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

Opening Prayer from
the Common of Our Lady
in Ordinary Time

From The Editor's Desk

LAWYERS AND LOVERS

Most novels in human history, indeed almost all of them, have only one theme: the story of good and evil. Often we find out in the first chapter, usually in the opening pages, who the good guys are and who are the bad guys. Then, for the rest of the novel, play, movie or whatever, you have the supposed good guys chasing the supposed bad guys, and we all cheer when the supposed good guy eventually triumphs over the supposed bad guy – not realising that at the moment the supposed good guy killed, defeated and humiliated the bad guy, he became the person he set out to destroy. That is the most consistent storyline in every culture and for some reason it turns us on, especially, if we see life in terms of win or lose.

That has been the way humankind looked at societies, groups, religions, cultures, customs, etc. from the perspective of worthy or unworthy, pure and impure, respectable or disrespeckable. The scribes and Pharisees of the time of Jesus and their clones down the centuries, right down to the XXI century seem to remain preoccupied with worthiness, winners or the acceptable people. And to this day they have it all worked out and there was no room for a second opinion. In their opinion it is nice, simple and tidy. They will not tolerate any contradiction. They have learned to live in a 'reward and punishment society' and this is sad...because in such a mindset there is no room for grace because everything is earned!

Jesus was aware that when religion was healthy, culture was healthy. That was why he dismantled the distinction that divides people into pure and impure and the idea that the Sabbath is pure and the rest of the week is impure. There is no impure day. Saturday (the old Sabbath) is a special day but every day is God's day. God created every day of the week. The very ground we walk is holy ground because it, too, is God's creation.

I am not knocking religion. I am not being liberal, suggesting that we throw out Sunday worship. Jesus challenged the religious system that insisted on the overriding importance of law before love: "I came not to destroy the law," he said, "but to fulfil it." He offered a new law based on love: people come first, love comes before the law. "By this shall all people know that you are my disciples" he said, "by the love you have for one another." Sadly we don't feel at home in the world of grace where God's unconditional love is determined by compassion.

How do you recognize compassion and love in the nooks and crannies of everyday life? What does unconditional love look like to you?

We would do well to rest on God's grace and compassion and learn to live it in our lives, realizing that in every breath we are beholden to the God who made us and who makes creation holy by his love!

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

DEALING WITH GRIEF

Jeanette Brimmer

In the early 1950's, when I was about ten years old, my grand mother, who was eighty four, died after slipping into a peaceful coma. She was given the Last Rites (a Catholic Tradition) now referred to as The Sacrament of the Sick, so she was well prepared for her journey into the next world. A black wreath was hung on the outside door to signal her death and the nearby funeral director picked up her body and prepared it for being shown. Then grandma's body was placed in a silk lined casket and returned home. The casket was placed in the parlour and was surrounded by flowers whose sweet scent permeated the whole house. All the relatives and extended family gathered and after paying their respects, they talked about Grandma being a kind and humorous woman and I felt comforted by being in the cozy setting. Refreshments were later served in the dining room which friends and neighbours donated.



Nowadays funerals are very expensive affairs here in Canada and the funeral homes have several rooms showing people who have died. The visitors that come

to pay their respects often have to sit in uncomfortable chairs after they have walked through the receiving line and although the casket is usually surround by flower arrangements, the atmosphere is nothing like the homey atmosphere of the old-fashioned wake held at my grandmother's home.

But no matter what customs, we have to bury our dead, the grief people feel when they lose a family member, relative or friend or even a public figure such as Mother Theresa, is the same no matter what their race, religion or culture may be.

Often there is disbelief when a family member dies, especially if the death is sudden. A very warm and closely knit family were completely stunned when they heard that the husband and father of five died in a tragic helicopter crash. When my friend Anna phoned to tell me about Jake, her voice was calm and steady and she was obviously suffering from shock.

Jake had been spraying crops all over Canada, especially in northern Ontario, and even went to Chile once to spray. No one expected the tragic event because Jake had an excellent flying record and had 7500 hours of experience. He was hoping to retire and run the Emu farm he and his wife had set up but the revenue was not enough to keep them going so he returned to his job at the airport. One day his boss asked Jake to

pick up a brand new helicopter the airport had bought which was in California. Jake was killed when the machine suddenly dropped to the ground as he was heading home.



Anna dealt with her grief by keeping busy conducting the Church choir, gardening, and comforting her grown children and grandchildren. Anna confided several weeks later that she would be feeling fine and then a wave of grief would threaten to drown her when a holiday or the anniversary of Jake's death approached. At first the waves seemed to be a hundred feet high, threatening to drown her in her sorrow. As time passed these waves became much smaller and less frequent. Prayers, asking for Jesus strength and taking long walks and talking to others who had experienced a great loss have all helped Anna to find joy in life again.

There are many myths of grief that prevail in our society, at least here in Canada

Many kind hearted people will say "Time will heal!" If you have a deep gash on your leg and you're bleeding and in shock from the pain you would label someone crazy if they came up to you and instead of offering help and calling an ambulance they assured you "Don't worry, time will heal." People need an unspecified time to grieve and will have to work

diligently in dealing with it. It might mean going to a grief therapist, expressing your feelings to a few friends or family members who will listen to you without passing judgment or giving unwanted advice, and praying, which can include heartfelt conversations with God.

"You will get over it!" Is another myth because the grief stricken person will never be the same as they were before a loved one's death. For instance a person widowed many years may feel they are over it but a song or some other reminder will bring back memories of their special one and they may dissolve into tears. Then there are those who insinuate that if you had more faith your grieving would be easier. Sometimes if a person weeps at the service, people might remark to them that it should be a joyous occasion because their loved one is on their journey to heaven. Even Jesus wept when he heard that Lazarus, His friend, was dead.

When my brother was ill we knew his illness was terminal and we tried to make his last days of pancreatic cancer as comfortable as we could. But when he died on Christmas day, expecting his death didn't ease our grief. We still cried, we still miss him so much and he will always be in our hearts. Then my son committed suicide about three weeks later.





ter which turned our lives into turmoil. Losing a child by such a method is devastating but we trust that our merciful God will allow him into heaven some day. He was very ill and depressed but he promised he would never do something to himself because of the children. Yet one evening he was gone and we have been left to deal with all the feelings that occur after a child chooses to end it all. This includes often dealing with unfounded guilt, feeling anger toward the person who left us, enduring the immense hole that is left in each member of the family and other raw emotions. My husband and I found solace from a priest who is our friend, attending grief sessions with a therapist and eventually returning to activities we couldn't undertake for weeks after his death. God gives us strength to go on.

Families can grieve when an earthquake or other natural disaster ruins their home and changes their way of life. They may be forced to take shelter or seek safety in their relative's home. And they may lose family members, their jobs as well as suffer physical injuries from the dreadful event. Forest fires, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, tsunamis and flash floods all can devastate

lives and also kill many people. The grief of losing all, especially if includes the loss of a child or parent can be heart-breaking and it's a time when leaning on God might be the only thing that keeps a family sane when sorrow envelops them.

After suffering a loss it will take us a long time to feel we are almost back to normal. Some people feel that if they laugh at a joke or begin once again to find humour in life's everyday experiences, they are being disloyal to their deceased loved ones. This is not really true. I'm sure that the deceased would be happy to know that their family and friends are once again letting joy light up their lives. After my son died I would watch funny shows on T.V. which sometimes made me laugh out loud. Laughter can be just as helpful as crying when we are dealing with loss. My husband and I have learned to joke with each other again. And I'm sure Scott, who had a great sense of humour when he was not depressed or anxious, is glad that we can still laugh.

When I was only thirteen, two Jesuit seminarians who used to visit our family were killed in a car



accident. It was devastating news, especially because they were both so young. I wrote a poem about this incident and I realized then how at anytime one of us could go to be with God. Our family said prayers for them by saying the Rosary and to this day saying my beads seems to help during any difficult situation.

According to Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D there are six stages of mourning but they are not predictable or orderly. They include accepting the reality of death even though shock may insulate us from doing so right away. Letting ourselves feel the pain of the loss which may take several days or maybe even weeks is difficult but necessary. Jim and I remember Scott by thinking of the joyful and also silly things he did. Developing a new self-identity will occur and I actually feel my faith has grown stronger after losing Scott. An important thing to remember when you are grieving is to nourish yourself by eating healthy foods, getting enough sleep and

exercise and being gentle with yourself. You need to nurture yourself mentally by getting counseling or sharing your thoughts and feelings out with a compassionate friend and spiritually by asking God for strength. Reading good books on grief can help, as well as trying to socialize now and then with friends and family. My husband and I find that attending plays helps us forget our troubles or just going to visit someone. Keeping a journal allows us to express our thoughts in private and can be very cathartic. Other activities that may switch your mind to something else might include painting or sketching, making clay pots, creating crafts, volunteering your help and time and becoming involved in community events.

A grieving soul shared in a survivor's group: "I heal in part by allowing others to express their love for me, by choosing to invite others into my journey, I move toward health, if I hide from others, I hide from healing. □



TAKING A TRIP

Melanie D'Souza

The skies blush with the Colorado sunset as Charlie Puth croons for attention (pun intended). I bring the car to 90 mph, determined to pass the slowpach of a Honda Odyssey in front of me. In the passenger seat, Gigi whistles. She's damn right; our girls' trip sure had begun. If our recent college graduation was a wedding, this trip was our honeymoon!

There's no denying that we love to travel a fair deal while we're young. And why wouldn't we? Travelling engages our senses, makes us grateful for the world we are in, whether we are running away from it or running towards embracing it. And while we are enjoying the world that God created for us, let's keep Him in mind every step of the way!

Here are some things that we can remember:

Preparation: Getting ready for a trip can be tiresome, but it is always worth it! Getting excited about your destination is even better, so offer up your trip and your companions in prayer!



Melanie looking out on the Colorado plains

Companionship: Whether you are embarking on your trip solo or with close friends and family, the typical out-of-town experience usually deepens your relationship with people you're with and the people you meet. It is time for new discoveries at events that happen throughout the journey, and hopefully we are able to see a little bit of God in the people we encounter!

New discoveries: Journeys like these can be eventful with the new places, new people, different food and customs that you encounter.

unter. It helps to remember that this is designed to create a new 'you'. A 'you' with fresh experiences that educates you a great deal about resilience, open-mindedness and wisdom, while you are busy being a smart traveller. It also shows you how people from even vastly different backgrounds can share same the reason for living as you, or offer a different, meaningful perspective.

Health, Safety and Protection:

Do you know a Catholic car when you see one? (Hint, it's the rosary hanging from the rear view mirror, haha!) Jokes aside, we love to call Mama Mary on protecting us and our fellow travellers from harm on our expeditions. That being said, while we can rely on her for our safety, we must remember that our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Spirit and so it is our duty to stay healthy even if a trip has upset our

regular schedule. We are also responsible for respecting nature, engaging in environmental stewardship, helping others in need and being the Good Samaritan whenever possible!

Documentation: Are you on vacation from God, while you're on vacation? As you travel and learn about yourself, don't forget to document it through words and actions. Journal when you can, capture the sights in photos for time immemorial and retain your role as an ambassador for Him.

Revel in Him: Lastly, remember you're on vacation. Respect the time off you've been blessed with and embrace the liberation that comes with going electronics-free or even communications-free.

Attend Mass if possible, thank and praise him continually for His beautiful world- while you're travelling.

So next time we get ready to fill in our travel diaries, let's be thankful for the opportunity to travel, and more so the opportunity to experience and discover. While we think that there's no place like home, God's world is our home and there's never been a better time to enjoy it! □



Mel and Gigi taking a break



Psalm 121:7-8

The Lord will keep you
from all harm-
he will watch over your life;
The Lord will watch over
your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

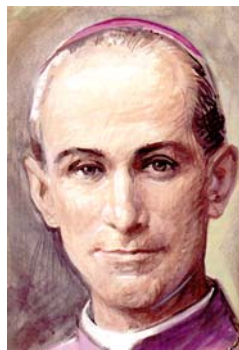
How Reassuring!

SALESIAN SAINTS

MONS. LOUIS OLIVARES 1873 - 1943

Bishop - Venerable

Born in Corbetta (Milan) on October 18, 1873, he was the fifth of fifteen children. He was baptized the following day at St. Victor's. Thanks especially to his mother he received a fine and profound religious and secular education that would distinguish him in his ministry later. He was confirmed in 1881 and later entered the seminary at Monza to complete his education and study philosophy. He studied Theology at Milan's Major Seminary under the guidance of Father Pasquale Morganti, the future bishop of Bobbio and Ravenna, who was himself a pupil of the Oratory of Valdocco. In the seminary the cleric Olivares learned to know and love the great apostle of youth Father John Bosco. It was during his stay in Milan that he met and approached the Salesians and would one day find his vocation among them. He was ordained a priest at the age of 22, on April 4, 1896 by Cardinal Andrea Ferrari and was sent as vice-rector to the College of Archbishop Saranno. He spent eight years there as a zealous, exemplary and an indefatigable priest. His exceptional ministry was characterized by the typical paternity of Don Bosco. Careful and vigilant he came to be known as "the presence of God."



It was in 1904 that he finally entered the Salesian Congregation. He humbly admitted: "After serious reflection and guided by the advice of those who directed my conscience I felt called by the goodness of God to it (the Salesian Congregation)." After completing his novitiate at Foglizzo Canavese and after just six years of Salesian life, he was sent as parish priest to the shrine of Santa Maria Liberatrice in Rome-Testaccio. It was the same Cardinal Ferrari who prompted Pope St. Pius X to offer to the Salesians this pastorally difficult place. At Testaccio the new pastor would give his best self, winning the hearts of his flock with kindness and in a few years, transforming a tumultuous and anti-clerical crowd into a fervent and dynamic parish. He was much sought after as a spiritual director and his confessional "was besieged from morning to

night."

On July 15, 1916, Pope Benedict XV promoted this zealous Salesian pastor to the Episcopal see of Sutri and Nepi. Among his resolutions this new bishop would write: "The theme of my episcopal life will be sincere, patient and loving charity, being spiritually prepared for every sacrifice." That became a reality in the five pastoral visits to the two dioceses and his long tenure at Civita Castellana, Orte and Gallese. He conducted numerous missions and retreats for the people and youngsters; celebrating the First Communions of children and holding frequent pontifical functions in both dioceses. He was frequently sought after even outside his diocese where he was esteemed for his words and counsel, especially for the brilliant example of his virtue. During his visits to parishes, early in the morning, as soon as the church opened, he was there in the confessional and remained there for long hours without getting tired, listening patiently and kindly to everyone and offering everyone his reassurance and enlightened advice. His zeal for preaching the word of God was incredible. His favourite themes were the Eucharist, the Madonna, Paradise - his voice was so gentle it almost sounded celestial.

A characteristic trait of Monsignor Olivares was his amiability and tenderness of soul. In fact he was unmoved by any resentment or hatred. "He loved and was loved in return by the poor." "He received everyone at his home at all hours, saying that the bishop's house was everyone's home and he was available to

everyone." He received and listened to each one accompanying them to the door with his hat in hand. When he went to Rome he was loaded requests and commissions entrusted to him by his poor people. He always returned loaded with packets, parcels, documents and household supplies.

He was a deeply humble person: "He always seemed destined to take the last place in anyone's presence." He was a man of deep piety. One of his parishioners who had lived a long time with him said: "He had an extraordinary love for prayer. To watch him pray was an unforgettable experience. I think I never saw him sit in church. He was always on his knees with his face in his hands or his eyes fixed on the tabernacle as if he were looking at something supernatural. In his spare time from ministry or from receiving visitors he never tarried in his room and, if someone was looking for the bishop he was definitely to be found in church. To say that he prayed constantly was an understatement. It was the way he prayed and his commitment to prayer that always amazed me."

He died on May 19, 1943 at Pordenone where he had gone to preach a retreat to the high school students of the Salesian Institute. He remained in the diocese of Sutri and Nepi from 1916 to 1943. The fame of his sanctity immediately spread far and wide. One of the doctors who attended him admitted: "As long as the Catholic Church has champions like this, it is destined for ever new and greater triumphs; men who thus preach the gospel and are listened to with disbelief." □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



BL. JEANNE-EMILIE DE VILLENEUVE (1811 - 1854)

Binta was a teenage African Muslim girl living in Guinea. One day in 1994, she swallowed some caustic soda. Rushed to Barcelona, Spain, she was saved by an operation, and then sent to stay in a home run by the “Blue Sisters.” But soon, doctors discovered that she had an enormous ulcer, peritonitis, and hemorrhaging of the stomach. In spite of another long operation, the prognosis was clear: “There is nothing more we can do.” The death certificate was even prepared. The Blue Sisters began a novena to their foundress, Emilie de Villeneuve, and placed a picture and relic of Emilie in the girl’s hand. Suddenly, Binta opened her eyes and without any possible medical explanation, quickly recovered. After twenty-three days of unconsciousness, she got up by herself and returned to the Sisters’ residence, completely healed. This miracle made possible the beatification on July 5, 2009 of Emilie de Villeneuve in Castres, in the south of France.

Emilie de Villeneuve was born in Toulouse, France, on March 9,



Emilie de Villeneuve 1811-1854

1811, into one of the oldest aristocratic families of the region. Two other girls, Léontine and Octavie had preceded her. Every summer, the family went to their chateau in Hauterive, near Castres, and, after the birth of a son, Ludovic, in 1815, the family moved there. Madame de Villeneuve educated and raised her children herself in spite of her poor health, which had been ruined at an early age by the hardships of the Revolution. Her husband was completely occupied in the cultivation of their land, which he strode every inch or, directing the

farm work. Discipline was strict at the chateau: no fires in the bedrooms, silence at table, and in the salon, the children were relegated to the far end of the room and forbidden to make noise.

The difference in age between Emilie and her sisters created a certain degree of distance, leaving Emilie somewhat isolated. She lived her childhood years with a disconcerting insensitivity. One of her friends, Coralie, would later describe her as: “A heart that seemed to feel nothing, a cold person, lacking even the sweetness of the little reasonings that are so endearing among children.” To this was joined a character trait quite exceptional at that age – a passion for exactitude, far things to be done at the precise time. She herself drew from this experience a growing taste for study.

Sensitive but closed

In 1825, Madame de Villeneuve died after a painful agony. Accustomed to not showing her emotions, however real, because, in her view, she had an exaggerated “sensitivity and tenderness”, Emilie appeared as though unmoved. But this attitude revealed a hidden tragedy - she had received too little of her mother’s tenderness, which had been focused more on the two older girls, and the younger girl had withdrawn into herself. On the occasion of her first communion in January 1826, she allowed no outward sign of her fervor. Shortly thereafter, Monsieur de Villeneuve was made mayor of Castres and turned over the care of his children to his own mother, who lived in Toulouse. This lady, very old and blind, gave the children

almost total freedom.

At the end of November 1829, Léontine married. Emilie then became the mistress of the chateau in Hauterive, which had been rather neglected for some years. Her father retired in 1830 from his duties as mayor of Castres, but expanded his agricultural pursuits. Very good at running things Emilie soon put all back in order to her father’s great satisfaction. Every morning, Emilie went to Mass. She divided among the poor the entire allowance her father gave her, and visited young women, instructing them and helping them in their illnesses. Father Leblanc, a Jesuit living in Toulouse, gave her spiritual direction.

An irresistible attraction

Having reached the age of twenty-three, Emilie confided to Coralie: “I will not marry... but what torments me is a vocation to which I feel an irresistible attraction, but Father Leblanc does not yet want to give his decision on it... I feel the desire to devote myself to the poor in the admirable community of the Daughters of Charity.” When, finally, Father Leblanc did approve her plan, her joy was immense. After several months of discernment and prayer, Father Leblanc concluded that the work was the will of God. Monsieur de Villeneuve, reassured by the thought that his daughter would not be too far away from him, gave his consent, and the Archbishop likewise approved.

Emilie took the name “Sister Marie”. The first Rules defined the purpose of the new Congregation – the education of abandoned children, service to the poor and prisoners, and teaching and

providing vocational training to young women. On March 19, 1837, a sewing room was opened for thirty students, but soon the city's seamstresses complained of unfair competition. The populace, which had been very favourable toward the Sisters when they first settled into their house, turned bitterly against Sister Marie, with malicious remarks, and even slander. Even the clergy allowed themselves to be swayed, but Father Leblanc urged the Sisters to forge ahead.

"I am so weak..."

At the end of 1837, the wave of criticism had passed and four postulants were admitted. At the beginning of the following year, the city of Castres placed the sisters in charge of the local prisons. On May 1, 1838 the community moved into the former minor seminary. Sister Marie treated every student with loving care, and they were drawn to the peace that she exuded. The still imperfect organization did not allow the religious formation she gave to bear all its fruits. She decided to separate the novices from the professed religious, and began drafting the Constitutions that would ultimately be approved by the Archbishop of Albi at the end of 1841. The Superior General was to be elected for three years, but the Sisters obtained the archbishop's permission to appoint their foundress Superior Mother Marie's behaviour with them was full of delicacy and discreet vigilance.

But Mother Marie still longed for distant missions. The first departure of four Religious for Africa was fixed for November 22,

1847; others for 1849 and 1850.

Singular Humility

Mother de Villeneuve threw her daughters into turmoil by resigning as Superior General. The reasons she gave can be summed up as follows: her ardent thirst to practice obedience in all things; the advantage to be the Congregation, which one day or other would be deprived of her leadership; the fear that her daughters obeyed her more out of confidence and fond affection than out of faith and pure love of God. Above all, Mother Marie did not consider herself at all necessary or even desirable, as Superior. Not without pain, the General Chapter of September 1853 assented to her decision.

Around the middle of 1854, cholera spread through the south of France and reached the city of Castres. An epidemic of "military fever" (a contagious febrile disease) broke out at the same time. Mother de Villeneuve set in motion a veritable crusade of prayers and created an atmosphere of confidence. Cholera did not make its way into the Sisters' convent, but the foundress fell victim to military fever and, on September 7, was forced to take to her bed. At the beginning of October, her condition worsened and the chaplain gave her Extreme Unction. Shortly thereafter, she passed away as the sisters said the prayers for the agonizing.

May Blessed Emilie de Villeneuve obtain for us the grace to be true evangelists, passionately striving to spread the Kingdom of God everywhere. □

(Taken from the Newsletter of St Joseph de Clairac Abbey)

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Vanity Fair

Little Billy was watching his mother cold-cream her face before going to bed. After watching intently, he asked: Mummy, what are you doing that for?" "To make me pretty," she replied. Then she began to remove the cream with tissue, Billy exclaimed: "It didn't work, did it?"

Fatal Foresight

A woman's husband had been dangerously ill but finally the doctor announced that the man would live.

"What do you mean?" demanded the wife. "You told me he couldn't last two weeks."

"Well, I'm going to cure him after all," replied the doctor.

"Surely you're glad, aren't you?" The woman wrinkled her brow in thought.

"It puts me in a kind of a hold," she said finally.

"I've gone and sold his clothes to pay for his funeral."

Make Do

"I know I'm not much to look at," admitted the young man a bit crestfallen. "Oh, well," philosophized his girl-friend and bride-to-be. "You'll be at the office most of the time."

Superstitious

A wealthy society lady had just engaged a new maid and was instructing her.

"At dinner, Mary," she explained, serve from the left and take the plates from the right, is that clear?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered the girl condescendingly.

"What's the matter, superstitious or something?"

Noble Cause

A little pig became ham, which was made into sandwiches by a beautiful lady.

"He died a gentleman," said his mourners.

"His last act was to give his seat to a lady."

Dogged Fervour

During a community drive to round up unlicensed dogs, a policeman whistled a car to the curb. When its driver asked why he had been stopped, the officer pointed to the dog in the seat beside him. "Does your dog have a license?" he asked.

"Oh, no," the man said quickly.

"He doesn't need one. I do all the driving."

Lethal Weapon

"Do you sing and play much?" a young man asked the pretty girl who was carelessly strumming the keys of the piano.

"Only to kill time," she replied.

"You've got a fine weapon, I must admit," ventured the young man.

Mistaken Identity

"Man overboard!" shouted the young sailor on his first voyage.

Amid the great confusion, the ship was stopped. The sailor stepped up to the captain, saluted and said: "I'm sorry sir. I made a mistake when I said: 'Man overboard!'"

"Thank God!" said the captain, signalling for full steam ahead.

"Yeah," replied the sailor.

"It was a dame." □



THE GREATEST LAW

by Ian Pinto, sdb

Laws are an integral part of society. Every society has a set of laws to ensure its smooth running and the security of its members. Laws are organic, that is, they gradually emerge over time. These laws aren't something universal or absolute. Each society discerns for itself the laws it needs to have in place so as to avoid conflict among its members and to foster a healthier and happier community. Simply put, laws are binding rules that help individuals peacefully pursue their own goals and fulfill their healthy desires. Just think about it. The laws of the road ensure that people can commute without untoward disturbance. It facilitates traffic and strives to ensure the safety of everyone on and off the road. But what happens when people don't abide by the traffic rules? We have chaos. In the rush, nobody can get to and the risk of accidents is much higher. This simple example gives an idea of the necessity of laws. Laws once made don't remain static forever. They evolve over time and amendments are made as per the existing milieu keeping in mind the future.

The Jews since the time of Joseph formed a part of the Egyptian empire (Ex 1:7). Since they were subjects of the Egyptian Pharaoh they abided by the rules and regulations decided by him. Once they left Egypt for the Promised Land they were a people without any ruler. They had Moses who was their leader and who mediated between God and themselves. Since they had left Egypt which was their home for many years they had no land of their own. Since they were a young nation in search of a new land and a new identity, they had no laws, as such. Their ruler, God himself, gave them the laws and the book of Exodus records the laws given by God to the people through Moses (Ex 20: 1-24:12).

Down the ages, the Jewish priests and scribes added more laws to facilitate better quality of worship. The enormous number of laws slowly deluded them into losing the sense of the law and stressing the practice. What resulted was a scrupulous vigilantism on the part of the law-makers and law-keepers (the scribes and Pharisees) in order to ensure that ev-

ery letter of the law was followed to a T. This in turn gave rise to spiritual one-up-manship and degrading comparisons of spirituality. Jesus was critical of such hypocrisy (Mt 22:2-23:36; Lk 11:39-52). Nevertheless, Jesus respected the law because it had come from God: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Mt 5:17-18). He didn't approve of what the scribes and Pharisees had done with the law or how they were compelling people to practice it. He wanted the people to understand why God had given such commandments instead of blindly following all that the teachers of the law taught.

The Pharisees were experts of the law. They knew it better than anyone else. In an attempt to trap Jesus they questioned him, "Master which is the greatest commandment of the Law?" (Mt 22:36) The question was a genuine one but their intentions were shady. They witnessed Jesus confounding the Sadducees on the topic of Resurrection. They wanted to prove their superior knowledge to Jesus and silence him once and for all. Jesus was an outspoken opponent. He unveiled their hypocrisy and used harsh language while referring to them (Mt 23:13-34). He accused them of beguiling the people with their outward show of spirituality. But in their hearts, they knew, he was right! And this angered them all the more. If he continued preaching the way he did, they would soon have to abandon their

ostentatious way of life and step down from the high-platforms they had built for themselves.

Jesus perceived the motives for their question and responded in an appropriate and convincing manner. "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment." He didn't just stop here, he went on, "the second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also" (Mt 22:37-40). A little reflection suffices to grasp the depth of Jesus' answer. There was no law that didn't pertain to these two commandments. If one followed both these commandments then one could never be accused of breaking any law. Just take the Ten Commandments for example. The first three commandments talk about loving God with everything one has while the remaining seven commandments refer to a passionate love for neighbour. Jesus brilliantly summarized the hundreds of laws into two very simple yet challenging *laws of Love*.

Christianity is the only religion to stress on *love*. No other faith or doctrine proposes love as its driving force. In fact, the New Testament repeatedly and in varied ways refers to the concept of love and its related qualities like compassion, mercy, forgiveness, generosity and so on. Christians are supposed to be known by their love (Jn 13:35). God is love. The one who lives in love, lives in God and God in him (1 Jn 4:16). At the heart of the law is *love* which originates in God and aims to make us like Him. □

Quiet Spaces

APPEARANCE AND TRUTH

On the morning of Tuesday, October 14, 2014 Pope Francis broke the Word of God for the little congregation at the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

Jesus condemns people with good manners but bad habits," because it is one thing to "appear good and beautiful," but inner truth is something else. In the same way, it isn't good to be bound exclusively to the letter of the law, because "law alone doesn't save. During morning Mass at Santa Marta, Pope Francis called for an examination of conscience regarding the state of each Christian's faith.

The day's liturgy offered a Reading from the Gospel according to Luke (11:37-41), from which the Pontiff began his homily. He explained Jesus' attitude with respect to the Pharisee who was scandalized because the Lord did not perform the ritual cleansing before his meal. Christ's response was grim: "You are so concerned with the outside, with appearance, but inside you are filled with plunder and evil." In a parallel passage from Matthew, he speaks of greed and uncleanness and where the Pharisees are compared to "whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." In this regard, the Pope underscored that Jesus firmly condemned the Pharisees' self-confidence in "having fulfilled the law."

This refers to the people "who liked to take walks in the town square", and to be seen while they prayed, and to wear a dismal face while they fasted. "Why is the Lord like this?" Francis asked himself, pointed out that the Gospel uses two different but related adjectives: "plunder and evil." He also explained that this evil is "strongly associated with money".

The Pontiff then recounted a brief anecdote: "I once heard an elderly preacher of spiritual exercises, who said: "How is sin able to enter the soul? Oh, it's simple! Through your pockets..." Money itself is basically "the door" through which corruption enters the heart. This explains why Jesus stated: "Give for alms those things which are within".

Pope Francis explained that "alms have always been, in the tradition of the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, the touchstone of justice. A just man, a just woman is always linked to alms" because with alms we share our own with others, we give what each one "has within."

The same concept, the Pope specified, emerges from the day's First Reading, taken from the Letter of Paul in which he disagrees with the Galatians (5:1-6). The Apostle's words are also well suited to our own daily life, because the faith, the Bishop of Rome highlighted, "is not only reciting the Creed: we all believe in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit, in life everlasting..." But if our faith is "immobile" and "inactive," then "it's of no use".

Thus, what's important in Jesus Christ is "the faith which becomes active in charity," in other words, "detached from the dictatorship of cash, from the idolatry of money" because "all greed distances us from Jesus Christ".

This is why, the Pope explained, throughout the Bible there is "a lot of talk about alms", whether the "small, everyday" alms or the more important ones. It's necessary to "strip oneself" and not give "only the leftovers". It's important to do as that elderly woman did, "who gave all she had to live".

One who gives alms and "sounds the trumpet" so that everyone knows "is not a Christian." This, Francis indicated, is to act as a Pharisee, "it's hypocritical." To better illustrate the concept, the Pope told about what happened once to Fr Pedro Arrupe, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus from 1965 to 1983. In the period that "he was a missionary in Japan," while seeking offerings for his mission, he received an invitation from an important woman who wanted to make a donation. The woman didn't receive him in private, but wanted to consign her envelope in front of "journalists who took photographs". In other words, she "sounded the trumpet." The Pontiff, said that he (Fr Arrupe) had "suffered great humiliation" and had put up with her only for the good of "the poor of Japan, for the mission." Once he returned home, he opened the envelope and discovered that there "were ten dollars" inside. If the heart doesn't change, Pope Francis commented, appearance counts for nothing. And thus concluded his homily. "Today it will do us good to think about how my faith is, how my Christian life is: is it a Christian life of cosmetics, of appearance, or is it a Christian life with a faith which is active in charity?". Everyone can examine his conscience "before God". And "it is good for us to do so." □
(by L' Osservatore Romano, Weekly ed. in English, n. 42, 17 October 2014)

THE LADY OF THE GROTTO

From Fr. Ian Doullton's collection of stories

I remember holding in my hands a picture of a little girl. It was taken when she was fourteen but her face still shows the clear innocence of a child. Her dark hair is brushed back simply from her placid brow. Her eyes are really lovely; they are large, dark, intense. Their expression is one of appealing candour, and complete honesty. When this picture was taken only a few people had heard of Bernadette Soubirous. Now she is known to the world. Year upon year millions will visit her birthplace, here is the reason why. This is what actually happened in Lourdes, France a little more than hundred years ago.

One cold day Bernadette Soubirous went with her young sister Marie-Toinette and a friend Jeanne to look for wood. It was a Thursday, 11th February, 1858. Bernadette's father was out of work. Her mother had made a little money washing clothes so there would at least be some gruel for the four children to eat. But first Bernadette must bring some wood. The three little girls wandered close by a stream near the river Gave at the grotto of Massabielle.

Jeanne spotted some wood on the other side of the stream and told the two sisters to accompany him. Toinette looked back and noticed Bernadette's attention was somewhere else. Bernadette suffered from Asthma and because she was afraid of catching a cold was hesitant to get into the little stream. "Mother won't let me get my feet wet, Jeanne you carry me across on your back,

you're strong?" She pleaded but Jeanne was not inclined to do that...he motioned to Toinette to follow him. Toinette pleaded with Jeanne: "But Jean, Bernadette can't help it. If she hurries she'll get her feet wet and another attack of asthma and then she'll cough all night and keep us awake." Just then both of them looked at Bernadette once more before crossing and to their surprise they saw her kneeling down. Like little children they were more irritated than surprised.

They went cross the stream and, in a short while they gathered quite a few twigs and cautiously crossed the little stream. When they finished they noticed that Bernadette was still kneeling and Toinette called to her: "Bernadette, are you coming over to help me with this wood or aren't you, yes or no?" Bernadette got up slowly and came towards them and got into the water...strangely she found the water wasn't as cold as she thought it would be. As she reached them Toinette, a little irritated called out: "Oh Bernadette! Take some of this wood, we should be getting home." And she continued: "That was a sly way to get out of work, make believe you were praying."

Bernadette wasn't upset but looked at Toinette and Jeanne and asked: "'Didn't you see anything?' They hadn't noticed anything. That was when Bernadette said: 'You didn't see the Lady in White?' Then Bernadette said that she had seen a lady and she made them promise not to tell anyone anything as she whispered to them:

"It was a girl, dressed in white; a girl, sixteen or seventeen years old. She had a white dress on with a blue sash. She had a white veil on her head and it fell down her back. You could hardly see her hair at all. Her feet were bare and there was a yellow rose on each foot. On her right arm she had a rosary of white beads and the chain was gold all shining like the two roses on her feet."

The children were not convinced but they promised not to say anything to anyone. So saying the three youngsters made their way home through the rugged country-side. They stowed away the wood near the kitchen fire and suddenly Bernadette heard her mother call out: "Bernadette, come here to me."

Toinette had told her what Bernadette had told them. Mme. Soubirous was upset: "What is this story Toinette told me about a lady dressed in white at the grotto." According to the lady it was nonsense but Bernadette stood by her story and she began to narrate it with the excitement of any little child: "I did see her mother. I was getting ready to take off my stockings to wade across the stream. I heard a sound, something like a gust of wind. I looked up towards the grotto and I saw a lady dressed in white. She took the rosary she had in her hand and she made the sign of the Cross. I knelt down. I said the Rosary before the beautiful lady. When I had finished, she made me a sign to come closer. I didn't dare. Then she disappeared."

Now her mother was even more embarrassed. "This is all nonsense." She shook her head and exclaimed. So saying her mother forbade her to go to the grotto

anymore. She warned Bernadette that it could probably be the devil...but the adamant little girl retorted: "The devil can't be as pretty as that."

Friday passed and Saturday and still Bernadette pleaded to go to the grotto. Her mother would not give her permission. But on Sunday, at last her mother gave in and Bernadette went back to the grotto. This time a dozen little girls came along. One of them carried a bottle of holy water. Bernadette went a few paces forward and knelt down. Toinette and Jeanne were both afraid and Toinette had brought holy water and the moment they saw the apparition Jeanne motioned to Toinette to sprinkle it with holy water. Bernadette hushed them and asked them to pray the Rosary with her. They were amazed that the lady seemed pleased and smiled at the children. The two children knelt at Bernadette's bidding. They looked at Bernadette and Jeanne commented: "Oh Toinette...Bernadette's face... looks so beautiful, so happy." But she seemed so pale and both Toinette and Jean thought Bernadette was going to die. They didn't know what to do. Just then they saw a family friend Nicholao returning from the mill where he worked. They ran up to him and pleaded "Nicholao, Nicholao..." And they told him about Bernadette... She seemed to be in a kind of faint but she looked to calm and her face seemed so radiant. Nicholao gently picked up the little girl while Toinette ran ahead to tell her mother.

On her way home she told everybody she met about what had happened at the grotto. Soon the

whole town was talking about Bernadette. There were arguments in the shops and the taverns and along the streets. The town authorities became alarmed. The police commissioner himself sent for Bernadette and questioned her. Monsieur Giacomè had the reputation for breaking down the most hardened criminals. The little girl looked straight at him and told her story. Then he questioned her and tried to confuse her by changing the details but the little girl stuck to her story. For instance he said: "Well, this lady was dressed in a blue robe with a white sash..." But Bernadette politely corrected the commissioner: "No sir, you got that down wrong, I said a white robe with a blue sash."

He couldn't confuse her and so he finally exclaimed in exasperation: "Young lady I know what you're up to. This story of yours is pure invention. You've learned it by heart."

Then he warned her that she was not to go back to the grotto but she pleaded: "Sir, I can't promise you that. I've already promised the lady I would go back." So he threatened her: "Very well, if you don't promise me not to return to Massabielle, I will call my gendarmes and have you put in prison."

The little girl was frightened but nobody could make her promise not to return to the grotto. She kept her word to the lady and went back everyday. And everyday the crowds of people who came to watch her, grew larger. They were hoping for some kind of miracle but all they saw was Bernadette becoming beautiful as an angel as she prayed and as she listened.

Then one day Bernadette said that the Lady had given her a message for the local pastor. So Bernadette went to see the L'abbe Peyramale. The elderly parish priest exclaimed amused: "Yes, you're Bernadette Soubirous; the one who claims to see visions, setting the whole countryside with your stories. Do you know this lady's name?"

He was amused that the little girl didn't even know the name of the Lady and he said: "Those who believe your story imagine it's the mother of Christ herself. Do you realise that if you untruthfully claim to have seen her in that grotto, you are taking a risk that you will never see her in reality in heaven?"

Bernadette admitted that she didn't even know if the beautiful Lady was the Blessed Virgin but to her she was as real as the parish priest sitting before her and she went on: "And she talks to me as clearly as you are talking to me now. I have come to tell you from her that she wants a chapel to her in the Massabielle rocks."

This was too much for the elderly parish priest of that sleepy little village. He was a bit irritated and so he told the little girl: "Ask her...ask her to make a rose bush at the grotto bloom right now, in this month of February."

The Abbe never got his miracle. The wild rose bush did not bloom in February, but something far more wonderful did happen but in one of Bernadette's visits to the grotto, the lady told her to dig in the ground at a certain spot. Bernadette was puzzled but she did what she was told. A little water seeped into the hole, then it began to overflow, it became a stream

that kept growing larger. Some workmen from the local quarry dug a channel for it and a basin. There was living at the quarry a workman named Louis Bourier, he was losing the sight of his right eye. This man heard about the spring at the grotto. One day he bathed his eye in the water. The next day he could see perfectly. The same doctor who was treating him for years could find nothing wrong with the eye. But the cure that Lourdes talked about most was that of Croizine Bohort's baby. Everybody knew that the child had been sick all his two years. Finally he stopped eating and the doctors gave him up. One day the father noticed that the baby lay motionless and his eyes were glassy. He told his wife that the child was dying and neighbours began preparing the clothes for the burial. But Croizine Bohorts ran with the baby to the grotto and plunged him into the icy waters of the spring. That night the child slept well. In the morning his mother discovered him toddling about the room, gurgling with good health.

Bernadette always called the visitor simply the Lady. People who believed in her visions thought the Lady must surely be the mother of Christ. Bernadette said several times that asked she visitor's name but each time she received only a smile in reply. On 25th March after a vision Bernadette arose from her knees and went at once to see Abbe Peyramale. He seemed disturbed: The little girl said: "The lady told me her name."

"Oh she did? And what did she say?" The Parish Priest asked.

"I asked the lady to tell me who

she was. I begged her...at last she looked grave and seemed to become humble. She joined her hands and lifted them to her breast. She looked up at the sky; then slowly separating her hands, like this. She leaned down towards me and said in a trembling voice: "*I am the Immaculate Conception.*"

"The Immaculate Conception! Is that what she said?" The Parish Priest was shocked and told her it's meaning and concluded: "There's only one person who's got the right to call herself that: the Blessed Virgin, the mother of Christ."

Pilgrims began to come from all over France, then from all over the world. They made Lourdes a place of prayer, peace and often of cures. Crutches of the lame and canes of the blind surrounded the grotto. But what was Bernadette doing in the midst of all this excitement? She was going on calmly with her schooling; her visits to the grotto stopped. There were no more visions. She didn't expect any. When she was 21 she left Lourdes and went into the convent of the sisters of Charity at Nevers. She spent the rest of her life as a nun. She was often sick and suffered a great deal.

People sometimes asked her why one who had seen the Blessed Virgin should have such a life of pain afterwards. Bernadette's answer always was: "The Lady told me once that she would not promise me happiness in this life but in the next." Bernadette died at the age of 36. Thirty years later when her case was examined for sainthood by the church, her body was to be found still lifelike in appearance, a special mark of God's favour. □

PROVERBS IN THE LANGUAGE OF DON BOSCO AND HIS MOTHER

by Natale Cerrato

Expressing Oneself in a Popular Culture

In the old days our elders flavoured their conversation with proverbs. The high point of Piedmontese proverbs was the second half of the 18th century when old municipalities especially in the countryside merged, at least in part, to form a more unified culture in the entire subalpine society.

These sayings were the fruit of experience and wisdom and were sometimes sheer poetry; while at other times they formed part of the village banter. In this short article we will describe how essential to Don Bosco's ways of expressing himself.

Speaking of Providence, they would say: *No goat is born without the birth of his bush (a-i nass mai na crava senza ch 'a-j nassa el sò busson).*

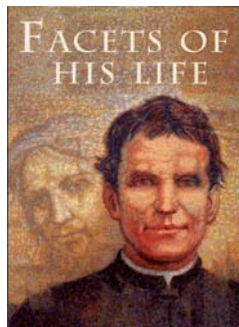
Of young people they said: *plants are light when they are young (le piante as drisso da gioio).*

Of work: *poverty and melancholy flee from the workplace (da la cà del travaj a scapa la miseria e la malinconia).*

Of suffering: *there's no altar without a cross (ja l'è nen autar senza cros).*

Of money: *war can't be waged without money (senza sold as fa nen la guèra).*

Of humility: *if you sit on the*



floor you won't fall (chi ch'as seta 'n tera a casca nen).

Of patience: *through patience, the mulberry leaf turns into silk (con la passienza la feuja 'd mor a doventa seda).*

Of indecision: *those who keep looking at clouds never travel (chi ch'a guarda tute le nivole, as buta mai an viagi).*

Of a critic: *the weakest wheel of the carriage is the one that is cracked (la pì cativa roa del cher al'è sèmpe cola ch'a scherzin-a).*

Of laziness: *the lazy youngster, the needy old man (giovio ossios vej bzognos).*

And so on... was the parlance of mamma Margaret and Don Bosco.

The proverbs of Mamma Margaret

In the "Life" that Fr G. B. Lemoyne wrote of Mamma Margaret, on the basis of Don Bosco's inputs, he mentions the use she made of the proverbs and moral

motivations she frequently used.

And to let her sons (*the boys of the Oratory*) understand the seriousness of sin she used to say: *"Don't joke with God."* If she saw them gorging themselves with goodies she warned: *"the excesses of the greedy hasten death."* To those who slept too much, she often repeated: *"We have little time to do good!"* When she saw the boys fighting among themselves she would say: *"It is good to have just one enemy not too many."* And when John was preparing to don the clerical dress, she said very directly: *"It's not the habit that makes the monk."*

She came to Valdocco in the autumn of 1846 and spent ten years by the side of her son. She made a great sacrifice leaving behind her 56 year old property. She became the mother of Don Bosco's orphans, the wise teacher of the poor and abandoned boys, keeping an eye on them all the time to see that everything was in order. She was always ready to warn, rebuke and even reprimand them to prevent any material or moral damage. Her natural energetic eloquence full of proverbs, parables and figures of speech came to Don Bosco's attention.

After having corrected a mischievous, lightheaded youngster and after having surrendered him to the Lord she would add: *Look, whoever wants to climb up will need to be able to rise! (Varda, a calé a cala chi ch'a veul; a monté a monta chi ch'a peull!).*

To an impudent youngster she suggested: *In a revolving world or a bottomless pool, those unable to sail will sink! (Mond rotond, bassin senza fond; chi a sa*

nen navighé, a va a fond).

To another who said he didn't have time to go to confession she replied: *A bad washerwoman never finds a suitable stone! (Na cativa lavandera a treuva mai na bon-a pera!).*

To a third who asked her to stitch a button to his jacket, she put a needle through a button and said: *Why can't you sew it yourself? You have to get used to doing a bit of everything.* Don't you know that one who is unable to cut the nails of both his hands will be unable to earn his keep? (*T sas nen che chi l'è nen bon a tajesse fongie con tute doe le man, a l'è nen bon a guadagnesse 'l pan?*).

To a little boy who was crying because he was bullied, she held out a bunch of grapes and said: *You're crying for that? Only in Heaven will things be perfect. No place is perfect on either this or the other side of the Po. (Ant gnun pais a-i son tante miserie come de dsà e de dlà del Pò).*

A brat was tearing up an old handkerchief trying to turn it into a ball. Mamma Margaret seeing it took it from him saying: *Why are you spoiling this stuff? Can't you use it anymore? Everything is useful; you need even your nails to peel garlic! (Fin-a fongie a ven-o a taj a gavé la pel a l'aj).*

When someone was caught stealing something from the kitchen: *That's good - she would say - your conscience will prick you; some listen to it; others don't. (la cossienza a l'è parèj del gatij; chi ch'a lo sent; chi ch'a lo sent nen).*

And so, through these proverbs, the wisdom of this good-

natured mum gave the youngsters some popular recommendations getting them to experience something of what it meant to live in a family; one they had either lost or never had and then Don Bosco would do the rest.

Don Bosco's Proverbs

Don Bosco was formed at the knees of his mother and his language revealed it. His evening talks, in his conversations in the playground and his jokes were all peppered with popular sayings and expressions or from Holy Scripture. They left an indelible impression on the youngsters.

When, for example, they saw him bent with worry and problems and they tried to comfort him he would exclaim: You need to adjust your load as you walk (*Andasend per la strà a rangia la somà*) (MB 4,593).

Once his assistants took advantage of his absence from Valdocco; they changed the schedule of classes. Don Bosco heard about this and he wrote to Fr. Barberis: "You did well to carry on the evening classes before dinner because I would not permit it...A manca 'l gat, ij rat a balot, that is: when the cat is away the mice are at play" (E 1514).

On another occasion Fr. Ronchail and Fr. Bonetti were sick. They were two of his best assistants. Don Bosco was forced to handle things alone, so he wrote to Fr. Cibrario: "

Another time Fr. Ronchail and on Bonetti were sick, his two best aides in a deal he had with his hand. Don Bosco was forced to manage all alone and he wrote to Don Cibrario: I am writing because there is a lack of horses



During these gatherings specially in winter, tales and proverbs flourished

and I'm lost. That is: In their absence we have donkeys trotting around." "*an mancansa dij cavaj, j'aso a trôto*" (E 2012).

Having made the announcement that Fr. John Cagliero was going as a missionary, he received a grant of just 1000 lire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was a pittance considering the amount that would be needed for the journey of so many missionaries. So he wrote: "*A l'é mej che 'n pugn ant j'eu,*" that is: it would have been better to get punched in the eyes (E 1517).

He wrote to Father Borgogno, the Procurator General of the Lazzarists in Rome. This priest had assisted and advised him on the bureaucratic procedures of the Roman Curia. He sent him a draft report to be corrected, saying: "*Ho mostrato ai gat a rampiè,*" that is: He showed me how cats scamper around, which meant, he knows more than me (E 1303).

Besides his habit of resorting to using proverbs from his own dialect he also used biblical quotes or aphorisms from sacred and secular authors as well in many instances. Here it is suffi-

cient to quote a few.

When he was in difficulty he would joke with his boys calmly placing his trust in God and he would exclaim: "Rejoice and do good, and let them sing and go by" (*Laetari et benefacere et lasciar cantar le passere.*) The latter expression typically follows the former and is taken from the book of Ecclesiastes today called the book of Quohélet.

To those who were lazy he would quote St. Paul in a popular paraphrase: "*Qui non laborat non mangiorat*" (Let him who does not work not eat).

To those who gobbled their food he said: "*Venter pinguis non gignit mentem tenuem*" (a fat belly never produces a fine mind).

To those who mingle with bad companions: "*Si cum bonis, bonus eris, cum perversis perverseris*" (If you mingle with the good you will be good; with the bad you will turn bad).

To those battling temptations, he suggested avoiding the occasions of sin saying to them: "*Lignum tollis, ignis extinguitur*" (removing the wood extinguishes the fire).

To inculcate perseverance in doing good he suggested always doing little things well because: "*gutia cavat lapidem*" (little drops wear out the stone).

Referring to those little things, he often repeated this verse from Ecclesiastes (now known as Sirach): "*Qui spernit medica paulatim decidet*" (The one who despises little things will gradually be ruined).

He also cited the prophet Isaiah when referring to those who were bad; they would never find peace: "*Non est pax impiis*" (No

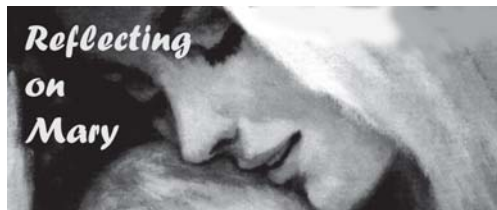
peace for the wicked).

Thus, Don Bosco continually flavoured his speech with quotes from Scripture, revealing his knowledge of Holy Scripture, the Fathers of the Church and other profane writers. He also had a popular way of speaking and preaching.

This habit of his has hitherto not been sufficiently emphasized, yet it was one his most effective educational tools. It was also, as you may have noticed, his way of looking on the bright side of his trials whereby he kept encouraging his collaborators, reassuring his youngsters, revealing his unconditional trust in Divine Providence.

Fr. Francesia, one his earliest collaborators, who had been by his side for many years, often referred to Don Bosco's use of popular language in his "*Good Nights*" when speaking about the problems of daily life. He recounted that when Don Bosco met with opposition regarding his projects he would quote what his mother used to say: The gardener's dog won't eat the fruit but won't let anyone take it away (*A l'é coma 'l can ed l'ortolan, ch'a mangia nen la fruta e a lassa nen mangela aj'autri!*).

And recalling the squabble with Bartholomew Garelli in the sacristy of the church of St. Francis of Assisi, at the beginning of his ministry he said: "the Oratory – and by Oratory he meant the Salesian Society – was born under blows and expanded under blows at the time and would expire." Was it a joke or a prophecy? Perhaps it was just a witty saying that should serve as a warning, truly a proverb! □



A SONG OF THANKSGIVING OF THE HUMBLE

by Sister Antonia Colombo, FMA

Every evening, at Vespers, the Magnificat, the song of Mary's gratitude is heard directed to the One who has done great things for her because He is pleased with His servant's humility.

In this prayer of praise, Mary places herself before God with her experience of joy, amazement and all that she is, recognizing Him as her Saviour. Beneath His gaze she perceives her own reality: a humble servant, a human being, in whom the Lord has done great things. Entering the heart of God, Mary understands God's logic and methods: He prefers the poor and the little ones, and that is why He looks with special affection on this daughter of Nazareth who is living among the humble and the poor of the Lord, only waiting for his salvation (cf LG 55).

The exultation of Mary is preceded by her listening to the word of God, from her faith experience and her fidelity to the Lord as she discovers the endless horizons of love that swell her

soul in prayer. This takes the form of a word, a song, a narration of God's action in her life and in the world. God loves to listen to his children recounting what He has done for them. At that moment, it is He Himself who sings in their lives.

Beginning from her own experience, Mary can testify that God has been faithful, that God's love extends from generation to



generation. The joy that God fills her with, makes her a prophet with a penetrating gaze able to fathom the thousands of contradictions in history, that are the fruit of God's mercy and the new logic of the Gospel where the little ones and the poor are privileged. They are chosen by God to testify that, despite the signs of death, suffering and injustice, the world is the object of His care, and it is filled with His presence, directed towards a prospect of hope.

The Magnificat of Mary is a monument of gratitude to God for the choices He made. It is a hymn that is destined to resound from generation to generation.

Don Bosco, in his turn, besides a stone monument, which is the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin, wanted a living monument that would sing forever his gratitude to Mary for her maternal concern: the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

The monument is even more

beautiful and complete today because each group of the Salesian Family and each member of the faithful who can contribute a stone. We join in Mary's song of gratitude as we recall God's mercy in our lives. He has lifted us out of our littleness and He calls us, as Christians to be a source of joy to others.

Mary of Nazareth recounts God's wonderful works in the humble and the poor through the reality of her existence.

If we trust God and commit ourselves to entering decisively into the Gospel narrative, God will permit us also to realize things we could never have thought about. All this becomes very simply and strong, capable of influencing our daily lives, leaving a trail for generations to follow. We will be able to communicate the hope of the humble in a world that has become increasing incapable of joy, simplicity and gratitude: the attitudes that the Christian draws from his/her contemplative roots, are the same as those from which Mary drew her strength to sing the Magnificat. □



VATICAN CITY

What is the true "great power of the universal Church"? "Its persecuted little churches." Words of Pope Francis. The Pontiff often recalls that there are more Christian martyrs today than in the early centuries, but - he decries - "the media don't talk about this" because it does not hit the headlines. Comparison with the past set aside, what emerges from beyond the Tiber River sources is that in 38 countries religious freedom is violated. Of these, 23 are areas where the abuse is serious and there is complete denial of rights and freedoms, long-term detention without fair trial, rape and murder. And Christians are the most persecuted group. This data was issued by the ACS, short for *Aiuto alla Chiesa che Soffre* which means Aid to the Church in need, a Foundation of Pontifical Right born in 1947 to support the Church all over the planet, with particular attention where it is persecuted. ACS carried out a "journey" through 196 nations, and measured the "temperature" of peacefulness and whether people have the possibility to live their faith and participate in rites and moments of prayer, and took a "picture" that can be consulted in the '2016 Report on Religious Freedom in the World'.

North Korea is certainly the hardest regime against believers, the ACS has listed it as "severe." It is estimated that there are about 200,000 prisoners in work camps. Among them, a large number - maybe 10%, but data is not confirmed -



of Christians were taken and imprisoned for having had a Bible or been present at celebrations. Particularly dramatic situations are also those in northern Iraq, where yazides, as well as Christians, are persecuted. Eritrea belongs to the black list too.

A new category of classification, is a "new phenomenon of religious violence": the "Islamic hyper-extremism." Hyper extremists are the men of the al-Baghdadi Islam in the Middle East region of Iraq and Syria, or Boko Haram who wants to de-Christianize northern Nigeria, al-Shabaab in Somalia and parts of Kenya.

ACS emphasizes that Christians run the risk of disappearing from the Middle East, in addition to being swept away in some regions of Africa. The number of nations identified as "extreme" places for Christian persecution are ten: China, Eritrea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, North Korea, Iraq, Nigeria, Sudan and Syria.

In this dark scenario, there are also some "lights", such as the steps forward taken by Egypt, Buthan and Qatar. But to reach full religious freedom - which Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, president of ACS, defines as "mother of all other freedoms" - the road is still long. *La Stampa* #87/2017



walking with the Church

Crosses, Alcohol, Washing of Feet, Women, Infant of Prague

From St Martin's Messenger, Ireland

Q. Could you tell me please why there are two types of crosses. On the one hand you have the cross with the Body of Christ crucified on it and on the other hand you have the cross without the body. I would like to know.

A. During the first 600 years or so after Jesus' death and Resurrection, it was very rare to find crosses with the body (corpus) of Jesus. They were almost always simple crosses without a 'corpus.' The emphasis was put on the Resurrection, Jesus was risen, Jesus was alive. For that reason, particularly in the sixth and seventh centuries, it was not unusual to find the crosses adorned with precious jewels. In fact, even when the body of Jesus began to appear more on crosses, it was often the risen living Lord that was shown, rather than the dead or dying Christ that later became common. Around the 13th century the Passion of Christ became very central to our spirituality and theology. Crucifixes graphically showed showing the suffering Christ became popular and remained so right up to our own time. In recent times we again see crosses with the risen body. This is because of the renewed emphasis on the Resurrection of Christ and our faith in his

living presence in our Church and in our lives.

Q. Does the Bible forbid the use of alcohol?

A. Nowhere in the Bible is the use of alcohol forbidden. St. Paul writing to the Corinthians condemns drunkenness but not moderate use of alcohol. Jesus himself drank wine and his very first miracle, the changing to water into wine, was performed so that the young married couple in Cana of Galilee would avoid the embarrassment of not having wine to offer to the wedding guests.

Q. Why did Jesus wash the feet of his disciples?

A. Jesus was giving the disciples a practical lesson on how he expected them to behave. This was a complete reversal of the normal practice, where the disciple washed the rabbi's or the master's feet. It was a very powerful teaching - a teaching which would be remembered for ever. As we know the central act of the Last Supper was the institution of the Eucharist and he said to his disciples: "Do this in memory of me." But in washing the feet of his disciples he said similar words: "If I do this for you," he

said, "so should you for one another." It is clear that he also wanted his disciples to follow the example of humility he gave them by washing his disciples' feet. The washing of feet stands symbolically for every lowly service we can perform for one another. We are called to love and serve one another - following the Lord's example.

Q. What was Jesus' attitude to women? Was it typical of the people of his race and time?

A. In the time of Jesus the Jewish society was a 'macho society.' Women had an inferior status to men. No spiritual leader would have spoken to a woman in public. Women were not even admitted to Jewish synagogues which were places of prayer and community functions. Jesus did not pay the slightest attention to these prejudices. Women joined his disciples in following him, ignoring the gossip and criticism which must have aroused. For Jesus, male and female were children of God equal in his sight to be treated with the same respect and love.

Q. Could you please explain how the infant of Prague came about?

A. The devotion to the Holy Child Jesus has been a tradition of the Catholic Church for a very long time. It is a veneration of the Divine Child - a veneration of Our Lord's sacred infancy. Many saints had a very strong devotion to the Divine Child Jesus, St Francis of Assisi, St Anthony of Padua and St. Teresa of Avila.

Prague is the capital city of the Czech Republic. The history of the Infant Jesus of Prague started in the 17th century when a statue of the Infant Jesus was brought into



Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) and eventually, after being presented as a wedding present on two occasions, it was given to the Discalced Carmelites in Prague. This statue then came to be known as the Infant Jesus of Prague. It stands 47 cm high (approx 18 inches). It includes a 2cm base and has a long gown around the wax body. Since then, the statue has remained in Prague and has drawn many devotees worldwide to go and honour the Holy Child. Special graces, blessings, favours and miraculous healings have been received by many who petitioned before the Infant Jesus.

Later copies of the Infant Jesus were made and distributed throughout European churches. The Spanish colonial efforts later brought the Infant Jesus to the Philippines and to Central America. And since then, the devotion has kept spreading to all parts of the world. □

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 and heartfelt thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and all the saints for the innumerable favours received over the years through the recitation of the three Hail Marys. Always continue to protect and guide us through our walk of life. Take care of my husband Jerry and my son Floyd.

Felicia Jerry Cardozo, Vasco

My grateful thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for answering all my prayers and for the numerous blessings bestowed on me and my dear family through the recitation of the three Hail Marys. We also thank you for your constant protection and for keeping us all in good health. Thank you so much, Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph for everything.

Antonietta Godinho Simoes

Dear Mother Mary, thank you for healing my daughter of fever.

Ridima Pinto

By God's grace at the age of 72 I have been on perfectly good health. Then suddenly on November 5, 2016 I started bleeding profusely and was diagnosed with cancer. For the subsequent months I was undergoing chemotherapy and on April 24, 2017 I have been pronounced cancer free. The Good Lord has helped me through this ordeal. I am grateful to everyone who has been instrumental in granting me a new lease of life. Sweet Mother protect me and keep me under your mantle and help me to be a blessing to one and all.

Colleen Traynor, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mother Mary for the speedy recovery of my husband from a mild stroke and other ailments. Our heartfelt thanks to St. Joseph, St. Jude, St. Anthony and St. Teresa of the Child Jesus for their intercession in granting me so many favours.

M. Braganza

Thank you Almighty Father, Jesus and Mamma Mary for healing me of a skin problem and also for many other blessings received. Please continue to intercede for my husband who is suffering from psoriasis.

Mrs. D. Monis, Mangalore

My belated, heartfelt and sincere thanks to the Lord Jesus for all the favours granted.

Lizelle Pereira

Sincere thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for healing my son James of a ligament tear without surgery. I pray the Three Hail Marys and so does my son.

Mable Fernandes, Mumbai

LOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER

Thank you Mother Mary for bringing my mother back from the jaws of death after her suicidal attempt. Thanks for being with our family always.

AMD, Mumbai
O My Mother, Help of Christians I thank you unconditionally for answering all my prayers and each time I call to you for help.

Clara Bernadet Fernandes, Mumbai
Thank you Mother Mary Help of Christians for helping my daughter clear her Std XX examinations with distinction.

Sarita Fernandes, Goa
On December 1st 2016 a friend and I were going from Goregaon to Ghatkopar by autorickshaw when a speeding taxi collided with us and our auto was thrown on its side. Both of us had bruised knees and nothing more. It was the protection of our Divine Saviour and Mother Mary. I have the practice of saying a short prayer before I leave my house. I am most grateful to Mother Mary.

Thomas Mendes, Mumbai
Thank you O Blessed Trinity and Mother Mary for giving my daughter-in-law a safe and normal delivery and for the gift of a healthy child and also for giving my son Ryan a good life partner and for all the blessings you have showered on us. Keep us always in your care.

Mrs. Maria Barretto, Mumbai

THEY ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR LADY AND DON BOSCO

My wife was working for 10 years in a respected organization in a reputed post. Prior to her pre-term retirement she was unofficially transferred (without prior notice) to another location which was not favourable to her. She took up the transfer but with much dissatisfaction as she was not authorised to do any work as per her profile. There were several moments when she wanted to resign. This left me very disturbed. I interceded with Mary Help of Christians and Fr. Aurelius Maschio to urge her to continue. I am immensely grateful that my prayers were heard.

Mr. M. L. Fernandes, Goa
We are very grateful to dear Jesus, Mother Mary and Don Bosco for curing a family member from a serious illness. We thank and praise Jesus and Mary also for keeping her in good health.

A Devotee
On April 2nd 2017 my daughter and I were on a two wheeler and we were crossing a road junction when I lost control of the vehicle due to faulty paver blocks because of which we were thrown down. I had bruises on my right side and a severe bruise on my head. Some good samaritans came to our rescue. My daughter was totally unharmed. I was taken by my family immediately to hospital where xrays revealed no fractures and no internal bleeding. We are thankful to Our Lady...both of us had scapulars on. Thank you Mother Mary.

Blase D'Souza, Mumbai

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Mine was a broken family for nearly three years. I prayed without ceasing to Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio. At long last we are now united. But my one and only son was called to his heavenly home. He had a massive heart attack from which he did not recover. God knows what is best and does what is best for us. He has his own ways. My belated but sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio.

A Devotee, Goa
Sincere thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco, Dominic Savio and all the saints for a speedy recovery from a major operation. In spite of the many complications,

by the grace of God everything is now normal. *Joseph and Family*
Belated but sincere thanks to Our Lord, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the successful surgery of the spinal cord and a heart bypass and thank you for blessing my family too.

Laurenco S. Afonso, Vasco
Sincere thanks to dear St. Dominic Savio for a safe delivery of a baby girl and for protecting both my children and their families from harm and danger.

Grenville and Kimberly D'Mello, Mumbai
My sincere and heartfelt thanks to Mary Help of Christians and Dominic Savio for blessing our daughter with a healthy baby boy after eight years of marriage, on the feast day of Mary Help of Christians (24th May, 2017)
Mother Mary keep us always under your mantle. *Goretti Dias, Goa*
Our sincere thanks to the Infant Jesus and St. Dominic Savio for helping her to secure 87.2% in the SSC exams and for granting all our wishes. Please continue to shower your abundant blessings on us and keep us in good health.

Joaquim J. D'Souza, Mumbai
My grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for my daughter's safe delivery and for the gift of a baby boy and for all the favours received.

Aloma Anand, Mumbai

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MARY WAS THERE

Two years ago my our family was driving through the Bandra Worli Sea-Link when my mother-in-law suggested that we pray the Rosary. Hardly had we started the decade when we heard a loud screeching sound behind our vehicle. A group of young boys driving an SUV had braked very close to us. There was barely any distance between us. My mother-in-law, my husband, sister-in-law along with our infants were in the car. I thank Mama Mary not only for this one escape but for the many times when we were saved. We Praise Almighty God and Mama Mary!

Mrs L.N.

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.

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