

## Monthly Commemoration of Don Bosco (#6 - July)

### WELCOME RAIN

Our Lady often repaid Don Bosco's devotion to her in remarkable ways. The story of what happened at Montemagno where he was invited to preach the Triduum for the Feast of the Assumption, is but one instance. The whole region has been suffering for months from such a drought that most of the harvest - grapes, maize, potatoes and vegetables was threatened. In his first sermon a mysterious impulse compelled him to make a sudden promise that rain would fall if they invoked the Blessed Virgin.

"Come for these three days to the parish services," he told the people in substance. "Make a good confession, prepare for a fervent Communion on the day of the feast, and in Mary's name, I promise you that the rain will fall to refresh your thirsty land."

"You must have a lot of courage," said the pastor to him when he returned to the sacristy.

"Courage? What do you mean?"

"In promising rain next Monday."

"Did I do that? I don't think so. There must be some misunderstanding."

"Ask the sacristan. He will repeat what you said word for word. There's no mistake about it, I assure you."

Word of the promise spread quickly around the hamlets and villages with the result that never had the church been so crowded. The confessionals were stormed every evening, so that Rua and Cagleiro, who had accompanied Don Bosco, for long afterward remembered the crowds they had to confront during these three days.

Meanwhile, in Montemagno and in the neighbouring parishes, bets were laid by the less fervent whether it would rain or not! If it did not, the local anticlericals were even planning a demonstration against Don Bosco.

"Will it rain, Don Bosco?" asked the parishioners when they met him.

"Purify your hearts," was his answer.

Came the Feast of the Assumption and rarely had the sun burned so fiercely. Don Bosco began to wonder if he had not tempted heaven with his promise of rain. Midday came, and the sky looked brighter than ever. At the end of the meal at a friend's home, Don Bosco withdrew to his room to prepare his sermon for the afternoon. From time to time he cast a glance at the horizon: it was as bright and as clear as a mirror. At last, the bell rang for the service.

"Whatever shall I say to these poor people," was the question uppermost in his mind, "if the Madonna fails me? John," he told the sacristan, "go and see if anything is showing on the horizon."

"Just a tiny cloud," reported the sacristan, "that amounts to nothing."

"Very well," said Don Bosco, "Give me my stole."



The last verses of the *Magnificat* were being sung and as Don Bosco made his way to the pulpit he could see that the church was crowded to the altar rail. Everyone had heard of the promise and was anxious to see what would happen. Don Bosco climbed into the pulpit, said a short prayer and began his sermon. At this moment, seen through the church windows the sky appeared to be darkening. Don Bosco continued speaking, but he had hardly finished the first few sentences when he was interrupted by a deep-throated roll of thunder. This was followed by a second roll then by a third. Flashes of lightning succeeded one another as the rain began to pour down and beat against the windows!

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***"Have a filial trust in Our Lady; confide in Her, rely on Her. It has never been heard that anyone trusted in Mary in vain. She will shield you against the devil's assaults."***

***"Our Lady loves those who are young, make sure you call upon Her often."***

***"When in danger or in need, have recourse to Mary. The Blessed Virgin has always helped me and will always do so!"***

***"...My children, see to it that the Blessed Virgin may always receive gifts from you which She will not have to refuse."***

**Don Bosco**

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**The *Magnificat*, taken from Luke's Gospel (1:46-55), is the Blessed Virgin Mary's hymn of praise to the Lord.**

My soul magnifies the Lord  
And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;  
Because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid;  
For behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed;  
Because He who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is His name;  
And His mercy is from generation to generation  
on those who fear Him.  
He has shown might with His arm,  
He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.  
He has put down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has exalted the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich He has sent away empty.  
He has given help to Israel, his servant, mindful of His mercy  
Even as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity forever.

