

Today is the memorial of Saint John Bosco, who was born on August 16, 1815 in the town of Becchi, which is about 12 miles east of Turin.

He was known for his dreams, one of the first ones in which he saw a large quantity of poor boys playing. The boys were also cursing and swearing, and in the dream John tried to stop them first by words, then by fists. In the dream there appeared a nobly dressed and stately man who intervened and said:

*You will have to win these friends of yours not with blows, but with gentleness and kindness. So begin right now to show them that sin is ugly and virtue beautiful.*

He was ordained in 1841, and dedicated his life to the betterment and education of street children, and disadvantaged youth. He developed teaching methods based on love rather than punishment.

In this we can see how Saint John Bosco applied what he was told in his dreams to his apostolic work.

He founded three religious orders - one for men, one for women, and one for the laity. And they applied his methods to education and evangelization.

In his time, he was seen as a loose cannon and a bit of a rebel.

He died on January 31, 1888. He was declared blessed in 1929, and made a saint in 1934. He was given the title of "Father and Teacher of Youth."

Even now, over 125 years after his death, the Church still struggles to evangelize youth. We can learn from Saint John Bosco in that our own evangelization - both of the young, or anyone for that matter - needs to be based in the Love of God, and not worldly methods or programs.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for the openness to the Holy Spirit, that we might be rooted in God's love in all that we do - especially our work to spread the Good News in our daily lives.