 Reading time: 4 min.

During the night of April 9th, Don Bosco had a new missionary dream, which he related to Father Rua, Father Branda, and Brother Viglietti, in a voice at times choked by sobs. Viglietti wrote it down immediately afterwards and, at Don Bosco' s direction, sent a copy to Father Lemoyne so that he could read it to all the superiors of the Oratory for their general encouragement. "But,"the secretary warned, "this is nothing more than a sketch of a very long, magnificent vision." The text that we are publishing is that of Viglietti, slightly touched up stylistically by Father Lemoyne to put it into more correct Italian:

Don Bosco found himself in the neighborhood of Castelnuovo standing on the hillock known as Bricco Del Pino 3 near the Sbarnau valley. He turned his gaze everywhere, but could see nothing more than thick scrubs that sprawled everywhere and which were covered by an infinite number of small mushrooms.
"Now," Don Bosco said to himself, "this is also the country estate of Joseph Rossi (*As a joke, Don Bosco had named Coadjutor Brother Joseph Rossi "count" of that piece of land*). He ought to be here!"
Shortly after that, in fact, he saw Rossi on a distant hilltop, gazing most seriously over the valleys spread out beneath him.
Don Bosco hailed him, but he answered only with a distracted glance, as if his thoughts were elsewhere.
Turning in another direction, Don Bosco also saw Father Rua at a distance, who just as Rossi, was most seriously, but peacefully, seated as if resting.
Don Bosco called to both of them, but they remained silent, not replying by so much as a gesture.
So he descended from the hillock and walked over to another one, from the summit of which he saw a forest, but it was cultivated, and roads and paths ran through it. He gazed around in another direction, looking toward limits of the horizon, and even before his eye perceived them, his ear was struck by the uproar created by an immense crowd of children.
No matter how much he tried to discover from where the noise came, he saw nothing. Then a shout followed the uproar, as though in the wake of some catastrophe. At length he saw a vast crowd of boys who ran toward him, crying, "We've been waiting for you. We've been waiting for you so long. Now at last you're here. You're among us and you won't get away from us!"
Don Bosco did not understand at all and wondered what these boys wanted from him. But while he was standing there, dazed in their midst, gazing at them, he saw

an immense flock of lambs led by a shepherdess. After she had separated the boys from the sheep, she set one group to one side and the other to the opposite side. She stopped in front of Don Bosco, to whom she said, “Do you see what’s before you?”
“Yes, I do,” Don Bosco answered.
“Good. Do you recall the dream you had when you were ten years old?”
“Oh! It’s quite hard for me to remember it! My mind’s tired and, at present, I don’t remember it clearly.”
“Good, good! Think hard and you’ll recall it.”
Then she summoned the boys to Don Bosco’s side, telling him, “Now look in this direction. Look further on – all of you, look further and read what is written over there. So what do you see?”
“I see mountains, then the sea, then hills, and again mountains and seas.”
“I read *Valparaiso*,” one boy said.
Another boy said, “I read *Santiago*.”
“I read both those names,” added a third.
“Well,” continued the shepherdess, “set out from there and you will form an idea of how much the Salesians have to do in the future. Now look in that direction. Draw a visual line and look.”
“I see mountains, hills, and seas!”
The boys, too, focused their eyes and exclaimed in chorus, “We read *Peking*!”
Then Don Bosco saw a great city. Through it ran a wide river, over which some big bridges had been built.
“Good,” said the maiden, who seemed to be the boys’ teacher.
“Now draw a single line from one end to the other, from Peking to Santiago. Establish your center in the middle of Africa, and you will get an exact idea of how much the Salesians have to do.”
“But how can all this be accomplished?” Don Bosco exclaimed. “The distances are enormous, the places difficult, and the Salesians few.”
“Don’t worry. Your sons, the sons of your sons, and their sons again will do this. Just let them steadfastly observe the Rules and keep the spirit of the Pious Society.”
“But where are we to find so many people?”
“Come here and look. Do you see fifty missionaries standing ready there? Farther on, do you see others, and still others? Draw a line from Santiago to the center of Africa. What do you see?”
“I can see ten central [mission] stations.”
“Well, these central stations that you see will make up houses of studies and novitiates and will send forth a multitude of missionaries to staff these lands. Now

look to this other side. Here you see ten more centers reaching from Africa to Peking. These, too, will provide missionaries for all of these other lands. There's Hong Kong; there, Calcutta; farther on, Madagascar. Here and also elsewhere there will be more houses, houses for studies and novitiates."

Don Bosco listened as he looked and examined, then he said:

"And where can so many people be found, and how can missionaries be sent to all those places? There you have savages that feed on human flesh. In this place you have heretics and in that one persecutors. So how shall we manage?"

"Look," the shepherdess answered. "Be of good will. There is only one thing to do: recommend that *my sons constantly cultivate the virtue of Mary.*"

"Okay, good. I believe I understand. I will preach your words to all of them."

"And beware of the error now prevailing, which is to mix those who are studying the human arts with others studying the divine arts, for the science of Heaven is not to be mixed with earthly matters."

Don Bosco wanted to say more, but the vision disappeared.

His dream was over.

(BM XVIII, 49-52)