



Saint John Bosco

Saint John Bosco is the patron saint of apprentices, editors and publishers, schoolchildren, magicians, and juvenile delinquents. His feast day is on January 31.

John Bosco, also known as Don Bosco, was born in Becchi, Italy, on August 16, 1815. At the age of two, John lost his father, leaving him and his two older brothers to be raised by his mother, Margherita. Raised primarily by his mother, John attended church and became very devout. When he was not in church, he helped his family grow food and raise sheep. They were very poor, but despite their poverty his mother also found enough to share with the homeless who sometimes came to the door seeking food, shelter or clothing.

When John was nine years old, he had the first of several vivid dreams that would influence his life. In his dream, he encountered a multitude of boys who swore as they played. Among these boys, he encountered a great, majestic man and woman. The man told him that in meekness and charity, he would "conquer these your friends." Then a lady, also majestic said, "Be strong, humble and robust. When the time comes, you will understand everything." This dream influenced John the rest of his life.

John was ordained a priest in 1841. His first assignment was to the city of Turin. The city was in the throes of industrialization so it had slums and widespread poverty. It was into these poor neighborhoods that John, now known as Fr. Bosco, went to work with the children of the poor. While visiting the prisons, Fr. Bosco noticed a large number of boys, between the ages of 12 and 18, inside. The conditions were deplorable, and he felt moved to do more to help other boys from ending up there.

When he was not preaching, Fr. Bosco worked tirelessly seeking work for boys who needed it and searching for lodgings for others. His mother began to help him, and she became known as "Mamma Margherita." By the 1860s, Fr. Bosco and his mother were responsible for lodging 800 boys.