 Reading time: 7 min.

Cascina Moglia, where Giovanni Bosco lived for about two years.

Giorgio Moglia testified at the beatification process for Don Bosco, recounting how the young Giovanni, then thirteen, worked as a farmhand at their farmhouse for two years after fleeing from Becchi due to mistreatment by his half-brother, Antonio. Even then, he stood out for his piety, dedication to his studies, and zeal in teaching catechism to the local children. The Moglia family welcomed him with affection: the mother would give him socks when he was in the seminary, and Don Bosco remained deeply grateful his entire life, taking his boys on outings to the Moglia's farm and proudly and gratefully calling Giorgio "my old master".

"Because he was simple and warm-hearted"

His testimony is contained in the ordinary process, public copy, on pages 781-793.

When young John Bosco, on a cold day in February 1827, had to leave his home in Becchi due to the mistreatment by his stepbrother Antonio, he went to look for work as a farmhand at the Moglia farmhouse. In the yard, he met the whole family: Luigi, a young father of 29; Dorotea, a flourishing mother of 26; their little boy Giorgio, aged three; Luigi's very young sister, Teresa, aged 15; and Giuseppe, Luigi's elderly uncle.
When the "process of sainthood" for Don Bosco was initiated, Mrs. Dorotea had just passed away, a frail, white-haired old lady of 91. Her son Giorgio, 67 years old, went to the "process".

My name is Giorgio Moglia, son of the late Luigi and the late Dorotea Filipello, aged 67, born and residing in Moncucco Torinese, a farmer by profession, owner of some real estate worth about twenty thousand lire (*about 48,500 euros today*). What I shall say is what I know from my own knowledge, and nothing else.
I knew Don Giovanni Bosco when I was three years old and the young Bosco was thirteen at the time he was at my parents' house as a farm servant. We were already living in Moncucco then, in the Moglia hamlet. The young Bosco stayed at our house for about two years. During that time, I spoke to him every day, because you could say I was always in his company, both in the fields and at home. In fact, my mother would entrust me to his care, and he did so willingly, but I don't

remember anything of what he said to me now, as I was just a child.

Two grains and four ears of corn

My mother told me that one day the young Bosco, having returned from the fields at midday with my father's uncle, the latter, tired from his work, lay down in the house to rest. Seeing the young Bosco, who, upon hearing the sound *of the Angelus Domini (the midday bell),* had knelt down to recite the *Angelus (a prayer commemorating the Annunciation to Our Lady)*, he was utterly amazed and exclaimed, "Well, this is a fine thing! I, who am the master and can't go on for tiredness, am lying here, and my servant instead gets on his knees to pray!".
The young Bosco added, "Oh, look, if all goes well, I have gained more by praying than you have by working; if you pray, by sowing two grains, four ears of corn will grow; if you don't pray, by sowing four grains, you will harvest two ears of corn. And laughing, he added, you pray too, and instead of two, you will harvest four."
Hearing this, the other exclaimed, "Oh, for goodness' sake, am I to take lessons from a youngster?"

He would gather the boys in his free and rainy moments

My aunt, named Anna, then unmarried, told me that in his free and rainy moments, the young Bosco would gather the young boys around him, and teach them either the catechism or to sing some sacred praise.
At the age of fifteen, the young Bosco left our house for his studies, and returned when he was already a cleric, and we no longer recognised him. Seeing and recognising him, we all felt great pleasure, and my parents wanted him to stay with them. As Bosco's mother was short of lodging, they had him stay at the house, where he remained for three months during the holidays. During that time, he was always seen devoted to prayer and study, and assiduous at Church.

When he first arrived

When the young Bosco was taken into our house as a farm servant, as my parents told me, he had come away from his father's house with his mother's permission, because he was being mistreated by his stepbrother. And he came to our house one day towards evening. He met my father's uncle, named Giuseppe Moglia, who said to him, "Oh, where are you going?" And Bosco replied, "I am looking for a master to offer my labour". Then the uncle said to him, "Good for you, get to work!" and sent him on his way.
When an aunt of mine heard these words, she begged the uncle to take him in, so that she would be spared from taking the animals to pasture, and she said so much that Moglia kept him in the house.

“I knew his mother, Margherita”

From my aunt Anna, I learned that the young Bosco was intent on prayer even when he was busy grazing the flock in the fields. I still remember that when the young Bosco was already a cleric, I had gone to his house, and I stayed there for about three months. Before we went to sleep, he would make me pray and give me good advice. Among other things, he told me several times,

– The best work in the world is to bring lost souls to goodness, onto the right path.

At other times he would say to me,

– Whoever loses respect for their father and mother brings God’s curse upon themselves.

And he told me this after I had told him that a young man from my village had mistreated his father.

I have as much respect, esteem, and love for Don Bosco as I do for my own parents. And if I need graces from the Lord, I turn to him to obtain them. I ardently desire his beatification, and if it were necessary for me to walk to Rome, I would do so very willingly.

I knew his mother, whose name was Margherita, a farmer’s wife. She had a small house and a few small fields. I did not know his father because he died when Don Bosco was still a little boy. His mother was held in high esteem by my parents, and in the hamlet and its surroundings, and praised by all as a Christian mother, a truly good one.

My mother gave him socks every year

When my uncle was ploughing the field, the young Bosco, who was guiding the oxen, if they went on without needing his guidance, would seize every moment to pull out a book and read.

After the young Bosco had stayed with us for two years, he stayed for a year with the parish priest of Castelnuovo, then went to Chieri to continue his studies.

My mother, when he was already a cleric in the seminary, would give him a few pairs of socks every year, which proves that she considered him as her own son.

I heard Don Bosco’s Mass in the first few months after he was ordained a priest, while he was on holiday in Castelnuovo, and I was edified by it. I also heard him preach once at the beginning of his priesthood, and my relatives and I were very impressed.

I saw the little shack that was the beginning of the Oratory

Ever since he was at our house, the young Bosco, in his moments of freedom, sought to attract young boys to him, and taught them the catechism, the

litanies, some praises, and told some good examples. Then, having become a priest, this desire of his to do good for the youth grew, and he then founded the Oratory to welcome poor young people. I myself, having once come to Turin, saw the little shack that was the beginning of the Oratory, in which there were already some young people. On that occasion, Don Bosco told me that if I knew any poor young man without parents, I should bring him to his Oratory in Turin, and he would accept him; in fact, I brought two or three.
The number of young people grew ever more. In the last years of his life, Don Bosco told me that there were more people in the Valdocco Oratory than in my village of Moncucco.
I have read some books and was subscribed to the *Catholic Readings* that Don Bosco had published for the purpose of instructing the people in religious matters.

He would ask me for news of his vineyard

My uncle Giovanni Moglia told me that when the young Bosco was at our house, they planted four rows of vines together. Giovanni tied one of those rows close to the ground with withies, and this cost him effort. Tired from the work, he complained of backache and sore knees, but my uncle told him, “Keep going. If you don’t want to have a bad back when you’re old, you have to suffer it now that you’re young.”
And Bosco continued to work. But after a few moments, he added, “Well, these vines will produce the most beautiful grapes and give better wine and in greater quantity, and they will last longer than the others.”
The thing happened as he had predicted, because the other vines on that land were lost over time, and instead, those tied by the young Bosco continued until 1890, to the admiration of all. And I, whenever I came to the Oratory in Turin, Don Bosco would always ask me for news of that vineyard.
In 1840, the cleric Bosco came to be godfather to my brother Giovanni. My mother was complaining of being exhausted; she feared she would not recover her health, to which Don Bosco said to her, “Take courage and be of good cheer, you will live to the age of ninety.” In fact, she died at the age of ninety-one. I must say that she trusted this promise of Don Bosco very much, and although she was sometimes struck by even serious illnesses, she never wanted to take remedies prescribed by the doctor, because she would say, “Don Bosco has assured me that I will live to be 90.” After Don Bosco’s death, she commended herself to him every day, and died with his portrait on her bed.

“This is my master”

Don Bosco always had great gratitude for my family, for the little we did for him. In the early years of his Oratory, when he did not yet have many young people, he would bring them to our house every year for an outing. And he wanted us to consider his Oratory as our home when we had to come to Turin. Many times, he made me sit next to him at the table, even when he was surrounded by many of his priests. Once at lunch, he said to his priests and other people, turning to me, “This is my old master”, alluding to the time when, as a young man, he had been in the service of my father, Moglia.

Don Bosco died a few years ago in the Valdocco Oratory. I saw him a few months before. I found him sitting in an armchair, exhausted, but patient and cheerful. When I asked him how he was, he said to me, “Eh, we are in God’s hands.”