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***Grant that
your Church,
participating with
the Virgin Mary
in the Passion
of Christ,
may merit
a share in his
Resurrection.***

*From the opening prayer
on the feast of the Sorrows
of Our Lady
(15th September)*

Cover: *The Virgin in Prayer*

From The Editor's Desk

THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

How important is friendship? How does it transform and enhance our lives? Speaking personally, I couldn't begin to imagine my life without the company of my true friends.

Oscar Wilde said that the essential ingredient in any meaningful relationship - marriage or friendship - is conversation. In the company of a genuine friend I feel able to communicate freely and he is not afraid to be honest with me either. But when he does tell me where I'm going wrong, he always does it in a compassionate way to avoid unnecessary hurt.

The great spiritual writer and Catholic priest, Henri Nouwen, often spoke about the vital importance of friends in his life. He was a deeply sensitive man who treasured his friends. He never forgot their birthdays and nothing was too much trouble for him as far as they were concerned. However, his deep devotion sometimes led to disappointment and pain if, for some reason, they failed to respond in the manner he expected.

Nouwen writes in *The Inner Voice of Love*: "When those you love deeply, reject you, leave you, or die, your heart will be broken. But that should not hold you back from loving deeply. The pain that comes from deep love makes your love even more fruitful... Every time you experience the pain of rejection, absence, or death, you are faced with a choice. You can become bitter and decide not to love again, or you can stand straight in your pain and let the soil on which you stand become richer and more able to give life to new seeds."

Thirty years ago I realized that some of my best friends were about twice my age. There was, in fact, no generation gap between us. We had wonderful conversations, shared many views on politics and religion and went on holidays together. It was a great friendship.

Even today the so-called generation gap proves to be a myth. One of my closest friends is half my age. And yet in many ways, I've much more in common with him than I do with some people my own age. We share the same love of music and movies, books and history. He's full of *joie de vivre* and adds colour, excitement and hope to my life.

It's at precious moments like this that I experience the sacred value and importance of genuine friendship and how it reveals God's loving presence. God speaks to us through other people. Nouwen remarked: "True Friendships are lasting because true love is eternal. You have to trust that every true friendship has no end, that a communion of saints exists among all those, living and dead, who have truly loved God and one another. You know from experience how real this is. Those you have loved deeply and who have died live on in you, not just as memories but as real presences."

Let us never cease to thank God for the gift of friendship and let us make a real effort to bring that true friendship into the lives of others.

Fr. Ian Doulton sdb

A REWARDING ACT OF PAY IT FORWARD

CEL SERIES

Fr. Erasto Fernandez, sss

The author of this charming story avers: "I truly believe in the power of paying-it-forward and I have always gotten enjoyment and fulfilment from it.

"A few months ago, I was stationary at the traffic lights on my routine trek to work, when I was jolted by a loud thud! My car was rammed from behind. No sooner did we pull over than a flustered young man haltingly admitted his fault and proceeded to apologise profusely. He laboriously explained why he had been distracted whilst driving; he had just been evicted and to make matters worse his insurance had just run out. His genuine stress and heartfelt regret were palpable, and as he gave me his details and promised to find a way to pay for it as soon as possible, I sought to comfort him telling him to not worry too much... things would sort themselves out; and as we parted I wished him have a great day.

"At work, my colleagues gave me no rest till I promised to get a quote quickly; they were amazed that I had not even collected his registration details. At home it was a continuation of the same story: here my sister chided me in a similar strain! She was aware that I had only a meagre sum in the bank (saved primarily for dental work) and was worried that I would not pursue damages. With everyone pressuring me to chase up compensation, I was utterly confused, unsure of what to do. Acting as if by instinct, I finally made my decision and sent him this sms:

"Hi Joe, A few weeks back you hit the back of my car. I have managed to pick up another, so things are back to normal. I want to let you know that I am not going to seek any payment from you. If in future you could help someone in need that would be reward enough for me. Wishing you a wonderful Christmas and hope next year is better and brighter!"

The young man was grateful beyond measure in his reply, and I felt that finally a weight had been shifted from my shoulders. If only I had trusted my own heart earlier we both could have been spared some unnecessary stress!

Trustful Instinct

There are a lot of people who take undue advantage of the kind-hearted people around them. Some glibly come up with every kind of excuse to escape incurring any painful consequences of their hurtful actions – with the result that it does become difficult to really believe even the genuinely needy person in a moment of crisis. One cannot help recalling the sob stories heard on most railway platforms in the big metropolitan cities: 'while travelling, I was robbed of all my belongings, including my wallet and ticket; I have no way of returning home. Could you, please help me purchase my ticket back home?'" Realizing that such a predicament is an ever present possibility, what does one do? What makes matters worse is that some days later one meets the same person giving one the

same sob story (of course, he does not recognize you nor remember the fact that he had approached you the last time with the same request!) Most of us have come across persons using this strategy against you to extract a few rupees from you. But then, how does one distinguish between the genuine person stranded because of theft (for such things can and do happen every so often!) and the fake professional liar out to relieve you of some of your hard-earned money?

In situations such as these, one has to learn to trust one's heart more than one's head, but not ignoring a few other common-sense principles. The first is that if I help this person in his real or feigned predicament it is *out of my free will* and not because his story is genuine or not. If I can assure myself that I act freely, out of my own conscious choice, then what I tell myself is: I take responsibility for parting with my money and even if I have been taken for a ride, I accept it and have only myself to blame for it! Hence, I will have no regrets if I later come to know that I have been cheated.

Next, I ensure that I check out the story as far as is possible before deciding to give or not. However, I need to remember that some of these people are 'professionals' and make good use of their grasp of the psychology of human behaviour. Besides, they have nothing to lose if I refuse to help them - they will try elsewhere for they are sure that someone or other will fall for the bait. Sometimes persons approached in this manner take

the time and trouble to go with the 'victim' to purchase a ticket for him/her to his alleged destination, actually put him on the train and see him off - only to learn some time later from a friend that he got off at the very next station, returned and had the ticket refunded, pocketing your hard-earned money that remained.

Yet, it will happen from time to time that you do meet the genuine person who is in trouble and the sincere gratitude and appreciation expressed more than compensates for the times when you have been cheated. However, when you start off by taking responsibility for your action irrespective of the other person's bad faith or otherwise, then you don't feel the hurt as much!



Pass it On

One other point we pick up from the story above is the donor's request that the recipient pass on the good deed to another whom he finds in need. This approach keeps the good deed moving forward, with the possibility of touching the hearts of so many persons along the way. At times the results are mind-boggling. The practice of using Smile Cards and the like is an example in view. It is amazing how even little children

pick up the principle of doing good anonymously and getting others to pass it on. While they might approach this as a bit of fun, yet the good is done and their generous hearts become more conscious of the needs of others. Besides, there is a sharing of one's blessings and an expression of gratitude to the Lord and Father of us all, for his generous blessings towards ourselves.

Condition for Entering into Eternal Life

We cannot but recall here the Gospel account of the Rich Young Man who came to Jesus to find out what he needed to do to gain eternal life. Having learnt that he had been meticulously observing all the commandments prescribed right from his early days, Jesus ingeniously spotted his real weak point, asking him to 'go sell all that you have, give it to the poor and come follow me!' At which, the man turned and walked away but sad and unfulfilled! He had come so close to enjoying real happiness and that too for ever, but balked at the suggestion that he part with his precious wealth.

The problem here seems to be that when one has wealth at one's command, one is totally in control of one's life. Besides, other people do respect a wealthy man unlike his poor neighbour. So, to deliberately part with one's wealth is courting a great risk of becoming a 'nobody' overnight! And that is something difficult to accept. Yet, it shows that one has not understood the meaning of the 'eternal life' that Jesus speaks about.

When God invites us into Covenant with him, he says in effect: Once you seal this

Covenant with Me, I shall be your God and you shall be my people. All that is yours in mine, *but* equally, all that is mine is yours! So, in fact, one ends up with an infinite amount of riches; such a person cannot lack anything, because God undertakes to provide him with everything, on condition that he likewise denies God nothing that he asks of him. But when we realize that what we give to God is really nothing compared to what we get in return, one would need to be a real fool to miss the opportunity for such an exchange.

We see the fulfilment of this exchange in every Eucharist we celebrate: what we bring to the altar are our paltry gifts of bread and wine – but what we receive a few minutes later is nothing less than the Son of God himself, though in sacramental form! Shouldn't our daily experience of this convince us of this truth and thus make us generous in sharing our gifts with our needy neighbours? Hopefully, you will be able to approach this kind of a challenge the next time the Lord offers you one, with greater confidence and with renewed vigour and conviction. It is worth recalling the words of Jesus, "Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple - truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward" (Mt 10:41-42).□

walking with the Church



Divination, Devotion to Mary?

from St. Martin's Messenger, Ireland

Q. *What has the Catholic Church to do about Divination and magic and trying to predict the future?*

A. The Catechism of the Catholic Church has two paragraphs on this. God can reveal the future to his prophets or to other saints.

Still, a sound Christian attitude consists in putting oneself confidently into the hands of Providence for whatever concerns the future, and giving up all unhealthy curiosity about it.

...All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to "unveil" the future. Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history, and, in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honour, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone. (CCC 2115,2116)

Q. *Why do Catholics worship Mary as though she were a goddess, when it is clear in Scripture that she was not a supernatural being?*

A. Catholics do not worship Mary,



the Mother of Christ as though she were a deity. She is a supernatural being. Catholics are just as aware as anyone else that Mary was a human creature, and therefore not entitled to the honours which are reserved to God alone.

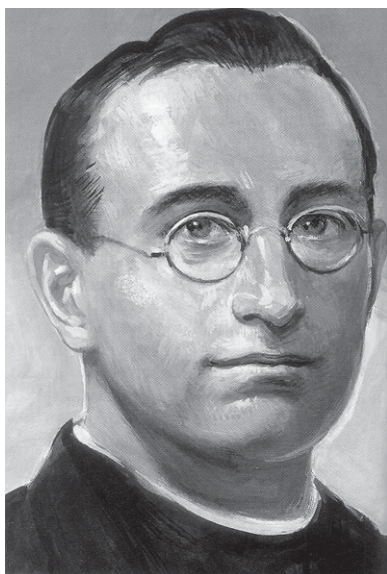
What many non-Catholics mistake for adoration is a very profound love and veneration, nothing more. The only person we adore is God. However, Catholics do feel that Mary is entitled to a great measure of exaltation because, in choosing her as the Mother of Redemption, God Himself exalted her - exalted her more than any other human person before or since. If God exalted her to such a degree, so indeed should we likewise honour and exalt her. Mary herself prophesied: "For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because he that is mighty, hath done great things to me; and holy is his name." (Luke 1:48-49) Christians have always honoured Mary as the greatest of the saints because of her fidelity to God and her son and because of her intimate relationship with Jesus who took his human flesh from her. Mary leads us to her son and we believe that the closer we draw to her the closer we draw to him who was born of her. □

**SALESIAN SAINT
OF THE MONTH**

**ENRICO SAIZ
1889 - 1936**

During the Spanish Civil War between the years 1936-1939 many priests, religious and lay Christians were killed. 95 members of the Salesian family were martyred. The groups at Seville and Madrid were headed by Fr. Enrico Saiz Aparicio, they numbered 63. Fr Enrico Saiz Aparicio (1889-1936) was the courageous rector of the Salesian minor seminary at Carabanchel Alto on the outskirts of Madrid. When the militia burst into the institution he immediately said: "If you want blood, here I am. But don't harm these boys. The boys were released while Fr. Saiz and eight Salesians were captured and killed. A short time before he died he confided to a friend: "What is better than dying for the glory of God?" He offered his life in exchange for the lives of his boys who had been entrusted to him by Providence. He gave himself for them till his last breath.

Here is the list of the martyrs. **MADRID: 9 priests:** Pio Conde, Salvatore Fernandez, Andrea Gomez, Felice Gonzalez, Sabino Hernandez, Andrea Jimenez, Michele Lasaga, Germano Martin, Giuseppe Villanova; **14 seminarians:** Pietro Artolozaga, Emmanuele Borrajo, Stefano Cobo, Pasquale de Castro, Francesco Edreira, Virgilio Edreira, Vittoriano Fernandez, Teodulo Gonzalez, Giusto Juanes, Giovanni Larragueta, Emmanuele Martin, Luigi Martinez, Carmelo Perez,



Florenzio Rodriguez; **14 lay brothers:** Emilio Arce, Giovanni M. Celaya, Antonio Cid, Giovanni Codera, Nicola de la Torre, Raimondo Eirin, Matteo Garolera, Anastasio Garzon, Valentino Gil, Paolo Gracia, Francesco Giuseppe Martin, Eliodoro Ramos, Dionisio Ullivarri, Stefano Vazquez; **3 aspirants:** Federico Cobo, Igino de Mata, Tommaso Gil; **lay men:** Giovanni de Mata. **SEVILLE: 12 priests:** Paolo Caballero, Enrico Canut, Antonio Fernandez, Emmanuele Fernandez, Emmanuele Gomez, Giuseppe Limon, Francesco Miguez, Antonio Mohedano, Michele Molina, Felice Paco, Antonio Pancorbo, Antonio Torrero; **1 sub deacon:** Onorio Hernandez; **1 seminarian:** Giovanni Luigi Hernandez; **4 lay brothers:** Tommaso Alonso Sanjuan, Giuseppe Blanco, Stefano Garcia, Raffaele Rodriguez; **3 Salesian cooperators:** Bartolomeo Blanco, Donna Teresa Cejudo, Antonio Rodriguez. □



AFTER THE HEART OF DON BOSCO

Br. Melvyn Carvalho, sdb
by Fr. Leslie Pereira sdb

A single sentence, would seem to suitably portray for us the kind, gentle, soft-spoken, hard-working and prayerful Salesian Brother Melvyn Christopher Carvalho: *"A Salesian truly after the heart of Don Bosco!"*

Melvyn is the fifth of six children born to Anthony and Irene Carvalho at Jabalpur in M.P. on 2nd Feb 1965, the feast of the Presentation of Our Lord. He completed his initial studies in Jabalpur and after a year in college, went on to complete his ITI as a 'fitter' from Joseph's Cardign Technical School, Parel.

It was during his training at St. Joseph Cardign that Melvyn encountered a charming, dynamic and jovial man who introduced himself as 'Savio Damle'. It was at this point of time that the question first popped up in the mind of young Melvyn. "Wouldn't it be wonderful to be like this young man?" Along the way there were some significant individuals who were signposts guiding him. Among them were Fr. Gilbert, who belonged to the parish of Malad, Fr. Agnelo Gracias who realized that Melvyn would be best suited to the Salesian way of life.

Melvyn made his first profession on 24th May 1987 and continued his post-novitiate studies at Kalyani (W.Bengal) for two years. From then on it has been nothing but selfless service in several houses in the Mumbai province, interspersed with a couple of years of updating studies.

Academically speaking, Melvyn is a trained welder and a fitter but Melvyn has taught himself almost every trade - be it electrical, vehicle maintenance, plumbing, cooking, computers... veritably a jack of all trades!

The Salesian centres in Gujarat have benefitted tremendously from the expertise of Melvyn, who opted to work in this area, dedicating his life for the poor tribals in Chhota Udepur, Dakor, Kapadvanj, Narukot and Alirajpur.

If one were to highlight the character traits of Melvyn, the first that would come to mind without a doubt is his spirit of work and dedication to duty. Lending a helping hand comes most naturally to him. Next, one would have to mention his love for the poor. Simplicity of life is another hallmark of Melvyn. Simple in dress and tastes, Melvyn comes across as an austere religious. A team man to the core, Melvyn is the delight of every Rector!

God has also endowed Melvyn with beautiful human qualities of warmth, tenderness, care and concern - all of which contribute to making Melvyn the wonderful person he is.

25 years ago when Melvyn set out on his Salesian journey, he had this as his objective: "To work as a Salesian wherever I am sent." Today, 25 years later, he is still committed to his first ideals of service especially the poorest of the poor. □

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

by Paul Andrews SJ

In moments of crisis and deep emotion, there are few gestures as rich in meaning as blessing ourselves

Can you think back and recall the last funeral you attended? The tragic occasion, the grieving relatives and sad hymns at the Mass all went to make the occasion memorable and very sad especially if it was the funeral of a loved one who would be tenderly missed, a parent, a child, a friend, a priest, someone whose relationship you cherished immensely. At this or at many other moments like it you may have simply made the Sign of the Cross while passing the bier or when you threw a fistful of earth over the closed coffin as it was being lowered into the grave at the cemetery. Probably only you and God knew what that meant. But it seemed the shortest prayer that rose up asking God to take the dear departed soul into his loving embrace.

A Visible Sign of Faith

It was certainly a prayer, an invocation, a visible act of faith, something intensely personal in the context of a very public liturgy. It was a reminder of how precious and universal that gesture is: to bless yourself in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

You spot people blessing themselves on all sorts of situations: absent-mindedly on the way into church; solemnly at the end of Mass; in joyful delight when one of your favourite Premier League players scored a goal. Then poignantly you are hauled back to the moment at the funeral when you made that Sign of the Cross which

was equally significant. In extreme sickness, when the brain can no longer form words, the only way we can turn to God may be with our feeble fingers, forming a cross on our breast or our brow. This sign can grow hurried and thoughtless through custom, but in moments of crisis and deep emotion, there are few gestures as rich in meaning as blessing ourselves.

An Urban Nomad

A young priest who was a chaplain in a huge state hospital in Brooklyn, New York recalled an old Irishman had come in to die – he knew it, and when the two of them met the Irishman looked exhausted and so was silent. Declan was a lonely figure, who had come to the USA to find work, and in finding it had lost all his family contacts, and with them his contact with the Church and the practices of his faith. It was nothing deliberate, just a drift but he brightened a little at meeting the priest who was anointing him and the two prayed the *Hail Mary* together. The effect was astonishing. He registered amazement. Barely able to talk, he wept with joy as he spoke the familiar prayer and blessed himself, slowly, feebly but deliberately. The prayer and the gesture came back to him easily, but clearly he had not used them for years.

What amazed him was that this should happen to him: that God should reach out to him with *the Last Sacraments* (as they were then called) after he had wandered for years as an urban nomad. He had

come to the USA at a time when emigration meant a one-way ticket. Gradually, communication with home had dropped off. His parents had died and his family seldom wrote letters. He had never married. Yet suddenly, in an impersonal hospital bed, in a ward with thirty other sick strangers, he was home, speaking to Mary as his Mother, knowing that God has a place for him.

It was a moment of grace for him and for the priest and part of that moment was the Sign of the Cross. Like the *Hail Mary* it came back to him as easily as breathing in and breathing out.

For Declan, the Sign of the Cross was a gesture towards God. Lying on his deathbed, he was well beyond worrying about what others would think. For someone like me making the Sign of the Cross in public (at a funeral), I was blessing myself in public not for the sake of everyone but not put off by them either. I was not pushing my faith on to others – nobody can do that, not even the street preachers, or the strident TV evangelists. But like thousands of footballers, other players and sportsmen/women before and/or after their events who bless themselves while passing a church or saying the *Angelus*, I was ready to brave human respect for the sake of a gesture towards God.

Let Your Light Shine

Perhaps this is the meaning today of Jesus' command: *Let your light shine before men*. There was a time when street preaching might have made an impact on people but nowadays everyone who owns a TV is bombarded with messages from another sort of street preacher

- the advertisers.

They beguile, heckle, amuse and titillate in order to seduce you into buying. As Christians we are not expected to rival them. We could not. Our Lord's words are not about coercing other people into religion but about doing good in a visible way *so that men, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father in heaven*.

It was remarkable how people looked at all the grief of people at funerals and the eulogies that recalled the virtues and merits of the deceased, people were invited to give praise to the Father in heaven for a life lived.

Beyond Words

In Recife, Brazil, a diocese where great numbers of poor people were illiterate and, like my friend Declan the Irishman, had drifted away from God, Bishop Helder Camara used to instruct his catechists: *Sisters and brothers, watch how you live. Your lives may be the only gospel your neighbours will ever read*. We are all witnesses, at every moment of the day. That does not mean shouting the *Creed* from the rooftops. It means living in such a way that our life would not make sense if God did not exist.

Parents sometimes worry that they have not said the right things to their children. They fear that their explanations of faith somehow fail to convince. But children watch more than they listen. When I think back to *my* parents, it is not so much their words that stay with me, but the life that lay beyond the words. We watch our children's lives and see beyond their words. They do the same with us. For better or worse, our light is shining all the time for those who we live with. □

Witnesses in & for Our Times



ST. WENCESLAS (907-929) (SEPTEMBER 28)

Mgr. Joseph Hanush

St. Wenceslas was born in 907, probably at Stochow, a village still extant near Prague. His father, Vratislav, a younger son of Prince Borivoj of the House of Premyslides, governed a portion only of the land, during the reign of his elder brother Sphytihnev, but on the death of the latter in 915, Vratislav ascended the throne. The Saint's mother, Drahomira, was the daughter of a Prince of the Lutici, a Slav tribe then inhabiting the country of Brandenburg which was afterwards annexed to Germany. Wenceslas was baptised in the Slav Rite by Father Paul, a disciple of St. Methodius and chaplain of Princess Ludmila, grandmother of the infant. She was a woman of great learning and sanctity, and was one of the earliest Czech saints to be canonised. Saint Ludmila remains a beloved figure in the history of the nation. Together with Father Paul she superintended the education of young Wenceslas who was an apt and eager pupil. At Budec College he acquired Latin, the cultural language of the time, and became as proficient as any aspirant to Holy Orders. He was also fully instructed in the science of warfare and the use of



arms, being destined to protect his country.

The death of his father, who was killed in battle by the Magyars, interrupted the lad's studies, for he was called to succeed him. Since he was still a minor, his mother, Drahomira, acted as regent and guardian of her seven children. Drahomira is represented as jealous of Princess Ludmila's ascendancy over Wenceslas.

On attaining his majority the young Sovereign boldly grasped

the reins of government, and issued a proclamation that he would observe divine laws, punish murder severely, but endeavour to be clement and just in all things. Drahomira, at first banished to Budec, was soon recalled to Prague by her son and we hear no more of the criminal disposition with which she had been charged. Wenceslas transferred the remains of his grandmother to St. George's Church in the capital where they received public veneration.

The young Sovereign practised Christian virtue to a degree that has identified his name with charity, beneficence and justice. He was particularly attentive to the trials of criminals, tempering punishments, and showing special mercy to the poor, as well as enforcing better treatment of prisoners. His generosity was boundless.

But good Prince Wenceslas did not neglect the duty of maintaining the integrity of his fatherland. After labouring successfully for the development of the economic resources of his people, and promoting in every way their spiritual welfare, Wenceslas bethought himself of retiring to Rome and embracing a monastic life. However, before renouncing the throne in favour of his brother Boleslas, he wished to see the completion of the Cathedral of St. Vitus. He had begun its construction in order to house worthily a relic of this Saint, presented to him by King Henry on the occasion of the Treaty mentioned above, when hostilities between Czechs and Germans were averted.

Unfortunately, Wenceslas was not destined to see his wish

fulfilled. The dedication of the Cathedral only took place after his martyrdom. Prince Boleslas had not enjoyed the benefits of an upbringing under the auspices of the saintly Princess Ludmila. He had been left to the care of semi-pagan courtiers whose mode of thought and rough ways he easily acquired. They now resented the strict rules of conduct enforced by Wenceslas who was, moreover, too mild and virtuous to suit their idea of the strong ruler required by Bohemia. Boleslas had, for his share of inheritance, a tract of land beyond the River Elbe, and he built himself a fine castle at the confluence of that river with the Jisera.

Boleslas, the very opposite of his brother, gathered round him a crowd of malcontents to whom the acts of Wenceslas were a constant reproach, for these men scorned to repress their passions or modify their evil lives. A plot was hatched to remove Wenceslas and replace him by his more accommodating brother who was unlikely to put a restraint on morals or to hinder freebooting expeditions. Boleslas agreed to usurp his brother's place, conniving even at the projected murder. On the 27th of September, 929, Feast of SS. Cosmas and Damian, Wenceslas assisted at the celebrations in Stara Boleslav, and remained after Mass, at his brother's request, to witness the games and contests arranged in honour of the day. As he left the hall, two of his retainers approached him and warned him that something was afoot. They had a saddled horse in readiness, and urged him to make his escape; but Wenceslas refused and returned instead to the banquetting hall and

resumed his seat. He lifted his glass and called on the company to toast "St. Michael, whom we pray to guide us to peace and eternal joy." Not all of those present answered "Amen," but Wenceslas withdrew undisturbed, and he recited the psalms as usual before laying down to rest. It was resolved that Wenceslas should be slain on his way to early morning Mass, and Boleslas gave orders to the priests of the Saints Cosmas and Damian Church that its doors should be barred at that hour. At the sound of the Mass bell, Wenceslas rose and went towards the church, along the passage where Boleslas awaited him. He drew a sword from beneath his cloak and struck at the head of Wenceslas, who parried the blow, snatched the weapon from his assailant, and threw him on the ground. But Wenceslas was no fratricide, even in self-defence, and preferred to succumb. He fell at the church door murmuring: "May God forgive you this, my Brother!" The date of St. Wenceslas' martyrdom is September 28th, 929.

Some time after the martyrdom, Wenceslas appeared to his sister Pribyslava, and told her where to find, near the church door, his ear which had been slashed off by a sword-cut. She discovered it exactly in the spot indicated and had the coffin opened in order to place the severed member near the Saint's head. When the body was afterwards transferred to Prague, say the chroniclers, the ear was found adhering to its proper place as firmly as if it had never been detached.

Boleslas, tormented by remorse, sought to make reparation and to ease his conscience by transporting the mortal remains of the Saint to

the capital. He gave orders that this should be done at early dawn, on March 4th, 932, under pain of death for those charged with the task if they delayed in its performance. But the river Rokytnice was in flood, and therefore impassable. The convoy fell on their knees and implored St. Wenceslas to help them. They then went to seek wood for a raft in the nearest forest, leaving the coffin on the bank. On their return they saw it on the other side and after fording the stream on horseback found it dry and uninjured as if miraculously transported without touching the water. Another obstacle confronted them at the river Vltava where the bridge was broken down. Again they had recourse to St. Wenceslas, and suddenly the coffin became so light that they easily waded with it on their shoulders to the opposite bank. A third incident confirmed their trust in the power of the Saint. Some distance from the Castle of Prague the horses drawing the bier stopped short and twelve team of oxen were requisitioned instead: The animals strained ineffectually until the arrival of the Arch-priest of the Church of Our Lady accompanied by his clergy. It was now broad daylight and a great crowd had assembled which joined in the Arch-priest's invocation for Divine assistance. At the close of the prayer, a single team of oxen (all the others having been unyoked) moved forward of their own accord and never paused in the steep ascent, till they reached the new Church of St. Vitus, Wenceslas's own foundation. Here the martyred Prince was interred amidst touching manifestations of love and grief by his devoted people. □

IN A CHEERFUL MOOD

Texas Vacation

A couple was relating their vacation experiences to a friend.

"It sounds as if you had a great time in Texas," the friend observed. "But didn't you tell me you were planning to visit Colorado?"

"Well," the husband said, "we changed our plans because, uh..."

His wife cut in, "Oh, tell the truth, Dan!"

He fell silent and she continued, "You know, it's just ridiculous. Dan simply will not ask for directions."

Things I've Learned From My Children

1. A king size waterbed holds enough water to fill a 2000 sq. ft house 4 inches deep.

2. A 3-year-olds voice is louder than 200 adults in a crowded restaurant.

4. You should not throw baseballs up when the ceiling fan is on. When using the ceiling fan as a bat, you have to throw the ball up a few times before you get a hit. A ceiling fan can hit a baseball a long way.

5. The glass in windows (even double pane) doesn't stop a baseball hit by a ceiling fan.

7. When you hear the toilet flush and the words "Uh-oh," it's already too late.

8. A six-year-old can start a fire with a flint rock even though a 36-year-old man says they can only do it in the movies.

9. Certain Legos will pass through the digestive tract of a four-year-old.

10. Super glue is forever.

11. Garbage bags do not make

good parachutes.

12. Marbles in gas tanks make lots of noise when driving.

13. You probably do not want to know what that odor is.

14. Always look in the oven before you turn it on. Plastic toys do not like ovens.

15. The fire department in Mumbai has a 120 minute response time.

16. The spin cycle on the washing machine does not make earthworms dizzy.

17. It will however make cats dizzy.

18. Cats throw up twice their body weight when dizzy.

19. The mind of a six-year-old is wonderful.

Shy Visit To The Dentist

A shy little 4-year-old came in to the dentist for his first cleaning and check-up.

The hygienist tried to strike up a conversation but no response.

After the cleaning, the dentist was called in to do the final check.

The dentist tried to strike up a conversation as well.

"How old are you?" No response.

The dentist then asked, "Don't you know how old you are?"

Immediately four tiny fingers went up.

"Oh," replied the dentist, "and do you know how old that is?"

Four little fingers went up once again.

Continuing the effort to get a response, the dentist asked, "Can you talk?"

The solemn little patient looked at him and asked, "Can you count?" □



REMEMBER WHAT JESUS SAID

by Marco Rossetti

A huge tombstone rolled away, a glance revealing the absence of the body of Jesus, a sense of inner loss (vv 2-3) and yet paradoxically this unverifiable and indescribable event is at the centre of our faith. All this happens because the resurrection is Christ's most beautiful gift of love. Just as love is indescribable and immeasurable so too is the resurrection because it is love's supreme mystery. Curiosity robs us of time to meditate on "remembering" the Word because what is revealed, is a mystery that only love can explain.

Day of Newness

The discovery of the empty tomb took place "on the first day of the week" (v. 1), that calculation coincides with the day after the Jewish Sabbath which for us Christians

corresponds to Sunday. The chronological indication of "the first day" tends to suggest for the world and for each of us the resurrection ushers in a new era, of the fulfilment of promises of God. Our Christian life should concentrate on this day "first and last," a wonderful and resplendent day of Christ's victory" (Liturgy of the Hours). Such an emphasis would help us to keep alive the desire to seek and meet the Lord in His Word and in the Eucharist which will enable us to proclaim him. Why does this desire sometimes fade? Why do our lives remain focused on the things of this life with weak prospects for the future? Why is it that we do not know how to put Christ into our daily lives? Maybe because we have missed the vitally important meaning of the "first day" which alone gives us the ability to re-interpret every event in the light of the Risen Lord.

Day to remember the Word

It is surprising, but the discovery of the empty tomb does not prevent Mary Magdalene and the other women from accepting the mystery of the resurrection (v. 10). Seeing is not necessary for

those who have faith but listening to the Word does: "Why search among the dead for one who lives? He is risen, he is not here." (v. 5) In this regard, Luke modifies the texts of Mark and Matthew replacing 'running to tell the disciples' with recalling: "the two men in shining robes" inviting the women "to recall" what Jesus had





The empty tomb. The resurrection is the the most beautiful gift of Christ's love

said (v. 6). In fact listening and recalling of the word over the announcement are given the highest priority. Why do the women understand "the two men," helping them to link what they see to what Jesus had said in his preaching and in the particular announcement of his death and resurrection? Was that not, perhaps, what the Risen Lord did while walking with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, helping them to recall all that the Holy Scriptures had said about him (24,25-27)? Was that not, perhaps, what Jesus told Martha one day that she should not worry and fret about so many things, but focus on listening to the Word which was essential and second to nothing else (10,38-42)? Was that not, perhaps what Mary of Nazareth did before pondering in her heart on all those things that had happened since she said "yes" right from the time of the birth of Jesus (2,19)? We have here a beautiful and clear

invitation not to let ourselves be overcome by curiosity or rush into the things pertaining to the mystery of Christ, but let ourselves be overcome by the Word which will help us to internalize it and live it. Only if we can accept the Word will we be true believers in the Risen Lord.

Day of Witness

Only if we accept the Word can we finally proclaim the Lord of life. The Evangelist gives us proof of the beauty of this dynamism when he says the women, only after they understood the words of Jesus (v.8) "announced all this to the eleven and to the others" (v. 9). They had not become heralds by a special appointment they had received but by the spontaneous initiative flowing from the fact that they were immersed in the memory of the Word and felt the need to proclaim it. Their testimony was however not accepted not because it wasn't good, indeed. Of course, the ancient Jewish culture forbade one to believe the word of a woman but the real reason that was central to the Eleven and the others was that they still lacked the decisive time to "recall" the Word that would lead them to faith helping them to understand the meaning of that empty tomb before which Peter himself, at that moment, was only wonderstruck (v. 12). Jesus would soon take care of him as he had done with the two on their way to Emmaus. He would introduce him and confirm him in a more adult faith which would find its highest manifestation in his words: "Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you." (cf. Jn 21:15-23). □

IN THE MOTI

Before the icon of *Salus Populi Romani*
 Pope Francis prayed the Rosary
 The following is an excerpt from

I thank you, brothers and sisters, who have come here today to pray to Our Lady, the Mother, the *Salus Populi Romani* [Health of the Roman people]. For tonight we are here before Mary. We have prayed under her motherly leadership that she guide us to be ever more united to her Son Jesus. We have brought her our joys and our suffering, our hopes and our struggles; we have invoked her by the beautiful title of *Salus Populi Romani* imploring her for us all, for Rome, for the world that she grant us health. Yes, because Mary gives us health, she is our health.

Mary is the mother, and a mother worries above all about the health of her children, she knows how to care for them always with great and tender love. Our Lady guards our health. What does this mean: Our Lady guards our health? I think above all of three things: she helps us grow, to confront life, to be free.

1. A mother helps her children grow up and wants them to grow strong; that is why she teaches them not to be lazy — which can also derive from a certain kind of wellbeing — not to sink into a comfortable life-style, contenting oneself with possessions. The mother takes care that her children develop better, that they grow strong, capable of accepting responsibilities, of engaging in life, of striving for great ideals. Our Lady does just this for us, she helps us to grow as human beings and in the faith, to be strong and never to fall into the temptation of being human beings and Christians in a superficial way, but to live responsibly, to strive ever higher.

2. A mother then thinks of the health of her children, teaching them also *to face the difficulties of life*. The mother helps her children to see the problems of life realistically and not to get lost in them, but to confront them with courage, not to be weak, and to know how to overcome them, in a healthy balance that a mother “senses” between the area of security and the area of risk. And a mother can do this! She does not always take the child along the safe road, because in that way the child cannot develop, but neither does she leave the child only on the risky path, because that is dangerous. A mother knows how to balance things. A life without challenges does not exist and a boy or a girl who cannot face or tackle them is a boy or girl with no backbone!

Mary saw many difficult moments in her life, from the birth of Jesus, when “there was no place for them in the inn” (Lk 2:7), to Calvary (cf. Jn 19:25). And like a good mother she is close to us, so that we may never lose courage before the adversities of life, before our weakness, before our sins:



Spaces

HER'S HOUSE

ni, in the Basilica of St Mary Major,
y on Saturday 4th May 2013.
n a reflection he gave in Italian



she gives us strength, she shows us the path of her Son.

Jesus from the Cross says to Mary, indicating John: "Woman, behold your son!" and to John: "Here is your mother!" (cf. Jn 19:26-27). In that disciple, we are all represented: the Lord entrusts us to the loving and tender hands of the Mother, that we might feel her support in facing and overcoming the difficulties of our human and Christian journey; to never be afraid of the struggle, to face it with the help of the mother.

3. Lastly, a good mother not only accompanies her children in their growth, without avoiding the problems and challenges of life; a good mother also helps them *to make definitive decisions with freedom*. This is not easy, but a mother knows how to do it. But what does freedom mean? It is certainly not doing whatever you want, allowing yourself to be dominated by the passions, to pass from one experience to another without discernment, to follow the fashions of the day; freedom does not mean, so to speak, throwing everything that you don't like out the window. No, that is not freedom! Freedom is given to us so that we know how to make good decisions in life! Mary as a good mother teaches us to be, like her, capable of making definitive decisions; definitive choices, at this moment in a time controlled by, so to speak, a philosophy of the provisional. It is very difficult to make a lifetime commitment. And she helps us to make those definitive decisions in the full freedom like she did (cf. Lk 1:38).

Dear brothers and sisters, how difficult it is take a final decision in our time. Temporary things seduce us. We are victims of a trend that pushes us to the provisional... as though we wanted to stay adolescents. There is a little charm in staying adolescents, and this for life! Let us not be afraid of life commitments, commitments that take up and concern our entire life! In this way our life will be fruitful! And this is freedom: to have the courage to make these decisions with generosity.

Mary's whole life is a hymn to life, a hymn of love to life: she generated Jesus in the flesh and accompanied the birth of the Church on Calvary and in the Upper Room. The *Salus Populi Romani* is the mother that gives us health in growth, she gives us health in facing and overcoming problems, she gives us the health to make us free to make definitive choices. The mother teaches us how to be fruitful, to be open to life and to always bear good fruit, joyful fruit, hopeful fruit, and never to lose hope, to give life to others, physical and spiritual life.

This we ask tonight, O Mary, *Salus Populi Romani*, for the people of Rome, for all of us: give us the health that you alone can give us, to be ever a sign and instrument of life. Amen.



LOOK ELSEWHERE SHEPHERD

From Fr. Ian Douulton's collection of stories

In the South of France, in what they call Provence, there is a village named Cucugnan. Here the people live in such happiness and harmony in their love of God, that the traveller stopping off for a little lunch at Monsieur Andre's inn, or to ask for directions, usually inquires why the people appear to be so much better than the other people nearby. It is then that Monsieur Andre tells the old legend of the priest from Cucugnan.

Fr. Martain was the priest of Cucugnan, he was as good as newly baked bread, as honest as true gold and loved his Cucugnaneses like a father and his Cucugnaneses loved him, almost as much. But, for Fr. Martain, Cucugnan would have been Paradise on earth if only his Cucugnaneses had given him a little more satisfaction. He knew his sheep were not really black but they were so lax, that it made the old priest's heart bleed. And everyday he asked God the grace

not to die until he had led back to the fold his scattered flock. You are going to see that God heard him.

One Sunday after the Gospel, Fr. Martain walked slowly up to the pulpit. His face was lined with worry and it made his flock wonder to see him so sad. "My children! My children!" He pleaded, as he drew the attention of Jacques, Pierre and Françoise who were making their way out; "Come back here please. I have something very important to say to you. My children, my heart is heavy this morning and with good reason. I know you love me but you are making me very sad, and God too. Neither of us likes to be sad. Please, I ask you, make us happy again."

"Now you may believe me if you wish, but last night I found myself, yes me, poor miserable sinner that I am, at the very gate of heaven. I knocked and St. Peter, dressed with a flowing robe, all embroidered with gold, opened it. "Well, well, well, what good wind brought you, Fr. Martain up here?" Hesitatingly and filled with wonder and awe he dared to ask: "How many Cucugnaneses are there in Paradise?" "We shall look into this matter together," said St.



Peter very dubiously, yet encouragingly. Ah, here is my book of souls. I think I can give you all the information you need. Cu...cu...Cucu...what did you say? Asked St Peter "Cucugnan" spelt Fr. Martain. Then shuffling through the pages of his book of souls he turned to Fr. Martain and much to his dismay said: "Why? There aren't any



Cucugnanes here than there are fish bones in a turkey...the page is completely blank" Fr. Martain was very depressed. He pleaded: "Look, look please a little closer". "I said there is no one!" said: St. Peter sounding a little irritated. Fr. Martain was so shocked that after all his teaching there was no one in heaven. He even lamented that he had wasted his life.

"You musn't be upset Fr. Martain" said St. Peter. "After all that is not your fault and besides they will soon be in heaven for your people must surely be in purgatory". This lightened Fr. Martain's heart just a wee bit. Then he said to St. Peter: "I wonder, out of the kindness of your kind heart, kind St. Peter, would you have the kindness to,

at least, let me see them and console them?" St. Peter consented and gave him a pair of really tough sandals and some directions. "Now you walk straight in front of you. Over yonder, at the fork of the road, watch that you turn, for if you don't..." Fr. Martain interrupted in great fear and eagerness. He was going to see his Cucugnanes. "Then on your left you will find a gate all studded with ebony crosses. You just knock and someone will open it. So saying St. Peter bade him good bye.

He continued his sermon: "My children, I walked and I walked. What a trip! It makes my feet ache, just thinking about it. This narrow path full of brambles and shining stones led me straight to the gate of silver with the ebony crosses." He knocked and from within he heard a serious question: "Who's knocking?" Fr. Martain identified himself as the priest from Cucugnan and then went in. "I went in," continued Fr Martain and saw a large and very beautiful angel with wings as black as the night with a robe



as resplendent as the day, with a diamond key hung about his waist. He was writing in a large book, much larger, I must confess, than St. Peter's." He pleaded that he would like to see his flock the people of Cucugnan, "I am their pastor". The angel, sounded rather tired and yet he shuffled the pages of his large book, and after some time came up regretfully: "Fr. Martain, we have no one from Cucugnan in Purgatory". This really shocked Fr. Martain's little soul. "Where are they then?" he asked. "What do you mean, good priest, if they are not here then they must be in heaven". But Fr. Martain had just come from there. "So" said the angel "If they are not in heaven and not in Purgatory there is no other alternative they are..." Fr. Martain interrupted: "No! No! Son of David! Is it possible?" The angel was sorry to see Fr. Martain's consternation. "But, good angel, if I may be so bold, that the Cucugnanese were not saints I know, but they were not so bad that they deserved the eternal torment, theirs were just little faults. "Surely you should know better, Fr. Martain, from the seed grows the tree and the little fault unrepented will gradually but surely grow into the great sin."

Fr. Martain wept bitterly, "How will I ever get to heaven, if my poor Cucugnanese are not there. I have failed them and I have failed myself."

"Do you wish to see with your own eyes what happens to those who are

not good, but not really bad? Then take this road and run along its course and soon you will find on your left..." Fr. Martain, eager and zealous pastor that he was, took to his heels following the angel's directions and behold! Heaving a sigh that came from his heart, Fr. Martain said: "My Children, may none of you travel that road. It was long and steep and seemed to be paved with red hot embers and from every crack great bursts of steam rose. I was covered with sweat. Every pore on my body had it's own drop. I panted from thirst, but thanks to the sandals good St. Peter lent me, I did not burn my feet; finally an opening, an enormous opening, yawning wide like the door of a huge oven. There nobody asked my name nobody recognized me. Then I heard a dreadful clamour groaning, shrieking, shouting."

A stern voice shouted: "Who are you? Are you coming in or not?" Fr. Martain was afraid and said: "Oh, no, no, I am a friend of God". There was a cynical laugh and he was asked what he wanted: "I came a great distance to ask you if by some strange chance you



might have here someone from Cucugnan...(and he began to spell out the name)." There was another laugh more sarcastic than before. "Fool! Spelling it for me! Did you not know that all of Cucugnan is here? Look, 'Black Crow' look, you'll see how



we've arranged them, your famous Cucugnanese." Feebly Fr. Martain tried to plead with Lucifer. "...for their 'little' sins." "See what their little sins became." Then began the parade: there was Armand, who loved his wine more than his soul, he became a perpetual drunkard, Catherine..." Said Fr. Martain sorrowfully, "that little rascal so proud with her nose in the air". Then there was Pascal, as sly as ever, adulterating even the olive oil he sold to the villagers. Over the years this cheating amounted to a great amount of olives. Louis, so irreverent and Jacques... and Lucifer teased Fr. Martain about them: "How I love your Cucugnanese and their 'little' sins." Then Fr. Martain concluded, with a heart as heavy as lead: "Yes, not one of you in heaven, not one even in Purgatory. You were all there, my children...all there in hell. Can you imagine my horror, my shame? Oh, it is a frightful thing that has happened to me." He shook his head in despair.

"Now, my children...my little sheep, you understand now, don't you? This cannot go on. You say they are just little sins and no one will care, but you see that God in

heaven cares. I implore you to be sorry for those little sins, because you see how dangerous they can become. The bright angel in Purgatory told me: "The little fault unrepented will gradually but surely lead you to commit the great sin." So let us tell God we are sorry and with his help we shall try to do better. We shall try to give him a little more satisfaction and the devil a little less. You see - my little sheep," continued Fr. Martain: "When the wheat is ripe it must be cut, and when the grapes are full they should be pressed. And when it is a question of dirty linen it must be washed and washed well. May God bless you, Amen!"

And it was done as he said. They put their linen to soak. And since that memorable Sunday, from miles around, one can breathe the perfume of sanctity and the good pastor, happy and full of joy dreamed the other night that followed by his whole flock he climbed in a resplendent procession, in the midst of lighted candles, in a cloud of incense, with the little children of the choir singing the 'Te Deum'. He dreamed that he climbed the brilliant road to the city of God. □

DISCIPLINE, REWARDS & PUNISHMENT IN THE SALESIAN EDUCATIVE METHOD

7

by Fr. Elias Dias

There can be different types of punishments:

a) Physical Punishment:

Physical punishment is used when parents thrash their children for bad behaviour and police beat the offenders of law to extract information. There are some teachers always with a ruler in their hands to get discipline in the class.

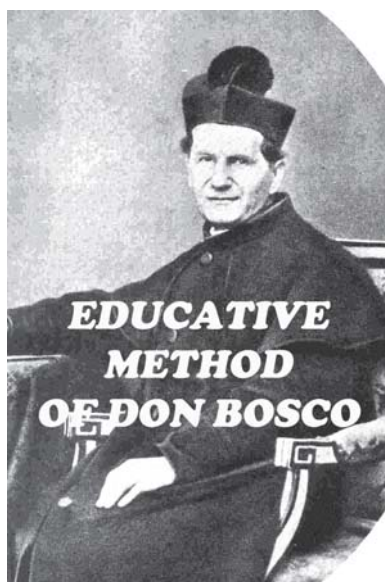
b) Psychological Punishment

is when child is not beaten but insulted leading the victim to spend his time in school in loneliness and fear. This certainly had a psychological effect in his life which took years to put in order.

c) Social Punishment.

Social punishment is often seen in the villages and tribal areas. Today every kind of violent punishment is forbidden by the society and liable to sentence to jail.

Discipline is obedience to an objectively rational order: For Don Bosco, discipline is obedience to an objectively rational order and enshrined in rules, norms and traditions which govern the life of the community. It is the result of a community of both subjects and superiors trying to follow objective norms to satisfy the need for order and truth. For Don Bosco it was necessary that all the rules are obeyed by all.



It is derived from the Gospel:

Don Bosco derived these rules from the Gospel principles, from the norms of morality and their functionality. These rules must be specific and made applicable to definite situations by the director in collaboration with those who help him to govern an institution.

Discipline has a special significance in the pedagogy of Don Bosco:

The question of discipline has a special significance in the pedagogy of Don Bosco because of the type of boys for whom he worked.

Don Bosco's pedagogy is pedagogy of love, correction therefore, permeates the entire educational activities of Don Bosco. In the rules on "Festive Oratories" Don Bosco exhorted the Salesians to warn the culprit immediately when a mistake takes place and to make him realize with love and patience that these

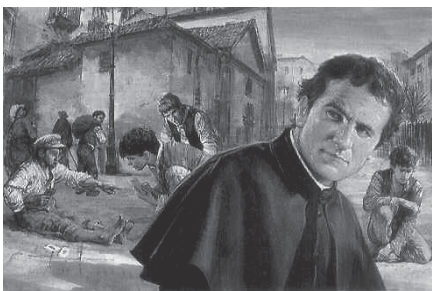
mistakes are contrary to education and the law of God. If punishments turn a student away from, or place him against the educator it cannot be educative.

In general, discipline is linked with punishments: For Don Bosco, however, the way of looking is different. Punishment is not a part of his system. In August 1863, in a "good-night" talk, he said, "I tell you quite frankly that I hate punishments, I dislike giving orders and threatening punishment for those who disobey. That is not my way."

Don Bosco said that he rarely saw a punishment given on a spur of a moment or inflicted before every other means is tried, that achieved its purpose. In life he often met souls so stubborn, insolent and opposed to any good suggestions that he believed that severity was the only means of dealing with them, yet it was only through charity that he succeeded in winning them over. For instance it is rare to find boys who never tell lies, or steal trifles, and eatables. Don Bosco was strongly opposed to any violent or physical punishment.

On rare occasions Don Bosco supported the use of psychological punishments. Here Don Bosco intimately links punishments with the capacity of the educator to love and make himself loved by the students. This type of punishment will work only when there is loving relationship between the educator and educand.

The educator should try to save the guilty person from shame and humiliation. Don Bosco recommended all the educators to be quick to forgive and forget when



a pupil shows that he is sorry. Never keep gauge and wait for opportunity to settle his account.

Don Bosco was opposed to all sorts of collective punishments especially when the group was not involved in the fault. Dismissal however, should be done only to safeguard the interests of the boy or of the whole institution. Such boys often are those who have given scandal or are unable to live in the institution.

Since in punishment reason and loving-kindness should be guaranteed, Don Bosco desired that punishment should not be administered by young educators but leave it to older and more mature persons. Here there is a word of caution - the educators must be mature, work for the same goal and not play popularity games by putting down their fellow educator which is very much seen today.

Some times when it is not possible to bring reconciliation between the educator and the educand, a third party could act as a mediator. For Don Bosco, punishment in educational institutions was not meant to restore law and order as it is ordained in the public legal system. In his mind educational punishment is ordained for the good of the pupil.

In the Salesian archives in Rome

there are five extant manuscripts of a document entitled "*Dei Castighi da Infliggersi Nelle Casa Salesiane*" Don Eugenio Ceria firmly believed that it was written by Don Bosco. We shall consider some of its contents:

1) Use Punishment only as a last resort: Don Bosco in his long experience with youngsters found that it is always easier to lose one's temper when dealing with a disruptive child than to keep control of oneself in a trying situation. On rare occasions it may have to be publicly redressed. Often a word from him can do wonders. And do not forget to pray.

Don Bosco's experience had taught him what happened when he punished a child in haste. Some times when there are problems in school, we tend to blame the students but often it is due to the harassment of the teacher, lack of preparation, slothful ways, unreasonableness and indiscipline of the educators. The educators must strive to have the child respect him rather than fear him, therefore use all other means before punishing a child.

2) The right time and the right place: Let everything take place at its proper time and proper place. Choosing the right moment is very important. If he is inclined to be ill-tempered, unreasonable and selfish he will do more harm than good when he punishes a child. It is his temper rather than his authority that motivates him.

Do not underestimate the shrewdness of children. They are keen observers of our outward behaviour. If a boy has misbehaved, punishment should not be swift and speedy. During this cooling-off period he will have time to reflect on what he has done.

3) Let every punishment carry a clear message: The clear message is that the punishment the educator is administering is not the result of an emotional outburst. There will be a fight on what you said rather than the fault committed. We cannot punish someone forcefully and immediately just because he has broken the rule or is guilty of some serious offence.

The heart of the matter is simply this, stay in control. St Francis de Sales says: "I do not lose in a quarter of an hour all those precious drops of kindness which I have managed to store up, drop by drop during my life time in the corner of my heart. We cannot demand the impossible from a boy whom we have corrected. Once he realizes his mistake and accepts it, meet him more than half way by lessening his punishment and telling him that his mistakes are forgotten by the educator.

4) The culprit must be assured that the educator does not carry a grudge: Every punishment leaves a trace of anxiety and even stress in its wake. Every boy must be made to feel that the educator trusts him to mend his ways and that he will not hold any grudge against him for his past misbehaviour.

5) What punishments should be used, and who should administer them: Don Bosco from his experience visiting the city jails says that harsh punishment may penalize the crime, but it does not rehabilitate the culprit.

The educators must not be surprised if a boy breaks the rule again and again. Such is the nature of the young. The educator must react with firmness and let the admonition be business-like and not like moon that changes every

day. The punishments ought to be formative, benign and less annoying.

Finally, other than routine everyday corrections, it is the Director's task to regulate what punishments are to be administered and the circumstances in which they are to be given. The final decision should be his. In his role as director it will be much easier for him to communicate with deviant students since he is looked upon as the father figure of the institution.

Don Bosco based his educational system on the psychological factors of emulation. One of his former students testifies it: "Emulation was in the hands of Don Bosco, a powerful instrument for God." This is generally the type of reward most appreciated by the students.

Don Bosco wanted many prizes and awards to be given to enkindle interest and encourage healthy competitions in pursuit and attaining good.

Don Bosco was well aware that food has great reward value with youngsters in the oratory. He made good use of it. Rewarding or denying had great value in the educational system of Don Bosco.

Rewards and punishment according to behaviourists: Many contemporaries of Don Bosco appreciated the way he educated the young.

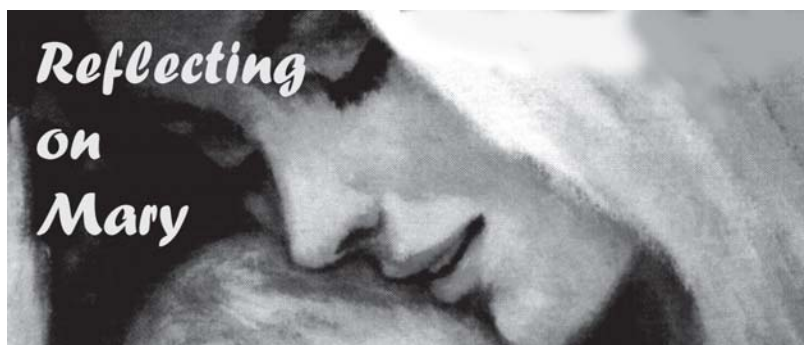
Don Bosco did not have benefits of the modern concepts and therapy of the behaviourists. Without the knowledge of their studies he had many things in common with the modern behaviourists however, he practiced some techniques of the

behaviourists such as he put emphasis on rewards rather than punishments. He believed in positive and negative reinforcements.

Don Bosco had great aversion for punishment: Often he practiced and recommended to his institutions negative conditioning rather than punishment. He insisted that one who was punished understood clearly that he was punished and the punishment should last only as long as the undesirable behaviour lasted.

Don Bosco used ways of rewarding that are very much common in today's behaviourism: He used conditioning techniques. He connected a desirable behaviour with something pleasant like food, outings, and words of praise. He respected the person, left them free. He gave them the rewards as a sign of his love, acceptance and as a personal achievement.

Don Bosco preached, wrote and practiced his convictions on discipline, corrections, punishment and rewards. He gave his legacy to his followers. It is difficult but Don Bosco and other Salesians could live it. A famous ecclesiastic, the Vicar General of the diocese of the Isle-de-France was an admirer of Don Bosco and his method of bringing up children. He said, "Don Bosco's method is very nice, most beautiful and perfect but such a system calls for saints and saints are rare." The famous prelate was right. The educator, to love his students, must always be with them and know their needs and respond to them and make them grow. Their needs call for a perpetual act of self-denial. □



TWO WOMEN UNITED FOR A FUTURE LIFE

by Maria Ko Ha Fong

The only passage in the New Testament where you only find female characters present is that of the visitation, the meeting of Elizabeth and Mary (Lk 1, 39-56).

The scene is simple: two women meeting, in the background is a house, a scene of ordinary everyday domestic life. Yet, there is a fascinating beauty about it, an atmosphere of mystery that portends something great and marvellous.

Elizabeth and Mary: two pregnant women who are looking forward to the future of their wombs, two women guarding within themselves an ineffable mystery, an amazing miracle and overwhelming joy. In addition to their being related to each other and their bond of friendship, they are united by a much more profound union: a consciousness that they are the object of the particular predilection of God who unites them in a common mission to collaborate with Him in a grand project and their enthusiasm makes them explode

in a song of praise. It is the experience of their prodigious maternity that unites them.

The two women communicate without needing many words. At Mary's greeting Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, replies with a blessing: "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb," a confession of faith: "Why is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" and a blessing: "Blessed is she who has believed in the fulfilment of the Word of the Lord." And Mary, in her turn, gives thanks to the Lord with her song, the Magnificat. Between these two women there is a deep bond that goes beyond words and transcending any concrete gestures.

Naomi and Ruth

In the Old Testament too, there is a scene that illustrates the beautiful encounter between two women. It is in the book of Ruth, a jewel of Jewish literature. The plot is simple, almost a kind of family chronicle with the flavour of

everyday life. The narrative is suffused with tenderness, warmth and feminine delicacy. In Naomi and Ruth, in the old Jewish widow and in the young daughter of Moab - two persons - are two peoples, two cultures and two generations. Yet



The encounter between Mary and Elizabeth in a scene from the film "Nativity" with Catherine Hardwicke

it is love that unites them intimately. "Where there is love there is God." God is present in the history of this family scarred by pain, famine, migration, disease, death and poverty. The face of God is reflected in these two powerless women. God is found in the purity and the profundity of human love. God passes by, moving from one to the other in feminine intuition, in domestic simplicity and the witness and solidarity between them. "Your God will be my God" (Rt 1,16): is a confession of sincere faith, essential to Ruth, without so much as a doctrinal argument.

God, who lives in an intra-Trinitarian relationship loves to reveal himself in intra-personal communion. He loves to be discovered in the mutual love among his sons and daughters.

Mary and Elizabeth

Even at Ain Karim God makes himself present in the solidarity and the friendship between the two women which is much more marvelous and real.

The encounter between Mary and Elizabeth actually takes place on the threshold between the Old and New Testaments between the epochs in which God spoke through signs and wonders, through prophets and saints and in a time in which he manifests himself directly in his Son who became man. In the two mothers we encounter two babies in their wombs: Jesus and John the Baptist who is his precursor, his witness (Jn 1,7) is the little glowing light that leads us to the true light of the world (Jn 5:35). John leaping in the womb in the presence of Jesus who himself later says: "the friend of the bridegroom rejoices to hear the bridegroom's voice" (Jn 3,29).

Contemplating on this thought-provoking scene and re-listening to the words of blessing, of praise, of thanks and awe makes us more aware that the Christian Faith has an aesthetic dimension which is not only true but is beautiful. And the beauty of faith bursts forth in the encounter between persons who love each other. □

BEST OF LIFE

Vincent Travers OP

A young couple came to see me. They were both in their early twenties. I thought they wanted to get married. We were sitting around a table exchanging pleasantries when the young woman - we'll call her Maria - dropped a bombshell. She said, "I have just been diagnosed with terminal cancer and the doctor says I probably have six months to live." I was shocked. I didn't know what to say. I had never met anyone so young with her particular diagnosis of cancer. I said nothing. I listened. She ended by saying; "I would like you to do something for me. I would like to have a mass said for my family and friends before I die, so that I can tell them how much I loved them, how much they have been part of my life, and how much they have meant to me, so that when the times comes, there will be joy on their faces knowing where I am."

The night before the mass I was a wreck. I was up half the night wondering what I was going to say. I don't know what prompted me, but after reading the gospel, instead of saying my few words, I invited Maria to the lectern to tell her story. She told her family and friends all they needed to be told. There wasn't a dry eye in the Church, including my own. What was so powerful in the story was that there wasn't a hint or word of anger against God. Now if that were me I'm not so sure I would not have said, "God, how could you possibly let this happen to me and I so young?" Yet here was this young woman, in her early twenties, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus, and the cost of being his disciple. I will never forget Maria. She died four months later. In that short space of time, she lived life as fully as she could, without ever feeling sorry for herself.

She was a living example of St. Irenaeus' definition of a Christian: The glory of God. □



NEWSBITS

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA



One of Mary's titles is "Christ's First Disciple," and some of Christ's earliest followers were women, two of whom he appeared to first after his resurrection. Now, some 2,000 years later, another special group of women, specifically Catholic mums who blog on the Internet about their faith, the Catholic Church, as well as the joys and challenges of parenthood and everyday family life, can be considered among Christ's newest evangelisers or "digital disciples," reports the Catholic News Service.

"Part of our vocation as mothers is to be within our home and do our work with love, and (as Catholic bloggers) we can also do work that draws people closer to Christ and his church," said Lisa Hendey, a Catholic wife and mum blogger from Fresno, California.

In between carpool, dinner and homework duties, a growing number of Catholic mums have turned to Internet blogging as a newfound outlet to enrich their own Catholic faith, as well as the faith journeys of their regular readers, with whom they form a sort of spiritual camaraderie.

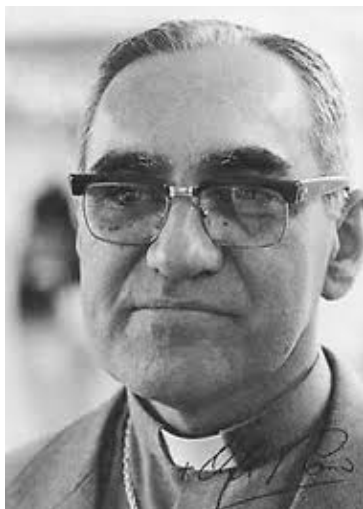
"We try to be supportive to parents in the trenches of the

domestic church," said Hendey, a mum of two sons ages 18 and 21. She also is the author of *A Book of Saints for Catholic Mums* and *The Handbook for Catholic Mums*.

Hendey said her eight-year-old blog, www.catholicmom.com, grew out of a website she launched in 2000.

Nowadays, she has about 150 regular contributors, mostly mums, a few dads - all volunteers - who are writing on various topics such as daily prayer, the church's liturgical seasons, marriage, family finances, books and movies. Hendey stressed that although the blog's content covers a multitude of Catholic-related subjects, all essays must be in accordance with church teaching and doctrine.

EL SALVADOR



When Archbishop Vincenzo
Don Bosco's Madonna

Paglia, promoter for the cause for the beatification of Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador, El Salvador, announced April 20 that the process had been “unblocked” – seemingly by the approval of Pope Francis - shock waves of joy surged throughout Latin America and many parts of the global church, reports Pat Marrin in NCR.

In the intervening years, Romero’s case for sainthood has successfully passed each level of scrutiny to confirm his orthodoxy and loyalty to the church. No miracle is required for his canonization, because he was martyred, something Pope John Paul II affirmed at a millennial jubilee ceremony in Rome in 2000 when he personally added Romero’s name to a list of 20th-century martyrs.

In 2010, when anticipation was high ahead of the 30th anniversary of Romero’s death, Escobar explained the stalled beatification as the result of efforts by some to “manipulate, politicize or use Romero’s image,” thus obscuring his largely spiritual role. The message was clear: Romero, while publicly proclaimed as a martyr and prophet, had to be free of all controversy for his path to sainthood to advance.

ALICE SPRINGS, AUSTRALIA

A year in ministry at Santa Teresa, near Alice Springs, has been a steep learning curve for Good Samaritan Sister, Anita Brennan, and one thing she has learnt is that while “we can’t fix everything”, a simple ministry of presence and hospitality plays a key role in the life of the Aboriginal

community, reports *The Good Oil*.

“One of the important learnings that I have had is how significant the land is for the Aboriginal people; the heritage of their ancestors; their source of bush food and medicine and their sacred places,” she says.

She was educated in secondary school by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan at St Brigid’s Marrickville, and from that experience says she felt a strong call to join the Congregation. When she entered the novitiate 53 years ago, at almost 18, she never dreamed where it would eventually take her – from teaching, leadership positions in schools and the Congregation, to study opportunities in Chicago, Israel and Canada, a counselling ministry, and now to outback Australia to live in an Aboriginal community.

“I would see my ministry at the moment as being a ministry of hospitality, a ministry of presence to people, and also a ministry of spiritual companionship.”

“We have about five local women coming. We’ve got two people who came here as lay missionaries over 40 years ago and two Divine Word Missionary priests, and Liz and myself,” she says.

“Every Thursday evening we have dinner here and they all come. It’s a form of connection for them, to be able to talk about things, to get together. And it’s also good for us.”

Earlier in the morning, Anita was at the Community Care Centre, helping the women of the community to organise their bingo morning. □

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.*

On 4th January I came back home because I had chicken pox. I remained there for four weeks. I prayed the 3 Hail Marys during this time. Mary helped me, providing me strength and helping me recover. By the time the four weeks were over I was fit enough to return to the hostel. I am very grateful to Mother Mary for all her goodness.

M. Abishek, Chennai

I prayed the 3 Hail Marys when my father was in the ICU. I was touched by the wonders worked. I am most grateful.

Amorette, Goa

My heartfelt thanks to Jesus and Mother Mary for the innumerable favours received and the blessings bestowed on my family through faithfully praying the 3 Hail Marys. Thank you Mother Mary for taking care of me during my illness and helping me to recover quickly. Also thanks for helping me to get a job soon. Both my sons are doing well now. Oh, mother, always protect our family from every danger and sickness.

E. D'Costa, Mumbai

Thank you Mother Mary for all the favours granted and for being with us at the time of pain.

Benny/Anna and Family

My sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio, through faithfully praying the 3 Hail Marys I received the final settlement from work. I prayed fervently for 2 years and now finally it has come through. Do continue to bless me always and help me to carry out my daily chores and responsibilities.

Conny Almeida, Goa

My wife and I are grateful to Our Lady for the success in the law exams and for other favours received which we gratefully acknowledge.

Dr. Olav Albuquerque and Deborah Albuquerque

I am grateful to Mother Mary: faithfully praying the 3 Hail Marys I received countless blessings for the last 35 years. I had been saved from many accidents. I always pray the 3 Hail Marys before leaving the house and Mother Mary has guided me in my work. Thank you Mother for granting all my favours.

Claud Mendez, Mumbai

While travelling by train I was struck on the head by a huge bundle of clothes from the rack above. I am in the habit of praying the 3 Hail Marys while I travel. I remained unharmed and I believe it was the gracious protection of Our Lady. I am most grateful.

Melvyn Pereira, Mumbai

LOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER

We are grateful to Our Lady through whose 'Miraculous Medal' we were saved from a fatal accident. *Theresa Chennai*

I am grateful to the Precious Blood of the Lord, the Holy Spirit, our Lady and all the saints for the return of my sense of smell after two years. *Mario Fernandes, Mumbai*

My sister was hospitalized for a month and 18 days and the doctors had given up hope. I prayed sincerely to Mother Mary. As there was no improvement we decided to take her home but our biggest problem was getting a nurse to look after her. I continued my prayer to Mother Mary and we were able to take her home. Thanks to Our Lady she is much better and quite stable. I always pray the Rosary at home and I am really grateful to Our Lady. *Conny Almeida, Goa*

While riding the bike with my husband the front tyre burst and the bike went out of control. Both of us were thrown off the bike. It was Mother Mary's grace that no vehicles were coming from the opposite direction or from behind us. Thank you Mother Mary for protecting us. Please continue to protect us. *Gordon & Fatima Alphonso, Mumbai*

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored and glorified and may Our Blessed Mother be praised for all the graces received. *Sabina*

Thank you, Jesus and Mother Mary for all the blessings and favours. *Liz Pires, Mumbai*

THEY ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR LADY AND DON BOSCO

Thank you, Mother Mary, Help of Christians, Don Bosco, St. Jude, St. Anthony, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and Bl. John Paul II for the numerous blessings received. *Leena Martis, Mumbai*

I am grateful to the Precious Blood of the Lord, the Holy Spirit, our Lady and all the saints for the return of my sense of smell after two years. *Mario Fernandes, Mumbai*

We are grateful to Our Lady and Don Bosco for the gift of baba Aaron to our dear cousin. *Elvira & Michael*

For curing my daughter Samrita Chandrakant Patkar of jaundice and helping her to secure a distinction in Std. X exams and for innumerable favours received. *Shirley C. Patkar, Mumbai*

Thank you Mother Mary for healing my bronchitis and my grand daughter's thyroid problem. *A. D'Souza, Mumbai*

Our sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for blessings and favours received. *Ms. Rose G. D'Sa, Goa*

Thanks to Mother Mary and Don Bosco for helping me. Praying the 3 Hail Marys faithfully I have celebrated 50 golden years. *Philomena Pinto, Mumbai*

THANKS TO DEAR ST. DOMINIC SAVIO



My sincere and heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Our Lord, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the success of a major operation and a clear and safe result of the kidneys of my husband. Mother Mary please keep us under your mantle and guide and protect my children, grandchildren and us always.

Maria P. Cordeiro, Goa

Our sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter Antoinette of a healthy baby girl 'Caelyn' born in Malta in June 2012. Thank you for giving us two lovely grand daughters and two devoted daughters and a good

son-in-law too.

Maria and Deryck Fernandes, Mysore

My sincere gratitude to our Blessed Mother, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for the safe delivery of my daughter who has been blessed with healthy twin girls and also for a safe heart operation of myself.

Yolanda Rodrigues, Mumbai

My grateful thanks to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio for a successful marriage of my grand daughter. My belated but sincere thanks to Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco for many favours received. Please continue to help us and grant all our hearts desires.

P. Fernandes, Mumbai

Thank you, dear Dominic Savio for the gift of a baby boy and other favours received.

Bosco and Darlette Menezes, Kalyan West

Thank you dear Dominic Savio for the gift of a healthy baby boy.

Augustino Savio D'Costa, Goa

Thank you, dear Mother Mary, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for helping me to build our house and for all the favours. Our Lady please keep us under your care.

F. Fernandes, Goa

Our sincere thanks to Our Lord Jesus, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and Dominic Savio for all the blessings bestowed upon our family especially my son's examinations. *Mr & Mrs P.D. D'Silva, New Zealand*

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

SEPTEMBER 2013

The Holy Father's General Intention: *That people today, often overwhelmed by noise, may rediscover the value of silence and listen to the voice of God and their brothers and sisters.*

Missionary Intention: *That Christians suffering persecution in many parts of the world may by their witness be prophets of Christ's love.*

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MARY WAS THERE

We were travelling back from Ottawa to Montreal at a speed of 100-120 kph in the fast lane. Being a Sunday everyone was speeding home and there was a line of vehicles behind us. At about 7pm we recited the Angelus and the Rosary. Suddenly we felt a jerk as if there were some road-rumblers. My son stopped the car on the left side of the highway and the other vehicles behind us simply sped by. Till today we can't understand how my son had the presence of mind to halt the car at the right side of the highway. If it wasn't done other speeding cars would have crashed into us causing a huge accident. Not only were we saved but we received timely help from a police patrol who helped us fix a spare wheel. We reached home safely only to find that the tyre we removed was in shreds. We're sure it was Our Lady's protection. Thank you dearest Mother for your protection at all times.

Mrs. Janet Sequeira, 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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Rev. Fr. Edwin D'Souza, sdb.,

SHRINE OF DON BOSCO'S MADONNA,

Matunga - MUMBAI - 400 019 - INDIA

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

<http://www.donboscosmadonna.org/www.dbmshrine.org>