

to a human being, it shows the exterior of the body to which it was united in life, with all its physical characteristics greatly beautified. It does so until body and soul are reunited in the Universal Judgment. Then it will take its body to Heaven. That is why I seem to have head and hands and feet. This is why you can see me.” “I understand,” I answered. “But listen, one more question. Are all my boys on the path to salvation? Tell me how I can properly guide them?”

### Knowledge Of The State Of Souls

“The boys entrusted to you by Divine Providence can be divided into three groups. Do you see these three slips of paper?” and he handed me the first one.

I looked at it. It was entitled *Invulnerati* — unwounded—and contained the names of those lads whom the devil had been unable to harm, those boys who had retained their innocence unstained. They were many, and I could see them all. Some I knew, others were strangers, undoubtedly boys who were to enter our school in future years.

They were walking straight along a narrow path, in spite of arrows and daggers that were thrown at them from all sides. Indeed, these weapons formed a fence on both sides of the path, striking and tormenting them, but never inflicting a wound. Then Dominic handed me the second slip, entitled *Vulnerati*—that is, those who had fallen from God’s grace but, rising to their feet, had healed their wounds by repentance and Confession.

There were more boys on this second list than on the first. They had been wounded on their way of life by the enemy lying in wait for them. I read their names and saw them all. Many walked along with their heads bowed in discouragement.

Dominic still had a third piece of paper in his hand. I could see its title *Lassti in via inquitantis*—those who have collapsed in the way of sin. It contained the names of all those in God’s *disgrace*. I was anxious to know who they were and stretched out my hand, but Dominic interrupted quickly, “No, wait a moment listen to me! If you open this paper, such a stench will arise that neither you nor I will be able to stand it! The angels withdraw in horror and disgust, and the Holy Spirit, Himself, abhors the hideous *odor of sin!*”

“How can this be?” I asked. “Neither God nor His angels can feel pain. How can they smell a material stench?” “The better and purer a creature is, the more it resembles a heavenly spirit; but the filthier and more sinful one is, the father one moves from God and His angels, who in turn withdraw from him, who is an object of disgust and loathing.”

Then he handed me the paper. “Take it,” he said, “open it and use it for the good of your boys. But do not forget the bouquet I have given to you. Make sure that everyone has it, and does not lose it!” Giving me the paper, he hastily withdrew to join his companions. I opened the paper. I saw no names, but in a flash, I saw all the boys who were listed on it. I saw them all! They were a sorry sight! Most of them I knew; they belong to the Oratory or to other schools. I saw some who seem to be good—even the best among all their companions, but they are not!

As I unfolded the paper, an unbearable stench was released—so much so that I got a violent headache, and such cramps that I thought I would die. Darkness settled about me the vision with Dominic faded away and, to my sadness, nothing was left of that wonderful sight. Suddenly a bolt of lightning flashed with a crash of thunder so loud and frightening that I awoke in a cold sweat! It was a dream but I remembered *everything!*

That stench had penetrated the walls of my room, and even my clothing, so that I could smell it for days. *So foul is even the name of the sinner before God!* Even now, as I recall that odor, I get very nauseated and choke, and my stomach rebels.

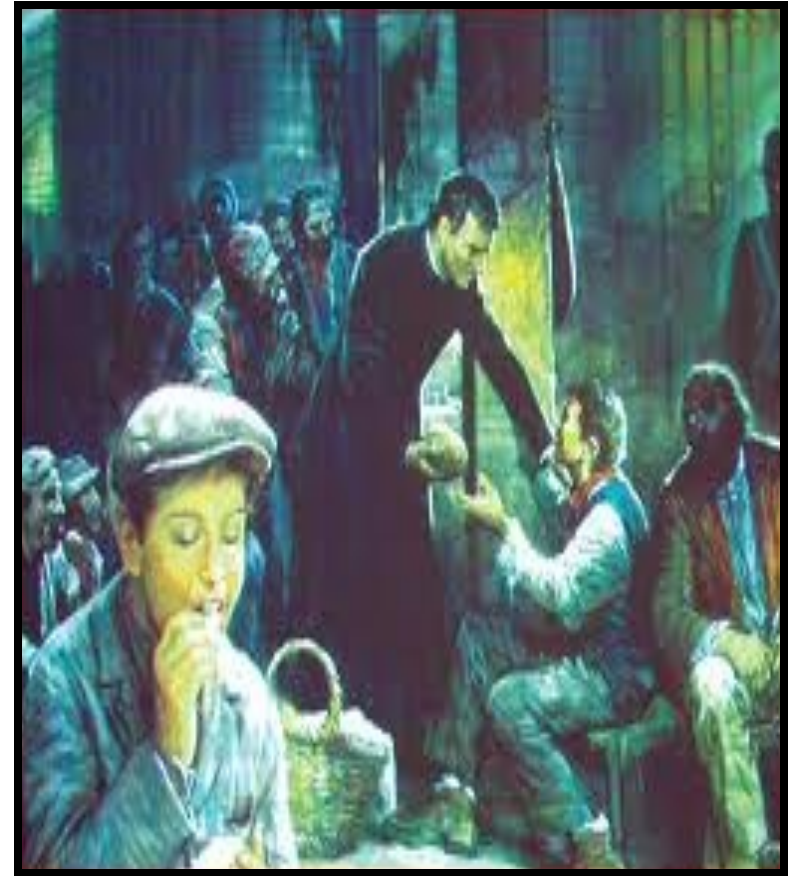
I have already made inquiries of boys at Lanzo, and have found out that the dream was not misleading. It was totally true! It is God’s grace that has allowed me to know the state of souls...to help them.

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St. John Bosco  
and  
St. Dominic Savio

## A Dream of Don Bosco’s



*“I saw a group of boys, many of whom had been at the Oratory or at our other schools, but most of them I had never seen.*

*Am I asleep or awake?”*

**I kept wondering.  
A boundless joy sparkled in the eyes of those boys,  
reflecting in their face the inner peace that flooded their souls.**

**Happy smiles played merrily on their lips...**

## A Dream of Don Bosco's

On the night of December 6, 1876, while in my room, asleep or not, I do not know, I found myself on a hill overlooking an immense plane. It was blue, like a calm sea, but not of water. It looked like shining crystal.

I saw large gardens of untold beauty. The grass, flowers, trees, and fruit were exquisitely beautiful. The trees had leaves of gold, trunks and branches studded with diamonds—everything blending in wealthy splendor. I saw buildings of such beauty and harmony, so exceptionally magnificent in shape, that not all the wealth of the world could construct even one of them!

I was seeing only the outside of these buildings—how magnificent they must have been inside! “If only my boys could live in one of these mansions,” I said to myself, “how happy they would be! How gladly they would stay!”

Then I heard music so sweet and rich in harmony that words cannot even describe it. A hundred thousand instruments were playing, and then a choir of voices joined them. There is nothing on earth to compare with it! I was enraptured.

## A Group of Boys

As I listened in ecstatic wonder, I saw a group of boys, many of whom had been at the Oratory or at our other schools, but most of them I had never seen. They came towards me, and at their head was Dominic Savio.

“Am I asleep or awake?” I kept wondering. I even hit myself a few times to make sure everything was real!

A boundless joy sparkled in the eyes of those boys, reflecting in their face the inner peace that flooded their souls. Happy smiles played merrily on their lips.

Dominic Savio stepped forward alone, coming so close to me that, had I stretched out my hand, I would have touched him.

How magnificent he looked! A snow white tunic, studded with diamonds and interwoven with gold, fell to his feet. About his waist was a wide crimson sash, embroidered with precious stones. About his neck hung a garland of wild flowers. Their petals looked like diamonds hung from golden stems, and they sparkled with a supernatural glory that outshone even the sun, with all its splendor of a spring morning. I almost lost my senses as I looked at him.

The rays from the flowers intermingled and played upon Dominic's innocent, handsome face in a manner that defies description. Everything about him gave him such an attractive and enchanting appearance that he looked like...an angel.

## Where Was I?

I kept staring at everything about me. “What does this mean?” I wondered, “And, how did I get here?” I still had no idea where I was. Stammering, I barely managed to ask, “Are you really Dominic Savio?” “Yes, I am! Don't you recognize me?” Why are you here?” I asked, terribly confused. Dominic's reply was reassuring.

I have come to talk with you. We often talked together on earth, and now God is allowing me to return your love for me.” I asked, “Am I in Heaven?”

He answered, “No. This is a natural place of happiness with temporal joys in a lofty degree; it is nature embellished and made so by God's power.

I said, “I thought that it was Heaven.” “No, of course not!” broke in Savio. “No mortal eye can see the eternal beauty of Heaven. Even the tiniest ray of Heaven's light would strike a man dead, because the human senses cannot stand it.

“I gazed attentively at the heavenly “Is there any natural light lovelier than this?” Oh, yes! If you could only see a ray of sunlight just slightly more powerful than this, you would lose your senses!”

“Could I not look at just one tiny ray of such light?” “All right...but, look carefully at the horizon on the crystal sea.” I did so, and at that moment, far away, a fleeting streak of light, thinner than a thread, flashed across the sky—so brilliant, so penetrating that it burned my eyes. I shut them and screamed. That one streak was a hundred million times brighter than the sun, and its brilliance could have lit up the entire universe!

After awhile, I reopened my eyes and asked Dominic, “What was that—a ray of divine light?”

Savio answered, “It was not supernatural light, although it does surpass all the light of the world. It is nothing else than natural light, intensified by God's power. Even an immense band of light equal in brilliance to the tiny ribbon which you have just seen, and encircling the entire universe, could not give you even a remote idea of the glory of Heaven!”

Then I asked Dominic, “Why are you wearing such brilliant garments?” Dominic was silent, and seemed to refuse an answer, but then I realized that the blood-red sash was a symbol of the many great sacrifices he had made, his violent efforts, the near martyrdom he had suffered to preserve the virtue of purity...and that to remain chaste in God's eyes, he had been ready to give his life, should it have been necessary. At the same time, it represented penance, which cleanses the soul from guilt. His shining white tunic represented baptismal innocence retained.

## God's Messenger

“I gazed attentively at the heavenly youngsters who followed him, and asked, “Tell me, Dominic, you are the youngest of all the boys who have died in our houses, so why do you precede these boys?” “I am the oldest of the Oratory boys, because I was the first to die and pass on into eternity. Besides, *legatione Dei fungor*—”I am God's ambassador.” He was a messenger for God.

I asked, “Tell me about the past?” He replied, “Do you see that vast number of boys over there? What is written over the entrance to that garden?” “Salesian Garden,” I answered. “Well,” Savio continued, “all of these people were either Salesians or were influenced by you. They were those saved by you and your priests and seminarians, or by those whom you guided into the paths of their vocation. Count them, if you can! *But, they would be a hundred million times more numerous if you had only had greater trust and faith in the Lord!*”

I sighed, not knowing what to say to this reproof, and inwardly resolved, “I'll make sure that I have this faith and confidence in the future!” “How about the present?” I asked.

Dominic showed me a beautiful bouquet of flowers he had in his hands. There were roses, violets, sunflowers, gentians, lilies, and evergreens...with some ears of wheat. He gave them to me, and said, “These flowers represent the virtues that are most pleasing to Our Lord.” “What are they,” I asked.

“The rose is the symbol of *Charity*; the violet of *Humility*; the sunflower, *Obedience*; the gentian, *Penance and Mortification*; the ears of wheat, frequent *Communion*; the lily symbolized that beautiful virtue of which it is said, “They shall be as the Angels of God in Heaven—*Chastity*. The evergreen tells you that these virtues must be lasting: *Perseverance*.”

## The Most Important Message

“Well now, Dominic,” I said, “you practiced all of these virtues during life. Tell me, what gave you the greatest comfort at the hour of death?” “What do you think it was?” “Maybe preserving the virtue of purity?” “No, not that alone.” “Peace of conscience...obedience?” “That is a good thing, but it is not the best.” “Perhaps the hope of gaining Heaven?” “No, not that.” “Well, was it the treasury of good deeds you had stored up? “No, no!” “Then what did bring you your greatest comfort in that last hour?” I pleaded, embarrassed that I had not discovered the reason.

“*What comforted me most at the hour of my death,*” Dominic replied, “*was the assistance of the powerful and lovable Mother of God! Tell this to your boys, and to everyone. As long as they live, they are not to forget to pray to Her!*”

“And, what of the future?” “As for your Congregation, if your priests guide it well and make themselves worthy of their lofty mission, the future will be resplendent, and an untold number of souls will be saved. But on one condition—that your sons *remain devoted to the Blessed Virgin, and that they all keep the virtue of chastity*, which is so pleasing to God.”

## Out Of Body

“How about myself?” I asked. “Oh, if you only know what trials still await you! But, now, I have little time left to speak to you.” Quickly I stretched out my hands to grasp him, but he seemed immaterial, and I touched only thin air! Dominic smiled, and asked, “What are you trying to do?” “I am afraid that you will go away. Aren't you here in your body?” “No, not in my body. Some day I shall take it back.” “Then what is this image that I see? Am I not gazing upon Dominic Savio?”

“When a soul is separated from its body by death and, with God's permission, appears