**Don Bosco – A Mystic**

Bhagavat Gita says “*one whose happiness is within, who is active within, who rejoices within, and is illumined within is actually the perfect mystic*” 5.24.

Good evening dear fathers and brother, I am glad to share with you some of reflections on the topic Don Bosco, a mystic from an Indian perspective and especially form Bhagavat Gita.

Mysticism can be described as an attitude of mind, the innate tendency of the human soul, which seeks to transcend reason and which believes that it is possible for the human soul to be united with Ultimate Reality, when God ceases to be an object and becomes an experience.” It is difficult to find words to describe mysticism because to do so is to talk about the experience of God as God. In the minds of some apostolic religious the mystical experience is left as the arena for the higher aspirations of the contemplative life while they get on with the work.

When we think of Don Bosco a question arises in our mind is really Don Bosco mystic? I think Don Bosco must have followed the guidelines of Lord Krishna for his spirituality “*of all yogi’s he who always abides in me with great faith, worshiping him in transcendental loving service is most intimately united with me in yoga and is the highest of all*,”even Don Bosco’s life was just this. Moreover at the end of his life he says whatever I did, I did it for the glory of God. “*A person is said to be established in self realization and is called a mystic when he is fully satisfied by virtue of acquired knowledge and realization, such a person is situated in transcendence and is self controlled, his sees everything whether it be pebble stone or gold as the same*” this was the advice given (by lord Krishna) to Arjuna.6:9 it is where Don Bosco’s spirituality finds its true meaning. He never recommended any acts of penance, for BG says *a yogi is greater than the ascetic, greater than the empiricist and greater than the fruitive worker 6:47,* for asceticism without self-knowledge is imperfect, empiric knowledge without surrender to the supreme lord is also imperfect, and fruitive work without God’s consciousness is a waste of time, Don Bosco gives a simple way to reach sanctity that is by being cheerful and doing things in a extraordinary way “*if one offers me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water I will accept it,” for one who sees me everywhere and sees everything in me, I am never lost nor is he ever lost to me.6.30*

(Lord Krishna) The BG says “*if you become conscious of me you will pass over all the obstacles of conditioned life by my grace. If you do not work in such consciousness by act through false ego you will be lost*” my dear friends this is called Krishna consciousness but to express in Don Bosco’s words it is what we call Contemplative in action these are like two hands playing the piano. “The music we play for the young is the music of the heart. It is the music of God’s love, God’s desire to ‘wrap’ us in a life-long loving embrace. This music requires both hands to play,” says Don Bosco. Contemplation and action are not in competition. Rather one needs the other in order to make the apostolic work we do ‘a real experience of God for the young people we serve’. It is almost as if God resides neither solely in the contemplation nor solely in the action. God resides in the reconciling point of Union of the two, even if there seems to be an implicit contradiction in trying to unite the two.

Prayer leads to the experience of God’s presence and the experience of God’s presence leads to the young. However, it is not as simple as one following on the other. There is no way that prayer comes first and presence to the young second or even that the presence to the young precedes upon prayer .“[Krishna speaking] I am ever present to those who have realized me in every creature. Seeing all life as my manifestation, they are never separated from me.” (Bhagavad Gita 6:30). In our work we seek God and not the things of God.

(Lord Krishna) The BG says “*the renunciation of work and work in devotion are both good for liberation but of the two works in devotion service is better than renunciation of works.”* The idea behind Karma yoga is acting without attachment; in other words, to act without being so concerned about the outcome of our actions. Don Bosco as a saint dedicated his work in devotion for his worship, for saints activity is not a hindrance to holiness rather their activities arise and grow from their holiness. My friends recall to mind Bl. Rinaldi’s definition on salesian work “tireless industry made holy by prayer and union with God.”

In the Salesian spirituality there is a most definite mystical dimension. The experience of God in Salesian terms is always verifiable in action. The mysticism of Don Bosco is one of everyday life, it is grounded or made visible in the everyday actions of the person or else it is not true. “Salesian mysticism is a mysticism of the synthesis of interior life and action; one is the soul of the other and each is reinforced by the love which unites them to the glory of God, for love is indivisibly affective and effective, contemplative and active.” It is this love which embraces the apparent opposites of action and contemplation, of prayer and presence and brings them together in a vibrant and life giving, yes even God-giving dynamic.

Since the Salesian mysticism is educational then prayer, living out the spirituality, happens in the very act of educating the young. It means that the very act of educating the young carries with it the experience of God. As sons of Don Bosco let us try to mirror him in our life and be a father, teacher, friend to the young as a mystic. My wish is as lord Krishna said to arjuna, in *all circumstances be a yogi*, an mystic like St John Bosco our father and friend.