



# ACTS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

## OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY

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## I. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

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Turin, July 1968

*My dear confreres and sons,*

I am writing these lines at the end of June, a month which in a sense has seen the happy culmination of a series of events and projects which have marked the first part of 1968 and which have been of particular interest and deep satisfaction for our whole family. Think for a moment: there was the opening of the Centenary of the Basilica with all the various events that followed in its wake; there were the three great meetings of provincials from different continents; and there was the solemn closing of the « Year of Faith ».

I should like to say a word to you about these great and consoling events which Providence has allowed us to witness.

But before doing this I should like to express my deepest thanks to all those who, in so many different ways, expressed their affection on my feastday for Don Bosco's representative, their fidelity to our common father, and their pledge to follow the path traced out by the Church and the Congregation in the matter of renewal.

It is impossible for me to thank each one individually as I should have liked to do, and so I avail myself of this means to convey my most sincere thanks; I do not think anyone will be surprised if I single out, for obvious reasons, the greetings from Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Hungary and Vietnam as being particularly dear to me.

One confrere wrote to me for my feastday: « We know that there is a price that must be paid and that by your daily work you are wearing yourself out. You are our holocaust. Thank you for the courage which you inspire in us in these difficult times ».



I cannot of course take the kind sentiments of this good confrere in too literal a sense, but I do endorse his recognition of the fact that « the Superior must pay the price for all ».

Now I do not think I could find a better way of expressing my gratitude than by confirming my intention to « pay this price » without reserve, for the good of our beloved Congregation, for each one of you, for the Church itself of which we are all determined to remain sons and faithful servants, and the more faithful the more the times increase in difficulty. And you, dear confreres and sons, please help me to carry the cross, reducing its weight by your constant prayers, by your generous collaboration, by your whole-hearted fidelity to Don Bosco not only in the abstract so to speak, but with willing docility to the directives of the one who has the mandate of being his representative and interpreter.

Help me to be the humble servant of the Congregation and of each one of you, so that together we can serve the Church and Christ Jesus.

### **The Centenary of the Basilica**

As I write I can still see and feel in my heart the demonstration of marian faith that has marked these past months and which reached its climax on 9th June, the actual date of the centenary of the Consecration of the Basilica of Mary, Help of Christians.

From the last week in April, when the ceremonies began, pilgrimages steadily increased in intensity — Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, young people, Cooperators, past pupils, the faithful in general, parish groups, etc. Fifty days saw something like five hundred pilgrimages. The Feast of Mary Help of Christians found thousands and thousands of the faithful mingling with Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, all of them there to pay filial homage to our Blessed Lady.

Characteristic of all these events was the devout and recollected participation of crowds of young people, of thousands of men and women, in holy Mass and Communion.

At the procession on the 24th May there was the edifying spectacle of a huge throng of people joining spontaneously in fervent prayer with the clergy and with the various organisations taking part in the procession.

### **The Salesian Exhibition and the « M.A.68 » Competition**

But, as you already know, there have been other projects of various kinds to celebrate this centenary. The permanent Salesian Exhibition, opened in the presence of many Dignitaries and all the provincials who had taken part in the meeting at Como, has aroused widespread interest and appreciation including that of many journalists, teachers and a host of young people.

This is not the place to describe it, but it is quite certain even from the impressions left by visitors who completed a questionnaire designed for this purpose that this is an enterprise which serves not merely to make known to a large number of people the nature of our mission in the Church and the world today, but which appeals to many young people who are ready to pledge themselves generously to lofty and concrete ideals.

Through these pages I should like to express not only own gratitude but also that of the Congregation to the confreres and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians who have worked so tirelessly for the success of this project, and in particular Father Michael Mouillard who has been the exhibition's moving spirit. All have worked together with intelligence and devotion to produce this achievement which will always remain for visitors a happy complement of their visit to the Sanctuary.

Another project was the « M.A.68 » Competition which stirred up so much interest among thousands of boys and girls in every continent. Where the work was undertaken seriously, and the underlying idea understood, appreciated and duly carried into effect the cooperation and lively enthusiasm of the young people concerned has been much in evidence. I was able to be present here at Valdocco at the final



phase of the competition between the Provinces of Italy. It impressed me to see boys and girls from the junior and senior sections of our schools, and even young people from the 20 age group, display such knowledge of marian history and doctrine. I was also particularly struck by the exhibition of paintings, sculpture and photographs, and by the poems and songs of marian inspiration, all compositions by young boys and often of high quality.

While I await the Feast of the Immaculate Conception when I am to present the prizes to the national winners from the various countries I am happy to extend my warmest congratulations to the Salesians and Salesian Sisters who have lent their valuable support to the development and success of this event.

There is a further remark I should like to make. The experience of this competition goes to show that when we set to work bearing in mind the need of modern youth and especially with a deep sense of belief in our own mission, a deeply spiritual mission at that, then we can succeed even today in eliciting in no small way the interest of youth in problems and issues such as those to be found in the competition « M.A. 68 ».

### **Appeal for Latin America**

A word about the appeal for Latin America which has been launched on the occasion of the Centenary. Offers are coming in, expressed in humble and generous terms. I offer all those concerned not only my thanks but those of the whole Congregation and in particular of the confreres of Latin America who will be strengthened by this aid.

Just now definite replies are being sent to each applicant, while we examine in conjunction with the Regional Superiors the areas and work where such help is most urgently needed. Meanwhile we are working on a programme of preparation and acclimatization bearing in mind the work the confreres will have to undertake in the countries in question.



June 9th

Now permit me to say a word about the centenary of the Basilica. On June 9th, His Eminence Cardinal Traglia, Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church, in the presence of the highest authorities and many representatives of our congregation, concelebrated Mass with the Major Superiors. The ceremony was broadcast on television. In the afternoon His Eminence gave the commemorative discourse for the centenary of the Basilica, setting out its history and underlining the good that has gone forth in a thousand forms from the Temple which Don Bosco's love erected in honour of her who inspired him from on high.

The Te Deum we sang was one vibrant outpouring of the whole Salesian Family — Salesians, Salesian Sisters, boys, Cooperators, Old Boys and faithful — expressing the feelings not only of those who were privileged to be there, but of all of you who belong to our Family. I should like to say how in that moment I somehow felt that our Father Don Bosco, along with hosts of Salesians who in this past century have passed through the Basilica, joined in our hymn of thanksgiving to God and of praise to our Heavenly Patron for all the graces poured out in the course of a hundred years in the home she built for herself.

In these moving moments I also thought of our Holy Father Paul VI. He, who has always been so kind and fatherly towards our humble congregation, like his predecessor Pius IX towards our Founder, deigned to be represented at our centenary celebrations by a letter from his Secretary of State, the text of which is given in full later on in these Acts.

Here I should like to emphasise a thought that should make our Centenary productive of immediate and lasting results. We read in the letter: « (The celebration of the Centenary) expresses the concern of the Salesian Congregation for drawing new vigour from the sources of its own particular spirituality, for keeping faith with its authentic traditions, and above all for strengthening the ties which bind it to Mary to whom the entire Salesian Society owes its existence and unimpaired vitality ».



Here is an invitation which we must accept from the Supreme Pontiff as well as from our own Founder and Father: our Salesian Family, far from letting itself be carried away by certain destructive and corrosive ideas that are the fashion here and there in the matter of devotion to Mary, must after Don Bosco's own example be aware, and show this awareness, of its identity, in all its members, as a family that sincerely and genuinely belongs to Mary.

In conclusion, I like to think that the fervour of this marian year which has produced concrete evidence of so much initiative will not be allowed to die down but will rather take the form in our various provinces of a devotion to Mary that becomes an integral part of our lives according to our best family traditions and in the spirit of the instructions given to us by the II Vatican Council.

### **Meetings of Provincials in various continents**

Now I intend to call your attention to the three meetings of Provincials in various continents in which, three years after the last General Chapter, all the Provincials of the Congregation gathered together along with a good number of confreres who are specialists in certain matters and many Superiors of the Council.

These meetings have enabled us first of all to check up, as it were, on what has been done in the various Provinces to put into practice the deliberations of the General Chapter and to make known and absorb its spirit.

The deliberations of the General Chapter are in fact much too important for us to resign ourselves to seeing them reduced to the level of documents in archives.

It is the task and responsibility of Superiors at different levels and of individual confrères as well to do their best to put them into effect. Our Founder's words are opportune here: whenever anyone complained to him about the sad times they lived in, he would remark that it was more useful to use the time given us for action, and united action at that.



Well now, the action to which these recent meetings of Provincials has invited us is just this: to put into effect the sum total of ideas, guide lines and directives left us by the XIX General Chapter. Indeed we can take it as certain that not only is there much more to be *done*, particularly in certain areas, but much remains to be *known* about the findings of the General Chapter; and there still remains a great deal to be *assimilated* from it.

But these meetings have also enabled us to take stock of the situation in the different areas where we pursue our apostolic work. We must not hide from ourselves the fact that these are critical times in the life of the Church, and they have an influence on our Congregation which we are quite well aware of. Well then, in an atmosphere of frankness as in a family, and guided by a sincere love for the Congregation, we have endeavoured with a healthy sense of realism to view the positive and negative aspects of these various situations, the gaps and the dangers to be found in them, the remedies we must apply, while always keeping in mind the General Chapter and the II Vatican Council.

They have been days of intense work, of well-informed debate, and days as well of fervent prayer in common, especially in concelebration and in the recital of the breviary. The conclusions arrived at which have been made known to you are the results of those days; they cannot however give you a proper idea of all the work accomplished. For this purpose they need to be read through carefully and Provincials are warmly recommended to fill them out and comment on them by explaining at greater length the wealth of material contained in the Acts of the respective meetings.

### **A serious duty: to pass on information**

In this connection I wish to express a certain fear I have, reinforced by news which I happen to have heard on a number of occasions.

It is said that the Acts of the Superior Council like those of our General Chapter have apparently not reached certain areas of the



Congregation, or else appear in a watered down and reduced form; or what is still worse, sometimes remain a dead letter.

The same is to be said of the Acts of the Superior Council, the documents of the Provincial Conferences, episcopal conferences and the Holy See.

If these statements bore any resemblance to the truth, it would certainly be a very sad and harmful state of affairs, and one would find therein an explanation of certain deviations and arbitrary actions, of certain attitudes of distrust and frustration that are by no means constructive elements in the life of the congregation, particularly in these day which demand decisive action, well-attuned to the rulings which come from one who has the duty and the right to give them.

I should therefore like to remind all who have the responsibility of government of their obligation to give complete and early notification of documents from the Holy See, the hierarchy, Superior Council etc. How otherwise can we ever hope to create that response or that mentality which is so much needed if we are ever to put into effect in a convinced and loyal manner documents which are meant, even in different forms, to renew and put in order our life as Christians, religious and Salesians?

It is only from the vital circulation of enlivening ideas contained in these documents that our confrères will draw light and encouragement to become the instruments of this true and genuine renewal desired by the Church and the Congregation.

Provincials and Rectors, by reason of the mandate of magisterium implicit in their office — are its natural transmitters. It is theirs to comment on it, to put life into it, and in particular to see that it is carried out. The passing on of such information then should always be done faithfully and without delay, without parentheses or undue emphasis; in short it must be done thoroughly and in the most efficacious and productive manner.

In these days of confusion, of lack of control and arbitrary conduct, the lack of timely and adequate information in a precise and authoritative form, silence on the part of Superiors, and especially a certain sluggishness in carrying out the prescriptions of these documents, could

— at least objectively — become connivance in deplorable situations, the consequences of which it would be hard to estimate.

We must all work together to ensure that the Superior Council, General Chapter and the meetings of Provincials are not a dead letter or end up as words and words only. We must employ them as living and efficacious instruments of a true renewal.

### **A valuable lesson: know how to listen**

I wish now to put forward a very useful and precious lesson deriving from the three meetings of Provincials. Anyone who has to govern a community whether it be at world, regional or local level, has everything to gain in listening to the ideas, points of view and experience of others who are not themselves the superiors responsible for government.

I have noted this myself and brought it to the notice of those attending the meetings of Provincials where all of us, whether Superiors or not, were at one and the same time teachers and disciples with immense advantage to one another. In fact, so many situations, problems and solutions were able to see the light in view of this fraternal cooperation; and all this in an atmosphere of openness and respect, of sincere and calm enquiry into the interests of the Congregation, in the united conviction that Superiors and confrères, provided that they form one body in humility and sincere love, will reach identity of purpose in their common vocation and mission.

At this point one naturally asks: How can this good example and these real issues which were part of the life lived so happily and with such advantage and satisfaction in the meetings of Provincials be put into practice in the environment of our different communities?

Besides this, it is a matter of a well-defined principle insisted on by the Decree «*Perfectae Caritatis*», which we come across once more in the deliberations of the General Chapter, and which is repeatedly hammered home by the author of these deliberations.



« A Superior should listen willingly to his subjects and encourage them to make a personal contribution to the welfare of the community and of the Church. Not to be weakened, however, is the Superior's authority to decide what must be done and to require the doing of it ».

« Let Chapters and Councils faithfully acquit themselves of the governing role given to them; each should express in its own way the fact that all members of the community have a share in the welfare of the whole community and a responsibility for it » (P.C., 14).

It is a matter therefore of promoting the union of all the members of the community for the welfare of the Congregation and the Church — an undertaking of vital interest. The words we read with regard to this matter in the conclusions of the Bangalore meeting are all the more evident: « From this point of view the rendicontos and frequent personal interviews, the effective worth and right functioning of the Council of Action, the meeting together of the different particular councils (such as the council comprised of teaching staff, the group of confrères attached to parish and oratory managers and assistants of workshops, assistants with Headmasters and Catechists, the directors and assistants of various associations, lay personnel etc.) all these take on a special importance and become pre-eminent duties which admit of no postponement and are explicitly laid down by the XIX General Chapter (A.G.C., 32-43) ».

This is a matter therefore of pre-eminent duty for the confreres responsible and no matter how large or how small the community, or how simple or complex the work they do, no one may exempt himself from such duties.

One must of course overcome so many difficulties of different kinds; in fact I would say that the secret of effective government in an atmosphere of calm from the psychological, human and technical point of view lies in the effective and advantageous employment of the confreres by use of the various means listed above.

Anyone who persists in ignoring these realities would only bear a heavy responsibility before the congregation, which must proceed with promptitude and not be hindered in the process of renewal demanded above all by the Council and by its genuine and essential



interests; this method and style of government is precisely one of the aspects of our renewal that must not take second place.

### **The Operation of our new Structures**

In all three meetings we examined the functioning of the Structures which are the outcome of the XIX General Chapter.

Even if not much time has elapsed since then, we were able to make some useful remarks.

The creation of Regional Superiors seems substantially a very positive achievement: it is now a recognised fact that precisely in view of the presence of such superiors contact between marginal areas and headquarters is much more intense and valuable. The forthcoming General Chapter, by making use of the experience it can gain in the interval, will be enabled to apply to this new feature some final touches and improvements which will help towards more efficient functioning and to define its tasks more clearly.

The new post of Vice-Provincial which has appeared alongside that of Provincial is decidedly something positive and corresponds to evident needs in the governing of a Province in these days.

As regards the Provincial Councils, it is even more evident that the Provincial needs at least some well-equipped persons, rich in prestige and experience, to be habitually at hand to make the Provincial Council a centre of dynamic impulse and enlightened guidance for the whole Province.

Provincial Delegates are also included on this list; chief amongst them all is the Delegate for Youth Apostolate. While we recognise the problems and special situations in some Provinces, the experience of these years shows what wealth of initiative, ideas and achievement has accrued to Provinces by the presence of these Delegates when they are capable, well-prepared, active and zealous individuals. At the Provincial's behest they render an inestimable service to houses and to confreres who would otherwise only be at a loss for ideas, guidance, co-ordination and encouragement.



We must have vision and a vision that is broad in its viewpoint. We must at the same time have a clear sense of proportion. To sum up, we should say with truth and convince ourselves of this fact: it is much more profitable for the work of a whole Province to have such men at its disposal — well-prepared and capable men, of course — than to engage in some extra work locally. I fully understand, as I have said above, that there are problems, particularly in certain provinces; but if we follow this line of reasoning, and if we only realise the validity of this way of seeing things, we will overcome the difficulties even if a problem has to be solved on the basis of the reshaping of our work. I realise that in the case of both Provincial Councils and Delegates, as envisaged by the General Chapter, there is still room for improvement. But the completely positive experience of anyone who has gone into these matters seriously, and the sincere determination expressed by those who took part in the meetings to make effective provisions, give us grounds for hope in the near future: our road is signposted and seems even more in evidence as a good and useful road to travel.

I have still a word to say about the Vice rector.

All recognise on the one hand need for his efficient presence; but at the same time it has been said in all sincerity that in this respect we are still a long way off the goal.

The problem is important and closely ties in with the figure and function of the Rector, whose responsibilities are essentially religious, spiritual and educational. He should be not like the manager of an organisation but the moving spirit of his community both from the religious and educational aspect. In view of this the problem will have to be taken up again at the next General Chapter. Meanwhile the criteria and guide-lines given by the XIX General Chapter remain valid.

But before I pass on to another point, I think it well to make a further remark.

Some think that excessive importance is laid on structures, to the extent that these are almost made an end in themselves.

It is clear that structures are not and cannot be an end in



themselves; but as in the case of steel and cement in building, our structures too are « load-bearing ». What is this load they bear?

Putting metaphor aside, and looking at the nature of things, none of us thinks of structures except in their instrumental role. For the General Chapter which noted for them and for us who must carry them out, structures have a function of essential service, of fundamental development, and of religious and apostolic life in the Congregation — even if this aspect is not always evident to all.

In brief, the General Chapter and the Superiors insist on this point because they see it as closely linked with the religious life of our Society and the fruitfulness of our apostolate. Think for example of the Vice Provincial. He, as one hears repeated nearly everywhere, has the task of lightening the Provincial's burden and complementing his office so that the Provincial can be constantly available for all the interests, religious, apostolic and human of the confreres (think only of that most important task of visitation which needs so much time and quiet).

The same can be said of the Vice Rector and of other structures.

Now, if these structures are not carried out, or are badly carried out, it is clear they cannot answer the purpose assigned to them. The consequence is that religious life, apostolate, indeed all our work, is influenced to a negative degree by such flaws at the various levels.

In this regard — and rightly so, I think — the obvious progress in renewal of religious life and apostolate asked for by the II Vatican Council and our General Chapter has been in evidence in those Provinces where these structures have been put into effect with all seriousness.

To conclude: we held the three meetings of Provincials at the cost of sacrifice of various kinds — not least the financial one. All told, we acquitted ourselves well. Those who took part returned home full of good will. But that is not enough. It was recognised that to no small degree the carrying out of the important decisions of the meetings is precisely linked up with the good functioning of the structures. Therefore let us make sure they are there in fact and not just in name; that they are efficient and actually work. Let us



courageously try to overcome all difficulties and let us not come to a standstill when we are faced by them. The interests and life of the congregation require it.

### **Our Mission at the Present Day**

In all the meetings not only was the theme of youth work dealt with at length but it was also a burning issue, one to which we continually returned at every stage of our work as the central problem of the Salesian legacy, as well as in the by no means easy search for the path of our renewal.

One established fact emerged, well documented by evidence from all over the globe, from the East and the West and in a still more emphatic way from Latin America. Never has our mission which is essentially directed towards youth, shown itself to be such a reality here and now; rather, never has it been so urgently called for.

Think for a moment how much this year has featured in the often dramatic and disturbing headlines of every continent.

Young people, nowadays, have a contradictory mentality that is so often very different and opposed to ours. Their protests assume most disconcerting forms; yet often contain the seed of an authenticity revealing an honest enquiry into human values and commitments. Youth forms an enormous and lively focal point of interest for all responsible individuals in the politics, industry, economics and social progress of the world.

For instance, it is very significant that in the government of many countries and large cities there is a department dealing with youth problems.

The Pope as well - and not just only once — has shown the deepfelt interest of the Church for these throngs of young people who disturb the quiet of the older generation. Indeed in face of this worldwide reality, when one thinks for instance that in the next thirty years in Latin America alone more than two hundred million poor and underdeveloped youngsters will ask us for help, training and betterment

of their conditions or will demand the concrete recognition of their rights by incipient revolt, how can we fail to realise that our mission, understood as D. Bosco conceived it, is up-to-the-minute and not only that but a truly providential fact in the world of today. There come to mind the words our Founder one day addressed to certain men of affairs: « If you won't help these boys now, tomorrow they will start demanding help at pistol-point ». Our Founder's words are still truer for us.

If we do not devote ourselves to youth with all the means at our disposal and if the need arise, with new and courageous forms of apostolate and with an intelligent and down-to-earth programme, we are in danger of losing for the Church and a well-ordered society so many thousands of boys. It is worthwhile reading the Caracas conclusions in regard to this. The problem is there set out more emphatically still

### **Let us work for young people of the poorer classes**

If it is true that in these recent meetings there was unanimous agreement on the topicality of our vocation in so far as it concerns youth, at the same time it was emphasised that our vocation is a genuine one not only in so far as it is on behalf of youth, but also *working-class* youth.

At Bangalore and Caracas as well as Como it was stated in clear terms even though differently expressed, that the congregation will live true to its spirit provided that it corresponds to its vocation among the poor. It was also noted with satisfaction that in many parts of the world our congregation is working generously for the poorer classes. But there is still more to be done.

« We must go back courageously and work among poor and forsaken youth in places where this witness has grown dim and the image of the congregation distorted ». « Our collective witness in the matter of poverty finds its best expression from the Salesian angle in our "de facto" preference for young people who are poor » (Conclusions of Caracas).



The sphere of Salesian work is certainly vast, complex and varied but there is an evident basic element in the aspirations of D. Bosco's spirit — the position of privilege to be accorded to young people who are poor.

Well then, truths cannot remain at the level of welcome recognition in the intellectual order but must be translated into concrete reality: only thus shall we appear as a clearer sign of the poverty of Christ and of loyalty to Don Bosco; if, that is, « everyone in the world is able to verify the fact that pride of place in our work is devoted to youth which in the different countries is looked upon as poor and forsaken » (Conclusions of Bangalore).

### **Pastoral Function of our Educational Work**

Another telling reminder, however, was formulated in the three meetings. Our mission to young people and in particular those who are poor must be efficaciously pastoral in aim if it is to reach its supreme goal. This is valid for every type of work in which we engage and in the first place the work of teaching. It is evident that we must not think of giving up our work of education: the Church, the Council, the General Chapter, the Hierarchy itself have spoken clearly about this matter. In the most recent message of Paul VI to Priests we read: « In fields such as the missions, youth, *schools*, the sick, and especially insistent today, the world of workers — in all these there is a continued urgent call upon the priestly heart ». Here we see the Pope putting the apostolate of teaching alongside the missions and the working-class world. The problem therefore is not one of giving up education; it is a different problem altogether.

The Caracas Conference has some brave words to say on this point: « Keeping in view the present situation of the congregation in Latin America and guided by a healthy realism, we recognise that our commitment must be thorough to ensure at all costs the success of our pastoral effects in our educational work... The urgency of this work we have to do becomes all the more serious and binding upon us when

we reflect on the grave words of the General Chapter which goes so far as to contemplate the closing down of work that proves to be unessential, i.e. unable to produce a form of pastoral work for Christian education and training by means of the school ».

I invite each and every one to reflect on these statements and to draw from them the necessary conclusions according to the post of responsibility he occupies, even if it will cost him sacrifices of various kinds. As I wrote in the introductory letter to the Caracas conclusions, maybe we shall need to be brave enough to give the steering wheel a vigorous turn. We have to do so in order to correspond « *de facto* » to what the Church and Don Bosco himself ask from us on behalf of youth: to make it Christian and Christian for our times.

The conclusions of plans for reshaping, if they are the fruit of this brave and unbiased examination of conscience, will be of great help towards carrying out this pastoral work in our schools that is their whole « *raison d'être* ». And this will also help to give the many confreres who work in this large sector of our activities a sense of trust and encouragement.

### **A Pressing and delicate Problem: Unity in Multiplicity**

A number of times during the three meetings a problem was discussed which is turning up more and more: the unity of the congregation in its multiplicity. I think it useful and interesting, or indeed even necessary, to go back over this point in the precise form in which it was dealt with in the meetings.

The formulation of the problem, at least so it seems to me, is a good one in so far as it asserts two requirements which no one today could deny without putting himself at variance with the Conciliar documents and reality itself.

The formula not only asserts that the two requirements should coexist but that they must interpenetrate, in such a way that unity exists, is maintained and is workable even in multiplicity.

The demands of unity derive from the uniqueness of the Founder's spirit which every congregation is called upon to keep alive and vital,



and prolong in the course of time, in order to offer it as « spirituality » and « specific apostolic work » in the service of the Church at a fixed time and place.

« Aut sint ut sunt, aut non sint » (« Either let them be as they should be, or let them not be at all »).

The Council invites us to return to our origins and these clearly are to be found in the Founder who is one (P.C. 2) and in our case is called D. Bosco.

On the other hand the demands of multiplicity spring fundamentally from the motive which prevails today of « incarnation » (authentic commitment) which finds its application in every ecclesial apostle (cf. P.C. 2-3, 8, 18. Cf. also « Ad Gentes » and « Institutionis Sacerdotalis » passim) « To be incarnated » (authentically committed) presupposes knowledge, esteem and respect for a different culture and mentality or for local conditions, to enable our service to correspond with particular expectations and needs.

Once we accept this principle, the problem is theoretically easy to propound and solve. But in practice a complete attunement of the two elements is not quite so easy, and if in the past there has been no lack of exaggeration in interpreting this « unity », even to the extent of conceiving it and carrying it into effect as uniformity, sacrificing to it every sort of individual action even when this was evidently necessary, today one could fall into the opposite defect, namely, to compromise unity by an exasperating and uncontrolled emphasis on multiplicity.

This mistake would be all the more harmful because to win back unity when it has already been compromised has always been shown historically to be a slower and more arduous task than the winning back of the sense of multiplicity

### **The Guiding Criterion**

« In essentia unitas » (« Unity in essence »). It is self-evident that the Founder's spirit should not undergo any change in what constitutes

its essence. But again, in the uncertainty of life in the concrete, there arises the fundamental query: in what does this essence consist? What is the area of demarcation between what is essential — and therefore the « unum » that is to be asserted and maintained — and what is of secondary importance, reducible to particular situations of time and place in which the Founder's spirit took flesh in the past, but which can and should be regulated by the principle of multiplicity?

A historial and psychological remark may also be of assistance here: there are *mentalities and times* which by their nature tend to broaden out of all proportion the sphere and sovereignty of the essential. Thus there is a tendency to trace every word and act of the Founder « sic et simpliciter » back to his spirit, just as if holy Founders were giving a definition of their spirit at every moment and on every occasion. Above all, it would mean deying them the merit of having been men of their own times and so able to read the signs of their times and to react to them concretely with suitable solutions.

But there are also *mentalities and times* (this is our case) in which there is an opposite trend, namely to open out to the fullest extent the field of what is of secondary importance. Making use of an irritating form of analysis, inspired by a critique not always balanced or under control, there is a tendency to reduce the essential of a Founder's spirit to a mere skeleton — incapable by then of functioning as a living thing. By dint of making one element after another, one rule after another, one tradition after another, pass as mere accessories linked to a particular time... one runs the risk of ending up empty-handed.

### **The distinction between what is of primary and secondary importance**

From what has been said it is clear that any congregation which would assert unity in multiplicity cannot leave it to the judgement of individuals to fix the boundaries of what is essential and what is



of secondary importance. As « *Perfectae Caritatis* » explains, this is the principal task of General Chapters to which all the members of the congregation have the right and duty to make their contribution.

The XIX General Chapter with all the riches it contains and the structures it has created at various levels has done a work of asserting its unity and its separate achievements that yet are linked together.

Outside this state of things lies private judgement: even if it is dictated by intentions that are good from the subjective point of view, such private judgement could only compromise the very life of our congregation.

It is clear that in saying this there is no wish to dogmatise or look upon the work of the XIX General Chapter as perfect or definitive. Quite the contrary! But the completion, perfection, modification, and adaptation with which history shapes the purpose and vitality of a Founder's spirit cannot be arbitrarily anticipated, since no one is authorised to consider himself as the mouthpiece and interpreter of the congregation in so delicate a matter.

## Experiments

In this context there are the so-called « experiments » to be considered. The Council makes frequent reference to these. So also does the General Chapter when it speaks of « experimentation ».

In a world in rapid transformation it is obvious that there cannot be a more adequate form of legislation to suit every case, or structures that are already well « run in », or men more fully equipped to face new problems that arise. Not only this, but so many times, perhaps in the majority of cases, the road to be taken is far from clear and the way ahead anything but free from uncertainty. These are all reasons for the frequent talk today of « experiments », « experimentation » and so on.

It would seem that some criteria need to be kept in mind as regards this matter:

*a) The purpose of experiment*

To try out a fixed method of putting into effect a possible development of our religious life, Salesian training or our pastoral work, in answer to the spirit and deliberations of both Council and Chapter.

*b) Limits*

Experiments therefore deal with « means » and as such they ought not and cannot be at loggerheads with the aims for the attainment of which they are being carried out.

Hence they have no power in themselves of self-justification: any worthwhile judgement concerning them comes from the objectives in the service of which they are employed. These objectives are set down in detail and indicated in the competent body (Council, Constitutions, General Chapter etc.) and cannot be obliterated or worse still, contradicted.

*c) Areas of Experiment*

These can be: religious life and forms of apostolate.

It is evident that these two fields of action have special needs of their own deriving from their own peculiar nature. Experiment in one area cannot be assessed by criteria proper to the other, even if the continual relationship and influence of both fields of action are unquestionable.

*d) Authorisation of the « experiments »*

It belongs to the authority to which it has been assigned and from which depends — according to the Constitutions, and in the case of new structures, according to the General Chapter — the accomplishment of the particular purpose for the attainment of which the experiment is intended. It is clear that such authority, as far as giving or withholding its authorisation goes, will not be based on its own personal and exclusive criterion, but will reach its conclusion by means of careful enquiry, dialogue, and a sense of responsibility.



*e) Conditions*

Experiments by definition are completely factual data. It is obvious, then, that they are conditioned by actual factors, namely, persons (i.e. availability, suitable preparation etc.) a social and cultural background, local religious situation etc.

Moreover there is a gradual check on experience while in process of accomplishment and it periodically undergoes critical revision in the light of competent advice at various levels in order to take an objective measurement of its validity and to give it those slight alterations that are needed, for the purpose of enriching the formation, religious life and apostolic development at which we all want to aim.

From what has been said it seems clear that one must go ahead with wisdom and prudence and in accordance with the rules that are meant to be a help and a guarantee, not a hindrance for which there is no justification, so that such eventual experience may not degenerate into negative factors instead of a real enrichment.

Only by acting in this way will the congregation be able to experience the benefits of the directives and spirit resulting from the Council and General Chapter. This is what every one of us has at heart, the real welfare of the congregation.

**May the Year of Faith lead us to a life of faith**

At the outset of this letter of mine I referred to the crowning event of a period of notable happenings — 30th June, the date on which the year of Faith concluded. In Vespers for that Sunday, Peter in the person of his successor Paul VI repeated his profession of faith before the whole world: « Thou art Christ, Son of the living God ».

The year of Faith could not have closed in a more meaningful and appropriate way; the profession of faith proclaimed by Paul VI was not just one item of a solemn papal ceremony but a calm and clear reply to the bombardment of « new ideas » so violent and prolonged as to stir up trouble even in some pastors of souls and professional theologians.

While we gratefully and trustfully accept the statement that comes to us from Peter's chair, we must surely wish to treasure all the richness and light that has flooded our souls during the Year of Faith; we must surely wish to let the Year of Faith, which is over by now, make an impression on our lives and work. It is only from our faith that these can draw inspiration, meaning and worth.

The words of Jean Guittou are indeed apt at this moment: « The Church is nourished on faith alone. Without faith charity is only human brotherhood. Without faith, what would the Sacraments be? Magic symbols! What would prayer be? Empty words! And the Liturgy? A sacred drama! Confession? Psychoanalysis! The catechism? A collection of moral tales and absurdities. The Gospel? A venerable myth! What would ecumenism be without faith? A pious comedy, because there is no question of union except where there is a common faith ».

There is food for thought in these words, but we as a body must add something that touches us very closely.

Without faith indeed everything both in the Church and in the whole content of our religious life would cease to make sense and would only lose its real meaning. What meaning would the life of grace, the sacraments or the liturgy have without faith? How could we live our vows with joy if faith did not illumine them before our eyes and show them to us as the instruments of a livelier imitation of Christ and of a greater availability in the service of D. Bosco and our brethren?

As St. Paul says, without faith we should be the most abject of men.

But the obligations that faith imposes upon us not only take the form of assent in the intellectual order to God and the truths He has revealed. It is a question of commitment that concerns one's whole personality — intelligence, will and feelings. It is therefore a vital and existential commitment.

« Believing implies entering the School of Christ with the thought, heart and feeling of the just and unjust, with everything of which human life is woven » (Guardini).

We can say we are quickened by a genuine spirit of faith only when our judgements on earthly events, the happenings in our life and



the motives that influence our behaviour are taken from our reflection on God's word, from the teaching of Christ and the Church and kept always in mind. Our Founder's example should be a source of light and strength for us. Don Ceria wrote of him: « Don Bosco was eager to know the truths of faith, firm in his belief of them, fervent in professing them, zealous in inculcating them, strong in his defence of them ».

### **Let us nourish our Faith**

It is only natural to ask ourselves a question at this juncture: how do we nourish our faith? What are the solid, dependable and really spiritual readings which enrich and strengthen our faith and comfort our soul? The pages of some reviews will certainly not nourish our poor soul — reviews that publish the outpourings of writers richer in presumption than true doctrine, or those that question everything, from the Pope's authority to the moral law itself. The documents of the pontifical and ecclesial magisterium are of course a substantial and safe form of nourishment, and one that is in keeping with the needs of our times.

I like to think that such publications reach every one of our houses. I would remind you in fact that the « Osservatore Romano » is published in a weekly issue in several languages. You will find therein the teaching of the Pope and the hierarchy, and it is always up-to-date. No house can afford to be without it.

But it is only right as well that we should be brave enough to admit frankly that religious and priests can lose their faith — and we have sad examples of this too. Well then, how are we to defend ourselves against this danger? And on the other hand, if faith to be genuine must permeate our whole life, how can it be nourished without the meditation which deepens truth, assimilates it and transforms it into conviction, a way of life, and action?

I should like then to ask each of you just as a father would ask his

sons: What about your meditation? Is it the soul of your day? of your work?

Let us also heed the heart-searching questions Paul VI puts to us priest and apostles: « How do we tend the lamp of contemplation? How seriously do we attend to this inmost focal point of our personality, retreating briefly for interior conversation from the constant onslaught of external duties? Have we kept our taste for personal prayer and meditation, for the breviary? And how can we hope to give our work its full effect if we do not draw from the interior source of conversation with God those choicest energies which He alone can give? » (Message of Paul VI to Priests).

Once meditation goes and with it spiritual reading, and the thoughtful and methodic perusal of Sacred Scripture, how can the mind of a priest or religious stand up to the assaults of all kinds it must face from every quarter? Without a real spirit of meditation which in turn produces a lively and active spirit of faith, the Eucharist itself is whittled down to a thing of mere outward show.

Our daily experience only shows us more and more lamentably that without meditation (and all that richness of faith and charity implied in this expression) the soul is emptied little by little, and the spirit of the world creeps in, with work done for its own sake or for other secondary ends; an easygoing conscience is soon deadened by compromise and surrender; the apostolate sinks to the level of social work, and then the empty religious even in the eyes of man appears no longer as one who bears, gives and reveals Christ, but as someone quite different, such as a mere organiser of public events, or a teacher — even of religion — a minister of religion or a manager of social activities. What will the consequences be for him — and what is more — for souls?

### **How the laity want us to be**

Allow me to take some points from a letter sent by a young man to the editor of one of our reviews. It is written in the sharp bitter style in use among young people today, but you will discover there a



longing to find in the priest and apostle the man who by living his faith reveals God's gifts to souls. It will provide us all, and not just priests only, with matter for a fruitful examination of conscience which will help us precisely to live our faith as apostles.

« It's not enough to go through the motions of a priest — you must *be* a priest ».

« I have found nothing more hateful than to see a man betray his own mission; and today in this period of great confusion of ideas this is a temptation for a priest — the temptation to descend from the supernatural and put himself on the human level, with all its consequences “just to be understood by his contemporaries”. This leads some priests to join the ranks of the failures, of those who have gone to pieces, people who desert their post as witnesses of the supernatural. In our eyes you are more than just men to us: you are the guardians of “something that gives freedom”, which is liberating and gives joy, peace and calm. You talk to us in Christ's name and for this reason we listen to you. The position of being witnesses to the Crucified is an uncomfortable one, but this is your mission. You have chosen it yourselves, “freely” ».

« At times when in the presence of some priests I had the feeling of being face to face with defeatists, with people who are fed up with life; I had the feeling that even priests are going through a period of complete reversal of their scale of values ».

« Nowadays, priests treat cars as an end in themselves and have all possible comforts in their homes, T.V., record-players, tape recorders and fridges. To our eyes these things seem at times merely like dodging the issue of real life, a form of emotional unbalance, a kind of escapism. I'm not saying that you should live in destitution; by no means — but at least show us that these things are not the chief concern of a man ».

« Have pity on us — we don't want you to go adding to the confusion in our minds which are already so mixed up: we look for something more from you to give us Christ, to give us God. You must give Him to us by your way of life ».

In Paul VI's recent message to priests I think we can find an answer to this boy's appeal: « Hence the present state of things is an

incentive to the priest to deepen his faith, to realise even more clearly to whom he belongs, with what powers he is invested, with what mission he is entrusted ».

Dear confreres and sons, in the words of this twenty-year old boy we can discern the appeal of thousands and thousands like him today.

Let us go the rescue! Let us live our faith by nourishing and defending it every day. Let us be clear-cut symbols of the faith within us and its faithful disseminators especially in the world of youth which looks to us with eyes full of hope.

May our Lord bless us all and give us strength and courage to be worthy sons of the Church and Don Bosco every day of our lives.

To one and all I send my sincerest greetings.

Pray for me. I assure you of a constant memento « in fractione panis ».

Yours most affectionately in Christ,

Father Aloysius Ricceri  
*Rector Major*



# CONCLUSIONS

agreed upon at the Reunion of the Salesian Provincials of Asia

Bangalore, 20-26 February, 1968

## RENEWAL OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

### I. Necessity of commitment and of further study

A genuine renewal of religious life cannot but be based on a serious and personal deepening of the significance and value of our religious consecration (*Perfectae Caritatis* 1,1 - A.G.C., p. 76).

To this end it is clear that it is particularly urgent to bring into realization some initiatives expressly willed by the XIX General Chapter and recommended by the Rector Major and the superiors on several occasions. *It is necessary to give confreres the possibility to study, go deep into and meditate on the Documents of the Council in general, and the doctrine on religious life in particular.* Hence:

1. House libraries are to be furnished with a sufficient number of copies of the conciliar documents and with a good selection of commentaries on the same. The Rector of the Studentate of Theology at Bangalore will prepare an accurate and well thought out list of books both in English and in Italian that may serve as a guide in this regard to the Provincials and Rectors of the East.

2. Pontifical documents and the speeches of the Holy Father are to be made known to the confreres; they are very often authoritative interpretations and offer wise comments on particular doctrines or dispositions of the Council. No house should fail to subscribe to the weekly English edition of the « Osservatore Romano ».

3. Courses should be organized, on a Provincial or inter-Provincial level, for an « aggiornamento » in theological, religious and pastoral

matters, having as basis the Documents of the Council and the Acts of the XIX General Chapter. Facilities should also be given to confreres to participate in conferences and seminars conducted in the locality by the ecclesiastical authorities or by other Catholic cultural institutions. For such courses as are held by us, the series of tapes prepared in the United States for the purpose may be made use of with advantage.

4. Let courses be promoted with the help of speakers of specific competence, whether Salesian or non-Salesian, for the « *aggiornamento* » of preachers of spiritual retreats, in order that their preaching may truly enrich and give solid nourishment to the confreres in their spiritual life and in their apostolic activity.

5. To help Rectors in directing confreres in the choice of a personal book for meditation and in selecting texts for community reading, let a list of books be drawn up according to criteria that correspond to the necessity of commitment and of further study as treated of in Fr. Cogliandro's paper. Fr. Lo Groi will prepare such a list of books in English and in Italian.

6. In the five-yearly plan for qualifications, let the specialization of a confrere, of particular aptitude, in spiritual and ascetical theology, be included. This confrere will later be able to render invaluable services to the Province.

7. The perpetual profession of confreres should be preceded by a course lasting several weeks (*A.G.C.*, p. 252).

8. Let the necessary time be given for the examination of conscience which is to be made, according to the ruling of the General Chapter, at the end of the spiritual reading, so that it may be carried out with seriousness and fruit.

9. Quarterly retreats have been done by the confreres with zealous interest and satisfaction; they must be continued, eventual difficulties and obstacles being overcome. Care should be taken, however, to see that they do not deviate from their principal scope, namely that of offering every Salesian a respite from work in order to devote himself to a serious examination of his spiritual, religious and apo-



stolic life, to a more intimate colloquy with God, to a renewal of his own pledges as a consecrated person. The monthly retreat must also be carried out according to the norms of the General Chapter.

10. The Rector has a prominent part to play in the religious life of the community, and the General Chapter has said many things concerning his person. « Let the Rector, especially in work making great demands on him, keep himself free from all duties and obligations in his house and outside of it which could compromise his fundamental duty of co-ordinator and guide, especially in the spiritual field and that of formation. Let him abstain from the demands of direct administration, as for example, the work of prefect, headmaster, teacher (if a regular one), and duties of a demanding pastoral character, e.g. a parish priest » (*A.G.C.*, p. 35).

More concrete and consistent steps must be taken to arrive at the ideals proposed by the General Chapter. We have to admit that what remains to be done in this sphere is more than what has already been accomplished. An essential requisite in this regard is that every Rector should be fully aware that his prime duty is that of « pastor » of the religious community. Meanwhile it is suggested to the Rector Major to consider the possibility of holding in the near future, for the Rectors of the Orient (divided into two or more groups), a course of retreats followed by three days of study, with the participation of a member of the Superior Council and with preachers specially qualified.

## **II. Life of liturgical and devotional piety**

Without a spirit of piety, religious life cannot stand and Salesian communities cannot live up to the definition given by the General Chapter, viz. « communities of faith, or worship and of apostolic action » (*A.G.C.*, p. 87-88). Hence:

1. Let us earnestly continue to deepen and take care of the liturgical spirit of the individual confreres and of the whole community. If the liturgy is « the summit towards which the activity of the Church

is directed and the fountain from which all her power flows » (*Const. Lit.*, 10), then it ought to be the very centre of Christian and religious life and formation. Let some initiative be singled out every year in each house and in the entire Province for the liturgical formation of the confreres.

2. Concelebration is the highest expression and sign of the community of faith and of worship, and therefore it should ever be better understood, put into practice and lived. Provincials and Rectors should take it to heart to bring about with courage and with a sense of gravity those changes in the horarium, in the building, in the arrangement of altars, etc., that will make concelebration pleasing to the confreres as well as decorous and meaningful in its liturgical rendering.

3. The spiritual life of the community ought to be based on the rhythm of the liturgical cycle — this should be the constant and habitual point of departure and of reference for the various types of instructions given to the community, good-nights included.

4. Religious life cannot support itself without continual personal reflection and serious meditation on those truths from which our total consecration to God, our conformation to Christ and the testimony of our vows derive their meaning and importance. The use of a personal book for meditation, so wisely introduced by the General Chapter, is meant precisely to help towards this personal reflection. It is not enough to insist only on the duty of meditation as though the mere doing of it fulfilled the obligation; confreres must be urged and helped to do it well. Rectors and confessors should remember that this is a point to be kept in mind in their mission of guiding and directing religious souls both during manifestation and in the sacrament of penance.

5. It has been ascertained with joy that the characteristic Marian devotion of the rosary is in full vigour. It is necessary, however, to deepen convictions on the importance of this practice from which the Salesian life of so many confreres has drawn in the past and can to-day still draw powerful energies for their moral, spiritual and apostolic endeavours.



### III. Life of consecration

The religious state has been thus outlined by Vatican II: Consequent to a *divine calling* which is a further continuation of the calling to faith, and by means of a *free response* given under the impulse of the charity of the Holy Spirit, the religious makes a deeper and fuller *consecration* of his entire self to Christ and to the Father, in order to serve and glorify them in the Church (L.G., 42 ff.).

The religious, therefore, wishes to realize in an *eminent* manner his baptismal consecration in its three dimensions:

a) *personal and mystical*, through a more intimate union with and greater conformity to Christ;

b) *ecclesial*, entering more fully into the mystery of the Church, the assembly made one in Christ;

c) *apostolic*, participating more actively in the mission of this Church (A.G.C., p. 78 ff.).

In this sense religious are the efficacious « signs » of Christ in His holiness, in His charitable activities, in His power of grace (L.G., 44 e 46).

To give such a witness, or better still, to « be » such a witness, the religious undertakes by public profession to practise the three evangelical counsels, which have thus a very high positive value, combining as they do in making a human being reproduce that testimony or witness which was the characteristic of the divine incarnate Person.

#### A. The witness of poverty

The world of to-day, with its paradox of inhabitants that live in luxury and in misery, and the Church, which has in the Council become vividly conscious of being the Church of the Poor, urgently demand from us unequivocal testimony in regard to poverty, for which, we may add, Don Bosco had a very special love. To this end:

1. It behoves that poverty should be, or become, the personal endeavour of every member (P.C., 13).

For the majority of men, poverty is nothing but an economic and social reality: suffered, not welcomed, and hence devoid of spiritual value in itself. Religious poverty, instead, is voluntarily chosen by one who wishes to follow in the footsteps of Christ, and has nothing in common with that legalistic mentality of some religious who, once having asked permission, think it quite all right to have exemptions and conveniences that are unnecessary. It is the religious himself, first of all, who is truly responsible for his poverty; he must judge in the first instance under the guidance of the Holy Spirit whether it is becoming or not for him to seek such authorizations.

Don Bosco meant all this when he affirmed that « in order to practise poverty it is necessary to cherish it in the heart ».

2. It is in work that we see a genuine and irreplaceable manifestation of poverty (*P.C.*, 13,3). A poor man is not so much one who dresses himself in rags, or takes his food from a bowl, but rather the one who has to earn his own bread by the sweat of his brow, day after day, by sheer hard toil and hope.

3. The poor have a delicate sense of the value of things in terms of money and of work. It is necessary to instil such a sense of values in every member by getting him interested in the financial running of the house through information given in true family spirit.

4. A special sense of poverty is required in the use of leisure time (holidays, journeys, amusements, etc.), as also in the means of conveyance.

5. The religious often finds himself in the necessity or the possibility of administering or spending money on different grounds: occasional or official expenses, for apostolic or charitable purposes, for the sake of propaganda or organization, in the house or outside... Whatever be the reason, it is our strict obligation to consider ourselves not masters but responsible administrators of the finances sent us by Providence and therefore we must:

a) use them only for the ends and within the limits of the task entrusted to us; in every other case, explicit permission is required;



b) keep exact and correct accounts to be shown periodically to the responsible superior who has the duty of exercising control;

c) respect the intentions of the donor if it concerns money coming by way of gift;

d) use the same criteria in judging our own needs as when we provide for the needs of the other members not in administrative positions.

6. It is necessary that even religious communities as such should aim at giving a kind of corporate witness to their own poverty (*P.C.*, 13). The Council speaks in a way that shows us that it wishes to be realistic. It is aware that when a congregation takes on certain works — a big hospital, a college or technical school, a modern printing press — it cannot easily give witness to poverty; the requirements are many and the materials costly, and these cannot readily be cut down. In such cases we must, according to the Council, adopt a way of doing things that is in keeping with the purpose of the institute and *also* with the conditions of the place, the development of the country, the climate, the different kinds of people, the surroundings. We must, however, always and everywhere, avoid giving a false witness to poverty through even the appearance of luxury (*P.C.*, 13).

7. The collective witness to poverty which the Council asks of us is to be dutifully shown in our food, in our standard of living and in the construction of apartments for the use of the community.

8. Our united witness to poverty, finally, finds its most Salesian expression in our actual preference for poor youth. The Salesian apostolate is certainly very vast, complex and varied. Poor youth, however, occupy a position of privilege, a special place: Don Bosco felt himself charismatically inspired to work for them.

Our fidelity to this portion of the Lord's flock especially chosen by Don Bosco hinges on our love for poverty (*A.G.C.*, p. 82). We shall certainly live our poverty better and more manifestly witness to Christ who was poor if, in the various places in which we are established,

all can attest that the first place in our works is given to youth who, in those regions, are considered to be poor and abandoned.

Let our « re-dimensioning » keep in mind this vital witness of fidelity to Don Bosco.

### B. *The witness of chastity*

This is a testimony which, to-day, has to face two obstacles:

a) On the *existential* plane we have to live this virginity in a world that is altogether pagan. Erotic tendencies and sexual liberty are spreading through fashions, through the press, the cinema, through songs, advertisements... so much so that they now speak of an aphrodisiac society.

b) On the *logical* plane, in the field of thought, this virginity is combatted for a number of reasons and by persons of all sorts: it is not understood.

It is therefore left to us to testify that our chastity is, as the Council puts it, « a liberation in order the better to love ».

Herein lies the positive value of consecrated virginity — it is wholly justified by love and directed towards love. Away from this context everything becomes obscure for the others and unbearable for us. In this perspective:

1. Every Salesian should be fully conscious of the specific task given us by the Lord, namely that of bringing to the world the message of purity, this being a fundamental characteristic of our spirit and a pedagogical exigency in our apostolate for youth.

2. The message of purity loses all or most of its import if it is not transmitted in the fulness of joy, of serenity and of generosity.

Hence, throughout the cycle of Salesian formation, let the accent be placed on the knowledge and appreciation of the positive values of virginity, and not on ignorance and fear (*Optatam totius*, 10). Let only those be admitted who have attained to an « adequate psychological and emotional maturity ».



3. Chastity ought to make a Salesian more inclined to a deeper and more generous love for the members of the community. It helps to build up the community in charity, for it creates brotherly love and at the same time finds strong support in the atmosphere of good and true friendship and courteous attention that reigns in the community and all this saves one from looking elsewhere for compensations of an affective nature (*P.C.*, 12).

4. Through consecrated chastity there arises in the Salesian the desire and the ability to love youth with genuine spiritual fatherliness. True chastity has never retarded the living springs of affection but rather purifies and strengthens them. Chastity bestows on the Salesian the heart of a father for his boys — not the heart of a professor or superintendent, nor that of an educational officer, but instead the impetus, the zeal, the tenderness and, sooner or later, the anguish of a father for his children.

If Don Bosco wants us to be absolutely pure, it is because he wants us to be real fathers who love and make the boys feel they are loved, who educate these boys to chastity and love. This cannot take place without danger to us and to them unless our chastity is, in the words of the Council, mature and really integrated with our personality (*P.C.*, 12).

5. Contempt and disregard for the traditional means of defence are a dangerous sign of collapse and cannot be justified by appealing to the Council which, on the contrary, in its decree « *Perfectae Caritatis* », recommends *faith* in everything Our Lord has said regarding virginity, *trust* in God's help obtained through the mediation of prayer and the sacraments, *prudence* in spurning everything that imperils chastity, and lastly, *mortification* and the custody of the senses, without discarding *natural helps* which favour mental and bodily health.

6. The positive values mentioned above and the Council's recalling to the traditional means of safeguarding chastity must be particularly borne in mind in the apostolate and in every work undertaken on behalf of women. If such an apostolate becomes part of our mission,

either because it is directly assigned to us by obedience, or because it is entrusted to our office, let us accept it without undue demur, and it will serve to enrich us psychologically and spiritually, as well as to edify souls.

Let such an apostolate, however, not be specially sought after, neglecting the duties of our office or the apostolate among boys; let it not be extended beyond the limits of time and categories set by obedience; finally, let it not be carried out in ways that offend against prudence, or such as to cause real dangers or unfavourable impressions in persons of mature and balanced judgment.

### *C. The witness of obedience*

On the natural plane, the virtue of obedience meets with so much difficulty in being appreciated because it is very often confused with attitudes that are in reality the very caricature or negation of it. For the majority of people, obedience is associated with children. Instead, the act of obeying, far from requiring the psychological condition of a minor, is an eminently free act that can only come from a developed and mature personality, in so far as it means saying 'yes' interiorly (and therefore with responsible cognizance) to an injunction that has been judged acceptable and is accepted in practice.

Such a manly virtue formed the fundamental texture of the life of Christ, who said His food was to do the will of the Father, and who, precisely through this virtue, brought salvation to the world, just as through disobedience sin had entered it (*Rom.*, 5,19).

It is to the obedient Christ that the religious wishes to conform himself, and such conformity cannot be realized except through an obedience that is mature, free and responsible (*P.C.*, 14). To this end:

1. The significance and the value of mature, free and responsible obedience should be in the mind of every member in the three instances in which obedience is carried out, namely:

a) when *seeking* the will of God in a particular situation. At this stage the religious has the duty to present to the superiors his ideas,



his plans, his desires, his considerations on what has been proposed to him, determined in advance to make his own the decision of the superior;

b) when *accepting* the order. The religious behaves in a mature, free and responsible manner if he makes his own the order of the superior because he sees in it his encounter with the will of God and his participation in the salvific obedience of Christ, who « became obedient for us unto death, even to the death of the cross » (*Phil.*, 2,8);

c) when *carrying out* the order. So as to behave as a responsible adult, the religious will have to use all his energies of mind and of will, all his gifts of nature and of grace, knowing that in every case he is helping to build up the Body of Christ.

2. The exercise of authority on the part of every superior ought to be such as to lead to an obedience that is mature, free and responsible on the part of the confrere. It is therefore necessary that the superior, in the *first instance* (of *seeking*), show himself ready for dialogue and be able to initiate and conduct it in the humble awareness that what is wanted is not so much the carrying out of his own will as the search for the will of God, and that for this purpose, the collaboration of the member, to whom this will has to be applied, is indispensable. It is even necessary that in the *second instance* (of *accepting*), especially if the order is burdensome, the superior should show himself a father, without however making blameworthy concessions. With a blending of kindness and firmness he should help the confrere to accept the will of God with all its implications. Lastly, in the *third instance* (of *carrying out*), the superior should respect the personality of the member and leave him sufficient autonomy and room for initiative, in accordance with his age, talents, office, and the nature of the work. Here the following happy formula finds a place: « Obedience in carrying out initiatives should go hand in hand with initiative in carrying out obediences ».

3. The superior should have such attitudes not only when dealing with individual confreres, but also when dealing with the whole community.

His office demands that he keep two duties well in mind: the service of the Father and the service of the brethren, in order that these latter may fulfil the will of the Father manifested in the mission which the Church, the Congregation, the rules, the superiors and the times have entrusted to the community. In order to render this twofold service, the superior should be 'a man of God' and thus merit to hear, and know how to interpret, the voice of God; he should also be 'the man of dialogue' and therefore one who listens and is easily available, so that he may be in a position to understand and assess the community of the brethren.

In this light, manifestations and frequent personal talks, the efficient management and the proper functioning of the Council of Action, the meeting of particular committees (such as the council of teachers, confreres attached to the parish and oratory, the heads and assistants in the workshops, the assistants with the Prefect of Studies and the Catechist, the leaders and assistants of sodalities, the lay personnel, etc.) acquires special importance, and becomes an urgent necessity, explicitly stressed in the XIX General Chapter (A.G.C., p. 32-43).

4. If the art of dialogue is difficult for the superiors, it is not easy for the confreres.

We are all exposed to the temptation of considering it a dialogue only when our own view is accepted, and to see it lacking otherwise. Individualism is a perennial danger and snare. The art of dialogue demands humility, sincerity, esteem for each confrere, and the persuasion that every human person carries with him his own proper values and is capable of spiritually enriching others and being enriched in turn.

And yet, all of us ought to achieve this art, because every member is called in his own time to conduct this dialogue with other members, with boys, with souls.

To-day, in every sector of our work, we have no other choice: either dialogue, or an attitude that impedes all collaboration, dissipates



energies, leads to division, diminishes the possibilities and the impact of our apostolate.

5. Every dialogue and every exercise of authority in a religious congregation should be constantly guided by, have reference to, and be in clear agreement with the rule, and in this regard the Rector must be the first one to obey in the community. This obedience of his will be the best foundation for the exercise of his authority, above all when his duty requires that he intervene in order to stop a disorder or give a correction.

Dialogue, on the other hand, is not meant to make a shambles of the rule, nor to violate or circumvent it, but to find the best way and to create the most favourable conditions for the individuals and the community to be faithful to Don Bosco who speaks to us through the rules.

6. The best fruit of obedience is peace. « Obedientia et pax » was the watchword of Pope John all through his long life.

Confreres who are habitually and radically discontented should reflect on the reasons for such a state of theirs and meditate on this profound truth contained in the Acts of the General Chapter: « Should the Salesian cease to regard both Christ and His Father as the great realities of his life, then he has lost the source of true joy and of supernatural generosity » (*A.G.C.*, p. 79).

Superiors should assist these members with charity and understanding to overcome such a crisis.

If, however, this is found impossible, let them invite these confreres to look for some other solution and offer them every help in doing so.

But faith gives us the assurance, and hope makes us believe that all of us can find in the love of Christ the secret and the strength to be joyously faithful to the calling of the Father.

#### **IV. The presence of the Salesian in the world**

The religious, by his very nature, renounces the world and lives for God alone (*P.C.*, 5).

On the other hand, the directives given by the Council tend to call for an ever more striking and perceptible testimony and activity on the part of religious in the world (*L.G.*, 44; *P.C.*, 5,8).

There arises an unavoidable sense of tension in dutifully striving to safeguard both separation from the world that is a trait of religious, and effective witnessing in the midst of the world. To this end:

1. Let the following recommendation of the Rector Major be kept in mind: « It is a matter of urgency that, in the formation of our confreres, we impart what I like to call an education to responsible self-determination. This is a point which requires much understanding, much attention, much wisdom, much prudence, much courage, clear ideas ».

Responsible self-determination: by this is meant integrating into the life of every Salesian certain principles in order that he may always act in consonance with these principles, even in situations in which he is not protected by an horarium, by a life in community, etc. Responsible self-determination as the result of principles — but why this? Because our life, our very apostolate that continues to develop, that goes on acquiring certain new forms, requires a greater presence in the world and keeps on multiplying the occasions for self-determination » (Good-night of the Rector Major to the participants: 24-2-1968).

2. Concerning modes of apostolate that require a particular presence in the world, let us remember and put into practice the directions of the XIX General Chapter:

« The exercise of these forms of the apostolate must not be left to the free initiative of each confrere but only to that of the Congregation. It must be carried out in the ambient of obedience and the religious community life, based on our ordinary work as its rounding off and completion. The General Chapter requires that it be confided to confreres chosen for their good sense and unquestionable Salesian spirit, well prepared for this kind of specialization in its technical, pastoral and religious requirements » (*A.G.C.*, p. 142).

3. Concerning our contacts with the outside world, whatever be the form they take, two general criteria hold good:



*a) a negative criterion:* it is imperative to avoid all that is not in keeping with our religious consecration; such behaviour would only make our presence in the world a counter-witnessing;

*b) a positive criterion:* it is necessary to bring to every kind of presence in and contact with the world an awareness of the significance and importance of Christian witnessing. We should be present as Christians, as religious, as priests. Men of our time want us to be near them and in the midst of them, but as bearers of values proper to our vocation.

4. Visits to families should be made by the one who has this duty by reason of pastoral office, and always in such a manner that the Salesian shows himself « ever a priest » as Don Bosco would want him to be.

5. Particular significance and an apostolic motivation ought to be given to our contacts with externs who teach in our schools, above all where circumstances impose on the responsible superiors the presence of female teachers.

6. The best guarantee with respect to our presence in the world is given by the thoroughness with which we shall live our religious consecration.

The more we conform ourselves to Christ who was poor, chaste, obedient, the more capable we shall be of making Him known and loved by the men of our time.

## FORMATION

« In the divine plan for salvation, ecclesiastical and religious vocations have an essential part to play both because of their importance in personal sanctification and in the apostolate.

The Salesian Society is aware of the problem concerning the increase in number and in quality of vocations... The problem is made the more acute by the crisis in vocations that is to be found in

many countries and by the fact that vocations no longer come from some centres of our apostolate for youth, which at one time were a rich source of supply.

On the other hand interest in vocations is one of the chief purposes of the Salesian Society. It owes its inspiration to one of the branches of the apostolate tenaciously fostered by Don Bosco in word and in deed. It is rooted in a Salesian tradition that was truly flourishing, both well documented and lived in practice » (*A.G.C.*, p. 48).

For these reasons the Assembly has determined that the following points be borne in mind the better to care for the formation of vocations sent by Divine Providence to the Church and to the Congregation.

### **Finding vocations**

1. The natural ambient for the birth of vocations and hence for seeking them is the actual field of our work, provided every Salesian remembers that « the good example of his own life affords the highest recommendation for his community, and the most appealing invitation to embrace the religious life » (*P.C.*, 24). All studies made by way of research go to show that at the root of every vocation we can find the example and the enlightening and encouraging word of a consecrated soul whose life embodied and revealed an ideal to be followed.

Nothing therefore can better attract divine vocations or cause them to bud forth with greater success than the serene atmosphere of joy, charity and good example of a house in which there reigns the spirit of Don Bosco. The General Chapter had reason to stress that « every Salesian work should be a nursery of vocations » (*A.G.C.*, p. 51).

2. Freedom is exercised by making a choice amidst all kinds of stimuli. While, therefore, it is our duty to abstain from undue pressure, it would, on the other hand, be blameworthy if we were to take no interest or refuse to direct boys who show signs of a vocation to a proper study and recognition of it.



3. In the selecting of vocations we must first of all pay careful attention to « the degree of Christian life in the family background » (A.G.C., p. 49).

In particular, without prejudices against poverty which, if accepted and lived in a Christian manner, is a great grace from God, it must be stated that a background of misery that crushes both body and soul, does not ordinarily seem suitable for the cultivation of vocations or to allow them to mature tranquilly. Inferiority complexes, poor intellectual abilities, moral depravity are defects that usually threaten to make inroads in such circumstances.

4. Every candidate, especially if he is an adult, should undergo a psychological examination to be sure on this count that he has a possible vocation.

We should be cautious regarding neophytes, who ought not to be accepted too soon after their conversion or without carefully considering their family and social background as well as the decisions and directives given by ecclesiastical authorities for such cases.

5. The Salesian entrusted with the task of looking out for vocations (who we suppose to be eminently qualified for this mandate) should make it his duty to know personally the family and the actual environment of each candidate before he is admitted to the aspirantate or to an apostolic school (*casa di Orientamento Vocazionale*).

6. Before admitting the candidate to the aspirantate or to the apostolic school, the prescribed documents should be procured and examined and all desirable information secured.

### Aspirantates

1. For those boys who are still too young to give any sign of an inclination towards the religious or priestly life yet possess good qualities, let schools be opened with an apostolic orientation. In these schools, by means of « a special religious formation which gives first place to spiritual direction », the students should « be conditioned to follow

Christ the Redeemer with a generous and pure heart » (*O.T.*, 3), wherever He calls them. The accent should therefore be placed on preparation, not for the priesthood, but for a Christian life and for the apostolate.

2. The aspirantate is for boys of the secondary school stage who manifest an inclination towards the priesthood and the Salesian life (*A.G.C.*, p. 52). In it boys are helped — undue pressure being avoided — to make a free and enlightened choice of the state of life which they wish to embrace. Apostolic schools and aspirantates should not be distinguished by a life meant for novices or the professed, but rather by a more careful Christian formation and appropriate spiritual direction which, besides other things, should make quite clear to those concerned the significance and the respective worth of the life of a layman, religious or priest.

3. In all these houses, let us not forget the need of keeping at a distance dangers that may be rather grave for the unstable character and will of a boy, but let us especially endeavour to motivate them apostolically. Nothing, in fact, serves so well to remove the attraction of temptations as an apostolic ideal deeply lived.

This initiation to the apostolate must, however, be in keeping with and proportionate to their age. It should be directed by competent Salesian experts and always carried out in groups or teams. Sodalities and other free associations can be of help if we give them an apostolic orientation and outlook.

4. Holidays spent with the family should not exceed one month. Boys should be instructed to exercise, if possible, some apostolate even during this time. That period of vocation, then, which is passed in community should be programmed in such a way as to leave some time free for initiatives of a social or apostolic character.

5. This pastoral aspect of formation presupposes much prudence and thought when opening a house of aspirantate or an apostolic school. These houses must never be isolated or kept aloof but should maintain



healthy contacts with the world around and prepare boys with the necessary experiences for their future apostolate which, in our case, especially concerns youth.

6. The Christian view of life calls for the union of the religious and the moral; and moral perfection requires that the whole man be formed according to the exigencies of his nature, and that nature be placed at the service of grace.

Let us therefore be on our guard against a faulty supernaturalism without foundations, and while we educate boys to piety, let us not undervalue the importance of the natural virtues: a spirit of hard work, a sense of responsibility, honesty, respect for a pledged word, sincerity, consistency, a healthy independence of character, etc. Let us concentrate on establishing lasting convictions more than on forming habits even though these are necessary.

7. « Since the training of the pupils hinges, to a very large extent, on wise regulations and on suitable teachers, directors and professors » — of formation houses — « should be chosen from among the best » available in the Province (*O.T.*, 5).

These are the houses that should have the first choice of confreres, whether regarding degrees or qualifications, or especially regarding educational ability and religious spirit. On the observance of this rule depend the religious fervour of the entire Province and the educational and apostolic effectiveness of all its institutes. Hence, to disregard such a norm, however specious may be the reasons adduced in justification, is to act against the best and deepest interests of the Congregation and the Church.

## **Studentates**

1. Religious life, which is a deepening and a flowering of the baptismal consecration, is essentially a life of faith, a prophetic realization of the future Kingdom of God in which God will be

‘all in all’, a witnessing to the reality of the grace of the Gospel, a proclamation of the supremacy of the rights of God (*L.G.*). Religious formation, therefore, is essentially a continuous exercise of the spirit and the life of faith, without which it would lose all its meaning. Hence everything in the studentate (not only the liturgy, the sermons, the talks, the good-nights, but also classes, festivities, etc.) should aim at strengthening and building up the virtue of faith in the clerics.

Even apostolic zeal must be understood and lived as a corollary of faith, lest it become mere activism or natural proselytism. The use of human techniques (whether pedagogical, psychological or sociological) should be considered as having only an instrumental value, even though necessary, since grace does not destroy nature.

2. The life of studentates of philosophy and theology should be characterized by that pastoral and apostolic outlook, both in the theoretical and practical field, which ought to permeate the entire formation of the Salesian (*P.C.*, 8; *O.T.*, 4). Hence, wisely and gradually, as already in the aspirantates and the apostolic schools, young religious should be introduced to the various forms of Salesian apostolate more adapted to them, possibly in rotation, so that all may get a more complete experience.

3. What has been said concerning the opening of aspirantates and apostolic schools only after prudent planning, taking into account both theoretical and practical aspect, should also apply to studentates. « Lest the adaptation of religious life to the needs of our time be merely superficial, and lest those who by constitution pursue the external apostolate prove unequal to the fulfilment of their task, religious should be properly instructed, according to the intellectual gifts and personal endowments of each, in the prevailing manners of contemporary social life, and in its characteristic ways of feeling and thinking » (*P.C.*, 18).

4. Apostolic undertakings should not however distract one from his studies or spiritual formation, which for the rest ought to have a pastoral orientation and prepare one directly or indirectly, proximately or remotely, for the apostolate. Such undertaking should always be



methodically programmed, prepared beforehand, and directed by Salesians who are zealous and experts in the specific task to be carried out. They should be always followed up by community discussions which will help to evaluate them.

5. Let us banish that worldly way of spending vacations which is not in harmony with the austerity demanded by religious life. According to Don Bosco, for the Salesian, holidays mean a change of occupation. Hence, while still allowing the necessary period of rest, let us arrange and organize with care apostolic group activities even on weekdays. Experience teaches us that in reality vacations such as these give the best satisfaction and relaxation to young hearts burning with a longing for the apostolate.

6. Oratories, Youth Centres, catechism classes should ever constitute the classical training grounds for apostolic formation. Nevertheless, according to the needs of the locality and giving due consideration to the maturity of the clerics and the possibilities, particularly during holiday time, let experiments be made in other types of apostolate and of social work, avoiding at the same time dangerous risks. Work in the slums, in prisons, in the missions, assisting the sick, helping in the parishes, etc., are types of such work.

7. Let the following principles laid down for all religious in the decree 'Perfectae Caritatis' be our guide in every apostolic endeavour and in our personal (and therefore also theoretical) formation: « All communities should participate in the life of the Church. According to its individual character, each should make its own and foster in every possible way the enterprises and objectives which the Church proposes to achieve in various fields. Communities should promote among their members a suitable awareness of contemporary human conditions and of the needs of the Church. For it the members can combine the burning zeal of an apostle with wise judgments, made in the light of faith, concerning the circumstances of the modern world and they will be able to come to the aid of men more effectively » (P.C., 2).

### Practical training

1. The purpose of the period of practical training is « to test the vocation of clerics and coadjutors, by instilling and cultivating in them the Salesian spirit, training them in the application of the preventive system, which is the basis of our pedagogy, and having them to attend to secular studies with a view to professional qualifications » (*Reg.*, 51). « It is accordingly evident that the period of practical training is aimed primarily at the betterment and formation of the confreres and not at the advantage and profit of the institute » (*A.G.C.*, p. 58).

This is the essential point to be understood and put into practice; the deliberations that follow are only the applications of this point. If this point is not grasped and generously accepted and put into effect, all the rest is useless.

2. The brothers ought not to be sent to just any house that finds itself in need of personnel, but only, as prescribed by the Regulations (53), to regularly constituted houses in which perfect observance and the common life flourish, where these members in training may be best assisted and cared for. Such houses must be chosen and fixed from time to time by the Provincial with his council (*ibid.*). There should never be just one member in training in any house (*ibid.*).

3. The Provincial should see that the timetable and the duties assigned to the brothers are in keeping with this formation. If this be endangered by his remaining in a house, the Provincial has the obligation in conscience to take action, either removing the cause of the harm, or transferring the member to another place if necessary (*ibid.*).

4. Very much depends on the Rector, who ought to be a guide and father and to continue the work of the master of novices (*Const.* 183). Let him follow up, direct, correct the member in training; let him educate him to use free time well, to pray, to study, to read good books of a formative type. Let him not omit the prescribed weekly meeting which he should know how to turn into a dialogue where understanding increases and grows strong as a family (*Reg.* 53, 56).



5. The three scrutinies in the year for each member in training should be held (*Reg.* 52), and the results communicated to the Provincial and to the brother concerned, with prudence and charity and perfect sincerity. It should never happen that when unpleasant decisions have to be taken in regard to a confrere, he should have grounds to accuse the superiors of the injustice of not having warned him clearly before.

6. During the holidays the brothers in training should be brought together in a pleasant place for some relaxation. During such time they should have the opportunity of listening to talks on subjects that interest them, and the Provincial or his Vicar should make a point of staying with them in the brotherly and joyous atmosphere of a family. The examinations fixed for the period of training could be given during this time.

### **Coadjutors**

1. The General Chapter solemnly affirms that « the coadjutorship is an essential part of the Salesian Society », that as a religious the coadjutor is equal to the Salesian priest and can carry out « the same apostolae as that carried out by priests, saving the specifically priestly ministrations » (*A.G.C.*, p. 65, 67; cf. *Const.*, 12). The Council proclaims its great esteem for the lay religious life and declares it to be « a state which of itself is one of total dedication to the profession of the evangelical counsels » (*P.C.*, 10). Salesians, mindful of the highest regard Don Bosco had for the vocation of the coadjutor, should endeavour to understand such a vocation and to make it understood and loved by all.

2. To consider the coadjutorship as a convenient alternative for those who lack the necessary natural qualities and cannot aspire to the priesthood, is contrary not only to the esteem we ought to have for the coadjutorship, but also to the very concept of a divine vocation.

3. Provision should be made for the technical, professional, cultural and religious training of the coadjutors. Those who are capable should

be placed in responsible positions and in House Councils in order that their vocation may be understood and appreciated by Salesians and youths.

This holds good in a special manner for provincial or inter-provincial houses for coadjutor-aspirants. In every Province a coadjutor should be appointed as Promoter for vocations.

4. Coadjutors should be given a share in all the forms of Salesian apostolate, without however withdrawing them from schools of arts and trades in which, in the present day and circumstances, they have a specific contribution to make towards the work of the Congregation for the poorer classes.

## Missions

The Second Vatican Council has solemnly declared that « the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father » (*Ad G.*, 2).

The Salesian Congregation also, accepting the invitation of the Council that « the missionary spirit should be thoroughly maintained in religious communities » (*P.C.*, 20), wants to be wholly missionary-minded. It « revives the ideal of Don Bosco who wished that the work of the missions should be a permanent preoccupation of the congregation to the extent of being part of its nature and end » (*A.G.C.*, p. 178).

### *A. Formation of Confreres from the locality*

1. « Undoubtedly the Church is more firmly rooted in any given sector of the human family when the various groupings of the faithful draw from their own members ministers of salvation who in the order of bishops, priests and deacons come to serve their brethren » (*Ad G.*, 16).



After rejoicing therefore at the progress made up to now by the Congregation in the seeking and formation of indigenous vocations, it is decided to intensify still more the campaign for vocations in our Provinces of the East and to consolidate even more the work in our houses of formation with suitable and prepared personnel.

2. Let the missionary spirit be instilled into aspirants and confreres by giving them information about our missions and by well-organized and well-prepared visits to actual missionary areas, particularly during the holidays. Students of theology should be provided with professors qualified to teach missiology.

3. During formation particular attention must be paid to attaining a balanced judgment and a proper sense of values. Exaggerated nationalism, regional tendencies, partialities, a certain anxiousness for a liturgical, ecclesiastical and theological renewal that oversteps the bounds of prudence, are to be avoided as contrary to Christian equilibrium.

Let us inculcate attachment to and love for Don Bosco and the Major Superiors who represent him, as well as union with the entire Congregation and with the Church.

4. Let us accelerate the promotion of the confreres of the region, so that when we find among them persons who are suitable to exercise responsible offices, these are to be preferred to foreign personnel; and these latter, for their part, will show the same disinterested love that inspired them to dedicate their lives to the missions, by heartily cooperating with the former, assisting and guiding them until the Church and the Congregation be firmly rooted and established in those areas.

#### *B. Matters regarding Missionaries*

5. We would have an erroneous conception of missionary activity if we were to disregard the person of the missionary himself, the man who is a precious instrument for the spreading of the Gospel and, alas, hard to find and difficult to substitute. With all care let us therefore avoid placing a single missionary in a station — particularly if it covers a large area — or a priest and a coadjutor, especially if young.

We should instead try to form teams of missionaries who, through their collaboration, may be able to compensate for the disadvantage of having to look after vast missionary districts.

The cultural and theological up-dating of missionaries through seminars and conferences is to be encouraged. The better his intellectual formation, the more efficient will the missionary be in his work.

Let us take special care of the spiritual life of the missionaries by making it convenient for them to make their monthly and particularly quarterly retreats, and of often approaching experienced confessors from other houses or outposts.

6. It is fitting that a Salesian, after working for a few years in a missionary station, return for some time to life in a regular house. In this way, intellectual and physical exhaustion will be avoided, as also a gradual ineptitude for community life, and the mission itself will not suffer from the sheer routine which can so easily diminish the value of missionary work.

7. Bearing in mind that the salvation of souls is the highest law ('*salus animarum suprema lex*'), Provincials should agree in a fraternal manner among themselves and with the local Ordinaries in making those exchanges of personnel that are deemed necessary or convenient for the different territories or missions or houses or even Provinces.

8. In order to face the ever-increasing need of labourers in the work of evangelization and the crisis regarding vocations that has come about in the Church, let provision be made to form catechists, establishing if necessary institutes for them, and let Salesian Co-operators be made to experience a zeal for the missions and a longing for the lay apostolate.

9. Though there exists a real and necessary distinction between the works of the Congregation and the works of the mission, let this distinction not be exaggerated to the extent of neglecting the latter, whether it be in the allotment of personnel or in the distribution of financial subsidies. « The Salesian Congregation, when it accepts from the Church territories or missionary enterprises, assumes complete responsibility for them and pledges itself to find the personnel and the means for their development » (*A.G.C.*, p. 178).



Provinces should take note of their missionary commitments and should refrain from developing along just one line (say, in the matter of schools and buildings), because all one-sidedness causes imbalance and is harmful to the Church. Works are to be re-examined from an apostolic viewpoint and we should not hesitate to re-dimension or even eliminate those that are found, in this respect, to be superfluous or fruitless or out of proportion.

This also holds good for diocesan missionary works that ought not to be allowed to develop for merely incidental reasons (as for instance, the presence of a priest who succeeds in getting in a lot of money), but everything should be done in harmony with a general plan that takes into account the needs of the place and the possibilities of both the diocese and the Congregation, in accordance with the dispositions given by the Church.

10. The relations between the bishop, missionary and Provincial form the topic of a decree which the Sacred Congregation for Evangelization is preparing. Decrees alone will do very little to change such relations if reciprocal charity is lacking, which entails not just mere sentiment but a real effort to understand and help each other.

The golden rule is always « *salus animarum suprema lex* » — this is the law of life for every priest, more so if he is a missionary. Let attention, however, be given to the fact that this law remains valid even when it concerns the soul, the vocation and the grave obligations of the missionary himself.

11. The missionary should give an exact account of his entire administration both to the bishop and to the Provincial. The very reason that he receives money by way of personal propaganda does not entitle him to violate the vow of poverty, and the fact that he is a missionary, residing in a house that is not canonically erected, does not exempt him from coming under the authority of the Provincial. He is responsible to the Provincial in everything regarding his person and actions from the point of view of the religious life, just as he is under the bishop's authority in everything concerning his person and actions from the point of view of the priestly and missionary apostolate.

A financial extract should be made from the account books to show the contribution given to the mission by the Congregation and from personal propaganda; but two separate accounts should not be kept for the two authorities.

12. While we must thank Divine Providence for having provided with so much generosity for our needs through propaganda, it is immediately imperative not to shut our eyes to the grave dangers that can beset such propaganda if it is not strictly regulated.

We should remember that it is an obligation of conscience to respect the intentions of the donors. We should also bear in mind that money is received not for oneself but for our works. When a missionary is transferred he — just as any other religious — cannot take with him money or articles acquired with propaganda money.

Private bank accounts in the name of a single individual should not be kept; instead, let everything be done in agreement with the superior. All secrecy is dangerous and betrays a conscience that is not at peace.

Let us avoid every illegal transaction that for mere money's sake can imperil our own good name and that of the mission, as well as cause irreparable damage. Let us not forget that money is just a means and not an end.

13. It is left to Provincial Conferences to decide who should take charge of the propaganda addresses when the confrere who was running the propaganda gets a change of house.

## APOSTOLATE AMONG YOUTH

### 1. Some authoritative recommendations recalled to mind

A. In the affectionate audience of May 21st, 1965, the Holy Father told us: « You have chosen well. Continue. Perfect yourselves nevertheless ». He was surely referring to our specific apostolate in favour of the choicest portion of Christ's flock, namely youth.

B. The Acts of the XIX General Chapter tell us: « The Salesian Congregation participates in the Church's mission especially through



its educative work among youth and the working classes, in the spirit of its founder and in accordance with the needs of time and place. Fidelity to the example of Don Bosco implies that Salesian education should be concerned preferably with 'poor and abandoned youth' or 'the young in moral danger', so that their secular and Christian formation may be assured; and also that where possible priestly and religious vocations should be fostered » (*A.G.C.*, p. 101).

C. Our most revered Rector Major expressed himself thus in a conference to the community of the PAS in October 1965: « Another great idea: the Chapter, basing itself on the documents and in turn making its own pronouncement, has willed to re-affirm the actuality of our specific apostolate, namely that which is dedicated to youth ».

In order to be faithful to these lofty directives, we should resolve to devote time and study, personnel and the necessary means for a thorough intensification of our apostolate among youth, reviewing and reflecting on the methods and forms of our presentday work, so that we may better respond to the wishes of Don Bosco, the expectations of the Church and the needs of the times and of the places in which we work.

An indispensable institution called for by the General Chapter to render service in this task of intensifying, co-ordinating, up-grading the different sectors of such an apostolate is the Provincial Centre for Youth Apostolate. Provinces which have not yet set up such a centre, or where it is not yet very efficient, should make provision as soon as possible for the same, so as to have at their disposal an apt and necessary instrument which will help to achieve the aims we have fixed on.

## 2. Catechetics

In the oratory, in the school, in the parish, in whatever other form of activity he is placed, the Salesian must always remember that he works for the building up of the Body of Christ (« in aedificationem corporis Christ ») through the spreading of faith.

« Faith comes through hearing » — *Fides per auditum*. As a consequence, the first duty of the Salesian is to impart religious instruction to all those who come within his sphere of influence, to youth in a particular manner. « The Congregation considers the teaching of religion to the young the most important activity in our Salesian apostolate » (A.G.C., p. 187).

We should earnestly endeavour:

1. To instruct and up-date our confreres in the field of catechetics through seminars, conferences and other opportune enterprises.
2. To arrange for some who are particularly suited to become qualified in this regard, by sending them to catechetical centres, directed by Salesians or by other religious.
3. To allot a sufficient sum of money for the purchase of catechetical books and aids.
4. Every member should be ready to dedicate himself to a work so typically apostolic and Salesian as this.

### 3. The Oratory

Let us remember the words of the Rector Major in relation to the apostolate of the Oratory, recorded in the Acts of the General Chapter (p. 330): « The oratory is really the formula which meets the demand so well; to reach youth by catechizing, but in our own style, and according to discipline and obedience. Don Bosco and the Constitutions wish to see an oratory attached to every single Salesian house — which shows the importance the Congregation attaches to the oratory. Having a house close by is a providential boon for the oratory, providing it with both means and personnel. Don Bosco could not imagine a house which lacked this lung; but a lung must be something alive and breathing, not atrophied. Whole nations and entire generations have benefited by the work of the oratory ».

The following should be our endeavour in the oratory:

1. The daily and festive oratory is not only our first work but also a most powerful and effective means of apostolate among the young.



Yet from the statistics presented to this gathering and from daily experience it is seen how much we treat it in practice as a secondary and side activity. Confreres should be convinced of the great utility of this form of apostolate, and should willingly lend themselves to the work of the oratories.

2. The Provincial Council, together with the House Council, should find out a concrete way of seeing that an oratory be attached to every house or parish.

3. The importance of and the difficulties inherent to this work among youth require that the Salesian chosen as its director be not only zealous but also capable and well acquainted with modern methods of the apostolate among youth.

4. In order that the work of the oratory may flourish, it is not enough just to place a Salesian in charge of it. He must be given reasonable scope for initiative, the necessary time and means, the co-operation of Salesian personnel for the enlivening of the various activities, and prestige. This last he might acquire by being a member of the House Council.

5. Whatever is possible should be done to see that each oratory has the premises necessary for its catechetical, formative and recreative activities. The consideration of expenses such as these has a place in the planning and budgeting both on a provincial and house level if we are to achieve an harmonious and well-balanced development of our work.

6. The oratory is an undertaking of the whole community. Confreres should show interest in its running and should often treat about its problems in Council meetings and the ways to solve them.

A decisive factor in promoting this interest among the confreres is the attitude of the Rector of the house towards the oratory.

7. In order that the oratory may be a powerful means of apostolate, it is necessary not to limit it only to children. We should know how to attract and retain a hold on adolescents, young men and adults.

8. For the same reason, the oratory should not be restricted only to recreative activities, but should also have activities of a formative character.

9. The oratory has to deal with a crowd, but an organized crowd. The boys should therefore be divided into groups according to their age, and these groups should have aims, activities and associations catering for their own interests.

10. The running of so very many activities proper to the oratory raises the problem of finding leaders. The Salesian in charge of the oratory, after the example of Don Bosco, should know how to form leaders and helpers for himself from among the boys who attend the oratory. He should also organize a group of Co-operators who may be able to free him from distracting material and organizational activities and render assistance in those spheres proper to the lay apostolate. It may be useful to remember that he will be able to find personnel especially qualified for this purpose among the past pupils.

11. Wherever, for serious reasons, it may not be possible for an institute to have an oratory attached, we should consider the possibility of starting mobile oratories ('*oratori volanti*') or some other form of activity conducive to apostolic penetration.

12. Every Province should make a point of responding with great readiness and Salesian enthusiasm to the invitation of the Rector Major who, when presenting the Centenary Year of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians to all the Salesians, has asked for « the establishment in every Province of a Youth Centre that fully corresponds to the ideas of the General Chapter » (*A.G.C.*, no. 250, p. 326).

#### 4. The school

The II Vatican Council has reaffirmed the valid status of the Catholic school: « Therefore, since it can contribute so substantially to fulfilling the mission of God's people and can further the dialogue between the Church and the family of man, to their mutual benefit,



the Catholic school retains its immense importance in the circumstances of our times too » (*C.E.*, 8).

But it has also pointed out for it certain specific aims which, according to the XIX General Chapter, are indispensable conditions for our schools to be justified.

« In order that our schools be that Catholic and Salesian apostolate which alone justifies their existence, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

*a)* They must be thoroughly Christian in inspiration (acceptance, programmes, teaching, etc.).

*b)* They must enjoy a high scholastic repute, and impress as schools which are up-to-date in teaching methods and organization.

*c)* They must not only give instruction, but must educate, and do so in a Christian manner; they must show they are effective missionary factors by leading to a coherent moral and religious life those 'morally undeveloped' who come from humanist or de-Christianized families, and also by forming a Christian elite capable of making its presence felt in the apostolate of the world » (*A.G.C.*, p. 105).

We should strive to realize the following in the scholastic field:

1. The Salesian should be convinced that an apostolic significance has to be given to our schools. He should recall the words of Don Bosco who went so far as to say that for us the schools 'are a pretext for teaching catechism'. Catechism lessons and, for non-Catholics, classes in moral science should be considered as the most important periods.

2. Since the teaching of Religion (and for the non-Catholics, of morals) has such a pre-eminence over the other aims of the school, it calls for the presence and the zealous effort of the Salesian. Hence, if need be, his other class periods should be reduced or completely taken away, so that he may be able to dedicate himself with greater freedom to this form of apostolate.

3. What we should aim at is not mass-education but the individual care of each pupil, whose soul has been entrusted to us by the Lord

in an altogether particular manner. It is for this that Salesians should be solicitous for the good of each one, and ever ready to listen to and help their students.

4. The XIX General Chapter recommends personal colloquies with the students as part of the duty of the Rector. This duty may also be delegated to the catechist or to other priests; in agreement with the Provincial (*A.G.C.*, p. 193) the set-up of the school should be such as to make it feasible to carry out this point as regards both day-scholars and boarders. This will be possible and more natural if the school work is complemented by extra-curricular activities, associations of various kinds, evening sessions, where Salesians can find a thousand and one occasions for doing priestly and apostolic work.

5. As far as local conditions permit, outside professors should be integrated into the educative community, in order that they may become our collaborators in the formation of the boys and in the practice of the system of education of Don Bosco.

Instructions in pedagogy, conferences held by the Rector, courses of retreats or of 'aggiornamento' will help to achieve this. Catholic members of the staff should be invited and duly prepared to enrol in the Union of Salesian Co-operators so that they may bring to their educative work that spirit which is typically ours.

6. Let us bear in mind that one of the aims of our schools is also that of training leaders among our Christian pupils. The ideal laity as envisaged by the Council will either spring from our Catholic schools and organizations, or never become a reality, to the grave detriment of the Church in the locality.

7. Schools that cater for boys from the period of pre-adolescence onwards are to be preferred, since such boys, precisely because they have reached the threshold of self-determination and of a certain maturity, can respond better to our apostolic cares.

If, however, local circumstances should counsel elementary schools, let these norms be followed:



a) They should be separated from the middle and high school as regards premises, playing fields, recreation halls, and in general for every sort of activity.

b) Salesian personnel should not be directly in charge of the assistance or the management of such a school, but should only maintain a control at the topmost level, especially if the teaching is in the hands of ladies.

8. The kindergarten may be tolerated when it is indispensable in a particular local situation. In such a case, the rules laid down for primary schools should be followed with even greater care.

# CONCLUSIONS APPROVED

at the meeting of Salesian Provincials of Europe, Middle East,  
Central Africa, United States, Australia

*Como, 16th - 23rd April 1968*

## I. Renewal of religious life

1. Renewal of Salesian religious life is attainable at the present day only if the new mentality and methods evident in the Council and General Chapter be fully accepted. It is inevitable that in a congregation so worldwide as our own local situations will differ considerably, but encouraging results have everywhere followed the work which has been done. It is necessary therefore for us to continue with and improve every means that will help to form this new mentality (preparation of subsidiary aids, the organization of special courses, the utilization of all the normal means provided by community life, the training of specialists, etc.).

2. The Council has asked us to re-assess some of the most significant points of Don Bosco's message and to integrate them into an ecclesial context more in harmony with the present day and more adequate to meet its needs. Amongst these are:

- the vital synthesis of prayer and activity, always present in Don Bosco's mind and consistently put into practice in his life;

- the special emphasis placed in his work on the apostolate of the young;

- his preference for the lower classes which brought him closer to the "church of the poor";

- the sense of dialogue which led Don Bosco to base on reason and kindness his mission of christian education, and his skill in founding religious congregations;

- his practical grasp of the needs of time and place with a view



to providing activities and other arrangements to meet local requirements for the good of the Church, etc.

3. The Church has confirmed that the special charism of Don Bosco is still relevant to the present day. Comparing this fact with the actual state of the congregation and works in which it is expressed, it appears that:

— many works and activities, valid in themselves, are efficacious only to the extent that the religious community responsible for them do in fact implement the conciliar and Salesian principles in their own lives;

— in the light of these principles there is need for a courageous re-thinking of the object and structure of various works to make them more relevant to the needs of the present day, and to meet doubts of the confreres about their efficacy and need which are quite justified;

— to this end the 19th General Chapter has already pointed out with breadth of vision and sober realism appropriate ways and means, and has also left the way open with proper safeguards for further experiments (cf. what is stated in the documents on the formation of youth, the oratories, parishes, cooperators, past pupils, means of communication, family apostolate, teaching of religion, workers, etc.);

— hence there is an urgent need for implementing the prudent but courageous re-shaping called for by the General Chapter to revitalize our religious life and ensure the pastoral efficacy of our work.

## **II. Fostering of vocations; pastoral aspects of Salesian formation**

1. The meeting confirmed the need for every member to be convinced that the natural seed-bed for Salesian vocations is to be found in our own works. Where this is not in fact the case the reasons need to be sought out, bearing in mind that vocations are related to the efficacy of the educative community. It is also necessary to make all Salesians alive to the duty of seeking out, recognizing and cultivating the vocations which God will not fail to grant to his Church. To this end it is hoped that a special course of training for the purpose will be included in the theology course.



As far as seeking vocations outside our own works is concerned, whilst admiring the great variety of ways and means used in different countries, the meeting considered that our first course of action should be to improve our own methods, with the help of specialists where necessary.

2. The call of the 19th General Chapter for a sober and prudent opening-out of our aspirantates has already found a response in various ways and to different extents. It was insisted on that the formation of the aspirants should include opportunities for apostolic work both inside and outside the house. An apostolic interest of this kind is both a sign of a vocation and an indispensable means of formation.

Other works for the initial care of vocations (apostolic schools, houses for late vocations, etc.) should be established according to the needs and possibilities of each area.

The principal task must be to train and obtain the proper qualifications for the personnel who have to conduct both these earlier works and the aspirantates themselves.

3. The entire formation of the Salesian should have a pastoral slant, as prescribed by Vatican II (*Optatam totius*, 19; *Perfectae caritatis*, 18); as far as the studies of the clerics are concerned it is hoped that the new "*ratio studiorum*" will not be long delayed.

Pastoral activity should form part of the formation of confreres at every stage and should be used to help them to acquire human, religious and apostolic maturity. In this field a great deal has already been done; prudent but courageous progress however is still needed.

This pastoral activity should be carried out especially within the compass of the Salesian apostolate and in accordance with local needs. In the studentates and houses of formation for coadjutors it should be made possible during the scholastic year without prejudice to studies, and to a greater extent during holiday periods. All such activity should be properly programmed, supervised and assessed with the help of experienced confreres.

The period of practical training (*tirocinium*) forms part of the over all plan of formation for both clerics and coadjutors; the Rector



of the house, as their magister spiritus, is responsible for guiding, helping and sustaining them in their religious life and pastoral activity.

4. The religious and apostolic qualification of confreres has its roots in the houses of formation; for this reason the latter must be the first preoccupation of every member and must have personnel adequate for their delicate purpose.

To this end let provincials strive to increase the number of well chosen confreres sent to the PAS and other ecclesiastical faculties in accordance with the five-year plan for the qualification of personnel, so as to provide a properly prepared staff in sufficient numbers for all the houses of formation and especially for the PAS itself.

### **III. The Salesian Coadjutor**

The provincials made a serious study of problems concerning the Salesian coadjutor.

1. The meeting re-emphasized the principle that the presence of the coadjutor is essential to a congregation made up of ecclesiastics and laymen (Constitutions, Art. 12).

2. It pointed out the need for paying greater attention in their training to what is said in the Council documents and in the deliberations of the 19th General Chapter about the consecrated layman.

3. It welcomed the further studies which have been initiated in various provincial conferences to clarify the training programme for the coadjutor and the best way of integrating him into the wide field of the Salesian apostolate.

4. At the same time, in the light of the special General Chapter, it proposed that further study be made of his juridical position according to the Salesian spirit, so that he can take his full place in the new set-up which is developing in this post-conciliar era.

5. It drew attention to the disturbing lack of coadjutor vocations in many parts of the congregation. This is a phenomenon which is of concern in every sector of the apostolate, and for this reason the meeting invited the provinces to study their own local situation and

to have recourse to all possible ways and means of solving the problem and of making the confreres alive to it.

6. It noted with satisfaction the raising in importance of the houses of formation of coadjutors to the same standard as those of clerics and invited all superiors concerned to pay them particular attention.

#### **IV. Youth Centres**

The international centre for the youth apostolate presented a statement outlining the nature and purpose of the youth centres called for by the Rector Major in every province. What is needed is a Salesian response to the needs and desires of the young people of the present day. The results already appearing in various countries lead to the conclusion that the idea is good and one which lends itself to implementation in many different ways according to the varying local needs.

#### **V. Structure of the Congregation**

The meeting examined in detail the structure of the congregation decided on *ad experimentum* by the 19th General Chapter. Particular consideration was given to the different sections of the Superior Council and the functions of the Regional Superiors, of the provincial conferences, of the vice-provincial, of the vice-rector, and of the consultative groups.

It was urged that the central office for the missions be strengthened so as to make it a more effective instrument for the missionary activity of the congregation.

Experience has shown that where the new structures have been properly set up they have proved to be efficacious means of real renewal; their implementation everywhere is therefore a matter of importance. Only in this way will it be possible in the forthcoming General Chapter to give an objective judgement on them and specify more exactly their scope and competence.



## VI. Special General Chapter

The meeting made useful suggestions for the proper preparation of a Chapter so important for the up-dating of the Congregation. Bearing in mind that its object, according to the conciliar and post-conciliar documents, is the revision and adaptation of the constitutions to the new needs of the religious and apostolic life, it drew attention to the Council's wish that some way be found to enable all confreres to express their views on the matters to be discussed, and to the need for careful preparation by commissions of specialists.

The calm atmosphere in which the discussions took place, the number and variety of different experiences from so many parts of the Salesian world, the frank assessments of the religious and pastoral situation in different countries enabled the meeting to gauge the extent to which the Salesian spirit is still valid and adaptable at the present day to the needs of the Church in the light of Don Bosco's vocation to work for the young.

This meeting has led to a greater understanding between the different provinces and has confirmed their common fidelity to the Salesian spirit.

The fraternal dialogue between provincials and the Superiors has strengthened the bond of charity and unity of heart which found its expression in the daily concelebration.

The concern of everyone for the missions, the generous offers of personnel for Latin America, are — as the Rector Major himself said — a proof of this unity and of the ability of the Congregation to come to grips with the very urgent needs of the Church.

At the end of the meeting the Rector Major, superiors and provincials took part in the inauguration of the centenary celebrations of the Basilica. As representatives of so large a part of the Congregation they offered to Mary Help of Christians the pledge of true fidelity to Don Bosco, and asked her maternal blessing on their plans, on their confreres, and on all the souls in their care.

# CONCLUSIONS APPROVED

at the meeting of Salesian Provincials of Latin America

Caracas, 5th - 12th May, 1968

## RENEWAL OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

### General Directives

The assembly of Provincials, dealing with the problem of renewal of religious life in Latin America, considers as fundamental the following general directives:

1) The renewal of our religious life is conditioned by the *renewal of our apostolic activity*. The reason for this statement on renewal goes deep and is to be sought in the *very nature* of religious life in the case of congregations dedicated to the active life of apostolic work, on the assumption that « the entire religious life of the members of these communities should be penetrated by an apostolic spirit, just as their entire apostolic activity should be animated by a religious spirit » (P.C. 8), a fact to which the example of our Father and Founder bears eloquent witness.

2) In dealing with the problem of the renewal of religious life which is closely linked with apostolic activity (a problem that raises uncertainty by its sweep and complexity), the Assembly declares that the structure of the *genuine community* will lead gradually but positively to an ever more real and efficient renewal.

The Assembly puts forward the following proposals along the foregoing lines:

a) It renews the pressing invitation to go more deeply into some aspects of our community life brought to our notice by the XIX General Chapter (Ch. 6. Our religious life today).



b) Among the elements of renewal it chiefly stresses that which considers the community as a body that prays.

c) It insists on the need for training the community at every level: at the particular level of every house, in collaboration with the local Church; at the level of the Province, in collaboration with the Episcopal Conference; at the level of the Latin American group, in collaboration with CELAM; at the level of the congregation, in collaboration with the whole Church.

d) It also states that in view of the urgency of the Gospel message for so large a number of young people and for the people in general, the Salesians of Latin America must absolutely give *precedence and first place to the creation of communities directed along the lines of pastoral work*, particularly in areas where work for youth and the working class is to be found.

3) The Salesian Community of Latin America is faced with two obvious and typical characteristics throughout the whole continent:

— the numerical predominance of youth.

— the inescapable need for the betterment of the working classes.

Therefore in its duty of serving the Latin American people, it will find the special characteristics of its religious life on earth by putting into effect and directing the whole of its apostolic activity to the service of offering *Christian guidance* to the large numbers of youth and to furthering the welfare of the working classes.

Keeping all this in view, the Assembly states:

a) The need of greater unity in our Salesian spirit in order to obtain an even greater understanding which will then yield a greater efficiency as regards the objectives proposed to us. This unity is all the more essential if one considers the multiplicity of situations, not only by comparison with other continents, but also within the countries, regions and individual Churches of our own continent.

b) The fact of the complete coincidence between the spirit proper to our congregation (pastoral work for youth and the working classes)

and that which here and now characterises our continent: the urgent need of the Gospel message and the welfare of the people.

Within this large community in process of development — the community for which Christ lived and died and rose again — it is essential that we should renew our Salesian religious life in the historical dimension assigned to it by our Founder's express wish, and read aright the signs of the times which clearly show that the hour for the development of this continent has now struck.

### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Basing its conclusions on the II Vatican Council, the XIX General Chapter and the documents of the Latin American Confederation of Religious, the Assembly recommends in particular, for an effective renewal of religious life:

1. A strong community framework.
2. Deepening of the life of faith in the community.
3. Making the meaning of religious consecration a living issue in our lives.

#### **1. A strong community framework**

The essential point about a true religious community is « the bringing into being of a genuine mature fellowship among its members united by the bond of a common purpose; this fellowship is informed by charity leading it to a deep-rooted "Koinonia" which in turn is pervaded by Christ's presence, and productive of obliging service by one member to another ».

In view of this the Assembly of Provincials:

- a) Stresses the need of keeping in mind when considering the formation of communities, the natural foundation which its normal character, efficacy and stability permit. For example: compatibility of characters,



the careful distribution of offices etc. Therefore one should bear in mind the principles of dialogue to be applied in giving out obediences and in allotting personnel and at the same time the duty every Salesian has to busy himself in the acquiring and perfecting of his social virtues, such as: respect for others, sincerity, openness, co-operativeness, mutual encouragement in a spirit of optimism, a genuine display of a loyal and brotherly friendship.

a) At the same time it stresses the importance of ensuring that the whole training of personnel at its different stages should not only be accompanied by a thorough instruction in the common life but should also be enlivened by the actual experience of an authentic family life and work in common which in fact would prepare the confreres for the joint responsibility of a teaching community.

c) It lays special emphasis on the primary importance of the spiritual and charismatic principle: Salesian charity and interior and liturgical life, which are the dynamic and creative basis of a genuinely evangelical community which in every vital situation bears witness in the body of the Church to its loyalty to its Founder's spirit.

## **2. Deepening of the life of faith in the community**

Confronted with the attacks of atheism and the constant growth of worldliness, youth and the working classes demand from us a frank avowal of our awareness of God and an explicit and refreshing dialogue with him. The impression of « devotionalism » and « ritualism » in our practices of piety and in the liturgy must be avoided. These only divorce people from the realities of life, and thereby show up the lack of connection between one's daily occupations and the life of faith. This lack of connection is looked upon by Vat. II as one of the greatest errors of the present epoch (Cf. G.S. 43).

The Assembly of Provincials, taking this grave danger into account, recommends:

a) That above all the Rector and priests should avail themselves of the ministry of the word to intensify the exercise of faith in the



community, by helping all to discover the real presence of God our Saviour in actual happenings and in the individuals with whom they live together.

b) That the members of the community should lead a manifest life of prayer, thereby stressing the social duty of interceding on behalf of youth and the working classes. The people of Latin America have a great need of the daily intercession of our prayer.

c) That there should be periodic meetings of the community to discuss spirituality in concrete terms, to make a gospel enquiry into its own work, and so interpret in a supernatural way the everyday events of life.

d) That there be greater efforts made to bring about liturgical renewal, especially by means of eucharistic concelebration, which should be looked upon in a factual way in the community as the apex and source of the whole life of faith of its members.

e) That there should be due insistence on faithfulness to our practices of piety, by giving a special importance among these to the use of Holy Scripture and inculcating a greater facility in communicating the spiritual riches of one's own reflections.

f) That a really special importance be set on the « powerful moments » of our spiritual life, particularly the different types of retreat.

g) That the practice of community confession be cultivated with care not only stressing the importance of the sacrament of penance for the life of faith, but also giving practical witness to what is prescribed as regards special acts of self-denial proper to our Salesian tradition.

h) That there should be a more intense personal and community devotion to our Blessed Lady, Mother of God, whom the Council presents to us in her special role as a « type » of the Church and Help of the People of God. While renewing the vitality of this important devotion, we should furthermore dwell on the riches of the liturgical cycle and see in the recital of the Rosary a special instrument for Marian meditation on salvation history.



### 3. Making the meaning of our religious consecration a living issue in our lives.

The specific value of religious life, according to Vat. II, consists in consecration by means of the vows to the « faithful imitation of that *form of life* which Christ, as the Son of God, accepted in entering this world to do his Father's will » (L.G. 44).

The Assembly of Provincials therefore holds that there are two reasons of particular interest today for this consecration:

a) In relation to the people of God. In this category all are equally children of the Father by baptism. Everything that is above and beyond this fundamental dignity and common sonship must be regarded not as a privilege but as a means of service towards others. Thus the rest of the baptised, in particular youth and the Christian poorer classes today look up to religious consecration and see it precisely as a ministry in support of their baptismal dignity.

b) In relation to the world. Not only present day ideologies but even the Council itself attribute a particular importance to temporal values. Now this factual trend of the moment demands more than ever the subsidiary role of religious consecration, because « the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes » (L.G. 31).

It is therefore a matter of pressing importance to succeed in establishing a genuine witness of religious consecration. But for this purpose we must be ready for commitment on three complementary planes:

— the plane of « objective reality ». Religious must be personal imitators in the objective sense of the chaste, poor and obedient Christ, even if they live in a desert, unknown to the world at large.

— the plane of « sign ». We must renew our witness with a sense of urgency and according to the needs of Latin America, and do so by showing to others the spirit of the Beatitudes.

— the plane of « apostolic work ». The saving work of our mission to youth and the poor must become even more efficient.

The Assembly of Provincials stresses above all the need for ensuring the thorough renewal of our Salesian communities on the plane of « sign » so that we may show the spirit of the Beatitudes more effectively to the youth and working classes of Latin America.

## Chastity

The view of chastity — which more than the other two vows makes a religious community what it is — shows itself in a Salesian community with a special intensity of cheerfulness, kindness and consecrated affection, making us — like D. Bosco — a « sign » of the deep-seated process which transforms our methods for training the human love that burns in our boys' hearts.

### *The Assembly of Provincials of Latin America*

1. Brings to the notice of all that the preservation and perfecting of this gift of the Holy Spirit is the result of the full training of the personality, the outcome of balanced behaviour and nobility of character proper to the progressive psychological and supernatural maturity of the individual. In this connection it calls attention to the grave responsibility of those who have the task of training personnel. It is their duty never to overlook any of the indispensable factors for accomplishing this union of nature and grace, in which the characteristic sign of Salesian sanctity "par excellence" is made manifest.

2. At the same time it would like to turn to the best account the community aspect of family life, in which the social conditions of peace and joy and reciprocal affection, of inborn trust and interest in the thorough fulfilment of one's duties, all find their source. This is how apostolic ideals so favourable for training the heart are brought



to fruition; this is how brotherly incentives to the consecrated life are fostered.

3. It also puts forward in a renewed form the idea of work not only as an ascetic means of sacrifice and meritorious occupation, but also as an intelligent fulfilment of oneself. When it is thus understood, work enlivens our own energies and capacity in a constructive way, even from the human point of view, and facilitates the vital and holy obligation of religious profession.

4. The Assembly thus also reaffirms the primacy of the community as a body at prayer, thereby offsetting the risk of a dangerous « psychologism » or an individualistic trend in problems in this field, which gives rise to false statements concerning religious personality; and in line with the text of « Perfectae Caritatis », it stresses the need for belief in our Lord's words about trust in divine help, about mortification and custody of the senses, about never presuming to rely on our own strength, and about « taking advantage of those natural helps which favour bodily and mental health » (P.C. 12).

## **Poverty**

The vow of poverty should make our physical presence more evident in the world of the poor and for the love of Christ. Community detachment from superfluous comforts should not be seen just as a sign of contempt for, or independence from; economic values, any more than chastity is contempt for, and independence from, sexual values. Moreover it should display a spiritual ministry which bears witness to the value of Christ's resurrection and makes use of economic goods, but in the service of poor forsaken youth and for the welfare of the underdeveloped working classes.

Today in Latin America particular attention must be given to this « sign » of poverty in our communities.

*Therefore the Assembly of Provincials:*

1. Reminds everyone of the personal inward value of poverty and so it calls upon confreres to accept joyfully our inability to dispose of money, our dependence on others in personal matters, our limitations and privations, in so far as we are sharers in Christ's poverty.

Every confrere should realise that his personal poverty is an indispensable stone in the building of a truly poor community, and joined to Christ it must stand as a sign and a witness.

2. Following Vat. II, the Assembly entreats all Salesians in all Provinces to make use of their work to the best advantage and carry it out as an expression of evangelical poverty. It is through the generous gift of our lives in Salesian work that we share in the human history of the working class and poor in our continent.

Faced with the temptation of « comfort seeking » and the heedlessness of youth, the Assembly calls upon everyone to make his renewal in the peaceful, joyous and thorough spirit of work we have inherited from D. Bosco. In a Church like ours which is in a period of emergence, something extra can be asked of each one of us in our work to ensure specialisation of personnel and maintenance of essential undertakings.

3. It reminds Salesians that the community witness to poverty, linked as it is with the nature of our consecration and again brought to our notice by the Council and Chapter, will find no echo in Latin America except through an intensified dedication of ourselves, for all to see, to the service of needy youth.

So we must not only let our work for the poor be known by means of suitable propaganda, but it is essential that we should go back courageously to our work for poor and forsaken youth, especially in those areas where this witness may have grown dim and the image of the congregation grown distorted. This witness of ours, in our underdeveloped country, is one of urgency and obliges us to a definite and continual reappraisal of the road we are travelling.

4. In order to carry out the rulings of the Council which invites religious to solidarity in their poverty so that « houses which are



better off may help those that are in need » and that all « should exchange their temporal goods with one another », this same Assembly makes the following proposals:

a) That Provincials should endeavour to do away with contrasting differences between houses of the same Province.

b) That a certain delicacy of feeling be introduced among Salesians so that the houses may not be administered along the lines of individualistic capitalism, but in conformity with an intelligent community spirit.

c) That each Provincial should insist upon houses with larger incomes supporting some social work. This will clearly demonstrate our preference for the poorer classes and will moreover help the confreres of the house to feel more attracted by the definite aim of brotherly love.

d) That the feasibility of lending financial help either in a personal and specialised way or by scholarships, should be gone into, with candour and charity, at Provincial Conference level, to assist poorer provinces of the same group or even the more needy provinces of the continent.

e) That, in imitation of the example of the early Church, every province in spite of its own straitened circumstances and poverty, should help the Rector Major and the Superior Council by finding a solution of their own financial problems, as an exercise of Salesian charity.

5. The Assembly requests that the Rectors and communities be informed of the financial condition of the Province and houses, of how funds are spent and the outlay for charitable purposes. This type of information will promote a more careful administration and will foster a spirit of responsibility in the confreres and help them towards a better understanding of the value of money and material goods. It will also enable them to develop a feeling for the embarrassments and uncertainties of poverty which so often are experienced only by the superiors concerned.

6. The Assembly asks confreres to lend their help in organisations that work for the development of Latin American peoples and for the abolition of destitution.

7. Finally, it asks every Salesian to be very careful not to introduce into his community habits and attitudes which may dim the powers of « sign » of a community and give entrance to too much well-being and comfort, things which D. Bosco already warned us about as dangerous for the congregation.

### **Obedience**

The vow of obedience should not only show the fulfilment of our personality in an enthusiastic filial attachment to Don Bosco, but it should also enable the advantages of a community which is jointly pledged to its mission to be apparent to all. Youth today, and Latin American youth in particular, must learn how to ensure that its freedom will reach maturity without frustration and with full social solidarity.

*Therefore the Assembly of Provincials makes the following declarations:*

1. The good results from dialogue which has taken on a new lease of life since the General Chapter, lead us to request all to do what they can to strengthen this marvellous instrument of the Salesian community at every level. It is something that will grow steadily more useful, in so far as everyone will feel he has a corporate responsibility, and so obedience by conviction and inward discipline will be the result.

A superior has to bear in mind that he too must let himself be guided like other Salesians by the sincere wish to discover the truth, and fall in with the expression of God's will in any situation of importance.

2. The Assembly strongly recommends that the spirit of the new structures should be brought to fulfilment. If the authority of the Vice Provincial and of other Council members such as the Vice Rector and members of the Council of Action is made real and effective, this will certainly bring about improvement in obedience by renewing the



relationship between Superiors and the members of the community.

Experience teaches us on the other hand, that the difficulties of obedience grow less and even disappear altogether, when the community inspired with an educational ideal about which this Assembly has so often spoken, is achieved in all its fullness.

3. In the choice of new candidates for the Provincial Council and the office of Rector, capacity for dialogue should be borne in mind, in view of the fact that the Superior should not only know what God wants of every confrere but should also know how to make this known to him in compliance with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

4. In the spirit of our Constitutions the Assembly urges all the confreres in imitation of Don Bosco to renew their desire to be ever loyal to the Church and the Pope. In these days when confusion, conceit and loose thinking are creating mischief in the Church of God, this Assembly asks all communities to renew their spirit of obedience to the Pope and the hierarchy, and to try to co-operate loyally with them in a spirit of simple and unwavering obedience.

5. It exhorts the confreres to read carefully all the guide-lines so far set out here, to consider them as a factual guide from the hands of the Rector Major and Provincials in order to give depth and meaning to what has been laid down by the XIX General Chapter. It extorts them at the same time to renew themselves once again with even greater generosity in their *loyalty to Don Bosco's spirit*. The loyal acceptance of that spirit will prove to be a heartfelt token of Salesian obedience to our Heavenly Father in the Church of Latin America.

## SALESIAN FORMATION

The Assembly of Provincials of Latin America is of the opinion that the subject of « Salesian Formation » occupies a position of primary importance in the work of the congregation's renewal and that it should be approached in the fresh outlook of Vat. II.

It has carried out its discussions for this very purpose, well aware of the pastoral needs of youth and the working classes in Latin America today, of the Council's outlook on vocations in the organic unity of the unique mission which is proper to the people of God, and of the loyalty it feels towards that special spirit which the Holy Ghost has stirred up in the Church by means of Don Bosco.

The subject was dealt with under two headings:

- a) Fostering of vocations.
- b) Pastoral aspects of Salesian training.

#### A. *Fostering of vocations*

The Provincials gave only some general directives, leaving greater possibilities of the clarification of the subject to specific regional meetings, to take place in some months' time. Nevertheless, they felt they should make the declarations:

1. Fostering of vocations is not an independent and artificial apostolate, but a constituent aspect of youth work itself. Hence it will have to be carried out above all in the sphere of our own work.

2. The following elements should contribute to the revival of this pastoral work:

a) The living witness of a Salesian community with its spirit of cheerfulness and commitment;

b) The courageous reappraisal of our work for youth, according to the directions of the XIX General Chapter.

c) Co-ordination of our efforts in the characteristic Salesian training of youth in faith and the spirit of « diaconia » (service).

d) Setting aside some Salesians of the province for vocations work.

e) Establishing a centre of vocational guidance where it does not already exist.

3. It is a matter of urgency to stir up a lively sense of joint responsibility in this connection among all Salesians, parents, co-operators, Old boys and apostolic groups among the boys themselves.



It is also a matter of particular importance to get to know the families of candidates, to keep in touch with them and show an interest in them.

4. The pivot of this apostolic undertaking is training in the use of freedom, in its progressive and dynamic reality, by means of training at the human level leading to real intellectual and emotional maturity. No sort of contrivance therefore should be allowed in community structures. Instead the practice of reviewing one's life and of spiritual direction should be insisted upon.

5. It is our view that aspirantates have their place even today, provided they go in for an adequate process of renewal, in accordance with the development and social and religious circumstances of each region.

While trying out new methods which offer better prospects we would recommend Superiors not to indulge in hasty and unwise experiments. It is essential in this field more than in any other to bear in mind the Rector Major's motto: « Renew but don't destroy ».

At all events the important thing is, in the last analysis, to increase the quality and number of novices.

6. The Provincials in particular request that Superiors should go into the question of changing the structures of our novitiates, according to the new doctrinal outlook of the Council. It is desirable that the Novitiate should keep up its intense efforts towards a genuine training for the Salesian life of consecration. It should have a greater elasticity as regards structures and the subjects the novices study.

The novitiate should not provide our candidates with a bolt-hole from the world. It should be an apprenticeship to be served in a Salesian way and should be looked upon as the first year of initiation with the prospect of a wider training afterwards.

7. Our work of fostering vocations today demands with extreme urgency an effort to enlist the adult lay person in the mission to youth and the working classes. We are dealing here with a movement of apostolic spirituality which must allow our work of fostering vocations to develop in the direction of the training of genuine co-operators.

In this way the « outward Salesian » will have a chance to work, and without him the « inward Salesian » would only be a cripple.

### *B. Pastoral Aspects of Salesian Training*

An analysis was made of the key elements of our work for vocations, keeping in view a thorough revision of the whole cycle of formation.

1. The point was made with insistence that the pastoral aspect is not something external, like an artificial addition to the studies, but an essential element of Salesian training. It should include the whole process of bringing a vocation to maturity and the specific method of giving the studies already referred to their particular trend.

In our efforts to sketch the sort of vocations director that we want to achieve by our Salesian training we put forward the example of Don Bosco. Some Provincials referred back to the description given in the meetings at Bogotá in May 1967.

2. Concerning the present problem of the existence of formation and having gone into their advantages and disadvantages at some length, the statement of the Council about the need for them was quoted and the sound reasons for their continuance were recognised, provided of course that there would be a thorough revision of structures to ensure a community life with greater stress on the family aspect and with a suitable pastoral outlet.

3. It was deemed a sound proposition to keep up the cycles of formation obtaining at present — what we now call « novitiate », « studentate of philosophy » or « “magistero” for coadjutors », « teaching practice », and « studentate of theology ». These would eventually form constituent elements of an Institute for Youth Apostolate.

A substantial revision is proposed for programmes of study in each cycle based in the linking up of philosophy and theology and leaving some elasticity in deciding how many years would be required.

It is hoped that the stage that comes before teaching practice will be long enough to warrant the obtaining of some university qualification,



without however interfering with the programme of studies as laid down or with any specific phase of formation.

4. It is obvious that there is an urgent necessity for all to train themselves in joint pastoral work of the real sort according to the means that are suitable to each country and the directives and programmes of the respective episcopal conferences.

5. So that our centres of Salesian training may be more efficient and in line with our Salesian spirit, we exhort you to redouble your efforts to exchange information between different provinces, and we ask the provincial conferences to go as soon as possible into the question of the actual steps that should be taken.

In certain fixed cases we accept the possibility of joint studies with congregations of similar spirit and with diocesan centres. Before taking this step the conditions in each country must be borne in mind, and there must always be an understanding with the Superior Council.

6. It is to be hoped that the novitiate may form part of the structures in the programmes of studies, without its departing thereby from its main function of Salesian religious training.

7. It is proposed to set up a Latin American commission to prepare a definite contribution to the new « ratio institutionis » of the Congregation. This commission should take into account the work already accomplished in the meetings at S. Paulo and Bogotá in May 1967.

8. On examination of the training problems arising in the teaching practice the Assembly recognises its importance and validity and undertakes to put the deliberations of the XIX General Chapter into practice in every detail.

9. The Assembly agrees to present a united front in the progressive search for solutions which will bring into even greater prominence the evidence for, and efficacy of, our special spirit in the eyes of the Church. We shall be all the more useful to the people of God in proportion to our greater growth in faithfulness to the vocation the Holy Ghost has assigned to us in the Church.

## YOUTH WORK

The Assembly of Salesian Provincials of Latin America reaffirms the central place Youth Work occupies in the Salesian spirit and in the process of renewal. Therefore, while it undertakes to engage in programmes for the qualification of personnel in different kinds of Youth Work and to bring into effect the structures envisaged in this sphere, it issues the following principles which must inspire the work of everyone in this field:

1. The whole of Salesian work for Youth should bear in mind its four essential dimensions, viz.

*a)* Its chief characteristic of ecclesial service (the ecclesial dimension);

*b)* Its special Salesian tone (Salesian dimension);

*c)* Its deep sense of professional competence (educational dimension);

*d)* Its special interest in the sociological data which condition the trend of our work at present and at the same time show the « signs of the times » for our work in the future (sociological dimension).

2. The conditions of youth in Latin America demand from us a speedy and resolute renewal of our extra-scholastic educational tasks, and a burst of enthusiasm and creative imagination in furthering a real widening of our apostolate along these lines.

Oratories, clubs and youth centres, teaching of the catechism and psycho-educational guidance, the apostolate of social communications, joining youth movements already in operation, assisting the working classes by work for boys by means of hostels for working boys and university students, retreat houses and many other enterprises, — all these means will not only conduce to Salesian influence amongst youth on the fringe, but will also present our image as an understanding and up-to-date congregation to Latin-American youth with its down-to-earth outlook.



3. Keeping in mind the present conditions of the congregation in Latin America and guided by a healthy realism, we recognise that our commitment must be thorough to ensure at all costs the success of our pastoral efforts in our educational work.

We feel we are even more decisively pledged to this assignment, which will have to be done quickly and in depth, by the words of the XIX General Chapter:

« In order that our schools may prove to be the Catholic and Salesian apostolate which alone justifies their existence, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

— They must be thoroughly Christian in inspiration.

— They must enjoy a high scholastic repute and impress as schools which are up-to-date.

— They must not only give instruction, but must educate and do so in a Christian manner. They must show they are efficient from the apostolic point of view by leading « morally underdeveloped » souls to a coherent moral and religious life, and by forming a Christian « élite » » (XIX General Chapter p. 105).

The urgency of these pastoral efforts assumes greater proportions when we consider carefully the weighty words of the General Chapter, which go so far as to contemplate the closing down of work that is not essential or work that does not combine the conditions mentioned above.

Instead, when this pastoral work is actually achieved, it will instil strength and fresh enthusiasm into our communities.

4. The Assembly also states that in view of the priority, urgency and nobility of our work for youth, there must be a definitive appointment in every province of a « de facto » Delegate for Youth Work — still non-existent in some provinces.

It states moreover that in this psychological moment for Latin America « which will not admit of delay or postponement » it is a matter of obligation for every Province to set up its own Salesian Centre for Youth Apostolate, whereby the most important of Salesian activities in the world today can be co-ordinated and directed.

## **The Latin American Institute for Youth Apostolate**

Faced by the urgent problem of qualifying Salesian personnel in the specialised work that is best adapted to Don Bosco's spirit, namely, work for youth, and in view of the fact that this specialisation can be achieved in the most suitable way in an Institute situated in Latin America, as this permits a larger number to attend it and greater insight into the problems of Latin American youth, the Assembly of Provincials hereby decides to propose to the Superior Council the setting up of a Latin American Institute for Youth Apostolate.

For this purpose, it undertakes to begin at once to prepare future professors and by means of a special commission to go into the question of the plan to be eventually presented for the approval of the Superior Council.

Moreover it promises to keep up a definite and generous supply of professors and pupils for the Salesian Pontifical Athenaeum.

The Assembly of Provincials declares enthusiastically that it is convinced that the future Latin American Institute for Youth Apostolate represents today one of the greatest services that can be offered to the congregation and the Church in Latin America.

## **The Second Novitiate**

The Assembly of Provincials, in pursuance of the express wish of many Salesians in Latin America and looking upon it as an efficacious means for the renewal of religious life, proposes to the Superior Council that the project of the Second Novitiate should be carried into effect, as already adumbrated in the General Chapter. It appoints a Commission composed of Rev. Fr. Claudius Gasparri, Fr. Wolfgang Gruen, Fr. Ferdinand Peraza and Fr. Joseph Vincent Henriquez to go into the question of the conditions necessary to ensure its speedy accomplishment.



## II. INSTRUCTIONS AND NORMS

### 1. Administrative Accounts

The first half of 1968 is almost over and all provincial consultants should by now have examined the administrative accounts compiled by the provincial economists, regarding the financial life of the province, the state of its property, and the appropriation account of each house.

We stress once more the importance of this obligation as laid down in article 257 of the regulations, and recommend anyone who has not already sent to the Economist General's office the relevant statement of accounts, duly signed, to do so at once.

Any undue delay, and likewise a hasty or vague statement of the financial position deprives it of worth, and reduces it to a mere formality.

### 2. Procedures regarding building programmes and economic matters

Those concerned are reminded that they should follow the prescribed procedure and furnish the required documents in seeking the authorization and permission of the Superior Council for building programmes or economic matters.

Borrowing money, making loans, opening up credit accounts (trusts), purchases, sales, acceptance of gifts, extensions of existing buildings, and new constructions must always be discussed in the provincial council. The latter in order to arrive at a reasoned decision, taking a vote where required, should have an adequate knowledge of the various factors involved (the purpose, amount, interest on, duration

of the loan and the possibility of extinguishing it; the purpose, type of form of guarantee of the loan and of its extinction; the purpose, and at least approximate valuation, description and quantity of the goods to be bought or sold; plans of, and report on, the proposed construction with an estimate of costs and scheme of payment etc., etc.).

Obviously in seeking the authorization of the Superior Council for any one of these operations one must forward a copy of the minutes of the provincial council regarding it, along with all the other above-mentioned data.



### III. NOTIFICATIONS

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#### 1) **Appointments of bishops**

V. Rev. Michelangelo Aleman, S.D.B., has been appointed titular bishop of Puppi and Apostolic Administrator « sede plena » of the diocese of Viedma (Argentina).

V. Rev. Andrew Rubio, S.D.B., has been promoted to the titular episcopal church of Foro Traiano and made auxiliary to the Right Rev. Mgr. Charles Parteli, Coadjutor of His Eminence Cardinal Antony Mary Barbieri, Archbishop of Montevideo (Uruguay).

#### 2) **Appointment of provincial**

V. Rev. Fr. Fernando Peraza to the province of Bogotá (Colombia).

#### 3) **Regional consultors**

For the sake of uniformity and brevity of title the groups of provinces established in accordance with the prescriptions of the XIX General Chapter are to be called « regions », and the Consultors themselves, « regional consultors ».

#### IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL AND PROJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST

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During the past three months the attention of the congregation has been focussed mainly on two events: the centenary celebrations in Turin of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, and the three meetings of provincials at Bangalore (India), Como (Italy), and Caracas (Venezuela).

Confrères can refer to the Salesian Bulletin for an ample coverage of the centenary celebrations, and in another section of the Acts the Rector Major himself comments on the spiritual meaning of the celebrations held in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

In yet another section of the Acts the Rector Major also speaks of the three continental meetings of provincials, already held, and of the subject matter, discussions, and the conclusions reached at them. As well as referring to the Rector Major's account of this, a full description of the external events in connection with these gatherings will be found in the Salesian Bulletin.

Against this background of more noteworthy and interesting happenings the ordinary activity of the Major Superiors and of the provinces connected with them has been continuous.

Fr Fedrigotti, the Prefect General, has been specially concerned with the missions and the sending of volunteers to Latin America.

Fr. Bellido, the Catechist General, presided over two important meetings regarding aspirantates. The first was held in Madrid from March 3rd to 8th, for all the aspirantates of the Iberian peninsula and, as well as the respective provincials, about seventy confrères from houses of formation were present. These provinces enjoy abundant promise of vocations, and their happy situation favoured a study in depth of the preparation of aspirants for the Salesian life in the light



of the conciliar decrees, of the deliberations of the General Chapter, and of the Salesian spirit.

The other meeting was held from April 26th to 28th in Bangalore, the seat of the new studentate of theology, and was for all the houses of formation in India. Here, too, the provincials were accompanied by the rectors and many other Salesians, and attention concentrated mainly on the situation in the aspirantates. As well as dealing with the general topic of formation, serious attention was given to the problem of organizing studies, which is especially involved in India on account of the variety of languages and curricula of studies. One result of the meeting, among others, was the plan for a new missionary aspirantate to be built near Bombay.

Don Bellido had occasion to visit several other houses of formation and everywhere he remarked on the harvest of good, numerous, local vocations. This promises well for the flourishing Salesian work in India.

Fr Pilla, the Economist General, continuing the work already started in Italy and the Americas, has held two other meetings of provincial economists. The first was in Calcutta from February 5th to 7th for all the provinces of the Far East, except Australia; the second in Madrid from March 11th to 13th for the provinces of the Iberian Peninsula.

The Consultor responsible for the Formation of Personnel, Fr Pianazzi, visited various studentates in India, Mexico and Italy. He presented to the meetings of provincials a report on the five-year plan for the houses of formation and on the Salesian Pontifical Athenaeum.

A most important task to which he is now giving his attention is the preparation of the new « Ratio Studiorum » for our studentates. The international commission already set up for this purpose has continued its consultations, and provisional conclusions have been already forwarded to provincials for them to consider, so that they can compile and forward their observations on them to the Consultor for Formation.

The labours of the commission are directed towards providing a



general outline for the reform of our studies in such a way as to make them meet the requirements of Salesian spirituality and the youth apostolate, and so become effective instruments not merely of a generic, but of a specifically Salesian, priestly formation.

The provincial conference, with the help of experts from the studentates, will have the duty of applying these general principles of reform and adapting them to the individual local situations, keeping in view, wherever necessary, the directives of the episcopal conferences.

Fr Scrivo, the Consultor for Youth Apostolate, was particularly responsible for the preparations for the meetings of provincials. He also held study sessions on the problems of youth apostolate in Quito (April 29th to May 1st), Bogotá (May 1st to 3rd), Medellín (May 4th). Rectors, catechists and headmasters took part in these, besides a large representative body from the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. In Bologna, from June 3rd to 6th, together with Fr Giovannini, he presided over the national conference of parish priests of Italy. This dealt with the following two subjects:

1) The part of the laity in parish life; 2) Youth in parishes today.

The discussion of these topics was complemented by working visits to some town parishes, and by a round-table conference of parish priests, experts, and representatives of the various groups and categories of parishioners.

Finally, from June 17th to 20th Fr Scrivo took part in the national conference for youth apostolate in Spain, held at Tibidabo (Barcelona) to plan activities for 1968-69, with special reference to teenage youth clubs.

In recent months the Consultor for the Social Apostolate was engaged in the preparation and holding of the celebrations for the centenary of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

The Regional Consultors have been busy preparing the meetings of provincials in their areas, and have also at the same time continued with their visits to individual provinces. Sometimes, as need required, they have only held meetings with the provincial councils, the rectors



and other special groupings of confrères; in other cases instead they have made more detailed visitations of all the houses of the province and have interviewed all the confrères.

Fr Castillo, in charge of Argentine, Uruguay, Paraguay, Perú, Chile and Bolivia, held brief meetings with the provincial councils of Perú, Uruguay and Paraguay, particularly with regard to the problems of reshaping our work there; then he visited all the houses of the province of Buenos Aires, taking a special interest in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, where he visited the individual mission stations. Among the various meetings held in the course of his stay in the Argentine, the most important was that of the delegates for youth apostolate of the del Plata Conference (Argentine, Uruguay, Paraguay), in which a programme of work for the youth apostolate centres in these individual provinces was got under way.

Fr Garnero, in charge of the provinces of Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador, visited the houses of formation in the Provinces of Colombia, arranging for various staff meetings of the studentates and of provincial councils. Then in Brazil in the provinces of Manaus and Recife he held meetings with the provincial councils and rectors. Finally he visited all the houses of the province of Belo Horizonte, closing the visitation with meetings with the rectors, provincial councils, and representatives of the various apostolic activities (youth apostolate, social apostolate, instruments of social communication, etc).

Fr Giovannini, who is in charge of the Italian provinces, visited the Venetian province of St Mark and the Adriatic province. In January he arranged two study sessions for the staff of aspirantates, at Como from January 8th to 12th, and at Pacognano from January 15th to 19th for the provinces of the North and South of Italy respectively. At Rome (Sacred Heart) on May 1st to 4th four study days were held for the preachers of retreats. Outstanding scholars and preachers from the Pontifical Universities of Rome, together with some of our own confrères, shed light on the theological principles and pastoral norms that ought to inspire our retreats.

A study was made of the method of holding retreats, man's general situation as regards the spiritual life, salvation history and our sharing in the life of Jesus Christ. Then attention turned to the particular problems such as how to present the last things and earthly realities, Don Bosco's idea of retreats, and the vitality of ideas and action within the Salesian congregation. Finally, in the light of the Council, a survey was made of the subjects dealing with religious life today, with special attention to the common life and the vows.

This new development, which proved very welcome to all who attended it, is one aspect of the congregation's endeavour continually to increase the value of the means used for the confrères' spiritual formation, and of our own renewal.

A full survey of community life was also set on foot in the Italian provinces, questionnaires being sent to all the confrères in order to ascertain their views on the present religious situation and their suggestions for renewal. A commission of theologians will examine the confrères' replies, which will provide the basis for a document to be drawn up on the religious life.

As has already been mentioned, Fr Giovannini presided over the second national conference for the Salesian parishes of Italy from June 3rd to 16th.

Fr Segarra visited all the Houses of the two Spanish provinces of Bilbao and Zamora. Besides the ordinary meetings at both provincial and local levels, there was a meeting of coadjutors in Madrid, with representatives from all the Spanish provinces and from Portugal, to study the formation of coadjutors.

A document regarding this matter has been approved for the confrères of the Iberian conference.

Fr Ter Schure, who is in charge of the provinces of Central Europe and the Congo, has completed his visitation of the French province of Lyons. At the conclusion of the visitation he presided over a meeting of all the rectors and delegates from all the different branches of work undertaken in each house. This meeting provided an opportunity for an



exchange of ideas and a comparing of notes on experience which was most useful for the religious life and apostolic work of our communities. He also presided over the Vth provincial conference for the German language group at Munich, for the French-speaking group at Paris, and for the Flemish-speaking group at the Hague.

The conferences discussed religious formation.

In April he visited the houses of North Africa and in May made a journey to Czechoslovakia.

Fr Tohill, in charge of English speaking countries and Asia, in addition to individual contacts with various houses in his region, made a more detailed visitation of all the houses and saw all the confrères in the Madras province (India) and in England. In Madras he presided over a meeting of catechists and headmasters.

## V. DOCUMENTS

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*Letter of His Eminence Cardinal A.G. Cicognani, Secretary of State of His Holiness Paul VI, to the Rector Major for the Centenary of the Consecration of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.*

SECRETARIATE OF STATE  
OF HIS HOLINESS  
N. 114344

*The Vatican, 28 May 1968*

Very Reverend Father,

With the approach of the centenary of the consecration of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin, the Sovereign Pontiff joins with pleasure the well-deserving Salesian society, as it makes ready, in a spirit of humble and sincere joy to lend emphasis to this event with solemn celebrations.

This commemorative celebration is by way of paying due thanks to the Queen of Heaven, who has been pleased to favour this shrine with special tokens of love, making it a rich source of grace and a living witness to her bountiful mercy.

If the festive occasion will be an invitation to turn to Mary most holy for all who love to invoke her with the beautiful title of Help of Christians, it will be even more so for the sons of Don Bosco spread throughout the world. The hundred years of the history of their beloved sanctuary will not only remind them of the most outstanding and sacred events in the life of their congregation, but will summon them to meditate afresh on the motives which led their holy founder to link his new born religious family so closely with the name and protection of her, whom he always acknowledged as the inspirer of all his works.



Precisely because from then on the sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians has never ceased to be the spiritual centre for all Salesians and the ideal centre for their relationship with their heavenly mother, the celebration of the coming centenary acquires a significance that goes beyond the merely commemorative aspect of the event. For it expresses the congregation's concern for drawing new vigour from the sources of its own particular spirituality, for keeping faith with its authentic traditions; and above all for strengthening the ties that bind it to Mary, to whom the entire Salesian Society owes its existence and unimpaired vitality.

For these reasons the Sovereign Pontiff gladly offers his best wishes for the success of the celebrations; and while he invokes the Virgin's generous and abiding patronage for her devoted sons, he looks forward to a healthy increase of Marian piety in every branch of the great Salesian family as the fruit of these solemnities. As long as the sentiments, zeal, and way of life of its members are inspired by the image and example of Mary most holy, they will never be cut off from that source of generosity and dedication, interior life and fervour, holiness and grace, which up to now has inspired the work of Salesians the world over, and through them has been of outstanding service to the church.

To these wishes and prayers the Holy Father is pleased to add his apostolic blessing, which he cordially imparts to you and to all the congregation.

I gladly take advantage of this opportunity of signing myself with sentiments of veneration and esteem

Yours devotedly in our Lord  
*A. G. Cardinal Cicognani*

**The Credo of the People of God - proclaimed by Pope Paul VI  
at the closing of the Year of Faith**

*Venerable Brothers and Beloved Sons,*

*With this solemn liturgy we end the celebration of the nineteenth centenary of the martyrdom of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and thus close the Year of Faith. We dedicated it to the commemoration of the holy Apostles in order that we might give witness to Our steadfast will to be faithful to the Deposit of the faith which they transmitted to Us, and that We might strengthen Our desire to live by it in the historical circumstances in which the Church finds herself in her pilgrimage in the midst of the world.*

*We feel it our duty to give public thanks to all who responded to Our invitation by bestowing on the Year of Faith a splendid completeness through the deepening of their personal adhesion to the Word of God, through the renewal in various communities of the profession of faith, and through the testimony of a Christian life. To our Brothers in the episcopate especially, and to all the faithful of the holy Catholic Church, We express Our appreciation and We grant Our blessing.*

*Likewise we deem that we must fulfil the mandate entrusted by Christ to Peter, whose successor We are, the last in merit; namely, to confirm Our brothers in the faith. With the awareness, certainly, of Our weakness, yet with the strength impressed on Our Spirit by such a command, We shall accordingly make a profession of faith, pronounce a creed which, without being strictly speaking a dogmatic definition, repeats in substance, with some developments called for by the spiritual condition of our time, the creed of Nicea, the creed of the immortal Tradition of the Holy Church of God.*

*In making this profession, We are aware of the disquiet which agitates certain modern quarters with regard to faith. They do not escape the influence of a world being profoundly changed, in which so many certainties are being disputed or discussed. We see even Catholics allowing themselves to be seized by a kind of passion for change and novelty. The Church, most assuredly, has always the duty*



*to carry on the effort to study more deeply and to present in a manner even better adapted to successive generations the unfathomable mysteries of God, rich for all in fruits of salvation. But at the same time the greatest care must be taken, while fulfilling the indispensable duty of research, to do no injury to the teachings of Christian doctrine. For that would be to give rise, as is unfortunately seen in these days, to disturbance and perplexity in many faithful souls.*

*It is important in this respect to recall that, beyond scientifically verified phenomena, the intellect which God has given us reaches that which is, and not merely the subjective expression of the structures and development of consciousness; and, on the other hand, that task of interpretation — of hermeneutics — is to try to understand and extricate, while respecting the word expressed, the sense conveyed by a text, and not to re-create, in some fashion, this sense in accordance with arbitrary hypotheses.*

*But above all, We place Our unshakable confidence in the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Church, and in theological faith upon which rests the life of the Mystical Body. We know that souls await the word of the Vicar of Christ, and We respond to that expectation with the instructions which We regularly give. But to-day we are given an opportunity to make a more solemn utterance.*

*On this day which is chosen to close the Year of Faith, on this feast of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, We have wished to offer to the Living God the homage of a profession of faith. And as once at Caesarea Philippi the apostle Peter spoke on behalf of the Twelve to make a true confession, beyond human opinions, of Christ as Son of the Living God, so to-day his humble successor, Pastor of the Universal Church, raises his voice to give, on behalf of all the People of God, a firm witness to the divine Truth entrusted to the Church to be announced to all nations.*

*We have wished Our profession of faith to be to a high degree complete and explicit, in order that it may respond in a fitting way to the need of light felt by so many faithful souls, and by all those in the world, to whatever spiritual family they belong, who are in search of the Truth.*

*To the glory of God most Holy and of Our Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in the aid of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, for the profit and edification of the Church, in the name of all the Pastors and all the Faithful, We now pronounce this profession of faith, in full spiritual communion with you all. beloved Brothers and Sons.*

Profession of faith.

We believe in one only God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Creator of things visible such as this world in which our transient life passes, of things invisible such as the pure spirits which are also called angels, and Creator in each man of his spiritual and immortal soul.

We believe that this only God is absolutely one in His infinite holy essence as also in His perfections, in His omnipotence, His infinite knowledge, His providence, His will and His love. He is *He Who Is*, as He revealed to Moses; and He is *Love*, as the apostle John teaches us: so that these two names, Being and Love, express ineffably the same divine Reality of Him who has wished to make Himself known to us, and who, « dwelling in light inaccessible », is in Himself above every name, above everything and above every created intellect. God alone can give us right and full knowledge of this Reality by revealing Himself as Father Son and Holy Spirit, in whose eternal life we are by grace called to share, here below in the obscurity of faith and after death in eternal light. The mutual bonds which eternally constitute the Three Persons, who are each one and the same Divine Being, are the blessed inmost life of God Thrice Holy, infinitely beyond all that we can conceive in human measure. We give thanks, however, to the Divine Goodness that very many believers can testify with us before men to the Unity of God, even though they know not the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.

We believe then in the Father who eternally begets the Son; in the Son, the Word of God, who is eternally begotten; in the Holy Spirit, the uncreated Person who proceeds from the Father and the Son as their eternal Love. Thus in the Three Divine Persons, *coaeternae*



*sibi et coaequales*, the life and beatitude of God perfectly One super-abound and are consummated in the supreme excellence and glory proper to uncreated Being, and always « there should be venerated Unity in the Trinity and Trinity in the Unity ».

We believe in Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God. He is the Eternal Word, born of the Father before time began, and one in substance with the Father, *homoousios tó Patri*, and through Him all things were made. He was incarnate of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, and was made man: equal therefore to the Father according to His divinity, and inferior to the Father according to His humanity, and Himself one, not by some impossible confusion of His natures, but by the unity of His person.

He dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. He proclaimed and established the Kingdom of God and made us know in Himself the Father. He gave us His new commandment to love one another as He loved us. He taught us the way of the beatitudes of the Gospel: poverty in spirit, meekness, suffering borne with patience, thirst after justice, mercy, purity of heart, will for peace, persecution suffered for justice sake. Under Pontius Pilate He suffered, the Lamb of God bearing on Himself the sins of the world, and He died for us on the Cross, saving us by His redeeming Blood. He was buried, and, of His own power, rose the third day, raising us by His Resurrection to that sharing in the divine life which is the life of grace. He ascended to heaven, and He will come again, this time in glory, to judge the living and the dead: each according to his merits — those who have responded to the love and pity of God going to eternal life, those who have refused them to the end going to the fire that is not extinguished.

And His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is Lord and Giver of life, who is adored and glorified together with the Father and the Son. He spoke to us by the Prophets; He was sent by Christ after His Resurrection and His Ascension to the Father; He illuminates, vivifies, protects and guides the Church; He purifies the Church's members if they do not shun His grace. His action, which penetrates to the

inmost of the soul, enables man to respond to the call of Jesus « *Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect* » (Mt. 5, 48).

We believe that Mary is the Mother, who remained ever a virgin, of the Incarnate Word, our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and that by reason of this singular election, she was, in consideration of the merits of her Son, redeemed in a more eminent manner, preserved from all stain of original sin and filled with the gift of grace more than all other creatures.

Joined by a close and indissoluble bond to the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption, the Blessed Virgin, the Immaculate, was at the end of her earthly life raised body and soul to heavenly glory and likened to her risen Son in anticipation of the future lot of all the just; and We believe that the Blessed Mother of God, the New Eve, Mother of the Church, continues in Heaven her maternal rôle with regard to Christ's members, co-operating with the birth and growth of divine life in the souls of the redeemed.

We believe that in Adam all have sinned, which means that the original offence committed by him caused human nature, common to all men, to fall to a state in which it bears the consequences of that offence, and which is not the state in which it was at first in our parents, established as they were in holiness and justice, and in which man knew neither evil nor death. It is human nature so fallen, stripped of the grace that clothed it, injured in its own natural powers and subjected to the dominion of death, that is transmitted to all men, and it is in this sense that every man is born in sin. We therefore hold, with the Council of Trent, that original sin is transmitted with human nature, « not by imitation, but by propagation » and that it is thus « proper to everyone ».

We believe that Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the Sacrifice of the Cross, redeemed us from original sin and all the personal sins committed by each one of us, so that, in accordance with the word of the Apostle, « where sin abounded, grace did more abound ».

We believe in one Baptism instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Baptism should be administered even to little children who have not yet been able to be guilty of any personal



sin, in order that, though born deprived of supernatural grace, they may be re-born « of water and the Holy Spirit » to the divine life in Christ Jesus.

We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church built by Jesus Christ on that rock which is Peter. She is the Mystical Body of Christ; at the same time a visible society instituted with hierarchical organs, and a spiritual community; the Church on earth, the Pilgrim People of God here below, and the Church filled with heavenly blessings; the germ and the first fruits of the Kingdom of God, through which the work and the sufferings of the Redemption are continued throughout human history, and which looks for its perfect accomplishment beyond time in glory. In the course of time, the Lord Jesus forms His Church by means of the Sacraments emanating from His Plenitude. By these she makes her members participants in the mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, in the grace of the Holy Spirit who gives her life and movement. She is therefore holy, though she has sinners in her bosom, because she herself has no other life but that of grace: it is by living by her life that her members are sanctified; it is by removing themselves from her life that they fall into sins and disorders that prevent the radiation of her sanctity. This is why she suffers and does penance for these offences, of which she has the power to heal her children through the Blood of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Heiress of the divine promises and daughter of Abraham according to the Spirit, through that Israel whose Scriptures she lovingly guards, and whose Patriarchs and Prophets she venerates; founded upon the Apostles and handing on from century to century their ever-living word and their powers as pastors in the Successor of Peter and the Bishops in communion with him; perpetually assisted by the Holy Spirit, she has the charge of guarding, teaching, explaining and spreading the Truth which God revealed in a then veiled manner by the Prophets, and fully by the Lord Jesus. We believe all that is contained in the Word of God written or handed down, and that the Church proposes for belief as divinely revealed, whether by a solemn judgment or by the ordinary and universal magisterium. We believe in the infallibility

enjoyed by the Successor of Peter when he teaches *ex cathedra* as Pastor and Teacher of all the faithful, and which is assured also to the Episcopal Body when it exercises with him the supreme magisterium.

We believe that the Church founded by Jesus Christ and for which He prayed is indefectibly one in faith, worship and the bond of hierarchical communion. In the bosom of this Church, the rich variety of liturgical rites and the legitimate diversity of theological and spiritual heritages and special disciplines, far from injuring her unity, make it more manifest.

Recognizing also the existence, outside the organism of the Church of Christ, of numerous elements of truth and sanctification which belong to her as her own and tend to Catholic unity, and believing in the action of the Holy Spirit who stirs up in the heart of the disciples of Christ love of this unity, We entertain the hope that the Christians who are not yet in the full communion of the one only Church will one day be re-united in one Flock with one only Shepherd.

We believe that the Church is necessary for salvation, because Christ, who is the sole Mediator and Way of salvation, renders Himself present for us in His Body which is the Church. But the divine design of salvation embraces all men; and those who without fault on their part do not know the gospel of Christ and His Church, but seek God sincerely, and under the influence of grace endeavour to do His will as recognized through the promptings of their conscience, they, in a number known only to God, can obtain salvation.

We believe that the Mass, celebrated by the priest representing the person of Christ by virtue of the power received through the sacrament of Orders, and offered by Him in the name of Christ and the members of His Mystical Body, is the sacrifice of Calvary rendered sacramentally present on our altars. We believe that as the bread and wine consecrated by the Lord at the Last Supper were changed into His Body and Blood which were to be offered for us on the Cross, likewise the bread and wine consecrated by the priest are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ enthroned gloriously in Heaven, and we believe that the mysterious presence of the Lord, under what



continues to appear to our senses as before, is a true, real substantial presence.

Christ cannot be thus present in this sacrament except by the change into His Body of the reality itself of the bread and the change into His Blood of the reality itself of the wine, leaving unchanged only the properties of the bread and wine which our senses perceive. This mysterious change is very appropriately called by the Church *transubstantiation*. Every theological explanation which seeks some understanding of this mystery must, in order to be in accord with Catholic faith, maintain that in the reality itself, independently of our mind, the bread and wine have ceased to exist after the Consecration, so that it is the adorable Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus that from then on are really before us under the sacramental species of bread and wine, as the Lord willed it, in order to give Himself to us as food and to associate us with the unity of His Mystical Body.

The unique and indivisible existence of the Lord glorious in Heaven is not multiplied, but is rendered present by the Sacrament in the many places on earth where Mass is celebrated. And this existence remains present, after the Sacrifice, in the Blessed Sacrament which is, in the tabernacle, the living heart of each of our churches. And it is our very sweet duty to honour and adore in the Blessed Host which our eyes see, the Incarnate Word whom they cannot see, and who, without leaving Heaven, is made present before us.

We confess that the Kingdom of God begun here below in the Church of Christ is not of this world whose form is passing, and that its proper growth cannot be confounded with the progress of civilization, of science or of human technology, but that it consists in an ever more profound knowledge of the unfathomable riches of Christ, an ever stronger hope in eternal blessings, an ever more ardent response to the love of God, and an ever more generous bestowal of grace and holiness among men. But it is this same love which induces the Church to concern herself constantly about the true temporal welfare of men. Without ceasing to recall to her children that they have not here a lasting dwelling, she also urges them to contribute, each according to his vocation and his means, to the welfare of their earthly city, to

promote justice, peace and brotherhood among men, to give their aid freely to their brothers, especially to the poorest and most unfortunate. The deep solicitude of the Church, the Spouse of Christ, for the needs of men, for their joys and hopes, their griefs and efforts, is therefore nothing other than her great desire to be present to them, in order to illuminate them with the light of Christ and to gather them all in Him, their only Saviour. This solicitude can never mean that the Church conform herself to the things of this world, or that she lessen the ardour of her expectation of her Lord and of the eternal Kingdom.

We believe in the life eternal. We believe that the souls of all those who die in the grace of Christ, whether they must still be purified in Purgatory, or whether from the moment they leave their bodies Jesus takes them to Paradise as He did for the Good Thief, are the People of God in the eternity beyond death, which will be finally conquered on the day of the Resurrection when these souls will be re-united with their bodies.

We believe that the multitude of those gathered around Jesus and Mary in paradise forms the Church of Heaven, where in eternal beatitude they see God as He is, and where they also, in different degrees, are associated with the holy Angels in the divine rule exercised by Christ in glory, interceding for us and helping our weakness by their brotherly care.

We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are attaining their purification, and the blessed in Heaven, all together forming one Church; and We believe that in this communion the merciful love of God and of His Saints is ever listening to our prayers as Jesus told us: *Ask and you will receive*. Thus it is with faith and in hope that We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Blessed be God Thrice Holy. Amen.

PAULUS PP. XI

*From the Vatican Basilica, 30 June, 1968.*



### **The Pope's Message to Priests** **At the conclusion of the Year of Faith**

To you, the Priests of the Holy Catholic Church, to you, dearest of all Our sons, whom Holy Orders have made Our brothers, and Our collaborators in the ministry of salvation as well as the brothers and collaborators of your respective Pastors; to you to-day We address Ourselves directly at the conclusion of the Year of Faith, commemorating the nineteenth centenary of the martyrdom of the holy apostles, Peter and Paul. Our words will be brief and simple, but they are intended for you alone. Many years have these words lain in our heart; because We have always been your confrere, ever since We too experienced the mysterious destiny of being ordained a Priest and of feeling the new and profound solidarity with all Our colleagues, with all those selected to personify Christ in our gift to the will of God, to the sanctification, guidance and service of the faithful, to the relationship of salvation with the world. Never have We neglected the communion of reverence, sympathy and brotherhood with you priests. And when the Holy Church called Us to exercise the function of Pastor, first as Bishop and later as Pope, the thought of the clergy became our continual interior concern, rich with esteem, solicitude and charity. Frequently have We regretted not having spoken to you sufficiently, not having borne witness more often and more earnestly to the feeling which the Spirit of the Lord inspired and still inspires in Our heart for you: a feeling which rises from Our innermost being and is accompanied by many other thoughts and feelings; because, above all things and in all things, in the order of charity, you Priests, together with the Bishops Our brothers, hold the first place.

That is why We speak to you to-day. We are not addressing you with an encyclical or an instruction or a legal canonical decree; but rather with a simple outpouring of Our heart. *Os nostrum patet ad vos... cor nostrum dilatatum est* (2 Cor., 6, 11). This anniversary of the memory of the Apostles, who laid the foundations of the Church by their evangelical message and their own blood, obliges Us to open Our heart to you for a moment.

This We do with great admiration and great affection. We know well your faithfulness to Christ and to the Church. We know your dedication to your ministry, your concern for your apostolate. We also know the respect and gratitude which many of the faithful feel for your evangelical unselfishness and apostolic charity. Nor are We unaware of the treasures of your spiritual life, your interior conversation with God, your sacrifice with Christ, your yearning for contemplation united with activity. To each of you We feel impelled to repeat the words of Our Lord in the Apocalypse: *Scio opera tua, et laborem, et patientiam tuam* (2,2). What emotion and joy We feel at such a spectacle! How grateful We feel! We thank you and We bless you, in the name of Christ, for everything you are and for everything you do in the Church of God. Like your Bishops, you are its best workers, its columns, its teachers and its friends, the direct dispensers of the mysteries of God (cf. 1 Cor. 4,1; 2 Cor. 6,4).

We wish to tell you this from the depths of Our heart so that each of you may know and feel that you are appreciated and loved, so that each of you may rejoice to be in communion with Us in the great design and difficult undertaking of the apostolate.

This vision of Ours is neither shortsighted nor irenic. Besides the many priests who find joy and serenity in their ministry, and whose voice is not so clamorous as that of others, We know that there are not a few sad situations. Among some of the clergy there is unrest, there is uncertainty regarding their ecclesiastical condition. Many feel that they have been thrust aside by modern social developments.

Undoubtedly, priests have no special shelter from the repercussions of the crisis of transformation which is upsetting the world to-day. Like all their brothers in the faith, they too experience hours of darkness in their journey towards God. Moreover, they suffer because of the frequently biased way in which certain facts of priestly life are interpreted and unjustly generalised. Therefore We ask priests to remember that the situation of every Christian, and particularly of every priest, will always be a paradoxical and incomprehensible situation to those who have no faith. Hence the present state of things urges the priest to deepen his faith, to realize ever more clearly to



whom he belongs, with what powers he is invested, with what mission he is charged. Beloved sons and brothers, We ask Our Lord to make Us able and worthy to give you some light, some consolation.

To all priests, then, We say: Never doubt the nature of your ministerial priesthood, for it is not a commonplace office or service to be exercised for the ecclesial community, but a service which participates in a very special manner, through the sacrament of Orders and with an indelible character, in the power of the priesthood of Christ (*Lumen Gentium*, nos. 10, 28).

Consequently. We can place in relief certain dimensions which are proper to the Catholic priesthood, and first of all, its character of sacredness. The priest is the man of God, the minister of the Lord; he can perform acts which transcend natural powers, because he acts *in persona Christi*; through him there passes a superior power, for at given moments he is, in his humility and his glory, its valid instrument, the channel of the Holy Spirit. Between him and the divine sphere there is a unique relationship, a divine delegation and trust.

This gift, however, is not possessed by the priest for himself, but for others; the sacred dimension is entirely oriented towards the apostolic dimension, that is, to the priestly mission and ministry.

This is evident to all: the priest is a man who does not live for himself, but for others. He is the man of the community. To-day this is the aspect of the priesthood which is most easily understood. Some find therein a reply to the aggressive questions about the survival of the priesthood in the modern world which even interrogate the priest's very *raison d'être*. The service he renders to society, and in particular to the ecclesial community, amply justifies the existence of his priesthood. The world needs him. The Church needs him. When We say this, We review all the needs of the human race: what category of persons has no need of the Christian message? Of faith and grace? Of someone who devotes himself unselfishly and lovingly to others? Are there any limits to pastoral charity? And is not the need of such charity even grèater where there is least desire for it? In fields such as the missions, youth, schools, the sick, and, especially insistent to-day, the world of workers — in all these there is continual urgent call upon

the priestly heart. Can we then entertain any doubt as to our lack of a place, a function, a mission in modern life? On the contrary, we ask ourselves: how can we reply to so many who have need of us? How can we elevate our personal sacrifice to the rising level of our pastoral and apostolic duties? Now as perhaps never before the Church realizes that she is the indispensable channel of salvation, now as never before the dynamism of her *dispensatio* excels. Shall we then foolishly postulate a world without the Church, a Church without properly prepared and specialized and consecrated ministers? By his very nature the priest is a sign of Christ's love for mankind, and a witness to the amplitude with which the Church seeks to make that love real, to the final measure of the Cross.

From a lively consciousness of his vocation and his consecration as the instrument of Christ for the service of men, the priest derives the consciousness of another dimension of his personality, that of mysticism and asceticism. If every Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit, what must be the interior conversation of the priestly soul with the inhabiting Presence, which transfigures, torments and inebriates him? These words of the Apostle are addressed to us priest: *Habemus... thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus, ut sublimitas sit virtutis Dei et non ex nobis* (2 Cor., 4, 7). Priestly sons and brothers, how do we affirm and nourish this awareness? How do we tend the lamp of contemplation? How seriously do we attend to this inmost focal point of our personality, retreating briefly for interior conversation from the constant onslaught of external duties? Have we kept our taste for personal prayer and meditation, for the breviary? And how can we hope to give our activity full efficacy if we do not draw from the interior fount of conversation with God those choicest energies which He alone can give? Where, then, can we find the primary reason and adequate strength of clerical celibacy other than in the demand and fulness of charity, diffused in our hearts which are consecrated to the sole love and total service of God and His plan of salvation?

Some may say that to-day social structures do not permit the efficacious achievement of this fruitful and exalting dedication. But here we find the fourth dimension of the priesthood, its ecclesial



aspect. The priest is not a solitary; he is a member of an organized body, of the universal Church, of a diocese, and typically and superlatively of his parish. It is the whole Church which must be adapted to the new needs of the world; having concluded the Council, the Church is completely committed to this spiritual organizational renewal. Let us help her by our collaboration, our consent, our patience. Beloved sons and brothers, have confidence in the Church. Love her greatly. She is the direct object of the love of Christ: *dilexit Ecclesiam* (Eph. 5, 25). Love her even with her limitations and defects. Not, of course, because of her limitations and defects or perhaps even of her guilt; but because only by loving her can we heal her and reveal clearly her shining beauty as the Spouse of Christ. It is the Church which will save the world, that Church which is the same to-day as she was yesterday and as she will be tomorrow, that Church which, guided by the Spirit and helped by all her children, always discovers the means of renewing herself, of growing young again, and of giving a new answer to ever renewed demands.

Our thoughts go out to those many priests intent upon methodical efforts towards spiritual growth by the study of the Word of God, by faithful and rational application of liturgical renewal, by increased pastoral service of the humble and those hungering for social justice, by the education of peoples in the ways of peace and freedom, by ecumenical approaches to Christian brethren separated from us, by humble daily fulfilment of the duties assigned to them, and above all by a radiant love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, for Our Lady, for the Church and for all men. By such thoughts are We intimately consoled and edified.

And with such feelings in Our heart, beloved priests, near and far, on the occasion of the commemoration of the Holy Apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, do We greet you and bless you all.

PAULUS PP. VI

*From the Vatican Basilica, on this thirtieth day of June in the year nineteen hundred and sixty-eight.*

## VI. DECEASED CONFRERES

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### *Coad. Anthony Aparicio*

\* 25.1.1877, † Campo Grande (Brazil) 4.12.1967, age 90, 66 profession.

A confrere faithful to Don Bosco and to his vocation. Music animated his whole Salesian life and service of God.

### *Coad. Peter Aprile*

\* 20.4.1911, † Piosasco (Italy) 16.3.1968, age 56, 29 profession.

Generous in his humble task as a shoe-maker, his value as a coadjutor was great in the aspirantates of the Central Province. He was a good religious and in his last years bore with resignation the illness with which God wished to purify his soul.

### *Fr. Esilarato Atzori*

\* 19.12.1893, † Caracas (Venezuela) 23.4.1968, age 74, 53 profession, 43 priesthood; Rector for 10 years.

Always smiling, he was a Salesian of few words but great charity. He proved his dedication to the Congregation as Consultor and Professor at the Crocetta, as Rector in Piedmont and as Superior of the Salesian works in Cyrenaica. Sent to Venezuela, he was first of all Provincial Economist and then for 18 years confessor at the sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians, never missing a day, and acting also as spiritual director of various apostolic works. His death was deeply regretted by his many confreres and friends.

### *Coad. Teresio Charles Barbero*

\* 11.2.1887, † Buenos Aires (Argentine) 10.2.1968, age 81, 59 profession.

From 1909 he was in charge of the library and in this position acquired great popularity amongst the Catholics of the city. Through



it he exercised a multiple apostolate, especially regarding vocations and the spreading of good reading. Amongst his clients he founded many burses for priestly vocations. In his last years he did vast propaganda for the construction of the church of St. Catherine.

*Coad. Francis Xavier Beyer*

\* 23.1.1903, † Sunbury (Australia) 12.4.1968, age 65, 43 profession.

He went to Australia with the first German Salesians and remained there for 41 years without ever returning home. In the last 20 years he suffered much from various illnesses and God alone knows the extent of his sufferings, for he never uttered one word of complaint. He was gentle, patient, punctual and generous, an exemplary religious and a man of God.

*Fr. Joseph Bokor*

\* 22.2.1897, † Bratislava (Slovakia) 8.4.1968, age 71, 52 profession, 43 priesthood; Rector for 12 years and Provincial for a further 12.

He was of the first Salesian priests who in 1924 left Perosa Argentina, Turin, to start Don Bosco's work in Slovakia. The esteem he enjoyed among the authorities and people and the affection of his confreres and boys caused the Superiors to choose him as the first Provincial in Slovakia. He consecrated the infant province to Mary Help of Christians, and in consequence enjoyed her help so much that he was able to open up a new house each year. However, with the turn of events, all thirteen houses were nationalized and the over 250 confreres sent to concentration camps. Fr. Bokor bore this sorrowful calvary sadly, but endured his own physical and moral sufferings with heroic courage, offering them up for the Church of Silence and for his confreres companions of persecution. His burial was the glorification of a faithful witness of Christ, a most upright Salesian, a good and unforgettable father.

*Fr. Dino Cavallini*

\* 7.1.1910, † La Spezia (Italy) 12.5.1968, age 58, 40 profession, 32 priesthood; Rector for 20 years and Provincial for 1.

Sudden death terminated the activity of this apostle and educator. With his cordial and open character he knew how to gain the esteem

and affection of the numerous boys trained by him to Christian life in his years as Rector of important houses and technical schools such as the Rebaudengo and the Agnelli Institutes in Turin. In the direction of these schools he specialized in problems of a professional character and generously placed his experience at the disposal of the Superiors. A profound religious spirit and a great love of Don Bosco guided his every activity and made it fruitful.

*Fr. Martin Cazzaniga*

\* 30.9.1896, † Buenos Aires (Argentina) 29.1.1968, age 71, 55 profession, 45 priesthood.

Organist of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians and St. Charles, he contributed for long years to the splendour of the religious functions and celebrations of Pius IX College, which was at the centre of the Province of Buenos Aires. In 1952 began his long martyrdom, caused by Parkinson's Disease, but he was an example to all of resignation and patience, offering his sufferings for the perseverance of Salesians and for the increase of vocations. He was still able to devote himself to the ministry of confessions, especially for the college boys, who esteemed and sought after his spiritual direction.

*Cleric Stephen Cukla*

\* 8.2.1946, † Cordoba (Argentina) 28.2.1968, age 22, 4 profession.

A young man of wonderful promise for the Congregation, his life was cut short by a tragic accident at a camp for clerics. He had frequented with much profit the course for a doctorate in literature. Pious, observant, a worker and of keen apostolic spirit, he gave hopes of becoming an excellent Salesian priest.

*Fr. Robert Cuttier*

\* 4.6.1907, † Puerto Casado (Paraguay) 14.10.1967, age 60, 41 profession, 30 priesthood.

He worked in various colleges and then in the missions with a simplicity and humility which gave no doubt as to what he really valued. Love for a life of piety was one of his characteristics and in his



ministry he gave the impression of a man of God, intent only on saving souls for Christ. He knew how to win the good-will of all, but especially of the boys, many of whom he guided to the aspirantate.

*Fr. Stephen Czerw*

\* 4.10.1900, † Zamosc (Poland) 16.1.1968, age 67, 37 profession, 29 priesthood.

*Fr. Joseph Deane*

\* 15.11.1921, † London (England) 6.4.1968, age 46, 28 profession, 19 priesthood.

Gentle and serene as a priest, wherever he worked — in India as a zealous missionary and at Turin as secretary of one of the Major Superiors — he knew how to win esteem and good-will by his own goodness and deep religious spirit. He preserved his serenity even during his long and painful periods in various hospitals, edifying the nursing staff and whoever approached him.

*Fr. Joseph D'Hollander*

\* 25.6.1920, † Brussels (Belgium) 20.3.1968, age 47, 26 profession, 17 priesthood.

His simplicity and cordiality, his goodness of heart, his humble, hidden but entire dedication, made him loved by all as a teacher and educator. His greatest joy was to be surrounded by boys; his love for them made him sacrifice himself during the holidays in the summer camps at Antwerp and Oud-Heverlee. During the last months of his long illness, his only regret was that he could no longer be with his boys.

*Coad. Nicholas Donno*

\* 27.3.1898, † Ypacarai (Paraguay) 31.10.1967, age 69, 39 profession.

*Fr. John Faccaro*

\* 25.4.1880, † Turin (Italy) 16.3.1968, age 87, 69 profession, 64 priesthood; Rector 3 years.

He spent almost all his life between the houses of Valsalice and St. John the Evangelist, leaving to numerous generations of pupils the unforgettable memory of an authentic and holy son of Don Bosco.

A cultured man, he prepared his teaching of classics well and taught as though it were a sacred ministry. For almost 40 years he was the assiduous, dedicated and much sought after director of souls in the church of St. John the Evangelist. His goodness, gentleness and patience reflected his intense interior life, and formed about his person an aura of serenity and faith which did great good and contributed not a little towards love and esteem of the Salesian Congregation.

*Fr. Joseph Ferrando*

\* 7.3.1909, † Montevideo (Uruguay) 21.2.1968, age 58, 39 profession, 30 priesthood.

As a pupil of the « Tallares Don Bosco » he felt the divine call to Salesian life, and his whole field of activity was totally Salesian: for youth. It can be said that he literally lived for them. His devotion to Mary Help of Christians was great and sincere. In the last years of his life God gave him a new mission, that of suffering, but he took this cross serenely from the hands of God.

*Fr. Claude Fontana*

\* 4.6.1916, † Puerto Madryn (Argentina) 15.2.1968, age 51, 25 profession, 18 priesthood; Rector 6 years.

A late vocation, he knew how to assimilate perfectly the spirit of Don Bosco. He was a zealous Rector and Parish Priest and worked particularly for vocations, which he attracted to the Congregation by his humble and good-natured spirit.

*Fr. Anthony Gavinelli*

\* 27.11.1885, † Bologna (Italy) 31.5.1968, age 82, 64 profession, 55 priesthood; Rector 6 years.

His activities were tied up mainly with spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart, of whose Temple in Bologna he was Rector for 35 years. His great priestly zeal found its best instrument in his special gifts as an organizer, winning him great esteem from church and civil authorities. Because of his efforts, the Temple of the Sacred Heart became the centre of many spiritual and material initiatives. which helped him to set up various works in and about the city, as, for example,



the parish of Don Bosco, a special boon in the poorer areas for youth and adults. Behind a seemingly reserved personality he nevertheless had a warm heart for all. He was a firm and faithful promoter of genuine Salesian tradition.

*Fr. Francis Gaffney*

\* 8.3.1906, † Cheam (England) 12.6.1968, age 62, 40 profession, 30 priesthood; Rector 1 year.

A man of great heart, he loved the Congregation tremendously; he was the friend of all, considerate in his dealings with others, showing these gifts as a teacher and then as a parish priest for many years. His fatherly and sympathetic figure, his fine example of priestly and apostolic life, has left an imperishable memory in the hearts of those who had the privilege of knowing him. His passing was felt by the whole Province and by a large circle of pupil and friends.

*Coad. Philip Gomez*

\* 23.6.1891, † Buenos Aires (Argentina) 12.5.1968, age 76, 50 profession.

After having been porter for some time at the novitiate at Bernal he went to Pius IX College to take charge of the workers, and from 1930 he had charge of the « Don Bosco Library ». He acquired a well-merited prestige for his goodness, wisdom and prudence which he used to advise all those who came to him for consultation on books or other matters.

*Fr. Frederic Gorla*

\* 9.2.1904, † Cumiana (Italy) 16.5.1968, age 64, 46 profession, 37 priesthood.

His confreres admired in him his faithful and almost scrupulous observance of the Rule, as a sign of his faith and generosity with God. For long years he had the delicate task of charge of the Salesian Bulletin, to which he gave perfect dedication. In the years he spent among the aspirants at Ivrea, Castelnuovo, Bagnolo and Cumiana, he dedicated himself to his teaching, to the confessional and to the cultivation of vocations with indefatigable zeal, perseverance and fortitude, being always precise, humble, and of edifying piety.

*Fr. John Hefter*

\* 4.3.1903, † Callao (Peru) 20.11.1967, age 64, 40 profession, 34 priesthood; Rector 16 years.

Rector in various houses and then parish priest at Callao, he was the living example of a good pastor who gave his life for the good of souls. The big port of Callao was part of his parish and the whole population liked him very well because of his illimitable charity. He died whilst teaching Christian Doctrine, which had always been his passion. His burial was an apotheosis never witnessed before in Callao, especially regarding the poor who had ever been his predilection.

*Coad Lisardo Herrero*

\* 5.5.1898, † Villena (Spain) 7.3.1968, age 69, 46 profession.

Throughout his Salesian life he worked with great zeal in teaching and in looking after the Dominic Savio Clubs, as well as with the Past Pupils of the colleges in the Levant region. His characteristic frankness and joviality, together with his untiring activity, won him the esteem of whoever approached him. He worked right until a few moments before his death, falling at the breach.

*Coad. Francis Kammermeier*

\* 20.10.1895, † Benediktbeuren (Germany) 1.2.1968, age 72, 41 profession.

A late vocation of peasant origin, he went to Venezuela and became most useful in the agricultural schools. Becoming ill, he returned to his homeland and was made Economer of the houses at Bamberg, Marienhausen and Benediktbeuern in turn. An indefatigable worker, he was always punctual for even the most menial work, a thoroughly useful coadjutor in the material affairs of the house.

*Fr. Charles Klaus*

\* 4.10.1903, † Civitavecchia (Italy) 21.1.1968, age 64, 40 profession, 33 priesthood.

Leaving Germany in 1927 he went to Venezuela and stayed there 20 years. In 1948 obedience sent him to Spain and then to the Roman Province. His main work was in the pastoral ministry as confessor, a man of faith and dedication even in the midst of great



difficulties. He climbed the purifying calvary of sorrow, praying and suffering for vocations.

*Fr. Aloysius Lagutaine*

\* 4.1.1925, † Milan (Italy) 7.6.1968, age 43, 26 profession, 17 priesthood.

He came from a distinguished and religious family that gave another son to the Dominican Order. His characteristic was a great zeal for pastoral work, which he engaged in even whilst studying for a degree in architecture, which he was unable to complete. He accepted the final sacrifice with consciousness and faith.

*Coad. Edelmiro Lopez*

\* 20.8.1893, † Santa Cruz (Tenerife) 27.3.1968, age 75, 49 profession.

Director of music and teacher, a Salesian who was exemplary, humble, cultured, he was an indefatigable worker. In his last years he bore with a great spirit of faith and resignation the hard sufferings with which God tried him, meeting death serenely.

*Fr. Clement Lussiana*

\* 1.2.1883, † Turin 2.3.1968, age 85, 67 profession, 55 priesthood; Rector 6 years.

Fr. Lussiana belonged to that unforgettable family of great Salesians who at Valsalice, close to the tomb of Don Bosco, trained numerous groups of young confreres for the Congregation. He was always distinguished by his gentlemanly, smiling goodness, by the fine priestly spirit of his apostolate and by his generosity in all his work. For many years he was the incomparable Rector of the Oratory, giving the boys an intense spiritual formation, treating them with cordial benevolence but nevertheless habituating them to a strong sense of duty and winning their greatest affection. He bore all the characteristics of that wonderful second generation of Salesians.

*Coad. Joseph Marzio*

\* 10.4.1911, † Caselette (Italy) 21.4.1968, age 57, 36 profession.

A Salesian of strong character, indicated also by his robust stature, he spent the first ten years of his religious life in the Land of Jesus,

Palestine, and the rest in various houses of the Central Province. At the beginning of this year an insidious illness overtook him against which medical help was useless. Although so strong and robust, he accepted the reality of it all admirably, full of trust in God, saying he was fortunate to die a Salesian and grateful to the confreres who assisted him to the end.

*Coad. Laurence Meindl*

\* 11.1.1883, † Burghausen (Germany) 12.2.1968, age 85, 45 profession.

He came to the house at Burghausen as an aspirant and returned there after his novitiate, remaining until his death. Although he had learned shoe-making, he hardly ever exercised his craft. He was a coadjutor of the old type as dreamed of by Don Bosco: laborious, serene, religious.

*Coad. Peter Miele*

\* 6.7.1891, † Juazeiro (Brazil) 14.10.1967, age 76, 44 profession.

*Fr. Mario Mondelli*

\* 9.11.1901, † Nave (Italy) 29.3.1968, age 66, 20 profession, 42 priesthood.

A most zealous priest of the diocese of Lodi, he became a Salesian in order to carry the Gospel to Latin America, where he proved a true apostle first in the Argentine and then in Paraguay. Obligated through illness to return to Italy, he kept up his interest in Paraguay through cultivating benefactors for it. Characteristic of Fr. Mondelli was his extraordinary joviality, fruit of interior joy, and this multiplied the efficacy of his word and example, especially in the direction of souls.

*Clerical Novice Francis Ottocento*

\* 20.7.1951, † Latiana (Italy) 27.3.1968, age 16, a few days after deathbed profession.

*Coad. John Pagliolico*

\* 12.12.1898, † Buenos Aires (Argentina) 6.2.1968, age 69, 49 profession.

The hidden life of sacrifice of this good confrere came to light very clearly in his latter years. In spite of a serious heart complaint he



worked with enthusiasm in the Festive Oratory and parish schools; he was always ready for any work and sang well at the religious functions. He left behind him the example of total donation to God and of an ardent Salesian apostolate.

*Coad. John Paredes*

\* 26.5.1889, † Guayaquil (Ecuador) 27.4.1968, age 78, 47 profession.

A good and humble religious, he spent his Salesian life united with God through a simple and fervent piety. He was ready for any job, whether as tailor, economer, linenarian, sacristan or porter.

*Fr. Julian Pincepoche*

\* 23.12.1882, † Marans (France) 10.12.1967, age 66 profession, 58 priesthood; Rector 2 years.

Don Rua had told him: « Don't worry... you'll live to your eighties ». The prophecy was fulfilled. He left behind the example of a good and faithful priestly life. In spite of his strong temperament, he could say at the end of his life, with all simplicity and humility: « I don't think I ever made any enemies ».

*Cleric Dominic Savio Reis*

\* 5.11.1940, † Puerto Madryn (Argentine) 15.2.1968, age 27, 9 profession.

Son of a patriarchal family (he had 16 brothers) he was educated right from the start at the school of Don Bosco. He learned to love the poorest and to work for them with preference and joy in the festive oratory.

*Fr. Stephen Saldivar*

\* 11.11.1911, † Concepcion (Paraguay) 3.9.1967, age 55, 38 profession, 23 priesthood.

*Coad. Ferdinand Schiappacasse*

\* 14.9.1909, † General Piran (Argentine) 1.2.1968, age 42 profession.

*Fr. Emanuel Sicker*

\* 25.12.1876, † Guatemala (Guatemala) 11.5.1968, age 91, 73 profession, 66 priesthood; Rector 37 years.

With the death of Fr. Sicker we lose one of the oldest and most well-deserving Salesians of our work in the republic of Guatemala. After his novitiate at Ivrea and studentate at Valsalice, he went to America. For almost 30 years he spent his youthful energies in the provinces of Argentine, Peru and Ecuador. When he was about 50 and at the peak of his maturity and efficiency, he was sent to Central America in order to start the Salesian work in Guatemala. In this mission he spent his last 40 years and to his zeal is due the flourishing work of the six houses in Guatemala. A much esteemed preacher and much sought after spiriutal director, he enjoyed the esteem of the authorities and people: this was very much in evidence at his funeral.

*Fr. Joseph Spadavecchia*

\* 11.9.1877, † Avellaneda (Argentine) 16.10.1967, age 90, 73 profession, 63 priesthood.

*Fr. John Tedeschi*

\* 3.7.1888, † Soverato (Italy) 25.4.1968, age 79, 62 profession, 43 priesthood; Rector 11 years.

A simple soul, an indefatigable worker, wholly given over to the good of others, he attracted the sympathy of the confreres and boys, amongst whom he always distributed little treasures of wisdom that sprang up from his good and generous heart. A capable teacher, Rector and Headmaster of no common merit, he was awarded a gold medal by the Ministry of Public Instruction.

*Fr. Aloysius Terrone*

\* 0.6.1875, † Generalate (Turin) 26.4.1968, age 92, 75 profession, 70 priesthood; Rector 48 years, Novice Master 25 years.

Last November he celebrated the 70th anniversary of his priesthood at the altar of Mary Help of Christians, assisted personally by the Rector Major, his former novice. He died with all the serenity of a patriarch, after having repeated: « I await my time; it has to come even for me »!



A Salesian since 1893, he obtained degrees in philosophy and theology at the Gregorian, and then, after a few years of teaching he was made Rector of various houses in Piedmont, Venice, Latium, Sicily, and Austria. But his specific apostolate was above all that of Novice Master in seven houses of formation, where he trained hundreds of Salesians.

In 1935 the Rector Major, Fr. Ricaldone, called him to collaborate at his side. To efficacy of speech and action. Fr. Terrone knew how to unite that of the pen and he wrote ascetical, apologetical and recreational works, his Salesian writings reflecting authentically the spirit of Don Bosco. Serene, optimistic, capable of understanding the realities of life and men, genial in his thoughts and initiatives, he encouraged everyone who approached him, knowing also how to adapt himself admirably to all the good ideas of modern times. His was a genuinely Salesian spirit and one may well call him a « classic » of Salesianity.

*Coad. Anthony Tronza*

\* 21.2.1903, † Rome 21.12.1967, age 64, 34 profession.

He was at the Institute of Pius IX from 1934 in charge of the workshops: in this delicate and difficult mission he proved to all that he was a true religious having at heart only the highest good of the house and Congregation which he loved so well. Stricken by infarction in 1964, he accepted this suffering with deep Christian spirit, seeing in it the hand of God who wished to purify him and call him to the mission of suffering.

*Fr. Salvador Trovato*

\* 15.9.1906, † Catania (Italy) 27.2.1968, age 61, 44 profession, 35 priesthood.

A Salesian of genuine stamp, he showed himself always faithful to the rules and to Don Bosco. Of great simplicity and goodness, always serene and smiling, he attracted the sympathies of the boys, whether pupils or oratorians, and of their parents. He worked with a spirit of sacrifice and abnegation, never sparing himself, leaving behind him the bright example of a good Salesian.

*Fr. John Trussardi*

\* 12.12.1904, † Bologna (Italy) 19.2.1968, age 63, 36 profession, 28 priesthood.

*Coad. Ignatius Urtassun*

\* 4.7.1875, † Madrid (Spain) 30.4.1968, age 92, 70 profession.

Aged 18, he entered the aspirantate at Sarrià (Barcellona) when Don Bosco's visit there was still a vivid memory. There he consolidated his vocation and learnt a tender love for Mary Help of Christians. He was always faithful in religious observance and a lover of work. On festal days it was a pleasure to see the way he treated the Oratory boys. After receiving holy viaticum he asked pardon from and thanked the confreres who were gathered about him.

*Coad. Raphael Venturi*

\* 23.1.1884, † Bologna (Italy) 19.3.1968, age 84, 61 profession.

He spent almost 56 years of his religious life in the house at Bologna, leaving behind him a vivid memory of observance, amiability, thoroughness at duty, and all elevated to a spiritual level. He was a past-master at bookbinding and received high recognition for his artistic work in Italy and abroad. Nevertheless he took all the honours and numerous awards for the school rather than for himself — a marvellous example of modesty and humility. This is the type of confrere Don Bosco wished for his professional schools.

*Fr. Aloysius Vizolo*

\* 6.4.1872, † Marsala (Italy), 23.5.1968, age 96, 73 profession, 64 priesthood.

He was the oldest confrere in the province. He was a most popular confessor because of his kind and luminous words. Possessed of a simple, limpid soul, he loved the Congregation and Don Bosco with sincere and enthusiastic affection. With edifying resignation he bore the sufferings of his last illness, offering them up for vocations for the Congregation.

*Fr. Joseph Walter*

\* 13.4.1907, † Wurzburg (Germany) 17.2.1968, age 60, 42 profession, 34 priesthood.



*Fr. Henry Willems*

\* 15.10.1911, † St. Georges-sur-Meuse (Belgium) 10.6.1968, age 56, 33 profession, 35 priesthood.

A congenital bone deformation impeded Fr. Willems from a great deal of apostolate and various offices in the Congregation. But he was a fine example of a Salesian assistant and above all with the smallest boys. Medical science was able, after several attempts, to restore movement to his limbs, but a sudden cardiac attack took him off within a few hours. Fr. Willems faced up to death, requested the sacraments and with faith and serenity awaited the meeting with his God.

*Fr. Costantine Zajkowski*

\* 6.10.1878, † Rio Grande (Brazil) 7.3.1968, age 89, 69 profession, 63 priesthood; Rector 10 years.

His long and venerable life was spent entirely in the service of the Congregation. A missionary in Brazil for many years, he was a most zealous confessor, indefatigable worker, exemplary priest, a man of intense religious observance and edifying piety. He was a true apostle of devotion to Our Lady. He suffered and did all he could for vocations.

## 2º elenco 1968

N.	COGNOME E NOME	DATA DI NASCITA	ISPETTORIA	LOCALITÀ E DATA DI MORTE	ETÀ
37	Coad. APARICO Antonio	25-1-1877	Campo Grande	Campo Gr. (Brasil)	4-12-1967 90
38	Coad. APRILE Pietro	20-4-1911	Centrale	Piossasco (Italia)	16-3-1968 56
39	Sac. ATZORI Esilarato	19-12-1893	Venezuela	Caracas (Ven.)	23-4-1968 74
40	Coad. BARBERO Teresio C.	11-2-1887	Buenos Aires	Bs. Aires (Argent.)	10-2-1968 81
41	Coad. BEYER Franc. Sav.	23-1-1903	Australia	Sunbury (Austr.)	12-4-1968 65
42	Sac. BOKOR Giuseppe	22-2-1897	Slovacchia	Bratislava (Slov.)	8-4-1968 71
43	Sac. CAVALLINI Dino	7-1-1910	Ligure	La Spezia (Italia)	12-5-1968 58
44	Sac. CAZZANIGA Martin	30-9-1896	Buenos Aires	Bs. Aires (Arg.)	29-1-1968 71
45	Ch. CUKLA Stefano	8-2-1946	Rosario (Arg.)	Córdoba (Argent.)	28-2-1968 22
46	Sac. CUTTIER Roberto	4-6-1907	Paraguay	Puerto Casado (P.)	14-10-1967 60
47	Sac. CZERW Stefano	4-10-1900	Kraków (Polonia)	Zamosc (Polonia)	16-1-1968 67
48	Sac. DEANE Giuseppe	15-11-1921	Centrale	Londra (Inghilt.)	6-4-1968 46
49	Sac. D'HOLLANDER Gius.	25-6-1920	Belgio N.	Brussel (Belgio)	20-3-1968 47
50	Coad. DONNO Nicola	27-3-1898	Paraguay	Ypacarai (Par.)	31-10-1967 69
51	Sac. FACCARO Giovanni	25-4-1880	Subalpina	Torino - S. Giov.	16-3-1968 87
52	Sac. FERRANDO Giuseppe	7-3-1909	Uruguay	Montevideo (Ur.)	21-2-1968 58
53	Sac. FONTANA Claudio	4-6-1916	Rosario	Puerto Madryn (Arg.)	15-2-1968 51
54	Sac. GAFFNEY Francesco	8-3-1906	Inglese	Cheam (Inghilt.)	12-6-1968 62
55	Sac. GAVINELLI Antonio	27-11-1885	Lombarda	Bologna (Italia)	31-5-1968 82
56	Coad. GOMEZ Filippo	23-8-1891	Bs. Aires	B. Aires (Argent.)	12-5-1968 76
57	Sac. GORIA Federico	9-2-1904	Centrale	Cumiana (Italia)	16-5-1968 64
58	Sac. HEFTER Giovanni	4-3-1903	Perù	Callao (Perù)	20-11-1967 64
59	Coad. HERRERO Lisardo	5-5-1898	Valencia (Sp.)	Villena (Spagna)	7-3-1968 69
60	Coad. KAMMERMEIER Francesco	20-10-1895	München (Ger.)	Benediktbeuern (Ger.)	1-2-1968 72
61	Sac. KLAUS Carlo	4-10-1903	Romana	Civitavecchia	21-2-1968 64
62	Sac. LAGUTAIN Luigi	4-1-1925	Subalpina	Milano	7-6-1968 43
63	Coad. LOPEZ Edelmiro	20-8-1893	Córdoba (SP)	Santa Cruz de Tenerife (Spagna)	27-3-1968 75
64	Sac. LUSSIANA Clemente	1-2-1883	Subalpina	Torino-Valsalice	2-3-1968 85
65	Coad. MARZIO Giuseppe	10-4-1911	Centrale	Caselette (Italia)	21-4-1968 57
66	Coad. MEINDL Lorenzo	11-1-1883	München (Ger.)	Burghausen (Germ.)	12-2-1968 85
67	Coad. MIELE Pietro	6-7-1891	Recife (Bras.)	Juazeiro (Brasil)	14-10-1967 76
68	Sac. MONELLI Mario	9-11-1901	Lombarda	Nave (Italia)	29-3-1968 66
69	Ch.n. OTTOCENTO Francesco	20-7-1951	Romana	Latina (Italia)	27-3-1968 16
70	Coad. PAGLIOLICO Giovanni	12-12-1898	Bs. Aires (Arg.)	Bs. Aires (Arg.)	6-2-1968 69
71	Coad. PAREDES Giovanni	26-5-1889	Quito (Equatore)	Guayaquil (Equat.)	27-4-1968 78
72	Sac. PINCEPOTCHE Giuliano	23-12-1882	Paris	Marans (Francia)	10-12-1967 85
73	Ch. REIS Domenico Savio	5-11-1940	Belo Horizonte	Puerto Madryn (Arg.)	15-2-1968 27
74	Sac. SALDIVAR Stefano	11-11-1911	Paraguay	Concepción (Parag.)	3-9-1967 55
75	Coad. SCHIAPPACASSE Ferd.	14-9-1909	La Plata (Arg.)	General Pirán (Arg.)	1-2-1968 58
76	Sac. SICKER Emmanuele	25-12-1876	Centro America	Guatemala	11-5-1968 91
77	Sac. SPADAVECCHIA Gius.	11-9-1877	La Plata (Arg.)	Avellaneda (Arg.)	16-10-1967 90
78	Sac. TEDESCHI Giovanni	3-7-1888	Napoletana	Soverato (Italia)	25-4-1968 79
79	Sac. TERRONE Luigi	10-6-1875	Centrale	Torino-Oratorio	26-4-1968 92
80	Coad. TRONZA Antonio	21-2-1903	Romana	Roma	21-12-1967 64
81	Sac. TROVATO Salvatore	15-9-1906	Sicula	Catania (Italia)	27-2-1968 61
82	Sac. TRUSSARDI Giov.	12-12-1904	Lombarda	Bologna (Italia)	19-2-1968 63
83	Coad. URTASUN Ignazio	4-7-1875	Madrid (Sp.)	Madrid (Sp.)	30-4-1968 92
84	Coad. VENTURI Raffaele	23-1-1884	Lombarda	Bologna (Italia)	19-3-1968 84
85	Sac. VIZOLO Luigi	6-4-1872	Sicula	Marsala (Italia)	23-5-1968 96
86	Sac. WALTER Giuseppe	13-4-1907	München (Ger.)	Würzburg (Germ.)	17-2-1968 60
87	Sac. WILLEMS Enrico	15-10-1911	Belgio Sud	St-Georges-sur-Meuse (Belgio)	10-6-1968 56
88	Sac. ZAJKOWSKI Costantino	6-10-1878	Porto Alegre	Rio Grande (Brasil)	7-3-1968 89