



CELEBRATING 200 YEARS

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

ANIMATION MATERIAL FOR SEPTEMBER 2024

“This is the field of your work. **Make yourself** humble, strong, and **ENERGETIC.**”

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Dear members of the Salesian Family,

I am happy to send to you the animation material on the dream of Don Bosco for September.

Fr Agilan Sarprasadam, SDB
Provincial, Tiruchy

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SEPTEMBER 2024: LECTIO DIVINA

“ENERGETIC”

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

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

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





Gospel text

Luke 12.22-32

²² “He said to his disciples,” Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear.

²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.


²⁴ Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵ And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁶ If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the

oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. ³⁰ For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

³² “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”



Reflection on the Text



Jesus' teaching on the goods of the world continues. Life does not depend on what you have (vv. 13-21) or what you don't have (vv. 22-30), but on who you are: a child of God (vv. 31-34). Therefore, have no anxiety in abundance or anguish in scarcity!

The disciple opposes false wisdom, which leads to accumulation and restlessness, and replaces it with the true wisdom of one who knows the Father. His providence, sharper and more effective than our foresight, does not let his children lack anything. If something is missing, it means it is unnecessary or we are looking in the wrong direction (cf. v. 30-31). The foundation of all pastoral audacity and “robustness” is found in this total trust in the Father.

Do not worry about your life...

The Lord Jesus wants to heal us from one of the deepest wounds of humanity, which prevents us from savouring life's joys, from enjoying the simplest and deepest joys with which God has filled it. How often does anxiety become our master? We can't stop, can't enjoy a job well done, a completed task, without already rushing to the next...what?

We also have to take into account the difficulties encountered, sudden dangers, excessive desires, unattainable dreams, poorly accepted and endured suffering, the craving for wealth or comfort, more or less



justified fears, little trust in the future, the desire to overdo things... The causes of the loss of peace are many, and Sacred Scripture is full of prayers to God to save us from this anxiety that leaves us empty-handed in the end, tired and joyless. An invitation to take life more calmly, more simply, aiming for the essential.

Worrying about material sustenance is the constant concern of all peoples. It robs us of serenity and peace of heart and diverts our thoughts from God. But it should not be so for the disciples, because the Father knows that we need these things and will provide them at the right time. If He wants us to do His will in this life, He must provide for our material sustenance. The problem is primarily His and not ours. The concern for food and clothing belongs to the man who has gone out on his own, after stealing existence from God. A life lived in God seeks its sustenance in God.

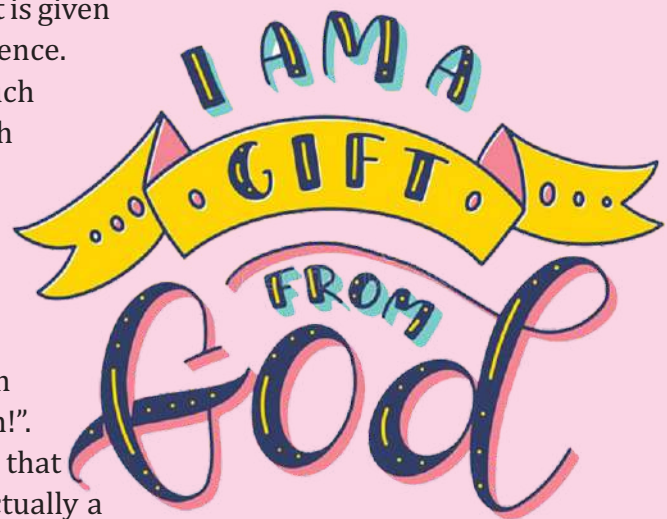
In itself, food and clothing are simple means. The first foolishness of the human being, then, is to consider them as ends. The second, even more serious, is not to understand that they are not possessions to accumulate. They are instead a gift that serves to enter into communion with the Giver and to enrich oneself toward Him (v. 21). This is the life that man hungers for, his only rest and satiety.

Who of you, by worrying...

It is true that we are never content with what is given to us and always seek to increase our existence.

But with what results? At the end of so much effort and toil, has there been any real growth in us? It is precisely in comparison with small things that we can understand all our powerlessness and nothingness. Is it worth the effort when every day, every moment, we are given the chance to know and experience the poverty of our strength? I am not the master of what I am, "I am not my own!".

In my essence, I am God's gift, I am the love that He has for me in His Son. Every worry is actually a subtraction of life!



If God not only feeds but also makes the grass of the field so beautiful, which is here today and thrown into the oven tomorrow, how much more will He provide for His little ones! Little ones, first and foremost in faith, and as such, in need of support and reinforcement. We are not abandoned by God because of the poverty of our faith; on the contrary, it is precisely this poverty that makes the Lord very prompt and caring towards us. But it is truly a lack of faith to want to foresee everything, ignoring that God provides!

Seek His kingdom rather...

For what concerns us, it is much better to seek the kingdom of God. These things will be provided to you by God Himself. The Lord will provide everything needed to carry out His work. The Kingdom is not to be produced – an impossible task! – or accumulated. It should

only be sought, for it is already among us but in a way that does not attract attention. The term “seek” assumes both the existence and the concealment of the Kingdom, otherwise it would be impossible to find or useless to seek. The Kingdom belongs to Him, that is, “the Father,” and it is realized in our filial relationship with Him. This, in turn, forms the foundation of our true brotherhood with all human beings. So, no fear and no anxiety, little flock, for it pleased the Father to give you His Kingdom! If everything has been predestined in heaven, the Lord ought to provide everything needed for His own. It is a small flock not only in number, but even more and even before all because it is formed of the little ones. Those who are the recipients of the Kingdom of Heaven should not preoccupy themselves with things of small value like the goods of this world.



From Text to Life

Jesus tells His disciples, “Do not worry - do not be anxious.”

These are very clear words that should make us reflect on how most of us think about our own lives, the concerns we have about our present and future. Do we let anxiety take control of today and tomorrow? “Rather, seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.” You - the Gospel seems to affirm - were born for the Lord. You are made for Him and for your brothers and sisters. Yet, we pay very little attention (let alone concern) to this fundamental truth, which is the very meaning and essence of life. Jesus, at the beginning of this Gospel passage, asks the disciples to recognize Him without fear and hypocrisy. The words from Deuteronomy come to mind, defining the service to the one Lord in these terms: to love Him “with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). It is a claim of absolute right on the part of God. It may seem excessive to us, and indeed it is. God is excessive. But it is the excess of love that justifies His claim. The text is certainly not a manifesto against the civilization of work or a nostalgic call for the serenity of life in a romantic naturalistic setting. Jesus addresses the disciples to invite them to live their relationship with God with radicality and integrity. Above all, they must seek the Kingdom of God, which is goodness, mercy, justice, fraternity, and friendship. This is the essence from which everything else flows.

Juan Edmundo Vecchi wrote:

“Providence says something important about God: that He loves what He has created. He loved it before creating it, just as a mother loves the child she carries in her womb; He loved it by creating it, and He will love it forever. It also contains an idea of the world. It obeys a plan: it was made by an 'engineer' rather than a 'wizard.' The principle of 'purpose' is evident in it—every movement has a reason. Many possible reactions correspond to each action. After each



reaction, infinite possibilities for movements in new directions open up. Providence also says something about human history. It is not adrift, although it takes on the direction of human freedom. It is like a river. It can carry a lot of water in one stretch and lack it in another, collect tributaries or give rise to effluents, become contaminated and then purified, go underground and reappear, widen and narrow, rush into a canyon or flow slowly across the plain. The law of slope carries it toward the outflow. Time does not go backward, and water does not flow uphill. It is up to man, in the light of the Word of God, to know the laws of the progress of history, take advantage of its energy, avoid the pitfalls, and make use of the leaps of progress. It has a meaning.”

Some Questions for Community and Personal Reflection



1. Reread the Gospel text carefully. Ask yourself if your life is oriented by what you are: a child of God. Is this your “robustness”?
2. Every anxiety subtracts life! Try to recognize or name the worries that take life away from you. Develop a corresponding plan to grow in trust in God.
3. Have no fear or worry. God provides. How confident are you in the Provident God who “loves what He has made”? Reread Don Vecchi’s reflections as a community and try to make a plan for your community to increasingly have a “meaning” in the logic of providence.



Prayer

Mary, Virgin and Mother,
you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,
welcomed the word of life
in the depths of your humble faith:
as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,
help us to say our own “yes”
to the urgent call, as pressing as ever,
to proclaim the good news of Jesus.

Filled with Christ's presence,
you brought joy to John the Baptist,
making him exult in the womb of his mother.

Brimming over with joy,
you sang of the great things done by God.

Standing at the foot of the cross
with unyielding faith,
you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection,
and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit
so that the evangelizing Church might be born.





Obtain for us now a new ardour born of the resurrection,
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life
which triumphs over death.

Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty
may reach every man and woman.

Virgin of listening and contemplation,
Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast,
pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are,
that she may never be closed in on herself
or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom.

Star of the new evangelization,
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,
service, ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of our world.

Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,
pray for us.

Amen.

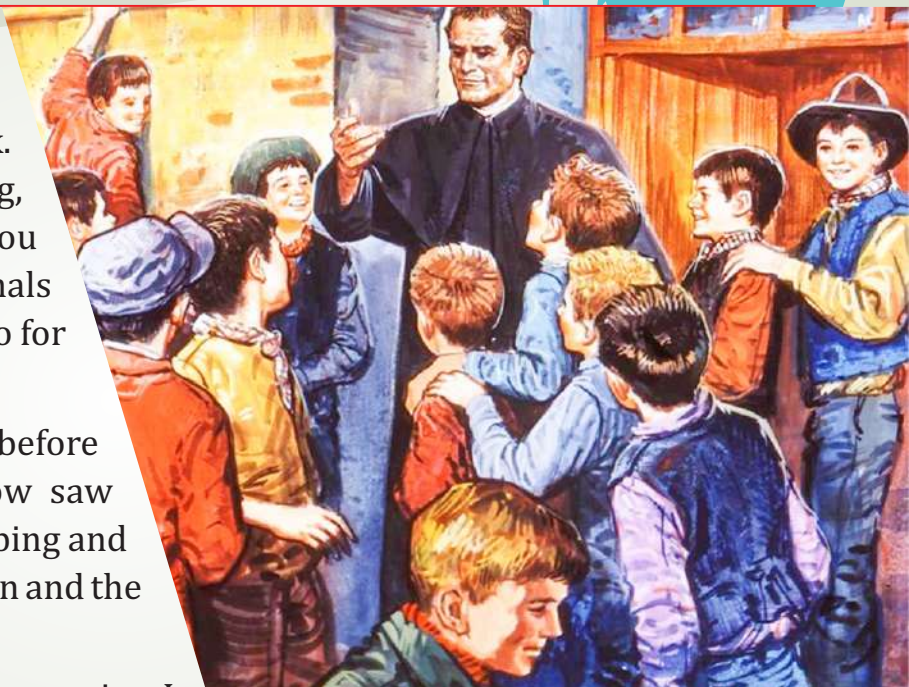
Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 288.

“ENERGETIC”

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

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

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



Charismatic Objective

Through the dream at nine years old, to outline the profile of today's Salesian family, men and women who are courageous, strong, and **robust in living every relationship** with young people in a generative way. **Jesus is the model of missionary audacity.**

Theological and Spiritual Insight

Our missionary calling is inscribed in our consecration, and from it, we draw strength, robustness, audacity, new and creative energies. The document on Consecrated Life offers us a secure and stimulating description to motivate our missionary audacity. Let's reread and meditate on it!

“Consecrated for the mission”

“In the image of Jesus, the beloved Son 'whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world' (Jn 10:36), those whom God calls to follow him are also consecrated and sent into the world to imitate his example and to continue his mission. Fundamentally, this is true of every disciple. In a special way, however, it is true of those who, in the manner that characterizes the consecrated life, are called to follow Christ 'more closely', and to make him the 'all' of their lives. The task of *devoting themselves wholly to His 'mission'* is therefore included in their call;



indeed, by the action of the Holy Spirit who is at the origin of every vocation and charism, consecrated life

itself is a mission, as was the whole of Jesus' life. The profession of the evangelical counsels, which makes a person totally free for the service of the Gospel, is important also from this point of view. It can therefore be said that *a sense of mission is essential to every Institute*, not only those dedicated to the active apostolic life, but also those dedicated to the contemplative life.

Indeed, more than in external works, the **mission consists in making Christ present to the world through personal witness**. This is the challenge; this is the primary task of the consecrated life! **The more consecrated persons allow themselves to be conformed to Christ, the more Christ is made present and active in the world for the salvation of all**. Thus, it can be said that **consecrated persons are 'in mission' by virtue of their very consecration**, to which they bear witness in accordance with the ideal of their Institute. When the founding charism provides for pastoral activities, it is obvious that the witness of life and the witness of works of the apostolate and human development are equally necessary: both mirror Christ who is at one and the same time consecrated to the glory of the Father and sent into the world for the salvation of his brothers and sisters. **Religious life, moreover, continues the mission of Christ with another feature specifically its own: fraternal life in community for the sake of the mission**. Thus, men and women religious will be all the more committed to the apostolate the more personal their dedication to the Lord Jesus is, the more fraternal their community life, and the more ardent their involvement in the Institute's specific mission" (VC 72).

Salesian Text

In our Salesian Family, we have **many models of missionary audacity**. Certainly, the charismatic characteristics are drawn from our **Founders**. Their charismatic experience **can enlighten today's choices, motivate our fidelity, and support our educational and pastoral projects**. In them, we have fully realized **models of fatherhood and motherhood** that is **generative**. We want to renew our fidelity through a deeper and more courageous imitation, just like them. Like them, we want to enter and serve the world with sympathy.

The following reflection by Mother Yvonne on being authentic announcers, witnesses, and servants of the Gospel can help us in this reflection.

FROM MOTHER YVONNE'S CIRCULAR LETTER 965, "ANNOUNCING, WITNESSING, SERVING THE GOSPEL"

In the world with sympathy

"The first dimension that I want to emphasize is that of **dwelling in the world with sympathy**: it was also one of the choices of the 21st General Chapter. We are part of a world where many different peoples, meeting each other, are forming a new fabric of which we do not yet know all the beauty because it is in progressive formation.

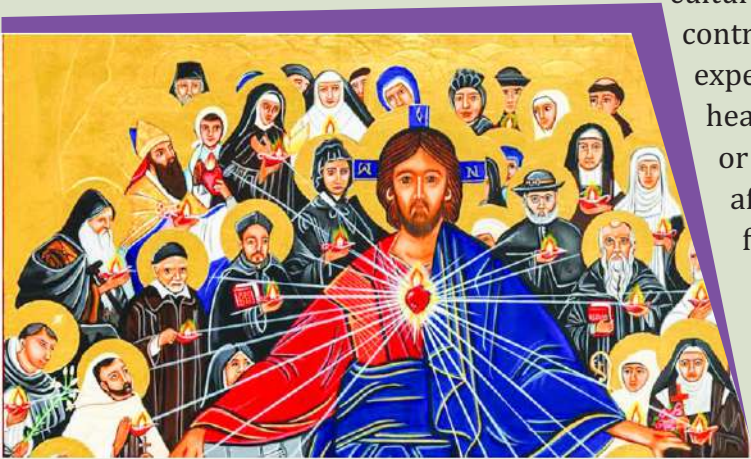
We are **companions on the journey**, we share the same reality, wonderful and at the same time overlapped by different life visions, ethnic and cultural plurality, conflicts



and oppositions, violence and oppression. Like in a big supermarket, we have before our eyes a vast range not only of products to buy but also of ideas, visions, lifestyles, and behaviours that can make one's journey difficult to navigate and define one's own personal identity. All of this makes relationships more fragile, bonds changeable, and life choices indefinitely postponed. Things and relationships are consumed, one switches from one choice to another or even prefers not to choose at all. The consequence is a perennial dissatisfaction, withdrawal into individualism, or a desire to show off in empty appearances that do not satisfy the heart. Faced with this fluid and complex process, we, consecrated persons, could feel intimidated or become too critical of everything that is wrong. With a need to nostalgically defend the past, we stand the danger of forgetting to listen to the cry of the poor, the cry of humanity itself.

If we rediscover the treasure of the Gospel, its originality can awaken in us a heartfelt adherence. We will feel “within” this world and not “beside” it. We will listen deeply to the

culture in which we are immersed and that we ourselves contribute to building; we will try to understand the expectations of our contemporaries, what sets their hearts on fire and what instead arouses fear, mistrust, or indifference. Immersed in multiple identities and affiliations, many today suffer from the “loss of face,” no longer knowing who they are or what they live for. They get lost in exteriority and activism. This gives rise to growing spiritual desertification and disenchantment with the world, which appears devoid of meaning and values because it is no longer anchored to the Absolute.



Fifty years after the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, which expressed a renewed sympathy for the world, we wonder what can make it vibrate with new light and where its deepest meaning lies. **As consecrated persons, we can help recover paths, open our gaze to broader and richer horizons full of meaning. We can help rediscover new wonder and new hope** for the world (re-enchantment); **to find a new sympathy, real closeness, and proximity to the people.**

If the Gospel of Jesus permeates our existence and transfigures it in love, we will be able to amaze the world, announce it to the men and women of today, and, even with the poverty and limitations that accompany us, show the world its beauty. We will make visible to the world the wonders that God still works in the hearts of those who allow themselves to be encountered by Him.

We can transmit to others only what we ourselves have tasted, deepened, contemplated, if in our hearts resonates with joy the word of Jesus: “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (Jn 20:21). It is a mandate accompanied by the gift of the Spirit (cf. Jn 20:22) and guaranteed by the presence of Jesus Himself every day (cf. Mt 28:20). The roots of the mission are indeed in the heart of the Trinity, in the dynamism of love and gift of the Divine Persons, which is also expressed towards the world.

Animated by the strength of the Holy Spirit, who forms in us the feelings of Jesus, we can inhabit human contexts with depth and radicality, giving voice to the presence of God, even with different methods and languages. In a complex and problematic reality, the message of disarming simplicity can still resonate: God is love and has come among us to tell us that love has the last word. **Love is the bond that unites us all in fraternity and in sharing** the same destiny of joy and happiness that extends into eternity. The gaze of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello had its roots in a heart inhabited by the Holy Spirit, a source of permanent creativity. The optimism that characterized them led them to invent new paths to regenerate society starting from the poorest young people. **Like our Founders, we too are called to love the world in which we live to transform it with the young people of every context where we are present...**



We announce the joy of those who have found in Christ the true hope and have allowed themselves to be transformed by Him. Warmed by His presence and His Word, we can set out without fear to meet young people, even those who do not dare to approach our environments or do not know us...

Renewing faith, as well as returning to the freshness of the charism's origins, means finding a faith that is expressed in society, capable of encountering the human. A faith that is neither comfortable nor individualistic but incarnated in today, with antennas stretched towards the novelty of the Holy Spirit. And it is He who guides towards paths of listening, communion, and prophecy...



Constitutional Reference for Meditation and Prayer

Reread, meditate, and pray with the articles of the Constitutions:

SDB: 10-21 (The Salesian Spirit)

FMA: 8-10 (Characteristic Traits of the FMA)

MSMHC: 6-9 (Spirit of the Congregation)

VSDB: 4-8 (Spirit of the Congregation)

SMA: 23-26 (Spirit of the Congregation of SMA)

Disciples: 2, 4, 35, 45-50 (Our Spirit – Preventive System)

Some Questions for Community and Personal Reflection

1. Through Don Bosco's dream at the age of nine, we have outlined the profile of today's Salesian Family, men and women who are courageous, strong, and *robust in living every relationship* with young people in a generative way. Let's evaluate the "robustness" of our relationships. Are they generative? How can we improve them?

2. The consecrated life reminds us that: “The more one is conformed to Christ, the more one makes Him present and active in the world for the salvation of people.” How do you feel in the journey of “conforming to Christ”?
3. Mother Yvonne reflects on the importance of entering the world with sympathy to remain close to people and offer new and broad horizons rich in meaning. Are our communities capable of giving meaning and significance to the people they encounter? Are our words “fruitful and generative” because they are rich in the Gospel or are they empty and useless words? As a community, try to trace a path of “generative missionary audacity.”
4. Share one of the articles from the Constitutions among those indicated and try to pray with that text.

An Appropriate Concluding Hymn

