Landas 22:2 (2008) 1–80

# ST. JOHN BOSCO'S SPIRITUALITY OF WORK

*Eligio R. Santos, S.D.B.*

The writer, a Salesian, has some experience in ministering to workers. Questions about the spirituality of work and work ethics have been persistent in his mind. The researcher has been instrumental in establishing the office ministry in Makati, Metro Manila in the 1980s. The author has been with the Brotherhood of Businessmen and Professionals in Makati, Metro Manila; Bacolod, Negros Occidental, and Cebu City, Cebu, and was a chaplain of several companies. Victorias Milling Company, Victorias, Negros Occidental, was one of them.[1] He had been invited to the Bishops' Businessmen Conference in 2002 in its effort to evaluate whether their member dioceses and companies lived according to the values that the group upholds. These experiences have challenged him to simplify the approach to the evangelization of work.

The author understands that theology is not just an intellectual esoteric science. It is also an organic and rational study, in the light of faith, of human values. These values also enter directly or indirectly

[1]The Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals is a charismatic group which began in 1980 and meets once a week to share the message of Christ for the marketplace.

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into the economy of salvation. The nineteenth century dealt with the morality of work and the mystique of work. The twentieth century had Marie Dominique Chenu, a Dominican theologian, who pointed out that work has its own unique value. After him, many other authors like Peter Schoonenberg, Yves Simon, Louis Savary, among others, spelled out this theology of work. They looked at work from the perspective of penance, incarnation-redemption, transformation of the world, and eschatology until the penning of *Laborem Exercens* by Pope John Paul II in 1981. After this encyclical, other authors like John Houch, John Haughey, Jose Luis Llanes, Dorothee Soelle, Richard Gilett, and Joe Holland, among others, continued to explore the other areas of work.

In the Church, great importance is given to work. The popes often addressed the topic of work in their social encyclicals. Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* described it as an activity of the mind and body done to support the family and to contribute to the community. Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* stated that work would entail hardship and toil to dominate the earth. John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra* said that work is an expression of the human person (MM 18). Paul VI, in *Populorum Progressio* mentioned that work is a rational and an intelligent activity (PP 27). John Paul II wrote in *Laborem Exercens* that work is at the core of the social question and proposed the elements for a spirituality of work (LE 3, 24).

As a Salesian, the author has been asking how one can rationalize the ministry among workers in the Philippines when most of the ministries of the Salesians in the Philippines are school-oriented. It is in this quest that the author found out that Don Bosco has something to contribute. Don Bosco's impact on work had been acknowledged by no less than Pope John Paul II during his pastoral visit to Turin at the centennial of the saint's death:

> Don Bosco showed an extraordinary interest in the world of work. He had a farsighted concern to give the young generations a professional competence and an adequate technical training. Notable also was his concern to promote a more discerning education to social responsibility

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> based on an increased personal dignity to which the Christian Faith gives legitimacy but also energy.[2]

Egidio Vigano, the seventh superior general of the Salesian Society, challenged the members with the following words:

> There is a compelling need for the Salesians to teach progressive work techniques so that people can tackle the gross problems of economic injustice and better their conditions of life. Evangelization should make use of all possible ethical means to retrieve technology and work organization from selfish people and put them at service of humanity. One must strive hard to imbue this important human activity with ethics and charity: placing work in a setting of love. One should train consciences and help restore work in its proper moral ambience so that it will be guided and enlivened by love and sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit. There is the need of evangelization of work.[3]

Adriano Bregolin, the Vicar of the current general superior, Pascual Chavez, summarized Don Bosco's spirit to the Don Bosco Alumni in Turin, Italy. The Alumni received an education centered on the primacy of the individual in social and economic life; linked to the world of work, where the professional approach is an element in the educative process.

Aware of the context today, characterized by technological evolution and economic globalization, Bregolin challenged those who are aware to be witnesses to a concept of work that is liberating and evangelical. The vicar proposed some common practical lines of action.

> First, all Salesians and alumni need to make a constant effort to be informed, to be discerning and to keep a critical eye on the world of work, particularly about the working classes and needy youth, at a time when emphasis on technical developments had led this world to be organized and developed without reference to human and religious values.

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[2]Pope John Paul II, "Discourse at the University of Turin," *L'Osservatore Romano* (October 10, 1988), 4.

[3]Egidio Vigano, "The Salesian Mission and the Workers' World," in *Acts of the Superior Council of the Salesian Congregation* 307 (January–March 1983), 6–7.

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> Second, there is a need to develop a systematic and serious social formation that ensures a more open and supportive way of thinking and a greater ability to become involved in issues of justice.
>
> Third, faced with the great challenge of poverty, the Salesian XXIII General Chapter indicated the formation of the young to a social dimension of charity as a fundamental task so as to make education to the faith more concrete and credible.
>
> Fourth, educators should accompany the young with a knowledge of the complex socio-political situation, beginning from those nearest and more immediate to them.
>
> Fifth, the educator should ensure a complete and systematic presentation of the social teaching of the Church, as the key to understanding this situation and as an indication of the ideal aims Salesians desire to achieve.
>
> Sixth is to introduce the young to situations where solidarity and help are called for, above all in the world of work and to promote with them specific and practical projects of solidarity.[4]

These words are the marching orders of Filipino Salesians and their students and those connected with them in the Philippines, to continually find ways of defining, enhancing, and empowering the workforce of today in their respective areas. As Salesians or as recipients of the educative system of Don Bosco, sensitive to the young, they should develop the pedagogy of work in an integral human formation. Many young people are suffering from a bad experience with personal, family, or social relationships. Salesians are to welcome the young and the unemployed to their places and provide them with useful experiences so as to re-integrate them in a positive way in the world of work. This welcoming and healing experience will allow the young person to acquire self-esteem again, discover one's own abilities and capacities and be motivated to develop them. Vocational training, education towards self-employment and work scholarships are signs of the interest and concern not only of the Salesians, but also of groups of the alumni who have become involved in this ministry.

[4]*Letter to the Past Pupils,* www.sdb.org (accessed May 12, 2005).

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When one looks at the Church teachings about work, one observes the importance of self fulfillment and excellence in production as part of the creative element, the concern for the bigger picture; finding meaning in pain and difficulties and the vision that draws them all together: the new heavens and new earth. Egidio Vigano, as mentioned earlier, noted there is the need for Salesians to promote the "evangelization of work." Adriano Bregolin pointed out certain tasks for Salesians in the world of work. These lead to the statement of the problem: "What is the contribution of St. John Bosco and the Salesian Spirituality towards the evangelization of work in the Philippines?"

This article will present and analyze the Salesian spirituality of work under three analytical elements: creation, Christ-event and community. It will expound the work ethics of St. John Bosco as presented by Salesian authors. It will use materials from the Philippines, within the time frame of 1981–2003. It hopes to contribute to and enhance the Salesians' manner of working in the Philippines.

The study uses the three analytic elements of creativity, Christ-event and community as a prism to refract the various elements of Don Bosco's spirituality of work. These three analytic elements can be used to assess whether work furthers the Kingdom of God or not. Through these three analytic elements work becomes a humanizing, redeeming and unifying factor in God's plans. A person becomes a co-creator in one sense of the word: that is, one is actively influencing and transforming creation through one's labor.[5] Created in the "image and likeness of God" (Gen 1:26, 27 NAB[6]), persons are planned by God to "rule over the fish, birds, livestock over the whole earth" (Gen 1:26, 28). Persons show this creative element in self-expression, which results in the production of goods and services, which transform the world (LE 27). In expressing oneself, there are changes that occur

[5]Oliver F. Williams, "Introduction," *Co-Creation and Capitalism: John Paul II's* Laborem Exercens (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1983), 6.

[6]New American Bible.

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within the person that bring about the second aspect of the creation element: self-fulfillment (LE 6, 9). One's work also transforms the person closer to the image and likeness of God.[7] Work then becomes a humanizing factor. This creative aspect also includes the caring stewardship of creation itself.

With the Christ-event, work becomes a redeeming activity. The Christ-event shows the effect of the Incarnation and Redemption of Jesus Christ on work (LE 26). Although work was affected by sin, Jesus' life, death and resurrection elevated work and its suffering and pain, which came in due to sin, as part of the paschal process (LE 27). The Christ-event is the vision inspiring and drawing all these elements together and moving them forward. There is also an eschatological thrust: the new heavens and new earth and the new person in Christ.

The creation and Christ-event elements of work presuppose and bring about work with others, which in turn build communities (LE 10). Persons participate in creation and imitate God through work, but one's "creation" is also a sign of one's relatedness and shared existence. Through work one enters into the continuous process of giving and taking, teaching and learning that characterizes all good work. Unfortunately, unhealthy competition is stressed today in work instead of relationships.[8] Work unites people, its social power builds up community (LE 20). Solidarity, a virtue that builds up community, is that firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good (SRS 38). Persons have a common nature, the *imago dei*, and common needs, thus they should see the other as neighbor, helper and sharer in the banquet of life to which all are invited (SRS 39). Through this virtue, persons seek to go beyond the self, leading to a new vision, reflecting God's triune life leading to communion

[7]Marie Dominique Chenu, *The Theology of Work: An Exploration* (Dublin: Gill & Son, 1963), 8.

[8]Dorothee Soelle and Shirley Cloyes, *To Work and to Love: A Theology of Creation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 94.

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(SRS 40). Work then is not only a humanizing and sanctifying or a redeeming activity, but it also becomes a pivot of socialization.[9]

These three elements are present in the spirituality of work of St. John Bosco, inspired by the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales. We will see how this is lived out by the Salesian priests and brothers, the lay adults and the youth.

The spirituality of St. John Bosco has nine elements which lead to being attentive to the presence of the Spirit in the life of the young, while one is doing one's daily work with temperance, and united with Jesus as a friend and Mary as guide, so that one's life and work may be lived with joy. This is done within the community of the church where everyone is welcomed in a kind and friendly way so as orient all towards service of the kingdom.

## The Life of Don Bosco

Don Bosco was born in the hamlet of Becchi, Castelnuovo d-Asti, Piedmont, north Italy, on August 16, 1815 to Francis Bosco and Margareth Occhiena. At the age of nine he had a dream that deeply influenced his life and mission. In this "dream" the boy found himself fighting a large crowd of rowdy lads who were rowdy and cursing, refusing to listen to his voice. Suddenly, a Man appeared, who motioned to John and said, "Not with blows will you help these boys, but with goodness and kindness!" "Who are you?" gasped the astonished lad. Then a Woman appeared. Putting her arms around him, she said, "Watch what I do, John." John looked. The boys changed into a pack of snarling wild animals whose growls sent terror to his heart. Then the Woman put out her hand. The beasts changed again, to a frolicking flock of lambs. "But what does it all mean? I'm just a farm boy. What can I do?" He burst into tears. The Lady's answer came to him, ever to resound in his heart, to be repeated audibly several times

[9]Chenu, *The Theology of Work*, 11.

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in his life. "This is the field of your work. Be humble, steadfast, and strong!"[10] "If you wish to win over these boys do not hit them: be kind and appeal to their better selves.[11]" Pietro Stella surmised that this dream could have been around the Feast of St. Peter, when he heard the gospel injunction "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep," which so affected the life of Don Bosco that even Pius IX in the first audience in 1858 asked him to give a minute account of everything that had the slightest appearance of the supernatural.[12]

Ordained a priest for the diocese of Turin on June 5, 1841, Don Bosco began his pioneering work for boys with a "Hail Mary" and a short catechism lesson to Bartholomew Garelli on December 8, 1841. He envisioned the youth to be honest citizens and good Christians. He had another dream in October 1844 wherein he saw himself standing in the middle of wolves, goats, lambs, ewes, rams, and dogs. The noise they made was frightening. A lady dressed as a shepherdess asked him to accompany her and the flock. They made three stops along the way and at each stop, many of the animals were turned into lambs. Finally he found himself in a field where all the animals grazed together peacefully. As they continued to walk he found himself in a large courtyard with porticoes around it and at one end of which was a church. By this time, most of the animals were already lambs. Suddenly, many of the lambs were transformed into shepherds who took care of the others.[13] This dream would indicate that later on in his ministry, he would empower his own boys to continue his apostolate for youth, oratories, popular schools, workshops, youth associations, hostels, colleges, boarding schools for priestly and religious vocations,

[10]Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, *The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco* 1 (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1989), 95–96.

[11]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 1: 316.

[12]Pietro Stella, *Don Bosco: Life and Works* (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1996), 8–10.

[13]John Bosco, *Memoirs of the Oratory 1815–1855* (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1989), 209–10.

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editorial activities and the apostolate of the press, building churches, reconciliation and spiritual direction, founding of two religious orders, for the missions, and positions of responsibility in the Church and for the Church. He died on January 31, 1888, was beatified by Pope Pius XI in 1929, and canonized a saint by Pius XI on Easter Sunday, 1934. Don Bosco's educational system, "the preventive system," was to be his means to sanctify himself and others.

The "preventive system" of education essentially means to prevent a boy from becoming bad. It is based on Christian charity. Its triple foundations are reason, religion and kindness. Reason implies a sense of understanding between teacher and pupil, engendered by daily contact, friendly chats, and an interest that is felt. Reason includes the humanistic approach to education: respecting yet guiding human nature as created and given by God. Religion implies that the life fostered by the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist is enhanced and developed in one's active membership in the guiding and nourishing Church. According to the saint, where other systems of education have failed, this system of kindly understanding and sincere religion has more than succeeded.[14] The system is not new, though in Don Bosco's hands it achieved a freshness all its own. While it compensates for errors committed by youngsters who are often changeable and always forgetful, the system does not condone the errors; instead, it uses them as entry points to the formation of a solid character, permeated by Christian principles. This system can be used not only in school but also as an environment for work.

## The Influence of St. Francis de Sales upon Don Bosco

Don Bosco's effort to live for the young was strengthened with his knowledge about St. Francis de Sales. He had been well acquainted

[14]Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, *The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco* 5 (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1989), 36–37.

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with St. Francis de Sales right from his seminary days at Chieri. He had looked to Francis de Sales and Charles Borromeo as his models. Furthermore, St Francis de Sales (together with St. Aloysius Gonzaga, S.J.) was recommended as a specific model for all the clerics. In the seminary, the feast of St Francis de Sales ranked among the most important solemnities of the year, marked by inviting noted and distinguished preachers.

This devotion to St. Francis was part of a popular tradition. Since the seminary library at Chieri where John Bosco studied did not have the copies of the works of St. Francis, it would appear that the young clerics were not encouraged to read his works. In spite of this, Don Bosco had recourse to this saint in the early stages of his active apostolate and chose him as titular and patron. In 1844 Don Bosco named his first oratory after Francis; in 1852 he built his first church and dedicated it to the same saint. Two years later, in 1854, he named his first disciples Salesians. Furthermore, his Cooperators too were likewise listed under the same Salesian nomenclature, and their mouthpiece was the Salesian Bulletin.[15]

Don Bosco made it clear why he had chosen Francis de Sales as patron and model. In 1844, when he was appointed chaplain to the institution of the Marchesa Giulia di Barolo, the latter agreed to give him the use of two large rooms. Don Bosco transformed them into his "first Oratory church." In the saint's own words, the name St. Francis de Sales was given for the following reasons:

> First, because the Marchesa di Barolo had in mind to found a Congregation of priests under this title and with this intention had a painting of this saint that even today hangs at the entrance of the building; and
>
> Second, since our ministry demanded great calm and kindness, and had therefore been placed under the protection of this saint. We wanted

[15]Peter Brocardo, "Francis, Our Titular Saint and Patron," in Joseph Aubry, *St. Francis de Sales and St. John Bosco*, http://www.sdb.org (accessed January 24, 2006), 1.

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> Francis to obtain from God the grace that would help us to imitate him in his remarkable gentleness and zeal for souls.
>
> A further reason was to place ourselves under his protection, so that he would help us from heaven to imitate him in his combating the adversaries of the Church, who were gaining numbers in Italy and especially in Turin.[16]

In his Regulations of 1847 Don Bosco was to speak of the imitation of Francis "in his charity and kindly demeanor," an attitude so necessary for the success of his educative work. Who was this patron saint of John Bosco?

Francis de Sales was a spiritual director, a writer, a preacher, a correspondent with people from all walks of life, a reformer, a theologian, a bishop, and an advocate of lay devotion, which is called lay spirituality today. He dedicated himself tirelessly to celebrate, sanctify and govern always for the good of his people, regardless of their social standing. It was as a bishop that he guided many, even women, along the path of devotion, living up to his episcopal motto: "Chosen by God, assigned to his people."[17]

Francis was born on the twenty-first of August, 1567 in the family castle of Sales, in Thorens in the duchy of upper Savoy. He was the firstborn child of twelve children of Francis and Frances De Boisy. After his university education in law, theology and rhetoric, he was ordained priest on the eighteenth of December, 1593. As a young priest, he was able to bring back to the faith the district of Chablais. On the twenty-fourth of March, 1599, he was appointed coadjutor bishop at the age of thirty-one. In 1602, he was assigned in Paris to bring the Gex area back to the Catholic faith. Francis became the bishop of the diocese on the eighth of December, 1602. He visited his 450 parishes and organized the further formation of his clergy, proclaiming that

[16]Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, *The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco* 2 (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1989), 196–97.

[17]Brocardo, "Francis, Our Titular Saint and Patron," 12.

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learning was the eighth sacrament for a priest. He reformed monasteries and emphasized the catechesis of the young.

In the midst of these activities he found time to publish in 1608 his *Introduction to the Devout Life* (Philothea—a woman who wanted to live a holy life amidst the daily ordinary work at home) and in 1616 his *Treatise on the Love of God* (Theotimus—a lay or religious who wanted to mature in holiness). In 1604, he met the Baroness Jane Frémyot de Chantal, who was thirty-two years old, a widow, and with four children. Together with her, Francis founded an order of contemplative sisters on the sixth of June, 1610. The Visitation sisters would at the same time care for girls and widows, and visit the sick and the poor. However, in 1618, all aspects of the external apostolate were suppressed. Francis died on the twenty-eighth of December, 1622. He was canonized on the nineteenth of April, 1665 by Alexander VII. Pius IX declared him a Doctor of the Church in 1877.[18]

Francis presented Christian life as a movement. The initial step of love is respect and admiration for the divine perfections ("Our Father who art in heaven"); second follows the love of benevolence, that is, the "love of goodness" ("hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come"). Finally one learns to love, submit to and obey God's laws ("Thy will be on earth as it is in heaven"). The perfection of love is to seek only His Will, to submit to it and fulfill it. This is the love that transforms. The one who helps a person love in such a way is Jesus. Thus, the *leitmotif* of Salesian spirituality is "live Jesus," the imitation of Jesus, gentle and humble, in the circumstances of one's state of life, whatever it may be. Even before Vatican II, he was exhorting lay people to carry out all their activities, unifying human, domestic, and professional tasks in one vital synthesis together with the religious graces. These should be done with one's heart, out of love, according to one's state of life. Spiritual direction was a way of guiding persons and empowering them to work for the kingdom of God. He would unite all those whom he directed into various confraternities. These or similar communities

[18]Brocardo, "Francis, Our Titular Saint and Patron," 2–3.

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were needed for one's total formation. The cream of the intellectuals he united in the Florimontane Academy.

Francis de Sales accepted that every person is unique. A person is loved by God at every moment, and should encounter Him just as one is. The spiritual director must work on each one in one's unique situation. This is the humanism of Francis de Sales, who understood that in this journey there is progress and regress, time for resting and time for forging ahead, time for fast progress and time for slowing down. God's love envelops and graces the pilgrim on the move. The dialogue between God and the soul is always a personal affair in which the unfathomable mystery of divine predilection is at work. The important thing is to forge ahead and not stagnate in mediocrity.[19]

Francis de Sales was convinced that God sees humanity as a great and varied garden, each person beautiful in his or her uniqueness. The various callings of life (soldier, prince, widow, married woman) are like the various flowers of the field. God loves them all. Through his or her own calling, each person can find a way to a deeper friendship with his or her Creator. Francis approached people with genuine respect and gently guided them to recognize the unique path they would take in life. He made the journey to God joyful and possible for everyone to make. Above all, he advised against despair and the burden of fear.[20]

Francis de Sales saw that it is the "heart" that matters since the heart was made for God. In the *Treatise on the Love of God* Francis wrote: "Man is the perfection of the Universe, the spirit is the perfection of man; love is the perfection of the spirit, and charity is the perfection of love. This is why the love of God is the goal, the perfection and the excellence of the universe …. If our thoughts contain some reference to God, we immediately sense a certain congenial emotion of the heart,

[19]Brocardo, "Francis, Our Titular Saint and Patron," 7–8.

[20]Francis de Sales, http://www.oblates.org (accessed January 25, 2006).

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which shows that God is the God of the human heart."[21] There is in each one, a readiness and a profound longing for the love of God. The very meaning of human affairs, and the destiny of every person is in the loving encounter with God. The tragedy is simply that persons can fail to recognize (even repress) their most profound hunger and turn away from God. In Francis' words, "The heart is the sanctuary and source of love."[22] Deep in one's heart there is the free capacity to love, which at times does not distinguish its object. Francis calls this "the very nature of the heart."[23] It is here that God encounters the person.

In the Salesian psychology, freedom is the power of the will to choose what shall be the object of its love. The heart is the actual person who makes a decision. If the heart chooses God and lives united to Him, love will permeate one's whole being and enliven it. In this way, Francis exalted human sensitivity. In this love of God one can be tender-hearted to love cordially, compassionately, and affectionately as St. Francis loved even those who were against him.

> The will does not love unless it chooses to love; and among the many loves that present themselves, it can bind itself to the one it chooses. Judgments and decisions must take account of passions and both sensitive and sensual appetites. It is in the depths of our hearts, where God is to be found in faith. It is precisely there that one encounters the war that we experience every day of our lives.[24]

Francis de Sales understood that charity affects the other virtues in different ways. He pointed out that "virtues that must enrich with

[21]Francis de Sales, *The Love of God* (Bangalore: Asia Trading Corporation, 1982), 70–72.

[22]de Sales, *The Love of God*, 60–61.

[23]de Sales, *The Love of God*, 65–66.

[24]de Sales, *The Love of God*, 48–49.

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their qualities the acts of all the other virtues."[25] "We must prefer the virtues that fit in best with our personal situation and the duties of our state of life, the better ones, not the most noticeable ones."[26] In *Introduction to the Devout Life*, he dedicated four chapters on humility and the awareness of one's deficiencies and frailties.[27] He underscored gentleness, which is humility towards one's neighbor and the flower of fraternal charity.[28] He also gave importance to simplicity and the important virtues of obedience, chastity, and poverty. The love of God lifts the human heart into the realm of a living and active faith. In the diversity of situations and virtues one needs to guard this love carefully, to preserve it and perfect it, for it is love that guarantees the true value of one's actions. This is the important principle of uprightness of one's aspirations, the purification of one's intentions.

> We do not generate and achieve perfection by means of a multiplicity of efforts; rather what matters is the perfection and purity of the intention we have when we carry them out. We do not always have to cope with important things in our lives; but we always have the ability to carry out our small duties extraordinarily well, that is, with great love. The holy man who, for the love of God, slakes the thirst of a poor and thirsty wayfarer with a glass of water does a very small thing, or so it seems! The intention, the kindness, the love that animates one's action changes the simple glass of water into the water of life, and life eternal.[29]

In another portion Francis mentions: "To suffer a rebuke with two grams of love is far more meritorious than to suffer martyrdom with only one gram of love."[30]

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[25]Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* (Bangalore: SFS Publications, 2002), 137.

[26]de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, 138.

[27]de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, 149–64.

[28]de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, 164–70.

[29]de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, 417–18.

[30]Francis de Sales, *Spiritual Conferences* (Bangalore: SFS Publications, 1998), 165.

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Don Bosco, influenced by Francis de Sales, understood mankind and human affairs as good and open to the best. He centered his convictions on love which for him is the most positive and decisive reality that exists. Love is the totality of God and it must become the totality of man. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. … He who loves remains in God and God remains in him. … If I have not charity I am nothing. … God is love … love comes from God. … Let us love one another … for love is of God. … Love is patient and kind …. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things …. Love never ends. … God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (Jn 4; Jn 15:12; 1 Cor 13:4, 7–8). Francis lived this life of love in a more reflexive way. Don Bosco did it in a more intuitive way. Francis was called the "Doctor of Love," and Pius XI called Don Bosco a "giant in charity."

The God they adored and preached is the Father so full of tender mercy, and Jesus the Good Shepherd who gives His life for His sheep. The *Treatise on the Love of God* tells the story of this patient divine love. Don Bosco taught his young charges, "You are the light and the love of the God who created you and who created you for your happiness."[31] The last of Don Bosco's labors was to build the Church of the Sacred Heart in Rome, as though to proclaim that all his work had the sole aim of being an expression of divine charity. The two saints considered charity not only at the beginning and the end. It constituted the process by which they toiled and fulfilled their pastoral work, the means and the form of their apostolate. The bishop, the priest, the educator must above all else love "with deeds and in truth" (1 Jn 3:12) those to whom one is sent. Before being translated into action, the apostolate must be a personal relationship of love. This conviction prompted Francis de Sales and Don Bosco to exhibit a number of attitudes that could be called typically Salesian.

[31]Giovanni Bosco, *Il Giovane Provveduto* (Turin: Paravia, 1863), 25.

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A quality of Salesian love is that of a good shepherd who loves the sheep and seeks to be loved by them so as to lead them the more easily to God. There is this unique relationship which Don Bosco summed up in the term "kindliness," a sublime respect for each person, including the poorest and the least likeable ones. The initial experience must be a pleasant, welcoming smile, a kindness that in all humility tries to be affable, a sense of humor, infinite patience and forbearance in the face of faults and ingratitude, and an invitation to friendship. In this way Francis de Sales and Don Bosco surrounded themselves with an aura of extraordinary pleasantness and congeniality. They were remarkable among all the saints as those who had an aura of attraction, and who were loved by all.

Salesian charity is expressed in a practical realism and a dauntless courage. True love is romantic and realistic, full of practical wisdom. It accepts others as they are, and tries to give them what they need here and now. It adapts itself to circumstances. Both Francis de Sales and John Bosco in their apostolate ran a course of popular apologetics in their preaching and writing. Their propositions were well balanced, their language simple, their presentation imaginative, and their style engaging and practical. They did not expect from their flock a holiness that was immediate or austere. They encouraged people to draw nearer to God in a steady, practical, and unexaggerated practice of virtue. They sought to instill in them a conviction of daily fidelity.

In all their apostolic efforts they never ceased to be impelled by love. They kept up to date and had no fear of trying out new approaches, calmly discussing various aspects of contemporary thought and action. Francis, in his Chablais mission, used leaflets and pamphlets slipped under the doors of his parishioners, and would later be proclaimed the patron of journalists. Don Bosco put up a popular press and was truly a staunch champion of the Catholic printing press. Today, both could be considered patrons of social communications, for both had great confidence in the value and progress of the media. In their own lifetime their own principal works went through multiple editions. Later on, the founding of the Visitation Sisters and the Salesian Society both surprised

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the authorities in Rome. The launching of the numerous Salesian missions must have seemed, humanly speaking, foolish acts.[32]

These two men of action initiated many enterprises, and generally with great success. Those who knew them were always struck by their interior calm, their constant serenity, their smiling tranquility, and their ability to deal methodically with matters, prompted only by their profound love of the God they wanted to serve. Obstacles did not discourage them: they expressed their fidelity in a patience that was certainly not resigned but very active. There was always about them serenity and that peace of God which surpasses all understanding (Phil 4:7).

The relationship between Francis de Sales and Don Bosco is evidenced in their common aim: they tackled the evils that afflicted humanity during periods of cultural, social, and religious crisis with the miraculous weapon of charity. For Francis in the sixteenth century, there was the Renaissance and the Council of Trent; for Don Bosco in the nineteenth century there was the nationalistic movement in Italy and the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Francis had to grapple with the distorted vision of mankind proposed by Calvinistic pessimism, and Don Bosco rebutted Jansenism.

## The Uniqueness of the Spirituality of Don Bosco

Although there is the strong influence of St. Francis de Sales' spirituality on Don Bosco, still one can see the marked differences. In St. John Bosco this spirituality finds a first formulation in the dream at the age of nine years. "Make yourself humble, steadfast and strong." The young John Bosco received in Mary a mother and teacher who was to be at his side in his mission for the young. Later in the oratory, under Don Bosco's inspiration, there flourished various expressions of holiness and life in the Spirit. The biographies of some of the students, like Dominic Savio and Francis Besucco among

[32]Brocardo, "Francis, Our Titular Saint and Patron," 15.

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others, describe the youthful sanctity of the first Oratory; it has been officially recognized by the Church and is offered to all young people through the canonization of Dominic Savio and the beatification of Laura Vicuña.

Don Bosco presented the Preventive System as a spirituality project. The content and method of spiritual proximity and encouragement are found in the concept of "reason, religion and loving kindness," fused by the "grace of unity" into a single experience. The *Companion of Youth* and the various Regulations written for pupils in Salesian houses carry in the simple context of daily life what is called for by Salesian spirituality.[33]

The secret to Don Bosco's educative endeavors was his intense spirituality, or that inner energy which united in him inseparably the love of God and neighbor such that it set up a synthesis between evangelization and education.[34] In him one can find the following traits of attentiveness to the situation of the moment, response coming from love of God and neighbor within the Church, and using one's total capacity while working with others in the community for the education of the young, especially the poorer ones. These elements were outlined in the Special General Chapter (GC 20) which coincided with the efforts of the Congregation to revise the formulation of the Constitutions and Regulations from June 10, 1971 up to January 5, 1972. This gathering outlined the nine elements of the Salesian spirituality. There is attention to the Presence of God in daily life, in the Church, and in the young, and the Salesian works with them with kindness, work and temperance, joyfully in the spirit of service and strengthened by one's relationship with Jesus and inspired by the example of Mary. The Twenty-First General Chapter (GC 21, February

[33]Twenty-third General Chapter of the Salesian Society of St. Francis De Sales, *Educating the Young People to the Faith* (GC 23) (Rome: Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, 1990), n. 158.

[34]Society of St. Francis de Sales, *Constitutions of the Society of St. Francis de Sales of Don Bosco* (CSFSDB) (Rome: Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, 1988), n. 21.

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12, 1978) describes the Salesians as Evangelizers of the Young. The Twenty-Third General Chapter (GC 23, March 4–May 5, 1990) applies the nine elements to the young educating the young in the Faith, also called the Salesian Youth Spirituality. For the young, there are five elements: daily life recreated by encounter with Jesus Christ, living in joy and optimism experienced in and with the Church, which in turn empowers the young to responsible service.[35] Later on this same spirituality was applied to the Adults in the Twenty-Fourth General Chapter (GC 24) called *Communion and Sharing in the Spirit and Mission of Don Bosco*. Who are these lay adults? They are the lay people who have gone through Salesian training like the Alumni of Don Bosco and the members of the Salesian Cooperators. The chapter proposes five elements: starting from one's daily life, one is challenged to keep a preference for the young, especially the poorer ones, provide them with an environment of relationship called the "family spirit," and while being with and in the Church, one lives by the educational approach of St. John Bosco called the preventive system.[36] It should be noticed that the lay adult living the spirituality of St. John Bosco is responsible for creating a community conducive for the youth to grow in and for providing a process of growth in the preventive system. From the responsible service of the young, one is challenged to live out and share the spirituality in which one has been formed. It is part of the process of empowerment that the Salesian priests and brothers share with the lay members.

Don Bosco institutionalized his work for the young at the Oratory in Valdocco, Turin. Don Bosco trained the young to exercise leadership among their companions in every sector of life, even to the extent that the youngsters were called by Don Bosco to be with him "founders" of a new Congregation. On their side they helped him to begin, in

[35]GC 23, n. 161.

[36]*Documents of the 24th General Chapter: Salesians and Lay People: Communion and Sharing in the Spirit and Mission of Don Bosco* (GC 24) (Rome: Society of St. Francis de Sales, 1996), 86–95.

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the context of everyday experience, a new style of holiness tailored to the typical requirements of a young person's development. This spiritual commitment was born from an encounter of friendship. This friendship, due to one's Baptism, would be a continuous point of reference whose implications would be more deeply understood and which would be a source of encouragement as one matures in the faith. "I want to stay with Don Bosco" expressed the choice of a particular way of growing in the life of the Spirit: experience of Christian life precedes systematic reflection on it.[37]

The center of this spirituality is the Gospel, the Person and Heart of Christ, the apostle of the Father who wanted all to be saved which Don Bosco expressed in "give me souls take away all else."[38] There is this gratitude to the Father for the gift of the Divine vocation, predilection for the little ones and the poor, zeal in preaching, healing, and saving because of the urgency of the coming of the Kingdom, the preoccupation of the good Shepherd who wins hearts by gentleness and self-giving and the desire to gather disciples into the unity of brotherly communion.[39]

## Creation and the Salesian Spirituality

After looking at the life and mission of Don Bosco and how Francis de Sales influenced him, it is good to go into the elements of work, creation, Christ-event and community and see how in St. Francis de Sales's and in Don Bosco's spirituality these would be present and how their followers would live out these elements.

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[37]GC 23, n. 159.

[38]*Twentieth General Chapter (Special) of the Salesian Society of St. Francis De Sales: Salesian Charism* (GC 20) (Rome: Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, 1978), n. 78–79; CSFSDB n. 10–11.

[39]CSFSDB, n. 11.

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When one looks at these nine elements from the vantage point of creation, which means looking at work as self-expression, self-fulfillment, and care for the rest of creation, the Salesian looks at daily life, taking its measure from the young, especially the poorest, and finding the Holy Spirit present in their lives, engaging oneself in work and temperance. When the element of creation is applied to youth spirituality, one can include daily life in this bracket. On the other hand, when one looks at adult Salesian lay spirituality, one can again find the element of attention to daily life and the needs of the young.

### *Self-Expression, Self-Fulfillment, and the Salesians*

The person created in the image of God and made for God is at the core of Don Bosco's humanism. He respected the innate dignity of all of God's children. Don Bosco was an optimist, with a radical confidence in the human person and his natural and supernatural capacity. He possessed a deep understanding of man, exalted human values and virtues, and made room for emotions, joy, culture, and progress in his system of education. He was certain of the usefulness and value of action, convinced that every person could be taken in hand and helped to develop his/her interior talents, intelligence, freedom, heart, and faith. Don Bosco referred to these activities as reason, religion and kindness. He was patient with setbacks, kept hope and kept trying in the face of failures.[40]

Influenced by Francis de Sales, Don Bosco saw persons as oriented towards God, destined for eternal joy, and capable of responding to His love. The core of a person is the heart, and one's vocation is to love. The purpose of a person, of the universe, of human affairs, and of every personal destiny is the loving encounter between God who seeks the person and the person who seeks God, and from this love there flows the willing encounter with one's neighbor. Genuine education then is the initiation to true love; salvation begins when love begins, and to love there is no need to wait for extraordinary

[40]Brocardo, "Francis, Our Titular Saint and Patron," 14.

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occasions: it is possible always and everywhere, in one's duties and in one's daily encounters.

If one looks at the life of Don Bosco one would find that attentiveness to the present, the work at hand, and to the needs of people, yet he was always guided by the vision he had at the age of nine. In 1840, the slums of Turin were overrun by the poverty that resulted in sweatshop factories with their hazardous machinery, child labor, and starvation wages.[41] Construction work was seasonal usually from April to December. During the winter lay offs, most apprentices and migrant workers returned to their families. Though the 1840s figures were not so clear, later in 1886 there were 1,481 bricklayers, 81 plasterers and white washers, 61 pavers, 38 roofers, and 23 building painters.[42] Regardless of their work, those who came from out of town were naturally those most at risk in the city, most likely to be preyed upon by unscrupulous bosses, landlords, or gangs, and least likely to have friends or family close by or to feel comfortable in church or catechism activities.[43]

At the beginning of his priesthood, Don Bosco would go with the other priests from the Convitto, a post-graduate formation center for priests, to catechize the inmates of the prison in the city of Turin. He abhorred this work but was prevailed on by the Scripture passage "I was in prison and you visited me" (Mt 25:36). He was shocked by the presence of young prisoners. John would approach them with words of kindness, faith and cheerfulness. As he continued to visit the prisons with Father Cafasso, his guide at the Convitto, his vocation seemed to be confirmed: "These boys were not bad once. Take care of them before they fall into crime—that is my task!" He wrote:

[41]Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, *The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco* 3 (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1989), 33.

[42]Stella, *Don Bosco: Life and Works*, 102.

[43]Bosco, *Memoirs of the Oratory*, 199.

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> Little by little, I instilled in them self respect and then made them understand the reasons of earning one's daily bread by honest toil and not by thievery. No sooner had I made some religious and moral principle clear to them that their hearts filled with an inexplicable joy that prompted them to mend their ways. In fact not a few reformed while still in prison and others after their release so conducted themselves as not to return to their gang.[44]

When they would be released, Don Bosco followed them up by assigning them to families or laypersons that could rehabilitate them, only stressing they attend mass on Sundays and Holy days. With this experience, he strengthened his resolve to approach the young with kindness and was again reminded on the necessity of good companions and good family relationships, yet he thought of sheltering them in some institutions.[45] As one goes through the anecdotes and life of Don Bosco, one has to take note of what Pietro Stella cautioned:

> Don Bosco by temperament found it difficult to systematize his thoughts and intuitions about realities: he could only keep on going back and making revisions. Don Bosco's writings are like his constructions, institutions, and organizations. He moves in stages. There is ongoing change in every matter, under the impetus of various factors, which we cannot always pinpoint today. Don Bosco had his absolute values and his constants, but working in the concrete he never turned into an absolutizer. What he did and left undone was inspired by the circumstances. It suited him to follow his decision and his inner life and it works as they move along.[46]

From this prison ministry, Don Bosco gradually formed the Oratory, the boarding house, the school, the professional school, the printing press and later on set up the Congregation of the Salesians of St. John Bosco, all because of this sense of mission. However, at his death bed, he too was surprised at all that he had done and was heard to say, "Had

[44]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 2: 83.

[45]Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, *The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco* 4 (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1989), 84.

[46]Stella, *Don Bosco: Life and Works*, xviii.

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I more faith, I could have done more." He was looking at the present and finding God's guidance and moving on step by step.

Don Bosco gave these simple rules for these young workers at the Oratory of St. Francis of Sales regarding work:

1. My dear sons, man is born to work. God put Adam into the earthly paradise to till it (2 Thess 3:10).
2. Work means fulfilling the duties of one's state of life, whether they consist in studying or in learning an art or a trade.
3. Remember that by working you will contribute to the welfare of your country and your church. You will also benefit yourself spiritually if you offer your daily occupations to God.
4. Give priority to tasks demanded by obedience. Make it a rule never to neglect duties in favor of other optional tasks.
5. Give glory to God for whatever learning you may have for He is the author of all good. Do not glory in any success for pride is a worm that gnaws away the merit of our good works.
6. Remember that youth is the springtime of life. He who does not accustom himself to work in his youth will become an idler to the shame of his soul since idleness will nurture all other vices.
7. He who does not do the work that he is supposed to do steals from God and those over him. At the end of their lives, idlers will suffer the greatest remorse for lost time.
8. Always begin your work, your study period and your class with the Actiones and the Ave Maria. At the end of the day, say the Agimus and the Ave Maria. Say these little prayers well so that Almighty God may guide you in your work. Thus will also gain the indulgences granted by the sovereign Pontiff to those who say these prayers devoutly.
9. Commence your work in the morning with the Angelus and say it again at noon and at the close of day. In the evening add the De Profundis for the souls of the faithful departed.[47]

[47]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 4: 553–54.

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At first glance one can see the right orientation of Don Bosco about work which is similar to what one finds in *Laborem Exercens*. Work is coming from God and allows one to support one's self and others. Work is a good habit to develop, and one should always integrate it with one's prayers. A worker is supposed to express oneself in one's work. That is why it is not enough to have a good intention for one's activity. It is also important to ask the help of the Creator to fulfill it. This also shows that ordinary life is the place where one could be a saint, just like the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales.

The followers of Don Bosco look at 1) daily, ordinary life as the meeting place with God and, attentive to the Spirit and doing everything out of love for God, one becomes a contemplative in action.[48] This attentiveness to God in the daily life calls the Salesian to be a realist, attentive to the signs of the times with initiative and flexibility, as Don Bosco was, ever ready to adapt to the circumstances.[49] 2) They take their cue from the situation of the young, especially the poorest of them, and discover the action of the Spirit in their heart so as to collaborate in its development.[50] 3) The Salesian gives oneself to the mission with tireless energy, taking care to do everything with simplicity and moderation, knowing that one is participating in the creative action of God and cooperating in the building the kingdom.[51]

For the adult lay Salesian, the spirituality of daily life and of work is living in the presence of God in work. Daily life is constituted for the natural setting of perfection, the place to respond to the human and Christian vocation. The value of daily life leads one to see the whole creation as a gift of God. Life, nature and material things produced by man are seen as blessings to be used properly. One should be a steward

[48]CSFSDB, n.12.

[49]CSFSDB, n.19.

[50]CSFSDB, n.14.

[51]CSFSDB, n.18.

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of interpersonal relationships. Sharing the joys and difficulties of the social context while seeking the sign of God's will are all part of the daily regimen for holiness. Time should be spent on useful tasks for personal or communal life in a healthy, educative, and creative form. Lay Salesians, like Don Bosco, should be imbued with the spirit of enterprise and hard work.

Don Bosco's school of work is where the pedagogy of duty is developed. Work, perceived as an integral part of God's plan for all, leads to defend the dignity of all work and of man as its subject. With the characteristics of one's specific vocation is demanded a professional approach—the greatest possible perfection in one's work. Jose Prellerzo states "at a time of economic depression, when little public attention was paid to professional instruction, the Salesian workshops offered many boys from peasant families or from working class backgrounds the chance to better themselves. There was a steady increase of artisans or professional students from 1880 (90) to 1887 (195)."[52] This implied that there was a generous acceptance of the toil involved, along with the constant commitment and ongoing formation that went with it. This also involved discipline and a sense of duty which beckoned one to a path of ascesis. The ministry became a concrete measure of spiritual maturity.[53]

For the adult, the spirituality in sharing in the heart of God, the disciple of Don Bosco has a better understanding of the importance and urgency of one's own vocation to render present to the young Christ's love for them. Prompted by this love, one dedicates oneself totally to the integral education of the young in one's family, community or workplace. Charity is the means and fundamental method of the mission. One gives added weight to the important values of Salesian spirituality like generosity, solidarity, simplicity, gratitude, fidelity,

[52]Jose Manuel Prellezo, "Don Bosco and Professional Schools," in *Don Bosco's Place in History*, eds. Patrick Egan and Mario Midali (Roma: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1992), 363.

[53]GC 23, n. 91–92.

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joy, and optimism even in dark moments, expressing in this way the paschal dimension of Christian life.[54]

The Salesian employs the "Preventive System" which was defined earlier. One of the three elements of this system is using reason in dealing with the young. There is fairness and persuasion in contrast to repression and imposition. By employing reason, one evaluates everything with a critical sense and discerns the authentic value of earthly realties, respecting their autonomy and secular dignity. Reason enables the great endeavors of mankind to be discovered and shared in the continual and laborious process of personalization and socialization. The use of reason implies a solid humanism and genuine appreciation of the reality of created things. This makes the preventive system an open one rich in human hope and able to come to grips with different cultural situations. The use of reason implies a particular attention to contexts, a previous assessment of the situation, and effective arrangement of intervention. Using reason balances the process of avoiding minimalism and going to the other extreme of rushing ahead and imposing responsibilities which cannot be sustainable.[55] What has been discussed as the function of reason in the educational system of Don Bosco has been emphasized by the Vicar General at the introduction of this work when he mentioned the need for (1) being critically attentive to the present; (2) the formation of oneself (self fulfillment); and (3) knowledge of the socio-political context. This is called mindfulness to the situation. It is the effort to look at the situation in an objective way. This implies natural and learned skills in analysis, comparisons, and evaluation of the situations and circumstances workers find themselves in.

In 1988, during the centennial celebration of Don Bosco's death, Pope John Paul II emphasized this as the authentic view of Christian humanism:

[54]GC 23, n. 86–87.

[55]GC 23, n. 93–94.

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> The value of the individual, of conscience, of human nature, of culture, of the world of work and of social living, are all accepted as needed by persons in their family, and in civil and political life. Reason invites the young to an attitude of sharing in the values they have understood and accepted. Reasonableness is accompanied by understanding, dialogue and unfailing patience through which the difficult practice of reasoning finds expression. It implies an updated and integral anthropology free from ideological oversimplification. Emerging values like peace, freedom, justice, communion and sharing, the advancement of woman, solidarity, development and urgent ecological demands all derive from reason.[56]

For the young, the spirituality of daily life is the effort with the help of faith to transform experience of life into gospel experience. One does not have to leave normal life to find God. One should live life integrally. This needs the grace of unity. This is to live the beatitudes even in adverse situations in life in a joyful way. When the Salesians live pastoral charity and produce a family setting in which "the need and joy of sharing everything is experienced," they facilitate the production of this harmony and raise up in young people the desire for happiness.[57] The first pages of the *Companion of Youth*, a prayer book produced by Don Bosco for the young, point out this requirement of youth: "I want you to be happy."

He had this profound respect for what God had created. He said that there were no bad boys, only misguided ones, and when given the proper environment, they could also become good and can become saints. Such was his awe at God's imprint in each person. He treated even the young with the respect they demanded as children of one Father. Furthermore, he trusted that God as Creator and Father would see to his needs and that of the young entrusted to his care. "Let us do what we can and Divine Providence will do the rest."[58] However, this image of God in the young has to mature and grow. This is where

[56]John Paul II, "Discourse at the University of Turin," 4.

[57]GC 23, n.162.

[58]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 2: 534.

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one sees the ingenuity of Don Bosco's catechism lessons. Today this is called education in the faith.

This education in the faith is done in the context of freedom. The strong emotions of the young workers, influenced by their personal development and their weak will, make them think twice in the face of norms of conscience. Through the catechism, they gradually know right from wrong. They have accepted the "new humanism" (GS 55) and its values: the sense of freedom, the absolute dignity of the individual, the sense of one's personal life-plan, the need for authenticity and autonomy which are all Gospel-based. Unfortunately, other influences confuse them. The possibilities of choice, offered them from all sides, are overpowering and make it difficult to live by a harmonized set of values learned in school, training centers, and seminars.[59] This formation of conscience began at the Oratory but it was followed up in the work places. This was the reason why Don Bosco was visiting the factories of his students which eventually inspired him to set up his own production line.

Don Bosco understood that conscience is the inviolable sanctuary of personal encounter between man and God. A distorted conscience gives one a false vision of God, His Word and His Salvation. Conscience formation will empower the workers to confront differing values and harness these to human, Gospel, and Church laws. Conscience formation implies that the workers have, first of all, a sufficient capacity for judgment and ethical discernment. The young should not only be able to discern good from bad, sin and its structures, the action of God in one's person and in history; they should also exercise their autonomy and responsibility. In this process, openness to objective truth is a precondition. Don Bosco presented the moral principles faithfully, as adapted to the practical situation of the workers. Second, there is a critical formation concerning cultural models and certain norms of social life that are in contrast with Christian values. This would allow the workers to see through the ambiguities arising from

[59]GC 23, n. 183.

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false rationalizations, current ideologies, or superficial judgments of events. Failure to live out one's religious commitment is oftentimes caused by a faith that has not been inculturated or by a non-integral technological progress.[60] The Word of the Lord contains within itself indispensable criteria for the expression of judgment on human actions. The Gospel must enter the life of the individual and provide one with a vision of the reality which has at its center the Father and Son. A swift condemnation on anything that is new or does not correspond to previous practice is not enough. Only with the word of God can one face them with competence.[61] Don Bosco understood all these and bequeathed this mission of conscience formation as a work of Salesians to guide the young in their path of self-fulfillment and self-expression. Conscience formation harmonizes with the challenge of Adriano Brigolin to the whole Salesian family to be critically attentive to the present socio-political context, to know how to evaluate it and identify the opportunities for evangelization.

### *Stewardship*

Although one cannot talk about stewardship of creation as we understand it today, Don Bosco had a special love for nature. For eighteen years (1847–1864) he would lead a group of his boys to his family home at Becchi each October. At the beginning, there were only a few boys, around sixteen to twenty-seven of them. Later on the number swelled to sixty and to about a hundred. Initially, these summer walks were for those who had no home during the vacations. In the long run, he allowed others who would otherwise be affected by bad influences at home. In the mid-1850s these summer outings became rewards for those who excelled in their conduct and study. These outings were organized before the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary (first Sunday in October in those days). These had the spirit of pilgrimages. He would coordinate with the parish priest so that there

[60]GC 23, n. 186–87.

[61]GC 23, n. 188.

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would be Masses in this place with the rosary. Later during their stay, the boys would hike to other nearby places.

These encounters with nature were for his personal vacation since he never thought of vacationing without doing anything. They were occasions when Don Bosco could visit his brother Joseph. The outings became an integral part of a total educational plan and method. The country trips integrated the sense of God, of religion, of study, of work and apostolic venture, and of joy that Don Bosco had learned from his mother and labored to instill in his sons. They were occasions of doing apostolate for the parishioners of the locality and their pastor. They were also chances for recruiting new students. Finally, they were a way of thanking his benefactors.[62]

It has been shown how Don Bosco respected the human person as God's creation. He allowed a person to express one's goodness through work in his teachings. In his own life, he was sensitive to God's presence in daily activities. As he looked at the dehumanizing effects of the processes of industrialization and urbanization on the young workers, he did not condemn the two processes as such, but allowed the power of God with the cooperation of the individual to transform these situations into something better. Instead of allowing the young workers to wallow in despair and slavery to forces around them, he shared with them the Christian vision and God's plan for human beings and trained the workers to become part of the transformation of their workplace and the city as a whole. He found ways to allow the young to use their power to become honest citizens and good Christians. Don Bosco "used" nature as a complementary way of experiencing God's refreshing care.

## The Christ-Event and the Salesians

When one looks at the Christ-event, one notices that the Salesian enjoys friendship with Jesus, guided by Mary, while being challenged

[62]Bosco, *Memoirs of the Oratory,* 332–38.

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to live out one's mission in Easter joy. These three have Jesus at the center. There would be no joy, and no devotion to Mary, if Jesus were not present. It has been seen that for Don Bosco the Christ-event is more salient and prior to everything. When considering the adult spirituality, the educational approach of St. John Bosco, the preventive system can be included. When one considers youth spirituality, one can include the friendship with Jesus and joyful living due to the resurrection of Jesus.

Already at the dream at nine years old Don Bosco was so impressed by the majesty and goodness of Jesus. What was important for Don Bosco was really the Christ-event. Even those around him who knew him understood the reason why he was working for the boys. This is succinctly expressed by Pius XI who, in an audience during the process of beatification, mentioned:

> At the core of what Don Bosco was doing was to study, meditate well and constantly on the mystery and work of our Redemption. He had received a specific mandate, a particular mission, namely, to continue the work of the Redemption, to expand and distribute more widely and in greater abundance the fruits of this Redemption. Think of all the souls that he led to share in the Redemption of Jesus Christ during his lifetime. Think of those souls, which have been called to share in Christ's Redemption by his *longa manus*, his sons and his cooperators. *Da mihi animas coetera tolle* (give me souls take the rest away).[63]

### *Incarnation and the Salesians*

Pietro Stella, an authority on Don Bosco, observed that, rather than focusing on the mysterious manner of the incarnation and Christ's divine and human life, Don Bosco's attention turned to three more practical areas: the divine Person of Jesus, the mysteries of his life on earth, and the Christ who is at the disposal of a humanity weakened by sin. The mystery of the Trinity is not one of the truths on which Don Bosco dwelt on, but he encouraged the young to aim at being in

[63]Eugenio Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 19 (New York: Salesian Publishers, 2003), 217–218.

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paradise. His focus was on a personal God, the supreme Good Who will assuage the thirst of happiness in the human heart. Creatures cannot satisfy that thirst precisely because the human being is made for God. Don Bosco did not offer contemplation or considerations that go beyond mere affirmation.[64] There were four ways through which Don Bosco stressed the presence of Jesus, which presumed and included the Incarnation, the most important of which is the Eucharist. The other favorite themes of Don Bosco were: Jesus as a model or example, Jesus as Divine Savior and Jesus as Judge.

The human condition of Jesus reveals the fact that God is presence, immanence and that God affirms life's transcendence. Jesus the Man, God's Sacrament, teaches that the place to meet God is in human reality: one's own and that of others, daily and throughout history. Human life inserts one in the event of the Incarnation.[65] If Jesus is in one's daily life then one has to love the ordinary aspect of existence. This is where the Father works. This means accepting the challenges, questions and tensions of growth; gathering life's fragments into the unity realized by the Spirit in Baptism; working to overcome the ambiguities present in daily experience and to leaven every option with love.[66]

Jesus in the Eucharist dominated the life of Don Bosco and his milieu. It is the Jesus of the Eucharist with all the elements that form part of worship of Jesus by the individual and the community. This is the Jesus with whom Don Bosco himself conversed in his daily afternoon visit in Church. This is the Jesus before whom he placed his boys in prayer, when he asked charity for his boys. When he dealt with Jesus in his later years he was no longer able to control himself. Don Bosco's Masses were celebrated in tears.

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[64]Pietro Stella, *Don Bosco: Religious Outlook and Spirituality* (New York: Salesiana Publishers, 1996), 108.

[65]GC 23, n. 163.

[66]GC 23, n. 164.

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The Christ who dominated the whole existence of Don Bosco was, by preference, Jesus alive and present in the Eucharist, the "master of the house" (as he used to put it), the center towards which everything converged, the "bread of life," the "Son of Mary," Mother of God and of the Church. Don Bosco lived by and in this Presence, which was always close at hand. When he spoke of God, it was often in terms of Jesus in the Eucharist, true man and true God, who came down from heaven to redeem mankind. This is the Jesus who died on the cross and Who is still living on altars and in tabernacles. Nothing could be more easily accessible. To have Jesus in the house, in fact, meant that one could go and meet Him whenever one wished, take part in His death and resurrection, have a heart to heart conversation with Him, receive Him in Communion and be transformed by His Spirit for the mission.[67]

The life of Don Bosco, right from his early boyhood, and the history of the first Oratory constituted a hymn of praise to the Eucharist. His pupil St. Dominic Savio remarked:

> When I pass close to him (Jesus in the Eucharist), not only would I cast myself in the mud to honor him; I would even throw myself into a furnace so as to share in some way in that infinite fire of love which drove him to institute this great Sacrament.[68]

Behind the young saint there was his spiritual guide, Don Bosco, who passed on to him his own Eucharistic ardor.

> When Don Bosco preached on the extent of Our Lord's love for us, he would often weep and bring tears to the eyes of his hearers. Even during recreation time, if the conversation turned to the subject of the Holy Eucharist, he would beam with holy ardor, and he would frequently say to the boys: 'My dear boys, love Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with all your hearts, and you will be truly happy!' His words made the boys more convinced than ever of the truth of the real presence of Jesus

[67]Bosco, *Il Giovane Provveduto*, 129.

[68]Giovanni Bosco, *Opere e Scritte di Don Bosco* 4, ed. Alberto Caviglia (Turin: Societa Editrice Internazionale, 1977), 37.

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> Christ. He was truly happy when he managed to have a good number of the boys take turns in receiving holy communion each day."[69]

"The sacrifice of the altar," wrote Don Bosco, "is the glory, the life and the heart of Christianity."[70] On another occasion he told the boys:

> One cannot imagine anything more holy and precious than the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, and so when you go to Mass, I want you to be convinced that you are doing something which is the greatest and holiest thing you could possibly do, something which gives greatest glory to God and is most useful for your own soul. Jesus Christ comes himself in person to apply to each one individually the merits of his adorable blood which he shed for us on the cross of Calvary.[71]

Even more eloquent than his words was his example.

> He was recollected, attentive, devout and exact in his celebration of Mass; he pronounced the words with clarity and feeling; he visibly enjoyed distributing holy communion, hardly able to conceal his inner fervor. But in it all there was no trace of affectation or serving the eye; without either haste or undue lingering he proceeded from start to finish in a calm and natural manner. This is how the early Salesians saw him, and this too is how he appears to us, the latest arrivals.[72]

His union with Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist reached sublime heights: "occasionally his face would be bathed in tears …. It also happened that at times he looked so ecstatic after the elevation that he appeared to be seeing Jesus Christ with his own eyes."[73] This very touching way of celebrating the Eucharist occured with greater

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[69]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 4: 317.

[70]Giovanni Bosco, "Il Cattolico Istruito nella sua Religione" (Turin: Letture Cattoliche I: 9, 1853–54), 191.

[71]Bosco, *Il Giovane Provveduto*, 85.

[72]Eugenio Ceria, *Don Bosco con Dio* (Asti: Colle Don Bosco, 1947), 97–98.

[73]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 4: 314.

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frequency during his last years.[74] His manner of celebration was of one who deeply believed, and people came from afar to join him in his celebration of the Eucharist. His great educational concern was to help the boys grasp the sacramental reality of the Mass:

> Understand well, my children, that when you assist at holy Mass it is just the same as if you were seeing our divine Savior coming out of Jerusalem and carrying his cross to Calvary where he is crucified and sheds the last drop of his blood. When the priest celebrates holy Mass, this same sacrifice is renewed, but in a bloodless manner.[75]

The Eucharist was always the central point of the feasts celebrated by the boys, and was prepared with great solemnity with music, singing and participation. People used to come to Valdocco from other parts of the city to take part in the festive Eucharistic celebrations.

The reception of Communion is another focal point in the spirit and action of Don Bosco. He spoke of the Eucharist as "essential to the smooth running of the house."[76] This sacrament is "the column which supports the material and moral world."[77] Jesus' presence in this sacrament is "the strongest moral support of the young and the foundation of vocations."[78] The one receiving Communion experiences personally an intimate encounter with Jesus Christ, who incorporates a person into Himself and makes one an apostle by the power of the Holy

[74]Eugenio Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 17 (New York: Salesian Publishers, 2002), 558–59.

[75]Bosco, *Il Giovane Provveduto*, 84–85.

[76]Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, *The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco* 7 (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1989), 466.

[77]Giovanni Bosco, *Collected Letters,* ed. Eugenio Ceria (Turin: Societa Editrice Internazionale, 1955), 299.

[78]Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, *The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco* 6 (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1989), 77.

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Spirit. One can detect a distant echo of this in the words with which Don Bosco concluded the conference he gave at Rome in 1876:

> Grant us, O Lord (the Church prays), that by participating in the merits of your Body and Blood sacrificed on the cross, we may be deserve to be included among your members. As members of the most Sacred Body of Jesus, we must keep ourselves closely united with him, not in an abstract but in a concrete manner, in believing and in our actions.[79]

For Don Bosco, a well made Communion was a source of happiness: "What joy it is to receive our Divine Redeemer into our hearts, that same God from whom we must draw the strength and constancy needed every moment of our lives."[80] The biographies of Louis Comollo (Don Bosco's classmate at the seminary who died), and his students in the Oratory—Dominic Savio, Michael Magone, and Francis Besucco—all contain references to the Eucharist, to Holy Communion and to Viaticum which transforms the fear of death into a loving embrace of Jesus. Don Bosco would encourage the students:

> If I want something important, I go to Communion and receive the Sacred Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus, offered for us to his eternal Father on the cross. What else do I need to be happy? Nothing in this world, but just to be able to see face to face the God I adore in faith on the altar.[81]

Don Bosco, the promoter of frequent Communion, helped young men achieve growth in faith, and through the Eucharist, scaled the heights of sanctity. Significant in this connection is the insertion in his *Companion of Youth* of the translation of a text from the Council of Trent:

> It would be highly desirable that every faithful Christian should keep himself in such a state of conscience that he could receive holy Communion each time he assists at Mass, and that this Communion

[79]Eugenio Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 12 (New York: Salesiana Publishers, 1980), 641.

[80]Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 12: 18.

[81]Bosco, *Opere e Scritte di Don Bosco* 4: 35.

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> should be not only spiritual but also sacramental, so that greater fruit may be reaped from this august and divine Sacrament.[82]

He was also one of the strongest supporters of making the First Communion at an early age: "Avoid as a plague the opinion that the first communion should be deferred to a late age."[83]

The fourth devotion of Don Bosco for the Eucharist is adoration. The awareness of the living presence of Christ in the consecrated Host is a stimulus to an attitude of adoration. This was a characteristic of the Catholic piety in the nineteenth century, and especially at Turin, city of the Blessed Sacrament. At the Valdocco Oratory this kind of piety flourished in the Eucharistic heart of Don Bosco, and this also from the conviction that he was able to inculcate among the boys that Jesus lived in the house with them. Jesus was present there with His infinite love to be their daily Friend. The expressions of Eucharistic piety lived at the Oratory were those of the time: hours of adoration, Eucharistic triduums, benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, processions, and individual and group visits. Don Bosco knew how to motivate the young from an educational and sanctifying approach. If Jesus, with his permanent presence, is at the center and heart of every community, He cannot possibly be forgotten. Don Bosco sought to cultivate various expressions of contemplative piety in the life and activity of his followers and boys. He encouraged the young to visit Jesus frequently in the Blessed Sacrament, to ask Him for spiritual and material graces, to talk with Him, to think about His death and resurrection, to spend time with Him. One of his recurring exhortations is "Remember, my sons, that Jesus is in the Blessed Sacrament with lots of graces that He wants to give to those who ask for them."[84] In another occasion he said, "I also recommend visits to the Blessed Sacrament: Our gentle Lord Jesus Christ is there in person. The Cure of Ars suggested that

[82]Bosco, *Il Giovane Provveduto*, 108.

[83]Giovanni Bosco, *Il Sistema Preventivo* (Turin: Paravia, 1847), 2.

[84]Bosco, *Il Sistema Preventivo*, 103.

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if time is limited, let us at least kneel before the tabernacle and say a Pater, Ave, and Gloria. This alone will steel us against temptation."[85] Once he insisted:

> There are two things the devil is deadly afraid of: fervent Communions and frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Do you want Our Lord to grant you many graces? Visit him often. Do you want him to grant you only a few? Visit him but seldom. Such visits are a powerful defense against the attacks of the enemy. Visiting the Blessed Sacrament, my dear boys, is essential if you want to overcome the devil. Therefore make frequent visits to Jesus; if you do that, the devil will never prevail against you.[86]

There is no doubt that Don Bosco's spirit and pedagogy gave importance to adoration as a manner of practicing friendship with Christ present in the Eucharist. Dominic Savio, Magone, and Besucco all made good use of this method; and if the same cannot be said of all the boys at the Oratory, the majority went for these adorations.

This centrality of the Eucharist went hand in hand with an educative practice that aimed at the integral formation of the young. In this program, the primary human, material needs (food, lodging and clothing), and the intellectual, moral and cultural ones, were supplied so the young are empowered to play their proper role in society. Inspired and healed by the Eucharist, the other needs of the young, such as self-affirmation, the correct use of freedom ("let them have full freedom to run, jump and make as much noise as they like"), the fostering of recreational activities, theatre, music, and others were provided. This is the educational quality of Don Bosco, one that is full and joyful, yet its secret is seen to be youthful hearts centered on the Eucharist (Mass, Communion, and Adoration). The Eucharist is Jesus who is alive and present, and whom they know, love, and visit as

[85]Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, *The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco* 9 (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1989), 167.

[86]Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, *The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco* 8 (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1989), 32.

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their Friend. The influence of the Jesus present (Emmanuel) produces kindness, commitment, and joy among the young.[87]

Don Bosco wanted the Eucharist to be celebrated in an atmosphere of solidarity and friendship, in a festive way, full of symbolism and expressions, to be a significant moment of spiritual growth. From the Eucharist, the young learn to reorganize life in the light of Christ who gives himself through love. One learns to submit one's life to the requirements of communion, overcoming selfishness and introversion, leading one to the generous donation of oneself, open to the needs of others and to apostolic activities suited to one's age and Christian maturity. This encounter is extended to the visit and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.[88] Don Bosco capped this devotion with a heroic task he accepted because of a devotion inseparable from the Eucharist, that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He expressed this in the building of the Church of the Sacred Heart in Rome as his culminating work. He said himself that "devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus includes all the rest" and that the source of this devotion is to be found precisely in the Blessed Sacrament. "Keep always before your minds, the thought of the love of God in the Holy Eucharist."[89] Inspired by God, Don Bosco lived and handed on to Salesians an original style of life and action: the Salesian spirit.[90] This spirit "finds its model and source in the very heart of Christ, apostle of the Father,"[91] and to this one may add that for Don Bosco, this reality of living and sharing the deep redemptive concern of the Heart of Jesus was intensely concentrated on the great mystery of the Eucharist.

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[87]Egidio Vigano, "The Eucharist in the Apostolic Spirit of St. John Bosco," *Acts of the Superior Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco* 324 (December 8, 1987.)

[88]GC 23, n. 176.

[89] Eugenio Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 16 (New York: Salesian Publishers, 1995), 152.

[90]CSFSDB, n. 10.

[91]CSFSDB, n. 11.

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The second image of Jesus is as an example or model. Don Bosco preferred to focus his attention on the earthly mysteries of Jesus and the teaching He imparted through His actions and discourses. In the *Companion of Youth*, Jesus is presented as the model of obedience or meekness, Jesus making clear how much He loves young people.[92] Jesus is presented as Teacher by virtue of His sayings, His Sermon on the Mount, and His parables. His teachings emphasize detachment from the things of earth, love for God, the need to surrender to God to win salvation and freedom from sin, prudence, humility, meekness even in the face of contradiction or mistreatment, and charity without bounds that manages to ask pardon even of one's killers. This is also found in the homilies and reflections he gave the Salesians.[93] At the beginning of the original rule and Constitutions he wrote:

> Just as Jesus Christ began to work and to teach, so the members will keep trying to perfect themselves by practicing inner and outer virtues and by acquiring knowledge[;] then they will set to work for the welfare of their neighbors.[94]

Don Bosco also wrote in his Spiritual Testament:

> Although your first director is dead, our true superior Jesus Christ will never die. He will always be our Master, our Guide, and our Model. But remember He will also be our judge when the time comes to reward our faithfulness.[95]

Don Bosco was working with the young who had no friends in the city and who needed persons to emulate. Thus Jesus as friend and model, a martyr of the way of the cross, became important in the Salesian education. Don Bosco did not dwell on Jesus as a youth or as a worker

[92]Bosco, *Il Giovane Provveduto*, 42.

[93]Stella, *Don Bosco: Religious Outlook and Spirituality*, 102–3.

[94]*Constitutions of the Salesian Society of St. Francis of Sales* (London: The Salesian Press, 1949), n. 1–2.

[95]Eugenio Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 17: 258.

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at Nazareth. In His last hours Christ showed the fullness of His love for persons and made Himself worthy of being loved. However, more often Don Bosco saw Christ as Master and model than as companion and friend.[96] He is the master of wisdom. "He said about Himself that He was the only Son of God, the Savior promised to men who came from heaven to earth to show them the road to salvation."[97] The savior is a Teacher. Don Bosco preferred Christ's moral teaching on penance and forgiveness of injuries, detachment from riches, and the denial of self-love. When Don Bosco wrote his *Stora sacra* he chose the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son, the Ten Virgins, the Rich Man, and Lazarus. These are stories which have immediate practical applications. For him the whole life of Christ was a lesson to ponder and imitate. In the Salesian Constitutions he wrote that "by imitating the virtues of Our Divine Savior," the members of the society will perfect themselves. He wrote in another booklet:

> The model which every Christian has to copy is Jesus Christ. No one can boast that he belongs to Jesus Christ if he does not endeavor to imitate Him. Consequently in the life and actions of a Christian the life and actions of Jesus Christ himself should be revealed.[98]

Certain aspects of the mysteries of Christ were more important for Don Bosco as shown in his topics. They are the obedience of Jesus, His humility, and His constant poverty, from the crib to the cross. This was part of the spirit of the age that looked to the suffering Christ, broken, under the weight of the sins of the world. Don Bosco added one more image later on: the gentleness and kindness of Christ who looks for the wandering sheep and who caresses little children.

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[96]Francis Desramaut, *Don Bosco and the Spiritual Life* (New York: Don Bosco Publications, 1979), 83.

[97]Giovanni Bosco, *Maniera Facile per Imparare la Storia Sacra* (Turin: Paravia, 1877), 59.

[98]Giovanni Bosco, *La Chiave del Paradiso* (Turin: Paravia, 1857), 20.

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> Every one who reads the Gospel knows that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin named Mary by the sole power of the Holy Spirit[,] that he was born in a stable, that he lived by the work of his hands and that he possessed all the virtues especially kindness and gentleness.[99]

Peter Stella observed that Don Bosco would present his principles and beliefs through the stories he wrote about his pupils (Savio, Magone, Bessuco). His effort to live up to the gentleness of Jesus was shown in how he dealt with the boys. There were three classes of them at the Oratory for the first ten years: 1) Those who came from other regions to find seasonal work and opportunities in the city. After 1850, these became fewer in number as the city grew. 2) The second group consisted of those who lived in the tenements of industrial zones where there were no schools and few parishes. They were often dirty, smelly, ill, and unsupervised. Even if they lived with responsible parents these might be working ninety hours a week during peak times. 3) Finally, there were those who attended the Catholic elementary schools for the poor, run by the Christian Brothers. They were the most consistent element of the Oratory in attendance, the better instructed and generally the most easily guided.

The first two categories were the poor and abandoned youth who were Don Bosco's first concern. They would not find jobs or were idle on Sundays and Holy Days. They tended to form gangs (bad companions) and get into trouble legally, morally, or both. Their attendance at the Oratory fluctuated a great deal depending on the season, work and other factors. After some training, the boys in the third group were to leaven the mass. These led the singing and reading which were important for all.[100] These young associates were valuable. Since most of them lived in the same neighborhood as the others, Don Bosco was also using prevention in their case. The youth who were frequenting the Oratory were generally not young boys but adolescents and young men. About three quarters were between

[99]Giovannni Bosco, *Storia Sacra* (Turin: Paravia, 1877), 285.

[100]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 2: 71.

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eleven and fifteen; many were in their late teens and a few in their early twenties. After the establishment of the oratory hospice in 1850, the average age came down.[101]

To help him in ministering to these boys, Fr. Louis Guala and Fr. Joseph Cafasso, professors at the Convitto, offered their services for confessions and were so generous with prizes to attract the boys to the Oratory.[102] These two priests also asked the other priests to help out in the work of the Oratory when the boys were numerous.[103] They allowed the boys to use the premises of the Convitto at first, then loaned the lot adjacent to the institute. Fr. Cafasso and Fr. Guala also provided funds for celebrations and feasts.[104] Don Bosco received other goods from other benefactors but he used all of these for the boys. He retained very little for himself.

At the beginning, the Oratory had no fixed place. Despite this, its membership grew daily. There was no place to meet because in those times people were afraid of a large group of two hundred working boys who were enjoying a day's freedom from the imprisonment of a factory.[105] Every Sunday they would meet in a different spot: a city church, a cemetery chapel, or an empty lot. Don Bosco would hear their confessions and celebrate Mass for them. An hour of religious instruction would follow. This would be plain, homely talks coming from the heart and embodying the solid truths of the faith. Then the priest would take his gypsy band into the country for an all-day outing of games. A final talk would close the "Oratory day," and the tired bunch would trail into Turin, scattering to their homes along the way.

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[101]Stella, *Don Bosco: Life and Works*, 234.

[102]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 2: 72.

[103]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 2: 108.

[104]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 2: 110.

[105]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 2: 71.

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During the week, Don Bosco used to tour the city shops, checking on his boys, making sure they had not forgotten his instructions to work hard and work well. The employers welcomed the priest's visits. The employers were happy to give work to the apprentices who were cared for in a fatherly manner on Sundays and weekdays. Due to this religious training, the boys became more punctual and faithful in their work.[106] The growth of his Oratory was of course due to his prayers, his kindness and gentleness, not only in dealing with the boys but also with their employers and his benefactors. Most of these were done because Don Bosco made Jesus the Companion at work and a Model of all the virtues.

It should be noted that this problem of young workers in Turin at that time was part of the migration spawned by industrialization (1844–1848). Don Bosco was not alone in his concern. In 1845 there were two other schools that were catering to the needs of young workers: a school of mechanics under Charles Guiullio, and a school of industrial chemistry under Ascanio Sobrero. Young laborers were also flocking to the Brothers of the Christian Schools to take lessons sponsored by the government agency that provided vocational training for the poor. In 1847, the number of would-be students surpassed six hundred, most of whom were amateurs and only seventy were qualified workers. Everything grew from this desire to help the young workers.

The Salesian priests and brothers took the examples of Don Bosco and practiced this spirituality of friendship and personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, whom they know through prayer, the Eucharist, and the Word.[107] This friendship brings about an Easter spirituality of joy in action that develops a positive attitude of hope in both the natural and supernatural resources of the person, and presents Christian life as a path to happiness.[108] This friendship with Jesus does not stand alone.

[106]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 2: 74.

[107]CSFSDB, n. 12, 34.

[108]CSFSDB, n. 17.

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For Don Bosco this was closely knit with a Marian spirituality where one entrusts oneself simply and trustingly to the maternal help of Mary, the mother of Jesus.[109] The adult lay Salesian lives this closeness with Jesus and Mary in what is called the "preventive system" of education. It is a way of constantly listening to God and to man. For Don Bosco, a fully educated person is one who is able to educate one's self and others. This is a criterion of spiritual maturity. This system uses three elements: reason, religion, and kindness.

Reason has been dealt with in the section for creation. Kindness will be included in the community. The third element of the preventive system is the faith, which had been accepted and responded to. Religion represents the meeting point between the mystery of God and mystery of persons linked with faith of one's history and culture, but also inspired by God's call. Faith invites one to imitate God's patience, and to meet people at their current stage of freedom. This faith does not impose itself on others. Faith helps people to discover the countenance of Jesus. Listening to the Word, the celebration of Sacraments, Eucharist and Penance, commitment to charity and witness, and the happiness of living under the gaze of a loving Father can be proposed within an ecumenical approach. Here what is meant is a daily attitude, which is neither simple human love nor supernatural charity alone. Loving kindness encourages the others to form bonds of close friendship with Jesus and His Project. This degree of relationship with Christ opens up in the workers the radicalism of the Gospel with commitment and generosity. The terms that Don Bosco used for Jesus—Friend, Teacher, and Savior—are the terms that describe the centrality of the person of Jesus in the spiritual experience of the young. The personal dimension of the relationship "Jesus is my friend and companion" is a spur to knowledge of the totality of the mystery of Christ, who died and rose again.[110] Don Bosco's constant concern was to educate to the faith, walking "side by side with the young so

[109]CSFSDB, n. 20, 34.

[110]GC 23, n. 167.

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as to lead them to the risen Lord," so that they might grow "into new men." For Don Bosco "education is a matter of the heart." The journey of spirituality requires a new heart. This contact with the Risen Lord produces a deep and enduring conversion leading to an intense love for life.[111] Don Bosco called this the Oratorian heart.

Just like in the Salesian priest and brother, the encounter with the risen Jesus brings about joy in the life of the young workers. Don Bosco was the saint of the joy of living the daily life. He said, "Holiness consists in being very happy."[112] To the marginalized young workers of his time, Don Bosco put the possibility of living life as a feast, and faith as happiness. Music, the theatre, outings, sport, the joyful daily rough and tumble of a playground have always been valued in Salesian pedagogy as educative elements of primary importance. These activities generate a lot of energy for doing good, which will be channeled, in due time, into a commitment of service and charity. For a Salesian, a feast is not just a relief, nor is it forgetting of hard realities. It is rather a means for building friendship, for developing whatever is positive in young people. This style of holiness does not play down the gospel demands and educational obligations. For Don Bosco, the source of joy is the life of grace which obliges the youngster to undertake a difficult apprenticeship in ascesis and kindness.[113] The influence of the Christ-event allows the Salesians and the young workers to experience the joy and transforming power of Jesus' love. This experience of being loved empowers the individual to be sensitive to charity and to transform society into a more loving one. This experience implies the guidance of the community through the Church's teaching. This experience of Jesus in the sacraments and in the community answers the challenge of Bregolin to share the love of Christ with others.

[111]GC 23, n. 168.

[112]Stella, *Don Bosco: Life and Works*, 31.

[113]GC 23, n. 165.

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In missionary territories, one finds ways of educating to the faith which is gradual and specific. In a secular setting, religion will start from the experiences of transcendence and the demands arising from sense of life and death, pain and love, but without concealing the beam of light which comes from faith. Amongst great monotheistic traditions and religions, the first educative dialogue will be with the lay people who are nearest, to recognize with them the grace present in such religions, encourage the desire for prayer, and maximize the fragments of gospel and of educative wisdom present in culture and life experiences of people. But with people of goodwill who do not manifest any specific religious attachment, the system aims at finding and welcoming the spark of truth deposited in every human heart, at fostering the dialogue of life, especially in the concern for human life and in promoting the dignity of women which prepares the way for more profound exchanges.[114]

### *Redemption and the Salesians*

The third image of Jesus for Don Bosco was Jesus as Divine Savior. This image of Jesus stands out in Don Bosco's historical comments, in his apologies, in his catechism, and in his preaching. This is Jesus who came down from heaven to redeem persons from the bondage of sin and save them from eternal death. Don Bosco wrote, "Jesus Christ taught us all that is necessary for us to believe and to do for our salvation."[115] Don Bosco saw salvation as identified in an institution, like the Church. The Divine Savior is viewed as the Institutor, Founder, and Legislator, and He is venerated and heard in those who are His vicars and representatives:

> Our divine Savior who came down from heaven to save us, willed to establish a means that would ensure the deposit of faith by the founding of a spiritual kingdom on earth. This kingdom is His Church, the congregation of the Christian faithful all over the world.

[114]GC 24, n. 94–95.

[115]Bosco, *Storia Sacra*, 158.

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> They profess the teaching of Jesus Christ under the leadership of its legitimate pastors, of the Roman Pontiff in particular who is its God appointed head.[116]

In addition to the traditional understanding of Jesus as Savior, Don Bosco also used the term "Divine Savior" since during his times there was a flood of errors, indifferentism, and blasphemous irreligion. "Divine" affirmed a faith that was being combated and repudiated by many people. "Savior" meant something special given the spiritual dangers that souls and the Church were going through as they aspired for the safe haven of eternity.[117]

This salvation of Jesus is expressed in the sacrament of Reconciliation. This sacrament celebrates the love of God. The sacrament enhances interpersonal relationships and creates conditions for the fulfillment of one's duties. This sacrament, in the system of Don Bosco, sustains the on-going conversion and renewal of heart, so that the young can give oneself to God totally. For Don Bosco, the sacrament was extended in spiritual direction. This would strengthen adherence to God through a joyful sharing of life. Don Bosco saw that when the young are sustained by a love which is understanding and forgiving, they find the strength to recognize their own sinfulness and weakness, and their need for support and guidance. They resist the temptation to self-sufficiency, and offer pardon in exchange for the reconciliation they have received. The young are educated to a respect for other persons, and form a right and consistent conscience. The regular encounters with Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation can accelerate the process of conversion and renewal.[118]

When Don Bosco started gathering the young workers, he called it "the Oratory," a term which suggested prayer and organized recreation.

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[116]Giovanni Bosco "Redemption," in *The Month of May* (Turin: G.B. Paravia, 1857), 33.

[117]Stella, *Don Bosco: Religious Outlook and Spirituality*, 107–8.

[118]GC 23, n. 175.

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The primary purpose of the Oratory was to teach boys to go to Church and pray (encounter Christ in the Sacraments). Its objectives were the practice of religion and virtue, the boys' moral education, and the salvation of their souls; recreation, entertainment, singing and schooling, which followed, were only the means. This was for boys who had recently been released from prison, who were in moral danger and in need of religious instruction. The Oratory boys included stonecutters, bricklayers, road pavers, plasterers, and others who came from distant villages. They were not church goers and had few friends, and so they were more susceptible to temptations.[119]

> On feast days I gave all my time to my youngsters[;] during the week I would go to visit them at their work in factories and workshops. Not only were the youngsters happy to see a friend taking care of them, [but] their employers were pleased gladly[,] retaining youngsters who were helped during the week and even more on feast days when they were in greater danger.[120]

Jesus as Divine Savior gives this strong message to the young workers that there is help for them especially in the community of the Church, through whom Jesus acts to save them. Jesus is the Truth that saves them from ignorance. He is Life to save them from meaninglessness and lack of power. He is the Way to save them from confusion. This is experienced in a powerful way in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Jesus' powerful aid in the Eucharist is given to those who believe in Him so that they too, like Him, may carry their own cross and afflictions after Him. He wrote to a sister professing with the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians: "You should be happy of any disturbance and uneasiness that you might feel for the way of the cross will lead you to God. Glory is attained only by great effort. We are not alone but

[119]Bosco, *Memoirs of the Oratory*, 195.

[120]Bosco, *Memoirs of the Oratory*, 198.

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Jesus is with us."[121] In the evening of November 11, 1875, when he was sending the first batch of missionaries to South America, he insisted, "Go then. You will have to face all kinds of trials, hardships, and danger. Do not be afraid: God is with you."[122] As he taught his followers to live the paschal mystery of suffering towards a better life, Don Bosco showed his own way of carrying a particular cross. He was not in good graces with his own Archbishop for some unfounded allegations but when the chance to publish something against Archbishop Lawrence Gastaldi came, he still defended the Archbishop. His permission to hear confessions in the Archdiocese was not renewed for flimsy reasons. Don Bosco assured the rest: "it is far better that we suffer a little, bow our heads and keep our peace."[123]

Don Bosco considered Jesus in the Eucharist as Someone who would be there everyday in the midst of difficulties and sufferings and help to carry them. This is well described in a talk he gave to the novices on December 13, 1875:

> When we follow our Divine Master, we must be prepared to endure everything for His sake. Whether this means cold or heat or discomfort, tasteless food, or anything else, we should still be glad that we are able to suffer a little for Jesus, who suffered so much for our sake. We must suffer, in fact, we must be crucified with Jesus. The cross is His banner, His standard. How do you expect to be a disciple of Jesus if you whimper and cry because of the food, or because the work assigned seems too hard? Let us meditate often on the crucifixion of Jesus. Let us think of the intense suffering He endured for our sake. If we remember how Jesus was obedient, we will not find obedience burdensome. Being poor will not be a burden when we recall Jesus died on the cross in extreme poverty.[124]

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[121]Eugenio Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 11 (New York: Salesiana Publishers, 1964), 338.

[122]Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 11: 362.

[123]Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 11: 449–59.

[124]Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 11: 482–83.

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Father Mauro Ricci, Superior General of the Piarists, vouched for the importance of the crosses in the life of Don Bosco:

> In meditation before the crucifix he drew that mighty spark which enabled him to make up for so much religious and moral damage and replace it with durable institutions which had in themselves the power to reach out to all the world. Today, we explain many things by blaming the environment, but Don Bosco built his own ambience on the inspiration that came from God.[125]

### *Eschatology and the Salesians*

Jesus in the Eucharist is the One who loves human beings: God-with-us, benign, patient, full of love and enkindling others with His love. His presence gives one the strength to carry daily difficulties with perseverance and serenity. Jesus as judge evokes the last things. Don Bosco presented the Christ of the last things as a fearsome and awesome Christ, the Christ of wrath and punishment. The time of mercy will come to an end after death. This was influenced by the poplar devotion at that time. He wrote in his prayer book for youth *The Companion of Youth*:

> Your soul will look for help to the Divine Mercy, and there will no longer be any mercy for it because the time of mercy ends with death. Your soul will look for help to the angels, the saints, and Mary most holy. In the name of them all she will reply, "Now you ask for my help? You who did not want me for your mother in life. Now I no longer know you for my child. Finding no escape, the sinner will cry for the mountain and rocks to cover him but they will not move. He will invoke hell and see it open. At that moment the exorable Judge will deliver the terrible sentence 'Faithless child get far away from me. My heavenly Father has cursed you, I curse you be off into eternal fire.'[126]

The young, the layperson, the Salesian who heard such a sermon would be afraid and anxious to ask for pardon immediately. We do not use

[125]Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 12: 456.

[126]Bosco, *Il Giovane Provveduto*, 42–46.

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such an approach today, but it was effective during their times. What was important is that for Don Bosco, Jesus as Judge was a potent challenge for conversion. The aim of Don Bosco was to make the listener pray:

> My Jesus, grant me the grace to be one of those blessed ones. Most Holy Virgin, help me, protect me in life and in death and especially when I will present myself to your Divine Son to be judged.[127]

Don Bosco set young workers on the road to a simple, serene and happy form of holiness, bringing together in a single vital experience the playground, serious study, and a constant sense of duty, all leading the young to growth and transcendence. He offers today, as a faithful response to the love of God, an invaluable rereading of the Gospel in the spirit of the beatitudes. The beatitudes manifest God in the life of the young, and what a believer should commit towards the construction of the Kingdom. While doing one's duty joyfully, one is challenged to take up the cross and follow Christ as the paschal dimension of the evangelical option. This contributes to human development according to the stature of Christ who died and rose again. Outside this journey of faith, one's growth becomes difficult.[128]

The young people would be reminded that rebuilding their lives in the light of the Gospel requires detachment even from good things. Freedom, justice, solidarity, and materiality often bring a young worker to decide: either to stay with Jesus, the Lord, and accept the hardships associated with faith, or to choose to live his life outside Christ's influence. This is a crucial moment. It is a difficult but necessary decision that has to be made so as to reach the integration of living with the Lord of life and history.[129]

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[127]Bosco, *Il Giovane Provveduto*, 43.

[128]GC 23, n. 165.

[129]GC 23, n. 166.

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The encounter with Christ Incarnate in the Eucharist, redeeming persons from sin and evil structures, and leading them to the fullness of life, is part of the whole process of an education to love. The education in faith includes not only conscience formation but also this education to love. Love is a fundamental dimension of the person which gives sense to existence, opening it to understanding and oblation. When this love is in a muddled context, it is not open to the future. Since it is blinded by present feelings, it impedes one's own growth and that of others. Happiness will be equated with pleasure. The environment created by people who live with similar experiences creates a kind of generalized culture which encourages them. An authentic understanding of love is only seen against the background of God. It is God who has willed the reciprocal relationship between men and women, and calling them to a deep communion able to signify the very reality of God himself.[130]

The mystery of Christ, His Incarnation, Redemption, coming back in glory, and the events of one's life provide the full revelation of true love. For the young to experience this, they need an educative environment wherein communication and affective exchanges challenge them to be better. The experience of acceptance, recognition, esteem, and love is the best lesson on love itself. The integral education of the person and the sustaining power of grace can bring the young to appreciate the authentic values of respect for themselves and others. This grace-laden education allows the young to recognize the dignity of the individual, transparency in relationships, fidelity, and self-giving. In living this way, they proclaim the Kingdom and denounce every form of exploitation and slavery.[131] Friendly encounters at work, when lived as moments of mutual enrichment, can initiate dialogue and concern for each other. In this process each one discovers the other, accepts them as they are, and respects their dignity as persons.

[130]GC 23, n. 194.

[131]GC 23, n. 196–97.

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The examples of persons who live this kind of love has the force of witness. If this witnessing is shown by a friend, as Don Bosco wants his followers to be, then the impact is stronger. In this situation, the young workers would find themselves, God in their work, and their specific calling in the work place. The witness of the Salesian priest, lay adult or youth leader who lives, in a clear and happy manner, the offering of oneself in one's work will definitely impress others. The young worker staying at the side of the Salesian will begin to wonder about the Lord of life who can fill the heart of a creature completely. From this experience of love in the Eucharist, in the community, the young worker will be clear about the meaning of life. Fraternal service to the poor and the "little ones," guided and gradual contact with situations of suffering due to injustice, will lead to gratuitous love. Careful catechesis will lead young workers to understand the reality and dimensions of this love; it will lead them to the acceptance of the plan of God who is Love and the source of all love, and it will prepare them for its realization in Christian ministry and even marriage.[132]

This section has shown how the Christ-event was present in Don Bosco's work and work for the young. He did not have deep thoughts about this topic but what was important for him was the practical side of the Incarnation. One should see Jesus as a companion and model in the Eucharist, which was celebrated everyday in his schools and institutions. This presence of Jesus accompanying the young is still extended through the visits to the Blessed Sacrament and adoration. The good Christian example of the Salesian priest, brother, lay or even youth leader becomes part of incarnation. Jesus is present today with the young workers. Don Bosco also saw Jesus as Savior of the young from their weakness and sins. Don Bosco wanted the young to experience this salvation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which he took pains to offer as frequently as possible. Redemption will also be part of the Salesian priest, brother, adult and even youth leaders when they have to undergo difficulties for the sake of their mission amongst

[132]GC 23, n. 201–2.

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the young. Finally, Don Bosco understood that the eschatological way of looking at Jesus was as Judge at the end of time. This seemingly "frightful" presentation of Jesus often brought conversion for the young to be honest citizens and good Christians. If in terms of creation the educative work with the young is conscience formation, in the Christ-event the young workers are allowed to experience the great love of God and are challenged to live out this love. This encounter with Jesus as incarnated, as redeemer, and as judge at the end of time brings the young in loving communion with the Trinity and with the rest of the community.

## The Community and the Salesians

The Community element means working for and with others. One can point out the approach of kindness in the family spirit as part of initiating community. Bringing one in full communion with the Church is obviously included in this element. Empowering one to responsible service stemming from one's Christian vocation is another item under the heading of community. When one looks at youth spirituality one can include life within the church and responsible service. When one looks at adult lay spirituality, one finds the insertion into the Church and the approach of kindness in the family spirit as items which can contribute to community life. Although one can notice that there are some elements which could also fall under Christ-event like ecclesial communion and responsible service, all inspired by Jesus, the author has decided to include them under community since service builds up the community, and the Church is part of the larger community of humanity and country.

Francis de Sales and Don Bosco loved and served the Church. Both had constantly devoted their efforts to defend sound doctrine, to encourage other shepherds, and to venerate the successor of Peter even in difficult situations. More than once they both paid dearly for their loyalty and obedience with varied and harsh sufferings. Both had to cope with the instability brought about by political problems. In delicate situations, both were always outspokenly true ministers of Christ.

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One appreciates the ministry of Don Bosco with workers as a response to the need of the times. His efforts to rehabilitate and to prevent as much as possible harm inflicted on the young workers inspired everything. There was the early phase where his main concern was to find jobs and decent employers for his boys. This was to ensure that their terms of employment were fair. He visited them in the shops or workshops where they were employed, even when this involved mounting the scaffoldings of houses that were being built. He placed the boys with good Christian employers in an environment that would not make them immoral or even bring them to prison. His prison visits had shown how boys could end up. He stipulated the terms of their contracts so as to prevent the exploitation that was then so common, especially in the case of apprentices.

There were two types of contracts of apprenticeship as preserved in the Salesian Archives, both signed by the employer, the apprentice, the father, and Don Bosco. These were in November 1851 and February 1852. The employer promised to teach the boy the trade, to instruct him as required, to impose fair rules, to correct the boy kindly and not with blows should he fail in some way, and not to demand services that lie outside his trade. The boy must be free on all Sundays and days of obligation and must be given suitable weekly wages, with half yearly increments. The employer is to behave towards the boy not like a master but a father. For his part, the young apprentice promises to be attentive, willing, diligent, docile, respectful, obedient, and to repair any damage he may cause. The contract was to run for two to three years.[133]

The second phase came about when Don Bosco saw how his boys in the workshops of Turin were in constant danger. He wanted to prevent young workers from listening to dirty talk, the ridiculing of religion, and bad language. He gradually got the idea of setting up

[133]Silvio Tramontin, "Don Bosco and the World of Work," in Patrick Egan and Mario Midali, eds., *Don Bosco's Place in History: Acts of the First International Congress on Don Bosco Studies* (Roma: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1993), 253–54.

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workshops in his own house. He opened workshops for shoemaking and tailoring in 1853, bookbinding in 1854, woodwork in 1855, a print shop in 1861, and a metal works shop in 1862.[134] The structure of workshops was pre-industrial, with the crafts masters, workers and apprentices all working together. They were not considered as true trades schools where investments were made for purely social reasons, but rather as craft businesses. Craft businesses produced marketable goods, which were needed by the workers. They would produce more than they needed and sold them. However, unlike in the craft businesses, the produce of the oratory benefited the artisans so they would not have to be subsidized so heavily out of the boarding fees of the students. This approach was something new. These were not professional schools in the strict sense, but found their way in the world of labor and production without the concomitant danger of depersonalization and exploitation. The Oratories were not just convenient pools of workers, craft factories or new industries; they were genuine unions of workers.[135]

In this second phase of serving young workers, Don Bosco encountered a serious problem. He could not rely on some craft masters who would leave their jobs without any previous warning. In this situation, Don Bosco saw it was preferable for the more advanced among the apprentices to instruct the others, even if the end product was less perfect. Out of this situation grew the idea of having "coadjutor or lay brothers." This name was used in 1854, when one out of thirty-nine of the young or slightly older lay people performed domestic duties in the house or in the workshops. They were odd job men, sweepers, waiters on table, or assistants to the craft masters in charge of the workshops. These evolved into the Salesian coadjutors, with or without vows, who became themselves real craft masters. This ensured the continuity of instruction and provided a higher degree

[134]Pietro Stella, *Don Bosco: Nella Storia Economica e Sociale 1815–1870* (Roma: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1980), 505.

[135]Tramontin, "Don Bosco and the World of Work," 255.

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of care for the pupils. This arrangement lessened the young workers' exposure to dangers from apprenticeships with employers who were morally doubtful. In addition, this provided both moral and material help, created friendships and collaboration, and inspired some to join the religious life as coadjutors.[136]

The third phase was the setting up of professional schools. This was again in answer to certain needs of specialization and a more complete formation. As the method of production changed, a corresponding change in worker training was called for. The demand was not for changeless simple products. People wanted variety. Years of assiduous preparation were needed, combining study and practical work, so that planning and openness to new ideas progressed with the acquisition and the perfection of manual skills. More workshops were turned into professional institutes of arts and trades. This happened sometime in 1876 and was discussed in the Third and Fourth General Chapter.[137]

Just to show what Don Bosco instituted, and the communities and network that he formed, Giovanni Agnelli, when he welcomed religious and civic dignitaries to Fiat in 1929, said:

> The disciples and followers of Blessed Don Bosco, this great Piedmontese that Turin particularly venerates and celebrates today, will feel pulsing in this place a rhythm of life that would not have displeased the Beatus who was [a] noble hero of charity as well as a most enthusiastic apostle of human labor. He was a man who released exceptional energies and discovered untapped forces, a tireless founder of workshops and factories.[138]

Don Bosco did not only bring together abandoned boys in order to prepare them for jobs by founding workshops and professional schools. He forged closer links with labor by his entrepreneurial enterprise in setting up and developing printing houses.

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[136]Stella, *Don Bosco: Nella Storia Economica*, 123–99.

[137]Tramontin, "Don Bosco and the World of Work," 257.

[138]Tramontin, "Don Bosco and the World of Work," 257.

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In addition to rebutting the inroads of other sects and to ensure the Catholic education of the young and their families, and to ensure that the young workers had a safe community environment in his premises, Don Bosco set up the printing press. Reading materials affected the faith of the young people and workers in those days. He was author, compiler and proofreader, and at the same time he was following up his boys.[139] He appreciated the importance of the printed word. His first published book was *Cenni storici Sulla vita del Chierico Luigi Comollo*. Three thousand copies were printed and sold at a modest price of thirty cents. He also printed devotional books like *Giovane Provveduto*, which in 1847 ran to one thousand copies. There were school texts like *Storia Ecclesiatica* and *Storia Sacra*. His more famous periodical among others was *Letture Cattoliche*, which began in 1853. He was printing them with different establishments like Pravia, Marietti and De Agostini, but by 1853–55 he started thinking of founding his own printing works for greater freedom and more savings. This materialized in 1862. Socially speaking he became an entrepreneur who was investing his capital in the cause of philanthropy. The printing house became the dynamic center of the Valdocco workshops. Don Bosco invested much in improving machinery, starting a book binding shop and binding press works, and opening a bookshop that by 1891 employed two hundred people. He displayed a flair for management.[140]

In April 1884, during the National Exhibit for Science, Industry and Art in Turin, Don Bosco was given a pavilion all his own. The pavilion was identified with a banner: "Don Bosco's Paper Mill, Print Shop, Type Foundry, Bookbinding Establishment and Salesian Bookstore." It was out of place since in those days a priest was not considered an exhibitor in the Labor section of the national exhibit. The work and the laborers of the pavilion impressed the visitors. The laborers were all boys of varying ages who won over the admiration of all the visitors because of their dedication to their task, their

[139]Stella, *Don Bosco: Life and Works*, 119.

[140]Stella*, Don Bosco: Nella Storia Economica,* 351–69.

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concentration, and their competence. He not only proved that the clergy too could be concerned with arts and progress. He also gave a good example on how to sanctify Sundays since all the machines were at standstill on Sunday.[141]

Another offshoot of Don Bosco's concern for workers and to build community was the Mutual Aid Society organized on July 1, 1850 at the Oratory chapel. This was inspired by the work of the guilds or confraternities. This Society assisted the members in fulfilling their religious duties and at the same time provided them with adequate apprentice training, employment, and savings, and helped the sick and aged. It also loaned money to the young, married men, and the necessary funds for sacred services. It was to combat La Giardiniera, a sort of workers association, which was the hangout for thieves and usurers. The members could enjoy the benefits after six months of admission. Those admitted should be members of the St. Aloysius Sodality. The spiritual director of the Sodality was the official visitor who would bring the subsidy to the sick, as well as spiritual advice and the Sacraments.[142] The members were to pay one soldo or five cents each Sunday, and after having been members for six months were subsidized to fifty cents a day if one were ill or unemployed. The cash reserve was augmented by voluntary contributions of benefactors, as was common with such societies at that time. The contributions made by the members taught them to save. This also educated them in the spirit of solidarity. In this respect Don Bosco was an innovator. He anticipated health insurance, indemnity against accidents and a community chest. Don Bosco did much for the youth of his time. One question which was troubling him was who would continue this follow up or work side by side with young workers and assist the young to be honest citizens and good Christians? Thus Don Bosco was inspired to put up the Society of St. Francis de Sales.

[141]Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 17: 219–24.

[142]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 4: 518–20.

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Don Bosco's times were unsuited for a new religious congregation. However, his friend and benefactor Archbishop Fransoni, the bishop of Turin at that time, encouraged him to put one up to keep up the apostolate for the young workers.[143] Those already in existence were being torn down by a destructive campaign of political radicals and self-styled freethinkers. It was a liberal-minded politician who had closed convent doors who first suggested the idea of a new religious congregation to Don Bosco. "Start a new order and have you suppress it in its cradle?" smiled the saint. "No, your case is different. You work for the poor. Your schools really belong to the working classes. No one will resent what you do. Make sure your religious keep their status as citizens, and we won't touch you."

Pope Pius IX suggested that he put up a congregation in such a way that the government cannot interfere with it, and with more than simple vows.[144] In the second audience on March 1858, Pope Pius IX instructed John Bosco to "write down these dreams and everything else you have told me minutely and in their natural sense. He had to save all this as legacy for your congregation so that it may serve as an encouragement and norm for his sons".[145] John Bosco had something prepared for the occasion, which the Holy Father appreciated.[146]

Still under Blessed Mary's guidance, Don Bosco set about the task. His own boys were the best material: little Michael Rua, who idolized him, tough Johnny Cagliero, hardworking Johnny Francesia, self-willed Paul Albera, and several others. They would be the pioneers in this experiment of a new religious congregation. "Would you like to stay with Don Bosco?" he asked them. "I'll do the work of four!" was Cagliero's stalwart answer. The others agreed. The Congregation

[143]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 4: 21.

[144]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 4: 561.

[145]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 4: 577.

[146]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 4: 637–44.

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of St. Francis de Sales was born on the night of December 18, 1859. The painstaking work of organization, based on experiment and experience, and of drawing up rules for the Holy See to approve followed suit. It required a genius in the delicate art of human relations. The Congregation was approved in 1869, and five years later, so were the Constitutions. Later on, under the inspiration of the same dream, he instituted the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians to do for girls what the Salesians were doing for the young men. In September 1876, during a retreat, Don Bosco narrated a dream where he saw the vast work of Salesians. He was given this advice: "Take heed[;] you must have these words engraved on your coat-of arms as your watchword, your badge. Note them well: Work and Temperance will make the Salesian Congregation flourish."[147]

It was his policy to do things tactfully and in such a way as to make them gradually attractive and voluntary rather than burdensome. The first Salesians were mostly young clerics and priests. Besides pursuing their own studies, they were teaching and supervising classes. From the middle of August to the middle of September during summer time, they would handle the make-up courses for those who had back subjects. During this hot season these priests and clerics could find their ministry more taxing because they would have to take the boys on more frequent and longer walks to make their stay more pleasant. In the middle of all this, they were busy winding up the past school year in August. These founding priests and brothers would have a lot to do in September and October to be ready for the new school year.[148]

In 1876, when accused that he was killing his collaborators with work, he replied:

> For each one of us who might die of overwork a hundred others would be drawn to the Congregation. Yes, it is true and I am ever proud to say: we work hard. But this has nothing to do with the priests who

[147]Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 12: 338.

[148]Lemoyne, *Biographical Memoirs* 8: 198.

https://publications.lst.edu/

> died in our community as victims of overwork. Each of them suffered from illnesses which doctors diagnosed as incurable. But how glorious a death it would be to die from overwork. Our congregation will keep growing as long as we work hard and are ruled by temperance. But I also see a marked tendency towards comfort, which frightens me.[149]

In another occasion, he remarked:

> There are three things that bring about the fall of religious congregations. The first is idleness, too little work. We must set to work more than we can actually do and then, who knows, we may manage to do all we can. The second cause is being fastidious about food and drink. Once one has eaten he must take a nap. The body may rest, but the imagination and passions grow strong. The third cause of decline is egoism or a spirit of reform or grumbling. It's all the same to me. When a subordinate does not agree with his superiors' actions, he complains, suggests other policies and demands that things be done to suit him.[150] There is bread in my house, and Divine Providence provides us with it day by day. There is work and everyone has to work for free. There is Paradise because those who eat and work for God are entitled to a little corner of heaven.[151]

At the annual conference in February 1877, Don Bosco again reiterated that the best way to attract more students to the institutions would be a good reputation due to the unchallenged widespread conviction that moral behavior is above reproach. The preventive means of maintaining this would be frequent confession and communion, and constant vigilance. The other ways to keep good behavior would be to keep the young men busy at all times, and to encourage them to avoid certain types of friendships.[152]

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[149]Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 12: 274–75.

[150]Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 17: 225.

[151]Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 12: 274–76.

[152]Eugenio Ceria, *Biographical Memoirs* 13 (New York: Salesiana Publishers, 1983), 65.

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These statements should be taken in context. It has been shown earlier that Don Bosco was bringing the boys and the Salesians to his place outside the city for summer. Earlier it has been mentioned that Salesians should have the motto of "work and temperance." This temperance includes the balance of work and rest. In 1863, in a confidential directive and clarification to directors, Don Bosco wrote:

> For yourself: avoid austerity in food. Be mortified in diligently fulfilling our duties and patiently bearing annoyances. Both for your own health and that of your subjects take seven hours of rest at night, with a one hour lee way for reasonable motives. Let charity and patience be your steady guide in commanding or admonishing. Concentrate your efforts on the spiritual, physical and intellectual well being of the boys entrusted to you by Divine Providence.
>
> For teachers: See that teachers have the necessary food and clothing. Be thoughtful of their work load and when they are sick or indisposed have someone substitute for them. Talk with them often, either individually or as a group; see if they are overworked, if they need clothes or books, if they are physically or morally worn out or have disciplinary or scholastic problems with some pupils. Do your utmost to provide for any need you discover.
>
> For coadjutors and domestic personnel: If arguments or friction should arise among domestics, assistants, pupils or others, listen kindly to everyone, but as a rule give your opinion privately so that one may not hear what you say of the other.[153]

Don Bosco understood that the call of God for him was to work with the young and the workers in a holistic way. He led them to Jesus Christ, and then to concern for each other in the community, and then trained them to work for the kingdom of God. All these are summarized in his aim in education: "honest citizens of this world and good Christians."

Don Bosco insisted that communion with God should be shown in one's unity within and with the Church. The Salesian priest and brother is an advocate of communion, lived in groups in the Church,

[153]Angelo Amadei, *Biographical Memoirs* 10 (New York: Salesiana Publishers, 1977), 447–48.

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and above all in the educative community. The educative community in turn unites young people and their educators in familial surroundings, around a project of integral education of the young.[154]

To encourage this journey towards communion, the Salesian educator should be kind. The Salesian makes the first approach and welcomes others with kindness, respect, and patience. This is done in family spirit where there is welcome, mutual trust, forgiveness, and sharing where everyone is responsible for the common good.[155] Don Bosco started his work for those whose parents were in the farms while their young men were flocking to the city for work. They needed a community, for which the Church is an example and pattern. Once the Salesian priest and brother show this responsible service for Church and humanity, the young people and adults are influenced in their apostolic commitment. This becomes a vocation, a call to the Christian transformation of the world.[156]

The kindness, respect and patience of the Salesian who follows the growth of the young, and the unconditional welcome of the community, allow the young to experience the God who loves them and walks along with them. This can offset the negative experiences of absentee fathers, or hurting family relationships, and allow the young to look at the world in a different way. This approach will emphasize that at the origin of life, there is a call of God. "To love life, not as something fragmented but planned as a vocation, means accepting the appeal to become involved in the building of a humanity of justice and peace; to love it in a far-reaching way, open to culture and ideals, ready to share and work in solidarity, able to dream courageously, as Don Bosco did, of new worlds and new men."[157]

[154]CSFSDB, n. 13, 35.

[155]CSFSDB, n. 15, 16.

[156]CSFSDB, n. 32.

[157]GC 23, n. 164.

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The educator and young people work together for a project giving preference to the poorest, to promote their growth to the fullness of life after the measure of Christ the perfect man.[158] The educators stay alongside the young workers and share their experiences to help them unite faith and life. "Love what the youngsters love," Don Bosco repeats to the Salesians in the present-day situation, "so that they will come to love what you love."[159] Pope John Paul II succinctly described this approach of Don Bosco:

> Loving-kindness is expressed in practice in the commitment of the educator, adult, and lay, as a person entirely dedicated to the good of others especially the young, ready to accept sacrifices and hard work in the fulfillment of one's mission. All this calls for a real availability to the young and others, a deep empathy and the ability to dialogue with them. The true educator shares the life of the young, is interested in their problems, tries to become aware of how they see things, is ready to intervene to solve problems, to indicate criteria, and to correct with prudent and loving firmness defective judgments and behavior. In this pedagogical presence the educator is not looked upon as superior, manager, supervisor but as a parent, kin and friend.[160]

Loving-kindness is an unconditional acceptance, constructive and positive rapport, sharing joys and sorrow, and the ability to manifest educative love by signs. It invites the educator to be cordially and faithfully present among the people, committing the community to the creation of an authentic family spirit. This new educative culture finds the ways and means for bringing this relationship into public life in the world of culture, politics, and social life. This can be part of the new education open to the new evangelization. This is important to help families shed light on modern problems and an inspiration to

[158]GC 23, n. 160.

[159]GC 23, n. 96.

[160]Pope John Paul II "Discourse at the University of Turin," 4.

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create an environment of joy, dialogue, and solidarity, transforming them into authentic domestic churches.[161]

For the adult lay Salesian, together with the Salesian priests and brothers, friendly relationship is also called the "family spirit" that is expressed in serene and welcoming human relationships. Based on self-control, "to be a friend of Don Bosco" was the aim of all in the School of Don Bosco. Charity, patience, and kindness were the relational virtues Don Bosco learned from St. Francis de Sales. The right atmosphere for dialogue is friendship or rather "service" which brings about affective balance and self-giving fidelity. Personal encounters build a formative and stimulating environment. These encounters encourage group processes and accompany the young as they mature in their vocation.[162] The adult layperson should create an atmosphere for communion and community.

Together with the Salesian priests and brothers, the lay adult should be committed in the Church for the world. This is summarized in *Da mihi animas*. This commitment indicates rapport with God, relations with one's neighbor, and a unique intervention in history. It includes contemplation and action, the will to do good, and the determination to find the necessary means in inculturating the Gospel (an aspect of the new evangelization). It obliges social, civil, and political sensitivity. It gives the same attention as Don Bosco did to movements and cultural changes. Through work, carried out conscientiously and with competence, with the enhancement of one's culture, and with joyful faith, one strives to make all, equally, children of the same Father. Some elements are urgently required today like the family as the sanctuary of life, respect for the dignity of the person and one's rights, the spreading of a culture of peace, human advancement leading to more just living conditions, and the defense of the ecological balance. The participation of lay people in public life must be reasserted and sustained. It must be

[161]GC 23, n. 87–89.

[162]GC 23, n. 87–89.

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lived with a spirit of service and to give growth to justice and fraternity, directing attention to the poorest and most abandoned.[163]

For the young, spirituality is living daily life with Christ joyfully, as found in the Church and community. Christ, the Salesian educator, and other friends want to be together to share and celebrate the joy of living, and to help each other. As such, the group can be the leaven in the midst of other young people. Creating groups, linked to varied interests of their lives, institutionalizes this friendship, from games, to culture, and to religious commitment. Groups often share the same ideals and values, relationships often develop among them, and in this way they tend to become a movement of and for the young.[164]

Don Bosco was a man of communion. The personal relationship with the risen Christ and the group experience led to his filial relationship with the Church. He taught the young to live the mystery of the Church which enshrines, despite its human weakness, the invisible grace of the presence of God. Don Bosco's personal daily witness and the family environment he created in the Oratory produced in the youngsters a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility. Today, the diverse interests, gifts, and values shared in the educative community testify to the presence of the Lord who unites all in one heart and one soul. This family spirit is an effective sign of the Church, which all want to build together, for a fraternal service to those in greater need.[165]

During Don Bosco's lifetime, the young people at the Oratory flourished in concrete expressions of love for the Church and catered to Her needs. Communion continually urges the young to align themselves with all those working for the salvation and the building of the Kingdom of God. This communion is expressed in esteem

[163]GC 23, n. 89–91.

[164]GC 23, n. 169.

[165]GC 23, n. 170.

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for, and convinced adherence to, the teachings of the Holy Father and all the leaders of the Church at different levels. This communion allows the young to cooperate with all who work for the common good. This communitarian sense seeks for understanding and dialogue with those responsible for pastoral work in the vicinity, following a mature vision of faith, and capable of understanding and accepting the human aspects of the Church, with its limitations, plans, pains, and projects, and making them one's own. It is open finally to the problems of adults and the youth, which arise in various situations. Spirituality grows and can be measured by reference to the history of the individuals concerned.[166]

It is important to note that in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the sacraments are placed within the context of the Church as the foundational sacrament instead of positioning this within the element of friendship with Jesus. However, in Don Bosco's pedagogy of holiness, the meeting and relationship of friendship with the risen Christ is lived in a special way in the celebration of the sacraments.

Don Bosco's prayer was that of the good Christian: simple and popular, rooted in life. It was a festive and personal dialogue with God. It was expressed in brief and spontaneous expressions drawn from the Word of God and the liturgy. Don Bosco used to speak more frequently of "piety" (devotion) than of "prayer." "Piety" expresses the awareness of being immersed in the "fatherhood of God" and is less concerned with words than with the loving gestures of one who wants to please the Lord in everything. As each generation finds its own style of prayer in fidelity to tradition and a courageous relationship with culture and related problems, Salesian prayer, in the spirit of Don Bosco, is able to accept new styles which help youngsters to meet the Lord in daily life. Prayer is flexible and creative, and attentive to the Church's guidelines for renewal.[167]

[166]GC 23, n. 171.

[167]GC 23, n. 176.

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Salesian youth spirituality reserves a special place for the person of Mary who "infuses hope," and suggests to them some typically gospel attitudes: listening, fidelity, purity, self-donation, service.[168] Mary, invoked and honored under the title of "Helper," is for them a "sign of certain hope and comfort" (LG 68). Once they have acquired a well-motivated Marian devotion, the young discover the horizons that Mary Help of Christians opens before them: a burning apostolic zeal in the struggle against sin and against a view of the world and mankind opposed to the Beatitudes and the "new commandment."[169]

This encounter with Christ in the Church would challenge the young to live for others. Don Bosco called on his boys to become "honest citizens and good Christians." The young believer, prompted by the Spirit, is at the service of mankind. Gradually, like the Church, one should be an expert in humanity. Service is a yardstick for the journey of spirituality. The synthesis of the two elements is the mature fruit of youth spirituality.[170] To be an upright citizen implies at the present day for a young person the promotion of personal dignity and the rights that go with it, in every context; living generously in the family and preparing himself to form it on the basis of reciprocal donation; fostering solidarity, especially among the poor; development of one's own work with honesty and professional competence; promoting justice, peace and the common good in the political arena; respecting creation; fostering culture (CL 37, 44).

It has been seen how Don Bosco responded to the needs of young workers. Today new fields of service are opening up for the youth. There is the educational and cultural animation of their neighborhood to overcome marginalization and spread a culture of sharing. There is also civil and missionary volunteer work for collaborating with other

[168]CSFSDB, n. 34.

[169]GC 23*,* n. 23, 177.

[170]GC 23, n. 178.

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institutions for human advancement and evangelization.[171] Love for life, a sign of the Spirit and the style of Don Bosco, can find adequate ways to harness the energies of the young and be challenged to continue Don Bosco's mission. Vocations are born from a meaningful experience of service for the poor, in catechesis, in an oratory, in visiting the sick, in voluntary work, or in educational initiatives. In these communitarian experiences the workers ask: "Where can I express my love for life and the Lord of life?" For many the call will lead to profession and raising of a family, lived as a responsible service to the Church and mankind. For others it might be a call to the priesthood or religious life. In any case, under the guidance of the Spirit and animated by the values of Salesian spirituality, the young welcome and live out their life as a vocation.[172] For the young, spirituality starts out with daily life—work lived with joy because of Jesus' presence and inspiration, lived within the Church, through responsible service in and beyond the Church. This responsible service for the community is what Bregolin mentioned at the beginning of this research. Through life in the community, the young workers are gradually involved in projects of solidarity. One's vocational orientation grows from the experience of love and unity in community where the young are empowered to form other communities.

In summary, Don Bosco's work of catechism or formation is supposed to introduce the young to Jesus Christ who will transform them. This is called "education in the faith." This education has three moments: the formation of conscience, the education to love, and showing the young the social dimension of charity.

### *Eucharistic Spirituality and the Salesians*

In 1987, the seventh successor of Don Bosco, Egidio Vigano, beginning from the Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, proposed

[171]GC 23, n. 179.

[172]GC 23, n. 180.

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that it is Jesus who challenges the Salesians to be present among the young as a good Shepherd. The Salesian is more inspired with deeper reflections of the sacrifice of the Eucharist. Vigano stressed that in the Salesian spirituality, the Eucharist brings in the different aspects of cult, sanctification, profession of faith, self-sacrificing witness, apostolic commitment, deepening of truth, and the triumph of love. The Eucharist is presented in its full originality in the gift of self in love which has become sacrifice: the ability to make a joyful offering of the concrete and generous commitment of one's love. As a Christian Passover, the Eucharist aims at the fullness of charity, directing a person simultaneously towards its two objectives, God and Man, through an intrinsic "grace of unity" which springs from the heart of Christ where the love of the Father is the cause, the source and the strength of love for neighbor, for the poor, for the young, and for those in need.

This sacrifice underscores the value of suffering in life when it brings about an increased love through the giving of oneself in sacrifice just like Christ. Through this union with Jesus, an educator in the faith restores morality, nourishes virtues, consoles the afflicted, strengthens the weak, and proposes one's own example to those who come to him. One's sacrifice becomes educative and redemptive at the same time.

In Holy Communion, one's assimilation into Christ makes one united with His Body in order to continue His redeeming mission. With this, Eucharist becomes the secret force behind all the kindness and activity and the real significance of the Salesian educational plan. There is need to cultivate among the young workers the centrality of the Eucharistic mystery.

Hence Salesians cannot be satisfied with seeking in the Eucharist something new about God or about man. Salesians cannot stop at a simple introduction to rites (though this is necessary); nor will it suffice to celebrate mere human, youthful or social values. What is called for is a true introduction to the mystery of Christ. In this way the Eucharistic celebration will appear as a genuine meeting between existence and faith, between daily life and the Gospel, between the saving truth and current problems. When this is done, together with

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the "paschal memorial," one will grow in the discovery of love and the precious nature of life. Sacramental sensitivity with its original and symbolic richness will be developed and the attitude of contemplative adoration will be intensified. Pastoral pedagogy will be concerned in fostering active participation, the awareness of being sons in Christ, the peculiar Christian values of gratitude, the settings of solidarity, and the historical requirements of the mission.

Introducing the young "to a conscious and active participation in the Church's liturgy" then would mean, in practice for the Salesian, introducing the young to the paschal mystery. In Don Bosco's method of education it meant building up an awareness of faith and friendship, of living with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.[173]

In this letter, Vigano mentioned six important elements of the Eucharist which Salesians should cultivate:

1. Conversion: without a sense of sin, [it] is impossible to understand the central and indispensable place of Christ. On the other hand, without a deep understanding of the truth of love, sin will be incomprehensible.

2. Enlightenment by the Word of God: only the light of the Gospel can provide a valid response to life's pressing problems.

3. Awareness of the "real presence" of Christ in the New Covenant: we cannot insist too strongly on the need to make known and understood the wonders of the sacramental character of the Church in the celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass.

4. Living incorporation into Christ means that the sacramental communion is the true cradle of the new Man. It should be continually presented and inculcated as the source of deep convictions and as strength for courageous Christian behavior.

5. Mission is taking part in the saving activity of Christ. Being the Body of Christ in the world requires the daily commitment to our educational work, that of introducing young people to the apostolate.

[173]Vigano, "The Eucharist in the Apostolic Spirit of Don Bosco."

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6. Finally, the friendship of "adoration" should be encouraged without forgetting its reparation aspect.[174]

Don Bosco gave special importance to the fact of having Jesus in the house, close at hand and available to us; the inculcating of the Emmanuel mystery banishes the depression of feeling lonely, and ensures that each one has a strategic starting point for the revival of his appreciation of the good of his own existence.

This relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist not only intensifies His Presence and Sacrifice but it challenges Salesians to create community as well. This sacred meal creates community among the Salesians and this empowers the mission among the young.

> The hearing of the Word finds its privileged place in the celebration of the Eucharist. This is the central act of every Salesian community: it is a daily festive celebration in a living liturgy. There the community celebrates the paschal mystery and unites itself to the immolated body of Christ, which it receives so as to build itself in him into a fraternal communion and renew its apostolic commitment. For us sons of Don Bosco the Eucharistic presence in our houses is a reason for frequent encounters with Christ. From him we draw energy and endurance in our work for the young (CSFDS 88).

> We labor in economically depressed areas and for poor youth. We educate them to a sense of moral, professional and social responsibility. In this way we contribute to the development of both people and environment .... While not getting involved in ideologies or party politics, we reject everything that encourages deprivation, injustice and violence. We cooperate with all who are trying to build a society more worthy of man's dignity. The advancement to which we dedicate ourselves in the spirit of the Gospel makes tangible the love of Christ, which makes men free, and is a sign that the Kingdom of God is among us. (CSFDS 33)

Don Bosco's contribution to the young is the education in the faith. This education would include the three elements of conscience formation, education to love, and the social dimension of charity. All these are

[174]Vigano, "The Eucharist in the Apostolic Spirit of Don Bosco."

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found in the Eucharist where one encounters Jesus, the Teacher, who is the Truth, the Word made flesh, who would enlighten the young person. From the experience of the sacrificial love of Jesus one learns how to love others and not use them for one's own advantage. One is taught to appreciate and respect the dignity of the other person. Finally, in the Eucharist one is challenged by Jesus' presence and mission to work for unity.

## Conclusion

In this study, we have seen how the three elements for analyzing work can be found in the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales who inspired Don Bosco and his followers, Salesians priests and brothers, lay adults and the young. St. Francis de Sales's contribution was his great respect for human nature, knowing that no human being was basically bad. They were only misinformed or the person had a traumatic experience. Starting with kindness and touching the heart of the person who is ultimately created for God, and through the process of education in the faith, one allows the person to go back to the Creator and live the fullness of life that Christ won for the person. This is partly what this paper understands by creation. The sub-elements of self-expression and self-fulfillment are found in the efforts of St. Francis de Sales and Don Bosco to see the goodness of each person and the possibilities in one's life provided one is guided and helped by the community and strengthened by God. Francis de Sales saw how God was guiding him in his work for his constituents, especially empowering women in their relationships with God, and how he saw in all things, even in the obstacles (i.e. people not attending his masses), instances where he could do something better. In Don Bosco, one can find this creativity in caring for young prisoners, teaching them, and preventing them from getting into trouble again, so that they become honest citizens and good Christians. Don Bosco saw the importance of daily life wherein he gradually understood God's call for him from the prison ministry to the Sunday gatherings. During these occasions, he just provided the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, catechism, and games for the young workers. Don Bosco, inspired by the need of the young, decided to establish a boarding house and school for them.

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Don Bosco finally had his own shops for production. Don Bosco founded a Congregation of Religious to follow up this ministry for the young. This is what the Salesian priests and brothers, the Salesian sisters, his disciples, do as they look to the presence and challenge of God in the life of the young workers. This is shared by the lay partners and the young themselves.

As these young workers learned the truth about themselves and about God, they gradually found out that they were co-creators (modern term not used during Don Bosco's times) and the work that they did as honest citizens is part of continuing the work of God. As they worked, they discovered their unique capabilities and continued to grow as God wanted them to be. They discovered their vocation in the process. Many became good workers and fathers of their families. Many, too, became priests and brothers, some in the Salesian Congregation. Don Bosco underwent the same process. He did not know what he was really going to do and to be, except for the challenge of the dream when he was nine years old. However, step-by-step Don Bosco continued until he found himself marveling at what God had done through him.

The Christ-event apparently has been seen as more important in the life of Don Bosco and his followers as his dream at nine gave him a vision and mission for life. However, as has been shown through this section, Don Bosco had his own way of looking at Christ. He was more practical in stressing four aspects of Christ. They are Jesus' presence in the Eucharist, as companion and model, as Savior, and as Judge. These have not been expected by the author but they are valid since the Incarnation can be expressed in the relationship of the young worker and the Salesian with Jesus in the Eucharist in four ways: Holy Mass, Holy Communion, adoration, and regular daily visits to the Blessed Sacrament. This was a way of being close to Jesus daily, He who was Companion and Model. The young worker can look at Him as a guide in life, to do as He had done. Don Bosco stressed Jesus more as model than as a companion in one's daily life.

Jesus as Savior or the Redeemer would come in when the individual sees one's tendency to be selfish, lazy, and dishonest at work. Don

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Bosco added the sacrament of Reconciliation. Jesus in this sacrament not only forgives and heals the sin but empowers the individual to persevere in the process of conversion. That is why when the work is difficult, one's baser self would tempt the worker to stop all together, to take an improper short cut or just waste one's time. When it is the environment or the context that makes work impossible, Jesus' example of struggling, suffering, and being victorious comes in.

During the time of Don Bosco, the reminder of Jesus as Judge would intensify the challenge to the young workers to do good in spite of adverse circumstances. This is the fourth image for John Bosco and this would approximate the eschatological part of the Christ-event. While not diluting this aspect of the end times, Salesians today, would use the "new heavens and new earth" as encouragement at work, the new things that will come about with human beings' decision and participation and God's grace.

Don Bosco did not begin with work itself but with the Catechism. The Oratory was a place where the young workers prayed. If ever playing was introduced it was to attract them. "Love what the boys love, and they will love what you love," Don Bosco would say. This encounter with Jesus is through the catechism lessons, which would move on to the sacraments. The two sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation were the mainstay of his educational approach called the "preventive system." This encounter with Jesus allows for conversion, which would result in peace and joy in whatever one would do. "Run, shout, play but do not sin." This is identified as the "joy in the Risen Lord." This encounter with the Sacramental Jesus also brings about healing of traumatic experiences of the young regarding relationships. This healing will allow them to move on to improved relationships with others in the community. It is the encounter with Christ, through the intercession and example of His Mother, Mary, that allowed Don Bosco and his followers to work unceasingly to improve oneself and others, and thus hasten the kingdom.

Finally it has also been shown that Don Bosco had a passion for communion not only with God but within the Church. This invitation to communion is facilitated by the family spirit: a warm,

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human, understanding, friendly relationship with the young and with others. The result of this encounter with Christ, which leads one into community with others, allows one to work for the betterment and empowerment of others so they, too, may find fullness of life. In his life, Don Bosco was keen on working in obedience to the Holy Father and even told his boys: "the wish of the Holy Father is a command for us." He built the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Rome not only because of his love for Jesus but also because the Pope requested him to do so. He obeyed the bishops even if he was unjustly asked to do certain things like not recruiting vocations in their dioceses and not celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation in their places. Don Bosco stressed that the needs of the Church become the work place of the Salesians. He formed good Christians within the Church. He formed honest citizens who knew how to work with their hands in society.

In this study we have seen the contribution of St. Francis de Sales' sound humanism and kindness to Don Bosco's approach towards the evangelization of work and the young. This humanism centers on the goodness of persons as given a "heart" that is made for God. This is discovered and matures through the "preventive system" of Don Bosco. In this system, three elements had stood out: reason (respect for and enhancing the human condition and capacity), religion (encounter with Jesus in the Sacraments), and kindness (family spirit). These three elements of the system can approximate the three elements of the spirituality of work: Creation, Christ-event, and Community. Another way of putting these three would be seeing them in the light of education in the faith. Conscience formation would influence one's reason and allow a person to find one's proper place in creation and act accordingly. Love is experienced in a most unique and perfect way in Christ's love for humanity. This Christ-event as taught and lived in a religious setting forms the young in the real way of loving. Finally, the social aspect of charity is deepened and expanded when one experiences community life in the proper way.

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