

31 January

Saint JOHN BOSCO, priest

Father and teacher of youth

Founder of the Society of Saint Francis de Sales, the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Salesian Cooperators

Solemnity

For the pastoral good of the faithful, when the solemnity falls on a weekday, its celebration may be transferred to the following Sunday, provided the latter be a Sunday in Ordinary Time. In this case the formulary may be used at all Masses in which the people take part (cf. *Roman Missal*, General Norms for the liturgical year and calendar, nn. 58, 59).

Born at Castelnuovo d'Asti in 1815, John was educated by his mother in the faith and in the consistent practice of the gospel message. When only nine he learned through a dream that he was called to dedicate his life to the education of the young. While still a boy he began to entertain his companions with games to which he added prayer and religious instruction. On his ordination to the priesthood (1841) he chose as his life programme: *Da mihi animas, cetera toïle* (Gen 14,21), and began his apostolate among poor youth by founding the Oratory and placing it under the protection of Saint Francis de Sales.

Through his style of education and pastoral practice, based on reason, religion and loving kindness (which he called his *Preventive System*), he helped young lads and teenagers to think seriously about their lives, to encounter Christ, accept their companions, learn about their faith and the sacraments, and to involve themselves in apostolic and professional commitment. Among the finest fruits of his pedagogy was the 15-year old Saint Dominic Savio.

The source of his tireless and efficacious activity was a constant union with God and limitless trust in Mary Help of Christians, whom he felt to be the inspirer and support of all his work. And to his Salesian sons he left a legacy in the form of a religious life that was simple but solidly founded on Christian virtues and summed up in the phrase: work and temperance.

Among his youngsters he sought out the best collaborators for his work, giving rise to the Society of Saint Francis de Sales; together with St Mary Domenica Mazzarello he founded the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians; finally with good and diligent lay people, both men and women, he created the Salesian Cooperators to flank and sustain his work, thus anticipating new forms of apostolate in the Church.

Don Bosco died on 31 January 1888, and on the centenary of his death John Paul II proclaimed him Father and Teacher of Youth, decreeing that he should be honoured and invoked under this title, especially by all who consider themselves his spiritual children.

The liturgical formulary is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God for having raised up Saint John

Bosco in the Church as the father, brother and friend of the young (*Pref.*).

The special character of 'father and teacher of youth' (*Coll.*) emerges as a sign of the providence of God who inspires every good intention (*Sol. Bless.*) and never leaves his Church without saints. Docile to the promptings of the Spirit and faithful to the guidance of the Virgin Mary, John was the tireless apostle who undertook his work with a prophetic vision of new times to come, and who educated the young by preparing them to face up to life with honest wisdom and industrious faith (*Pref.*); and all this for the good of the Church (*Coll.*).

The joyful and festive participation in this Eucharist is for every assembly a pledge of fidelity to baptismal promises, i.e. to walk always in faith, hope and love (*Sol. Bless.*); a commitment to work for the salvation of our neighbour (*Coll.*), serving them with joy (*Sol. Bless.*), so that the life of each one may be a hymn to the glory of the Father (*I Offertory*), and that one day all may share in the everlasting feast of heaven (*III After comm.*). For this reason the faithful ask for the gift of apostolic charity (*Coll.*) carried out in tireless activity (*I After comm.*), so as to follow with joy the example and teachings of Saint John Bosco (*II Offertory*), and to continue in the Church his mission of father and teacher (*Pref.*).

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf 1 Kings 5,9-

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

Or:

Ps 34 (33), 12.6a

**Come, children, and hear me:
that I may teach you the fear of the Lord. Look
towards him and be radiant.**

The 'Gloria' is said.

OPENING 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, who lives
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and
ever.**

1st Reading: Ezek 34,11-12.15-16.23-24.30-31 2nd

Reading: Phil 4,4-9 Gospel: Mt 18,1-6.10

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Accept, holy Father,

the sacrifice we offer you
with sincere devotion;
grant that we may love you above all else,
so that our whole life
may be a hymn to your glory.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

PREFACE

Saint John Bosco, a gift of God to the Church

V. The Lord be with you g. And also with you.

V. Lift up your hearts.

I. We lift them up to the Lord.

**V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. g. It is right to give him
thanks and praise.**

**Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to
give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Father of eternal love

**you have raised up Saint John Bosco in the Church as the father, brother
and friend of the young, to lead them along the way of salvation.**

**With a prophetic vision of new times to come, he prepared them to
face up to life with honesty, integrity and active faith.**

**Under the impulse of your Spirit, he brought
into being a great Family to continue
throughout the world his mission of father and
teacher.**

**And we, gathered together in festive assembly, raise up
to you, Father,
our hymn of adoration and praise,
as together with the angels and saints in heaven we
proclaim your glory saying (singing):**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven
and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosannah in the highest.

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosannah
in the highest.**

Anyone who welcomes one little child like this in my name welcomes me, says the Lord.

Or:

Jn 15,12

**This is my commandment:
love one another as I have loved you.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Father, you have nourished us
with this sacrament of salvation;
help us to imitate the tireless activity of Saint John Bosco in
bringing young people to the love of Christ, your Son, the
inexhaustible source of new life.**

He lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Saint JOHN BOSCO (1)

In this celebration in honour of the Father and Teacher of youth, let us make our prayer to God the Father, who is always ready to listen to the petitions of his children.

I. Father, hear our prayer.

1. For the Pope, bishops, priests and deacons: that they may proclaim the gospel of truth and joy by the generous testimony of their vocation, we pray to the Lord.
2. For all persons of good will: that their commitment for a better world may be founded on unselfish and generous love, we pray to the Lord.
3. For the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians: that in imitation of Saint John Bosco in the complete donation of their lives in the service of the young, they may be able to form in them the image of Christ, we pray to the Lord.
4. For young people who are abandoned, on the fringe of society, and without ideals: that they may find in every follower of Don Bosco a friend to help them live their lives in accordance with the Gospel, we pray to the Lord.
5. For those involved in the Christian education of the young: that they may find in their holy Patron a teacher and guide from whom they can draw inspiration for their own mission, we pray to the Lord.
6. For all of us here present: that we may strive to realize each day the gospel teaching of mutual acceptance, so that one day we may be welcomed by the Lord himself, we pray to the Lord.

7. *Other intentions.*

Ever faithful God, you gave to Saint John Bosco a great and generous heart; hear our prayer, that with your Spirit as our guide we may strive to live out each day what we have asked for with faith. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Saint JOHN BOSCO (2)

My brothers and sisters, as we celebrate the solemnity of Saint John Bosco, faithful servant of the Church and educator of the young, let us pray to God who is kind and rich in mercy.

g. Guide us, Father, in our journey through life.

1. For God's holy Church: that he who raised up saints to meet the needs of every age, may also in our own time give to the Church zealous apostles, educators in the faith and animators of the spiritual life, we pray to the Lord.

2. For ecclesial communities: that overcoming all self-interest they may strive with courage to work for the poor, the weak, and all who are neglected in any way or abandoned by society, we pray to the Lord.

3. For young people: that they may learn to grasp the urgent needs of the times and dedicate themselves with generosity to the building of a future that will be more humane and Christian, we pray to the Lord.

4. For parents and educators: that they may help families, parishes and schools to develop a sense of shared responsibility in the formation of the young as they become adult, we pray to the Lord.

5. For the Salesian Family: that its members may be attentive to the signs of the times and, following the example of Saint John Bosco, commit themselves courageously to the human and spiritual salvation of mankind, we pray to the Lord.

6. For all of us gathered here today: that we may seek always what is true, just and virtuous, and make our lives a continual act of thanksgiving to God our Father, we pray to the Lord.

7. *Other intentions.*

God our Father, grant us tireless faith and boundless love, that following Saint John Bosco in our daily situations we may be signs and bearers of your love for the young. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.