

STRENNA 2020 VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

“Which one of you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them does not leave the 99 in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?” There were many lost sheep in the city in Don Bosco's time. Fr. Cafasso, ever his friend, had told him: “Go and look around you.”

Don Bosco learned how to discover the poverty and wretchedness on the outskirts of the cities. Right from those early Sundays, Fr. Michael Rua would testify he went through the city to get an idea of the moral circumstances of the young people. He was disturbed by it. The suburbs were seedbeds of unrest and revolution – a ring of desolation. Teenagers were wandering around the streets, jobless, sad, ready to do their worst. He met a huge number of boys of every age, Fr. Rua's testimony continues. They were wandering about the streets and squares, especially in the inner city areas - playing, fighting, swearing, and doing even worse things.

One day, while visiting the prisons, he could not hold back his tears. They noticed it. Why is that Priest weeping? My mother would weep, too, if she could see me here.

Today the Salesian Family is a mother who weeps over her children. The situation has not changed. The massacre of the innocents continues. It is a catastrophe of souls as it was in Don Bosco's day. For too many youngsters the world's doors remain closed. The heavens above them are also closed. The stars in the heavens are not shining. No horizons lie before them and they have no roots backing them. No one wants to give them the strength to resist.

“We will always be friends, right?” These were Don Bosco's first words - the first door thrown open to the young. The door to his heart. The future begins with us. With that first step like a prophecy - just as a river begins with the first drop of water, or the night with the first of the stars. Providence only knows human beings while on the move:

People who have stood up and are on the move in the trust and hope they offer God in their tomorrow. Go out and meet them. This is our call to recognize the beauty hidden in every human being, in their dignity - their greatness as an image of God and as children of the Father. The Holy Spirit is urging us to go out of ourselves, to embrace others lovingly and seek their good. This is why it is always better to live our faith together and express our love in a community style of life, sharing our affection, our time, our faith, and our doubts with other young people because everything is easier when we do it together; because young people are crying out today. They are crying out because nobody is listening to them. Nobody seems interested in the real problems they have: the meaning of life, lack of opportunities or education, finding work - all they have in front of them is some accursed wall or just so many people who are just one more brick in that wall of “Just be patient and make do.” Like Don Bosco, let us open a breach in that wall and listen to what they are saying.

“I want to be happy.”

“I want real friendships, not just virtual ones.”

“We want to build a future together.”

“I want to feel less alone.”

“I want to be respected.”

“I want to choose my path.”

“I want to meet someone who listens to my opinion.”

“I want a real job.”

“I want to be part of the change.”

“I want to live in a cleaner world.”

“I want to work in my city.”

“I want to remain human.”

There is a justice and a citizenship that young people are becoming prophets of - one that goes beyond all borders. There is a citizenship of the world as our common home and of the future.

One thing became immediately clear to Don Bosco: there is only one way to change the world: education - a strong and complete education, one that opens the doors to life and the gates of heaven. We cannot be afraid. Let us break down the wall of indifference and allow the power of the Spirit to break in. Even if we have to roam streets where the earth has been reduced to silence beneath asphalt and cement, we should not sell our ears nor should we sell our souls any longer. We must rejuvenate and find eyes to see Creation and what is yet to be created.

As well as the strength and courage to say: "Enough! Enough of poverty, hunger, inequality, exploitation of the earth, the merciless marketplace and its people. We need to guarantee full and productive and dignified work for everyone. This means starting over again - and there is always a mother at every beginning. Don Bosco presented her to his boys as the Immaculate, the simple woman filled with kindness who joyfully lived out the plan God had for her. He presented her also as the helper, the loving mother concerned that all her sons and daughters would fully live the dream that God has for each of them.

All of this Don Bosco called his "politics of the Our Father". In the "Our Father", we ask daily that the Heavenly Father's Kingdom come on earth. We seek to build a new Kingdom for the young and with the young - a Kingdom of God on earth today.

We are tired of waiting. Young people's patience is exhausted. Don Bosco hastened to their aid. The youngest of them had a future in his mind and heart. For our part, our being educators and evangelizers of the young demands personal experience – first of all, an experience we can recount to the young telling them in words, gestures, and actions that God loves them, that "you are really precious to Him"; "you are not insignificant"; "you are important and He loves you and walks with you". This is why we can never cease to be evangelizers of the young knowing that evangelization also seeks growth and this implies taking the plan that the Lord has for every person very seriously.

This is our vocation: giving a voice back to the young and forming credible leaders, new prophets for a just and fulfilled humanity. Don Bosco also want the young of today to be happy now and in eternity. It means celebrating life - just at a time when it seems there is no longer anything to celebrate.

"When the shepherd has found the lost sheep, he lays it on his shoulders, full of joy, returns home and calls together his friends and neighbors saying to them, 'Rejoice with me for I have found my sheep, the one that was lost.'"

To youngsters he says: "Let the feast begin with the dancing!" The young person is no longer thrown down like a stone tossed away. They take flight and they find their wings in Him. The music already exists in today's young people and their dreams, dressed for the future, dance, blowing in the wind. The nomads of the city centers reawaken and they get going. Wake up all of you. We have to go. The future is already here; the doors are forced open; the sun has already arisen; shadows dying.

Don Bosco: Profoundly human and totally open to God

Good Christian

- Living in the faith of the Lord and with the guidance of God.

- Make one's life of faith an announcement for others; this is the most precious gift we can exchange

- In listening to God who speaks to us

- True educators living Salesian spirituality

Upright Citizens

- In educating to social and political commitment free from corruption

- Sensitive and co-responsible in a world in movement

- Taking care of the "common home"

- In defense of human rights, especially of minors