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31 January

## **Saint JOHN BOSCO priest**

**Founder of the Society of St Francis de Sales,  
of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians,  
of the Association of the Salesian Cooperators.  
and of the Association of Mary Help of Christians**

### **Solemnity**

The life of Saint John Bosco is marked in particular by interventions of divine Providence and by the presence of the Virgin Mary. He was born at Castelnuovo d'Asti on 16 August 1815 into a poor peasant family, and from his childhood felt a call to devote his life to the young. He was ordained priest at Turin in 1841 after years of sacrifice, and spent all his rich natural talents and tireless zeal in setting up works for the education of abandoned youth, in defending the faith of the common people from danger, and in contributing to the evangelization of distant lands.

He entrusted the continuation of his immense work to the three branches of his Family: the Society of St Francis de Sales (1859), the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (1872), and the Association of Salesian Cooperators (1876), passing on to them as the key to success the treasure of the *preventive system*: reason, religion, loving kindness: a system totally inspired by a charity rooted in a living encounter with Jesus Christ, especially in the Eucharist, in boundless trust in the Virgin Mary, and in fidelity to the Church and its teaching.

He died at Turin on 31 January 1888. He was canonized by Pius XI at Easter 1934, and on the centenary of his death was proclaimed by John Paul II as the *Father and teacher of youth* (24 January 1989).

### **Evening Prayer I**

\* **HYMN**    *Iste Confessor*

He, whose confession God of old accepted,  
Whom through the ages all now hold in honour,  
Gaining his glory this day came to enter  
Heaven's high portal.

God-fearing, watchful, pure of mind and body,  
Holy and humble, thus did all men find him;  
While, through his members, to the life immortal  
Mortal life called him.

Thus to the weary, from the life enshrined,  
Potent in virtue, flowed humane compassion;  
Sick and sore laden, howsoever burdened,  
There they found healing.

So now in chorus, giving God the glory,

Raise we our anthem gladly to his honour,  
That in fair kinship we may all be sharers  
Here and hereafter.

Honour and glory, power and salvation,  
Be in the highest unto him who reigneth  
Changeless in heaven over earthly changes,  
Triune, eternal.

*Or another suitable hymn approved by ecclesiastical authority.*

**1 ant.** God has raised you from the dust, and given you a place  
among the great ones of his people.

*Psalms and canticle from the Common of Pastors.*

**2 ant.** Through you the Lord has given bread to the hungry, a father  
to orphans, a friend to the young

**3 ant.** God has raised you up in the Church  
to the praise and glory of his grace  
to reveal his love to young people.

#### SCRIPTURE READING

**2 Thess 2,13-17**

We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

#### SHORT RESPONSORY

**R/.** The Lord loved him, \* and bestowed on him all honour.

The Lord loved him, and bestowed on him all honour.

**V/.** He invested him with glory, \* and bestowed on him all honour.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The Lord loved him, and bestowed on him all honour.

**Ant. At the Magn.** My every breath and all my strength  
will be at the service of the young.

**Or:** My son, keep your father's commandment,  
and forsake not your mother's teaching;  
Bind them always upon your heart.

#### INTERCESSIONS

Our faith receives encouragement from the witness of the Saints; they are signs of the presence of the Spirit in the Church. United with them in prayer let us invoke God our Father, the source of all holiness:

*Increase in us our faith, hope and charity.*

You raised up St John Bosco in your Church as the father and teacher of youth:

– grant that all of us may love young people and joyfully dedicate our lives to their good.

You enabled the Saint of youth to unite tireless activity with an intense life of prayer:

– help us with the power of your Spirit that in our apostolic work we may always remain united to you.

It is your wish that parents be the first and principal educators of their children:

– may they find in you the strength and joy to be always aware of the grandeur of their task

To our Founder you gave the Virgin Mary as Mother and Guide:

– grant that the members of the Salesian Family may trust in her help and always experience her motherly presence.

On those who have died after spending their best energies for the education of the young in line with the Salesian charism:

– bestow the fullness of happiness and eternal light

Our Father.

*Concluding prayer as at Morning Prayer.*

## Compline

*Compline of Sunday after Evening Prayer I. It can conclude with the antiphon: "Sub tuum praesidium confugimus", or:*

"O Maria, Virgo potens

Tu magnum et praeclarum in Ecclesia praesidium;

Tu singulare Auxilium Christianorum:

Tu terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.

Tu cunctas haereses sola interemisti in universo mundo.

Tu in angustiis,

Tu in bello,

Tu in necessitatibus nos ab hoste protege,

atque in aeterna gaudia in mortis hora suscipe."

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### INVITATORY

*Ant.* Let us give praise to the Lord our God  
on the Feast of St John Bosco

*Invitatory psalm as in the Ordinary.*

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## Office of Readings

\* HYMN

Praise the Lord of all things living,  
Praise the God who gives us life.  
Praise to Him who brought His people  
Out of darkness into light.  
Unto us His Son was given  
To redeem unbroken sin;  
His command of love He left us  
Till the day He comes again.

Out of love He raised a shepherd,  
Father, teacher of the young.  
Gave to him a hopeful vision  
of the Kingdom Jesus won.  
Leading youthful hearts to heaven,  
Modelling a life of grace,  
Showing how a joyful spirit  
Earns our heav'nly dwelling place.

Sign of all that God has given,  
Bearer of the Father's love,  
Pray that we proclaim the promise  
Of our heav'nly home above.  
Show us how to praise the Father,  
How to praise His only Son,  
Living, reigning with the Spirit,  
E'er eternal, ever one!

*(C.J.Lieby)*

*Or another suitable hymn approved by ecclesiastical authority.*

**1 ant.** God gave him wisdom and understanding  
and a heart as vast as the sand on the seashore.

*Psalms from the Common of Pastors*

**2 ant.** He believed against all hope  
and became the father of many peoples.

**3 ant.** He trusted in the Lord and did good works;  
in him he placed all his joy.

**R/.** You will hear the word from my mouth,  
**V/.** and pass it on to your brethren.

#### **FIRST READING**

From the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

**1,2-6; 2,7-9a.10-12**

*Our behaviour was holy,  
righteous and blameless*

We give thanks to God always for you all, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brethren beloved by God, that he has chosen you; for our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit;

But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. For you remember our labour and toil, brethren.

You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our behaviour to you believers; for you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory

#### RESPONSORY

1 Thess 3,12-13a; 4,2

**R/.** May the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all men, as we do to you, \* so that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father.

**V/.** For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

\* so that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father.

#### SECOND READING

From the "Regulations for the Oratory of St Francis de Sales" (1854) written by St John Bosco.

(Pedagogical and spiritual writings, Rome 1987, 41-44 passim)

#### *A new way for evangelizing the young*

"[...] to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (Jn 11,52). These words of the holy Gospel show us that the Divine Saviour came down from heaven to earth to gather together all God's children scattered over the face of the earth, and I think we can apply them literally to the young people of our time. This portion of human society, the most precious and at the same time most delicate on which rest the hopes for a happy future, is not of itself of a perverse disposition. Were it not for the neglect of parents, idleness, meeting with bad companions, to which they are prone especially on Sundays and Feastdays, it would be quite easy to insert into their tender hearts principles of good order and behaviour, of respect and of religion, because it sometimes happens that those who are already lost at that age have become so through thoughtlessness rather than through ingrained wickedness.

These youngsters really need a kindly helper who will take care of them, encourage them and lead them to virtue, and to keep them away from vice. The difficulty lies in finding a way to gather them together, to talk to them and teach them good morals.

This was the mission of the Son of God, and only his holy religion can bring it about. But this religion which in itself is eternal and unchangeable, which has been and will always be the mentor of mankind, contains a law so perfect as to be adaptable to changing times and to the different characteristics of all persons.

Among the means best suited to disseminate the spirit of religion in the hearts of the uneducated and abandoned the Oratories stand high. They are places which provide youngsters with pleasing and honest recreation after they have been present at sacred functions in church.

The encouragement I have received from civil and ecclesiastical authorities, the zeal shown by many people who have helped me by temporal means and by their own hard work, are without any doubt signs of the blessings of God and of public satisfaction.

I do not intend to give either laws or precepts. My only purpose is to describe what is done in the Boys' Oratory of St Francis de Sales at Valdocco, and the manner in which it is done.

Some may think from what I say that I am looking for honour and glory. Don't you believe it! It is just that I have a duty to describe things that have really happened and continue to happen still.

When I gave myself to this part of the sacred ministry, my intention was to consecrate all my energies to the greater glory of God and the good of souls; I intended to work to produce good citizens in this world so that in due time they would be worthy citizens of heaven above. May God continue to help me to continue in this work till my last breath.

#### RESPONSORY

Cf. Col 3,17; 1 Cor 16,14

**R/.** Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus \* giving thanks to God the Father through him **V/.** Let all that you do be done in love,

**R/.** giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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\* *Or:*

#### SECOND READING

From the letter "Iuvenum Patris" of Pope John Paul II  
(AAS 80 [1988] 969-987)

*St John Bosco*  
*"Father and Teacher of Youth"*

St John Bosco felt within himself that he had received a special vocation and that in the carrying out of his mission he was assisted and almost led by the hand by the Lord and the motherly intervention of the Virgin Mary. His response was such that the Church has officially proposed him to the faithful as a model of holiness.

His stature as a Saint gives him a unique place among the great Founders of religious Institutes in the Church. He is outstanding from many points of view: he initiated a true school of a new and attractive apostolic spirituality; he promoted a special devotion to Mary, Help of Christians and Mother of the Church; he displayed a loyal and courageous ecclesial sense manifested in the delicate mediation work he carried out between Church and State at a time when the relations between the two were difficult; as an apostle he was both realistic and practical, always open to the implications of new discoveries; he was a zealous organizer of foreign missions with truly Catholic sensitivity; he was an eminent example of a preferential love for the young, and especially for the most needy among them, for the good of the Church and society; he was the exponent of an efficacious and attractive pedagogical method which he has left as a precious legacy to be safeguarded and developed.

An interchange between "education" and "holiness" is indeed the characteristic aspect of his personality: he was a "holy educator", he drew his inspiration from a "holy model" - Francis de Sales, he was the disciple of a "holy spiritual director" - Joseph Cafasso, and he was able to form from among his boys a "holy pupil" - Dominic Savio.

For St John Bosco, founder of a great spiritual Family, one may say that the peculiar trait of his brilliance is linked with the educational method which he himself called the "preventive system". In a certain sense this represents the quintessence of his pedagogical wisdom and constitutes the prophetic message which he has left to his followers and to the Church, and which has received attention and recognition from numerous educators and students of pedagogy.

The substance of his teaching remains intact; the unique nature of his spirit, his intuitions, his style, his charisma are unchanged, because they draw their inspiration from the transcendent pedagogy of God.

In the Church and in the world the integral educative vision that we see incarnated in John Bosco is a realistic pedagogy of holiness. We need to get back to the true concept of "holiness" as a component of the life of every believer. The originality and boldness of the plan for a "youthful holiness" is intrinsic to the educational art of this great Saint, who can be rightly called the "master of youth spirituality". His secret lay in the fact that he did not disappoint the deep aspirations of the young (the need for life, love, expansiveness, joy, freedom, future prospects) but at the same time led them gradually and realistically to discover for themselves that only in the "life of grace", i.e. in friendship with Christ, does one fully attain the most authentic ideals.

RESPONSORY

Phil 3,17; 4,9; cf. 1 Cor 1,10; 10,31

**R/.** What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do \* and the God of peace will be with you.

**V/.** I appeal to you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to do all to the glory of God; **R/.** and the God of peace will be with you.

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Te Deum

Concluding prayer as at Morning Prayer.

### Vigil celebration

*Those who desire to extend the celebration of the Vigil should first celebrate the Office of Readings; after the two Readings and before the Te Deum they should add the canticles and Gospel as indicated below:*

**Ant.** Whatever you do, in word or deed,  
do everything in the name of the Lord.

CANTICLE I **Jer 17,7-8**

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord

CANTICLE II **Sir 14,20-21; 15,3-6**

Happiness of the wise man

CANTICLE III **Wis 9,1-6.9-11**

Lord, give me the wisdom that is pleasing to you

## GOSPEL

*An extract from the Gospel is read, taken from those proposed in the Lectionary for the Mass of St John Bosco*

1. Mt 5,13-19: You are the light of the world.
2. Mt 18,1-6.10: Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.
3. Mt 22,34-40: You shall love the Lord your God and your neighbour
4. Mk 9,34-37: Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.
5. Mk 10,13-16: Let the children come to me.
6. Lk 22,24-30: I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom.
7. Jn 10,1-11: The Good Shepherd.
8. Jn 15,9-17: You are my friends if you do what I command you.

*If convenient a homily may be given.*

Te Deum

Concluding prayer as at Morning Prayer.

## Morning Prayer

### \* HYMN

Living source of all creation,  
Grateful songs to you we raise.  
In our joyful celebration  
Of your love poured out always.  
For our Father, Lord, we thank you,  
For our unity in love,  
For the brothers, for the sisters  
Trusted to us from above.

Take our hearts, our love's devotion,  
On our Father's festal day;  
And in mercy give your blessing,  
As with reverence we pray:  
May we all, your life possessing,  
Steadfast be in work and word;  
By Christ's charity enamoured  
May we be to service spurred.

May we, true to our vocation,  
For our Father's sake now grow,  
Showing forth Christ's healing kindness,  
As Don Bosco's heart might show.



May we burn with zeal and ardour  
For the work which Christ has blest.  
Guided by our storied banner:  
"Give me souls and take the rest."

Living source of all creation,  
Guide and friend of all the weak,  
Let us know Christ's true salvation  
And the Spirit's grace unique.  
By the Virgin's intercession,  
By Don Bosco's prayers so kind,  
May your children know your healing,  
May we peace and mercy find.  
(A.J.Lenti)

Or another suitable hymn approved by ecclesiastical authority.

**1 ant.** Glory and praise to you, O God of my fathers,  
for you have given me wisdom, humility and strength.

*Psalms and canticle from Sunday, Week 1*

**2 ant.** Praise our God with dancing;  
praise him with lute and harp, alleluia

**3 ant.** You have filled him with joy before your face:  
and to the young he proclaims your blessings

**SCRIPTURE READING**

**Heb 13,17.20-21**

Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you.

May the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**SHORT RESPONSORY**

**R/.** The Lord is my shepherd, \* there is nothing I shall want.

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

**V/.** Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose,  
\* there is nothing I shall want.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.  
The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

**Ant. al Ben.** Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.  
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

## INTERCESSIONS

Let us bless God our Father who called St John Bosco to proclaim the gospel of joy. In his memory, let us pray:

:

*Lord, bless your people*

In St John Bosco you have manifested your love for the young and the poor:

– help us to recognize in them the countenance of Christ your Son and to serve them with true pastoral charity.

You made him the apostle of the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation;

– grant that we may be able to lead young people to these sure founts of life and grace.

You opened the mind and heart of St John Bosco to the great horizons of the Church:

– bestow on us a missionary spirit and apostolic creativity for the building of your Kingdom.

In your providence you gave him serenity and trust in the trials of life:

– impart also to us a complete confidence in your assistance and faithful perseverance in your service.

In St John Bosco you have given to your Church a living image of Jesus the good shepherd:

– grant that not one may be lost of those you have entrusted to our mission as educators.

Our Father.

## PRAYER

Lord our God, in your providence you have given us Saint John Bosco, the father and teacher of youth, who under the guidance of the Virgin Mary worked with untiring zeal for the good of the Church; inspire us with that same apostolic charity, to seek the salvation of our neighbour and so serve you, the one and only good. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son....

### Prayer during the day

*A suitable hymn and complementary psalmody; Ps 121 may be replaced by Ps 128, and Ps 126 by Ps 130. When the solemnity falls on Sunday the Sunday psalms are used.*

### Before noon

**Ant.** Serve the Lord with joy, alleluia.

## SCRIPTURE READING

1 Thess 5,16-22.28

Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**V/.** Praise the Lord and call upon his name,

**R/.** proclaim his works among the peoples.

## Midday

**Ant.** Adore the Lord at all times: in joy and in sorrow:

**SCRIPTURE READING**

**Phil 2,1-4**

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

**V/.** Celebrate the Lord with me,

**R/.** together let us magnify his name.

## Afternoon

**Ant.** May God be our help and our companion on the way of heaven.

**SCRIPTURE READING**

**Rm 12,9-13**

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practise hospitality.

**V/.** Lord, you are good and the source of all goodness:

**R/.** everlasting is your mercy.

*Prayer as at Morning Prayer.*

## Evening Prayer II

**\* HYMN**

Thou who didst befriend the friendless  
Toiling here with heart so brave.  
By thy love and labour endless  
Fondly striving souls to save.

*Refrain:*

Saint John Bosco, guard and guide us.  
We our hearts now pledge to thee.  
Grant that we, whate'er betide us,  
True to God shall ever be.

Unto youth you were a father,  
Loving teacher, loyal friend.  
Grant that we may round you gather  
At our earthly journey's end. *Refrain.*

Grant that we may, sin defying,

With the strength that faith can bring,  
Bravely living, bravely dying,  
Win the fight for Christ our King. *Refrain.*

Or another suitable hymn approved by ecclesiastical authority.

**1 ant.** My glory is in the Lord: let the humble listen and rejoice.

*Psalms and canticle from the Common of Pastors*

**2 ant.** The source of wisdom is the fear of the Lord;  
wise is the man who is faithful to him.

**3 ant.** Great and wonderful are you, Lord, in all your saints..

**SCRIPTURE READING**

**1 Cor 13,4-8a.13**

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; It is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. Faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

**SHORT RESPONSORY**

**R/.** The just man speaks \* words of wisdom.

The just man speaks words of wisdom.

**V/.** The law of God is in his heart;

\* words of wisdom..

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The just man speaks words of wisdom.

**Ant. At the Magn.** To save your souls I will gladly spend all my life.

**INTERCESSIONS**

United in the love of Christ at the close of this festive day, let us present to God our Father our hopes and expectations. Let us say:

*Protect this your family, O Lord.*

Through St John Bosco you have raised up new religious families in your Church:

– grant that in them may flourish evangelical life and prophetic witness.

You inspired our holy Founder to involve many others in work for the salvation of the young:

– increase the number of new vocations and keep our Salesian Family united.

It is your will that all peoples should attain to a knowledge of the truth:

– through the intercession of the Virgin Mary bless the work of missionaries of the Gospel and render it productive.

You made St John Bosco outstanding in the formation and education of the young, and especially of those who are poor and abandoned:

– in the way you have marked out for each one of us help us to imitate his pedagogical wisdom.

You have called to yourself many brothers and sisters who have dedicated their own lives to the spreading of your Kingdom:

- bestow on them the reward promised to good and faithful servants

Our Father.

#### PRAYER

Lord our God, in your providence you have given us Saint John Bosco, the father and teacher of youth, who under the guidance of the Virgin Mary worked with untiring zeal for the good of the Church; inspire us with that same apostolic charity, to seek the salvation of our neighbour and so serve you, the one and only good. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son....

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#### Compline

*Of Sunday. The concluding antiphon can be "Sub tuum praesidium" as in the Ordinary, or the antiphon "O Maria, Virgo potens".*