

## BICENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF DON BOSCO



16<sup>th</sup> October 2014

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### “BORN TO LEAD”

**Hymn:** “Raise your voices and sing his praises”

**Reader 1:** Dear friends, we have gathered here to honour and salute our beloved father, Don Bosco. The theme of today’s prayer service is “Don Bosco Born to Lead.” Don Bosco developed a sense of vocation at an early age. When he was only five years old, he was thinking of his life as a mission to “gather boys for teaching Gospel values.” His others gifts and talents brought him fair success in this particular ambition. At the age of nine, God entrusted him to lead, to elevate and to save the young souls. Don Bosco became indeed a leader – a leader who walks the way, knows the way and leads the way. All his life was a proof of this when he says: “**You can always count on me fully, on any day, at any time, especially in what concerns your soul. On my part I give you my entire self...**” Let us thank the lord for this wonderful leader and pray that we may be enlightened and strengthened by the Lord to be like him in following our Shepherding Lord.

**Celebrant:** The Lord be with you

**All:** And with your spirit

**Let us pray:** O Merciful God, in your loving providence you have given us St. John Bosco, a Father and Teacher of youth who with the help of Virgin Mary worked with tireless zeal to save souls. Enkindle in us the same flame of zeal and love that impel us to lead the young souls to salvation and serve you alone. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen

**Reader 2:** Cheerfulness is the manifestation of the light within. Don Bosco is a cheerful saint. Like the light that dispels the darkness, his cheer would send the gloom away. He brings beauty to life and spreads joy be it through his jokes or through spiritual guidance. We could see joy in his shining and deep eyes, on his face which is invariably attractive and unforgettable and smiling. The vast and deep joy which springs from him implies many things; it is the joy of witness to the daily life, it is the acceptance of the daily events, it is the understanding of persons with talents and limitations. It is the gift of predilection for the young.

As his sons and daughters, it is fitting that we be like him, bearing this holy joy. Let God brighten up the same flame of joy within us. As we light this lamp, let us experience our hearts being lit by the Spirit.

(Inviting the superiors of the institutions, teacher, parent and students to light the flame)

**Reader 3:** “Dream, dream, dream. Dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts result in action.” – says APJ Abdul Kalam. Johnny Bosco dreamt to be the leader of souls and God revealed to him in a dream that his mission was to lead the ‘young souls’.

**Reader 4:** Johnny was 15 when he was studying at Castelnuovo. When the summer holidays came around, he went back to his work in the fields. What was going to happen to his dream to be a priest and lead the young? The answer came in the dream. In his dream he saw a shepherdess, beyond compare, appeared to him, who seems to lead a large flock of sheep. “John,” she called, “come here. Do you see this flock of mine? I give it into your keeping.” “My Lady,” said John, “what can I do? How can I keep this great flock of sheep and lambs? I have no pasture for them.” “Don’t be afraid,” she said, “I will watch over you and I will help you.”

After this dream, Johnny was certain of his future. He said as a farmer, “I know with certainty that I shall be a priest.” Having his goal clear in mind, he oriented his activities towards it. He wanted to undertake his studies seriously without any loss of time. He gathered boys and read them stories, taught them moral lessons. When he gathered people with his acrobatic skills, his main intention was religious. He would begin his performance with prayer and end with it. He was an example of holiness among his companions. He was already a little priest, a caretaker of the souls.

**Song:** There is a call comes ringing o’er the restless wave (AYH 406)

**Celebrant:** Now let us listen to the Gospel according to St. John. [John 14: 1-7, 18-19]

“Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him.”

## **Reflection (Animation Notes)**

Jesus the would-be-leader of his flock, wanted from His disciples, the virtue of ‘trust’ in God and also ‘trust’ in fellow men. Jesus points out in the gospel that a ‘leader’ should trust God whom he couldn’t see and in men whom he can see. Let us see this particular quality of ‘trust’ in Don Bosco the leader.

- 1) Don Bosco loved and had great trust in his friends in the prison. The boys were impelled never to betray his trust in them. Once, Don Bosco obtained permission from the minister Rattazzi to take the young prisoners for a day of outing and relaxation to Stupinigni. The prisoners’ warden warned him, “You won’t bring them back with you.” The high officials of the law were rather worried and thought it is wise to not let Don Bosco carry out his plan. But, Don Bosco insisted on his way and assumed the full responsibility for risk involved. He declined the service of policemen offered by the minister. When the day came, the procession headed by a donkey carrying the provisions went off into the country. Don Bosco organized games and sports in which he joined with full enthusiasm. When evening came the boys saw that he was tired. They made him sit on to the donkey and escorted him back in triumph, singing hymns as they went. The warden of the prison was astonished when the cheery procession turned in at the gate. During the evening call, everyone was present without exception.
- 2) It is night and the moon is obscured by the threatening storm clouds. On the dark sea a small boat tries to make its way to the safety of the harbour. However the waves are mountainous and the tiny boat rolls from side to side.

Each time the boat dips into a trough the walls of water obscure the view of the many twinkling lights along the coastline. The next moment, however it is right on top of a risking swell and for an instant it appears as if it could be landed safely amid the bright lights and the roller –coaster of the amusement park on the shore. The crack of the thunder and the heavy drops of icy rain chill the imagination back to reality. The boat with its crew, struggles against the wind and the current that seem determined to carry it out to sea. The many coloured lights on the beach –front are inviting, yet it is the penetrating beam of the lighthouse that must be found in order to ensure a safe entry into the calm and security of the harbour.

The navigator’s skill and the power of the boat’s little engine are very necessary at a time like this, when any error of judgment, any rash action, or any mechanical weakness can easily spell disaster for the struggling boat.

(The boat on the stormy sea represents young people today who find themselves tossed about on the sea of life. The many coloured lights along the shore have different names, depending on the country, the culture, and the circumstances of young people who are attracted to them, losing sight of the steady beam of the harbour lighthouse. The young are searching for the truth, but they are fragile and tossed about by storms of confusion, the currents of the times and the conflicts caused by their unsteady emotions. No doubt, they have an inner strength of their own, but they require the sensitivity and loving guidance of a friend, of someone who understands them, one who is on their side and can show that they are loved.)

**Reader 5:** Dear brothers and sisters, where two or three are gathered in my name I am in their midst says the Lord. Believing that God is present amongst us let us turn to Him asking for graces and blessings.

Let your response be: **Through the intercession of Don Bosco, listen to our humble prayer.**

**1.** For our Holy Father, Pope Francis that the Holy Spirit may guide him to lead the church and the world more closer to Christ. We pray to the Lord.

**2.** For our new Rector Major and for the Salesian family that we may become true followers of Jesus and of Don Bosco dedicated in our service towards young people and the society. We pray to the Lord.

**3.** For youngsters that they may long for the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their lives to live a better and more responsible life. We pray to the Lord.

**4.** We pray for peace in the world, in our country, in our society and in our hearts. May the peace of Christ dwell within us so that we may become agents and promoters of peace. We pray to the Lord.

**5.** For all of us gathered here that we may imbibe the spirit of Don Bosco in our lives, leading young people to God and bring God's kingdom into our society. We pray to the Lord.

**Celebrant:** Let us pray for all these intentions through the prayer, "Our Father".

**Let us pray:** O gracious Don Bosco, you who accepted the call of God with an open mind and heart ask the bountiful God to pour out his gratuitous gift upon us. You were born to lead, to lead the youngsters, the society and entire humanity towards God. Help all of us also to respond to the call that God is offering us to be leaders like Don Bosco. May this celebration be an occasion for us to love God and come closer to Him through your powerful intercession. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Final Hymn:** "To work among the poor and young" (or) "We thank you O Lord for Don Bosco".

Bicentenary Organizing Committee: Don Bosco Provincial House - Dimapur