

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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*Mary's mediation is not
intended in a univocal sense
but to get closer to Christ
the one and only mediator
between God and man.*

**Cover: The Madonna with the
child and two angels**

by
Filippo Lippi
1465 circa



From The Editor's Desk

Can we confidently love God?

While watching movies or reading romantic potboilers we have often heard or read phrases like: *I love you, or don't you know how much you mean to me? or your love is so precious to me, I know you'll always be there for me.* These and other similar overtures of love are blurted out by some fictitious characters not only to make us feel 'warm and fuzzy' inside but they also resonate with some secret longing in our real lives. Then one day someone *does* really make such a statement... and we are dumbfounded and confused and what is even more tragic we even begin to get suspicious.

It is not uncommon for us to be wary of such statements because all too often we've been victims of a love that is spurned or withdrawn leading us rather to take refuge in the 'fantasy world' of the novel or the movie rather than face the 'painful' reality of a love that is rejected. Relationships in our daily lives most often do not resonate with what we read in novels or see in movies but then who's to forbid us from allowing ourselves the pretended warmth of this celluloid love?

I am inclined to believe that this is probably how we treat the Word of God too. Take for example a statement like: *You are precious in my eyes and honoured, and I love you.* (Isaiah 43:4). It sounds pretty romantic and may be used, at best, as lyrics in a song with a catchy melody, but to believe that we *are* truly precious in God's eyes...and that he loves us - that could be rather difficult to accept.

Most of us probably suffer from this misconception about God's love because we've never really heard those words spoken to us by some human being and sincerely meant. At most, what we heard was probably a non-committal statement that left us without any feeling at all. Now why is that? It is because deep down we have such a poor opinion of ourselves that we can hardly believe someone would love us. - The famous Jesuit pop-psychologist John Powell had a book entitled *If you really knew me would you still love me?* The title itself very eloquently brings out just this idea.

So, our greatest challenge is the ability to receive love and to open the door of our hearts confidently to Christ who knocks. We must just keep trying till we begin to see and understand the truth that *I am loved. I am precious in his eyes and he loves me.*

What is most difficult is to try to open our hearts to accepting human love because authentic human love shares in God's love and reveals it to us. We have to give others a chance to love us and we too have to learn to *dare* to truly love others.

If we think and pray about this, true love will not be relegated to the darkness of a theatre or the pages of some romance but we will become aware of a new energy springing up within us. We will then be able to face the uncertainties and struggles of life with optimism and courage. For when we know that we are loved we are never alone.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

9. THE DISABLED FOX

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

Sa'di the Arab mystic tells the story of a man who was one day walking through a dense forest. He unexpectedly came upon a fox that had lost its legs and as he saw the poor animal struggle even to move a little, he wondered how the disabled fox managed to survive in that condition. Curious to find out for himself, he hid among the branches of a nearby tree. He was there only a few minutes when he spied a lion come along with game in its mouth. Having had his fill, he left the substantial remains at the side of the hungry fox who gratefully availed himself of the generosity of his benefactor.

The man saw this happen day after day, and could not but marvel at the greatness and providence of God who provided for all his creatures, especially the unfortunate ones, with tender loving care. Wishing to avail himself also of this great love of God, he decided to lie in a corner of his house and call upon God to fulfill all his needs. More than a month elapsed with nothing spectacular happening and our friend who was growing thinner and thinner now reached almost at death's door. When he began complaining to God about his plight, he heard a voice say distinctly: "You fool, imitate the lion and not the fox!"

Beggars or Princes?

As you read the story, did you discern a similarity between

yourself and the man, the fox or the lion? I guess most of us would easily identify ourselves with the man and his foolish way of thinking. Isn't our attitude generally like that of the people whom Jesus fed with the miraculous bread in the desert? All they could think of the next day was: 'Sir give us this bread always!' (Jn. 6:34) St. Paul tells us in Eph. 1:3-4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places..." The text tells us plainly that God has *already* blessed us with *every* spiritual blessing, which really means that there is nothing more that God can give us, which he hasn't already given. Besides, he tells us in another context: 'Do not be afraid little flock, for it has pleased your Father to grant you the kingdom... Ask and you will



receive ... whatever you ask the Father in my name, I will obtain for you...!' If we really believed these words and promises of Jesus, we certainly would be able

to identify ourselves easily with the lion, not only in his confidence that he would always find enough game for himself and for his incapacitated brother, but also in his generosity and thoughtfulness.

Yet, most of us find it so easy to see ourselves as beggars denuded of all resources and means of caring for ourselves. We are so obsessed with our petty little sins that we see ourselves as perpetually unworthy of God's loving kindness. Hence, most of our prayer consists of petitions: a continuous and unending litany of 'gimme, gimme, gimme!' It isn't any wonder that we don't then have the freedom to even see or notice the needs of our neighbours and much less do we have the inclination to reach out to them. The spirituality of the majority of Christians today all over the world consists simply in a self-centred approach of obtaining salvation of their own 'souls'. This stems from the fact that they do not yet believe that Jesus has made any difference in their lives; they still see themselves as 'outsiders' as regards the kingdom and they see salvation as something that they attain only after death. That the Father has already gifted them with the kingdom hasn't even crossed their minds and so they continue to see themselves as indigent and despicable beggars needing to constantly plead with the Father.

And even in this the understanding seems to be that they have to 'drag' or coax these gifts out of the hands of a miserly and parsimonious Father-God. That he waits and ardently longs

to be generous to his beloved children, (Give me a chance to wash your feet), that it is his good pleasure to grant them the kingdom is way beyond their mental horizon. The gratuitousness of God's fore-given love is a mystery, undoubtedly – but a foundational mystery on which is based our entire spiritual life's journey. This must be a response of love, stemming from an initial exclamation: 'Wow, God, our Father – it never dawned on me that You could love me so much... that You gave Your only Son to us, to die for us!' How utterly unbelievable is Your love, Lord!

Example of Early Christians

The early Christians thought otherwise and hence we see in them two attitudes refreshingly different from what we see in ourselves today: first, like us they too prayed to the Father to 'give us each day our daily bread' – but in their minds this *bread* (standing for everything that sustains life) is asked for and received primarily with the idea of sharing it with others. That is what the Eucharist meant for them – bread that was broken to be shared. Secondly, realizing that whatever they had, has actually come from the Father and was meant to be shared, they gave generously of their belongings to anyone in need. They even went and sold their property and gave the money to the apostles. "With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ***There was not a needy person among them,*** for as many as owned lands or houses, sold

them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need" (Acts 4:33-36).

We hardly ever hear of such lavish generosity in the Christian community today. We do have many Christians who are generous in giving to the needy – but the all important question is: what is their understanding behind all that giving? Many still give in order to get – they believe that if they give, the Lord will bless them with more (there is absolutely no doubt that he will, but we do not give in order to get!) – or at least, that they will gain extra merit in heaven because of their giving. The key defect or deficiency that Jesus came to save us from is a 'preoccupation with the Self' even when that preoccupation is with spiritual gain. And when our self-



image is a poor or miserable one, it is almost impossible for us to think of anyone else but ourselves! A person experiencing a severe toothache can think of nobody else except him/herself. If s/he does think of another, it would be the dentist who can relieve him of his pain. Similarly, if we see ourselves as totally indigent and helpless, how could we possibly think of others and their needs?

Inflated Self-image Repels

The same is true when our image is an overly inflated one; as Jesus warned: "I tell you, it is far easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God. When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, 'Then who can be saved?'" Here, the apostles seemed to be caught between the devil and the deep blue sea: damned if you do and damned if you don't! But Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible' (Mt 19:24 – 20:1). True life then lies in the middle and only God can work out a proper balance between a poor self-image and an unduly bloated one.

In general most people would lean towards a negative self-image and so if we do realize the need to work in this area of improving our self-image it would need to be in the direction of developing a healthy positive self-image. Here again, we receive what we give. If we can train ourselves to reflect more the positive that we see in others and in every situation, then we will find others also being positive towards ourselves too. But ultimately it is God who provides us with opportunities to strengthen our positive self-image. And to make it possible for him to do this for us, we need to leave everything into his hands through a totally loving and obedient surrender. God loves the cheerful giver – it is more blessed to give than to receive! Imitate the lion and not the disabled fox!□



FR DOMINIC ALMEIDA: LIVING ON IN THE LIVES HE TOUCHED

by Fr. Michael Fernandes, sdb (Provincial)

Fr. Dominic Almeida was born on September 10, 1942 and died on April 16, 2008, at about 8.15pm after a prolonged illness which he bore with grit and determination.

Dominic was a priest who tirelessly gave himself to his work and sought the good of the institution. He planned, he dreamt of successes, he charted careers, he coached, he taught music and did everything to help the boys succeed in life. He dreamt of boys, their careers, their futures. Their life was his life. He gave himself so that they may rise. It was this giving that mattered: this commitment, this sacrifice, this generosity.

His hard work and sacrifice to achieve goals, showed his priestly zeal in imitation of Christ. Even after he had served as principal for so many years, he was ready to go to a new mission in Kuwait. He received the missionary cross and spent some months in Kuwait, a different culture with complex difficulties. Fr. Derrick Misquitta writing from Kuwait said "the province may not know that Dominic was a pioneer and missionary in Kuwait. He moved about in the scorching heat of 46 degrees. Only when he visited the doctor after he complained of some chest pain he was told that he had had a minor heart attack. He returned to India even though he was very influential there. He was much respected by the students".

Dominic was known as a disciplinarian and that was where he could have been misunderstood. He was strict and demanding, but he meant well. He had the good of the boys at heart. He wanted them to progress in life. He wanted their foundations to be strong and so he made demands on his charges.



Fr. Tony D'Souza writing from Kuwait says that he knew Dominic for many years and they were good friends. He added that even today there were many boys (now men) in Kuwait who remember Dominic with high regard.

Even when Dominic was ill, he did a simple and yet unnoticed ministry of emailing sermon notes to some of his priest friends who were unable to have easy access to such facilities. How few of us think of using our illness for ministry. I missed him on my rounds of the province as he had gone to Goa, but then when he came back he called me up and told me that he is suffering, but he offered his sufferings for the province, especially for good vocations.

We will miss him but he will live on in the lives he has touched and in the memories he has left behind. He does not die who lives in the hearts of those who love him. □

For your inquiries to become a Salesian Priest or Brother please mail: frbrian@rediffmail.com

COMFORT FOR THE LONELY

by Eithne Murphy

Loneliness can take many different forms. There is the loneliness of the widow or the widower, and the loneliness of the orphan. There is the loneliness of the confused youngster, and the loneliness of the alcoholic or the unemployed. There is the loneliness of old age, and the loneliness of being rejected. There is the loneliness that comes from being handicapped, or deaf, or misunderstood. There is the loneliness of the AIDS victim. Which of us can say what kind of loneliness is the worst?

I remember an old woman saying, 'If only, just for once, I could be the person giving instead of receiving. I am truly grateful for the thoughtfulness of my family. They are so generous to me. But oh, if only I were in the position to give for once!' That too was a special sort of loneliness.

Isolation and Fear

I often think that our Lady's life must have encompassed many forms of loneliness. While still very young, Mary was invited to become the mother of the Messiah. How she must have been burdened by the mystery, the awful knowledge of what was happening in her, and what was yet to come. Unable to confide in anyone, she was possibly misunderstood, bewildered, the object of vile gossip. How isolated she must have felt!

Later, after Jesus was born, she had to endure the fear that came with Simeon's words, words that foretold conflict, misunderstanding and defeat for her Son. Hearing those words must have broken her heart. How she must have longed for it to be otherwise.

Emigration and Loss

Soon after that, Mary faced some of the most forlorn years of her life,



Mary has comfort for all of us in our times of loneliness.



years of forced emigration. Fleeing in terror from the threat of Herod, she had to leave all she loved to travel into a far distant land, whose language she did not speak, and whose customs differed from those of her own people. She fled into the unknown with fear at her heels. Many of those who come into the city of Mumbai looking for any menial job will be able to understand Mary's lonely pain, for there are hardly any casual labourers who have not migrated here and whose services we pay for.

Then, when Jesus was only twelve years of age, Mary had the terrible experience of losing him. Any parent who has ever lost a child for even a short time will understand the fear that must have gripped Mary's heart.

I recall once, when my brother's children were small, going into town with them and their mother

for the Christmas shopping. Somehow, in the fuss and rush, as we boarded the bus, one of the little boys got left behind. I can still hear his mother's anguished cry, as we watched the tiny figure running after the bus, trying in vain to catch it. All ended well, the good driver stopped without hesitation. It is a memory not to be forgotten. It lasted all of two minutes. The child Jesus was missing for three days.

Sad Memories and Old Age

Yet worse was to come. The years of Jesus' public life must have been lonely ones for Mary, when she seldom saw her Son, although she surely heard with dismay of the plotting against him. Later she witnessed the terrible isolation of Jesus as he hung dying on the cross, and carried with her for the rest of her life the sad memories of his trial, his scourging, his mockery, his betrayal, his desertion. What pain for a mother to endure!

Surely, here above all we can seek comfort from Mary in our own times of loneliness. She who saw her Son rejected will not fail to comfort those who feel society has cast them aside, the poor, the handicapped, the travellers, the prisoners, AIDS sufferers.

And if the elderly think that they are forgotten in the modern cult of youth, they too should remember that Mary understands. She grew old alone with her memories, some happy, some sad. Like many elderly people today, Mary knew long nights and lonely days. She has comfort for all of us in our times of loneliness. □

walking with the Church



Eucharistic Presence, Secularism, Marian Doctrine, Lourdes, Extraordinary Minister

by St. Martin's Messenger

Q. *Could you please explain to me the ways in which Christ is present in our world and in particular, how is he present in the Blessed Eucharist?*

A. Thank you for your question. Christ is present in many ways in the world in which we live. He is present when we gather in prayer for he promised, "When two or three gather in my name I will be with you." He is present in the Church, present in His word, and we see him in the goodness and the kindness of our neighbour. He is present in all the Sacraments but His presence in the Blessed Eucharist is described as the 'Real Presence.' This does not mean that the other ways in which Christ is present are artificial or false. We say Real Presence to emphasise that Jesus Christ, God and Man, ('body, blood, soul and divinity') is present in person on the altar in the form of bread and wine. It is more than a spiritual presence. It is not just a symbolic presence. He is present as one person is present to another person in the house. And after mass when the Blessed Eucharist is reserved in the Tabernacle, His presence there allows us to come to him at any time to seek help and guidance in our lives.

Q. *At a mass recently I heard a priest talking about us being in danger of becoming a secularist society. What is secularism?*

A. Secularism is an atheist or agnostic belief that rules out religious faith and values. It explains everything exclusively in terms of this world. An agnostic is someone who says we cannot know anything with certainty about God, or the afterlife. Atheists deny the existence of God in theory or in practice. Have we more atheists and agnostics today than before? It would certainly seem so, but as long as committed Christians continue to practice and defend their beliefs this is not a trend that is going to overwhelm our society.

Q. *What do we have to believe in as regards the Blessed Virgin? I am concerned about this, because, as a recent convert, I accepted the traditional doctrines regarding Mary but now I see new (or at least new to me,) teachings about Mary which I find quite upsetting... please answer.*

A. Thank you for your letter and for sharing your concerns with

our readers. There are dogmas formally defined concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are Mary, the Mother of God; the perpetual virginity of Mary; the Immaculate Conception; and the Assumption. The new teachings you mention are not dogmas and we are not, as Catholics, required to believe them. Having been specially chosen as the Mother of God, Mary obviously has a unique position and the four defined dogmas testify to that.

The Vatican Council speaks of the Blessed Virgin's rate in the Church as follows (no 62 in the document on the Church): 'By her maternal charity, Mary cares for the brethren of her Son who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are lead to their happy fatherland. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix. This however is to be understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficacy of Christ the One Mediator. For no creature could ever be classed with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer; but just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by his ministers and the faithful so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this One source. The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary.'

But the Church has long held that because of her sinlessness and close union with her son, Mary has been given a role of mediation or intercession before God above any other human being. That is to say that though all of us, saints and

sinners, are nor can be mediators of grace to one another through our prayers. Mary's mediation or intercession is superior to that of any other human being.

Q. Our Lady is reported to have appeared at many places in the world, Lourdes being the most famous of these. My question is (1) are people cured at these places and (2) why are people asked to do penance and to pray so much?

A. Miracles have been reported at many of the Shrines to Our Lady around the world. Lourdes is exceptional in that the Catholic Church has officially recognised 67 miracles and 7000 inexplicable cures at Lourdes since the Blessed Virgin appeared there in 1858. All of these were analysed scientifically before being accepted as cures. Prayer and penance are an integral part of a good Christian life and are mentioned in many of the places where Our Lady is reported to have appeared. This follows on Our Lord's repeated mention of the need for prayer and penance in our lives.

Q. I was asked to put out the sacred host for adoration. I am not a minister of the Eucharist. What are the rules in this regard?

A. The Blessed Sacrament may be exposed for veneration by a priest, deacon, instituted acolyte or extraordinary Eucharistic minister. If, as you say, your Parish Priest asked you to expose the Blessed Sacrament I would presume that he was appointing you as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist. For your own peace of mind I think you should consult him.

Witnesses in & for Our Times



'FOR LOVE OF MY LORD JESUS' ST. ROSALIA OF PALERMO (SEPTEMBER 4)

by Mario Scudu (T/A I.D.)

About Saint Rosalia, as with some other saints of the Church calendar, there are a lot of oral and popular devotions and traditions but very few certain historical facts to be had. There are a lot of paintings and iconographic testimonies but very little biographical data. The first biography of her life was written only about four centuries after her death and it was put together from the oral traditions and popular devotion prevalent at the time.

Even though there are no historical documents, the iconographic documentation that attests to the fact that the veneration of this saint was ancient and her widespread popularity among the people of Sicily and the surroundings, cannot be ignored.



Rosalia in an ecstatic moment captured by the great Flemish painter Anton Van Dyck. It is believed that the saint asked to be walled up in her cell so she could spend the last years of her life in this state of particular ecstasy with greater facility.

People have prayed to her and invoked her with consistent fervor down the centuries.

According to some traditions, Rosalia was born near Palermo, into the noble Sinibaldi family of Norman extraction. On her maternal side she was linked to family of Charles the Great. Thus, she grew up in the royal court, familiar with a life of wealth and luxury of the time. Yet she was soon tired and nauseated by the luxury, the vanity and haughtiness of the life she was living and she decided to leave everything: her family, her titles and comforts, and retire from the world to live a life of solitude. In short, she chose to live a life that was diametrically opposed to what she was used to. She embraced a life of solitude, penance, prayer and meditation. Thus she began a difficult spiritual discipline, taking after the many others who had gone before her.

Rosalia went to live in a cave at San Stefano Quisquina not far from the city. An inscription found on one of the walls of this cave and perhaps written by her documented her early fervor (*in Latin it read*): Ego Rosalia Sinibaldi Quisquine et Rosarum domini filia, amore Domini mei Jesu Christi in hoc antro habitare decreti" (*which means*) **"Rosalia, daughter of Sinibaldo, Lord of Quisquina and Rose, has decided to live in this cave for love of my Lord Jesus Christ."** She also requested the spiritual assistance and the protection of the monks of St. Benedict who lived not far from there. From some traditions it is believed that she became a Benedictine (even some paintings attest to this fact). According to others, she belonged to the order of St. Basil.

In that cave Rosalia



The shrine, dedicated to the Patroness of Palermo and constructed over the cave in which Rosalia spent her days

courageously struggled against wild animals and hostile demons who did not look kindly on her long prayers and severe penances.

On the Slopes of Monte Pellegrino

After some time Rosalia moved closer to Palermo; precisely to a stalactite cave on the slopes of Monte Pellegrino. Here we imagine that she, more or less lived the life she had lived earlier, with the same ascetic ingredients by now tested and proven and with the same unpleasant visits from her demonic tempters. It is interesting to note that 1500 years earlier, near the cave there lived some hermits who came to be called "Hermits of St. Rosalia" (in memory of her). Attracted by the fame of her sanctity and her prayers many of the local people from Palermo came up the mountain to ask for her prayers and spiritual advice.

When Rosalia realized that she had reached the end of her earthly sojourn she laid herself in a grave and died. Tradition has it that she died on 4th September of 1166. She remained there for five centuries until the people of Palermo, the clergy and the faithful were

convinced that they had found the remains of their saint. Her cult began immediately after her death: She was revered by the people of Palermo as a saint, their saint. From the end of the XII century churches, and chapels dedicated to her sprung up in Sicily and particularly in southern Italy.

How were her remains recovered from that cave where a shrine was built in her honour?

Rosalia, Patroness of Palermo

It was in 1624, when devotion to her had all but diminished, that it resumed with added vigour because of the proclamation of Rosalia as principal patroness of Palermo. There are two versions as to this turn of events. The first has it that the saint appeared on May 26th 1624 to a certain Giacomina Gatto who was suffering from the plague but she almost recovered and climbed up to the cave to thank the Virgin Mary and the saint for her recovery. In the vision Saint Rosalia pointed out to her where her own mortal remains were buried and some time later some monks found the place and the remains. The recognition that followed was not quite simple, in fact it was difficult and controversial. In short, the ecclesiastical authorities wanted to clearly verify the remains and so they proceeded with much prudence. Meanwhile the plague that had struck Palermo kept on claiming more victims among the population. The Bishop of the city Cardinal Giannettino Doria summoned clergy and the people to the cathedral to implore the intercession of the Madonna, promising her that they would

defend her title of the Immaculate Conception even to shedding of their blood and second, they would proclaim Rosalia patroness of the city.

On February 11th 1625, the bones that were recovered from the cave were authenticated by physicians as belonging to a woman and therefore were very presumably those of Saint Rosalia. Some time later (here is the second version) the saint appeared, on Monte Pellegrino, to a man that wanted to commit suicide because he was embittered by the death of his wife in the plague. Rosalia comforted him assuring him of her protection and recommended him to go to the Bishop to report that the bones recovered by the hermits in the cave were really hers and they were to be carried in procession through the streets of Palermo. The cardinal placed the relics in an urn and exposed them for the veneration of the people who carried them around the city in a solemn procession. The plague that tormented the city had gradually diminished and finally disappeared altogether.

In 1630 news arrived from Rome that Pope Urban VIII had inserted the name of the Sicilian saint into the Roman martyrology. It was in 1631, after the Roman pronouncement that an elaborate chapel was built inside the city's Cathedral with an altar dedicated especially to her. There a magnificent ornate silver urn holds the relics of the saint who is patroness of the city. It has become a place of pilgrimage not only for devotees from Palermo but for others coming from other parts of Sicily and the world.□

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

In the Pause Between

Megan was puzzled recently by the odd messages she kept getting on her voice mail. Day after day, all she'd hear, from friends, family, and customers alike, would be their message and then they'd ALL say, "BEEP."

We were talking about something else and I had her check her voice mail message to find something out. She discovered the solution to the BEEP riddle.

Her message said, "I'm not available right now, so, please leave a beep after the message."

Compliments to the Chef

I have a reputation for not being a fantastic cook. One evening I worked particularly hard on a new recipe, and once again it didn't turn out as well as I'd hoped.

My son, always sweet and conscious of my feelings, chose his words carefully after the meal. "Mom," he said, "that dinner was so good I thought someone else made it."

Arrangements

It was a difficult subject to bring before his aged mother, but John felt that he must: "Mum, you're no longer a spring chicken and you do need to think ahead of what'll happen in the future. Why don't we make arrangements about when...you know...when...you pass on?"

The mother didn't say anything, just sat there staring ahead.

"I mean, Mum, like...how do you want to finally go? Do you want to be buried? Cremated?"

There was yet another long

pause. Then the mother looked up and said, "Son, why don't you surprise me?"

Classmate Reunion

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

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

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

"Yes," he replied.

When did you graduate?" I asked.

He answered, "In 1971. Why?"

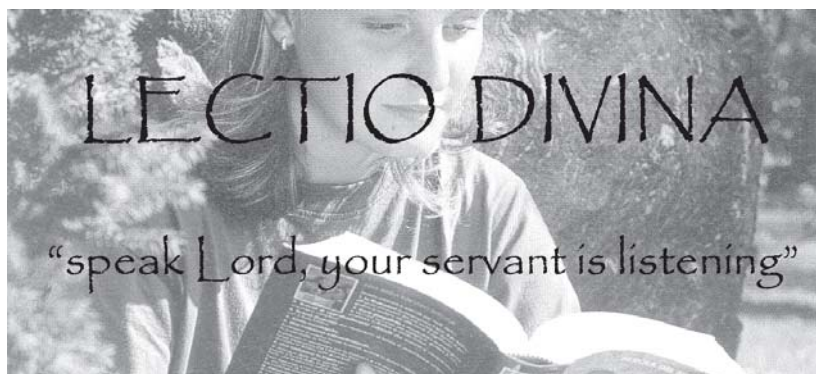
"You were in my class!" I exclaimed.

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

Empty Nest Craft

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

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



Our Father...and lead us not into temptation!

by Roberta Fora

Deliver us, Lord, from the temptations of everyday, those that we meet daily and that form part of our everyday lives.”

“I would like to be free (of temptation) but I am unable, I would prefer if it were not so, it would be better without it...”



This is the daily encounter of our limited humanity. In spite of the several plans and the many good intentions with which we arm ourselves on our spiritual journey...in just one moment we slip back to where we started. Each day is fraught with a thousand temptations: idleness, laziness, pride, boredom, apathy and who knows what else. Even though faith is a great gift, it does not always help us to react in the most effective way against temptation. Sometimes it is more comfortable to just allow ourselves “to be immersed” in the small problems of every day, rather than “rolling up our sleeves,” getting ourselves to “start again.”

God however gives us the Holy Spirit, that Source of immense and inexhaustible Power. Therefore, when, in the “Our Father” we say: “lead us not into temptation,” we are actually turning to God and asking him to send us his Spirit to help us not to succumb at the moment of trial.

The Lord doesn't send us temptations, but allows these moments of testing in our lives, because they purify us and strengthen our faith. However, there are some obstacles, which at the moment of temptation could be dangerous. Here it is necessary to pray and ask for the gift of attention and vigilance, that we may not slip even unconsciously, running the risk of losing our faith.

Each of our lives is a continuous test, even if the tests are not all the same: some great, like the loss of a dear one; others are part and parcel of our everyday lives. In each day's daily monotony, for example, a temptation, if we are not careful, will gradually wear out our interior enthusiasm and lead us to abandon the practice of our faith.

It is only by looking at Jesus that we understand the true meaning

of temptation.

In the desert Jesus was tempted to carry out his mission according to the values of the world but he courageously chose the Word of God.

In Gethsemane Jesus suffered and prayed to be freed from that terrible suffering, but on the cross, at the culminating moment of his passion, just before he died, he cried in a loud voice: "Father into your hands I commit my life."

The small and great crosses that accompany the journey of our lives acquire a deeper meaning if they are accepted and lived with love.

"Help us, O Lord, to discover the unsettling beauty of the Cross, because we know how to let its wonder and amazement flood us and with the help of the Holy Spirit, may we resist every temptation that would estrange us from you." □

POPE BENEDICT XVI on the *Our Father*

(*Jesus of Nazareth* p. 163 -164)

When we pray the sixth petition of the Our Father in a more practical way we pray it saying to God: "I know that I need trials so that my nature may be purified. When you decide to send me these trials, when you give evil some room to maneuver, as you did with Job, then please remember that my strength goes only so far. Don't overestimate my capacity. Don't set too wide the boundaries within which I may be tempted, and be close to me with your protecting hand when it becomes too much for me."

When we pray the sixth petition

of the Our Father, we must therefore, on one hand, be ready to take upon ourselves the burdens of trials that is meted out to us. On the other hand, the object of the petition is to ask God not to mete out more than we can bear, not to let us slip from his hands. We make this prayer in the trustful certainty that Saint Paul has articulated for us: "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." (1 Cor 10:13) □

DEDICATED TO MARY
MOTHER OF SORROWS

Quiet URGENT

by Maddalena

When I was asked to leave my home in Italy and make a trip to Paray-le-Monial it was only then that I was to realize “what” and “who” the Church really was. It was not something in stone and mortar but something invisible yet eternal and I must be an active member. But how was I to know this?

During the Mass of the Episcopal consecration of Monsignor Bernini Dante on December 10, 1970 at Quercia, Viterbo, I was standing in a pew trying to see the celebration. While my physical eyes followed what was happening my inner eyes saw an image I will never forget. That indelible impression would completely transform me.

I saw the Blessed Virgin cradling her wounded and suffering Son in her arms and while she held his lifeless, lacerated body she seemed to say to me: “You will not share my pain but you will comfort me.” It was as if someone was pointing at me.

This internal vision lasted only for a very brief moment but it was indelibly engraved in me and it taught me all I needed to know about the Church!

I soon understood that the Church was the Body of Christ incarnated in history. It was made up of all the wounded and suffering millions of cells that existed down the centuries! As I thought of this I was filled with a profound love for Christ and his sorrowful mother. The following day, on my return, I got down at Foligno to meet the Bishop of the place. Till then this was something inconceivable for me! I did not come from a family of practicing Catholics and my parents never even went to Mass! What was more, in my childhood I had never encountered a truly Christian person, not even the priest who taught Catechism. It was considered useless and a waste of time!

Some time later my first spiritual director taught me to reform these attitudes that would not help me. I wrote about all this to his “successor,” Father De La Chapelle of Paray-le-Monial and he made me understand more clearly the point of doing everything with the Bishop and in obedience to the Church! That has been my life since then.

But why do I speak of this today? I do so because I am pained and I cannot forget Our Lady of La Salette, the weeping Madonna, who was the origin of my conversion. Because of the numerous wounds that the Church receives today, I have the impression that we are passing through a time of decay, not in the Church because, being the body of Christ it will never crumble, but because human hearts who bear the image of God



*The Mother of Sorrow
suffering humanity is
mystery of God who takes
the sin of man*

Spaces

HOLINESS

di Spello

within themselves do not wish to obey God's laws anymore.

Despite my 76 years, I don't think I am old-fashioned or conservative. I know this from the love I experience from so many youngsters who visit me! But today their way of involvement is influenced by the rest of the world that urges them to question their own values and their own self-worth.

Girls, for instance, who quietly pass by a man while going to Mass and receive the Body of Christ on the advice of a priest or a friar say that, "it is not serious, it's normal for two people fall in love...", or having discussed among themselves, they are of the opinion that confession is foolish and old-fashioned and practiced only by conservatives. So I ask: are these young people responsible for the predicament into which they have fallen?

Our loving Lord, humble and patient, suffers at the state of all those who are placed in charge of his young sheep, teachers, parents and even consecrated persons who fail to guide these youngsters anymore because they do not teach the truths of the Faith presented in the Catechism of the Church to those who come to them.

Today's proponents of psychology and various theologies question everything because they are afraid to pass for being termed antiquated or deficient. On the other hand there is much evil done within the Church when you encounter some fanatics among either the laity or the clergy who are always aggressively pursuing some crusade against this or that, believing that they know everything with unshakable certainty and this entitles them to be ready to wage war against any section of humanity.

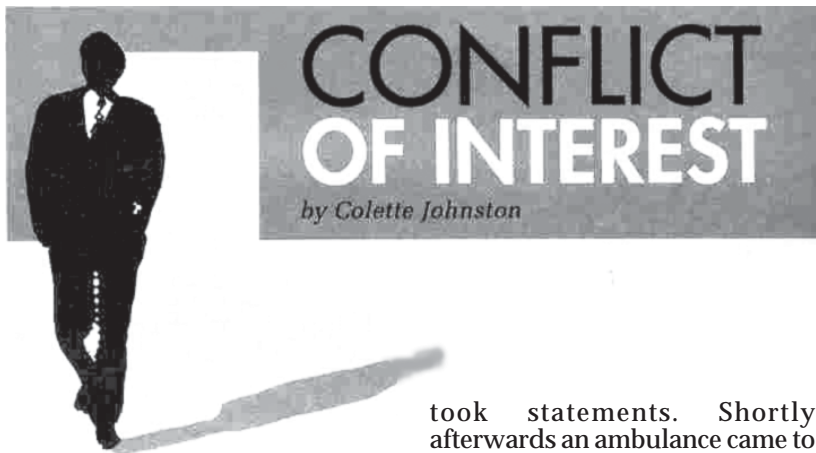
O Lord forgive us, but first of all, pardon me, since I do not know how to give you anything other than my life in your service and for in the service of truth even though I have neither merit nor virtue.

Forgive those who do not pray anymore, those who have forgotten that you are the Living one who can be encountered in the depths of our hearts, in prayerful silence, in the Sacraments that you established, in the Scriptures and the Tradition of the Church. In all these you are the same God who is incarnated down the centuries, wounded and bleeding, waiting for us with an absolute and undivided love, meek and humble. We know that you died for us out of love and your grace is ever near us!

My God, adorable Holy Trinity, call many saintly priests and consecrated persons. Enlighten and send them to your people so that all these poor parts of your mystical body may be restored to health once more and that your Church may reveal your face in the midst of the miseries of this world! □



...is the sign that
...s bound up to the
...akes upon himself
...ankind.



The story so far:

John Campbell is astounded to discover that his mother has a brother, Patrick McCarthy, about whom he has never heard. John eventually learns that Patrick, once a compulsive gambler, spent some time in prison for theft. Having traced his widowed sister and her family, Patrick is injured in an accident involving a car driven by Gerald O'Rourke, John's rival for the affections of Carol Martin.

John knelt on the ground beside his uncle, and found that he was unconscious, bleeding from a wound on his forehead. Carol ran to summon help. Gerald stood looking down at the injured man, saying, 'There was nothing I could do to avoid him.'

A doctor, who had been dining in the hotel, came out to attend to Patrick. The police arrived and

took statements. Shortly afterwards an ambulance came to bring Patrick to hospital, and John followed in his car. When Carol said that she would go to the hospital with John, Gerald said that he too was going. 'Why don't you come with me?' he added pointedly.

While the doctors were examining Patrick, John was directed to the Admissions Desk.

'The patient's name and address?' enquired the white-coated receptionist.

'Patrick McCarthy.'

'What's his address?'

'I don't know.'

Out of the corner of his eye John saw Carol and Gerald hurrying in from the car-park. To his horror they came and stood one on either side of him.

'His age?'

'I don't know, but I suppose he'd be somewhere between fifty and sixty.'

'Who is his next of kin?'

John glanced uncomfortably at Carol. She was pale and anxious, and it was obvious that the accident had greatly upset her. If he admitted now that Patrick was

his uncle, it could be the beginning of the end of John's hope of marrying her. Gerald, who was watching him now with increased intentness, would be certain to use the knowledge to drive a wedge between them.

John was tempted to say that he would make enquiries about Patrick's family. But then he remembered Patrick, with his sad eyes and worn features, battered and bruised, with no one to take responsibility for him.

John said, 'I'm his nephew.'

Gerald turned to Carol. 'Now that's very interesting!' he whispered with obvious glee. John had to fight the impulse to turn around and hit him.

When the admission form was completed, John said to Carol, 'I'm staying on here until I get the doctor's report. Then I'll decide what's best to be done.'

'I'll wait with you,' Carol added at once.

Gerald snapped, 'There's no need for us to stay.'

Carol repeated, 'I'll wait here. I'm anxious to know how badly injured John's uncle is.'

Gerald's laugh was short and humourless. 'John's uncle! John has kept very quiet about him all these years!'

Carol frowned. 'I hope he'll be all right. I'm desperately sorry that this has happened.'

'He fell on to the bonnet of the car. I couldn't have avoided him.' Annoyance crackled in Gerald's voice. 'Well, come on, Carol. We still haven't had our meal.'

'Oh, forget about it. I don't feel like a meal now.'

Gerald's angry frown gave way to a conciliatory smile. 'But we've booked! We'll be causing

problems for the staff.' How well he was able to turn Carol's thoughtfulness to his own advantage!

After Gerald and Carol had left the hospital, John waited for a lonely couple of hours. Then the doctor came, and told him that Patrick had regained consciousness. His leg was broken, he said, but he had no other serious injuries. When John asked if he could see him, the surgeon said, 'Sure'.

On seeing John, surprise and pleasure showed on Patrick's thin face.

'Uncle Patrick, how do you feel?'

'You're still here, John!'

'Of course I'm still here. Are you in pain?'

'Ah, it's not too bad.'

'I'll collect your belongings from the guest-house, and bring whatever you want here. I'll keep the rest at home for you.'

'Your mother won't want...'

'Don't be too sure of that. And I'll fix up your bill at the guest house.'

'There's money in my wallet.'

'We can settle all that later on.'

A nurse came into the room.

'I'm sorry, but you'll have to leave now. Mr. McCarthy must rest.'

John stood up. 'I'll be back tomorrow,' he said.

'Thanks,' said Patrick with tears in his eyes.



When John told his mother and Joe what had happened, his mother sank into a chair, and

tears poured down her face. 'Poor Patrick, the unfortunate creature. I'm sorry for him. And I'm sorry for us, because we're disgraced now for good and all.'

'Well, Carol and Gerald went off without asking any questions. Maybe no one will learn anything about him, except that he's your brother.'

'Do you think Gerald O'Rourke will leave it at that? He's been jealous of you over Carol Martin for a long time. Mark my words: he'll go to a lot of trouble to find out why we didn't acknowledge Patrick from the start.'

John leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes.

'I'll go up to the hospital now and see him,' his mother said finally, getting to her feet.

'You'd better ring first. They told me he needed to rest.'

His mother rang the hospital, and was told that Patrick should be left alone until the following day. When she put down the phone, John rang Carol. He told her what the surgeon had said.

'Thanks for letting me know,' she said. He could hear the relief in her voice. 'The poor man! It was dreadful. If only you and he had come to the races with us, that accident wouldn't have happened.'

'Gerald wouldn't have wanted that,' snapped John. It was out before he knew it.

'Don't mind Gerald. If you had asked me to go to the races with you, I wouldn't have gone with him.'

John closed his eyes, and breathed a sign of relief. Nothing had changed, thank God, and Gerald hadn't gained any advantage.

'Will you be at home if I call over in the morning,' he asked, 'about eleven?'

'I'll be here.'



When John walked into the hotel lounge the following morning, she was sitting alone at a table by the window. She looked up as he approached, and his smile faded when he saw the hostile expression on her face. He greeted her and sat down. She poured out tea for both of them in silence.

'Why didn't you tell me he was your uncle?'

John put his head in his hands and sighed deeply. He felt trapped. How could he explain without letting his mother down?

Miserably he took a drink of tea.

'You should have told me when you introduced us.'

'Carol, I...' He fell silent as Gerald O'Rourke walked into the lounge, and with a self-satisfied smile headed straight for their table.

'This is a private conversation,' John said.

Gerald laughed. 'Oh, your family secrets are out now, John. You kept it all from Carol for a long time, didn't you?'

John leaped to his feet. 'I said this is a private conversation,' he hissed.

A man's voice behind him said loudly, 'You listen to me, John Campbell.'

John turned to see James Martin, Carol's father, standing behind him, his face flushed with anger. □

To be continued.

Don Bosco: The Times, The Man, The Facts

DON BOSCO'S FIGHT AGAINST SIN

by Claudio Russo (T/A:ID)

As priest, Don Bosco was always at war against sin." This is how Father Michael Rua, the first successor of Don Bosco begins his testimony at the process of his beatification. If we think of the many initiatives and works of the "Father and Teacher of Youth," we discover that they had as their one purpose the struggle against sin. The educational method of this priest, called "preventive," was meant to prevent mistakes and sins in young people.

"I Would Make any Sacrifice"

"In the novenas before big feasts Don Bosco always told us to starve the devil by not committing sins," Father Rua continues. "In time of calamity he taught us, that before anything else, in order to get out safe, one had to flee from mortal sin. To those who asked him what they needed to do to obtain any kind of grace or favour,



Johnny Bosco entertains his companions



he always advised them to make their peace with God through the sacrament of Penance. Hearing him speak of committing sacrileges or other serious sin he seemed very worried and distressed and he suffered much. This also happened when he heard someone swearing. He seemed serious and he suffered. Once he told me: "In Confession when I hear someone repeat a swear word with which he accuses himself I seem to lose all my strength." If someone told him about a scandal that his youngsters were exposed to by some bad companions, he would painfully exclaim: "What a disaster!" And he would immediately go about trying to repair the damage. When he found that he had to be away from Turin Don Bosco's only fear was

that sin would infiltrate his house. He never missed an opportunity to write to the Superiors, warning them of the traps that the devil would lay to ensnare them. Even in his common letters to his boys he would forewarn them against the traps of the enemy (the devil). To fight sin he founded houses that would welcome boys. "For certain abandoned youngsters and for others who lived with scandals in their homes it was not enough to instruct them on feast days. If they needed to be saved they had to be kept far from evil even during the week." In fact, when he came to know that there were young people in similar situations he invited them to come to his house in preference to others. One day, speaking of youngsters found in this miserable situation, exposed to dangers of committing crime or being lured by some bad companion he would be moved

and with tears in his eyes he would exclaim: "For these youngsters I would make any sacrifice, even gladly shedding my blood to save them," and he recommended us to use the same sensitivity toward them," concludes Father Rua (2409 B3-B4).

A Dangerous Tavern

All Don Bosco's work, from oratories, schools, from the hours spent in hearing the confessions of his boys while they were playing in the courtyard had just one aim and that was to help the boys to avoid sin and be free to love and serve the Lord.

Already as a boy, Johnny Bosco began to develop in himself this sensibility to fight against sin. "As a youngster he committed himself to entertain his companions with honest fun so as to keep them away from sin," testified Father Rua. "Close to the Café Pianta



Don Bosco hears the confessions of his boys (pic. Nino Musio)

where Johnny Bosco worked as a waiter, he mentioned that sometimes when they played pool, Pianta appointed Johnny Bosco to keep the score. When someone cursed, or began to use indecent language Johnny became serious and objected to that behaviour. Quite a few of those who frequented the place pleaded with the owner of the café not to put Johnny as the score-keeper anymore because it hurt their respectability and prevented them from speaking as they liked" (2409 B1).

For Don Bosco the struggle against sin begins with "prevention," that means preventing boys finding themselves in situations where they would be unable to avoid sin. "Near the house of Don Bosco was an inn where, on feast days, coarse ill-bred ruffians gathered, cursed and sang bawdy songs during the religious services," recalled Father Rua. "Don Bosco saw the danger that that house represented for his boys and he knew the dangers that he would have to face if he tried to prevent those gatherings. At a very heavy price he took over the lease of that entire house and sent away all the tenants, causing serious disorder and despite the threats and even attacks against his person he refused to give up his work of saving his poor boys (2408 E 11).

The Best Tool

One of the tools that Don Bosco considered the most effective for combating sin is the sacrament of Reconciliation. He often recommended it to his boys and gave them many occasions to approach this sacrament. "Despite



Don Bosco welcomes youngsters to his house

his many preoccupations, Don Bosco never avoided his role as a minister of reconciliation," testified Father Michael Rua. Habitually Don Bosco heard confessions for two or three hours every day. Often, however especially on big feasts or during the spiritual retreats he sat for whole days and sometimes whole nights. Even when he was sick he did not stop hearing confession. Even during his last illness Don Bosco kept up this sacred duty. With great tenderness he passed on to his priests, his spiritual sons, the promptness of a minister of confession. (...) In order to give his students the freedom necessary to approach the sacrament, from the first days of the Oratory, Don Bosco usually invited other priests to whom the boys were free to go to for their confession" (2408 A. 10).

Even through what today we call "social communication" Don Bosco helped his neighbour to fight sin because he already saw the importance of communication for the salvation of the soul: he correctly instructed Christians through articles and books.

Don Bosco educated his boys to fight against sin because it estranged them from God. □

VATICAN

The Shroud of Turin, revered by many as the burial cloth of Christ, will be displayed to the public for the first time in a decade in 2010.

Pope Benedict XVI announced during a June 2nd audience with pilgrims from Turin that he had approved the shroud's removal from its protective casket for display to the public in the spring of 2010.

He told the 7000 pilgrims gathered in the Vatican's Paul VI hall, "If the Lord grants me life and health, I, too, hope to come and see the shroud displayed."

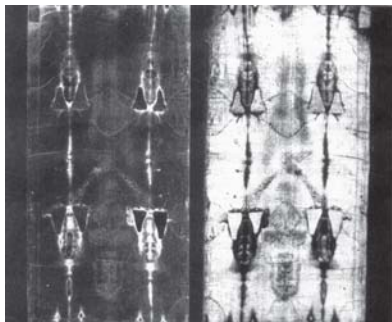
According to tradition, the 14-foot by four-foot linen cloth is the burial shroud of Jesus. The shroud has a full-length photonegative image of a man, front and back, bearing signs of wounds that correspond to the Gospel accounts of the torture Jesus endured in his passion and death.

The Church has never officially ruled on the shroud's authenticity, saying judgments about its age and origin belonged to scientific investigation. Scientists have debated its authenticity for decades, and studies have led to conflicting results.

The shroud lies protected



The Pope admires a replica of the Shroud, 2 June, in the Vatican



The Shroud of Turin is shown in this positive, left and negative combo undated file photo. It will be displayed for the first time in a decade in 2010

behind bulletproof glass in a special chapel of Turin's Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. The cloth lies flat, unseen, inside a casket made of special space-age alloy that is waterproof and fireproof and is hermetically sealed to keep out oxygen.

The shroud is removed only for very special spiritual occasions, and its removal for study or display to the public must be approved by the pope. The last time it was displayed to the public was in 2000 for the jubilee year.

Cardinal Severino Poletto of Turin, papal custodian of the Shroud of Turin, had requested the shroud be displayed in two years.

During the June 2nd audience, the Pope said he was happy to grant the archbishop's wish.

Pope Benedict said it would be "a propitious occasion" for the faithful "to contemplate that mysterious face that silently speaks to the heart of humankind, inviting them to recognize the face of God."

At the end of the Vatican audience, the spokesman for the

shroud's custodian Msgr. Giuseppe Ghiberti, presented the pope with a life-size production of the shroud. (CNS)



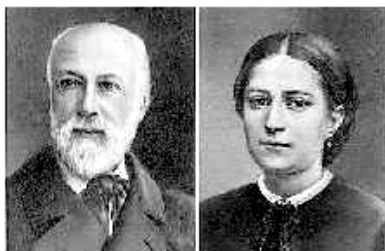
ISRAEL

Herodium, which was once a fortress and palace of King Herod the Great, is seen in this undated file photo released by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. An Israeli archeologist announced on May 8th that he recently found the tomb of King Herod at Herodium, which is in the desert about 9 miles south of Jerusalem. King Herod ordered the slaughter of the innocents after he learned of the birth of Jesus. (CNS photo)

POLAND

The remains of the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux, France, have been exhumed as French Catholics await the couple's expected beatification.

"This beatification will be important not only for the church in France, but for families everywhere who've prayed through the intercession of this married couple who lived in a different epoch but experienced the same strains as all parents," said Dominique Monvielle, director of Lisieux's pilgrimage centre on June 4th. The bodies of Louis and Zelig Martin



were disinterred on May 27th from graves outside St. Therese's Basilica in Lisieux and will be reburied after preservation work in the basilica crypt in September. Monieville told *Catholic News Service* that Pietro Schillero, a 6-year-old Italian boy whose cure from a fatal lung condition at 13 months was recognized as a miracle by the Church in June 2003, attended the exhumation ceremony with his parents who had prayed to the Martins for a cure. (CNS)

CZESTOCHOWA

Three 18th Century musical scores discovered in a collection at Poland's Jasna Gora monastery may be the work of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, experts say. The musical scores identified as 18th century manuscript copies "correspond to the style" of the period and "their character allows us to suppose Mozart was their author", musicologist Remigiusz Pospiech told Poland's *Polska* daily.

The three scores are among 18 musical manuscripts attributed to the Austrian genius in the Jasna Gora monastery's vast archive at Czestochowa, but do not figure in the Koehel catalogue of Mozart's complete works. A special commission has already started analyzing the authenticity

of 18 scores which are signed with the name of the Austrian composer, Polskie Radio says. The notes under examination were put on paper by 18th century copyists.

Polish specialists have already contacted experts in Vienna and Salzburg, Mozart's birthplace in Austria, focused on music in the period between 1756 and 1791 according to Pospiech. Archives at Jasna Gora monastery hold some 3,000 manuscripts of musical scores, collected over the centuries for the needs of its orchestra. The Monastery of Jasna Gora in Czestochowa, Poland, is the third largest Catholic pilgrimage site in the world. Home to the beloved miraculous icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa, the monastery is also the national shrine of Poland and the centre of Polish Catholicism. *CATHNEWS*

NEW YORK

The Vatican has given a mixed reaction to the exclusion of Pope Benedict XVI from Time magazine's 2008 list of the world's 100 most influential people.

"I am happy that Pope Benedict is absent from this list, the composition of which is kind of bizarre and arbitrary," said Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Director of the Vatican Press Office and TV. "They used criteria that are totally extraneous to the religious and moral authority of the pontiff," he commented.

But Giovanni Maria Vian, the new editor-in-chief of the Vatican daily *L'Osservatore Romano*, said the pope's exclusion from the list was "disconcerting."

"It's absurd to prefer an unknown Mexican golfer or the



author of a book on cooking to the pope, a person known throughout the world," he said.

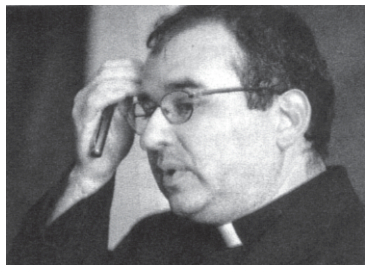
For the fifth year in a row, Time magazine has published the list based on input from its correspondents around the world and experts in various fields, with the final decision taken by its editorial team.

Time's list is divided into five categories: artists and entertainers; scientists and thinkers; leaders and revolutionaries; heroes and pioneers, and builders and titans – each category having 20 names.

Under leaders and revolutionaries, Time listed three religious leaders: the Dalai Lama, the Ecumenical (Orthodox) Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I and Iraq's Shi'ite Muslim-religious-political leader Muqtada al-Sadr.

The current pope had been on the list for the past three years, in 2005 as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, and in 2006 and 2007 as Pope Benedict XVI.

Adi Ignatius of Time said that although the pope had been considered, this year's exclusion was to "allow others the possibility to appear". (*The Universe*)



VATICAN

If aliens exist, they may be a different life form that does not need Christ's redemption, the Vatican's chief astronomer said. Jesuit Father Jose Funes, director of the Vatican Observatory, said Christians should consider alien life as an "extraterrestrial brother" and a part of God's creation.

Father Funes, an Argentine named to his position by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006, made the remarks in an interview published on May 13th by the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*.

Father Funes said it was difficult to exclude the possibility that another intelligent life exists in the universe.

Just as God created multiple forms of life on earth, he said, there may be diverse forms throughout the universe.

"This is not in contrast with the faith, because we cannot place limits on the creative freedom of God," he said.

Asked about implications that the discovery of alien life might

pose for Catholic redemption, Father Funes cited the Gospel parable of the Shepherd who left his flock of 99 sheep in order to search for the one that was lost.

"We who belong to the human race could really be that lost sheep, the sinners who need a pastor," he said.

"God became man in Jesus in order to save us. So if there are also other intelligent beings it is not a *given* that they need redemption. They might have remained in full friendship with their creator," he said. Father Funes went on to say that Christ's incarnation and sacrifice was a unique and unrepeatable event. But he said he was sure that, if needed, God's mercy would be offered to aliens, as it was to humans. (*CNS*)

ALGERIA

A Catholic priest in Algeria has been sentenced to a year in prison for praying with Christians in Cameroon. Father Pierre Wallez is the first victim of legislation approved in March 2006 prohibiting directing a religious ceremony in a place which has not been recognized by the government in Algeria. Speaking on Vatican Radio, Alger Archbishop Henri Teisser said, "The most surprising thing is that the conviction was issued simply because the priest visited a group of Christians in Cameroon. He had not celebrated Mass, but was only joining them in a prayer. The prelate said the sentence will not be carried out, because the tribunal decided to modify it to a sentence of parole. The new law on worship sought above all to control clandestine evangelical proselytizing groups. *Cathnews* □

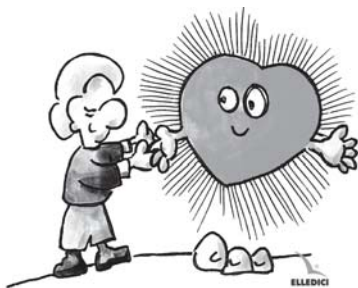
16 STEPS to GREATNESS

(Operation Wardrobe)

Text by: Jimmy Rizzi

Drawings by: Giovanni Gherardi

Translation & adaptation: I.D.



The age of

16 - PERSEVERANCE Part 1

**BE CAREFUL
NOT TO BECOME
A JELLYFISH OR
A SLUGGARD**



A persevering youngster is:

- 2) One who has a goal and does everything to reach it.
- 3) One who is convinced that he cannot reach Paradise on a cushion but through sacrifice and suffering.
(He is convinced that every success is the fruit of blood and sweat)
- 4) One who is on the go and keeps at his job no matter what the difficulties.
- 5) One who is never bored if things get dull after some time. He marches on all the same.
- 6) One who goes on even if he does not see immediate results.

Prayer

***Lord, how often have I thrown myself
enthusiastically into a new initiative!
But as soon as it seems monotonous I lose interest.
How often have I thrown at an enterprise
that fascinated me!
But when I did not see immediate results or there
were some difficulties I gave up and surrendered.
Lord, teach me never to surrender or give up
teach me to march on even if it is difficult.
When I think of all that you've done for me...
I realize that if you had not persevered
in coming after me, seeking out my friendship,
if you had not insistently knocked at my door
I would have got nowhere.***

***Thank you Lord, for insisting and for persevering,
Grant that I may imitate you
in the face of difficulties, delusions and fatigue
May I never surrender but always carry on... □***

The End.

LOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER

Our belated sincere and heartfelt thanks to our Most Loving Jesus and Mary Help of Christians for having blessed us with a baby girl in January. Be with us Mary and shower your blessings on all that we do.

Priya and Pradeep Corera, Bahrain

Dear Mother Mary, thank you for all the favours granted to me.

Fatima Fernandes

My very grateful thanks to Mother Mary for the favours received through the intercession of three Hail Marys.

Tresina D'Silva

Sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians for the cure of my wife Margaret from stomach ulcers, she was constantly under medication.

Joe Monteiro, Daund

Sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians for helping solve two great problems. No wonder Don Bosco used to say "Have devotion to Mary Help of Christians and you will see what miracles are."

Linus Ferreira, Bombay

Thank you dearest Mother for having getting me settled to a loving husband.

Mona, Malaysia

Dear Mother Mary, thank you for a very great favour that I have received.

Mary Ann, Sydney, Australia

Thank you dear Mother for the safe delivery of our daughter, do continue to bless her.

Roland-Lidwina, Goa

Thank you dear Mother Mary for freeing me from the sin of Idolatry and homosexuality.

Aditya Tawde, Mumbai

I am most grateful to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady Help of Christians and the entire court of heaven for the good percentage I was able to obtain in my TYBCom examinations.

Lloyd, Vasai

In the month of May my father had a dangerous accident but escaped with a wound to his head and a hairline fracture to his leg. His great devotion to Mary Help of Christians helped and protected him. My sincere thanks too, to our Blessed Mother for protecting my sister from what could have had very serious consequences.

Freida D'Souza, Mumbai

Thank you dearest Mother for all the graces and favours received through your powerful intercession.

Mrs. Flaira Pereira, Kalyan

Million thanks to Our blessed Lord and his most holy Mother for flooding us with good health and enabling us to raise two beautiful daughters, Mira and Maya especially after my recent health scare.

Mrs Pushpalata Samagond, USA

Our sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians for helping my son get a good job.

Richard Coelho, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary for helping me in my urgent need.

L. Paes, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary Help of Christians for all the favours received especially for a peaceful settlement of my brother's court case.

Mrs. Ana Monteiro, Mumbai

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.

Thank you, dear Mother Mary for blessing my family.

Anthony Pereira, Singapore

Through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys, I am happy and grateful that Our Lady brought me to realize the bad in me and she helped me to overcome it.

Peter, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary for helping us to settle in Australia and for granting us good health.

Stephen Fernandes, Australia

Dear mother I really want to thank "you" for helping me to score good marks and secure a good percentage. It wouldn't have been possible without your grace.

Mary Joseph, Khopoli

My sincerest thanks to my dearest and Blessed Mother Mary for the cure of my grandson Rhys' viral cough and cold through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Mrs Arlene deSouza, Australia

Thank you dear mother for safe delivery of our daughter. Continue to bless our daughter.

Roland-Lidwina Goa

My children passed their examinations thanks to the faithful daily recitation of the 3 Hail Marys in the morning, afternoon and night. I thank Our Blessed Mother for many other graces received.

Perpetua Fernandes, Goa

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS

We celebrate this feast on the 14th September and in so doing commemorate the victory which Our Lord accomplished through his death and resurrection. The cross, a mark of great suffering and humiliation, is a horrific symbol which we adore because through the cross we have been redeemed, and in the cross we see Christ's great love for us. It could have become a symbol of shame for Christians, because it brought about the death of Christ. However, faith in the Resurrection made the cross a symbol of pride. And so as we honour the cross which Christ bore for us, we pray that we might find in his example the strength to bear our own burdens with patience and to triumph over our own difficulties assisted by strength that comes from above.

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

Thank you dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco for the favours received by me and my family members. *Rodney D'Souza, Mumbai*

Thank you dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for granting us a safe, healthy and happy overseas trip and also for numerous favours granted to us. *Riona James, Australia*

I am most grateful to Our Lady and Don Bosco for the many favours received. Please do continue to guide, bless and protect us always.

Mrs. A.F. Dubash, Mumbai

Thanks to Don Bosco for the gift of a healthy baby boy to my daughter after two miscarriages. Sorry for the delay in expressing my gratitude.

Dorin Gomes, Goa

Thank you dearest Mother Mary, help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for your constant guidance and divine protection, moreover for healing me completely from all my physical ailments.

Joseph C. Bangalore

Sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for a safe delivery of my daughter-in-law and for gifting us with a baby girl.

Theresa Fernandes, Pune

Thank you Mother Mary and St. John Bosco for granting me a good percentage in my XII boards and for getting me the college and subjects of my choice.

Nivedita D'Lima, Mumbai

I am grateful to Our Blessed Mother and St. John Bosco helping me succeed in my SSC exams with the good percentage.

Irene Coelho, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary Help of Christians and St. John Bosco for a successful operation and for the many other favours received.

E. Sequeira, Mumbai



In the cross of Christ

I see three things:

***First a description of
the depth of man's sin.***

***Second the overwhelming
love of God.***

***Third, the only
way to salvation.***

(Billy Graham)

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



My daughter was in the ninth month of her pregnancy when she met with a car accident. She was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance. After a thorough examination the doctor declared that both mother and baby were safe except for a fracture of her leg. We thank our Lady and St. Dominic Savio for protecting both the mother and the baby. Fifteen days later the baby was born safely and normally.

Mrs D'Souza, Mumbai

Our sincere thanks to Our Lady Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for blessing our daughter with twins (both girls)

after 11 years. We are grateful for all the other graces received also.

Mr. & Mrs. Francis and Geraldine Mascarenhas, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of baby girls (twins) after 9 years of marriage.

Gladwin & Maggie Ferrao, Goa

In the 8th month of my pregnancy the doctor said the baby was not growing normally and the doctor could not guarantee that the baby would have a normal and healthy delivery. I prayed fervently and wore the scapular of St. Dominic Savio. The baby was delivered by a Caesarian, but thankfully both the baby and I are safe. Due to the low birth weight the baby had developed two bumps on its head. The day we returned home the bumps disappeared. I am most grateful to Our Blessed Mother, the Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for protecting my baby during this difficult period. *Stellina D'Souza, Mumbai*

Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians and St. Dominic Savio for helping me conceive.

C. Pereira, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the cure of my grandson Rhys' viral cough and cold.

Mrs. Arlene deSouza, Australia

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER SEPTEMBER 2008

Holy Father's General Intention: *That those who, because of wars or oppressive regimes, are forced to leave their homes and country may be supported by Christians in defending and protecting their rights.*

Missionary Intention: *That, faithful to the sacrament of Matrimony, every Christian family may cultivate the values of love and communion in order to be a small evangelizing community, sensitive and open to the material and spiritual needs of its sisters and brothers.*

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MARY WAS THERE

I am working for a BPO and was returning after work in a taxi on the 5th September 2007 when the vehicle collided with another car at around 1.50 am. - Everyday before I leave for work all of us pray to Mary Help of Christians to protect us and we recite the 3 Hail Marys. The night of the accident I was alone in the taxi with a security guard. I was taken to the hospital with a cut on my forehead. My nose was bleeding and my handbag and clothes were covered with blood. I was semi-conscious. I called home and informed my mother. She rushed to the hospital. My forehead was stitched and they straightened my nose. I was sure that Our Lady was protecting me all this time and I am most grateful for her protection. (Nirmala Lobo, Pune)

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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