

Be large minded. Turn down all... A bad book is falsehood and sin...

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THE FIRST EASTER SAINT

(Continued from page 9) the title of Blessed, and setting the date of his canonization for next April 1—as the closing event of the Holy Year. Don Bosco, the Blessed Friend of Youth, whose name has become a household word in Italy, France and Spain, is not unknown in the United States. The story of his life has been presented in various Catholic periodicals and magazines, and recently it has become more widely known through Father Boyton's admirable biography, "The Blessed Friend of Youth." Boss in Northern Italy In a poor cottage of a hillside hamlet called Recchi, near the village of Murtaldo in Northern Italy, Don Bosco was born August 16, 1815. At the baptismal font he received the names of John and Melchior, but it was only by the former that he was afterwards known. His father, who kept a small farm, died when little John was but two years old, leaving three boys and an invalid mother-in-law entirely dependent on his widow, Margarita. This peasant woman who did not know how to read or write had the heart of a heroine and the soul of a saint. Her toll and her courage and her confidence in God kept the home going just as when her husband was living. John, although the youngest, was a example of piety and obedience to his two brothers. Coming as a second Joseph with a special mission from heaven, while yet a lad hardly ten years old he had a singular dream. In this dream, he thought he was in the meadow near the farm, surrounded by a crowd of children at play. Many were bent on mischief and even blaspheming. An aged, and anxious to stop this conduct, he started to strike one of them. At that moment a Person—clothed in white and with a shining face appeared and said to him: "Not with blows but with charity and gentleness must you draw these friends of yours to a good life." And He commanded him to teach them the hatefulness of sin and the beauty of virtue. Subsequently, in the place of the children, he saw a multitude of wild beasts of every kind, and close by a lady of noble deportment. She addressed him: "Behold the field of your labors. Here is where your work lies. Be humble but brave and persevering, and what you will now see happen to these beasts, you must do for my children." Then another change took place. Instead of the wild animals, he saw a flock of lambs bleating, and skipping around the two personages. About that time he had several such dreams. In one of them he saw that some of the lambs became shepherds and joined him in assisting and directing the flock. This mysterious presentiment of his future mission, induced John, even at that early age, to become an apostle among his companions, and to desire ardently to become a priest, so as the better to consecrate his life to the spiritual and temporal care of poor boys. His mother gave him every encouragement, but the opposition of his step-brother Anthony (Don Bosco's father had been twice married), and the poverty of the family were obstacles to any regular study. Forced to Leave School For a time he went to the distant village school, walking as many as twelve miles a day. However, his brother's arguments at last put an end to the lessons temporarily. For the sake of peace the poor child had to give up school and take a part in the labors of the field. When the step-brother came of age, a settlement of the family property was made, and Anthony went away. Father Cafasso of Murtaldo undertook to teach John the first rudiments of Latin, but he died suddenly a year later. In 1831, he went to Chieri to continue the course of Latin, and on its termination, four years later, he received the clerical habit and entered the Seminary. Poverty was his greatest handicap, but by undertaking lowly duties and casual employment, he managed to pay his way through college. By turns he became a tailor, a baker, a metal-worker, and even a waiter in a cafe. The pages dealing with this early life contain many incidents which give a special insight into his budding career and bring to light his singular abilities as well as the wonderful ways in which his vocation was being gradually developed. In the Seminary chapel, the Blessed John Bosco was ordained priest by Archbishop Franzoni of Turin, on the Eve of Trinity Sunday, 1841. He was then 26 years old. On the advice of his Director Father Cafasso (now the Blessed Joseph Cafasso), he proceeded to Turin to read a three years' special course of Practical Moral Theology at the Convitto. Among his duties was that of visiting the prisons. The experience was a great shock to him. He came to recognize at close quarters the deplorable condition of mere boys sent to jail for some petty theft or larceny and compelled to associate with hardened criminals of the worst type, with the inevitable result of their utter moral ruin. It made him yearn to gather around him the homeless boys who roamed the streets and do something to better their condition. Divine Providence soon opened the way to him by what seemed a casual incident, but which marked the real beginning of his apostolic labors. It was a winter's morning, December 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1841. Don Bosco was vesting for Mass in the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, when an unusual noise made him turn round. As he did so he caught sight of a ragged urchin being beaten and turned away by the sacristan. He at once put a stop to the unpleasant scene. Calling the boy he spoke kindly to him and told him to wait till the Mass was over as he had something important to tell him. After Mass he found that the boy was almost entirely ignorant of his religion, and then and there he began the Christian education of Bartolomeo Garelli. This lad was captivated by the fatherly manner of the young priest and brought several companions along with him the next Sunday. The number continually increased and it was not long before they reached a hundred. Every Sunday they would meet at St. Francis for Mass and instruction. During the week the kindly priest went tramping around seeking shelter for some employment for others. His course at the Convitto being finished, he was appointed assistant chaplain at the Rifugio, a charitable institute in the city. His boys followed him and met in his apartments. Two additional rooms were obtained and converted into a chapel, which was dedicated to St. Francis of Sales. Here, too, he started his night schools, the first in Italy. In this work he was assisted by Father Borel, a distinguished ecclesiastic, who entered enthusiastically into his plans. For several months everything went along smoothly. Then he had to vacate the Rifugio. During 1846 and 1847 he was driven from one place to another, because of complaints that his oratory was composed of a band of vagabonds and was a public nuisance. From the Rifugio he went to St. Martin's, from there to St. Peter's Churchyard, thence to three rooms in Via Cottolengo, and turned out of these he rented a field and held his meetings in the open air. Here at an early hour on Sunday and Days of Obligation, Don Bosco might be seen sitting on a chair hearing confessions. When he had finished, a bugle would order silence, the good Father would lead the boys to the church, where they heard Mass and received Holy Communion. Was Believed Insane Finally he and his boys were ousted even from the field. His few remaining friends advised him to relinquish his idea and let the boys go. No, that he would never do. If he could not find a place, he would build his own oratory. In fact, he could already vision a beautiful church, with adjoining large buildings to accommodate hundreds of boys, with workshops of every description, dormitories and classrooms, and a wide enclosure for recreation. Many thought he had gone mad and an attempt was made to put him in an insane asylum. Eventually he secured a tumble-down shack with adjoining property, and there today rises the Salesian Congregation, covering an acre or more than eight city blocks. This institution contains over a thousand residents, with workshops for arts and trades, comprising: carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, bakers, printing and bookbinding of every description, besides studios for drawing, modeling and painting; in addition to the technical schools, there is a high school for classical studies. The day oratory still continues there. Seven months after occupying this permanent site, his mother, Margarita, joined him, and their first boarder was received in May, 1847. The new Church of St. Francis of Sales was finished and blessed in June, 1852. In the meantime, two other Oratories were established in Turin, but the first college was opened at Mirabello that same year. Every year, thereafter, saw a new Salesian foundation in Italy or other countries. The work of expansion of the central Oratory went on apace, and in 1857, there arose amid its buildings the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, capable of accommodating 3,000 worshippers. This was Don Bosco's tribute of filial devotion to the Mother of God. Although busily engaged in opening institutes and in building churches, he still found time to write books and pamphlets in defense of Catholic Truth. He wrote a Bible history and a history of Italy, and edited classical text books. The approbation of the Salesian Congregation by Rome came in 1863, and four years later that of the Rules and Constitutions. He had ever been consumed by an ardent desire to go to the foreign missions. Unable to go himself, he sent his first missionary expedition to Patagonia in 1875, headed by Father Cagliero, who later became Cardinal Bishop of Frascati. Unfiring in his zeal for the salvation of the souls of young people, he turned to the establishment of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, a Congregation of Sisters, for the education of poor friendless girls. Today they vie with the Salesians in numbers and zeal. To this second order was added a third order, the Society of Salesian Co-operators. At his death, the Blessed Don Bosco bequeathed to his successor 64 religious houses and 800 religious.

Bishop Rummel Fears Age May Become One of Broken Homes

Preservation of the principles and ideals which unobscure the family and the home "must become a definite function of Catholic Action in every city, parish and home of the Diocese," the Most Rev. Joseph Francis Rummel, Bishop of Omaha, has pointed out in his Lenten Pastoral Letter to the clergy, religious and laity of his See. Bishop Rummel says that "the multiplication of reasons or apologies for divorce, which is breaking up American homes at the rate of over 100,000 per year, may yet mark this age in history as the age of broken homes." Condemning "the devastating tide of vulgarity, sensual suggestion, crime glorification, sneering at virtue, mock worship, thumbed social unrealities and downright indecency, which emanates daily from the thirteen thousand moving picture houses which have survived the depression," and warning also against "the so-called literary products of un-Christian and unprincipled modern writers," Bishop Rummel states that "the time has come for rising in defense of the Christian family and home." Among recommendations made by Bishop Rummel are the following: "You are in conscience bound to avoid all proximate occasions of sin. Hence you may not attend moving picture exhibitions, plays, cabarets, roadhouse shows, dances or other forms of amusements, which are immoral or grossly suggestive or which make a mockery of religion or virtue." "We are organizing a vigilance committee, to be known as the Committee of Catholic Standards, whose function it will be to register Catholic opinion, criticism and action in the matter of amusements, literature and all manifestations affecting our religious and moral welfare. We ask for your loyal cooperation with this Committee so that its work may prove effective. Hosts of right-thinking and right-living non-Catholics will welcome and even follow Catholic leadership, if they are convinced of our sincerity and unanimity. Vigorous protests made effective by withdrawal of patronage will convince producers, managers, publishers and shopkeepers that it is neither wise nor profitable to offend the religious and moral sense of their patrons. In this mercenary age concessions and policies are often regulated by the standards of the box office and cash register!" Mass in Mesopotamia Catholics everywhere may well take note of the fact that during the past three years, our young United States has sent eight of her Jesuit sons to do missionary work in Iraq, the oldest country of the world,—American Arabian knights, all in the Land of the Magic Carpet. From his present post at Baghdad College to his recent one at Worcester, Father Joseph F. Merrick, S.J., sends back some fascinating data on All Bab's legendary haunts. In his letter to the student body of Holy Cross College, Fr. Merrick describes colorfully the historical setting of this new theatre of Jesuit mission operations, and testifies convincingly to the cultural integrity of its Asiatic charges. To begin with, this land of the Garden of Eden; this land of the Tower of Babel; this land of Noah and Mount Ararat; this land of Daniel and Jonas, the prophets; this land of Assyrian empire, of Babylon captivity, of Persian cruelty, of Islamic dominance, bids fair to rival Jerusalem and Rome as a key-center of interest to Christian archeology. Fr. Merrick thus describes Mass in Mesopotamia: "So this morning Baghdad College had its general Communion at a beautiful Mass in the Armenian rite, celebrated by our newly consecrated Armenian Bishop. Though the poor church is catacombic, yet the decorations were charming, and the little altar was like a sunburst in a tomb. Every Catholic boy in the school went to Communion (we have only six non-Catholics in our total of one hundred and twenty); there was a sermon by the Bishop in Arabic and another by one of our Fathers in English; there came the reception of ten boys into the Society; and finally Benediction. Our own little groups just revel in these blessed hours of religious union close to the Sacred Faith, when the bonds of sincere Faith and Love pull them tightly together; Syrian, Chaldean, Armenian and Latin rite though they be."

How Date of Easter Is Fixed Explained

(By N.C.W.C. News Service) Easter Sunday is the first Sunday which occurs after the first full moon (or more accurately after the first fourteenth day of the moon) following the 21st of March. As a result, the earliest possible date of Easter is March 22, the latest April 25. The moon by which Easter is calculated is not the moon of the heavens, but the moon of the calendar. The calendar moon, admittedly a fiction, departs very little from the actual astronomical facts, and at the same time gives uniformity to the whole world in the observance of Easter. With all this yelping about dollars and their content, we haven't seen anybody refusing one.

HOLY PLACES INTACT DESPITE PROFANATION

(By N.C.W.C. News Service) When, 110 years after the profanation of the Holy Places by the act of Emperor Hadrian, who had them covered over with a pagan terrace, St. Helena called the debris to be removed and found the Holy Sepulchre and Golgotha (Mount Calvary) intact. Emperor Constantine, after the discovery, proposed the erection of a grand and sumptuous monument "worthy of the most marvelous place in the world." Subscribed to the Catholic Courier...

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