 Reading time: 3 min.

El Greco, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, 1595-1600, oil on canvas, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona

The dream Don Bosco recounted to his confreres on the night of 12th-13th May 1884 offers a unique insight into the spiritual drive that animated the "father and teacher of youth". In this dreamlike scene, the great apostles Peter and Paul appear to him in Eastern attire, almost as a reminder of the Church's universal reach and the continuity of its mission. The dialogue – simple, friendly, yet full of biblical references – becomes a concrete exhortation: to reprint and disseminate their lives, so that the young people of the Oratory might find models of living faith. At the heart of it all, the heartfelt invocation to Mary, "Queen of Apostles", illuminates the entire narrative with the characteristic Marian emphasis of Salesian spirituality, blending contemplation and apostolic action into a single vision.

During the night of the 13th, Don Bosco had a dream that he reported to someone when he woke up. He had dreamed that he was in a house where he met both St. Peter and St. Paul. They were wearing tunics which came down below their knees and Oriental headdresses. They both smiled at Don Bosco. When he asked them if they had some mission to assign to him or something they wanted to tell him, they did not answer, but instead they began talking about the Oratory and the boys. Just then a friend of Don Bosco who was very well known among the Salesians (though later, Don Bosco did not remember who he was) appeared on the scene.

"Just look at these two," Don Bosco said to the newcomer, and his friend looked at them.

"What do I see? Is it possible?" the other exclaimed. "Saints Peter and Paul, here?"

Don Bosco then repeated his previous question, but the two Apostles continued talking evasively of other matters, although they were most affable.

All of a sudden, St. Peter asked: "What about the life of St. Peter?" Likewise St. Paul

asked: “What about the life of St. Paul?”

“True,” Don Bosco admitted with a humble apology. He had, in fact, planned to chronicle their two lives, but he had then forgotten all about it.

“If you do not do it soon, you’ll have no more time,” St Paul warned him.

Meanwhile, St. Peter had removed his headgear and his head was bald with two tufts of hair at the temples. He had the appearance of a healthy, handsome old man. He withdrew a little and set himself in the act of praying.

Don Bosco tried to follow him, but St Paul said, “Let him pray.”

Don Bosco replied, “I would like to see in front of what kind of thing he is kneeling.”

He went over to him and saw he was kneeling in front of something that looked like an altar, but it was not. He asked St. Paul, “But are there no candlesticks?”

“There is no need of them, where the sun is eternally shining,” the Apostle answered.

“I cannot even see the altar. But, after all, there is no altar, right?” “Mount Calvary is the altar for everybody.”

Then St. Peter began to pray in a high, melodic voice although he was not singing: “Glory be to God the Father, the Creator, to God the Son and Redeemer, and glory be to God the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier. Glory and honor to God alone forever and ever. Praise to you, oh Mary. Heaven and earth proclaim you Queen. Mary…Mary…Mary…”

He pronounced this name, pausing between one exclamation and the next with such profound affection and a crescendo of emotion that words could not describe it, and one could only shed tears of tenderness.

As St. Peter rose to his feet again, St. Paul went to kneel at the same spot, and with a firm voice he also began to pray: “Oh, the depth of divine mysteries! Great God, Your secrets are inaccessible to mortals. Only in Heaven will they comprehend their depth and majesty, for it is accessible only to those endowed with heavenly understanding. Oh! God, one and three, to You let there be given honor, homage and thanks from every corner of the universe. May your name, 0 Mary, be praised

and blessed by all. In Heaven they sing your Glory, and here on earth may you be forever our help, our comfort and our salvation. Regina Sanctorum omnium, alleluia, alleluia [Queen of all Saints, alleluia, alleluia].”

At the end of his report on his dream, Don Bosco said, “By the way the words were uttered, this prayer made an impression so profound on me that I began to weep and woke up. Afterward, an indescribable comfort lingered on in my soul.”

(MB IT XVII 27-29 / MB EN XVII 12-14)