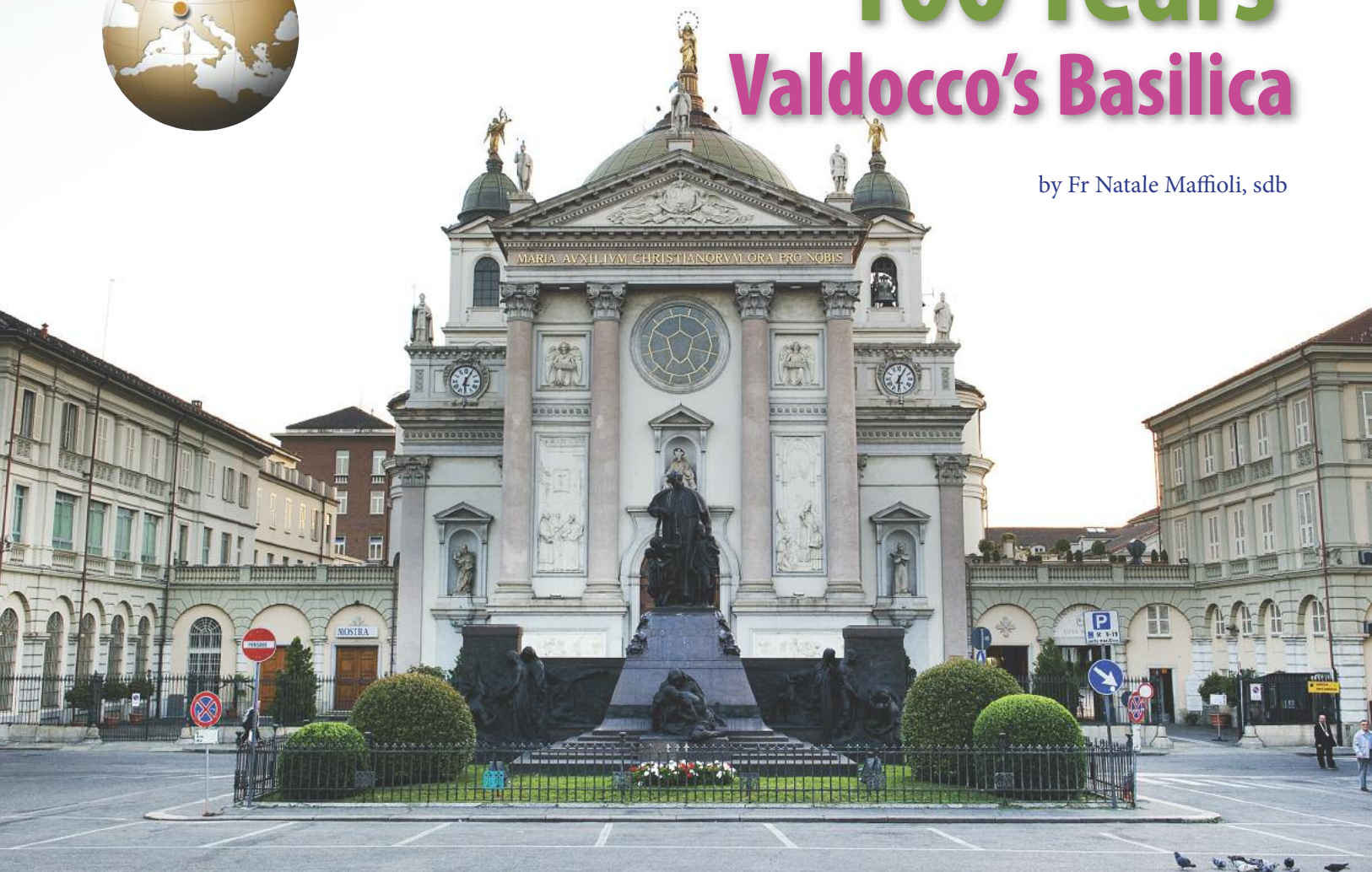




100 Years Valdocco's Basilica

by Fr Natale Maffioli, sdb



One hundred years ago, July 13, 1911, the Church of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco received the title *Basilica*. It finds a place in the heart of every Salesian around the world.

One summer's day, an elderly grocer trundling along in his cart saw the massive scaffolding rising in the midst of the Valdocco fields and became curious.

"What's going on?" he asked one of the stone masons.

"We are building a large church for Our Lady!"

"And who's finding the money?"

"Don Bosco. But he is scraping together donations from everywhere".

The man was silent a moment, then called the su-

pervisor and gave him all the fruit in his cart so he could share it amongst the builders and then, wanting to give a hand himself, with the help of some others he heaved a large stone onto his shoulders and started climbing the scaffolding. The poor old guy was trembling all over under his heavy load, but sweaty and breathless he got to the top. He lowered the stone in place and said cheerfully: "Now I can die happy because I hope that now I can somehow be part of all the good this church will achieve".

Don Bosco never said: "I'll do this or that..." He always said: "Mary Help of Christians will do this and that..."

Together, Mary and Don Bosco built a beautiful church!