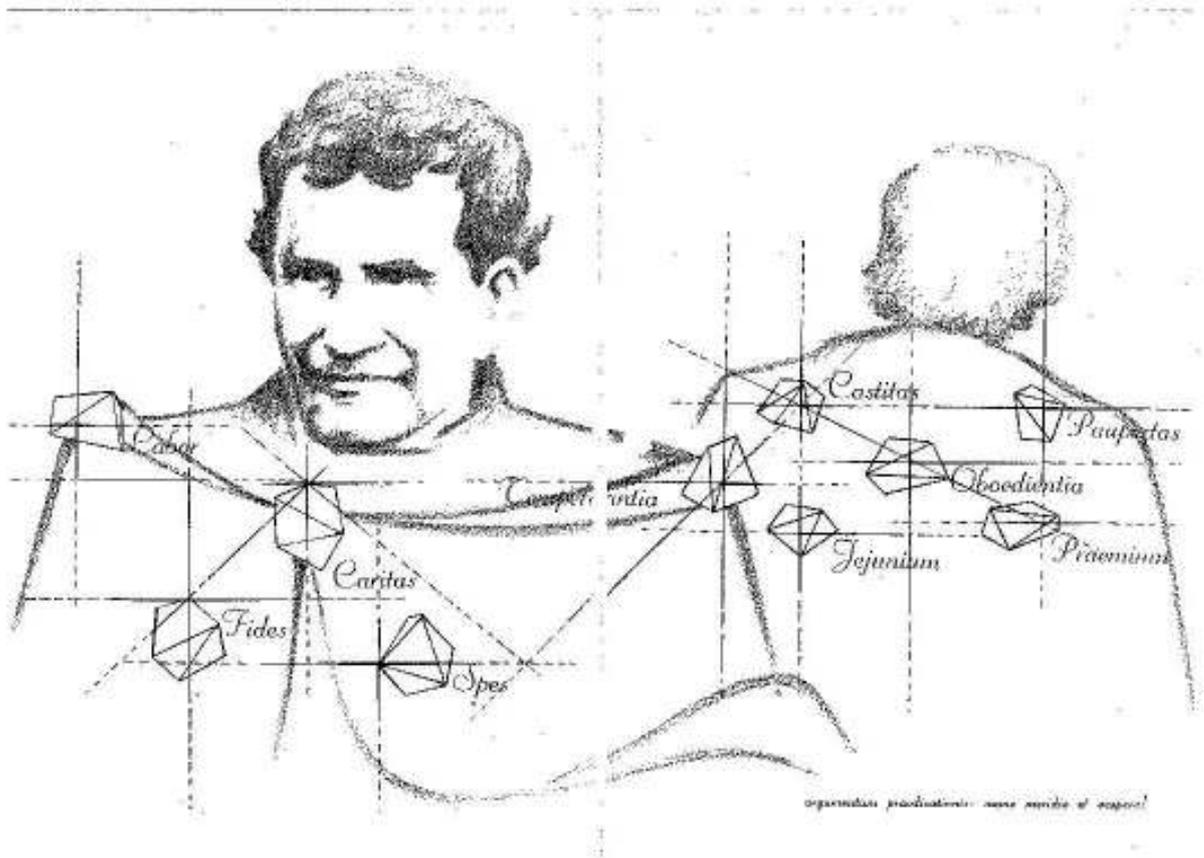


REFLECTIONS ON THE DREAM OF THE TEN DIAMONDS¹

PREPARED BY THE STUDENTS OF DIVYADAAN – JANUARY 2014



DAY ONE: 22 JANUARY – DIAMONDS OF WORK AND TEMPERANCE

Introduction

Today, we begin our novena in preparation for the Feast of our Father and Founder St. John Bosco. We will celebrate these nine days responding to the invitation from our Rector Major, Fr. Pascal Chavez made in the Strenna for 2014: to reflect on the Dream of the Ten Diamonds as a way to deepen our understanding of Don Bosco's spirituality.

¹ The principal sources for these reflections are the Dream of the Ten Diamonds and the Circular Letter of Fr. Egidio Vigano on the completion of its centenary in 1981. [Both the text of the dream and the commentary are available in: Egidio VIGANO, «The Salesian according to Don Bosco's Dream of the Ten Diamonds» in *AGC* 300 (April-June 1981).]

MEDITATIONS ON “THE DREAM OF THE TEN DIAMONDS”

Don Bosco had this dream at San Benigno during the retreat from 10 to 15 September 1881. In it he seen a majestic personage clothed with a mantle of 10 brilliant diamonds. The diamonds were named for the three theological virtues, work and temperance, the three vows, reward and fasting.

On the first day of the Novena let us mediate on **WORK and TEMPERANCE**. Don Bosco says: “Work and temperance will make the congregation flourish, where as the seeking of an easy and comfortable life will bring about its death”. Keeping in mind these words of Don Bosco let us spend this time of reflection.

Work and temperance are among the notable features of the Salesian Spirit. Art 18 of our Constitutions reads: “The Salesian gives himself to his mission with tireless energy, taking care to do everything with simplicity and moderation. He knows that by his **work** he is participating in the creative action of God and cooperating with Christ in building the Kingdom. **Temperance** gives him the strength to control his heart, to master himself and remain even-tempered. He does not look for unusual penances but accepts the daily demands and renunciations of the apostolic life. He is ready to suffer cold and heat, hunger and thirst, weariness and disdain whenever God's glory and the salvation of souls require it.”

In the **Dream of the Ten Diamonds** the diamond of **Work** is found on the front of the mantle on the right shoulder. The rays of WORK carried the inscription, “Remedy for concupiscence; powerful weapon against all the temptations of the devil.” The diamond of **Temperance** is on the left shoulder. TEMPERANCE had the text, “Take away the fuel and the fire will die out. Make a pact with your eyes, your appetite, your sleep, so that these enemies may not ravage your souls. Intemperance and chastity cannot go together.” They support the whole mantle.

On the destroyed garment in the place of the diamond of Work is the quotation: *Sleep, dishonesty and idleness*. And in the place of the diamond of Temperance is found: *Gluttony - their god is their belly*.

Work

What is **work**? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* indicates that by work man participates in the Divine work of creation. When united to Christ, work is redemptive. (CCC, 2427)

As we noted earlier Art 18 reminds us that our work is a participation in God’s creative work in the universe and is a cooperation with Christ in building the kingdom.

Art 78 tells us that “Unremitting and self-sacrificing work is a characteristic left us by Don Bosco, and is a concrete expression of our poverty. In our daily labours we are at one with the poor who live by the sweat of their brow, and we bear witness to the human and christian value of work.

In Art 95 we are reminded that our work is made holy by prayer and union with God.

Reflection questions:

1. Do I experience joy in my work?

2. Can I say that I am a hardworking person?

Temperance

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes that **temperance** moderates the attraction of the pleasures of the senses and provides balance in the use of created goods. (CCC, 1809)

The *diamond of Temperance*, on the left shoulder, must not be confused with the *diamond of Fasting*; and to emphasize the difference in these two virtues, so seemingly alike, one is positioned on the front of the mantle and the other on the back. As we shall see, the *diamond of Fasting* stands for mortification of the senses; whereas *Temperance* indicates a general Spartan like self-control achieved through a cogent work-plan, self-sacrifice, moderation and balance that are the fruit of self denial.

In the Constitutions we read that: temperance gives the Salesian strength to control his heart, to master himself and remain even-tempered. (c. 18)

Our temperance will be linked with a general mien that is congenial and in keeping with the ordinary working folk, full of common sense and tinged with a healthy shrewdness. To quote Don Rinaldi: "The Salesian must practice self control: he does not go about with his eyes closed; he opens them but goes no further; if something is wrong, he stops. He will control himself also in his games; he will be restrained with the bothersome boy; he will be able to hold his peace, hide his feelings, speak at the right time, and exercise a measure of shrewdness".

We are called to moderation and self-denial. Without this moderation we risk becoming people who seek pleasure at all costs. Masters of the spiritual life tell us that denying ourselves even things that are legitimate helps build our spiritual stamina for prayer and meditation.

Reflection questions

1. Do I exercise self-control and self-denial in my daily life especially in matters of food and entertainment?
2. What forms of asceticism do I voluntarily undertake?

DAY TWO: 23 JANUARY – THE DIAMOND OF FAITH

Dear friends in Christ Jesus, today is the 2nd day of the novena in honor of our Father and Founder Don Bosco.

On the night of 10th September 1881, Don Bosco had the **Dream of the Ten Diamonds**. The personage in the dream wore ten huge and splendid diamonds, 5 diamonds in the front and 5 diamonds at the back.

Three of the diamonds that were on the breast of the mantle were inscribed - Faith, Hope and Charity – the theological virtues. These virtues have God himself as their origin, motive and direct object. Infused with sanctifying grace, they bestow on one the capacity to live in a relationship with the Trinity. They are

the foundation and the energizing force of the Christian’s moral activity and they give life to the human virtues. They are the pledge of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the faculties of the human being. (From *Compendium of the CCC*, 384) Today we shall reflect on the diamond called “Faith”.

Faith is the first of the theological virtues and is a precious virtue in our Christian life. Faith is the virtue by which we believe in God and all that he has revealed to us and that the Church proposes for our belief because God is Truth itself. By faith the human person freely commits himself to God. Therefore, the believer seeks to know and do the will of God because “faith works through charity” (*Gal 5:6*). (From *Compendium of the CCC*, 386)

Looking at the **life of Don Bosco** we cannot fail to notice his deep faith and union with God. All his life he was led by Divine Inspiration and it was his Trust in the Lord that ensured his fidelity to the Mission God gave him. This faith he nourished by a deep spiritual life – leading some to call him “Union with God”. His devotion to the Eucharist, to the Mother of God and to the Church were all means to deepen this trust and confidence that led him in fidelity to His Mission.

In the **Dream of the Ten Diamonds** each diamond had rays like small tongues of flame on which various texts were written. Faith carried the following maxims: *Take up the buckler of faith and battle against the snares of the devil*. In life we face many challenges to our faith: some of them come from within ourselves and others from outside. What we need to remember is that it is only by clinging to God that we can survive the attacks on our faith.

Another ray read: *Faith without works is dead. Not he who hears but he who keeps the law will possess the kingdom of God*.

That is we must and should keep the flame of faith burning in our life because it leads us closer to God. We do this by performing good actions and by following the demands of faith in our daily life. If we treasure these small actions (virtues), we will build the edifice of sanctity.

So the *diamond of Faith* stands for a totally supernatural vision of the world in which we are immersed, and it is a vision full of optimism: "This is the victory over the world, our faith". It provides our activities with clear pastoral motivations; it permeates and sustains that healthy humanism that characterizes the Salesian apostolate.

In the second scene of the **Dream of the Ten Diamonds** on the destroyed garment in the place of the diamond of Faith was written *Sleep and sloth*. These are a reminder to us of the need to be always awake to the promptings of God’s spirit and to avoid all forms of laziness. If we neglect virtuous actions we will be ruined little by little. If we don’t grow in our faith we will be full of sleep and sloth.

The dream is inviting us to practice the virtue of faith which is vital to us. Let us now reflect on the following questions that we may grow in faith like Don Bosco.

1. Is my faith in God **firm**?
2. How do I practice the virtue of faith in my daily life? What do I do to come closer to God and to deepen my faith?
3. What are some of the challenges to my faith at present? How do I intend to face them?

DAY THREE: 24 JANUARY – THE DIAMOND OF HOPE

Today, we shall meditate on the second of the theological virtues in the **Dream of the Ten Diamonds** - the diamond of **hope**.

Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire and await from God eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit to merit it and to persevere to the end of our earthly life. (Compendium of the CCC, 387)

In the Dream of the Ten Diamonds on the rays of **HOPE** was written, ***Hope in the Lord and not in men. Let your hearts always be set on the attainment of true joy.***

- Hope inspires man's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the kingdom of heaven.
- Hope keeps man from discouragement
- Hope sustains man during time of abandonment
- Hope opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitudes.

Hope has a special place in Don Bosco's mission. It is through this virtue that Don Bosco with optimism and joy was able to love those ragamuffins and vagabonds even in his sickness and ill health. This hope also helped Don Bosco march ahead with his many projects in the face of opposition and obstacles.

Hope helps us live our daily lives in creative and practical dedication to the young knowing that our help from on high is certain. The virtue of Hope plays an important role in the life of a Salesian who lives in union with God and who works for the salvation of souls and for God's greater glory.

Hope finds its way as an important instrument to transmit this faith in God which is the very purpose of the life of a Salesian.

Hope sees God in all the events of life and each day is seen as a blessing to be lived in gratitude.

In the second part of the dream, the diamond of **Hope** was replaced by **indecent laughter and frivolity**, the dream clearly shows that these behaviours are against the virtue of Hope. When God reveals Himself and calls man, he cannot fully respond to the divine love by his own powers. Man must hope that God will give him the capacity to love Him in return and to act in conformity with the commandment of charity. Failing to hope in this makes all our human efforts of reaching God a struggle in vain.

The sins against the virtue of hope are despair (lack of faith in God’s power to help us) and presumption (over-confidence in human powers). By despair or presumption, man becomes slothful and surrenders himself to evil.

- Hope is the sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.
- Hope is a weapon that protects us in the struggle of life.
- Hope is expressed and nourished in prayer alone.

Questions

1. Am I an optimistic and joyful person? What is the basis of my hope?
2. How do I face difficulties and trials in life? Do I give into despair or am I presumptuous placing all my trust in my own capacities?
3. Is my hope nourished by my prayer?

DAY FOUR: 25 JANUARY – THE DIAMOND OF CHARITY

For today’s meditation we shall reflect on the **Diamond of Charity** that Don Bosco saw adorning the front of the mantle of the glorious august personage. The diamonds on the mantle of the personage are not placed at random, as Fr. Rinaldi reminds us, rather the front of the mantle signifies how a Salesian is to present himself to others, it is the social image of the Salesian, as seen by the people and the boys for whom he works. The virtues on the front are social and Christian virtues and not “religious” or monastical attitudes. Thus the Salesian should be able to feel at home even in a secularized society by the inculcation of these virtues. And **Charity is at the center, the heart.**

In the dream Don Bosco testifies that on the rays of **Charity** it was written, “*Bear one another’s burdens if you wish to fulfill my law. Love and you will be loved. Let your love be for your soul and the souls of others. Recite the Divine Office with devotion. Celebrate Holy Mass with care. Make loving visits to the Holy of Holies.*”

Similar to the diamond on the mantle, **Pastoral Charity** is at the very centre of the Salesian spirit and is the never-ending source of an extraordinary kindness that characterizes our whole pedagogy and fills it with an aura of joy and spontaneous happiness.

Fr. Rinaldi tells us that for Don Bosco ‘charity means a constant attitude of sincere love for persons, treating each individual as God himself or his image; it means being one with Christ and living in him our sonship to the Father in an uninterrupted spirit of prayer; uniting ourselves with him in total dedication to our neighbour and more especially our boys.’ It is here that we discover the heart of Don Bosco in its overflowing kindness, endowed with his singular predilection for the young.

Also in the letter of Rome in 1884, Don Bosco makes a special mention of Charity. He says that in that dream when he asked his former pupil how to regain the old liveliness and happiness and warmth of the old days? The answer he was given was, “With Charity!” adding that, “It is not enough that the youngsters be loved, but that they should know that they are loved.” he further says that the young should be loved in the things that they like, therefore the Salesians should love what the young love so that through this the young may come to see love in the things they find less attractive such as discipline, study and self-denial, which the Salesian is to do with love.

In the CCC we read that, the practice of all the virtues is animated and inspired by charity, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. It articulates and orders them among themselves. It is the source and the goal of their Christian practice. Charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of divine love. It is the fruit of the Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the commandments of God and his Christ: ‘Abide in my love, if you keep my commandments, you will abide in me.’

We also need to beware of the debasement of the diamond of CHARITY. The text reads: *Neglect of the things of God. They love and seek their own desires and not the ideals of Jesus Christ.* Here we see a very clear warning about what destroys the virtue of charity.

Questions for reflection

1. To speak about Charity is quite simple but we need to ask ourselves if we are charitable in our thoughts, words and deeds towards our community members and others?
2. Can we say as individuals that we really live a fraternal community life wherein all our problems and hardships are resolved through genuine sharing and dialogue?
3. During meetings we often hear it said that our community life radiates the attitude of joyous self-sacrifice and self-giving but are we truly convinced of this fact? If not, why?

DAY FIVE: 26 JANUARY – THE DIAMOND OF CHASTITY

Dear friends, today we turn our attention to the back of the mantle worn by the majestic personage in the Dream of the Ten Diamonds. Our focus now moves from the external and public face of the Salesian to the **supporting structure**, the inner life that guides the mission of the Salesian. At the centre are the **evangelical counsels**. Now we turn our attention to Don Bosco and the vow of Chastity in connection with the Dream.

The evangelical counsels are an expression of religious life. The vows explain our mission, and the mission explains our vows. The practice of the evangelical counsels is a particularly profound and fruitful way of sharing in Christ’s mission. The vows make us signs and a prophetic statement to the world.

All those who ever met Don Bosco would say that, ‘the splendor of the virtue of **purity** was evident in his every word and gesture. He was an angel in the flesh’ His biographers would state that, ‘God had showered extraordinary gifts upon him, and has used him to do wonderful things, precisely because he has always kept pure as an angel.’ We can sum up Don Bosco’s purity in the following three areas:

- ◆ Don Bosco was angelic in his deportment and in his dealings with others
- ◆ Don Bosco was angelic in his speech
- ◆ Don Bosco’s love was angelic

Don Bosco’s love for his boys was such that they were all aware that they were loved, yet at the same time noted that there was a certain angelic quality in his dealings with them. The vow of chastity of the religious is a consequence of the “special relationship” they have with Jesus, in imitation of the apostle’s relationships with Him. The religious in the likeness of Peter, are called to the profession of a greater love for Jesus: “Do you love me more than these?” (John 21:15) This love for Jesus Christ is the great foundation to our vows, and in particular to the vow of chastity. We profess the vow of chastity because we love Jesus and want to follow Him and live a life similar to His.

Dream of Ten Diamonds- Don Bosco’s understanding of Chastity

Don Bosco in the **Dream of the Ten Diamonds** tells us, that the diamond of chastity has a splendor all its own. It drew and held the attention as a magnet attracts metal. On the rays of CHASTITY the following quotation is found: **All virtues come together with it. The clean of heart see the secrets of God and shall contemplate God himself.**

Don Bosco insisted on the value of chastity for everyone especially for those who chose to work with the young. As sons of Don Bosco chastity is "the supremely necessary virtue" also in regard to our mission as educators: in a special way must we be bearers of the message of love in the young people's world so plagued by eroticism today. It is essential that the Salesian’s spiritual formation be such as to make him a model of chastity beyond reproach, taking wise preventive precautions in defense of this virtue. Salesian loving-kindness is impossible without purity.

Don Bosco often spoke of the splendor of chastity in a Salesian. The Benedictine Rule says that, “chastity must be loved”. Don Bosco went further: not only must chastity be loved and practiced, it must be made to shine splendidly. He spoke a number of times about this beautiful virtue, but he always linked it with a spirit of mortification - many daily acts of self-denial. He was concerned more with how to guard chastity than with its beauty. This certainly shows how practical our Father’s pedagogy was. Hence, the need of precaution, prevention and defense that must form an intelligent part of our Salesian spirituality.

Debasement of the vow of Chastity

In the final part of the **Dream of the Ten Diamonds** we see the collapse of the supporting spiritual structure. Where CHASTITY was earlier the following text was found, *Concupiscence of the eyes and*

pride of life. Thus, *concupiscence replaces chastity, with an immature and compulsive need for sensory affection that quickly leads to the most unforeseen falls.* During his life Don Bosco always insisted on means to defend chastity, it is a pearl which is most threatened by the ‘enemies of the souls’, who try to rob us of it.

We notice the vow of chastity has a distinctive Salesian dimension wherein the Salesian is called to live chastity as a love of God and for the young without limits. Don Bosco used to warn: “Whoever has not a well-grounded hope of being able, with divine help, to preserve the virtue of chastity in word, deed and in thought, should not make profession in this Society, for he would often find himself in danger.”

Questions for Reflection

1. How can our love for each other be angelic while we move about doing the daily duties of everyday life? Do I cultivate purity in my life?
2. What can I do to make my words, looks and actions modest and free from negative influence? How can I be less compulsive in the use of my sense of pleasure and practice greater self-control?
3. What kind of relationships and friendships do I foster within the community?

DAY SIX: 27 JANUARY - THE DIAMOND OF ‘POVERTY’

Today we focus our attention on the vow of Poverty. The **Diamond of Poverty** in the **Dream of the Ten Diamonds** is found on the back of the mantle. We begin by briefly looking at Don Bosco’s living of Poverty.

“Remember this: I was born poor, I have lived poor and I want to die poor. Even more, I want to make this very clear to you. If you decide to become a secular priest and should fortunately, become rich, I will never pay you a single visit.” These were the words of Mamma Margaret to Don Bosco when she heard from Fr. Dassano that Don Bosco wanted to become a diocesan priest in order to support her.

Little Johnny came from a poor family although not like people in extreme poverty. Throughout his formative years we see Don Bosco as a person who made sure that he lived as told by his mother never giving in to an easy life. Let us ask ourselves. ***Am I during these formation years looking for a comfortable life?***

Article 75 of our constitutions talks about our **Personal commitment to poverty:**

Each one of us bears prime responsibility for his own poverty, dally living out by the frugality of his life the detachment he has promised.

He accepts his dependence on the superior and community in the use of temporal goods, but he knows too that permission does not dispense him from being poor in spirit and in fact.

He is careful not to give way gradually to a desire for a comfortable and easy life, which poses a direct threat to fidelity and to apostolic generosity.

MEDITATIONS ON “THE DREAM OF THE TEN DIAMONDS”

When his state of poverty causes him some inconvenience or suffering, he is glad to be able to share in the blessings promised by the Lord to the poor in spirit.

In the *Dream of the Ten Diamonds* coming forth from the diamond of POVERTY was the following quotation: *The kingdom of heaven is for the poor. Riches are thorns. Poverty is not practiced by words but by love and deeds. Poverty opens the gates of heaven.*

We see Don Bosco’s faith in divine providence as a result of his conviction to live in poverty. When he was without funds, the bank towards which he had recourse was that of Divine Providence. **Am I making an effort to detach myself from material things in this consumer society and to place my trust in God’s care and providence?**

He constantly needed money for various projects. Yet he thought of money only when necessary to promote Gods’ glory and for the salvation of souls. Don Bosco succeeded in undertakings which powerful people would have hesitated to start. **Do I believe that God gives me material goods to spread his kingdom?**

Don Bosco today asks us to live a life that witnesses to that of faith in God and the ability to give of oneself. He tells us that poverty is not practiced by words but by love and deeds. Poverty opens the gates of heaven.

In the scene of the **debasement of the society** in the *Dream of the Ten Diamonds* when it comes to **poverty** Don Bosco sees the voracious grub destroying the diamond which carries the inscription: ”Bed, dress, drink and money”. This diamond of poverty reminds us that we need to be able to give up our comforts and become one with the poor we serve or our Congregation runs the risk of destruction.

Never did Don Bosco move a finger to obtain something that would give him personal comforts. He was in the habit of saying you cannot live poverty unless you love it. **Am I ready to experience love and be joyful even when I do not get the things I desire the most? Am I ready to face personal discomfort with a spirit of sacrifice or do I constantly seek comfort and security?**

Don Bosco tells us: “We must love poverty and the companions of poverty let us strive to have poverty in our hearts if we wish to practice it. Let us end this meditation by committing ourselves to practice poverty with greater enthusiasm. Let us take a practical resolution that will help us live poverty.

DAY SEVEN: 28 JANUARY – THE DIAMOND OF OBEDIENCE

It was May 1884, Don Bosco was in Rome and he had a frightening dream. This dream disturbs him a lot for the Oratory of Valdocco was not the same as he wished it to be. He wanted to express this to his sons at the Oratory and so he wrote a famous letter to the salesians and the boys at the oratory which is known in Salesian circles as the “Letter from Rome”.

Don Bosco narrates the dream as if a past-pupil of the Oratory is having a chat with him. Don Bosco was deeply hurt to learn that the relationship between the boys and the salesians was indifferent and the boys were exposed to many dangers. Thus he asks the boy in the dream, “What is the best way to achieving the friendly relationship, this kind of love and confidence?” and the boy replies, “The exact observance of the rules of the house.” The simple way to sanctity is to obey our holy rule which is the foundation and perfection of holiness.

Let us now listen to article 64 from our constitutions on the “Gospel significance of our Obedience”

Our Saviour assured us that he came on earth to do not his own will but that of his Father in heaven.

By professing obedience we offer our will to God and by carrying out the mission entrusted to us we relive in the Church and in the Congregation Christ's own obedience.

Docile to the Spirit and attentive to the signs he gives us in the events of each day, we take the Gospel as our supreme rule of life, the Constitutions as a sure path to follow, and the superiors and the community as day by day interpreters of God's will.

Obedience in the Dream of 10 Diamonds: Our Attitude toward Obedience

In the **Dream of the Ten Diamonds** which we are meditating on during our novena, the diamond of Obedience is placed in the middle of the back of the mantle. About the place of obedience in the mantle Bl. Philip Rinaldi writes, “The spirituality of a Salesian is guided by obedience.” In the Constitutions Don Bosco always put obedience as the first among the three vows for his salesians as it is the foundation of sanctity. In fact, in another dream our Blessed Mother advised Don Bosco to “tie them (his followers) with the ribbon of obedience.”

From the diamond of Obedience the following text emanated: *Obedience is the foundation and perfection of holiness.* The fullness of our mission is completed with the observance of holy obedience. It is Obedience that distinguishes our apostolate from any social work. It is also significant that the central position of the diamond of Obedience is matched by the centrality of Charity on the other side of the mantle. This charity is the basis for our mission as well as for our community life. Salesian obedience must help in giving practical expression to the “one heart and soul” of our community life, which in turn is the fruit of that bond of brotherly love that gives foundation and life to our communion.

Let us spend few minutes in silence reflecting on our attitude towards the vow of obedience.

Collapse of the supporting spiritual structure:

What would happen if scaffolding collapses when a man is on his journey upwards? It would be the same when a Salesian while on the pursuit of sanctity loses the virtue of obedience. The negligence of obedience is the destruction of the whole spiritual structure of a Salesian. The individualistic attitude may conclude that it is meaningless to be a handkerchief as Don Bosco wished. Consequently, it may lead to the thinking that, “In fact, I am also doing the will of God and not of any individual.” Thus a Salesian

may fail to see the hand of God at the personal and the communitarian level. This brings dissatisfaction in mission and in vocation for God’s will becomes unimportant.

Questions for reflection:

1. Am I able to see my superiors as the representative of God or Don Bosco inspite of their personal shortcomings?
2. What gains prominence in my ministry – My willingness to obey the will of God which may not be comfortable **or** my rationalizing individualism that justifies my easy way of living?
3. In what ways is my vow of Obedience the foundation and perfection of holiness?

DAY EIGHT: 29 JANUARY – THE DIAMOND OF FASTING

We are coming closer to the feast of our Founder St. John Bosco. Today on the 8th day of the Novena we shall meditate on the diamond of **FASTING**.

Salesian life is symbolized “in its activity” by the diamonds placed in front and in “its interior life” by the diamonds placed at the back. The diamond at the back also emphasize its indispensable place in Salesian spiritual formation. The diamond of fasting according to Don Bosco, is the most powerful weapon against the snares of the devil. It is the guardian of all the virtues; it chases all kinds of enemies. It stands for mortification of our senses and should not be confused with temperance which is self-control achieved through cogent work plan, self-sacrifice, moderation and control. So Temperance is the external quality of a Salesian and the outward expression of an attitude of Fasting.

On the rays of the diamond of FASTING in the Dream of the Ten Diamonds was the following text: *The most powerful weapon against the snares of the devil. It keeps watch over all the virtues. Fasting puts to flight all sorts of foes.*

Don Bosco would often link Chastity and Fasting for he could not think of the existence of purity without mortification of our senses, “which is the ‘custodian’ of Chastity.” He said, “wine and chastity cannot go together”. For Don Rinaldi the diamond of **Fasting** stood for the large area of asceticism covering the mortification of senses: Chastity is inconceivable without mortification. Don Ziggotti in regard to this dream wrote, “It invites us to practice the virtue most vital for us.”

In the debasement of the personage in place of the diamond of **Fasting** there is now only an empty hole and no writing. When custody of the senses is missing the gate is thrown open to all sorts of temptations and deviations.

Don Bosco tells us, “it is not knowledge that makes saints but virtue. Treasure small acts of virtue and you will build solid holiness. If you neglect small things: little by little ruination will overtake you and when the custody of the senses is missing the gate is thrown open to all sorts of temptations and deviation which will lead to individualism, money and rejection of mortification.”

The Dream of the Ten Diamonds then calls us for a revision of life. It is the beauty of our Salesian spirituality which will enable us to become good Salesians. For this we need to look upon our Lord Jesus Christ and our founder Don Bosco. Let us hear the appeal of the young people who need us and let our lives be shining examples of these values.

Questions for Reflection

1. Let us reflect and see how Jesus would practice Fasting in his life
2. Let us now reflect and see how Don Bosco would practice this virtue from the various instances in his life
3. How can I put in practice this virtue of fasting in my life?

DAY NINE: 30 JANUARY - THE DIAMOND OF REWARD

Dear Fathers and Brothers today is the last day of the novena in honour of St. John Bosco. We have earlier dealt with many themes concerning the dream of the 10 diamonds. This morning we shall reflect on the theme, “Reward”. Don Bosco would say, “Work, Bread and Heaven”. For him work was not without a purpose. He does all his work keeping in mind the goal he should reach. His only driving force was the salvation of souls. While at work we should not forget to fix our gaze to heaven and do all things for God’s glory and not ours.

On the rays of the diamond Reward was found: *“If the rich reward attracts you, do not be afraid of the many hardships. He who suffers with me rejoices with me. What we suffer on earth is momentary; the joys of my friends in heaven are eternal.”*

The majestic personage in the dream made it clear to Don Bosco that a great reward awaited the Salesians due to their hard work. This reward is heaven and nothing short of it. The young man urges the Salesians to meditate on the observance of the Constitutions, and he assures them that in doing this God’s help will never fail them and his Glory will shine in their works. We approach work with the awareness that God is going to give us Heaven as a recompense for it.

The *diamond of Reward* is quite different from that of *Hope*, which displays visibly the drive and activity of the Salesian in building up the Kingdom; his persevering efforts and enthusiastic dedication are based on the certainty of God’s help given through the risen Christ and his Holy Mother.

The *diamond of Reward*, on the other hand, lays the emphasis on the *constant attitude of mind* that imbues every effort of a man of the spirit - "a little bit of Paradise puts everything right".

The Salesian, according to Don Bosco, “should be ready to suffer cold and heat, hunger and thirst, fatigue and rejection whenever the glory of God and the salvation of souls require it”. The interior support for this spiritual urge is the thought of heaven that accompanies a good conscience. "In all we do, our duty,

hard work, troubles and sufferings, we must never forget that the least thing done for his name's sake is not forgotten. It is of faith that in his own good time he will give us rich recompense. At the end of our lives, radiant with love, he will say to us as we stand before his judgment seat, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little: I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your Master!.' (Mt 25:21) "In fatigue and suffering, never forget that there is a great reward awaiting us in heaven." (MB VI 442) And when Don Bosco tells us that a "Salesian worn out with overwork" is a triumph for *the whole Congregation*, he seems to imply that the diamond of Reward includes brotherly communion - the community sharing the garden of heaven.

The continual awareness of heaven is one of the key principles that gives thrust to Don Bosco's distinctive spirituality and pedagogy. It sheds light and deep understanding on the basic instinct of a soul in vital quest of its own proper goal.

The diamond of reward in the dream displays visibly the drive and activity of the Salesian in Building up the Kingdom. It lays the emphasis on the constant attitude of mind that imbues every effort of a man of the spirit. “A little bit of paradise puts everything right,” says Don Bosco.

In the debasement scene on the diamond of REWARD is written: “*Our heritage will be earthly goods*”. Here we see the Salesians making no daily effort in asceticism. No longer are their eyes lifted up to the joys of heaven. There is an increasing inclination towards temporal things and seeking one's own development only in the present life without any thought of heaven. Instead of reward people look for happiness in human and material realities; they make no effort and so they feel no need of God's help or His inspiration. Today quite often we find ourselves striving for earthly goods as our reward for works done. We are living in a world of Utilitarianism, wherein we seek for instant gratification. We do our works and activities with instant reward in mind. We have no longer any patience to wait for heaven – something that we would achieve at the end of our lives.

Questions for Reflection

1. How do I accept inconveniences that come my way even if they cost my personal interest?
2. What is my approach to work and responsibility? Do I do my daily duties with a view to attaining any earthly reward or for the love of the work itself?
3. As a member of this community do I participate fully in the various activities with a sense of belonging?