

# Don Bosco's Vocation-Mission Dream—Its Recurrence And Significance

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## Introduction

Don Bosco's vocation dreams hold an important place in Don Bosco's vocational development and in the process by which his lifework was determined and specified. Beginning with the original vocation dream (the Becchi or Morialdo Dream of 1824/5) these dreams appear to punctuate the development of his vocation and apostolate up to the settling in of his work of the oratory at Valdocco. In his autobiographical *Memoirs*,<sup>1</sup> Don Bosco confesses that, at the

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<sup>1</sup> Mss. held at the *Archivio Salesiano Centrale*, Via della Pisana, Rome, Italy [cited as *ASC*], the Don Bosco files of which (*Fondo Don Bosco*) are reproduced in microfiches [cited as *FDBMicro*]:

*Memorie dell'Oratorio di S. Francesco di Sales dal 1815 al 1855*, written in the mid-seventies. Don Bosco's original manuscript: *ASC 132*: Autografi-Oratorio, "Memorie[a] dell'Oratorio...", *FDBMicro 57-60* [cited as *MO-DB*]; Father Joachim Berto's copy, with Don Bosco's correction and additions: *Ibid.*, *FDBMicro 60-63* [cited as *MO-Ber*].

This work was written by Don Bosco following a suggestion, and later a command, from Pius IX. It describes the origin and establishment of the work of the oratory up to 1855, beginning with Don Bosco's childhood. Its chief purpose (so Don Bosco states) was to acquaint the Salesians with "how God himself has always been our guide." Internal evidence would indicate that the bulk of Don Bosco's rough copy was set down in writing between 1873 and 1875; and the rest perhaps in the few years that followed. Berto's copy, most of it revised by Don Bosco, was produced not long after that, since it can be shown that Fr. John Bonetti made use of parts of it for his serial *History of the Oratory*, published in the *Salesian Bulletin*, beginning with January 1879.

Italian edition: *San Giovanni Bosco, Memorie dell'Oratorio di S. Francesco di Sales dal 1815 al 1855*, ed. Eugene Ceria. Torino: SEI, 1946 [cited as *MO-Ce*].

time of the occurrences of his dreams, he was reluctant to put any faith in them. Eventually, however, he was led to believe that through them God was calling him to a special kind of apostolate on behalf of youth.<sup>2</sup>

English edition: *Memoirs of the Oratory of Saint Francis de Sales from 1815 to 1855: The Autobiography of Saint John Bosco*, tr. by Daniel Lyons, with notes and commentary by Eugenio Ceria, Lawrence Castelvecchi and Michael Mendl. New Rochelle, New York: Don Bosco Publications, 1989 [cited as *MO-En*].

Other sources cited:

Diocesan Process of Beatification: *Processus ordinarius curiae taurinensis* [cited as *POCT*], in ASC 161: *Deposizioni dei Testi*, *FDBMicro* 2,100ff. (to be specified).

Summary of Diocesan Process: *Processus Ordinarius, Positio super introductione causae, Summarium et Litterae Postulatae* [cited as *POS*], in ASC 163: *Processo... Documenti ufficiali stampati*, *FDBMicro* 2,212ff. (to be specified).

[G. B. Lemoyne], *Documenti per scrivere la storia di D. Giovanni Bosco, dell'Oratorio di San Francesco di Sales e della Congregazione Salesiana*, 45 volumes [1885ff.] [cited as *Doc*], in ASC 110: *Cronachette-Lemoyne-Documenti*, *FDBMicro* 966ff. (to be specified).

A note of explanation as to the nature of this much-cited work may be of help to the reader. When Fr. John Baptist Lemoyne was recalled to Turin as secretary in 1883, he began to bring together source material on Don Bosco and his work (collected by him and others over many years) and to edit it in view of a large biography. The collection began to take printed shape in 1885, and eventually reached forty-five large volumes. The *Documenti* were printed for private use in single copy. The first 40 volumes of the *Documenti* contain material distributed chronologically over the years 1815-1890. To these were added 4 volumes collecting additional material covering the same period. (A forty-fifth and last volume contains material pertaining to the Bosco-Gastaldi controversy.) New material was entered at different times, for each page contains only one column, printed on separate paper and glued on the blank page of the folio register. This column is only 60 mm. wide, set off center to the right on the page, thus leaving ample room for further entries. Lemoyne continued to affix in their proper place additional items from various sources: handwritten notes, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, etc. In time each volume took on the form of a scrap book. The work is the forerunner of the *Biographical Memoirs* and served as their immediate basic source.

Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, Angelo Amadei and Eugenio Ceria, *Memorie Biografiche di Don Giovanni Bosco*, 19 volumes. San Benigno Canavese: Scuola Tipografica Libreria Salesiana; Torino: Tipografia S.A.I.D., S.E.I., 1898-1938 [cited as *IBM*]. Lemoyne is the author of the first nine volumes, of which the first two (1898 and 1901) cover the period of the vocation dreams.

The first fifteen volumes have been translated into English as, *The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco*, vol. I-XV, Diego Borgatello, Editor-in-Chief. New Rochelle, New York: Salesiana Publishers, 1965-1988 [cited as *EBM*].

Other works cited: P. Stella, *Don Bosco nella storia della religiosità cattolica*, vol. I: *Vita e Opere*, 2. ed.; vol. III: *La Canonizzazione (1888-1934)*. Roma: LAS, 1979 & 1988 [cited as Stella, *DB I & DB III*]. Volume I is translated into English as: *Don Bosco*, vol I: *Life and Work*, tr. by John Drury. New Rochelle, New York: Don Bosco Publications, 1985 [cited as *DB I-En*].

P. Stella, *Don Bosco nella storia economica e sociale (1815-1970)* (Pubblicazioni del Centro Studi Don Bosco, Studi storici 8). Roma: LAS, 1980 [cited as Stella, *DB-EcSoc*].

F. Desramaut, *Les Mémoires I de G.B. Lemoyne. Étude d'un ouvrage fondamental sur la jeunesse de Saint Jean Bosco*. Lyon: Maison d'études Saint-Jean-Bosco, 1962, (esp. p. 250-258) [cited as Desramaut, *Mem I*].

<sup>2</sup> "This dream [of 1844] lasted most of the night. [...] At the time I understood little of its meaning since I put little faith in it. But my understanding grew as its premonitions came true one after another. Later, together with another dream, it even served as a basis for my decisions" [*MO-En*, 210]. Later in life, as he looked back on these experiences, he saw in them a proof of divine guidance: "[These memoirs] will serve to make known how God himself has always been our guide" [*Ibid.*, 3]; "When I went to Rome in 1858 to speak to the Pope about the Salesian Congregation, he asked me to tell him everything that had even the suggestion of the supernatural about it. It was only then, for the first time, that I said anything about this dream which I had when I was nine or ten years old" [*Ibid.*, 20].

We are not dealing with a one-time occurrence. Don Bosco himself states that the original vocation dream was repeated at various times:

The dream I had had at Morialdo remained deeply imprinted on my mind; indeed it had occurred at other times in much clearer terms, so that if I wanted to believe it and follow its suggestion I would have to choose the priesthood, toward which I actually felt inclined.<sup>3</sup>

We are evidently dealing with the genre of the vocation-mission dream—a religious experience that is well documented in Christian hagiography, a segment of a wider role of dreams in Christian culture. This essay will not deal with this particular area, though such a study would no doubt be helpful for an understanding of Don Bosco's own experiences by situating them in a wider context.<sup>4</sup> It will instead be concerned with a study of the many reports and testimonies of Don Bosco's vocation dreams. Such a study will entail a critical examination of the dream texts of the *Biographical Memoirs* and their sources, and of the way in which Don Bosco's biographer, Father John Baptist Lemoyne, has arranged and interpreted them. The ultimate aim is to evaluate the significance of the dream experiences for Don Bosco's vocational decisions in their actual historical circumstances.

The only treatment of the subject that has come to my attention is Fr. Francis Desramaut's valuable examination of the vocation dream's texts and witnesses, a chapter in his vast and masterful source-critical study of the first volume of the *Biographical Memoirs*.<sup>5</sup> Since this author is concerned solely with the first volume of the *Biographical Memoirs*, only the vocation dream narratives relating to Don Bosco's childhood, adolescence and early manhood come under scrutiny. His study does not include the *Dream of 1844*, nor the two

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<sup>3</sup> *MO-En*, 110. Further on in the *Memoirs*, after relating a dream which he had in 1844 and which he calls "a sequel [appendice] to the one I had had at Becchi when I was nine years old," he concludes: "Later, together with another dream, [this dream] served as a blueprint for my decisions" [*MO-En*, 209f.].

<sup>4</sup> Such a discussion would take us too far afield. Works on the subject in English (though not restricted to the subject of vocation-mission dreaming) are the following: For a discussion of the dream in Christian culture, Morton Kelsey, *Dreams: The Dark Speech of the Spirit*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968; re-edited as *God, Dreams and Revelations*. Minneapolis:Augsburg Press, 1974; and the short and popular, *Dreams: A Way to Listen to God*. New York: Paulist Press, 1978. For a discussion of the religious and psychological value of dreams, John Sanford, *Dreams, God's Forgotten Language*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1968.

<sup>5</sup> Desramaut feels that his treatment is shorter than the subject deserves: "I have had to summarize here what would have been the matter of a long article." [Desramaut, *Mem I*, p. 250, note 128]. I am not aware that such an article has ever been written.

*Dreams of the Holy Martyrs*, so-called, that follow in the second volume of the *Biographical Memoirs*. These, however, will be included in the present essay.

## Part I. Witnesses and Reports of Don Bosco's Vocation-Mission Dreams

### 1. The Vocation-Mission Dream Line in Lemoyne's *Biographical Memoirs*

This survey of the textual evidence of the vocation dreams will begin by examining the reports edited in the *Biographical Memoirs*. These constitute the final stage of the tradition of the dream texts and of its biographical interpretation. It will then attempt to describe with appropriate critical comments the tradition of the texts (i.e., the prior reports on which they are based) <sup>6</sup> as Lemoyne construed this tradition. It should be emphasized that Lemoyne's construction of the tradition, as well as his overarching interpretation of Don Bosco's vocation dream line and its significance, needs critical evaluation.

After speaking about a dream which John, as a seminarian, related to his friend Joseph Turco during a summer vacation at the Sussambrino farm, Lemoyne continues:

At this point we cannot refrain from commenting on the gradual and logical progress of the various extraordinary dreams that followed one upon another [to guide Don Bosco in his vocation]. At the age of nine, John Bosco first learnt of the great mission that would be entrusted to him; at sixteen, he is given assurance that the material resources needed to shelter and to feed countless youngsters would not be wanting; at nineteen, a categorical injunction makes it clear that he is not free to refuse the mission entrusted to him; at twenty-one he is shown the type of boy whose spiritual welfare he is especially called to look after; at twenty-two, a big city, Turin, is pointed out to him as the field where his apostolic work must begin, and its center established. Nor do these mysterious instructions cease at this point. As we shall see, they will continue as needed until the completion of God's work. <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The text of these reports is provided in Appendices to which the reader will be referred.

<sup>7</sup> *IBM* I, 382; *EBM* I, 317.

The further 'instructions' referred to here are the *Dream of 1844* and the two *Dreams of the Holy Martyrs* that follow in the second volume of the *Biographical Memoirs*, and presumably later dreams as well.

Ceria follows Lemoyne when he writes:

After the first dream at the age nine or ten Don Bosco had six other dreams, each of which shed light on some further aspect of what that first dream, as it gradually unfolded, was calling him to. Two of these [additional dreams] have already been mentioned—the dream at the age of sixteen, in which he was given assurance that the material resources needed for the attainment of his goal would not be wanting; and the dream at the age of 19, in which he received the express command to look after young people. Two other dreams followed which are not recorded in the *Memoirs of the Oratory*—the first, at the age of 21, in which he was given to understand the type of youngster he was to look after (cf. *EBM* I, 284f.); the other at the age of 22, in which the city of Turin was pointed out to him as the place where his apostolate was to begin (cf. *EBM* I, 315f.) There are two further dreams: the one presently under consideration [the *Dream of 1844*] and the one referred to at the end of the present paragraph and given in the note [the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs*]. In the former he saw clearly the great work that was to rise at Valdocco; in the latter he learned how he was to bind helpers to himself—forecasting the Salesian Oratory and the Salesian Society.<sup>8</sup>

What are we to think of such a construction? It appears that in his effort to paint a charismatic portrayal of Don Bosco for his readers, Lemoyne used and interpreted all available testimonies of Don Bosco's vocation-mission dream to construct a 'logical' dream line tending to show that Don Bosco and his work was guided by a pre-determined divine plan. As our discussion will bear out, he achieves his goal through an uncritical use and interpretation of the sources.<sup>9</sup>

Part I of this essay, therefore, will be devoted to an analysis of the dream texts themselves, as recorded in the *Biographical Memoirs* and in the

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<sup>8</sup> *MO-Ce* 134f., note to line 8.

<sup>9</sup> Desramaut writes, for example: "The dream [Don Bosco had] at the age of nine was repeated without any doubt. Don Bosco's own testimony cannot be disputed [cf. note 3 above, and text relating thereto] But Fr. Lemoyne's dates and descriptions are not at all firm. [...] Faced with related texts which were in essential agreement as to content, but which diverged in non-essential details, he failed to recognize them as true doublets" [Desramaut, *Mem* I, 255 and 256].

sources. In Part II, taking Don Bosco's own *Memoirs* as a starting point, an attempt will be made to understand the significance of his vocation-mission dream and its recurrence in the actual historical junctures of vocational decision.

## 2. Text and Source-critical Study of the Vocation-Mission Dream Narratives in Vol. I of the *Biographical Memoirs*

In the first and second volumes of the *Biographical Memoirs*, Lemoyne records no less than eight occurrences of vocation dreams that he identifies as stages of the divine guidance. In each instance he provides: a context, that is, the circumstance and the period in Don Bosco's life at which it occurred; a dream narrative derived from source texts available to him; and various interpretative comments on the significance of the dream. The list is as follows:

- (1) The First Dream at the Age of Nine (the Becchi/Morialdo Dream, the original vocation-mission dream which Don Bosco relates in his *Memoirs*);<sup>10</sup>
- (2) The Dream at the Age of Sixteen (First Turco-Related Dream);<sup>11</sup>
- (3) The Dream at the Age of Nineteen (Dream of 'Imperious Command');<sup>12</sup>
- (4) The Dream at the Age of Twenty-one ('Clothes-Mending' Dream);<sup>13</sup>
- (5) The Dream at the Age of Twenty-two (Second Turco-Related Dream);<sup>14</sup>
- (6) The Dream of 1844 (the dream which Don Bosco called, "a sequel to the one I had at Becchi at about nine years of age," and which he relates in his *Memoirs*);<sup>15</sup>
- (7) The First Dream of the Holy Martyrs;<sup>16</sup>
- (8) The Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. *IBM* I 123ff.; *EBM* I, 95f.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *IBM* I, 243f.; *EBM* I, 181f.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *IBM* I, 305f.; *EBM* I, 229.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *IBM* I, 381f.; *EBM* I, 229.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *IBM* I, 424f.; *EBM* I, 315f.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *IBM* II, 243ff.; *EBM* II, 190f.

<sup>16</sup> *IBM* II, 297-301; *EBM* II, 232ff.

<sup>17</sup> *IBM* II, 342ff.; *EBM* II, 267f.

As expected, Lemoyne's own *Documenti* served as the immediate source for the dream narratives of the *Biographical Memoirs*. The above-listed dream texts had already been fashioned in *Documenti* before they were edited in the *Biographical Memoirs*.

For the compilation of the first and second volumes both of *Documenti* (from 1885) and of the *Biographical Memoirs* (in 1898 and 1901), the autobiographical *Memoirs* of the Founder were available to Lemoyne in Ms. form.<sup>18</sup> Obviously these were a prime source. But apart from a few passing references and sketchy reports,<sup>19</sup> Don Bosco's *Memoirs* offer extended accounts of only two dreams, the *First Dream* and the *Dream of 1844*.<sup>20</sup> What other sources did Lemoyne have at his disposal, and how did he use them?

To answer these questions, and hence and to delineate the tradition of the dream texts, we will review each of the dreams listed above. We will examine its sources, with appropriate text and source-critical comments. This will be done in two sections. First, we will examine the five vocation-mission dream narratives in the first volume of the *Biographical Memoirs*. These span the period of Don Bosco's childhood, adolescence and early manhood, and constitute an earlier 'cycle'. Next, we will look at the last three dream narratives in the second volume of the *Biographical Memoirs*. These are set in the oratory period, and appear as a second and later 'cycle'.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Note 1 above, and Desramaut, *Mem. I*, 116ff.

<sup>19</sup> The references are to the recurrence of the dream [cf. note 3 above, and text relating thereto]. Sketchy reports are given of a *Dream of 'Reprimand'* [cf. *MO-En*, 48] and of a *Dream on the Franciscans* [cf. *MO-En* 110f.].

In spite of the fact that this latter dream occurred in a context of vocational decision, it is not regarded as a vocation-mission dream, for it does not contain any of the images of Don Bosco's apostolate which are characteristic of the vocation dreams. It is not, however, deprived of all significance in this respect.

It might be remarked that the *Dream on the Franciscans* is not to be construed as reflecting actual religious life situations in the Franciscan monastery of Our lady of Peace. It manifests rather the conflict raging in John Bosco's soul, as he tried to flee from the 'awesome responsibility' of priestly life and apostolate in the world (which was his vocation) in order to seek the peace and security of the monastery.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *MO-En* 18-21 and 209f.

(1) *The First Dream (the Becchi or Morialdo Dream—the original vocation-mission dream)* <sup>21</sup>

“At the age of nine, John Bosco first learnt of the great mission that would be entrusted to him.” <sup>22</sup>

The text of this dream narrative in the *Biographical Memoirs* is transcribed from *Documenti*; and, as the author himself avers, it is taken directly from Don Bosco’s *Memoirs*. Both in *Documenti* and in the *Biographical Memoirs*, Lemoine prefaces the dream text with a kind of ‘theological’ introduction and with an explicit reference to his source. In *Documenti* he writes:

To persons destined to accomplish great things for the salvation of souls the merciful God is wont to make known, by some sign, the mission to which they are called. This is what he did in John Bosco’s case. Here is how he himself relates the experience in his memoirs. <sup>23</sup>

The more ample rephrasing of this introduction in the *Biographical Memoirs* has the effect of placing greater emphasis on the charismatic nature of Don Bosco’s vocation:

In his great mercy God is wont to make known to people, through some sign, the vocation in which they are destined to undertake important projects for the salvation of souls. This is what he did in John Bosco’s case. And thereafter, throughout his life, he continued to guide him by his all-powerful hand at every stage and in his every undertaking. [Joel 2, 8, prophesying an abundance of dreams and visions in eschatological times, is quoted.] And John Bosco did have such visions; and here is how he himself relates his first dream in his memoirs. <sup>24</sup>

However, neither in *Documenti* nor in the *Biographical Memoirs* does Lemoine transcribe the text of the *Memoirs* with perfect fidelity. Generally his

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Appendix I, where the text of the *Biographical Memoirs* and that of the Berto Ms. of Don Bosco’s *Memoirs* are given for comparison.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Note 7 above and text relating thereto.

<sup>23</sup> *Doc I* [P. I, C., XVI “Il primo sogno”], 68.: *FDBMicro* 967 B2.

<sup>24</sup> Appendix I, B.(T-B).



editing, more developed in the *Biographical Memoirs* than in *Documenti*, is concerned merely with punctuation, spelling, paragraphing, and a few stylistic touches. But there are also some real, though minor, changes.

One change relates to the time of the dream. In the Mss. the opening words of Don Bosco's narrative are, "At that age [at that point in my life, referring to the time he was attending Fr. Lacqua's school in Capriglio] I had a dream". In *Documenti* Lemoine specifies the age between brackets: "At that age (nine years) I had a dream." And accordingly, toward the end, where Don Bosco had written, "At the age of nine to ten", Lemoine simply writes, "At the age of nine". In the *Biographical Memoirs*, at the beginning of the narrative, Lemoine resolves the parenthesis by the phrase, "At about nine years of age", and the time phrase at the end is left unchanged.<sup>25</sup> The content is not substantially altered.

A comment on Don Bosco's own editing of the dream narrative in the *Memoirs* may be helpful. Don Bosco's heavily scored and emended rough copy<sup>26</sup> was faithfully transcribed by Fr. Joachim Berto in neat, almost calligraphic script. This was subjected to further correction by Don Bosco. Hence the Berto text, as corrected by Don Bosco, is regarded as definitive.<sup>27</sup>

Don Bosco's most significant editing of the practically flawless Berto transcription is in the form of additions.<sup>28</sup> Apart from these there are only a few slight stylistic changes.

Obviously, Don Bosco's original rough copy with its laborious corrections is to be taken into consideration for a judgment on the dream experience itself. Don Bosco's emendations of his own original draft (mostly in the dream section)<sup>29</sup> are in the form of stylistic changes, cancellations, interlinear corrections and marginal additions. None of these alter the contents substantially, although the net result is a more ample, some times more detailed, narrative. The most significant correction occurs in the words spoken by the Lady to John. Don Bosco had originally written, "*Renditi sano, forte, robusto.*" Then he struck a heavy line across the word '*sano*' [healthy] and wrote the word '*umile*' [humble] above it.<sup>30</sup> This may represent later moralizing reflection.

<sup>25</sup> Other changes will be apparent through a comparison of the text of Don Bosco's *Memoirs* with that of the *Biographical Memoirs*, in Appendix I, A (T-A) and B (T-B).

<sup>26</sup> MO-DB, 5-8: FDBMicro 57 A6-9. Cf. note 1 above.

<sup>27</sup> This is the text used by Lemoine in both *Documenti* and *Biographical Memoirs*, and by Ceria in his 1946 Italian edition [cf. note 1 above]. This is also the text given in Appendix I, A.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Appendix I, A, *italicized* text.

<sup>29</sup> MO-DB: FDBMicro 57 A6-9.

<sup>30</sup> MO-DB: FDBMicro 57 A7 (bottom).

The foregoing text and source-critical comments show that the tradition of the text of the *First Dream* is straightforward. The text is taken directly and with substantial, though not literal, fidelity, from Don Bosco's own written testimony.<sup>31</sup>

## (2) *The Dream at the Age of 16 (First Turco-Related Dream)*<sup>32</sup>

*"At sixteen he is given assurance that the material resources needed to shelter and to feed countless youngsters would not be wanting."*<sup>33</sup>

In the *Biographical Memoirs* this dream narrative is a compilation of three separate source texts<sup>34</sup> with editorial interpretations. The way these source texts are brought together shows considerable ingenuity, and stands as a good example of Lemoyne's editorial method. We will look at each element in turn.

[a] The immediate source of the text of the first section<sup>35</sup> is a long marginal note in *Documenti*, in Lemoyne's hand, written alongside the printed text of the *First* or *Becchi Dream*.<sup>36</sup> It describes a dream which young John Bosco is said to have had when he was at school in Castelnuovo (1830-1831) and which he related to a certain Joseph Turco, 'a schoolmate' of his. Mr. Turco is said to have told the story of this dream when he visited the Oratory on October 30, 1875.

From the opening words of the third section,<sup>37</sup> "This report was made to us by Mr. Joseph Turco himself," one might be led to the conclusion that Lemoyne had himself heard the story from that gentleman, and that, therefore,

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<sup>31</sup> As will be discussed below, Lemoyne had other narratives of the original vocation-mission dream at his disposal that were not directly derived from Don Bosco. He rightly opted for the prime source. But instead of exercising critical judgment on the other narratives, he used them as further separate dreams within his construct of a line of divine guidance. This is in full accord with his compilation methods [cf. F. Desramaut, "Come hanno lavorato gli autori delle Memorie Biografiche," in *Don Bosco nella storia: Atti del 1<sup>o</sup> Congresso Internazionale di Studi su Don Bosco (Università Pontificia Salesiana, Roma, 16-20 gennaio 1989)* (Pubblicazioni del Centro Studi Don Bosco, Studi storici 10), ed. Mario Midali, Roma: LAS, 1990, p. 45-60; A. Lenti, "Don Bosco's Boswell: John Baptist Lemoyne—The Man and His Work," *Journal of Salesian Studies I* (1990:2) 36ff].

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Appendix II.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. note 7 above and text relating thereto.

<sup>34</sup> In Appendix II, B these are distinguished as B-1, B-2 and B-3.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Appendix II, B-1.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Doc I*, 68f.: *FDBMicro* 967 B2f.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Appendix II, B-3 (T-B-3).

the *Documenti* text is a direct report. This, however, is not the case. The *Documenti* text is taken from a report by Fr. Julius Barberis.<sup>38</sup>

This account is in Barberis' hand, and it is curiously entitled, "*Primo Sogno o Visione di D.B. a 15 an.*" (Don Bosco's First Dream or Vision at the age of 15).<sup>39</sup> It bears at the beginning of every line the heavy double slash which is Lemoyne's marker for his use of the text. Joseph Turco related that one day John Bosco, in a joyful mood, told him and his father that he had had a dream from which he learned that he would be able to continue his studies, to become a priest and to spend the rest of his life in the education of young people.

In transcribing the Barberis report for *Documenti*, Lemoyne shortens and restyles the opening sentence and introduces a number of smaller revisions that do not substantially affect the contents. At one point, however, he misconstrues Barberis' text. In reporting young John Bosco's words, he writes: "*Vorrei finir quest' anno il latino e farmi prete*" (I should like to finish my [study of] Latin this year and go on to the priesthood), instead of Barberis' "*Vorrei finito quest' anno studiare il latino e farmi prete*" (I should like, once this year is over, to study Latin and go on to the priesthood).

In the *Biographical Memoirs* that anomaly is removed; the story as a whole is rewritten to a considerable extent (to a lesser degree in the significant dialogue); and some new concepts, such as 'our Lady', are introduced.<sup>40</sup>

To tie together the first and second section of his narrative in the *Biographical Memoirs*, Lemoyne uses an editorial device—a 'bridge' the purpose of which is to join two different sources, thus creating a time sequence in the story:<sup>41</sup> "The following day, on his way back from the parish church, where he had been to Mass, [John] paid a visit to the Turco family [...]."

[b] This leads to Lucy Turco's report. This is not recorded in *Documenti*. It came to Lemoyne later through Fr. Michael Rua's testimony at

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Appendix II, A-1.

<sup>39</sup> It may be on account of the words, "*Primo Sogno*," that Lemoyne entered this text in *Documenti* alongside the Becchi Dream.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Appendix II, B-1 compared with A-1. The *Documenti* text is not provided in Appendix II; but it may be gauged by reference to the Barberis text (A-1), keeping in mind the observations made above.

<sup>41</sup> The contents of this 'bridge' are not derived from any particular source. The device is used merely to provide a chronological sequence or framework. Desramaut discusses this editorial technique of Lemoyne's, quoting this very passage as an example, cf. Desramaut, *Mem I*, 276f.

the Diocesan Process given in 1895.<sup>42</sup> Rua's testimony contains two separate reports. The first is by Lucy Turco. She is quoted by Rua as saying that one morning John Bosco in a happy mood told her and her brothers (Joseph and John Turco) about *a dream in which a Lady of noble bearing, leading a large flock, called him by name and entrusted the flock to him*. The second is by 'others', by which expression in all probability Rua means that he had it from 'tradition.' This second part of the testimony describes *John's apprehension at the difficulty of the charge, and the Lady's reassurance, "Have no fear, I will help you."*

In the *Biographical Memoirs* Lemoyne transcribes the dream parts of Rua's testimony almost word for word, but ascribes everything to Lucy. The 'others' are not mentioned. This compiled report ascribed to Lucy does not really tally (though it does not clash) with that of her brother Joseph. But Lemoyne is probably right in taking the two as referring to the same dream experience.

But which dream experience? It appears that Rua intended to refer to the *First* (or *Becchi*) *Dream*. The opening and closing words of his testimony seem to make this clear: John manifested an inclination to be a priest *from early childhood*; his desire increased after having a certain dream, but it met with *drawbacks arising from family circumstances* and with *opposition from his half-brother Anthony*. Overall, such a description points to the context of the original vocation dream at the age of nine and to the period that followed it, rather than to a dream at the age of sixteen, when Anthony had pretty much ceased to be a factor.<sup>43</sup> Also, the dream narrative, sketchy as it is, contains images that match those of the *Becchi Dream*, and add nothing new.

In this connection, the circumstances described by Mr. Turco should be examined a little more closely. This is the gentleman who also testified at the Diocesan Process in 1892, and his testimony on that occasion, to be more fully discussed below, is helpful here as well.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Appendix II, A-2. Rua was the twenty-sixth of forty-five witnesses called, and he testified in thirty-eight sessions from April 29 to July 10, 1895 [cf. Stella, DB III]. The testimony in question was given on April 29.

For the *Biographical Memoirs* (from 1898), but not for the Documenti (from 1885), Lemoyne made use of the testimonies given at the Diocesan Process (1890-1896), in spite of what he writes in the preface to the first volume: "My work could be considered complete only if the canonical inquiry into Don Bosco's life were already terminated and we could read and quote the depositions of sworn witnesses. This we cannot do until the canonization proceedings are over" [*EBM* I, xii]. The fact is that he found a way of circumventing this standing prohibition [cf. Desramaut, *Mem* I, 218f].

<sup>43</sup> By the time John was sixteen the Bosco inheritance had been divided by Margaret, precisely in order to neutralize Anthony's opposition and to set John free [cf. *MO-En*, 48f.].

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Joseph Turco's testimony in Appendix V, A-1 (T-A-1). From scattered bits of information we gather that Joseph was the son of Dominic Turco and Catherine Pilone, and that the elder Turcos had at least two other children, Lucy and John. According to his own testimony [cf. Appendix V, A-1-a (T-A-1-a)] Joseph was eighty-two years of age in 1892. He would, then, have been born in 1810 and would have been twenty-one

In Barberis' account he states that his own vineyard adjoined that of John's father ("*attigua a quella di suo padre*"). Lemoyne in *Documenti* writes that it was located near that of Mamma Margaret ("*vicina a quella di Mamma Margherita*"). In the *Biographical Memoirs* he emends this seemingly misleading description and, in the light of what he knows of Don Bosco's life, he writes that the vineyard was located in a region called *Renenta* and that it bordered on the Sussambrino property. Sussambrino was the name of the farm which Joseph Bosco, together with a partner, began to work as a sharecropper, presumably in 1830-1831. The Sussambrino vineyard belonged neither to John's father (dead eighteen years before) nor to John's mother. Could Joseph Turco, in the story he told at the Oratory in 1875, have possibly been speaking of a vineyard which the Boscoss owned, presumably in the Becchi area, and not of the Sussambrino vineyard? (Did the Turcos own a vineyard in the Becchi locality?) Contrary to this possibility, however, stands the fact that in his testimony of 1892 Joseph Turco speaks in similar terms of adjoining vineyards at Sussambrino-Renenta—his own and that "which his parents worked as sharecroppers (*che i suoi genitori coltivavano a masserizia*)."<sup>45</sup> It was, of course, his brother that worked the Sussambrino as a tenant farmer. However, Margaret would have gone to live there with Joseph, and John would 'go home' there for the holidays. Joseph Turco confirms this in his testimony in 1892, speaking, however, of the time when John Bosco was a seminarian.<sup>45</sup> But this may have been true also of the time when John was attending school at Castelnuovo.<sup>46</sup>

It is more probable, then, that in the light of Joseph Turco's testimony in 1892 the time to which he refers in his story in 1875 is the year 1831 and the setting is the vineyards in the Sussambrino-Renenta locality.

years of age in 1831, when John Bosco was sixteen and was attending school at Castelnuovo. They could hardly have been schoolmates. Mr. Turco, who lived in Castelnuovo, states that he became acquainted with John Bosco at that time, but not that they were at school together. It must have been Barberis who drew that conclusion when he heard Mr. Turco relate the episode in 1875. Cf. also Stella, *DB* III, 75, 80 and 118 (where one should read Joseph, not John, Turco).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Appendix V, A-1-a (T-A-1-a). For the Bosco property and its location (all in the Becchi area), cf. Stella, *DB-EcSoc*, 15-22.

<sup>46</sup> Some time in 1831, Don Bosco's brother, Joseph, (with partner Joseph Febraro) undertook to work the Sussambrino as a tenant farmer or sharecropper. Joseph lived at the farm. Don Bosco in his *Memoirs* states that when he was attending school at Castelnuovo, he had to make four trips back and forth, covering twenty km. every day [cf. *MO-En* 49]. This implies that he walked to and from Becchi, not to and from Sussambrino, which was located just outside Castelnuovo. Joseph Turco in his testimony confirms this: "In the evening [John Bosco] would return home to his parents (*genitori*) in the hamlet of Becchi" [cf. Appendix V, A-1-a (T-A-1-a)]. Perhaps in the winter of 1830, when John started attending school at Castelnuovo, Joseph was not yet established at Sussambrino, but he would have been by early spring, 1831. Joseph worked the Sussambrino farm until he returned to Becchi in 1839.

But there is a further question. Was the Turco-Related Dream a new vocation dream at the age of 16, or was it simply the Becchi dream recalled? Clearly the Turco narrative as gathered by Barberis presents it as a new experience. Young John appeared habitually worried about his future; but one morning he turned up in the vineyard in a happy mood, and related that he had had a reassuring dream the night before: "Last night (*Sta notte*) I had a dream."<sup>47</sup> Desramaut, however, does not regard such a statement as decisive, taking into consideration also the years that had elapsed between the occurrence and the testimony.<sup>48</sup>

A note appended to the *Documenti* transcription of the Barberis report is of interest in this respect. It reads: "N.B. This dream occurs again at 16, and 19 years of age, and at other times (*N.B. Questo sogno lo ripete ai 16, ai 19 anni e in seguito*)".<sup>49</sup> It would seem that, at the time, Lemoine regarded this text as a doublet of the original vocation dream. Hence he wrote it in as a marginal note alongside the *Becchi Dream*, and warned the reader that the dream would occur again at the age of 16, etc. In the *Biographical Memoirs*, however, this text is given as the dream at the age of 16, and the note is omitted.<sup>50</sup> Thus a specific historical context for the whole is created in accordance with Lemoine's construction of the vocation dream line.

[c] To complete the compilation of this dream narrative in the *Biographical Memoirs*,<sup>51</sup> Lemoine makes two further points. The first refers to the sources jointly: "We have this story from Mr. Joseph Turco himself and from Lucy Turco." By 'we', Lemoine may mean, 'we, the Salesians', rather than 'I personally', for, as indicated in the foregoing comments, he himself

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Appendix II, A-1 (T-A-1).

<sup>48</sup> "In my opinion, positive arguments in support of a new dream experience are still lacking. It is likely that John related to Joseph Turco a dream he had had *recently* [...]. But must one insist on such details? Had there been no contact between the Turcos and the Boscos from about 1825 on, the time of the dream at the age of nine, or were there contacts only from 1830 on, as Lemoine believes? If the latter be the case, then the doubling would be justified. However, the possibility that his memory could have been interfered with or hampered should be considered [...]" [Desramaut, *Mem I*, 256, note 162].

<sup>49</sup> Desramaut remarks that the physical style of the note differs from that of the main text. It may have been added later from some source, perhaps Don Bosco himself [cf. Desramaut, *Mem I*, 253, note 149].

<sup>50</sup> It may be that, when the first volume of *Documenti* was fashioned (1885, the marginal note having been added later), Lemoine had not yet fully elaborated his theory of a vocation dream series with its predetermined step-by-step line of divine guidance. Hence he had not yet proceeded to organize, as he does instead in the *Biographical Memoirs*, all available testimonies of the vocation dream in accordance with that theory.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Appendix II, B-3 (T-B-3).

obtained the reports from Barberis' and Rua's accounts. However, as will be seen later in other instances, Lemoyne has a tendency to include himself as a source.

Secondly, Lemoyne finds a confirmation of this dream experience in Don Bosco's *Memoirs*: "It corroborates a brief and simple statement in Don Bosco's own *Memoirs*: 'At the age of sixteen I had another dream.'" The reference here is clearly to the so-called *Dream of 'Reprimand'* of which Don Bosco offers the briefest sketch in his *Memoirs*: "At that time [not, as Lemoyne interprets it, 'At the age of 16'] I had another dream. In it I was sharply rebuked for having put my hope in human beings rather than in our good Father in heaven.<sup>52</sup> "At that time" refers to the period of grieving following Fr. John Calosso's death when John was about to enroll in, or was already attending, grade school at Castelnuovo.<sup>53</sup> He was indeed going on sixteen at the time, though Lemoyne's quote is inaccurate. The chief problem here, however, is that Lemoyne's claim that the *Dream of 'Reprimand'* corresponds, in content or otherwise, to the *Turco-Related Dream* is really without foundation. He seemed to have realized the problem and he tried to alleviate it by adding: "I am convinced that he saw and was given to understand a lot more than he related [in his sketchy report of the dream], which was merely intended to give vent to the pain that filled his heart."<sup>54</sup>

The foregoing text and source-critical comments show that Lemoyne's compilation of the dream at the age of 16 in the *Biographical Memoirs* is indeed based on source texts. But, first, it is likely that these texts do not represent a new dream which John had at that age, but refer back to the original Becchi dream; and secondly, his reference to Don Bosco's *Memoirs* for support is probably gratuitous.

### (3) *The Dream at the Age of 19*<sup>55</sup>

"At nineteen a categorical injunction makes it clear that he is not free to refuse the mission entrusted to him."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. Appendix II, A-3 (T-A-3). In Don Bosco's original draft of the *Memoirs*, this sketchy notice on the dream, "In quel tempo [...] Padre Celeste," was added as a marginal note [MO-DB [First Decade, 4\*]: FDBMicro 57 B7].

<sup>53</sup> Fr. Calosso died on November 21, 1830. John had met him a year earlier, and had been under his tutorship that whole year.

<sup>54</sup> Appendix II, B-3 (T-B-3).

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Appendix III.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Note 7 above, and text relating thereto.

This is the so-called *Dream of 'Imperious Command'*. The immediate source for the text of this dream in the *Biographical Memoirs* is a short printed marginal note to the chapter '*Scelta dello Stato*' in *Documenti*.<sup>57</sup> No indication of origin is given in *Documenti*; but in the *Biographical Memoirs*, however, the source is given as Barberis: "[Don Bosco] confided [the dream] to Fr. Julius Barberis around 1870."<sup>58</sup> This reference could not be verified.<sup>59</sup>

The dream narrative is brief and sparing in detail. *Our divine Savior, dressed in white, resplendent with light, and leading a throng of children, orders John to look after them. When John objects, the Savior persists in his categorical demand, till John finally takes charge of the youngsters.*

Clearly it was the 'imperious command' or 'categorical demand' detail that prompted Lemoyne's interpretation quoted above. Taken literally, this detail is unique to this dream narrative. Otherwise the images of the dream, even though only generally sketched, clearly match those of the Becchi Dream. But even the 'categorical injunction' is not altogether unparalleled. In the *Becchi Dream* he was also 'ordered' to take charge of the children, though the command is not qualified as 'imperious': "At that moment there appeared a Man of dignified bearing, mature in years and nobly dressed. He wore a long white cloak, and his face shone with such brightness that I could not look directly at him. He addressed me by name, *ordered me* to take charge of those children [...]" The parallel is striking.

We have no way of telling what the original context of the Barberis account might have been. From the parallel drawn above, one is led to believe that it may have been just a sketchy delineation by Don Bosco of the original *Becchi Dream*. Lemoyne, however, by his technique of association places it in a specific context of vocational decision.

In *Documenti* (where, as indicated, it appears as a detached marginal note), the dream acquires its context from being associated with John Bosco's vocational discernment, as the rhetoric year (the fifth year of secondary studies) was drawing to a close. It is specifically associated with the chapter of Don Bosco's *Memoirs* entitled, "Choosing One's State in Life." In that connection, Don Bosco speaks of the recurrence of the Becchi Dream and of his own struggle to discern his vocation. Don Bosco is then quoted as saying that the *Becchi*

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Appendix III, A-2. The marginal additions in *Documenti* are in both printed and handwritten form. A printed note is usually glued in the ample margin provided for this purpose [cf. note 1 above].

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Appendix III, B-1; *EBM* I, 229.

<sup>59</sup> A search through the Barberis chronicles and dream collections proved fruitless.



*Dream* was still on his mind and that it had occurred "at other times" (though apparently not *at this time*), with its obvious suggestion of priestly vocation. Then Lemoyne remarks: "On this period in his life Don Bosco has left us lines written out of admirable humility." For, apart from not wanting to put faith in dreams, he felt unworthy of the priesthood, because of (as quoted by Lemoyne) "my manner of living, and my absolute lack of the virtue necessary to that state."<sup>60</sup>

In the *Biographical Memoirs*<sup>61</sup> the context of the dream remains that of Don Bosco's vocational discernment, and more specifically that of the Franciscan episode. But in dealing with the period of Don Bosco's vocational discernment toward the end of his secondary studies at Chieri, Lemoyne undertakes an elaborate reorganization of his materials. Essentially, he records two crises. The probable reason for this doubling is that he has data the preservation of which requires such a procedure. The first crisis is dated late during the humanities year (fourth year of secondary studies). For this he has the document of John's admission by the Franciscans, dated April 18, 1834.<sup>62</sup> He probably also has a report about Fr. Cafasso's role in dissuading John from entering the Franciscans (unless this be a conjecture of his). The second crisis is dated to the end of the rhetoric year (fifth year of secondary studies) before entry into the seminary. For this he has Don Bosco's statement in the *Memoirs*, where he also finds that Louis Comollo and Fr. Comollo play a role. In the *Biographical Memoirs* the first crisis, occurring as it does in the context of the Franciscan episode is the more important of the two and is the true parallel to the one described in Don Bosco's *Memoirs*. The second crisis, although it incorporates some important words of the *Memoirs* and Comollo's role, appears as an additional episode of a protracted crisis, and no more.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Appendix III, A-1 (T-A-1), A-2 (T-A-2). *Documenti* follows *MO* [cf. *Doc I*, 153f.: *FDBMicro* 968 D1f. and *MO-Ce* 79ff.; *Mo-En*, 110f.]. In both the sequence is as follows: vocational discernment as the rhetoric year (fifth year of secondary studies) draws to a close; reference to the recurrence of the Becchi dream "at other times" with suggestion of the priesthood; John's doubts and 'humility' statement; (in *Documenti* the *Dream of 'Imperious Command'* is added at this point;); lack of a spiritual guide; John decision to join the Franciscans, and reasons for wanting to become a religious; application, examination, acceptance for the Franciscans; (at this point in *Documenti* a marginal note in Lemoyne's hand records the document of acceptance;); the *Dream* on the Franciscans raises doubts in John's mind; the confessor is no help; the 'incident' and the 'obstacles'; Comollo's advice; decision to enter the seminary.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Appendix III, B-1 (T-B-1).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Secondo Caselle, *Giovanni Bosco a Chieri 1831-1841: Dieci anni che valgono una vita*. Torino: Edizioni Acclaim, 1988, p. 97]. Lemoyne transcribes this document both in *Documenti* and [cf. note 60 above] in the *Biographical Memoirs* [cf. *IBM I*, 301f; *EBM I*, 226].

<sup>63</sup> The contents and sequence in the first crisis are as follows [cf. *IBM I*, 286-306; *EBM I*, 214-229 compared with *MO-Ce*, 79ff.; *MO-En*, 110f]: vocational discernment late during the humanities year (fourth year of secondary studies); first (accurate) quoted reference to the recurrence of the Becchi *Dream* at 'other

Lemoyne reorganizes the material at the following crucial points:

(1) In the *Biographical Memoirs* the passage from Don Bosco's *Memoirs* on the recurrence of the Becchi (Morialdo) Dream is quoted twice — the first time correctly,<sup>64</sup> the second time incorrectly for the purpose of introducing the *Dream of 'Imperious Command'* at the age of nineteen.<sup>65</sup>

(2) In *Documenti* the Franciscan episode, with its *Dream on the Franciscans*, is related after and independently of the *Dream of 'Imperious Command'*; in the *Biographical Memoirs*, the order is reversed.

(3) Don Bosco's vocation crisis as described in *Documenti* (following the *Memoirs*) is resolved through consultation with Louis Comollo and his uncle, Fr. Comollo of Cinzano; in the *Biographical Memoirs* Fr. Cafasso plays a role in the resolution of both crises, the first time alone and probably on Mr. Evasio Savio's advice;<sup>66</sup> the second time, in a secondary capacity together with Fr. Cinzano of Castelnuovo, after Fr. Comollo has been consulted.

It may be noted that both in *Documenti* and in the *Biographical Memoirs* Lemoyne quotes Don Bosco's expression of 'admirable humility,' as follows: "My own manner of life, and my absolute lack of the virtue necessary to that state [the priesthood], filled me with doubts and made my decision very

times' with suggestion of the priesthood; John's doubts and 'humility' statement; lack of a spiritual guide; John's decision to join the Franciscans and reasons for wanting to become a religious; John obtains necessary papers, but Mamma Margaret is not told; John's return to Chieri with new lodging arrangements; life at the Pianta Café; John's piety, good example, apostolate, lessons to sacristan Palazzolo; Pastor Dassano tells Mamma Margaret of John's decision to join the Franciscans; Mamma Margaret's selfless words; John's dire need; Joseph Blanchard's charity and Don Bosco's later acknowledgement; John's application, examination and acceptance for the Franciscans (document of acceptance is given in a footnote); the *Dream on the Franciscans*; the confessor is no help; John is doubtful, but decides to go ahead and takes leave of Mamma Margaret and of the new parish priest, Fr. Cinzano; Mr. Evasio Savio advises John to consult Fr. Cafasso and acts to obtain financial help for him; Fr. Cafasso advises John to enter the seminary; Margaret is in agreement provided it is God's will; God manifests his will through another dream; *second (inaccurate) quoted reference* to the recurrence of the *Becchi dream* "at the age of 19 and at other times thereafter"; the *Dream of 'Imperious Command'* (narrated to Barberis around 1870) is reported; for all these reasons John drops the idea of joining the Franciscans.

The contents and sequence in the second crisis are as follows [*IBM* I, 363-366; *EBM* I, 271ff.]: at the end of the rhetoric year, again doubts arise whether to enter the seminary or join the Franciscans; the 'incident' and the 'obstacles' are reported in the words of Don Bosco's *Memoirs*; Louis Comollo's and Fr. Comollo's role; Fr. Cafasso and Fr. Cinzano, consulted again to the same effect; decision to enter the seminary.

<sup>64</sup> "The Morialdo [Becchi] dream remained imprinted [on my mind]; indeed it had recurred at other times in much clearer terms, so that to put faith in it I would have to choose the priesthood, toward which I actually felt inclined" [*IBM* I, 286; *EBM* I, 214; cf. *MO-En*, 110].

<sup>65</sup> "The Morialdo [Becchi] dream recurred at the age of 19 and at other times thereafter" [*IBM* I, 305; *EBM* I, 229].

<sup>66</sup> "It seems that he urged John to seek Fr. Cafasso's advice" [cf. *IBM* I, 303; *EBM* I, 228].

difficult.”<sup>67</sup> He omits one of the reasons listed by Don Bosco for his perplexity, “certain habitual tendencies of my heart.”<sup>68</sup> Why?

In conclusion, it will have been clear that the theory of a recurrence of the vocation dream at nineteen, the use of the Barberis report and the construction of a context for that dream, both in *Documenti* and more so in the *Biographical Memoirs*, rest on shaky ground. Certainly Don Bosco's *Memoirs* do not lend any support to Lemoyne's interpretation.

#### (4) The Dream at the Age of Twenty-one<sup>69</sup>

“At twenty-one he is shown the type of boy whose spiritual welfare he must especially look after.”<sup>70</sup>

This is the dream in which seminarian John Bosco saw himself as a priest working in a tailor shop, not sewing new garments but patching threadbare clothing.

Whatever the exact significance of the dream for Don Bosco at the time, it seems that in retelling it at a later date he attached vocational significance to it, though the nature of the significance is not clear from the sparing narrative. The dream does not contain any of the images of the other vocation dreams, such as the Gentleman and the Lady, the animals, the children, etc. As a consequence, but for Lemoyne's interpretation, one would probably not recognize it as a vocation dream at all. But Lemoyne makes John's dream at the age of 21 an important link in the chain of vocation dreams. And the special slant he gives to the interpretation both in *Documenti* and in the *Biographical Memoirs* adds to its significance.<sup>71</sup>

There is no reference to this dream in Don Bosco's *Memoirs*. Don Bosco is said to have related the dream to “to a few people privately,” among whom, Fr. John Turchi and Fr. Dominic Ruffino.<sup>72</sup> Neither reference could be verified.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *Doc I*, 153; *FDBMicro* 968 D1; *IBM* 1, 286f.; *EBM* I, 214.

<sup>68</sup> *MO-En*, 110; Appendix III, A-1 (T-A-1).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Appendix IV.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Note 7 above, and text relating thereto.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Appendix IV, A-1 (T-A-1), B-1 (T-B-1)

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* Fr. Turchi alone is mentioned in *Documenti*; both are given as source in the *Biographical*

*Memoirs*.

<sup>73</sup> A perusal of the Ruffino chronicles [cf. *ASC* 110: Cronachette-Ruffino: *FDBMicro* 1206-1218] failed to turn up the passage in question. No reference is made to the dream in Fr. John Turchi's testimony at the

Fr. Barberis preserves accounts of this dream, one of which is given for comparison.<sup>74</sup> Lemoyne does not refer to him as a source; but on reading Barberis' report one suspects that it may well represent what Don Bosco might have said on that occasion. He would first have recalled the 'strange experience' from his seminary days, and then in the same breath would have added Fr. Cafasso's reaction on hearing of it years later.

Lemoyne, splits the narrative and places each section in their particular historical context (the seminary and the Convitto)<sup>75</sup>, respectively in the first and second volumes of both *Documenti* and the *Biographical Memoirs*.<sup>76</sup>

It is interesting to see how Lemoyne describes Fr. Cafasso's mysterious reticence on hearing Don Bosco's account. In *Documenti*, vol. I, he says that Fr. Cafasso had no explanation for the dream. This detail is omitted, as would be expected, in the corresponding passage of *Biographical Memoirs*, vol. I. Then in

Diocesan Process [cf. ASC 161: Testi: *FDBMicro* 2196ff.]. Fr. John Turchi, who left Don Bosco soon after his ordination in 1861, presumably authored a chronicle as a member of the original 'historical committee,' but it is no longer extant [cf. *EBM* VI, 505ff.; Deramaut, *Mem I*, 203 and 137ff.]. Perhaps that was Lemoyne's, as well as Barberis', source.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Appendix IV, A-3 (T-A-3).

<sup>75</sup> After his ordination in 1841 Don Bosco, on Fr. Cafasso's advice, enrolled in the Convitto. This was a pastoral institute for newly-ordained priests housed in a former Franciscan monastery, attached to the church of St. Francis of Assisi, in Turin. Its full name was *Convitto Ecclesiastico di San Francesco d'Assisi* [Pastoral Institute for Priests at St. Francis of Assisi]. In the present essay the traditional short form 'Convitto' will be used exclusively.

Don Bosco in his *Memoirs* speaks highly of this institution, and in particular of its 'founders', Fr. Guala and Fr. Cafasso [cf. *MO-En*, 180ff.]. The merit of having conceived and realized the institute is variously attributed to Fr. Pius Bruno Lanteri (1739-1830) or to Fr. Louis Guala (1775-1848), or to both. Probably it was Fr. Lanteri who conceived the project (intending it to be one of the purposes of his congregation, the Oblates of the Virgin Mary). But when he was unable to put the plan into effect himself, his associate Fr. Guala started conferences in moral theology which he later developed into a proper program as Rector of the church of St. Francis of Assisi.

The two-year program of studies at the Convitto included the following: (1) Conferences in moral-pastoral theology, with an anti-rigorous, Alphonsonian orientation, especially with regard to sacramental practice; (2) Renewal of preaching in content and style; (3) Opportunity for the student priests to explore practical applications of the moral-pastoral teaching, and hence to be involved in basic and new priestly ministries (preaching, visiting the sick, prison ministry, catechetical instruction, care of poor and neglected young people).

Fr. Joseph Cafasso (1811-1860) enrolled in the Convitto after his ordination in 1833. He stayed on to serve as assistant lecturer under Fr. Guala. In 1844 he became principal lecturer and acting-Rector, and finally succeeded Fr. Guala as Rector of both institute and church on the latter's death in 1848.

Besides distinguishing himself as a lecturer and pastor, Fr. Cafasso was the inspired spiritual director and guide of the Convitto priests. He directed them towards various 'new' ministries, with special attention given to the problem of prison inmates, of juveniles at risk. Don Bosco made his apprenticeship under Fr. Cafasso in the years 1841-1844. And it is out of this experience that his definitive option for the young was formed [Cf. L. Cristiani, *A Cross for Napoleon: The Life of Father Bruno Lanteri (1759-1830)*, tr. K. Mayes and M. Soudée. Boston: St. Paul Ed., 1981; Stella, DB-EcSoc, 43-48; *Sussidi 2: Dizionarietto*. Roma: Dicastero per la Formazione, 1988, p. 289f. G. Usseglio, "Il teologo Guala e il Convitto Ecclesiastico," *Salesianum* 10 (1948) 453-502].

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Appendix IV, A-1 (T-A-1) and A-2 (T-A-2) for *Documenti*, vol. I and II; B-1 (T-B-1) and B-2 (T-B-2) for *Biographical Memoirs*, vol. I and II.

*Documenti*, vol. II, he presents Fr. Cafasso as having a deep-rooted conviction about Don Bosco's vocation, and an understanding of the implications of the dream. All this is made more explicit in the corresponding episode of *Biographical Memoirs*, vol. II, and the effect is heightened:

Fr. Cafasso had looked at him intently and inquired: "Can you sew like a tailor?" "Indeed I can; and I can make trousers, jackets, cloaks and clerical cassocks." "We'll see what happens when you're put to the test!" And every time they met, he would ask: "How are things, tailor?" Grasping the meaning of this query Don Bosco would reply: "I am awaiting your decision."<sup>77</sup>

By the undercurrents of the dialogue Lemoyne suggests that both Fr. Cafasso and Don Bosco have been given illumination regarding the vocational significance of the dream.

Lemoyne's interpretation of this dream, as defining the type of children Don Bosco was called to serve, is quite remarkable. It refers not to their social condition (poverty), but to their moral condition. Furthermore, Don Bosco's mission was not intended to cultivate innocent lads, but to rehabilitate "youngsters already tainted by the evil of the world and turned delinquents".<sup>78</sup>

Whether it be regarded as a true vocation dream or not, this occurrence from Don Bosco's seminary days may indeed have acquired significance for Don Bosco in the light of his experience with poor and abandoned youngsters. One doubts, however, that in itself it had the meaning and the importance which Lemoyne attaches to it.

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<sup>77</sup> *Biographical Memoirs*: Appendix IV, B-2 (T-B-2) compared with A-2 (T-A-2). It may be noted that Barberis' account [cf. A-3 (T-A-3)] is quite free from such 'psychic' undercurrents.

<sup>78</sup> Appendix IV, A-1 (T-A-1) and B-1 (T-B-1). In the *Biographical Memoirs* Lemoyne appears to want to soften this statement, and writes that Don Bosco's mission was *not only* to work among innocent lads. But the second part of his sentence does not properly complete the thought.

(5) *The Dream at the Age of Twenty-two* <sup>79</sup>

"At twenty-two a big city, Turin, is pointed out to him as the field where his apostolic work must begin, and its center established"<sup>80</sup>

This is the *Second Turco-Related Dream*. It has no counterpart in *Documenti*; and this is understandable, since the Diocesan Process, from which much of the material for this dream narrative is taken, had not yet taken place when Lemoyne edited the first volume of *Documenti* in 1885.<sup>81</sup> Not unlike the first, the *Second Turco-Related Dream*, in the *Biographical Memoirs*, is a compilation of earlier source texts, joined with editorial comments and interpretations—another good example of Lemoyne's method.

To achieve this compilation, which serves as a kind of crown in the series of dreams spanning Don Bosco's formative years, Lemoyne joins sections of Joseph Turco's testimony at the Diocesan Process (including its short narrative of the dream)<sup>82</sup> with Bishop John Cagliero's account of a dream given at the same Process.<sup>83</sup> A further speculation by Lemoyne regarding the dream's contents is derived from a late oral source. Then, in the famous passage already quoted, and referred to throughout the foregoing discussion, he proposes his overarching interpretation of Don Bosco's vocation dreams and his theory of a line of divine guidance.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. Appendix V.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Note 7 above, and text relating thereto.

<sup>81</sup> The Diocesan Process took place between 1892 and 1897. Hence its testimonies became available to Lemoyne for use in the *Biographical Memoirs* (Vol. I was published in 1898), but not in *Documenti* [cf. also note 42]. He could, of course, as he did in other instances, insert the testimonies as marginal additions at the appropriate place in *Documenti*. That he did not do this might be explained by the fact that by that time he was already working on the *Biographical Memoirs* [cf. A. Lenti, "Don Bosco's Boswell: John Baptist Lemoyne—the Man and His Work," *Journal of Salesian Studies* I (1990:2) 31ff.].

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Note 44 above, and text relating thereto. Mr. Joseph Turco was the seventh of forty-five witnesses who testified at the Diocesan Process. He testified at sessions 89-90, July 6-7, 1892 [cf. Stella, *DB* III, 75. 79. 80 and 118, where one should read Joseph, not John, Turco].

<sup>83</sup> Bishop John Cagliero was the sixteenth of forty-five witnesses to testify at the Diocesan Process (from March to May 1893, 23 sessions, 143 to 168) [cf. Stella, *DB* III, 75 and 119]. For this discussion the relevant portion of his testimony is quoted from the *Summarium* [cf. Appendix V, A-2].

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Note 7 above, and text relating thereto. Cf. also Appendix V, B-4 (T-B-4).

The setting for Lemoyne's compilation is the Renenta-Sussambrino farms where John Bosco spent his summer holidays.<sup>85</sup> The time is the summer of 1837.<sup>86</sup> This agrees generally with Joseph Turco's testimony.<sup>87</sup>

In this scenario, with substantial though not literal fidelity, Lemoyne quotes Turco's brief testimony of the dream: John Bosco dreamt "*that in future years he would settle in a certain place and there he would gather a large number of youngsters and educate them in the way of salvation.*" Obviously, Lemoyne's understanding is that Mr. Turco is speaking of a dream which John Bosco had at the time—in other words, a *new* dream. But Joseph Turco had merely said: "When still a seminarian, he told me one day that he had had a dream [...]"<sup>88</sup> The dream need not have occurred *when John was a seminarian*. It could just have been the *Becchi Dream* recalled in its essential thrust.

Next Lemoyne, unaccountably, goes on to surmise that Turco's sketchy report may coincide with the dream narrated in greater detail by Don Bosco "to his spiritual sons at the Oratory for the first time in 1858—among whom were Cagliero, Rua, Francesia and others." For this text he quotes Cagliero's testimony at the Diocesan Process.<sup>89</sup>

This then for Lemoyne is the dream at the age of twenty-two. Cagliero, however, is speaking of the *Becchi Dream*; and the opening and closing words of his testimony put this beyond all doubt:

I know of a dream which the Servant of God had when he was but nine or ten years of age. He saw the valley below [the Becchi hill, obviously] turn into a city. [...] I heard this dream from the lips of the Servant of God himself in 1858-59. He had just returned from Rome, where he had gone to petition Pope Pius IX for authorization to establish the Congregation. The Pope had asked him what natural and supernatural promptings he may have had for such an undertaking, and he had then related the dream.

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<sup>85</sup> Cf. Appendix V, B-1-a (T-B-1-a); Joseph Bosco (by this time married to Maria Calosso) worked and lived at the Sussambrino farm. Margaret lived there for the most part, and John would also stay at Sussambrino 'with the family' during the holidays [cf. also note 46 above, and text relating thereto].

<sup>86</sup> This may be argued from the episode's position in the Biographical Memoirs, where it is placed before John Bosco began his theology in the fall of 1837 [cf. *EBM* I, 310-330].

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Appendix V, A-1-a (T-A-1-a).

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Appendix V, A-1-b (T-A-1-b) compared with B-1-b (T-B-1-b).

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Appendix V, B-2 (T-B-2) compared with A-2 (T-A-2). The comparison shows that without a doubt Lemoyne quotes Cagliero's testimony. Cf. also note 83 above.

This is in agreement with what Don Bosco writes in his *Memoirs* when speaking about the *First Dream*.<sup>90</sup> But Lemoyne, wanting to compile a text for a presumed dream set at Sussambrino at the time when John Bosco was a seminarian, changes Cagliero's clear statement and the dream setting to read: "He had seen the valley below *the Sussambrino farm* transformed into a big city." He also modifies the ending of the dream narrative, perhaps to justify the dragoman procedure, and writes: "Then, *as in the first dream*, he saw the young people changed into wild beasts and then again into gentle sheep and lambs. And by the Lady's order he took charge of them as their shepherd." But he omits one puzzling detail of Cagliero's account, namely, the image of the lambs changed into shepherds. Cagliero had said: "Soon he saw those animals changed into so many lambs, with him as their shepherd. Then many of the lambs in time turned also into shepherds." Evidently Lemoyne felt that this detail belonged to a later dream.<sup>91</sup>

Now that the city of Turin has been designated as the place of Don Bosco's initial apostolate, Lemoyne goes one step further in his compilation. Utilizing an 1890 oral testimony by a certain Fr. Bosio, an old fellow seminarian of Don Bosco's, Lemoyne surmises that a vision of the actual Oratory with its churches and buildings was also part of the presumed *Dream at the Age of Twenty-Two*. These images pertaining to the settling of the Oratory at Valdocco recur in dreams that will be related later, in the second volume of the *Biographical Memoirs*.<sup>92</sup> But the additional testimony at this point allows Lemoyne to broaden the scope of his theory of pre-determining divine guidance through dreams beyond Don Bosco's early years. This he does in the passage already quoted and referred to above.

Then, finally, Lemoyne asks, "Can one believe that such dreams were mere constructions of fantasy?" Don Bosco's *real* vocation dream and its

<sup>90</sup> Cf. *MO-En*, 20f. and Appendix I, A (T-A), ending.

<sup>91</sup> Cagliero's account of the Becchi Dream does indeed offer some puzzling elements. Don Bosco in relating the *First Dream* in his *Memoirs* writes, "I seemed to be standing near my home, in a very large courtyard [...]" [cf. *MO-En*, 18; Appendix I, A (T-A), beginning]. Cagliero, on the other hand, says: "He saw the valley transformed into a city." This image is unique to Cagliero's account of the *Becchi Dream*. Did it originate with Don Bosco or with Cagliero? Is it one of the images of the original dream experience, or an extrapolation from the fact that historically the city of Turin became the theater of Don Bosco's oratory activity?

Then Cagliero says that in the dream John saw that "many of the lambs, as they grew up, turned also into shepherds." This image is absent from Don Bosco's account of the Becchi dream in his *Memoirs*, but it occurs in the *Dream of 1844*, also related in the *Memoirs* [cf. *MO-En*, 210; Appendix VI, A-2]. Again, is this one of the images of the *Becchi Dream* omitted by Don Bosco in his narrative, or is it due to 'interference' from another dream in Cagliero's recall when he testified in 1893? After all, it is likely that Cagliero was acquainted, if not familiar, with Don Bosco's *Memoirs* (written in mid-1870s); in which the *Becchi Dream* and the *Dream of 1844* are the only vocation dreams related in extensive detail.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Appendix VI, VII and VIII (*Dream of 1844*, *First and Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs*).



recurrence are certainly not constructions of fantasy. But Lemoyne's compilations may be just that—for the most part.

### 3. Text and Source-Critical Study of the Vocation-Mission Dream Narratives in Vol. II of the *Biographical Memoirs*

The foregoing five dream narratives in the first volume of the *Biographical Memoirs*, and the many source accounts that preceded them, have their setting within Don Bosco's early formation period. All of these accounts testify to the fact that the vocation dream was a component in his vocational discernment at various stages during that period. Essentially the vocational decision revolved around *whether and how he would become a priest, with an option for the young in view*. The dream images reflect this historical reality. The fact that Lemoyne's construction of the dream line is not critically tenable should not blind us to this basic reality. Here Don Bosco's own testimony about the dream's recurrence and suggestion is decisive: "The dream [...] had occurred at other times in much clearer terms. Hence, if I were to believe it and follow its suggestion, I would have to choose the priesthood, toward which I actually felt inclined."<sup>93</sup> These words may be regarded as the authoritative resumé of the whole process of vocational decision and of the accompanying dream experiences (not further specified). The end result of the process was that John donned the clerical habit and entered the seminary.

Don Bosco's *Memoirs* record a later dream experience, also set in a context of vocational decision. This occurred nearly a decade later, when Don Bosco, a priest of three years, was struggling with the problem of establishing the work he had begun on behalf of young people at risk (the oratory) on a permanent basis. In that context he relates in detail a dream which he himself describes as "a sequel [*appendice*] to the one I had had at Becchi at the age of nine." And he adds: "Later, in conjunction with another dream, it even served as a guideline for my decisions."<sup>94</sup>

In the *Biographical Memoirs* Lemoyne records three dream narratives, set within the same general period of vocational decision. The first one (the

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<sup>93</sup> Cf. *MO-En*, 110; note 3 above, and text relating thereto; also, Appendix III, A-1 [T-A-1].

<sup>94</sup> Cf. *MO-En*, 209f. and note 2; also, Appendix VI, A-1 (T-A-1) and A-3 (T-A-3). These dreams, to be discussed more fully below, accompany that period of vocational discernment through which Don Bosco re-founded the oratory (so to speak). This was in 1844, when he left the haven of the Convitto and the church of St. Francis of Assisi, and out of the little oratory he had begun there he created his very own, the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales.

*Dream of 1844*) is taken directly from Don Bosco's *Memoirs* and set in the same narrative context; a second (the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs*), ascribed to Barberis as a source, is taken from a Barberis report, but with a change of context; and the third (the *Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs*) is compiled by Lemoyne on his own authority.

These will now form the object of a few text and source-critical comments.

### (1) [6] *The Dream of 1844* <sup>95</sup>

“*[These mysterious instructions] will continue as needed until the completion of God's work.*” <sup>96</sup>

The only other dream which Don Bosco narrates in detail in his *Memoirs* is the dream of the night preceding the second Sunday of October, 1844, as he was leaving the Convitto for Marchioness Barolo's Rifugio. <sup>97</sup> This is not accidental. He sees it both as a counterpart to the Becchi Dream (he specifically makes this connection), and, together with yet another (unspecified) dream, as a point of reference in his decisions. Therefore, the vocational significance of this dream for Don Bosco is clear. And that this significance was important to him is borne out by specific editorial reflection on his part as he wrote his *Memoirs* in the mid-1870s.

Don Bosco's original draft of the text in his *Memoirs* at this point looks like a good copy, so free is it of additions and emendations. This is contrary to norm. The only significant change is the marginal addition near the beginning: “[I had another dream] which seems to be a sequel (*appendice*) to the

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<sup>95</sup> Cf. Appendix VI.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Note 7 above, and text relating thereto.

<sup>97</sup> Julie V. F. Colbert (1785-1864) with her husband, the rich Charles Tancred Falletti, Marquis of Barolo, founded, in Turin, numerous works of charity, and religious congregations to take care for them. The shelter for girls and young women at risk, called the 'Rifugio', dedicated to Our Lady, Refuge of Sinners, was founded in 1821 in the Valdocco area. Fr. John Baptist Borel, Don Bosco's great friend and supporter, was its chaplain and spiritual director. After her husband's death, she increased her benefactions. Among other foundations, in 1845 she established the Little hospital of St. Philomena, for handicapped young girls, also in the Valdocco area. Don Bosco was appointed its chaplain-designate in 1844 while it was being built. She was also planning to establish a society of priests under the patronage of St. Francis de Sales, housed at the same hospital, to care for her foundations as chaplains [cf. *Sussidi 2: Dizionarietto*. Roma: Dicastero per la Formazione, 1988, p. 236-239].

Don Bosco lived at the Rifugio with Fr. Borel from October 1844, when he left the Convitto, until he moved to the Pinardi house in 1846. He gathered his oratory on the premises of the Rifugio for six weeks, and thereafter at the Little Hospital's 'priests' quarters', until 'evicted' in May 1845.

In this essay these institutions will be referred to as the Rifugio and the Little Hospital, respectively.

one I had had at Becchi at the age of nine.”<sup>98</sup> Likewise Don Bosco's only addition to Berto's transcription reveals further reflection on his part on the vocational significance of the dream: “And later, *in conjunction with another dream*, it even served as a guideline for my decisions.”<sup>99</sup>

For *Documenti* and later for the *Biographical Memoirs* Lemoyne transcribes the text of the Berto Ms. with substantial, but far from perfect, fidelity. One expects certain changes to be made in punctuation, paragraphing, and the like; but one wonders why certain verbal changes are introduced: for example, ‘we wandered like vagrants’ (*andammo vagabondi*) for ‘we kept wandering’ (*andammo vagando*); ‘without the least attempt on the part of some [animals] to snap at the others’ (*mordere*) for ‘to harm the others’ (*nuocere*).

A verbal change, which is also a misconstruction of Don Bosco's meaning, is ‘as these [young shepherds] increased [in numbers] (*aumentandosi*) they cared for the others’ for ‘as these grew up (*crescendo*)’.

Again, perhaps to emphasize the recurrence of the Becchi Dream, Lemoyne adds to Don Bosco's words: “I had another dream, which seems to be an appendix to the one I had had at Becchi at the age of nine ‘for the first time (*la prima volta*)’.”

Another addition which is due to Lemoyne's misreading of the Ms. occurs at the very end, where he writes: “And later, in conjunction with another dream, this [dream] even served as a guideline for my decisions *at the Rifugio*.” The words, ‘at the Rifugio [*presso il Rifugio*]’ belong to the title of the next section in the Berto Ms., where Don Bosco, speaking of the transfer of the oratory, crossed out what he had originally written (*in Valdocco*) and wrote above it, “*presso il Rifugio*.”<sup>100</sup> The damaging effect of this oversight on Lemoyne's part is that it de-emphasizes the significance of the dream for vocational decision, which is the point of Don Bosco's comment.

But what is perhaps most remarkable is that Lemoyne apparently failed to appreciate the importance which Don Bosco attached to this dream, even though he transcribes Don Bosco's words with reference to its ‘sequel character’. He does not in any case make a point of it. He may have thought of Don Bosco's vocation as decided by divine guidance with his entrance into the seminary, or with his ordination to the priesthood, or with his encounter with

<sup>98</sup> *MO-DB*, 94: *FDBMicro* 58 C11. Cf. Appendix VI, A-1-b [T-A-1-b].

<sup>99</sup> *MO-DB*, 95: *FDBMicro* 58 C12. Cf. Appendix VI, A-3 [T-A-3]. Don Bosco's additions are *italicized*.

<sup>100</sup> *MO-Ber*, 88: *FDBMicro* 61 D4. For these and the other editorial changes cf. Appendix VI A-2 and A-3.

young Garelli on December 8, 1841. In fact, he may have regarded the decision confronting Don Bosco in 1844 merely as a troublesome circumstantial 'difficulty'. Consequently, Lemoyne simply emphasizes that divine illumination continued to guide Don Bosco by disclosing the future to him.<sup>101</sup> But the move of 1844 was more than just a troublesome circumstantial difficulty. Although Don Bosco's personal resolve never wavered, leaving the shelter of St. Francis of Assisi and the Convitto and creating *his own* oratory was for Don Bosco a major, perhaps the definitive, vocational step.

To conclude these comments, one may say, after allowing for Lemoyne's editorial slants, that the tradition of the text of the *Dream of 1844* from Don Bosco's *Memoirs* to the *Biographical Memoirs* is fairly straightforward.

### (3) [7] [8] *The First & Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs* <sup>102</sup>

The Dream of 1844, described above, dealt with the establishment of Don Bosco's own oratory in the Valdocco area. Lemoyne had two further dream narratives, dealing with the same subject, at his disposal. The holy martyrs of Turin are either referred to, or play a role in them. Hence the designation, '*Dreams of the Holy Martyrs*'.

Don Bosco had spoken of 'another dream' which, together with that of 1844, served as a guideline in his decisions.<sup>103</sup> It would have been tempting to identify one of the *Dreams of the Holy Martyrs* with that 'other' dream. Lemoyne, however, refrains from doing so—another instance perhaps of his failure to appreciate the vocational significance of these dreams. He seems to regard them simply as premonitive or predictive dreams come to comfort Don Bosco by disclosing the future to him.

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<sup>101</sup> Both in *Documenti* and in *Biographical Memoirs* Lemoyne speaks of this dream as of a wonderful and comforting experience that came to relieve Don Bosco's mind and to reveal the future to him [cf. Appendix VI, B-1-a-Doc (T-B-1-a-Doc) and B-1-a (T-B-1-a)]. It may also be noted that when Lemoyne records yet another onset of missionary desire on Don Bosco's part in 1844 (which Don Bosco does not mention in his *Memoirs*), he fails to attach much vocational significance to it. In fact one gains the impression (from Lemoyne's account), that it was all for Fr. Cafasso's benefit—namely, to get Fr. Cafasso to come out and say what the will of God was in Don Bosco's regard [cf. *IBM* II, 203ff.; *EBM* II, 160ff.].

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Appendices VII and VIII.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Note 99 above, and text relating thereto.

## (a) Sources of the First and Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs

In *Documenti* Lemoine states that his source for the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs* is Barberis: "We shall here report in broad outline the picture seen by Don Bosco [in a dream], just as he himself related it for the first time to Fr. Julius Barberis on February 2, 1875."<sup>104</sup>

What appears to be Barberis' 'original' draft is an entry entitled, '2 Febbraio 1875' in his chronicle or collection, *Notizie varie dei primi tempi*. This shorter and densely written account was later expanded and 'finalized' by Barberis. For this operation Barberis worked on a good transcription (in another hand), which he annotated and emended profusely. This text seems to represent Barberis' final version. From this expanded draft were 'derived' other good copies. Although Lemoine's slashes are found only in Barberis' 'original' draft, the text used by Lemoine both in *Documenti* and in the *Biographical Memoirs* is the 'derived' text. It is more polished and better organized, but abridges the description of Don Bosco's dealings with the Rosminians.<sup>105</sup>

In his 'original' draft Barberis writes:

February 2. 1875. Today I was asked by the Rev. Don Bosco to go with him and the Consul of the Argentine Republic to dinner at the Ocelllettis. After dinner Don Bosco and myself left together. We talked about the novices and of our newly established house of novitiate. We talked at great length, and finally reached *Borgo Nuovo* Street. Here Don Bosco stopped to call on Marchioness Doria, who was ill. Then on the way home he discussed very important matters with me. Among other things, he told me of a remarkable vision which he had never

<sup>104</sup> Appendix VII, B-1-a-Doc (T-B-1-a-Doc).

<sup>105</sup> 'Original' draft: *Notizie varie dei primi tempi dell'Oratorio su D Bosco ecc.*, p. 11f., '2 Febbraio 1875' in ASC 110: Cronachette-Barberis, *FDBMicro* 892 A11f. It is a neatly but densely written report in Barberis' hand, with few corrections. It is remarkable in that it lacks the dream scenes where Don Bosco is shown churches and buildings, but it nonetheless records the scene where the Lady points out the spot of the martyrdom. This document bears the heavy double slash at the beginning of each line, the mark of Lemoine's (intended) use of the text.

Barberis' 'finalized' report is at ASC 110: Cronachette-Barberis, "Sogni Diversi a Lanzo", *FDBMicro* 866 B10-C1. This is the text transcribed in Appendix VII, A. One of the features of this text is that it gives the most detailed description of Don Bosco's dealings with the Rosminians for the re-purchase of the 'field of dreams'. 'Derived' copies (all virtually identical) are: ASC 111: Sogni-Barberis, "Il nastro bianco +Rivelazione della Congregazione" (calligraphic copy), *FDBMicro* 1279 C6-11 and 1282 E8-1283 A1; ASC 111: Sogni-Lemoine, "Visione riguardante la Congregazione" (in Lemoine's hand), *FDBMicro* 1314 B10-C5. This last text should be considered the immediate source for Lemoine's narrative in *Documenti* and in the *Biographical Memoirs*.

disclosed to any one before. He assured me that I was the first person to learn of it.<sup>106</sup>

The introduction of his ‘finalized’ report reads:

On February 2, 1875 I was walking with Don Bosco back to the Oratory from Borgo San Salvario.<sup>107</sup> We were alone. Among many other things he related to me the following vision. He said that it was the first he had had regarding the congregation [...] He added that he had never opened his heart to anyone about the matter. I was the first person to hear about it.<sup>108</sup>

In the *Biographical Memoirs*, however, the source is given both as Fr. Julius Barberis and Lemoyne himself: “Extraordinary dreams [...] came to comfort Don Bosco, as he confided once and only once to Fr. Julius Barberis and to the author of these pages on February 2, 1875.” Lemoyne’s inclusion of himself as a source is puzzling, in view of Barberis’ statements that he was Don Bosco’s only companion when the latter narrated the dream on February 2, 1875. (In 1875 Lemoyne was stationed at Lanzo, where he had been director since 1865.). However, Barberis himself tells us that Don Bosco later related the dream to Lemoyne and other Salesians.<sup>109</sup>

The source for the *Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs* is given in the *Biographical Memoirs* (no source is indicated in *Documenti*) as Lemoyne himself. He compiled the narrative on the basis of Don Bosco’s utterances in 1884 and which extended over a period of some twenty years:

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<sup>106</sup> Note 103 above (*FDBMicro* 892 A11). The Ocellletti lived in *Via Federico Campana* at the southern edge of the *Borgo San Salvario*. *Borgo San Salvario* itself lay at the southern end of the city, south of the *Viale del Re* or *dei Platani* (*Corso Vittorio Emanuele II*). The Oratory of St. Aloysius had been established at the northern edge of this borough in 1847 and the church of St. John the Evangelist would be dedicated here in 1882. In 1859 Chevalier Charles Ocellletti had begun, at his own residence, the Oratory of St. Joseph, subsequently run by the Salesians (1863-1866).

<sup>107</sup> They had been to dinner at the Ocellletti [cf. note 106 above, and text relating thereto].

<sup>108</sup> Note 105 above (*FDBMicro* 866 B10). Cf. Appendix VII, A-1-a (T-A-1-a).

<sup>109</sup> Appendix VII, B-1-a (T-B-1-a). Cf. J. Barberis, *Il culto di Maria Ausiliatrice*. Torino: SEI, 1920. After transcribing his report of Don Bosco’s narration regarding the purchase of the ‘field of dreams’ and the place where the church of Mary Help of Christians was eventually built [cf. Appendix VII, A-5 (T-A-5)], Barberis writes: “Thus far, my report. Later the Venerable [Don Bosco] related the same story, with further details, to other Salesians, and to Fr. John Lemoyne in particular. The latter made use of my report and of what he himself had heard from Don Bosco. He thus compiled the most detailed account yet of those events for the biography of the Venerable which he authored” [p. 53]. (These are the details edited in *IBM* VII, 372ff. and 380ff; *EBM* VII, 223f. and 227f.).

He related it briefly, and only to a few close associates, in 1884. But he had disclosed the most magnificent aspects of it earlier, at intervals, over a period of some twenty years. [...] The present writer, who was [constantly] at his side, did not allow his utterances to be lost. He took careful note of them each time, and later compiled them to obtain the following dream scene."<sup>110</sup>

It would not have been difficult for one who heard Don Bosco tell the dream in 1884, to write an account of it on the basis of what he could recall of the narration. And assuming that Don Bosco specified in what connection he had had the dream, then it would have been possible for the biographer to set it in its proper context. Perhaps that is what happened. What is more difficult to understand is how Lemoyne could compile an account of a specific dream for a specific context out of snippets heard over a period of twenty years.

### (b) *Context of the First and Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs*<sup>111</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Appendix VIII, B-1-b (Γ-B-1-b). The twenty years are reckoned from 1864, when Lemoyne first entered the Oratory. In 1865 he was sent to Lanzo as director, in which capacity he served until, in 1877, he was sent (farther away) to Momese and Nizza as chaplain to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. He was recalled to Turin as secretary in 1883 [cf. A. Lenti, "Don Bosco's Boswell [...]," *Journal of Salesian Studies* 1 (1990:2) 12-19].

<sup>111</sup> The various stages and stops of the oratory from the time it left St. Francis of Assisi (October 1844) to the settling at Pinardi's (April 1846) may be listed as follows: (1) On the second Sunday, 13th of October, 1844 (after the dream of the preceding night) Don Bosco announced that the oratory would thereafter meet at the Rifugio. It met there for the first time on the third Sunday (October 20) and continued to meet there until the first Sunday of Advent, December 1. (2) Meanwhile Don Bosco was given permission by Marchioness Barolo to use two rooms and some adjacent space at the Little Hospital of St. Philomena, which was under construction at the time and of which Don Bosco was chaplain-designate. The oratory met there for the first time on December 8, 1844 and continued to use the premises until Sunday, May 18, 1845 [cf. note 97 above]. (3) By permission from the resident chaplain, though not from the City, Don Bosco gathered his oratory at the Cemetery of the Holy Cross (St. Peter in Chains) on one Sunday, May 25, 1845, and was promptly evicted. (4) For a few Sundays thereafter the meetings may have taken place out-of-doors and at various churches, until (5) Permission for restricted use of the church of St. Martin at the Dora Mills was granted by the City to Fr. Borel by letter of July 12, 1845. The oratory continued to meet at St. Martin's, not without local protest, until Sunday, December 21 (not 22) permission being officially terminated by an official communication dated January 1, 1846. (6) After Christmas of 1845 Fr. Borel and Don Bosco rented three rooms in Fr. John Baptist Moretta's house, in the Valdocco area, and the oratory met there until some time in March 1846, when Fr. Moretta, under pressure from disgruntled tenants, refused to renew the lease. (7) In March and early April, 1846 the oratory (by now 300 or 400 strong) used a grassy field rented from the Filippi brothers and located near the Moretta house. (8) Meanwhile Fr. Borel's and Don Bosco's attention was drawn to a shed attached to a house in the vicinity by a Mr. Pancratius Soave who had rented the house, but not the shed, from the owner, a Mr. Francis Pinardi. On April 1, 1846 the lease for the use of the shed was signed by Fr. Borel for three years, and the oratory met there for the first time on Easter Sunday, April 12, 1846, never again to leave [cf. *MO-En*, 215-262; *EBM* II, passim; P. Stella, *DB-EcSoc*, 74ff.; F. Giraudi, *L'Oratorio di Don Bosco. Inizio e progressivo sviluppo edilizio della casa madre dei salesiani in Torino*. Torino: SEI, 1935; p. 32 and passim].

A remarkable feature of Lemoyne's use of these texts in the *Biographical Memoirs* is the context in which they are set. In the case of the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs*, he flagrantly disregards his source (Barberis). In the case of the *Second*, he creates a likely setting on his own authority. Taking the *Dream of 1844* as a point of reference, the contexts may be compared as follows:

<b>Dream of 1844</b>		
<i>MO</i> : night preceding 2nd Sunday of Oct. 1844 (DB is leaving the Convitto for the Rifugio)	<i>Doc</i> : SAME as <i>MO</i>	<i>BM</i> : SAME as <i>Doc</i> & <i>MO</i>
<b>1st Dream of H. Martyrs</b>		
<i>Barberis</i> : SAME as <i>MO</i> above	<i>Doc</i> : SAME as <i>Barberis</i> & <i>MO</i> above	<i>BM</i> : May 1845 (Oratory is forced to leave Barolo's Little Hospital, 7 mos. after first meeting there)
<b>2nd Dream of H. Martyrs</b>		
	<i>Doc</i> : SAME as <i>BM</i> above	<i>BM</i> : 4th Sunday of Advent, Dec 22 [21], 1845 (Oratory is forced to leave St. Martin's definitively)

Thus, the setting of the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs* in the source (Barberis) is the same as that of the *Dream of 1844*, the night preceding the second Sunday of October 1844, when Don Bosco was about to leave the Convitto to take up his duties at the Barolo institution. When Barberis wrote his account of Don Bosco's narration, that very day, February 2, 1875,<sup>112</sup> he certainly set down as accurately as he could what he had heard from Don Bosco. It was Don Bosco himself, then, who established the setting for this dream—that

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Note 106 above, and text relating thereto ("Today").



moment of crisis, when he was leaving the Convitto and the future of the oratory seemed in doubt. This is clearly stated in Don Bosco's introduction to the dream narrative in all archival Mss. The 'derived' text mentioned above features a longer introduction which makes the point even more forcefully:

The white ribbon. Revelation of the Congregation." [...] The oratories were begun on December 8, 1841. Catechetical instruction was conducted for nearly three years in the sacristies of the church of St. Francis of Assisi. I was then attending the conferences in moral theology of which Fr. Cafasso was the director. I also served as tutor in moral theology. However, in 1844 I was due to leave the Convitto and move to the Rifugio to work with Dr. Borel. I was very much concerned about the youngsters that attended the catechetical instructions in such great numbers. I did not know whether I should disband them or continue to care for them [...] On my last Sunday at the Convitto I had to notify them [one way or the other] [...] The night preceding that Sunday [I had a dream].<sup>113</sup>

In *Documenti*, Lemoyne records this dream in an 'additional' chapter (as an 'epilogue'). He omits the introduction that he read in his source (his own transcription of Barberis' 'derived' text), but keeps the same setting.

In the preceding chapters we mentioned extraordinary dreams that came to encourage Don Bosco step by step. [...] We shall here report in broad outline the picture seen by Don Bosco [in a dream], just as he himself related it for the first time to Fr. Julius Barberis on February 2, 1875. [...] On the last Sunday I was to stay at the Convitto [...].<sup>114</sup>

In the *Biographical Memoirs* the setting is changed; for, after all, how could two different dream narratives share the same setting? Or perhaps in Lemoyne's mind the critical question was less important than preserving a text guaranteed by a source and using it in a likely narrative context. It now finds its setting when the Oratory was forced to leave the Little Hospital in May 1845, after being based there for several months, to begin its 'wandering'. It might be alleged that Lemoyne was able to ascertain the exact situation from Don Bosco

<sup>113</sup> ASC 111: Sogni-Barberis (*FDBMicro* 1279 C6). Identical text in Lemoyne's hand in ASC 111: Sogni-Lemoyne, "Visione riguardante la Congregazione" (*FDBMicro* 1314 B10). Cf. note 105 above.

<sup>114</sup> Appendix VII, B-Doc (I-B-Doc).

himself, as he did on other occasions. But then why does he not warn the reader, as he usually does when that is the case; or why does the new context appear only in the *Biographical Memoirs* (vol. II, published in 1901), and not in his own Ms. copy of the text, nor in *Documenti* (vol. II, printed after 1885)?

Further questions about this dream, chiefly concerning its relationship to the Dream of 1844, demand an answer. These will be addressed below.

The *Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs*, presents similar problems. Besides the fact that, as mentioned above, the report as such appears to rest on weak foundations, there is the additional problem that its narrative context in the *Biographical Memoirs* differs from that assigned to it earlier by Lemoyne in *Documenti*. In this latter work it is set in that time of crisis when the oratory was forced to leave the premises of the Little Hospital in May 1845. In the *Biographical Memoirs* this context is assigned to the first dream, and a new suitable situation is found for the second dream, namely, the time when the oratory left the church of St. Martin at the Dora Mills (December 1845).<sup>115</sup>

Perhaps Don Bosco did have further dreams to steady him on his vocational course during those critical eighteen months of the wandering oratory. And Lemoyne could have been privy to special information which he does not tell us about. However, the sources as they stand, and the use Lemoyne makes of them, leave us in doubt.

### (c) *The Textual Tradition of the First Dream of the Holy Martyrs*<sup>116</sup>

After discussing sources and contexts, we turn to the text of the dream as edited in the *Biographical Memoirs*. It has already been pointed out that the probable tradition of the text is as follows: Don Bosco's narration to Fr. Barberis on February 2, 1875; Barberis' 'original' draft on the same day; Barberis' 'finalized' report; and 'derived' edited copies, including one in Lemoyne's hand.<sup>117</sup> This last is the text transcribed in *Documenti*, and subsequently edited in the *Biographical Memoirs*.

As reported by Barberis ('finalized' draft) the text of Don Bosco's narration contains the following parts: the occasion or setting of the dream, which has been discussed; the dream narrative proper; the comment on the certainty obtained from the dream; the place of martyrdom and the research by

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Appendix VIII, A-1 (T-A-1) and B-1-a (T-B-1-a).

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Appendix VII.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Note 105 above and Appendix VII, A.

Canon Laurence Gastaldi; the place where the church of Mary Help of Christians was to be built and the buying back of the 'field of dreams' from the Rosminians, with a concluding comment on the square and the monument.

[a] With regard to the square and the monument, a curious difference is noted between Barberis' 'finalized' draft and the 'derived' text (*Documenti* and *Biographical Memoirs* included). In the former, the appended comment reads: "Also, in front of the church which the Blessed Virgin showed me there lay a beautiful square with a monument in its center. Now I shall wait and see if all this will be feasible."<sup>118</sup> In the latter texts, there is no mention of a square, and the monument is seen in the center of the Oratory building complex ringing the church.: "I then saw a huge church rising on the very spot [of the martyrdom] [...] There were many buildings around the church, and in the center stood a beautiful monument."<sup>119</sup>

[b] In the 'derived' copies, including Lemoyne's, the section dealing with the location of the church and the buying back of the field from the Rosminians is given in a simplified form. It is in this simpler form that it passes into *Documenti*. This section, however, is omitted in the *Biographical Memoirs* at this point and appears later in an edited but expanded form in its proper historical context.<sup>120</sup>

[c] For the rest, the text of the dream in *Documenti* is the 'derived' text, the immediate source being Lemoyne's manuscript copy, transcribed with some stylistic editing.<sup>121</sup>

In the *Biographical Memoirs* Lemoyne engages in further editorial activity, producing a fuller text.<sup>122</sup> Generally speaking his additions are in the nature either of elucidations of the text or of topographical explanations. Some times, they are designed to emphasize appropriate religious feeling. Noteworthy is Lemoyne's typical addition to Don Bosco's comment on the certainty gained through the dream:

Here then was the source of his unshakable faith in the ultimate success of his mission; of the boldness, regarded by some as

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<sup>118</sup> Appendix VII, A-5 (T-A-5), at the end.

<sup>119</sup> Appendix VII, B-2 (T-B-2).

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Appendix VII, B-5-Doc and B-5 (*IBM* VII, 372ff. and 380ff.; *EBM* VII, 223f. and 227f.) [cf. note 109 above, and text relating thereto].

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Note 105 above.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Appendix VII, B-2.

foolhardiness, with which he tackled all sorts of obstacles; of the courage with which he shouldered colossal undertakings, difficult beyond the power of human endeavor, and brought them to successful completion nonetheless.<sup>123</sup>

[d] Finally, in the *Biographical Memoirs* the section on the place of martyrdom and Canon Gastaldi's research is greatly expanded on the basis of information derived (by Lemoyne, obviously) partly from Gastaldi's publication and partly from ideas received in Salesian tradition. The whole explanation regarding the place of martyrdom is ascribed globally to Don Bosco.<sup>124</sup>

The most basic questions with regard to this dream, however, remain those of its relation to the Dream of 1844.

#### (d) *The Textual Tradition of the Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs*

Apart from the difference in setting, already discussed above, the tradition of this text is short and straightforward, since it was totally under Lemoyne's control. In the *Biographical Memoirs* he merely edits what he had written in *Documenti* to obtain a fuller and certainly more readable text.

The editing consists of descriptive expansions, of explanatory additions, and of touches and emphases. Thus, for instance, he gives a fuller description of Don Bosco's position and of that of the three young men in the opening scene,<sup>125</sup> and of the Lady and her entourage later in the dream. He explains that the house, as Don Bosco later learned, was the property of a certain Mr. Pinardi. He emphasizes the kindness of the three youths in escorting Don Bosco to the

<sup>123</sup> Appendix VII, B-3 (T-B-3) and B-6 (T-B-6).

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Appendix VII, B-4 (T-B-4) compared with B-4-Doc (T-B-4-Doc) and A-4 (T-A-4). Canon Gastaldi memoir on the Holy Martyrs was published anonymously in the Catholic Readings as, *Memorie storiche del martirio e del culto dei SS. Martiri Solutore, Avventore ed Ottavio, protettori della città di Torino*, raccolte da un sacerdote torinese (Lecture Cattoliche XIV: 1, Gennaio 1866). Torino: Tipografia dell'Oratorio di S. Francesco di Sales, 1966, esp. p. 42f. The partial dependence of the passage of the *Biographical Memoirs* on Gastaldi's monograph is virtually certain. But apparently Gastaldi was willing to expand orally for the Salesians what he had set down more sparingly in writing. This may be the origin of the more detailed Salesian tradition about the place. For a fuller discussion, see E. Valentini, "Hic Domus Mea: Storia del santuario di Maria Ausiliatrice in Torino (1868-1968)," in *Aiuto dei Cristiani Madre della Chiesa. Nel Centenario della Consacrazione della Sua Basilica di Torino 1868 - 9 giugno - 1968 (Accademia Mariana Salesiana VII)*. Zürich: PAS-Verlag, 1968, p.96-99.

<sup>125</sup> In *Documenti* Lemoyne writes that Don Bosco was standing at the border of the so-called *Bordò di S. Massimo*. In the *Biographical Memoirs* he replaces this designation with more recent names and speaks of *Rondò* or Valdocco Circle and *Corso Regina Margherita*. This boulevard was formerly known as *Viale San Massimo*, and the *Bordò* would have been where it came to an end, at the Circle.

Lady. He reports a lengthy and touching exhortation (to perseverance and trust) from the Lady to Don Bosco; and, to conclude the dream narrative, he writes that Don Bosco had already re-dedicated himself completely to the mission entrusted to him.

On the other hand, he omits mention of the third martyr's flight to Ivrea, after being wounded at the scene, a detail which is not well handled in *Documenti*.<sup>126</sup>

Finally, both in *Documenti* and in the *Biographical Memoirs*, Lemoyne describes Don Bosco's visit to 'the house', apparently expecting to find a 'suitable' building and a church. Now, if the time assigned to this dream by Lemoyne is correct, Don Bosco had been living in the area for quite a while. From his room at the Rifugio he had a practically unobstructed view eastward over the low lying land.<sup>127</sup> He must have been aware of the few scattered houses in the area, as well as of the fact that there was no church in the immediate vicinity. This conclusion has all the earmarks of Lemoyne's dramatic touch.

Be that as it may, the main question concerning this dream narrative, in view of what has been said above, is whether it should be accorded independent status. It appears that its status is in doubt.

#### 4. Comparative Table and Reference Data of Dream Source Texts Compiled and Interpreted in the *Biographical Memoirs*

The foregoing study has attempted a critical evaluation of the vocation-mission dream narratives in the *Biographical Memoirs*, through a critical survey of the sources from which such narratives were compiled and edited by Lemoyne. Before we proceed with comments on what Don Bosco's actual dream experiences and their significance for vocational decision might have been, it may help to bring together in comparative fashion the reference data to the texts that have been discussed above and selectively transcribed in the Appendices.

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<sup>126</sup> Cf. Appendix VIII, A-2 (T-A-2).

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Stella, *DB-EcSoc*, 73.

[sources of dream narratives] [original/early]	[Ed. in Documenti] [intermediate]	[Ed. in Biogr. Memoirs] [final]
<b>First Dream</b> <i>MO</i> [Intro.], "Un sogno": <i>MO-Ber</i> , 5-8 (Micro 60 A9-12); <i>MO-DB</i> , 5-8 (Micro 57 A6-9); <i>MO-Ce</i> , 22-26; <i>MO-En</i> , 18-21	<b>First Dream</b> <i>DocI</i> [P.1,C.XVI] 68f (Micro 967 B2f)	(I) <b>First Dream</b> (at age 9) <i>IBMI</i> , 123ff; <i>EBM I</i> , 95f
<b>First Turco-Related Dream</b> <b>Barbaris Report:</b> ASC 110 (Micro 892 A8) + <b>Rua quoting Lucy Turco &amp; others</b> <i>POCT</i> [S.358, 4/29/95,12], 4306f (ASC 161: Micro2184 E7) + <b>Unspecified Dream of Reprimand</b> <i>MO</i> [1. Dec.,4 <sup>o</sup> ]: <i>MO-Ber</i> , 20f (Micro 60 B12); <i>MO-DB</i> , 18 (Micro 57 B7) <i>MO-Ce</i> , 43f; <i>MO-En</i> , 48	<b>Turco-Rel. Dream</b> <i>Doc 1</i> , 68f (Micro 967 B2f) Marg. note in L's hand	(II) <b>Dream at Age 16</b> <i>IBM I</i> , 243f. <i>EBM I</i> ,181f.
<b>Refer. to Recurrence of Dream</b> <i>MO</i> [1.Dec., 14 <sup>o</sup> ]: <i>MO-Ber</i> , 50 (Micro 60 E7); <i>MO-DB</i> , 44 (Micro 57 D9) <i>MO-Ce</i> , 79f; <i>MO-En</i> , 110	<b>Dream of Imp. Comm.</b> <i>Doc</i> [P. II,C.XVI], 153 Printed marg. note.	(III) <b>Dream at Age 19</b> <i>IBMI</i> , 305; <i>EBMI</i> , 229) told to Barbaris ca. 1870
<b>Clothes-mending Dream</b> ASC III: Sogni-Barberis (Micro 1294 A2f)	<b>Clothes-mending Dream</b> <i>Doc I</i> [P.III,C.III], 179 (Micro 968 E8) <i>DocII</i> (P.V.C.III), 144f (Micro 972 A11f)	(IV) <b>Dream at Age 21</b> <i>IBMI</i> , 381f; <i>EBMI</i> , 284f  <i>IBMII</i> , 202; <i>EBMII</i> , 159f

[sources of dream narratives] [original/early]	[Ed. in Documenti] [intermediate]	[Ed. in Biogr. Memoirs] [final]
<b>Second Turco-Related Dream</b> <b>Joseph Turco's Testimony</b> <i>POCT</i> IS. 89-90, 7/6-7/92, 23],1387 (Micro 2135 C2-11) <b>Bp.Cagliero's Testimony:</b> <i>POS</i> [XVI, 12], 87f (Micro 2213 D7f)		(V) <b>Dream at Age 22</b> <i>IBMI</i> , 381f; <i>EMBI</i> , 315f
<b>Dream of 1844</b> Sequel to Dream at Age 9 <i>MO</i> [2.Dec., 15 <sup>o</sup> ): <i>MO-Ber</i> , 84, 86ff (Micro 61 C12.D2ff.); <i>MO-DB</i> , 93ff (Micro 58 C10ff) <i>MO-Ce</i> , 133-6; <i>MO-En</i> , 203f. 209f	<b>Dream of 1844</b> Sequel to Dream at Age 9 <i>DocII</i> [P.V,C. IV], 148f (Micro 972 B3f)	(VI) <b>Dream of 1844</b> Sequel to Dream at Age 9 <i>IBMII</i> , 241f. 243ff; <i>EBMII</i> 189. 190f
<b>First Dream of Holy Martyrs</b> <b>Barberis' 'Orig.' Draft:</b> <i>ASC110</i> : Cron-Barb (Micro 892 A11f); <b>Barberis' 'Final' Draft:</b> <i>ASC110</i> : Cron-Barb (Micro 866 B10-C1) <b>Derived Copies:</b> <i>ASC111</i> : Sogni-Barb (Micro 1279 C6-11); <i>ASC111</i> : Sogni-Lem (Micro 1314 B10-C5)	<b>First Dream of HM</b> Told to Barbaris 1875      <i>DocII</i> [P.V.CX], 189f Micro 972 E8f	(VII) <b>First Dream of HM</b> Told to Barbaris 1875      <i>IBMII</i> , 297-301; <i>EBMII</i> , 231-235
	<b>Second Dream of HM</b>   <i>DocII</i> [P.V.C.V], 157 (Micro 972 B12)	(VIII) <b>Second Dream of HM</b> Told to a few SDBs (1884) Reconstructed by Lemoyne. <i>IBMII</i> , 341-344; <i>EBMII</i> , 267f

## Part II. Don Bosco's Vocation-Mission Dreams in Their Historical Setting and Their Significance for Vocational Discernment at Critical Turning Points

### 1. Evaluation of Data and Conclusions to Be Drawn from the Foregoing Text and Source- critical Study

In his critique of Lemoine's use and interpretation of the sources for the dream narratives recorded in the first volume of the *Biographical Memoirs* (Dreams I-V as listed above), Desramaut<sup>128</sup> makes what may be valid points.

He observes, in the first place, that the six chief source-texts on which Lemoine relies may be distributed into two series, of three witnesses each, harking back to Don Bosco and to the Turco family respectively. The Bosco series comprises Cagliero's testimony at the Diocesan Process (Dream V above) Barberis' report as quoted in *Documenti* (Dream III above), and, of course, Don Bosco's own account in his *Memoirs* (Dream I above). The Turco series comprises Joseph Turco's report "through an unidentified intermediary" in *Documenti* (Dream II, above),<sup>129</sup> Rua's testimony at the Diocesan Process quoting Lucy Turco (Dream II, above), and Joseph Turco's testimony at the Diocesan Process (Dream V, above).

Secondly, Desramaut argues, not without some reservation, that all six narratives, refer to the same dream experience, that is, to the *First Dream*.<sup>130</sup>

When we evaluate Lemoine's construction of the three dreams in the second volume of the *Biographical Memoirs*, as discussed above (Dream VI-VIII above), further observations are in order.

To begin with, it appears that for the first two dream narratives (the *Dream of 1844*, related in Don Bosco's *Memoirs*, and the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs*, reported by Barberis) their setting is determining. In the sources

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<sup>128</sup> Desramaut, *Mem I*, 251-255.

<sup>129</sup> Actually the intermediary has been identified. He is none other than Barberis [cf. note 38 above, and text relating thereto; Appendix II, A-1].

<sup>130</sup> "There would be, then, only one dream reported in a slightly different manner by six different witnesses. This conclusion, however, is at variance with a few small but troublesome phrases or reflections [in the texts]" [Desramaut, *Mem I*, 253]. Cf. also note 47 above, and text relating thereto.



both are set in the same narrative context, namely, the evening preceding the second Sunday of October, 1844, the time of Don Bosco's move out of the Convitto to Barolo's Rifugio. The conclusion then would be that the two are variant recollections of the same dream experience. This one dream, however, would have offered such a wealth of images that, building on the same core, different narratives could be constructed in accordance with the narrator's point of view and purpose at the time of narration. And after all, dreams are pretty elusive when it comes to expressing them in words. In narrating his dreams Don Bosco often refers to this phenomenon. On this very occasion, according to Barberis, Don Bosco remarked, "A lot of other things occurred [in the dream], but there is no need of relating them now."<sup>131</sup> Lemoyne makes this very point in relating this dream (in a different setting) in *Documenti*.

A noteworthy feature of these mysterious visions is the presence of complex skeins of interrelated scenes which keep recurring and changing into new ones, always with surprising effects. They might also merge simultaneously with other representations, the whole seeming to merge into one point.<sup>132</sup>

Then, as is known, in his *Memoirs* and in connection with the *Dream of 1844*, Don Bosco refers to 'another dream', obviously in a different but similar setting, that he considered equally important. Might this be that 'other dream'? If so, then we are forced to conclude that Don Bosco's recollection faltered when he told it to Barberis on February 2, 1875.

This, however, seems unlikely, also due to the fact that events of 1844 must have been very much on his mind at the time of the narration (early 1975). He was then writing his *Memoirs*, and we know from internal evidence that the better part of his Ms. (comprising the Dream of 1844) was composed between 1873 and 1875.<sup>133</sup>

Thirdly, as already indicated above, the *Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs*, in terms of source, context and content (apart from the image and role of the three youths) may not have a claim to independent status.

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<sup>131</sup> Appendix VII, A-3 (T-A-3)

<sup>132</sup> Appendix VII, B-1-a-Doc (T-B-1-a-Doc).

<sup>133</sup> Pages 29 to 158 of Don Bosco's original draft [cf. Desramaut, *Mem I*, 116]. The *Dream of 1844* occurs on page 93f. of *MO-DB (FDBMicro 58 C11f.)*.

If Don Bosco's vocation-mission dream experiences did not occur as the biographer says they did—how and in what historical junctures in Don Bosco's life did they occur? And how did these experiences function in Don Bosco's vocational discernment?

## 2. Don Bosco's *Memoirs*—the Point of Reference

Here a comment on method is in order.<sup>134</sup> To address these questions one has to fall back on what Don Bosco tells us himself about his experiences, and this means that the text of his *Memoirs* must be our point of reference. True, as he tells us himself, the vocation–mission dream recurred at various, perhaps numerous, times. But the few instances which he relates, and the references that he provides, pinpoint the crucial situations of his vocational discernment and decision. The understanding is that God normally reveals his will not independently of a complex set of interacting socio-historical and psychological forces at work. Therefore, this seems the only reliable course to take, not only because most of the dream narratives reported in the sources may be brought back to the data of the *Memoirs*, but also because Don Bosco gives us therein a reliable historical context in which to understand that data. After all, Don Bosco's purpose in writing the *Memoirs of the Oratory* was precisely to describe the progress of his vocation and his definitive option for the young, which he sees as the origin of the Salesian Society.

Admittedly, Don Bosco's *Memoirs* are not 'pure history'. Fr. P. Braidó's judgment may be taken as a guideline not only for an overall understanding of the work, but specifically for an evaluation of Don Bosco's own understanding of his vocation.

The events recorded and the things described [in the *Memoirs*] reflect real-life experiences. But [in real life] those experiences were most likely not perceived as possessing that fulness of meaning or that organic relationship, which the author [Don Bosco] attributes to them

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<sup>134</sup> This observation refers to historico-critical methodology. But it is understood here that such experiences (in our case, Don Bosco's vocation-mission dream experiences) are approached with a more general method that includes a certain Christian understanding of reality. For instance, in this regard, M. Kelsey, after quoting a skeptical statement by B.H. Streeter, writes: "This is the attitude of many intellectuals [...]. A world view that includes a belief in spiritual reality, however, would enable us to conclude the following. 1. God is always present, not only in the physical world, but also in the spiritual world, which constantly breaks through into our consciousness via the dream and the vision. 2. God gives direction to those who are open to them. 3. We can directly confront and experience this spiritual world [...]" [*Dreams: A Way to Listen to God*, p. 69; cf. note 4 above].

[in retrospect] out of an understanding gained through the mature achievement and reflection of a lifetime. [...] <sup>135</sup>

For, after all, one of his aims in writing his story was, as he states, “to make known how God himself has [always] guided [me in] everything, and in every circumstance.” <sup>136</sup> But there is no reason to doubt that Don Bosco maintained the detachment necessary for a basically realistic portrayal of the situations he is writing about. We may, therefore, take him at his word with respect to the dreams which he relates or refers to in his *Memoirs*, and which he presents, with sobriety and even self-doubt, as playing a role in his vocational decisions. Hence, the comments that follow will focus on the dream material of Don Bosco's *Memoirs*. <sup>137</sup>

### 3. First Vocational Awareness and the *First Dream* at the Age of Nine

For Don Bosco's earliest years, dates and sequences of events can be established only with approximate accuracy. Fr. Teresio Bosco, in a popular biography, remarks that in writing his *Memoirs*, Don Bosco's photographic (not logical) memory portrays early scenes and experiences with refreshing vividness, but not necessarily with chronological accuracy. <sup>138</sup>

It should be noted, however, that Don Bosco's dating of the *First Dream* at the age of nine or ten (or better, between the age of nine and ten) never varies. Moreover, the dream is related in a context which has all the likelihood of being the true one. And the sequence is as follows: Mamma Margaret's religious teaching and John's first Christian commitments; schooling and Christian education by Fr. Lacqua in Capriglio; the dream; and lastly his early activity

<sup>135</sup> P. Braido, *S. Giovanni Bosco. Scritti sul sistema preventivo nell'educazione della gioventù* Brescia: La Scuola Ed., 1965, p.4.

<sup>136</sup> *MO* [Intro.]: *MO-En*, 3.

<sup>137</sup> The following passages of the *Memoirs*, together with the material connected with them, will be discussed or referred to: (1) The *First Dream* [*MO* [Intro.]: *MO-Ce*, 22-26; *MO-En*, 18-21]; (2) the short narrative of the *Dream of 'Reprimand'* [*MO*, 1. Dec., 4<sup>o</sup>: *MO-Ce*, 43f.; *MO-En*, 48]; (3) the reference to the recurrence of the dream with the accompanying comment [*MO*, 1. Dec., 14<sup>o</sup>: *MO-Ce*, 79f.; *MO-En*, 110]; (4) the short narrative of the *Dream on the Franciscans* [*MO*, 1. Dec., 14<sup>o</sup>: *MO-Ce*, 80f.; *MO-En*, 110f.]; (5) the *Dream of 1844* [*MO*, 2. Dec., 15<sup>o</sup>: *MO-Ce*, 134f.; *MO-En*, 209f.].

<sup>138</sup> Teresio Bosco, *Don Bosco. Una biografia nuova*. Leumann (Torino): Editrice Elle Di Ci, 1979,

with the local children.<sup>139</sup> These elements belong together and reinforce one another.

The dream is introduced with the words: “At that point in my life I had a dream” (*A quell'età ho fatto un sogno*). This refers to the immediately preceding notice that he had reached the age of nine, that Mamma Margaret decided that John should have proper schooling, and that arrangements for this were made with Fr. Joseph Lacqua at Capriglio.<sup>140</sup> Don Bosco says of this priest-teacher: “He was very attentive to my needs, seeing to my instruction and even more to my Christian education.” Immediately after relating the dream, he continues: “You have asked me at what age I began to take an interest in children. When I was ten years old, I was [already] doing all that a child could possibly do at that age, and this was to run a kind of ‘festive’ oratory.” He begins his description of his early apostolate among his peers with words that seem to hark back to an even earlier time: “I was still very small, when I was already studying my companions’ characters.” All this seems to point to the fact that something was already going on in John’s life when the dream occurred. These experiences included Mamma Margaret’s religious upbringing, her desire to give John a chance at proper schooling, Fr. Lacqua’s teaching and spiritual influence, and John’s aptitude for, and early involvement with, peer ministry. One cannot but believe that all these converging circumstances did indeed carry with them the suggestion, not only implicit but at some point explicit, of the priesthood. Consequently, when Mamma Margaret on hearing John’s dream made the comment, “Who knows, you may become a priest,” it was not the first time that

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<sup>139</sup> Cf. *MO* [Introd.]: *MO-Ce*, 21-27; *MO-En*, 9f. 18ff. 27.

<sup>140</sup> At this time Joseph was eleven years of age, and Anthony sixteen. As records show, Joseph remained illiterate throughout his life (although Lemoine says that he did learn how to read and write [cf. *IBM* I, 96; *EBM* I, 73]). Anthony was able to sign his name to documents, and must have acquired rudimentary literacy. John had already received some instruction from a local farmer. But Margaret had proper schooling for John in mind, obviously at the public elementary school at Castelnuovo, for Becchi was a harlet of Morialdo under Castelnuovo. But two miles was too great a distance to walk four times a day for one so young. So Margaret succeeded in enrolling John in Fr. Lacqua’s school in the nearby town of Capriglio, probably through the influence of her unmarried sister Joan Marie, nicknamed Marianna, who had entered Fr. Lacqua’s service as housekeeper around this time [cf. also *Ibid.*, 94-100 and 72-76]. (Marianna remained in Fr. Lacqua’s service, when the latter moved to another town, also as municipal school teacher, until his death in 1850; whereupon she moved to Valdocco to help Margaret and became one of the Oratory ‘mothers’.)

Don Bosco makes another remark that is of interest in this respect. In speaking of the difficulty connected with attending school in Castelnuovo because of distance, he mentions an alternative that must have been discussed: “*Recarmi in collegio si opponeva il fratello Antonio*” [*MO* [Introd.]: *MO-Ce*, 22]. In context this appears to mean that Anthony was opposed to his ‘boarding’ in Castelnuovo (the alternative to walking the distance four times a day) [so *MO-En*, 9]. However, Lemoine may have understood that the alternative discussed was a ‘boarding school’ (*collegio*) [*IBM* I, 96; and clearly so *EBM* I, 73]. This is unlikely not only in view of context, but in view of the child’s tender age (eight years). If this were the case, however, then we would have to conclude that Margaret’s plans for John went far beyond elementary schooling, and certainly included the priesthood.

the thought had occurred to her or that the subject had been mentioned. It is quite possible that Fr. Lacqua himself may have set in motion or added impetus to the idea of a priestly vocation in connection with John's desire 'to study'. The dream, then, would have been the subconscious reaction to the psychological situation created in John by such a possibility and the family debate surrounding it.

Fr. P. Stella's plausible suggestion that the dream took place on the occasion of the patronal feast (St. Peter, June 29), when liturgical texts such as, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep," were heard in Morialdo, would explain some of the dream's specific images.<sup>141</sup>

The dream's suggestions are immediately evident. The images symbolize priestly ministry, and specifically priestly ministry to children in need or at risk. These images are a constant not only in the prime account of the dream in Don Bosco's *Memoirs*, but also in all the variants preserved in the sources that have been cited above.

P. Stella's concluding words are also worth quoting:

For Don Bosco this dream at the age of nine was not just another of the many dreams that he undoubtedly had during childhood. There are unresolved problems surrounding it, of course. Some of these have to do with the accuracy of his later recollection, and with the nature of the reports that have come down to us; others, with the actual time of its occurrence (no longer ascertainable), or with the circumstances that may have provided the stimuli for the dream and its immediate fantastic images, etc. In spite of such unanswered questions, however, this much is abundantly clear: Don Bosco was deeply affected by the dream. In fact, the evidence suggests that he must have experienced it as some sort of divine communication; as an event invested, as he himself avers, with the 'appearance' (the signs and guarantees) of the supernatural. It was as if his life had been indelibly stamped with with some new divine seal.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> "Perhaps the dream occurred toward the end of John's reduced period of schooling under Fr. Lacqua, in the year 1824-25. And it may have taken place at the time of the patronal feast of St. Peter [and Paul], when [such liturgical texts as] 'Feed my lambs, feed my sheep', were heard in [the village of] Morialdo. That was also the time when John, between nine and ten years old, had begun to put on Sunday entertainments, consisting of magic tricks and acrobatic stunts interspersed with prayers and religious instruction. It was in this context that he had the experience which was to "remain deeply imprinted on his mind for the rest of his life". [Stella, *DB I*, 29; cf. *DB I-En*, 7f.] .

<sup>142</sup> Stella, *DB I*, 30, cf. *DB I-En*, 9.

#### 4. The Calosso Experience <sup>143</sup> and the *Dream of 'Reprimand'*

John's year with Fr. Calosso was a memorable and significant one for his vocation, even though it ended in tragedy. For, if on the one hand the experience stands in continuity with earlier vocational elements and decisions, on the other, it appears to have been so transforming that by it John's vocational course was definitively set.

John started school with Fr. Calosso at Morialdo almost immediately after their meeting, when Anthony's opposition was still a problem. At first he walked back and forth from Becchi for his lessons, then began to stay with the priest the whole day, and finally moved in with him. In Fr. Calosso young John found not only a teacher and a spiritual guide, but also (and this was perhaps a new experience for him) a good father. When it appeared that things were finally going well for John, Fr. Calosso died suddenly of a stroke in November 1930. John grieved for this loss to the point of becoming ill and deserving a reprimand in a dream. <sup>144</sup>

But before discussing the Calosso experience and what it meant for John, a comment of a more general nature may be helpful. How did the loss of his father in early childhood affect little John? <sup>145</sup> The absence of a father in childhood and adolescence is regarded as a serious matter for a boy; and John's

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<sup>143</sup> Fr. Calosso's spotty records show him born in Chieri in 1760, studying theology in Turin, and ordained probably in 1782. After holding a parish for twenty-two years in a small town, he resigned at the age of fifty-three. There is practically no further record of his doings until, in the summer of 1829 (while John was still working at the Moglia farm), he was appointed chaplain of Morialdo, one of the villages of Castelnuovo, to which Becchi belonged. He was nearly seventy years old at the time, and he died a year later. (The age of seventy-five given in the parish record of his death and burial is an error.) John returned to Becchi from the Moglia farm at the beginning of November 1829 and met Fr. Calosso a few days later on the occasion of a Jubilee celebration.

This was the Jubilee proclaimed by Pius VIII on his accession to the papacy in March 1829 (not to be confused, as Don Bosco has it in his *Memoirs*, with the Holy Year kept four years earlier under Leo XII). It was to be celebrated in the various dioceses on dates established by the local ordinaries. Archbishop Chiaverotti of Turin set the dates of November 8-22 for his archdiocese. A triduum preparatory to the Jubilee exercises was held in the town of Buttigliera, beginning on November 5, with sermons by preachers that attracted people from towns, villages and hamlets round about. It was under these circumstances that Fr. Calosso and John Bosco, now fourteen years old, met one evening after devotions [Cf. J. Klein - E. Valentini, "Una rettificazione cronologica delle Memorie di san Giovanni Bosco," *Salesianum* 17 (1955) 581-610; Desramaut, *Mem I*, 128f.; M. Molineris, *Don Bosco inedito. Quello che le biografie di San Giovanni Bosco non dicono*. Colle Don Bosco: Istituto Salesiano Bernardi-Semeria, 1974, p. 153-162. Stella, *DB I*, 37-40; *DB I-En*, 17-20].

<sup>144</sup> Cf. *MO*, 1. Dec., 2<sup>a</sup>-3<sup>a</sup>: *Mo-Ce*, 33-41; *MO-En*, 33-36. 41-43.

<sup>145</sup> For the comments that follow, cf. G. Daquino, *Psicologia di Don Bosco*, 2. ed., Torino: SEI, 1988, p. 20-23. 26-31.

loss was aggravated by the situation in which the immediate family found itself: a mother left to cope with extreme conditions of hardships and strife, alone.

No doubt, Margaret succeeded in providing steady support and sure guidance by her instinctive understanding of the situation, her clear religious beliefs, her strong moral principles, and her sound decisions. Also, the good image which the mother has of the father and which she can make present to the child can provide substantial compensation. That this was the case may be gauged by the fact that John from early infancy gave evidence of unusual courage and self-possession, coupled with a sense of reality, duty and personal sacrifice, all evidences of a constructive motherly presence.

From an even more basic standpoint, Margaret's presence as a mother was constructive. In earliest infancy, when the child begins to distinguish objective from subjective reality, it needs an adult person to interact with and to help it in the process. This adult person is usually the mother; so that a child's relationship with its mother will determine its relationship to itself and to the external world. A good relationship with the mother establishes in the child that 'primary trust' which is the matrix out of which the child's self-esteem and self-reliance grow. Self-trust, self-acceptance and love of self; trust in others, acceptance of others and love of others; the feeling of being trusted, accepted and loved by others—all of this in the child grows out of a good relationship with its parents, especially with the mother. Failure in the child to achieve 'primary trust' will inevitably result in a 'negative identity', an inability to trust, accept and love self and others. There results an individual who is depressed, unsatisfied, insecure; one who is forever in need of, and seeking, other peoples' approval; one whose self-valuation depends on the judgment of others; one whose love life is disturbed (e.g., loves possessively, or feels 'unworthy' of being loved); one whose sexuality is also disturbed (e.g., unable to relate, or to relate realistically with a person of the opposite sex). The emotional experiences of childhood can become permanently fixated.

There is every indication that John's relationship with his mother in childhood was 'constructive', and that his psychological development took a normal course. Never repressed or withdrawn, he appears self-reliant, able to relate to others, and endowed with a happy reflective-active personality.

But the fact remains that the absence of the father can never be fully compensated by the presence of the mother alone, no matter how devoted and capable that parent may be. The absence of a father of itself need not cause grave damage, only if such a lack is compensated *both* by the constructive presence of the mother *and* by the positive presence of some father substitute in a situation where a reciprocal emotional relationship is established.

Apparently there were no father figures available to assist John in a realistic fashion. Presumably the men of the extended family (e.g., uncles Francis and Michael Occhiena and legal guardian John Zucca) could to some extent fill that role. But it seems that they stuck to a well-meaning but rigidly traditional role of merely occasional support. Far from being present for a meaningful personal relationship, they were probably habitually absent.

Fr. Calosso comes into John's life at a critical juncture, and the father-son relationship that developed between the two was perhaps a new and transforming experience for John. In Fr. Calosso John, now an adolescent, met the 'good father' that he had been needing and yearning for all along. Fr. Calosso had enough psychological experience to understand John's problem, compounded as it was by the fact that at the age of fifteen John found himself in the middle of his adolescent crisis. And on the other hand, the good (but probably disillusioned) priest found himself in need of a son to whom he could be a father, and saw the opportunity of doing something worthwhile and fulfilling in his old age. Thus there quickly developed a deep bond and mutual relationship. Don Bosco expresses himself in the most emphatic terms.

Fr. Calosso had become my idol. I loved him more than a father, I prayed for him and served him willingly in every way I could. My greatest happiness was to do things for him; and, believe me, I would gladly have given my very life to make him happy.[...] On his part, that holy man loved me so much, that he would frequently reassure me: "Do not worry about your future. As long as I am alive I shall see to it that you lack nothing; and I shall provide for you for after I am gone."<sup>146</sup>

No wonder then that Fr. Calosso's death was so traumatic for John. Again Don Bosco writes:

Fr. Calosso's death was a disastrous loss for me. I wept inconsolably over my dead benefactor. I thought of him in my waking hours and dreamt of him when asleep. It affected me to the point that my mother became alarmed over my health and sent me off to my grandfather at Capriglio.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> *MO*, 1. Dec., 3<sup>o</sup>: *MO-Ce*, 40; *MO-En*, 42.

<sup>147</sup> *MO*, 1 Dec., 4<sup>o</sup>: *MO-Ce*, 43; *MO-En*, 48.



Thus the Calosso relationship was truncated by tragedy; and the yearning with which John sought a good father figure seems not to have been satisfied until he came under Fr. Cafasso's influence. But the experience was important for John's vocation.

In the first place, the loss and the grieving were the occasion of another dream, to which Don Bosco refers briefly: "At this time I had another dream. In it I was harshly rebuked for having put my hope in human beings and not in our good Father in heaven."<sup>148</sup> It has already been pointed out that there is no way of telling from such a sketchy description whether we are dealing with a recurrence of the vocation dream or not. Likewise Lemoyne's supposition that it coincides with the *First Turco-Related Dream* has already been critically examined. Lemoyne's further claim that by this dream John Bosco "was given assurance that the material resources needed to shelter and to feed countless youngsters would not be wanting," also seems unwarranted.<sup>149</sup> It supposes that the rebuke was motivated by the fact that John had hoped that Fr. Calosso would supply the material means necessary to ensure his education. Indeed Fr. Calosso had given him that assurance, and his entrusting the key of his strongbox to John showed that he fully intended to do so. But John, on the other hand, by freely renouncing his right showed that he had not put his trust in human beings for the material security to be gained. In view of what has been said above, the rebuke was given on more general human grounds. John had come to rely on the good priest in more important ways than his need for money. And it was his personal loss that was the reason for the inconsolable grieving which called forth the rebuke.

In the second place, study and priesthood (with an option for the young) became inseparably linked in John's mind as a result of the Calosso experience, if they had not been so linked before. For he mentions the dream and the rebuke, and then he adds: "Meanwhile the thought of going ahead with my studies was uppermost in my mind." He goes on to remark on the aloofness of the local priests and he continues: "If I were a priest, I would act differently. I would approach the children, speak kindly to them, and give them good advice."

Studies and priesthood for her son seem to have been uppermost in Margaret's mind as well, for now she embarks on a course of action that will soon assure John his freedom.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> *MO*, *ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Cf. pp. 54-59 above.

<sup>150</sup> *MO*, *ibid.*

## 5. Vocational Decision at Chieri <sup>151</sup>

As the Rhetoric year drew to a close (1835), <sup>152</sup> John began seriously to consider his options for the future. The importance of the recurrence of the *Becchi Dream* has already been emphasized, and Don Bosco himself makes a point of it, though he does not state that it was repeated at this time. But the dream and its possible suggestions become a serious consideration and a problem for John at this critical turning point, when he is trying to discern his vocation. He writes:

The dream I had had in Morialdo remained deeply imprinted on my mind. It had even occurred at other times and in much clearer terms; so that, if I wanted to believe it and follow its suggestion, I would have had to choose the priesthood, toward which I actually felt inclined.

It has also been mentioned that Don Bosco, when writing his *Memoirs*, makes a point of stressing the ‘supernatural’ character of the experience. But even as he tells the story of supernatural guidance from the vantage point of the mid-1870s, he also reveals the self-doubt and uncertainties entertained at the time of the actual events, when he was struggling with discerning his vocation. Thus he adds:

However, a reluctance on my part to put faith in dreams, my [worldly] lifestyle, certain habitual tendencies of my heart, and the absolute lack of the virtue necessary to this state [the priesthood] filled me with doubts and made any decision in this regard extremely difficult.

His spiritual director or confessor, Fr. Maloria, who had been so helpful in guiding John in the basics of Christian life and devotion, consistently refused to take a stand in the matter of the choice of a state in life. <sup>153</sup> After much thought and after reading some books on the subject of vocation, John decided to

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<sup>151</sup> All quotes from, and references to, Don Bosco’s *Memoirs* in the paragraphs that follow under the present heading are from: *MO*, 1. Dec., 14<sup>o</sup>: *MO-Ce*, 79-83; *MO-En*, 110ff.

<sup>152</sup> As has been mentioned, the crisis centering on the Franciscan episode took place during the humanities year (1834). John applied to enter the Franciscan convent, took his examinations and was accepted on April 8, 1834 [cf. note 60, 62 and 63 above, and text relating thereto].

<sup>153</sup> On Fr. Maloria, and the possible didactic aim of Don Bosco’s characterization of him in this matter, cf. Stella, *DB I*, 44f.; *DB I-En*, 26f.

join the Franciscan Friars Minor of the Observance at the local monastery of Our Lady of Peace. The books that John read stressed the importance for one's salvation of choosing the right state in life.<sup>154</sup> Further, it appears that here the choice was clearly between the seminary and the religious life; and apparently the books that he read suggested that a diocesan priest would be exposed to the gravest dangers, that his responsibility was staggering, and that a strict account would be demanded of him by God, and such things. The religious life was perceived as a haven of refuge from the dangers of the world where one could more easily save one's soul and find peace.<sup>155</sup> He applied for admission to the Franciscan novitiate, took his entrance examination in Turin and, as the records show, he was accepted. But then a dream dissuaded him from entering the monastery of peace where there would be no peace.

As Don Bosco relates it, this dream does not qualify as a recurrence of the vocation dream.<sup>156</sup> Nor does Lemoyne regard it as such. It is not, however, without vocational significance. Negatively, it dissuaded John Bosco from entering upon a way of life which would have run counter to the evident thrust of the vocation dream. Positively, it indicated to John that his true vocation lay in another direction ("another place, another harvest"), alluding to the mission imaged in the vocation dream.

Whether this dream by itself would have forced him to reconsider his choice we can only speculate. Don Bosco continues with a puzzling statement, which in literal translation reads: "Then some incident (*caso*) occurred that made it impossible for me to carry out my plan; and since the obstacles [arising therefrom] were many and lasting, I decided to disclose the whole matter to my friend Comollo." While John is making a novena for guidance, Louis Comollo writes to his uncle, Fr. Joseph Comollo, pastor of his home town of Cinzano, seeking a solution to John's problem. By the end of the novena a reassuring letter arrives from Fr. Comollo.

What 'plan' is Don Bosco referring to? The context seems to favor understanding the 'plan' as John's intention of joining the Franciscans. So Ceria takes it and speculates no further.<sup>157</sup> One must then conclude that the dream by itself would not have been a good enough reason for John to reconsider his

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<sup>154</sup> Cf. Stella, *DB I*, 46f.; *DB I-En*, 28f.

<sup>155</sup> "If I become a secular priest [...] my vocation runs a great risk of shipwreck. I will embrace the priesthood; but I will renounce the world, enter the cloister, and dedicate myself to study and meditation. Thus in solitude I will be able to combat my passions, especially my pride" [*MO*, *ibid.*].

<sup>156</sup> Cf. Note 19 above.

<sup>157</sup> *MO-Ce*, 81, note to line 42.

decision. Reading on, however, one suspects that Fr. Comollo's reply addresses a larger problem, for he writes:

Having given careful consideration to the matters you wrote to me about, I would advise your friend not to enter a monastery at this time. Let him don the clerical habit. As he goes on with his [seminary] studies he will better understand what God wants of him. He should not be afraid that he *will lose his vocation*, because by shunning the world and by being diligent in prayer he will be able *to overcome all obstacles*."

If this is the case, one may ask further, What was the nature of the 'incident' and of the 'many and lasting obstacles' arising from it? Is Don Bosco referring to special personal problems, or to unreachable ideals of holiness, or to anxiety connected with choosing a 'predestined' vocation? It may not be just out of humility that in connection with his vocation discernment he writes, as already mentioned: "my [worldly] lifestyle, certain habitual tendencies of my heart, and the absolute lack of the virtue necessary to this state [the priesthood] filled me with doubts and made any decision in this regard extremely difficult." It may indeed point to a very serious inner conflict.

Did a vocation dream come to comfort and reassure John at this critical juncture? As seen above, Lemoyne thinks so. Now, even though his identification of the dream narrative for this occasion and his recourse to the *Memoirs* for support may not be critically tenable, a dream at this stage would be plausible, if not expected.<sup>158</sup>

Be that as it may, as in the case of any young man, so also in John Bosco's case, a complex set of historical factors, of a socio-economic-cultural nature, were at work in his decision to enter the seminary.

One of these would be the religious-cultural milieu of the school. The school system under which John received all his education was totally under the Church's control. The school curriculum, the organization of the students' social and religious life, the overwhelming presence of the Church and its personnel,

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<sup>158</sup> For a discussion of the *Dream at the Age of Nineteen (Dream of 'Imperious Command')* cf. pp. 59-63 above.

It was noted at that point that in quoting the 'humility statement' just referred to here, Lemoyne, both in *Documenti* and in the *Biographical Memoirs*, skips what may be the key phrase in it, namely, "certain habitual tendencies of my heart" [cf. notes 67 and 68 above, and text relating thereto].

The doublet of the crisis as recorded in the *Biographical Memoirs* has also been discussed [cf. note 63 above, and text relating thereto]. It may be pointed out that in reporting the 'incident' and the 'obstacles', and Comollo's role, in connection with the second crisis, Lemoyne sees no problem and expresses no curiosity.

both diocesan and regular, throughout the school system, from the highest echelon of its administration down to the teacher in the lowest grade, guaranteed such control. The whole educational system was calculated to foster and channel vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life. Recruiting by religious orders (all of which suffered from lack of vocations during this period) must have been brisk. Perhaps that had something to do with John's decision join the Franciscans. But it seems that, overall, the stronger influence on John was diocesan. Some of his favorite teachers at the school were diocesan. The advice that finally shaped his decision to enter the seminary came from diocesan priests: Fr. Comollo, Fr. Cafasso and Fr. Cinzano.

Secondly, Fr. Lemoyne's passing comment is worth noting: "John was now twenty-one, and only his entrance to the seminary could exempt him from military service."<sup>159</sup> From what has been said, we may be sure that this consideration alone would not have been decisive, but it should not be overlooked.

In the same passage Lemoyne states that John was facing serious financial difficulties. If John had entered the Franciscans his financial problems would have been resolved. Entering the seminary on the contrary would not only not alleviate, but would aggravate, his financial position. In the seminary there were fees to be paid and few opportunities for lucrative odd jobs (although John did help himself in various ways).<sup>160</sup> And it was diocesan priests and well-to-do lay people connected with local parish life that came to the rescue.<sup>161</sup> It appears, therefore, that the stronger and decisive influence in John's vocational decision was diocesan.

Finally, the question may be asked, What role did John's option for the young play in this period of vocational decision? Was it a real factor? Don Bosco tells us in his *Memoirs* that by the age of ten he was already engaged in a youth apostolate compatible with his age. Throughout his student days at Chieri, what we now call 'peer ministry' was a serious commitment on his part. Moreover,

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<sup>159</sup> *IBM* I, 366; *EBM* I, 274. In effect, the name John Melchior Bosco appears on the list of draftees of the military district of Asti prepared for a drawing on November 5, 1835. He had disqualified himself by opting for the seminary and by receiving the clerical habit on October 25. Opposite John's name there appears the notation, "exempted [...] as a cleric called by his Lordship the Bishop" [S. Caselle, *Op. cit.*, p. 145. Cf. note 62 above].

<sup>160</sup> An author quoted by Caselle maintains that the real reason John wanted to join the Franciscans was precisely because neither he nor his family could meet the financial obligations of the seminary [cf. E. Dervieux, *Un secolo del Seminario Arcivescovile di Chieri 1829-1929*. Chieri: Premiata Officina Grafica G. Astesano, 1929, in S. Caselle, *Op. cit.*, p. 83. Cf. note 62 above].

<sup>161</sup> Lemoyne mentions Fr. Michael Anthony Cinzano (pastor of Castlnuovo), the well-to-do Fr. Louis Guala (Rector of the Convitto), and Fr. Joseph Cafasso (by now finishing his course at the Convitto); also the laymen, Mr. Spirito Sartoris and the Chevalier John Baptist Pescamona.

the basic image of the vocation-mission dream (youngsters and animals being changed and the 'order' to take charge of them) symbolized youth apostolate, and the dream is said to have occurred at various times in even clearer terms. The priestly vocation, which was the dream's direct suggestion, was in view of an option for the young. This is the basic meaning that he reads into the dream, according to the sources. How then explain his desire to become a Franciscan? Would he permit any reason whatever, theological, moral or practical, to override the call to the young that he had heard in the dream and that re-enforced his own Christian instincts? Lemoyne senses the difficulty and claims that "He was convinced that this step could not obstruct the plan that God had laid out for him."<sup>162</sup> But how could he hope to be able to carry on a youth apostolate, as envisioned in the dream, as a Franciscan under obedience?

Perhaps this is another proof that in the actual circumstances of vocational decision, the vocation dream (assuming that there was one at this time) did not bring the clarity and the certainty that would have allowed John Bosco to cope with, if not to bypass, the play of historical forces.

## 6. Vocation Decision in 1844

Don Bosco's option for the young found fresh opportunity and confirmation on his entering the Convitto and coming under Fr. Cafasso's direct influence. In his *Memoirs* Don Bosco writes of his immediate involvement with youngsters on entering the *Convitto*:

No sooner had I enrolled at the Convitto of St. Francis that I found myself surrounded by a crowd of youngsters who followed me around in the streets, in the squares and in the very sacristy of the church attached to the institute. But the lack of suitable premises prevented me from becoming directly involved with them. An amusing incident provided me with the opportunity I was looking for, of attempting to put into effect a plan that would benefit boys roaming the streets of the city and juvenile delinquents, especially of those just released from prison<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> *IBM* I, 363; *EBM* I, 272.

<sup>163</sup> *MO*, 2. Dec., 12<sup>e</sup>: *MO-Ce* 124; *MO-En*, 187.

This 'amusing incident' is his meeting with young Bartholomew Garelli on December 8, 1841.<sup>164</sup> These words seem to imply that before the Garelli episode, and hence immediately upon entering the Convitto, he had already been involved with youngsters. This would have been through the catechetical program established at the church, or when going after young people in the streets and squares of the city, as Fr. Cafasso required his catechists to do. But the words also reveal that he had not yet really begun to gather them as his own; in fact, that he had not yet really discovered them. For, after relating the Garelli episode he writes:

I learnt from personal experience that when youngsters were released from detention and found a good-hearted person who showed interest in them, was present with them on feast days, and demonstrated his concern by finding them a good employer and visiting them occasionally at work during the week—then these youngsters were more likely to mend their ways, put past bad experiences behind them, and begin to live as good Christians and honest citizens<sup>165</sup>

These words clearly indicate the essential nature of oratory work, as Don Bosco came to practice it. But they are significant also in that they express the 'revelatory' character of the Garelli experience and of the first experiments that followed it. The encounter was for Don Bosco the personal discovery of a certain type of youngster. This was an entirely new experience. The early industrial and urban development in Turin in those historic years and the social conditions it produced brought about the conditions of an apostolate that hardly bore any resemblance to Don Bosco's early activities with the simple country lads of Becchi or with the students at Chieri. This perception must have begun to haunt him, and finally to address him personally and demand a commitment.

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<sup>164</sup> It may be noted that whereas in his *Memoirs* Don Bosco speaks of one young man (Bartholomew Garelli), in the *Cenno Storico* of 1854 he speaks of two young adults [cf. Pietro Braido, *Don Bosco per i giovani: l'Oratorio*]; *Una Congregazione degli Oratori*. Documenti (Piccola Biblioteca dell'Istituto Storico Salesiano 9). Roma: LAS, 1988, p. 35].

This is a critical edition of a number of documents in which Don Bosco speaks of the origin and work of the Salesian Society: [1] *Introduzione* and [2] *Cenno storico dell'Oratorio di S. Francesco di Sales* (from the *Piano di Regolamento per l'Oratorio* [...] of 1854); [3] *Cenni storici intorno all'Oratorio di S. Francesco di Sales* of 1862; [4] *Cenno storico sulla Congregazione di S. Francesco di Sales e relativi schiarimenti* (drafted early August 1873 at Lanzo). Roma: Tipografia Poliglotta della S.C. di Propaganda, 1874. [5] *Riassunto della Pia Società di S. Francesco di Sales nel 23 Febbraio 1874*. [6] Don Bosco's *Letter on the Origin of the Oratory* to Marquis Michael Benso of Cavour, Vicar for the City of Turin, March 13, 1846, [orig. in *Archivio Storico della Città di Torino, Vicariato*].

<sup>165</sup> *MO, Ibid.*, 126 and 190.

Thus did a 'new' option for the young take shape, and the oratory experiment at St. Francis of Assisi continued with increasing success until 1844.

"Toward the close of his third year at the Convitto", 1844, Don Bosco entered another critical period of vocational discernment. This time it was marked by a twofold crisis.

First, Don Bosco again entertains the idea of joining a religious congregation (the Oblates of the Virgin Mary), and of going to the missions. He makes no mention of this in his *Memoirs*, but Lemoyne reports the episode at length, if somewhat off-handedly, in the *Biographical Memoirs*. Fr. Cafasso repeatedly dissuaded him, though not as firmly as one would expect. In June 1844 Fr. Cafasso advised Don Bosco to make a spiritual retreat, which he was preaching for the first time at St. Ignatius' Retreat House, to help him discern his vocation. After the retreat Don Bosco served notice on Fr. Cafasso that he was packing his trunk and leaving the Convitto to become a religious. Fr. Cafasso is quoted as replying: "Forget about becoming a religious.[...] Continue to work for your boys. This and none other is God's will for you."<sup>166</sup>

The reasons for this lingering uncertainty are biographically unclear; but the same vexing questions may be raised here as in the case of the Franciscan episode, especially with regard to Don Bosco's option for the young.<sup>167</sup>

Secondly, as Don Bosco relates in his *Memoirs*, he must leave the Convitto and must choose one of three possible assignments. The crisis in this case is not from within, but from the circumstances. His reply to Fr. Cafasso's question shows that his commitment to the work of the oratory was not flagging: "My inclination is to work for young people.[...] At this moment I see myself in the midst of a crowd of children calling to me for help." But none of the assignments offered realistic possibilities in that respect. Fr. Cafasso's decision cut the gordian knot, but did not unravel it. He told Don Bosco to accept the chaplaincy at Marchioness Barolo's Little Hospital (under construction at the time), and in the meantime to help Fr. Borel at the Rifugio and live with him: "Meanwhile God will show you what you are to do for the young."<sup>168</sup>

This would mean that the little oratory activity at St. Francis of Assisi, good an experiment as it was, had to be left behind, albeit with the expectation that God would meanwhile make it possible for the work to continue. Don

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<sup>166</sup> Cf. *IBM* II, 203-207; *EBM* II, 160-163. It is in this connection that Lemoyne recalls the Clothes-Mending Dream and Fr. Cafasso's "deep-rooted conviction" regarding Don Bosco's true vocation.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Notes 154, 155, 162 above, and text relating thereto. Lemoyne even quotes Don Bosco as saying: "If Our Lord calls me to the religious life, he will find some one else to take care of the young people" [*IBM, EBM, ibid.*].

<sup>168</sup> Cf. *MO*, 2. Dec., 14<sup>a</sup>: *MO-Ce*, 132ff.; *MO-En*, 202ff.



Bosco accepted the arrangement. But even Fr. Borel's suggestion to hold the meeting in their rooms at the Rifugio for the duration was not very reassuring, given the circumstances.<sup>169</sup> Don Bosco did not have the heart to disband the group of youngsters that had become attached to him personally at St. Francis of Assisi. Thus we can still hear the anguish in his words as he told the story thirty years later to Fr. Barberis:

It was the year 1844. I was due to leave the Convitto and move to the Rifugio to live with Dr. Borel. I was very worried about [what I should do with] my youngsters who were attending religious instruction [the oratory] on Sundays and holy days. I did not know whether I should disband them or continue to look after them. My desire was to continue with [the work of] the oratories; but I did not see how I could. On my last Sunday at the Convitto I had to notify my youngsters that they should no longer meet there, as they did usually. In fact I was debating whether to tell them outright that there was no need to meet at all anywhere, since the oratory would be terminated there. If the oratory was to continue, I would, of course, have to indicate a place.<sup>170</sup>

To make a long story short, the illumination of a new dream (the *Dream of 1844*) was necessary for him to re-start the work under completely new circumstances. Certainly the group from St. Francis of Assisi would go along with him, but the oratory was no longer under the Convitto's protection. Marchioness Barolo's Rifugio and Little Hospital would offer him a degree of personal security, but only for the duration. The Rifugio priests, especially Fr. Borel, would provide considerable support, but the oratory would nonetheless be his personal responsibility. Such responsibility would demand of him an all-out commitment. He was about to enter into a covenant, fidelity to which would require of him the sacrifice of virtually everything else. It would seem, then, that lack of space at the Rifugio was not the primary cause of Don Bosco's anguish at that historic turning point. Thus a new inspiration was required for him to re-start the oratory on this new basis, making it permanently his own, *the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales*.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Cf. *MO*, *ibid*.

<sup>170</sup> Appendix VI, A-1-b (T-A-1-b).

<sup>171</sup> Cf. Ramón Alberdi, "Don Bosco Fondatore dei Salesiani," in *Don Bosco Fondatore della Famiglia Salesiana. Atti del Simposio, Roma-Salesianum (22-26 gennaio 1989)*, a cura di Mario Midali. Roma: Dicastero per la Famiglia Salesiana, 1989, [pp. 149-196], p.153f.

The dream has been discussed above.<sup>172</sup> Here we need only emphasize its significance for Don Bosco at that moment of vocational decision. In speaking of the origin of the Salesian Society Don Bosco refers to different dates ranging from 1841 to 1859 and beyond. Obviously 1841 is an important point of reference. But perhaps more appropriately, in a memorandum addressed to Pope Pius IX in 1864 he writes: "The purpose of [this Society] is to continue [the work] which for about 20 years has been in progress at the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales."<sup>173</sup> The year of reference here is 1844, the year when the oratory was re-founded, so to speak, out of the earlier group, as Don Bosco's very own. The Oratory of St. Francis de Sales may indeed be regarded as a continuation of the earlier experiment at St. Francis of Assisi—provided it is also viewed as the result of a new and definitive vocational option, which must have entailed considerable soul searching on Don Bosco's part, under the circumstances. It was in 1844 that Don Bosco's vocational option for "poor and abandoned" young people was finalized never again to waver.

Rightly, therefore, has the time that followed (namely, the time of the wandering and the settling at Valdocco) been characterized as the period of Don Bosco's vocational maturity. On the one hand, there is on Don Bosco's part total dedication, pervasive joy and bright hope for the future of the work; on the other, daunting trials and difficulties encountered for the first time: serious sickness, exasperating difficulty of finding a permanent home, objections of parish priests, suspicion and harassment by the police, abandonment by friends and helpers, and more.<sup>174</sup> Through it all Don Bosco never wavered: "I had an inner certainty about what I was doing, and felt that events would prove me right at the end."<sup>175</sup>

The *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs*<sup>176</sup> belongs to the same setting of final vocational crisis and definitive decision. One may consider it a more detailed doublet variant of the *Dream of 1844*, as Don Bosco told it to Barberis in the same setting. One may regard it as 'the other dream' that Don Bosco considered important for decision, set by Don Bosco in 1844 through faulty recollection, but the setting of which can no longer be determined. Again one

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<sup>172</sup> Cf. pp. 69-72 above and Appendix VI.

<sup>173</sup> [Don Bosco] *Cose da notarsi intorno alle Costituzioni della Società di S. Francesco di Sales*, in F. Motto, *Giovanni Bosco. Costituzioni della Società di S. Francesco di Sales [1858-]-875. Testi critici*. Roma: LAS, 1982, p. 229 (*IBM* VII, 622; omitted in *EBM* VII, 376); Cf. Alberdi, *op. cit.*, 149f.

<sup>174</sup> Alberdi, *op. cit.*, 153f.

<sup>175</sup> *Cenno Storico* of 1854, in Braido, *op. cit.*[cf. note 164 above], 44.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. pp. 72-80 above for a discussion, and Appendix VII for the text.

can, with Lemoyne, set it in the context of the eviction of the oratory from Barolo's Little Hospital in May 1845; or in any other crisis of that period of the wandering oratory—provided it be understood in continuity with, and not separately from, the definitive option of 1844.

## Conclusion

In the foregoing pages—in Part I we have surveyed critically the texts of the narratives of Don Bosco's vocation-mission dreams in the *Biographical Memoirs*, in *Documenti*, and in the sources and testimonies that preceded them; in Part II we attempted to describe the significance of the dream experiences in the actual situations of Don Bosco vocational decisions, as he records them in his *Memoirs*. Some brief concluding comments are now in order.

The general nature and the specific character of Don Bosco's mission are aptly portrayed in the many images with which Don Bosco describes his dream experiences, and in significant words reported by him in that connection.<sup>177</sup> These important elements may be listed as follows:

1. The Gentleman and the Lady (Shepherdess)—mediators of the call.
2. The crowd of children engaged in games, fighting and mischief—the field of apostolic labor and the option for the young.
3. The calling by name and the order—vocation as personal address.
4. Exhortation to kindness and love—words expressing the style of Don Bosco's apostolate.
5. Exhortation to teach the children about the ugliness of sin and the beauty of virtue—words expressing the priority of religion.
6. Children as wild animals; pack of assorted wild animals led by the Shepherdess—the special type of John's future youth apostolate.
7. Wild animals grazing peaceably together; turned into gentle lambs—the social, religious, moral significance of Don Bosco's work for the young.
8. John's awe and avowal of insufficiency—the magnitude and committing nature of the task.
9. Exhortation to obedience and education; to humility, steadfastness and toughness—preparation and equipment for the apostolate.

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<sup>177</sup> This list of essential vocation-mission images is compiled from the dreams related by Don Bosco in his *Memoirs* [cf. note 137 above] and from Barberis' report of the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs*.

10. The Lady as Teacher—the role of Mary in Salesian spirituality and apostolic action.
11. Reliance on the Father's goodness rather than on human beings—the special character of Don Bosco's trust.
12. Shepherds (priests and seminarians) helping for a while, then leaving—Don Bosco's struggle to gather his men.
13. The ribbon of obedience—forming of group of collaborators.
14. Lambs turned to shepherds in great numbers and taking charge of other flocks—growth of the idea.
15. Wandering from place to place and stops—the struggle for permanence.
16. A field in the open—like Christ and the Apostles.
17. An enclosed place, building, a small church, a little courtyard—initial establishment.
18. A courtyard, a portico, a larger church and building—progress of the work.
19. The place of the Holy Martyrs—numinous guarantee and protection.
20. The great church in the vegetable field rising on the site of the martyrdom, many buildings, a square and a monument—*Hic domus mea; inde gloria mea.*

These images from various successive dreams beautifully describe, by their premonitive suggestions, Don Bosco's vocation-mission itinerary. Even in the midst of the harsh reality of his real life experiences, as he struggled painfully to find and establish his way at various critical junctures, the dream and its call were an ever-present source of strength. And later in life as he reflected, wrote, and spoke about his life's work, he could clearly point to the dream as a component of vocational decisions.

In May 1887 Don Bosco, ill and failing, attended the consecration of the church of the Sacred Heart in Rome. While celebrating Mass he was overpowered with such emotion that he was forced to interrupt the celebration no less than fifteen times. Later his secretary, Fr. Charles Viglietti, who had assisted him at the Mass, wanted to learn the reason for his tearful emotional outburst. Don Bosco replied:

With the mind's eye I saw vividly laid out before me the scene of my childhood when, at about the age of ten, *I dreamt of the Congregation*. I could see and hear my mother and brothers, as clearly as though they were there present, arguing over the meaning the dream.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> *IBM XVIII*, 340f.

APPENDIX I  
 THE FIRST (BECCHI/MORIALDO) DREAM AT THE AGE OF  
 NINE/TEN

[A] Text of the *First Dream* As Found in the *Berto Ms. of Don Bosco's Memoirs* (*MO* [Introd.] "Un sogno": *MO-Ber*, 5-8; *FDBMicro* 60 A9-12. Cf. *MO-DB*, 5-8; *FDBMicro* 57 A6-9. Cf. also *MO-Ce*, 22-26; *MO-En*, 18-21)

[Note: *italics*: Don Bosco's additions to the Berto transcription of Don Bosco's own corrected draft]

[B] Text of the *First Dream* As Found in the *Biographical Memoirs* (*IBM* I, 123ff.; cf. *EBMI*, 95f. Cf. also *Doc* I [P. I, C. XVI], 68f; *FDBMicro* 967 B2f.)

[Note: Comparing *IBM* (B), *Doc* (not transcribed) and *MO-Ber* (A): underscoring: chief verbal changes introduced into *Doc* (not carried over into *IBM*); *italics*: chief verbal changes introduced into *IBM* (not in *Doc*); underscoring and italics: chief verbal changes introduced in *Doc* and carried over in *IBM*.]

[B-1] E' costume di Dio, nella sua grande misericordia, palesare con qualche segno la vocazione di quegli uomini, che Egli destina a cose grandi per la salute delle anime. Così fece con Giovanni Bosco, che poi continuò a guidare colla sua mano onnipotente in ogni stadio della sua vita ed in ogni sua impresa. [... Joel 2, 8 is quoted about dreams and visions.] E [visions] le ebbe Giovanni Bosco, ed ecco in qual modo egli stesso nelle sue memorie ci narra il suo primo sogno.

[A-2] Un sogno. A quell'età ho fatto un sogno, che mi rimase profondamente impresso nella mente per tutta la vita. Nel sonno mi parve di essere vicino a casa in un cortile assai spazioso, dove stava raccolta una moltitudine di fanciulli, che si trastullavano. Alcuni ridevano, altri giuocavano, non pochi bestemmiavano. All'udire quelle bestemmie mi sono subito lanciato in mezzo di loro adoperando pugni e parole per farli tacere. In quel momento apparve un uomo venerando in virile età nobilmente vestito. Un manto bianco gli copriva tutta la persona; ma la sua faccia era

[B-2] «All'età di nove anni circa ho fatto un sogno che mi rimase profondamente impresso per tutta la vita. Nel sonno mi parve di essere vicino a casa, in un cortile assai spazioso, dove stava raccolta una moltitudine di fanciulli che si trastullavano. Alcuni ridevano, altri giuocavano, non pochi bestemmiavano. All'udire quelle bestemmie mi sono subito slanciato in mezzo di loro, adoperando pugni e parole per farli tacere. In quel momento apparve un Uomo venerando, in età virile, nobilmente vestito. Un manto bianco gli copriva tutta la persona; ma la sua faccia era così luminosa, che io non poteva

così luminosa, che io non poteva rimirarlo. Egli mi chiamò per nome e mi ordinò di pormi alla testa di quei fanciulli aggiungendo queste parole: Non colle percosse ma colla mansuetudine e colla carità dovrai guadagnare questi tuoi amici. Mettiti dunque immediatamente a fare loro un'istruzione sulla bruttezza del peccato e sulla preziosità della virtù.

Confuso e spaventato soggiunsi che io era un povero ed ignorante fanciullo, incapace di parlare di religione a que' giovanetti. In quel momento que' ragazzi cessando dalle risse, dagli schiamazzi e dalle bestemmie, si raccolsero tutti intorno a Colui, che parlava.

Quasi senza sapere che mi dicessi, Chi siete voi, soggiunsi, che mi comandate cosa impossibile? Appunto perchè tali cose ti sembrano impossibili devi renderle possibili coll'ubbidienza e coll'acquisto della scienza — Dove, con quali mezzi potrò acquistare la scienza? — Io ti darò la maestra sotto alla cui disciplina puoi diventar sapiente, e senza cui ogni sapienza diviene stoltezza. — Ma chi siete voi che parlate in questo modo? — Io sono il figlio di Colei, che tua madre ti ammaestrò di salutar tre volte al giorno. — Mia Madre mi dice di non associarmi con quelli che non conosco senza suo permesso; perciò ditemi il vostro nome.

— Il mio nome dimandalo a mia madre. In quel momento vidi accanto di lui una donna di maestoso aspetto, vestita di un manto, che risplendeva da tutte parti, *come se ogni punto di quello fosse una fulgidissima stella*. Scorgendomi ognor più confuso nelle mie dimande e risposte, mi accennò di avvicinarmi a Lei, che presomi con bontà per mano, e guarda mi disse. Guardando *mi accorsi che quei fanciulli erano tutti fuggiti, ed in loro vece vidi una moltitudine di capretti, di cani, di gatti, orsi e di parecchi altri animali*. Ecco il tuo campo, ecco dove devi lavorare. Renditi umile, forte, robusto; e ciò che in questo momento vedi succedere di questi animali, tu dovrai farlo pei figli miei.

*rimirarla*. Egli mi chiamò per nome, e mi ordinò di pormi alla testa di quei fanciulli, aggiungendo queste parole: — Non colle percosse, ma colla mansuetudine e colla carità dovrai guadagnare questi tuoi amici. Mettiti dunque immediatamente a far loro un'istruzione sulla bruttezza del peccato e sulla preziosità della virtù. — Confuso e spaventato soggiunsi che io era un povero ed ignorante fanciullo, incapace di parlare di religione a quei giovanetti. In quel momento quei ragazzi cessando dalle risse, dagli schiamazzi e dalle bestemmie, si raccolsero tutti intorno a colui che parlava. Quasi senza sapere che mi dicessi: — Chi siete voi, soggiunsi, che mi comandate cosa impossibile?

»— Appunto perchè tali cose ti sembrano impossibili, devi renderle possibili coll'obbedienza e coll'acquisto della scienza.

»— Dove, con quali mezzi potrò acquistare la scienza?

»— Io ti darò la Maestra, sotto alla cui disciplina puoi diventare sapiente, e senza cui ogni sapienza diviene stoltezza.

»— Ma chi siete voi che parlate in questo modo?

»— Io sono il Figlio di Colei che tua madre ti ammaestrò di salutare tre volte al giorno.

»— Mia madre mi dice di non associarmi con quelli che non conosco, senza suo permesso; perciò ditemi il vostro nome.

»— Il mio nome domandalo a mia madre.

»— In quel momento vidi accanto a lui una Donna di maestoso aspetto, vestito di un manto che risplendeva da tutte parti, come se ogni punto di quello fosse una fulgidissima stella. Scorgendomi ognor più confuso nelle mie domande e nelle mie risposte, mi accennò di avvicinarmi a Lei, che presomi con bontà per mano: — Guarda! — mi disse. Guardando mi accorsi che quei fanciulli erano tutti fuggiti, ed in loro vece vidi una moltitudine di capretti, di cani, di gatti, *di* orsi e di parecchi altri

Volsi allora lo sguardo ed ecco invece di animali feroci apparvero altrettanti mansueti agnelli, che tutti saltellando correvano attorno belando come per far festa a quell'uomo e a quella signora.

A quel punto, sempre nel sonno, mi misi a piangere, e pregai quella a voler parlare in modo da capire, perciocchè io non sapeva quale cosa si volesse significare. Allora Ella mi pose la mano sul capo dicendomi: A suo tempo tutto comprenderai. Ciò detto un rumore mi svegliò, *ed ogni cosa disparve* —

animali. — Ecco il tuo campo, ecco dove devilavorare, *continuò a dire quella Signora*. Renditi umile, forte, robusto: e ciò che in questo momento vedi succedere di questi animali, tu dovrai farlo pei figli miei.

»Volsi allora lo sguardo, ed ecco, invece di animali feroci, apparvero altrettanti mansueti agnelli, che tutti saltellando correvano attorno belando, come per far festa a quell'Uomo e a quella Signora.

»A quel punto, sempre nel sonno, mi misi a piangere, e pregai quella *Donna* a voler parlare in modo da capire, perciocchè io non sapeva quale cosa si volesse significare. Allora Ella mi pose la mano sul capo dicendomi: — A suo tempo tutto comprenderai. — Ciò detto, un rumore mi svegliò, ed ogni cosa disparve.

[A-3] Io rimasi sbalordito. Sembravami di avere le mani che facessero male pei pugni che aveva dato, che la faccia mi duolesse per gli schiaffi ricevuti; di poi quel Personaggio, quella Donna, le cose dette e le cose udite mi occuparono talmente la mente, che per quella notte non mi fu più possibile prendere sonno. Al mattino ho tosto con premura raccontato quel sogno prima a' miei fratelli, che si misero a ridere, poi a mia madre ed alla nonna. Ognuno dava al medesimo la sua interpretazione. Il fratello Giuseppe diceva: Tu diventerai guardiano di capre, di pecore o di altri animali. — Mia Madre: Chi sa che non abbi a diventar prete. — Antonio *con secco accento*: Forse sarai capo di briganti. Ma la nonna che sapeva assai di teologia, era del tutto inalfabeta, diede sentenza definitiva dicendo: Non bisogna badare ai sogni.

Io era del parere di mia nonna, tuttavia non mi fu mai possibile di togliermi quel sogno dalla mente. Le cose che esporrò appresso daranno a ciò qualche significato. Io ho sempre taciuto ogni cosa; i miei parenti non ne fecero caso. Ma quando, nel 1858, andai a Roma per trattar col Papa della Congregazione Salesiana, egli si fece minutamente raccontare tutte le cose che

[B-3] Io rimasi sbalordito. Sembravami di avere le mani che facessero male pei pugni che aveva dato, che la faccia mi dolesse per gli schiaffi ricevuti *da quei monelli*; di poi quel Personaggio, quella Donna, le cose dette e *quelle* udite mi occuparono talmente la mente, che per quella notte non mi fu più possibile prendere sonno.

»Al mattino ho tosto con premura raccontato quel sogno prima ai miei fratelli, che si misero a ridere, poi a mia madre ed alla nonna. Ognuno dava al medesimo la sua interpretazione. Il fratello Giuseppe diceva: — Tu diventerai guardiano di capre, di pecore o di altri animali. — Mia madre: — Chi sa che non abbi a diventar prete. — Antonio con accento secco: — Forse sarai capo di briganti. — Ma la nonna, che sapeva assai di teologia ed era del tutto analfabeta, diede sentenza definitiva dicendo: — Non bisogna badare ai sogni. — Io era del parere di mia nonna, tuttavia non mi fu mai possibile di togliermi quel sogno dalla mente. Le cose che esporrò in appresso daranno a ciò qualche significato. Io ho sempre taciuto ogni cosa; i mei parenti non ne fecero caso. Ma quando, nel 1858, andai a Roma per trattare col Papa della Congregazione Salesiana, egli si fece



avessero solo anche apparenza di soprannaturali. Raccontai allora per la prima volta il sogno fatto in età di nove in dieci anni. Il Papa mi comandò di scriverlo nel suo senso letterale, minuto e lasciarlo per incoraggiamento ai figli della Congregazione, che formava lo scopo di quella gita a Roma.

[T-A] Translation of the Text of the *First Dream As Found in the Berto Ms. of Don Bosco's Memoirs*

[T-A-2] A Dream. At that age I had a dream that remained deeply impressed on my mind my whole life long. In my dream I seemed to be standing near my home, in a very large courtyard, where a great number of children were gathered and having fun. Some were laughing, some were playing games, quite a few were swearing. On hearing those swear words, I immediately rushed in among them and began to swing and yell at them to make those boys stop. At that moment there appeared a Man of dignified bearing, mature in years, nobly dressed. He wore a long white cloak, and his face shone with such brightness that I could not look directly at him. He addressed me by name and ordered me to take charge of those children. He added these words: "Not by blows but by gentleness and love must you win over these friends of yours. Start at once then with a lesson on the ugliness of sin and the value of virtue."

minutamente raccontare tutte le cose che avessero anche solo apparenza di soprannaturale. Raccontai allora per la prima volta il sogno fatto in età di nove in dieci anni. Il Papa mi comandò di scriverlo nel suo senso letterale, minuto, e lasciarlo per incoraggiamento ai figli della Congregazione, che formava lo scopo di quella gita a Roma».

[T-B] Translation of the Text of the *First Dream As Found in the Biographical Memoirs*

[T-B-1] In his great mercy God is wont to make known to people, through some sign, the vocation in which they are destined to undertake important projects for the salvation of souls. This is what he did in John Bosco's case. And thereafter, throughout his life, at every stage and in every undertaking he continued to guide him by his all powerful hand. [... Joel 2, 8 is quoted about dreams and visions]. John Bosco did have visions. And here is how in his *Memoirs* he himself relates his first dream.

[T-A-2] At about nine years of age I had a dream that remained deeply impressed on my mind my whole life long. In my dream I seemed to be standing near my home, in a very large courtyard, where a great number of children were gathered and having fun. Some were laughing, others were playing games, quite a few were swearing. On hearing those swear words, I immediately rushed in among them and began to swing and yell at them to make them stop. At that moment there appeared a Man of dignified bearing, mature in years, nobly dressed. He wore a long white cloak, and his face shone with such brightness that I could not look directly at it. He addressed me by name and ordered me to take charge of those children. He added these words: "Not by blows, but by gentleness and love, must you win over these friends of yours. Start at once then with a lesson on the ugliness of sin and the value of virtue."— Confused and frightened, I re-

Confused and frightened, I replied that I was a poor and ignorant child, quite incapable of lecturing those youngsters on religion. At that moment those boys stopped their fighting, shouting and swearing, and gathered around the speaker.

Hardly knowing what I was saying, I asked: "Who are you to demand the impossible of me?" "Precisely because such things seem impossible to you, must you make them possible through obedience and an education." "Where, by what means can I get an education?" "I will give you a Teacher. By learning from her you will become wise. Without her all wisdom is foolishness." "But who are you to speak in such a manner?" "I am the Son of her whom your mother has taught to greet three times a day." "My mother tells me not to associate with strangers, unless I have her permission. So tell me your name."

"Ask my Mother what my name is." At that moment I saw a Woman of majestic bearing standing beside him. She was wearing a mantle that shone as though every stitch were a very bright star. From my questions and answers she saw that I was more confused than ever. She beckoned me to come to her, then took me kindly by the hand and said, "Look." As I looked, I realized that those children had all disappeared, and a large number of young goats, dogs, cats, bears, and several other [kinds of] animals had taken their place. "This is your field; this is where you are to work. Make yourself humble, steadfast, strong. And the change you will now see in these animals, you must bring about in my children."

I looked around then and saw that the wild animals had been replaced by gentle lambs, skipping, capering about and bleating as if to greet the Man and the Lady.

At that point, still dreaming, I began to cry, and I begged the Lady to talk to me in words I could understand. I had no idea what it all meant. She then placed her hand on my head and said, "In good time you will under-

plied that I was a poor and ignorant child, quite incapable of lecturing those youngsters on religion. At that moment the boys stopped their fighting, shouting and swearing, and gathered around the speaker. Hardly knowing what I was saying, I asked: "Who are you to demand the impossible of me?"

"Precisely because such things seem impossible to you, must you make them possible through obedience and an education."

"Where, by what means can I get an education?"

"I will give you a Teacher. By learning from her you will become wise. Without her all wisdom is foolishness."

"But who are you to speak in such a manner?"

"I am the Son of her whom your mother has taught to greet three times a day."

"My mother tells me not to associate with strangers, unless I have her permission. So tell me your name."

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At that moment I saw a Woman of majestic bearing standing beside him. She was wearing a mantle that shone as though every stitch were a very bright star. From my questions and answers she saw that I was more confused than ever. She beckoned me to come to her, then she took me kindly by the hand and said, "Look." As I looked, I realized that those children had all disappeared, and a large number of young goats, dogs, cats, bears, and several other [kinds of] animals had taken their place. "This is your field; this is where you are to work," the Lady added. "Make yourself humble, steadfast, strong. And the change you will now see in these animals, you must bring about in my children."

I looked around then and saw that the wild animals has been replaced by gentle lambs, skipping, capering about and bleating as if to greet the Man and the Lady.

At that point, still dreaming, I began to cry, and I begged the Lady to talk to me in

stand everything." With that some noise woke me up, and everything disappeared.

[T-A-3] I was totally bewildered. My hands felt sore from the punches I had thrown, and my face stung from the blows I had gotten. After that, the memory of the Gentleman, of the Lady, and of the things said and heard, so occupied my mind that I could no longer sleep that night. In the morning, excited as I was, I wasted no time in telling my dream [to the family]. [I told it] first to my brothers. They laughed at the whole thing. Then [I told it] to my mother and to my grandmother. Each one came up with a different interpretation. My brother Joseph said, "You're going to become a keeper of goats, sheep or other animals." My mother [mused], "Who knows, you may become a priest." Anthony [quipped] sharply, "Perhaps you'll become the leader of a gang of robbers." But grandmother, who, even though illiterate, knew a lot of theology, said with finality, "One should not pay any attention to dreams."

I agreed with my grandmother. However, I was never able to put that dream out of my mind. The things I shall have to say later will show that there is some meaning in all this. I never mentioned these matters again, and my family paid little attention to them. But when I went to Rome in 1858 to confer with the Pope on the Salesian Congregation, he demanded to be told in detail everything that had the slightest suggestion of the supernatural about it. It was only then that for the first time I related the dream I had had at the age of nine or ten. The Pope ordered me to set it down in writing word for word and in every detail, and to leave it as a legacy for the encouragement of the sons of the Congregation, the business of which had been the object of my trip to Rome.

words I could understand. I had no idea what it all meant. She then placed her hand on my head and said, "In good time you will understand everything." With that some noise woke me up, and everything disappeared.

[T-B-3] I was totally bewildered. My hands felt sore from the punches I had thrown, and my face stung from the blows I had gotten from those street boys. After that, the memory of the Gentleman, of the Lady, and of the things said and heard, so occupied my mind that I could no longer sleep that night.

In the morning, excited as I was, I wasted no time in telling my dream [to the family]. [I told it] first to my brothers. They laughed at the whole thing. Then [I told it] to my mother and to my grandmother. Each one came up with a different interpretation. My brother Joseph said, "You're going to become a keeper of goats, sheep or other animals." My mother [mused], "Who knows, you may become a priest." Anthony [quipped] sharply, "Perhaps you'll become the leader of a gang of robbers." But grandmother, who, even though illiterate, knew a lot of theology, said with finality, "One should not pay any attention to dreams."

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## APPENDIX II

## THE FIRST TURCO-RELATED DREAM

(The Dream at the Age of Sixteen, According to Lemoyne)

**[A-1] Text of Fr. Julius Barberis' Account of Joseph Turco's Report**

(ASC 110: Cronachette-Barberis. "Notizie varie dei primi tempi dell'Oratorio [...]," p. 8, "Primo sogno o visione di D.B. a 15 an.," *FDBMicro* 892 A8.)

L'antivigilia della festa di Ognissanti dell'anno 1875 venne all'Oratorio un certo Turco di Castelnuovo compagno di scuola di D. Bosco quando D. Bosco era tuttora alle scuole elementari di cotesto paese di Casteln. Costui raccontò molte cose discorrendo e senza essere interrogato, della giovinezza di D. Bosco. Tra le altre cose il fatto seguente.— "Giovannino (come chiamavano allora D. Bosco) veniva con frequenza nella nostra vigna che era attigua a quella di suo padre perchè più lontana da ogni strada e meno disturbato [sic]. Aveva sempre qualche libro in mano e si compiaceva, specialm. quando governava l'uva, di montare in un dato rialto dov'esso poteva veder gli altri nella sua e nella nostra vigna e non esser veduto. Con frequenza mio padre lo incontrava, ed avendo un amore speciale per questo giovanetto gli diceva, mettendogli la mano sul capo "Fa coraggio, Giovannino, sta molto buono e studia che, il Signore ti ajuterà" — Lo spero, rispondeva D. Bosco; ma io non son mai tranquillo — io vorrei finito quest'anno studiare il latino e farmi prete; ma i miei non possono. Come farà mia madre a lasciarmi continuare gli studi? — Non aver paura, caro

**[B] Compiled Text of the First Turco-Related Dream As Found in the Biographical Memoirs**

(*IBM* I, 243f.; cf. *EBM* I, 181f.)

[In September 1831, a letter from newly appointed Archbishop Louis Fransoni, dealing with the political situation, was read from the pulpits.]

[B-1] Se Giovanni nulla intese allora del segreto di Dio, pure un nuovo sogno sembra si collegi con questo fatto per la sua contemporaneità.

Giovanni alla scuola di Castelnuovo aveva stretto relazione con un tal compagno di nome Giuseppe Turco, il quale lo aveva condotto a far conoscenza della propria famiglia, cui apparteneva una vigna detta *Renenta*, confinante col podere Susambrino. In quella vigna Giovanni sovente si ritirava come luogo più lontano dalla strada che attraversava la valle e quindi più tranquillo. Saliva sopra un rialto, donde poteva vedere chiunque fosse nella sua vigna e in quella di Turco, e senza essere veduto faceva la guardia all'uva col suo libro in mano. Il padre di Giuseppe Turco incontrandosi frequentemente con lui, cui portava uno speciale amore, gli metteva la mano sul capo, dicendogli: — Fa coraggio, Giovannino: sta molto buono e studia che la Madonna ti aiuterà.

— In lei ho riposta tutta la mia fiducia, rispondeva Giovanni; ma mi trovo sempre nell'incertezza: vorrei continuare i corsi di latinità e farmi prete. Mia madre non ha mezzi per aiutarmi.

— Non aver timore, caro Giovanni; vedrai che il Signore ti spianerà la strada.

— Io lo spero, conchiudeva Giovanni — e congedandosi andava al solito posto, col capo chino, ripetendo: Ma.... ma....

Giovannino; guarda solo di studiare molto ora e di farti sempre più buono e poi vedrai che il Signore ti esaudirà. — Lo spero, e se ne andava al suo solito luogo a stud. col capo chino e tutto pensoso, ripetendo: ma.... ma....

Un giorno lo vediamo, fuori del consueto, tutto allegro correre e saltellare per la nostra vigna e tutto festoso presentarsi a mio padre — “che hai Giovannino che sei tutto così allegro mentre da un po’ di tempo ti vedeva tanto mesto?” Buone nuove, buone nuove. Sta notte ho fatto un sogno in cui vidi che io avrei continuato gli studii, mi sarei fatto prete, e mi troverei a capo di molti giovani della cui educazione mi occuperei pel resto della mia vita — Ecco ora è tutto bell’e fatto: io mi potrò far prete — Ma, questo non è che un sogno — poi dal detto al fatto.... Oh! il resto è nulla, io mi farò prete e sarò alla testa di tanti giovani, cui farò molto del bene. E così dicendo tutto allegro se ne andò al solito a leggere o studiare governando l’uva.

**[A-2] Text of Fr. Michael Rua’s Testimony at the Diocesan Process Quoting the Reports of Lucy Turco and ‘Others’**  
(*POCT*, Session CCCLVIII (April 29, 1895), juxta interrogatorium duodecimum, p. 4036f., in *ASC* 161: *Deposizioni di Testi-Rua*, *FDBMicro* 2184 E7.)

D. Bosco, fin da fanciulletto mostrò inclinazione allo stato ecclesiastico. [...] Forse fin da quei primi anni il Signore gli aveva fatto intravedere la sua futura missione. Mi raccontò Lucia Turco appartenente a famiglia ove D. Bosco recavasi sovente a trattarsi coi di lei fratelli, che un mattino lo videro arrivare giulivo più del solito. Interrogato quale ne fosse la causa, rispose che nella notte aveva avuto un sogno che tutto l’aveva rallegrato. Pressato a raccontarlo, espose che aveva visto a venire verso di lui una Gran Signora, che aveva dietro di sè un gregge molto numeroso e che, avvicinatasi a lui, lo chiamò per nome e gli disse: “Ecco

Ed ecco, dopo qualche giorno, il signor Turco e suo figlio lo vedono tutto allegro correre e saltellare per la loro vigna e loro presentarsi festosamente. — Che hai, Giovannino, gli chiese il proprietario, che sei così allegro, mentre da un po’ di tempo ti vedeva tanto pensieroso?

— Buone nuove, buone nuove, esclamò Giovanni: stanotte ho fatto un sogno, nel quale io vidi che avrei continuato gli studi, mi sarei fatto prete, e mi troverei posto a capo di molti giovanetti, della cui educazione mi occuperei pel resto della mia vita. Ed ecco ora tutto bell’e fatto; io presto potrò essere prete.

— Ma questo non è che un sogno, osservò il sig. Turco; e poi dal detto al fatto c’è un bel tratto.

— Oh! il resto è nulla, concluse Giovanni. Sì, io mi farò prete, sarò alla testa di tanti e tanti giovanetti, cui farò molto del bene. — Così dicendo, tutto contento, se ne andò alla vedetta.

**[B-2]** All’indomani, ritornando dalla parrocchia, ove erasi recato ad assistere alla santa Messa, fu a visitare la famiglia Turco; e la signora Lucia, chiamati i suoi fratelli, coi quali egli veniva sovente ad intrattenersi, lo interrogò sulla cagione che gli faceva risplendere in volto tanta gioia. Egli ripeté come avesse fatto un bel sogno. Pregato a raccontarlo, accennò di aver visto venire verso di sè una gran Signora che conduceva un numerosissimo gregge, e che avvicinandosi a lui e chiamandolo per nome, gli aveva detto: — Ecco, Giovannino; tutto questo gregge lo affido alle tue cure. — E come farò a tener custodia ed aver cura di tanti agnelletti? Ove troverò io i pascoli, nei quali condurli? — La Signora gli rispose: — Non temere; io ti assisterò. — E sparì.

Gioannino: tutto questo gregge io affido alle tue cure.”

Intesi poi da altri che egli chiese: “Come farò io ad aver cura di tante pecore e di tanti agnelli? Dove troverò i pascoli per mantenerli?” La Signora gli rispose: “Non temere: io ti assisterò.” E poi sparì.

Da quel momento i suoi desideri di avviarsi agli studi per riescire prete divennero più ardenti, ma gravi difficoltà si opponevano per le strettezze della sua famiglia, ed anche per le opposizioni che faceva il fratellastro Antonio.

**[A-3] Text of the *Dream of ‘Reprimand’* As Found in the Berto Ms. of Don Bosco’s *Memoirs***

(*MO*, 1. Dec. 4<sup>o</sup>: *MO-Ber*, 20f.: *FDBMicro* 60B12. Cf. *MO-DB*, 18: *FDBMicro* 57 B7. Cf. also *MO-Ce*, 43f.; *MO-En*, 48)

La morte di D. Calosso fu per me un disastro irreparabile. Io piangenza inconsolabile il benefattore defunto. Se era sveglio pensava a lui, se dormiva sognava di lui, le cose andarono tanto oltre, che mia madre, temendo di mia sanità, mandommi alcun tempo con mio nonno in Capriglio. A quel tempo feci altro sogno secondo il quale io era acutamente biasimato perchè aveva riposta la mia speranza negli uomini e non nella bontà del Padre Celeste.

**[T-A-1] Translation of the Text of Barberis’ Account of Turco’s Report**

Two days before the feast of All Saints [October 30], 1875, a certain [gentleman named Joseph] Turco from Castelnuovo came to the Oratory. He had been a schoolmate of Don Bosco when the latter was still attending primary school in that town. During the course of the conversation, without being specifically asked, he volunteered quite a bit of information having to do with Don Bosco’s youth. Among other things he related the following.

[B-3] Questa narrazione ci venne fatta dallo stesso signor Giuseppe Turco e dalla signora Lucia, e pienamente armonizza con una linea delle sue memorie, nella quale sono scritte queste semplici parole: A 16 anni ho fatto un’altro sogno. Io sono certo che vide e seppe molte cose più che non disse per dar sfogo alla piena che riempivagli il cuore.

**[T-B] Translation of the Compiled Text of the *First Turco-Related Dream* As Found in the *Biographical Memoirs*]**

[In September 1831, a letter from newly appointed Archbishop Louis Fransoni, dealing with the political situation, was read from the pulpits.]

[T-B-1] John may not on that occasion have understood any part of God’s secret plan. But a new dream that he had may have some bearing on the story, if only for the fact that it occurred at the same time.

While attending school at Castelnuovo John had made friends with a certain schoolmate of his, named Joseph Turco, who had introduced John to his family. They owned a vineyard which was located in an area called *Renenta* and which bordered on the Sussambrino property. John would often withdraw to that vineyard, since it lay farther away from the road that crossed the valley

“Johnny (the affectionate name by which Don Bosco was known at the time) would often come to our vineyard, which bordered on that of his father, [and he came there] because it lay far from any road, and was therefore more secluded. He always had a book in his hand. And, particularly when he was keeping watch over the grapes, he liked to climb a certain knoll from where he could see people both in his vineyard and in ours, without being seen himself. My father would often find him there. And as he was particularly fond of the lad, he would pat him on the head and say to him: ‘Take heart, son; be really good, study hard, and the Lord will help you.’ ‘I hope he will,’ Don Bosco would reply; ‘but I am never free of worry. Once this year is over, I would like to study Latin and go on to the priesthood; but my family hasn’t got the means. How could my mother allow me to continue my studies?’ ‘Have no fear, dear Johnny,’ [father would add]; ‘just try to study very hard for now and be an ever better boy. The Lord will answer your prayer, you’ll see.’ ‘I certainly hope so!’ [he would reply]. And he would retreat to his usual place to study, deep in thought and wondering dejectedly, ‘Who knows?... Who knows?...’

“One day unexpectedly we saw him running and prancing happily into our vineyard. He went up to my father in a joyful mood. ‘What’s happened to you, Johnny?’ [my father inquired]. ‘Why are you so happy now, when you’ve seemed so sad of late?’ ‘Good news, very good news!’ [he replied]. ‘Last night I had a dream. I dreamt that I would continue my studies, become a priest, and be in charge of many youngsters, to whose education I would devote the rest of my life. Don’t you see? It’s all arranged. I shall be a priest.’ ‘But that’s only a dream,’ [my father exclaimed]; ‘and, it’s easier said than done!’ ‘Oh,’ [John insisted] ‘the rest is easy! I shall be a priest. I shall be in charge of many youngsters and I shall help them a lot.’ With these words, beaming with joy, he went

and was therefore more secluded. He would climb a certain knoll from which he could see people both in his own and in Turco’s vineyard, without being seen himself. From there, book in hand, he would keep watch over the grapes. Joseph Turco’s father would often find him there. And as he was particularly fond of the lad, he would pat him on the head and say to him: ‘Take heart, son; be really good, study hard, and our Lady will help you.’

“I have put all my trust in her,” John would answer, “but I never know what’s going to happen. I would like to continue studying Latin and become a priest, but my mother is unable to help me.”

“Have no fear, dear John. You’ll see that the Lord will pave the way.”

“I certainly hope so,” John would answer. He would then take leave and go up to his usual place, all the while wondering dejectedly, “Who knows?... Who knows?...”

A few days later, unexpectedly Mr. Turco and his son saw him running and skipping happily into their vineyard. He went up to them in a happy, festive mood. “What’s happened to you, Johnny?” the owner inquired. “Why are you so happy now, when you’ve seemed so sad of late?”

“I’ve got good news, good news!” cried John. “Last night I had a dream. I dreamt that I would continue my studies, would become a priest, and would be given charge of many youngsters, to whose education I would devote the rest of my life. Don’t you see? It’s all arranged. I shall soon be a priest.”

“But that’s only a dream,” Mr. Turco exclaimed.; “and, it’s easier said than done!”

“Oh! the rest is easy,” John said with finality. “Yes, I shall be a priest and shall have charge of a great many youngsters, and I shall help them a lot.” With these words, beaming with joy, he went off to his look-out post.

off, as usual, to read, study and stand watch over the grapes.

**[T-A-2] Translation of the Text of Rua's Testimony Quoting Lucy Turco and 'Others' at the Diocesan Process**

From early childhood, Don Bosco gave evidence of an inclination toward the priesthood.[...] Perhaps the Lord had given him a glimpse of his future mission even at that early age. Lucy Turco related the following to me. Don Bosco visited her family frequently to spend time with her brothers. When he arrived at the house one morning, they noticed that he was in a happier mood than usual. When asked why, he replied that it was because the night before he had had a dream that had made him very happy. When they urged him to tell them the dream, he related that he had seen a great Lady coming toward him, leading a large flock. She had approached, called him by name, and spoken to him: "Here, Johnny, I entrust this whole flock to your care."

I also heard from others that he had asked the Lady: "How am I to look after so many sheep and so many lambs? Where will I find sufficient pasture to feed them?" The Lady had answered: "Have no fear, I will help you." Then she vanished.

From that moment on an even stronger desire to begin his studies and become a priest took possession of him. But he had to face serious obstacles: namely, his family's impoverished condition, and also opposition from his half-brother Anthony.

**[T-A-3] Translation of the Text of the Dream of 'Reprimand' As Found in the Berto Ms. of Don Bosco's *Memoirs***

Fr. Calosso's death was really disastrous for me. I wept inconsolably over my dead benefactor. I thought of him in my waking hours and dreamt of him when I was

**[T-B-2]** The following day, on his way back from the parish church, where he had been to Mass, he called on the Turcos. John often stopped by to visit the Turco brothers. So, Lucy [Turco] called them over, and asked John why he looked so radiantly happy. Again he repeated that he had had a beautiful dream. When urged to tell them about it, he related that he had seen a great Lady coming toward him, leading a very large flock. She had approached, called him by name, and spoken to him: "Here, Johnny, I entrust this whole flock to your care." "How am I to guard and look after so many sheep and so many little lambs?" [John had replied]. "Where will I find pastures for them?" The Lady had answered: "Have no fear, I will help you." Then she vanished.

**[T-B-3]** We have this story from Mr. Joseph Turco himself and from Lucy Turco. It fully agrees with a brief statement in Don Bosco's *Memoirs*, where he writes simply:



asleep. The situation got so bad that my mother, fearing for my health, sent me for a while to my grandfather in Capriglio. At this time I had another dream. In it I was severely rebuked for having put my hope in human beings and not in our good Father in heaven.

“At the age of sixteen I had a dream.” I am convinced that he saw and was given to understand a lot more than he related [in his sketchy report of the dream], which was set down merely to vent the pain that filled his heart.

### APPENDIX III

#### THE DREAM OF ‘IMPERIOUS COMMAND’

(The Dream at the Age of Nineteen, According to Lemoyne)

[A] Text on the Recurrence of the *Becchi* (Morialdo) Dream As Found in the Berto Ms. of Don Bosco’s *Memoirs*

(MO, 1. Dec., 14<sup>o</sup>: MO-Ber., 50: FDBMicro 60 E7; cf. MO-DB, 44: FDBMicro 57 D9. Cf. also MO-Ce, 79f.; MO-En, 110)

[A-1] Preparazione—Scelta dello Stato. Intanto si avvicinava la fine dell’anno di Rhetorica, epoca in cui gli studenti sogliono deliberare intorno alla loro vocazione. Il sogno di Murialdo mi stava sempre impresso: anzi mi si era altre volte rinnovato in modo assai più chiaro, per cui, volendoci prestar fede doveva scegliere lo stato ecclesiastico; cui appunto mi sentiva propensione: ma non volendo credere ai sogni, e la mia maniera di vivere, certe abitudini del mio cuore, e la mancanza assoluta delle virtù necessarie a questo stato, rendevano dubbiosa e assai difficile quella deliberazione.

[T-A-1] Translation of the Text on the Recurrence of the *Becchi* Dream As Found in the Berto Ms. of Don Bosco’s *Memoirs*.

The end of my rhetoric year was fast approaching. It was the time when students as a rule try to reach a decision regarding their vocation. The dream I had had in

[B] Text of the *Dream of ‘Imperious Command’* As Found in the *Biographical Memoirs*

(IBM I, 305f; EBM I, 229)

[B-1] D. Cafasso lo dissuase dall’aggregarsi ai Francescani, dicendogli: —Andate avanti tranquillamente negli studi, entrate in seminario e secondate ciò che la divina Provvidenza vi sta preparando. — D. Cafasso aveva conosciuto in un colpo d’occhio tutta la missione che era destinata a Giovanni.

Come Margherita seppe l’ultima determinazione del figlio, si mostrò egualmente contenta. Purchè, essa diceva, si faccia la volontà di Dio.— E infatti parve che questa divina volontà confermasse i suoi disegni, in questo stesso anno, con un altro sogno, che D. Bosco narrò confidenzialmente a D. Giulio Barberis verso il 1870. Nel suo manoscritto [Don Bosco’s *Memoirs*] aveva notato: «Il sogno di Morialdo si ripeté nel mio 19<sup>o</sup> anno di età e altre volte in seguito».

Morialdo remained deeply imprinted on my mind; indeed it had occurred at other times in much clearer terms. Hence, if I wanted to believe it and follow its suggestion, I would have had to choose the priesthood, toward which I actually felt inclined. However, a reluctance on my part to put faith in dreams, my own [worldly] life style, certain habitual tendencies of my heart, and my total lack of the virtue necessary to this state, filled me with doubts and made any decision in this regard extremely difficult.

[A-Doc] Text of the *Dream of 'Imperious Command'* As Found in *Documenti*  
(Doc I [P II, C XVI], 153: *FDBMicro* 968  
D1)

[Recorded as a printed marginal note to the chapter, "Preparazione. Scelta dello stato," which quotes Don Bosco's *Memoirs*]

[A-1-Doc] [Main text] Capo XVI:  
Preparazione — Scelta dello stato.

Intanto si avvicinava la fine dell'anno di rettorica epoca in cui gli studenti sogliono deliberare intorno alla loro vocazione. D. Bosco lasciò scritto su questo punto della sua vita una pagina di umiltà ammirabile. "Il sogno di Murialdo, mi stava sempre impresso; anzi si era altre volte rinnovato in modo assai più chiaro, per cui volendoci prestar fede doveva scegliere lo stato Ecclesiastico, cui appunto mi sentiva propensione; ma non voleva credere ai sogni, e la mia maniera di vivere, e la mancanza assoluta delle virtù necessarie a questo stato rendevano dubbioso [sic] e assai difficile quella deliberazione."

[A-2-Doc] [Printed marginal note] Gli era parso di vedere il Divin Salvatore vestito di bianco, raggianti per luce splendissima, in atto di guidare una turba innumerevole di giovanetti. Rivoltosi a lui aveagli detto: \_ vieni qua: mettimi alla testa di questi fanciulli e guidali tu stesso. — Ma io non son capace: — rispondeva Giovanni. Il Divin Salvatore insistette imperiosamente finchè Giovanni si

[B-2] Gli era parso di vedere un maestoso personaggio, vestito di bianco, raggianti di luce splendissima, in atto di guidare una turba innumerevole di giovanetti. Rivoltosi a lui aveagli detto: — Vieni qua: mettimi alla testa di questi fanciulli e guidali tu stesso. — Ma io non son capace di dirigere e di istruire tante migliaia di fanciulli — rispondeva Giovanni. Quell'augusto

pose a capo di quella moltitudine di ragazzi e incominciò a guidarli giusto il comando che eragli stato fatto.

personaggio insistette imperiosamente, finchè Giovanni si pose a capo di quella moltitudine di ragazzi e incominciò a guidarli, secondo il comando che eragli stato fatto.

Giovanni adunque per tutte queste ragioni depose l'idea di entrare tra i Francescani [...].

**[T-A-Doc] Translation of the Text of the *Dream of 'Imperious Command' As Found in Documenti***

**[T-A-1-Doc] [Main text] Chapter XVI.** Preparation. Choosing a state in life.

The end of my rhetoric year was fast approaching. It was the time when students, as a rule, try to reach a decision regarding their vocation. On this period of his life Don Bosco left us lines written out of admirable humility. "The dream I had had in Morialdo remained deeply imprinted on my mind; indeed it had occurred at other times in much clearer terms. Hence, if I wanted to believe it and follow its suggestion, I would have had to choose the priesthood, toward which I actually felt inclined. However, a reluctance on my part to put faith in dreams, my own [worldly] lifestyle, and my total lack of the virtue necessary to this state, filled me with doubts and made any decision in this regard extremely difficult."

**[T-A-2-Doc] [[Marginal note]** He seemed to see our Divine Savior, clad in white and resplendent with a most brilliant light. He was leading a countless throng of youngsters. Turning to John, he had said: "Come here. Take charge of these children and lead them yourself." "But I don't know how," John had answered. Our Divine Savior, however, persisted with authority in his demand [*insistette imperiosamente*], till finally John took charge of that throng of boys and began to lead them, obedient to the command received.

**[T-B] Translation of the Text of the *Dream of 'Imperious Command' As Found in the Biographical Memoirs***

**[T-B-1]** Fr. Cafasso dissuaded him from joining the Franciscans. "Continue your studies, and don't worry," he advised him. "Enter the seminary and cooperate with whatever Divine Providence may have in store for you." At a single glance, Fr. Cafasso had perceived the full scope of the mission to which John was destined.

On learning of her son's latest decision Margaret, as on earlier occasions, expressed her agreement—"As long as it is God's will," she said. And indeed that very year God seemed to manifest his will and confirm his plans by another dream. Don Bosco confided it to Fr. Julius Barberis in 1870. In his manuscript [his *Memoirs*], Don Bosco had written: "The dream I had had at Morialdo was repeated when I was nineteen and at other times thereafter."

**[T-B-2]** He seemed to see a Gentleman [*personaggio*] of majestic bearing, clad in white, resplendent with a most brilliant light. He was leading a numberless throng of youngsters. Turning to John, he had said: "Come here. Take charge of these children and lead them yourself." "But I don't know how to lead and teach thousands of children," John had replied. But the noble Gentleman persisted with authority in his demand [*insistette imperiosamente*], till finally John took charge of that throng of boys and began to lead them, obedient to the command received.

These were the reasons that persuaded John to give up the idea of entering the Franciscan Order.

## APPENDIX IV

## THE CLOTHES-MENDING DREAM

(The Dream at the Age of Twenty-one, According to Lemoyne)

[A-1] Text of the *Clothes-Mending Dream As Found in Documenti*, Vol. I (Doc I [P. III, C. III], 179: FDBMicro 968 E8)

[Note: underscoring: marginal additions in Lemoyne's hand to the printed main text of *Doc*]

Capo III: La vita del seminario [...] Un altro sogno.

Frattanto in mezzo agli atti di virtù, agli scherzi, agli studii [Bosco] sentiasi sempre più crescere in cuore una brama ardentissima di giovare ai fanciulli, che continuava a radunare intorno a sè pel Catechismo e per le orazioni, mentre li divertiva.

E la divina bontà che teneva sopra di lui i suoi occhi amorosi prese a fargli conoscere in modo più particolare qual fosse il genere di missione che gli riserbava in mezzo ai giovanetti.

D. Bosco lo raccontò nell'Oratorio ad alcuni in privato: — Chi può immaginare, disse, il modo nel quale mi vidi quando faceva il corso di filosofia!

Venne interrogato: — Dove si vide? In un sogno o in altro luogo?

— Questo non importa saperlo. Io mi vidi già prete in una posizione veramente ridicola; con rocchetto e stola: e vestito così da prete lavorava in una bottega da sarto, ma non cuciva cose nuove bensì rapezzava [sic] robe logore [e] metteva insieme un gran numero di pezzi. Di questo ne feci qualche motto allora con qualcheduno; ma non ne parlai chiaramente finchè fui prete e solo coi miei consiglieri. Non ho allora nè per molto tempo di poi potuto capire ciò che significasse tale stranezza. Venuto prete il raccontai a D. Caffasso; ma neanche lui mi seppe spiegare la cosa. Turchi Giovanni era presente a questa narrazione.

[B-1] Text of the *Clothes-Mending Dream As Found in Biographical Memoirs*, Vol. I (IBM I, 381f.; EBM I, 284f.)

In mezzo all'esercizio delle virtù più sode ed agli studii serii della filosofia, Giovanni Bosco sentiasi sempre più crescere in cuore la brama di giovare ai fanciulli, che continuava a radunare intorno a sè pel catechismo e per le orazioni, quando i superiori lo mandavano a questo fine nel duomo. E la divina bontà, che teneva sopra di lui i suoi occhi amorosi, prese a fargli conoscere in modo più particolare qual fosse il genere di missione che gli riserbava in mezzo ai giovanetti. D. Bosco lo raccontò nell'Oratorio ad alcuni in privato, tra i quali era presente D. Giovanni Turchi e D. Domenico Ruffino. — Chi può immaginare, disse, il modo, nel quale io mi vidi quando faceva il primo corso di filosofia! —

Venne interrogato: — Dove si vide? In un sogno o in altro luogo? — Questo non importa saperlo. Io mi vidi già prete, con rocchetto e stola: e così vestito lavorava in una bottega da sarto, ma non cuciva cose nuove bensì rapezzava robe logore e metteva insieme un gran numero di pezzi di panno. Subito non potei intendere che cosa ciò significasse. Di questo ne feci motto allora con qualcheduno; ma non ne parlai chiaramente finchè fui prete, e solo col mio consigliere D. Caffasso. —

Questo sogno o visione rimase indelebile nella memoria di Bosco. Indicava chiaramente come non fosse chiamato a fare scelta di giovani santi e ad operarsi [sic] a perfezionarli e custodirli, ma sibbene a radunare intorno a se giovanetti i quali, tratti fuori magagnati dai pericoli del mondo, si rifacessero per le sue cure buoni cristiani. Gli innocenti raccolti da lui sarebbero stati eccezioni. Gli altri tutti abiti logori da rattappare.

[A-2] Text of the Reference to the *Clothes-Mending Dream* As Found in *Documenti*, Vol. II

(Doc II [P. V, C. III: "Vocazione decisa"], 144f.: *FDBMicro* 972 A11f.)

[Don Bosco] trattò allora di andare nelle missioni [...]

Ma D. Caffasso aveva una sua idea fissa che non palesava. Quando D. Bosco era venuto al Convitto aveagli fin sul principio confidato il suo sogno nel quale eragli sembrato di essere sarto e rattappare abiti logori.

D. Caffasso mirandolo fissamente aveagli domandato: — Sapete fare il sarto?

— Sì che lo so fare; so fare calzoni, giubbe, camicie.

— Vi vedremo alla prova. — E tutte le volte che lo incontrava dicevagli: — Come va il sarto?

— Sto aspettando la sua decisione, rispondeva D. Bosco.

[T-A-1] Translation of the Text of the *Clothes-Mending Dream* As Found in *Documenti*, Vol. I

Chapter III: Seminary Life. [...] Another Dream.

The practice of virtue, wholesome fun and serious study were [Bosco's] daily occupations [at the seminary]. But his heart

Questo sogno o visione rimase indelebile nella memoria di D. Bosco. Esso indicava come egli non fosse solo chiamato a fare scelta di giovani santi e ad adoperarsi a perfezionarli e custodirli, sibbene a radunare intorno a se giovanetti fuorviati e guasti dai pericoli del mondo, i quali per le sue cure si rifacessero buoni cristiani e cooperassero alla riforma della società.

[B-2] Text of the Reference to the *Clothes-Mending Dream* As Found in the *Biographical Memoirs*, Vol. II

(IBM II, 202; *EBM* II, 159f.)

[In 1844 Fr. Cafasso became head lecturer at the Convitto. Don Bosco was assisting him with his ministry and tutoring.]

D. Cafasso vedeva alcun che di straordinario nella sua attività così ben regolata in ogni azione: nel tempo stesso aveva sopra di lui un'idea persistente che non palesava [...].

Quando D. Bosco era venuto al Convitto, aveva confidato al santo suo Direttore spirituale ogni suo segreto, e tra le altre particolarità, il sogno nel quale eragli sembrato di essere sarto e rattappare abiti logori. D. Cafasso, mirandolo fissamente, aveagli domandato: — Sapete fare il sarto?

— Sì che lo so fare; e so fare calzoni, giubbe, mantelli, e vesti talari per i chierici.

— Vi vedremo alla prova! — E tutte le volte che incontravalo dicevagli: — Come va, sarto?

D. Bosco intendendo il significato di questa domanda, rispondeva: — Sto aspettando la sua decisione.

[T-B-1] Translation of the Text of the *Clothes-Mending Dream* As Found in the *Biographical Memoirs*, Vol. I

The devoted practice of virtue and the serious study of philosophy were John

burned with an ever stronger desire to work for the good of children. He continued to gather them around him for catechism, prayers and entertainment.

The good God, who in his loving Providence was watching over him, undertook to make known to him in clearer terms the kind of mission he had destined him to on behalf of the young.

Don Bosco confided this experience to a few intimates at the Oratory. "Who would believe," he said, "how I once saw myself when I was a student in philosophy?"

"In what situation did you see yourself?" someone asked. "Was it in a dream, or otherwise?"

"That's not important. I saw myself as a priest in a truly ridiculous situation. I was wearing surplice and stole; and dressed like that, as a priest, I was working in a tailor shop. However, I was not sewing new garments, but rather mending threadbare clothing and stitching numerous patches together. I mentioned this briefly to someone at the time, but never spoke of it plainly until I was a priest, and even then only to my advisers. Neither at the time nor for a long time thereafter was I able to grasp the meaning of that strange experience. After my priestly ordination, I related it to Fr. Cafasso, but he could not tell me what it meant either." [Fr.] John Turchi was present when [Don Bosco] told the above story.

This dream or vision remained indelibly engraved in Don Bosco's memory. Its meaning was clear. He was not called to care for a select group of saintly young people, for their advancement and protection. Rather, he was called to gather around him youngsters already tainted by evil, to rescue them from worldly dangers, and to restore them by his care to the practice of a good Christian life. Among the young people that he would gather, innocent lads would be the exception; the vast majority of them would resemble the threadbare clothing that needed mending.

Bosco's daily occupation [at the seminary]. But his heart burned with a most ardent and ever growing desire to work for the good of children. He continued to gather them around him for catechism and prayers at the cathedral [*duomo*], whenever his Superiors assigned him to this ministry. The good God, who in his loving Providence was watching over him, undertook to make known to him in clearer terms the kind of mission he had destined him to on behalf of the young. Don Bosco confided the experience to a few intimates at the Oratory. Among them were Father John Turchi and Father Dominic Ruffino.

"Who would believe," he said, "how I saw myself when I was a first-year student in philosophy?"

"In what situation did you see yourself?" someone asked. "Was it in a dream, or otherwise?"

"That's not important," Don Bosco replied. "I saw myself as a priest, wearing surplice and stole. Thus attired, I was working in a tailor shop. However, I was not sewing new garments, but rather mending threadbare clothing and stitching numerous patches together. Then and there I did not grasp the meaning of the image. I mentioned it to someone at the time, but I never spoke of it plainly until I was a priest; and even then only with my adviser, Father Cafasso."

This dream or vision remained indelibly engraved in Don Bosco's memory. It meant that he was called not only to care for a select group of saintly young people, for their advancement and protection. Rather, he was called to gather around him delinquent youngsters, already tainted by the evil of the world, so that by his care they might be restored to the practice of a good Christian life and might contribute to the transformation of society.

[T-A-2] Translation of the Text of the Reference to the *Clothes-Mending Dream* As Found in *Documenti*, Vol. II

Then D. Bosco seriously considered going to the missions [...]

But Fr. Cafasso had formed a deep-rooted conviction of his own in the matter, which, however, he would not disclose. Immediately on entering the Convitto, Don Bosco had confided to him the dream in which he had seen himself as a tailor sewing patches on threadbare clothing.

Fr. Cafasso had looked at him intently and asked: "Can you sew like a tailor then?"

"I can indeed," [Don Bosco had replied]. "I can make trousers, jackets, shirts."

"We shall see what happens when you are put to the test," [Fr. Cafasso had closed]. And whenever [Fr. Cafasso] chanced to meet him, he would ask, "How is our tailor?"

Don Bosco would reply, "I am awaiting your decision."

[A-3] Text of the *Clothes-Mending Dream* As Reported by Fr. Julius Barberis

(ASC 111: Sogni-Barberis, "Particolarità della Vita di DB": *FDBMicro* 1294 A2f. Cf. also ASC 110: Cronachette-Barberis, "Cronichetta Anteriore I": *FBBMicro* 885 C12-D1)

Ecco alcune particolarità della Vita di D. Bosco che esso stesso racconto a qualcuno in particolare: — Chi può immaginare il modo in cui mi vidi quando faceva il corso di Filosofia? Io mi vidi già prete, e così vestito da prete lavorava in una bottega di Sarto: ma non cuciva robe nuove, rappezzava robe logore. Di questo ne parlai con alcuni allora, ma poco, finchè fui prete. Allora ne parlai con Don Cafasso (che era il suo confessore e direttore spirituale). Egli mi domandò: "Sapete fare il sarto?" — "Sì, che so" — E tutte le volte che m'incontrava, mi diceva: "Come va il mio caro sarto?"

[T-A-3] Translation of the Text of Barberis' Report of the *Clothes-Mending Dream* (Continued in next column on right)

[T-B-2] Translation of the Text of the Reference to the *Clothes-Mending Dream* As Found in the *Biographical Memoirs*, Vol. II

[In 1844 Fr. Cafasso became head lecturer at the Convitto. Don Bosco was assisting him with his ministry and tutoring.]

Fr. Cafasso saw something out of the ordinary in Don Bosco's ability to plan every aspect of his activity. He also had formed a deep-rooted conviction about him, which, however, he would not disclose. [...]

On entering the Convitto, Don Bosco had confided all his private affairs to his spiritual director. Among other unusual things, he had related the dream in which he had seen himself as a tailor sewing patches on threadbare clothing. Father Cafasso had looked at him intently and inquired: "Can you sew like a tailor then?"

"I can indeed; and I can make trousers, jackets, cloaks and clerical cassocks."

"We shall see what happens when you are put to the test!" And whenever [Fr. Cafasso] chanced to meet him, he would ask: "How are things, tailor?"

Grasping the meaning of this query Don Bosco would reply: "I am awaiting your decision."

(Continued from column at left)

Following are some special episodes in Don Bosco's life which he himself related to particular individuals. "Who can imagine how I saw myself [once] when I was a student in philosophy? I saw myself as a priest; and actually dressed as a priest, I was working in a tailor shop. I was not, however, sewing new garments, but rather patching threadbare clothing. I mentioned this experience to some individuals at the time, but not in detail—not until after my priestly ordination, anyway. Then, I mentioned it to Fr. Cafasso (his confessor and spiritual director). He asked me: 'Can you sew like a tailor?' 'Yes, I can,' [I replied]. And whenever he chanced to meet me, he would ask, 'And how is my friend the tailor?'"

## APPENDIX V

## THE SECOND TURCO-RELATED DREAM

(The Dream at the Age of Twenty-two, According to Lemoyne)

[A-1] Text of Mr. Joseph Turco's  
Testimony at the Diocesan Process

(Selections)

(POCT, sess. 89 and 90 (July 6 and 7, 1892)

FDBMicro 2135 C2-11)

[B] Compiled Text of the *Second  
Turco-Related Dream* As Found in the  
*Biographical Memoirs*

(IBM I, 424f.; EBM I, 315f.)

[Sessio LXXXIX]

[A-1-a] Juxta interrog. secundum.

R — Io mi chiamo Turco Giuseppe, del fu Domenico e fu Catterina Pilone, d'anni 82, nato e domiciliato a Castelnuovo d'Asti e sono proprietario nel paese stesso.

[...]

Juxta interrog. septimum

Resp. Io ho conosciuto il Servo di Dio mentre era agli studi a Castelnuovo d'Asti. So che studiava molto e tra una scuola e l'altra andava in casa di un certo Robert, che aveva un figlio che attendeva agli studi insieme al giovane Bosco, e questi alla sera ritornava alla borgata dei Becchi presso i suoi genitori. [...]

Frequentai poi il giovane Bosco specialmente quando egli veniva nelle vacanze da Chierico coi suoi parenti; ed il podere di mia proprietà e la sua vigna che i suoi genitori coltivavano a masserizia erano confinanti; ed egli passava molte ore della giornata all'ombra degli alberi studiando; il perchè DBosco soleva dire: — «i miei studii li ho fatti nella vigna di Giuseppe Turco alla Rementa [sic]» — (regione così chiamata)

[...]

Juxta interrog. decimum quartum

Resp. D Bosco dimostrò fin da giovane la vocazione di dedicarsi all'istruzione ed educazione della gioventù. Difatti, mentre io un giorno lavoravo, egli già chierico si avvicinò a me: ed io presi a dirgli: — «ora che sei chierico, presto sarai prete e poi che cosa farai?» — Ed egli mi rispose: «a me non piace fare il parroco, e neppure il vicecurato, ma mi piace raccogliere attorno a me giovani

[B-1-a] Più volte abbiam sentito D. Bosco dire: — I miei studii li ho fatti nella vigna di Giuseppe Turco alla Renenta. — E il fine de' suoi studi era di rendersi degno della sua vocazione ed abilitarsi alla istruzione ed educazione della gioventù. Difatti un giorno avvicinatosi a Giuseppe Turco, col quale era stretto da grande amicizia, mentre lavorava intorno alle viti, questi prese a dirgli: — Ora sei chierico, ben presto sarai prete: e poi che cosa farai? — Giovanni rispose: — Non ho inclinazione a fare il parroco e neppure il vice-curato; ma mi piacerebbe raccogliere



poveri ed abbandonati per educarli ed istruirli» —

[...]

[Sessio XC]

Juxta interrog. vigesimum tertium.

[A-1-c] Resp. Non saprei dire cose al riguardo [supernatural gifts]. So però che Castelnuovo mio paese era sovente devastato dalla tempesta, che cadde per dieci anni di seguito; ora trovandosi colà DBosco, allora semplice chierico, disse a me stesso ed alla mia famiglia: — «finchè sarò io qui alla Rementa [sic], non temete, la tempesta non cadrà più; preghiamo solo la Madonna, ed ella ci proteggerà» — E di fatti così avvenne.

[A-1-b] Mentre era chierico, mi raccontò pure un giorno che aveva fatto un sogno, che egli si sarebbe stabilito in qualche luogo, dove avrebbe raccolto un gran numero di giovani per istruire.

#### [A-2] Text of Bishop John Cagliero's Testimony at the Diocesan Process

(*POS, Positio super introductione causae*, XVI. Testis, juxta interrog. 12, p. 87f.: *FDBMicro* 2213 D7f. [The *Summarium* is quoted here, because this section of the Ordinary Process is not available in *FDBMicro*. Cagliero's original testimony for the dream is recorded in *POCT*, proc. fol. 1080v.]

A questo proposito [John's desire to become a priest] rammento un sogno che il Servo di Dio aveva fatto essendo ancora in età di soli nove o dieci anni. Egli vide la valle sottostante convertirsi in una città, nelle cui strade e piazze scorazzavano turbe di fanciulli, schiamazzando e giocando e bestemmiando. Come egli aveva in grande orrore la bestemmia, ed era di carattere pronto e vivace, si avvicinò a questi ragazzi sgridandoli perchè bestemmiavano, e minacciandoli se non avessero cessato. Non desistendo essi, prese a percuoterli, ma reagendo gli altri, fu egli stesso carico di pugni. Fuggendosene egli allora incontrò un personaggio che gli impose di fermarsi e di ritornare a persuader

intorno a me giovani poveri ed abbandonati per educarli cristianamente ed istruirli. —

[B-1-c, cf. below]

[B-1-b] Incontratolo un altro giorno, gli confidò come egli avesse fatto un sogno, dal quale aveva inteso come col volgere degli anni egli si sarebbe stabilito in un certo luogo, dove avrebbe raccolto un gran numero di giovanetti per istruirli nella via della salute.

[B-2] Non spiegò il luogo, ma sembra che alludesse a quanto raccontò per la prima volta nel 1858 a' suoi figliuoli dell'Oratorio, fra i quali eravi Cagliero, Rua, Francesia ed altri. Aveva visto la valle sottostante alla cascina del Sussambrino convertirsi in una grande città, nelle cui strade e piazze scorrevano turbe di fanciulli schiamazzando, giuocando e bestemmiando. Siccome egli aveva in grande orrore la bestemmia ed era di un carattere pronto e vivace, si avvicinò a questi ragazzi, sgridandoli perchè bestemmiavano e minacciandoli se non avessero cessato; ma non desistendo essi dal vociare orribili insulti contro Dio e la Madonna Santissima, Giovanni prese a percuoterli. Senonchè gli altri reagirono e, correndogli sopra, lo tempestarono di pugni. Egli si diede alla fuga; ma in quella ecco venirgli incontro un Personaggio, che gli intimò di fermarsi e di ritornare a quei monelli e persuaderli a stare buoni e a non fare il male. Giovanni obbietto le percosse avute e il peggio che gli sarebbe toccato, se fosse ritornato sopra i suoi passi. Allora quel Personaggio lo presentò ad una nobilissima

quei monelli, perchè stessero buoni e non facessero male. Obbiectando egli le percosse avute, quegli lo presentò ad una Signora che gli si fece innanzi, dicendogli: — Questa è mia madre, consigliati con lei. — La Signora gli disse: — Se vuoi guadagnare questi monelli, non devi prenderli colle percosse, ma colle buone, colla dolcezza e persuasione.— In quel mentre vide invece di quei monelli delle bestie, e la stessa Signora gli soggiunse; — Questo è il tuo campo, mettili in mezzo. — Il che eseguendo vide che quelle bestie si convertirono in agnelli, ai quali egli prese a fare da pastore. Molti di quegli agnelli poi, crescendo, diventavano pastori anch'essi.

E comprese da questo sogno, che egli doveva occuparsi della gioventù, onde toglierla dal male. Di qui si spiega la tendenza che il Servo di Dio ha sempre avuto per l'educazione cristiana della gioventù. Questo sogno lo udii nel 1858-59 dallo stesso Servo di Dio, dopo il suo ritorno da Roma, ove erasi recato per ottenere dal Papa Pio IX la facoltà di stabilire la Congregazione. Come il Papa domandò al Servo di Dio i motivi naturali e soprannaturali che aveva di fondare tale Congregazione, egli raccontò detto sogno. [...]

Signora, che si faceva innanzi, e gli disse: — Questa è mia Madre; consigliati con lei. — La Signora, fissandolo con uno sguardo pieno di bontà così parlò: — Se vuoi guadagnarti questi monelli, non devi affrontarli colle percosse, ma prenderli colla dolcezza e colla persuasione. — E allora, come nel primo sogno, vide i giovani trasformati in belve e poi in pecorelle e agnelli, ai quali egli prese a far da pastore per ordine di quella Signora. [Quote from Isaiah 43, 20.]

[B-3] Forse è questa volta che egli vide l'Oratorio con tutti i caseggiati, che erano pronti a raccogliarlo coi suoi biricchini. Infatti D. Bosio, [...] compagno di D. Bosco nel seminario di Chieri, venuto per la prima volta all'Oratorio nel 1890 [...], girando lo sguardo attorno ed osservando i molteplici edificii, esclamò: — Di tutto ciò, che ora vedo qui, nulla mi riesce nuovo. D. Bosco in seminario mi aveva già descritto tutto, come se avesse veduto coi propri occhi ciò che narra e come io vedo adesso con mirabile esattezza esistere. [...]

[B-4] A questo punto non possiamo fare a meno di fissare lo sguardo sul progressivo e razionale succedersi dei vari sorprendenti sogni. Ai 9 anni Giovanni Bosco viene a conoscere la grandiosa missione, che a lui sarà affidata; ai 16 ode la promessa dei mezzi materiali, indispensabili per albergare e nutrire innumerevoli giovani; ai 19 un imperioso comando gli fa intendere non esser libero di rifiutare la missione affidatagli; ai 21 gli è palesata la classe de' giovani, della quale dovrà specialmente curare il bene spirituale; ai 22, gli è additata una grande città, Torino, nella quale dovrà dar principio alle sue apostoliche fatiche e alle sue fondazioni. E qui, come vedremo, non si arresteranno queste misteriose indicazioni, ma continueranno ad intervalli fino che sia compiuta l'opera di Dio.

[B-1-c] Si dovan dir forse questi sogni mere combinazioni di fantasia? E una prova

che Giovanni Bosco era accetto a Dio e che la protezione della Vergine SS. non gli mancava fin da quei tempi, in qualsivoglia occasione a Lei ricorresse, è il fatto seguente. La regione di Castelnuovo era sovente devastata dalla tempesta, che per dieci anni di seguito aveva distrutto interamente il raccolto dell'uva. La famiglia Turco se ne lamentò col chierico Bosco ed egli rispose con umile sicurezza: — Finchè io sarò qui alla Renenta non temete: la tempesta non cadrà più; preghiamo solamente la Madonna ed Ella ci proteggerà. — E infatti da quel punto per un certo numero di anni più non cadde la grandine. Sembrava che la presenza di Giovanni in quei luoghi portasse benedizione. Così affermava Giuseppe Turco.

**[T-A-1] Translation of the Text of Joseph Turco's Testimony at the Diocesan Process**

**[T-A-1-a]** My name is Joseph Turco. I am the son of the late Dominic Turco and of the late Catherine Pilone. I am 82 years of age. I was born and live in Castelnuovo d'Asti, and I am a freeholder in that town.

I knew the Servant of God while he was attending school at Castelnuovo d'Asti. He was a serious student, this I know. When not in class, he would be found in the house of a certain Robert, whose son attended school with young Bosco. In the evening [John] would return to his parents' home in the hamlet of Becchi. [...]

I associated with young Bosco, particularly when as a mere seminarian he came to spend the holidays with his relatives. My property bordered on the vineyard which his parents worked as sharecroppers. He would spend many hours each day studying under the trees. That's why Don Bosco often said, "I pursued my studies in Joseph Turco's vineyard at Renenta (as the place was called)."

Don Bosco from his early years showed evident signs of a vocation to work for the

**[T-B] Translation of the Text of the Second Turco-Related Dream As Found in the Biographical Memoirs**

**[T-B-1-a]** We often heard Don Bosco say: "I pursued my studies in Joseph Turco's vineyard at Renenta."

His devotion to study was for one purpose: to prepare himself for, and to be worthy of the mission to educate the young. One day [John] went up to Joseph Turco, his great and close friend, while the latter was tending the vines. [Joseph] began to prod him: "Now you're a seminarian and soon you'll be a priest. What then? What are your plans?"

John answered: "I feel no inclination to parish work, whether as pastor or as curate. But what I would like to do instead is to gather around me poor and neglected young people and look after their Christian education."

education of young people. For example, when he was already a seminarian, he came up to me one day while I was working, and I began to question him: "You are now a seminarian and soon you'll be a priest. What then? What are your plans?" His reply was, "Parish work, whether as pastor or as curate, is not to my liking. What I would like to do instead is to gather together around me poor and neglected children and look after their education."

[T-A-1-c] I have no knowledge of anything pertaining to the subject [of supernatural gifts]. But this I do remember. The area of Castelnuovo, my home town, was often ravaged by hailstorms. In fact, we had hailstorms for ten consecutive years. Once, when he was still a seminarian and happened to be staying there [at Sussambrino-Renenta], Don Bosco said to me and my family: "For as long as I shall stay here at Renenta, don't worry. There will be no more hailstorms. We have only to pray to our Lady, and she will help us." And that's what happened.

[T-A-1-b] Also, when still a seminarian, he told me one day that he had had a dream. [He had dreamt] that he would eventually settle in some place, where he would gather together a large number of youngsters and give them an education.

### [T-A-2] Translation of the Text of Bishop Cagliari's Testimony at the Diocesan Process

On this subject [the priesthood] I know of a dream which the Servant of God had when he was but nine or ten years of age. [He dreamt that] he saw the valley below turn into a city. Crowds of children were running wild through its streets and squares, shouting, playing and cursing. He had a great horror of cursing, and was besides quick-tempered by nature. So, he went up to those boys, scolded them for cursing, and threatened them [with blows] if they did not stop.

### [T-B-1-c, cf. below]

[T-B-1-b] When they were together on another occasion, [John] confided to him that he had had a dream. From it he had understood that in future years he would settle in a certain place, where he would gather together a large number of youngsters and educate them in the way of salvation.

[T-B-2] He did not specify what the place would be. But it is likely that he was speaking of the same experience that he related to his sons at the Oratory for the first time in 1858. Among them were Cagliari, Rua, Francesia and others.

[In the dream] he had seen the valley below the Sussambrino farm transformed into a big city. Crowds of children were running about its streets and squares shouting, playing and cursing. He had a great horror of cursing, and he was besides quick-tempered by nature. So he went up to those boys, and scolded them for cursing and threat-

They did not stop; and he began to strike out at them. The boys, however, reacted in kind and pelted him with punches. As he was running for his life, a noble Gentleman stood in his way and ordered him to stop running and go back and try to persuade those street urchins to behave and stop their mischief. When John objected that he had already taken a beating, that Gentleman presented him to a Lady, who now stood before him, with the words, "This is my Mother. Ask her advice." The Lady spoke and said: "If you wish to win these street urchins over, you must not use force, but gentle, kindly and winning ways. As she spoke, he saw that those street boys had been replaced by so many animals. The Lady then went on: "This is your field; go in and work." John obeyed, and soon he saw those animals changed into so many lambs. He took charge of them as their shepherd. Then many of the lambs as they grew up also turned into shepherds.

From this dream [the Servant of God] understood that he was to work for young people [at risk], to remove them from evil situations. I heard this dream from the lips of the Servant of God himself in 1858-59. He had just returned from Rome, where he had gone to petition Pope Pius IX for authorization to establish the Congregation. The Pope had asked him what natural and supernatural promptings he had for such an undertaking, and he had then related the dream. [...]

ened them [with blows] if they did not stop. But they kept on shouting their horrible insults against God and the most holy Virgin. So John began to strike out at them. They, however, struck back, overpowered him, and pelted him with punches. John had to run for his life.

As he did so, he was met by a Gentleman who ordered him to stop, to go back to those street urchins, and try to persuade them to behave and stop their mischief. John objected that he had already gotten a beating and would receive a worse one if he went back.

Then the Gentleman introduced him to a Lady of most noble bearing who now stood before him. He told John: "This is my Mother. Ask her advice." The Lady looked at John intently and lovingly and then said: "If you wish to win these street urchins over, you must not confront them with blows; you must approach them with gentle ways and persuasive words."

Then, as in his first dream, he saw the young people changed into wild beasts and then again into gentle sheep and lambs. And by the Lady's order he took charge of them as their shepherd. [Quote from Isaiah 43, 20.]

[T-B-3] Perhaps it was on this occasion that he was given a glimpse of the Oratory with all its buildings prepared for him and his little rascals. This, as a matter of fact, was what a fellow seminarian of his, a certain Father Bosio, believed. [...] In 1890 this priest paid his first visit to the Oratory. [...] Passing through the courtyard, [...] he looked around at the many buildings enclosing it and exclaimed: "Nothing I see here is new to me. When we were seminarians Don Bosco described it all to me; and he was telling it as though he had seen it all with his bodily eyes. It is just as he described it." [...]

[T-B-4] At this point we cannot refrain from commenting on the gradual and logical progress of the various extraordinary dreams that followed one upon another. At the age of nine, John Bosco first learnt of the great

mission that would be entrusted to him; at sixteen he is given assurance that the material resources needed for sheltering and feeding countless youngsters would not be wanting; at nineteen a categorical injunction makes it clear that he is not free to refuse the mission entrusted to him; at twenty-one he is shown the type of boy whose spiritual welfare he is especially called to look after; at twenty-two a big city, Turin, is pointed out to him as the field where his apostolic work must begin and its center established. Nor do these mysterious instructions cease at this point. As we shall see, they will continue as needed until the completion of God's work.

[T-B-1-c] Can one believe that such dreams were mere constructions of fantasy? No. John Bosco was dear to God; and even in those early days the Blessed Virgin acted in his behalf whenever he had recourse to her. One episode will suffice to show this. The area of Castelnuovo was frequently ravaged by hailstorms; the entire grape harvest had been lost for ten consecutive years. The Turco family lamented this misfortune with John, who was then still a seminarian. He replied with humble assurance: "As long as I shall be staying here at Renenta, don't worry, there will be no more hailstorms. We have only to pray to our Lady, and she will protect us." The fact is that for that year and for several years to follow there were no more hailstorms. It looked as though John, by his presence, drew down God's blessing on the district. This is Joseph Turco's own report.

**APPENDIX VI**  
**THE DREAM OF 1844**

(One of the 'Further Instructions', According to Lenoyne)

**[A] Text of the *Dream of 1844* As Found in the Berto Ms. of Don Bosco's *Memoirs***

(*MO* 2. Dec., 15<sup>o</sup>, "Un nuovo sogno": *MO-Ber*, 84.86ff.: *FDBMicro* 61 C12.D2ff.; Cf. *MO-DB*, 93f.: *FDBMicro* 58 C10f. Cf. also *MO-Ce*, 134ff.; *MO-En*, 209f.)

[Fr. Cafasso sends Don Bosco to live with Fr. Borel at the Rifugio, as chaplain-designate of the Little Hospital of St. Philomena, then under construction. He assures him:]

**[A-1-a]** Intanto Dio vi metterà tra mano quanto dovrete fare per la gioventù. A prima vista sembrava che tale consiglio contrariasse le mie inclinazioni, perciocchè la direzione di un Ospedale, il predicare e confessare in un istituto di oltre quattrocento giovanette mi avrebbero tolto il tempo ad ogni altra occupazione. Pure erano questi i voleri del Cielo, come ne fui in appresso assicurato. [...]

[The problem was fulfilling these duties] e nel tempo stesso assistere i giovanetti, la cui moralità ed abbandono richiamava sempre più l'attenzione dei sacerdoti. Ma come fare? Dove raccogliere quei giovanetti?

[...Fr. Borel's advice follows.]

**[B-Doc] Text of the Editor's Introduction to the *Dream of 1844* As Found in *Documenti***

(*Doc* II [P. V, C. IV], 148f: *FDBMicro* 972 B3f.)

**[B-1-a-Doc]** Intanto combinato il suo nuovo soggiorno al Rifugio, Don Bosco doveva trasportarvi altresì il suo Oratorio, non reggendogli il cuore di lasciarlo perdere. Ma dove raccogliere qui i ragazzi? [... Fr. Borel's advice follows.]

Da queste ansietà fu tolto da un mirabile fatto, che indicogli ciò che sarebbe accaduto. Narriamolo colle sue stesse parole:

La seconda domenica di ottobre di quell'anno (1844) [...]

**[B] The *Dream of 1844* As Found in the *Biographical Memoirs***

(*IBM* II, 241f. 243ff.; *EBM* II, 189. 190f.)

**[B-1-a]** Intanto si ordinò il nuovo soggiorno di D. Bosco [at the Rifugio]. [...] D. Bosco doveva trasportare quivi altresì il suo Oratorio. Diede uno sguardo all'edificio. — E dove raccogliere i ragazzi? — La mancanza di un sito cagionavagli pena.

[Fr. Borel's advice follows.]

Don Bosco ritornò al Convitto alquanto sopra pensiero, ma riguardando, come ci disse più volte, quale una grazia segnalata del Signore il poter trattare così da vicino col santo uomo il Teologo Borel, il suo cuore provava una grande consolazione. [...]

Un fatto mirabile ricreava in quei giorni Don Bosco, indicandogli gli avvenimenti

[Note: *italics* at the beginning; Don Bosco's marginal addition in his own original draft;

*italics* between ++marks at the end: Don Bosco's additions to Berto's transcription of the original draft.]

15<sup>o</sup>. Un nuovo sogno

[A-1-b] La seconda Domenica di ottobre di quell'anno (1844) doveva partecipare ai miei giovanetti, che l'Oratorio sarebbe stato trasferito in Valdocco. Ma l'incertezza del luogo, dei mezzi, delle persone mi lasciavano veramente sopra pensiero. La sera precedente andai a letto col cuore inquieto. In quella notte feci un nuovo sogno, *che pare un'appendice di quello fatto ai Becchi quando aveva nove anni*. Io giudico bene di esporlo letteralmente.

[A-2] Sognai di vedermi in mezzo ad una moltitudine di lupi, di capre, e capretti, di agnelli, pecore, montoni, cani, ed uccelli. Tutti insieme facevano un rumore, uno schiamazzo o meglio un diavolio da incutere spavento ai più coraggiosi. Io voleva fuggire quando una signora, assai ben messa a foggia di pastorella mi fe cenno di seguire ed accompagnare quel gregge strano, mentre Ella precedeva. Andavamo vagando per vari siti; facemmo tre stazioni o fermate. Ad ogni fermata molti di quegli animali si cangiavano in agnelli, il cui numero andava ognor più ingrossando. Dopo avere molto camminato mi sono trovato in un prato, dove quegli animali saltellavano e mangiavano insieme senza che gli uni tentassero di nuocere agli altri.

Oppresso dalla stanchezza voleva sedermi accanto di una strada vicina, ma la pastorella mi invitò a continuare il cammino. Fatto ancora breve tratto di via, mi sono trovato in un vasto cortile con porticato attorno alla cui estremità eravi una Chiesa. Allora mi accorsi che quattro quinti di quegli animali erano diventati agnelli. Il loro numero poi divenne grandissimo. In quel momento

futuri. Narriamolo colle sue stesse parole copiate dal manoscritto dell sue memorie:

[Note: Comparing *IBM* (B), *Doc* (text not given) and *MO-Ber* (A):

underscored: chief verbal changes introduced in *Doc* and carried over into *IBM*; *italicized*: further verbal changes introduced into *IBM* (not in *Doc*).]

[B-1-b] «La seconda Domenica di ottobre di quell'anno (1844) doveva partecipare a' miei giovanetti, che l'Oratorio sarebbe stato trasferito in Valdocco. Ma l'incertezza del luogo, dei mezzi, delle persone mi lasciavano veramente sopra pensiero. La sera precedente andai a letto col cuore inquieto. In quella notte feci un nuovo sogno, che pare un'appendice di quello fatto *la prima volta* ai Becchi quando aveva circa nove anni. Io giudico bene di esporlo letteralmente.

[B-2] »Sognai di vedermi in mezzo ad una moltitudine di lupi, di capre e capretti, di agnelli, pecore, montoni, cani ed uccelli. Tutti insieme facevano un rumore, uno schiamazzo, o meglio un diavolio da incutere spavento ai più coraggiosi. Io voleva fuggire, quando una Signora, assai ben messa a foggia di pastorella, mi fe' cenno di seguire ed accompagnare quel gregge strano, mentre Ella precedeva. Andammo vagabondi per vari siti: facemmo tre stazioni o fermate: ad ogni fermata molti di quegli animali si cangiavano in agnelli, il cui numero andavasi ognor più ingrossando. Dopo avere molto camminato, mi trovai in un prato, dove quegli animali saltellavano e mangiavano insieme, senza che gli uni tentassero di mordere agli altri.

»Oppresso dalla stanchezza, voleva sedermi accanto ad una strada vicina, ma la pastorella mi invitò a continuare il cammino. Fatto ancora breve tratto di via, mi sono trovato in un vasto cortile con porticato attorno, alla cui estremità eravi una Chiesa. Qui mi accorsi che quattro quinti di quegli



sopraggiunsero parecchi pastorelli per custodirli. Ma essi fermavansi poco e tosto partivano. Allora succedette una meraviglia: Molti agnelli cangiavansi in pastorelli, che crescendo prendevano cura degli altri. Crescendo i pastorelli in gran numero, si divisero e andavano altrove per raccogliere altri strani animali e guidarli in altri ovili. Io voleva andarmene, perchè mi sembrava tempo di recarmi a celebrar messa, ma la pastora mi invitò di guardare a mezzodì. Guardando vidi un campo in cui era stata seminata meliga, patate, cavoli, barbabietole, lattughe, e molti altri erbaggi. Guarda un'altra volta, mi disse, e guardai di nuovo. Allora vidi una stupenda ed alta Chiesa. Un'orchestra, una musica instrumentale e vocale mi invitavano a cantar messa. Nell'interno di quella Chiesa era una fascia bianca, in cui a caratteri cubitali era scritto: Hic domus mea inde gloria mea. Continuando nel sogno volli dimandare alla pastora dove mi trovassi; che cosa volevasi indicare con quel camminare, colle fermate, con quella casa, chiesa poi altra Chiesa. Tu comprenderai ogni cosa quando cogli occhi tuoi materiali vedrai di fatto quanto ora vedi cogli occhi della mente. Ma parendomi di essere svegliato dissi: Io vedo chiaro e vedo cogli occhi materiali, so dove vado e quello che faccio. In quel momento suonò la campana dell'Ave Maria nella Chiesa di S. Francesco ed io mi svegliai.

[A-3] Questo mi occupò quasi tutta la notte; molte particolarità l'accompagnarono; Allora ne compresi poco il significato perchè poca fede ci prestava, ma capii le cose di mano in mano avevano il loro effetto. Anzi più tardi +*congiuntamente ad altro sogno*+ mi servì di programma +*nelle mie deliberazioni*+.

16<sup>o</sup> presso il rifugio  
Trasferimento dell'Oratorio in ~~Valdoce~~

animali erano diventati agnelli. Il loro numero poi divenne grandissimo. In quel momento sopraggiunsero parecchi pastorelli per custodirli; ma essi fermavansi poco, e tosto partivano. Allora succedette una meraviglia. Molti agnelli cangiavansi in pastorelli, che *aumentandosi*, prendevano cura degli altri. Crescendo i pastorelli in gran numero, si divisero, e andavano altrove per raccogliere altri strani animali e guidarli in altri ovili.

»Io voleva andarmene, perchè mi sembrava tempo di recarmi a celebrare la S. Messa, ma la *pastorella* mi invitò a guardare al mezzodì. Guardando, vidi un campo, in cui era stata seminata meliga, patate, cavoli, barbabietole, lattughe e molti altri erbaggi. — Guarda un'altra volta, — mi disse. — Guarda di nuovo, e vidi una stupenda ed alta Chiesa. Un'orchestra, una musica instrumentale e vocale mi invitavano a cantar messa. Nell'interno di quella Chiesa era una fascia bianca, in cui a caratteri cubitali *stava* scritto: HIC DOMUS MEA, INDE GLORIA MEA. Continuando nel sogno, volli domandare alla pastora dove mi trovassi; che cosa *voleva* indicare con quel camminare, colle fermate, con quella casa, Chiesa, e poi altra Chiesa. — Tu comprenderai ogni cosa, mi rispose, quando cogli occhi tuoi materiali vedrai di fatto quanto ora vedi cogli occhi della mente. — Ma parendomi di essere svegliato, dissi: — Io vedo chiaro, e vedo cogli occhi materiali; so dove vado e quello che faccio. — In quel momento suonò la campana dell'Ave Maria nella Chiesa di S. Francesco *d'Assisi*, ed io mi svegliai.

[B-3] »Questo sogno mi occupò quasi tutta la notte; molte altre particolarità l'accompagnarono. Allora ne compresi poco il significato, perchè, *diffidando di me*, poca fede ci prestava, ma capii le cose di mano in mano avevano il loro effetto. Anzi più tardi *questo*, congiuntamente ad altro sogno, mi servì di programma nelle mie deliberazioni presso al Rifugio».

[T-A] Translation of the Text of the *Dream of 1844* As Found in the Berto Ms. of Don Bosco's *Memoirs*

[Fr. Cafasso sends Don Bosco to live with Fr. Borel at the Rifugio, as chaplain-designate of the Little Hospital of St. Philomena, then under construction. He assures him:]

[T-A-1-a] "Meanwhile God will show you what you have to do for the young." At first this advice seemed to run counter to my inclinations. For, with chaplaincy duties at a hospital, with preaching and hearing confessions in an institution with more than four hundred young girls, there would be no time for anything else. Nevertheless this was the will of heaven, as I was soon assured. [...]

[The problem was fulfilling these duties] and at the same time caring for the youngsters whose moral condition and neglect was becoming a matter of ever graver concern for priests. But what could I do? Where could I gather these youngsters together?

[Fr. Borel's advice follows.]

[T-A-1-b] On the second Sunday in October of that year (1844) I had to notify my youngsters that the Oratory would be moving to Valdocco. But the uncertainty of place, means and personnel gave me real cause for concern. The previous evening I had gone to bed with an uneasy heart. That night I had another dream, which seems to be a sequel to

[T-B-Doc] Translation of the Text of the Introduction to the *Dream of 1844* as Found in *Documenti*

[T-B-1-a-Doc] After arrangements were made for Don Bosco's lodgings at the Rifugio, he felt compelled to move his oratory there as well. He did not have the heart to disband it. But where [at the Rifugio] could he gather together [all] those boys? [... Fr. Borel's advice follows]

Then something wonderful happened to relieve his mind at that anxious moment. It made clear what the future held in store for him. Let us hear it in his very own words.

[T-B] Translation of the Text of the *Dream of 1844* As Found in the *Biographical Memoirs*

[T-B-1-a] Arrangements were made for Don Bosco's lodgings [at the Rifugio] [...] Don Bosco felt compelled to move his Oratory there as well. He looked the premises over. — "Where can I gather my boys?" [he wondered.] There was no suitable place. This was for him a painful realization. [... Fr. Borel's advice follows.]

He went back to the Convitto with an uneasy mind. But, as he told us numerous times, the fact that he could now live and work in such close association with the saintly Dr. Borel filled his heart with joy. He regarded this as a signal grace from the Lord. [...]

Then a wonderful thing happened to relieve Don Bosco's mind, as it disclosed the future to him. Let us hear it in the very words set down by him in his own *Memoirs*.

[T-B-1-b] On the second Sunday in October of that year (1844) I had to notify my youngsters that the Oratory would be moving to Valdocco. But the uncertainty of place, means and personnel gave me real cause for concern. The previous evening I had gone to bed with an uneasy heart. That night I had another dream, which seems to be a sequel to

the one I had had at Becchi at the age of nine. I think it advisable to relate it in detail [*letteralmente*].

[T-A-2] I dreamt that I was standing in the middle of a multitude of wolves, goats and kids, lambs, ewes, rams, dogs and birds. All together they raised a din, a racket, or better, a bedlam to frighten the stoutest heart. I wanted to run away, when a Lady, very nicely dressed in the style of a young shepherdess, motioned to me to follow and accompany that strange flock, while she led the way. We kept wandering from place to place, and made three stops. Each time, many of those animals turned into lambs in ever increasing numbers. After much walking, I found myself in a grassy field where all those animals gamboled and grazed together without the least attempt on the part of some to harm the others.

Worn out with fatigue, I wanted to sit down at a nearby road; but the young Shepherdess urged me to continue on a little farther. After another short walk, I found myself in a large courtyard. It was ringed round with porticoes, and a church stood at one end. At that point I realized that most of those animals had turned into lambs, and their number was growing quite large. Just then several young shepherds came along to help look after the flock; but they stayed only a short time, and soon were gone.

Then something wonderful happened. Many of the lambs were changed into young shepherds, and as they grew up they looked after the others. As the number of young shepherds grew very large, they split up and went to other places to gather other strange animals and guide them into other folds.

I wanted to be off, because it seemed time [for me] to go and celebrate Mass; but the Shepherdess invited me to look southward. I looked and saw a field sown with maize, potatoes, cabbage, beets, [various kinds of] lettuce and many other vegetables. "Look again," she said to me. So I looked again and saw a magnificent, grand church.

the one I had had at Becchi at the age of nine for the first time. I think it advisable to relate it in detail [*letteralmente*].

[T-B-2] I dreamt that I was standing in the middle of a multitude of wolves, goats and kids, lambs, ewes, rams, dogs and birds. All together they raised a din, a racket, or better, a bedlam to frighten the stoutest heart. I wanted to run away, when a Lady, very nicely dressed in the style of a young shepherdess, motioned to me to follow and accompany that strange flock, while she led the way. We wandered like vagrants from place to place, and made three stops. Each time, many of those animals turned into lambs in ever increasing numbers. After much walking, I found myself in a grassy field where all those animals gamboled and grazed together without the least attempt on the part of some to snap at the others.

Worn out with fatigue, I wanted to sit down at a nearby road; but the young Shepherdess urged me to continue on a little farther. After another short walk, I found myself in a large courtyard. It was ringed round with porticoes, and a church stood at one end. At that point I realized that most of those animals had turned into lambs, and their number was growing quite large. Just then several young shepherds came along to help look after the flock; but they stayed only a short time, and soon were gone.

Then something wonderful happened. Many of the lambs were changed into young shepherds, and as [their numbers] increased [*aumentandosi*] they looked after the others. As the number of young shepherds grew very large, they split up and went to other places to gather other strange animals and guide them into other folds.

I wanted to be off, because it seemed time [for me] to go and celebrate Holy Mass; but the young Shepherdess invited me to look southward. I looked and saw a field sown with maize, potatoes, cabbage, beets, [various kinds of] lettuce and many other vegetables. "Look again," she said to me. So



## APPENDIX VII

## THE FIRST DREAM OF THE HOLY MARTYRS

(One of the 'Further Instructions', According to Lemoyne)

**[A] Text of the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs* As Reported by Fr. Julius Barberis**

ASC 110: Cronachette-Barberis, "Sogni Diversi a Lanzo": *FDB Micro* 866 B10-C1 ['finalized' text given here]. For 'original draft', cf. ASC 110: Cronachette-Barberis, "Notizie varie dei primi tempi...", '2 Febbraio 1875': *FDB Micro* 892 A11f. For 'derived' copies, cf. ASC 111: Sogni-Barberis, "Il nastro bianco, +Rivelazione della Congregazione": *FDB Micro* 1279 C6-11 and 1282 E8-1283 A1; also ASC 111: Sogni-Lemoyne: *FDB Micro* 1314 B10-C5

[A-1-a] Il 2 Febbraio 1875 il Sig. D. Bosco, venendo io solo con lui da Borgo S. Salvario fino all'Oratorio, oltre a tante altre cose mi raccontò la seguente visione dicendomi esser la prima riguardante la congregazione e nello stesso tempo la più lunga avendo durato tutta la notte — Inoltre mi disse che non era ancora uscita dal suo cuore e che io era il primo a cui lo [sic] raccontava. — D. Barberis.

[A-1-b] Eravamo nell'anno 1844. Io dovevo lasciare il convitto Ecclesiastico di S. Francesco e recarmi al Rifugio col Teol. Borel. Era grandemente impensierito dei miei giovani che venivano in gran quantità ai catechismi nei giorni festivi perche indeciso se doveva abbandonarli oppure continuare a coltivarli. Avrei voluto continuare gli Oratorii, ma non vedeva in che modo l'avrei potuto fare. Nell'ultima domenica di mia fermata al convitto doveva avvisare i giovani di non venir più in quel luogo solito e stava studiando se doveva dir loro di non venir più in nessun luogo perchè l'oratorio non si sarebbe più fatto, o indicare in che luogo trovarsi —

**[B] Text of the Introduction to the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs* As Found in *Documenti***

(Doc II [P. V, C. X: Epilogo], 189f.: *FDB Micro* 972 E8f.)

## Capo X: Epilogo

[B-1-a-Doc] Nei capitoli precedenti abbiamo fatto cenno dei sogni singolari che ad ogni passo venivano a confortare D. Bosco. E però da notarsi come in queste misteriose apparizioni vi fosse un'intreccio ripetuto, vario, ma sempre sorprendente, eziandio con simultanei spettacoli che si confondevano in un punto solo.

Quindi stando le sopraddette particolarità, noi qui descriveremo il quadro generale visto da D. Bosco, come esso stesso narrò per la prima volta il 2 febbraio 1875 a D. Giulio Barberis. Il sogno aveva sempre durato un'intera notte.

[B-1-b-Doc] Nell'ultima Domenica di mia fermata al Convitto doveva avvisare i giovani di non venir più in quel solito luogo, e stava studiando se doveva dir loro di non venir più in nessun luogo, perchè l'Oratorio non si sarebbe più fatto, o indicare in che luogo trovarsi —

[B-2-Doc] Nella notte dal Sabato alla Domenica mi sembrò di trovarmi in una gran pianura [...]

**[T-B] Translation of the Text of the Introduction to the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs* As Found in *Documenti***

[T-B-1-a-Doc] In the preceding chapters we mentioned extraordinary dreams that came to encourage Don Bosco step by step. A noteworthy feature of these mysterious visions was the presence of complex skeins of interrelated scenes which kept recurring and changing into new ones, always with surprising effects. They might also mingle simultaneously with other representations, the whole seeming to merge into one point.

With this word of warning, we shall here report in broad outline the dream picture seen by Don Bosco, just as he himself related it for the first time to Fr. Julius Barberis on February 2, 1875. Again, the dream had lasted the whole night.

[T-B-1-b-Doc] On my last Sunday at the Convitto I had to notify my youngsters that they should no longer meet there, as they did usually. In fact I was debating whether I should tell them outright that there was no need to meet at all anywhere, since the oratory would be terminated there and then; or else I should indicate our new meeting place.

[T-B-2-Doc] The night between Saturday and Sunday [I had a dream.] I seemed to be standing in a vast plain [...]

[B] Text of the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs As Found in the Biographical Memoirs*

(IBM II, 296-301; EBM II, 231-235)

[B-1-b] Sette mesi erano ormai trascorsi dallo stanziamento dell'Oratorio all'Ospedaletto. [...]

La Marchesa Marolo, sebbene vedesse di buon occhio ogni opera di carità, tuttavia, avvicinandosi il tempo di aprire il suo piccolo Ospedale, cioè il 10 agosto 1845, voleva che l'Oratorio fosse allontanato di là. [...]

Don Bosco però era pronto a soffrire qualunque disagio piuttostochè abbandonare i suoi giovani, e l'aveva apertamente dichiarato alla Marchesa. Tuttavia angustiavalo grave pena, non sapendo dove condurli. Aveva in animo di cercare un luogo

dalle parti di Portanuova; ma il Teologo Borel si provò di fargli mutar parere e vi riuscì con gran facilità, persuadendolo a rimanere nella regione di Valdocco.

[B-1-a] Ma sogni singolari venivano a confortare Don Bosco, e l'occupavano l'intera notte, come egli raccontò la prima e l'ultima volta, solo a Don Giulio Barberis ed allo scrittore di queste pagine, il 2 Febbraio 1875. In queste misteriose apparizioni vi era un'intreccio di quadri ripetuto, vario e nuovo, ma sempre con riproduzione dei sogni precedenti, ed eziandio con altri simultanei aspetti meravigliosi che convergevano in un punto solo: l'avvenire dell'Oratorio.

Ecco il racconto di D. Bosco:

[Note: *IBM* (B) compared with *Doc* (text not given here):

underscored: Editor Lemoyne's additions in *IBM*;

[*italics* in square brackets]: words in *Doc* omitted in *IBM*;

[for: ...]= words in *Doc* changed in *IBM*.]

[A-2] Nella notte dal Sabato alla Domenica mi sembrò di trovarmi in una gran pianura piena di quantità immensa di giovani. Alcuni rissavano, altri bestemmiavano, altri rubavano o facevano brutte cose. Un nuvolo di sassi si vedeva poi per l'aria, di costoro che facevano battaglia. — Erano giovani abbandonati e corrotti. Stava per partirmi di là quando mi vidi accanto una signora che mi disse "Avanzati tra quei giovani." E che potrò fare tra questi monelli? Avanzati e lavora. Io mi avanzai: ma che fare? non vi era locale per ritirarne nessuno; voleva far loro del bene, ma nessuno mi dava retta e nessuno mi aiutava. — Mi volsi a quella Signora la quale mi disse: Ecco il locale — e mi fece vedere un prato. Ma qui non c'è che un prato diss'io — Rispose: Mio figlio e gli Apostoli non avevano dove posare il capo. Io mi posi a lavorare in quel prato ma vedeva che per la

[B-2] «Mi sembrò di trovarmi in una gran pianura piena di una quantità sterminata di giovani, Alcuni rissavano, altri bestemmiavano. Qui si rubava, là si offendevano i buoni costumi. Un nugolo di sassi poi si vedeva per l'aria, lanciati da coloro che facevano battaglia. Erano giovani abbandonati dai parenti e corrotti. Io stava per allontanarmi di là, quando mi vidi accanto una Signora che mi disse: — Avanzati tra quei giovani e lavora.

»Io mi avanzai, ma che fare? Non vi era locale da ritirarne nessuno: voleva far loro del bene: mi rivolgeva a persone che in lontananza stavano osservando e che avrebbero potuto essermi di valido sostegno; ma nessuno mi dava retta e nessuno mi aiutava. Mi volsi allora a quella Matrona, la quale mi disse: — Ecco del locale; — e mi fece vedere un prato.

—Ma qui non c'è che un prato, diss'io.

maggior parte riusciva inutile ogni sforzo se non si trovasse un luogo ove ritirare alcuni affatto abbandonati. — Allora quella Signora mi condusse un po' più in là e mi disse: — Osserva — ed io guardando vidi una piccola chiesa, un po di cortile, giovani ecc...

Essendo questa chiesa divenuta angusta ricorsi ancora a Lei e mi fece vedere un'altra chiesa con fabbricato assai più grande. Poi conducendomi ancora un po' d'accanto quella Signora mi disse — In questo luogo dove i gloriosi martiri di Torino, Avventore ed Ottavio soffrirono il loro martirio io voglio che Dio sia onorato in modo specialissimo. Così dicendo avanzava un piede ponendolo sul luogo dove venne il martirio, e me lo indicò con precisione. Io voleva porre un qualche segno per ricordarmi bene del posto ma non trovai nulla da fare un segno; tuttavia lo tenni bene a memoria. Intanto io vidi intorno a me un numero sterminato di giovani; ma guardando la Madonna crescevano anche i mezzi ed il locale. E vidi poi una grandissima chiesa proprio sul luogo dove mi aveva fatto vedere che avvenne il martirio dei Sti Martiri, con fabbricati tutt' attorno ed una bella piazza davanti.

In tutto questo tempo vidi anche dei preti e chierici che mi aiutavano un poco e poi fuggivano; io cercava con grandi fatiche di attirarmeli ed essi poco dopo se ne andavano e mi lasciavano tutto solo — Allora mi rivolsi nuovamente a quella Signora, la quale mi disse: vuoi tu sapere il modo che non ti scappino più? prendi questo cordoncino o nastro, e lega loro la fronte; prendo il cordoncino e vedo che sopra era scritta questa parola: ubbidienza. — Provai a fare quanto mi disse cominciai a legare il capo di qualcuno col nastro e vidi subito grande effetto; e questo effetto sempre cresceva andando avanti, poichè questi cotali lasciavano il pensiero d'andarsene altrove e si fermavano ad aiutare D. Bosco.

Rispose: — Mio figlio e gli Apostoli non avevano un palmo di terra ove posare il capo. — Incominciai a lavorare in quel prato ammonendo, predicando e confessando, ma vedeva che per la maggior parte riusciva inutile ogni sforzo, se non si trovasse un luogo recinto e con qualche fabbricato ove raccogliarli e ove ritirarne alcuni affatto derelitti dai genitori e respinti e disprezzati dagli altri cittadini. Allora quella Signora mi condusse un po' più in là a settentrione e mi disse: — Osserva! — Ed io guardando vidi una chiesa piccola e bassa, un po' di cortile e giovani in gran numero. Ripigliai il mio lavoro. Ma essendo questa chiesa divenuta angusta, ricorsi ancora a Lei, ed Essa mi fece vedere un'altra chiesa [confabbricato] assai più grande con una casa vicina. Poi conducendomi ancora un po' d'accanto, in un tratto di terreno coltivato, quasi innanzi alla facciata della seconda chiesa mi soggiunse [for: disse]: — In questo luogo dove i gloriosi Martiri di Torino Avventore ed Ottavio soffrirono il loro martirio, su queste zolle che furono bagnate e santificate dal loro sangue, io voglio che Dio sia onorato in modo specialissimo. — Così dicendo, avanzava un piede posandolo sul luogo ove avvenne il martirio e me lo indicò con precisione. Io voleva porre qualche segno per rintracciarlo [for: per ricordarmene] quando altra volta fossi ritornato in quel campo, ma nulla trovai intorno a me; non un palo non un sasso [da fare un segno]; tuttavia lo tenni a memoria con precisione. Corrisponde esattamente all'angolo interno della cappella dei SS. Martiri, prima detta di S. Anna al lato del vangelo nella chiesa di Maria Ausiliatrice.

»Intanto io mi vidi circondato da un numero immenso e sempre crescente di giovani; ma guardando la Signora, crescevano anche i mezzi ed il locale, e vidi poi una grandissima chiesa precisamente nel luogo dove mi aveva fatto vedere che avvenne il martirio dei santi [martiri] della legione Tebea con molti edifici tutto all'intorno e con un bel



monumento in mezzo.

«Mentre accadevano queste cose, io, sempre in sogno, aveva a coadiutori preti e chierici che mi aiutavano alquanto e poi fuggivano. Io cercava con grandi fatiche di attirarmeli, ed essi poco dopo se ne andavano e mi lasciavano tutto solo. Allora mi rivolsi nuovamente a quella Signora, la quale mi disse: — Vuoi tu sapere come fare affinché non ti scappino più? Prendi questo nastro [*for*: cordoncino], e lega loro la fronte. — Prendo riverente il nastrino bianco dalla sua mano e vedo che sopra era scritta questa parola: *Obbedienza*. Provai tosto a fare quanto mi disse quella Signora [*for*: la Madonna], e cominciai a legar il capo di qualcuno dei volontari coadiutori col nastro, e vidi subito grande e mirabile effetto: e questo effetto cresceva mentre io continuava nella missione conferitami [*for*: cresceva andando avanti], poichè da costoro si lasciava affatto il pensiero d'andarsene altrove, e si fermarono ad aiutarmi. Così venne costituita la Congregazione.

[A-3] M'avvennero ancora più cose che ora non è il caso di raccontare, perchè questo fu il sogno più lungo ch'io abbia mai avuto (e sembra che alludesse a grandi cose); ma fin da quell'anno 44 io camminai sempre sul sicuro sia riguardo la Congregazione, sia riguardo all'oratorio, Sia anche le cose politiche. Fu in seguito d'aver veduto Chiesa, casa, cortile, giovani, chierici e preti che mi aiutavano, ed il modo di condurre avanti il tutto, che io ne parlava con altri, e raccontava la cosa come se fosse già fatta. Ed è per questo che molti credevano che io sragionassi e fui tenuto per pazzo, e volevan condurmi al manicomio.

[B-3] Vidi ancora molte altre cose che ora non è il caso di farvi sapere [*for*: dirti] (sembra che alludesse a grandi avvenimenti futuri), ma basti dire che fin da quel tempo io camminai sempre sul sicuro, sia riguardo agli Oratorii, sia riguardo alla Congregazione, sia sul modo di diportarmi nelle relazioni cogli esterni di qualunque autorità investiti [*for*: essi siano]. Le grandi difficoltà che devono sorgere, sono tutte prevenute, e conosco il modo di superarle. Vedo benissimo parte a parte tutto ciò che dovrà [*for*: benissimo le cose che dovranno] succederci, e cammino avanti a chiara luce. Fu dopo aver visto chiese, case, cortili, giovani, chierici e preti che mi aiutavano, ed il modo di condurre avanti il tutto, ch'io ne parlava con altri e raccontava la cosa come se fosse già fatta. Ed è per questo che molti credevano che io sragionassi e fui tenuto per folle [*for*: pazzo] [*e volevano condurmi al manicomio*].

[B-6] Di qui ebbe adunque origine quell'incrollabile fede nel buon esito della sua missione, quella sicurezza che pareva temerità nell'affrontare ogni sorta di ostacoli, quel cimentarsi ad imprese colossali, superiori a forze umane e pur condurle tutte a felicissimo termine.

[A-4] Riguardo al luogo che Maria Vergine insegnò a D. Bosco come quello in cui avvenne il martirio dei SS. Avventore ed Ottavio ecco più ampia spiegazione. Il Sig. D. Bosco continuò: «Io non volli mai dire a nessuno in che posto ciò avvenisse. Solo incaricai il Canonico Gastaldi (ora Monsig. Arciv.) a fare studi su questo: che cioè ricavasse dalla storia in qual luogo della città, più approssimativamente ciò fosse avvenuto, ed egli (suggerendogli io che stampasse un libro sulla vita di questi Santi) fece studii profondi, e concluse essere in Valdocco, e po' più po' meno dove era il nostro oratorio. —

[A-5] Ma intanto si decise di innalzare la chiesa là proprio nel luogo del martirio; Quel locale era venuto in mia proprietà, ma siccome intanto si studiava di fare la chiesa in altro luogo — cioè dov'era casa Defilippi — così si vendette quel tratto di terra ai Rosminiani i quali volevano stabilir quivi una loro casa. S'eran già fatte molte pratiche per comperar la casa Defilippi e far la chiesa nel cortile davanti; che così sarebbe stata veduta sin da via Dora grossa; ma quando il contratto era come concluso, cade e non ci vollero più lasciar la casa — Allora si pensò di nuovo al luogo di prima, ma il locale era ceduto ai Rosminiani — Ed ecco che arriva la nuova che l'abate Rosmini era morto ed i Rosminiani non credertero più bene di metter casa a Torino e posero il terreno in vendita con un patto però che non si contrattasse con D. Bosco a cui non volevano più venderlo essendo il prezzo diminuito di 8/10 ed avendolo essi comperato da D. Bosco a prezzo grande. Vedendo che a

[B-4] Riguardo al sito che la Beata Vergine indicò a D. Bosco come quello in cui avvenne il martirio dei SS. Avventore ed Ottavio e donde fuggiva S. Solutore ferito da un colpo di lancia per morire ad Ivrea confessando Gesù Cristo, ecco più ampia spiegazione. Don Bosco continuò: «Io non volli mai narrare a nessuno questo sogno e molto meno manifestare la mia fondata opinione sul luogo preciso del glorioso avvenimento. Quindi nel 1865 suggerii al Canonico Lorenzo Gastaldi di scrivere e stampare un libro sulla vita dei tre santi martiri Tebei e di fare studii, ricavando dalla storia, dalla tradizione e dalla topografia, in qual luogo della città più approssimativamente fosse avvenuto detto martirio. Il dotto Canonico acconsentì; scrisse e stampò le memorie storiche dei tre confessori della fede, e dopo lungo studio concluse: ignorarsi il luogo preciso del loro martirio; ma sapersi certamente che si erano ricoverati fuori delle porte della città, presso il fiume Dora, e che furono scoperti e uccisi dai carnefici presso il loro nascondiglio: il vasto tratto che dalle mura di Torino si estende verso la Dora a ponente del borgo di questo nome, nei tempi antichi essere stato chiamato in latino *vallis* o *vallum occisorum*, la valle o vallata degli uccisi, ed ora *Val d'occo* dalle prime sillabe di tali parole; e ciò forse in allusione ai martiri quivi uccisi; essere poi certissimo aver questo tratto di terreno evidentemente la benedizione di Dio per i meravigliosi istituti di carità e di pietà che vi sono sorti, indizio questo pure di essere stato inaffiato dal sangue di quei valorosi cristiani. Aggiungeva ancora l'autore che da più a meno consultando l'antica topografia della

me non volevano venderlo io misi sotto il fratello di Monsignor (Negroni, o Negrotti, o Neirotti, o Neironi, od un nome simile) il quale trattò la cosa senza dir nulla ed io mi presentai poi a sottoscrivere lo strumento. Il procuratore dei Rosminiani meravigliato di veder me a nessun costo voleva cederlo avendo egli avuta proibizione di ciò; tuttavia l'affare premeva vi era in casa il notajo. Eran presenti diversi consiglieri municipali. Non si poteva scrivere e tra tutti lo indussero a cederlo secondo il convenuto a me. Quivi adunque si fabbricò la nuova chiesa e senza che io accennassi a nessun luogo speciale riuscì una capella [sic] nel luogo preciso che la B. V. mi aveva insegnato ed è la cappella che chiamiamo di S. Anna, ma il cui altare è consacrato precisamente ai santi martiri Torinesi.

Ora non dico di altre meraviglie della costruzione della chiesa, ma ci sarebbero cose così straordinarie che farebbero meravigliare.

Avanti la Chiesa poi che la B. V. mi fece vedere c'era una bella piazza con un monumento in mezzo — Ora starò vedendo come si riuscirà a fare questo. Le difficoltà sono tutte prevenute ed io cammino avanti a chiara luce — vedo benissimo tutte le cose che dovranno succederci, le difficoltà ed il modo di superarle.

**[T-A] Translation of the Text of the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs As Reported by Barberis***

**[T-A-1-a]** On February 2, 1875 I was walking with Don Bosco back to the Oratory from Borgo San Salvario. We were alone. Among many other things, he related to me the following vision. He said that it was the first he had had regarding the congregation, and it was the longest, since it had lasted the whole night. He added that he had never opened his heart to anyone about the matter. I was the first person to hear about it.

**[T-A-1-b]** It was the year 1844. I was

città, l'Oratorio di S. Francesco di Sales sorgeva presso a quel luogo benedetto, o forse lo conteneva dentro l'ambito delle sue mura».

[Note: The account regarding the church's planned building site and the purchase of the 'field of dreams' (B-5) in the *Biographical Memoirs* is not given at this point, but in its later context and in an edited and expanded form [cf. *IBM VII*, 372ff. and 380ff.; *EBM VII*, 223f. and 227f.].

**[T-B] Translation of the Text of the *First Dream of the Holy Martyrs As Found in the Biographical Memoirs***

**[T-B-1-b]** Seven months had now elapsed since the oratory had begun to meet at the Little Hospital. [...]

The date set for the inauguration of the Little Hospital, August 10, 1845, was fast approaching. And Marchioness Barolo, though sympathetic to all works of charity, was nevertheless determined that the oratory should leave her premises. [...]

Don Bosco, however, was equally determined, no matter at what personal sacrifice, not to abandon his youngsters. He had made this unambiguously clear to the marchioness. But the troubling and painful reality was that he had no idea where else he could take them. He was considering looking for a place in the area of *Portanuova*, but Dr. Borel tried to make him change his mind. He easily persuaded him to stay in the Valdocco district.

**[T-B-1-a]** Extraordinary dreams, lasting through the night, came to comfort Don Bosco, as he confided once and only once to Father Julius Barberis and to the author of these pages on February 2, 1875. In these mysterious visions complex skeins of inter-related scenes kept recurring and changing into new ones. They kept recalling the earlier

due to leave the Convitto and move to the Rifugio to live with Dr. Borel. I was truly worried about [what I should do with] my youngsters who were attending religious instruction [the oratory] on Sundays and holy days. I did not know whether I should disband them or continue to look after them. My desire was to continue with [the work of] the oratories; but I did not see how I could. On my last Sunday at the Convitto I had to notify my youngsters that they should no longer meet there, as they did usually. In fact I was debating whether I should tell them outright that there was no need to meet at all anywhere, since the oratory would be terminated there and then; or else I should indicate our new meeting place.

[T-A-2] On the night between Saturday and Sunday, I dreamt that I was in a vast plain crowded with an enormous number of youngsters. Some were fighting or swearing; others engaged in theft or indecent behavior. The air was thick with flying stones from the little war that was being waged by those youngsters. These boys were delinquents and victims of neglect. I was about to leave there, when I saw a Lady at my side. "Go among those youngsters," [she told me]. "And what can I do with these street urchins?" [I replied]. "Go in and work," [she countered]. I went to them; but what could I do? I had no place to shelter any of them. I did want to do them some good; but no one [of the people around] paid any attention to me or offered to lend me a hand. I then turned to the Lady, and she said, "Here are your premises," and pointed to a grassy field. "There is nothing here but a field," I remarked. She replied: "My Son and His Apostles had nowhere to rest their head." I began to work in that field; but I saw that my efforts were largely unavailing. I had to find some place where I could provide shelter for some [of the lads] that had been totally neglected. Then the Lady led me a little farther out and said: "Take a good look" I looked and saw a little church, a small courtyard, youngsters, etc.

dreams and merging at the same time with other fantastic images. But they invariably converged on one point: the future of the oratory.

Don Bosco's narration follows.

[T-B-2] I dreamt that I was standing in a vast plain crowded with an enormous number of youngsters. Some were fighting or swearing; others engaged in theft or indecent behavior. The air was thick with flying stones hurled by youngsters who were doing battle. All of these boys were delinquents, the victims of parental neglect. I was about to leave there when I saw a Lady at my side. She said to me, "Go and work among those boys."

I went to them, but what could I do? I had no place to shelter any of them. But I did want to do them some good. I kept appealing to some people who were watching nearby and who could have been very helpful, but no one paid any attention or offered to lend me a hand.

I then turned to the noble Lady. She said, "Here are premises for you," and pointed to a grassy field. "But there is nothing but a field here," I remarked. She replied: "My Son and His Apostles had not even a square foot of ground where to rest their head." I began to work in that field, counseling, preaching, hearing confessions; but I saw that my efforts were largely unavailing. What was needed was an enclosed place where I could gather them. I especially needed some kind of building where I could house some who had suffered total parental neglect, and

But since the church soon proved inadequate, I again appealed to her and she pointed out another church and a much larger building. Then the Lady took me a little farther to one side, and said: "This is the place where the glorious martyrs of Turin, Adventor and Octavius, suffered martyrdom. It is my wish that here God be honored in a very special manner." So saying, with her foot she pointed to the very spot where the martyrdom had taken place. I wanted to leave some kind of marker there so I could remember the spot; but I could find nothing about for this purpose. Nevertheless, I kept the place clearly in mind. In the meantime, I saw myself surrounded by a very large number of youngsters; but, as I looked to Our Lady, the resources needed as well as the premises kept growing apace. I then saw a huge church rising on the very spot which she had pointed out to me as the place where the martyrdom had taken place. There were buildings all around [the church] and a beautiful square in front of it.

While all this was going on, [in my dream] I saw that I had the help of priests and seminarians; but they helped me for only a short while, and then ran off. I made every effort to keep them with me. They would stay for a while and then leave, and I would be

were rejected and despised by society.

Then the Lady led me a little farther north and said: "Take a good look" I looked and saw a little, squat church, a small courtyard, and youngsters in great numbers. I then resumed my work.

But since the church soon proved inadequate, I again appealed to her and she pointed out another, much larger church, and a building adjacent to it. Then the Lady took me a little farther to one side, to a plot of ground under cultivation that lay almost directly in front of the second church. "This," she added, "is the place where the glorious martyrs of Turin, Adventor and Octavius, suffered martyrdom. This ground is drenched and hallowed by their blood. It is my wish that God be honored here in a very special manner." So saying with her foot she pointed to the very spot where the martyrdom had taken place. I wanted to leave a marker there so I could locate the place again on my return, but I could find nothing, not even a single stick or stone, for that purpose. Nevertheless, I kept the place clearly in mind. It coincides today exactly with the gospel-side corner inside the chapel of the Holy Martyrs, previously known as St. Anne's Chapel, in the church of Mary Help of Christians.

In the meantime, I found myself surrounded by a vast and ever increasing number of boys; but, as I looked to the Lady, the resources needed, as well as the premises kept growing apace. I then saw a huge church rising on the very spot which she had pointed out to me as the place where the saints of the Theban Legion had suffered martyrdom. By now there were many buildings around the church, and in the center there stood a beautiful monument.

While all this was going on, still in my dream, I had the help of priests and seminarians. They helped for only a short while, and then they ran off. I made every effort to keep them with me. They would stay for a while and then leave, and I would be alone again. In this predicament I appealed

alone again. In this predicament I appealed once more to the Lady. "Do you want to know what will keep them from deserting you?" she asked. "Take this little cord or ribbon and bind their foreheads with it." I took the little white ribbon and noticed the word *Obedience* written on it. I tried to do as Our Lady suggested and began to bind the heads of some [of my helpers] with the ribbon, with immediate good results. And the results improved as time went on. Those individuals gave up the idea of leaving and stayed on to help Don Bosco.

[T-A-3] A lot of other things occurred [in the dream], but there is no need of relating them now. (He may have been referring to great things [to come].) In any case, from 1844 on I have walked on sure ground both in matters regarding the Congregation and the Oratory, and in matters regarding politics. It was because of having seen church, house, playgrounds, youngsters, seminarians and priests helping me, and how the whole undertaking should be managed, that I began to mention the matter to others and to speak of it as a reality. That is why many people took it all as irrational nonsense. They thought I had lost my mind, and wanted to commit me.

once more to the Lady for help. "Do you want to know what will keep them from deserting you?" she asked. "Take this ribbon and bind their foreheads with it." Reverently I took the little white ribbon from her hand and noticed the word *Obedience* written on it. I tried at once to do as the Lady suggested and began to bind the foreheads of some of those volunteer helpers of mine, with immediate and amazing results. And the results improved as I went forward with the mission entrusted to me. Those individuals laid aside any idea of leaving and stayed on to help me. Thus was our Congregation born.

[T-B-3] I saw many other things, but there is no need of sharing them with you now. (Perhaps he was referring to important future events.) Suffice it to say that from that time on I have walked on sure ground both in matters regarding the oratories and the Congregation, and in my relationships with outside authorities, regardless of their rank. All the serious difficulties that will arise in the future have already been forestalled, and I already know how to overcome them. I have very good and detailed knowledge of what is going to happen to us, and therefore I walk on securely in the light of day. It was because of having seen churches, schools, playgrounds, youngsters, seminarians and priests helping me, and how the whole undertaking should be managed, that I began to mention it to others and speak of it as a reality. That is why many people took it all as irrational nonsense, and thought I was insane.

[T-B-6] Here then was the source of his unshakable faith in the ultimate success of his mission; of the boldness, regarded by some as foolhardiness, with which he tackled all sorts of obstacles; of the courage with which he shouldered colossal undertakings, difficult beyond the power of any human endeavor, and brought them to successful completion nonetheless.

[T-B-4] Regarding the spot which the

[T-A-4] Regarding the spot which the Virgin Mary had pointed out to Don Bosco as the place of Sts. Adventor's and Octavius' martyrdom, the Rev. Don Bosco had further comments to make. He went on to explain:

"I made a point of never telling anyone where that [event] had taken place. I simply gave the task of researching the matter over to Canon Gastaldi (now His Grace the Archbishop). The object was to determine as closely as possible, on the basis of historical data, where the martyrdom had taken place. (In fact I suggested that he publish a book on the life of these saints.) He researched the matter thoroughly and concluded that Valdocco, and indeed approximately the area of our oratory, was the most likely place.

[T-A-5] "Meanwhile the decision was made to build the church at the very place of the martyrdom. That area had formerly been my property. However, since there had been proposals to build the church elsewhere, that is, at the location where the Defilippi house stood, that plot of ground had been sold to the Rosminians, who meant to establish a house of their own there. Negotiations for the purchase of the Defilippi house were already far advanced. The church would have been built on the courtyard area in front of the house, so that it would have been visible from as far as *Dora Grossa* Street. But just as the deal was about to be closed, it fell through. The owners were no longer willing to sell the house to us. Then we again turned our attention to the original location; but, of course, the land had been sold to the Rosminians. At this point we received word that Abbé Rosmini had passed away. Under the circumstances the Rosminians were no longer keen on setting up a house in Turin. So they put that land up for sale, but with the condition that [the agents] should not deal with Don Bosco. They refused to sell to him because they had bought the plot from him at a high price, and it was now depreciated by 80%. Seeing that they refused to sell to me, I got Mgr. Negroni's brother to act for me (Negroni, or Negrotti, or

Blessed Virgin had pointed out to Don Bosco as the place of Sts. Adventor's and Octavius' martyrdom (this was also the place from which St. Solutor fled, wounded by a lance, to die at Ivrea, a martyr for Jesus Christ), Don Bosco had further comments to make. He went on to explain:

"I made a point of never telling anybody about the dream, much less of revealing what I myself considered reliable information about the precise spot where that glorious event had taken place. Later, in 1865, I approached Canon Laurence Gastaldi with the suggestion that he write an account of the lives of the three holy Theban martyrs. His study of the data from history, tradition and topography would determine as closely as possible the probable spot of their martyrdom. The learned canon agreed. He wrote and published historical memoirs on these three confessors of the faith. His extensive research produced the following conclusions.

The exact spot of their martyrdom could no longer be ascertained.

It was certain that they had sought safety outside the city gates, near the River Dora, and that they had been discovered and killed by the executioners near their hiding place.

The expanse of land stretching from the city walls to the River Dora, west of the borough of that name, was in ancient times known by the Latin name of *vallis* or *vallum occisorum* (valley or basin of the slain).<sup>(6)</sup> It is now popularly known as *Vald'occo*, from the first syllables of those words, a possible reference to the martyrs who were killed there.

The wonderful works of charity and devotion established in the area would show that it had clearly been blessed by God. This was an added reason for supposing that it had been bathed by the blood of those brave Christians.

Finally, the author [Gastaldi] added, a study of the city's ancient topography supported the view that the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales rose near that hallowed spot, or

Neirotti, or Neironi, or some like name). He handled the matter for me in the strictest confidence, and I appeared only when the time came to sign the contract. The procurator of the Rosminians was no little surprised at seeing me. He would have none of it since he had received clear instructions to the contrary. But the matter was urgent. The notary public had been called in. Several city councillors were also present. There was no time [for him] to write [for instructions]. Everyone put pressure on him to go along with the terms of the negotiations and sell to me. To make a long story short, that is where the new church was built; and without any reference on my part to any specific place, one of the chapels turned out to be situated at the very spot which the Blessed Virgin had pointed out to me. It is the one we now know as St. Anne's chapel. The altar in it, however, is consecrated specifically to the holy martyrs of Turin.

"I will not go into the wondrous events that accompanied the building of the church. I could tell you stories so extraordinary that you would be amazed.

"Also, in front of the church which the Blessed Virgin showed me there lay a beautiful square with a monument at its center. Now I shall wait and see if this will be feasible. All the difficulties that may be lying ahead are forestalled, and I walk securely in the light of day. I have a clear view of the things that may happen to us in the future, of the difficulties, and of the manner of dealing with them."

perhaps it even enclosed it within its walls."

[(\*) Actually *vallum* means 'fortification, palisade, stockade'.]

**[B-4-Doc] Account of the Research on the Place of Martyrdom As Found in Documenti**

Riguardo al luogo che Maria vergine insegnò a D. Bosco come quello in cui avvenne il martirio dei ss. Avventore ed Ottavio ecco più ampia spiegazione. Il Sig. D. Bosco continuò: "Io non volli mai dire a nessuno in che posto ciò avvenisse. Solo incaricai il Canonico Gastaldi (ora Mons. Gastaldi) a fare studii su questo punto, che cioè ricavasse dalla storia in qual luogo della città, più approssimativamente fosse accaduto detto martirio ed egli (suggerendogli io che stampasse un libro sulla vita dei Santi Martiri) fece studii profondi e conchiuse essere in Valdocco, e, po' più, po' meno, dove era il nostro Oratorio —

**[T-B-4-Doc] Translation of the Account of the Research on the Place of Martyrdom As Found in Documenti**

Regarding the spot which the Blessed Virgin had pointed out to Don Bosco as the place of Sts. Adventor' and Octavius' martyrdom, The Rev. Don Bosco had further comments to make. He went on to explain:

"I made a point of never telling anyone where that [event] took place. I simply gave the task of researching the matter over to Canon Gastaldi (now Archbishop Gastaldi). The object was to determine as closely as possible, on the basis of historical data, where in the city these saints' martyrdom had taken place. (In fact I suggested that he publish a book on the life of these holy martyrs.) He researched the matter thoroughly and concluded that Valdocco, and indeed the grounds of our oratory, approximately, was the most likely place."

(Continued on next page, left column)



(Continued from previous page, right column)

**[B-5-Doc.] Text on the Site of the Church and on the Purchase of the 'Field of Dreams' As Found in *Documenti***

Intanto si decise di innalzare la Chiesa di Maria Ausiliatrice. Secondochè io aveva veduto essa doveva sorgere nel luogo preciso del martirio, ma non parlai. Quel locale era da tempo venuto in mia proprietà; ma siccome molti suggerivano di edificarla (per avere la Chiesa più in vista e più comoda alla popolazione) in fondo al corso Valdocco dove era casa Defilippi, per la compera della quale si erano già fatte pratiche, così si era venduto quel tratto di terra ai Rosminiani, i quali volevano stabilire quivi una loro casa. Ma quando il contratto con la casa Defilippi era come concluso, si disciolse e non ce la volle più lasciare. [(\*)] Allora si pensò di nuovo a comperare, come dopo superate molte difficoltà si comprò, il luogo di prima, dove i Rosminiani per la morte dell'abate Rosmini non pensavano più ad aprir casa. Quivi si fabbricò la nuova Chiesa e senza che io accennassi a nessun luogo speciale riuscì una Cappella nel luogo preciso che la Beata Vergine mi aveva insegnato, ed è la Cappella che chiamiamo di S. Anna, ma il cui altare è consacrato specialmente ai Ss. Martiri Torinesi.

Don Bosco diceva eziandio che tutto l'Oratorio avealo visto in forma di ferro di cavallo e che la Chiesa era nel mezzo.

[(\*) Here, a marginal note in Lemoyne's hand:] I Rosminiani non volevano cedere quel fondo perchè lo avevano comprato da D. Bosco a gran prezzo ed ora era diminuito il valore di 8/10.

(Continued in column on right)

**[T-B-5-Doc] Translation of the Text on the Site of the Church and on the Purchase of the 'Field of Dreams' As Found in *Documenti***

Meanwhile the decision was made to build the Church of Mary Help of Christians. To comply with what I had seen [in the dream], it would have to rise on the exact spot of the martyrdom. However, I did not say a word. That plot of ground had formerly been my property. Many people, however, suggested that the church be built at the end of *Corso Valdocco*, where the Defilippi house was located. (This would have made it more visible and more accessible to the public.) Negotiations for the purchase of that house were already under way. Hence the property was sold to the Rosminians, who had intended to establish a house of their own there. But when the deal for the purchase of the Defilippi house was about to be closed, it fell through. [The owner] had changed his mind about selling. [(\*)] Then we decided to buy the original land back, and we succeeded in spite of the many difficulties that had to be overcome. For, with Abbé Rosmini's death the Rosminians had changed their minds about establishing a house there. That is where the new church was built. Without any previous specific suggestion on my part, one of the chapels turned out to be situated at the very spot which the Blessed Virgin had pointed out to me. It is the one we know as St. Anne's chapel. The altar of the chapel, however, is consecrated specifically to the holy martyrs of Turin.

Don Bosco also added that the whole Oratory, as he had seen it, stood in the form of a horse shoe, with the church right in the center.

[(\*) Here, a marginal note in Lemoyne's hand:] The Rosminians were unwilling to cede that property, because they had bought it from Don Bosco at a very high price, and now its value had depreciated by 80%.

## APPENDIX VIII

## THE SECOND DREAM OF THE HOLY MARTYRS

(One of the 'Further Instructions', According to Lemoyne)

[A] Text of the *Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs As Found in Documenti* (Doc II [P. V, C. V], 157: *FDBMicro* 972 B11f.)

[A-1] Sette mesi erano ormai passati dacchè l'Oratorio si era stabilito all'Ospedaletto.[...]

La Marchesa Barolo [...], avvicinandosi il tempo di aprire il suo piccolo Ospedale (10 Agosto 1845), voleva che l'Oratorio fosse allontanato di là. [...]

Don Bosco però era pronto a soffrire qualunque disagio piuttostochè abbandonare i suoi giovani. Ciò aveva apertamente dichiarato alla Marchesa. Tuttavia era in grave fastidio non sapendo dove condurli. Aveva in animo di cercare un luogo dalle parti di Porta Nuova, ma il Teologo Borelli cercò di fargli mutar parere, e ci riuscì con gran facilità, persuadendolo a rimanere nella regione di Valdocco. Una causa misteriosa influiva su questa determinazione. Don Bosco in sogno aveva avuto una cara visita.

[B] Text of the *Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs As Found in the Biographical Memoirs* (*IBM* II, 341-344; *EBM* II, 266ff.)

[B-1-a] Finalmente la chiesa di S. Martino fu abbandonata del tutto, la quarta Domenica di Avvento 22 dicembre [1845]. [...]

Il giorno di Natale i giovani si versarono come un'ondata presso di D. Bosco al Rifugio. Che fare? [...] D. Bosco, attorniato da una moltitudine di fanciulli pronti a seguirlo ovunque andasse, non aveva un palmo di terreno per intrattenerli, che in qualche modo potesse dir suo. [...]

Tuttavia D. Bosco, sebbene angustiato, per timore che i giovani si stancassero di venire alle festive adunanze, celava la sua pena, [...] e rallegravali col raccontar loro mille meraviglie attorno al futuro Oratorio, che per allora esisteva soltanto nella sua mente e nei decreti del Signore. — Non temete, miei cari figliuoli, diceva loro; è già preparato un bell'edifizio per voi; presto ne andremo al possesso: avremo una bella chiesa, una grande casa, spaziosi cortili, ed un numero sterminato di giovani verranno a ricrearsi, a pregare ed a lavorare. — Gran cosa! I giovani gli credevano! [...]

[B-1-b] È un fatto eziandio ben degno di nota come di queste peregrinazioni di D. Bosco punto di partenza, di arrivo e di stanza fosse sempre Valdocco, come se potente calamita qui lo attraesse. Una cara fantasia gli aveva aperto in sogno un altro magnifico spettacolo. Ei lo raccontò brevemente e a pochi suoi fidi nel 1884. Ma ciò che in esso vi ha di più splendido gli sfuggì di bocca a più riprese e a lunghi intervalli nello spazio di circa vent'anni, contemplando commosso e

quasi estatico la chiesa di Maria SS. Ausiliatrice. Lo scrivente che gli era al fianco non lasciò cadere le sue parole, notandole volta per volta, e poi riunitele ne risultò la scena qui descritta.

[A-2] Gli era parso di trovarsi sul lembo del così detto Bordò di S. Massimo e spingendo lo sguardo dalla parte della Dora, vide vicino alla via Cottolengo tre bellissimoi giovani splendenti per luce vivissima. Costoro lo invitarono a discendere e andare in loro compagnia. D. Bosco si affrettò a muovere il passo e come gli ebbe raggiunti, fu da essi accompagnato in quello spazio di terreno ove ora s'innalza maestosa la Chiesa di Maria Ausiliatrice, allora seminata di patate, meliga, fagioli, e cavoli. Ivi egli passando di meraviglia in meraviglia, fu innanzi ad una bellissima matrona alla quale come a regina facevano corteggio eserciti numerosi, ornati di bellezza e splendore celestiale. Quella signora invitollo ad avvicinarsi e gli disse come quei tre giovani che aveano condotto, fossero i martiri della legione Tebea Solutore Avventore ed Ottavio; come in quello stesso campo Avventore e Solutore [sic] avessero data la vita per Gesù Cristo e quivi pure fossero [sic] stato ferito Solutore, che fuggendo ad Ivrea quella città aveva santificata col suo sangue: per questo fatto chiamarsi quella regione *Valdocco*, ossia *Vallis occisorum*. E gli indicava il luogo del martirio, che era lo stesso dal quale i tre martiri aveano chiamato, che corrisponde esattamente all'angolo interno della capella [sic] di S. Anna al lato del Vangelo. Quindi la Vergine Immacolata, che stava ove adesso è collocato l'altar maggiore della chiesa grande, gli mostrò in quei luoghi una casa ed una chiesa precisamente nel posto ove ora è la chiesuola di S. Francesco di Sales col fabbricato annesso. Alzando quindi la destra, esclamò con una voce ineffabilmente armoniosa: — Haec est domus mea; inde gloria mea. —

[B-2] Gli era parso di trovarsi sul margine a settentrione del *Rondò* o Circolo Valdocco, e spingendo lo sguardo dalla parte della Dora, fra gli altissimi alberi che in quel tempo allineati ornavano il corso ora detto Regina Margherita, vide in giù, alla distanza di circa settanta metri vicino alla via Cottolengo, in un campo seminato di patate, meliga, fagioli e cavoli, tre bellissimoi giovani, splendenti di luce. Stavano fermi in piedi in quello spazio che nel sogno precedente gli era stato indicato come teatro del glorioso martirio dei tre soldati della legione Tebea. Questi lo invitarono a discendere e a venire con loro. D. Bosco si affrettò, e come li ebbe raggiunti, fu da essi accompagnato con grande amorevolezza verso l'estremità di quel terreno nel quale ora s'innalza maestosa la Chiesa di Maria Ausiliatrice. D. Bosco percorse un breve tratto passando di meraviglia in meraviglia, fu innanzi ad una Matrona magnificamente vestita di indicibile avvenenza, maestà e splendore, presso alla quale distinse un senato di vegliardi in aspetto di principi. A lei come a Regina facevano nobilissimo corteggio innumerevoli personaggi ornati di una grazia e ricchezza abbagliante. Intorno intorno si stendevano altre schiere fin dove si poteva spingere lo sguardo. Quella signora che era comparsa ove adesso è collocato l'altar maggiore della Chiesa grande, invitò D. Bosco ad avvicinarsi. Come le fu dappresso, gli manifestò quei tre giovani che lo avevano a lei condotto, essere i martiri Solutore, Avventore ed Ottavio; e con ciò sembrava indicargli come di quel luogo sarebbero stati gli speciali patroni.

Quindi con un incantevole sorriso sulle labbra, e con affettuose parole lo incoraggiò a non abbandonare i suoi giovani, ma di

proseguire con sempre maggior ardore nell'opera intrapresa; gli disse che incontrerebbe ostacoli gravissimi, ma che questi sarebbero tutti vinti ed abbattuti dalla confidenza che egli avrebbe posta nella Madre di Dio e nel suo Divin Figlio.

In fine gli mostrò poco distante una casa, che realmente esisteva, e che poi egli seppe essere proprietà di un certo signor Pinardi; e una chiesuola, precisamente nel sito dove ora è la chiesa di S. Francesco di Sales col fabbricato annesso. Alzando quindi la destra esclamò con voce ineffabilmente armoniosa: HAEC EST DOMUS MEA: INDE GLORIA MEA.

Al suono di queste parole, D. Bosco rimase talmente commosso, che si riscosse, e la figura della Vergine SS., che tale era la Matrona, e tutta la visione, lentamente svanì come nebbia al levare del sole. Egli intanto, confidando nella bontà e misericordia divina, ai piedi della Vergine aveva rinnovata la consacrazione di tutto se stesso alla grande opera alla quale era chiamato.

[A-3] Don Bosco in sul mattino seguente, tutto in festa pel sogno, si affrettò ad andare a visitare quella casa che eragli stata indicata. Nell'uscire disse al Teologo Borelli. — Vado a vedere una casa adatta al nostro Oratorio. — Ma quale fu la sua dolorosa sorpresa, quando su quel sito, invece di una casa con una chiesa, trovò un'abitazione di mala vita! Ritornando al Rifugio e interrogato con premura dal T. Borelli, senza dir altro, rispose, che quella casa sulla quale aveva fatti i suoi disegni non serviva all'uopo.

Per la qual cosa il nostro D. Bosco si trovò di bel nuovo negli imbrogli; ma non si perdè di coraggio. Pieno di fiducia nella divina Provvidenza egli fece vive istanze presso il Municipio di Torino, e mediante raccomandazione dell'arcivescovo Fransoni ottenne in uso la Chiesa di S. Martino dei così detti Molazzi, ossia Molini di città.

[B-3] In sul mattino seguente, tutto in festa pel sogno, si affrettò ad andare a visitar quella casa che dalla Vergine eragli stata indicata. Nell'uscire dalla sua stanza disse al Teol. Borel: — Vado a vedere una casa adatta al nostro Oratorio. — Ma quale non fu la sua dolorosa sorpresa, quando, giunto in quel sito, invece di una casa con una chiesa, trovò un'abitazione di gente di mala vita! Ritornato al Rifugio e interrogato con premura dal Teol. Borel, senza dare alcuna spiegazione, gli rispose, che quella casa sulla quale aveva fatto i suoi disegni non serviva all'uopo.

[T-A] Translation of the Text of the  
*Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs As  
Found in Documenti*

[T-A-1] Seven months had now elapsed since the Oratory had begun to meet at the Little Hospital. [...]

Marchioness Barolo was determined that the Oratory should leave her premises, since the date set for the inauguration of her Little Hospital (August 10, 1845) was fast approaching. [...]

Don Bosco, however, was equally determined, no matter at what personal sacrifice, not to abandon his youngsters. He had made this unambiguously clear to the marchioness. But the troubling and painful reality was that he had no idea where else he could take them. He was considering looking for a place in the area of *Porta Nuova*. But Dr. Borel tried to make him change his mind. He easily persuaded him to stay in the Valdocco district. The decision to remain in the area was due to a mysterious cause. In a dream Don Bosco had had the pleasure of entertaining heavenly visitors.

[T-B] Translation of the Text of the  
*Second Dream of the Holy Martyrs As  
Found in the Biographical Memoirs*

[T-B-1-a] In the end, on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 22 [1845], St. Martin's church was definitively vacated. [...]

On Christmas Day the youngsters converged like a great tide on Don Bosco's place at the Rifugio. What could he do? [...] Don Bosco was surrounded by throngs of children who were ready to follow him wherever he went, but he did not have a square foot of land that he could call his own, where he could meet with them. [...]

This deeply distressed him, but he concealed his anguish lest the youngsters might lose heart and give up attending the oratory. He cheered them up by [...] painting the rosiest picture of the future oratory for them, even though it existed only in his imagination and in God's plans. "Don't worry, my dear boys," he would tell them. "A wonderful place is waiting for you right now. We'll move into it soon. We'll have a beautiful church, a big house and spacious playgrounds. Great crowds of boys will come there to play, to pray and to work." Amazingly enough, the youngsters believed him. [...]

[T-B-1-b] It is most remarkable that, despite the various wanderings, the Valdocco area remained Don Bosco's consistent focal point. If he left it, it was only to return to it as the oratory's natural home. It was as though a powerful lodestone drew him toward the place. A lovely and fanciful dream had unveiled to him yet another marvelous sight. He related it briefly to only a few close associates in 1884. However, the more magnificent details of that dream were often on his lips, at intervals, over a period of some twenty years. These disclosures occurred especially when with ecstatic emotion he would stop and gaze at the church of Mary Help of Christians. The present writer, constantly at his side, did not allow his words to

[T-B-2] He seemed to be standing at the edge of the so-called *Bordò di S. Massimo*. Looking toward the Dora, he spied three young men, very handsome and resplendent with light, standing near the *Via Cottolengo*. The three beckoned to him, and Don Bosco walked quickly down to them. Then they escorted him through that plot of ground where the church of Mary Help of Christians now stands in all its grandeur. [That field] was then planted with potatoes, maize, beans and cabbage. Witnessing wonder after wonder as he walked with them, he found himself face to face with a most beautiful noble Lady. She appeared surrounded by numerous armies of beautiful and resplendent heavenly beings. The Lady invited Don Bosco to approach, and then she told him that the three young men who had escorted him to her were the martyrs of the Theban Legion, Solutor, Adventor and Octavius. She added that Adventor and Solutor [sic] had given up their life for Jesus Christ in that very field; and that Solutor had been wounded there also, but had fled to Ivrea and sanctified that city by shedding his blood. This was why the region's name was *Valdocco*, that is, *Vallis occisorum* [Valley of the Slain]. The Lady then pointed to the place of the martyrdom. This was the spot from which the martyrs had first beckoned to him, and it coincided exactly with the gospel-side corner inside [the present] St. Anne's chapel. She herself was standing at the spot where now the main altar of the larger church [of Mary Help of Christians] is situated. The Virgin then pointed out to him a house and a church existing in the area at the very spot where the church of St. Francis de Sales and the building adjacent to it now stand. Then, raising her hand, and speaking in most melodious tones, she said: "*Haec est domus mea: inde gloria mea*" [This is my house: hence my glory].

be lost. He took note of Don Bosco's utterances, and later compiled them in the following dream scene.

[T-B-2] He seemed to be standing at the north edge of the *Rondò*, or Valdocco Circle. Looking down toward the Dora through the tall trees lining the boulevard now known as *Corso Regina Margherita*, he spied three handsome young men enveloped in a resplendent light. They stood there motionless near the *Via Cottolengo*, some seventy meters away [200 ft.], in a field planted with potatoes, maize, beans and cabbage. They were standing in the very spot which in his previous dream had been pointed out to him as the place where the three soldiers of the Theban Legion had gloriously suffered martyrdom. The three beckoned to him, and Don Bosco walked quickly down to them. Then, with great kindness, they escorted him to the far end of the field where the church of Mary Help of Christians now stands in all its grandeur. After that short walk, during which he witnessed wonder after wonder, he found himself before a noble Lady. She was splendidly clad, and indescribably beautiful, majestic and resplendent. A senate of princely, venerable personages attended her. Numerous others, of dazzling grace and beauty, paid court to her as though she were a queen. An army of heavenly beings hovered around her in ranks stretching as far and the eye could see. The Lady stood where the main altar of the larger church [of Mary Help of Christians] is situated. She invited Don Bosco to approach her. He did so, and she told him that the three young men who had escorted him to her were the martyrs Solutor, Adventor and Octavius. This seemed to imply that they were to be the special holy patrons of that place.

Then, speaking to him in tender tones, with an enchanting smile, she urged him never to abandon his youngsters and to persevere with ever greater zeal in the work he had begun. She also warned him that he would have to face great obstacles. Nevertheless, he would be able to overcome all of

them by trusting in the Mother of God and in her divine Son. Finally, she pointed out to him a house standing nearby. This building really did exist and, as he was later to learn, belonged to a man named Pinardi. She then directed his attention to a small church. It rose at the very spot where the church of St. Francis de Sales and the adjacent building now stand. And raising her hand, in most melodious tones, she said: "*Haec est domus mea: inde gloria mea*" [This is my house: hence my glory].

Don Bosco was so moved by these words that he woke up. The figure of the Blessed Virgin (for that was the noble Lady's true identity), and the entire vision, gradually faded away like mist dissolved by the rays of the rising sun. Don Bosco, on his part, confiding in God's goodness and mercy, had already consecrated himself anew and completely, at the Blessed Virgin's feet, to the the great work that was his calling.

[T-B-3] Elated by this dream, early next morning, Don Bosco hastened to inspect the house which had been pointed out to him. On his way out, he said to Dr. Borel: "I am going to look over a house that may be suitable for our oratory." But when he got there, he was painfully disappointed in finding, not a building and a church, but a house of ill repute. When he got back to the Rifugio, Dr. Borel was anxious to learn all about it. He simply replied that the house on which he had placed his hopes did not suit their purpose.

With this discovery, Don Bosco found himself in the same old predicament. He did not lose heart, however. With full trust in Divine Providence, and a reference from Archbishop Fransoni, he applied for the use of the church of St. Martin at 'The Great Mills', as the city's flour mills were called, for oratory purposes. Permission was granted.

[T-B-3] Elated by this dream, early next morning, he hastened to inspect the house which the Blessed Virgin had pointed out to him. On leaving his room, he said to Dr. Borel: "I am going to look over a house that may be suitable for our oratory." But when he got there, he was painfully disappointed in finding, not a building and a church, but a house tenanted by persons of ill repute. When he got back to the Rifugio, Dr. Borel was anxious to learn all about it. Without a word of explanation, Don Bosco replied that the house on which he had placed his hopes did not suit their purpose.