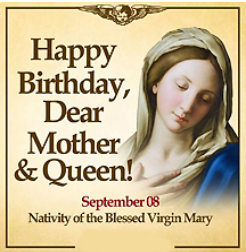


CONTENTS	
From The Editor's Desk: <i>Respect, It's Just Out of Style...</i> 3	
Motherhood - Ian Pinto, sdb.....	4
Youth on the Move: Personal Affects or Effects - Claudia Gualtieri.....	8
Salesian Saint: Ven. August Arribat.....	10
Vocation Promotion: Dn Merwin Fernandes.....	12
Witnesses In And For Our Times: St. Rosalia of Palermo.....	13
Lectio Divina: Ephphata! - Ian Pinto, sdb.....	16
Quietspaces: In The Little Things - Pope Francis.....	18
A Father's Ordeal - Fr. Ian Doulton's Collection.....	20
Don Bosco and His People: Deeds Not Words - Natale Cerrato 24	
Reflecting on Mary: Mary Loves Us As We Are - Angelo di Maria.....	28
NewsBits.....	30
Walking With the Church: Altar Boys and Altar Girls.....	31
In a Cheerful Mood.....	32
The Devotion of the Three Hail Marys.....	33
Loving Children to their Loving Mother.....	34
They Are Grateful to Our Lady & Don Bosco.....	34
Thanks to Dear St. Dominic Savio.....	35



*May your Church
exult, O Lord,
for you have renewed
her with these
sacred mysteries,
as she rejoices
in the Nativity
of the
Blessed Virgin Mary,
which was
the hope and
the daybreak
of salvation
for all the world.*

From The Editor's Desk

RESPECT, IT'S JUST OUT OF STYLE

Respect everyone, and love the family of believers. Fear God, and respect the king. - 1 Peter 2:17

It was a rainy afternoon. A friend of mine and his son were walking down the school hallway following a meeting. As she opened her umbrella to ward off the chilly shower, she heard a woman's voice pipe up. "Hello? Excuse me?" She turned to see one of the lunchroom workers. "Are you Rohit's mother?" she inquired, adjusting her cap.

"Yes," my friend answered. "Is something wrong?" Her heart fluttered and fretted. She had just left the vice-principal's office, where her son sat busted for pulling a stunt in class — which he and his friends found completely hysterical but which the teacher saw no humour in. My friend later admitted: "I was not bursting with parental pride. Now I feared he'd also misbehaved in the lunchroom."

"Oh, no. Nothing is wrong at all!" she asserted. "I just wanted to tell you how respectful your son is. He never fails to ask if I'm having a good day or flash a huge smile and thank me when I hand him his food. And he addresses me as 'ma'am' and calls the supervisor 'sir.' Such a fine and respectful son you've raised!"

To say that her words thrilled this parent's heart would be an understatement. In fact, it was a little kiss from God that day when this thoughtful school employee pointed out a positive quality she saw in her teenage son's behaviour.

Respect is frequently absent in our society. In person — and especially online — snark and sarcasm often rule. Talking down to someone or insulting one another is the new norm. For adults and for kids, respect is often nowhere to be found.

No longer do we use terms like "sir" and "ma'am" when speaking to a stranger. Addressing elders with terms of esteem is rare as well. And having respect for authority seems to have gone out of style long ago. And unfortunately, sometimes these comments and thoughts aren't tucked in an envelope of respect. Instead they are laced with cynicism, mockery, or disdain. The verse I quoted at the top of this editorial admonishes us about respect. And not just respecting those in authority, like a teacher or a police officer. It goes so far as to say that we are to respect everyone. Does this mean the grumpy neighbour who makes the landing his garbage dump? Yes. Does it include your combative relative who never speaks respectfully to you? Yep. That one too. Okay... deep breath... reach out to that person with your words this week — either spoken, written, texted, or typed — and say you admire that quality in them. Do not expect a response. Do it only to show love and display respect. As you do, think about this verse:

Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honouring each other. - Romans 12:10

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

MOTHERHOOD

Ian Pinto, sdb

Victor Hugo wrote a story in his last book *Ninety Three*. It was about a French lady who had two children. They were driven away from their home after the Revolution and had to face harsh conditions. They had no food or shelter and with the cold winter arriving, death seemed imminent. One day as they were trudging around looking for some scraps of food to satiate their growing hunger they were greeted by the sound of two soldiers coming their way. Instinctually, the woman gathered her kids and hid in the bushes. The two soldiers, a captain and a sergeant were busy in their conversation when they noticed a bush nearby shaking slightly. The captain ordered the sergeant to check who was stirring the bushes. The sergeant did as he was ordered and discovered the frail, starving woman holding on tightly to her children. The captain took pity on them and asked the sergeant to give them a loaf of bread. The children's eyes lit up with joy on seeing the food. On receiving the loaf, the woman thanked the soldiers and proceeded to divided it into two pieces, giving one piece to each child. The captain was surprised at her action and asked aloud, "Is it because she isn't hungry?" to which the sergeant replied, "No, it's because she's a mother."

This is quite a touching story



and does give rise to some very warm feelings for it touches a sensitive area in almost every person's life: the mother-child relation. This connection between mother and child begins from the first moment the child is conceived. Over the course of the child's development within the mother's womb it forms a bond that lasts well into life. This bond is vital and sacred as it goes a long way in forming and molding the child into the person he/she becomes. Numerous psychological studies have been conducted to investigate various psychological characteristics and surprisingly many of them have been traced back to the pre-natal and early childhood. This goes to show that these periods are crucial to the later development and character formation of the child. The one person who plays a dominant and crucial role during this delicately important period is the mother.

Mothers are the most wonderful creatures on earth. The Jewish proverb captures this sentiment well when it says, "God

couldn't be everywhere so he created mothers." Mothers are like superheroes without capes. They juggle a multitude of responsibilities and make it seem like child's play. In most families, the mother cooks, does the housecleaning, laundry, child-rearing and so much more besides holding a stable job. She works as much as her husband at the workplace and is just as tired but comes home and takes up her household chores as if that's all she has to do. She seldom complains and rarely has a holiday since nobody can go a day without food or a clean pair of clothes!

Even though others may have a holiday, mothers don't. Their job and responsibility as mothers is a full-time activity that doesn't allow them a moments rest. The role they play and responsibility they shoulder is crucial and is in fact a service to the whole human race. Think about it, without mothers where would we be? First of all, we wouldn't be born. Even if we were born by some unimaginable means, we wouldn't be nurtured, supported and raised by someone who is capable of giving us much more than life. We would be missing out on a lot of the most basic human experiences: the experience of security, love, self-sacrifice, tenderness and freedom. These are necessary not just in helping us develop a healthy personality but in making us human.

A young boy said to his mother, "Mommy, you are a fairy." She laughed at his childish innocence. He reiterated once again, "I

am serious, mother. You know everything." My child", the mother replied, "I try to answer all your questions as best as I can. When you grow older, you will not need me." Immediately the boy retorted, "No mom, I will always need you. Nothing can change that."

I think this is a real experience for many of us. No matter how big or rich or famous we have become we cannot be so ignorant and conceited to think that it was all our own doing. We would be nothing without our mothers, and yes, we do need them. No matter how old we've grown we will always desire and cherish the warmth and support that our mothers give us. They needn't even touch us, their presence itself exudes security and motivation. God knew what He was doing when He made mothers.

WOMAN AS CO-CREATOR

God said, "Let us make man in our image, to our likeness. Let them rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle, over the wild animals, and over all creeping things that crawl along the ground." So God created man in his image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Gen 1:26-28).

God created human beings in his own image and likeness and

bestowed on them the power to carry forward His work of creation. He made them co-workers with Him in the work of creation and also gave them the responsibility to take creation forward. This task belongs to both man and woman for it is only together that they can truly “be fruitful and increase”. Despite contrary opinions, man and woman are designed to be one. The second creation story in Genesis shows woman being created from the rib of man. Upon seeing her Man said, “Now this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She will be called woman because she was taken from man. That is why man leaves his father and mother and is attached to his wife, and with her becomes one flesh” (Gen 2:23-24).



Man and woman received a divine vocation: to be co-creators. This is both a gift and a responsibility to be used appropriately and in accordance with the Will of God. They complement one another in fulfilling this mission and contribute their own unique resources. It is this uniqueness that gives rise to such diversity within creation. No two beings are alike and their diversity does not simply lie in their

genetic make-up but also in their environmental nurture. Hence, even a pair of identical twins who are similar in most ways, can turn out to be poles apart in terms of likes and dislikes.

It is in this capacity as co-creator that a woman partakes of motherhood. “The man called his wife by the name of Eve, because she was the mother of all the living” (Gen 3:20). Motherhood is intrinsically connected to one’s vocation of co-creator. Fecundity and child-birth are only secondary characteristics of motherhood. Hence, motherhood is available to all women irrespective of marriage and children. By the very fact that one is a woman, she is called to be a mother. For this reason, even women who choose to remain single either because of their religious vocation or otherwise share in the common motherhood that is bestowed on the female race. In the act of bearing children one becomes a mother in a direct and real way but this does not restrict one’s motherhood merely to one’s own progeny although it ought to be primarily directed toward them.

HOME-MAKER

The first thing a marriage accomplishes is that it creates a basic unit of society and the Church, namely, the family. In the coming together of a man and a woman, no more as two but as one, the family takes on its distinctive character. It becomes a reflection of the image and likeness of God since it was in and through the divine image and

likeness that man and woman were created and ordained to the creative vocation. Hence, the church teaches that marriage aims at the good of spouses and the procreation of children. This is what a family is about: it is the space where new life can take root and blossom and where each person finds the resources to realize his/her divine destiny.

In this regard, a woman has a delicate and powerful role. She is the one who transforms a house into a home by exercising her creative capacity and feminine influence. Being a home-maker is a tough job. It demands a lot of work and is quite stressful. Unfortunately, this task is often reserved for women. While women may be better equipped to take up this responsibility, by no means is it only her job! The father is equally responsible for building a home and this doesn’t stop with the nurturing of children but also implies sharing in the other household responsibilities. It is a common misconception among men to think that being a home-maker is a feminine thing. It isn’t actually, it is a human thing!

Mothers are capable of building up the home and family in more ways than one. Besides the most basic functions that she performs, feeding the family, cleaning the surroundings and looking after the upkeep of the members, she also nurtures and educates the children and supports and cares for her husband. She is, in most cases at least, the focal point around which the whole family moves. The impor-

ance of a mother within a family cannot be stressed enough.

As the wife of President John Adams, Abigail Adams (1744 – 1818) was the second First Lady of the United States. Because her husband was often away from home for work, she often single-handedly ran their farm, wrote letters supporting equal rights for women and the abolition of slavery, and educated their five kids—including future president John Quincy Adams. Quincy Adams wrote: “My mother was an angel upon earth. She was a minister of blessing to all human beings within her sphere of action. Her heart was the abode of heavenly purity... She was the real personification of female virtue, of piety, of charity, of ever active and never intermitting benevolence.”

Mothers have the capacity to bring God close to the members of their family as well as to all other people they encounter. Through her activity as a mother she reflects the divine motherhood of God. She reveals the kindness, compassion, predilection and motivation that God gives to each of his children. She is also her children’s first educator and also their first link to the world. So a mother reflects God and the world to her children quite literally especially in the early stages of life. The image she reflects will be the foundation from which the child will later respond or react and therefore the value of the jewel that is the mother cannot be underestimated. □

PERSONAL AFFECTS OR EFFECTS

by Claudia Gualtieri

What's more important to today's youngsters: the affection of a person or the attachment to a material object?

Joseph, 19: *I think I won't be able handle not having anyone in my life.*

We cannot deny the importance of personal effects in our lives, but we should just put these objects back to their rightful place and avoid making a cult of them. I would never dispute the primacy of the person. Coming to think of it, in reality, this happens automatically and probably unconsciously for any of us.

Behind most of our obsessions with personal effects, is our need for affection. Just say you're looking for a particular piece of designer clothing, a particular bag or whatever, with a particular brand label. What are we actually looking for? We're actually hoping these 'things' will make us acceptable and affirmed by other human beings. Keeping this in mind, one of the most striking examples is the cellphone. We see social networks, blogs and virtual platforms constantly looking for approval and therefore affection. Each 'like' on our wall becomes a symbol of aff-

ection and we think it's real. The virtual world therefore becomes a projection of the real world, but it can also be a great illusion, a distorted projection that doesn't correspond to reality. Then, regarding my affections, there is obviously and most importantly, my mother, my brothers and sister, my girlfriend and some other particular mentors and friends from my old group. However, I don't think I'll be able to do without having people in my life. Even those who've caused me much pain; because there wouldn't be a negative side without a relationship and even the most conflicting relationship would have something positive. After all, we're nothing but the sum of all our relationships with others.

Eleanor, 21: *Love, warmth and emotions could never be replaced by a material object.*

I believe, that unfortunately, personal affects are becoming more and more important nowadays. Even children are much more tech-savvy today. I rarely see them playing outside with their friends instead, I hear them asking their mothers if they could

play on their cellphones or watch a movie on their tablets. Even on public transport (buses, trains or the metro) you find everyone glued to their screens. They no longer talk to the person sitting beside them or opposite them. But for me, what's even more shocking is that these objects overtake family conversation at meal-times. Everyone wants to possess something more, something bigger. I don't deny that there are some things that I'm pretty attached to. I realise that I have become increasingly dependent on my cellphone; from early morning when the alarm that I set the night before, sounds, I check my messages, see the commitments I have lined up and then who's celebrating a birthday today. I'm convinced that if I don't write down everything I might forget a lot of things and should I lose my cellphone, I wouldn't know what to do next. However, there are some personal attachments too that I can't do without. First of all, there's my family, my parents, they're the most important people in my life; they always support me. Then there are my grandparents, my uncles, my boyfriend and some other friends. I try to nurture these relationships very carefully. I'm convinced that it's much easier to live without personal effects, but personal relationships are much more profound and more important for us humans. Love, warmth and emotions will never replace personal effects.

Tomy, 26: *Affections are "distracted passengers"*

The impression that today's society gives is that personal effects

are very important. Everyone tries to keep up and so we need to have the top-of-the-line cellphone, the best video console, the trendiest shows, a car for my 18th birthday, even if, so far I've been content with a two-wheeler...and so on. Affections instead (citing a title Italian song by RAF are like "distracted passengers,") are great travel companions but ones you can be rid of easily. On the other hand, the same social dynamic every-day life throws up a whole lot of friends on social media platforms and then there are those who really count, very few ...or maybe none. For this reason I repeat that some of the dynamics of life and society almost forcefully deprive us of personal affections, making per-sonal effects almost indispensable for different reasons. Everything is subjective. I (for one) find it difficult to spend the holidays with the family. Just as we never miss an occasion to celebrate something that happens to us or to someone close to us. Speaking of personal effects, I can't do without my cellphone if I'm far away from home because it becomes absolutely essential to communicate quickly. Another thing that I can't do without, especially if I go out of town is my team scarf; more than anything else it's because of the strong bond that I have with my hometown. Speaking of personal affections on the other hand, in addition to my family and my dog I feel a strong bond with my birthplace. Finally, for me, the people I meet every day are very important, the ones that leave me with something and those with whom I leave a part of myself. □ (SB, Gennaio 2018)

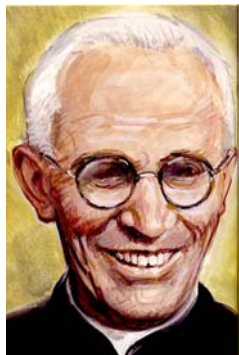


**SALESIAN
SAINTS**

**AUGUST
ARRIBAT
1879 - 1963
SALESIAN, PRIEST,
VENERABLE**

Joseph August Arribat was born at Trédou (France), a small town in the diocese of Rodez on December 17, 1879. He came from a family of seven children, he being the second. They were mainly farm labourers. Already as a boy he envied the happiness of priests who celebrated Mass. That was why he decided to enter the seminary. Since his family could not afford the fees, he was accepted at the Salesian house of Marseilles where he was able to commence middle school at the age of eighteen. Being thus already exposed to the Salesian life, he was sent as a "late vocation" to Toulon to continue his studies there. Because of the political situation at the turn of the century, he began his Salesian life in Italy with a group of French candidates. The group was received at Avigliana near Turin where he received the cassock at the hands of Blessed Michael Rua, the first successor of Don Bosco on October 20, 1903. After his novitiate he continued his formation at Ivrea.

When he returned to France, he began his Salesian life under semi-clandestine conditions, first in Marseilles and then at an agricultural orphanage at La Navarre in the diocese of Toulon. It was there he made his perpetual profession



in September 1907. While there he also studied philosophy and theology and was ordained a priest by Archbishop Fabre in Marseilles in 1912. A short time later the First World War broke out and he was drafted into the army as an ambulance nurse. His heroic behaviour earned him the *Croix de Guerre*. After the war Father Arribat became a teacher, catechist and the confessor of the young students and he also offered his services at the parish of Sauvebonne. In 1926 he was sent to the vocational-training school where he remained till 1931. That year he returned to La Navarre as Rector. It had now become a novitiate. At the same time he was put in charge of the parish of St. Isidore in the Sauvebonne valley. He proved to be good pastor to all his children. He would stay up looking after the sick throughout the night.

He was called "the saint of the

valley" and many miracles were attributed to him. At the end of his three year tenure he was sent to Morges, in the canton of Vaud, Switzerland, as a "temporary" rector. In 1935 the superiors assigned him to the new Salesian house of Millau, his original diocese where he was first a catechist and then rector. Unfortunately the war interrupted several flourishing activities there. In 1940 he warmly and selflessly welcomed refugees from the North of France and Belgium. He even gave up his room to confreres passing through, without them knowing that he had spent his nights in an armchair or in the chapel. The years spent in Villemur a town near Toulouse, from 1941 to 1947 were perhaps the busiest, filled with dangers and graces too. He succeeded, even in the midst of the war to start a school and see to its growth. The SS soldiers occupied his school where he was harbouring Jewish boys. Through his fortitude and his discretion he ably avoided any major catastrophes. For his selfless courage the Jews awarded him the "Righteous Among the Nations" medal. In 1947, at the age of 68 Father Arribat was sent, once more as director to Thonon, in the diocese of Annecy, the land of St. Francis de Sales. His work there enjoyed great success and many youngsters flocked to the Salesians. He was often seen praying in the chapel of *Foyer*: because of this, many of the graces received were attributed to the intercession of his prayers.

Wherever he was appointed, Father Arribat came across as an exemplary Salesian always dedicated to his mission as an educa-

tor. He was always present among the young students, in the playground, in chapel, at catechism class and even in the infirmary. He went from the refectory to the dormitory, from the confessional to the garden, always attentive to everyone and to everything. His life seemed to have been the incarnation of the Gospel expression: "I did not come to be served but to serve." He had an extraordinary respect and a great sensitivity for each person especially the little ones and the poor. He watched over the house and was considered its "lightning rod," like a new Saint Joseph whose name he bore. A candid and cheerful exterior, this son of Don Bosco never distanced himself from anyone. His leanness and asceticism likened him to the holy Curé de Ars, his kindness while his gentle smile likened him to St. Francis de Sales. "He was the most spontaneous man in the world" was a comment someone made about him. He had a way of greeting that was special; full of warmth and respect. On returning to La Navarre in 1953 Father Arribat spent his last years being available to one and all. He suffered a lot because of his health but never complained. He was appreciated as confessor by the novices and youngsters, by the diocesan clergy and by several people in the vicinity. His Franciscan habits, especially his love for nature, animals especially doves, gave rise to many incidents that could peg him as an ecologist before his time. He remained in La Navarre till his death on March 19, 1963, the feast of St. Joseph, at the age of 83. His mortal remains lie in La Navarre where he worked for thirty-four years. □



DN. MERWIN FERNANDES

A Deacon for the Salesian Province of Panjim

When I look back at my life, 13 years back, I still wonder what made me fall in love with Don Bosco. Becoming a priest was one of the many things that was running around in my mind during my high school days. Since I was diligent both in studies as well as catechism, the nuns in the school, the brothers who were doing their regency in my parish had encouraged me to think about it. I had listened to many vocation promoters who came to my school and spoke about their congregations but none had grabbed my attention. I had attended a number of vocation camps along with my companions since they were good fun. I had one thing clear in my mind that if I joined, I would join a congregation or even diocese whose full formation would be in Mangalore and didn't ask me to go far so that I could be near my parents. In fact the thought of leaving my parents and going away frightened me.

At the beginning of my 10th std. a Salesian (Fr. Maxim D'Souza) visited our parish. He celebrated Mass and met us altar servers. He said, "We Salesians work for the youth." That one sentence churned something inside me. Later he joined us for our regular Sunday cricket game which so far, no priest had done. Later I attended two camps conducted by Salesians and the life of Don Bosco just added fuel to this unknown desire within me. I kept in touch with Fr. Maxim but was still not sure about my decision.



After my board exams I told my parents about my desire. They were shocked and asked me to think it over till my results. I passed my 10th std. with a distinction. Many persuaded me to join after 12th std. and others dissuaded me since I am the only son.

But I wanted to join. I was not thinking about any other reservations from my family, friends, etc. Fr. Maxim spoke to my parents and clarified a few things about the congregation because none of us had heard about Salesians or Don Bosco. My father said, "Son, we are always with you. If ever you will feel that you are not meant, come back, the doors will always be open to you."

My journey with Don Bosco had begun. It was difficult staying away from home, coping up with my studies, etc. But here I am today a deacon! When I look back I am still surprised at the things that have happened in my life and I am proud to say that I am a Son of Don Bosco. □

Witnesses in & for Our Times

ST. ROSALIA OF PALERMO (SEPTEMBER 4)

by Mario Scudu, slb



Of St. Rosalia, as of quite a few of the ancient saints of the Christian Calendar, there are many oral traditions and popular devotions but very little historical information. There is a lot of iconographic evidence but meagre biographical evidence. The first written account of her life seems to date back to about four centuries after the saint's death. At that time oral traditions gathered already speak of the existence of the saint of Palermo.

There are no true historical documents, however these, together with the iconographic documentation are not without importance at least about accepting that her cult had already existed and was extensive in the collective imagination of the Christian population of Sicily and the surroundings and for this reason she has been invoked. In fact, in that period of time, there was no other cult so intense.

According to these traditions, Rosalia was born near Palermo into a noble family of the Sinibaldi who were of Normal origin be-



related (on her mother's side) even to Charlemagne. She grew up at the court in luxury and comfort till she got tired and disgusted with the pomp, vanity and the pride of life that she decided to leave everything; family, honours, riches and comforts and live alone. In short, she chose a life diametrically opposed to

her present lifestyle. She chose to live in solitude, a life of penance, prayer and meditation. She began a life of hard asceticism following the example of many who had made that choice before her.

Rosalia went to live in a cave at Santo Stefano Quisquina, not far from the city. An inscription discovered on the walls of that cave, perhaps written in her own hand reads: "*Ego Rosalia, Sinibaldi Quisquina ad Rosarum Domini, filia, Amore Domini mei Jesu Christi in hoc antro habitare decreti*" which means, 'I Rosalia, daughter of Lord Sinibaldi of Quisquina and Rose, have decided to live in this cave for love of my Lord Jesus Christ.' She also requested the protection and spiritual assistance of the monks of St. Benedict who lived, not far away. For this reason, some traditions state that she had become a Benedictine (also testified by some iconography that depicts her dressed as a nun). According to others, she belonged to the order of St. Basil.

In that cave Rosalia courageously faced the daily struggles against animals who were not really friendly and demons who were hostile towards her because they were angry at her long prayers and harsh penances that were, for her, a source of spiritual nourishment.

On the Slopes of Monte Pellegrino

After a while Rosalia moved closer to Palermo, precisely to Monte Pellegrino, staying in a stalagmite cave on its slopes. Here, we imagine, she followed more or less, the same routine as

before with her ascetical practices, being visited continuously by demons who continued to tempt her away from her way of life. It is interesting to note that until the early 1500s, in the vicinity of the cave, there were other hermits who called themselves "Hermits of S. Rosalia" in memory of her.

After a while, Rosalia moved closer to Palermo, precisely to Monte Pellegrino to a stalagmite cave on its slopes. Here, we imagine, she conducted more or less the same lifestyle as before with the ascetical practices that were well proven and practiced, being visited by demons that continued to tempt her away from her way of living. It is interesting to note that until the early 1500s, in the vicinity of the cave, there lived other hermits who called themselves "hermits of S. Rosalia" in memory of her. Many citizens of Palermo were attracted to her because of her reputation as a saint, asking for her prayers and her spiritual advice.

When Rosalia realized that she was reaching the end of her earthly life, she dug her grave, lay in it, and eventually died there. According to tradition it happened on September 4, 1166. Her grave remained unknown marked for five centuries until the people of Palermo, the clergy and the faithful were convinced that they had found her remains. Her cult began immediately after her death. She was venerated by the people of Palermo as their saint. And from the twelfth century, churches and chapels were dedicated to her in

Sicily and particularly in South-eastern Italy.

How were her remains discovered in that cave on Monte Pellegrino and why was the shrine erected in her honour?

Rosalia, patron of Palermo

Around 1624 her cult diminished but then it resumed with vigour when Rosalia was proclaimed the principal patron of Palermo. There were two versions of how that took place.

The first: It was said that the saint appeared (on May 26, 1624) to a certain Giacomina Gatto who was sick with the plague and was almost completely healed after having climbed up to Rosalia's cave to give thanks to Blessed Virgin and to the saint for her healing.

In the vision, St. Rosalia pointed out the spot where her mortal remains lay buried. They were discovered a short time later by some monks. The reconnaissance that followed was not simple at all, in fact, it was a rather labourious and controversial process. In short, the ecclesiastical authorities wanted to see the remains for themselves and so they went forward with great caution. In the meantime, the plague had broken out in Palermo and began claiming victims from among the population.

The bishop of the city Cardinal Giannettino Doria summoned the clergy and the people to the cathedral and together they implored the Blessed Virgin, promising that they would defend to the death the privilege of Mary's Immaculate Conception and second, they would proclaim

Rosalia the patron saint of the city.

On February 1, 1625, the bones found the cave were authenticated by doctors as belonging to a woman, and therefore very probably were those of St. Rosalia. A short time later (and this is the second version) the saint appeared to a man who wanted to commit suicide because he was grief-stricken because of his wife's death by the plague. Rosalia comforted him and assured him of her protection and advised him to go to the Bishop to tell him that the bones found by the monks were indeed her very ones and they were to be carried in procession through the streets of Palermo.

The cardinal gathered those relics in an urn and displayed them for the veneration of the people. Later, they were carried in solemn procession throughout the city. The plague that had afflicted the city had by now run its course and finally disappeared altogether.

In 1630 news arrived from Rome that Pope Urban VIII had inserted the name of the saint of Palermo into the Roman Martyrology. And in 1631, after the Roman pronouncement, an oratory chapel was erected with an altar dedicated to her in the city's cathedral where a magnificent silver urn with her relics was placed. She is now the patron saint of the city and the chapel has become a pilgrimage destination not only for devotees from Palermo but for many others who come from all parts of Sicily and the world. □



EPHPHATA!

Ian Pinto *sdh*

BACKGROUND

Jesus' public ministry was a hectic period. He was constantly on the road moving from one place to another, preaching the Good News of the Kingdom of God, healing the sick, exorcising demons, comforting and advising people. He and his disciples hardly had much time for themselves. On one eventful day, as he made his way back from the district of Tyre through Sidon and the region of the Decapolis, a man who was both deaf and dumb was brought to him (Mk 7:31-37).

The Decapolis is mentioned three times in the New Testament and refers to a collection of 10 Greco-Roman cities who shared a common language and culture.

The first time we hear about the Decapolis is at the end of Matthew 4; Jesus has begun his public ministry by going around the region of Galilee, "teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing all kinds of sickness and disease among the people" (v. 23). The news spread about him was enough to attract large crowds

from Syria, Galilee, Judea, Jordan and the Decapolis. His reputation as a miracle-worker spread like wildfire since he healed all who were brought to him. There is no dearth of sickness and pain on earth and whenever people get wind of someone who can remove all suffering and pain, they flock to him/her. Something similar may have been the case at the time of Jesus as well.

DEAFNESS AND DUMBNESS

The gospel passage speaks about the cure of the man who was deaf and dumb. While reflecting on the passage I was struck by the question: Are we Christians also deaf and dumb? Have we grown indifferent? Our faith teaches us to be persons who are involved in the world without being carried away by its attractions. Christians are called to participate and lead the way in establishing God's kingdom here on earth. That is the Good News we are called to give. I will highlight four responsibilities every Christian has in four domains of life.

1) Social Responsibility – Human beings are born in societies and require them to fulfill their vocation and destiny as human beings. Society, like the human beings it is composed of is not perfect. It is plagued by violence, poverty, discrimination, exploitation and other evils. Within a healthy society, the good of each individual is necessarily related to the common good. The common good refers to "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" (*Gaudium et Spes* 26 §1). Therefore, if there are poor and oppressed people in a society then that society cannot be happy and healthy. Christians are called to promote the common good, not simply by doing charitable work but by treating people with respect and giving them the dignity that is their due, ensuring peace and stability in every setting.

2) Moral Responsibility – Christians ought to be persons of strong and upright moral character. To this end aim the commandments and teachings of the Church. Christians therefore are not expected to engage in immoral or illegal activities. They can never be completely righteous but are expected to strive towards that perfection. A Christian can never rest easy so long as his neighbour does wrong. This does not mean that he/she becomes nosy and nag other people. This would achieve quite the opposite result. Unlike Cain who said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Christians ought to realize and exercise their familial responsibility in solidarity considering that all are God's children.

3) Political Responsibility – Every member of society has certain political and civic duties and responsibilities that are necessary to fulfill to ensure the smooth running and progress of society. Christians are often accused of being lethargic or afraid when it comes to fulfilling their political duties and responsibilities. A strong example is the dearth of good Christian political leaders. I'm not promoting a blind pursuit of power and prestige but an openness to serve people in and through civil and political roles of leadership.

4) Spiritual Responsibility – This is perhaps the most important of the lot. Christians are first called to witness to the Kingdom of God as a situation of equality, justice, peace and harmony. Until people notice these values in us all that we say and do will remain purely at the level of empty talk or lofty ideas. We are called primarily to experience God and to share that experience with others. The best example is Jesus. He fulfilled his social, moral and political responsibility just by fulfilling his spiritual responsibility.

If we are unaware or fail to fulfill these responsibilities then we too are suffering from deafness and dumbness for we have shut our ears to the needs of others or are unwilling to speak for their good, or perhaps both. In any case, we are desperately in need of healing. If the cries of the poor, oppressed, suffering, wayward and hardened sinners do not reach our ears and if we are not ready to open our mouths to help them, then Jesus calls out to us *Ephphata* (Be opened)! ☐

Quiet Spaces

IN THE LITTLE THINGS

Morning meditation by His Holiness Pope Francis
in the Chapel of Domus Sanctae Marthae on Monday, September 11, 2015

It's all there in the 'littleness.'" In the Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning, the Feast of the Nativity of Mary, Pope Francis focused on the manner of God, who acts in small ways but opens vast horizons for us.

Referring to the text of the Collect recited moments before, which asked the Lord for "the grace of unity and peace," the Pontiff focused on two verbs considered in his homilies of the previous few days: to reconcile and to make peace. God, he said, "reconciles: he reconciles the world to himself through Christ." Jesus, brought to us by Mary, makes peace, "gives peace to two people, and of two peoples he makes one: Hebrews and Gentiles. One people. He makes peace. Peace in their hearts". But, asked the Pope, "How does God reconcile?". In what "manner" does he do this? Does he perhaps "make a great assembly? Does everyone come to an agreement? Do they sign a document?" No, he answered. "God uses a specific method to make peace: he reconciles and makes peace in the little things and on the journey."

Francis' reflection thus began from the concept of "littleness," the "littleness" which was spoken of in the First Reading (Mic 5:1-4): "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little...". In other words, the Pope explained: you are "so little: but you will be great, because your ruler will be born from you and he will be peace. He himself will be peace", because from that littleness "comes peace." This is the manner of God, who chooses "little things, humble things, to do great works." The Lord, explained the Pope, "is the Great One" and we "are the little ones", but the Lord "advises us to make ourselves little like children to be able to enter the Kingdom of Heaven," whereas "the great ones, the powerful, the arrogant, the proud cannot enter." God, however, "reconciles and makes peace in littleness."

The Pontiff then addressed the second concept, according to which the Lord also reconciles "on the journey: walking." He then explained: "The Lord does not want to make peace and reconcile with a magic wand: today – boom! – all done! No. He journeys with his people." An example of this action of God is found in the day's Gospel (Mt 1:1-16, 18-23). The passage regarding Jesus' lineage may seem somewhat repetitious: "This one begot that one, that one begot this one, this one begot that one.... It's a list," Francis noted. Yet, he

explained, "It is God's journey: God's journey among men, good and bad, because on this list there are saints and there are sinful criminals."

Thus, it is a list which even contains "much sin." However, "God is not afraid: he journeys. He walks with his people. And on this journey he makes hope grow in his people, hope in the Messiah." This is the "closeness" of God. Moses said it to his own: "Think about it: what nation has a God as close as ours?" Thus, "this journeying in littleness, with his people, this walking with the good and bad gives us our way of life". In order "to walk as Christians", in order to "make peace" and "reconcile" as Jesus did, we have the path: "With the Beatitudes and with the protocol by which we will all be judged. Matthew, 25: 'Do likewise: little things.'" This means "in littleness and by journeying".

The Pope then added a third element. The people of Israel "dream of being set free," they have "this dream because it was promised to them". Even Joseph dreams and his dream "is somewhat like a summary of the entire history of God's journey with his people." However, Francis added, "not only does Joseph have dreams: God dreams. God our Father has dreams, and he dreams beautiful things for his people, for each of us, because he is Father and as Father he thinks and dreams of the best for his children".

In conclusion, "this great and almighty God teaches us to do great works of peacemaking and of reconciliation in littleness, by walking, and by not losing hope, with the capacity" to dream "great dreams", to have "vast horizons."

For this reason the Pontiff invited everyone – in this commemoration of the beginning of a crucial phase of salvation history, the birth of Our Lady – to seek "the grace that we asked for in prayer, that of unity, of reconciliation, and of peace." To be "always on the path, close to others" and "with great dreams." With the manner of 'littleness', the littleness, he recalled, which is found in the Eucharistic celebration: "a little piece of bread, a little bit of wine...". In "this 'littleness' there is everything. God's dream is there, his love is there, his peace is there, his reconciliation is there, Jesus is there." □ (by L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly ed. in English, n. 37, 11 September 2015)

A FATHER'S ORDEAL

From Fr. Ian Doullton's collection of stories

You've all heard the expression: "To err is human, to forgive is divine." But how does a man measure up to this 'divine' challenge? Take Jim Collins for instance, when he woke up that Saturday morning in November he owned a dairy farm and he had a wife named Vicky and a son named Billy. He had no idea what a fateful day that was going to be. All he could think of was that it was a perfect morning to go hunting. He washed and dressed in a hurry and ran downstairs.

Vicky was already down and the smell of coffee brewing tickled his nostrils and placed his cup before him. It was a lovely morning. The birds were chirping outside as the sun began to rise above the barn roof. A shot sounded outside. Jim looked up and asked: "Where's Billy?" Their son was already up and out with his new rifle. Vicky went back to the kitchen counter to get breakfast ready: "He's out target practicing, he and Jaime Watson." Jim thought that Billy would wait for him...but that was his son. He was up at five and this is a red-letter day in his life. His dad's taking him hunting.

But listening to the intermittent shots Jim gathered the boys were having a great time. Then all of a sudden Clem, their overseer came running past the kitchen window heading for the front door. He was not young but he was running pretty briskly for his age. "Something must have happened to one of the cows." Then the sound of a fist pounding on the door: "Mr. Collins, Mr. Collins..." "What's the matter..."

"It's Billy, he's been shot. He's

dead Mr. Collins."

Jim tried to keep his composure. He shook his head: "Vicky, get Doc Hershey on the phone. Tell him to get over here. Go on, hurry!"

Both the men headed out running to the hollow behind the barn: "Oly Watson's boy Jaime did it." Clem said between breaths, "Him and Billy." Jim tried to keep cool: "Let's go... Billy's just hurt. He'll be alright, he's just hurt."

As they reached they heard Jaime screaming near the limp body of Billy: "Billy get up..." Then he looked up and saw Jim and through his sobs he shouted: "Mr. Collins... Billy... Billy... We were just target shooting..." Now Jim heard the boy whining and shouted: "Shut up!" Then reaching his son's body he looked down: "Oh, God, no, God no, please..." Jaime came up behind Jim and said softly: "I didn't mean it..." Jim didn't know what to say: "Go home, tell your father what happened." Jim had carried the limp body of Billy into the living room. Just then they heard Dr. Hershey's car. "Puthim down on the couch," said Dr. Hershey softly. Now Jim was desperate: "Bring him back to us...operate...do some thing..." Vicky had already sat down and wept silently.

Clem came over while Dr. Hershey was looking over Billy's body and told Jim that Oly Watson and Jaime were on their way over. Jim looked up...his eyes seemed dark and cold: "No, tell them to stay away. Tell them to just stay away." Then Dr. Hershey added: "Clem you tell them to wait until tomorrow." Clem withdrew quietly and closed the door behind him.

Dr. Hershey turned to Jim and Vicky who had now begun to accept the reality that Billy was dead: "Jim, I'll call Dr. Finley the coroner. There'll have to be an inquest."

It was a quiet afternoon about three weeks after Billy's funeral. Not too many folks had gathered in the little courthouse and Jaime took the witness stand. He was sobbing more out of fear than out of shame. Dr. Finley, the coroner was seated in front of the assembled group. Jaime's father Oly Watson and Alice his mother were sitting in the front row of the courtroom.

Dr. Hershey who was the Collins' family doctor gently rose and went over to Jaime: "Now Jaime, you listen to me..." "Yes, Dr. Hershey."

"Dr. Finley and all of us here are just trying to find out what happened. That's what an inquest is for. You tell us just what happened." A little hesitant at first, Jaime began: "We were target shooting. I fired a round and Billy started firing. I stepped back. I had to reload. I put a clip in and pushed the bolt forward..."

Dr. Hershey asked: "Your gun cocked?" "No it didn't cock. I thought it was going to, but it didn't. It just went off... Billy fell down." Then turning to Jim Collins he pleaded: "Mr. Collins, I didn't mean it."

Dr. Finley had heard enough. He turned to Jaime: "It's alright Jaime... you can sit down now. That's the way I figured it happened. You've all heard what Clem Williams and a couple of others have testified. They've had trouble with that type of gun too. You can't depend on it cocking right. I'll call on Dr. Finley to give you the findings of the autopsy."

Back in the Collins house it was all quiet. The days dragged on and

Jim was bearing a heavy burden of grief and anger, frustration and discouragement. The couple was at the dinner table and hadn't touched anything for the past two days. Vicky wasn't convinced: "You can't do your work if you don't eat."

All work at the farm had stopped. Clem the farm overseer just came over to see if he would be needed. As he saw the couple at the table he felt embarrassed to intrude on their grief and when Vicky told him they would call him when they needed him, he replied: "Yes, Mrs. Collins, I understand. I just stopped by Oly Watsons... Jaime's back in the hospital again. They brought him home but they had to take him back. Shock..."

Vicky was upset and saddened. She was grateful for the news that Clem brought. When they had cleared up the table the couple went into the sitting room and sat reading and simply looking blankly at the ceiling. Then Vicky broke the silence: "Jim, if we'd speak to Jaime, just a few..." "No, Vicky! He shot back."

"I guess his mother and his father must feel pretty bad. He's their only boy too. We've always been such good friends with Oly and Alice..."

"Yeah! We were..." Vicky came over and sat near Jim and taking his hand she said: "Oh, Jim... please don't act like this, it doesn't help anything. Jaime's punished himself long enough. Jim, just say a few words to him... he's only a boy?" "I had a boy once..." said Jim.

Vicky rose from where she sat and went over to the telephone and dialed the Watsons.

Mr. Watson picked up the phone. Vicky spoke: "Oly, Oly, this is Vicky. Yes, I heard... may I speak

to Alice?" Alice soon came to the phone. "Alice, we just heard about Jaime. How is he? I know Alice, it takes a long time. It takes a long time to get over something like this. But will you tell Jaime something Alice? Tell him we know it was just an accident - God lets these things happen sometimes, for some reason. Don't cry Alice. Just a min-ute, Jim's here, he has something he wants to say to you." Then putting her hand on the mouthpiece she said: "Jim... please... Billy would want you to?" Jim came to the phone and said rather softly but bereft of emotion: "Hello Alice, tell Jaime to get better, making himself sick isn't going to change things. Goodbye Alice." Then he looked at Vicky: "There, satisfied?" It had taken him some effort and Vicky was grateful. "Thank you Jim. But the sooner you..." Jim cut her off: "Don't tell me, I'll get over it. That's what everybody says *'you'll get over it'*. He wasn't their son, he wasn't their only child." "He was mine," Vicky added firmly.

Jim, with his head in his hands said: "He was just... too young. He had everything ahead of him. He was all we had." Vicky seemed to understand Jim's grief and how difficult he was finding it to put one grieving step ahead of the other but she added: "But we have to do it." Jim rose and said: "I'm sorry Vicky, I'm not being much help to you. But you keep saying God let it happen as if it had to happen that way. Well, it didn't! Billy wouldn't have done a thing like that. I taught him how to handle a gun. Why couldn't Oly Watson do the same?" His anger was flaring up again. Vicky was tired too but she had to stand by her husband: "I'm sure he did, but people make mistakes. They forget

once in a while, especially children." Jim wasn't convinced: "That's no excuse. Oly Watson should never have let him have a gun like that. It's Oly's fault! It's absolute stupidity!" Vicky too was wondering how Jaime's father was feeling at that moment... and Jim seemed smug about it: "Well, he should." Vicky could sense Jim's anger and she laid a gentle hand on his shoulder: "Jim, I know it's hard but we can't go on holding it against him..." He decided to go out into the cool night to clear his mind and brood.

The following morning Clem was back asking if he would be needed: "Good morning Mrs. Collins... Good morning Mr. Collins." Vicky prompted: "Jim you were talking about fixing the roof over the barn before the bad weather sets in." Clem, an old hand in these parts knew the weather patterns: "It's set to rain any day now..." Jim agreed: "Alright, we'll go look at the barn." There were new shingles required on the roof and so the two walked out towards the barn and as they opened the barn door Jim noticed a car drive up and a gentleman in a dark suit came out: "Mr. Collins? My name is Harvey Alexander Mr. Collins, I'm an attorney here in town and I'd like to talk with you if you have the time?" Jim told Clem to go ahead and walked over with Harvey Alexander. He told Jim that he had been at the inquest and how frustrated he felt that Jaime Watson had been exonerated. Then he added: "I know how you feel about your son and I am very sorry." And then he added: "It must have been especially hard, knowing that it was so unnecessary..." Jim shook his head and said: "Imagine giving a kid a gun without showing him how

to use it." Harvey said: "And the law would call it criminal carelessness, Mr. Collins. And you're entitled to some indemnity after all it wasn't your fault." Jim looked at him: "You mean money for a life?" Harvey clarified that what he had meant was that in spite of the carelessness the Watsons were getting off scot free and he didn't think it was fair. Jim's mind was beginning to work: "That's right. It isn't fair. I guess it's only one way a man will learn." Harvey was casting his hook and Jim was taking the bait: "Precisely, perhaps Mr. Collins you could drop by my office to discuss this a little more thoroughly. I'm in the Court House building. Here's my card." Jim promised to get in touch... and Harvey left satisfied. Jim seemed to have a new spring in his step. He looked up and saw Clem on the roof and Jim climbed up too. Work seemed to be going well. Clem watched as Jim climbed the ladder. "Feeling better Mr. Collins?" Jim smiled weakly: "Much better..." Then he stretched out his hand waiting for Clem to hand him a shingle but Clem was looking over the roof. He noticed Jaime Watson coming around the barn. The boy shielded his eyes against the sun as he looked up and asked: "Mr. Collins?" "What?" came the curt reply. "Mr. Collins, can I talk to you?" "I'm busy... Jaime." Jaime was not deterred. "I thought maybe if I could help you; I'll saw wood for you; and I'll clean up; I'll do everything Billy used to, if you let me..." Jim paused a moment but simply continued banging nails into the shingle: "You've got your own father to help." "I want to help you. Won't you let me, Mr. Collins? Please." Jaime pleaded. "Go on

home Jaime, go on." As this conversation was going on Vicky suddenly came out of the house and shouted to Jim. There was a call for him. He had left the hatchet on the edge of the roof. As he turned to look down to see Vicky his elbow touched the hatchet and it slipped down the roof right towards Vicky. Jim screamed: "Vicky! The hatchet's falling down." Vicky wasn't aware of it coming. It fell just near her. Jim screamed: "Missed her by an inch." Then he turned to Clem looking pale and breathless: "I'm going down." Then looking at Vicky as he descended the ladder he screamed in exasperation: "For a lousy phone call you almost got your head split open. Why did you stand under the ladder?" Vicky leaned against him: "It was just an accident." But he held on to her: "But I almost killed you... I almost killed you." His voice was quivering. Vicky turned to him: "I look as pale as you do." He just put his arm around her shoulder and said: "Vicky, Vicky, come on. Let's go back to the house. You tell whoever's on that phone to call back. I've got an important call to make. I'm going to phone the Watsons." Vicky was shocked: "The Watsons? Oh Jim!" By the time the couple reached the house Jim said again: "I'm going to tell Jaime to come over. He wanted to help me. And I need help with a lot of things."

We all have to forgive mistakes. Sometimes it seems impossible to pardon the blunder that breaks our hearts. To err is human; to forgive is human too; but it demands a spark of the divine pity which comes through prayer. Jesus said in his sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are they that show mercy. They shall have mercy shown them." □

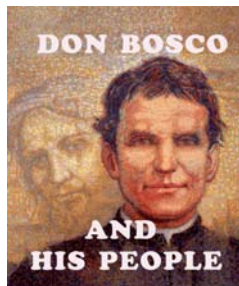
DEEDS NOT WORDS CHAPTER 6

by Natale Cerrato

Pausing at the nineteenth century, we can recall figures like Quintino Sella, mentioned in the previous chapter and Giovanni Lanza who we may shortly dwell on. Quintino Sella was so short of words that it was said that he was devoid of eloquence, but if eloquence meant being able to explain their ideas clearly, no one was more eloquent than he. His interventions in the Chamber were so crystal clear, ranked as works of architectural precision, logical and rigorous that could be proved geometrically. Frills of language and rhetoric devices were not his style. The same could be said of Giovanni Lanza.

Calm, precise and brief, he did not take the Chamber to be a forum of trickery or ambush or foibles. He never entered parliament ready and polished, full of erudition, to wrest the applause of the galleries or garner votes, but spoke with brevity and directness. He was one who wanted to convince and not to overwhelm, as one seeking the truth not the glamour.

Even in this quality, Don Bosco proved to be a genuine Piedmontese, action not rhetoric. He was not bombastic. He never raised his voice. He never tried to prevail over others with a plethora of speeches. From an early age he turned out to be reflective and pensive and a person of few words. He watched everything, weighed the words of others trying to surmise what they thought. The house of Mamma Margaret became a shelter for vagrants and a stopping



point for the *carabinieri* looking for bandits. John and Joseph were well known to these guests... respecting them but they seemed more inclined to Joseph who was active and talkative while John "talked little but noticed everything, weighing the words of others, trying to understand other people's character and to guess their thoughts so as to conduct himself with prudence."¹ Don Bosco himself, in a casual conversation admitted that "since he was a child he had always been rather serious by nature and in character."² Some portraits of his confirm this. He learned from his mother that silence was better than long-drawn speeches. When he was just four years old, one sultry summer's day, he returned home in the company of his elder brother Joseph. Both of them were very thirsty. Mamma hurriedly drew some water and gave it first to Joseph. John noticed this sort of preferential treatment and so when mamma came to him with the water, he made a sign to say he didn't want it. Mamma Margaret, with-

out saying a word just put the water away. John was shocked!

Then, after a moment of silence he timidly said:

-Mom!

-Yes?

-Aren't you going to give me some water too!

-I thought you weren't thirsty.

-I'm sorry, Mom!

-Now! That's a good boy!" She went back for the water and gave it to him, smiling.³

A few words in their dialect sounded even shorter. Margaret was not a woman to raise her voice to correct her children. John learned the art of silence at that school.

As he grew up, tempered by the hard life of a farm-hand and in a workshop he was used to sobriety and straight-talk. He was never a carefree chatterbox, never lightheaded. He abhorred lying, duplicity, underhanded scheming; his speech and manner were always above suspicion, and he edified all those who approached him by following the *yes, yes; no, no* of the Gospel [Cf Mt. 5:37].⁴ Father Lemoyne, (in the Italian edition of the *Memoirs*) referring to Don Bosco's youthful performances wrote: "Those who read these pages to research the young Bosco, so capable and agile in a challenge, so bold; head and shoulders above his companions, could have swaggered and have a loose bearing, yet he was not like that. We have heard the testimonies of exemplary priests and his confreres who said that he possessed the same manner as a young man as he had when he was a seventy year old priest: loving, somewhat restrained, reserved in speech and gestures."⁵

As a priest he did not have an

easy time carrying out his plans. He was unable to get lost in idle chatter but had to roll up his sleeves and day by day resolve his difficulties as they presented themselves. Contrary to what one might believe, Don Bosco, as a young priest did not have an easy time. Those who study him closely in those early years of his apostolate discover a simple, balanced activity and a great circumspection in his endeavours. Nothing was left to chance even though Divine helped had been assured to him in all his enterprises.⁶

His talks and sermons to youngsters were simple, clear and brief. He spoke slowly and almost without any gestures. He had a silvery voice that touched hearts with brilliant eloquence. His evening talks, except in exceptional cases lasted two or three minutes.⁷

Even in conversations, he was a man of few words. Don Bosco had the special ability to sustain a conversation. "He spoke calmly, slowly and gently and with profound moderation, avoiding any unnecessary comments. He abhorred profane conversations, vivid expressions or lightheaded comments. "He gave great importance to every word [...]. When necessary he could make long conversations but he was contained when there was no special need and he observed silence especially to attend to his duties."⁸ On the playground he whispered a word of encouragement to one and a word of warning to another. When hearing the confessions of youngsters he never gave long advice but short and appropriate admonitions.

ions which went straight to the heart.

The most obvious characteristic of Don Bosco's language was his frankness. He never used ambiguous phrases that could veil his thoughts. He was candid with everyone without a false sense of shyness. One day he himself admitted to Fr Berto: "Do you know why Don Bosco enjoys such esteem and trust? It is because I don't speak in mysteries, I'm clear and simple."⁹⁹ He never hesitated to tell everyone what his priestly duties were even to people in high places. Urbano Rattazzi asked him one day in confidence if he had really incurred excommunication because of his steps against the Church... Don Bosco deemed it wiser not to reply at once to this unexpected question, and he asked for three days to study the matter. [...] Don Bosco replied: "Your Excellency, I have considered the matter and done my best to discover some reason that would justify my telling you that you have not incurred excommunication, but regretfully I was not successful. I could find no sound theological reason to excuse you."¹⁰⁰

In February of 1867 he was invited to celebrate a Mass in the Farnese Palace in the presence of Royals of Naples. Francis II then asked him if he could still hope to return to Naples with Queen Sofia.

- Your Majesty, I am no prophet, but if I must tell you what I believe: you had better forget about it.

The king would later say: "No one has ever spoken to me so frankly."¹⁰¹

In order to satisfy the desire of Princess Margaret to hear Mass in the Quirinale, Francesco Crispi

asked Don Bosco to find the means to get the pontifical permission. With a fine sense of humour Don Bosco replied:

"Very well, then, I'll speak frankly. If you want Holy Mass in the Quirinale, you'll first have to vacate it!"¹⁰²

Brief and frank in speech, he appreciated brevity in his interlocutors while expressing infinite patience with their impunity and indiscretion. In a letter to the Countess Gabriella Corsi, on August 18, 1871 he announced her arrival at the "cascina" near Nizza Monferrato, where the noble lady intended to host him, and she remembered, in a way, how to deal with those who asked for an audience: "I think we'll have time to meet everyone. Let it be held on the following basis: those who bring money or who come for what concerns the good of souls, may come at any time on any day, as they will always be welcomed with great pleasure. Those who come to pay their respects can be thanked and dispensed."¹⁰³

Even from his Salesians he demanded facts rather than words in their educational tasks. From various sources Father Lemoyne gathered a number of Don Bosco's notes written by the confreres during his talks. With them he compiled a *General Rule for everyone with the aim of satisfying the students so that the college would remain in their grateful memory*. These are precious fragments that contribute to a better understanding of the spirit of Don Bosco's educational system. One finds, among other things: "We lose a lot if we speak about our labours. It is enough

to have one ill-intentioned youngster in a boarding school to start a murmur and jokes are made [...] we manufacture the cross with our own hands. We remain silent. Youngsters have eyes to see and minds to understand and they comprehend very well if we are mercenaries or if we work for love of them."¹⁰⁴

In the Circular on Punishments in Salesian Houses, dated the Feast of St. Francis de Sales 1883 and which undoubtedly reflects the mind of Don Bosco, whatever the literary source and the drafter of the document, we find: "In certain very serious cases, he should be recommended to God out of humility. A storm of words which, on one hand does not only produce evil in the one who hears it but is of no benefit to the one who deserves it."

If Don Bosco demanded such reserve in speech, he himself was the first to give the example almost scrupulously.

"One evening in 1879, while reminiscing with a few confreres in Alasio about his many vicissitudes, he made them realize how much he had suffered then because of obstructed audiences, intercepted letters, secret and open opposition on several sides, harsh and humiliating words... He further recalled the dream in which he had seen the Vatican devastated and prelates dragged down the stairs, as though being punished for having failed to listen to his advice. He also revealed - with regret - that he had destroyed his correspondence with his adversaries as they died, so that about a third of the confidential information on his life

was no longer available. Contrariwise, Father Cerruti, when speaking of it, stated that he had not detected any excess-ive or wrathful tone. But, sudd-enly, Don Bosco stopped talking, remained pensive a moment, and then said in front of them all: "I have talked too much," That same evening he made his confession to Father Rocca."¹⁰⁵

In one of his last letters, dated July 24, 1887 to the baroness Azelia Fassati we read: "I'm here in Lanzo, half-blind and almost entirely lame and almost dumb. But that is good penance for me who speaks too much and out of turn."¹⁰⁶

Only a saint like Don Bosco, at the end of an industrious life like his, could have accused himself of talking too much and out of turn.

Rivers of words have flowed on the *Risorgimento*, but that men like Don Bosco have accomplished the real renaissance of the Fatherland, is an accepted fact. □

(Endnotes)

¹ Cf. EBM 1, pg. 72

² Cf. BM 17, 460

³ EBM 1, 44-45

⁴ Cf. EBM 2, 174

⁵ Cf. BM 1, 316

⁶ Cf. BM 3, 22-23

⁷ Cf. BM 3, 61-62; 4, 12; 5; 10

⁸ Cf. MB 4, 207

⁹ Cf. MB 10, 486

¹⁰ Cf. EBM 5, 283

¹¹ Cf. EBM 8, 293

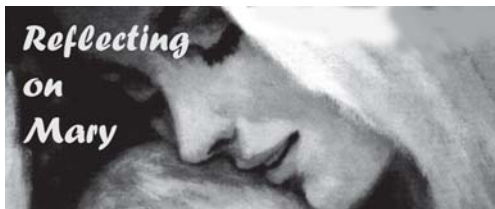
¹² Cf. EBM 10, 240

¹³ Cf. BM 10, 438

¹⁴ Cf. BM 14, 848

¹⁵ EBM 13, 389

¹⁶ E 2620



MARY LOVES US AS WE ARE

by Angelo di Maria

Jesus is Saviour and Mary, his mother wants us to meet him. Meeting him is not easy. Even the apostles often seemed very doubtful.

She presents Jesus to us and he looks like a precious pearl worth selling everything for. He needs to be trusted and loved completely. Those who encounter him with love and trust are strengthened and encouraged to abandon themselves completely to him in order to be able to live this exciting encounter.

OBSTACLES TO A REAL ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST

First of all, let's not convince ourselves that we have-it-all. It's a very common risk: "I'm honest, I don't kill...and all in all, I'm good."

The second obstacle is our attachment to idols; that sense of security that seems to come from having everything and the esteem of others. When we are enslaved to our possessions we believe that we are rich. Often the separation from the things that weigh us down becomes unsustainable because we can't feel the presence of Providence deep in our hearts; that sense

of belonging to God.

The third obstacle is closing ourselves to others: We are afraid that putting ourselves at their disposal.

First of all, let's not convince ourselves that we are self-sufficient. It's a very common risk: "I'm honest, I don't kill...all in all, I'm good."

The second obstacle is our attachment to idols, the sense of security when we have things or the esteem of others. Enslaved to possessions make us believe we are rich. Often the separation from things that weigh us down sometimes becomes unsustainable because we don't profoundly sense the presence of Providence in our lives; that sense of belonging to God.

The third obstacle is closing ourselves to others: we are afraid that by putting ourselves at the service of others, we will lose ourselves.

MARY'S EXPERIENCE

In this encounter with Christ what kind of example does Mary give us? She is the branch that is most perfectly attached to Christ. She is the only creature who let Christ enter her heart entirely as his mother. She is the first creature to

be redeemed and she is full of grace; the beloved daughter of the Father.

She is that branch that leans towards us. Jesus said: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him, bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Those who do not remain in me are like dry branches which are collected and thrown on the fire to be burnt" (Jn 15, 5-6). Only if we remain in him will we bear fruit and Mary was able to do that and so she invites us to imitate her. She is the mother of Jesus and she is given to us. She is the co-redeemer. She accepted to suffer with her Son for our redemption.

More than any other, she was able to live this experience of unity and inseparable love with her Son. The age of the Spirit began with Mary's free and conscious acceptance of God's plan.

In accepting to do the will of God and in all the circumstances of our life, we become, in our turn, co-redeemers, participating in the redeeming work of Christ in a certain and mysterious but nonetheless real manner. Only in heaven will we know how many people have been helped by our willingness to accept the will of God.

MARY'S 'YES' AND OURS

Mary's 'yes' was generous, unselfish and complete and what kind of a 'yes' do we say? How many times have you said 'yes' to the Lord because you couldn't have your own way? You say, 'your will be done' because you cannot have it your way. This is not what a Christian does and this is not what Mary teaches us. She is the imitator of the one who said: "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and I do his work" (Jn. 4:34).



Our food is to commit ourselves to do what God wants of us today, not tomorrow and in every circumstance: small or great, humble or ostentatious. A martyr is not only someone who lets himself be killed for the faith but also and above all one who at every moment of every day knows how to say 'yes' to God, sometimes in joy and often in suffering and doubt. But s/he knows how to ask God for the help to be able to say this 'yes.'

Don't be afraid if sometimes this 'yes' costs us a lot and we have not said it. The great and consoling reality is this: God loves us as we are and the way we are but he doesn't leave us that we but changes us. We can recover from our past with love and commitment during the present and the future that God grants to us. Even Mary loves us as we are because when you love someone you don't notice whether the one loved is dressed well or shabbily. Mary deserves a special place in our lives because she gave and continues to give us Jesus and Christ gives us a future to trust and to hope. □

ROME

To give up financial investments that generate profits through fossil fuels, such as oil and coal and natural gas: this is the objective of the campaign, launched in 2014 and expanded in the following years, by the *Global Catholic Climate Movement*, a network that includes about 650 organizations around the world. Climate change is causing dramatic side effects in various regions of the world such as the progressive desertification of the sub-Saharan strip (Sahel), the melting of glaciers and the alteration of seasonal cycles.

The latter phenomenon primarily affects those populations tied to agriculture and carries different consequences such as over-populated cities, sudden waves of migration and famines. These are some of the themes placed at the centre of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato si'*, which gave further impetus to the initiative and is the backbone and reference of the initiative. Among other things, a black list has been drawn up that includes about 200 large companies and corporations that are largely responsible for global warming for their polluting emissions.

Finally, the campaign was joined by important Catholic institutions such as *Caritas Internationalis*, several dioceses and by some important *German Catholic banks*, a sign that even in the financial world the idea that fossil fuels are not "convenient" in the long run is beginning to

gain ground. There are 35 Catholic organizations that have chosen to disinvest in traditional energy sources, giving notice on 22 April, during World Earth Day, and that adds up to another 60 that had previously joined the initiative with public announcements.

Philippine Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, president of the Catholic body, commented on the decision to join the campaign: "The poor suffer greatly from the climate crisis and fossil fuels are the main drivers of this injustice. For this reason, he added, *Caritas Internationalis* has decided no longer to invest in fossil fuels. We encourage our member organizations connected to the Church to do the same."

Also significant was the support of the main German Catholic banks, which are disinvesting from fossil fuels in order to offer Catholic institutional investors responsible options capable of tackling the climate crisis. These institutions have balancing sheets totalling around 7.5 billion euros.

Jean-Claude Hollerich, Archbishop of Luxembourg and recently elected to lead the Comece (Commission of the Episcopal Conferences of the European Community), noted: "Together with our brothers and sisters in the Church, we bishops are increasingly committed to making financial decisions that are in line with our moral values. Divestment is an important way for the Church to show leadership in the context of a changing climate." (*Francesco Peloso, La Stampa*) □



walking with the Church

Altar Boys and Altar Girls

Zenit.org; the World as Seen from Rome

Q: Altar boys and altar girls serve in my parish. While altar boys grow and "graduate" into acolytes as adult men and continue to serve at the altar, is there an age threshold for altar girls beyond which they may not serve as adult women? – A.R., Gwynedd, Wales

A: The short answer would be no, there is no age limit for such service.

The question can be addressed at several levels. The roles of instituted lector and acolyte are open only to males. Canon law says:

"Canon 230 §1. Lay men who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte.

However, the vast majority of altar boys are not eventually admitted into these ministries, and this for several reasons.

While there does not appear to be a universal age requirement to be instituted as an acolyte, the minimum age is usually set around the time that seminarians would receive the ministries. This usually occurs during theological studies and, hence, when they are in their mid-20s.

In most parishes only a very persevering altar boy would still be

serving Mass at this age.

On 30 June 1992, the members of the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts pronounced on the following question that had been raised: "Whether, among the liturgical functions that lay persons, men or women, may exercise according to Canon 230.2 of the Code of Canon Law, may also be included service at the altar (servitium ad altare)." But bishops are not bound to permit them to do so, nor could the episcopal conference limit the bishop's faculty to decide for himself. A further clarifying letter published in 2001 said priests are not compelled to have girls serve at the altar, even when their bishops grant permission.

The aforementioned letters do address the question of altar boys and girls from a pastoral perspective but make no mention of an age limit. Nor is any age limit mentioned in the interpretation, and it is to be supposed that none was ever intended by the legislator since this would not usually be the case in a question of delegation. Likewise, the functions specifically mentioned in Canon 230, such as reader or cantor, are normally carried out by adults, and therefore the interpretation would also cover adults being delegated to serve at the altar. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Donation...but

A little fellow was sitting in the bus when an enormously fat lady entered. She stood for a minute glaring at the seated passengers and then demanded: 'Isn't some gentleman going to offer me a seat?'

The tiny fellow got up and said timidly: "Well, I'll make a small contribution."

Church traditions

One bus driver gets good natured action from his passengers by singing out: "All right, folks, act like you're in church. Fill up the rear!"

Test Strum

A swift-driving motorist lost control of his car and ran into a telephone pole. When he came to his senses, he was on the ground clutching telephone wires.

'Thank goodness,' he murmured, 'It's a harp!'

Where the Heart Is

'For months,' said the excessive socialite, 'I couldn't discover where my husband spent his evenings.'

'And then what happened?' breathlessly asked her friend.

'Well,' she said, 'one evening, I went home and there he was.'

Matter of Taste

A shipwrecked sailor was captured by cannibals. Each day the natives would cut his arm with a dagger and drink his

blood.

Finally he called the king: 'You can kill me and eat me if you want,' he said, 'but I'm sick and tired of getting stuck for drinks.'

Cache the Cash

It was during the Nazi regime in Czechoslovakia that a seedy character crept up to the counter of a store.

"The Gestapo is after me!" he whispered to the man behind the counter. 'Please - hide me!' The shopkeeper scowled sternly, then pointed to a sign on the wall: 'Positively no Czechs cached here.'

Matter of Perspective

A couple of vagrants were walking through a swamp in the game reserve. One yelled 'help, help, an alligator bit off my leg!'

'Which one?' cried his friend. 'I don't know,' he answered. 'All these alligators look alike.'

Matter of Taste

Two cockroaches lunched in a dirty sewer and excitedly discussed the spotless, glistening new restaurant in the neighbourhood from which they had been barred.

"I hear," said one, "that the refrigerators shine like polished silver. The shelves are clean as a whistle. The floors sparkle like diamonds. It's so clean..."

"Please," said the second in disgust, nibbling on a mouldy roll. "Not while I'm eating." □

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.

By the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and Mother Mary I present my testimony. I receive the Don Bosco's magazine for the past 3 years. In 2015 I was struck with severe depression regarding my job and marriage this depression coupled with OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) which acts as a deadly combination. I could not sleep at nights. I prayed to the Lord and Mother Mary for help. I was once reading through this magazine and came upon the testimonies of the devotion of 3 Hail Marys to Mother Mary. An uncle of mine also advised about the same. I started this devotion and in sometime I was relieved of my sleeping illness I did not have to take sedatives prescribed by my doctor for sleep. I want the world to know about this miracle.

Elvis Terrance Pink, Navi Mumbai

My most sincere thanks to the Infant Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Our Lady Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for helping my daughter and daughter-in-law to have a safe and normal delivery. Thank you very much for blessing me and my wife with two beautiful grand sons. Thank you once again, guide and protect me and my family always.

Cedric Gonsalves, Goa

I had a heart failure and an angioplasty done at the end of October 2017. Fortunately, I was sitting when I passed out for a few seconds. When I came to consciousness I looked at the picture of the Divine Mercy and Mother Mary and asked them to just hold my hand. Before being taken to the hospital I asked for holy water to be put on my forehead, a Rosary on me and I kept saying these powerful words to myself: *Jesus Mercy, Mary help!* The angioplasty was a success. During my recovery I also prayed to St. Teresa of Kolkata for healing.

Zarina Pereira

Holy Mother Mary, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for hearing my prayer and helping me and my wife to get well when we were very sick. Dear Blessed Mother of Jesus, I thank you for always being with me and answering my prayers. I recite the 3 Hail Marys morning and evening everyday. Your assurance and support have provided me hope and has strengthened my faith in you. I also thank St. John Bosco and Dominic Savio for the same. *Everyday, keep us safe. A Devotee, Goa*

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

A million thanks to Jesus and Mamma Mary for the blessings received; for giving me the best position in the whole world. Every second is a blessing from them. *Ms. Hermione Banger* Thanks to the Holy Trinity and all the saints, the souls in Purgatory for my sister's recovery from a stroke. It was a real miracle. May God bless us always and keep using his loving care.

D. Rodrigues, Goa
Baby Mathew was born with three holes in his heart. He was rushed to the ICU as blood flowed into his lungs. He soon deteriorated. Our son Dominic requested a priest to baptize him in the ICU. To the amazement of the medical staff he improved. Three months later, we had him baptized in church. Now he is fast improving into a healthy pious child. Thank you Blessed Trinity and Mamma Mary for your unfailing mercy and love.

Almona and Leonard Harper, Vijayawada
Thank you dear Jesus and Mother Mary for all the favours received and for helping my daughter achieve her milestone.
Mr. & Mrs. Pereira, Mumbai

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

Our sincere thanks to the Infant Jesus and Mother of Good Health at Velankanni and all the saints to whom I prayed. I am grateful for the graces received. Dear Mother, do continue to protect and bless us. *M.A.*

This accident took place on October 6, 2017. I was on my scooter on my way back from my office. If you have read the newspapers you might remember that we have a new landmark "LULU Hyper Market" at Kochi's Edappally. This place has a reputation for being very crowded. As I was riding over the overpass I had almost reached the front gate of Hotel Marriott, a biker, in his hurry for nothing, overtook me just grazing my bike. I fell on my left, hurting my left knee and my right palm. With great difficulty I got on to my feet with the help of the people who had gathered around me all at once. I am sure Mother Mary was there under the instruction of Jesus to protect me - because no vehicle was behind me to run over me.

George Matthai
Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians, and all the Saints for helping me find an important document which was lost.

Mary T.A. Heldt, Bangalore
Thank you Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for helping my son with good SSLC results.
Elizabeth Barretto, Goa

**THANKS TO DEAR
ST. DOMINIC SAVIO**



I was on a holiday in Goa just walking on a very nice road after visiting the Mangeshi temple. I suddenly fell flat and thankfully was able to get back on my feet and also return to Mumbai safely despite a serious fracture that took place. I was in hospital for a month and a half. Happy to say that I am on my feet, up and about. I owe my gratitude to Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for this great miracle. *Mrs. Irene Lobo, New Mumbai*
My sincere thanks to Our Lord, dear Mother Mary, Dominic Savio and Don Bosco for the gift of a healthy baby boy. May God bless our family.

Theresa D'Souza, Mumbai
Grateful thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter. She wore the scapular of St. Dominic Savio throughout her pregnancy. *A Devotee*
Grateful thanks to Mary Help of Christians, St. Dominic Savio and Don Bosco for their loving protection over Judith.

Basilia Fernandes, Goa
My sincere thanks to Our Lord, Mother Mary, St. Dominic Savio and Don Bosco for my good health.
Stella D'Costa, Thane

**APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER
SEPTEMBER 2018**

Young People in Africa

That young people in Africa may have access to education and work in their own countries.

A World Map

A father wanted to read the paper, but was being bothered by this little daughter, Vanessa. Finally, he tore a sheet out of his magazine, on which was printed the map of the world. Tearing it into small pieces, he gave it to Vanessa, and said, "Go into the other room and see if you can put this together."

After a few minutes, Vanessa returned and handed him the map correctly fitted together. The father was surprised and asked how she had finished so quickly. "Oh," she said, "on the other side of the paper was the picture of Jesus. When I got Jesus in His place, then the world came out alright."

Regd RNI no. 9360/57;
Postal Regn. MH/MR/North East/089/2018-2020
WPP License to post without prepayment
posted at Mumbai Patrika Channel Sorting Office
on 1st & 2nd of every month
Date of Publication: 1st of every month

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

MARY WAS THERE

It was on Mother's day when I had recited the Rosary in honour of our heavenly Mother before venturing out to celebrate Mother's day. I was in the auto when due to the driver's negligence the bamboo poles in the tempo before us took a U-turn allowing the huge poles to enter the auto, they pressed against my neck, chest and face. I could not push them away nor was there a way to escape, as it was a shared auto. Due to Mother Mary's intervention I was saved from being strangled and escaped only with a scratch. Suddenly the driver came to his senses and took control of the situation. Mother Mary was there, protecting me. Also heartfelt thanks for curing my hip pain and heamorrhage of my eyes which happened on Christmas day. Thank you Heavenly Father and Mother Mary for your love and grace. *Sharon Danthis*

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

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

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

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

You can help by establishing a Perpetual Burse with:

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

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

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

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

Please address all correspondence to:

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

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