#  The Oratory of St. John Bosco

Constitutions of the society of St. Francis de sales, Article 40: Don Bosco’s Oratory a permanent criterion. It describes: Don Bosco is lived a pastoral experience in his first oratory which served as a model. It was for the youngsters a home that welcomed, a parish that evangelized, a school that prepared them for life and a playground where friends could meet and enjoy themselves.

Dear fathers, and my dear brothers, I would like to share my reflection basing on this article. This particular article attracted me very much. It made me to cogitate on this article. At a point of time, out of the blue a thought came to my mind on Don Bosco’s life and his works that he was doing for the youth.

From the heart of Don Bosco emanated four qualities like home, school, parish, and a playground. This was the tranquil experience of Valdocco. Valdocco oratory was a place where Don Bosco offered joy and happiness for his boys. The oratory of Voldocco rendered for the boys a comfortable place to grow as in a family, as an educated person, as a spiritual person, and as a cheerful and happy person.

We are all in the initial stages of our Salesian life and we are Salesians who carry these four qualities of Don Bosco in our daily life. Let me elaborate the four qualities of Don Bosco. The first and the very important aspect is ‘home’. Yes, his heart was a home where his boys could find comfort and safety. We have so many examples wherein he expressed his love for his boys. One of the great examples which I can give you now is, the life of Bartholomew. He could transform his life through behavior. Don Bosco safe guarded and loved him from his heart. It is very important for a Salesian to make his heart as a home. Don Bosco made his heart a home for his boys where his boys could feel welcomed in joy. They experienced his great love and concern; so they felt to come again to meet him frequently. We need to ask ourselves “Are we preparing our hearts as a home for the youngsters. Is it how we are going to make the youngsters happy and serene?

Secondly I would like to share about ‘parish’. Don Bosco offered his entire life for his boys in many ways especially by making his oratory a parish. He helped the boys to attain holiness especially the abandoned boys. His oratories helped the boys to attend the Holy Mass with utmost devotion and holy joy. Later, the oratory which was considered as their parishes not only gave the boys an opportunity to participate in the Holy Mass but also spurred on his catechists to greater efforts. Don Bosco’s heart was a parish where his boys could gain spiritual strength and in the same way faith in God. We are also called to make our hearts a parish like Don Bosco who prepared his heart a parish. For this quality we need to be a good spiritual person on whom they can rely on.

Thirdly, I would like to bring before you ‘school’. Education is very important for a salesian. Education is not for us to keep within, but to share with others, especially for them to attain kingdom of heaven. And I would say that it is very important to have the catholic education than worldly education. Don Bosco gave the catholic education in his schools, especially by rescuing many children from the atheistic schools. He could teach his boys moral values in order to become good Christians and honest citizens. It is very important to educate the boys in the catholic education.

Finally, the playground. It has a fundamental role to play in the youngster’s life. Don Bosco was a person who always was the first to start a game. He seemed to be in every corner of the playground especially in the midst of every group and taking part in everything. He covered the whole playground and he was always considered as a good player. Yes, indeed it is imperative for any Salesian to have interest in games. Ultimately, our goal is to live for the youngsters. So, it is very salient to learn games in order to be with the youngsters amidst them. Even if have no skills to play the games, it doesn’t matter provided it is enough that we are present among them.

As I conclude my speech I would like to recommend each one of us to have these qualities of Don Bosco, which he had deposited in the oratory of Valdocco. It helps us to magnetize the youngsters. Yes, my dear friends, we too need to have these qualities like a home, parish, school, and playground. These qualities of Valdocco are very much essential and relevant for our Salesian life. So, my dear friends let us plead God for these four gifts of Salesian criterion spirit that we may lead the young to himself.

 Thank you