticket to Hell."

"I didn't do that. Why would I do a thing like that?" "Because you were fool enough to think you could have sin and heaven too." Presuming he made the grade Sulphur was coming home. "Control tower to Satan... Sulphur coming through." "Send him here." And he walked in: "Sulphur reporting in sir."

"Proud of yourself aren't you, tail in the air...and all that?" He seemed to have misjudged his Boss' reaction: "I sent down seven souls...they were all the result of my plan to tell people that there is no such thing as a place of everlasting punishment. They wanted to believe that so then they could sin all they wanted to."

Satan was furious: "No wonder you sent me such disgusting specimens, blobs of humanity, dripping

with sentiment, oozing emotion. You've got to face facts even in Hell. Any man in the world who's lived through the last two wars knows that there's got to be a place for the inventors of so much inhumane torture and abuse, war and crime, not to speak of Gas Chambers and Concentration Camps."

Sulphur still insisted on redeeming himself: "You don't get my point! The whole basis of my plan is the impossibility of everlasting punishment. People are too soft-hearted to believe that God would make anyone pay forever." Now there was steam in the great hall of darkness as Satan rose: "Don't they put criminals in prison for life? Is the justice of God to be less than that of his creatures?" Sulphur looked down offended as he muttered. "Seven men is still something."

That was all, Satan was exasperated: "They've already melted into grease spots. I want quality! Get out!"

"Postgraduate department, send me Hotpoint and make Sulphur director of the smoke disposal department in the main furnace room."

His last straw...appeared: "Dishonourable master, your miserable servant!" He was not called the Father of Lies for nothing; he screamed: "Truth will get you nowhere." Trying to control his temperature he tried to be calm: "Hotpoint, my boy, you're our last hope to drum up some business. Otherwise we're going to have a depression that will curl your tail. Imagine what this place will be like then."

"Oh that would really be Hell." The young rookie seemed to get

the drift. "Then go on up to Earth and get things moving down here," Lucifer shouted! It wasn't long before the communication system was crackling to life once more: "Tower to Satan...soul coming down the freeway..." Satan seemed delighted: "Ah ha! Up there five minutes, and already has a soul."

Evil Eye at the Control tower seemed excited: "Here comes number two, three, four, six, ten, sixteen, seventeen! Sir, they're coming in faster than we can process them. There's a jam on the freeway...half way up to Earth."

Satan was eager to learn the secret of his last rookie, Hotpoint. "Evil eye, signal Hotpoint to come in and keep this traffic moving."

"Roger sir they're coming in as if they were coming to a fire... oh excuse me sir! There was a gentle tap on the door and it opened: "Master, you sent for me?"

Satan came around, with hand on the young graduate's shoulder he whispered: "Hotpoint, how did you do it?" Innocently Hotpoint said: "I didn't try to tell them there was no God, no heaven or Hell. In fact I picked out people who firmly believed that there was. I agreed with them that faith was fine, religion was all for the good."

"Shows originality..." Satan was trying to get the point. Hotpoint didn't know how to explain himself so he requested: "And then... I... Master, with your permission I'll illustrate with two of my cases; if you'll step into the observation booth?"

He went to the holding room and shouted: "Bring them into the line-up." As he saw them coming up: "Alright you people, move
(Continued on pg. 32)

DON BOSCO'S COOPERATORS

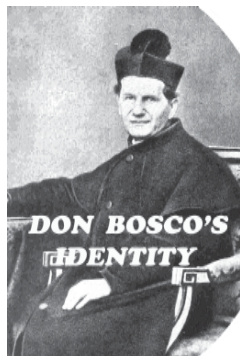
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by Fr. Elias Dias

The idea of the Salesian Cooperators was the brainchild of Don Bosco. As in many other fields, Don Bosco was far ahead of his time in organizing lay people into an apostolic group and endowing them with apostolic goals and methods to achieve them. While many others would have thought of this idea only in this century, Don Bosco, an apostle himself and the inspirer of apostles, saw the need of lay involvement, a century ago, with the intuition of a genius and a saint.

Don Bosco began his youth ministry in 1841 at the *'Convitto Ecclesiastico'*. Soon crowds of boys from the streets, slums and squares crowded Don Bosco's Oratory. From the very beginning (1841-1859) Don Bosco was on the lookout for possible helpers to help him to look after poor and abandoned youth. The group included priests who helped him in his ministry, lay people from rich or ordinary families who helped him at the household chores. They assisted him in teaching Catechism, looked after the evening classes and even assisted him financially. They were united by the bonds of fraternal charity. Don Bosco wrote: "In 1841 as I dedicated myself to the festive oratory apostolate many devout and zealous priests and lay men joined me to support the charitable undertakings entrusted to me by Divine Providence."

Don Bosco soon realized the



need for organizing his collaborators into an association for greater efficiency and influence. In 1850 he sent a petition regarding this group of collaborators to Pope Pius IX calling them 'The congregation of St. Francis of Sales or Salesian Promoters': "Most Holy Father, John Bosco, Priest (Turin) herewith puts before you for approval and legitimate establishment in the city of Turin, a congregation under the title and protection of St. Francis of Sales, of which I am the director. This congregation has as its aim the instruction of abandoned youth in matters of religion and devotion."

Referring to this group Don Bosco later wrote that they were called benefactors, promoters and also Cooperators of the Oratory and later Cooperators of the Congregation of St. Francis of Sales. Originally Don Bosco thought of a group who would be "Salesians in the world," a branch of the Sal-

esian Congregation. They were to have full rights in the Congregation, but would not be bound by vows or common life. They would remain in the world and work according to the Salesian spirit. They would build a united front against evil to save poor and abandoned youth "Let us be united in one big family bonded together in charity," Don Bosco would later say.

It is very important to recognize the fact that in the mind of Don Bosco, this small group of Religious and Lay men and women was only a part of the greater number of the Promoters of the congregation of St. Francis de Sales. From 1858 Don Bosco made a definite division of his congregation into two categories, "interns" who lived permanently with him and "externs" who lived in their own homes without vows. That was why in the first draft of the constitutions presented to Rome in 1864, Chapter XVI on externs was inserted. Article One of that chapter reads as follows "Any person, even living without vows in his own home and with his family can belong to our Society."

In 1864 Don Bosco began his battle with Rome to get his rules approved. The text included a chapter on "The externs". The Roman Congregation of Bishops and Regulars refused to approve such a novel project as it fell outside the Canonical laws of the time. Don Bosco tried to classify it as the Third Order or Tertiaries of the congregation. He was even ready to maintain the chapter on 'externs' as an appendix. But the Church law did not accept the plan of a Salesian family composed of "interns and externs" and

it had to be sacrificed on the altar of rigid canonical laws of the time. He was forced to look for an alternative project to include the laity in his apostolic designs. Don Bosco said "If the chapter of our Constitution concerning the extern members was approved, I think that our Society and the Church would greatly profit thereby."

At some point in time, Don Bosco wanted to found a similar Third Order for women, attaching them to the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. But when he was discussing the matter with Pius IX, the Pope advised him to include the women in the same Association as men: "Women have always come to the fore in good works in the Church, in converting people. They have a natural bent for charity and good works. If you were to exclude them from the Association you would be depriving it of their tremendous help." Don Bosco was very happy to comply with the wishes of the Pope.

Don Bosco considered the externs as a very important and necessary constituent of the apostolic force he wanted to build up. He could not think of his definitely approved Religious Congregation as a self-sufficient unit. Therefore he set about finding a new formula to include them in his apostolic work. In 1876 he wrote their regulations. The booklet had eight chapters that spelled out the his fundamental ideas on 'the Christian Union' or The Association of Salesian Cooperators.

Pope Pius IX first praised the new Salesian Association. By the brief of May 9, 1876 the Holy

Father granted special indulgences, not through the Superior General but directly to the "Union of Salesian Cooperators", thus recognizing the Association. The Pious Union of the Salesian Cooperators came into being officially in 1876, not long after the definitive approval of the Salesian Society and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. But, it was always the cherished desire of Don Bosco, going right back to the beginning of the Oratory.

The purpose of the Association:

Among Christians there are some who would very gladly leave the world in order to attend to their own perfection and ensure their own salvation. They would thus avoid the dangers that imperil their souls and enjoy peace of heart in solitude for the love of Christ. But not everyone is called to follow this kind of religious life. Many, because of circumstances, conditions or simply due to a lack of a religious vocation, find it impossible to fulfil this desire. It is in order to satisfy this desire that Don Bosco proposed the Pious Association of St. Francis de Sales. This association would have a double purpose: To offer a means of perfection to those who would wish to enter some religious institute but could not. Secondly to offer the members of this association the opportunity of taking part in public and private works of charity and religion that the members of the Salesian Congregation undertake for the greater glory of God and the good of souls.

The Association may be regarded as one of the ancient Third Orders, with this difference: the

traditional Third Orders aimed at Christian Perfection through pious exercises, whereas this Association of Salesian Cooperators has as its main purpose: working in the world, especially on behalf of morally endangered youth.

The activities of the Salesian Cooperators were analogues to those of the Salesian Religious. The Cooperators not only support Salesian works but also adopt every other means possible to cooperate in the salvation of their brothers and sisters, particularly the young. To be a Salesian Cooperator means to cooperate with others to educate and reach out to the young. 'Let them teach catechism, help in the parish, spread good literature'. All these things are part of the activities of a Salesian Cooperator's commitment.

Many today tend to have a wrong notion that the Salesian Cooperators are those who work with Salesians or help them financially. Don Bosco did not exclude financial help but he had a different idea of the Salesian Cooperators. He declared: "The Association will depend completely on the Bishops and Parish Priests in all matters connected with religion."

There is also a very important additional motive. Feeble forces, when united became stronger, union makes for greater strength. A single strand may be easily broken, but several such strands twined together form a strong cord which is very difficult to break. People in the world use this principle in business enterprises for evil purposes. The purpose of the Association of Salesian Cooperators is to unite good Christians in order to advance the cause of

our holy religion, and at the same time to ensure each member's salvation through practicing the regulations of the society of St. Francis de Sales, as are compatible with the conditions of persons living in the world. Don Bosco invited people of good will to unite and join the Association of the Salesian Cooperators. Therefore the Association will get involved in charitable works towards the needy, in religious and secular education of the young and poor, in looking for and helping the growth of one's vocation and in defending the Church against errors and the negative influence of the social media.

The Salesian Cooperators are called to holiness, "to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity" (LG 41). The Salesian Cooperator's vocation is the deepening of the baptismal vocation oriented in a charismatic Salesian manner. It is a free choice, oriented towards the typical service inaugurated in the Church by Don Bosco, and entrusted to the Salesian Family. The sure sign of an authentic 'Salesian Cooperator' vocation is the radiant joy of being at the service of the Church in a Salesian way.

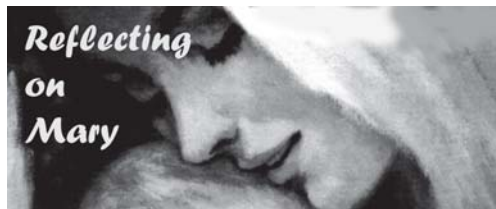
For Don Bosco, the radiant splendour of the Salesian Cooperators will spread to all countries throughout the Christian world. The day will come when the name Salesian Cooperator will signify a true Christian. The Cooperators will be the ones who will help promote the spirit of Catholicism. They will rise aloft with their flaming torch of active faith.

Immediately after the approbation of the Association of the Salesian Cooperators, Don Bosco

started giving talks, travelling and recruiting new members. His methods varied; he would send them the certificate of membership, or send them the Salesian Bulletin. He spoke about the necessity and importance of being members. Above all, he stressed the spiritual advantages of being a member of the Association. Among the great number of Cooperators some personalities stand out: Pope Pius IX who was so enthusiastic that he became the first Cooperator, Leo XIII wanted not only to be a Cooperator but an Operator." In Spain there was Dorotea de Chopitea, that great lady of Barcelona who will one day be canonized. In France Claire Louvet d'Aire-sur-la-Lys and Count Louis-Fleury Colle of Touon deserve special mention. Great people from all walks of life joined Don Bosco.

The Bishop of Tortona wrote to Don Bosco "I think that the Salesian Cooperators' Association which may certainly be regarded as a Third order of your worthy Congregation, already definitely approved by Holy Church, is most timely and even providential for the present condition of society".

At the death of Don Bosco in 1888, the apostolic strength of the humble Salesian Congregation had increased tenfold through the fraternal help of his Salesian Cooperators. In his Last Testament he wrote "You have helped me with so much good will and perseverance; and now I ask you to continue the works that I have begun with your support. You need me no longer, but they (Salesians) continue to need you. On that account I confide them to you all and recommend them to you." □



A WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN (1)

by Pascual Chavez Villeneuve, sdb

The Madonna of Don Bosco was a queen, crowned with twelve stars and clothed with the sun, like the woman in the Book of Revelation who was a sign not yet ready to be overcome by the enemy. She is represented as amiably extending her arms and offering us her Son. As friend and "Queen," she draws our attention to her Son, as if saying: "Behold, the one who is the Way, the Truth and the Life" (see John 14:6) or using the words that she addressed to the servants at the wedding feast of Cana, pointing to Jesus she said: "Do whatever he tells you." The Son, for his part, according to Don Bosco, "extends his arms and offers his grace and his mercy to those who have recourse to his august mother."

This Madonna of Don Bosco is "clothed with the sun," invested with power because she bathed in the sea of light who is God, immersed in the mystery of the

Trinity who illuminates her person and endorses her mission. That was why our Father Don Bosco succeeded in having this concept depicted in the painting of Tommaso Lorenzone who said with much emotion: "It was not I who did the painting; there was another hand that guided me."

Shrouded in Light

The Madonna of Don Bosco is the image of the Church, already celebrating the wedding feast of the Lamb, while the Church on earth is still on pilgrimage, immersed in the mystery of God, surrounded by his light but she is also immersed in the historical events of today and attentive to our needs as she was attentive to the needs of that newly married couple when she realized that the wine had run out. She is present and active in our families as even in our Salesian houses, ideally represented by the church (in the painting) of Valdocco.

Like the woman in the Apocalypse, the Madonna of Don Bosco is truly the image of the Church, the people of God in her eschatological glory triumphant in heaven, but here on earth she is submissive and accepts the prolonged pain of giving birth. It is the Church that has the task of historically making present the Son of God and the Son of Man and, at the same time, protecting her with the power of God, from the Dragon as she nourishes her children with the bread of the Eucharist.

Here is the great insight of Don Bosco, which combined the title of Mary Help of Christians and Mother of the Church, acknowledging her proper role as the Madonna at the heart of the Church's mission as she protects all the faithful beneath her mantle, feeding them and nourishing them till they attain the full stature of Christ.

Mother of the Poor

That was the concept of the Madonna that Don Bosco wanted to offer his boys at the time of great upheaval caused by the new socio-political situation which resulted in a transition from a typically patriarchal rural society to a new industrial process which was gradually changing the social order of the time: the family structure and the mobilization of resources for life. This upheaval had its victims and it was, as it always is, that youngsters become the victims who suffer the direst consequences of this new scenario, causing them to be exposed to failure, abuse and frustration.

How and where were they to



Mary, as a fully realized woman, is invited by God to reign in his presence, presiding over creation itself and directing it towards its fulfilment.

fathom the new cultural context in order to insert themselves into this new social order which required different skills and new knowledge, ideas and attitudes? Through their educational institutes, oratories, formation centres, vocational training schools the Sons of Don Bosco were able to teach and equip the children of the lower classes. In his time, Don Bosco played a leading role in training thousands of youngsters to face these new challenges. Opting for the poor meant offering them new possibilities. This was a novel idea and a new way of being Church – which meant taking special care of her most disadvantaged children.

To be continued

NEWSBITS



Sr Magi Maria, a member of the Congregation of Mother Carmel, has helped the poor in drought-prone farm communities near Bhopal, India (GSR)

MADHYA PRADESH (INDIA)

Sr Magi Maria quit a comfortable teaching job to plunge into social work and embark on a mission that has lifted a huge swathe of Indians out of poverty.

A quarter of a century after she started, more than 50,000 residents of 105 drought-prone villages in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh thank the Congregation of Mother Carmel nun for taking that "leap into the dark."

Her intervention has helped them break free of poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy and enslavement.

"We did not have even a hand-to-mouth existence when we met the sister," says Gayatri Sahu, a mother of three sons and one of Sr Magi Maria's beneficiaries.

The 45-year-old woman lives with her husband Beny Prasad Sahu and sons in Chota Khera, a village on the outskirts of the state capital of Bhopal.

When Sr Magi Maria met the family eight years ago, the husband was earning 50 rupees

(A\$1.70) as a daily wage worker. "We had to go to bed on an empty stomach many days since he had no regular work," Gayatri Sahu told Global Sisters Report.

Her husband says now they have "enough to eat and a good house" after Sr Magi taught the family how to make the best use of their one-acre farm.

Sahu, 49, stopped working on others' farms as he began cultivating his land. He got help from Cyriac Elias Rural Organisation for Women and Children, a group Maria started in 1991 to aid the villagers. It encouraged him to try growing multiple crops.

"Earlier I had a hard time raising even one crop a year," Sahu said.

Initially, Sr Magi Maria encouraged the family to start a poultry farm to meet the family expenses as Sahu's income had stopped. As the crop production increased, the family stopped the poultry business and focused entirely on agriculture.

Since they started rotating crops, the family earns around 200,000 rupees (A\$4,000) annually.

Devi Ram Lodhi is another farmer this energetic religious Sister has helped. She not only trained the 45-year-old father of five to work on his one-acre farm but also sent him to various places to learn modern farming techniques. (GSR) □



walking with the Church

Apocrypha - Jesus descended into Hell - Lazarus

From St Martin's Messenger, Ireland

Q. *The question I wish to ask is why do we sometimes at Mass have Readings from the Apocrypha when there is the whole of the authorised version of the Bible to choose from.*

A. 'Apocrypha' is the name given to some early Christian writings similar in form to the inspired Scriptures. With the rise of Protestantism, critics in the sixteenth century questioned the divine inspiration of some books of the Bible. (Old and New Testament) These books were termed 'apocryphal' by non-Catholic groups who excluded them from their bible. The council of Trent resolved any doubts for Catholics by listing the books of the Bible and declaring them to be equally inspired in their entirety. That council did not establish a new list; it formally confirmed the authenticity (the divine inspiration) of the list fixed in tradition for more than a thousand years earlier. The list included the Book of Ecclesiasticus sometimes known as the book of Sirach. The declaration of the Council of Trent was reaffirmed by the first and second Vatican Councils.

(The New Testament of both Catholic and Protestant Bibles has the same number of books that is 27. The Old Testament of Jews and most Protestants have an Old Testament containing 39 books while the Catholic Old Testament

contains 46 Books.)

Q. *Why would Jesus descend into Hell?*

A. We read in 'The Apostles Creed' that Jesus descended into 'Hell'. 'Hell' is the name scripture has for the abode (home) of the dead. Hell does not mean the Hell of the damned. It is the abode where all the dead, evil or good, await the Redeemer. So "by the expression 'he descended into Hell' the Apostles Creed confesses that Jesus really did die and through his death for us conquered the devil." (CCC636)

Q. *If Lazarus was dead for three days before they brought him back to life, where did his soul go?*

A. His soul went to Sheol - where Christ's soul was during the three days his body was in the tomb. Heaven was closed to the departed faithful of the Old Testament until Christ redeemed the world by his death and resurrection. In the earliest stages of salvation history, Sheol, the place for the departed spirits, was variously named 'hell' (not the hell of the damned), 'grave' or 'pit', thus reflecting an undeveloped belief in a future life, which was gradually superseded by the more defined beliefs of later Judaism. □

(Continued from pg 23)

along. Find a red square, plant both feet on it. Face the front, hands at your side. Speak up when I ask you a question.

Then he proceeded: "Alright, number one: Clara Walters, come forward Clara... You're charged with hating your sister Bessie for fifteen years. Is that right, Clara?"

"I'm no hypocrite...I acted just the way I felt about Bessie." "What started the trouble between you and your sister, Clara?"

"After mama died, Bessie took that living room furniture and those diamond earrings that mama always meant for me to have. I told Bessie she was nothing but a thief." "And you think so?" "Of course, trying to tell me she didn't remember mama telling me I was to have the rings and that furniture."

"Bessie offered to give them to you, didn't she?" Hotpoint reminded Clara. "I refused to speak to her."

"And now your sister's in the hospital facing a critical operation." "Well, I almost went over there today but I got to thinking..." Hotpoint whispered to Satan: "Master, I helped her with this point..." Clara went on: "I was thinking; people have operations everyday. There was no call for me to go rushing over to the hospital. I wasn't going to knuckle under to Bessie. I'd go, but when I got good and ready." Hotpoint added: "Instead you stayed home to hang drapes. You fell off a ladder and ten minutes later you died of a fractured skull...that's all, Clara, step back." That was Clara's story and it was over.

Hotpoint shouted: "And number two, step forward. Samuel Leo-

nard...charged with final impenitence. How about that Samuel? Did you refuse to make your peace with God, on your deathbed?" Samuel was muttering to himself: "Well...I had had those attacks before. Every time the doctors thought I was going to die, I pulled through."

Hotpoint also reminded him: "Every time you refused to see a priest..." Sam retorted: "It wasn't as simple as that. The first thing a priest would tell me would be: pay it back. I began thinking..." Hotpoint whispered to Satan again: "Master this is typical of scores of my cases..." Samuel became bolder and went on: "I could hear this voice telling me: this is going to be an awful shock to your family... leaving them poor! Think it over...don't rush things...you might get better. Anyway, you can take care of it tomorrow. Better sleep on it."

Then Samuel went silent. Hotpoint concluded Samuel's story for him: "You did, and you died in your sleep. Alright, Leonard, step back." "Alright, that's all for the line, take them away. Well, Master, you see the plan?" Rubbing his palms together with glee Hotpoint looked up at Satan with an air of confidence. "Do I? Hotpoint, you've given us our plan for the future. Our watchword from now on is: Tomorrow...agree with people that there is a God, a Heaven and a Hell. Say, yes, you should pray and repent...clear your conscience and make your peace with God, but, you can do it, tomorrow. There's no rush, no hurry, think it over. Sleep on it. Yes, this is our plan for the future. Make men believe the great lie that says: *For you there is always tomorrow.*"

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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.

Our sincere thanks for all the graces received.

Sapencia Alvarez

My heartfelt thanks to Our Blessed Mother for answering our prayers so miraculously. We had, what could have been, difficult times but Our Lord and Our Blessed Mother were there and continue to shelter us in marvelous ways. I pray that devotion to Our Blessed Lord and His Most Holy Mother grow throughout the world. The three Hail Marys and the Rosary and such powerful devotions.

Anna D'Silva

On Oct 3rd 2015 my Aunt and I were on our way for our relative's month's mind Mass. When while negotiating a turn, suddenly from nowhere a vehicle at a high speed came and bumped into the front headlight and bonnet of our car. The impact was quite bad. Those who witnessed the accident commented saying we had a miraculous escape because the oncoming vehicle was travelling very fast and the outcome would have been a major accident. We did not even receive a scratch. We thank the Almighty. We always recite the Memorare, the Consecration of Our Lady Help Christians and three Hail Marys. And, as always, my Aunt carries her Rosary in her hand. We know Mary was there to protect and guide us and we thank her very much.

Loretta Furtado, Goa

For a long time we were in search of a boy for my daughter. I started praying the 3 Hail Marys to Our Lady Help of Christians. In spite of several struggles we faced during that time I thank you Mother for blessing my daughter.

A Devotee

I would like to offer my thanksgiving to Mary Help of Christians for keeping us safe when on 8-2-16 fire broke out in our building due to a short circuit in our meter box and it stopped. I have prayed and consecrated our home to Mary Help of Christians besides reciting the 3 Hail Marys. Keep my son and my daughter under your protection and in good health during their years in college. *Sebastian Fernandes* I am sincerely grateful for the graces and favours received through the intercession of Mary Help of Christians. Please continue to protect and bless my family of three children and seven grand children and six great grand children.

Mr & Mrs Rodrigues, Australia

LOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER

My sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and all the saints for stopping my husband's hiccups which he had for a whole week and for all the other favours received. *Mrs N. Balfour, Australia* Belated, but heartfelt thanks to the Blessed Trinity and Mother Mary for the successful laminectomy performed on my husband. Mother Mary please continue to intercede for him as he is recovering and protect him from all dangers. We are all eternally grateful for your intercession. *Goretti Silveira, Goa*

Thank you dear Mother Mary, Help of Christians for the numerous graces received. Do continue to bless us. *Mrs Leticia Vaz, Mumbai* I thank the Miraculous Infant Jesus and Mother Mary for saving me from a serious accident I could have had at home and I had to be hospitalized for a few days because it was a head injury. But it was my faith in the Infant Jesus and Mother Mary that saved me and now I am back to a normal life. *Mrs. D. Lowe, Bengaluru*

I would like to thank Jesus and Mother Mary for the miraculous escape my son and I had driving on the motorway, when my son lost control. It was like a Divine Hand upon us, that we were protected unhurt from the other speeding cars. This only shows us how God protects us at every moment. I am grateful to Almighty God and Our Blessed Mother for their powerful protection. *Maria Vasudevan*

THEY ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR LADY AND DON BOSCO

My wife was going for the 7am Mass at Don Bosco church, Borivil. It was a Tuesday and LT Road was congested with vehicles visiting the Ganesh Temple. Suddenly a bike came out from nowhere and knocked my wife down in the middle of the road. The biker controlled himself on the vehicle. All traffic stopped. She escaped with minor injuries. The X ray report said that there were no fractures. We thank Mother Mary and Don Bosco for their protection. *Mr Johnny, Mumbai*

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery, obtaining a PR in Canada and finding a good house and getting good jobs. I also thank the Almighty, for it is only by his grace and mercy that my son completed his doctorate. Do continue showering your blessings upon him. I once again thank and praise Abba, Father for healing my husband from his diabetic foot. *A. Gomes, Thane*

My grateful thanks to Jesus, Our Lady and Don Bosco for curing me of a deep depression which I suffered for nearly a year. Please continue to pray for us and shower your blessings on us. Let there be peace among our family members. *Mrs. D. G. Briggs*

I prayed to Jesus, Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco when my son was critically ill - my sincere thanks for his recovery.

Molin Fernandes, Goa

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Thank you dear Jesus Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby boy prematurely after 7 months. Thank you for all other favours and graces that my children received. *A devotee from Kerala*

Our special thanks to the Divine Mercy, Mother Mary and St Dominic Savio for the gift of a wonderful daughter, Ella Delphine and for all the innumerable favours too. Please continue to shower on our family your bountiful blessings. *Mark and Altricia, Shillong* Thank you Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the favours received. Please continue to protect and bless my family with health and prosperity.

Mr. & Mrs. B. Whittle Belated, but sincere thanks to our Blessed Mother, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the many favours granted to our family and for all the protection, guidance, peace and joy that we experience for all these years.

Jose, Mariano and Family, Dubai/Goa My sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for granting my favour. *Maria Alice Fernandes, Goa*

My grateful thanks to Our Lord, Mary Help of Christians, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for giving us the gift of a lovely baby girl.

Truman and Selene, Goa My sincere and heartfelt thanks to Our Lord Jesus Christ, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe caesarian delivery of my grand daughter and for the gift of a baby boy Noah, her son.

Grand Mere Annette (Mauritius) My heartfelt thanks to Jesus, Mary and St Dominic Savio for special favours received. Please accept my offering of thanksgiving.

Domenica Roberts, Vizag, AP I thank the Blessed Trinity, Our Blessed Mother and St Dominic Savio for blessing my daughter-in-law with the delivery of her second son after 7 years and for many other favours received. *Gracy N. Godinho*

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER SEPTEMBER 2016

Universal: Centrality of the Human Person

That each may contribute to the common good and to the building of a society that places the human person at the centre.

Evangelization: Mission to Evangelize

That by participating in the Sacraments and meditating on Scripture, Christians may become more aware of their mission to evangelize.

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MARY WAS THERE

We were returning from Pune and my husband was driving with two of our friends. After praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet, I found an urgent request from a priest friend who was known to us. We immediately started saying the intercessory Rosary for him. My husband was yawning and wiping his eyes frequently. I called to him and by the time he reacted he hit the border guards. We were thankful that we were all safe. There was not a scratch on the car but for the front wheel was punctured and the hub broken. - The miracle doesn't end there. God provided for a service van to come by. He changed the punctured tyre and we were back on the road within a matter of a few minutes. That is the power of Our Lord through the intercession of His Mother Mary. We had said the Rosary for our priest friend but Mother Mary knew we were more greatly in need at that hour and she protected us. Thank you Jesus. Thank you Mother Mary. *Joan Manohar, Mumbai*

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;

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