

# CHAPTER 3

## THE HORIZONS OF YOUTH SPIRITUALITY IN THE COMPANION OF YOUTH

### SOURCE:

P. Stella, *Valori spirituali del "Giovane provveduto" di san Giovanni Bosco*, Roma, Scuola Grafica Borgo Ragazzi di Don Bosco 1960, pp. 80-128.

### PREFACE

- Mistaken judgment about the value of the Companion of Youth (CY): That it is merely a devotional book. In fact, it is a way of living the Christian life.
- The importance of the Companion of Youth (CY): It contains the program of sanctity for young people that DB himself has conceived and formulated.
- To interpret the principles contained in the the Companion of Youth (CY), we look at DB's other writings, his words and his practice. We go to DB to explain DB.

### 1. HOLINESS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AS PROPOSED IN THE COMPANION OF YOUTH: ITS NATURE AND SCOPE

#### 1.1. THE PRIMACY OF RELIGION

##### 1.1.1. DA MIHI ANIMAS COETERA TOLLE

1.1.1.1. This motto expresses Don Bosco's priestly work. It should never be forgotten in the interpretation and evaluation of his educative work. The problem of saving one's soul and those of others brought him anxiety. It is a key to his spiritual system. Giving glory to God by loving him and serving him and saving one's soul are connected questions.

##### 1.1.1.2. OBJECTIVE OF HIS EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

a) To become the consolation of one's parents, the honor of the fatherland and good citizens of this world. This coincides with being a good Christian.

b) To become good citizens of this world in order to become one day fortunate inhabitants of heaven. This implies remaining an authentic Christian in all phases of one's life.

##### 1.1.1.3. THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR

a) His responsibility is not only limited to seeing to it that his pupils become good citizens and good Christians. He has to protect, safeguard and re-acquire sanctifying grace.

b) According to DB the educator has attained his supreme goal when he is able to protect during this period of youth (a time of particular danger for him) the supernatural life and make it the basis for perseverance.

##### 1.1.1.4. RELIGION

a) The only way of life possible is the practice of religion (to live a Christian life). Any other way is a deception. In fact the first attempt at deception by the devil to convince youth that life outside the yoke of the Lord is freedom and fulfillment of one's desire for happiness.

b) For DB religion is often synonymous with the practice of the Christian faith and life of grace. Hence, the true educative work and the exclusive scope of his priestly ministry are to preserve and increase the life of grace.

c) The use of the sacraments is bound to the practice of religion.

## 1.2. RELIGION FOR THE YOUNG IS THE ONLY SOURCE OF HAPPINESS

1.2.1. In CY DB proposes to the young the idea that a life of holy joy is the only way of living the Christian life. This idea is a distinguishing mark of DB's patrimony.

### 1.2.2. STUDY OF SOURCES

1.2.2.1. The idea that the Christian life consists in serving the Lord with joy does not have an immediate source.

1.2.2.2. In terms of literary formulation one can find it in the Life of Comollo which DB published three years earlier.

1.2.2.3. We find this idea in the other pages of CY and in his other writings.

### 1.2.3. DEVELOPMENT

1.2.3.1. The seeds might be found in St. Francis de Sales and St. Philip Neri.

1.2.3.2. But it is above all the fruit of his intuitive grasp of the psychology of the young and of the family spirit.

### 1.2.4. PEDAGOGICAL VALUE

1.2.4.1. Participating in the joy of the young is a means of getting to be liked by them and of gaining their confidence which the educator needs to achieve his supernatural and educative purposes.

1.2.4.2. The playground where joy reigns is a place where one can get to know the young (diagnosis) and where the educator and the young themselves can do apostolate.

### 1.2.5. THEOLOGICAL VALUE

- Don Bosco firmly believed that joy is an unmistakable sign of the life of grace.

## 1.3. DECEPTIONS TO BE REFUTED

1.3.1. That serving the Lord consists in a sad life, far from everything enjoyable and pleasant.

1.3.2. That thinking about Christian truths makes one unhappy and even gives one a headache.

1.3.3. To postpone one's conversion at the end of one's life.

1.3.4. To learn one's Religion but not practice it.

1.3.5. SOURCES: St. Alphonsus, Guida Angelica and Gobinet

## 1.4. LET US SERVE THE LORD IN HOLY JOY

1.4.1. DB rarely describes directly sanctifying grace. True to his Christian realism, he talks about the effect of grace. "We see that those who live in the grace of God are always happy. Even in the midst of afflictions they have contented hearts."

1.4.2. To prove his position, he points to St. Louis Gonzaga, St. Philip Neri and St. Vicent de Paul.

## 1.5. ABSENCE OF JOY IS THE EFFECT OF ABSENCE OF GRACE

1.5.1. The spiritual crisis provoked in a sinner contemplating the happiness of a good person is a theme dear to DB. Such was what happened to the father of Peter in the educative novel "La forza della buona educazione, curioso episodio contemporaneo".

1.5.2. Michael Magone. Being good is the root of true happiness. Being bad is the root of sadness.

## 1.6. CONFESSION, THE WAY TO REGAIN LOST JOY

- Peter and Magone. The only way to regain joy is through confession for it gives grace which gives joy.

## 1.7. JOYFUL LIFE

- 1.7.1. Joy was the condition DB wanted for his boys at the Oratory.
- 1.7.2. DB was able to make a connection between the natural desire for happiness and the supernatural which enabled him to create an atmosphere of spirituality.
- 1.7.3. Communion is the possession of God who gives us joy.
- 1.7.4. DB knew that whatever required the serious use of the mind was something young people didn't like. Yet he was able to make them like praying so that prayer became an outlet for their need for joy.
- 1.7.5. Joy is not limited to the spirit. It must be seen externally. The body also manifests the joy that is within.
- 1.7.6. Grace adapts itself to nature. In youth it shows itself in fun and enjoyment. Jumping, running, making noise, the playground, music, song and theater are ways by which youth intensely relishes their happiness.
- 1.7.7. QUOTATIONS
  - 1.7.7.1. DB: "Be happy. But if it is to be happiness, it should come from a conscience free from sin."
  - 1.7.7.2. CY: "I wish you well and I willingly grant you those amusements which are not sinful."
  - 1.7.7.3. DB: "Joy. Study. Piety. This is the great program which when practiced will enable you to live happily, and to do a lot of good to your soul."
- 1.7.8. Joy is an excellent means of escaping from idleness which is an occasion of sin.
- 1.7.9. Psychological effect of joy. It absorbs the detritus of melancholy and of bad talk.
- 1.7.10. Liturgy of joy. "While at play, or in conversation or in other pastime, raise your mind to God."
- 1.8. IT IS EASY TO BECOME A SAINT
  - 1.8.1. Become a saint. To the ears of XIX century youth, "Saint" is a word associated with courage and daring. The Saint is a champion, a hero who through extraordinary feat merited the honors of the altars.
  - 1.8.2. GPD (1885): "Give me an obedient boy (adolescent) and he will become a saint. A disobedient boy on the other hand will take a road that leads to the loss of every virtue."
  - 1.8.3. Aspiration taught by DB to his boys: "Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, St. Joseph and St. Louis Gonzaga, obtain for me the grace of becoming a saint."
  - 1.8.4. DB firmly believed in youthful sanctity. He believed that for each stage of life there exists a perfection relative to that stage.
    - 1.8.4.1. He counseled Dominic Savio: "Be persevering in the fulfillment of your duties of study and piety...and don't miss taking part in recreation with your companions." Formula for Dominic: "Piety. Study. Recreation."
    - 1.8.4.2. Formula for Besucco: "Joy. Study. Piety."
  - 1.8.5. Reaching a heroic level is expressed in the adjective "perseverante" or persevering.
  - 1.8.6. He also believed that there exists perfection appropriate for one's state of life.
  - 1.8.7. Expressions of DB: Youthful sanctity consists in the practice of religion or in giving oneself to God (darsi a Dio).
  - 1.8.8. Young people should not think that sanctity is for adults and old people. In fact, one becomes a saint in one's mature years or old age only because he was already a saint from his youthful years.

## 2. FOUNDATIONS

### 2.1. RELATIONSHIP OF MAN WITH GOD

- 2.1.1. The program of life DB offers is tied to the existence of God to which the existence of man is subordinated. This relationship can not but direct man to religion. In the context of religion, the life of man is understood as service of God.
- 2.1.2. FIRST AND UNBREAKABLE FOUNDATION: KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
  - 2.1.2.1. God is Creator and Savior, beginning and end.
  - 2.1.2.2. Man is the most noble and perfect of the visible creation. He is given a spiritual and immortal soul. He has been elevated to the supernatural level and thus destined to be with God in Paradise or to be punished in hell depending on his good or bad deeds.
- 2.1.3. THE SALVIFIC WILL OF GOD
  - 2.1.3.1. All creatures are for Paradise.
  - 2.1.3.2. God is a loving father who experiences great displeasure at having to punish some rebellious child with hell.
  - 2.1.3.3. The spirituality of DB is not only of joy but of the last things. Sanctity is not only about giving glory to God but also about saving one's soul.
- 2.2. SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE YOUNG WITH GOD
  - 2.2.1. BIBLICAL REFERNCES
    - 2.2.1.1. God finds delight in the midst of the young (My delight is to be with the sons of men).
    - 2.2.1.2. Terrible words against those who scandalize the little ones.
    - 2.2.1.3. Let the children come to me.
  - 2.2.2. BASES OF DIVINE PREDILECTION
    - 2.2.2.1. He loves you because you are still in time to do a lot of good. Influenced by St. Alphonsus (Time is precious. It is necessary to do good while there is the possibility.).
    - 2.2.2.2. He loves you because you are simple, humble and innocent. Influenced by Gobinet.
    - 2.2.2.3. The young are in unique and unrepeatable situation of being able to offer to God the first fruits of life.
  - 2.2.3. This special relationship obliges the young to love God in return. He should do all he can to do what pleases him and to avoid what displeases him.
  - 2.2.4. ADVANTAGES OF STARTING THEM YOUNG
    - 2.2.4.1. To give oneself early on in life to God is a fundamental theme of Gobinet which DB shares. The necessity of this is due to that fact that ordinarily one will be in life what one was when young.
    - 2.2.4.2. Moreover, Guida Angelica and St. Alphonsus warn us not to put off one's conversion in old age. We may never reach it.
    - 2.2.4.3. De Mattei on St. Aloysius. If he had waited for old age to give himself to God, he would not have undoubtedly reached the heights of sanctity. And since he died young, might not have been saved.
3. THE NECESSARY VIRTUES
  - Love of God and neighbor, purity and obedience
- 3.1. LOVE OF GOD AND RELATED VIRTUES
  - Objectively it is the most excellent virtue and the root of the taste for the 'religious' life.
- 3.1.1. LOVE OF GOD

3.1.1.1. Having little taste for spiritual things is due to lack of love of God. The love of God is the source of the taste for spiritual things. The foundation of our love for God is the love of God for us.

3.1.1.2. The immediate object of love of God is God himself who is a loving Father. But the love of God made man is seen especially in the Cross and in the Eucharist. Having little taste for spiritual things is due to our having little love for Jesus crucified and rare communions or receiving communion unworthily or receiving communion with hearts filled with worldly affections.

3.1.1.3. The exercise and manifestation of love God is through sensible means. For example, kissing the cross and sacramental communion.

3.1.1.4. The love for Jesus crucified united to the devotion to the Sacred Heart is an expression of a love that seeks to make reparation. While love for the Eucharistic Lord (sacramental and spiritual communion and visit to the Blessed Sacrament) are expressions of love that seeks union.

3.1.1.5. LOVE FOR MARY

a) Love for Mary has for its foundation the motherly love of Mary for man, especially the young. He who has been abandoned should run to Mary and will find in her a motherly love.

b) Titles

- Mother of Jesus and our Mother
- Ausiliatrice. Specifies her motherly function and the help of Mary for the entire Church and for each of her children.
- Immaculate. The ideal of being free from sin, especially those sins against the beautiful virtue.

c) Expressions of devotion

- Rosary
- Seven sorrows
- Aspirations. "To you I give my heart, mother of my Jesus, Mother of love."

3.1.2. LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

3.1.2.1. Love of neighbor is understood as apostolate and winning them over. We do not find this concept fully developed in GP. Its full development is found in the biographies of Savio, Magone and Besucco.

3.1.2.2. In 1854 during the cholera epidemic, DB challenged his young people to assist those in need. When DB started welcoming youngsters at Casa Pinardi, he felt the need of making his boys feel responsible for the good of their companions who are less strong in the spiritual life.

3.1.2.3. NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

a) Flee from bad companions, from scandal, from bad talk, from dangerous amusements.

b) Bear with the defects of one's companions. Pardon their offenses.

3.1.2.4. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

a) Profit from their good example.

b) Choose good companions (those who go to confession and communion, who fulfill their duties, who go to church and who avoid offending the Lord.)

3.1.2.5. APOSTOLIC RELATIONSHIP

- a) Reach out to the poor
- b) Teach them the things about the faith or bring them where they can learn these. Tell edifying stories. Lead them to listen to the Word of God and to go to confession. Read about spiritual matters in their presence.
- c) The most effective apostolate is that of good example.
- d) St. Augustine: "He who is able to save a soul has sure hope of saving his own."

### 3.1.3. DETACHMENT FROM EARTHLY GOODS

- 3.1.3.1. The anxiety for the salvation of one's soul should make one renounce anything that does not lead to the salvation of one's soul. Example of St. Aloysius: "What use is this for eternity?" "What is not eternal is nothing."
- 3.1.3.2. Don Bosco preferred the sacraments of Communion and Confession in detaching one's heart from earthly things and in loving heavenly things.
- 3.1.3.3. De Mattei. Meditating on the goal of man's existence is a way of detaching one's heart.
- 3.1.3.4. Also working for the glory of God.

### 3.1.4. SPIRIT OF PENANCE AND MORTIFICATION

#### 3.1.4.1. PENANCE

- a) The model is St. Aloysius.
- b) The reason for reflecting about sin is to lead to repentance whose primary motivation is ingratitude toward God. Repentance leads to a firm resolution and act of love for God.

#### 3.1.4.2. MORTIFICATION

- a) It is the fruit of the love of God, a means of expiating for sins committed and a means for asking for help against temptation and for guarding the beautiful virtue.
- b) St. Aloysius is presented not for material imitation but for learning the spirit behind his penance.
- c) Penance should not be postponed to old age when one does not have the strength to do it.
- d) DB: "He who does not wish to suffer with Christ on earth will not be able to enjoy heaven with Jesus Christ."
- e) Penance is a way of reducing the punishment due to sin committed while on earth.
- f) Don Bosco unlike De Mattei and Guida Angelica does not favor painful (afflictive) mortification.
- g) The fasting counseled by Jesus in order to overcome temptations against purity consists in the mortification of the senses: (1) Keep guard over one's eyes; (2) against too much food and drink; (3) don't go to dances and theater; (4) give the body only the needed rest; and (5) avoid idleness, bad companions, bad talk, scandal and occasions of sin.
- h) SAVIO, MAGONE AND BESUCCO
  - Obedience
  - Monotony of daily life , diligence in one's studies, attention in school, decorum in prayer, in school, and in recreation.
  - The inconveniences which form part of our life
- i) JOY AND PENANCE

- Penance does not produce sadness because it is done out of love for God.

- Penance enables one to preserve purity which means remaining in the state of grace. And the state of grace is a state of happiness.

### 3.1.5. THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

3.1.5.1. DB invites the young to acquire the spirit of devotion and to pray St. Aloysius for a spark of his fervor and to obtain an increase in prayer and devotion. This idea is not well-developed in GP. It is developed in “La Forza della buona educazione” and especially in the triptych Savio-Magone-Besucco.

3.1.5.2. Following St. Alphonsus DB sees prayer as petition. Because man is weak and miserable, he needs God to attain his supreme end.

#### 3.1.5.3. MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

- We invoke her as our mother who we honor especially by seeking graces for our needs. She is our protector and helper.

#### 3.1.5.4. ASPIRATIONS

- There are many aspirations in GP expressing love for the Sacred Heart, to St. Joseph and Mary. But there are more which seek graces and special favors.

#### 3.1.5.5. CHURCH

- The Church is the place par excellence for making petitions. “Whatever we ask from God in Church, we obtain it.”

#### 3.1.5.6. SALVATION

- With St. Alphonsus, DB says: “He who prays will certainly be saved. He who does not pray will certainly be damned.”

#### 3.1.5.7. PETITIONS

a) Salvation of one’s soul. To avoid offending God. Help in times of temptation. Safeguard purity.

b) Church. Relatives. Friends. Enemies. Benefactors. Those who are far from God. Those who are separated from the true church.

#### 3.1.5.8. MODES OF PETITION

a) Daily, weekly, monthly formulas

b) Aspirations which are called formidable weapons against the assaults of the devil.

#### 3.1.5.9. PRAYER OF REPARATION

- Coroncina al S. Cuore di Gesu’

### 3.2. THE FIRST VIRTUE OF THE YOUNG IS OBEDIENCE

3.2.1. This virtue is of capital importance in youthful spirituality. A young person who will not allow himself to be guided by those who have responsibility for his education and the good of his soul will surely turn to evil.

#### 3.2.2. GUIDES

3.2.2.1. Parents

3.2.2.2. Ecclesiastical and secular superiors

3.2.2.3. Teachers

3.2.2.4. At the Oratory, director, teachers and assistants

- Director is father and spiritual father. He is the confessor. He guides the young in the choice of state of life and his decision prevails over that of his parents.

### 3.2.3. AIM OF THE GUIDES

- To support and strengthen the joyful life of sanctity of the young in order to lead them to perfection.

3.2.4. There is a link between obedience and joy.

3.2.5. Intolerance and disobedience are signs that the young is not at peace with God.

### 3.2.6. MOTIVES

- God commands obedience to parents and superiors.

### 3.2.7. MANIFESTATIONS

- Docility. Respect. Sincerity.

### 3.2.8. OBEDIENCE IS THE WAY TO SANCTITY

- “A youth who is obedient will become a saint. The disobedient take the road that leads to perdition.”

## 3.3. THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF VIRTUES IS PURITY

- It is the most beautiful ornament in the soul of the young in the state of grace. It is a treasure to be protected. It merits the predilection of God and of Mary. It is the source of angelic joy. It is the virtue most in danger in the youthful years.

### 3.3.1. CENTRALITY

- With Gobinet DB keeps the centrality of Purity. But while Gobinet treats of the contrary vice abundantly, DB never mentions it in GP. Instead DB treats of Purity.

### 3.3.2. CHRISTIAN PRACTICE

3.3.2.1. Guida Angelica. Christian practice boils down to guarding purity.

3.3.2.2. Aloysian tradition. Defending grace is defending purity. Purity is identified with being in the state of grace.

3.3.2.3. “This virtue is like the center around which all good things gather and are preserved. And if unfortunately, one loses the virtue; all other virtues are also lost.”

### 3.3.3. EFFECTS AND BLESSINGS

- Together with purity come tranquility, peace, happiness

### 3.3.4. NEGATIVE MEANS: FLIGHT

#### 3.3.4.1. AVOID IDLENESS

a) It is the principal trap of the devil for youth. Temptations hide in idleness (DB cites St. Jerome).

b) From idleness comes the search for useless entertainment and public shows which bring no good.

c) From idleness comes bad companions and bad talk.

#### 3.3.4.2. AVOID OCCASION OF SIN (BAD TALK)

a) In the article on bad talk, DB develops his teaching on avoiding the occasion of sin.

b) DB follows the strictness of St. Alphonsus and St. Leonard of P. Maurice. If the young can not remain good without a guide, how much more will it be impossible to remain good in an environment where there is poison?

#### 3.3.4.3. AVOID FAMILIARITY WITH GIRLS

- With this counsel DB adds custody of the senses, especially of the eyes.

### 3.3.5. POSITIVE MEANS

- 3.3.5.1. The beauty of the virtue itself
- 3.3.5.2. Confession and communion. Prayer, especially the aspirations.
- 3.3.5.3. Mortification. Work.
- 3.3.5.4. Patronage of Mary. Protection of St. Aloysius.

#### 3.3.6. STYLE OF DON BOSCO

- In GP DB used a method of silence and reserve in dealing with Purity, more rigorous than his times.

#### 3.3.7. PROBLEM: PREPARING THE YOUNG FOR LIFE

- GP does not deal with the crisis that the young will certainly face.

### 4. THE MEANS

#### 4.1. INSTRUCTION

4.1.1. DB: "The nourishment and food of our soul is the word of God, that is, preaching, explanation of the gospel and the catechism. If you deprive yourself of this nourishment, you put yourselves in grave spiritual harm.

4.1.1.1. Recall the preaching before going to sleep.

4.1.1.2. Recall the advice given by the confessor after morning and evening prayers.

#### 4.1.2. Written word

4.1.2.1. Lives of Saints. Spiritual books

4.1.2.2. Spiritual reading (after morning or night prayers) should be the daily bread of the soul.

4.1.3. The need for instruction was heightened by the liberty given to the Waldensians.

#### 4.2. PRACTICES OF PIETY

4.2.1. They are the expressions of the spirit of prayer.

4.2.2. DB was preoccupied like the other manualists to suggest prayers for the various moments of the day and for the various spiritual attitudes.

4.2.2.1. Beginning of the day: Sign of the cross; offering of one's heart to God; morning prayers; and if possible, go to mass.

4.2.2.2. Sign of the cross to sanctify the food; and holy aspirations, the work.

4.2.2.3. At night the rosary; night prayers and examination of conscience.

4.2.2.4. And while preparing for bed, imagine Jesus being stripped of his clothes and being whipped. Presence of God.

#### 4.2.3. SACRAMENT: EUCHARIST

4.2.3.1. Psychological preparation in the form of devotional commentaries.

4.2.3.2. Daily Mass which is the source of every blessing.

4.2.3.3. The Eucharist is the spiritual Bread that nourishes the soul.

#### 4.2.3.4. FREQUENCY

a) DB attributes to seldom receiving communion as cause of lack of taste for spiritual things.

b) DB's desire for daily communion goes way back (old).

c) Although DB's preference for daily communion was under the influence of St. Alphonsus through the teaching of Don Cafasso at the Convitto, the arguments he chose were not those put forward by St. Alphonsus regarding the conditions necessary for receiving communion frequently. Rather he chose those that favor daily Communion. St. Augustine: "If we ask God everyday for bodily bread, why can we not ask to eat everyday of the Spiritual Bread of Holy Communion?"

- 4.2.3.5. REAL PRESENCE. The concern of DB was to inculcate the Real Presence of the Son of God, made man, under the appearance of bread and food of the soul.
- 4.2.3.6. JOY. The promise of joy reaches its apex in Holy Communion because it is here that one objectively attains maximum communion with Jesus who is the source of joy.
- 4.2.3.7. VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
  - a) This practice is based on the fact of the Real Presence.
  - b) In the visit we find Jesus who is rich in graces which he willingly gives to those who ask him.
  - c) Spiritual communion. Make acts of love and seek particular graces.
- 4.2.3.8. FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS. Communion can be the beginning of a true education towards friendship with Jesus.
- 4.2.4. SACRAMENT: CONFESSION
  - 4.2.4.1. Preparation the day before: visit to the Blessed Sacrament, fasting or mortification, spiritual reading, or some prayer.
  - 4.2.4.2. For DB a well-done confession enables one to regain true life and nourish it.
  - 4.2.4.3. In Confession DB gives personal spiritual direction to each penitent. They must remember and put into practice the advice of the confessor. They should be open to him. They should value his advice regarding their choice of state of life.
  - 4.2.4.4. Confession is to take away sin and be reconciled with God. They should confess every week. When they commit mortal sin, they should go as soon as possible.
  - 4.2.4.5. DB gives detailed treatment of confession so that it may not become useless, or worse, sacrilegious.
- 4.3. SPECIFIC DEVOTIONS
  - 4.3.1. Way of the cross (expression of reparation), Mary, St. Aloysius
  - 4.3.2. MARY
    - 4.3.2.1. DB invoked Mary as mother who protects, sustains and cares for her children. Marian devotion is reciprocating her love.
    - 4.3.2.2. She is an effective mediatrix of graces.
    - 4.3.2.3. Her virtues are presented not so much for imitation but as objects of petition. Purity, for example, is something to be asked from Mary.
    - 4.3.2.4. DEVOTIONS
      - a) Kissing her medal or her scapular
      - b) Little Office of the Blessed Virgin
      - c) Rosary (also for the intention of preservation of the Faith)
      - d) The Seven Joys of Mary
      - e) Addolorata
      - f) Immaculate
      - g) Help of Christians
  - 4.3.3. ST. ALOYSIUS
    - 4.3.3.1. Devotion of the first order. Prototype of youthful holiness who knew how to live joyfully in this world, detached from all worldly pleasures, seraphic lover

of God, generous towards others, perfectly realized the ideal of giving oneself to God and above all, model and protector of the beautiful virtue.

4.3.3.2. He is invoked in the prayer before and after communion. The most solemn devotion is the Six Sundays in preparation for his feast.

#### 4.3.4. OTHERS

##### 4.3.4.1. GUARDIAN ANGEL

- a) Protector
- b) Pleased with those who are pure and heavenly example of the beautiful virtue

##### 4.3.4.2. ST. JOSEPH

- a) Implored for the grace of a happy death
- b) Included in the daily aspiration: Jesus, Mary and Joseph...
- c) Intercessor for purity
- d) Devotional practices for March

##### 4.3.4.3. EXERCISE FOR A HAPPY DEATH

- a) Asceticism of the Last Things so much in vogue from the XVI to the XIX centuries.
- b) Re-establish or re-invigorate the life of grace through reflection on the Last Things which pushes one to go to confession and receive communion as if one were at the point of death.

##### 4.3.4.4. THE POPE

- Vicar of Christ and Head of the Church

##### 4.3.4.5. GUIDE FOR ASSISTING AT MASS

##### 4.3.4.6. INDULGENCES ATTACHED TO PRAYERS AND PRACTICES

#### 4.4. WORK-PLAY-SONG

##### 4.4.1. WORK

- 4.4.1.1. Work is presented as part of the nature of man. Man was born to work. It guarantees victory over obstacles that man meets in his life.
- 4.4.1.2. It is an instrument that is fit for giving glory to God.
- 4.4.1.3. Study and house work are means by which we gain useful knowledge and please our superiors.

##### 4.4.2. THEATER

- Manifestation of youthful spirit. Means of going up to the Lord and giving him glory.

##### 4.4.3. SACRED SONG

- 4.4.3.1. Gives life to festive gatherings.
- 4.4.3.2. Means of attracting youth and keeping them occupied.
- 4.4.3.3. Preparing them for parish life

#### 4.5. EXAMPLE

- 4.5.1. Setting forth examples is a powerful means of attracting toward the Christian life. Si ille, cur non ego?
- 4.5.2. Gobinet and many imitators have a chapter on the imitation of Jesus. They also sprinkle their considerations with episodes taken from the Bible or from Church history.
- 4.5.3. DB likes to set as examples youth who can easily be understood and imitated.

4.5.3.1. St. Aloysius. Louis Comollo. Stanislaus Kotska. John Berchmans. Francis de Sales. David and Jonathan. Rose of Lima. Patriarch Joseph.

4.5.3.2. Biographies of Savio, Magone and Besucco.

4.5.4. Jesus as model of obedience

4.5.5. BAD EXAMPLE

- Bad example and scandal are also powerful. Hence, take as good friends those who practice religion, who carry out their duty and avoid offending God.

## 5. A SPECIFIC CONCERN: THE CHOICE OF STATE OF LIFE

### 5.1. GP

5.1.1. After the chapter on the need of giving oneself to God, DB did not feel the need of adding a chapter on the problem of vocation.

5.1.2. In edition B, he added a prayer in order to know one's vocation.

5.1.3. In edition C, he added a fifth section in Part I where he dealt on the topic of choice of state of life.

### 5.2. THEOLOGICAL BASIS

- The choice of one's vocation is nothing else but to discover one's role in God's plan.
- On this choice depends one's salvation.

### 5.3. MEANS OF ARRIVING AT THE CHOICE

5.3.1. Purity of life

5.3.2. Humble and persevering prayer

5.3.3. Retreat

5.3.4. Communion

5.3.5. Advice of wise people, especially one's confessor

### 5.4. OBLIGATION TO FOLLOW ONE'S VOCATION

- One should follow his vocation even over his parents' opposition because one should obey God first and not men.

## 6. FAMILY SPIRIT IN GP

### 6.1. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

6.1.1. God exercises his fatherhood over the young through a variety of titles: creator and author of life of grace.

6.1.2. Jesus in the Eucharist is said to be Father, Brother, Friend and Spouse of the soul

6.1.3. Mary is the spiritual mother of souls. She has special tenderness for little children.

6.1.4. The Catholic Church is a great family. The Pope rules and guides this great family as a father.

### 6.2. CONTEXT OF THE ORATORY

6.2.1. The Director of the Oratory and the Confessor are loving fathers with whom one must have confidence. The Superiors take the place of the parents and merit respect and love.

6.2.2. Obedience is seen as acceptance and fulfillment of the commands of the superior who is also a loving father.

6.3. DB: "My dear boys, I love you with all my heart and it is enough that you are young for me to love you very much. You might find other people who are more virtuous or more learned than me. But it would be difficult to find someone who loves you in Jesus Christ more than me and who desires very much your happiness."

## 7. CONCLUSION

### 7.1. ASPECTS UNDER WHICH GP MAY BE EXAMINED

#### 7.1.1. Living instrument of piety

- Just like other similar manuals it is destined to grow old and decline. It will no longer be able to adequately express the religiosity of people of another age for whom it was not made.

#### 7.1.2. Document of religious sentiment of the epoch in which it was composed

- It is a document of the religious sentiment of Piedmont and Italy in the XIX century whose value can not be set aside. It was able to find its way into institutes, “case di lavoro” and families all over Italy.

#### 7.1.3. Witness to the spirit of the author

- As a witness to the spirit of DB it is an exceptional document. It is not just a compilation but a re-thinking of the different sources.

7.2. It is a luminous program of youthful spirituality of holy joy which inspired the activity of DB. It was able to give voice to the longings of youth for all times. And it earned for DB the title of Master of youthful holiness.