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*Grant we pray,  
almighty God,  
that, for all who  
celebrate  
the glorious Name  
of  
the Blessed Virgin  
Mary,  
she may obtain  
your merciful favour.*

*From the opening prayer of the feast  
of the Most Holy Name of Mary*

## From The Editor's Desk

## JUST STAY

As I go through life, there are times I instinctively ask myself: 'Does *this matter?*' Or those times that you - like me - have been faced with things that seem to be 'going down the pipes' and nothing works and you're forced to ask that question: 'What difference will this make?' After reading the following story I've been compelled to look at situations differently. There are people who I meet and I might treat them casually as they come into my life in the course of a day. (pg. 32) I have quit thinking they're 'a waste of time.' There are some things in this world which are gifts beyond price; gifts that mean so much to another, there is no way to fix a value. Sometimes we might never know the value of what we do. We do it because it's the right or the appropriate thing to do.

A nurse took the tired, anxious serviceman to the bedside. "Your son is here," she said to the old man. She had to repeat the words several times before the patient's eyes opened. He was heavily sedated because of the pain of his heart attack; he dimly saw the young uniformed Marine standing outside the oxygen tent. He reached out his hand. The Marine wrapped his toughened fingers around the old man's limp ones, squeezing a message of love and encouragement. The nurse brought a chair so the Marine could sit beside the bed. All through the night the young Marine sat there in the poorly lighted ward, holding the old man's hand and offering him words of love and strength. Occasionally, the nurse suggested that the Marine move away and rest awhile.

He refused. Whenever the nurse came into the ward, the Marine was oblivious to her and to the night noises of the hospital - the clanking of the oxygen tank, the laughter of the night staff members exchanging greetings, the cries and moans of other patients in the ward.

Now and then she heard him say a few gentle words. The dying man said nothing, only held tightly to his son all through the night. Along towards dawn, the old man died. The Marine released the now lifeless hand he had been holding and went to tell the nurse. While she did what she had to do, he waited.

Finally, she returned. She started to offer words of sympathy, but the Marine interrupted her. "Who was that man?" he asked. The nurse was startled. "He was your father," she replied. "No, he wasn't," the Marine replied. "I never saw him before in my life."

"Then why didn't you say something when I took you to him?" "I knew right away there had been a mistake, but I also knew he needed his son, and his son just wasn't here. When I realized that he was too sick to tell whether or not I was his son, knowing how much he needed me, I stayed."

The next time someone needs you - just be there. Just stay.

*Fr. Ian Doulton sdb*

## LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

*Janette Brimmer*

Someone suffering with an illness of the brain such as schizophrenia, dementia or mood disorders such as clinical depression or bipolar disorder, can find life's journey extremely difficult without God's gentle light leading the way. Likewise, family members who live with a sibling, son or daughter or parent who is afflicted with a mood disorder or a malady of the brain, need to be positive, compassionate and open to God's guidance in dealing with their loved ones. I have known or have been acquainted with hidden saints from each category who wholeheartedly believe in the words expressed by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin "Jesus did not promise to take away our burdens. He promised to help us carry them."

I have suffered from bouts of clinical depression since I was a teen. In those days I never knew what was wrong with me but even though I had a wonderful home life, was considered attractive and enjoyed writing for fun, my world seemed to crumble and I began to dread going to school and remembered wanting to crawl in a crack in the floor once I got there. Communicating with people became tedious and when I would arrive back home I would hide in my room and cry. "I feel I am in a dark ditch and can't climb out." I told my mom



one day when she noticed I had been crying. She sent me to a person to talk to and eventually, after several months, I began to feel better.

But when I reached my forties those nightmarish feelings returned and they were much worse. During that trying time I had four lovely children and a considerate husband but I felt wretched and ill-at-ease for several weeks. I would become irritable and sometimes hysterical over simple things such as a child spilling his milk and my eyes would well with tears at the slightest critical remark. Since I felt so lethargic and listless, daily chores became overwhelming and a profound dark despair permeated my soul. My husband and children tried to be patient but they could not ease my suffering and I felt powerless as the wretched sadness and anxiety increased.

I finally volunteered to admit

myself to an excellent hospital for the sake of my family and myself. During that period I received anti-depressants and learned coping skills such as relaxation exercises and learning to replace negative thoughts with positive ones. Counseling also helped. My family and friends rejoiced at my recovery and I still take medication to keep away other episodes of deep depression.

Clinical depression is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain and taking medication for it is not much different than taking insulin for diabetes. Churchill, famous sports figures and newsmen and writers such as Hemmingway have all been attacked by this mood disorders. No one is immune. And it is not a weakness. The chemical imbalance can even be seen on a CAT Scan and scientists are continually finding more knowledge regarding the brain and are researching diligently to uncover better treatments.



Some of the symptoms of clinical depression include feelings of hopelessness and dread, irrational guilt, changes in sleeping habits and anxiety. If you have clinical depression seek God's guidance as well as finding medical help and you will surely find relief.

Alzheimer's began to attack Mary's brain while her husband Pete was still President of a Community College and as her disease progressed he unselfishly resigned his position to care for her. When asked after her death, if he had found it a terrible burden being the main caretaker he answered "No, I considered it a privilege to help her." He loved her very much and wanted to care for her with the same dedication and compassion she had shown him when he was ill with cancer. When Mary could no longer recognize him or talk with him he grieved deeply but tried to liken this to God loving us but often being met with indifference or ingratitude or outright hostility.

Rather than asking God why he had to deal with his heart-breaking situation of watching his beloved wife slowly slip away, he accepted God's will and offered his sufferings for the poor souls in purgatory. He even learned to become an excellent cook, became a skilled gardener and kept the house clean and orderly when he was not busy taking care of his wife's emotional and personal needs. Often he confided in God as a trusted



friend and drew strength from Him.

Once cheerful and outgoing, Susan was in her late twenties when she began to suffer an overwhelming sense of sadness tinged with dread and her interest in everyday activities such as caring for her husband and children began to ebb. Even the activities that had once been just for fun such as partaking in community events, reading and going to the theatre, lost their appeal. Then her mood would swing in the opposite direction which caused her to be hyper, sleepless, willing to take on too many activities and feeling she could conquer the world. After several months her husband, finally persuaded Susan to seek medical help and after much trial and error the specialist found the proper medication that would correct the chemical imbalance in her brain that had made her bipolar.

My own mom succumbed to Alzheimer disease when she was in her mid-eighties and staying at a nursing home. At first she began telling us stories about a murder occurring on the floor above which had never really happened. Then one day she was quite indignant about a man in the nursing home who had called

on her holding a bouquet of flowers. He had asked her on a date. "What a nerve," she exclaimed while we all tried not to smile. "Does he not know my husband just died and I'm not ready to go out with another man!" Poor dad had died several years before. Her tales gave us comic relief when we went to visit.

My sisters and I, blessed with good voices, would sing to her which seemed to calm her and one sister brought her a large teddy about a foot and a half high which she named Christopher. Christopher accompanied mom everywhere and even ate meals with her. When his cute face became spotted with food stains, I took him to mom's washroom and cleaned him up. Christopher became her child and she loved him as if he was her own. That is until she began getting worse. Eventually mom began to forget who we were. She still enjoyed music but as time went on she could no longer walk or talk. Mom was a vibrant woman and now she is in heaven being her extroverted self again. She was a devout woman and taught us to trust in Jesus and ask him for strength during difficult times.



Tim and Sara knew there was something seriously wrong with their son when he was in his late teens. At first they were anxious and confused by some of the symptoms he was having such as hallucinations (hearing voices in his head) disrupted thoughts and behaviour and social withdrawal. When they finally had their son diagnosed properly they learned he had a brain disorder called schizophrenia which appears to be a failure of the brain's electrical or chemical systems to properly function. This results in numerous neural twists such as disjointed, disconnected and confused thoughts and other symptoms.

With God's help Tim and Sarah finally realized how ill their son was but resolved to treat him with the same understanding, love and acceptance they gave their other children. They tried to learn all they could about the disorder and how to cope with the symptoms. This included knowing what kind and how much medication would be needed to keep him stable. It has been very difficult dealing with the episodes when he refuses to take his medication for this results in his confused thoughts, paranoia and other symptoms becoming much more pronounced. Tim and Sara could not endure the trying times with patience and love without relying on God's grace and encouragement to guide them through.

When someone is afflicted with a serious injury in a car



accident or at work it is easy to feel empathy for them for we can readily see the outward signs of their distress. But it is harder to relate to people with mental illness and mood disorders. A person, for instance, may be enduring the inner turmoil of a clinical depression but may appear fine on the outside because they are skilled at covering up their feelings when they are around other people. Families living with a patient who is mentally ill or suffers from mood disorder must often cope with the ignorance many people still have regarding problems with the brain. Some bias still occurs today despite all the knowledge shared about mental disorders. There are also not enough government funds available to help people with mood disorder or diseases of the brain. As Mother Teresa states in her book: *Mother Teresa - In my Own Words*, "There is someone who suffers in every family and in every situation." and she continues "Love begins by taking care of the closest ones...the ones at home." We can pray often for people who must deal with mental illness in themselves or their family and show them appreciation and love. They are an inspiration to us all! ☐

## BABY STEPS, GIANT FOOTPRINTS

by MelanieD'Souza

Not too long ago - I shared with you my ordeal of adjusting to changing plans. Of course, plenty of you may be familiar with such situations and are prepared to accept these circumstances as they come, because life is such.

### *Because God's grace is the real plan.*

It's hard to think clearly, when you realise that the plans you believe to have been so well-crafted, just cannot be executed. What does this look like in real life? When you don't have the appropriate educational qualifications for a job you greatly desire. When a law stands in between you and a perfectly good job offer. When you cannot go forth with your research agenda. When poor health comes in the way of a vacation much eagerly awaited.

So when you try to think - it's a melee of thoughts. A dangerous combination of positive hopes and prayers with negative thoughts and reflections on past hurtful experiences. You start to think and then believe, "*Why shouldn't this happen again?*" Add to this the opinions of several close friends and networks - they are well-

meaning but seemingly not always helpful. How do you stand your ground?

Here are a few, small measured steps - yes, *small*. We have to take it slow:

1. You have options - and you have the skills

It's not your intended plan - and not even your backup - but think of the Bible just one quick second - and well, can you count the number of reluctant, surprised, confused prophets? God kept changing their plans, but also kept protecting them on the way, equipping them with what they needed.

2. You have been so, so strong

This ordeal teaches you the difference between getting used to fighting for what you want, versus fighting for what you need. It has been an excellent test of your determination and perseverance because helps you revisit the value of things you already have, when you are going lengths to achieve something.

3. You're part of a legacy now

It goes without saying that this series of events has helped you



realise your real support - and has revealed to you how many folks around you understand the gravity of your situation. The migration story is universal - just as any story of struggle and success. This is probably the biggest positive outcome of it all - that you are now part of a special group of like-minded, strong-minded, innovative people that aren't afraid to let the future and God's plan work strange wonders for them. These are the people who with you can share not just your deepest fears, but more importantly, an open mind with mutual encouragement.

4. Your path aligns with that of others

It's easy to focus on oneself in the midst of such strife - as it keeps you striving towards your goals - sometimes over those of others. Let's remember to be malleable because we're never alone: plenty of people contribute to your success. It's time to honour our mentoring professors, the academic obstacles you thought would never pass, the communities you actively enjoyed, the fun friends who made you feel inclusive, to even and the not-so-fun long lonesome gruelling nights you've endured.

5. Your path is crooked, but it is still destination-bound

Because circumstances occur without your control, no matter how much you work against the grind, it is hard not to take it personally. Especially when you arrive at what you believe to be a climax, expecting a reward that just doesn't come. You receive sympathy but that drags you



down, even though you're aware that the failure isn't a result of your slacking. *So recognise that this isn't your fault, but it is still your path.* Focus on what you have accomplished already; what great memories have you made? Is the destination in mind your ultimate and immediate satisfaction? Absolutely not - your path just gets more and more crooked - because God meant for this life to be exciting.

A good soul once told me that, if everything were left up us, there would be paths that we just wouldn't take. Which is why it is important for us to trust God's plans as well as our God-given friends and talents - and take risks to let the journey do its deed. Of course, this thought has already been immortalised in a poem from our school days:

*"Two roads diverged in a wood,  
and I -  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made  
all the difference."*

*Excerpt from The Road Not Taken  
by Robert Frost*

Bottom line? With every passing step that seems futile, and the journey exhausting, there is still a *footprint*. Your efforts don't go unseen, and our God never leaves us. □

## SALESIAN SAINTS

### RUDOLPH KOMOREK 1890 - 1949

**R**udolph Komorek was born in 1890 in Polish Silesia (still Austria), the third of seven children to John and Agnes Goch, truly Christian parents. His father was a blacksmith who worked very hard to support his family. His mother Agnes was a country midwife and also a seamstress. Rudolph entered the archdiocesan seminary at Weidenau where he was loved by everyone and because of which he was called St. Aloysius. On July 22, 1913 Rudolph Komorek was ordained a priest by Cardinal Kopp. At 23 the world was on the brink of the First World War. Fr. Rudolph, dressed like a soldier was asked to accompany them as their priest.

He was the chaplain in the military hospitals of Cracow and Borgo. His brother Robert writes: "I once visited the hospital when I had some leave from the front. The sick loved him very much. He was always among them, trying to alleviate their sufferings."

While he saw so many young men dying around him, there matured in his heart the desire to consecrate himself more fervently to the Lord and to his brothers. He would go to the missions where many survivors of the Polish war had migrated to live a life less fraught with less physical and spiritual perils.

At the end of the year 1919  
September 2017



Rudolph was appointed Parish Priest of Frystak. From there he wrote to Cardinal Bertram asking for permission to join the Salesians. The answer was: "It is with extreme sadness that the Cardinal grants his permission but he begs me to remain in the diocese in view of the great shortage of priests."

January 18, 1922 Father Rudolph's dear mother had passed away. Now there was nothing to hold him back. A request came from Brazil asking for some priests to help care for the Polish emigrants. Rudolph was asked and he accepted. He went then to Turin where he received the crucifix from the hands of Blessed Father Philip Rinaldi, the third successor of Don Bosco.

On November 27, 1922 Father Rudolph reached Rio de Janeiro and was sent to work at a school and a chapel of the Polish Community of San Feliciano, a colony

of Rio Grande do Sul.

In the early months of 1934 he was able to return to his beloved Polish people, the Italians and Germans in Luis Alves, in Santa Catarina State. In those years the Christians among whom he worked with absolute dedication, began calling him *O Holy Father*. When the simple folk addressed him in that manner, he looked at them seriously and replied: "I am Father Rudolph, a great sinner."

In June 1936 he had begun to grow weak. The young Salesian students at the house of Lavrinhas did not have a confessor and so the Provincial thought of sending Father Rudolph there. There was no one better than him who could teach those young Salesians a life of sacrifice. Father Rudolph bid his dear emigrants farewell without a word of complaint and accepted the obedience. The Provincial wrote to the rector Father Ladislao Paz "It is my conviction that I am sending you a saint." Father Ladislao realised that this was no exaggeration. He wrote: "I confessed to him every week. As the rector late in the night I was compelled to take a round of the house. Several times I realised that there was a light burning in the chapel. Approaching I saw Father Rudolph lying on the floor with his arms outstretched in the form of a cross, praying." And Father Pinto Ferreira added: "He was sought for confessions both by Salesian Confreres and the clergy outside. When hearing the confessions of priests, he demonstrated a great shyness and humility. At the end of confession he surprised the penitent priest by kissing his hand." He was not just a confessor. He taught for 28 hours a week!

When there was need of someone to assist the sick he was first to offer himself.

In January 1941 Father Rudolph's health seriously deteriorated. He was tormented by a persistent cough day and night because of which he was sent to the Salesian House in San Jose dos Campos, a sanatorium. After a thorough examination the specialist admitted that his lungs were severely affected with tuberculosis. He was unable to return to Lavrinhas; he would remain in San Jose because only some radical treatment would prolong his life. The *Santa Casa* (home for senior Salesians) where he was chaplain and the Vicentina Aranha Sanatorium, became his field of apostolate. How many tuberculosis patients did he assist! Some at first were indifferent, but they ended up receiving the sacraments from the "*Padre Santo*." They were impressed by his poverty. He slept on three wooden planks with a blanket and some old coats to cover himself. His humility was remarkable; he was always the last of all. The nine years that he spent in San Jose were a continuous and serene journey to heaven. Father Rudolph regarded his illness as a blessing from God and received his sufferings gratefully from God's hands. Sister Maria Faleiros who was with him during his last hours testified: "He wanted his medicines - which were now ineffective - to be distributed to the poor who could not afford them. Never for a moment was he impatient. In his last hours he said to me worriedly: "Sister, it's hard to die. I did not know that it would be so." He died on December 11, 1949. □

# Witnesses in & for Our Times

## VEN. ALFRED PAMPALON

From the Newsletter of Saint Joseph de Clairval Abbey, April 17, 2010

On May 14, 1991, the same Pontiff declared the heroic virtues of a young Redemptorist religious, Father Alfred Pampalon, who, since his blessed death in 1896, is often invoked by alcohol and drug addicts. The apparently insignificant life of this man shines like a light for our era, greedy for material efficiency and comfort. He built his life on supernatural realities, and what abundant favours—even temporal ones—have been obtained through his intercession!

On November 24, 1867, Alfred was born in the Marian parish of Notre-Dame de Lévis in Quebec, the ninth child in a deeply Christian family. His father, Antoine Pampalon, was a contractor who built churches. His mother, Josephine Dorion, known for her humility and faith, took loving care of her children. Every evening, the family prayed the Rosary together. Two of Alfred's brothers and his sister Emma dedicated themselves to God. Particularly affectionate and helpful, Alfred quickly learned—thanks to his mother—about the Lord's goodness, and to pronounce the names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

September 2017



An even better mother

At the age of five, he lost his mother, not long after she had the joy of a twelfth birth. Shortly before she died, Madame Pampalon gathered her eight surviving children and, with an affectionate smile, said, "My dear children, your Mama is going to die... I love you very much, but I must go... You will no longer have a mother on this earth... I entrust you to an even better mother, the best there is, the Blessed Virgin... She is stretching out her arms to

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Don Bosco's Madonna

you... Love her very much! Pray to her very much! She will take care of you..." Beside the bed, Alfred cried softly. These words from the one he loved more than anyone else on earth were engraved into his memory, and would mark his entire life. His mother died on July 2, 1873, at the age of 45.

One year later, Monsieur Pampalon decided to remarry. He married a fine Irish widow, Margaret Phelan, who would regard all of Antoine's children as her own. Alfred was affectionate and sweet to his second mother. "He always had a smile on his lips," Margaret recalled. "He was cheerful, sweet, entertaining my little ones (Alfred's half-brothers), and was helpful to everyone."

In September 1876, at the age of nine, Alfred became a day student at the high school in Lévis, run by diocesan priests. He would study there for five years, without ever thinking of becoming a priest. Interested in business, he chose to take business courses rather than classical studies. In May 1877, he made his First Communion, and on October 7, the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, he received the sacrament of Confirmation.

Alfred's virtue drew others to him. He exuded goodness—in sports, in a good and somewhat playful humour, he proved to be an excellent organizer. No one equaled him in some games—the younger students in particular were amazed at his skill in cricket, soccer, baseball... He ran very fast. Not only did they admire him, but they loved him, because he was always modest and kind when he won.

September 2017

### A smile that lit up

The year was 1881. A young adolescent, Alfred was not a brilliant student, but in catechism, he excelled. Suddenly, his life was threatened by a serious illness. He prayed, recommending himself to Mary. "God made me understand," he would later write, "that He did not want me to belong to the world, but be entirely Him. He remained joyful, even playful, but he wanted to live with and for the Lord. For the rest of his life, he would retain a sickly face, yet always brightened by his smile.

In 1885, pneumonia brought him to death's door. He received the last sacraments. The sanctuary of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, where Quebec Catholics venerate Saint Anne as their patroness, was nearby. The alarmed family urgently appealed to the mother of the Virgin Mary to obtain Alfred's cure from the Child Jesus. "As my studies progressed," Alfred would later say, "my intention to become a priest became more and more firm. I promised it to Him, if He granted my cure." Teachers and students in Lévis joined the family in pulling this grace from Heaven. Alfred recovered... As soon as he had the strength, he walked the 35 km to Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, rosary in hand. At the sanctuary, kneeling before the miraculous statue, he gave thanks and promised to follow his brother's example and join the Redemptorists.

The Redemptorists arrived in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré only in 1878. Even before his decision, Alfred had read with profit the work the saint had dedicated to the Virgin in 1750, *The Glories of*

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Don Bosco's Madonna

*Mary.* Since no Redemptorist house of formation had yet opened in Canada, he would have to set out for Europe. Courageously, on July 22, 1886—at the age of eighteen—he tore himself from his family's affections to enter the novitiate in Saint-Trond, in Belgium. On September 8, 1887, he joyfully made the perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. He was ordained a priest on October 4, 1892 and began his ministry in Mons, Belgium—preaching parish missions, hearing confessions, teaching catechism to children. He often visited the sick and encouraged them with his smile and kindness.

#### **A sure guide**

From where did he draw his strength of soul? From prayer: "There is no virtue without prayer," he said, particularly prayer that ascends to the source, the most Holy Eucharist. He often stayed kneeling in the chapel, immobile, his eyes fixed on the tabernacle.

Alfred had placed at the top of the edifice a passionate love for Jesus Christ. Imbued with these words of Saint John: In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us ... God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him (1 Jn. 4:9, 10), he wanted to render love for love. He meditated on the crib, the crucifix, the Eucharist. Every day, he made the Stations of the Cross and read the Holy Scriptures. He often repeated, especially during his final illness: "May my constancy not fail! Just a little while longer, and it will be eternity."

#### **Glorifying mercy**

Alfred was driven by a burning zeal for souls. But unable, because of his impediment, to preach much but he was diligent in the ministry of confession.

In May 1895, he was transferred from Mons, a mining area, so that his sick lungs might be relieved by the clean air of Saint-Jean-de-Beauplateau, in the forests of the Ardennes. He wrote, "My way of giving missions is to pray for souls."

From the age of fourteen until his death, Alfred suffered from tuberculosis. He had hung in there as best he could. But on February 5, 1896, nine months after his forced retreat into the Ardennes, he had to resign himself to remaining in the infirmary—one lung was gone, the other badly damaged. The doctor gave him until March or April. He coughed day and night. Soon consumption was joined by dysentery. On August 23, no longer able to stand up, he was forced to stop several times. Through the month of September, he hovered between life and death. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, at three o'clock in the morning, he received Holy Communion for the last time. He could scarcely be heard. On the 30<sup>th</sup>, at one o'clock in the morning, he suddenly sang the entire Magnificat in a loud and clear voice. At two o'clock, he asked for and received absolution from all the sins of his life. Shortly before eight o'clock, he raised his eyes to Heaven smiling, as though he saw someone, and breathed his last. He was not yet twenty-nine years old. □

## IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

#### **Legal Settlement**

The courtroom was crowded as the judge finished his lecture to the defendant in a divorce case. "So, I've decided to give your wife Rs. 500/- per month," the judge concluded. The defendant's face lit up. "That's swell, Judge," he smiled. "I'll try to slip her a couple of bucks now and then myself."

#### **Wanted a Man**

A woman appeared at the police station to report that her husband had disappeared. She gave the desk sergeant a picture of the missing man. After looking at the picture the sergeant said: "In case we find him, is there any message you would like to give him?" "Yes," replied the wife, "tell him, Mother didn't come after all."

#### **Musically Inclined**

The worried mother waited until after her child's violin lesson and approached the boy's teacher. "Prof, how is Willie making out in his lessons?" "Fine, fine!" boomed the teacher. "His progress on the violin is very good. He's playing some very nice tunes now." "Oh," beamed the mother, "do you really think so? His father and I were afraid we were merely getting used to it!"

#### **Common Sense**

"Can you imagine, just as the bride approached the altar, the groom turned and ran out of the church." "Lost his nerve?" "Nope, found it."

#### **Essential Ingredients**

Curt: I sure made a hit with the prettiest girl at the picnic. Everytime I looked at her she was eating a hot dog and watching me. Bert: Maybe you had the mustard.

#### **Hit List**

A man entered a neighbourhood pool hall with a piece of paper in his hand and said: "This is a list of all men I can whip." "Is my name there?" asked a husky broad-shouldered brick-layer. "Yes." "Well, you can't whip me!" "Are you sure." "Damn right, I'm sure!" "Okay," replied the man, "I'll take your name off the list."

#### **Safety First**

"Lady," demanded the traffic cop wearily, "don't you know this is a safety zone?" "Why, yes," she said brightly. "Of course I know; that's why I drove in here."

#### **Lethal Treasures**

A young mother paying a visit to a doctor friend and his wife made no attempt to restrain her five-year-old son, who was ransacking an adjoining room. But, finally, an extra loud clatter of bottles did prompt her to say: "I hope, Doctor, you don't mind Brian being in there." "No," said the doctor calmly. "He'll be quiet in a moment when he gets to the poisons." □



## THE ROAD TO GLORY

Ian Pinto *sdh*

Who hasn't ever dreamt of becoming famous? Most of our childhood fantasies are about narratives in which we are the heroes/heroines. Once we leave the comfort of our fantasy and enter the competitive world of social interaction, we realize that we aren't the only heroes around. Thus begins a lifetime of struggle to prove 'who is better'. After a while of friction some firmly establish themselves as heroes on account of their superior performance, looks, personality, wealth or whatever other criteria seems acceptable to the majority. Those who do not make the grade then scramble to find themselves a place in the camp of one hero/heroine or the other.

What triggers such affiliations? Associating oneself with a hero/heroine serves as a boost to one's ego which is smarting from the shock of realizing that one isn't in fact a hero/heroine. It gives a renewed sense of self-confidence and self-esteem. Such individuals begin to find their identity in relation to the hero/heroine in

whose company they find themselves. From your own experience you will be able to see such processes building up. Perhaps some of you may have even been a part of such a process.

Jesus made his entry into the Jewish world in a dramatic and yet quiet fashion. He was an unknown person for most of his life. It was only when he went about preaching and healing that his fame began to spread. For many of the people he was their *hero*. Naturally he began to attract followers. A good number followed him because they truly believed in him while others did so probably because they expected to receive things from him. Many flocked to listen to him while others couldn't stomach his teachings (*Mk 10:17-22; Jn 6:60-66*).

The disciples of Jesus had been with him for quite some time. They were getting to know him better as time passed. The Bible informs us that the disciples though they spent nearly all the time with Jesus had very few moments of clarity about who he was, what he taught and

how he performed miracles. Yet they followed him obediently. Jesus was slowly making a name in Israel and his disciples surely began to see themselves in a new light. They weren't just ordinary people anymore. Their close association with Jesus meant that now they too would attract fame. The disciples rejoiced in the 'glory' of Jesus because a portion of that glory would overflow into the thirsty desire for recognition they cherished. Jesus intuiting their thoughts often rebuked them for being slow to understand and believe (*Mt 8:26; 14:31; 15:16; 16:8, 11, 23; 18:17, 20; 19:14; 20:20-28; 21:21-22; 26:52-56; Lk 24:25-26*).

At some point of time, every leader has to make a difficult choice. No matter what he chooses he will always have some of his followers who will laud him and support him while others will criticize and desert him. For Jesus, his tough choice was carrying out the Will of the Father. The Father willed that "all men be saved and come to the knowledge of truth" (1 Tim 2:4). Jesus declared his intention of coming to earth clearly: "For I have come from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of the One who sent me" (Jn 6:38). John writes in his epistle: "God... first loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 Jn 4:10). From the above verses we gather that God loved us so much He was willing to sacrifice His son, a part of Himself, for our sake. Jesus had a tough choice to make. He could choose to do the Will of his Father and suffer and die for the redemption of mankind or he could carry on with his life and supernaturally save mankind. Perhaps many of us would

have chosen the easy way out but Jesus chose to do the Will of his Father notwithstanding the struggle and pain it would entail.

Peter was the first of his disciples to protest against his decision. Of course the disciples weren't aware of the dilemma of Jesus. They were merely informed of what he had intended to do and what tribulations awaited him. Jesus predicted an end that was not in keeping with what the disciples had in mind. His story didn't seem to have a happy ending at all. There was no glory or fame there. Instead there was shame, death and a mention of 'rising from the dead' which didn't seem exciting at all! They sought glory and Jesus offered them a cross. They wanted fame and Jesus served humility.

Jesus' suffering was not in vain. It didn't end in shame or disgrace. On the third day He rose in glory from the dead just as He had foretold (Lk 24:7-8). The path to glory traced by Jesus included renunciation, self-abnegation and suffering. He says: "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself, take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt 16:24-25). Jesus seeks to share his glory with anyone who is interested. He extends an invitation and makes his conditions clear. Very few of us will achieve some sliver of the passing glory this world advertises but all of us can achieve the eternal glory that Jesus offers. Are we ready to trod the difficult path that He himself has walked before us? If yes, then the crown of glory is one cross away. □



# Quiet Spaces

## ANGELS AND DEMONS

Morning meditation by His Holiness Pope Francis  
in the Chapel of Domus Sanctae Marthae on Monday, September 29, 2014

The fight against the subtle plans of destruction and dehumanization brought forth by the devil — who “presents things as if they were good”, even inventing “humanistic explanations” — is “an everyday reality.” And unless we fight “we will be defeated.” But we have the certainty of not being alone in this fight, because the Lord entrusted to the archangels the task of defending man. Pope Francis recalled the actual role of Michael, Gabriel and Raphael during morning Mass at Santa Marta.

The Pontiff began by pointing out that “the two Readings we heard — both that from the Prophet Daniel (7:9-10, 13-14) and that from the Gospel according to John (1:47-51) — speak to us about glory: the glory of heaven, the court of heaven, the adoration in heaven.” Thus, he explained, “there is glory” and “in the midst of this glory there is Jesus Christ.” In fact, Daniel says: “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him”. Here, Francis said, is “Jesus Christ, before the Father, in the glory of heaven”.

The day’s liturgy also reintroduces this reality in the Gospel. Thus, the Pope continued, “to Nathaniel, who was astonished, Jesus says: ‘you shall see greater things than these... you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.’” And the Holy Father used “the image of Jacob’s ladder: Jesus is at the centre of the glory, Jesus is the glory of the Father.” A glory which, the Bishop of Rome clarified, “is promised in Daniel, is promised in Jesus. But it is also a promise made in eternity.”

The Pontiff then referred to the “other Reading” from Revelation (12:7-12). In this text as well, he indicated, “glory is spoken of, but as a battle.” In fact, it reads: “Now war arose in heaven: Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world — he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.” It is the “battle between the Devil and God,” the Holy Father explained. But “this battle happens after Satan seeks to destroy the woman who is about to give birth to her son.” Because, the Pope stated, “Satan always seeks to destroy man: that man whom Daniel saw there, in glory, and who Jesus told Nathaniel would come in glory.” The Pope said further that, “from the beginning, the Bible tells us about this:

Satan’s seduction to destroy. Perhaps out of envy.” And in this regard, in reference to Psalm 8, Francis highlighted that the angel so highly intelligent “could not bear this humiliation on his shoulders, that an inferior creature could be made superior; and he sought to destroy him.”

“The task of the People of God”, the Pontiff explained, “is to guard the man himself: the man Jesus. Guard him, because he is the man who gives life to all men, to all humanity.” And, from their side, “the angels fight in order that man wins.” Thus, “the man, the Son of God, Jesus and man, humanity, all of us, fight against all these things that Satan does to destroy him.”

Indeed, Francis affirmed, “so many projects, except for one’s own sins, but so many, many projects for the dehumanization of man are his works, simply because he hates man.” Satan “is subtle: the first page of Genesis says so. He is subtle, he presents things as if they were good. But his intention is destruction.”

In the face of Satan’s work “the angels defend us: they defend man and they defend God-man, the superior man, Jesus Christ, who is the perfection of humanity, the most perfect one.” This is why “the Church honours the angels, because it is they who will be in the glory of God — they are in the glory of God — because they defend the great hidden mystery of God, that is, that the Word came in the flesh.” He is exactly “who they want to destroy; and when they cannot destroy Jesus the person, they seek to destroy his people; and when they cannot destroy the People of God, they make up humanistic explanations that actually go against man, against humanity and against God.” This is why, the Pope said, “the battle is a daily reality in Christian life, in our family, in our people, in our Churches.” Such that “unless we fight, we will be defeated.” However, “the Lord has mainly given this task to the angels”, that is, “to fight and win.” And also for this reason, he added, “the final song of the Apocalypse, after this fight, is so beautiful: ‘Now salvation is fulfilled, the strength and the Kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ, because our brothers’ accuser has fallen, the one who accused them day and night before our God.’” The objective, therefore, was destruction and, as a result, there is this “victory song” in the Apocalypse. Recalling the Feast of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, the Pope affirmed that this was an especially suitable day to turn to them. And also “to recite that old but beautiful prayer to Michael the Archangel, that he continue to fight to defend humanity’s greatest mystery: that the Word became man, died and rose again.” Because “this is our treasure.” And, Francis concluded, let us ask that the Archangel Michael to continue “to fight to guard it.” □

## NICK SHOWS THE WAY

From Fr. Ian Doulton's collection of stories

This time I'd like to dwell on a city and a man. The city is yawning its way to the end of another day. It's been an important day. The people in the well-heeled of the city are reading the headlines over continental meal washed down by a fine wine... while over on the other side there are some standing in the fading evening light listening to their transistor radios to catch the latest news. Today the city officials are wondering what to do to bring down the rate of juvenile crime and increase spending on law enforcement. The minister in charge of housing comments that there are more city slums than 12 months ago and rents are spiraling even slum housing causing untold hardship to low income families. An official from the welfare department had this to say: We have an increasingly serious problem of old age in this area. People are living longer but many are finding that there is no place for them with today's families. We must do something to increase care and security for the elderly... and enlarge our residential facilities...

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Down a busy city street in one of the flats in the low-income housing area swarming with the poor, an old man is reading a book. He's a small man with grey hair and a grey moustache. His name is Nick Dohanyios, aged

57, country of birth: Greece; citizenship: American, occupation: cook. The book he is reading makes him important; it makes him one of the most important men in the city. He believes what he reads. He does what the book says. He's done that ever since he came to this country thirty years ago. Pittsburg was his first home in America. There he opened a coffee shop; the coffee was always fresh and Nick talked to his customers as though they were people. He built up a good business, so good, he took on a partner. At 7.30 every evening he closed the shop, went to his room in a small hotel and he read the book. He read in the book words like these: *"Of what good is it, my brothers, if a man says he has faith but no corresponding deeds. Can such faith save him? If a brother or a sister has no clothes or no daily food, and one of you says to them: 'go and be at peace, warm yourselves and eat plenty, yet does not give them the things that are necessary for the body, of what good is it? So too faith, if it does not express itself in deeds has no life in it."*

His partner's name was George. One day Nick noticed that George looked worried. Going up to him behind the counter he whispered: "You've got to get away. Take two or three days off." But George simply turned and told Nick that he wasn't tired he was worried." Nick thought, as usual, George had a scrap with his wife. With

half a smile George said: "No, not today; I'm worried because I did something foolish. Oh, it was a long time before I became partners with you and now I've got to pay for it." And the sum that George gave someone was four thousand dollars. Putting his head in his hands he thought aloud: "Well, I tried my own business. I borrowed money, I thought I could pay it back and the business failed. And when you have five kids..." He had wonderful kids, Nick knew that but they have to be fed, clothed and educated... and George went on: "Now, this fellow I borrowed the four thousand from says he'll take me to court. He's threatened to take all my furniture, all the money I've made here. I've got a letter from him today." He was so frustrated he simply stood up: "Ah, Nick, I'm going to go out and get drunk right now!" Nick said he would come with him... and added: "Ah, but only one drink!" Before they parted for the night Nick looked into George's eyes and said: "George, don't talk to me. I'll think tonight and tomorrow I'll tell you what I think."

The following morning Nick opened up bright and early and as soon as George walked in looking a little worse for wear Nick, with a broad smile said: "George, I've been thinking all night. This is what I decide: You now own this coffee shop!" George thought Nick wanted him to buy it but Nick shook his head of silvery grey hair: "You don't have to buy it just take it. I'm giving it to you!" George

couldn't believe it: "You're kidding!" George explained it very simply: "I've got two strong hands. I've got no wife, five kids and no four thousand dollars debt. I think I'll go see what's going in New York... oh and George: Give me the fare to New York, that's all, will you?"

Nick got off the train at New York's Grand Central Station and watched the people hurrying in and out. Two weeks later he set up his new business selling apples in front of the terminal. With his simple smile and heavy Greek accent he called to passersby: "Apples, apples, big, red, good river apples... only 5 cents... nice juicy apples..." Even counting the apples he sold to kids and down-and-outers for a penny or less. He made enough money. He then bought a new business on 14<sup>th</sup> Street. He bought himself a shoeshine stand and started again: "Shine...Shine...shoe shine...make them look like new...shine the boots..." And he got clients... He lived in a furnished room. Every evening when he went to his room and he read his book. He read in the book: *A new commandment I give unto you, love one another as I have loved you. So, I want you to love one another. By this token shall all the world know, you are my disciples by cherishing love for one another.*

One morning calling to his customers Polish...shine... Mister...shine?" He noticed a middle-aged man looking down and out and exhausted. From his accent he recognized that he was Greek and to Nick's delight he

said he was from Athens! Nick embraced him and asked how long had been in the city and he was told, just over a year. But sadly he had no work. Sitting by the stand he told Nick his story: "One year. No work in Athens, everyone's hungry. I have two sisters in Athens...they're hungry." He had to stop because he had a spasm of coughing. When that subsided he went on: "I promised to send money to bring them to America. I don't make any money." But there was a lot of work and plenty of money to be made. But his countryman countered: "Not for a man with a cough who knows only a cook's business. Doctors say: 'Steve, don't bend over hot stoves anymore. You're frying your own lungs. They said, 'get a job in the open air.'" Nick who was listening intently suggested that shoe shining was good business." Steve said he had walked past Nick's stands for some time...hoping to ask if Nick was willing to sell his business. Nick asked if he had any money. When Steve said he had a couple of hundred dollars, Nick's face brightened and he slapped him on the shoulder and said: "Tomorrow you write a letter. Send tickets to sisters in Athens...Tell your sisters that you own a shoeshine stand." Steve was confused: "But I can't buy stand." Nick smiled and simply said: "Who said buy? I give it to you!" Nick told his wonderstruck countryman that he didn't need the stand anymore and he couldn't leave it in the street or the police would be after

him. He simply wanted someone to take it and his reason: "You're my countryman. You've got to take the stand so the police don't get me."

This time Nick took the rail fare to Chicago. He walked along Michigan Avenue and watched the people. He walked through the back streets of the district and looked at the people. They had hungry faces there so he went into the food business. He sold cheap tasty and wholesome snacks that were gobbled up. After a while he thought he'd like an even bigger city so he moved back and took a job as a cook at a restaurant called: The "*Wander Inn*." That was a very long time ago. When I last tried to ask about him they said...he was still there. He was a good cook: prompt, efficient, with a single-mindedness of purpose. He earned \$54.55 a week, that's all \$54.55, take-home pay. In the evenings he sat in his room in the tenement on East 28<sup>th</sup> Street and read his book. He could recite pages of it from memory. But every once in a while the words of Christ spoke to him in a new tone: *When you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing. Thus your alms given in secrecy and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you.*

After he read that one day, he went to his Parish Priest. They had a long talk and he came away with a list of names and addresses. Then miracles started happening around his neighbourhood.

There was surprise after surprise...suspicion turned to de-

light...and gratitude...but to whom?

One often heard things like: "I don't know who did it, honey! Here's the envelope just the way I found it in the door; \$54.55 in it."

Then again: "Somebody gave us 30 bucks to pay the rent! My kid brother says it was Santa Claus but in June, Santa Claus? But somebody *did* shove it under the door and beat it... I heard him."

A youngster screamed with excitement when his old man looked at him with suspicion. "But Pop, I never stole the dough. This envelope's got my name on it, Joe Wright, so I can go to that job in Jersey City? How did he know the parole officer told me to go there to get away from the gang?"

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Every so often Nick goes to the Pastor to get more names and addresses. He usually takes his list and ducks fast. But one day the Pastor asked him to stay: "Nick are you sure you can afford this? I know that sometimes you give your whole week's paycheck. You're not depriving yourself of anything you really need, are you?"

"Father, what does an old man like me need? Few groceries, room for sleeping, one suit, work clothes and a suit for church. I got money left over. What am I going to do with the money?" The Parish Priest was almost moved and said: "Nick, speaking of Church, I saw you there the other day. I'd swear you were crying?"

Looking at his calloused hands Nick said: "Sometimes, in church I feel sorry."

"Why Nick, you're not worried about anything are you?" The priest went on.

Looking directly at his Pastor Nick said: "In church I feel sorry because I am a sinner. All men are sinners. I go to be sorry and ask God forgiveness." Then as an afterthought he asked: "Is what I do with the money Ok Father?"

"Nick, it's one hundred percent Ok."

"And you won't tell anybody. You keep it secret?"

"Top secret, I'll never let on to anybody. This is between you and me and God."

That's Nick Dohanyios: In the city where he rents one room, officials are desperately searching for answers to the life and death questions of a metropolis. But they've passed up the real answer which is in the book Nick reads. They've overlooked the fact that they are dealing with men who have not only minds and bodies but souls. Give me ten men like Nick. Ten men who read that book and do what it says and I'll give you East 28<sup>th</sup> Street without hunger and without shivering in the winter. Give me a thousand men who will spend their extra time, money and attention on the lonesome, the hungry and the lost, then the plans of the city fathers about Juvenile Delinquency, slum housing and help for the aged will accomplish their purpose. Give me a city full of people who dare to love the family next door and I'll soon give you peace in this world. □

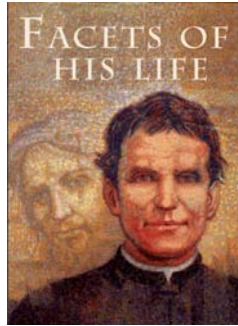
## THE PROBLEM OF SUSTENANCE

by Natale Cerrato

*Keeping in mind the peasant customs of the time one better understands the situation of Don Bosco's boys.*

The peasant families of Piedmont were not the only ones who lived frugally. Agricultural properties were generally not extensive though the mouths that had to be fed went on increasing. With the risk of having bad harvests and famines, to say nothing of wars meant that social security was practically non-existent. Therefore the only way to survive through these persistent discomforts was to use Mamma Margaret's method: "by constant hard work, continuous thrift and by attention to the smallest details." (MO 9) The Piedmontese word *speculassion* not only meant other commercial activities but also and more often, as in our case, studying any and every option of doing business.

Frugality at table was just one aspect. The staple food in the morning, at noon and in the evening was *polenta* (gruel made of maize). There might also be some salad for breakfast, a few peppers sprinkled with olive oil or a fist full of chestnuts. At supper again, there would be *polenta* and there would be something with it...maybe a little milk but it didn't last very long. There was also bread, but rarely white bread (wheat flour bread). More often than not it was black or whole wheat or rye bread or a mixture of both. Meat was seen only on feast days or special



occasions when a pig was killed in winter. Chicken was only cooked for the landlord or if someone was ill. It was a crime to eat an egg. Usually eggs and flour were taken to the market and exchanged for salt, sugar, oil and other necessities. Good wine was only drunk on feast days. The usual drink was vinegar diluted with some water.

The usual meal for a casual labourer or a mason was no better: *polenta* or a piece of bread with cheese at noon and *polenta* or soup with a little vegetable in the evening.

Now keeping this in mind we may be in a position to understand what meals the boys at the Oratory of Valdocco had, at the time of Don Bosco.

### Bread and Soup at Valdocco

Till 1851 it was Mamma Margaret who prepared the hot soup that everyone ate. The boys got a bowlful each from the hands of Don Bosco himself. He would stand there with an apron round

his waist, a ladle in hand and pour each one his share. They took it gratefully and walked off to the playground to consume it. Don Bosco gave each of them 25 cents to buy themselves some bread on their own in the city. "Those who were not too fussy bought whole wheat or coarse army bread; the more fastidious preferred soft white bread (EBM 3, 249). The bread made from bran flour was nothing but black or dark brown. The bread-biscuit was baked twice to preserve it but it was tougher than the bread supplied to the army. The white bread was rather soft and fluffy.

After 1851 the boys did not disperse into the playground to have their meals, they sat down at proper tables. The 25 cents distributed for bread also ceased and this was replaced by real bread with which the boys stuffed themselves...so they were no longer left without bread. The tin bowls were abolished and these were replaced with real soup bowls in which they could dip their bread (the so called *panada*) and eat it. Finally, they began to have real meals, first only on Thursdays and Sundays, then daily and they had more vegetables and soup (MB 4, 334).

Don Bosco's initiatives to feed his little fledglings had no limits. For instance, in 1854, having leased out a part of his property to a dairy farmer who also produced butter and cheese, the man agreed to provide some of his produce to the boys in place of rent. Bread, however, was always the fundamental sustenance at Valdocco. Don Bosco provided this more or less abundantly depending on the possibilities. At breakfast the boys

would have either have a *biòva* or a *gavass*. The *biòva* was a typical Piedmontese loaf of a fairly good size. The *gavass* was an elongated loaf (in Piedmonese *gavass*). There would be no crumbs left on the table, sometimes there were soups-sticks *i ghersin* (grissini) or little biscuits in the shape of sticks that are still consumed today.

If Don Bosco was lavish with bread there was however need to recommend discretion. In a talk he gave to the youngsters on November 27, 1864 he gave them these tips:

"Do not gorge yourselves [...] I am not telling you this for my own good. I know very well that if you eat one roll less at breakfast, you will eat three at lunch [...] When your stomach is overloaded, your minds get foggy, you feel listless and sleepy and you cannot concentrate on your lessons (EBM 7, 482).

He was very displeased when he saw a youngster waste even a small piece of bread.

### Daily and Feast Day Menus

For some years Valdocco made a distinction between lower and higher boarder menus. This was due to the fact that some well-to-do families were willing to pay, and they found their sons become undisciplined or on the verge of become unruly because they were willing to pay their dues. Don Bosco gave these youngsters something extra at dinner, that is, a second meal that consisted, at lunch, of a slice of cheese or a bit of boiled meat and at supper some fruit in addition to the vegetable that everyone else had. For a few years we called this the second table, or the middle table. The dis-

tion, however, did not please Don Bosco and so a few years later he put an end to it.

The fees at Valdocco varied from 5 to 24 lire monthly. But even as Don Bosco demanded that all those who could pay should pay, he very easily made concessions and exceptions when he saw that there was need. One student, returning to the Oratory after his convalescence at home, instead of paying his fees brought six soft untouched *robiole* cheeses from home. This was common in Piedmont and Lombardy. They could be worth 50 cents. This amounted to three months fees and Don Bosco accepted it with a smile (cf EBM 11, 237).

On feast days there was always something special at table. Already at the time of the Oratory at the *Convitto* (the seminary where Don Bosco was studying) on via San Francesco di Assisi, the Oratory of Don Bosco under the patronage of Fathers Guala and Caffasso enjoyed special treats on feast days. Don Bosco himself remembers that on the feast of St. Anne, the patroness of masons and casual labourers, the boys were invited to breakfast at the great conference hall of the seminary. Once there were almost a hundred of them and they were all provided with ample provisions of coffee, milk, chocolate, pastries, cakes, semolina and other and other sweet dainties much loved by children" (MO 131).

Later, at Valdocco, Don Bosco used to add a more or less medium sized slice of salami to the breakfast and a little wine to the lunch. There was soup served after the Christmas midnight Mass. At the

time of the carnival cherries were distributed and chestnuts were handed out on the evening of All Souls Day and so on...

#### Courtesy and Frugality

While Don Bosco devised several means to provide wholesome and nutritious food for his boys, his mother chose to continue as before and she would have some cold *polenta*, a pepper or an onion, or a few radishes seasoned with salt. She was perfectly satisfied with this Spartan fare (EBM 4, 106). And the example of the mother was followed by her son for the rest of his life. In place of meat with spices, Don Bosco preferred potatoes seasoned with vegetable and herbs provided they were well cooked and though insipid it appealed to his taste. The wine he drank was always diluted with water which he sipped with a smile. "I've renounced the world and the devil, but not the *pumps* (*pomps* – a play on words)" he would say. Up to 1858 and even later, his wine cellar was partly stocked with samples and leftovers from the market which City Hall sent almost weekly to the Oratory; red and white, sweet and dry wines were mixed together; sometimes good wine was mixed with sour (cf EBM 4, 134). And Don Bosco knew well the wines of his time. He was the son of Piedmontese wine cultivators. From the time he was a boy he knew how vines were cultivated and how wines were produced and the various qualities of wine. Not for nothing did he enjoy regaling his listeners with stories of *Gianduja* during which he would occasionally speak of wines like *Barbera d'Asti*, or *Barolo*, or *Moscato di Trevi*, or

*Siracusa*, or *Malvasia*, *Bordeaux* and *Nebbiolo*, or *Tokai*, or *Vin Santo* and *Caluso*...he was an expert.

He himself was extremely mortified but extremely generous with his benefactors. He sent them the best wines that he could afford. In a letter he wrote from Alasio to Father Berto, his secretary on July 7, 1877 he requested him to buy a case or two of bottles of wine for the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Mons. Aneiros:

"I am entrusting you with a series of commissions, assuming that you have strong legs:

- *A case or two for the Archbishop of Buenos Aires: A Bordeaux, a Malaga, a Barbera, a Grignolino, a Nebbiolo, a Moscato di Trevi*, in all 15 to 20 bottles. Check their vintage, the older the better... prepare the cases and I think you should have them sent to Genoa (E. 1613). As you can see, with the generosity of the gift was also the concern for their vintage!

Finding himself in Rome in 1879, he brought Card. Nina, the Cardinal Protector of the Salesians and eighty year-old bottle of wine and he kept a ninety year old "*Bellel*" – so called because of the vineyard it had come from and reserved it for the Pope in 1881 (cf. 15, 133). Writing to his procurator, Father Dalmazzo in that same year, in order to treat his cousins Sigismondi, Alessandro and Matilde, who used to host him while he stayed in Rome he wrote:

"If you can go and tell Sig. Alessandro that this year I will not be able to celebrate St. Matilda on the proper day, but that solemn feast may be transferred to another day when together we may share a bottle of Cipro or some other wine that you like." (E 2171)

How refined the saint was!

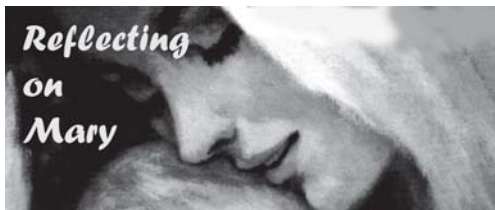
#### More or less Dangerous Tastes

In order to please his guests and benefactors Don Bosco was often compelled to taste some delicious wines against his will. One day in 1872, his friends at Peveragno offered him a Sardinian wine produced in Campidano di Cagliari called *Giro* (16-17<sup>o</sup>). It was a fine wine, ruby red in colour. Writing on May 5 of that same year to his pharmacist friend Angelo Lago of Pervagno, who would later become a Salesian priest, Don Bosco said:

"Please convey my wishes to the Provost, Father Schiez, to dear Father Luigi and Signor Campana and tell everyone that the next time when they return I will be careful about the *Giro* that easily makes the head of a gentleman spin." (E 1014)

On his trip to France in 1883, he had the occasion to taste some delicious wine from Frontignan, a southern *moscat*, just to please the Baron of Montigny, the master of the house.

Instead he deliberately refused the "*vino astigiano*" with the chestnuts that some of his assassins offered him one day on the Osteria del Cuor d'Oro, on via Cottolengo, 34. They had offered it to him under the pretext that they wanted him to hear the confession of a sick man. But with the help of God he managed to escape their clutches. The Lord's hand was always upon him as he completely abandoned himself to Divine Providence, with the words of the Gospel ringing in his mind: "Do not worry about your life, about what you are to eat or what you are to drink" (Mt 6, 25). □



## BE OUR MOTHER IN OUR PAIN

by Giuseppe Pelizza SDB

Love, in itself has a yearning for eternity. It holds in its dynamic the energy that takes it beyond our human condition. Yet, despite the intensity with which it is proposed to us, we always know that it is insufficient and limited. Difficulties, sufferings, sorrows and the ever changing rhythms of love itself are inevitable to those who love very tenderly. While in its greatest intensity, love often leads those who love to fall back on themselves and then they realize that as long as they desire to be one with the one they love they are still distinct and separate.

Every gesture of love that we perform on this earth, even though we realize what they intend, actually promise only what God alone can give. Those who are caught up in love hear this distress all the time: the absence of the beloved and a yearning for his/her indisputable presence.

It is the pain of love that disturbed Mary, when she felt the suffering of being separated

from Jesus during the three days that he was lost in Jerusalem. "Behold your father and I have been anxiously looking for you!" (Lk 2, 48). Mary's sorrow was a spasm of anguish that came from the fact that she was separated, an event that changed the predicted course of events.

True love never flows smoothly. Not even the most spiritual love is free from aridity, fruitlessness and the feeling that the presence of a beloved is missing.

It was with that anxiety that Mary returned to Jerusalem, to the Temple, to look for her Son. We see here the complete manifestation of her solicitude as a mother, of her loving concern. "We have been anxiously looking for you," are the words that Mary says to Jesus on our behalf in our night of sorrow and loneliness. He seems to be far away, like he was when the boat was overwhelmed by the stormy sea and the worried apostles woke him up.

With the loss of Jesus in the Temple anticipating the three

days of the Passion, Mary becomes aware of how inseparable love is from pain. She had a presentiment at Bethlehem when she experienced the bitterness of being excluded. This was expressed in Luke's few words that expressed all of man's rejection: "There was no place for them" (Lk 2, 7).

She had experienced the trauma of suddenly having to flee to Egypt when, almost like an illegal immigrant, she had to seek shelter from the cruelty of Herod. Now she had to live this with a new intensity something more profound and dramatic.

First it was people who were the cause of her anguish. Now it was her Son whom she strenuously defended and for whom she lived: "Son why have you done this to us?" (Lk 2, 48)

If earlier God had entered her life most unexpectedly, now he becomes inexplicable. In the face

of this obscurity, the anguish of seeking him is not attenuated but it feeds on new questions that seem to become unbearable.

"Why have you done this?" is not just Mary's question; her words are our words too, our silences, our questions to God when he visits us on our nights of grief and suffering. Then our question is no longer ours, it becomes Mary's too: "Son why? We all know the reply of Jesus: "Did you not know that...?" They are incomprehensible words for Mary and for us too when we are in pain and we turn to God and hear no answer.

If in those moments, which seem to be filled only with the absence of God, we also feel abandoned by those we have tried to love, then we look to Mary and like her, we come to Jesus without saying a word, we hold on to him as she did and embrace him as she did when she found him in the Temple. And in silence, we return with him from those places without answers, holding his hand, as she did, tenderly, the mother, in her pain.

Only in time will we understand the remoteness of those three days in the temple that produced so much anguish and torment which were another anticipation of the Passion. He remained in the Temple of His Father, our life and our hope; to rebuild His body, anguished with sorrow. Then we too will be able to understand the silence of God in our suffering and his closeness to us as we are built up, for our good, with a love that no longer knows the anguish of absence and pain. □



Mary, Mother of God  
and Lady of all Glory  
At the Monastery  
of Vatopaidi, Mount Athos

## NEWSBITS

### MEDJUGORJE



When on June 24, 1981, Our Lady appeared to six kids between the ages of ten and sixteen, Medjugorje was a small and poor town of Yugoslavia. Many lived in homes without heating and running water, not everyone had electricity. Since then, according to a study of the University of Herzegovina, the turnover increased vertiginously to nearly 12 billion euros, especially after the war had ended. In Medjugorje live 5 thousand people, 2 thousand of which are employed in tourism as the small town holds over 20 thousand beds. The little village is now a "new town", full of salmon-colour hotels carrying celestial names, dozens of sacred objects shops, pizzerias.

Pope Francis has just made it clear; the 1981 appearances are credible, while the following ones are more similar to a mail-box. The shrine is among the most visited in the world: about two million faithful per year, a fertile ground for continuous conversions. Whether there have been apparitions or not is now secondary: Medjugorje is a place of undeniable mystical strength. Yet there are also some who leave town nauseated from the mercionium. (*LaStampa*)

### EL SALVADOR



*Captain Álvaro Rafael Saravia*

In the jubilee year dedicated to monseñor Romero - which will end on August 15, anniversary of his hundredth birthday - a Salvadoran judge has decided to reopen the case of his assassination. Judge Ricardo Chicas's decision follows last year's ruling of the Constitutional Court of El Salvador to derogate the amnesty law, which prevented the prosecution of perpetrators of crimes committed during the bloody civil war. The judge who reopened the Romero-case also annulled the immunity enjoyed by Captain Álvaro Rafael Saravia, the only one prosecuted for the Romero crime who benefited from the amnesty and demanded that the Prosecution pronounce its decision. 37 years later El Salvador is still trying to clarify the responsibilities of his death and his perpetrators and instigators. The auxiliary bishop of the capital, Gregorio Rosa Chávez, a life-long friend and among the most prominent promoters of the canonization case of the assassinated archbishop, revealed in the metropolitan cathedral, home of Romero's remains, that the Church wants to "forgive, certainly, but the element of justice is a condition for forgiveness." □



## walking with the Church

### *Those Who have Died - Statues*

*From St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland*

**Q.** *What is the Church's teaching on those who have died? Do they go to heaven/hell or do they simply rest, being unaware of the circumstance until Judgement Day? Is it when a person dies; is it then that they are assigned where they will go?*

**A.** Thanks for your question. When one is asked about the afterlife two statements from the New Testament come to mind: "This day you will be with me in paradise" - Christ to the thief. The second is from St. John's Epistle, 'My dear people we are already the children of God, but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed: we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.' (1 Jn 3:1). Assuming the natural drive for happiness is the driving force in our lives the Christian message is simple. That happiness is to be found only in seeing God face to face, and that is what Heaven is, seeing God face to face. Whether we know it or not all our desiring is ultimately a desire for God who alone can satisfy our hearts' desires and our deepest human longings: 'no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.' (1 Cor 2:9) Death has been conquered by Christ's death.

*If we are to enter this life with*

God, then we must decide to seek him and love him and avoid all serious sin, especially by failing to meet the needs of the poor and little ones who are Christ's brothers and sisters. Refusal to love him or to repent of our sins against him and our neighbour, leads to self-exclusion from his presence which we call hell. We do not know if there is anyone in hell but we do know there are many in heaven where we shall find everything that was good, beautiful and precious here on earth.

### **In-between stage**

But for many of us there is probably an in-between stage before we enter into the perfect vision of God; we call it purgatory. It is a time of purification, of detaching us from all those attachments and selfishness in life which prevented us from achieving a profound and intense love of God which alone makes us ready for his presence. God is love. But purgatory is not a place of punishment. It may be just a moment or an extended time of suffering; the suffering involved is love's purifying action which is experienced even here on earth by everyone who loves. It is death to self, a constant experience of lovers. It is

always painful to move out of our egoism; but it will be the degree of purification needed which determines the pain and that will differ for each of us in purgatory.

As to the detail of your question: All who die in the love of Christ go immediately into the presence of God either perfectly or imperfectly. If the Resurrection is a future event then the separated soul alone achieves that goal at death. But if, as many theologians think now, the Resurrection is an individual thing and takes place at the moment of death, then once ready for the full vision of God, we are present to him body and soul. Body and soul enjoy that vision.

**Q.** Aren't all those statues in the Catholic Church the same as

*worshipping graven images which is forbidden in the bible and is against the second commandment?*

**A.** The Council of Trent in the 16th Century answers that question clearly "The images of Christ, the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints are kept and honoured in churches not because it is believed that there is any divinity or power in these images, or that anything may be asked of them, or any faith put in them. The honour shown to them is really being given to the persons whom they represent. Through these images which we kiss, and before which we bow with bared heads, we worship Christ, and not the saints whose likenesses they display. □

### **LIFE IS LIKE A CUP OF COFFEE**

**A** group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. Conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life.

Offering his guests coffee, the professor went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups - porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain looking, some expensive, some exquisite - telling them to help themselves to the coffee.

When all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said: "If you noticed, all the nice looking expensive cups have been taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress.

Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases it is just more expensive and in some cases even hides what we drink. What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups... And then you began eyeing each other's cups.

Now consider this: Life is the coffee; the jobs, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain life, and the type of cup we have does not define, nor change the quality of life we live."

Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee. Savour the coffee, not the cups! The happiest people don't have the best of everything. They just make the best of everything. Love God. Live simply. Care deeply. Speak kindly. □

### **THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS**



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

My sincere gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ and Mother Mary for granting a good life partner to my niece Marina and for all other favours received. Continue to shower us with your blessings. *Sabina Braganza Goa*

Through the recitation of the Three Hail Marys, I am grateful to our Blessed Mother for her constant graces and protection. Thank you Mother. *Audrey Cabral, New Zealand*

Thank you dear Heavenly Mother, for the special grace received through the recitation of the Three Hail Marys. Please, dear Mother continue to bless, help and watch over us. *Heldt Family, Australia*

Thank you dearest Jesus and Mary for blessing my daughter with a job and always being there to guide and help her in her studies. Dear Mother Mary, continue to bless both my daughters and guide them through life's journey. *Cheryl Lobo*

As I was travelling to school in an autorick, the wheel came off and the autorick turned turtle and I fell off my seat. I had just finished reciting the 'Hail Mary'. I escaped unhurt, without even a bruise. Jesus and Mother Mary were there. They saved me. Thank you Jesus, thank you Mary. *S. C. Pinto, Goa*

Our sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mother Mary. We're extremely sorry for the delay in acknowledging our gratitude and for curing my daughter from an illness. *Pius D Souza, Mumbai*

Grateful thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary and all the saints for protecting my family in every difficult situation. Please continue to protect us. *Peter Lobo, Navi Mumbai*

I was suffering from a cyst on my chest. I started praying to Mother Mary and the cyst disappeared. After some days it reappeared. I started praying sincerely to Mother Mary and was so happy when the cyst disappeared completely. I thank Mother Mary for all the favours received. *Mrs. P. Rebello, Mumbai*

Thank you Mother Mary Help of Christians for helping my daughters clear their Std XII exams with a distinction. *Sarita Fernandes, Goa*  
O My Mother Help of Christians, I thank you unconditionally for answering all my prayers and each time I call you for your help. *Clara Bernadet Fernandes, Mumbai*



### LOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER

In May 2016, I was returning from office and was waiting on the platform to board the local train which was late and the platform was overcrowded. I was standing back and when the train halted I tried to board the train. However, I got pushed by somebody from behind and instead of getting a grip on the door of the train, I was pushed towards the gap between two bogies. The pressure was so much, that I was balancing on one leg and my upper body was falling towards the tracks. I completely blanked out and I thought this is the end. But suddenly, an old lady with white short grey hair, held my hand, and gently took me inside the compartment. I was still dazed and shocked with fear, not knowing what was happening. When the train started moving, I realized what just took place and I started looking around for that lady, to thank her for saving my life. But I did not see her in the compartment. I believe it was God who sent her to save my life. A million thanks to Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mother Mary for being there always and taking care of me and my family. *J. DSouza, Mumbai*  
Million thanks to the Holy Trinity and Mama Mary for your blessings bestowed upon my family last year. My mother was cured of a severe attack of asthma and up to now her reports are clear. Thank you Jesus and Mary. *Miss Flory Fernandes, Mumbai*

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

Thanks to Our Blessed Mother Mary and the saints for all the favours granted through their intercession. May they continue to shower their blessings on us and protect us from the evil one, i.e the devil.

*Jubel D'Cruz, Mumbai*

Mrs. Wendy Dias was sick and was suffering from kidney problems. I prayed to Our Lord, Our Mother Mary Help of Christians, St John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio, through whose intercession she was cured.

*B. Rodrigues, Goa*

I was suffering from psoriasis for the last two years. Consulting renowned dermatologists didn't help. After sincerely invoking the Holy Spirit, Mother Mary and Holy Don Bosco, I was healed without any medication.

*A Devotee*

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary and Don Bosco for a successful medical test. Thank you dear Mother for hearing my prayers and helping my niece to get through all her hurdles. Please continue to keep her under your protection.

*M.M. Caldeira, Goa*

Praise, honour and thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit, Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady, St. Joseph and all the saints for the many graces and blessings received.

*Mabel D'Cunha*

Our sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco, Dominic Savio, St. Mary Mazzarello and all the saints for graces and blessings received by my family.

*Ophelia and Flavio Mazzarello, Mumbai*

## THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Our heartfelt thanks to the Divine Mercy, Mother Mary, Dominic Savio and all the Saints for the gift of a healthy baby boy and for all the favours received. Please continue to bestow your blessings on our family.

*Mark and Altricia, Shillong*

My sincere thanks to Almighty God, Jesus, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for hearing my prayers and helping my children with their studies and for all the favours granted through the recitation of the Three Hail Marys.

*M.P. Pereira, Goa*

My heartfelt and sincere thanks to Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the safe and normal delivery of my daughter and

being blessed with a baby girl.

*Diana D'Cunha, Kochi, Kerala*

Thank you St. Dominic Savio for my safe delivery and giving me the gift of a child.

*Queenie Ferrao Goa*

There was uncertainty about my grandson's results to Std. VIII as he didn't fare well in Maths. But, but prayer and intercession to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio and of course dear St. Anthony he scored 50% in Maths and did all the other subjects well. My gratitude and unending thanks to our heavenly intercessors.

*A Devotee, Bangalore*

I thank St. Dominic Savio for the safe and normal delivery of my daughter Andrea Pinto and for the gift of a healthy and beautiful baby girl.

*Antoneta D'Souza, Mira Road*

My special thanks to Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for curing me from the sickness I had and also for granting my family good health and for all the favours I requested.

*Maria Fernandes, Goa*

Thank you, Mary Help of Christians, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby and for many other favours granted.

*M. Menezes*

Thank you for the graces and favours received through the intercession of Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco, Dominic Savio and the saints. Do continue to protect my children, grandchildren, my husband and myself.

*Mrs. Rodrigues, Australia*

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*J. J. Fernandes, 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.

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