

JANUARY 31 2025 DEACON KEVIN DAUDLIN

Education is something from the heart, and God alone is its master. We cannot succeed in anything unless God gives us the key to the hearts of these children. Today being the feast of Saint John Bosco, otherwise known as Don Bosco, I thought it would be nice to start with one of his quotes. Education was very important to him, especially among the disadvantaged and marginalized youth, many of whom were living on the streets. Not much has changed since the Saint's passing, with many youth still living on our streets throughout the world. Don Bosco knew this would always be the case. So, he started the Salesian Order, named after St. Francis de Sales, to continue his legacy to this day.

"Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives not me, but him who sent me." These are Jesus' own words, but do we listen? John Bosco obviously did. Not only did he heed them, but he lived them on a daily basis. Today, like Don Bosco, we are being asked to take on a more active role in our church and community. Also, do not feel that you have to do this alone. We're all in this together, each and every one of us.

I think I had this concept ingrained in me at a very early age. My memories from my childhood were working as a family with others at our parish or local K of C Hall, setting up for events, serving, and cleaning up. We did everything together, never alone. In our first reading, the people were struggling. They were being tempted to return to their old ways and faith as Jews. It wasn't easy for them becoming Christians, not only ostracized by their community, but shunned by their families as well. Even though they truly believed it, it was a hard road. Paul knew this and used terms such as "let us," because he was hoping

they would understand they were doing this as a group, not just individually, and could lean on each other for help.

Things aren't any different today. With everything going on all around us, that is why we need to move from the sidelines to being active participants, but we need to do it together. When we try to do things alone, it is as if we are walking around alone in the dark. Moreover, in the dark we can get lost or even hurt. Jesus knew this. So, that's why in yesterday's gospel he shared with us the parable of the lamp, and that had a lot to do with St. John Bosco as well, because this is that lamp brought to be put under the bushel basket or under the bed. The disciples probably looked at him and thought, "Of course not, that is just plain foolish. You put it out where it can be useful, where everybody can see it." A light that is hidden is of no help. We are that light, and it is up to us to not hide it, but let it shine.

Jesus asked us to come out of the dark and shine as a light or beacon for all when he said, "Be like me, live like me, act like me, follow me." He also said, "You are the light of the world." You can say that we are Jesus's ambassadors, because he calls on us to shine his light in the darkness. We have all been given that lamp. It is up to us what we do with it. Yeah, we could just hide it under the bed or a basket or we can say, "Of course not." In reality, we may actually hide the lamp. Even though we know that is not what we should be doing, we tend to do it anyway. Is it because we generally don't care or are we just blind to what is going on around us or are we just way too busy? Or, like most of us, maybe we are just afraid.

Was Don Bosco afraid? Too busy or didn't care? What he-- did he do when he saw the youth of his era going astray, many ending up in

prisons? His light shone so brightly that it inspired others to add fuel to their lamp so it could shine even brighter. One of those unfortunate boys even went on to lead a saintly life of his own, because he was inspired by St. John Bosco, his mentor, and that's namely St. Dominic Savio. Where would he be if this priest had not entered into his life as a beacon of hope? It isn't going out to help or be an inspiration of others. It's not easy we, but we do it. Jesus never said it would be easy. We're even asked if we're willing to take up our own cross. So, today, we look to St. John Bosco as an inspiration to help those around us, to be open in our love for Jesus, and to be open about our love for others.

Our good deeds are the light that God uses to shine in and through us. Be patient when others are rude. Be kind when others are harsh. Show love where all you see is hate. Be calm in our world of panic and anxiety and be courageous to help others living in fear. Let your lamp shine bright for all to see. St. John Bosco, pray for us.