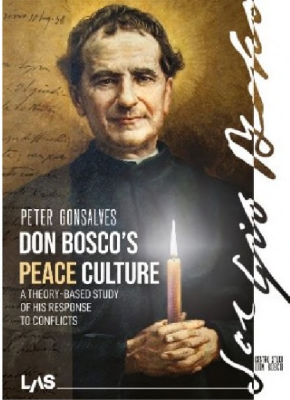


## **DON BOSCO'S PEACE CULTURE**

### **A THEORY-BASED STUDY OF HIS RESPONSE TO CONFLICTS**

*by Guglielmo Malizia*



Until last February 23, peace in Italy and in Europe could seem taken for granted because for 70 years war had only been encountered in books and other media. Russia's invasion of Ukraine suddenly dispelled the illusion that a war would never again break out in Europe. It is an unjustifiable aggression against a free people that risks turning the clock back to a situation of massacres, destruction and forced exodus. What is most worrying is that there are no signs of an imminent peace. Yet, just a few years ago, on December 19, 2016, the United Nations Assembly approved a solemn Declaration on The Right to Peace which in article 1 reads: "Everyone has the right to enjoy peace such that all human rights are promoted

and protected and development is fully realized."

In this context, the author's volume is particularly welcome because it speaks to us of a culture of peace with a scientific approach, and connects it with the thought and action of a saint, St. John Bosco, who still deeply influences thinking, attitudes and behaviors of many young people in more than 130 countries in the world.

There is also another merit of the work that deserves to be immediately highlighted. The publication fills a void in the scientific literature relating to Don Bosco. In fact, until now there was no serious study that would illustrate the peace characteristics of his thought, of his action and, in particular, of his educational system. The publication in question breaks new ground for further studies on the Piedmontese Saint in a justifiable way.

The chosen approach is scientific and acceptable. The starting point is based on the studies of Johan Galtung which occupy a fundamental place in the literature on peace. With this legitimacy, the volume constructs a firm theoretical framework to analyze Don Bosco's thought and action. The outcome is that the Saint emerges incontrovertibly as an "artisan of peace".

After this positive evaluation of the volume, it is appropriate to present it in more detail. The book is divided into three parts. The first is dedicated to describing Don Bosco's attitudes and behaviors in contexts of conflict. It begins with the presentation of his attempts at being non-violent in the years of his youth. His actions become more relevant over time, starting from his first effective initiatives on behalf of poor and abandoned youth and extending into his peace responses to political and ecclesial conflicts.

The second part is a study of Don Bosco in the light of the framework of Galtung's school. With the theory explained in the first chapter, three chapters that deal with the theoretical analysis of Don Bosco's thought and action follow. The author's re-

examination of the preventive system of the Piedmontese saint will certainly pique the readers' interest.

The third part is dedicated to the general presentation of the culture of peace of St. John Bosco. Some aspects that are particularly significant are his nonviolence, his search for truth, his awareness of the social question; his service to others especially poor and abandoned youngsters; his discovery of the potential of the mass media; the importance given to citizenship on a par with ecclesial membership and love for the Church. The list reaches its climax with his attention to the voice of conscience and his profound faith which interiorly nourished his culture of peace.

The volume is addressed to members of the Salesian family, those who know the life of Don Bosco; to parents, teachers, youth leaders and all other collaborators and benefactors of Salesian works. The author also has readers from different religious traditions in mind. Whoever the readers may be, one is certain to be enriched by this publication, especially all those who care about world peace and about peace education of the young.

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