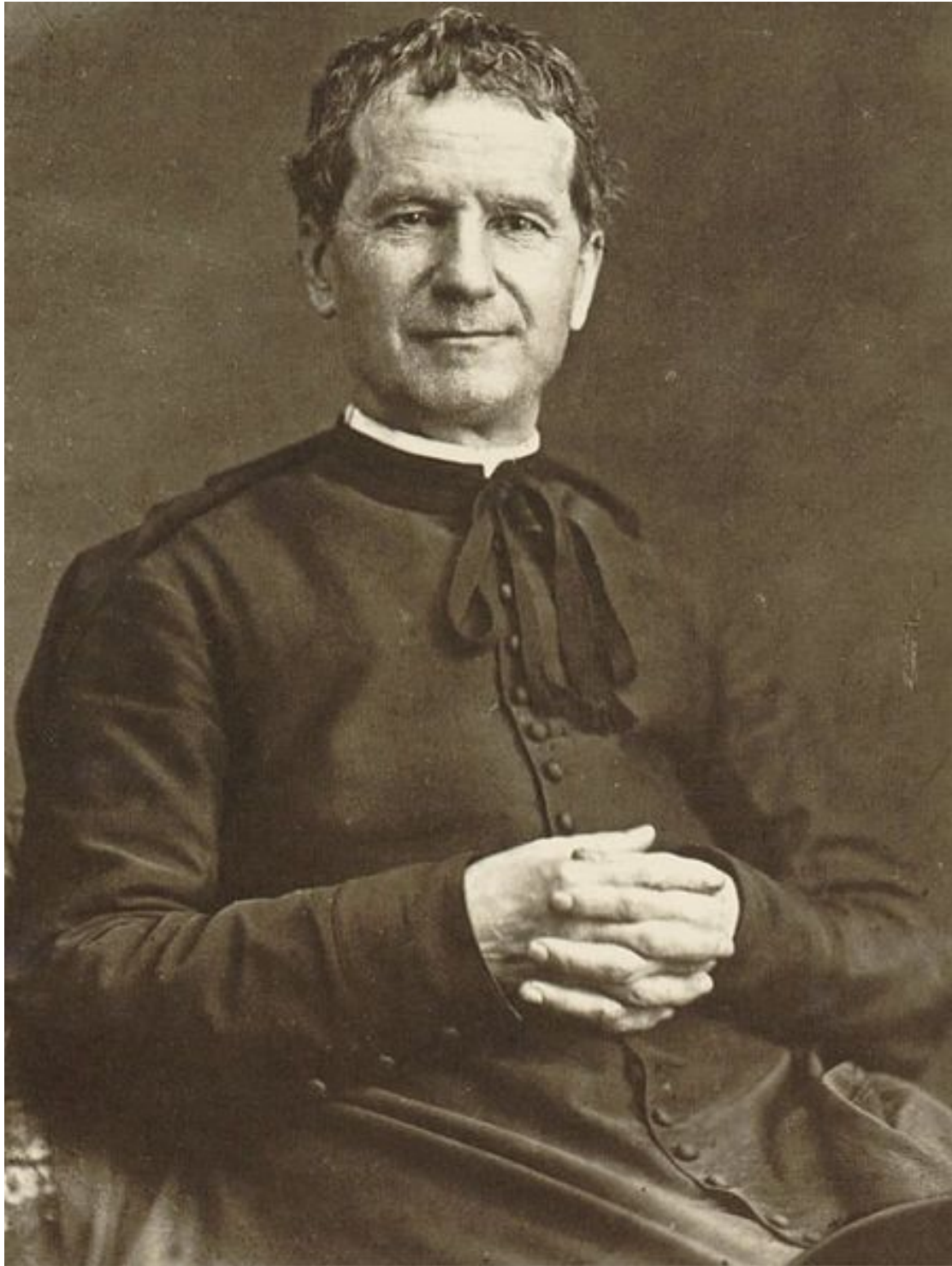


# St. Don Bosco



By Kevin Arackan

John Bosco was born on August 16, 1815 in the hills of Becchi in Italy. His father, Francis, died when John was only 2, leaving his mother Margaret to raise three boys. She taught them how to cultivate the soil, and to see God behind the beauty of the heavens, the abundance of harvest, and the rain which showered the vines. Margaret taught her children how to pray and to see God in other's faces.

At the age of nine, John Bosco had a dream where he saw many poor boys who cursed and blasphemed. A majestic man told Don Bosco, "With meekness and charity you will conquer these your friends." Then a lady just as majestic added, "Make yourself humble, strong and vigorous. You will understand everything at the right time." John tried to do good for these boys. He learned some tricks of magic and started a carnival show. Admission fee was one rosary to be recited. Grounds were filled with boys. It was then that he realized that he should become a priest. He had no money, so he had to work in a vineyard to make money to go to school. After six years of intense studies in the seminary, he was ordained as a priest in Turin on June 5th, 1841.

Fr. Bosco was able to dedicate himself fulltime to the abandoned boys in his dreams. He was shocked to see the boys in the slums with hazardous machinery works and starvation wages. The abandoned boys of Turin were the effects of the Industrial Revolution. When he saw the boys in the prisons between the ages of 12 and 18, he decided to prevent these boys from ending up here. With his heart full of trust in Mother Mary and empty pockets, he started his work. He went out to the streets looking for boys where they worked and played. He used his talents to capture their attention and

sharing his message for the day. They meet every Sunday in different spots. Fr. Bosco would hear their confession, say Mass for them, homely talks and give religious instructions. When he was not preaching, he worked tirelessly, searching for work and lodging for these boys.

In 1846, he bought an empty lot with a shed and later converted to a chapel. His first benefactor was his mother, who left her house at Becchi to take care of these boys. She sold everything she had. By 1860, Fr. Bosco and his mother was responsible lodging for 800 boys. Fr. Bosco then realised the problems of the boys who are employed as apprentice. They were given hard labours out of their apprenticeship and even beaten. Fr. Bosco negotiated the contract and started trade school for these boys. Fr. Bosco also identified boys who he thought would make good priests and encouraged them to consider vocation of priesthood. Then he helped them in their path of ordination. In 1859, Fr. Bosco established the 'Society of St Francis de Sales'. Their purpose was to carry out the charitable work and help the boys in their faith formation and to stay out of troubles. The Salesian brothers have the same dignity as those of the Salesian Priests. There are lots of Salesian professional schools all over the world. In the following years, Fr. Bosco founded the 'Daughters of Mary Help of Christians' for women. He invented a system of education founded on three values: Reason, Religion, And Loving kindness.

He said to his admirers,"I have been an instrument in the hands of Mary. She has done everything. Had I been a worthier instrument, I would have accomplished a great

deal more.” Fr. Bosco died on December 31, 1888. He was declared blessed by pope Pius XI in 1929 and canonized in 1934 and was given the title ‘Father and Teacher of Youth’.

I chose this saint, because he shows how we should treat the less fortunate children and young boys. He teaches us how to help them to have a better life, as St. Don Bosco said, “Love each other as brothers. Do good to all and evil to none... Tell my boys that I wait for them in paradise.”