

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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*From
the earliest times,
Mary's greatness
was
related
to her
Divine Maternity.*

**Cover: Don Bosco, the Great
Apostle of the Printed Word
by Nino Musio**



From The Editor's Desk

An Enduring Dream

Occasionally in recent months, I've found myself thinking back affectionately to the first stirrings of my vocation to join the Salesians of Don Bosco when I was a teenager. They were exciting years for me, filled with wildly extravagant visions of the future. Sometimes I imagined myself as another Fulton Sheen, preaching powerfully to enthralled congregations. At other times, I would see myself as a modern-day missionary may be a 'Salesian' Francis Xavier, boldly setting out to plant the faith where it had no roots. Another time, I would find myself planning to be just a quiet, self-effacing, country parish priest, austere and working for the good of my simple flock. I smile gently at those dreams now, and wonder how I could have been so naïve to even entertain them.

Some years later, when I joined the Salesians, my dreaming was quickly tempered by a dose of realism. Within a short time, I found out – often painfully – that I wasn't made of such heroic stuff, and that my efforts would have to take on a much more modest hue. Time went on, and the long years of study took the edge off my first fervour, as I ploughed through the intricacies of Latin, or grappled with the meaning of Existence, or tried to understand the mystery of the Incarnation. But I still held on to my dream, even if it had lost some of its gloss. I still wanted to make a difference to people's lives, especially to the lives of youngsters. I still wanted to make the Good News of Jesus Christ meaningful to them. And I still believed I was called to do that!

Now, as I pass the twenty-fifth anniversary of my ordination, I'm pleased to find that the dream is still there, despite all the ups and downs of the years. But it has changed too. In earlier times, I used to think of myself as a rugged pioneer, announcing the gospel alone, self-contained and self-propelled. No longer! - I have come to believe that I can best contribute my little bit as part of a wider community – my fellow Salesians, other priests and religious, the whole people of God – working for a common dream. I believe now that it's together that we can and must make a difference.

I also notice that I'm less likely to worry about my successes and failures these days than I did as a young priest. Experience has taught me that I can never evaluate the fruit of a homily, a retreat, or an article I've written. I believe now that it's enough to sow the seed, however tiny it may be. It is for the Lord alone to count the harvest.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

1. GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, SSS

One of the fall-outs of the global culture that which grips us all in its tentacles is that there is less and less room for senior citizens in our big cities, especially the aged and the sick. Yet, when today even secular Governments have felt the need to move in with protective laws and regulations to support this senior bracket of human life especially in our metropolitan cities, we have before us one of the 'signs of the times' that demand our urgent attention.

We would all agree that life is not just for existing or surviving, but for enjoying, for sharing and for enriching others even to the very end. Realizing the plight of senior citizens in his parish of St. Anne's, Mazgaon, Colin D'Souza, himself an ex-school teacher of Mazgaon's St. Mary's SSC searched for a meaningful way to make them count as worthwhile human beings and citizens. The youth, the women, the children – almost every age bracket had a club in the parish, but not the elderly. They were conspicuous by their absence in all parish activities. So he shared his vision for these neglected seniors with the Parish Priest who generously offered him a room on the church grounds. Soon others rallied round and a few items like a television set, carom boards, playing cards and a table tennis set were assembled. A simple constitution was drawn up, an appealing announcement made in church, and thus the Senior Parishioners Club sprang into

being. Numbers steadily grew from 10 to 250. In no time eight focus groups mushroomed, picnics and pilgrimages were planned, spiritual and health discourses judiciously organized, a reading library installed, yoga exercises scheduled, social service groups set up, and lively social gatherings routinely interspersed these activities.

Realizing that no blessing is meant only for one's own self-centred consumption, the Seniors then decided to reach out to others in the parish. Providing senior people with an outlet for their creative though depleting energies, "We set up a basic computer training facility for those who need computer skills to secure a job, with donated machines," adds Colin with a proud smile adorning his happy face. Having acquired a sense of belonging and purpose, the seniors of this Club will never miss a programme for anything in the world. They provide encouragement and inspiration for younger people and enjoy the sunset years of the lives having found something worthwhile and constructive to do.

Eucharist – Bread of Life

Nothing extraordinary, one might say, regarding Colin's efforts, yet what a difference he has made in these few lonely hearts. While he could have settled into a cozy way of life centred round his own needs, thanking God for the blessings he himself had received, he rather spent his time and energy getting others to also share these

blessings. That is what the Eucharist, properly celebrated, is meant to do. "The bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world," Jesus told the people he had fed in the desert. And elsewhere he reminded them: "I came that you may have life and have it to the full."

There are two little reflections that emerge from these texts. **The first** is that we cannot have the fullness of life unless, at times, another person in his generosity helps us. It is said that 'even eagles need a push' meaning thereby that even this great bird, the king of the skies, would not learn to fly unless the mother eagle pushes the young one out of the nest - a seemingly cruel and heartless act, but so necessary to get the young one ready to face life to the fullest! The young offspring hurtles to its grave but at the very last second the mother dives underneath the falling eaglet and bears it up on its powerful protective wings.

Soaring far above the clouds, it once again drops the young one for yet another round of flying experience and the pattern continues till the little one gains strength and confidence enough to venture out on its own. Now it is free and rules the skies on its own - something that would have been unthinkable had the mother eagle not initiated it so lovingly and painstakingly. Each one of us too, including senior citizens, is like that little eaglet in some area of our life. Unless some one spots the talent, the enthusiasm, the zest for life buried deep within us and has the courage and generosity to help us realize these gifts, they would be buried like the proverbial one talent received by the third servant

in the Gospel.

The second reflection is that 'fullness of life' is a relative term and can be experienced even up to one's dying day. There is no age at which one can say 'I have had enough - all I need now is to wait patiently for the day of my final departure!' When a person discovers something relevant or significant yet to happen, s/he finds purpose in life and will live it energetically. Viktor Frankl showed us in his Logotherapy that what people need most is a 'purpose' in life. Now some people are able to find this purpose, or to generate it for themselves, whilst most others look to someone for a helping hand, especially as they grow old and infirm.

While the mother eagle's initiation of her young one is instinctive, in our case especially when dealing with the elderly, it would need to be done out of genuine love and concern. In today's fast moving globalized world where the motto seems to be: 'Each one for himself and God for all', but, every person is precious in God's eyes, and even if s/he hasn't achieved anything great in life, yet there is no saying how many blessings could accrue to the wider community through these seemingly useless people.

Eucharistic Inspiration

The Sunday Eucharist reminds us that we are one family, rather one *body* in Christ. Just as we care for every part of our body, and especially for those that are weak and delicate like the eye, the ear, the heart - to name only a few, so those who have reached the closing years of life need the love and attention of the younger

generation. In so many places, not just in the western 'first-world' culture, but in almost every part of the world, the old and infirm are seen as readily disposable. They are regarded as a burden, a nuisance, as a deadweight that hampers one's own enjoyment of life. What when they cannot hear nor see too clearly, nor move swiftly because of arthritic limbs, what with their endless tales of pain and woe, repeated ever so often? But these too are God's beloved children and part of our family in Christ – and they too appreciate it when someone cares to make life a little interesting and less monotonous for them.

I still remember vividly a Christmas season Eucharist we organized in our little parish sub-station for the 'oldies.' These were men and women who had lived for years in the same vicinity, but were now home-bound and hence hardly able to meet their old companions for a good old gossip session. At this Eucharist we lined up the wheelchairs close to the sanctuary thinking that they would want to celebrate this Eucharist with full gutsy participation. But to our surprise, what interested them most was the fact that they saw their former companions and friends – they kept talking to one another right through the Eucharist. The thought that crossed my mind on seeing this was: 'Would God be offended by this lack of respect for the great Sacrament of his love? I like to think that he would have been smiling from his throne of glory saying: "I was lonely and you cared to make me feel wanted and loved... as long as you did it

to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me."

Inspiration to Imitate?

Would it be preposterous to imagine that such Senior Citizens Clubs could be organized in every parish – and run by the young and able-bodied? But it is not just a question of handing out goodies to the seniors, rather the ideal should be to get them sufficiently involved as well in projects aimed at reaching out to others in need. Without a doubt, they would enjoy giving while they too receive in return! After all, what they want most, even though they may not know how to express it, is the feeling that they are still useful to society. The gifts we bring to the Eucharistic table are simply what 'earth has given and human hands have made!' This kind of venture would indeed be a case of human energy and love recycled. Again, could this effort be linked with other parish associations too e.g. each zone taking its turn in providing something profitable and challenging to the seniors of the entire parish? Or again, each zone could be allotted a month in which to work out something creative and engaging for the seniors of the entire parish!

Colin's venture could be seen as a start, an eye-opener, providing inspiration for a number of improvements and additions. Would you allow the Lord to stir your imagination and heart the next time you attend the Eucharist? And should you hear his voice, 'harden not your heart' but let it respond with generosity and love. "The measure in which you give will be the measure in which you receive!□



"REMAIN IN MY LOVE" (JN 15:9)

Fr. Mayank Parmar, sdb

Newly Ordained in December 2008

How could I just let pass the way God kept me in His Love and showed me the way? He still says "*Remain in My Love*" Jn. 15:9.

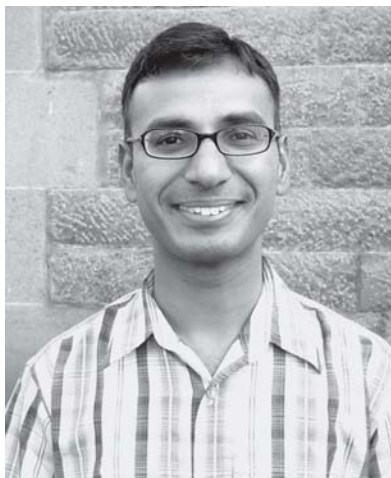
If someone asked me when did God really call me? I would reply like the prophet Jeremiah: He called me from my mother's womb.

I was born into a God fearing family, and in the fervently Catholic village of Karmasad, in Anand District, Gujarat. There all the religious feasts were celebrated with great devotion. It was the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on 11th February that always moved me. Each year the month of May too was an especially fervent time for me.

When I finished my Std. VII I was sent to the boarding school. There I met boys from different places and backgrounds. It was a difficult time for me, though I must admit that life in the boarding helped me to grow in my vocation. I was impressed by the example of our boarding prefect Fr. Thomas Macwan (*now bishop of Ahmedabad diocese*). I admired his accurate guidance and selfless service too. There were others too who did influence my vocation tremendously.

I was allowed to complete my college studies and so after some spiritual guidance I encountered new and varied experiences as I entered college.

When I finished my third year of college my spiritual director asked me if I liked working with youngsters and I said 'Yes' so he sent me to meet Fr. Monty Rodrigues. That was my first encounter with the Salesians



and I was invited to join the vocation camp the following week. Then I was directed to join Don Bosco Baroda. After joining the Salesians I did face problems but never once did I doubt my vocation.

After much encouragement throughout my seminary training I was admitted to be ordained a priest in December 2008.

Though I cannot recall any spectacular miracles I can recall many individuals who came into my life and made me aware that the Hand of God was constantly guiding me and His voice was constantly whispering to me to ***Remain in (His) Love*** and spread that Love to all whom I was to be sent. I pray that the Lord allows you to experience his Love, to remain there and share it, like I did, with others who are waiting...by becoming his priest, sister or brother. □

For further contact Fr Brian Moras sdb: frbrian@rediffmail.com

CAN YOU LIVE SERENELY AMONG THORNS?

By Antonio Rudoni

Blessed are those who mourn, they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5, 4) is what the Lord said. Again just before his passion and death he assured us: "Your sorrow will be turned into joy" (John 16, 20).

These and other words of the Master teach us to live serenely despite the difficulties we encounter. He offers us the secret to earthly joy because this joy becomes a foretaste of another, infinitely greater joy that awaits us in heaven. Thus, faith and Christian hope become more than just a "stroke of luck". They help us to overcome a fear that risks killing us, a fear that our lives will turn meaningless and will lead us nowhere!

Recall the example of Jesus. He is the model for all of us. As man he pleads with his Father: 'If it is possible, take away this cup' of pain that appears to him in all its ferocity (Matthew 26, 39). But his Father in his infinite love and immense wisdom offers him a far greater gift. Christ selflessly accepted to suffer for a short time so as to eliminate suffering (not only for himself but for all humankind and not only for some time, but forever), with the Resurrection and the subsequent transformation of man in "the new heavens and the new earth" (2 Pt. 3, 13).

And so, that is why if we wish



to find serenity we must understand that:

1) *God never makes us suffer:* "God is love" (1 John 4, 8, 16). Indeed a mother loves each of her children with the same intensity. Pain then is the fabrication of man or from natural phenomena in a world that is still in the process of being perfected.

2) But it is not enough "to excuse" God for our troubles. We have also to understand that when He does not prevent someone or something from hurting us, He teaches us to "recycle" our sufferings *in the fullness of life and joy.* "All things

work together for good with those who love God" (Romans 8, 28). He wants us to transform any situation into the unimaginable happiness of into the Resurrection, in fact, something divine!

Jesus went through a similar experience and what Paul spoke about it too. Even though his prayer (in which he asked to be delivered from Satan's difficult temptation) seemed to go unheeded. In reality, Jesus, like the master of the field in which the enemy had sowed darnel (cfr Matthew 13, 24-30) wanted to give him even more time. For that reason he recommends that the reaping be withheld because he wants to reveal the immensity of his love to the weakness of man. It is when we accept that we are weak, that we become strong! In fact we no longer depend on our uncertain abilities but rely on the immense and infinite power of God (cfr 2 Cor. 12, 7-10). Truly the apostle (Paul) lived boldly in the joy of the Lord!

I too am cautiously testing the wisdom of God. I have developed a serious ailment that involved

several medical interventions. Now I don't speak anymore, I don't read anymore. I live in a wheelchair. I thought that, that would be the way I would have to live for the rest of my life, but instead, I have gradually begun to recover some functions and I am now discovering the beauty of life. I'm beginning to notice the attentive care with which God our Father lovingly follows me around. Today, if I am asked to choose between my former life, the life before my illness, and this present state with its limitations, I would, without hesitation, say that I am now living the best years of my life! I feel neither "unlucky" nor unfortunate as I often used to feel when I almost had it all... Now I realize what it means to 'snuggle up' into the arms of God "like a child in its mother's arms" (Psalms 131, 2).

In conclusion: We would be rid of so many difficulties if only we knew how to completely abandon ourselves to His love because He knows us better than we know ourselves and He knows that we need His strength to overcome each obstacle! ☐

Today, My friend, Today!

*If you wish to make someone happy,
someone you love,
tell him so today...*

Today, my friend, today!

*If you wish to give someone a flower,
don't wait till it dies
send it to her with love, today...*

Today, my friend, today!

*If you wish to say:
"I love you"
to your folks at home
and to your friend,*

*near or far away...tell them
Today, my friend, today.*

*Don't wait
for people to die,
to love them, because
they can hear you now...
Today, my friend, today.*

*Don't visit graveyards,
don't cover gravestones
with flowers,
fill hearts with love,
Today, my friend, today.☐*

walking with the Church



Liturgical Postures and the Saturday Mass

by Fr. Edward McNamara - Rome

Q1: *When a priest is presiding at a penitential service with the Blessed Sacrament exposed, should he leave his presidential seat to go and hear confessions for penitents even when the Blessed Sacrament is still exposed?*

Q2: *At the end of Mass, when all are kneeling while the sacred vessels are purified, etc., when is it appropriate to sit down? I thought it was when the principal celebrant sits, but I find myself sitting down alone, when all others are waiting for a deacon or someone to finish at the altar.*

A: As both questions relate to posture and can be answered fairly briefly, I will address them both here.

Regarding the first question, there is no reason why a priest may not enter the confessional after exposing the Blessed Sacrament during a penitential service or any other period of adoration.

After all, almost all prayers and readings used during the adoration may be conducted by a deacon or a lay minister. Only the priest, however, is able to hear confessions and impart absolution.

If a deacon is present, he would usually expose the Blessed

Sacrament and, if the priest is busy hearing confessions, the deacon may also impart Benediction.

The situation described by our reader suggests that the priest exposes the Blessed Sacrament, introduces the celebration in a general way, goes to hear confessions, and probably returns later for Benediction. I believe that this procedure is correct.

The priest should remain if he is to preside at an office of the Liturgy of the Hours during the period of adoration. But he may also withdraw before the recitation of the office begins and allow another minister to lead the community, in accordance with the norms for the Divine Office.

With respect to the second question, No. 43 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) says: "The faithful should ... stand from the invitation, *Orate, fratres* (Pray, brethren), before the prayer over the offerings until the end of Mass, except at the places indicated below.... [A]s circumstances allow, they may sit or kneel while the period of sacred silence after Communion

is observed...

"With a view to a uniformity in gestures and postures during one and the same celebration, the faithful should follow the directions which the deacon, lay minister, or priest gives according to whatever is indicated in the Missal."

These indications would appear to allow some degree of flexibility in the posture during the sacred silence after Communion, and the choice as to kneel or sit at this moment seems to fall upon the individual.

The norms do indicate that singing of the Communion chant should continue while the sacrament is distributed (GIRM, No. 86). This would suggest that those who have already received Communion would do better to remain either standing or sitting so as to accompany the assembly in song. If, however, there is no song or the song is executed by the choir alone (GIRM, No. 87), then the faithful could also sit or kneel on returning to their pew.

The period of sacred silence (or a song after Communion) begins after Communion has been distributed to all until the priest returns to the chair thus initiating the silence. This would be the common practice when a deacon or instituted acolyte purifies the vessels.

Although either posture may be freely adopted at this moment of the celebration don't violate liturgical law it is often better not to make a point of it even though our own spiritual sensibility inclines us to something else.

Saturday Mass for Sunday

Several pointed out that most

canonists, based on Pope Pius XII's apostolic constitution "Christus Dominus" and the Code of Canon Law, No. 1248.1, which speaks of Saturday evening ("vespere") Mass, say that 4 p.m., and not 5 p.m. as I affirmed, is the recognized time after which Sunday Masses may be celebrated.

This canon also states that Catholics may fulfill their Sunday and holy-day obligations by assisting at any Catholic Mass after this time. Therefore, if a Catholic were to attend a wedding at this time, even if the ceremony lacked the elements proper to a Sunday Mass, he or she would be fulfilling the Sunday precept.

This would also be the case if a holy day of obligation fell on a Saturday or Monday. A Catholic who assisted at morning and evening Mass on either Saturday or Sunday would fulfill both holy-day precepts, even if the Mass formulas were of the same day. It would always be required to go to Mass twice though, so there is no "killing two birds with one stone," as the saying goes.

To be clear, I am merely stating the minimum legal requirements and am not recommending this as a practice, which I believe would often be pastorally and spiritually detrimental to the faithful.

Therefore a pastor should do all that he can to assure that a Saturday evening wedding has all the elements of Sunday Mass and also encourage the faithful to fulfill their calling to glorify God and celebrate the fullness of the liturgical year.□

Witnesses in & for Our Times



WHAT DOES GOD WANT OF YOU? TO LOVE ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN (330-390) Bishop and Doctor

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

St. Gregory Nazianzen was a great friend of St. Basil the great. The two were both bishops and doctors of the Church, genuine authorities in theology and masters of the spiritual life in their day and to this day. Both saints had very diverse personalities and often held conflicting views. Basil though small of stature and rather delicate and even sickly could stand up to the high and mighty of his day and contend with them. Gregory on the other hand was retiring and given to contemplation. Each had some original trait that stood out. The Church owes them a lot with regard to their contribution to the clarification of the doctrine of the Trinity and Christology.

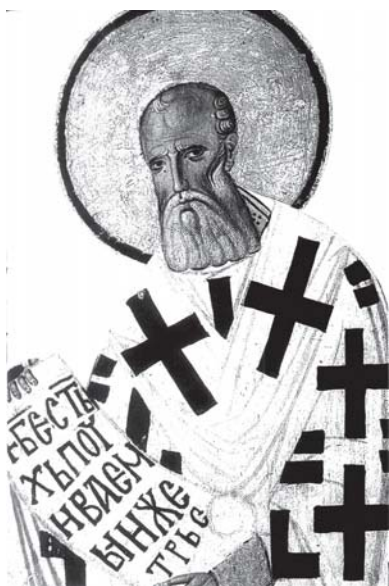
Between the peace of the monastery and the turmoil in the Church

Gregory was born at Arianzus in Cappadocia in the year 330 and his parents were nobles and welcomed the child as truly a gift of God. His mother, after the

example of the mother of the prophet Samuel immediately consecrated him to the Lord. His father, after his conversion became the bishop of Nazianzus. Both parents chose the best schools for him first at Caesarea of Cappadocia (with St. Basil), then at Caesarea in Palestine. Later Gregory went to Alexandria, a great centre of learning at that time and from there to Athens.

In 361 his father wanted his help in the governing of the diocese. Much against his will he agreed but at the first occasion he returned to the monastery. He returned only to help his father who, being 'theologically' inexperienced, inadvertently signed up to the doctrine of Arianism. During this time Basil became bishop of Caesarea and at his insistence (and that of his father) Gregory agreed to be consecrated bishop of Sasima, a suburb of Nazianzus. He never actually took over that see. Was it too small a diocese or did the

city really need a bishop at all? Probably both. When his father died he withdrew to a monastery, bidding farewell (or so he believed) to his bishopric. He felt called to the monastic life not to an ecclesiastical career. In fact he wrote: **"Nothing seems to me greater than this: to silence one's senses, to emerge from the flesh of the world, to withdraw into oneself, no longer to be concerned with human things other than what is strictly necessary; to converse with oneself and with God, to lead a life that transcends the visible"** (Orationes 2: 7; SC 247: 96). That was Gregory's dream everyday and he passionately yearned for this. But history (or better the Holy Spirit who guides the Church) knocked on the door of his heart once more. This time the call came in the form of a delegation of Catholics from Constantinople who were hopelessly in need of a bishop. Unfortunately they were a small flock in a sea of the followers of the Arian heresy but they were good... in fact, it was to their credit that they refused to surrender to Arianism. The Catholics of Constantinople wanted someone who was culturally adept and with some standing in society and thankfully they found those qualities in him... thanks to St. Basil who recommended him. They strenuously tried to convince him since he was so conversant in theology. With Gregory, the Arians would have quite a vigorous contender. What about his other qualities? Probably among the most preponderant motives for accepting were his



theologico-pastoral concerns. Finally he had a See worthy of his cultural acumen. The Imperial Court had its seat at Constantinople second only to Rome. We are in the year 379. Gregory's expectations would take a beating though. His triumphal welcome was not as it should have been. He was even prevented from entering the Cathedral of Santa Sofia. He had to be content with a little chapel that he rechristened Anastasis (i.e. Resurrection). Finally the Catholics of the city found in him a point of reference and a solid rock of support. It was there that Gregory preached his famous five sermons on the Trinity - lucid doctrine and compelling eloquence. His fame grew tremendously. The new emperor, Theodosius, a Catholic, solemnly accompanied him into Santa Sofia, while he was enthusiastically cheered by the people. Were all his problems at

an end? Not really.

God, the breath of every creature

Two years later the same Theodosius convened the Council of Constantinople (381). It was there that Gregory surprised them all. Knowing that some bishops doubted his legitimacy as bishop of Constantinople, he humbly (and sincerely) tendered his resignation. Unanimously the Council fathers refused to accept it. The moderator of the Council, Melezius of Antioch had died and he was elected president of the assembly.

Everyone was now able to hear and admire his theological thought especially his explanations on the Trinity and on Christology.

Gregory strenuously defended the formula of the neo-Nicene formulation that affirmed that the Trinity was of one divine substance (*ousios*) in three hypostatic persons at the same level – honoured and glorified.

In the field of Christology he emphatically defended the Church's idea (against various heresies) that "Christ's purpose was to redeem man in his totality, even his rational soul, because otherwise man would not have been integrally saved." This formula would be refined at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

But other difficulties surfaced as the Council progressed. There were some younger bishops who arrived there, enthusiastic but with little theological depth. They were politically motivated and rather immature. They once more proffered the question about Gregory's legitimacy at the Council. Gregory, in exasperation

tendered his resignation once more, though he secretly hoped they would refuse to accept it. But they did not. So before leaving the Council Gregory delivered his farewell discourse to a packed cathedral with great effectiveness and dignity. He ended this heartrending speech with these words: "Farewell, great city, beloved by Christ.... My children, I beg you, jealously guard the deposit (of faith) that has been entrusted to you (cf. I Tm 6: 20), remember my suffering (cf. Col 4: 18). May the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."

Then he concluded: **"The more young people chirp like a flock of magpies they will be attacked by swarms of wasps" and "while the elders carefully watch and do not warn them."** Tough words but perhaps exaggerated and prompted by his disappointment. Gregory however said his goodbye in a spirit of reconciliation and returned to Nazianzus frustrated, discouraged and disappointed. In fact he wrote: **"There is only one way to get out of this malady: death. But even from there, I fear I shall be judged from here."** Nevertheless he accepted the government of the diocese that was earlier his father's and he waited till another bishop was found. In one of his theological poems addressed to God he wrote: **"May you be benevolent, You, the hereafter of all things"** (*Carmina* [dogmatica] 1: 1, 29; PG 37: 508)." And in 390, God welcomed into his arms this faithful servant who had defended him in his writings with keen intelligence and had praised him in his poetry with such great love. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Frenzied Courtesy

A taxi was creeping slowly through the rush-hour traffic and the passenger was in a hurry. 'Please,' he said to the driver, 'can't you go any faster?' 'Of course I can,' the cabby replied. 'But I ain't allowed to leave the taxi.'

Efficient Exit

After several practice fire-drills, the employees of a government office invited the fire chief and his staff to watch them go through a drill. With the ringing of the fire alarm, six hundred employees evacuated the four-storey building in three minutes and ten seconds. Everyone was proud and pleased - until the buzzer sounded for quitting time that afternoon and someone timed that evacuation.

This time the building was cleared in two minutes flat.

Sound Strategy

The most popular record in one bar and grill is a record which is nothing but the sound of a lot of typewriters going. It's played every time one of the regulars phones home to report he's working late at the office.

Diet Economy

The Sales Manager was going over one of his salesman's expense accounts. "Just look at this!" he demanded. How can you spend \$50 on food in a single day in this small town?"

"It's easy," answered the salesman cheerfully, "You just skip breakfast."

Transmission Trials

"She told me," a woman complained to a friend, "that you told her the secret I told you not to tell her."

"Well," replied her friend in a hurt tone, "I told her not to tell you I told her."

"Oh, dear," sighed the first woman. "Well, don't tell her I told you that she told me."

Points of View

Three matrons sat down at a restaurant table next to mine.

After each had moved her menu closer to and farther from her nose all three produced spectacles from their handbags.

"I only wear mine for reading," explained the first.

"I really need mine just for driving," the second said, putting hers on.

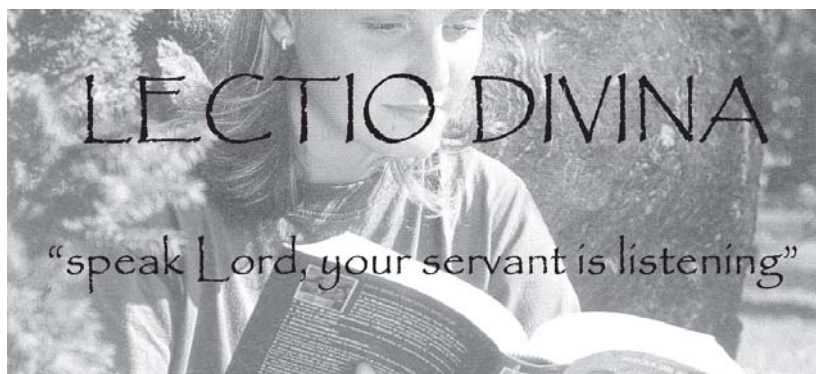
"I rarely wear mine," said the third, "except when I want to see."

Apparent Heir

People who use sarcasm, we have always felt, deserve to get a retort, so we liked the story of the father who was wheeling his new son's pram. He was asked by a passerby. "That your baby?"

"No," said the father facetiously, "I borrowed it from a neighbour."

"Hmmm," replied the other, taking a closer look, "ugly little beast, isn't he?" □



'THE LORD IS WITH YOU'

by Roberta Fora

Meditating on this most common prayer is like meditating on the Word of God...may it touch our hearts. (ed)

God chose Mary to be the mother of his Son, Jesus. Humanly it was an inexplicable plan unless it is viewed and accepted through the eyes of faith.

"The Lord is with you" means "God himself speaks to the humble of heart".

The Lord is present in Mary's life and in ours – what an immensely





marvelous gift!

We should joyfully begin each day with that sublime certainty that we are never alone. At every moment we should sense the thoughtful, watchful and loving presence of a God who ineffably loves us more than anything else that he has created.

How unbelievably powerful we Christians could be if indeed we were convinced of this presence! When we are aware that we can rely on the constant help of God it becomes very easy to overcome the many problems we face along life's journey. Therefore we should never ever be bogged down by pessimism or steeped in sadness. Indeed, we should be veritable witnesses of the joy of God's presence in our lives.

Mary is always that perfect model of the one who believes and abides in God's will, living always in his presence. Even though there was human fear, moments of doubt and difficulty, Mary never lost her composure but let her heart be flooded by the light of God's grace.

Perhaps it was Mary's great humility and her ability to recognize her 'lowliness' before God.

Only the truly humble sense the greatness of the Lord and only they will allow him "to fill" their lowly lives.

We read in the Magnificat: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit exults in God my Saviour, for he has looked on the lowliness of his handmaid". And yet: "He brought down the mighty from their thrones and raised up the lowly".

Those whose hearts are puffed up with pride and haughtiness will never feel the Lord's presence. It is only those who are sincerely poor and weak and those who are aware of their lowliness; it is only they who will experience the uniquely beautiful and extraordinary presence of God.

Mary, model of humility and total fidelity to God's plan, intercede for us with the Father. We wish to renounce our daily pride so as to become simple and humble of heart in order to rejoice in the Lord's presence at every moment of our lives. □



Rabbi Levi asked a busy man why his life was so frantic, and was told, 'I must rush to make a living'. 'Are you sure you can catch up?' the Rabbi asked. 'Perhaps your life is rushing towards you, and you need to stand still and let it catch up with you.' The Jewish Sabbath and our Sunday are occasions for making time for God, for celebrating what is good and for finding life.

Sunday is not a day just to be idle. Rather, it's a day for us to realize again who we are and where God is in our lives. The events and news of the week can sometimes make us feel distracted or overwhelmed. Sunday offers us a chance to take another perspective, to bring our cares before God, to listen to God's viewpoint.

Emmaus

We needn't be put off by the mystery of the resurrection. We can think of how Jesus shows us what it means to be risen. The disciples who walked sadly to Emmaus on Easter Sunday didn't lack companionship. They missed the joy and insight that being with Jesus had offered them before his downfall.

Then, when they recognized his wounded hands sharing bread, they realized that he was among them still, and they rushed back to Jerusalem. They were prepared to face the trouble of the city, because they knew Jesus was with them.

Jesus wishes the same for us. At least on one day of the week, we try to be less busy, to let things go undone or unbought. We admit to ourselves that we don't have the final say, even in our own lives.

Sunday Mass

There comes a time in most families today when Sunday becomes a subject of discussion, perhaps even argument. Parents want to form good habits, teenagers want to decide for themselves. Discussion of Sunday leads to a painful test: to go or not to go to Mass.

The decision to attend Mass doesn't end there. Every teenager realizes that Sunday faith has to be reflected in weekday action and attitudes. Adolescents face an important dilemma: should they struggle with a demanding ideal, or settle for what is more comfortable? Good example continues to be the best way forward.

A Good Habit

The example given by Sunday observance often comes from habit. A good habit can be relied on. It just needs checking from time to time, a bit of fine-tuning to make sure it's serving us well. Changes in circumstance – in personal health or family

Spaces RD'S DAY

s Jackson

commitments, for instance – may prompt us to adapt our habits. As time goes by, we may need to find new ways of keeping Sunday traditions. In accepting the changes that time brings, it is important to remember, above all, that Sunday is the Lord's day.

In times past, people lived in more or less uniform and traditional parishes. Today, however, change and variety are very much part of life. Now we are more aware of being citizens of the world. How we celebrate Mass on Sundays has changed over the years.

Thanksgiving and Devotion

The late Pope John Paul drew our attention to the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist in his Apostolic Exhortation *Dies Domini*, meaning 'Day of the Lord.' In it he asked that we take care not to lose our devotion.

We should be grateful that there are many examples of love for the Eucharist even in our country today. We can take heart from the dedication shown by ministers of the Eucharist who make home visits to the sick or house-bound. We can rejoice in all those who take renewed care for the quality of music at Mass, and the revival of Eucharistic adoration in many parishes. There are many imaginative ways in which people draw each other into the net of prayer and community life. We should recognize what is good, remembering that thanksgiving is at the heart of the meaning of Eucharist.

Rich and Poor

Of course, prosperity has changed our Sundays. Businesses open now, people shop, traffic continues unabated. When every day is filled with opportunities, it is more difficult to make any day special. The Sunday suit is now our daily wear!

Sundays are an occasion for us to think of those who live without the blessings we enjoy. Our concern for them is not an optional extra. It is a vital way of recognizing Sunday as a day for God and for others. Sunday reminds us that the reign of God means the removal of deprivation, want and poverty from the world.

Leisure and Ease

As the rabbi told the busy man, Sunday is a day when we let our lives catch up with us. Having too much to do at the weekend tires us out as much as work does. A well spent Sunday helps us to be re-created. There's no need to apologize for a Sunday of leisure and ease. The tradition of relaxing on Sundays in the company of family, relatives and friends keeps us in touch with one another. It keeps us human. □

Family Secrets

Helen Morgan

The Story so far:

While she and her fiancé, Jonathan, are planning their forthcoming wedding together; Sinéad Williams receives the news that both her parents have been killed in a car accident. Originally Irish, Tom and Bridie Williams lived in Britain for many years, where Sinéad, their only child, was born.

Sinéad has always believed that she has no living relatives. Now, after the funeral, a stranger; Jim Brennan, approaches and tells Sinéad that she has Irish cousins on her mother's side.

During the weeks that followed, Sinéad couldn't settle to anything. There was a vast emptiness inside her, and she lacked the energy to pull herself together and start living again. With the realization that her beloved parents were never coming home again there came an overwhelming sadness, and the tears began to fall at last. Day

after day she shut herself up in her parents' bedroom, lovingly touching their clothes and possessions. She wanted to seal herself up inside that room forever to keep them close to her.

Jonathan was worried about her. Two months had now passed since the funeral, and it was clear to him that she was not coping with the situation.

'Don't you think it's time you went back to work, love?' he enquired casually one day.

'No Jon. I'm not ready yet.'

'But it's not healthy shutting yourself up in the house all day. You need to meet people'.

'I need to be left alone!' she suddenly snapped. He had noticed how touchy she had become of late and, being the closest to her, got the full brunt of her anger. He was aware that her life had been turned upside down, but so too had his. He still had no idea if the wedding was going ahead as planned.

'Sinéad,' he said casually one evening, 'how would you feel about us getting married quietly, just the two of us?'

She looked at him aghast.

'Are you serious, Jon? My parents have just died and you want us to get married? How could you be so insensitive?'

'I didn't mean to offend you, love,' he replied, exasperated. 'I just want us to be together, and we were getting married in June anyway.'

'I'm sorry, Jon, but I can't possibly think of getting married at the moment.'



'Jon, do you really think that Mum has family in Ireland like Jim Brennan said?' Sinéad asked one evening as they were doing the washing-up together. Since the funeral, she had been thinking more and more about Jim's revelations. She could not believe that her parents would deliberately lie to her.

'It's quite possible, love,' he replied.

'But why did she tell me she had no family?'

'I don't know, love. Perhaps there was a family argument.'

'It must have been some argument to last twenty-seven years! Jim Brennan said that Mum and Dad came to England years ago and disappeared out of everyone's lives. Why would they do that?'

'I have no idea, love. Perhaps you should go to Ireland and find out.'

'Would you come with me, Jon?'

'Sinéad, you know I can't take

any more time off work.'

'But we know nothing about this Jim Brennan, do we?'

'Yes, we do,' he immediately replied. 'He's genuine. I had him checked out by the Irish Police; they're called the Irish CBI.'

'You didn't tell me, Jon!' said Sinéad, taken aback by this news.

'Well, I thought you had enough to cope with, love.'

'But what if Mum's family don't want to know me? What then, Jon?'

'Slow down, love! One step at a time. First, you ring Jim Brennan and find out more about them.'

With trembling hands, Sinéad picked up the telephone and dialled the number on the business card.

The phone was answered immediately by a polite, pleasant voice.

'Hello, Jim Brennan...'

'Hello, Mr. Brennan. This is Sinéad Williams.'

'Hello, Sinéad,' he replied, his voice warm and friendly. 'How are you?'

'Very well, thank you,' she replied.

'I went to see your Auntie Nuala when I came home from the funeral, and she was very upset at the news. She hadn't heard about the accident.'

'Auntie Nuala?' asked Sinéad, puzzled.

'Yes, your mother's eldest sister. She hadn't heard from your mother for many years, and had no idea where she was living. She didn't know about you. She's dying to meet you; in fact the whole family is. She wanted to ring you straight away, but I suggested she wait for you to get

in touch first.'

'So you were expecting my call then?'

'Oh yes,' he replied. 'I don't understand why your parents told you they had no family, but I expect they had their reasons. When are you coming over to meet everyone?'

'That's what I was ringing you about. I would like to meet them soon, if it's all right with them.'

'Of course it's all right. Your aunt and uncle are dying to meet you, and your cousins can talk about nothing else.'

Later that day, her Auntie Nuala rang and invited her to her mother's family home in Kilpatrick where she now lived with her family. Her aunt's warm, welcoming voice and lilting Irish accent was balm to Sinéad's tired spirit, and she gladly accepted the invitation.

'Stay as long as you like. We

would love to have you,' her aunt told her.

◆◆◆◆◆

It was dark when the plane landed at Dublin Airport. The lights on the runway cast a warm glow on the wet surface which shimmered under a shower of late-March rain. As the door of the aircraft opened and the passengers began to disembark, Sinéad suddenly experienced an overwhelming sense of guilt.

She felt she was betraying her beloved parents by visiting a family whom they obviously never wanted her to meet. 'I can't go through with this,' she thought, panic rising up inside her. 'I will take the next available flight back to Birmingham and go straight home to Kingsborough...'

To be continued

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA SINCERELY THANKS YOU!



If Don Bosco's Madonna sports a new look after 71 long years we owe it to this 21 year-old graduate from the Sophia Polytechnic (Art & Design) Mumbai. She is **Giamaria Fernandes** of Dosti Acres, Antop Hill Wadala. *Don Bosco's Madonna* thanks her for her hard work and her creative insight that brings out the character of the magazine as a publication of the Shrine of Don Bosco's Madonna. After spending time with test drawings she came up with the cover you hold in your hands.

'Gia' as she is familiarly called has received the Kalpaka Trophy for the best creative performance for the year 2007-2008 and a merit certificate for the best exhibit in experimental typography.

Thank you for your hard work and for generously offering us your creative talent to freshen up this popular magazine that blesses each home it enters. May Our Lady copiously bless you with success and creativity in the years to come. ☐

Don Bosco: The Times, The Man, The Facts

DON BOSCO THE GENIAL ACHIEVER

by Natale Cerrato (T/A:ID)

In a manner of speaking, we could define Don Bosco as a 'genius', a man of exceptional talent, "who reflects in an unusual way the light of divine intelligence." (Cardinal Charles Salotti)

We must distinguish here between a speculative and a practical genius according to the natural gifts that a person is endowed with. In that sense, Don Bosco was a practical genius

Cardinal Charles Salotti, who was first present at Don Bosco's process of Beatification and



Canonization was an advocate for the causes of Saints and later followed the processes of the Saints. Pius XI then nominated him Defender of the Faith or the Devil's advocate as he was popularly known. He was obliged to scrutinize every accusation and every fact of judgement regarding the life, works and writings of Don Bosco. It was then that he came to recognize not only the creative genius of his works but also his untiring zeal in conquering hearts caring little for public opinion.

But he was not the only one to recognize Don Bosco's genius, others before and after him manifested the same conviction. It is worth mentioning the judgement of the famous French writer Henry Daniel-Rops who wrote: "Don Bosco is really a great founder, an idealist and a realist together. He knows how to attempt everything..., he was less



of an agitator than a meddler in the enterprises of others. He was a builder of solid realities."

Significant Testimonies

Fr. John Baptist Lemoyne, notes in the *Biographical Memoirs* that in a materialistic and money-oriented century in which economics, machines, and powerful trusts were all that counted, and amid speculators and bankers, God raised an extraordinary man - a man without means, a nobody in the eyes of the world, a financial nonentity unschooled in business methods. And yet this man would make his undertakings grow to vast proportions; he would handle huge sums provided by charity and spend them for the glory of God and the salvation of souls...

Don Bosco was fully aware of the dignity of his office as steward of Divine Providence, and like a faithful servant he began to put to work the talents which his master had endowed him with.

He took as his rule the maxim of St. Ignatius of Loyola: "work as though the outcome of any undertaking depended entirely upon your efforts, and at the

same time distrust yourself as though everything depended entirely on the Lord" (EBM 4,174-175).

An elderly priest who lived for years at the Oratory of Don Bosco, first as a student and later



The house of of Mirabello Monferrato. The first house outside Turin. (1863)

as a cleric, left this interesting testimony. The biographer does not say who this priest was but he could probably be Luigi Chiapale, a fourteen year-old who entered the Oratory of Valdocco in 1857 and later became a diocesan priest. The Chaplain Mauriziano of Saluzzo wrote a letter to Valdocco dated August 12, 1889 in which he writes among other things: "Who was Don Bosco? Don Bosco was a famous man... With no means of his own, he erected a marvelous edifice that astounds our generation... He was an enlightened judge of his contemporaries and his times, a priest of firm character, unwavering purpose, unerring farsightedness, incomparable tact and boundless trust in Divine Providence. He brought to reality - almost magically - every plan he conceived, despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles, by believing that God would provide. Apparently, the word "impossible" was unknown to



The house of Nizza Mare. The first house outside Italy Turin. (1875)

him as to Napoleon, though the latter's aims and means were quite different...

A moderate pace and a simple bearing bespoke his thoughtful, tranquil mein, so unassuming as to give no clue of his real worth. If I may be allowed the comparison, I would say that the slight sway in his walk suggested that good friend of the farmer – the ox – whose meekness, strength and constancy in pulling the plow through rough and rocky soil he seemed to imitate (EBM 6,1-2).

Without ignoring the Divine Source of his strength in carrying out his enterprises, neither holiness nor the charisms that characterised his bold initiatives could account for the impressive number of initiatives that Don Bosco realized.

A young priest from Turin in the 1800's began an oratory with new strategies and methods only to scoop up poor youngsters from the streets before they destroyed their beautiful youthful lives. Besides, for those among them who had no home, he even began a boarding house.

He organized Sunday school and evening classes, workshops and schools for the arts and colleges of various kinds where, besides study he nurtured



The house and the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome (1887)

Christian piety and Christian youth movements.

He then founded, as an enduring legacy of his apostolate the Salesian Society and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Salesian Cooperators' Movement, the American Missions, besides constructing houses and churches in Italy and around the world.

He also launched the great apostolate of the Catholic Press – he himself being a writer and publisher of the famous "Catholic Readings," other academic texts, hagiographical texts and religious, biographical and spiritual material.

Tenaciously Trusting in God

In the face of obstacles posed by those who didn't understand him nor support his works he proceeded serenely without being perturbed. He was often heard saying: "Whenever I am faced with difficulties, even grave ones, I do what a hiker does in finding his trail blocked. If I cannot shove the obstacle out of the way, I either go over or around it. In some cases, I even temporarily lay that project aside so as not to lose time, and I tackle something else until things settle down and difficulties are smoothed away" (EBM 7,271).

Whenever someone suggested that he take some rest from his tiring work he characteristically replied: "Thanks be to God, hard work is for me more of a delight and relaxation than a burden" (EBM 4, 148).

And he would add: "Courage, let us work, work, always keep working because up there we shall enjoy eternal rest". □

VATICAN

When Pope **Paul VI** spoke about the “smoke of Satan” entering the Catholic Church, he was referring to liturgical abuses, according to the prelate who served as his master of ceremonies.

Cardinal **Virgilio Noe**, the chief Vatican liturgist during the pontificate of Paul VI, spoke candidly about the late Pope’s concerns in an interview with the Roman *Petrus* website. The Italian prelate – who was also the Vatican’s top liturgist under Pope **John Paul I** and in the early years of the pontificate of **John Paul II** – is now retired, and at the age of 86 his health is failing. In his interview with *Petrus* he concentrated on his years serving under Pope Paul VI.

Pope Paul accepted the liturgical reforms after Vatican II “with pleasure,” Cardinal Noe said. He added that Paul VI was not by nature a sad man, but “he was saddened by the fact of having been left alone by the Roman Curia.” Regarding the late Pope’s famous remark about the “smoke of Satan,” Cardinal Noe said that he knew what Paul VI intended by that statement. In that denunciation, he said, the Pope “meant to include all those priests or bishops and cardinals who didn’t render proper worship to the Lord, celebrating Holy Mass badly because of an errant interpretation of the implementation of the Second Vatican Council.”

For Pope Paul VI, the cardinal continued, the worst outcome of

the post-conciliar liturgical reform was the “craving to be in the limelight” that caused many priests to ignore liturgical guidelines. Cardinal Noe recalled that the Pope himself believed in careful adherence to the rubrics of the Mass, firmly holding that “no one is lord of the Mass.”

Speaking for himself, the former top Vatican liturgist said that the liturgy must always be celebrated with reverence and careful respect for the rubrics. He said with regret that in the wake of Vatican II “it was believed that everything, or nearly, was permitted.” Cardinal Noe said, “Now it is necessary to recover – and in a hurry – the sense of the sacred in the *ars celebrandi*, before the smoke of Satan completely pervades the whole Church.

VATICAN

Pope Benedict approved the canonical statutes of the Neocatechumenal Way, leaders of the lay apostolate have announced.

Leaders of the Neocatechumenal Way were apparently caught by surprise by the news that the Pontiff had given final approval to their statutes. **Kiko Arguello**, the founder of the group, was traveling to the Holy Land when the website operated by the Neocatechumenate members in Rome announced the Pope’s decision.

Canonical statutes for the Neocatechumenal Way were approved *ad experimentum* by the

Holy See in 2002 for a period of five years. But final approval was delayed, with informed sources suggesting that the Vatican remained concerned about some aspects of the organization, including unusual liturgical practices that had provoked a correction from the Congregation for Divine Worship in 2005.

In April the secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, Bishop **Josef Clemens**, told the Italian news site *Petrus* that final approval might not come for some time. But the Pope's final decision was announced barely one month later.



SHANGHAI

Shanghai diocese has launched the 400th anniversary celebrations of the arrival of Catholicism here. The celebrations started on March 1, 2008 with a thanksgiving Mass at St. Ignatius Cathedral. In May, the diocese held a photo exhibition and two special Masses that marked the start of the

Marian month and the feast of Our Lady Help of Christians (May 24) the title under which the Blessed Mother is venerated at the Sheshan Marian shrine in the diocese. The celebrations officially closed on December 6 with priestly ordinations. (*Asia Focus*)

CZESTOCHOWA

"St. Paul is the great announcer of Christ," reads the Pastoral Letter from Archbishop **Stanislaw Nowak** of Czestochowa, who has wished to highlight the importance of the Year of St. Paul and the many celebrations being held in St. Paul's honour throughout the diocese.

The Archbishop places St. Paul as the model of profound faith. "This year, we should deepen our faith," Archbishop Nowak wrote, describing the life and works of evangelization that characterized the Apostle to the Gentiles. "St. Paul was a great man for all humanity. He was given a gift, like none other, to preach Christ to the hearts of men. With St. Peter, he brought faith in Christ to Europe. St. Paul became the father of Christian Europe," Archbishop Nowak explained.

In naming possible pastoral initiatives for the Year of St. Paul in the Archdiocese, Archbishop Nowak suggests that parishes organise catechism courses on St. Paul for children, youth, and especially adults. He also suggests a daily reading of the "Lectio divina," of the Letters of Saint Paul, in parishes and in homes.

Archbishop Nowak makes

special reference to the Catholic mass media that is playing such an important role in the Year of St. Paul. He thanked the Catholic weekly "Niedziela" for its numerous initiatives dedicated to St. Paul and asked that all mass media groups may help the faithful of the Archdiocese of Czestochowa in becoming aware of the Church activities that will be taking place during this Year of St. Paul. (*Agenzia Fides*)

FRANCE

A French bishop has given formal approval to Marian apparitions that occurred in the 17th Century in the Alpine town of Laus.

Bishop **Jean-Michel di Falco** of Gap said that after a thorough investigation he was persuaded that the visions seen by **Benoite Rencurel** between the years 1664 - 1718 were of "supernatural origin." The bishop said that the Church "has committed in an official way to say to pilgrims: 'You can come here in total confidence.'" He encouraged pilgrims to come to the shrine of Our Lady of Laus "and find spiritual renewal."

Benoite Rencurel began to see visions of the Virgin Mary when she was 17 years old. An illiterate girl from a peasant family, she disclosed that the Virgin had asked for the construction of a church on the site, and had emphasized God's mercy towards sinners. The apparitions won tentative approval from the local diocese in 1665, and the Church of Our Lady of Laus was built.

The Marian shrine eventually won a wide reputation as a site

where miracles occurred, and today about 120,000 pilgrims flock to the church in Laus every year.

The official recognition of the apparitions is the first such authoritative finding by Church officials in France since the formal approval of the apparitions at Lourdes.

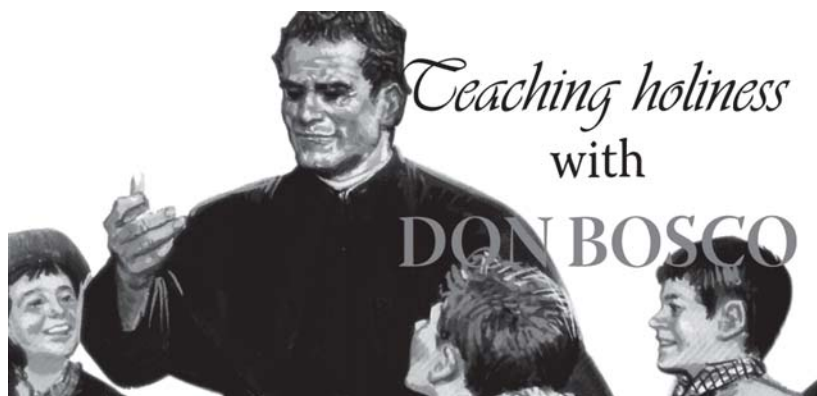
ARGENTINA

An Argentine cardinal travelled to the Vatican in May 2008 for consultations about a Church-state crisis in that country.

Cardinal **Jorge Bergoglio** of Buenos Aires spoke with Vatican officials about the decision by Argentina's President **Cristina Kirchner** to cancel the traditional Te Deum service that has taken place on May 25, the country's national day of independence, each year since 1810.

In place of the Catholic service, Kirchner has called for a "multi-faith" religious observance, clearly designed to show her government's displeasure with the Catholic Church after a series of disagreements over moral issues. The government was also reportedly determined to avoid giving Cardinal Bergoglio an opportunity to deliver another sermon criticizing its policies.

Tensions between the Argentine government and the Catholic Church flared in February, when the government named **Alberto Iribarne**, a Catholic who is divorced and remarried outside the Church, as ambassador to the Holy See. The Vatican refused to accept his diplomatic credentials. □



Teaching holiness with DON BOSCO

MICHAEL MAGONE *and His Troubled Conscience*

by Claudio Russo

During the first month that Michael Magone was at the Oratory of Don Bosco he quickly got into the routine of his studies, prayers and recreations. His infectious joy distinguished him from his companions. However, in the weeks that followed, Michael became more and more pensive and withdrawn.

Don Bosco, who kept an eye on his boys, was aware of the cause of Michael's sadness. Having let a few days pass he approached the youngster as he stood by himself in a corner with his eyes downcast and deep in thought. He invited him to come to his office and there he said:

"My dear Magone, I need you to do me a favour, but you must not refuse."

"Just say it. I'm prepared to do anything you want me to do." Michael quickly replied, at which Don Bosco told him that he had discovered the solution to his

problem.

"For a moment, I need you to let me be the master of your soul. So tell me what has been saddening you so much these past few days."

"That's true, it's exactly as you say. But I'm desperate and I don't know what to do." At this Michael stopped and burst out crying.

Don Bosco let him cry for some time and then went on:

"How come? Aren't you the famous General Mickey, the leader of that whole gang of



boys of Carmagnola? What kind of a general are you? You can't tell me in your own words what's upsetting you so much?"

"I would like to," replied Michael, "but I don't know how to start, I don't know how to express myself."

"Just say one word, and I'll fill in the rest."

"My conscience is terribly confused," the boy finally admitted.

"That's enough, I think I've understood everything," said Don Bosco. "I needed you to say those words so I can do the rest. For the moment I don't wish to enter into the things in your conscience. I'll only give you some guidelines to help you put things in order. Listen carefully, if you put your conscience in order regarding your past, then prepare yourself to make a good confession and reveal all the wrong you've done since your last confession. If, out of fear or for some other reason, you have not confessed something, or made a bad confession, you will do well to make your confession about anything you have done. Mention anything that is troubling your conscience."

"This is my problem," said Michael. "How am I supposed to remember what I've done so many years ago?"

"You can put things in order very easily," Don Bosco reassured him. "Only tell the confessor what you wish him to know about your past life, then he will take a note of things and ask you only to say either a "yes" or a "no," or tell me how often you've fallen."

After he listened very attentively to the advice of Don Bosco Michael

decided to prepare himself for his confession by making a serious examination of conscience. He was so determined to renew his friendship with the Lord that he made his confession that very evening. This is how he justified his eagerness: "I know that the Lord has waited for me for such a long time; but I'm not certain if he will wait till tomorrow. So, if I can make my confession this evening, I won't postpone it any longer. It is time to break with the devil."

And so, that very evening Michael Magone made his confession. He interrupted it several times with his weeping. At the end, he thanked the confessor and returned to his room and tried to sleep.

Trying to sleep, but how? After such an intense day, after such an emotional confession, and finally after experiencing the joy of being pardoned by the Lord?

A Sleepless Night

In the days that followed, Michael told his friends: "It was so difficult to express the feelings that filled my poor soul on the memorable night. I could not sleep for most of the night. I remained there only dozing most of the night. At around midnight I began to feel sleepy but I was so full of joy, of gratitude and so many other emotions filled my soul that I got up and fell on my knees and said several times: "How unfortunate it is for those who fall into sin! And how much more unhappy are those who continue to live in sin. I believe that if only for a moment they

experienced the great consolation of seeking and finding the grace of God, they would all go to confession. My God, I don't want to offend you anymore. I would rather love you with all the strength of my soul, and, if by some misfortune I fall even into the smallest sin I shall immediately make my confession."

From that day Michael Magone assiduously and joyfully frequented the sacraments of Confession and Communion.

"My advice to you..."

In the little book on the life of Michael Magone, Don Bosco wrote this episode of the confession of this holy rascal in order to give his boys some advice. This is what he said:

"The first thing that I recommend to you is to confess whatever sin you have committed. Leave out nothing. Do not allow the devil to convince you to withhold anything. Remember that the confessor has the power from God to forgive any kind and any number of sins. The confessor is a father who desires

with all his heart, to do for you every possible good and to keep you away from every kind of sin. Don't be afraid of losing your self-respect when you confess something serious or that he will reveal your sins to others. Go frequently and seek out your confessor, pray for him and follow his advice. When you have chosen a confessor who knows the needs of your soul, don't change him without good reason. Till you don't have a stable confessor, one in whom you have placed all your confidence, you will only be depriving yourself of the friend of your soul."

Michael Magone was fortunate to hear this advice from Don Bosco's own lips and he put it into practice. In frequenting Confession and Communion without having to be persuaded, Michael demonstrated his true faith. Following this advice he became a model for his companions. □



**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

Thank you dear Jesus and our Blessed Mother for blessing our son for 21 years with good health and prosperity.

Marcelino and Wilfreda Antao, Bahrain

I am an engineering student studying in Mumbai. I couldn't clear my first semester because of 5 KT's but I didn't lose hope. I continued praying to Mother Mary and because of her constant love and inspiration I cleared my first sem examinations at the second attempt. I am sincerely grateful to her for her assistance.

Ronak Sequeira, Mumbai

Thank you loving mother for helping my son recover from his illness.

Mrs. Abishya Kelson, Ernakulam

My sincere though delayed thanks to Mother Mary for helping my daughter select her life partner. Mother Mary kindly bless her with a child.

Bertha Tavares, Goa

Grateful thanks to Mother Mary for blessing us with a healthy baby girl.

Annette and Vinay, Mumbai

Thank you Mother Mary for helping me find my mobile and for many other favours.

Mrs. Sneha Ghadi, Mumbai

Thank you dear Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and Mary Help of Christians for helping my son Russell Wasdell to get a job abroad and helping him out of his financial crisis. Thank you also for helping my husband get his new pay commission arrears.

Mrs Colleen E. Wasdell, Thane

Dearest Mother Mary thank you for all your blessings on our family and for helping our son to get a good job and helping him to settle down.

Maria D'Souza, Mumbai

Thank you Mother Mary for protecting me from a dangerous scooter accident that could have been fatal. I did have a rosary around my neck and I believe Mother Mary protected me.

Regina Olivera, Mumbai

My belated thanks to my beloved Lord, Jesus and to Mary Help of Christians for selecting my son for a job on the ship and also for helping my daughter answer her SSC exams. Thank you for showering us with so many blessings.

Mrs Silveira Mumbai

Thank you Mary Help of Christians for helping control my diabetes and for the successful removal of a kidney stone.

Mrs. M. M. D'Souza, Mumbai

Thank you for the many graces and favours received.

Anthony and Celine Rodrigues, Mumbai

Many thanks to the Most Blessed Trinity and dear Mother Mary for all the blessings bestowed on me especially for my good health.

Melba D'Souza, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mother Mary for a safe delivery and for good health.

G. Valladares, Mumbai

Thank you dear Lord Jesus and Mother Mary for all the favours received.

Senya Soares, Goa

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



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

Our deepest gratitude to the Lord Jesus and Mother Mary for all the blessings and favours. Thank you, dear Mother for your special blessings. Please continue to bless and guide us with your presence in our lives.

Anjali and Aroul, N. Delhi

Thank you Mother Mary for all your blessings on me and for confirming me in my job.

Daphny Pinto, Mumbai

Thanks to Mother Mary for all the favours received through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Sylvia Fernandez, Bhopal

I am most grateful for the protection of Our Blessed Mother in an accident when I was knocked down by a rickshaw. I believe it was the protection of Our Blessed Mother and the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Agnello Torres, Mumbai

I am grateful to Mother Mary for the clear medical reports that I received through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys. My son met with an accident but he got away with just a few bruises. I am most grateful for Our Lady's protection.

Maria Effie D'Souza, Goa

I am grateful to Mother Mary and Don Bosco for healing my mother after she was seriously ill.

Dr. Olav Albuquerque, Mumbai

Lord Jesus and Mother Mary, thank you for the many favours received through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

Margaret Fernandes, Mumbai

On the 3rd August I was travelling by scooter and I lost my balance and fell into a culvert. I missed colliding with the wall nearby. I am sure the powerful hand of our Blessed Mother was there with me. I pray the 3 Hail Marys regularly.

G. Miranda, Goa

My grandson David has been cured of frequent chest pain after continuously praying the 3 Hail Marys for the last 90 days.

Janet, Chowara

My sincere thanks to Our Blessed Mother Mary for saving my sister who was in a critical condition during her pregnancy through the faithful recitation of the 3 Hail Marys.

S.M. Fernandes, Goa

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

Sincere thanks to Our Lady and Don Bosco for all the graces received.

Cleta D'Souza, Mangalore

Thank you Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for the birth of my grandson Adrian.

Gwen, Cuncolim, Goa

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary and Don Bosco for getting my daughter a good job in an IT company. O, dear Mother Mary, I understand and witness here that without your intervention, my daughter would not have been successful in getting this job. For this I am ever grateful for your continuous intervention in my daily life.

Mrs. Alphonsa Jose, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Our Lady Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for giving me a safe delivery of a beautiful baby girl, Michelle.

Sany and Reshma Soares, Goa

Thank you Mother Mary, who in spite of all her problems, my daughter completed the BA part one examinations successfully.

Mrs. Rajni Fernandez

Thank you dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all the favours, graces and blessings granted to my 3 sons, particularly to my eldest son for his success in the interview with the Catering College.

M. D'Costa, Goa

Thank you Mother Mary and Don Bosco for answering my prayers and for so many blessings received, especially for a wonderful life partner.

Shalena Sequeira, Mumbai

Thank you dear Mary Help of Christians for a safe and healthy delivery of two boys. I am sorry I have delayed in expressing my gratitude.

Mrs. J. Fernandes, Goa

Many thanks dear Mother Mary and Don Bosco for saving me from a car accident which could have been fatal and for all the other favours received.

Nita Fleming, Patna

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter and the gift of a healthy baby boy.

Magarida Faria, Goa

Dearest Mother, thank you for the many favours received through your intercession and through the intercession of St. John Bosco and Dominic Savio too.

O. F. Mazarello and Family, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Mary, Help of Christians and St. John Bosco for a safe delivery of my daughter-in-law and for the gift of a baby girl after six years.

Phyllis, G. Virar

Thank you, Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for curing my granddaughter. Please help her in her studies.

Mrs. Leena More

My most grateful thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for healing me of a severe attack of flatulence and for many other favours.

L. Gonsalves, Mumbai

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Thanks dear St. Dominic Savio for the gift of three baby boys to the Gonsalves family.

A Devotee

Thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the many favours received.

Vijay Aranha, Udipi, Karnataka

Thank you Jesus, Mother Mary and Dominic Savio for the gift of a child and for all the graces and favours received.

Michelle and Amancio Britto

Sincere thanks to the Most Holy Trinity, Our Lady, and St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a healthy baby boy to my daughter. Doctors had told us that my daughter had to undergo a caesarian but I prayed to St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery which was granted through his miraculous intercession.

Ida Pereira, Goa

Thank you Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for all the favours granted to keep my family safe and always under your protection.

Loretta Mascarenhas, Mumbai

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for helping my husband get his visa and job. Thanks a million for all the blessings and favours granted to us.

A Devotee

Our sincere thanks to Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of our daughter and the gift of a lovely healthy baby girl.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Cardoso, Bhusawal

After an entire week of excruciating pain and after taking a lot of medication I finally prayed to St. Dominic Savio and I was relieved of this pain. I was feeling better before the end of that day and I'm really grateful to St. Dominic Savio.

Sylvia Figueira, Goa

My grateful thanks to dear St. Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby girl whom we have named Saviola Maria.

M.S. Noronha, Goa

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER JANUARY 2009

Holy Father's General Intention: *That the family may become more and more a place of training in charity, personal growth and transmission of the faith.*

Missionary Intention: *That the different Christian confessions, aware of the need for a new evangelisation in this period of profound transformations, may be committed to announcing the Good News and moving towards the full unity of all Christians in order to offer a more credible testimony of the Gospel.*

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MARY WAS THERE

Driving from Goa to Mumbai on the 13th Sept my driver fell asleep at the wheel and the car skidded off the road and crashed into the deep bushes before it landed into a ditch a few inches away from an electric post. The villagers came quickly to our rescue to find us emerging from our car with only a few bruises. One said, "God has saved your lives, otherwise no one could survive such a bumpy crash." As I emerged from the car, I slipped my hand into my pocket to hold on to my Rosary which I never fail to carry where ever I go, equally important was an envelope along with my car papers containing a cheque addressed to Fr .Edwin D'Souza, sdb, my contribution for the good works the Salesians do for the needy and the poor. This miraculous new life made me realise that, the more you give, the more you will receive God's blessings in many forms. Mother, protect your Children.

Richard Mascarenhas, Goa

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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**Phone/Fax: 91-22- 2414 6320, email: dbmshrine@gmail.com
<http://www.donboscosmadonna.org/www.dbmshrine.org>**