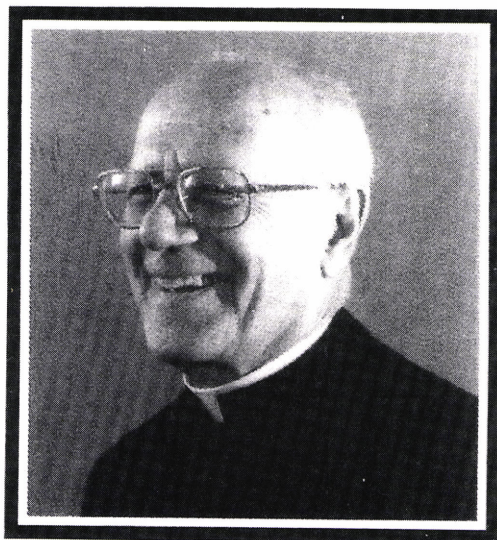


Very Rev. Esteban Ortiz, SDB
Direzione Generale
Via della Pisana, 1111
00163 Roma, ITALY

Salesians of St. John Bosco



Fr. John Divizia, SDB

Born – October 22, 1905
Profession – November 13, 1927
Ordination – July 7, 1935
Died – October 8, 2003

November 2, 2003

Dear Confreres:

Our much admired and beloved confrere,

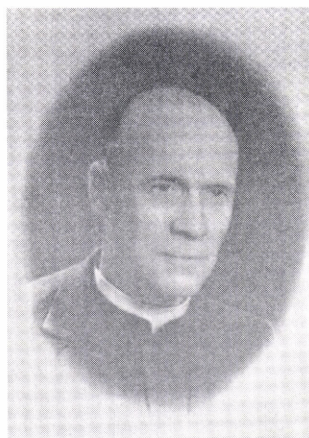
FATHER JOHN DIVIZIA,

went home to our heavenly Father at approximately 8:20 in the evening of October 8, 2003. Two weeks more and Father John would have reached the age of 98, having been born on October 22, 1905. His father's name was Lawrence Divizia, and his mother's maiden name was Emily Pattarini. John was born and baptized in New York City.

John's father had gone to the Salesian school in Alassio, and there he once saw Don Bosco. Consequently, says Father John in his memoirs, when his dad was thinking of a school where his son could receive a good education, he heard about the Salesian school in Hawthorne, New York. Therefore, he sent young John to Hawthorne from 1914 until the school burned down in the middle of December 1917. While a pupil at Hawthorne, John went down to Holy Rosary Church in Port Chester, New York, for the sacrament of Confirmation. It was administered by Bishop (later Cardinal) Patrick Hayes, Auxiliary Bishop of New York. John's sponsor at Confirmation was the famous millionaire, Adolph Tornquist, who became a Salesian priest, and who traveled the world over, spending all his millions by donating to Salesian schools and churches in the various Salesian mission countries. The last years of Adolph's life were spent with the Salesians in Argentina.



Fr. John As Pastor of
Transfiguration - 1945



Fr. Adolph Tornquist

When the Salesian school in Hawthorne burned down, John's father decided to send his son to the LaSalle Military Academy in Oakdale, Long Island, New York, for the remainder of his elementary education. After finishing at LaSalle, young John Divizia received his high school education at St. Peter's Prep in Jersey City, New Jersey. John went to St. Peter's Prep in 1920 with the idea of becoming a priest. After three years he graduated and then became a Jesuit novice, but after a year and a half he decided it was not his vocation.

John had kept in touch with Mr. Adolph Tornquist, his Confirmation sponsor. By this time John was toying with the idea of becoming a Salesian, and apparently Mr. Tornquist recommended that he visit the Salesians at the Transfiguration Church on Mott Street in New York City. There John met Brother Asta, who suggested that he visit Father Francis Binelli, the famous Novice Master, in New Rochelle, New York. John did that, and very soon he became an aspirant to the Salesian life.

On November 21, 1926, John donned the cassock. The novitiate began at the Provincial House in New Rochelle, but a couple of months later it moved to Goshen, New York. Father Richard Pittini, the new Provincial, had recently arrived, and on November 13, 1927, John Divizia was the first one to make his profession of vows in the Salesian Society in the presence of Father Pittini.

Fr. John with
Archbishop
Pittini and Fr.
Penna in 1959



After his profession, Bro. John's first obedience was to remain in Goshen for one year studying philosophy. In the year 1928-29, he taught at Salesian High School in New Rochelle, New York. During the two school years 1929-31, Brother John taught in the Salesian School in Goshen. Meanwhile, during November, 1930, he renewed his vows while in Goshen, and finally his perpetual profession took place in Newton, New Jersey on July 4, 1931.

Now it was off to Turin, Italy, for four years at the Salesian International Institute of Theology. Two companions who sailed with Bro. John were Bro. Peter Rinaldi and Bro. John Lomagno. Every Wednesday, weather permitting, they took the twenty minute walk to the Valdocco Oratory, visited the Basilica of Mary, Help of Christians and met with the

superiors and boys. All three were ordained in the Basilica of Mary, Help of Christians, on July 7, 1935, by His Eminence, Maurilio Cardinal Fossati. Father John recalled that in the studentate in Turin there were some fellow theologians who became provincials, bishops, and cardinals; for instance, Cardinal Raul Silva of Chile and Cardinal Stephen Trochta of Czechoslovakia. He also remembered that all the theology students went to Rome for the canonization of Don Bosco. Lastly, Father John recalled that he visited Blessed Philip Rinaldi and received his blessing shortly before his death.



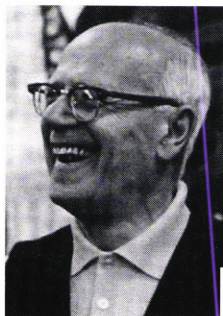
1933 at Crocetta (standing) M. Sersen, B. Roskowski, P. Rinaldi, J. Reedy, J. O'Loughlin, M. Ulloa, L. Coppo, (seated) J. Divizia, J. Lomagno, Fr. A. Rossi, and two unidentified clerics.

After his priestly ordination in July 1935 Father John was appointed the secretary of the Provincial for one year. Thereupon he was assigned to the Salesian School in Goshen



Fr. John, Fr. M. Azzoni
and Fr. A.J. Louis at the
First Mass Celebration of
Fr. Louis - 1944

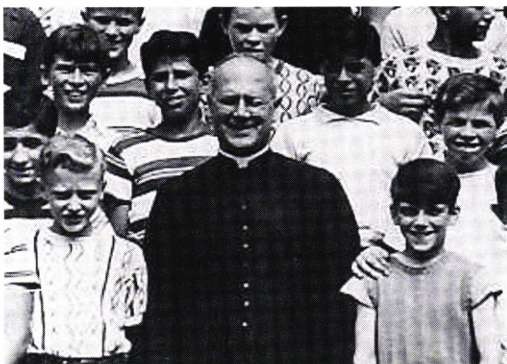
as teacher and confessor until 1940, and then to St. Anthony Parish in Paterson, New Jersey, for 1940-41, as an assistant pastor; then back to Goshen for 1941-42, as confessor and teacher; then to St. Anthony Parish in Elizabeth, New Jersey for 1942-43, as an assistant pastor; then back to St. Anthony Parish in Paterson for 1943-44. During 1944-49 Father John was the Pastor and Director in the Transfiguration Parish on Mott Street, in New York City. Then from 1949 to 1951, Father was the vocation director. He liked to say that the one vocation he directed was Dominic DeBlase, who became the Provincial, and a missionary to Sierra Leone, Africa.



90th Birthday
Celebration
with Fr. J. Sesto

Newton - 1962





Newton - 1950
Summer Boys'
Retreat

At this time Father John began a real odyssey. In 1951-52, Father John was the Director of the Salesian Oratory on Paris Street in East Boston. From 1952 to 1953 he was the assistant pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Elizabeth, New Jersey. From 1953 to 1955 Father John was the Director in St. Anthony Parish in Paterson. From 1955 to 1964 he was the Director and the Pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Paterson. A real change for Father John came when he was made Pastor of the St. Rosalie Parish in Harvey, Louisiana. In 1966 he came back north, this time as the chaplain to the Salesian Sisters at the Mary Help of Christians Academy in North Haledon, New Jersey. Then in 1968 another change came. This time he was appointed assistant pastor at Corpus Christi Parish in Port Chester, New York. Father John was not finished moving yet. Don Bosco Technical High School in Boston, Massachusetts became his home from 1969 to 1970 as confessor; then another move in 1970 to Don Bosco Technical High School in Paterson, New Jersey as confessor; another move in 1971 to Goshen, New York as confessor.



Dedication of the memorial plaque in honor of Fr. Francis Binelli
May 11, 1967

First Novice Master in the USA

J. Divizia, A. Trifari, P. Rinaldi, P. Granzotto, A. Bosio, F. Gambaro, N.
Pierro, P. Sappino

All novices of Fr. Binelli (except Fr. Bosio and Fr. Granzotto)

Finally a more permanent home was given to Father John when in 1972 he moved to Don Bosco College in Newton, New Jersey, as confessor. Here he remained until 1988, when he was retired to Blue Gate in Stony Point, New York. There he remained until 1990, at which time he went to Holy Rosary Parish in Port Chester, New York until 1992. Then he was moved to the Christian Brothers Rest Home in New Rochelle, New York. Not very long afterwards Father John entered the Shervier Home in the Bronx, New York. His health deteriorated very much during the last few years, and on October 8, 2003, at the ripe old age of practically 98 years his soul left his worn out body and entered into the presence of God

In conclusion and as a brief commentary, it was fairly obvious to those who lived and worked with Father John that he was a dynamic preacher in his younger years. He liked the work of preaching, and he was often called on occasions of retreats and celebrations. Secondly, the confessional was his other favorite priestly work, not only for parishioners, but also for priests and religious men and women. One confrere who was at his side for many years put it this way: "He was always kind, understanding, and helpful."

As Fr. John has shared for so many years in the bread and work promised by Don Bosco we pray he will now receive the long-awaited Paradise.

Fr. Philip Pascucci, SDB
for the community of the
Marian Shrine in
Stony Point, NY, USA



50th Anniversary of Ordination Celebration - September 21, 1985
 (Front row) R. McCormick, J. Korman, J. Lomagno, J. Divizia, M. McPake
 (Back row) J. Stella, A.J. Louis, J. Bajorek.

Fr. John Divizia was born 13 November 1927, in New York City, NY, USA. He died in the Bronx, NY, USA on 8 October 2003, at the age of 97. He had been a Salesian for 76 years and a priest for 68 years.

