



## Saint Dominic Savio Church

May 7, 2023

### Pastor

Fr. Michael Gergen, SDB

[mgergen@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:mgergen@la-archdiocese.org)

### Associate Pastors

Fr. Andrew Ng, SDB

Fr. Fabian Cardenas, SDB

### Permanent Deacons

Dn. Joseph Lumsdaine

Dn. Wilfredo Arban

Dn. Carlos Porras, Jr.

Dn. Ricardo Arriola

### Religious Education School (RES)

Sr. Cynthia Salas, FMA

**For information about  
religious education classes for children,**

call: (562-920-7796), ext. 317

### C. Y. M.

Mr. Juan Carlos Montenegro

### St. Dominic Savio Catholic School

Principal: Mr. Gerardo Hilario

For information, call: 562-866-3617

### Parish Office

#### Monday through Friday

10:00 am to 7:00 pm

(lunch break from 1 to 2 pm)

#### Saturday

10:00 am to 3:00 pm

(lunch break from 1 to 2 pm)

#### Sunday

9:00 am to 1:00 pm

**Please register at the Parish Office**

### Weekday Masses

#### Monday thru Friday

6:30 am English

8:00 am Spanish

12:00 noon English (online)\*

**Church doors will be closed  
after the 12 noon Mass**

### Weekend Masses

#### Saturday

7:00 am English

5:30 pm English

7:00 pm Spanish

#### Sunday

6:30 am English

8:00 am Spanish

10:00 am English (also online)\*

11:30 am English

1:00 pm Spanish (also online)\*

5:30 pm English

7:00 pm Spanish

\*[saintdominicsavio.org/live-mass](http://saintdominicsavio.org/live-mass)

### Adoration Chapel

#### Monday through Friday

3:00 pm to 9:00 pm

### Confessions

#### Saturday

10:00 am to 12:00 noon

**For information on Marriages,  
Quinceañeras, and Baptisms,**  
speak to any of the parish priests or  
e-mail: [mgergen@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:mgergen@la-archdiocese.org)

## Fifth Sunday of Easter

### The Way

Today we sense the apostles' trepidation as they begin to realize that the Lord would soon be leaving them. In their fear, they ask, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" (John 14:5). Jesus tells them that he is the way. The Easter season has been a time of growing in Easter faith so that we, too, may learn to know that Jesus is the way. We can take comfort in the Lord's promise that he is going to his Father's house to prepare a place for us, his chosen people who have been called out of darkness into God's wonderful light. As the paschal candle continues to burn during this holy season, let us remember that in baptism we were given the light of Christ. With Christ our light as the beacon lighting our way, let us march toward the glory of Pentecost.

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### Treasures from Our Tradition

In many parish churches, more rarely in monastery churches and cathedrals, the tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament is visible from a doorway or aisle in the church. Normally, a person is to give the proper sign of reverence, a genuflection, when passing in proximity to the tabernacle. The word "genuflect" comes from Latin roots meaning bending (or flexing) the knee. A common-sense exception to the rule is for a sacristan who is taking care of the church and can't be genuflecting every thirty seconds during a vacuum run. Also excepted are persons in procession entrusted with important symbols of the Lord's presence. So, a crossbearer or a minister carrying the Gospel book, or ministers on their way to their Communion stations do not genuflect. For everyone else, the usual sign of reverence for the Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament is to genuflect on the right knee.

The oldest form of reverence during prayer in our tradition is standing; kneeling or genuflecting is a sign borrowed from old civic practice. The posture of kneeling, even on one knee, is a sign of submission. Servants would take this position before their masters in the ancient world. It said: I'm not running away, I'm yours, I'm here for you. This is what your genuflection says when you enter a Catholic church where the place of reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is visible to you: I'm yours.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

## Quinto Domingo de Pascua

### El Camino

Hoy sentimos la perturbación de los apóstoles cuando empiezan a darse cuenta de que el Señor pronto los dejara. Temerosos preguntan: "Señor, no sabemos a donde vas ¿cómo podemos saber el camino?" (Juan 14:5). Jesús les dice que *él* es camino. El tiempo de Pascua ha sido un tiempo para crecer en la fe pascual para que, así también, nosotros podamos darnos cuenta de que Jesús es el camino. Nos consuela la promesa del Señor de que va a la casa de su Padre a preparar un lugar para nosotros, su pueblo elegido que ha sido llamado de las tinieblas a la luz admirable de Dios. Mientras el cirio pascual continua ardiendo en este tiempo santo, recordemos que en nuestro bautismo nos dieron la luz de Cristo. Con Cristo, nuestra luz como faro iluminando nuestro camino, marchemos hacia la gloria de Pentecostés.

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### Tradiciones de Nuestra Fe

Después de la muerte de Jesús, los discípulos habían regresado a su antiguo oficio de la pesca para así ganarse la vida, pues no sabían que hacer. El Jesús resucitado tuvo que pescárselos de nuevo. En su tercera aparición, Jesús pidió a los discípulos que lanzaran sus redes al mar. Estos sacaron 153 peces del mar, numero representativo de todas las naciones del mundo. Esta pesca milagrosa que tuvo lugar en Galilea, nos recuerda otra pesca milagrosa hecha en Brasil.

En 1716 tres pescadores pescaban en el Rio Paraíba y al lanzar la red l agua sacaron una estatua de la Virgen de la Concepción. Después, la pesca fue tan abundante que por poco hundía el barco.

La virgencita de 36 centímetros había pasado muchos anos en el agua por lo cual había tomado el rico color oscuro de muchos latinoamericanos. La devoción a Nuestra Señora de Aparecida creció hasta que la familia que la había encontrado la dio al pueblo para que en 1745 se construyera para ella una capilla publica. De esta manera. Aparecida paso de las redes a los corazones, dando una rica pesca de personas para su Hijo.

—Fray Gilberto Cavazos-Glz, OFM, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co., Inc.

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### Bulletin Submissions

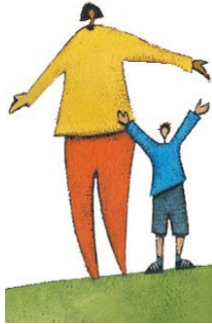
Please send, via e-mail, bulletin submissions to [bulletin@saintdominicsavio.org](mailto:bulletin@saintdominicsavio.org) or via postal service to the parish office. Please submit information by the Thursday before the publication date.

## Safeguarding the Children

### Did you know?

#### The importance of protective software

Children spend more time online than ever before. How can parents keep up with what they are doing and seeing? One easy way is to install accountability and filter software. Programs like Covenant Eyes, Bark Home Web Filter, or Circle can limit the sites and apps available to your children, and allow you to see their online activity. For more internet safety tips, read the VIRTUS® article “Five Keys to Monitoring Kids Online Activity” at [lacatholics.org/did-you-know/](http://lacatholics.org/did-you-know/).



#### La importancia del software de protección

Los niños pasan más tiempo en línea que nunca antes. ¿Cómo pueden los padres de familia mantenerse al día con lo que sus hijos hacen o ven? Una manera fácil es instalar un software de responsabilidad y de filtrado. Los programas como Covenant Eyes, Bark Home Web Filter o Circle pueden limitar los sitios y aplicaciones disponibles para sus hijos y permitirle a usted ver la actividad de ellos en la Internet. Para obtener más consejos de seguridad en Internet, lea el artículo de Virtus® en inglés, “Five Keys to Monitoring Kids Online Activity” (Cinco claves para monitorear la actividad de los niños en línea) en [lacatholics.org/did-you-know/](http://lacatholics.org/did-you-know/).



*In my  
Father's house  
there are many dwelling places*

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## Mass Intentions

### Saturday, May 6, 2023

7:00 am --- Special Intention

5:30 pm --- Parishioners of Saint Dominic Savio Church

7:00 pm --- Irma Rayas

### Sunday, May 7, 2023

6:30 am --- † Roman & Nina Gonzalez

8:00 am --- Carmen Haromota, Francisco & Engracia Zuniga, Familia Torres, Santiago Diaz, Almas del Purgatorio, † Virginia Portillo, † Jose & Emilia Zuniga, † Maria Torres, † Brigida Castillo, † Josefina Lopez & Mauro Diaz

10:00 am -- † Felipe Ferrer, † Gloria Lozada, † Ray Lucas, † Florita Cansino, † Maria de Jesus & Francisco Trevilla, † Audomaro De La O

11:30 am -- Sophia Beal

1:00 pm --- Fidel & Lilia Sanchez

5:30 pm --- Special Intention

7:00 pm --- † Adela Madrid De Beltran

### Monday, May 8, 2023

6:30 am --- Parents of members SBKM, For the deceased parents of SBKM

8:00 am --- † Benjamin Jr. Gutierrez

12:00 pm -- Special Intention

### Tuesday, May 9, 2023

6:30 am --- † Cristeta Gali

8:00 am --- † Trinidad & Miguel Arevalo

12:00 pm -- † Fernando Cardenas Rodriguez

### Wednesday, May 10, 2023

6:30 am --- Delgado-Camacho Family

8:00 am --- † Aurelia Guzman & † Alejandra Gutierrez

12:00 pm -- † Arnulfo Alatorre

### Thursday, May 11, 2023

6:30 am --- Hector Delgado

8:00 am --- Special Intention

12:00 pm -- † Jack Alexander Maurer

### Friday, May 12, 2023

6:30 am --- Special Intention

8:00 am --- Special Intention

12:00 pm -- Special Intention

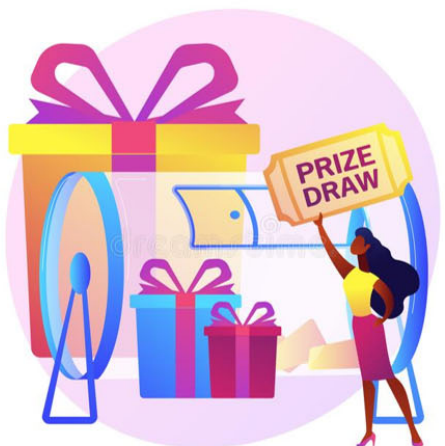
### Saturday, May 13, 2023

7:00 am --- Special Intention

5:30 pm --- Emmanuel Gutierrez

7:00 pm --- Feligreses de Iglesia de Santo Domingo Savio





**Spring Fiesta:**  
**Sunday: May 7**  
**Tickets for the Raffle**  
**on sale today**

**Join us on Saturday, May 13, 2023**  
**to honor Our Lady of Fatima.**

**7:00 am      Mass**  
**7:30 am      Rosary**

**St. Dominic Savio Church**  
**Sponsored by**  
**Legion of Mary**  
**Mary Help of Christians Praesidium**





***Wednesday: May 24***  
***Feast of***  
***Mary Help of Christians***

**Mass (Bilingual): 7:00 pm**  
**Procession, Rosary: 6 pm**

**May 21: Sunday Mass**

**May 22: Rosary**

**May 23: Eucharistic Adoration**

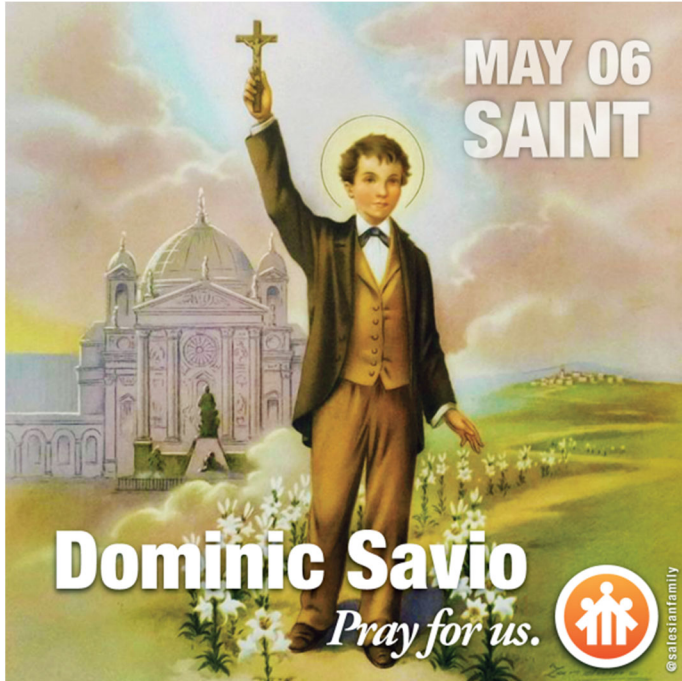


**May 21, 2023**

**Spring Pop-Up Shop**  
**at St. Dominic Savio Church**

**If you have a small business and would**  
**like to reserve a spot, please contact**  
**Armando Gonzalez – 562-708-0517**

## The Life Story of St. Dominic Savio (Biography of St. Dominic Savio)



Adapted from  
A Brief Life of St. Dominic Savio By Paul J. Pascucci, SDB  
Saint Dominic Savio, by St. John Bosco, translated from  
the fifth Italian edition with introduction and notes by Rev.  
Paul Aronica, SDB, Salesiana Publishers, 1963.

### Childhood

On a beautiful spring day, April 2, 1842, in the village of Riva, two miles from the town of Chieri, in the province of Piedmont, northern Italy, Dominic Savio was born. He was the second of eleven children born to Charles and Brigid Savio, who were poor, hard-working, pious people. Charles was a blacksmith. Dominic was a remarkable boy. What we know of him comes from a biography written by St. John Bosco and the testimony of family and friends. He attended the Oratory of St. Francis De Sales a school, youth center and hospice founded by Don Bosco.

### School Days

Dominic was very bright and enjoyed school as well as play. He was well liked and respected by his friends. Dominic had remarkable control over his emotions, and while he could get angry like any of his companions, he was able to control himself in most situations. He was friendly and showed early his leadership qualities and a strong sense of duty. He was a prayerful person and had an ever-maturing spirituality.

The Savios attended church in the town of Murialdo and the pastor, Father John Lucca, knew them well. He saw Dominic in Church often. Once he learned to serve Mass he was there every day. While children of the time customarily received their first Communion in their early teens, Fr. Lucca recognized the boy's remarkable piety and let him make his First Communion at the age of seven.

### Growing Faith

As the day of his first Communion drew near, Dominic wrote down four resolutions, remarkably mature thoughts of a seven year old:

I will go to Confession and Communion as often as my confessor will allow.

I will sanctify Sundays and holy days in a special way.

Jesus and Mary will be my friends.

Death, but not sin.

As we shall see Dominic lived by these resolutions.

Imagine a boy of ten trudging a total of twelve miles to and from school every day for a whole school year. That's what Dominic Savio did, because the school he attended was three miles away from home, and he had to go and come twice a day. On one very hot day an elderly man met him and asked, "Aren't you afraid to walk so far alone on this country road?"

"I'm not alone," replied Dominic. "I have my guardian angel with me. "

"But surely you find the journey long and tiresome in this very hot weather!"

"I work for a Master who pays well."

"And who is your master?"

"God is my master."

While full of energy and ready to join in any game with his friends, Dominic's health was weak. The long walk every day took its toll. The next year his parents decided to move from Murialdo to another village called Mondonio to be closer to school.

### Growing Love

It was at this school that an incident occurred which shows the depth of Dominic's kindness and thoughtfulness. Once a classmate committed a serious offense. This boy had a reputation for misbehavior. The culprit falsely accused Dominic of the offence. The teacher scolded the class, and threatened Dominic was expulsion, but because Dominic had never misbehaved before, he gave Dominic severe scolding before the whole class. Dominic made no reply but stood in silence



head bowed. A few days later the boy who was actually guilty was discovered. Regretting his previous harsh words, the teacher asked Dominic why he had not defended himself.

His answer came slowly but simply: "I knew that the other boy was in trouble for other things. I remembered how Our Lord had been unjustly accused, and I hoped that if I kept silence he would be given another chance."

This incident took place when Dominic was only eleven years old. It shows the depth and simplicity of this young soul.

## Meeting A Guide

For several years Don Bosco would take some of the young people of the Oratory on an outing during the customary October break. This noisy procession of students would walk from the Oratory in Turin some 18 miles to Becchi where Don Bosco grew up and where his brother, Joseph, still worked the family farm. Don Bosco would arrange for food and lodging with the pastors of the parishes on the way. In return the young people would put on an entertainment for the people of the towns they visited.

Early on the morning of the first Monday of October' in 1854, Dominic and his father went looking for Don Bosco, who was going to be in the town of Murialdo on the outing. Dominic greeted Don Bosco with a bright smile, "Good morning, Father."

"Good morning, and what is your name?" asked Don Bosco. "Where are you from?"

"I'm Dominic Savio. I come from Mondonio. This is my father, Mr. Charles Savio. Father Cagliero, my teacher, told me that I should talk to you. Did he tell you about me?"

"Yes he did, Dominic." Don Bosco asked him about his schoolwork and his life at home.

Without hesitation Dominic asked, "Father, will you take me to Turin with you to the Oratory to study?"

"Well, you look like good material to me!" Don Bosco exclaimed.

"Good material, Father? Good for what?"

"To make a beautiful garment for the Lord, son."

"Then take me with you, Father. You can be the tailor, and I'll be the cloth. Make me into a beautiful garment for Our Lord."

Knowing a little about the boy from information given by his Pastor, Fr. Lucca, and his, teacher, Don Cagliero, Don Bosco explained, "I'm concerned about your health. Do

you think that you will be all right? Life at the Oratory is not the same as at home?"

"Don't worry about that, Father. I'll be O.K." Dominic was very excited about going to Don Bosco's famous school.

"What do you want to do when you finish your studies?" Don Bosco asked.

"If God gives me the call, I very much want to be a priest."

"Bravo, Dominic! Now let's see how quick you are at learning. Take this book and see if you can learn this page by heart. Come back tomorrow when you have it memorized. Go now and join the other boys in that game. I want to talk to your father."

Don Bosco sent Dominic off to join the other boys who were playing, and then he turned to have a word with his father. Mr. Savio assured Don Bosco that his son was a very good boy and a bright student.

To Don Bosco's surprise, Dominic returned a few minutes later. Smiling, he said, "I can recite it now if you want me to, Father!" Don Bosco listened as the boy recited the assigned page word for word without hesitation or any mistakes. Dominic was motivated to accomplish the task as soon as he could so that he could join the other youngsters who were playing near by.

With a little doubt in his voice Don Bosco asked, "That is very impressive, Dominic, but do you know the meaning of what you have just recited?"

Eagerly Dominic explained clearly the meaning of the passage to the delight of both Don Bosco and his father.

"Very good," said Don Bosco. "Your father and I have spoken and he agrees that you may come to Turin. From now on you are one of the Oratory boys. Let's pray for each other."

Overjoyed and grateful beyond words, Dominic took Don Bosco's hand and said, "Don Bosco, I will do my best."

Dominic arrived in Turin at Don Bosco's Oratory of St. Francis De Sales in early October 1854. He was twelve-and-a-half years old.

Dominic paid Don Bosco a visit in his office a few days after his arrival. Dominic noticed a sign in a frame hanging over the door.

"What's the meaning of those words, Father?"

Don Bosco explained, "That is a motto, Da mihi animas caetera tolle. It is Latin. Do you understand Latin?"

"No, Father."

"It is a saying of St. Francis De Sales, our patron. I have taken it as my motto. It is translated: Give me souls: take away the rest."

Dominic did not fully understand meaning of the words, but a seed was planted in his heart.

Don Bosco Explained, "I am very concerned that I work hard to help people and myself save our souls by following Jesus, nothing else really matters."

### **Meeting Another Guide**

A second event captured Dominic's imagination. On December 8, 1854 Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Don Bosco and his Salesians took great care to prepare the young people of the Oratory for that special day. The whole community gathered in the Chapel. In a special prayer service the Salesians and the young people offered themselves to Mary, the Immaculate Mother of Jesus. Dominic remembered his first Communion resolutions and renewed them. Death but not sin... he remembered.

"From that day onward," wrote Don Bosco, "Dominic made such evident progress in virtue, that I began to write down everything I noticed about him."

### **Called to Holiness**

A few months later on the second Sunday of Lent, 1855, Don Bosco was preaching to the boys of the Oratory. He exclaimed, "Every one is called to be a saint, and do you know, it is easy to be a saint. Just do this: diligently do the ordinary things of the day in an extra ordinary way." Dominic was profoundly impressed. He began to think most seriously about what it meant to be a saint.

He became quiet and looked worried. Don Bosco stopped him one day and asked him if something was bothering him, "Dominic, do you feel all right?"

"I am fine, Don Bosco! I have been thinking about your sermon last Sunday. From now on, I am going to be very serious about becoming a saint."

"Dominic," explained Don Bosco, "say your prayers devoutly. Perform all your duties exactly, and above all be cheerful. The Lord loves a cheerful giver."

At first Dominic did not really understand what Don Bosco meant. In his eagerness to become holy, Dominic began to do what he understood to be penance. He had heard about saints of the Middle Ages who would go on severe fasts and punish themselves with painful physical penances. Dominic actually put pieces of wood or small stones in his bed so that he could "suffer for Christ." When the dormitory monitor told Don Bosco about this he called Dominic aside.

"The way to be a saint, Dominic, is to be always cheerful, do your duties to the best of your ability, and give your classmates good example. Keep in mind that the Lord, Jesus is always with you and wants your happiness."

The educational method Don Bosco and his Salesians was guiding Dominic and the other youngsters of the Oratory, helping them to develop and grow into maturity. Don Bosco's approach to ministry was to foster in the young people the skills and talents that would help them to develop into good Christians and upright citizens. In a short booklet entitled, *The Preventive System*, he described his approach to youth ministry as based on reason, religion and loving-kindness. Volumes have been written about Don Bosco's method by his Salesians.

### **A Young Apostle**

Don Bosco developed youth to youth ministry a hundred years before the term came to be used in education. Don Bosco began his ministry with very little help and no expertise except his own experience as a child and his keen insights into the nature of young people. He had to train a taskforce of people who would become experts in caring for these at-risk children. He gathered a hand full of generous adults willing to follow his lead and a large number of youth whom he could train to minister to their peers. Dominic became one of these young apostles.

### **Learning to Minister**

During the next two years Dominic grew in his awareness of God's call to holiness. He was already very pious, but now he became a person of prayer. Dominic realized that part of becoming a saint was sharing his knowledge and awareness of God with his companions.

Dominic was well liked by his classmates at the Oratory. He did well in school and enjoyed the games the other youngsters played. In Italy at the middle of the nineteenth century children did not play sports as we do today. Instead they enjoyed any number of games, races and field games. Dominic was always in the middle of the activities. He was always aware of what the others were doing and he became the mentor of his companions. The other kids respected him and appreciated his leadership, but when things went wrong he was not afraid to step in a bring order to difficult situations.

On one occasion two boys had gotten into an argument and challenged each other to a rock duel. This was a common way young thugs and street gangs settled arguments. These duels usually ended with someone getting hurt and sometimes seriously. It seems that one boy had insulted the family of the other. The two boys became so enraged that the only way they could think of



settling the affair was to fight with stones. They were to meet in the lot about ten minutes' walk from the Oratory.

Dominic Savio learned about the fight. He caught up with the boys and tried to talk them out of it. They would not hear of it. Dominic followed them to a field where the fight was to take place.

Dominic pleaded "You must stop this. It is not right!"

The one of the boys shouted, "You can't stop us."

"Not until I split his head open..." the other added.

"I am not stopping the fight," shot back Dominic, "but I am asking you to accept one condition."

"And what's that? They asked. By now they had arrived at the field set up the duel. Each boy stood facing the other with a distance of about twenty feet between him. Each had a pile of stones arranged at his feet. On the signal they would begin to throw the stones at each other until one gave up or was seriously injured.

Dominic stepped between them. One of the two shouted, "Dominic, what are you doing?"

"Do you promise you will fight under the condition I will set up?"

"Yes, now get out of the way, agreed one of the boys."

The other shouted, "Let's get this over with. What's the condition?"

Taking out a small crucifix, which he used to wear around his neck, Dominic held it up. "Before you start the fight you must look at this crucifix, and throw the first stone at me."

He strode before the angrier boy, and kneeling down said, "You start! Throw the first stone at me!"

Taken by surprise, the boy began to tremble. "No!" he protested. "Never! I have no argument with you, Dominic."

Dominic ran over to the other boy. He too was astonished and assured Dominic he was his friend and meant him no harm.

Then Dominic stood up. Looking at them, he said with great emotion: "Neither of you is ready to hurt me because I am your friend, yet you want commit this sin over a stupid remark made at school. Christ, who was innocent, died for us rather than seek revenge from those who hated him." Dominic stood, silent, crucifix in hand. Both boys dropped their stones, ashamed before his courageous stand.

"At that moment," one of them later admitted, "all my determination broke down and a cold chill ran through me. I hated myself for having forced a good friend like

Dominic to go to such lengths to keep us from sin. To show my regret, I forgave the boy who had insulted me and asked Dominic to tell me of some good priest who would hear my confession."

### Apostle of Prayer

Dominic had a special love for the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He prayed asking for the grace of keeping his heart like Mary's, free from every impure desire. "Mary," he would pray, "I always want to be your son. Let me die rather than commit a single sin against chastity."

Every Friday he found a few minutes during recreation to go to the chapel with some friends and recite the Seven Sorrows of Mary or the Litany of the Sorrowful Virgin. One Saturday, for example, he invited a companion to recite Our Lady's Vespers with him, but the lad tried to get out of it by pleading that his hands were cold. Dominic took off his own gloves and gave them to him. Another time he lent his coat to a boy to have him go to church with him for a few moments. (Apparently, in the winter the Church was colder inside than it was outside.)

Dominic drew up an interesting set of stories about Mary, the mother of Jesus, to tell his schoolmates. Now and then he would drop a good hint to get someone to go to confession and Communion in honor of the Blessed Mother. He was the first to set the example. He saw the Sacrament of Penance as a good place to get advice from the priest.

A pleasant episode bears out his tender love for Mary. The boys of his dormitory had decided to set up a little shrine to Our Lady at their own expense so as to keep the month of May. Dominic was very excited about it, but when he found out how much it would cost, he exclaimed, "What can I do? I haven't a cent!" Then he had an idea. He got a book he once received as a prize and, giving it to the boys, said, "Now I can do my share for Mary! Take this book and sell it!" The others were so impressed that they too got books and things and had a little raffle to pay for their project.

After they bought the decorations they began setting up the shrine, but by the eve of Mary's feast they had not yet finished. "I'll stay up to night to get things ready," volunteered Dominic. But his friends knew that he was still recovering from a recent illness and made him go to bed. "All right," he agreed, "but when you finish, wake me up. I want to be among the first to see our shrine to Mary!"

### Burning With Love

About ten months before his death Dominic confided to Don Bosco: "Father, I desire to do something for Mary, but I must do it at once. I want to share my love for the

Blessed Mother with my companions. What can I do?" Together they agreed to start a group of students interested in promoting devotion to Mary, the Immaculate Mother of Jesus, and the good of the Oratory. He drew up a few rules and guidelines for the group, which he called Sodality of the Immaculate Conception. On June 8, 1856, nine months before his death, Dominic had the rules approved by Don Bosco, and the first members were enrolled. Today the function of the sodality remains in the Campus Ministry Teams in Salesian Schools and the Youth Ministry Teams in youth centers and parishes.

If we put the founding of the Immaculate Conception Sodality by Dominic Savio together with the apostolic direction that he received from Don Bosco, it becomes clear that for Don Bosco Salesian Spirituality is always a forward movement of prayer motivating ministry and ministry motivating prayer.

Before going to Don Bosco's Oratory, Dominic would go to confession and Communion once a month, as was the practice of the day. Dominic heard Don Bosco tell the boys that to keep on the path to heaven, they should do three things: "Go to Confession regularly choosing a steady confessor to whom you can unburden the heart, receive Communion often, and promote goodness among your friends." He observed that advice diligently. He had a great love for the Eucharist. At first he went to Confession and Communion every two weeks, then every week. Observing his spiritual progress, his confessor (Don Bosco) advised him to go to Communion three times a week and by the end of the year every day. Dominic placed unlimited confidence in Don Bosco, sometimes speaking to him of his spiritual problems even outside of Confession. To spend time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament was his delight, and he made at least one visit to church a day, taking other boys with him.

We should remember that Dominic lived at a time when Northern Italy was still influenced by Jansenism, which had a very negative understanding of confession and the Eucharist. In simple terms it regarded humanity as basically evil. The Holy Communion (Eucharist) was to be received only rarely and only by those who were worthy. Don Bosco was among those who were trying to combat this heresy. In today's climate he would suggest frequent celebration of the Eucharist. His Salesians do so daily and offer their students the opportunity for daily Eucharist. Don Bosco knew well that we all need spiritual advice through a spiritual director and through regular celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).

### **Extraordinary Gifts**

Don Bosco himself was an eyewitness to extraordinary events concerning Dominic Savio. Don Bosco wrote, "I am recording things I have seen with my own eyes. I assure you I am adhering strictly to truth ..."

When Dominic received Communion or when he made a visit to Church he became completely absorbed in prayer. One day Dominic was missing from breakfast, from class, and from lunch. No one knew where he was. On being informed, Don Bosco guessed that he was in church as he had been at other times. His guess was right. He went into the sanctuary behind the main altar. There was Dominic, standing as immovable as a rock. One foot was over the other; one hand rested on a bookstand, the other was pressed against his heart. His face was fixed toward the tabernacle. Don Bosco called to him, "Dominic." He looked at Don Bosco and asked, "Is Mass over already?"

"Look, Dominic," said Don Bosco as he showed him the time. "It's two o'clock in the afternoon."

Dominic apologized. Don Bosco then sent him for something to eat, adding, "If anyone asks where you were, say you were doing something for me." Another time, Don Bosco had just finished his thanksgiving after Mass and was about to leave the sacristy when he heard someone talking in the sanctuary. He found Dominic alone but speaking as if in a conversation with some invisible person. Don Bosco heard Dominic say, "Yes, Lord, I have said it before, and I will keep on saying it, I love you and I want to love you all my life. If you see that I am about to commit a sin, make me die first! Yes, death first, but not sin!"

Don Bosco asked Dominic what was happening. "I don't know," was his answer. "I get distracted and lose track of my prayer, and then I see such wonderful things that the hours fly by like seconds!"

One night after all had gone to bed Dominic rushed into Don Bosco's room, waking him, "Don Bosco come with me!"

"What," asked Don Bosco?

"Please Don Bosco, hurry!"

With Dominic's insistence, Don Bosco dressed quickly and followed him. They left the Oratory, hurried down one street, into another, and up a third, without saying a word, and then into another street. They walked quickly along a line of tenements, and finally Dominic stopped before one. He ran up the stairs to the third floor with Don Bosco following. Dominic stopped at one door, knocking on the door and told Don Bosco, "Here!"

The door of the apartment opened, and a woman stood before Don Bosco. "Thank God!" cried the woman, "There's little time. My husband is dying. He left the Church, but now he wants to die a good Catholic!" The man made his peace with God. Don Bosco heard his confession and blessed him. The man died a few moments later.

Days later, Don Bosco asked Dominic how he knew about that dying man. His face clouded over with a look of distress, and tears came to his eyes. Don Bosco did not insist.

"Innocence of life," wrote Don Bosco, "love of God, and the desire of heaven had so elevated his soul that he could be said to be living always absorbed in God..."

Dominic's sister, Theresa, testified that on the morning of September 12, 1856, Dominic rushed into Don Bosco's room.

"Please, Father," he asked, "may I go home?"

"Why?"

"My mother is very sick, and Our Lady wants to take care her. "

"How do you know?"

"I just know, that's all."

"Has someone written to you?"

"No, but I know just the same."

Don Bosco gave him permission because, as he later told Mr. Savio, "When your son insists on anything, I do well to agree with him."

Don Bosco gave Dominic fare for the coach to Chieri and then a carriage to Mondonio. When Dominic arrived he met his father, who was on his way to find a doctor.

"What are you doing here?" he asked his son.

"I'm going to see mother. She's very sick."

"Go to grandma's!" insisted Mr. Savio and rushed on. Dominic ran home. His mother was in labor. The neighboring women were doing what they could for her but could not help her. Dominic suddenly rushed into the house. Disregarding the objections of the women he ran upstairs to his mother, saying, "I know she's sick. That's why I came!" His mother was alone.

"Dominic, what are you doing here?" she asked.

"I found out that you were sick, and I came to see you."

Forcing herself to sit up, she replied, "Oh, it's nothing. Go downstairs. I'll see you later." "I'll go, Mama, but first I want to hug you!"

He quickly embraced his mother and kissed her. Then he left the house and returned immediately to Turin.

A few minutes later Brigit's labor pains reached their climax and subsided. It was at five that evening that Dominic's baby sister, Catherine, was born. By the time Charles returned with a doctor the birth was over.

The women who assisted Mrs. Savio noticed she was wearing a green scapular. Not having seen it before, they asked where she got it. She too was surprised but then replied, " Dominic must have put this scapular on me as he embraced me, because I've never had one like this before. That is why I have been safely delivered!"

On his return to the Oratory, the only answer Dominic gave Don Bosco was, "My mother is all right. I gave her a scapular of our Blessed Mother."

That same scapular later saved the life of Theresa herself in a similar condition, as well as the lives of several women. While Dominic was at home, during his last illness, he told his mother, "Do you remember the time I came to see you when you in labor with my sister? I left a scapular of Our Lady around your neck? It was Our Mother Mary who eased your Labor. Take good care of the scapular and lend it to other women in the same condition. Our Blessed Mother will take care of them also."

The scapular, however, was lost. "I had very many requests for this miraculous scapular," testified Theresa. "It was lent to many women in labor who were in danger of death. To my regret, it has been lost."

### To the Father's House

Don Bosco promoted a practice he called The Exercise of a Happy Death. This monthly celebration consisted in conference by one the Salesians or a guest speaker on some aspect of faith development, an opportunity for confession, the celebration of the Eucharist, and prayers for a Happy Death. Don Bosco did not intend this to be a gloomy or frightening experience, but an educational opportunity to help the young people to examine their life and their relationship with God. Today the Salesians call it The Monthly Day of Recollection. Dominic always carried it out with great devotion. At the end of the prayers an Our Father and Hail Mary were recited "for the one among us who shall be the first to die." One time Dominic playfully remarked, "Don't say 'for the one among us'. Just say 'for Dominic Savio, who will be the first among us to die.'"

At the end of April 1856, Dominic went to Don Bosco and asked how he should spend the month of May in honor of Our Lady.



"Do your duties carefully," said Don Bosco. "Speak of Mary to your companions every day, and receive Communion every day."

"I will, Father. What should I pray for?"

"Ask Our Lady for health and the favor of becoming a saint."

"Yes, to become a saint and to die a happy death and have her help in my last moments and be taken by her to Heaven!"

Since Dominic began showing signs of failing health, Don Bosco called in several doctors. All admired his lightheartedness, bright wit and quick responses. Doctor Vallauri examined him and remarked to Don Bosco, "What a fine treasure you have in this boy!"

"But what is causing him to fail so quickly day by day?" asked Don Bosco.

"He seems to be generally in poor health. He is an intense young man and puts himself under constant pressure to succeed especially in his spiritual life."

"What remedy can we use?"

"There is nothing we can do medically. The only thing that might prolong his life is to relieve him of his studies completely for some time and just give him little odd jobs that will not tire him."

The doctor's advice was based on the practice of the day, 1857. Today a doctor would have put Dominic in a hospital. The general opinion today is that Dominic was suffering from a respiratory infection. We should remember that in the mid 19th century childhood death was very common. Respiratory deceases were not well understood.

Dominic spent some days in bed. On days when he felt better he attended classes and study hall, and joined the community for prayer. However, his health continued to decline, Dominic did not want to go home. He did not want to interrupt his studies. He enjoyed very much the life at the Oratory, and would miss the regular prayer life of the community. Some months before, Don Bosco had sent him home. He returned to the Oratory after only a few days. Dominic valued the experience of Don Bosco's Oratory.

Dominic had developed a persistent cough. Don Bosco with the doctor decided that it would be better if Dominic went home so that he could receive the attention his mother and family could give him. Dominic was not happy with the decision.

"Why are you so sorry to go home?" asked Don Bosco. "You should be glad to be with your parents again."

"I want to end my days at the Oratory," he replied.

"You will go home for a while, and, when you are better, you can come back. "

"No, Don Bosco, I'll go, but I'll never come back!"

The night before he left, he refused to budge from Don Bosco's side, looking for all sorts of questions to ask.

"What can a sick boy do to gain merit before God?" Dominic asked.

"Offer your sufferings to God," replied Don Bosco.

"Will I be able to see my parents and friends from Heaven?"

"Yes, you will be able to see everything at the Oratory and your parents. You will know everything that concerns them, and so many other wonderful things besides, but that is not to concern you now. You are going home to get well."

Dominic kept asking many other questions.

On the morning of his departure from the Oratory, Dominic made the Exercise For A Happy Death with his companions. With great devotion he went to Confession and Communion. He spent the rest of the morning packing and said goodbye to his friends. He paid back two cents he owed to a friend saying, "Let's get this fixed, so I won't have to worry about it when I present my accounts to God." He spoke to the members of the Immaculate Conception Sodality, insisting that they be faithful to their promises to Mary and to place the utmost confidence in her.

Before leaving, he told Don Bosco, "Since you don't want this poor body of mine, I'll have to take it back to Mondonio. But it would have burdened you only a few days, and all would soon be over. But God's will be done! Pray that I may die well. Goodbye till we meet in Heaven."

As they approached the gate to the main road, Dominic was holding on to Don Bosco's hand. He turned to his companions. "Goodbye. Pray for me. We'll see each other where we will always be with God." Upon reaching the gate, Dominic turned back and asked Don Bosco, "Will you give me a present to remember you?"

"How about a book, Don Bosco proposed?"

"No, I want something better."

"Do you want money for your trip?"

"Yes, that's it, money for my trip to eternity. You told me once that the Pope had granted you plenary indulgences for the hour of death. Put my name among those who can gain that indulgence."

"Gladly, Dominic, you can consider yourself in that number now."

Dominic then walked out of the Oratory gate with his father. It was two o'clock in the afternoon of March 1, 1857. He had lived at the Oratory almost three years to his great joy, and to the edification of both his companions and the teachers. He was never to return.

For the first four days at home Dominic did well. Then he took a turn for the worse. He became weaker, his appetite failed, and his cough became more persistent. The doctor found that the boy's illness was much worse than it seemed. Thinking that Dominic had an infection, the doctor used the accepted remedy of the time, bleeding. Dominic was bled several times. He seemed to rally.

However, Dominic asked to have the priest hear his Confession and give him Communion. They called for the pastor who heard his confession and gave him Communion. Dominic then recalled the resolutions at his first Communion. Several times he repeated, "Jesus, Mary, you will always be my friends... death but not sin!"

After four days, the doctor had good news for the parents. "Thank God," he said. "We are past danger. All he needs now is rest." They were overjoyed at the news. Dominic smiled. After the doctor left, he asked for the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. To please him, his parents agreed. On being anointed he prayed: "My God, forgive me my sins. I love you and I want to love you forever. Dominic's mind was so clear and his voice so loud, that all thought he was fine and on his way to recovery.

He had been bled ten times. He was very weak. The priest gave him a special Papal Blessing, which deeply consoled him. He repeated often, "Thanks be to God!"

No one but Dominic suspected he was so close to death. An hour and a half before he died, the pastor came to see him, and, noting how calmly he rested, was surprised to hear him recommend his soul to God. The boy kept praying in long, drawn out sighs. After reciting a few prayers with Dominic, the pastor turned to leave.

"Please, Father," called Dominic, "give me a little remembrance before you go."

"What remembrance can I leave you?"

"A word of comfort!"

"I know of nothing better than to recall the passion of Christ."

"Thanks be to God!" Dominic answered.

He then fell asleep and rested for half an hour. He then opened his eyes, looked at his parents, and gasped, "Papa, it's time! Take my prayer book and read for me the prayers for a happy death!"

For a while he seemed to be resting. Then slowly he awoke. Smiling, he said clearly, "Goodbye, Papa, goodbye, goodbye Mama! Oh, what a beautiful sight I see!" With these words and a smile on his lips, Dominic breathed his last...

According to the testimony of Charles Savio, Dominic's father, shortly after his death Dominic appeared to him. After verifying it was his son, Charles said, "Oh, my dear boy! How wonderful you look! I don't know what to say! Are you in Heaven?"

"Yes, Papa, I am in Heaven."

"Will you pray for us, for mother and me?"

"Yes, I will pray for you!"

With that the vision faded.

### A Friend Forever

On December 6, 1876 nineteen years after his death Dominic appeared to Don Bosco. Dominic came to encourage and to advise Don Bosco about the future of his work for youth. In that vision Don Bosco asked his pupil, "Dominic, what gave you the most comfort at the hour of death?"

"What comforted me most at the point of death was the assistance of the powerful and loving Mother of God."

On March 5, 1950, Pope Pius XII beatified Dominic Savio. It is a curious coincidence that March 5, 1950, was the second Sunday of Lent. It was the second Sunday of Lent, 1855, when St. John Bosco gave the boys at the Oratory where Dominic Savio was a pupil, the sermon on how easy it was to become a saint.

On June 12, 1954, Pope Pius XII canonized Dominic Savio, this 14-year-old boy from Don Bosco's Oratory a Saint.

Saint Dominic Savio is a wonderful hero for young people today. This teenage saint's way to holiness was to live the spirituality that was shared with him by St. John Bosco and his Salesians, basically a life lived simply by doing the everyday duties of life in an extra ordinary way. It is a youth spirituality that can be lived by people of all ages. The Salesian Spirituality responds to the Gospel imperative given by Jesus to his disciples and to all who follow Him, "Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.' Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them." (Mark 10: 14-16)