**MARY IN THE LIFE OF DON BOSCO**

“Son behold thy mother Said Jesus, and John the apostle took Mary as his own mother and all the disciples of Christ have considered her as their own mother ever since.”

“Son behold thy guide, “Said Jesus and John the apostle of youth took her as his own guide and the disciples of St. John Bosco have considered her as their own guide ever since.”

Mary the promised woman designed to bring forth the promised one, the Holy One of God who was to be born centuries later. But what happened before the promise came to be fulfilled? Pursuing the pages of history we find people not wandering for happiness but wandering away from happiness.

How long the world would go on without virtues? Therefore in the fullness of time God sent a model to humanity and to each one of us. Mary was born sinless to be our model.

It is with great pleasure and joy that I stand before you to speak a few words about the role of our Bl. Mother in the life of St. John Bosco.

Don Bosco was a man with a clear vision and eventually his vision became his mission. In the beginning he did not fully comprehend the totality of the mission that he was to embrace, the cause for which he had to work untiringly and zealously.

It all began with a mysterious dream at the age of nine. He found himself in a strange field where hundreds of boys were fighting with each other, using abusive language. Little Johnny could not bear up with such nonsense and feeling indignant at their bad behavior, plunged into their midst and began to use his fists to put an end to the fighting. Suddenly a majestic personage approached him and said, “John, not with blows but with love you must change these boys” he stood dumbfounded at what he heard and was startled but the majestic personage gave him a guide, a mistress, a helper to accomplish this great mission which God had prepared for him. From that moment onwards till the end of his life the name of ‘Mary’ was the most cherished name for Don Bosco.

His saintly mother Mamma Margaret instilled into the young heart of Johnny Bosco a deep, tender and affectionate love and devotion to the heavenly queen. He had great love for our Bl. Mother and later on enkindled the same love to her in the hearts of his boys. When Mamma Margaret took John to Castelnuovo for his studies, before leaving him, she gave him this motherly advice, “Be devout to the Bl. Virgin.”

When we unfold the pages of his life we see how much influence our Bl. mother had on his life from the very beginning of his earthly existence. On October 25, 1835, on the day of his vestition Mamma Margaret told him these words: “when you were born I consecrated you to the Bl. Virgin; when you began your studies I told you to be devoted to our heavenly mother. Now I ask you to be hers entirely. Choose your friends from among those who love her, and if you become a priest, spread devotion to her.”

He was always obedient to his mother’s instructions. So he sought the friendship of those seminarians who were devoted to our heavenly mother. Among them Louis Comollo was well known for his Marian piety.

When he was at school, he kept nurturing within his heart this precious gift Mary that he had received from Jesus as his guide and who was recommended by his mother as his heavenly Mother. Later on, Don Bosco saw more and clearly the mission that was ahead of him and Mary prepared him to embrace this great mission.

Well we know, Don Bosco’s gigantic work started with a simple “Hail Mary” and later on he would say, “Our congregation is led by Mary, the most holy.” The initial stages of his work seemed an utter failure; but far from losing heart he once gathered his co-workers and told them: “Do not fear. God will not abandon us. With his help our small society will forge ahead. Mary is our salvation, and our help.”

One evening, Don Bosco told his boys, “the best spiritual flowers we can offer up to Mary are such ordinary practices as kissing the medal of Mary, kissing the crucifix before going to bed, reading a few pages about the Bl. Virgin making the sign of the cross reverently.” These simple gestures of Don Bosco reveal to us deep love for the Bl. Virgin. Throughout his life, he never took an important step without first entrusting his plans to her protection. The parting words of this beloved father to his sons were: “Remember nothing, absolutely, must ever be done at the oratory except in the Holy name of Mary.”

Don Bosco placed unlimited confidence in Mary right from his childhood days. He kindled in the boys a great love for the Madonna. Moreover, Preaching on our Lady was one of Don Bosco’s greatest delights. He was never tired of repeating the words “Think of Mary, invoke Mary.” He frequently spoke of her glory to inculcate in others that filial confidence his own heart fell towards her. When people praised him for the works he had done he corrected them saying, “It is Mary who does everything, poor DB is merely a tool in the hands of MHOC.” These words clearly show, what prominent place Mary had in life of St. John Bosco

As we are here, “to mirror Don Bosco”, let us try together to possess the filial devotion to our Bl. Mother which our father and founder Don Bosco nurtured in his life.

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