

DON BOSCO'S MADONNA

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*The dead
are not absent
but they are angels
we cannot see
who gaze on us
with eyes
filled with light
while our eyes
are filled with tears
(St. Augustine)*

Cover: **the Madonna and Child**
A stained glass window in New Zealand



From The Editor's Desk TO ANOTHER SHORE

I recall, that as a youngster, one of the most eagerly awaited events in our family was the visit of my uncle which always came around Christmas time; a couple of weeks before and a week or so into the New Year and then he was gone. We children were all very excited, though we tried not to show it. When he finally arrived, the huge suitcases he brought were lugged up to his room which became his private den for the duration of his stay. His entire stay was punctuated with surprises for everyone. A walking stick for my grandfather, (*don't ask me how he got that into his suitcase?*) a pretty set of kerchiefs for my granny, some music for me. All of us received something that we so sorely wanted but were afraid to ask. He could somehow read our minds. As Christmas drew closer he remained more and more in his room from where we only heard the sound of rustling wrapping paper interspersed with his sonorous voice humming some of the old-time favourites he knew my mummy liked. Every evening as the sun went down we would all gather for the family Rosary after which he would conjure up something exciting...we spent many a memorable evening laughing and singing till tears ran down our cheeks and our sides ached with laughter. They were days of magic.

But then, all too quickly, the end of his holiday would come. Gloom would begin to descend on us a day or two before he was to depart, and it was with heavy hearts we made our way to the train station to see him off. I can still recall the pain of those partings: the desperate efforts at cheerfulness, the tearful embraces; the desolate sound of the train's whistle as it moved out of the station, gradually getting smaller and smaller until it finally slipped from sight. At that moment, life seemed hardly worth living for us children.

One year, however, as we trudged our way home in glum silence, it struck me that there was another side to the story. The train carrying our beloved uncle might have disappeared beyond our sight, but it would be seen be coming within reach somewhere else. While we were left behind, heart-broken and sad at his departure, his friends in London were at that moment preparing a big party for him, eagerly awaiting his arrival and looking forward to catching up on the news. For us it was parting and sadness; for them, reunion and great joy; our loss their gain.

The death of a loved one is a bit like that. For us it is all heartbreak and loss: a silenced voice in the home, an empty place at the table, a void in the heart that can never be filled. But there is another side to the story. For death is also, in God's loving plan, an arrival at another shore, to a welcome beyond imagining, and peace at last.

Fr. Ian Douulton sdb

THE LEADERSHIP LESSON FROM ANTS

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

Ndubuisi Ekekwe, the founder of non-profit African Institution of Technology writes, "A few years back, I planned to build a networked digital library where theses from African universities could be stored. I was looking for a way to make these contributions visible to the whole world. It was a hobby, not a job, and so I took the time to personally craft it to my taste. The project took weeks, then months, and years. Finally, I gave up: no time!

"Then, while resting on a road trip to New York, I noticed some ants in action. What crossed my mind as I stared at them staggered me. I noticed that when one finds food, others immediately gathered to help pull the food to their storage. When I disturbed their pattern they quickly re-grouped and evacuated it. Next they re-organized and continued on the line they had created. I was amazed at the total lack of supervision, yet they accomplished tremendous tasks moving pieces of food that were about 30 times their individual sizes.

As I watched them dumbfounded, the theses project flashed to my mind. Couldn't I trust others to help me and thus together we could achieve a lot more than I did alone? Right there, I made notes on my observations that led to the following decisions on the project:

The ants worked as a team: I will form a team, bringing professionals together.

The ants trusted one another:

I must abandon the notion that ensuring quality means working alone.

The ants were open: I will share the idea with like-minded people. When ants discovered food, they informed others, who came along and helped.

The ants were partners and of different sizes: I will bring help and make the task our project, not mine. As much as possible, each team member will be assigned based on his capability.

The ants were diligent and focused: The team must keep working, even slowly. Deadlines will give us focus.

The ants regrouped: I will be open to try new ideas if present ones are not working.

In less than a month the project picked up and began progressing well. We hope to launch it soon from Ethiopia, the seat of the African Union.

Peter Miller observed that swarming animals, like ants, can teach us a lot about planning, military strategy, and business management. Their specialty: they make decisions as a group and depend on one another to survive. Samuel Haldeman had already noted that these small creatures live in unity, are hard-working, prudent and disciplined. It is no wonder the wise King Solomon rebuked the lazy man: "Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!"

Particularly for small business owners, there is a major lesson here. By engaging everyone in the organization and learning to

trust people, one can achieve more success. One cannot afford to assume that only one person can close the sales, install the products, and fine-tune the design all by himself. It is much wiser to give others opportunities to fail or succeed, and regularly ask for help. For one thing, I have learnt to forward emails on the projects to others immediately, instead of hoarding them for days. I also share project progress and challenges to all team members. The more people know where we are, the more they come up with solutions. You never know which member of your staff can come up with vital information or networks that can unlock future growth opportunities unless you share and communicate with the team. It means understanding like my ancestors that "The ant-hills are not built by elephants, but by the collective efforts of the little rejected ants."

Communion Not Competition

Perhaps the insights of Ekekwe could be further strengthened by our experience at Eucharist. The whole point of coming for the Eucharistic celebration is to deepen our realization that we are 'one body, one spirit in Christ' from the moment of our Baptism. Unfortunately, even at Eucharist we are filled with a totally individualistic attitude. We come to get 'my' personal problems solved, to obtain peace for 'my' family and so on. Even that beautiful prayer which many pray after receiving Holy Communion seems to emphasize our personal concerns only: "Soul of Christ, sanctify *me*, Body

of Christ, save *me*...! Is it any wonder then that we do not achieve much even when it comes to furthering God's kingdom in this world?

When we read Paul's comments on the way the Corinthian community celebrated the Eucharist, we would possibly be shocked at our individualistic concerns. He chides them in these scathing words, "Now... when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. To begin with, when you come together *as a church*, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it... When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you! ..." (1 Cor. 11:17-34).

He then goes on to recall the message and example of Jesus himself, "For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me'". Paul's frightening remarks that follow remind us that the problem of self-centredness is as old as Adam and Eve and does not die out simply because one as received Baptism.

Unfortunately, while the entire baptismal rite is geared towards expressing our 'well-considered and conscious choice of' renouncing of Self, there is hardly any attention paid to this aspect of the baptismal commitment all through life. Even the Eucharist which is primarily 'the breaking of the bread' (which signifies the breaking of our very selves, our egos) hardly touches this aspect even in the most devout Christians and regular Mass-goers.

Understand What You Do

At the ordination ceremony the ordaining Prelate reminds the candidate in words similar to these, 'understand what you do, do what you say and imitate what you celebrate!' warning him that mere ritual actions do not bring about our redemption from the vice-like grip of self-centredness. It is only conscious renouncing of the Self deeply rooted in everyone's lives that the kingdom of God has a chance of being implanted. The Eucharist does not automatically transform anything in our self-centred lives. But when we consciously bring the areas of concern and place them together with the bread and wine on the altar, only then can Jesus transform them into his own self-sacrificing attitudes and hand them back to us when we receive him in Holy Communion.

Just as a wound on our hand cannot heal unless we first remove the harmful microbes infecting it by some powerful antibiotic, so too our spiritual wounds will not heal without conscious and careful attention being paid to the different ways

in which we continue to be self-centred. On the other hand what marvels would we not see in our daily lives when we begin to trust one another and work in collaboration rather than in competition. However, we are all aware that the culture in which we live foster and promote competition rather than collaboration and so it is a herculean task to even think in this Christ-like and Eucharistic fashion. Yet, this very practice can be a revolutionary contribution of Christians who celebrate the Eucharist frequently and wish to make it the springboard of a social transformation all around them.

Eucharist for Living, Not Merely For Celebrating

In order to achieve this kind of unity, we would need to learn from ants and other creatures all about us, for Mother Nature herself trains them in the best methods for survival and success. This idea of collaborating is one of the key pillars of the entire effort to build Small Christian Communities in our parishes - building SCCs is incidentally the decision of the entire hierarchy of the whole of India. Yet, although this decision was taken years ago and some efforts are made in different dioceses, everyone would have to admit, to our shame, that we are miles away from anything like genuine Christian sharing, at least such as is characterized by the early Church and presented to them as the ideal of Christian living (Acts 4:32-35).

In Acts we read, "Now the whole group of those who

believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. 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. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means 'son of encouragement'). He sold a field that belonged to

him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."

The next time we have an opportunity it would be worth gazing at a line of ants at work and observing what kind of reflections fill our minds. Maybe we too would learn a lesson or two about how we could contribute more effectively in our own little SCC gatherings. And since nothing succeeds like success, we would need to be bold enough to take the plunge and dare to do something different - but for that we need the inspiration and example of Jesus himself who said, as he broke the bread and shared it (this is MY body) - Do this as a remembrance of Me! ☐

walking with the Church



Why Confess to a Priest?

From St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland

Q. *In the bible when Jesus healed the crippled man, they said to him: "who can forgive sins but God alone." In this case Jesus was God. But what gives a priest the right to forgive sins? Why can't I just pray to God for forgiveness?*

A. The priest is given the right to forgive sins by the words of Jesus the son of God when he said to his apostles (the first priests) "as the Father has sent me so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit, for those whose sins you forgive they are forgiven, for those whose sins you retain they are retained." (John 20:22-23) While

obviously we can pray and do pray to God for forgiveness of our sins, going to confession to a priest brings us to meet Christ our saviour and healer in His sacrament of penance. Here we are renewed and healed. We are also assured by the priest that our sins are forgiven and can ask for and expect to get some sound advice. In 1984 Blessed John Paul II in a document on 'Reconciliation and Penance' urged Catholics to confess their sins often to a priest saying that "it would be foolish to disregard this means of grace and salvation which the Lord has provided..."

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW EVIL?

by Vincent Travers OP

There is no way of explaining away all the sufferings and evil, the violence and hunger in the world. We try lamely with arguments, religious and rational, but we don't get very far. Sadly, terrible things make headline news every day, and often our reaction is: 'I can't believe there's a God in heaven who would allow such things to happen. I can't believe God really cares; otherwise, he would strike suicide bombers dead in their tracks, and save lives of innocent people.' Yes, it's a real puzzle. Can God really love us if he allows evil things to happen not just to bad people but to good and innocent people, and apparently he does nothing about it?

Actually, evil in the world is not a puzzle. A puzzle is something that can be solved. It has a solution to it. Not so evil. When faced with evil in the world we are faced with great mystery. In the face of mystery, often, we can only stand before it and bow our heads, in respectful silence.

Evil-free world

Only the other day I was having a meal with friends and one of them, Tom, an unbeliever, made a statement in the middle of a conversation about evil in the world: "I can't understand anybody worshipping a God who allowed all the evil we see in the world."

Something in his tone of voice warned me to keep cool and say

nothing. But I knew Tom was expecting me to react. No sooner were his words out, than everyone's eyes went down towards the soup. Tom continued: "I have an even more difficult time understanding why anybody would dedicate their whole life to a God like that."

Now everyone's eyes were on me. I knew he wasn't trying to be deliberately provocative. He was genuinely grappling with a problem that had tortured him all his life, and no one was able to give him a believable answer. I said: "Tom, the problem you and others like you have, is that you really don't believe that free will is a good thing."

"What do you mean by that?" "The way I see it is that God must have thought about it for 'ages' before he finally decided to give his creatures the freedom to make up their own minds. But once he decided on it, then he was stuck with the use, misuse, and abuse of freedom. We do not cope very well with freedom. We want God continually to interfere in human decisions to prevent people from doing evil. We want an evil-free world. Fortunately, no one respects freedom more than God himself."

Blaming God

Well, it's no good pretending that this isn't a very difficult problem.

But we have to face up to the fact that God hates all evil actions - whether



it's Hitler starting a war, or me telling a lie, or stealing something that doesn't belong to me. Evil spoils God's world and causes suffering and misery to people. But if I think God ought to step in and interfere and stop evil things happening, where is He going to begin and where is He going to end? Why would he not begin with me (and you, too) just as much as with some dangerous psychopath? And, besides, how do I expect God to do it? There is no point in blaming God for doing nothing unless I've got some idea of how he could do it. Do I really think it might be a good idea if God were to strike me dumb every time I was going to tell a lie, or make my arm go all paralysed whenever I was in the act of stealing something? I'm afraid that is the kind of thing he would have to do short of bumping me off altogether (which is what most of us would want Him to do with the psychopath).

Divine interference

Suppose I am exceeding the speed limit, a danger to myself and others; I am obviously doing something very wrong? What can God do about it? He could toss me aside and take over the wheel himself. I have to say, I'd be a bit surprised and rather indignant, if I suddenly found myself stretched out and lying dazed on the back seat, wondering how on earth I got there. That is not a stupid example. If God is going to interfere and stop me from driving dangerously, how else can he do it? That is the kind of intervention we ought to expect, be it on a small or massive scale, to prevent evil happening in our world. But I imagine that the very people, who complain loudest about God not interfering, would

be the first to complain even louder still, if he did.

Free to choose

We have to be realistic about this. God won't force me to do good nor prevent me from doing evil; He's left me free to choose for myself.

If God really wants us as his children and not as puppets and slaves, he is bound to leave it finally to us, whether we'll have him or not. If God wants us to respond to his love and give ourselves to him, then clearly he wants a free and not a forced response. All religious experiences remind us that God will never force his way into our lives unasked; we can turn away if we insist. Parents cannot make their children love them. Neither can God.

God has left us free because he loves us and He knows that if we are going to love and serve Him in return, it's because we want to, and not because we have to. The fact that God does not interfere is, indeed, a compelling reason that he does care - and not the other way around.

Gift to God

That response however, did not sway Tom. Alas, it is not possible to find God through reason alone. Faith is, first and foremost, a gift. Tom was seeking the truth, not trying to win an argument. He said, "I envy you. You have faith. Why is it that faith has eluded me? I have prayed so hard for faith, but I never found it. Why can't I believe? How do I get faith?" I looked at him and all I could say was, "Tom, I guess Faith is a gift of God, but God rewards and blesses all those who seek him with a sincere mind and a humble heart." □

MARGARET OCCHIENA 1788 - 1856

Margherita Occhiena was born on 1st April 1788 at Capriglio, in the province of Asti, the sixth of ten children. She was baptised on the same day in the parish church. She had no opportunity for schooling because of the times in which she lived, but her love for prayer and her dedication to work gave her a wisdom which could not be gained from books.

In 1812 she married Francis Bosco. Francis was 27 years of age, a widower, with a three year old child, Anthony, and a sick mother to look after. Joseph was born the following year and in 1815 John (*the future Don Bosco*). In 1817 Francis died of pneumonia.

The love of the Lord burned strongly in her maternal heart. A wise teacher, she knew how to combine fatherliness and motherhood, kindness and firmness, vigilance and trust, familiarity and dialogue, bringing up her children with disinterested love, both patient yet demanding.

When she heard about John's dream at the age of nine, she alone could interpret it in the light of the Lord: *"Who knows, but maybe you should become a priest"*. She accompanied him all the way to the priesthood. That day she said something that would remain in Don Bosco's heart for the rest of his life. In 1846 when Don Bosco was seriously ill,



Margaret went to be with him discovering there the good that he had been doing for poor and abandoned youngsters.

When asked to go with him in this work she said: *"If you believe this to be the will of the Lord, I am ready to go"*. Mamma Margaret's presence turned the Oratory into a family. For ten years her life became entwined with that of her son and with the beginnings of Salesian work. She was the first and principal Cooperator of Don Bosco; she became the maternal element in the Preventive System; without realising it, she was the *"co-foundress"* of the Salesian Family.

She died in Turin, struck down by pneumonia on the 25th November 1856, at 68 years of age. Many youngsters went to the cemetery crying as they would for their own mother. Generations of Salesians called her and will continue to call her *Mamma Margaret*. □

**TO SPEND MY ENERGY FOR YOUNGSTERS**

Fr. Edwin Colaco, sdb by Fr. Godfrey D'Souza, sdb

Edwin Colaco was born in Mumbai on 11th December 1967. They were eight children in the family, four brothers and four sisters, and Edwin is the seventh in order. As a child, Edwin would join his parents, brothers and sisters, when they recited the Rosary as a family.

Every person has a vocation, a call from God, a call to holiness. The challenge is to identify your call, which is very personal and individualized. In the case of Edwin, his sister who once met the late Fr. Thomas Braganza at Hinduja Hospital, began an informal chat and told Fr. Braganza that she had a younger brother who seemed religious and pious. She was directed to take Edwin to meet Fr. Oscar Misquitta who looked after vocations. Thus began Edwin's journey to God through the loving hands of Fr. Oscar.

Edwin made his first profession on 24th May 1986. Ten years later he was ordained a priest on 21st December 1996. The following day, at his first mass, in his homily Edwin recounted how as a young lad he made it a point to serve at all the masses in his parish and even got the gold medal for being the best server at the altar. He felt overjoyed that from now on, he would not just be 'serving mass' but actually 'celebrating mass'.

Edwin's assignments as a priest were: Kapadvanj in Gujarat where he was responsible for the training of the youngsters. He was a great source of inspiration and enthusiasm for the youngsters.



From there he moved to Borivli and then on to St. Dominic Savio Wadala East and on to the Resurrection Parish at Virar. He has designed a variety of creative ways to get the youngsters involved in church ministry and worship.

Being an effective youth animator and a creative trainer. Together with the youth he has also made a number of CDs that are used in church to help the young worship better and participate fully. He is presently the Provincial Delegate for Groups and Movements.

When asked about his plans for the future, Edwin says his one desire is to spend his energy, time and talents for the spiritual, personal and vocational empowerment of needy youth and to bring effectiveness, efficiency, and enthusiasm in youth groups, parishes and institutions. □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA (III-IV CENT ?) 25 November

I HAVE FOLLOWED MY LORD JESUS CHRIST

by Mario Scudu (TA/ID)

Alas, Catherine of Alexandria has neither a historical record nor any other details to her credit. Historians turn up their noses in the face of her life because nothing has been documented and her memory has been nourished only by legends that have been handed down, embellished and adapted. A testimony to the devotion to Catherine of Alexandria was the particular episode in which a legendary mystical marriage took place between Catherine and Christ and she received a ring from him. The first documents about Catherine were written between the VI and the IX centuries which inexplicably presume that Catherine died in about the year 305.

As regards depictions of her (iconography) there is a ninth century painting of her in the Basilica of St. Lawrence outside the walls in Rome. Sometime ago a series of paintings were found on the walls of a chapel. These paintings depict the Virgin Mary with the Child, angels, saints, St.

Lawrence, St. John the Evangelist and...St. Catherine. The latter depicts only the upper body and the head. The saint is represented with no crown and no other distinguishing marks of her own (like the wheel and the palm). Beside her is her name: Catherine (written vertically). Some archaeologists, based on the analysis of the technique and the style of the frescoes and on a paleographic examination of the inscriptions say they could not be later than the ninth century.

But even the above iconographic documentation was not enough for those involved in formulating the roman calendar of 1969. They, in fact, mercilessly decreed the removal of her name from the calendar when they wrote: "*The commemoration of St. Catherine, entered in the Roman Calendar of the thirteenth century has been eliminated. Not only is the Passion of St. Catherine entirely legendary, but there is nothing certain about her.*" It was clear that her name be removed and so it was!

However in the supplement to the *Liturgy of the Hours* by the Italian Episcopal Conference published by the Vatican Press in 2003, shows November 25 as the Optional Memorial of the saint with the following caption: "It is said that the Virgin St. Catherine of Alexandria, with keen intelligence, wisdom and fortitude testified to her faith with fortitude and suffered martyrdom. Her body is venerated with pious devotion at the famous monastery on Mount Sinai."

Philosopher and Theologian

We return to the story of the *Passion of St. Catherine*. This seems to be the first document that speaks about her and must be considered the best source or claim to any further developments (embellishments and additions) that were made by other authors or hagiographic writers who were anxious to nourish the faith of the common people by offering them the figures of saints that they could honour and imitate or at least admire which would inevitably lead to invoking them. Why was this? A hypothesis: most 'Passions' of this kind (certainly that of Catherine of Alexandria) were written to give a civil, Christian and religious identity to the martyrs of whom very little or almost nothing was known, or even because sometimes their story (or what little is known for certain and documented) was not pleasing at the time and so came to be "upgraded" and embellished, depending on the audience. In addition, these stories of martyrdom were often handed down orally and inevitably changed. They were enriched and adapted depending on the



imagination of the narrator who in turn codified it until in the end they were significantly different from the original. At other times, pious tales of pure imagination, (only parenthetical) were credited to historians and handed down (let's say uncritically) by word of mouth and from book to book, giving birth to a devotion to the saints who were historically imaginary and unproven. Something similar must have happened in the case of our saint.

Someone actually wanted to identify her with the famous *Hypatia*, a philosopher who lived in the same city around the same time and was murdered in 415. But the latter, historians say, was still a pagan when she died the victim of a popular uprising by religious fanatics. Elements of her life were allowed to enter (knowingly or by historical misinformation) Catherine's life giving her a

philosophical and theological "appeal" among the students of such disciplines and others in the Middle Ages. The mendicant orders who sent their students to the University (such as Paris, Padua or Bologna) and others too now had a patroness.

When Maximus Daia arrived in Alexandria in 305 as the governor of Egypt and Syria he held great festivals as tribute to pagan gods. Worship by all subjects was mandatory.

Catherine, a rich and beautiful girl, from a noble and famous family acknowledged Jesus Christ as the redeemer of mankind and she refused sacrifice to the idols. She was finally sentenced to martyrdom. Her instrument of torture was the wheel (later to be called: St. Catherine's wheel). She was saved by a miracle but was finally beheaded. Was this the end of her story? No! Because the angels miraculously transported her body from Alexandria to Sinai where to this day on a hill close to Jebel Musa (Mount of Moses) called Gebel Catherine it lies, and at the foot of that hill is the famous monastery naturally called by her name.

Patroness of students

The first devotee of St. Catherine that we know of was a Greek who lived very far from Mount Sinai. He was called Saint Paul of Latros and he died in the year 955. Her tomb became a place of pilgrimage for the faithful.

At this monastery, the tomb of the martyr does not occupy one of the main confessions or the centre of the basilica but it is simply placed on the right of the choir as if to say that it is not the most important thing to visit there.

The popularity of the saint reached its apogee late in the Middle Ages because there was a great affection for this martyr who, immediately before her martyrdom, had remembered to pray for her future devotees. God had even promised that her prayer would be heard.

Her circle of devotees grew far beyond students of philosophy and theology or lawyers. Even prisoners invoked her since she too was one.

When she was sentenced to death she was accompanied by large crowd. She asked her executioner for some time to pray. A last request was never denied to anyone. And so it was for her. Catherine then, raising her hands to heaven uttered the following prayer, which is, in part the source of her vast cult following by so many devotees: *"Lord my God, hear me and for your love, grant to those who remember me, Catherine, an abundance of bread and wine, health of body and kindness to animals. Keep them from them every disease and every storm and grant that all who call on my name may not die a sudden death or lose any limbs. May women not abort nor die in childbirth. Let there be no famine in the city or country but may the dew of heaven descend upon them day and night. Grant to my devotees the remission of their sins and if someone remembers your servant Catherine at the time of his death, grant that your Holy Angels may lead them to rest in your paradise."*

I must say that this is a beautiful prayer. It is too bad that other than being pronounced a martyr of Alexandria in the first centuries, there are no other historical details known of her. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Control Seminar

The company I work for sometimes puts on what they call "Lunch and Learn" seminars during the employees' lunchtime, dealing with a variety of physical and mental health issues. If the seminar lasts beyond the normal lunch hours, we're supposed to get managerial approval to attend. So, last week, this flier came around:

LUNCH AND LEARN SEMINAR:
WHO'S CONTROLLING YOUR LIFE?

(Get your manager's permission before attending)

Looks like that question's been answered

Call Me Leroy

Uncle Leroy got a job down at the Broom Factory.

On his first day the straw boss (Floor supervisor) calls ol' Leroy into his little office and says, "You the new man huh? What is yer name?"

Leroy replied "Leroy"

The straw boss says "I don't call anyone by first names. It breeds familiarity and that leads to breakdown in my Authority. I refer to all employees by last names; Now what is Your Last Name!"

Leroy sort of smiles and says, "Its Darling - Leroy Darling!"

The Straw Boss said "Now Leroy the next thing....."

Banking Woes

The girl came running in tears to her father. "Dad, you gave me

some terrible financial advice!" she cried.

"I did? What did I tell you?" said the dad.

"You told me to put my money in that big bank, and now that big bank is in trouble."

"What are you talking about?

That's one of the largest banks in the world," he said. "Surely there must be some mistake."

"I don't think so," she sniffed.

"They just returned one of my checks with a note saying, 'Insufficient Funds'."

Do It Yourself

When a guy's printer type began to grow faint, he called a local repair shop where a friendly man informed him that the printer probably needed only to be cleaned.

Because the store charged \$50 for such cleanings, he told him he might be better off reading the printer's manual and trying the job himself.

Pleasantly surprised by his candor, he asked, "Does your boss know that you discourage business?"

"Actually, it's my boss's idea," the employee replied sheepishly.

"We usually make more money on repairs if we let people try to fix things themselves first."

Sweat Of Her Choice

My mother once gave me two sweaters for Christmas. The next time we visited, I made sure to wear one.

As we entered her home, instead of the expected smile, she said,

"What's the matter? You didn't like the other one?" □



THEY SAW HIS GLORY - II

(John 2, 1-11)

by Mario Galizzi

Cana of Galilee (2,1-11)

And now, here is the story of "the marriage at Cana," one of the most difficult Gospel episodes. Its symbolic understanding will inevitably lead us to the same conclusion as the previous episode: "Jesus is the one who joins earth to heaven."

The entire narrative is a sign. When using the word "sign" we mean that this episode should not be read purely superficially but must be seen beyond the reality pointing towards something to which the sign indicates. Let us begin with the word "wedding." What does that reality indicate? In the remote context of our story it means what a 'wedding' always means in the rest of the Bible. It is a metaphor to express the covenant that God makes not just with his people, with Israel, but with all humankind.

Now, in our story, who are the contracting partners at the wedding? Not

Jesus and humanity, but God and Israel, symbolized here by the Mother of Jesus who intentionally comes to be addressed here as "woman," a title that exceeds her individuality and refers to the ideal Zion, also portrayed in the Bible in the guise of a woman and as a mother who gathers her children at the end of time. As manifested in the Magnificat, Mary belongs also to that world and also in the reality of her life she acknowledges her need of others. Just as from ancient times the fulfillment of the prophecies in the messianic wedding promises an abundance of wine so too in Isaiah we read: "As a young man marries a virgin, so shall your Creator marry you" (Is 62:5). It is the new people of God who will drink wine at the messianic banquet and it will be plentiful. And in a manner of speaking, of the future we say: that from now on the wine will never run out.

We return to the materiality of the text and look at Mary, who seeing the shortage of wine she, as the mother of Jesus, comes to him and says, "They have no wine" to which Jesus replies: "What is that to you and me?" It sounds like a rebuttal that makes one inclined to believe that she has been instructed not interfere with his mission. However, he calls her "Woman." Perhaps it is an invitation for her to act as the "woman," and so Mary is immediately aware of what she must do. She





The wedding of Cana, Jan Vermeyen (1550-1559) Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

calls the servants and says to them: ***“Do whatever he tells you,”*** a phrase from *Exodus 19.8* which appears on the Day of the Covenant when the people said: “We will do all that the Lord said.” The Son welcomes the initiative of the Mother and says to the servants: “Fill the jars with water” and they filled them up. Then he said to them: “Draw some of it out and take it to the steward of the feast. They did so and it was quality wine!”

Note that this is a sign, not the messianic reality. But when do you realize this? Jesus says to his mother: *“My hour has not yet come.”* This does not mean that the signs cannot be anticipated in order that the disciples may behold the “glory” that he reveals to



them so that they have reason to believe in him. However, the true reality, the total fulfillment of the messianic prophecies would only be fulfilled when his hour would come, his passion, death and resurrection which would be on the “third day,” a term which opens the story of the Cana wedding. Only

then would his glory manifest itself in its depth. Those drops of blood and water which flowed from his pierced side were the beginning of the fulfillment of all the prophecies, the beginning of the Covenant. The wine would never run out and it would be quality wine and the water would bring true purification.

In this light, Jesus appears as the true mediator between God and humanity, as the one who inaugurates the new Covenant, the marriage between God and his people which was the whole of humanity will now be purified

from all sin. Jesus is the one who unites everyone in perfect communion with God in the Holy Spirit. □

To be continued

Quiet S LIKE A

TO LIGHT US ON OUR WA

Believing in God and living love means bearing "invincible hope, like a lamp to light them on their way through the night beyond death to arrive at the great feast of life". The Holy Father said this in commenting on the wise and foolish virgins of the famous parable at the Angelus on Sunday 6th November, 2011 before leading the recitation of the Angelus with the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square on Sunday, 6th November, 2011. The Pope's Reflection was given in Italian:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Biblical Readings of this Sunday's Liturgy invite us to extend the reflection on eternal life that we began on the occasion of the commemoration of the faithful departed. On this point there is a clear difference between those who believe and those who do not believe or, one might likewise say, between those who hope and those who do not hope.

Indeed St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: "but we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope" (1 Thess 4:13). Faith in the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ in this sphere too is a crucial divide. St. Paul always reminded the Christians of Ephesus that before accepting the Good News they had been "separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). Indeed the religion of the Greeks, the pagan cults and myths, were unable to shed light on the mystery of death; thus an ancient inscription said: "*In nihil ab nihilo quam cito recidimus*" which means: "how quickly we fall back from nothing to nothing". If we remove God, we remove Christ and the world falls back into emptiness and darkness. Moreover, this is also confirmed in the expressions of contemporary nihilism that is often unconscious and, unfortunately, infects a great many young people.

Today's Gospel is a famous parable that speaks of ten maidens invited to a wedding feast, a symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven and of eternal life (Mt 25:1-13). It is a happy image with which, however, Jesus teaches a truth that calls us into question. In fact five of those 10 maidens were admitted to the feast because when the bridegroom arrived they had brought the oil to light



Spaces

LAMP

Y THROUGH THE NIGHT

their lamps, whereas the other five were left outside because they had been foolish enough not to bring any. What is represented by this “oil”, the indispensable prerequisite for being admitted to the nuptial banquet?

St. Augustine (cf. *Discourses* 93, 4), and other ancient authors interpreted it as a symbol of love that one cannot purchase but receives as a gift, preserves within one and uses in works. True wisdom is making the most of mortal life in order to do works of mercy, for after death this will no longer be possible. When we are reawakened for the Last Judgement, it will be made on the basis of the love we have shown in our earthly life (cf. Mt 25:31-46). And this love is a gift of Christ, poured out in us by the Holy Spirit. Those who believe in God-Love bear within them invincible hope, like a lamp to light them on their way through the night beyond death to arrive at the great feast of life.

Let us ask Mary, *Sedes Sapientiae*, to teach us true wisdom, the wisdom that became flesh in Jesus. He is the Way that leads from this life to God, to the Eternal One. He enabled us to know the Father's face, and thus gave us hope full of love. This is why the Church addresses the Mother of the Lord with these words: “*Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra*” [our life, our sweetness and our hope]. Let us learn from her to live and die in the hope that never disappoints.

After the Angelus the Pope said:

I am happy to greet all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present for this Angelus. In today's Gospel Jesus invites us to be prepared, like the wise maidens, for the definitive encounter with him who will come to complete his work of salvation at the end of time. May the light of faith always guide us and may the gift of Christian love grow strong in our hearts and in our deeds as we journey to the eternal wedding feast. I wish you all a pleasant stay in Rome, and a blessed Sunday!

Our thoughts today cannot but turn to the city of Genoa, harshly affected by floods. I offer the assurance of my prayers to the victims, their relatives and all who have suffered serious damage. May the *Madonna della Guardia* sustain the beloved Genoese people in their solidarity and commitment to overcoming this trial. Dear pilgrims, I wish you all a good Sunday and a good week. A good Sunday to you all! □



IT IS IN GIVING

From Fr. Ian Douulton's collection of stories

Peace, we all want peace, in our hearts, in our homes and in the world. But somehow we cannot seem to find it. Perhaps the trouble is that we really don't know how to look for it. St. Francis of Assisi knew how. In the beautiful words that are called his "Prayer for Peace" he let the whole world in on the secret. Here it is:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace...

It is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned

And, it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Giving, pardoning, dying, easy to say, not so easy to do. Perhaps we think it is too difficult for ordinary human beings like ourselves. But people have done it. We would like to show you how it was done, by a man whose story, for a long time lay hidden in the jungles of Brazil.

In giving we receive

Daniel Rossini gave himself to God as an instrument of peace when he joined the priesthood in Milan, Italy. They sent him as a missionary to Brazil. For fifteen years he received his greatest joy in giving himself to the Indians in his vast jungle parish.

One day he was sitting on a pile of boards near the foundation of a new building at the mission. His assistant Fr. Bruno called him to look at part of the wall he was building. Fr. Daniel replied: "Coming Fr. Bruno," with that he rose to cross the courtyard and stumbled and fell almost on his

face. Fr. Bruno came running up to him: "What's the matter, Father?" Fr. Daniel got up with a little help from Fr. Bruno his assistant and said rather distractedly: "Oh, it's that left foot of mine again. I almost fell on my face." Fr. Bruno looked rather concerned: "Is your foot still numb? You mentioned last week that it was bothering you." The two of them crossed the courtyard towards the wall and carried on their conversation. Fr. Daniel smiled and said: "Yes, it goes to sleep all the time, it doesn't seem to have any feeling in it. Well, I guess it's just poor circulation. Now about this wall..." By this time they had crossed the courtyard. Fr. Daniel decided to see Dr. Rodriguez, a friend of the mission the following afternoon after his nap.

Dr. Rodriguez examined him and seemed rather pensive. Fr. Daniel was eager to get this over and done with: "Well, doctor? What do you think of this stupid foot of mine?" Dr. Rodriguez looked away across the vast jungle through his window and said: "Father I have made a thorough examination. There are various other symptoms." Fr. Daniel seemed rather impatient, for he felt perfectly well, except for that leg of his. The middle aged doctor turned slowly and said in a rather grave voice: "Then, I am afraid that what I am going to say will come as a terrible shock." Fr. Daniel was rather serene and replied: "No, doctor, I think it will be just what

I have been suspecting for the past month." The doctor came towards his desk and sat across Fr. Daniel and placing his hands before him on the table said: "Have you been exposed to any infection lately?" Fr. Daniel casually answered: "For fifteen years I have been making sick calls to lepers." Dr. Rodriguez seemed to think Fr. Daniel was a brave man. "Nonsense," came the reply, "it's part of my work. Just as it is yours." Dr. Rodriguez asked: "You must have recently come in contact with a case where the ulcers were open and where the infection was unusually active. Such cases are extremely rare, but when you do find them..." Fr. Daniel grew serious and said: "Then, what I have suspected is true." Slowly Dr. Rodriguez pronounced the verdict: "Yes, you have leprosy!" Receiving this news, there were orders from Fr. Daniel's superior to hurry back to Italy with Fr. Bruno his companion. Visits to one specialist after another, always the same answer: 'no cure,' 'no cure.' For Fr. Daniel, one final hope, the last resort, Lourdes!

The two priests made their way to Lourdes and after an excited first day at the grotto while walking back, Fr. Bruno asked: "How do you feel now, Fr. Daniel?" Fr. Daniel just looked over the serene hills and said: "The same, Bruno."

In the evening the two went for the benediction of the sick. Fr. Bruno tried to encourage Fr. Daniel: "Remember, many people have been cured at this benediction service when the Bishop blesses each one of the

sick with the sacred host." Fr. Daniel was leaning on a cane and watching the monstrance passing with a little bell announcing its arrival. He whispered: "I wish I knew how to pray harder." Fr. Bruno was at a loss for words. Fr. Daniel looked at Bruno and said: "No, no, perhaps what I need to say is a very old prayer. Another leper said it in the gospel." He looked up and saw the Bishop coming nearer. Here comes the bishop. Then he whispered loud enough for Bruno to hear: "*Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.*"

Fr. Bruno seemed a bit impatient: "Fr. Daniel, don't give up hope it may still happen." Fr. Daniel was very serene and very deliberately said: "No, I am not cured nor will I be. When I prayed, I heard a voice in my heart it said: 'go in peace, thou shall receive another grace. Thy sickness is for the glory of God and the good of thy own soul.' It is our Lord! The doctors say I will have at least five years more to work. And I know the best way to use my time. Bruno, let us go back to Brazil!"

They were five years of the same hard work at the mission. Every day bringing nearer the hour that Fr. Daniel dreaded. The sentence he steeled himself to hear after every examination by the doctor. The day came for him to go to the little clearing where the doctor would come that morning: Dr. Rodriguez came as expected. Fr. Daniel bid him the time of the day and walked in with him. They sat in silence for a while, then Fr. Daniel broke the silence: "Well, Dr. Rodriguez, how much more time do I have?"

The doctor did not look up from his hands. He just said: "Father, I am afraid, you had better leave the mission." Fr. Daniel didn't seem disturbed. All he said was: "Is this the end?" Dr. Rodriguez got up and paced towards the only window in the room: "The marks of the disease are beginning to show. You know how people are. You could not possibly infect them. There are twenty diseases that are more contagious, but nobody will believe that." It was Fr. Daniel's turn to look down and he said as if to himself: "I'll have to be isolated, put on the shelf. Where should I go, doctor?" The doctor had his answer already. "To the sanitarium at Pernambuco, there are some German fathers in charge and the Italian sisters there will give you the best of care. At least I won't have to send you to the government hospital at Itaituba. I think you should plan." Fr. Daniel interrupted: "Excuse me, doctor, what about Itaituba?" Dr. Rodriguez turned around and said: "It is a hell hole, the food and housing are wretched and the patients are absolutely uncontrollable, there is no chaplain at Itaituba. They don't need any, most of the lepers are pagans of the lowest type." Fr. Daniel was shocked: "No chaplain?" Dr. Rodriguez went on: "The few Christians who are there don't stay Christian very long. Now, father I think you should plan on leaving for the sanitarium at Pernambuco as soon as possible." Fr. Daniel had made up his mind and said: "Doctor, I'm going to Itaituba." The doctor would not think of it: "Father, that is impossible, you

will not get proper care." Fr. Daniel rose and smiled: "Ah, but I will have plenty to do."

Itaituba: Fr. Daniel's superiors built him a little hermitage that he called 'The Retreat'.

This was a new agony: saying goodbye to his mission, his Indians and at last after arriving at Itaituba, even to Fr. Bruno who had accompanied him there. "God bless you for helping me get settled in my hermitage, Bruno," he said. Fr. Bruno had tears in his eyes: "Fr. Daniel, let me know if there's anything at all you need, I'll come and visit you at any chance I have." They embraced each other: "Thank you, Bruno, but don't look as if you were already attending my funeral. I'm glad to come here. This is a wonderful new mission field, Bruno. The lepers will come flocking as soon as they realize that they have the service of a priest, who is a leper, like them."

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned

Everyday for eight months Fr. Daniel had to pardon the lepers of Itaituba. Forgive them for misunderstanding, insults, mockery, and finally slander and open hatred. He had to forgive even the doctor in charge. One night Fr. Daniel was getting out of his hermitage when he heard a voice: "Fr. Daniel, what are you doing outside at this hour of the night? I ordered you to stay indoors after dark." It was Dr. Da Gama. Father stopped and turned: "Yes, Dr. Da Gama, I know you meant it for my own protection, but I have to go out. A sick man has sent for me. It's the first call I had in five

months." There was suddenly the sound of loud laughter and a brawl brewing. Dr. Da Gama said: "You hear that? They are getting drunk again. Tomorrow is Christmas. All your lecturing on morality has only antagonized them. I tried to stop them by making peace when I first came here. I was as much of an idealist as you are. I wanted to serve humanity, even find a cure for leprosy. Now I don't care a damn!" A shot rang out: "Father, you're bleeding. There goes the man. He's fallen. I'll catch him." A dark figure moved into the darkness, the doctor ran after him. When he caught up with the man who had stumbled he shouted: "Pablo, give me that gun." Pablo was one of the lepers. He shouted at the priest: "Next time, I'll kill you." Fr. Daniel simply said in a whisper: "Pablo?" Dr. Da Gama asked Fr. Daniel if he was hurt. Fr. Daniel simply brushed him aside: "No, doctor, the bullet only grazed my cheek." The doctor just shook his head: "He tried to kill you. For such an attack he should be put in prison." Pablo shouted, still lying on his back: "Put me in prison, kill me, I would rather die quickly. Someone else will kill this priest. We all hate him." The doctor shouted back: "Shut up, he's only trying to help. You've been the ring leader of all this since father came here." Fr. Daniel walked towards Pablo and said: "Yes, doctor, Pablo has, and now he has a chance to make up for it. Pablo, tomorrow is Christmas," Pablo smirked: "Christmas, who cares?" Fr. Daniel pleaded: "I would like you to attend my Christmas

Mass, well?" Pablo laughed out loud: "Attend Mass?" The doctor tried to discourage the priest: "Father, this man belongs in prison." Fr. Daniel walked between the doctor and Pablo and said: "One moment, doctor. Pablo, please come. Invite all your friends, everyone in the camp. They are all welcome. They will come if you do, because you are their leader." He turned away laughing and said: "Come to Mass? Why you crazy Priest? I try to kill you, and all you say is 'please come to Mass'?"

But next morning Pablo was at Mass and half the camp with him. Crawling in the seats, whispering, snickering when Fr. Daniel began his sermon. He merely raised his calm voice. "My brothers and my sisters, it is Christ himself who has invited you to come here today. He will make up for the mistake I have made in trying to give you myself when you needed him. He is happy that on his birthday you have given him a little of your time and in return he will give you the greatest of gifts, his love, and his peace."

The next Sunday, ten lepers at Mass, quiet and attentive; a week later, twenty, finally Pablo and the crowd of his friends. Fr. Daniel fighting daily the increasing agony of his body, was overjoyed at once more giving his time and his strength, ten years of work tending the sick, preaching, writing letters, with his sore bleeding finger, until Itaituba came to be known throughout Brazil as the model hospital for lepers.

Continued on pg. 30

DON BOSCO: BUILDER, WRITER AND PUBLISHER

11

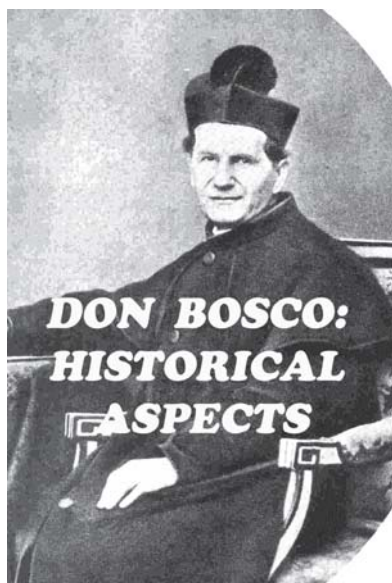
by Fr. Elias Dias

A stranger visiting a construction site saw masons cutting stones. He asked the first what he was doing and he said he was cutting the stones. He asked the second who said he was cutting the stones in order to get paid, Finally he asked the third who proudly answered that he was cutting the stones to build a church. Don Bosco built several monuments and used his pen to write and publish monumental works in order to build up the Church. I shall limit myself just to speak about three monuments and the three writings of Don Bosco.

Early in 1861 the Virgin in a painting on the wall of a ruined church at La Fratta near Spoleto spoke to a five-year-old child named Righetto Cionchi. The Archbishop called her the Help of Christians and launched the idea of building a shrine dedicated to Mary Help of Christians on the site of the miracle. Don Bosco was familiar with the title of Mary Help of Christians. In December 1862 Don Bosco confided his plans to build a church to Mary Help of Christians to Frs. Paul Albera and to John Cagliero because the present church of St. Francis de Sales was too small.

Don Bosco the Builder

In his dream in 1844, Don Bosco saw the site of the church. On June 20, 1850 he bought a tract of land from the archdiocesan seminary



but in a moment of grave need, on April 10, 1854, he sold it to Father Antonio Rosmini. Fr. Rosmini had plans for the site but after his death they changed. Don Bosco asked Fr. Angelo Savio to buy the property but it was difficult but finally it was bought. It was called the "field of the dream." This was the place where saints Salvator, Adventor and Octavius were martyred. Don Bosco identified the place as the one that the Shepherdess had pointed out to him saying: "*Hic domus mea inde Gloria mea.*" (Here is my house and from hence goes forth my glory!)

Architect Antonio Spezia designed the church. Charles Buzzetti was contractor. In April 1864 Don Bosco laid the foundation stone. The work proceeded at a steady pace and by the end of 1865 the entire building was completed. There were financial difficulties. Archbishop Riccardi di Netro consecrated the church of Mary

Help of Christians on June 9, 1868. Pius IX in a personal letter to Don Bosco wrote: "While renewed, fierce warfare was being waged by evil people against the Catholic Church, our heavenly Patroness is being honoured anew under the title of Mary Help of Christians."

Since 1869 Don Bosco was planning to build a large church at the site of the St. Aloysius Oratory which had been opened in 1847 in a district where Waldensian activity was strong.

Architect Count Arborio-Mella designed the church. The building began with the laying of the cornerstone on August 14, 1878 with the blessings of Archbishop Gastaldi. The building was delayed because of the on-going conflict between Archbishop Gastaldi, Don Bosco and Fr. Bonetti. In 1867 a group of proprietors formed a committee to build a church in the district of San Secundo. The city granted a building permit and donated the land and a subsidy of Lire 30,000, but the project was stalled until 1871. In the end they gave the project to Don Bosco. Don Bosco asked the architect to revise the plan. The city rejected the proposal but Archbishop Gastaldi took up the project and Don Bosco began the construction of St. John Evangelist church in 1878. Archbishop Gastaldi consecrated it in 1882.

The beautiful school building was begun in 1882 with the help of Count Louis Colle. It was completed in 1885. Don Bosco moved the Sons of Mary (late vocation seminarians) into these premises. They contributed to the solemnity of the church services, revived the work of the oratory



The Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Turin, today

and many of them asked to be admitted to the Salesian Novitiate at Foglizzo.

Around 1870 a new neighbourhood arose in Rome at the Esquiline Hill in a place called "Castro Pretorio," east of the main Termini station. Pope Pius IX realizing the need of pastoral care bought a piece of land for a church to be dedicated to St. Joseph. He then changed his mind and decided to build there the Basilica of Sacred Heart of Jesus. Pope Pius IX died and his successor Leo XIII put his hands to the work. He organized a fund collection for the Basilica. Don Bosco was reluctant to take up the task because of his relationship with Rome, the financial situation and debts he had incurred but when the Pope asked him he immediately accepted it and offered his services not only to build the church but also to use it as a hospice for boys.

Don Bosco asked his council but they all opposed it. Don Bosco told them that the Sacred Heart of Jesus would provide the funds for the building and more. In December 1880 the contract was signed. Gradually the workers resumed their activities. The newly erected church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was blessed on May 14, 1887 by Card. Parocchi, secretary of State and the promoter of the Salesian Congregation. On May 16, 1887 Don Bosco celebrated his only Mass in the church of the Sacred Heart at the altar of Our Lady. During the celebration he frequently broke in tears saying: "Now I understand."

The Writer and Publisher

Don Bosco was not only a builder but prolific writer and publisher. As a writer he turned out some 170 major works. In his last will and testament of July 26, 1856 Don Bosco claimed authorship of 26 works. Some of Don Bosco's writings went through many editions and enjoyed exceptional popularity and wide circulation. Just to mention one within his life time, *the Companion of Youth* went through 118 editions. The purpose of his writing was to edify and to encourage the education of the masses. He wrote to counter religious error, to enhance the spiritual and devotional life of the simple people.

In the year 1853 the first two shops: shoemaking and tailoring were opened at the Oratory. Pleased with the modest success of these shops he ventured into the area of bookbinding. In 1861 a print shop was begun at the Oratory. The print shop was

constantly updated with modern equipment. Major printing presses envied it. Don Bosco assured them that his aim was to produce educational material and material for the religious instructions of his readers.

In 1877 the Oratory Press took a bold step. It purchased a revolutionary chemical process designed to enliven its publications with attractive photographs. In order to control the process of printing, Don Bosco intended to acquire his own paper making machine. Mr. Michele Varetto, the owner and operator of a small power-driven paper mill in Mathi had died in 1877. His widow sold the machine to Don Bosco. Later, Don Bosco ordered a paper-making machine manufactured by the Swiss firm of Eschar-Wyss in Zurich. Don Bosco took part in the ExPo 84 organized by the National Exposition of Italian Industry and Commerce at the Workers' Pavilion which opened in April. He wanted to visitors to see the modern vocational training his boys received at the Oratory. They presented the process from pulp to bound book. It gained lot of public appreciation.

Bishop Louis Moreno of Ivrea wanted to improve the moral and intellectual level of the clergy in his diocese. His pastoral letters were read in dioceses throughout Italy. He took advantage of the freedom of the press granted by King Charles Albert in July 1848 and founded the newspaper *L'Armonia della Religione e della Civiltà*. Don Bosco and Bishop Moreno entered negotiations in 1851 which resulted in the founding of the of *the Catholic Readings*. The

relationship between Don Bosco and the Bishop deteriorated when Don Bosco transferred the publication of the Catholic Readings from the publishing house of Paravia to the Print Shop at the Oratory.

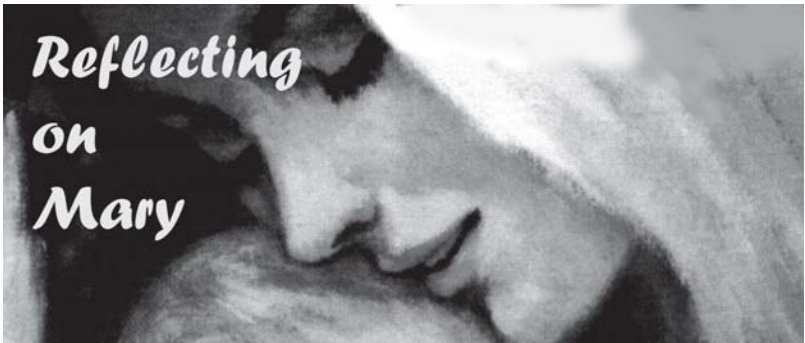
The Catholic Readings was the brain-child of Don Bosco. Its aim was to bring good, decent and inspiring reading into the homes. Don Bosco involved others, the laity, the diocesan clergy, religious and later his own Salesians in the apostolate of the press for the sake of the Gospel and the mission of the Church.

On March 1, 1853 the first issue of the Catholic readings appeared. By 1870 the average monthly printing was 15,000 copies. In 1883 some issues of the Catholic Readings were put together and combined into a single volume titled *The Catholic in the World*. Don Bosco was a voluminous writer and an indefatigable editor. His topics for the Catholic Readings were truly Catholic.

During his student years, Don Bosco had a predilection of the study of history. He was an avid reader of Church History. He read the works of famous historians and then set about writing his own popular *History of the Church* for the young in 1845. His writings were meant for young students full of optimism and hope. Don Bosco wrote of the triumphs and travails in the history of the Church. Wrong was punished and good rewarded. He brought out a second edition. In 1847 he published the *Bible History* which was easily understood by school children. During the early months of 1855 Don Bosco was busy writing other books. He wrote the

History of Italy (1855-1856) it was written to appeal both youngsters as well as to the man in the street. He wrote history because it was grand and demanding. It was grand because it teaches invaluable lessons and demanding because it records the words and actions of man regardless of his wealth, dignity or station in life.

Author's Note: *The Companion of Youth*: was his greatest success. The work is divided into three parts: 1: things necessary for a boy to become virtuous; things that youngsters must especially avoid. 2: particular exercises of piety; 3: the office of Our Lady etc. Both in its ascetico-doctrinal part and its devotional part modifications and additions were made all of which stand testimony to the maturing of Don Bosco's ideas. He wished to make this book not merely a simple manual of devotions but to present the Christian life to youngsters in order to make them happy. *The Companion of Youth* is the work of a Saint and has been my inseparable companion for the past fifty years. When I went to Don Bosco Panjim, Goa on 26th May 1961, to bid goodbye to my superiors, Fr. Victor D'Souza gave me a hard covered blue book with his signature and the date on it. I took the book, read it and reread it in the Sacred Heart church at Dharamtala Street, Calcutta. Some of the pages are stained with tears, a reminder of some very difficult times. I carried that holy book wherever I went. In 2011 together with my other books I sent it to the library at Divya Daan, Nashik with the hope that some youngster may find solace from those hallowed pages. □



THE GOD WHO STANDS IN THE QUEUE

by Maria Ko Ha Fong

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled... And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city." This was how Jesus was born; on a journey, in the context of a crowd in motion. And so it was that in "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4) his coming which was awaited and expected by so many, coincided with a census.

While the inhabitants of this world made their way to their own city, the Lord descends from heaven "to be among his own" (Jn. 1:11) and journey with them. While the kings of this world welcome power, the King of the universe becomes small, weak, humble and submissive. While the children of this earth are being counted, the Son of God, unknown and silent slips among them as a number, a cipher, an

inconsequential demographic quantity.

"Truly, thou art a God who hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour" (Is 45:15), exclaimed the prophet Isaiah already many centuries earlier. Yes, that was the image you left of yourself in the Bible: a God who loves to hide himself among people in queues.

Entering history, you wanted to immerse yourself among human descendents following a lineage from father to son. You wanted to have a genealogy. Your name appears at the end of a series of names and faces, of long and short lives, of extraordinary stories and everyday events. It is as if you have been standing in line awaiting your turn.

As your birth drew near, Mary and Joseph had to hitch





themselves to a caravan and head off to register themselves. You, who write the names of your friends in the heavens, (cf. Lk 10:20) wanted that your parents, in spite of their fatigue and hardships to have their names entered in the civil registry. You who assured your friends a place in your Father's house (cf. Jn 14:2) could not find a place to be born. No hotel would open its doors, no house welcomes you and yet nothing discourages you from seeking to be united with obstinate men.

Eight days after your birth you were once more waiting in a queue at the temple to be circumcised. You did not ignore the observance of the prescriptions of Moses. You were given a name. Unlike the builders of the Tower of Babel, who wanted to reach the sky and "make a name" for themselves (Genesis 11.4), you humbly came down from heaven and received a name.

Seeing you, the old Simeon is moved and expresses his joy in a song of sweet surrender. His vigil is now over; he can retire in peace from the scene. Now it's up to you! In you God visits His people as He promised (cf. Lk 1.78).

To begin your public ministry

you still have to wait in a queue. On the banks of the Jordan we see you in the midst of an anonymous crowd who come to John to be baptized. Confused with sinners, mingling among penitents you will sink low to be in solidarity with us. In contrast to the Pharisee who prayed: "God, I thank thee that I am not like other men" (Lk 18:11). You praise the Father because you have become a man among men.

You continued to live like this throughout your human existence. All the evangelists say that the first act of your public ministry was calling your disciples. It was as if you didn't want to do anything by yourself without the company of friends; friends who would show more sympathy because they are sinners. You fearlessly entered their homes, without fear of being tainted or discredited. You kindly participated at their table which led to a lot of disputes and scandal. You well knew what they were saying about you: "Behold a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners! (Mt 11:19) But you did not step back but openly declared that you had come for them (cf. Mk 2.17). Indeed while lining people up you would change the order. The

first shall be last and the last shall be first (cf. Mt 19.30). To your opponents you unequivocally state: "Truly I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. (Mt 21, 31)

You showed your solidarity with humanity at Bethlehem, at the Jordan river and finally on Calvary you were lined up with two criminals. You let them crucify you between "two robbers" (Mark 15:27). You died like a sinner on the cross - the sign of a criminal. But at the height of your ignominy you attracted everyone to yourself (cf. Jn 12:31), just in time to leave this world as you promised your companion that he would have full communion with you in your kingdom, "truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Lk 23:43)

By sharing our fate you radically transformed it, by

joining the queue you changed its direction. To become a leader of the redeemed you made yourself a sinner waiting for salvation.

This should be the pattern your disciples should follow. Living Christianity is an experience of "proximity," of sharing, of participation and fellowship. Living as a Christian means being in solidarity with those who are the least, with the smallest and the poorest. You fall in line with generations of saints behind you who walked the same path as you.

O Emmanuel, God-with-us, teach us the art of "living with" and "walking with." Give us the humility and patience to wait in line and the wisdom to find the right place, the courage to rearrange the ranks according to your plan, the fraternal charity to move forward together behind you and recognize you as our only leader. Amen. □

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It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Father Daniel's patient body was dying a little more every day until finally, Fr. Bruno came to his side: "His mind is so clear, doctor." Dr. Da Gama said in despair: "But he's going fast, Fr. Bruno." The frail body of Fr. Daniel lay on a mat and in a feeble voice said: "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. I commend my spirit. My life is thine." He had breathed his last. Fr. Bruno was confused and called: "Fr. Daniel! Doctor!" The doctor came to the bedside and felt him and said: "He's gone." Fr. Bruno brushed away a tear: "His life, was the last thing he had to give." Dr. Da Gama tried to control his grief too and said: "I never

thought I'd ever say this about a leper. Fr. Daniel was the happiest man I ever knew."

The happiest, because, he had followed the peace prayer to the end on the only true road to peace. None of us will be called upon to give as much as Fr. Daniel did, to forgive as much, or to die his death, but we can find the same peace. We take the first step when we turn our heart to God and pray humbly and sincerely: *Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. O Divine Master grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love, for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life, Amen* □

NEWSBITS

NEPAL - Kathmandu

May 27th was the deadline for the preparation of the new Constitution. The government still has not overcome the impasse caused by the demands of religious extremists.

The Apostolic Vicar of Nepal, His Exc. Msgr. Anthony Sharma, SJ, commented on the situation by stating, "We hope that the work on the new Constitution are (sic) completed. We appeal to the responsibility and good will of all political forces. We ask, for the future, full respect for religious freedom in Nepal..." "The Church" the Apostolic Vicar reaffirms "calls for... a secular state, which protects the freedoms and individual rights and recognizes all religious communities. We hope for a Charter that gives women equal rights, equal opportunity, finally overcoming the caste system." Msgr. Sharma fears that if the constitution is not completed on time, then these basic principles will be in danger. "Nepal was a Hindu kingdom. Today there are still parties and groups that would like to make Nepal a Hindu nation. This legacy gave life to the Nepal Defense Army (NDA), a radical Hindu group that in the past hit people and Christian targets.

In Nepal, about 2,500 Christian communities and the 2 million faithful Christians wish to contribute to the development of the country, operating with respect for the dignity of every man. The Catholic Church (over 7,000 souls) is committed above all to the service of education for all citizens.

The 32 Catholic schools teach the core values to approximately 21 thousand students, including 11 thousand girls. "The Church," concludes the Vicar "has always offered the testimony of the love of Christ through social works. So many are asking us to become Christians and we have 300 to 500 newly baptized per year. *Agenzia Fides*

Vatican City

Once again this year, *Fides* publishes an annual document of all the pastoral workers who lost their lives in a violent manner over the course of the last 12 months. According to information in our possession, during 2011, 26 pastoral care workers were killed: one more than the previous year: 18 priests, 4 religious sisters, 4 lay people.

For the third consecutive year, the place most affected, with an extremely elevated number of pastoral workers killed is AMERICA, bathed with the blood of 13 priests and 2 lay persons. Following is AFRICA, where 6 pastoral workers were killed: 2 priests, 3 religious sisters, 1 lay person. ASIA, where 2 priests, 1 religious sister, 1 lay person were killed. The least affected was EUROPE, where one priest was killed. *Agenzia Fides*

Hong Kong

In response to the current pastoral needs, the Cathedral of the Diocese of Hong Kong offers employees of numerous offices in the area, to turn the lunch break into opportunities for permanent

formation of faith. According to reports from the Kong Ko Bao (Chinese version of the diocesan bulletin), since last March, every Tuesday, the community of the Cathedral organizes a meeting with Christian employees during their lunch break.

During the meeting, in addition to the necessary time for lunch, the presentation of the themes of Christian faith, the spiritual direction of priests, the exchange of one's life experiences of faith, and also the problems of life or office are dealt with.

After an initial period of experience, this encounter has been defined by participants as an "oasis of the heart", and also prompted many to "regularly attend Sunday Mass and the life of their parish." Given the success of the initiative, which takes account of the daily stress faced by employees and workers, other parishes are doing this kind of pastoral activity. (NZ)

Tian Jin - China

As every year the Catholic community in mainland China is intensifying the children's summer pastoral with the organization of summer camps, meetings and catechism with many other initiatives to increase formation and experience of faith of the young people, the sense of belonging to the Church and their missionary awareness, through moments of relaxation and enjoyment.

According to what was reported to Fides by Faith of He Bei, about sixty high school children of the parish of Fei Xiang of the Diocese of Han Dan, in the province of He Bei, gave birth to the "Community

of St. Luigi Gonzaga." Their first summer formation session was held from July 5 to 12, under the guidance of priests and nuns, during which they deepened their knowledge of catechism, formation, liturgy, scripture.

The seminarians of the Diocese of Wen Zhou, in the province of Zhe Jiang organized a summer camping for children in the parish, as every year. About seventy children, the majority of whom followed or are following the course of catechism, attended the camping which this year had the theme "Experience faith in love, share the Love of God in faith." At the closure of the camping, on Sunday, July 15, eight children were baptized and two received their First Communion. All the children at the end of the camping received the missionary mandate by the priest.

The "Camping of the life of faith" of the parish of Xi Zhong Ying of Xing Tai, in the province of He Bei, was a real missionary experience for 32 children, led by priests, women religious and university volunteers. In the end, along with 18 adults of the parish, they received the sacrament of confirmation by the Apostolic Administrator of Xing Tai, so that they may walk in the footsteps of the Seven Saints of Xing Tai, witnessing faith with life.

Instead pre-school children of the parish of Yi Xing Fu of the Diocese of Tian Jin made a pilgrimage to the cemetery of the Belgian CICM Missionary martyrs (Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, missionaries of Scheut) remembering how many offered their lives for the proclamation of the Gospel in this land. AF □

THE DEVOTION OF THE THREE HAIL MARYS



The devotion of the THREE HAIL MARYS is a very simple yet most efficacious devotion.

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

My sincere thanks to Mother Mary for protecting me and my family in all our troubles, for the many blessings and favours received over the years through the recitation of the three Hail Marys. Thank you for not having to undergo gum surgery, be able to sell my car and take us safely to the car buyer. Mother Mary please continue to intercede for my family and be with us always. *M. Smith, Canada*
I started praying the 3 Hail Marys when I was expecting a baby. By Mother Mary's grace, I had no complications during the pregnancy, and I had a very comfortable and normal delivery. She kept me and my baby safe at all times. Thank you Mother for taking care of us always and please keep your child Mikhaila under your protection.

Ridima Pinto Nair

On 17th April our family, consisting of 6 adults and 5 children were travelling by road from Bangalore to Goa. At around 7am the driver fell asleep at the wheel and crashed into an electric pole before crashing into a school compound wall. Luckily no one was hurt but for a few scratches. Even the driver escaped with a few bruises. We had said the Three Hail Marys before leaving. Mary was there. Thank you Mother Mary.

Charmaine Hass-Mehta, Bangalore

My grateful thanks to darling Mamma Mary for giving me a good percentage and for granting me the college of my choice and for all the numerous graces received.

Rini Aranha, Mumbai

My husband John Mathai is 68 years old and whenever he rides the scooter we are always afraid of accidents. I always pray the three Hail Marys. Recently he was thrown forward when he was knocked by a pickup truck. His scooter and he went crashing into an auto rickshaw coming in the opposite direction. He was badly hit on the face and the leg. He was taken to hospital. Even though he received 9 stitches on his lip he was not seriously injured. I believe that Mother Mary protected him and we are most grateful.

Mrs. Theresa Mathai, Kerala

Our grateful thanks to Mother Mary for all the favours received and for a successful European Tour. *Dr. (Mrs) Sushma Rose Tirkey, Kalyan*
My sincere and heartfelt thanks to dear Jesus and Mother Mary for helping me clear my NET exam and for numerous other blessings and favours received through the recitation of the three Hail Marys.

Coral Barboza

**LOVING CHILDREN TO
THEIR LOVING MOTHER**

On 15th August 2011 my son Cleo and I were climbing the stairs to the Carmelite Monastery when we realized that our house key was not with us. However, we attended Mass without being much disturbed knowing that Jesus and Mother Mary would take care of our home. After the service we were searching for it in our car which was parked by the side of the main road when a muslim gentleman handed it over to us. He found it fallen outside our car. The key chain had the words: I love Jesus.

Ms. Nora Fernandes, Goa

On May 29th my son had gone for a drive by car when it hit an electric pole and the car turned turtle. The impact was so bad that the car was valued as scrap but my son was saved without a scratch. In the car there was a statue of the Divine Mercy. I firmly believe that Jesus and Mother Mary saved my son. We pray the chaplet of the Divine Mercy and the Rosary daily. My sincere thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary.

Mrs. Paes, Goa

One night as I was returning home on the motorbike with my husband, after visiting my sick uncle in hospital, we skidded and I was flung off the bike. I saw my rosary and a little bottle of blessed oil that was in my bag lying some distance away. The rosary protected me. Only my elbow and my knees were grazed. Nothing happened to my husband. I thank Mother Mary for protecting my husband and me from any major injuries. Do continue to bless and protect us.

Anna F. Almeida, Goa

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

Thank you dear Mother Mary for helping me clear my CA exam and for all the blessings on the family. My sincere thanks to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, Mary Help of Christians, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for favours received.

Dylan Rebello, Mangalore

My grateful thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for graces and favours received.

A Devotee, Goa

My son-in-law, Mervin Orton met with a motorbike accident in Bangalore resulting in multiple fractures in his right leg. Thank you Mother Mary for averting something more tragic. He has completely recovered. We pray that after the removal of the implanted steel rod there should be no further complications.

Mr. & Mrs. Edward O'Connor, Hubli

Dear Father in heaven, Mother Mary, Don Bosco, Dominic Savio and all the saints I thank you for granting my grandsons success in their examinations and to my friends, good jobs. I thank you also for protecting my son and his family safe in Lagos, Nigeria and assisting my son, Brendan in his troubles and giving him a successful job too. For these miracles I will remain ever in your debt.

C.E. Wasdell, Ontario, Canada

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



Our sincere thanks to our Lady, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all the blessings received and especially for the gift of a healthy bonny baby boy to my daughter after 5 years.

Benny and Cilavia Rodrigues, Goa

Our sincere gratitude to our Blessed Mother, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for blessing us with a healthy baby boy after 5 years of marriage. We are grateful for all the other blessings we have received. *Riva and Nisha Mendonca, Goa* I am grateful and I sincerely thank the Infant Jesus, Our Lady, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for helping my son

secure a job and granting my daughter the gift of a baby girl after 10 long years.

Mrs. L. Pires, Mumbai

Sincere thanks to MOTHER Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for curing my daughter of a mild cancer, vertigo and securing a government job. We always pray the three Hail Marys for so many favours we have received through the Divine Mercy, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio.

M.F.M., Goa

I was advised complete bed rest during my pregnancy and there were several complications during that period. There were blood clots and the placenta had descended 2 inches. I prayed to Our Lady and Don Bosco while wearing the scapular of Dominic Savio for a safe delivery. I delivered a healthy baby girl and the blood clot disappeared. The Baby is in good health.

Cony & Efiana Monteiro, Goa

Thank you, dear Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping my grandson pass his CBSC examination with a good percentage. Mother Mary please continue to intercede for my family and keep my grand-children under your protection.

Mrs. Kausalaya Das, Bangalore

My sincere thanks to Our Lady, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for all that you have done for my family and for me. Please continue to keep us under your protection.

Mrs. Patricia D'Souza, Mumbai

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

NOVEMBER 2012

The Holy Father's General Intention: *That bishops, priests, and all ministers of the Gospel may bear the courageous witness of fidelity to the Crucified and Risen Lord.*

The Holy Father's Missionary Intention: *That the pilgrim Church on earth may shine as a light to the nations.*

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MARY WAS THERE

On May 20th 2012, we were travelling by bus from Goa to Mumbai and the bus driver, because he was inebriated was driving very rashly. He got into an argument with some of the passengers. On reaching a police station the bus parked and the driver and his assistant both absconded leaving us stranded. We did not know how long we would be there. But it was the intervention of the Divine Mercy and Our Mother Mary that a passerby helped us to get on to another bus which brought us up to Panvel railway station for a small sum of Rs. 200 per head. Thank you Jesus and Mother Mary for your divine intervention.

Susan Rodrigues, Mumbai

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

The magazine is sent to all who ask for it, even though there is a fixed subscription (Rs 200/- India & Rs 400/- Airmail)). We trust in the generosity of our readers/benefactors. Whatever you send us will help cover the expenses of printing and mailing; the surplus if any, is devoted to the support of orphans and poor boys in our schools and apostolic centres.

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

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