



# DON BOSCO PREPARATORY SCHOOL

300 Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

December 8, 1996

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

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Dear Confreres,

On Saturday morning, September 7, 1996, Brother **JULIUS BOLLATI** died at the age of eighty-eight. Aside from thirteen years in Marrero, Louisiana, Brother Julius spent the major portion of his Salesian years in Boston.

No epitaph could better sum up the life of Brother Julius than the following found on his memorial card:

*"A missionary, he left his home in Northern Italy for the land of the United States. A skilled crafts master, he taught countless young men to work with wood in imitation of Saint Joseph. A committed Salesian, he urged countless others to live with faith in imitation of Saint John Bosco. A prayerful Christian, he endured ill health and suffering in union with Mary."*



**Brother Julius Bollati, S.D.B.**



**Brother Julius,  
the newly-  
professed  
missionary  
October 3, 1933,  
Turin, Italy**

## **BROTHER JULIUS THE MISSIONARY:**

Julius Bollati was born in Canegrate, Italy, on July 13, 1908. His parents were Giovanni and Angela (Binetti) Bollati. Brother had two sisters, one who has since died and the other, Antonia Olotani, who presently lives in Forli, Italy. Brother Julius is survived by nephews and nieces -- Piero was one he corresponded most frequently with. Then there are two grandnieces, Cristina Pellegatta who lives in Canegrate and Anna Thomann who lives in Winchester, Massachusetts. The roots of Brother Julius' missionary vocation obviously began at baptism in the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption on July 17, 1908. Not much is known of his early life. We do know that Julius was a member of the Catholic Action in Italy. He was also conscripted into military service. In fact, Bro. Julius once intimated how he was imprisoned for leaving the Army base to attend Mass. Here is a clear sign of religious commitment. Obviously, Julius felt the inspiration of the Divine Spirit for he left home at the age of twenty-four and entered the Salesian Aspirantate at Ivrea, on September 30, 1932. The very next year, October 3, 1933, he made his first profession at La Moglia, Italy. Soon afterwards, Brother Julius left his home in Northern Italy. Without question, his heart was full with the love of Christ and Mary. But even more his hands were generously open to help educate the poor youngsters like his father and model St. John Bosco. A few months later he arrived in the United States and was immediately assigned to Hope Haven in Marrero, Louisiana, where he spent thirteen years teaching cabinet making.



## **BROTHER JULIUS THE SKILLED CRAFTS MASTER:**

Sometime prior to the pre-novitiate, Brother Julius studied at the Count Rebaudengo Institute in Turin, Italy. There he undoubtedly learned very well a trade, but even more a skill that became his passion and, in many respects, his very life. He learned to fashion and design all kinds of wood, much of which was donated and recycled into magnificent furniture. Some of Brother Julius' work can be found in many a community in the Province, whether an altar, ambo, dining room table, desk or bookcase. Look around and you will see it.

Here in Boston, there is not a room exempt from the skilled hand of Brother Julius-- wood paneling, a repaired desk, a bedside table, you name it! But, that Brother Julius was truly a skilled crafts master is only the half of it... What is more, he taught countless young men to work with wood in imitation of St. Joseph. Every year on the Feast of St. Joseph, a special Mass was offered in the Wood Shop attesting to Brother Julius' faith in that special patron of every coadjutor brother. Stephen McDonnell of the DBT Class of 1979, wrote an inspiring letter on the occasion of Brother's death. Among other things Stephen said the following:



*"Bro. Julius' gift to his students far exceeded the boundaries of cabinet making. Instilling character in the Christian tradition was always atop his agenda in my mind. He had an unshakable, even if unspoken, belief in doing the right thing, working hard and developing the excellence that is present in some way in each of us."*

Many a student who came to Brother's wake paid much the same tribute. Brother Julius stood for no nonsense in the shop. With a poke in the ribs from a two by four or the end of a hammer handle, but always with a broad smile and kind heart, he would promote a professional approach to his noble profession. Throughout the City of Boston, I dare say we might find thousands of grandfather clocks, Christmas stables, rocking horses and kitchen Madonnas, all taught to boys who made them for their home or gave them as gifts.

Many a young man can today feel added pride knowing he worked with Brother Julius in manufacturing the sacred furniture of a church as beautiful as Immaculate Heart of Mary in Mahwah, New Jersey, or the chapel of the Sisters of the Divine Master West Street, Boston, Massachusetts. Day in and day out over the long years, Brother Julius taught each boy to measure accurately, saw safely, fit tightly, glue securely, sand gently, stain and finish beautifully. A Salesian educator all the way!

**Brother Julius,  
skilled crafts master, teaching the young**





**Brother Julius, committed Salesian, with friends John Columbo, John's nephew, Don Marco and close collaborator and Bosco alumnus, John McIntyre**

## **BROTHER JULIUS THE COMMITTED SALESIAN**

To know Brother Julius was to be clearly convinced of his deep faith. He may have had only one eye, but that good eye was clearly focused. (He lost the other eye, by the way, in a shop accident in his early life.) Brother Julius knew very well to look to the Lord. It was to Him he belonged and for Him he labored. After appropriate days of mourning, some of his confreres helped me dispose of Brother's immediate effects - a sad task indeed! And yet how his room was arranged and what was left behind left little doubt in our minds that here was a committed Salesian. All the earmarks of simple life were quite evident. Julius had little, wasted nothing, and saved everything of value for his ministry. When his books were evaluated, it became obvious that here we could find the reasons why Julius lived the deeply spiritual life of committed and convinced Salesian spirituality. In clear contrast to books on woodworking, medical monographs, several Bibles and dictionaries in both English and Italian, were many Salesian publications. Top of the list were the various copies of the Constitutions of the Salesian Society, commentaries, General Chapter documents and a vast assortment of Salesian prayerbooks. In addition, you clearly saw all kinds of articles, pamphlets and holy cards of a definite Salesian character.

As one good confrere commented, "This shows his deep interest and knowledge of what was going on in our Province and in the entire Salesian Society." Any of us who lived with Brother Julius knew full well that it was not enough for him to live committed. He wanted his confreres to live their commitment too. Many a superior was reminded of his responsibility in this regard. "You're the Director, that's your job."

Julius was concerned about his confreres, especially the younger set. We all knew he was concerned with the best of intention. Many a time you would hear him say with good nature, but with serious concern nonetheless, "Are you still a religious?" "Do you still pray or celebrate the Mass?" To others he might say, "What you need is more work!" We could all kid him too, that when the Provincial came for visitation, he might just talk with Brother Julius and get quite a comprehensive view of what's going on. With all respect, though, Julius urged us all to live and practice that Christian faith rooted in the faith, hope and charity so typical of Don Bosco and the Salesian charism.

## **BROTHER JULIUS THE PRAYERFUL CHRISTIAN**

Like so many of the exemplary coadjutor brothers in our Province, Julius was no exception. You knew Julius was prayerful, you just did! Whether it was fingering the beads and invariably saying his rosary every night after supper or making his regular visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, you knew instinctively that Brother Julius was a man of prayer. The Rosary was said routinely either on the roof over the gymnasium here at the Tech or walking up and down his corridor on the fourth floor. Each day you might find him any number of times sitting in the chapel keeping the Lord's company. In addition he was always most faithful to be with the community for morning and evening prayer, liturgy of the Holy Eucharist and spiritual reading. All this came first and then, only then, did Brother Julius make his work a prayer like Don Bosco. And thus the workbenches in the shop, the spray room in the basement all became sacred space for Julius. For there he prayed, there he found his union with God.

If Brother Julius was naturally prayerful there was the added prayer of ill health and suffering. It was a living prayer, literally, a daily liturgy which he joined to that of the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus. For



the past ten years Brother underwent kidney dialysis three times weekly. Whenever one visited him during these treatments they would find him spending his "three hours' agony" reading, meditating, or saying another rosary, but above all, displaying an extraordinary amount of patience, resignation, and yes, suffering nonetheless. In the last few months Brother Julius began to have further complications. His legs and ankles began to swell, he felt discomforting heat and cold in his extremities. Then it became difficult for Brother to breathe effectively. This impeded him from walking and this became a real cross to carry. He then learned in the last two weeks that his heart was far from healthy. He had significant blockages in fact. His doctors were very wary of surgery and together with them he agreed to accept his present condition with whatever limited medical protocol would be recommended.



**Brother Julius,  
prayerful Christian, with  
Father Mario Carpanese**

To all that has been said about Brother Julius' prayer life there was another element of suffering he undoubtedly offered in union with Mary. That, I believe, was a matter of personal distress. Brother Julius had invested 50 years of his life in Don Bosco Tech in Boston. When changes were spoken of and ultimately agreed to, hopefully for the survival of the school, he could hardly accept these radical changes. Knowing that the shop as he knew it was closed became an added burden to his prayer. We would like to think that the prayer of his death while marking the end of an era, marks also the beginning of a new era, a new aspect of the dream of Don Bosco for Boston! We rely on Brother Julius' prayer even now from heaven. Through the intercession of the immaculate help of Christians.

## **BEYOND THE EPITAPH**

Bro. Julius has left us a great legacy of solid faith, trenchant hope and committed love. But what is more, he leaves many of us simple memories of a great life. Father Patrick Angelucci summed up Julius' life at the funeral homily in his typical homiletic style of trilogy, Fr. Pat said:

*"Bro. Julius was a good man, a good Christian and a good Salesian. As a good man, he was determined and committed; a hard worker. As a good Christian, he lived his Baptism of water, fire and suffering to the full. As a good Religious, he lived his Salesian life in simple detachment, dedicated love and humble obedience."*

Brother Julius was a solid citizen. He could be very demanding and exacting of others. His humanity was rooted in clear convictions. Little things point that out so well. His die-hard loyalty to the Red Sox, Bruins and Celtics, his concern for cleanliness and order, his demand for nurses that were responsible, Directors who did their job and DRA's that fulfilled their responsibilities. Many a time he would chide us: "What are you crabbing about"; "Don't talk about it; just do it!"

This community is the poorer without Bro. Julius Bollati. He who helped found Don Bosco's work in Boston and began this work on Tremont Street has a permanent place in our hearts and memories. Little doubt, then, that at his wake and funeral were the dignitaries of the Church, Bernard Cardinal Law, William Cardinal Baum, Bishop John Boles, civic leaders, many numbers of the Salesian Family, a large circle of friends, countless alumni and all the students. We have committed his body to the cemetery grounds of Goshen, but his legacy will remain here. Let's pray for his good soul and for this community.

Cordially in the Risen Christ,

Rev. Richard McCormick, Director and the Confreres of Boston

### **Data for the Necrology:**

Brother Julius Bollati, born July 13, 1908, Canegrate, Italy, died September 7, 1996, Boston, Massachusetts at the age of 88.