

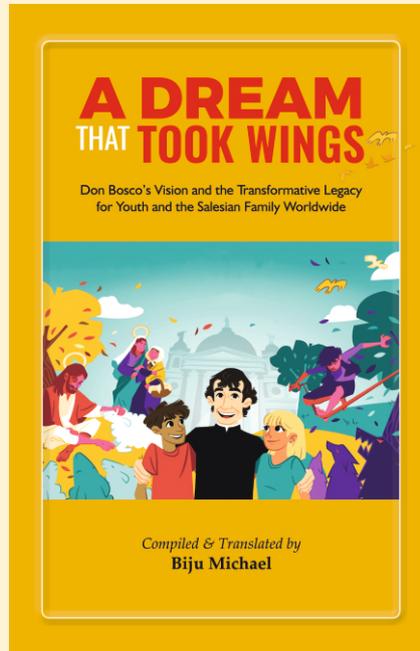
CELEBRATING 200 YEARS

OF THE DREAM OF JOHNY BOSCO AT THE AGE OF NINE!

ANIMATION MATERIAL FOR JANUARY 2024

“a MULTITUDE of children were playing...”

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Dear members of the Salesian Family,

Happy New Year!

In this year dedicated to celebrating the 200th anniversary of Johny Bosco's Dream at the age of nine, the Rector Major has given the Strenna: “The Dream that makes you Dream”. The South Asia Region of the Congregation is happy to present to the English-speaking Salesian world, animation material extracted from the book *A Dream that took Wings: Don Bosco's Vision and the Transformative Legacy for Youth and the Salesian Family Worldwide*. It is translated from material published by the Mediterranean Region of our Congregation. The book is published by Kristu Jyoti Publications, Bangalore. Those who need printed copies of the book may contact kristujyotipub@yahoo.co.in

It is recommended that each community, under the guidance of the Rector/Superior/Leader, schedule two sessions with the entire community every month at a convenient time. One session could be focused on the *Lectio Divina* part of the theme/chapter for the month (starting with January as Chapter 1). In the second session, the community could take up the Charismatic Reading part. Both parts have questions for community discussion. It would be best if the two sessions are scheduled on successive days or at least not too far apart so as to maintain the continuity of theme to reflect on. It could also be done in one sitting. All other creative ways to use the material are to be encouraged.

Fr Tinh Phuoc Giuseppe NGUYEN
Regional Councillor for East Asia-Oceania

DON BOSCO'S DREAM AT THE AGE OF NINE

It was at that age that I had a dream. All my life this remained deeply impressed on my mind. In this dream I seemed to be near my home in a fairly large yard. A crowd of children were playing there. Some were laughing, some were playing games, and quite a few were swearing. When I heard these evil words, I jumped immediately amongst them and tried to stop them by using my words and my fists.

At that moment a dignified man appeared, a nobly dressed adult. He wore a white cloak, and his face shone so that I could not look directly at him. He called me by name, told me to take charge of these children, and added these words: "You will have to win these friends of yours not by blows but by gentleness and love. Start right away to teach them the ugliness of sin and the value of virtue." Confused and frightened, I replied that I was a poor, ignorant child. I was unable to talk to those youngsters about religion. At that moment the kids stopped their fighting, shouting, and swearing; they gathered round the man who was speaking.

Hardly knowing what I was saying, I asked, "Who are you, ordering me to do the impossible?"

"Precisely because it seems impossible to you, you must make it possible through obedience and the acquisition of knowledge."

"Where, by what means, can I acquire knowledge?"

"I will give you a teacher. Under her guidance you can become wise. Without her, all wisdom is foolishness."

"But who are you that speak so?"

"I am the son of the woman whom your mother has taught you to greet three times a day."

"My mother tells me not to mix with people I don't know unless I have her permission. So, tell me your name."

"Ask my mother what my name is."

At that moment, I saw a lady of stately appearance standing beside him. She was wearing a mantle that sparkled all over as though covered with bright stars. Seeing from my questions and answers that I was more confused than ever, she beckoned me to approach her. She took me kindly by the hand and said, "Look." Glancing round, I realised that the youngsters had all apparently run away. A large number of goats, dogs, cats, bears, and other animals had taken their place.

"This is the field of your work. Make yourself humble, strong, and energetic. And what you will see happening to these animals in a moment is what you must do for my children."

I looked round again, and where before I had seen wild animals, I now saw gentle lambs. They were all jumping and bleating as if to welcome that man and lady.



At that point, still dreaming, I began crying. I begged the lady to speak so that I could understand her, because I did not know what all this could mean. She then placed her hand on my head and said, "In good time you will understand everything."

With that, a noise woke me up and everything disappeared. I was totally bewildered. My hands seemed to be sore from the blows I had given, and my face hurt from those I had received. The memory of the man and the lady, and the things said and heard, so occupied my mind that I could not get any more sleep that night.

I wasted no time in telling all about my dream. I spoke first to my brothers, who laughed at the whole thing, and then to my mother and grandmother. Each one gave his own interpretation.

My brother Joseph said, "You're going to become a keeper of goats, sheep, and other animals."

My mother commented, "Who knows, but you may become a priest." Anthony merely grunted, "Perhaps you'll become a robber chief."

But my grandmother, though she could not read or write, knew enough theology and made the final judgement, saying, "Pay no attention to dreams."

I agreed with my grandmother. However, I was unable to cast that dream out of my mind. The things I shall have to say later will give some meaning to all this. I kept quiet about these things, and my relatives paid little attention to them. But 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. The Pope ordered me to write out the dream in all its detail and to leave it as an encouragement to the sons of that Congregation whose formation was the reason for that visit to Rome.

Source: Memoirs of the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales from 1815 to 1855. The Autobiography of Saint John Bosco, tr. by Daniel Lyons, SDB, with notes and commentary by Eugenio Ceria, SDB, Lawrence Castelvechi, SDB and Michael Mendl, SDB (New Rochelle, NY: Don Bosco Publications, 1989) 3-4.



DON BOSCO'S DREAM

INTRODUCTION

Among the many dreams narrated by Don Bosco, the most defining one for his vocation and mission is arguably the most popular among them, the “dream at the age of nine”. Don Bosco himself describes in the *Memoirs of the Oratory* that it was impressed on his mind and was repeated several times.

In the dream at the age of nine, in particular, the mission that the saint of the youth would fulfil with dedication, effort, sacrifice, but also with joy, charity, and passion is outlined. Jesus and Mary indicate to John his mission: the field of work (*the poor and abandoned youth*); the educational method (*not through beatings/blows but with charity and gentleness*); the attitude to adopt (make yourself humble, strong, and robust); the teacher and support (*Mary Help of Christians*); the fruits of this commitment (*the transformation from wolves to lambs*). For this reason, the dream at the age of nine remains an essential point of reference for the entire Salesian family. A dream that “remained impressed in his memory for a lifetime.” A dream that seems like a typical vocation story like those we find in the Bible.



In 2024, the Salesian Family is celebrating the **second centenary of this dream** of young John Bosco – the future Don Bosco. In view of this celebration, the Rector Major, the Father and Centre of Unity of the Salesian Family has chosen the **Strenna** for 2024 to be: “The dream that makes you dream. A heart that transforms 'wolves' into 'lambs'.”

The year 2024 also marks **150 years of the approval of the Salesian Constitutions** on 3 April 1874. The second part of every chapter draws attention to the articles from the Constitutions of some of the Salesian Family members: SDB, FMA, MSMHC, VSDB, SMA, and Disciples.

With the intention of preparing an animation tool on this topic for the English-speaking groups of the Salesian Family, I have selected and translated a *Lectio Divina* and a Charismatic reading each per month that was published over three years (three books in 2020-2023) by the Salesian Youth Movement of the Mediterranean Region (involving SDBs, FMAs, and Cooperators). The original was published in Italian. I am grateful to the Regional Councillor, Fr. Juan Carlos Godoy Pérez and

the various authors for the permission granted to use the material. The three books were named: *Nel cuore del mondo: ecco il tuo campo, ecco dove devi lavorare* (2020-2021), *Amati e chiamati: renditi umile, forte e robusto* (2021-2022), and *Noi ci stiamo: non con le percosse ma con la mansuetudine e la carità* (2022-2023). Special thanks are due to Fr Carlo Maria Zanotti, Fr Fabiano Gheller, Fr Andrea Checchinato, Fr Carlo Cassatella, Sr Maria Ko, FMA, Fr Marco Rossetti, and Fr Marco Pavan. I am grateful to Sr Lydia Komuhra, FMA and Fr Jose Kuttianimattathil, SDB for proofreading the entire work. Sr Mary Thadavanal, MSMHC, Sr. Iaineh Kurbah, VSDB, Sr Josephine Selvi, SMA, and Fr Joe D'Souza, SDB (Founder of the "Disciples") helped with identifying the articles from their respective Constitutions. I am grateful to Kristu Jyoti Publications, Bangalore for the help rendered to make the book available in print.

The chapters for each month are linked together by the connecting thread of the Dream at the age of nine. It was of fundamental importance in the life of Don Bosco. This dream was for him and is now for us the key to understanding the works of our Father Don Bosco and for understanding the origins of our Salesian Family. From the distance of about fifty years when Don Bosco was advised by Pope Pius IX in 1858, to write down the dream for encouraging posterity, the dream has evolved to be, as Fr Bozzolo describes, one of the most “effective symbols and one of the most eloquent synthesis” of the Salesian charism. It remains a dream that can still illuminate and guide our choices and strengthen our pastoral charity.

This book meant to be an animation tool for the Salesian Family in the year of the bicentenary celebration of the dream at the age of nine is organized with 12 *Lectio Divina* and 12 Charismatic readings – one each for every month of the year. Every month, one or more keywords of the dream are stressed and the scripture readings, and charismatic readings are chosen to help reflection on those aspects of the charism and mission. Hence the chapters are organized in the following order:

Lectio Divina

Theme of the month based on the Dream at the age of nine

A Gospel text

Reflection on the text

Reflection on moving from text to life

Some questions for communal and personal reflection

A prayer

Charismatic Reading

Charismatic objective of the month

A brief theological and spiritual insight

A Salesian text

Constitutional reference

Some questions for communal and personal reflection

An appropriate concluding hymn

It is obvious that these are “reflection guides” and therefore they are not exhaustive and do not claim to be exhaustive.

It is hoped that they can be a concrete help and an impulse to stir up a profound and useful “animation” in our communities for the journey of every member of the Salesian family.

The reflections and texts provided are meant to be only a beginning, a starting point that could lead to greater focused reflection on the concrete situation of each one.

May Don Bosco, Dominic Savio, Mother Mazzarello, Artemide Zatti, and all Salesian Saints support and encourage us to walk boldly to realize “today” the same dreams of salvation for “the multitude of children” who await good and kind words that give meaning and significance to their existence and transform them into honest citizens and good Christians.

Fr Biju Michael, sdb

General Councillor for South Asia

“MULTITUDE”

“When I was nine years old, I had a dream that remained deeply imprinted in my mind throughout my life. In this dream I seemed to be **near my home** in a fairly **large yard**. A **MULTITUDE** of children were playing there. Some were laughing, some were playing games, and quite a few were swearing. When I heard these evil words, I jumped immediately amongst them and tried to stop them by using my words and my fists.”



Gospel Text:

Luke 13:18-21

¹⁸ “He said therefore, “What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? ¹⁹ It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.”

²⁰ And again he said, “To what should I compare the kingdom of God? ²¹ It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with [a] three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”



Reflection on the Text

The preceding passage states that the Kingdom already exists and is at work in the world. Now it explains how. It has a seemingly insignificant and inconspicuous appearance, almost invisible, and **discernment is needed to recognize it**. **The Kingdom of the Father** is open to children; but to the eyes of the worldly, it appears small and unsuccessful: a seed that rots! But in this very aspect, its vital strength is revealed – spontaneous and specific – to become a plant. To perceive its

presence and action, one must turn one’s gaze toward what doesn’t count: **God accomplishes His plan through what is small, despised, and nothing** (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:28).

These parables serve as criteria for discerning the divine plan from above, as God sees it: what happened to Jesus in His history corresponds to what happens to His Kingdom in our history. Therefore, they are **Christological** parables, tracing the story of Jesus – the seed that brings forth life through death, the yeast that works only in concealment. They become parables of the Church,

of our communities, of each of us, called to follow Him. They become useful parables for understanding that the dying seed produces a “multitude,” a vital force to accompany, guide, and direct!

The Kingdom of God

First and foremost, it is “of God” and not “of man.” The Kingdom can only be expressed through similes, both because it is inexpressible directly, and because everything that exists is its expression and image. **Indeed, the entire creation is a reflection of the Son, the glory of the**

Father. In Him alone do we directly see our faces as children, faces we had forgotten. It's interesting to note that it is not said to what we can compare the beginning, growth, and completion of the Kingdom. Instead, it is affirmed: the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed; it is like a bit of yeast. **The Kingdom of God is already fulfilled** in its inception and throughout its history. **The Kingdom of God is here and now.**

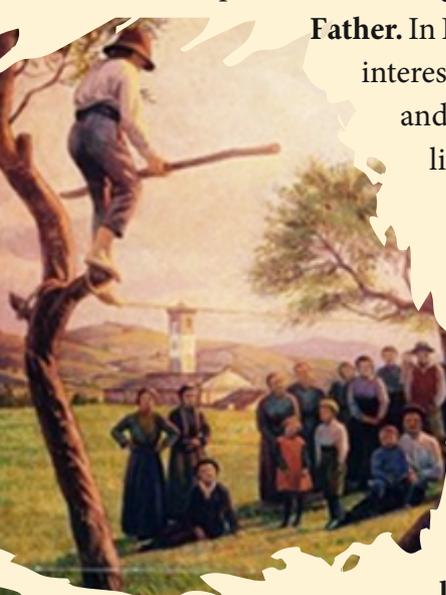
“**Kingdom of God**” means: God exists, God lives, God is present and active in the world, in our/my life. God is the most present and decisive reality in every moment of my life, in every moment of history (Ratzinger, Address to the Catechists, 10 December 2000).

A tiny seed. Just a bit larger than a pinhead; Mark calls it “the smallest of all the seeds on earth” (4:31). Just as the Word (8:4-15), the **Kingdom is now likened to a seed.** The seed is an **invisible yet irresistible vital force** that germinates according to its nature and fully expresses its potential by dying. The story of the Kingdom, or of the seed, is the same as that of Jesus: “the smallest among all” (9:48), handed over to humanity, “taken and thrown” outside the walls.

The seed grows only if it dies (John 12:24). This is its mystery: it produces life beyond death. While everything else, in dying, rots forever, it becomes a plant, a flower, and fruit! A “multitude” indeed! Death cannot conquer it; it becomes what is life conquering death! It is the **tree of the cross!**

The **characteristics of the Kingdom are those of Jesus:** not grand, but small; “it doesn't take,” but is taken; it's not significant, but cast aside; it doesn't remain in the city, but outside. And it dies. But thus, it reveals its true nature as a seed: by dying it gives life, germinates, grows, and becomes a tree. In Him, the Word “made His dwelling among us, and we saw His glory” (John 1:14). **In Him,** the seed that is thrown away but has grown to be the tree of the cross, **every person finds a dwelling** in the glory of God: rediscovers their face as a child of God, reflecting the light of the Father.

The Yeast isn't something apart from the flour; it changes it and causes the dough to rise. It also describes the Kingdom of Heaven as a historical reality in the making, initially small, almost imperceptible, yet vital and dynamic. Through generational historical events, it will manifest itself definitively in its majesty. Here's the contrast: a humble beginning with a magnificent ending.



The Yeast of which Jesus talks about was a tiny piece of raw dough, which naturally ferments. But what does it mean to leaven the dough? What does the figure of yeast evoke?

In using the vivid image of yeast, Jesus wanted to emphasize not only the coming of the time of salvation (already highlighted in the parable of the mustard seed) but also His **powerful and unstoppable action**.

An interesting aspect of the parable of the yeast is the **deliberate exaggeration Jesus employs**: the fermenting work of the yeast is disproportionate to the amount of flour (just three measures, corresponding to 39 kilograms of flour). Jesus speaks of a large quantity of flour capable of feeding hundreds of people. Certainly, no housewife would knead such a large amount of flour. What interested Jesus was that the listeners could grasp the significance of the message underlying the image of the flour: **the Kingdom of Heaven possesses within itself extraordinary power**, although it was insignificant in its manifestation in history.

The effectiveness of the Kingdom isn't worldly efficiency but rather the continuation of the history of the One who was rejected and hidden in a garden cave! Whoever wants to see glory should consider what is contemptible, hidden, in the world's dough, but is able to transform it. The yeast is not only hidden. **It is also dispersed and spread. I am life for the three days of human history: today, tomorrow, and always** (cf. Mk 8:31ff.). Only this way will all the world's dough shift from the Pharisees' yeast to the Kingdom's yeast: through insignificance and humility. Otherwise, despite all goodwill, one would only obstruct God's work in history.



From Text to Life

In summary, with the words of Pope Francis (June 14, 2015),

“The second parable uses the image of the mustard seed. Despite being the smallest of all seeds, it is full of life and grows to become 'larger than all the garden plants' (Mark 4:32). And so it is with the Kingdom of God: a humanly small and apparently insignificant reality. To be part of it, one must be poor in heart, not rely on one's abilities, but on the power of God's love, not strive to be important in the world's eyes but precious in God's eyes, who favours the simple and humble. When we live this way, the strength of Christ bursts forth through us and transforms what is small and modest into a reality that ferments the entire mass of the world and history.

From these two parables, an important lesson emerges: **the Kingdom of God requires our cooperation, but it is primarily the Lord's initiative and gift**. Our weak work, seemingly small in the face of the world's complex problems, when **inserted into God's work**, is unafraid of difficulties. The victory of the Lord is certain: His love will sprout and grow every seed of good on earth. This opens us to trust and hope, despite the dramas, injustices, and sufferings we encounter. The seed of good and peace sprouts and develops, because it is made mature by the merciful love of God.”

- The Kingdom of God is on the move. And not only is the Kingdom 'not still,' but even more, the Kingdom of God 'is realised' every day.

- **Yeast and seed** are on the move to 'do' something. And so is the Kingdom. It's not a '**problem of smallness**,' where one might think, 'it's small, it's insignificant, or it's big.' It's more a 'problem of movement.' It's precisely in the movement that 'transformation happens'.
- What attitude does the Lord ask of us so that the Kingdom of God may grow and be bread for all and a dwelling for everyone? The answer is clear: "docility." Indeed, the Kingdom of God grows with docility to the power of the Holy Spirit.

This reality of the Kingdom of God reveals itself as decisive in death. Just like the seed, just like the yeast, just like Jesus. The Kingdom is where everything slips from our hands and can no longer be controlled; where nothing is understood of what is happening, at the exact limit beyond which despair, exhaustion, surrender await us. **The Kingdom of God is represented in Christ Himself lying on that edge.** His tomb itself turns into soil and flour, what we are today, our existences. The grain fallen to the ground, if it doesn't die, remains alone. The Lord thrown away in this world like an utterly ordinary grain of Life, abandoned in a garden, executed on a cross, buried in a cave, saved an immense multitude, and among them, us too.

And He makes our life His Kingdom, precisely where it is torn from us. **Today, Jesus awaits us** at the end of dreams and plans, of love and affections, of ideals and philosophies, of politics and finance; **He awaits us to redeem us, to fill us with Him, with His full and eternal life.** It's not death, **it's life!** It's not a tomb, it's the Kingdom of God! "Man's incomparable solitude was overcome the moment He found Himself in it. In its depths, man doesn't live by bread alone, but in the authenticity of his being, he lives because he is loved and allowed to love" (J. Ratzinger, Homily for Holy Saturday).

The mustard seed, the yeast, our human and fleshly insignificance constitute the authenticity of our being: stripped of every mask, we experience that we don't live on bread and that we're born to become bread: where everything is taken away from us, emerges victorious the love of Christ, as the only source and reason for life.

Thrown into history like a mustard seed, kneaded into days like yeast, we're called to be **citizens of the Kingdom of God in Christ: it's in us and with us, visiting history**, the places of our human experiences, to become a tree capable of welcoming the birds of the sky - between our crucified arms - a biblical image of pagan peoples. Our redeemed insignificance ferments the countless nonsensical things that terrify people, opening the doors of the Kingdom to them. Thus, the silent martyrdom of every day that awaits us, bloodless and therefore not even heroic, reveals the authenticity and value of our life.

Some Questions for Communal and Personal Reflection

1. Re-read the Gospel text slowly. Ask yourself what it means for your life to be and enter into the logic of the "seed" and "yeast."



2. The Kingdom of God is here and now. God is there. Therefore, conversion means “**turning to Him.**” Review your day and examine all your actions, big or small, to see if they were truly lived in the awareness that God is there, that His Kingdom “is being realised,” that it’s a “journey.”
3. What **path** can you take to improve and strengthen the “logic of small things” that the Gospel proposes to us?
4. Reflect as a community on the theme of the “multitude” and the “Kingdom of God” as applied to your reality.



Prayer

Send us, O God, your fools,
those who commit fully,
who love sincerely,
not in words but in deeds,
and who truly know how to sacrifice themselves until the end.
We need fools who are willing to lose themselves to serve Christ.
Lovers of a simple life,
strangers to compromise,
determined not to betray,
ready for total selflessness, able to accept any task,
free and submissive at the same time,
spontaneous and tenacious,
gentle and strong.
Amen!

- Madeleine Delbrel

“MULTITUDE”

“When I was nine years old, I had a dream that deeply impressed my mind for my entire life. In my sleep, it seemed to me that I was **near home**, in a very spacious **courtyard**, where a **MULTITUDE of children had gathered**, playing around. Some were laughing, others were playing, and quite a few were swearing. Upon hearing those curses, I immediately threw myself into their midst, using fists and words to silence them.”



Charismatic Objective

To understand that even today, “the harvest is plentiful,” young people are a “multitude,” and they are “near home, in a courtyard.” We want to recognize and “reaffirm the preference” for young people who are “poor, abandoned, and in danger.”

Theological and Spiritual Insight

St. John Paul II wrote in *Redemptoris Missio*: “missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others!” (RM 2). Therefore, every pastoral effort arises from this **dynamic vitality of the ecclesial mission**. And it is the most precious service that the Church can render to humanity and to each individual who is in the search for the deep reasons to live life to the fullest.

All those who have encountered the risen Lord have felt the need to proclaim his resurrection to others, as the two disciples on the road to Emmaus did. After recognizing the Lord in the breaking of the bread, “they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found the Eleven gathered together and those with them” and reported what had happened to them along the way (Luke 24:33-34). This is how it was for Don Bosco and now his sons commit themselves to have a **preferential gaze for the “multitude” of young people** awaiting the proclamation of life in its fullness.

The Pope rightly recalled in *Christus Vivit*: “The attentive gaze of one who has been called to be a father, shepherd, and guide to young people consists in **identifying the small flame that continues to burn**, the reed that seems to be breaking but is not yet broken (cf. Isaiah 42:3). It is the **ability to identify paths where others see only walls, to recognize possibilities where others see only dangers**. This is the gaze of God the Father, capable of valuing and nourishing the seeds of goodness sown in the hearts of young people. Therefore, every young person's heart must be considered “sacred ground,” bearing seeds of divine life, and we must “remove our sandals to approach and deepen the Mystery” (CV 67).



Salesian Text

As we know, the mission gives our entire life its “concrete tone,” its touch and original colour. **The mission is a characteristic element of the Salesian charism** and life, to the point of shaping the face of our consecration, which is precisely “apostolic” consecration. Therefore, our recipients, the “multitude” of young people we encounter or who await this encounter, are always the objects of our preference. There cannot be a Salesian without a passion for the preference for young people.

It may be interesting to reread the Circular Letter of Don Paolo Albera, written on October 18, 1920, titled: “Don Bosco, our model in the acquisition of religious perfection, in educating and sanctifying youth, in dealing with others, and in doing good to all” (Circulars of Fr Albera, XXXV, p. 360-383). Here we include an interesting passage on the “preference” of the Salesian for the “multitude” of poor and abandoned youth.

From the Circular Letters of Fr Albera, XXXV, p. 372-373

The Gift of Preference for the Young

Once this point is well established, I will say that to imitate the apostolate of the Father among the young, it is not enough to feel a certain natural attraction for them, but we must truly prefer them. This preference, in its initial state, is a gift from God, it is the very Salesian vocation; but it is up to our intelligence and our heart to develop and perfect it.

Intelligence reflects on the ministry received in the Lord, in order to carry it out properly: “See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord” (Colossians 4:17). It thinks about the greatness of the ministry of educating youth and forming them in true and solid virtue: that is, to draw from the child the whole person, just as the artist sculpts the statue from the marble: to elevate young people from a state of intellectual and moral inferiority to a higher state: to shape the spirit, the heart, the will, and the conscience through piety, humility, gentleness, strength, justice, self-denial, zeal, and edification, gradually instilling them through example. In short, in the light of youth apostolate, intelligence intuitively meditates, and understands all the beauty of Don Bosco's heavenly pedagogy and sets its heart on fire to practice it with love, attracting, winning, and transforming.

We must love young people.

Preference is the perfection of love: it is therefore formed above all in the heart and is formed by loving. It must be, my dear ones, that we love the young people whom Providence entrusts to our care, as Don Bosco knew how to love them. I do not say that it is easy, but this is where the secret of the expansive vitality of our Congregation lies.

However, it must be said that Don Bosco preferred us in a unique way: we felt the irresistible charm of it, but words fail to make it understood by those who have not experienced it for themselves, and even the most fervent imagination cannot represent it with images that can give a true idea of it.

Even now, I seem to feel all the sweetness of his preference for me as a young boy: I felt as if I were made a prisoner by an affectionate power that nourished my thoughts, words, and actions, but I cannot describe this state of my soul better, which was also the state of my companions back then. **I felt that I was loved** in a way I had never experienced before, which had nothing to do with the intense love my unforgettable parents had for me.

Constitutional Reference for Meditation and Prayer

Read, meditate, and pray with the articles from the Constitutions:

SDB: 26-30 (Recipients of our mission)

FMA: 6-7 (Identity and Mission)

MSMHC: 1-3; 71-72 (Identity and Charism)

VSDB: 1-3 (Nature & Aim of the Congregation)

SMA: 1-2 (Nature & Spirituality)

Disciples: 1, 2, 4, 5 (Nature & Purpose)

Some Questions for Communal and Personal Reflection

1. Are we, as a community, embedded in the dynamic vitality of ecclesial mission? Can we say that our commitment is a “dynamic passion” for the multitude of young people?
2. Is our “preference” the ability to identify paths where others see only walls, to recognize possibilities where others see only dangers?
3. Is our preference for the multitude of young people a “perfection of love”? What can we enhance? What can we transfigure?
4. Share one of the Constitution articles among those mentioned and try to pray with that text.

An Appropriate Concluding Hymn

