



ACTS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY

SUMMARY

I. Letter of the Rector Major

Fraternal Solidarity in action — Vocations crisis — General aspects of the crisis — Remote causes of vocations crisis — The crisis in the Congregation — Brethren who have left the priesthood — Our responsibility — A word to the young — Crisis of vocations and crisis of faith — Our vocation a total donation to God — Emotional compromise — Warnings that induce thought — But none of us is an island — Frustrating attitudes — Elements that nourish vocations: Prayer, Charity, Poverty, Joy — Mistaken and ruinous attitudes — A motive of trust — Vital problem: new vocations — The Aspirantates — Renewal without extremes — A most important point: selection.

II. Special General Chapter (in this issue: nothing)

III. Instructions and norms (in this issue: nothing)

IV. Notifications

Participation of lay religious in the government of clerical religious institutions — Letter on the formation of priests — The new rite of religious profession — New bishops — New provincials — Course of spiritual and pastoral renewal — Course of formation for promoters of development — Fraternal solidarity — Prolongation of temporal vows.

V. Activities of the Superior Council and projects of general interest

VI. Documents

Decree on the participation of lay religious in the government of clerical religious institutes — Letter of the Sacred Congregation of the Clergy on the permanent formation of priests (summary) — Letter of the Rector Major to the confreres at Caracas.

VII. Pontifical Magisterium

Living according to the Faith is essential to conciliar renewal — Follow the Council to halt present troubles — Obedience and Liberty in the Church — Liberty and Authority go Hand in Hand — Increasing Community Spirit perfects Priestly Life — Penance. A guide to Hope and Joy — Greater Spiritual Intensity should mark Lenten Season — Christian perfection demands an Inquiry into Fundamentals.

VIII. Necrology (1st list of 1970)

I. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

Turin.

April, 1970.

My dear confreres and sons,

Here I am again for our periodical meeting whilst the whole Congregation is eagerly preparing for the Special General Chapter. News from all the provinces shows the interest and seriousness with which the Rector Major's invitation is being taken for a personal, conscientious and enlightened participation.

We too, here at headquarters, are trying to do our part. Thought is already being given to the venue and all that will be needed there. The technical commission is being set up for the systematic collocation of the material that will come from the Provincial Chapters. We are also studying the formation of the five pre-capitular commissions that will have the delicate task of preparing the basic reports to be studied by the capitular commissions.

As you will realize we are here treating of a most important task whose successful outcome will depend so much on the preparation and Salesian sensibility of the members of the five commissions. On the other hand, judging also from the experience of other religious orders, the beneficial development of the work of the Special Chapter is strictly bound up with the serious and systematic preparation brought to it and this, surely, is something that all of us together wish to do.

If therefore the provinces have to make certain sacrifices in order to provide the confreres needed at headquarters for all this precious work, I ask you to make these willingly, convinced that it is question of a primary service of collaboration in the interests of the whole Congregation.

Fraternal Solidarity in action

In this number of the *Acts* you will find a long and comprehensive list of all the sums of money received for the Fraternal Solidarity Campaign, together with the destinations — this list includes the previous one already published.

I wish hereby to express my heartfelt gratitude to the individual confreres, groups and communities who have found so many ways and means suggested by true fraternal love to help their brethren in need. The confreres and communities that have benefited will know how to find their own way of expressing their appreciation whilst I do so here in the name of all of them.

I know that this campaign is still under way in many provinces and in the next issue of the *Acts* we shall try to publish a new list including these. In the meantime I would like to invite all to take part in this act of fraternal charity which is simultaneously a powerful bond of union.

Especially in our conditions, charity cannot be just a garment worn on special feastdays: for us it should be our everyday garb.

Lent and Advent especially are occasions in each year when we are urged to show our charity towards our brethren in a positive manner and I expect to meet you there in this campaign of solidarity, sure you will not fail me.

Vocations crisis

I would like to treat now of a subject on which I have been thinking quite a while. It is an extremely topical matter that by its very nature affects us intimately, a problem of equal interest to the whole life of the Congregation and of each one of us, viz. the problem or crisis of vocations.

This is not a new phenomenon that affects the whole Church but one that has become much more serious and worrying in the last few years, not even our own Congregation being able to escape it. It is true that up to a few years ago the general balance of vocations each year was positive, but it is also true that whilst various provinces showed a

consoling increase of vocations, the general balance for the Congregation as a whole has for some years not been as outstanding as in the past.

We must face up to this situation with great humility, sincerity and serene courage, without wasting time in sterile moans or emotional accusations. Facing up to the crisis occurring among those whom we would never have even vaguely doubted, people who, because of the high position they occupied, or the functions they fulfilled, seemed so secure from every attack, we must avoid any pharisaical sense of scandal and recollect ourselves in prayer. We must ask God to help us, in so far as it concerns us, to view this situation with the greatest objectivity, tracing the causes, seeking possible remedies.

This problem, I repeat, concerns all of us, for we have a vocation which we must not only safeguard and defend but, even more so, strengthen and render fruitful in these our times.

Moreover, since none of us is an island and each one, unwittingly or otherwise, has an influence on the vocation of his neighbour, and on the one beyond that, and so on, let us feel in no small way responsible both for the vocations of the confreres surrounding us and for the new vocations which the Congregation needs in order to live and continue to fulfil its mission in the Church.

As I have hinted above, the crisis of religious and priestly vocations is prevalent throughout the Church, some areas being at a low extreme, others much more fortunate.

General aspects of the crisis

The Union of Superiors General has tried to study this phenomenon and to get it studied seriously in all its various aspects on a world scale, and I shall refer very briefly to some of the results that are also of interest to ourselves.

This crisis occurs more strongly in countries in which, until recently, the ecclesiastical structures have been firm and more or less static; then came a step forward that was too swift and for which the local mentality was not prepared. In many countries the situation was complicated also by social, economic and political factors. It was noticed that defections were fewer where life was more tough and difficult.

There are few defections among missionaries, among priests and religious of the East where vocations still remain pretty firm; even among religious dedicated to the ministry and work among laity there has been a relatively lesser number of defections. Thus far a geographical synthesis of the vocational crisis.

In the above-mentioned study we find also a necessarily rather general diagnosis; nevertheless it is interesting to note how the study commissions, even though dealing with countries and situations far distant and different, arrived substantially at the same conclusions.

One fact commonly noted is « a great weakening in faith: everything is subjected to discussion, the content of faith, dogmas, the Church, authority, obedience, solemn pledges; the fundamental value of vocation is questioned; in giving great value to the sacramental aspect of matrimony, religious life is devalued; the Council, the Magisterium, etc., are ignored. Badly digested ideas of a more or less marginal philosophy or theology in evident contrast to the Magisterium are accepted without serious examination. The desire to know all and to test everything so as to be "really with it" leads slowly but surely towards this weakening of faith ».

In their desire for an apostolate that is often reduced to very temporary obligations, many affirm that they want to be « *with* the rest », whilst the facts demonstrate that they are merely « *like* the rest ». The result of this is an ever more pallid and weak spiritual and religious life. On the other hand, the inefficacy of so many acts of worship, the sacraments and practices that have become mere routine creates a state of apathy, an emptiness, a search for « something else » or « someone else ». This explains especially the search for female relationships and contacts motivated by the activities of the ministry, the excessive familiarity with young people, resulting in moral falls that one seeks to justify on grounds of doctrine and faith.

It is also true that quite often, because of a complex of structural and human causes, the community itself does not offer the subject that warmth of charity which every human being feels the need of, and so he seeks compensations outside the community.

There is also a crisis of faith in the structures of both the Church and the religious life or in the actual works of the religious institutes.

Remote causes of vocations crisis

To all this can be added other remote elements and motives which the various study-commissions found everywhere present in the crises: a poor process of selection that allowed those without authentic vocation to go forward through a lack of proper investigation in the period of formation; defects in the actual training which did not succeed in bringing certain aspects of human life to proper maturity and so brought about a crisis regarding perseverance in vocation.

One element that is never missing in the vocational crisis is that of a falling-off in, and often a total abandonment of prayer, and this is necessarily bound up with the weakening of faith.

Finally, it is recognized that the mainly negative publicity given to the problems and crises in the priestly and religious vocation, especially regarding defections (particularly some of note), has produced a depressing effect in souls that are uncertain or weak, aggravating in them a state of crisis and accelerating an unfortunately negative conclusion.

This is the very sad picture that results from the study promoted by the Superiors General. As I said earlier, I have had necessarily to synthesize but I think I have given enough material to make us aware of both the actual situation and the more general causes of the crisis, realizing that it affects ourselves also, since we cannot pretend to live in a reserve or a « garden enclosed ».

But precisely on this account, whilst recognizing that many of the observations made by the Superiors General apply to us also and that the remedies are already implicit in the descriptions of the diagnosis, it seems to me not only useful but also a duty to say something more specific concerning our own situation. After all, in a family of adults one ought to speak clearly even about sad events.

The crisis in the Congregation

Up to 1964-65 the crisis was limited to only some provinces, being balanced in the Congregation as a whole by the increase in many others.

Then in 1966-67 one began to notice a certain light downward

curve which has continued, even if not violently, in the past two years.

I think it opportune to give you some data so that you may have a clear knowledge of the situation.

Between the years 1965-69, all told, the average difference in numbers of members in the Congregation was actually about 250 confreres. To this number can be added about 150 confreres behind the Iron Curtain who either died or left in the last decade and about whom previously we could get no information.

Many provinces still have an annual increase in vocations. In Europe the province of Yugoslavia (from which Croatia will soon be detached) showed between 1965-69 an increase of 112 confreres. A good increase has also been shown in some other provinces in Europe. However, the general state of the provinces of Europe and North America shows a diminution, in some cases rather severe; the defections are not being made up for by new vocations, whilst the greater part of the provinces just about hold their own.

The provinces of Latin America in general show a downward movement — some very noticeably — even if some still show a constant line of increase.

With two exceptions, the provinces of Asia show consoling increases, Vietnam and the Philippines leading. Australia, too, has increased between 1965-69.

I am sure you would like to know, too, the state of our novitiates during this present year, 1969-70.

According to the data arriving at headquarters, the over-all number of novices is 673, subdivided thus: Europe 359 (Italy 105; Spain 120; the rest 134, excluding Czechoslovakia and Hungary); America, including U.S.A., 186; Asia 118 (India 69; Vietnam 35); Australia 10; in Africa the novitiates have been suspended. Eight other provinces have also suspended the novitiate, prolonging the preliminary course of studies.

One observation that should make us think is the notable lessening, and in certain provinces a complete absence of coadjutor novices. This fact should be considered seriously by all of us, but especially by provincials, with a view also to the General Chapter. In our Congregation the Salesian Coadjutor is a component essential to its very nature and mission.

Concluding this exposition, the over-all diminution of confreres is something which we have to take note of, even painfully.

Brethren who have left the priesthood

That having been said, we must remember that there are two sources of passivity and it is precisely on these that we must get moving: 1) stem the losses, the real losses of vocations that have already progressed some way in Salesian formation; 2) increase new vocations, authentic vocations.

Regarding losses, whilst there is always cause for sadness, our hearts feel profoundly sorrowful when it comes to our brethren who leave the priesthood. The crisis of these brothers of ours has certainly arouse the most serious fact of these recent years.

Last year newspapers published statistics of priests reduced to the lay state, and among the religious institutes our Congregation appeared sixth on the list. As pointed out by the *Osservatore Romano*, however, we have to note that in these statistics many cases are included that go back decades but which were only recently regularized, and hence, relative to the total number of our priests, the percentage was actually much lower than that indicated by the newspapers.

But it is also true that such losses have continued and that, even in view of the corrected number, they are still a matter of profound sorrow to us, especially regarding confreres whose age or position arouse an even deeper sense of pain and sadness.

In 1969 priest confreres reduced to the lay state numbered exactly 59. Of these 10 had been irregular for many years, only now being regularized. This against the more than 11,000 priests in the Congregation at present.

An examination of what these poor brothers of ours have written would be interesting and certain admissions of theirs would make us ponder deeply. I feel I must mention one thing that often arises: on leaving the Congregation, by far the great majority express deep gratitude for all the good they received from it. Not long ago one of them actually wrote this to me: « I owe everything to the Congregation, which has been to me a generous and kind mother ». The same thought has been expressed in different words by so many others. But all this

cannot expel our sorrow and cannot exempt us from an examen of conscience.

Our responsibility

Each of us without distinction must ask himself in all sincerity of heart what responsibility he has concerning these defections of our brethren. I know what the response will be of some but I refute it, saying: We cannot know and still less can we interfere in the mystery of human conscience; these brothers of ours will have to answer to their conscience and to God Himself, but for us there remains the sacrosanct duty of asking ourselves: What was it that we could have done at the right time as superiors, as brothers, to prevent that final step being taken by this one or other confrere of ours? And what can and should we do today to prevent it happening to others? This question concerns us as individuals, as communities, as men who rule at whatever level, as confreres who always have a certain responsibility, whatever it be, as a confessor, prefect, economist, assistant, etc. This question involves a whole mountain of problems and duties for all of us, even though we must admit that it cannot always be said that everything depends on us; but I repeat, each one must take note of his own responsibility in the matter.

This holds, moreover, not merely concerning the priests who leave us, but all others also, and in a special way the young (among whom the percentage of defections is highest), for the latter are besieged, violently, by such a turmoil of ideas, problems or beliefs floating about everywhere. We have to approach them personally (and this holds especially for Rectors) so as to show them our affection, to get them talking, to listen to them, to understand them. In an atmosphere of sincere friendship it is much easier to clear up matters, to separate the gold from the dross, and then to direct, guide, correct, etc.

If it is true that each one is responsible for his own vocation, it is no less correct that so many elements and values that defend, strengthen and render it joyously vital, are fatally bound up with the work of each one of us, but especially of those who ought to be the very backbone of our communities.

A word to the young

And what shall I say to the young confreres, priests or otherwise? Among other things, you impatiently await a Church and a Congregation different from the one you see today. In many ways you are right. However, and primarily, *videte quod tractatis* — look to what you are doing. Do you believe that your own opinion, your own point of view, is sufficient in itself to make everything change at once? Is it possible to change everything in a Congregation, or nearly everything, just according to the ideas of this one or that?

If we were to take that as a standard, it wouldn't need much to realize the chaos and disintegration that would result not only in the Congregation itself but also in each life associated with it.

On the other hand we cannot ignore that fortunately we are almost on the threshold of the Special General Chapter, to which the Church in fact assigns the mandate to review and renovate — in fidelity to the charism of our Founder — all that is needed in order to give fruitful life to the Congregation in our own times. This in fact is the most logical, wise and responsible, even « democratic », way not merely to go ahead but to advance, make progress and improve according to our objective.

Naturally, first of all in the Special Provincial Chapters, in which all have a say directly or indirectly, and then at the General Chapter, matters will be studied and discussed with full liberty, with a sense of responsibility and especially with true love for the Congregation — that love that Don Bosco was so anxious to keep alive, his spirit, his mission, the Council, the Magisterium. Then, *in nomine Domini*, let all those even brave resolutions be taken which are necessary.

This is the honest, clear and sure way of securing the desired renewal, and there can be no other way.

But I still want to add: dear confreres, young and old, let us not deceive ourselves: even the most genial and ardent reforms will be of no avail if men do not improve themselves, if *we* don't reform our own selves!

For this reason I say to all, whether in authority or not: whilst preparing for the Special General Chapter let us busy ourselves in actuating so many sound norms of the XIX General Chapter which still have not been fully carried out. By doing this in a definite way,

even if we don't eliminate we shall certainly diminish many of those elements that feed the vocations crisis.

If we, in fact, attentively re-examine the review given earlier on the crisis of vocations, even in our own surroundings we shall notice immediately that so many losses could be avoided if we set ourselves seriously to carry out the precise norms of the XIX General Chapter.

Crisis of vocations and crisis of faith

Here I think it well to recall and emphasize some principles and directives of perennial value that form the irreplaceable supports of every religious vocation today as well as after the Special General Chapter and forever.

In the aforementioned study of the Superiors General the basis of the complex and varied motives of vocational defections was always found to be a crisis of faith, not always leading to a total loss but at least to a falling off or obscuring of faith. The same observation was met with in other researches into this subject — and it is logical. Vocation is something bound up intimately with the transcendent, with faith in the supernatural. Without faith our vocation has no sense, it cannot stand, it has no foundation.

Not for nothing did Maritain say, « The Religious vocation has no human quantity that can be catalogued ». And we can add: it is more than human. Let us then thoroughly examine this fundamental reality.

« To strengthen and defend our vocation we have to start from faith as its foundation and motive ». I found this statement with amazed pleasure in the work of a modern psychologist who studies vocational problems from his own point of view. This man of science, evidently a Christian, in the course of a long debate promoted by one of our Provincial Chapters in Latin America, repeated three times that « actually a vocation can only be preserved by means of faith ».

Well then, we have received this supernatural gift from God at Baptism, which rooted it in our soul. Now, in our lives, faith ought to spring from our spirit and from thence overflow into our daily existence. Unfortunately we must confess that our faith is often, as a certain writer puts it, rather epidermic, superficial, a kind of information

or external fact or coined phrase that does not explode inside us to transform itself into vitality.

Let us admit it: doesn't our faith so often seem to be dormant? Isn't it perhaps a rather sedimentary reminiscence in our spirit rather than a deep vibration in our heart that God is within us? In front of such a stupendously great gift as faith, perhaps what we call faith is more a certain incredulity than faith.

Faith is the capacity of seeing the invisible, of hearing the voice of the living God, the living Person. We must then release our faith from the ruins of a certain kind of routine or automation, so that God can really be the Lord of our existence. There is a means for doing this, the intrinsic prayer of trust and humility that we should recite every day with the same attitude as the poor man before Jesus in the gospel: « Lord, I believe, I want to believe, rid me of my unbelief ».

Our vocation is intimately bound up with, takes its meaning from and is ruled by faith alone.

Our vocation a total donation to God

In the light of this, then, let us look again at this second precious gift God wished to give us after that of faith at Baptism.

Above all we should keep in mind that in His own mysterious ways God has called us to a consecrated life in the Salesian Congregation. Ours, then, is a religious and Salesian vocation. The priesthood is not *per se* the object of the religious vocation nor of our Salesian consecration. I think it necessary to place this reality in evidence since not rarely a lack of clearness brings about ideas and attitudes that are erroneous and crises that lack objective basis.

We, then, as Salesians, are consecrated. This word needs deep consideration in order that all its inherent values and implications may be unveiled or felt again. Each one of us in his own time and with full knowledge and liberty made a gesture which was not so much juridical as religious, viz. in the deepest meaning of the word, a *total donation to God*.

With this consecration of ours we became, by our own will, the property of God — exclusively, fully, integrally. We offered Him, definitively, all that we are, all we have, all we can be. We gave Him

our body with its members, powers and faculties; we donated our intelligence and will: truly an oblation of astounding completeness. It would be truly baffling were it not for the adequate motive behind it: the love of God.

We have fully and joyfully renounced such authentic values as Matrimony for a higher value, for God, for love of Him and in order to love Him more. We have made ourselves — as Galot says — His absolute property, absolutely complete slaves of God — but only for the love of the Father in order to follow Christ who gave Himself completely to God the Father.

As you see, our vocation has two motives, two vital sources: faith above all, and with it love, which is a consequence of that same faith and charity that comes from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Brother and which deflects as though by physical law onto our neighbour, for St. John says: « He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen ».

The apostolate, then, the service of our brethren, who in the Salesian charism are preferably the young (and among these again the most needy) is a consequence of and an expression of our love toward God that has led us on to a total donation of ourselves to Him, and through Him to our neighbour.

From all this it is obvious that we are Salesians because we believe in God and consequently in the love of God, our supreme good, for us; and we respond to His love by the total donation of ourselves that translates itself into a love of service on behalf of souls.

Our consecration, therefore, is not directly *per se* to our neighbour; only God can make a donation sacred. We are not Peace Volunteers or simply progress technicians: we are something profoundly different and more noble. We have made profession of the evangelical counsels in order to follow the poor, chaste and obedient Christ. Following the whole Christ, we shall pursue Him in that charity He brought down on earth, a charity that proves its truth and christian character by always expanding inseparably in two directions: God and neighbour.

This is the essence and the nature of our vocation. These are the realities we must keep well in mind and render operative; these we must keep clear and alive even in the face of the difficulties, diverse temptations and confusions of today. Nurtured on simple prayer through filial contact with God, these will make us live our vocation in generous

and faithful coherence far more than certain discussions and debates and so many written articles that so often serve only to confuse ideas and disturb consciences.

I said « faithful and generous coherence » and I think it well to emphasize those words. If we believe, if indeed believing truly we have made our total donation through love for the good God, nowadays especially it is impossible for a vocation to sink into mediocrity, routine or, worse, into compromise.

The first victim of a compromise is the very person who makes it. Fundamentally the mind of such a person is dissatisfied and, for this reason, often bitter, critical and rebellious. Even the laity react sternly when they notice someone living his vocation inconsistently by a life that seems to have two souls, each cancelling out the other. This happens especially when one lives in a state of what today is called emotional compromise.

I do not think it out of place here to linger a while on this subject, since it is one of the most recurring factors in the vocational crisis.

Emotional compromise

Emotional maturity means emotional soundness. In the religious atmosphere today a lot is said and written about the complimentary role of the sexes, of the abolition of the separation of sexes, of a so-called third way between marriage and consecrated celibacy. Not a few of the champions of these new principles have ended up entering matrimony — and no wonder, for these theories indeed are well proven to be untenable deviations in the religious life.

If our consecration is total then how can one think of compromising in any of the ways suggested by such theories? No document emanating from any Church authority whatsoever ever countenanced such things.

Unfortunately, in practice there are some who delude themselves into thinking they can go along this « third way », claiming harmony between chastity and a worldly life, more or less daring relationships with females that they seek to defend by various motives. There are some who, without any official assignment, seek female apostolates, but if such work is not assigned to a Salesian by obedience or not required

by a real need on the part of souls, nor carried out in the way, time and manner required (and which the laity themselves demand) then it can only be an alibi for subterfuge, for that third way which unfortunately often ends with abandonment of one's vocation even after many years of profession and priesthood. Experience nowadays repeats that even fifty or sixty years of life, high offices held, nor even episcopal consecration are enough to defend us.

Some will say that one can't live between four walls, that we must open up, that we cannot and must not look upon women as was done in the past, etc. Certainly there is need to open up and the Congregation encourages all such enterprises that are constructive for the Salesian and for souls. We *must* open up, but this does not mean opening up the way to every Salesian, and especially young Salesians, to take risks.

For example, in the matter of mixing, there are precise norms and principles: how do we observe them? Moreover, one notices that in certain cases a lot of zeal is brought to the apostolate among females whilst in the same surroundings our own boys — who are our own specific charge — are practically neglected. Here and there, and even recently, there have been some sad experiences. The truth is this: human realities remain ever the same. A man is always a man when alongside a woman. But in addition, confronted with all the erotic stimuli and aphrodisiacs that are found almost everywhere, a consecrated religious is even more exposed to danger from the very fact of not being destined for marriage.

Warnings that induce thought

Mgr Ancel, the well-known bishop of the working priests, uses sane and unbiased words that re-echo the old-age teachings: « If we wish to preserve perfect chastity, we must know how to renounce whatever actually arouses in us obsession or impulses we cannot resist. He who thinks he can read everything, hear everything and see everything; he who refuses to control his own imagination and his emotional needs should not commit himself to the way of celibacy ».

And Cardinal Pellegrino, commenting on that passage to his young clerics, added: « It is a matter of choice. Do you really believe you can read everything, hear everything, see everything? Are you unwilling

to control your imagination and emotional needs? If so, then it is better for you to choose another road, and to do it soon. If anyone says: I can read anything I like, see anything I like, without any danger or disturbances, then I'm afraid I cannot take him seriously. In brief: you are not just a piece of steel — even you are flesh and blood! ».

And Mgr Ancel concludes: « Even God could not be faithful to you, for you cannot demand from Him that He create a miraculous safeguard just for you ».

But I would like here to add a warning that comes from those who for so many years were united to us by the bonds of consecration and priesthood and then left us, abandoning both. Faced with those who seem to wipe out the reality of original sin, the admissions of these brethren invite us to reflect.

In the psychological study entitled « The Drama of the Ex », D. Burgalassi gives these results on the causes of abandonment of vocation. Whilst 95% gave as the first cause the giving up of prayer, 76% admitted it was love for a woman. And the author concludes: « The ex-vocations make no bones about admitting that their decision has been the logical outcome of a state that endured some time ("I did not live at peace with my conscience for a long time") and which relaxed and weakened the normal means of spiritual help ».

As you see, one doesn't arrive at the sad epilogue suddenly. At a certain point there is an intersection, a confusion of causes and effects, a giving up of prayer, a taking up of female relationships, and unfortunately the conclusion is always sadly negative.

I would not like anyone to gather from all this an impression of excessive fears or extreme narrowness. Certainly we want none of that. I have said these things in my letter only for the sake of a loyal and constructive discourse, moved by a sense of realism which refuses to cover up the truth with smoke-clouds or high-sounding words that are merely equivocal.

And the truth is this: our consecration demands an undivided heart. Even from the point of view of human dignity, everyone will therefore understand how repugnant is the situation in which a Salesian would wish to live a life of compromise. He should have the courage and the consistent loyalty to make a definite choice one way or the other.

I have up to now insisted on what ought to be the line of defence

of our consecrated chastity, but how can I remain silent about the other truth? The primary help of our chastity comes from grace and consequently from prayer. In this matter you have seen the admonitory admissions of ex-priests. Let us quote now the words of a great theologian of our times, Fr. Karl Rahner: « ... Treating of the theology of celibacy (so well worthwhile for us who are consecrated!) one is dealing with a part of theology that one does not acquire from the academic chair, nor from the gossiping crowds, nor from mediocre compensations, but *on one's knees, in prayer* » (*Letter on celibacy*).

And let us conclude these considerations in the light of our Father. As can be seen from the *Memorie* and his letters, Don Bosco had a lot to do with the female world; and in all these encounters he showed no complex but in his amiable sociableness he was always priestly. Let us look to him, then, who even in this was a magnificent master.

Let us seek above all to be and then to live, think, act and show ourselves everywhere priests like him. We, like him, can live our integrated and joyful chastity and serenely exercise our apostolate for our own good and that of souls.

But none of us is an island

Yes, none of us is an island. We are also responsible for the vocations of our confreres.

We speak of co-responsibility and it is precisely we who in this very field can construct or destroy, save or lose vocations, even without realizing it. Not only Provincials and Rectors, even if they do have this primary responsibility for the vocations of the confreres, but all who are in any way superiors should take special care in this matter.

Even in a responsible community of mature adults (as the saying goes nowadays), the confreres cannot be left to themselves, nor can mere trust prevent chaos and disorders whose victims can definitely be the very confreres themselves.

But every Salesian still remains always a man. He has need of comfort and guidance, at times of help. The lack of these elements often brings about situations which militate negatively, even if slowly, against vocations. This remark applies especially (but not exclusively) to confreres in their tirocinium and university students.

Frustrating attitudes

There are, however, much wider and deeper responsibilities that reflect on the vocation of confreres and that hold especially in reference to the various levels of authority in a community, though not only to these. Let me explain.

Concerning re-dimensioning, how many and what consequences has the unreasonable defence of the past had on the life and vocation of the Salesian of today! So too the renewal desired by the Council and the XIX General Chapter but not yet applied! Can we expect all this to leave the confreres indifferent? One thinks, for example, of the problem of the school not yet animated by the fresh air of Christian formation. One cannot ignore certain frustrations suffered by confreres when confronted by situations that remain obstinately static in this section of our apostolate, cases where there is a kind of air-tight shutting-in and when reasonable and constructive requests are made (e. g. the way of exercising authority, co-responsibility, etc.). This only provokes certain unwelcome reactions and leads to opposite extremes or certain exaggerated enterprises. Hence by refusing to budge, almost inevitably we end up by incensing those who wish to move too fast.

The Congregation is not and does not wish to be a sclerotic institution, but unfortunately certain people unwittingly present it as such by their attitudes. We have to present the Congregation as something youthful and active. The old adage « Leave well alone » cannot apply to us, for history will not wait for us to catch up.

This, however, does not mean that everything is allowed, that each one can undertake whatever initiative comes to mind. The conciliar and postconciliar documents say clearly that « experiments » must always be promoted and approved in advance by those who have the authority to do so, a norm dictated by wise experience.

That having been said, is it not opportune to ask: what have we in fact done to actuate the XIX General Chapter and the Council in our provinces, houses and parishes? For so very many of these important and precious fulfilments there has been no need for cumbersome permissions but merely an active will to put them into practice. Isn't it opportune, then, to check on how we have responded to the reasonable expectations of the confreres in this field?

It would be very sad indeed if certain authentic vocations had been

made to suffer painful frustrations through the closed-up attitudes of those who should have been open-minded. For example, what is being done about the following: information to the confreres concerning the interests, problems and running of the house, the building up of an educative community, the liturgical life of the confreres and boys?

But there is also an opposite defect, reminding us of the ever true adage *Virtus stat in medio*. It is never permissible, under the guise of a renewal that is an entirely personal idea, to despoil every norm of the religious life, even the most essential ones, reducing the religious community to a group of people who only come together for meals.

I know well that it is difficult, especially in these times, to avoid mistakes and abuses. Often in fact this is quite a torment for those in authority, but the matter in question is of such importance that every sacrifice must be made in order to avoid mistakes: the very life of the Congregation is at stake in the light of this and we cannot in any way be traitors.

Elements that nourish vocations

But there are certain essential elements that not only concern our own personal vocation but simultaneously serve in the community to nourish the consecration and vocation of each of its members.

Our consecration and hence our vocation are not matters just of a certain occasion, a certain moment, but they need to be renewed, we might say, at every moment. Now, this continual total and joyful renewal of our consecration is most efficaciously strengthened by that community « climate » that is made up of various constituents working effectively on the actions of the individual members and in particular of those who have influence or responsibility in the life of the community. What are the principal components of this nourishing vocational atmosphere in our communities?

a) Prayer

Above all, prayer.

In the study made by the Superiors General on the vocations' crisis one reads: « Those who know how to pray persevere » and it reports in counter-evidence the fact that those who defect generally

admit that their exit began with the abandonment of prayer. The same thing is confirmed directly and explicitly by the ex-priests interviewed by Fr. Buralassi, the priest sociologist, in the research he made into the causes of priestly defections. As already quoted, 96% of them put abandonment of prayer in the first place. And it could not be otherwise.

If it is true that prayer is contact with God, the source and channel of grace, absolutely necessary for a consecrated life, then we must surely recognize the whole dramatic truth of that statement: « Those who know how to pray persevere ».

But prayer is not so much a matter of form as knowing how to pray, and it is perhaps this that is not seldom the lacuna in our personal and no less our community life. Not by chance does *Perfectae Caritatis* clearly state that prayer must be the primary preoccupation of every consecrated person, and it repeats and brings home this idea on every page. Let us quote one basic passage: « Those who profess the evangelical counsels love and seek before all else that God who took the initiative in loving us; in every circumstance they aim to develop a life hidden with Christ in God... Therefore, drawing on the authentic sources of Christian spirituality, let the members of communities energetically cultivate the spirit of prayer and the practice of it » (PC 6).

There, in just a few phrases, we have the essential elements of true and therefore efficacious prayer. The constant search for and the genuine, active love of God, the life hidden in Christ with God, these are the deep springs that render prayer and the spirit of prayer alive and operative, nourished by the genuine sources of Christian spirituality that are — as Padre Anastasio notes — above all the Word of God and the Body of Christ. These are the irreplaceable aliments of religious life and hence of vocation.

We must now ask therefore how is this kind of prayer cultivated in our communities, this prayer that by its nature brings about « communion », without in any way excluding that personal prayer (above all mental prayer) that is so necessary for « a more intimate and efficacious participation in the sacrosanct mystery of the Eucharist and of public prayer » (*Ecclesiae Sanctae*, 21).

If prayer has such primary importance, then obviously this fact should be recognized as such in our communities, which should « defend at whatever cost the praying dimension of our consecrated life ».

This applies to each individual Salesian and even more so to those who have the mandate of being the « inspirers » of their communities. One cannot forget the danger of worldliness that today continually threatens the consecrated and apostolic life, and precisely on this account we must get closer to Christ, thus succeeding in also giving Christ to the world.

b) *Charity*

From prayer, this filial, personal and communal contact with God, there springs fraternal charity, also an essential component of that atmosphere that gives life to our vocation. It was not just by chance that this year I chose to recall our family to the conscientious and positive practice of this theological virtue. I say « theological » because for those who have faith (and we surely wish to have it) it is a theological virtue like the love of God.

A tremendous amount has been written on this virtue but it is perhaps also true that today one notices a painful dearth of this virtue in ecclesiastical and religious circles. There is no time now to make a diagnosis of this but the fact unfortunately remains.

A community that is cold, narrow-minded and envious, a community in which the members do not have the time or desire to meet one another serenely, not feeling themselves a living part of a family of adults; who do not help one another; who do not bear with one another's defects nor tolerate differences in ideas and mentality, not willing to substitute for one another at work when necessary — all this should not cause amazement when such a community becomes a tomb for quite a few souls. Painfully true are the words of Bernanos' curate: « Hell is not to love any more ».

How much need there is to take to heart what Our Lord says to each member of our communities, and more so to superiors: « Love one another as I have loved you », giving to one another. Oblige yourselves therefore to be the first to give to your brethren! Oblige yourselves every day by your own personal attitude to create an atmosphere of true charity — then you can never go wrong. The fruits of this donation, in one way or another, will never be lacking for both individuals and communities: this is confirmed by God's word and daily experience.

c) *Poverty*

And how can poverty be absent in a community that truly wishes to testify its consecration before outsiders and, more so, before its own members?

After the Council, in a hitherto unknown way, the need has been felt for a consistency carried to its ultimate consequences in the following of the poor Christ. But we must also acknowledge that deeds have not proportionately followed the many fine words and writings on this subject. For example: after my letter on poverty, apart from many brave and praiseworthy efforts, one also noticed here and there a certain insensibility and at times a painful resistance, an attitude of defence and of justification for situations that have in the course of time become stratified, but which cannot continue without compromising our true way of life, which is primarily that of religious, consecrated and voluntarily poor people.

If we wish to give the Congregation a youthful image, if we want to make it acceptable to the new generations, then a poverty that is lived, practised, even suffered is obligatory; a poverty that is sound and not merely one of rhetoric and exhibitionism, a poverty that is deeply rooted in the life and behaviour of each individual, embracing his dress and journeys, his equipment and food, his holidays. It must be a poverty that is palpable in the community, whose members live in simple but neat surroundings, living by the work they generously do according to the strength and possibilities of the community, without egoism or selfish choice, without unjustified distinctions regarding personal comforts, since all these are mortal enemies of fraternal unity and peace; a poverty, finally, that is obvious in the works undertaken and carried out according to the Salesian charism.

Shirking the recall to such poverty, we only encourage that atmosphere of worldliness which acts as a pernicious anaesthetic on that impetus and love of sacrifice and renunciation which are irreplaceable premises of a pledged and fruitful religious and apostolic life that attracts genuine vocations to the Congregation.

d) *Joy*

I would like finally to recall that without joy our religious life would be simply that of a family condemned to live in a hovel without

sunlight. I think one can say that certain vocations end up in failure because they find in their communities an atmosphere of coldness, often of mistrust, of bitterness and pessimism — in a word, frustration.

Within the scope of a letter such as this it is not possible to analyse such states of mind basically. Objectively and subjectively, the causes can be very many, with explanations that can in a certain sense be justifiable or else completely invalid. But I would like to say something further.

If I truly believe in my vocation and if I live it fully in a spirit of faith, then the inefficiencies and even the very infidelities of whatever kind on the part of those who surround me should not affect me. I know that I am consecrated to God, not to men; from Him I expect the approval that will crown my consecration. Even at the darkest moments in the life of the Church, the great and true saints did not stop, did not desert, did not despair when confronted by the obvious deviations of those alongside them, even when in posts of high responsibility. They knew and they felt that their own fidelity was anchored on God, not on men. « I know in whom I believe ». And hence the *Niente ti turbi* of Don Bosco, even though this obviously does not imply insensibility or indifference.

Confronted with the authentic interests of the Congregation — which should also be mine — without losing my peace, I can and must do my part, and especially today when the Congregation invites all her sons to give each his own contribution to the process of renewal desired by the Church. The ways and means of such participation are known to all.

Mistaken and ruinous attitudes

There are unfortunately other attitudes that arise from very different and in no way edifying motives.

Quite often one finds in a religious house, even a Salesian house, people whose very words, tone and attitude point to a troubled and bitter heart, what I would call a soul living physically within the walls of a religious house, dining at the common table, enjoying all the advantages, but one that is estranged and even hostile. What can be the causes of such a state of mind?

Apart from psychiatric cases, let me quote a few examples. A mistaken vocation, which has never been at ease, never rectified, is like the magnetic needle of a compass that acts convulsively because it does not point to the North. « Certain souls are sad and bitter because they are not what they should be ».

Close to these are those who persist in living a life of compromise, especially regarding their emotions — a double life totally incompatible with the sacred obligations undertaken. P. Fabi writes aptly: « The tap-root of a certain lack of contentment, hypercriticism, excessive and evasive weak will, of escapism, of deep and inexplicable dissatisfactions, shallow demands and weariness in apostolate is here a matter of heart trouble: the incorrect solution to the emotional problem, inadequate sublimation, insufficient emotional integration through lack of sincere affection for one's confreres and superiors ».

But there are also those who speak with bitter pessimism about the affairs of the Congregation, stating they remain on in order to induce radical reforms, and this, they allege, « for love of the Congregation ». Even if their intentions were good, clearly this is an attitude that is extremely perplexing. It is beyond comprehension that anyone can, through love, so ill-treat his own mother, even though she be at fault. Notice, instead, how the real reformers of the Church (and the argument holds good for the Congregation also), those who have truly purified and improved it, have always had a different attitude, which was certainly not that of those who lacerated it and covered it with mud. The true reformers never placed a bomb in their Mother's house, not worrying about the consequences, but they began by showing in their own persons, as one writer says, the sample of the stuff they wished to sell. Metaphors aside, they showed themselves to have a clean slate, all in order, by a life that was religious, priestly, exemplary — the only badge of recognition for any true « prophet ». And then, avoiding demagogic and destructive attitudes that build up nothing, they acted with charity and respect, and especially with prayer, avoiding self-righteousness. This indeed is the way to prove by facts that one truly seeks the glory of God, that one loves the Congregation and sincerely desires its renewal.

At this time when we are being, one might say, bombarded by a cross-fire of pressures and suggestions of every kind, I think it is useful to call attention to these simple and clear remarks that are based

solely on experience of men and things and on a great love for our Mother the Congregation.

A motive of trust

Let us return to the subject of joy. Even amid so many inefficiencies and uncertainties, so many problems and delusions, we still have reasons to cultivate joy and trust, and above all because we are Christians. Bernanos would scold us for the christian inconsistency of having sad faces and souls. What must be said, then, of a consecrated person who believes and lives the words of Jesus: « Blessed are the poor... blessed are the pure... »? How can a religious who believes in Jesus, the Truth, be sad?

And then, from here in my little study, as I pass in review the Salesians spread over the continents, I find so many palpable motives for faith, hope and joy — motives for gladness in every Salesian. True, we have our miseries, otherwise we wouldn't be human; we have so many ceaseless and pressing problems to confront and solve, but we also have so many magnificent Salesians who do not organize a lot of debates and round-table conferences but live the Beatitudes, truly serve God, work silently but with intelligence and dedication for the glory of God; who love the Congregation filially, live its interests intensely and show it by making sacrifices, without stopping to rub salt into her wounds, anxious rather only to alleviate them.

I see those thousands of confreres — many of them still young, others mature in years and responsibilities — who, throughout the continents, sacrifice themselves joyfully in the Missions, in the populous and often poorest parishes, in leper-colonies and in the miserable outskirts of metropolis cities; I see them working in the oratories, in the confessionals, giving catechism classes, amid thousands and thousands of orphans, boys, young men, workers, peasants or students. They pour themselves out with a genuine heroism that is nevertheless united to a charming simplicity. I see many others also who, in the most diverse occupations, from the humblest to the highest, love God in the simplicity of their hearts even when they themselves are rich in culture, and they serve Him in the person of their neighbours without getting involved in corrosive equivocations.

This vision is for me a source of trust, of optimism and joy — and it should be so for you too, my dear sons, for it is no mere phantasy. The Congregation has a magnificent potential of men who believe in their vocation and render great service to the Church whilst living their own consecration in the best way. Why should we then fall into an attitude of mistrust and desertion?

In every house, in every community, let us extend our vision beyond the narrow boundaries of local petty miseries. Acknowledging the widespread good that exists in the Congregation, even without ignoring the limits and deficiencies, let us all feel obliged to be, not mere feeders of a vacuous optimism, but men who fulfil all the conditions that give us the right to look to the Congregation of tomorrow with sound and constructive optimism.

My dear confreres, I would not know what different means and methods to suggest other than those just mentioned for our communities to foster an atmosphere that gives us the strength and trust to live our vocation. On the other hand, it seems to me that without these components — Prayer, Charity, Poverty, Work and a sound Optimism — it will be difficult to avoid those crises that bring so much harm to all.

Vital problem: new vocations

But if our first care and responsibility ought to be directed to our own personal vocation and that of our brothers, we cannot show lack of interest in future vocations. If we feel ourselves to be vital members of the family, if we love the Congregation and wish it to be renewed and rejuvenated in order to carry out the mission to which Providence has called it, we cannot remain uninterested in what is a strict condition for the fruitful survival of the Congregation, viz. the problem of new vocations.

Already in some provinces — though fortunately not many — one notices that the average age of the confreres is very high, clearly demonstrating the reduced number of new vocations over a period.

I have presented a complex and difficult problem, but rather than lament and list the difficulties and obstacles, Don Bosco teaches us to overcome them together, with trust and that courage which looks at

the matter realistically and then makes use of the appropriate means to overcome them. And this work is urgent and far more important than constructing new wings or playing-fields.

Let me make one premise. There are vocations, at least potential ones. This declaration is not mine but that of a psychologist-director working in state schools. After examining thousands of boys between the ages of 12 and 15 he declared that a good percentage showed a priestly or religious vocation. While keeping in mind the value to be given to a « vocation » at that age, the fact remains that even in unexpected environments one can find the signs of vocations. But then there comes the spontaneous question: « Isn't it possible, then, that among the thousands of our pupils and oratorians there might also be potential vocations? ». Surely this is something fundamental.

It is often said that vocations should come from our own world of youth. This is true: from various parts we are reminded that in the early years of the Congregation, in Don Bosco's time and after, the vocations came precisely from our own Houses. Nay more, one can say that our Congregation has the best opportunities for encouraging vocations. But then we must ask: What can and should one do to foster them? What must one avoid (for the word « fostering » has many implications indeed)? Certainly, if every community creates a climate favourable to the germination of vocations, they will become evident. But such an atmosphere is the fruit of everyone's action, a climate of serene joy, of charity between confreres and between confreres and boys, an environment of work and generous sacrifice (not a life that is just jolly and worldly), a Salesian and missionary atmosphere in which one has no fear of making known the life and style of Don Bosco and the Congregation, a climate of serene liturgical and marian piety, and finally an environment of christian friendship that expresses itself even in personal contacts with the boys.

In such surroundings, the intelligently discreet work and even more the faith of a Rector, a Catechist, of a good confessor and of simple priests and Brothers can hardly remain fruitless.

For the rest, it has been proved that in spite of the avalanche of literature that presents modern youth as gone mad and the victim of sex, drugs and revolution, daily reality places before us so many youths who are not only available but decidedly against all lukewarmness and surrender. Often it is the young who give us lessons in gener-

osity and giving of self in a way that says shame to our fear of getting them involved. We should be and show ourselves the first in serious and consistent involvement.

The aspirantates

At this stage it would be opportune to say something about the controversy concerning the houses traditionally called « aspirantates » or « minor seminaries ».

I know that there are strong currents of opinion against such institutions; I know the criticisms about them that come from various parts; yet I am also aware that the destructive criticism of some years ago led to very much altered, prudent and constructive judgments. I want to say that after the totally negative experience of doing away with such institutions and after deep studies on the part of specialists, in many dioceses and religious institutes the position has now been reviewed, once again acknowledging the value of the « minor seminary », whilst at the same time deeply reviewing its training and structures.

I must add that a study conducted by the Union of Superiors General came to this summarised conclusion: A candidate can indeed mature very well in a minor seminary, provided he gets a formation suited to the needs of his age and with a greater open-mindedness than in the past.

Cardinal Pellegrino, after having said that minor seminaries (our so-called aspirantates) « still constitute a necessary and irreplaceable instrument for the general search for and cultivation of vocations », adds: « It seems to me that we are ingenuously presumptuous when we dare tell God the age and moment in which He should make His call known! ».

The study made by the Superiors General concludes: « The minor seminary, in one form or another (boarding-school, semi-boarding, or a school attached to other religious institutes that give it serious care) should be maintained as far as possible. The expenses are high but one should not measure the results solely by the percentage of those who reach the goal ».

So now, what about ourselves? First of all I would like to ask:

are vocations coming from our works? Unfortunately the reply is not very encouraging, for there are extremely few (granted some fine and consoling exceptions here and there). How, then, can we tranquilly close any house that could, with the necessary and sound up-dating, a well understood atmosphere of openmindedness and sensible liberty, conducted in the light of conciliar and postconciliar documents and those of the Congregation itself, be suitable for the development of those seeds of vocation than can be found in carefully selected subjects who show signs of a vocation?

To eliminate such institutions would seem to me to betray the Congregation and inflict a mortal wound upon it. But, keeping that in mind, I must at once add something else. I realize that the best vocations ought to come forth from our works, from the oratories and youth centres (the most fruitful fields of magnificent Salesian vocations), from our schools, hostels and parishes. Even more, the coming to light of such vocations will be the further proof that our communities have known how to create that atmosphere in which the mysterious seeds of vocation find ways of appearing and developing. But until such time as this is verified, can we in conscience close those houses already adapted for vocations? I am sure that no one with any conscious sense of responsibility would dare say Yes.

Renewal without extremes

Obviously our aspirantates must be run in a manner that differs in many ways from the past. By this I do not intend, however, to encourage certain extremes whose absolutely negative effects are known to more than the provincials. Let me be more explicit. In certain places the old closed-in system has been suddenly substituted by a regime of uncontrolled liberty to the point of allowing things that no serious college and still less parents who are conscientious about their duties as educators could allow. What is missing there is a sense of balance and tact because of an ill-founded confusion concerning liberty and education. Instead of being a gradual exercise of things that are intelligently graded, liberty has become indiscriminate and unreasonable, to the point where the more mature boys have been the first to lament and protest at the grave mistakes of their educators. I do not wish to be

misunderstood and hence I repeat: in the aspirantates (and analogously in the houses of formation) we must up-date. Hence it is necessary that the documents of the competent authorities be studied seriously, rejecting others that are superficial in these matters. Let us draw up plans and programmes that are not merely theoretical and abstract but which take into account the type of boy or young person, the ages, the family and social environment they have lived in, the course of studies, differentiating between the newcomers and those in the last years just before the novitiate.

A most important point: selection

To one point especially I want to recall the attention above all of those confreres directly concerned with the problem of vocations, and that is selection. Here we must speak frankly. Even with the best of intentions, not seldom in the past importance was given to the number of vocations, whilst the selection was deficient for various reasons. Unfortunately the passage of time has revealed the negative effects of this poor selection.

I have in mind something said by a priest who is rich in experience in training religious: five less than lukewarm subjects do not make one good religious. What can we say, then, if men are pushed on who show clear counter-signs? All the pontifical, conciliar and Salesian documents agree on the need of strict selection, and this not only at the beginning of the course but throughout the period of training. And in every document it is clearly stated that the mere absence of grave faults is not sufficient: the actual presence of human and spiritual qualities is needed for making a positive judgment.

The Congregation need not have shed so many bitter tears if a dutiful and necessary selection had been made at the opportune moment according to these criteria. It would, too, have been an act of great charity toward the people concerned, since when one is confronted with deficiencies and difficulties of character or certain temperamental manifestations it is, to say the least, ingenuous to talk about « saving a vocation ». On the contrary, vocations are saved when we guide them on along the more suitable paths indicated by Providence, since there

is no true religious vocation when certain positive qualities are lacking which can never be substituted or compensated for by other gifts.

Today, then, especially concerning the ages between 16 and 25, particular attention must be paid to ideas. One cannot accept as a religious and a Salesian one who, already in his years of trial, has shown himself to be an intellectual rebel regarding the precise and serious teachings of the Church and the Pope; nor one who does not accept or despises even the important norms that regulate religious and Salesian life. It is well to record that such ideas are elements even more negative than certain sporadic happenings that are so often just the results of light-headedness. Let us be on our guard, then, against certain demagogic attitudes that are often external explosions of serious, unresolved personal problems within, but which can throw whole communities into confusion, and especially houses of formation. Let us act with courage, then, even though with charity and patience, not however confusing all this with a deadly weakness and with fears that are camouflaged as prudence. The superior must defend the rights of the community; he cannot leave it to the mercy of those who, by their deeds or their ideas, place themselves against the community and outside the Congregation.

Finally I would like to entreat all those who have to worry about these problems: let us resist any preoccupation with numbers-at-all-costs and jobs to be done. Especially today this is not the right way to secure the vocations the Congregation needs. In these times what we need is authenticity.

My dear confreres, it is time to end this long letter. I have tried to speak with an open heart, without convenient euphemisms, but also without any vague pessimism, on the vital subject of the Salesian vocation confronted by the crises that threaten it.

I would like to borrow two thoughts that complete one another and give a synthesis of what should be our own sentiments and attitudes before the problem of vocations.

The first thought is that of Padre Anastasio, a profound student of the religious life and ex-Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites. He says: « Let us make an examen of conscience, and instead of placing ourselves before God and saying, "Lord, Lord, why don't You send us vocations?" let us say with all humility, "Lord, have mercy on us who do not make the religious life something radiating and attrac-

tive. Forgive us for having made it an archaeological reality rather than a prophetic adventure through our lack of communion and understanding of what it really is in the mystery of the Church and in the mystery of Your Christ » (*In Ascolto di Dio*).

The other thought is from Paul VI: « We would like to infuse into you that comfort which comes from the security of knowing that one is walking along a good road... We say to you religious, assailed by criticisms of the magnanimous choice that qualifies your life: you have chosen “ the better part ”, and if you are faithful and strong in your singular vocation, “ no one will take it away from you ”. Know how to adhere with firmness to the Church, of which you are living and holy members; do not fear: above all the din that today surrounds us, listen to the secure, ineffable and divine voice of Christ saying: “ Have faith. I have overcome the world ” (*John 16,33*) ».

My dear sons, nothing remains but to turn our prayer to the Virgin Help of Christians, Mother of the Church and of the Congregation. May she help us to transform the many appeals of this letter into courageous and fruitful action. And may our Father bless you all. Let us pray for one another.

Affectionately,

Fr. Aloysius Ricceri
Rector Major

IMPORTANT: I think it opportune that this letter be not only made the subject of community reading at the most opportune time and place, but also the object of comment and discussion so that the most appropriate conclusions may be drawn in each community.

IV. NOTIFICATIONS

1. Participation of Lay Religious in the government of clerical religious institutes

On 27th December, 1969, the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes issued a decree entitled *Ratione qua sodales laici regimen Institutorum Religiosorum Clericalium participare possint*, in which some principles and norms were established regarding the participation of lay brethren in the government of clerical religious institutes. We give here the relevant norms from the text of the decree published among the documents in this issue of the *Acts*.

a) The General Chapters of clerical religious institutes can decide that lay religious may exercise purely administrative offices such as economer, manager of bookshop, and similar offices that do not directly have connection with the purely priestly ministry.

b) Similarly, they can allow to them an active and passive voice in any kind of Chapter for the elections and in the treatment of affairs occurring in the Chapter, in the measure and according to the conditions imposed by the nature of the matters themselves as established by the General Chapter.

c) Moreover, they can establish that, within the same limits, the non-clerical members may exercise the office of consultor at any level.

d) The non-clerical members, however, cannot be superiors or vicars, whether general, provincial or local.

From these deliberations the following details emerge:

a) The Sacred Congregation confirms and approves of what has been conceded by General Chapters within the above defined limits.

b) The dispositions of the decree can be applied even in societies of common life.

c) In no way does the decree concern institutes that are « not exclusively lay » as referred to in No. 15 of the decree *Perfectae Caritatis*.

d) The decree does not repeal the particular right of some clerical institutions which, with the approval of the Apostolic See, have provided in their own particular way for the condition of their non-clerical members.

2. Letter on formation of priests

The Sacred Congregation for the Clergy issued, on 4th November, 1969, a letter to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences on the permanent formation of priests. Among the documents in this issue of the *Acts* we give a broad synthesis of this letter as published in the *Osservatore Romano*.

3. New rite of religious profession

The *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia* has published an *Ordo professionis religiosae* (ed. Vatican Polyglot), giving the new rite for religious profession and the renewal of vows desired by Vatican Council II in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

Since, besides elements that are obligatory for all, the new rite allows the possibility of adaptations for individual religious institutes, precise details for its practical application will be given in the next issue of the *Acts*. By that time a deeper study of the regulations of this new rite and certain formalities required by it will have been studied.

4. New Bishops

The Holy Father has promoted the following:

a) To the titular episcopal Church of Illiberi Rev. Fr. Onofre Candido Rosa, Salesian parish priest of Araxà in the diocese of Patos de Minas (Brazil), appointing him Auxiliary to the Most Rev. Mgr. Almir Marques Ferreira, Bishop of Uberlandia.

b) To the titular episcopal Church of Acque Nuove di Proconsolare the Rev. Fr. Braulio Sanchez Fuentes, S.D.B., naming him Prelate of the Prelature of Mixes (Mexico).

c) To the Metropolitan Church of Managua (Nicaragua) His Excellency Most Rev. Mgr. Miguel Obando Bravo, titular Bishop of Puzia di Bizancena.

5. Appointment of Provincials

Fr. Emmanuel Pinho - Portugal.

Fr. Francis Ghizo - Cordoba (Argentine).

Fr. George Casanova - Bolivia.

6. Course of Spiritual and Pastoral Renewal

On 18th January, 1970, at San Antonio, Caracas (Venezuela), a Course of Spiritual and Pastoral Renewal for the Latin American Provinces was inaugurated. 27 confreres, representing 23 of the 25 Provinces, are taking part in it. The course is destined for volunteer priests between 35 and 45 years who, after a number of years of ministry, desire to deepen and renew their own religious, Salesian and religious lives.

In the organization of the course lectures on the theory of the great themes of priestly and religious life will alternate with practical pastoral experiences, whilst the whole ambient of the House will favour personal reflection and preparation for new apostolic duties. This enterprise is at present in experimental form in accordance with the desire expressed at the XIX General Chapter.

In the documentary part of these *Acts* there will be found the letter addressed by the Rector Major to the confreres who began the Course.

7. Course of formation for promoters of development

On 1st December last, at 78 Via Appia Antica (Catacombs of St. Calixtus), the Centre of Formation for Promoters of Development

initiated its activities with an enterprise that can be explained in two different ways.

The first consists in a course of 200 lessons, lasting three months, given by specialists in various subjects, the aim being to give specific qualification to those who intend embracing the new professions that aim at resolving the problems of development. Today only a high and adequate level of preparation admits entrance into social, educative and assistential works of development in Italy and in Third World countries. To this end the technical lessons are integrated with a practical course.

To this course (35 enrolled) there is added another, a correspondence course for anyone in Italy who is interested. This latter course has 120 enrolments.

This enterprise helps to realize that social promotion which Don Bosco aimed at in his apostolate among youths. It hopes to open up the way to a further activity, envisaged for next autumn, intended to prepare lay missionaries as collaborators for missionaries of Latin America.

8. Fraternal Solidarity

We give herewith a complete list of offerings that have so far been made toward Fraternal Solidarity and the works for which the various sums have been destined (including the previous list, cf. *Acts*, N. 258, September 1969).

In the March issue of the *Italian Salesian Bulletin* there has been reproduced the letter of the novices of Peru and Bolivia who constructed their novitiate. Their example has been followed by the clerical students of Ypacaraí, Paraguay, who, during two months of their holidays, helped with the construction of a new wing of their House and in works of maintenance. They wrote thus to the Rector Major: « Dear Father, we believe that the formative value of these days has made us feel really poor through our direct contact with manual work, in having given our personal and collective contribution to the Solidarity Campaign and earning a modest wage. Certainly, all over the world there are Salesians who work: we now feel closer to them and — why not? — more Salesian ».

Sums of money sent directly by individual Houses and persons have been grouped under the names of their respective Provinces, even though due note has been taken of the indications given re: destination.

Offerings from the following Provinces:

Italy - Central	Lire Ital.	4,791,000
Italy - Subalpine	Lire Ital.	5,473,320
Italy - Adriatic	Lire Ital.	100,000
Italy - Campano-Calabria	Lire Ital.	200,000
Italy - Lombardo-Emiliana	Lire Ital.	3,905,000
Italy - Novara-Switzerland	Lire Ital.	7,730,000
Italy - Pugliese-Lucana	Lire Ital.	873,000
Italy - Rome-Sardinia	Lire Ital.	360,000
Italy - Sicily	Lire Ital.	407,000
Italy - Venice	Lire Ital.	3,289,000
Austria	Lire Ital.	48,200
Portugal	Lire Ital.	543,200
Spain - Barcelona	Lire Ital.	2,051,607
Spain - Leòn	Lire Ital.	544,617
Spain - Madrid	Lire Ital.	1,785,312
Spain - Valencia	Lire Ital.	3,508,000
Ecuador - Quito	Lire Ital.	643,750
U.S.A. - New Rochelle	Lire Ital.	4,474,575
U.S.A. - San Francisco	Lire Ital.	18,750
Venezuela	Lire Ital.	2,525,000
Argentine - Bahia Blanca	Lire Ital.	1,997,000
Argentine - Buenos Aires	Lire Ital.	60,000
Argentine - Cordoba	Lire Ital.	629,000
Argentine - La Plata	Lire Ital.	625,000
Argentine - Rosario	Lire Ital.	88,000
Bolivia	Lire Ital.	15,000
Brazil - San Paolo	Lire Ital.	6,592,500
Central America	Lire Ital.	1,405,750
Peru	Lire Ital.	932,500

TOTAL SUM RECEIVED

Lire Ital. 55,616,081

Works for which the offerings are destined:

Lourenço Marques (Mozambique) for the construction of classroom for elementary school in the Mission of S. José de Lhanguene	Lire Ital.	2,000,000
Cité des Jeunes at Lubumbashi (Congo)	Lire Ital.	1,000,000
St. Francis de Sales College, Lubumbashi (Congo)	Lire Ital.	300,000
St. Amand Parish, Ruashi (Congo) for the Youth Home	Lire Ital.	1,000,000
Works at Haiti (Antilles)	Lire Ital.	93,750
Work at Port-au-Prince (Antilles)	Lire Ital.	1,500,000
Missions of the Vicariate of Mendez (Cuenca - Ecuador)	Lire Ital.	1,450,000
House of Sucúa (Cuenca - Ecuador) to finish the reconstruction of the Mission burnt down last year	Lire Ital.	2,000,000
Mgr. Paul Seitz, diocesan Bishop in Vietnam	Lire Ital.	100,000
Aspirantate of Thu Duc (Vietnam), to complete construction	Lire Ital.	3,500,000
House of Azimganj (Calcutta - India), for sons of neophytes	Lire Ital.	500,000
Province of Gauhati (India) for construction of a provincial residence	Lire Ital.	1,000,000
Missions of the Diocese of Dibrugarh (India)	Lire Ital.	450,000
Fr. Premoli (Gauhati - India)	Lire Ital.	60,000
Mgr. Sapelak (Buenos Aires - Argentine)	Lire Ital.	126,100
Temple of Maria Auxiliadora, Cordoba (Argentine)	Lire Ital.	187,500
Aspirantate of Calacoto (Bolivia)	Lire Ital.	500,000
Novitiate, Cochabamba (Bolivia)	Lire Ital.	1,867,500
House of S. Cruz (Bolivia) for construction of a hall at the Oratory and of a mechanics workshop	Lire Ital.	4,000,000
Province of Campo Grande (Brazil)	Lire Ital.	150,000
Ciudad Don Bosco, Corumbá (Campo Grande - Brazil)	Lire Ital.	1,000,000
Leper-colony, S. Julian (Campo Grande -		

Brazil) for medicines, etc.	Lire Ital.	1,500,000
Province of Manaus (Brazil)	Lire Ital.	75,000
Rio Negro Missions (Manaus - Brazil)	Lire Ital.	1,750,000
Missions of Humaitá (Manaus - Brazil)	Lire Ital.	286,200
Fr. Mometti (Manaus - Brazil)	Lire Ital.	60,000
Patronato St. Thérèse, Salesian Sisters (Manaus - Brazil)	Lire Ital.	400,000
Province of Porto Alegre (Brazil) for confreres in formation	Lire Ital.	3,600,000
St. Peter Mission, Carchà (Central America) for construction of new missionary centre among the « Quechies » tribe	Lire Ital.	2,500,000
Fr. Giovanelli, Leper-colony, Contretación (Bogotá - Colombia)	Lire Ital.	600,000
Fr. Bruno Stella, Chaco Paraguayo (Paraguay)	Lire Ital.	480,000
Province of Paraguay - study-burses for theologians	Lire Ital.	2,400,000
Aspirantate, Ypacaraí (Paraguay)	Lire Ital.	1,400,000
St. Louis Oratory, Asunción (Paraguay)	Lire Ital.	1,250,000
House of S. Lorenzo, Asunción (Paraguay) for local adaptations for transfer of senior aspirants	Lire Ital.	2,000,000
Library for theologians and philosophers of Uruguay	Lire Ital.	1,000,000
Dominic Savio Industrial School, Maroñas (Uruguay), for electronic equipment	Lire Ital.	1,000,000
Aspirantate, Kwangju (Korea): 6,000,000 of which to complete the aspirantate building, suspended some years through lack of means	Lire Ital.	7,262,950
Don Bosco Sha Press, Tokyo (Japan) for the edition of Ricciotti's « Life of Christ »	Lire Ital.	100,000
Fr. Liviabella, Tokyo (Japan)	Lire Ital.	25,000
House of Chiari, Fiesco, Pavia (Italy)	Lire Ital.	1,875,000
Province of Jugoslavia (of which 300,000 for study-burses for Salesian students)	Lire Ital.	687,500
Works behind the Iron Curtain	Lire Ital.	2,431,320
TOTAL SUM ASSIGNED	Lire Ital.	55,467,820

Resume

Sums received	Lire Ital. 55,616,081
Sums assigned	Lire Ital. 55,467,820
	<hr/>
To be assigned	Lire Ital. 148,261

9. Prolongation of temporary vows

The concession for the prolongation of temporary vows for a seventh year or beyond depends neither on the Provincial nor the Provincial Council but on the Rector Major alone.

VI. DOCUMENTS

1. Decree on the participation of lay religious in the government of clerical religious institutes

SACRA CONGREGATIO
PRO RELIGIOSIS
ET INSTITUTIS SAECULARIBUS
Prot. N. S. R. 1511/59

DECRETUM

*de ratione qua sodales laici regimen Institutorum Religiosorum
clericalium participare possint*

Clericalia Instituta religiosa, quae fratres conversos, cooperatores aliove nomine vocatos complectuntur, a Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II monentur ut eos vitae et communitatis operibus arcte coniungant, eo consilio ut inter omnes sodales intimius sit fraternitatis vinculum (cfr. *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 15).

Summus vero Pontifex Paulus VI per Litteras Apostolicas *Ecclesiae Sanctae* Motu Proprio datas, statuit ut Capitula Generalia modum explorent quo iidem sodales non clerici « gradatim in determinatis actibus communitatis et in electionibus votum obtineant activum, et in quibusdam muneribus etiam passivum » (*Ecclesiae Sanctae*, II, n. 27).

Cum autem in nonnullis clericalibus Institutis quaestio orta esset de muneribus quae — salva Instituti natura et indole clericali quam Capitula specialia mutare vetantur (cfr. *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, II, n. 6) — praedicti fratres obire possent, Sacra Congregatio pro Religiosis et Institutis saecularibus, postquam votum exquisivit sive Consultorum, sive Unionis Superiorum Generalium, quaestionem in Coetu Plenario diebus 8 et 9 Octobris nuper elapsi celebrato, examinandam curavit.

Omnibus mature perpensis Em.mi ac Rev.mi Patres deliberaverunt:

a) Capitula Generalia Institutorum religiosorum clericalium statuere possunt ut religiosi laici admitti valeant ad munera exercenda mere administrativa, veluti oeconomi, moderatoris officinae librariae aliorumque huiusmodi, quae cum ministerio proprie sacerdotali relationem directam non habeant.

b) Possunt pariter eisdem concedere vocem activam et passivam ad Capitula cuiusque gradus, atque ad electiones negotiorumque tractationem in iisdem Capitulis habendas, secundum mensuram et condiciones tum ipsa rerum natura impositas tum a Capitulo Generali statuendas.

c) Praeterea statuere possunt ut, iisdem limitibus servatis, sodales non clerici fungi valeant munere consiliariorum cuiusque gradus.

d) Sodales non clerici vero non poterunt munus Superioris vel Vicarii gerere sive generalis, sive provincialis, sive localis.

Summus Pontifex, in Audientia infrascripto Cardinali Praefecto die 13 Novembris 1969 concessa, Congregationis Plenariae deliberationes approbavit et publici iuris fieri iussit.

Quapropter Sacra Congregatio, praesentis Decreti tenore Coetus Plenarii dierum 8 et 9 Octobris 1969 praefatas deliberationes promulgandas curavit.

Quae ergo a Capitulis Generalibus intra definitos limites, de quibus supra, concessa sunt, haec eadem Sacra Congregatio rata habet et approbat.

Praesens Decretum applicari potest etiam Societatibus vitae communis. Nullatenus tamen afficit Instituta « non mere laicalia » de quibus sermo est in n. 15 Decreti *Perfectae Caritatis*; neque quidquam derogat iuri particulari quorumdam Institutorum, licet clericalium, quae, peculiari ratione sibi propria, conditioni sodalium non clericorum, probante Apostolica Sede, consuluerunt.

Contrariis quibuslibet non obstantibus.

Datum Romae, die 27 Novembris 1969.

I. Card. Antoniutti
praeef.

Heston, c.s.c.
secre.

2. Letter of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy on the Permanent Formation of the Clergy

1. The research for the means of a more perfect formation of the Clergy and for the development of its knowledge and its pastoral methods is one of the tasks allotted to the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy deriving from the Constitution « Regimini Ecclesiae Universae », of 15th August 1967.

2. This Sacred Congregation has sent a questionnaire to the Episcopal Conferences in order to be informed by them of the real problems in the world concerning the permanent formation of the Clergy, as well as the results obtained from their experiences. The dossiers containing the answers have been presented to the Plenary Congregation of October 18th, 1968. Hence the reason for the present Circular, which has as its scope communication with the Episcopal Conferences, of the conclusions arrived at during the said Plenary Session.

General Observations

3. The renewal of the Church depends mainly and largely on the priestly ministry and consequently on the formation of priests, and on their continued formation, particularly during the first years of their ministry.

The Conciliar decree on the *Ministry and life of Priests* requires of the Episcopal Conferences that they emphasize the most proper means for the achievement of the formation to be imparted to priests.

4. The three aspects of priestly formation: spiritual life, theological sciences, and pastoral practice, should be very much connected and be mutually supporting, the spiritual life being, above all, the basis of the other two.

5. From the cultural point of view, the formation of priests concerns the deepening of the principal disciplines, above all, those that are closely related to the spiritual life and the pastoral activities. It should take into account the progressive development of doctrine and

of new pastoral methods, especially if the living Magisterium should bring forth certain clarifications. Thus, pastoral experiences should be founded on a solid doctrinal basis.

6. The determination of the subjects should not be merely a reflection of the wills of individuals, nor only suiting the tastes of the dictates of a particular theological formation.

7. Difficulties that are encountered today in the formation of young priests. Our time is one of questioning everything, and the truths of faith are not exempt from this: hence, the loss of personal certainty in authentic Catholic doctrine and even the principles that govern Christian and priestly life are questioned.

This fashion of thinking leads towards « secularization », which quite often is openly intended as the goal. The solid sense of a personal grasp of the patrimony of Catholic teaching being lost, there follows a loss of resistance to the evergrowing sense of naturalism and materialism that flood every sphere of today's social life.

8. The younger priests very often have difficulties in being faithful to the deposit of Faith. The causes of this are manifold. On the one hand, a spirit of contradiction accounts partly for this: the truths of the faith are rejected, above all with regard to their formulation; the pronouncements of the Magisterium are often rejected even to the extent of questioning obedience. On the other hand, there is also the continued importance attached to the growth of experimental sciences, whose conclusions theologians interpret at times in a manner quite discordant from faith. Lastly, there are the deep social changes that do not spare the priest's social life.

9. *The spiritual life* requires personal living faith: it derives its origin from such faith, it rests on it, it grows with it. And also, spiritual life strengthens the faith and guarantees a safe theological way of thinking, studying, and deciding, and facilitates the adoption of the teaching proposed by the Magisterium.

By divine Institution, the task to teach the truths of faith belongs to the Pope and to the Bishops in communion with him, and not to the laity or to priests. The decision proposed by the Magisterium must be accepted loyally, without exception or subterfuge; otherwise they should be null and void.

It is desirable that every priest should make an act of renewal on Holy Thursday morning. Even though he is not able to take part in the Mass of the Chrism, this act of renewal should be a reaffirmation of the act by which he consecrated himself to Christ and has undertaken to fulfil the obligations of his priesthood, particularly of celibacy and of obedience to his Bishop or Religious Superior.

10. Before everything else, *the Theological training should, therefore*, establish and explain Catholic teaching as laid down by the Magisterium of the Church, by adhering to Scripture, to the Fathers and to the still valid patrimony of philosophy. It must not neglect to deal in the same way with the Catholic teaching laid down on the authority of the Church Magisterium. The difficulties to which present-day discussed questions against Sacred Doctrine give rise should be taken into account and be given a truly Christian answer.

11. A solid spiritual life and healthy theological science will shake up and favour *pastoral zeal and activity*. The love of God, being the root of love towards the neighbour, the role of priests in explaining the faith in conformity with the teaching Magisterium of the Church; the distinction between priestly activity and political and social activities (the latter belonging to the layman); a life in conformity with the gifts received at Ordination and with the functions to be exercised in pastoral life: all this will prevent the priest from forgetting the motive why he once dedicated himself to the service of God and of his people. He will not ignore what can contribute to their salvation and will not place himself in danger of substituting a kind of purely natural humanitarianism for charity towards neighbour.

12. *Those responsible for the training of priests* should be selected for the task in view of their ecclesial sense (*sentire cum Ecclesia*); that is they are supposed to be theologians with no doubt as to their integrity. A close link between their theological knowledge and their priestly spirituality will uphold their conviction in their priestly life.

Suitable persons for this function are those who can solve the problems that are laid before them, and not those that raise and increase doubts. Reputation, research of novel ideas in the exposition or the enunciation of arguments, are not criteria to be chosen. Those that are accustomed to attack tradition, institutions, and the authority of the Church are not suitable to fulfil such a task. Therefore, only priests

that think with the Church and do not let themselves go astray from its tenets should be chosen. Mindful of the real values of our times and their needs, attached in their ways and teaching to the tradition of the Church, they should endeavour to reconcile both the legitimate requirements and present-day trends with the tradition of the Church.

13. It is preferable, it seems, to entrust such training to a priest, acting as Director of Studies, or to a small group of 3 priests at the most. The all-important thing is that the Bishop should keep in touch with them. Insofar as it is possible, these directors should be prepared through special courses.

Suggestions

14. The organization and the implementing of this training lie first and foremost with every Ordinary. It may come to pass, however, that this problem be better solved by a higher body, such as the Episcopal Conference.

15. The means proposed below are the result of already confirmed experiences: they are suggested to the Bishops, who in their choice can take into account the particular circumstances and possibilities.

I. Pastoral year

16. This year of Pastoral Courses, immediately following the priestly ordination, has been made imperative by the Conciliar decrees.

The purpose for such a year are:

a) to provide an easier passage from the seminary to the practice of the ministry;

b) to move gradually and progressively towards pastoral practice;

c) to acquire a greater human and priestly maturity.

Also recommended, as a more opportune means, is community life among young priests.

17. It would be suitable to have a house specially appointed for this purpose, be it in a parish or in another centre for pastoral activities. Young priests should be provided with a convenient balance of time between that dedicated to study and that appointed to practice.

II. *Triennial examinations and examinations for Parish Priests*

18. The examinations set out for the first three years following ordination (can. 130) are retained; likewise those required for the nomination of Parish Priests. But the Bishops and the Episcopal Conferences may revise the matter of the traditional form.

III. *Sessions for the improvement of Priests*

19. Pursuant to the Conciliar decree « *Presbyterorum Ordinis* », priests should be given, a few years after their ordination, the opportunity of setting up a « session with the intent of acquiring a better grasp of pastoral methods and theological science, to strengthen their spiritual lives, and to share their apostolic experiences with their brothers » (n. 19).

IV. *Study sessions*

20. It is most desirable that the Theological faculties set up for the Clergy some kind of study sessions (e.g. one week a year, or once a month). The weekly courses could be conducted by correspondence.

Such session can be made compulsory at their 10th and 25th year of priestly life.

V. *Priestly meetings*

21. The meetings of Rural Deans, according to can. 131, should keep pace with conditions prevailing today. The meeting of priests of the same age or of the same region should be encouraged, with a view to fostering the bond of charity, and to communicating with one another experiences, thus overcoming possible differences.

VI. *Setting up libraries*

22. A library in every deanery would be much desirable, in which books of a certain cultural value could be provided which priests could use for their theological, spiritual and pastoral sciences.

VII. *Vocation for studies*

23. Facilities should be made easy for priests who wish to improve their theological knowledge.

VIII. *Other helps*

24. The establishment of a Pastoral Institute, whether on a diocesan, or an inter-diocesan level that would promote the progress of pastoral studies through courses, commentaries published periodically, conferences, etc.

25. It is very suitable to encourage free study groups in theology as well as general institutes capable of helping priests in their spiritual life, in their pastoral work and their cultural training.

The Sacred Congregation for the Clergy aims at encouraging as much as possible its relationship with the Episcopal Conferences, and would like to be the gathering place for information and communication concerning the new issues regarding every tentative experiment and the result obtained thereof.

The Congregation will be grateful to the Bishops and to the Episcopal Conferences if they kindly forward to it the results of their experiences, their suggestions, and proposals. It hopes that the dialogue established through this circular on the permanent formation of the clergy, will be ever more intensified to the benefit and increasing profit of all in a better service to priests.

Rome, November 4, 1969.

JOHN CARDINAL WRIGHT
Prefect

✠ PIETRO PALAZZINI
Secretary

3. **Letter of the Rector Major to the confreres of the first Course of Spiritual and Pastoral Renewal at Caracas, South America**

Turin, 9th February, 1970

Dear Sons,

Allow me, even if a bit late, to wish you welcome to San Antonio.

I have heard with pleasure that your fine family, already united in Salesian syntony, has happily started that *actuacion* for which each of

your provinces has made great sacrifices in sending you to Caracas in accordance with the express desire of the XIX General Chapter to this effect.

I can tell you immediately that I often think of you with lively faith and so much hope. This, after all, is the first experiment of its kind in the Congregation and it is taking place almost on the vigil of the Special General Chapter. You will therefore understand how important will be the outcome of this experiment.

It is also true, however, that its success depends in no small way on each one of you, viz. on the positive and practical understanding of the purpose for which the Congregation has united you at San Antonio. You know well that the idea is not just for study nor for pastoral experience or other even fine and most useful activities: the fundamental and primary objective, toward which all the methods, enterprises and all the various moments of your varied and planned activities should tend, is your own « renewal » as Salesian priests and hence as consecrated apostles with and in the spirit of Don Bosco in our own post-conciliar age.

This enterprise is not merely a necessary and precious theological, ascetical and pastoral aggiornamento, nor can it consist only in an exemplary life in common communion and service. No, by means of these and other things, it should produce that action of « conversion » above all in ideas that are being transformed into profound convictions that should lead to that life hidden in God, without which a Salesian — today more than ever — risks being a « tinkling cymbal » or « sounding brass ».

Today the imminent danger for individuals and for communities is precisely this: an horizontal superficiality that leads on fatally to worldliness of mentality and practical life, no matter how camouflaged. From these evils there comes almost by natural law that spiritual void that strikes at the roots of the Salesian vocation and renders the apostolate sterile even if in the eyes of certain people it arouses approbation and admiration.

Dear sons, the opportunity Providence offers you is something unique and stupendous in your lives. Whatever years God may still grant to you will be influenced — for yourselves and the souls you encounter — by the apostolic spirit you will have assimilated in these blessed months. Not only that: you at Caracas are enjoying a very

special privilege. Thousands of other confreres indeed ardently desire to have it but are unable to enjoy this providential period of spiritual rest and restoration.

How many reasons you have, then, dear sons, for treasuring these precious days one by one, entering with conviction and firm will into the mind of the Congregation and into the directives of those who have charge of helping you in this work of spiritual and pastoral renewal. Do not be amazed that I say this. You, or rather, many of you have been the very ones to suggest this beneficial and restorative enterprise after years of work that has been physically and spiritually wearying.

Thanks be to God, from your first news-bulletins I gather that you yourselves realize the need and are now living and working for the future. I wish you, then, good work and energy, Salesian joy and merriment. I thank God for the happy beginning and wish it an even more worthwhile fulfilment. All news of your fine community will always be most welcome.

To each and all of you in this composite but united and harmonious community I send my affectionate greetings and the assurance of my constant remembrance before the Lord. I know I can count on your cordial return of prayers and I thank you so much for them because I earnestly feel the need of them.

The Superiors all unite with me in good wishes and prayers. When Fr. Henriquez returns he will tell you about the Seminar held here for new provincials. Auguri...

Fr. A. Ricceri

V. ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL AND PROJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST

The main item of interest for the Superior Council at the beginning of 1970 was the Seminar for Provincials held between 15-24 January at Caselette, outside Turin, and continued from 25-31 at Valdocco. This course was for newly-appointed Provincials and there were 23 participants from 18 nations. These days were filled with a warm atmosphere of brotherliness and the intense work involved in studying themes of lively interest and at times of urgency for the government of the Provinces.

After a glance at the doctrinal problems that more immediately concern the Church and the Congregation in our times and a swift synthesis of the characteristic elements of the Salesian spirit, the more salient aspects of the status and work of the Provincial himself were studied. Under this heading came the following: his spiritual life; the task of stirring up the religious and pastoral fervour required in our works; the actual activities proper to the Salesian apostolate; juridical and economic problems that can arise in the Province. Relations with one's own collaborators at a provincial level and with central headquarters were also studied and particular attention was devoted to the subject of the formation of the young confreres.

The various topics were expounded by the Major Superiors and other confreres, as well as by laity, and were then opened for discussion. The Rector Major took a great part in all this work, each day commenting on the more important problems and giving the guarantee of the Congregation's authority to their solution.

Apart from personal interviews with the Rector Major and other Superiors, the Provincials took part in various solemn concelebrations in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, in the Church of St Francis

de Sales and at Colle Don Bosco. Participation in the feast of St John Bosco set a worthy religious and Salesian seal on these days of work.

The whole encounter was recognized as most useful for the participants. It also proved how helpful the experiences and contributions of those who come from such various countries in the world can be in the cause of unity and renewal in the Congregation.

From among other projects of the past few months we select now those of wider interest.

A meeting was held in February at Turin in order to prepare a new edition of the Regulations for Salesian Cooperators. That of Don Bosco has lost nothing of its value in defining the general principles and norms of action of our Third Family, but its treatment and form needed renewal. Also to be inserted were those references to the Council and the needs of the times which were necessary in order to bring it into line with the mentality of our own days. Various Conventions have mentioned the necessity of this revision and to this end there has been a lot of consultation among our Delegates and the Cooperators themselves. The new text will be presented to the General Chapter for ultimate discussion and eventual approbation.

Various gatherings have been held in these past months in order to edit the new text of the Constitutions and Regulations for the Don Bosco Lay Associates. After ten years of trial, the conditions now seem ripe for requesting the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes to approve of this movement. The number of members increases every year, their field of action in Europe, America and Asia has widened, and they have achieved that stability of structure and richness of spirit that can guarantee good success in this venture that is something new in our Congregation but deeply rooted in the conception Don Bosco had of the lay apostolate. The new Constitutions will be a useful working instrument also for the many Salesians priests who so generously give spiritual assistance to this movement.

Passing on to another subject and to other parts of the Congregation, we draw attention to two promising enterprises of a pedagogical nature in Latin America. In March the Latin American Institute of the Youth Apostolate will be officially inaugurated. This Institute came about with the approval of and through the impetus given it by

CELAM; it has the collaboration of the Jesuits, Salesians and the Presentation Sisters and meets a need that was expressed *inter alia* last year at the Provincials' Meeting at Caracas. Its scope is to study youth problems in the light of christian pedagogy and to prepare future religious and lay educators of youth.

A somewhat similar institution will begin its activities in April at Buenos Aires, Argentine, as a result of the decision of the Provincial Conference of Plata and will serve the Salesian Provinces of the southern part of Latin America. The Salesian teaching personnel will have as collaborators professors of the Argentinian universities.

News of recent gatherings includes the Theological Aggiornamento Course for Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and diocesan priests held successfully at Lima, Peru, in the first fortnight of February; the study course promoted by the Italian Salesian Centre for the Youth Apostolate with the theme « A Sign of the Times: Revision of Life » (9-14 February); a meeting at Florence of all the National Delegates of Italy in order to study an organic and global pastoral apostolate among all the sectors of our apostolic activities; the National Conventions held by the many National Federations of Past Pupils with the special aim of preparing for the World Congress of Past Pupils due to be held next September at Turin to commemorate the Centenary of the Past Pupils' Association.

Concluding this rapid survey of the more significant current Salesian activities, we must put on record the continued generosity there has been in answering the Rector Major's appeal for « Fraternal Solidarity ». In another part of these *Acts* will be found a list of money received and distributed. For the edification of the confreres and as a just token of recognition we here quote some of the sentiments gleaned from the many letters sent to the Rector Major accompanying the offerings, which came from so many different sources and reveal an ingenious variety of means in their collection.

From a studentate: « We Salesians in this house of formation wish, by means of the little sacrifices of our clerics, to give a sign of our solidarity with our confreres in other parts of the world ». A Provincial gives a list of the renunciations made by the Houses in order to contribute their mite: some Houses gave up outings; others sacrificed

something at meals; one House gave up one cinema show per month; another cut down on the hours of central heating; some confreres took on manual work instead of employing outsiders for it; unnecessary journeys were cut out; the renewal of certain equipment and furniture was postponed for a further while.

Two confreres wrote in this edifying way: « With much pleasure we unite with the whole Congregation in making our modest contribution, the fruit of much sacrifice on the part of two old Salesians who live alone in this house... In this way we want to feel that we are united with our confreres and above all with those who are worse off than we are ».

A priest sent to the Rector Major a good part of the prize award for his literary services. Another wrote: « I want to join spiritually and materially in the solidarity campaign. Herewith I send a sum of money received by me from my father as an inheritance, for I know that charity covers a multitude of sins and I feel a sense of responsibility toward so many dear confreres in need... ».

A Rector thus explains his offering: « At Easter a great benefactor made me a fine present for the good of our particularly needy boys and I thought it a good thing to give half to our poorest missionaries. This I intend as a first offering and we have already started other enterprises in order to collect more... ».

A particularly impressive offering was that of the Rector of an Oratory. He himself is extremely poor and constantly depends on Providence for help for his boys, but still feels the need of being part of the solidarity campaign of the Congregation. He wrote: « I feel I must cooperate in my own name and that of my oratorians in giving even this grain of sand towards the urgent needs of another Oratory ».

A similar sentiment was expressed in a letter from the Rector of one of our studentates in a missionary country: « Our community too is anxious to send you its little contribution towards Fraternal Solidarity. We have received so much and so often from people who have less than we have, and hence it is only right that even we should get moving in this fraternal campaign you have so wisely launched. A group of our clerics will spend part of their summer holidays very willingly in a leper colony ».

Naturally, this competition of generosity has resulted in an affectionate competition of thanks on the part of those who have benefited.

To express the common gratitude we choose a voice from Vietnam, the country that is today in the hearts of all because of its sufferings. It acts as a fitting interpreter of all the beneficiaries: « Our hope today is for peace in Vietnam... Where fire and sword have passed, only ruins remain, and we will have to re-build... Hundreds of people who have been bombed out, injured or ill ask us each day for help and protection. We shall never refuse as long as we can give these. Our joy in the little part we have in building up of the kingdom of heaven has been increased by your generous help. We are not alone in our desire to make ourselves useful: you are with us and your gift gives us the chance of rendering aid to the sick, the homeless, starving and terrified children who turn to us so full of confidence... ».

VII. PONTIFICAL MAGISTERIUM

1. **Living according to the Faith is essential to conciliar renewal**

Paul VI, General Audience, 7 January, 1970

It seems to Us a duty to look at the teaching of the recent Council to find a theme for this morning's talk with you. We have an idea, dear visitors, that in your hearts you are curious to know: What is the Pope thinking? Well, here is Our answer: We are still thinking about the Council.

That event did not terminate at the end of its labours, like any historical fact shut away in time. It was the beginning of a renewal in the Church which will have to keep on developing and reach the life of the whole great ecclesial community. The Council left a body of teachings which we ought not forget. We must remember them, get to know them, and put them into practice. The Council must live on in the Church's thinking; it must give it a new mentality, imprint on it new ways of behaving, renew it, spread it, and sanctify it.

Personal Renewal

We are well aware that a whole literature has arisen out of the Council and is still producing new writing. We know well that works and institutions have arisen from the Council, and by virtue of its prescriptions. Everyone knows what big doctrinal developments have derived from the Council and are fostering study and culture. We call upon the Holy Spirit so that this doctrinal and canonical process may go forward happily.

But now We have to ask a question: What can the individual believer do, what ought he do in regard to the Council? What should single ecclesial communities do? The answer to this question leads us to give some special consideration to the moral demands deriving from the Council's teachings and from the very fact that it was celebrated.

This means that we all have to ask ourselves what coherent course of action we should foster, both in thought and action, in regard to the Council, assuming that each of us desires to give practical and useful importance to that great event, not only as regards the whole Church, but also as regards our own moral lives and renewal of our concrete and personal profession of Christianity.

Deviations

It will be well to begin our reflection by immediately laying down a line of demarcation to avoid two dangerous deviations. The first is that of believing that the Council began an era of such newness that we are justified in depreciating the Church's tradition, standing apart from it and being intolerant towards it. A state of mind of radical refusal to bear with the Church's past exists in many minds. Men, institutions, customs, doctrines: all are summarily set aside, if they have the mark of the past on them. The implacable critical spirit of these unrestrainable innovators condemns the whole of the Church « system » of yesterday. They can no longer see anything but faults and defects, and inability and ineffectiveness in expressing Catholic life in years gone by. The consequences would give rise to many grave considerations, and darken that historical feeling for the Church's life which is a precious characteristic of our culture. It is replaced by facile sympathy for everything outside of the Church. The adversary becomes likeable and a model; the friend becomes unlikeable and unbearable.

If this course is not modified, it even gives rise to the conviction that it is right to look forward to and form the hypothesis of a Church completely different from our Church of today. A Church, it is said, invented for the new times, where all bonds of troublesome obedience will be done away with, together with all limits upon personal freedom and every form of sacred commitment. This deviation is unfortunately possible; but it is to be hoped that its obvious excesses will reveal the error in it. It is certain that « *aggiornamento* », the renewal of the Church fostered by the Council, is not intended to produce such disintegration of tested historical and institutional reality.

Another deviation consists in confusing custom with tradition, and in believing that the Council is to be regarded as finished with and ineffective, that the Church's real enemies are those who promote and

adopt the innovations deriving from the Council. Tradition (that is, custom) must prevail, they say. These defenders of unchanging forms in Church practice perhaps make their mistake through excess of love, but they end by expressing this love in polemics with friends belonging to the household, as if these were more unfaithful and dangerous than anyone else.

The voice of the Pastors: Confidence in the Church

So, which is the right road? It is the one which the responsible authority of the Church's Pastors and Our authority lays down for the ecclesial community. The pastoral voice is not silent. The good hear it. They do not disregard it, and they do not neglect it. We are firmly convinced in the Lord that the Church can not only preserve her efficacious means but also carry out her mission of salvation and peace in this hour which is so critical in her own history and so grave for the history of the world, if the pastoral function is exercised freely and lovingly and if the community of clergy and faithful will understand it and support it.

And where is this way leading? The question belongs to the order of ideas, which We indicated at the beginning. That is, it is aimed at finding out what moral and spiritual line (not to go any further at present) the Council offers the Church, for it is exactly along this line that the footsteps of pastoral guidance lead.

The Order of Charity

Before We end We will just refer to a few preliminary criteria. For example, consistency, which is so obvious and wholly necessary. The Christian must restore his spiritual and moral unity. It is not enough just to say that one is a Christian; we must live as Christians. This is the ancient and fundamental maxim which the Apostle enunciated: « Justus ex fide vivit ». The just man, that is, the genuine Christian, derives the rule, style and strength of his life from the faith. He not only lives *with* faith, but also *according to* it. This is a basic principle. We can speak about it on other occasions. This is the axis of the renewal which the Council desired.

We might add two other fundamental criteria, but will simply mention them, so as not to tire you any further with this discourse. Here

they are: Christ must be put at the top, at the centre, at the source of our lives, of our thought and our conduct. He should be our Master, our example, the bread of our personal lives. And we must go into the communitarian notion of Christian living, including the interior and personal part of it; that is, we must enter the order of charity. Charity is the distinguishing mark of those who follow Christ. Let us never forget that (cf. Jn. 13,35).

May Our Apostolic Blessing render fruitful in you these fleeting hints.

2. Follow the Council to halt present troubles

Paul VI, General Audience, January 14th, 1970

No one in this moment of our history can avoid the bewilderment of uncertainty. We know this. Very many are changing around about us; the feeling of change passes from things into minds. The need to stick to reality is throwing doubt upon our acquired ideas, our inner attitudes, our habits. This is because exterior reality is in continual alteration, the world is being progressively transformed.

We are attracted by experience of new things, of things in movement, of original ideas. This experience often becomes our criterion for judging truth. We believe we are free because we liberate ourselves from what we have learned, because we get away from obedience and rules, because we entrust ourselves to the new and to the unknown. But we often fail to notice that we are becoming followers of others' ideas, imitators of fashion imposed by others, attached to whoever most daringly detaches himself most from common sense.

Those who describe this widespread attitude from a theoretical point of view speak of relativism. That is to say, we become relative to what surrounds us on the outside and conditions us. They talk of historicism which means to say that we should surrender to the transitoriness of time and have no more taste for the things that are still with us and keep their reason for being. They speak of existentialism: that is, they find in what exists or in what is in the process of becoming a higher criterion of value without looking for its measure of truth and integrity. And so on.

But when we speak in the simple language of common sense we

have to acknowledge that all are involved in a phenomenon of weakness. Interior inquietude has become habitual and is taking away our security, our satisfaction with what we are and with what we are doing. We are putting our hope in transformation, in revolution, in radical metamorphosis of the inheritance with which tradition and progress itself have provided us.

It is true that we have many good reasons nowadays for striving towards some innovation. More than in the past, we are aware of the many imperfect and unjust things which exist, hold out and sometimes grow worse around us. We make it our duty to find remedies and invent better things.

The Virtue of Fortitude

But people lose their bearings in this very disturbance. They no longer know what is the best thing to think and do. We ought to be grateful to those who are studying, thinking, seeing, teaching and guiding with a true sense of humanity. Reason is being rehabilitated before our eyes: man's good cannot but be reasonable (cf. S. Th. II-III, 123,1). And there is being restored the magisterium of those who, with responsibility and wisdom, teach others the value of things and the order of finalities. We may add, authority is being rehabilitated; that is to say, the function of those who rightfully provide others with the service of guidance and order. But We would say again: we owe esteem and support to whoever remains strong personally or in the exercise of their duties.

Fortitude is a virtue that does not get sufficient honour today. It presupposes principles, it presupposes logic, it presupposes personal freedom, it often presupposes unpopularity and sacrifice; it presupposes fidelity to an irreversible commitment, to an irrevocable choice, to an unquestionable law.

The Results of the Post-Conciliar Period

Dearly beloved children, at this moment We do not wish to make an analysis or a criticism of our times. We will barely refer to the confusion which pervades so many areas of modern thought and contemporary action, and We do so only to recall how a certain confusion is unhappily also entering religious life and the very effort which

the Church has been making, since the Council, to find herself, to improve herself.

The examination of conscience which the Council set in motion seems to Us to be having excellent results. We may say that everything is being submitted to reflection and many things are being reviewed. You know this; you can see it for yourselves. The Church has a twofold basic purpose: to be what Christ wills her to be, and to make herself better and better fitted to infuse the energies of faith and grace into the modern world, by the means of her traditional institutions and her spiritual experience. If the Holy Spirit helps her in this, her face will appear youthful and calm today also, with that look which sees everything: past history, the present drama, hope, and the beauty of holiness and of conformity to her divine prototype, the Son of God made Son of man (cf. Rom. 8,29).

This is the basis: the Council. Our duty is to remain loyal to that great word which the Church spoke for this hour in history, in the fullness of her authority, in invocation of and in obedience to the charism of the Holy Spirit, who assists her and liberates her, in her vision of the world in which she lives and for which she lives. In the Council there was clarity: in the post-conciliar period may there be fortitude.

Because, you know and you see it, the reawakening which the Council not only authorized but also promoted, is tending to grow weary in many Christians and in many forms of Christian life. Indolence is getting the better of us; laziness seems to be avoiding or reducing every question. Or the reawakening is turning into a spirit of corrosive and destructive criticism. It is impugning obedience and leaving it to individual judgment to fashion a convenient concept of the Church just as it pleases, with more conformity to the spirit and morals of the world than to the demands of the Church's supernatural genius and her apostolic mission.

The Undoubted Voice of Christ

This is why We say to you: hold fast to the Council. It ought to relieve us of that feeling of insecurity which is troubling mankind so much today. We are pilgrims in time. We have a lamp to light our road. For Our part, We would like to give you that comfort that

comes from the security of knowing that one is on the right road. We say this to you, Priests, who are being assailed by so many doubts about your being in the Church and in the world. Do not fear. Re-read those passages in the Council which concern you and go forward with confidence and courage. We say this to you, Religious. You too are being attacked by criticisms of the magnanimous choice which is the mark of your lives. You have chosen the « better part ». If you are loyal and strong in your singular vocation, « it shall not be taken away from you » (cf. Lk. 10,42). Fear not.

To you, young people, militant in contestation. The causes of justice and liberty which make you yearn for a new, truer and more fraternal social life, will not be disappointed or ineffective. Only, do bring your many energies into the hive of genuine ecclesial life. Some of the most spirited among you often, perhaps unconsciously, waste them outside, and against Christ's name. Do not fear that the Church will not be able to welcome and understand you and that the firmness of her principles will benumb your lively spirits. Her principles are hinges, not blocks. Have no fear!

All you fervent and thoughtful members of God's People: learn how to belong firmly to the Church, whose living and holy members you are. Do not be afraid. Listen, and above the surrounding uproar, hear the voice of Christ, certain, and, because it is divine, ineffable: « Take courage: I have overcome the world » (Jn. 16,33).

3. Obedience and liberty in the Church

Paul VI, General Audience, January 28th, 1970

In these years since the Council we have been in search of the style of our moral life, the new art of our actions in relation to our faith, the way of giving practical expression to our Christian faith. To begin, we all know that the Church and theology about the Church ought to exert a predominant influence upon our religious ideas, that a large part of our conduct and religious life ought to depend on the Church's doctrine and the idea we have of the Church. The Church must give a new stamp to our attachment to Christianity. What the Council taught us about the Church influences the form of our morality.

Secondly, We are aware that the Council developed the Church's

teaching about several aspects of human life, whereby the person is extolled, increased, emancipated, and in a certain sense placed in the centre of the Christian religion's doctrinal and practical system. The Council talks about vocation, conscience, liberty, responsibility, perfection of man. Anthropology is extolled and enobled, certainly not to the disadvantage of theology and christology. On the contrary, it derives its light and its consistency from these latter doctrines. But it is certain that man came like a giant out of the Council, capable of victoriously pitting his stature and his effectiveness with the stature and effectiveness which contemporary profane humanism attributes to its idolized type of man, thinking, working, trafficking, enjoying and suffering in the modern world.

If the Council's moral teaching looks like this in the extremely simplified yet exact synthesis which We have just given, then We dare offer you a formula to think about. The formula is: The Church is an obedience, a liberating obedience. This is a paradoxical statement and at first sight has little to attract. But just look at it a bit and consider: A liberating obedience.

A Bridge between God and Man

It is clear that the Church is an obedience in the general sense of that word. We know that the Church is a society, a communion, a people organized and governed in a pastoral manner, and all this entails a certain kind of acceptance, an obedience. This is on the horizontal plane, as they say. Something more has to be said about the vertical plane. The Church is a sign; it is a sacrament, the bridge between God and mankind. It lies between God shedding his light of revelation over humanity, and humanity entering by faith into that sphere of light, becoming alive again to grace, obtaining a new principle of life, and called and helped to live in a supernatural form. This is to say, the Church is in a welldefined relation to God, through Christ. God's will, his new will in regard to man, charity, becomes a quite demanding relationship. The divine *fiat* initiating the economy of salvation needs the response of the human *fiat*, of man agreeing to enter that sublime and exalting economy. Mary gives us a lesson in her « Be it done unto me according to thy word » (the word of the angel of the annunciation: *Lk* 1,38). Jesus teaches us: « Not everyone

who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven » (*Mt* 7,21). The condition, the norm, is to do the Father's will: obedience is the fundamental moral virtue which is the basis of our relations with Christ and with God: the Church establishes those relations and opens our lips to repeat the evangelical prayer: *fiat voluntas Tua*.

The Rule of Faith

Innumerable texts provide documentation, and demonstrate that obedience is the Church's constituent law, to be found in every catechism and every book of Catholic spirituality and social life, even when obedience is considered as a particular virtue, that is, as submission on the part of some to others who exercise authority. For authority exists, as in every society; authority is indispensable. It has two characteristics in this case: authority in the Church does not come from below, nor, *per se*, from numbers, but derives from the original immutable institution of Christ, as everyone knows. Secondly, authority in the Church has for its object not only the exterior actions of those who accept her guidance, but also to some extent, certain not insignificant interior acts, for example, the rule of the faith: free assent to the faith. But the norm of faith itself then becomes binding, and the Church guarantees and safeguards that norm.

St. Paul says: « The weapons of our warfare... have divine power... We destroy false arguments... and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience when your obedience is complete » (*2 Cor* 10,5-6). Thus spoke the Apostle of liberty, the « liberty », he declares, « wherewith Christ has made us free » (*Gal* 4,31), because, as he keeps on saying to the first Christians, « you have been called to liberty » (*Ib.* 5,13).

Man and his Power

But the question arises: how do you explain this paradox? what do these words mean: obedience and liberty? What is their practical value? Here we would require a lecture in exegesis to clarify the scriptural terms with which we are concerned, especially these two

terms, law and liberty, which have varying meanings in the biblical texts.

For the present, however, We will merely note that what We have just said: the Church is a liberating obedience, does not contain a contradiction. Being associated with a certain order constitutes being liberated from a different order, or rather from a disorder, in the case of man; and what a grave and fatal disorder it is. Thus, belonging to the Church's order demands indeed the acceptance of a conscientious and manly uniformity: but at the same time it frees us from heavier chains: those of ignorance about God and our destiny, sin, solitude, human frailty and death. This liberation sets man's faculties working intensely, freely and responsibly: his faculties of intelligence, will and all the wealth of his soul, his capacity for self-development, and also his ability to repress himself in the fields of the good, of justice, of love and of art.

Never tire of the truth

It is all a matter of understanding what the Church is, what kind of formation she gives us, how fortunate we are to be her children, what is required in order to be loyal to her.

Our generation's great temptation is to grow weary of the truth we have received as a gift. Many who recognize the importance and usefulness of changes occurring in the scientific, technical and social fields, lose faith in speculative thought, in tradition, in the Church's magisterium. They distrust Catholic doctrine; they think of emancipating themselves from its dogmatic character. They no longer want definitions binding on all for ever. They deceive themselves into thinking that they have found another liberty, and they no longer value the freedom they already possess. They alter the terms of doctrine sanctioned by the Church, or give it a new, arbitrary interpretation, with a display of erudition and even greater psychological intolerance. Perhaps they dream of shaping a new kind of Church corresponding to their own ideas, which are sometimes noble and lofty. But it would not be the authentic Church, as Christ willed it, and as it developed and matured in the course of history.

So it happens that obedience grows lax; with it liberty — which is characteristic of the faithful believing and working in, with and for the Church — likewise decreases. It is replaced by an unnoticed submis-

sion to other obediences, which can become burdensome and contrary to the true freedom of a child of the Church.

Newman, the great Newman, tells us at the end of his famous *Apologia pro Vita Sua* of his peace in belonging to the Catholic Church. He is an example not to be forgotten.

May Our Apostolic Blessing strengthen you all in your fidelity.

4. Liberty and Authority go Hand in Hand

Paul VI, January 29th, 1970, to the Judges and Officials of the Court of the Sacred Roman Rota

We are happy to reply with all Our heart to the words which the venerated Dean of the Sacred Roman Rota, Monsignor Boleslaus Filipiak, has just addressed to Us. He has well expressed your feelings and your state of mind on this particular occasion, beloved and venerated Auditors and Officials of that Court. His words vividly brought to Our mind the image of the Judge in the Church of today, his conscience, and the gifts which are needed to help him carry out his functions, with humility, with a sense of the duty and responsibility incumbent upon him, with discretion, and with clemency joined with dutiful strictness, so as always to be a calm and impartial interpreter of the law when applying it in concrete cases which we meet in life.

Hence the importance of your mission. The service which you give the Church is of such fundamental importance that We cannot but have words of sincere praise, lively gratitude and paternal encouragement for it. We take pleasure in repeating today (cf. *Discourse to the International Congress of Canonists: A.A.S. 60, 1968*), to give you comfort in your delicate task, those terse but meaningful words of an outstanding jurist of the past to describe the work of a teacher and jurisconsult of canon law, for his own and for future times: « Quicumque ergo ecclesiasticus doctor ecclesiasticas regulas ita interpretatur aut moderatur, ut ad regnum caritatis cuncta quae docuerit vel exposuerit, referat, nec peccat, nec errat; cum salutis proximorum consulens, ad finem sacris institutionibus debitum pervenire intendat »: « Every ecclesiastical teacher who interprets or moderates the Church's laws in such a way that everything he teaches or expounds is directed towards the reign

of charity, neither sins nor errs; since, in his concern for the salvation of his fellow men, he aims at the proper end of sacred legislation (Ivo of Chartres, *Prol. in Decretum*: P. L. 161, 47-48).

By correctly applying the norm to concrete cases, you complete the legislator's work and contribute to the vital development of Church order. But what shines out most brightly in your mission is *caritas christiana*. It gives greater nobility and fruitfulness to that *aequitas* of judgment which was so much to the honour of Roman law. That *aequitas* has become for you through the Gospel spirit, « priestly moderation », to use the beautiful expression of St. Gregory the Great.

While We express Our appreciation for the moral sensibility which you show, We should also like to offer you Our encouragement for your ever consistent and generous exercise of your practical functions.

Moral Sensitivity and Equity

1. We praise your moral sensitivity, the lofty and indispensable prerogative of a judge. We think We are here grasping the essential feature, the one that ought to distinguish you; We are deeply pleased to see that you are profoundly imbued with it. As everyone knows, the judge is the interpreter of objective *ius*, that is, of the law; he interprets it through his own subjective *ius*, that is, *potestas et libertas*, which he should possess in the highest degree. It follows that he ought to have great objectivity of judgment, and great equity at the same time, so as to evaluate all the elements which he has patiently and tenaciously sifted out, and thus judge with imperturbable impartiality.

In this regard it would be very useful to go more deeply into the concept of *aequitas* just mentioned, in the development of Roman law and in the body of canon law. It entails a strict evaluation of the matter subjected to judgment. That explains why in modern trials, both canonical and civil, account is taken of the psychology of the parties to the suit and other subjective elements, as well as environmental, family and social circumstances, etc. Of course, when applying such objectivity and *aequitas*, the judge will never depart from the fundamental criteria of natural law, that is, human, just law, nor from observance of the laws in force, *the ius scriptum*, which is supposed to be the expression of reason and the demands of the common good.

But a judge requires complete moral uprightness to take account

of all these elements. It would be useless to try to establish them in him if he were without them in the first place. We are comforted to know that this requirement and all its urgency and seriousness are well known to this noble circle of servants of the Church.

Liberty instead of Authority

2. We therefore exhort you, beloved sons, to exercise your practical functions as judges with uprightness and fervour. What virtues are needed — and how many! You well know, for you live in daily contact with the realities and difficulties of your work. As We said, there is need of impartiality, and that presupposes profound and unshakable integrity. There is need of disinterestedness, lest interests alien to good judgment: venality, politics, favouritism, should press upon the Court. There is need for solicitude, which takes the cause of justice to heart, in the awareness that justice is high service to Him who is just and merciful: *misericors et misereator et iustus* (Ps 111,4), *iustus udex* (2 Tim 4,8), *fidelis et iustus* (1 Jn 1,9).

Always do honour to your office by performing your lofty mission in this way. In this manner it will be sublimated and brought into line with God's own justice, of which it becomes a reflection and a faithful instrument.

3. But now We must halt, to examine a basic question. The considerations We have just uttered, Our apologia for the judge, as it were, seems to imply a need to defend the judge's function. Exercise of judicial power is criticized nowadays, especially in the Church, almost as if it were a « structure » superimposed upon the spirituality and freedom of the Gospel message. No one is unaware that there is an acute tendency to devalue authority in the name of liberty. The council stressed this in its very significant document on religious liberty. It observed that « there seem to be not a few who, under the pretext of liberty, reject all dependence and give little value to due obedience » (*Dignitatis humanae*, 8).

This is the so-called charismatic tendency, which becomes anti-hierarchical, for it stresses exclusively the function of the spirit, which is hard to define, at the expense of authority. This generates a state of mind which presents disobedience as something rightful and justified, as a safeguard of the liberty which the children of God ought to enjoy.

The reasons for this attitude would provide the occasion for a long enquiry, because it is a very big theme. However, since We are unfortunately restricted by the limited time at Our disposal, We can reduce the basic objections involved in it to three.

The necessity of a Juridical order

a) First of all, there is an appeal to *liberty* against *law*, against any law. And there is an appeal to the Gospel in support of this. Indeed, the Gospel is a call in favour of the pre-eminent freedom of the spirit. We cannot forget the severe condemnations which Jesus uttered against pharisaical legalism, in favour of the love and the freedom of the children of God: *Audistis quia dictum est... Ego autem dico vobis*: You have heard how it was said, but I say to you... (cf. *Matt* 5,21, sqq.). All his preaching was directed towards interior spirituality, to the charity which frees from the yoke of constraint. That is what Jesus words and example were aimed at. As the Council emphasized in the Decree just mentioned, « Christ... our Master and Lord, meek and humble of heart, invited and attracted his disciples patiently... He wrought miracles to shed light on his teaching and to establish its truth, but his intention was to arouse faith in his hearers, and to confirm them in faith, not to exert coercion upon them... Noting that cockle had been sown amid the wheat, he gave orders that both should be allowed to grow until the harvest time, which will come at the end of the world. He refused to be a political Messiah, ruling by force. He preferred to call himself the Son of Man, who came "to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (*Mk* 10,45); ... He completed on the cross the work of redemption whereby he achieved salvation and true freedom for men » (*Dignitatis humanae*, 11).

Hence the lapidary expressions used by St. Paul in his letters to the Romans and Galatians and his polemical teaching about liberty. Opposing the legalism of the Judaizers, he wrote: *Si spiritu ducimini non estis sub lege*: If you are led by the spirit you are not under the law. He set down that code of love which is a stranger to all impositions: *Omnis lex in uno sermone impletur: diliges proximum sicut teipsum*: For all the law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (*Gal* 5,18.14).

Liberty, Authority enrich each other

All this is very true. But it is also true that evangelical and apostolic doctrine does not stop at this point. The same Jesus who preached love and proclaimed the primacy of the inward life and liberty, laid down moral and practical prescriptions which oblige his disciples to loyal observance. He willed, as We shall repeat, an authority provided with specified powers, in the service of man.

Therefore those who appeal to the Gospel to defend liberty against law therefore need to be reminded of the many-sided meaning of the term « law ». The Mosaic law has been repealed; the natural law remains with all its innate vigour, and it is supported by the New Testament. It does not deprive man of his freedom, but is an intrinsically just guide for it. Likewise, positive law is always supported or suggested by natural law, and safeguards human good. It disposes and promotes the common good; it provides a guarantee for that inviolable and responsible autonomy of the individual by virtue of which every human being can give fruitful expression to his personality, and it provides this guarantee against all possible interferences of abuses. Liberty and authority are not opposing terms, but values which complement each other. Their mutual cooperation fosters growth of the community and of the capacities for initiative and enrichment of individual members.

Insistence on the principle of authority and the necessity of a juridical order does not detract from the value of liberty and the esteem in which it ought to be held. On the contrary, emphasis is laid on the demands of a secure and effective safeguard of common goods, amongst which is that fundamental good of the exercise of that very liberty which only a well-ordered social life can adequately guarantee. What would liberty be worth to an individual if he were not protected by wise and suitable laws? The great son of Arpino was right when he said, « Legum ministri magistratus, legum interpretes iudices, legum denique idcirco omnes servi sumus ut liberi esse possumus »: The rulers administer the laws; the judges interpret them; all of us are therefore their servants, that we may be free (Cicero, *Pro Cluentio*, 146).

The Church's hierarchical Structure

The law of the Gospel, finally, is reduced to love of God and of one's neighbour. But it has ramifications in three directions: in the

conscience, which becomes more developed and operative in liberty bound by truth; in the many precepts and virtues, which do not coerce but extol personal liberty, in respect for God, for oneself, for one's neighbour; and in the charisms of the Holy Spirit, in docile fidelity to the pastoral power and its service for building up the whole body in charity (cf. *Eph.* 4,16).

b) A second objection, aimed at justifying the current anti-hierarchical attitude, appeals to liberty against *authority*. There is an appeal to the Gospel here too. But the Gospel not only does not abolish authority, but it institutes and establishes it. It places it at the service of the good of others, not as though it were derived from the community as its servant, but because it is given from above to govern and to judge, originating as it does from a positive intervention of the Lord's will. The fact is that Jesus did not wish his teaching to be subjected to the individual's free interpretation, but that it should be entrusted to a qualified power (cf. *Matt.* 28,16-20; *Mk.* 16,15; *Lk.* 24,45-48; *Jn.* 20,21-23). He willed that his community should be structured and knit together in unity, constituted by hierarchical organs; he willed that it should be a social, spiritual and visible organism, a single complex reality arising from a twofold element, human and divine (cf. *Lumen gentium*, 8). And, since it is also a social fact, the Church requires and demands external structures and norms having the characteristic feature of law: *ubi societas, ibi ius*.

Consequently, though the primacy belongs to the spirit and the inner life, organic membership of the ecclesial body and submission to authority are still an indispensable element, willed by the Founder of the Church himself. The Council reminded us of this: « After his resurrection our Saviour handed over the Church to Peter to be shepherded (*Jn.* 21,17), commissioning him and the other apostles to propagate and govern her (cf. *Mt.* 28,18 ff.). Her he erected for all ages as "the pillar and mainstay of the truth" (*1 Tim* 3,15). This Church, constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in union with that successor... » (*Lumen gentium*, 8). Canon Law does indeed consecrate the primacy of the spirit as its own *suprema lex*, but at the same time it responds to the necessity which is inherent in the Church as an organized community.

Canon Law and Salvation of man

Canon Law is concerned with the spiritual values; it scrupulously protects and safeguards the administration of the sacraments, which are at the centre of its norms. It prohibits administration of baptism to an adult who is not *sciens et volens*: knowing and willing (can. 752). It does not wish anyone to enlist among the sacred ministers, or to remain such, if he has not freely chosen the priestly state (canons 214, par. 1, 1994, par. 2). It does not consider valid the sacrament of matrimony if it is contracted without free consent (can. 1087, par. 1). But at the same time it does not tolerate altering the deposit of revelation (canons 1322-1323); nor that the Church's powers should be allowed to fall into confusion, without distinction of orders and ministerial functions (canons 108, pars. 1-3; 948); nor that free initiative on the part of individuals should upset the order established by Christ. Moreover, it does not permit that the rules of *the communion of faith, sacraments and discipline* should be the object of human bargaining, promoted by the sole initiative of groups bereft of title or authority (can. 109, 218, 329).

Canon Law obeys a basic precept, which comes from God and was entrusted to the Apostles through Jesus Christ. As St. Clement says in his first Letter to the Corinthians: the Apostles « then established the rule of succession, in such a way that on their death other approved men should take up their ministry » (1 Cor. XLII-XLIV, 2). The organic and hierarchical structure therefore marks the canonical order as a constitutional law of the Church, willed by Christ for the good and salvation of men, who, *liberati a peccato, servi autem facti Deo* (Rom. 6,22), are called to live to the full the life of the spirit.

Legitimacy of the Juridical power

c) A third objection also appeals to liberty against certain antiquated or too arbitrary or too severe forms of the *exercise of judicial power*. Discussion of this is open, in connection with revision of the Code of Canon Law. Everything, for example, concerned with warnings, condemnations and excommunications arouses a modern touchy sensitiveness to think in terms of rejection, as if confronted by the vestiges of an absolutist power which has now had its day. Yet it must not be forgotten that the coercive power is based on the experience of the

early Church. St. Paul made use of it in the Christian community of Corinth (1 Cor. 5). We have only to look at this passage to understand the pastoral significance of such a severe measure, which was taken solely with a view to the spiritual and moral integrity of the whole Church and the good of the guilty one himself: *that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus* (ib. 5,5).

Such an exercise of authority in due form and measure, is therefore at the service of the rights of the person, as well as of community order. Consequently it enters the sphere of charity, and ought to be considered and presented in this light, whenever grave and relevant circumstances demand it for the common good; but it ought to be exercised with the greatest delicacy and understanding for those who have gone astray. Its practical application is being studied, so as to perfect it more and more, to adapt it to demands for respect of the human person which have lately become more pressing and attentive, and in this way bring it more harmoniously into line with modern sociological reality.

No one will wish to challenge the necessity, the expediency and the efficacy of the exercise of such power. It is inherent in the very essence of judicial power, because, as We have said, it too is an expression of that charity, which is the Church's supreme law. Just as it derives from charity for safeguarding the ecclesial community, so charity makes it understood by those who are subjected to it, and leads them to accept with profitable humility the painful remedial consequences.

Lovers of liberty

We would therefore repeat the call which the Council made in the above mentioned Decree on religious liberty. We would repeat it not only to you, outstanding lovers of the Law and wise interpreters of its rules, but to all Our children. The Council called upon us « to strive to form human beings who, in full acknowledgement of the moral order, will know how to obey rightful authority and be lovers of genuine liberty » (*Dignitatis humanae*, 8). We are very glad that this meeting with you today has enabled Us to talk to you, even though only in a fragmentary way, about such an important and deeply felt problem.

With lively pleasure We repeat to you a paternal exhortation which rises from Our heart on this solemn occasion which is so pleasing to Us:

discharge your high office with a lofty Christian conscience. Do honour to the Church by responding with absolute dedication to the trust which she puts in you. Serve souls with humility, with love and with disinterestedness. May the Lord's grace always accompany you and be your daily light; may it give you the strength you need and grant you profound peace.

This is our wish that We utter with all Our heart on the occasion of the inauguration of the judicial year. We accompany it with Our Apostolic Blessing.

5. Increasing Community Spirit perfects Priestly Life

Paul VI to Roman parish priests and Lenten preachers, 9 February, 1970

This yearly meeting seems to Us to be assuming extraordinary importance, because it is our only meeting. Therefore it is charged with all desires, all problems and all experiences. They seek to be expressed here and to obtain judgment, comfort, guidance. Each one of you will notice that a change of perspective is imposed on this discourse by a spontaneous demand connected with the present moment in the Church's life.

We will not turn Our attention to the many and far from out of date themes of Lenten preaching and preparation for Easter, which custom calls for and which are the origin and reason for this discourse. Instead, We feel obliged to reflect about the persons here present, about you, about the problem of your ministry. In this way the discourse can be a conversation: trust can give it that character, and affection can give it spirit. In other words, We feel gripped by this audience, as by something of major interest to us. Questions concerning Our clergy are at present taking precedence over those concerning the field in which they exercise their priestly and pastoral functions.

Last year We addressed Our attention to the same topic, if We remember correctly when on this occasion We spoke about the controversial sociological position of the priest in the contemporary world. And this year too, dearest Brothers and Sons, We shall only speak about what affects you directly. We certainly do not yield to this inner prompting in order to simplify what We have to say with these simple

words and so lighten the burden of Our ministry. Rather We do it in order to be closer to Our responsibility and to give you proof of the place you have in Our mind and in Our charity.

We will choose among the many themes which crowd into Our mind, and speak to you about only one thing: the spirit of community. Community spirit in this community of ours which is the diocese of Rome. There is talk of increasing it. We very willingly acknowledge that it already exists. It ought to be developed, it ought to be deepened, it ought to be the mark of our spirituality, it ought to be expressed in our pastoral work, it ought to become trust, collaboration and friendship.

Outward community relationships already exist: living in the same place, belonging officially to the Church of Rome, membership of its organic, ministerial and hierarchical structure. The ecclesial community exists. But is it always at the level of perfect communion of minds purposes and work?

Are we not sometimes solitary men in the great crowd, whereas we ought to be brothers and form a family? Do we not sometimes prefer to be isolated, to be ourselves, distinct, different, also separated, perhaps a bit dissociated, and even unfriendly, in the midst of our ecclesiastical structure? Do we really feel ourselves to be ministers united in the same ministry of Christ? Is fraternal affection always alive amongst us; does it make us concerned for and glad at our fellow priests' welfare; does it make us humbly and holily proud of our calling to be in the ranks of the Roman clergy?

Fraternal Unity

The current revision was inspired by the Council. It raises certain problems, which are made all the more pressing by the fact that many members of different kinds come to join our diocesan community. They vary very much among themselves, by reason of differences in origin, in training, in function, and spiritual and cultural characteristics. There is need to fuse these ranks of priests, religious and Prelates, if we wish really to be a « church », that is, a congregation, a family, Christ's body, a multitude inspired with the same faith, and the same charity, as that multitude of the first believers was « one heart and one mind » (*Acts 4,32*).

There is no doubt that this is how Christ thought. *Unum sint* was his greatest desire (*Jn.* 17). Before he extended this messianic (cf. *Jn.* 11,52) and divine (cf. *1 Tim.* 2,4) desire to the whole of humanity, he expressed it directly to his disciples (*Jn.* 13,34). Before he asks for ecumenical unity of the Church, the Lord asks us to have fraternal, community unity in the Church. It seems to Us that one of the clearest bearings given by the recent Council is exactly that in which it brings out the communitarian nature of all mankind, especially manifested in the intentions of the supernatural divine plan (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 23-24). By virtue of the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church already accomplishes this constitutional design of its Founder, but we still have a duty to work at putting it into practice more and more.

Hierarchical Communion

It seems to Us that two factors come to our aid in the effort to perfect unity and charity, that is, to achieve perfect community in priestly life. The first is the emphasis which the Council's Decree on « the ministry and the life of priests » places on the subordinate participation of the priestly Order in the mission of the episcopal Order. This is a wellknown truth, but the Council threw light upon it, in such a way that « from now on anyone who wishes to know what the priest is, cannot but refer to the episcopal priesthood, in which the priest participates and shares, and to the exercise of which he is called to make a contribution » (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, nn. 2, 6, 7; Cardinal Garrone, *Le Concile*, p. 78).

Communion in the Church is hierarchical. This characteristic constitutes a stricter and more vital principle of cohesion. The second factor is a renewed and clarified notion of the solidarity which unites the priestly and the episcopal orders. That solidarity has been given back its name, *presbyterium*, and together with that name goes a structure and a function. The Council tells us that « priests, prudent cooperators with the episcopal order, as well as its aids and instruments, are called to serve the People of God. They constitute one priesthood with their bishop, although that priesthood is composed of different functions » (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 28).

Some would like to see a more open and active spiritual presence arise under the form of association and the juridical form which the

ecclesiastical order thus takes on. Such a spirit does not make ecclesiastical authority rise democratically from the base to the summit, nor does it try to impose arguments based on numbers, in other words, impose plurality of opinions, so paralyzing the charismatic and responsible exercise of that authority. It aims rather at making communion and cooperation between Bishop and his priests more vital, conscientious and harmonious, and to do the same for the union of priests among themselves.

Common Pastorate

It seems to Us that the right moment has come for giving the ecclesial community spirit better awareness, greater effectiveness, especially among priests and even more so among those, whether diocesan clergy or religious, who are engaged in a pastoral ministry.

Priests have recently been elected to the Presbyteral Council here in Rome. We see importance, significance and effectiveness in this new organism. We think that Our venerated and zealous Cardinal Vicar takes the same view. This group of priests should not become separated from their fellow priests; even less should it become the representative of a current of opinion that will break up the Clergy into mutually antagonistic factions. May it rather be a sign and means of concord and collaboration, solidarity and friendship amongst Our priests. May it feed that spirit of community, of unity and of charity of which We speak. We Ourselves shall be delighted to foster such fusion of minds and works to the extent that We are made aware of and approve your common aims, and give aid for your common needs.

Such spiritual and practical concord should result in a programme of combined and harmonious pastoral action (« joint pastoral work », as they say today). There will be greater saving and use of personnel, undertakings and means, and with more effective results.

Vocations to the Church

A number of matters connected with simultaneous and concerted pastoral work at once spring to Our mind. Very first in line is the question of vocations to the Church!

We do not resign Ourselves to the thought that our field of pastoral labour is barren of youthful and adult souls capable of understanding the call to the heroic service of the kingdom of God. We think that the scarcity of vocations in big cities does indeed depend to a large degree on family and social conditions, which make the consciences of new generations unresponsive to the urging of Christ's voice; but We also trust that a priest will have the virtue, rather the grace in him to light in other souls the flame which burns in his own, the fire of love for Christ the Lord, and that he will be able to do this if he be a true priest, neither sanctimonious, nor worldly, but a priest living his priesthood with intense wisdom and sacrifice in contact with the community, especially the young.

We believe that greater attraction to embrace the ecclesiastical state will be exercised by presenting the priestly life through living it in full dedication, together with the sacred celibacy which it entails, to the sole and total love of Jesus the Master and Lord, the High Priest and sole Redeeming Lamb, together with the complete and exclusive following of him in pastoral service to God's People. All this will have greater effect than a more natural and apparently easier formula, from the human point of view, in which dedication to Christ and self-sacrifice are no longer perfectly and sublimely linked together.

It is all a matter of understanding. This is the charism which conditions the life. Shall we doubt that the Holy Spirit will grant it to the more generous spirits in the new generation? Moral fortitude, gift of self, sacred and superhuman love for Christ, most true, most vital and most sweet love (cf. *Mt.* 19,29), in a word, the cross, accepted for one's own and others' salvation, have greater and more effective influence upon the human heart than has an invitation to take on a priesthood which has been eased by combining natural with supernatural love.

Even though there is a pressing need for vocations to the Church, We believe that transfigured and transfiguring celibacy is a better incentive to qualitative and quantitative recruitment than an easing of the canon law which prescribes celibacy firm and entire, and sets it as a seal on the loyalty and love for the kingdom of God, on the historical experience and ascetic and mystic struggle of our Latin Church. You know this, and with Us you also wish it, Sons and Brothers. May you be blessed.

The Seminary

Together with the problem of vocations we must take up the problem of the Seminary, study it and solve it. The Seminary too should be more than ever before a centre of agreement for our ecclesial community, through the affection, the trust and the support which each and everyone gives it. A tradition which must not die out has made our seminary a family circle for very many most worthy ecclesiastics who were students and teachers there — so much so that it is more a pedagogical arena than a school of knowledge.

The seminary has been and continues to be the home of our incomparable Mother, our Church, a home of affections that never die, of memories that are always green, of resolutions that have directed whole lives. So it is still and so it should ever be, through your collective, cordial loyalty. You, religious, will also derive merit and benefit from it.

The Vicariate of Rome

And then, how many problems are waiting to be dealt with in the spirit of community, through more systematic and more organic thought about modern and broader solutions: problems of the clergy's finances, common life for priests, renewal of preaching, religious instruction of youth and adults, Catholic Action, new churches, assistance to poor districts, Catholic newspapers, methodical application of liturgical reform, religious chant, sacred art, spiritual exercises, and so on. The moment has come for united and vigorous relaunching of every form of apostolate, every way of exercising the ministry, every kind of pastoral care. All must set to work. All must set to work together. There are many differing instruments in the orchestra, and everyone plays his own, but the music is only one, and it must be harmony, the sum of all efforts pitched together. Our Vicariate is unfortunately seen by some as only a bureaucratic and disciplinary institution, but you can see how it can become the centre of fervour, concord, zeal and diocesan charity.

Personal Spirituality

Before ending this exhortation for an increase of community spirit, We would remind you that, as you already know, there is an intrinsic

relationship between community spirit and personal spirituality, that one presupposes and fosters the other.

If increase of community spirit is not linked with intense, deep and punctual interior religiousness, we shall fall into externalism, purely sociological calculation, and legalism.

Some Comfort in Love

The apostolate would lose its interior roots and its best and original forms, together with its highest ends, if the apostle were not a man of prayer and meditation. The texture of the people educated in participation in the liturgy would lack true spiritual cohesion and true fruits from communion with the divine mysteries being celebrated, if the minister and the individual faithful themselves did not acquire a religious fervour of their own from the rite and put some of their own into it. The Church would no longer be the Church, if divine charity were not put before the practice of fraternal charity and also infused into it. This requires the soul to have a silent colloquy, listening and contemplating within itself, speaking its childlike, superlative words, stammering them, mournful, imploring, exultant and singing words, but its own words, secret words, perhaps comprehensible only by God, words uttered in an indescribable manner alone with the Spirit and perhaps by the Spirit himself in us: *gemitibus inenarrabilibus* (Rom. 8,26). There are no substitutes for the spiritual life. For us especially who are the Lord's ministers, it cannot, it must not be lacking.

Let us end with the following « liturgy of the word », St. Paul's words to the Philippians (2,1-5). Sons and Brothers: « If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any feeling of mercy, fill up my joy by thinking alike, having the same charity, with one soul and one mind. Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of vainglory, but in humility let each regard others as better than himself, each one looking not to his own interests, but to those of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Jesus Christ ».

So many it be, with Our Apostolic Blessing.

6. Penance - a guide to Hope and Joy

Paul VI, General Audience, St. Peter's, Ash Wednesday, February 11th, 1970

Today is the first day of Lent. What is the rite We have just performed?

It is a rite that goes back to most distant ancient times. We learn of it from the Old Testament. It was practised in early Christian times, and the liturgy has made it its own ever since the early middle ages. The Christian spirit of our times has conserved it.

It is the rite of putting ashes on the heads of members of the ecclesial community, whether they be ministers or faithful. It speaks for itself, for its impressive language has a great deal to say about the fallen nature of our life. It tells us a truth from which we cannot escape and which disposes of our habitual illusory belief that our lives are stable. It tells us of the pitilessly realistic awareness we ought to have of our moral misery, and of the need to confront this emptiness of our own being with the mystery of God. God appears to us terrible, overpowering and inexorable in that harshly objective yet one-sided view of our frail and guilty condition. It tells us of the imperious necessity to overcome desperation, for despair would seem to be the fatal conclusion of our disastrous human balance-sheet unless some way out were offered to us. We can still see what that providential way is. It is close to us, and it is called penance. Today the doors of our consciences are beaten upon by a severe yet basically comforting word: « Unless you do penance », Jesus said, « you shall all perish » (*Lk 13,5*).

What thoughts for our generation, which likes to call itself the age of affluence! We shall do well to think about this description of modern life, which appears to contain the sum of practical wisdom and which directs popular philosophy and social policy in our time. It calls it welfare, and by welfare it means satisfying all man's basic needs — but not only that, it also means gratifying him with those work-saving devices, those commodities, those diversions, those entertainments, those pleasures which are expected to make life happy. All this seems to be the ideal end of civilization, the scope of progress, the goal towards which we are all striving: welfare, present happiness. It would be a state from which poverty, pain, labour, obedience, renunciation, abnegation and penance were all absent. To be well off, to have resour-

ces, to enjoy life... this is what all are looking for today, and this is what all are getting, more and more. So, why does the Church speak to us of penance?

The screen widens, the picture becomes more interesting. It is something to think about. Above all, to free the Church, indeed Christ, from the accusation of making our existence a sad one, depriving it of what it needs, including also in human needs every healthy progress.

But the Church does not oppose rightful modern progress. It favours it. However, it would be betraying its mission for the true good of man if it left people in the illusion that such welfare is enough to make them happy, and that such happiness, admitting that it might be attained, is enough for the destiny to which man's life is directed; finally, if it left them in the illusion that man's life does not entail quite different needs from those that can be satisfied by modern cultural and economic welfare.

We will not give the proof of this now. It would be easy to do so, but it would take too long. We all know, however, that hedonism makes man remain within his own limitations; it prevents him from reaching beyond himself, as it is his fundamental destiny to do. It causes him to increase his desires without end, and indeed to satisfy them at gradually sinking levels, below his true rational level, which is meant to rise towards the mysterious transcendency of religion. It teaches him to seek fulfilment for his insatiable desires in degrading passions, in loss of higher ends, in vice and anguish.

The Need for Purification and Elevation

The Church will not cease from pointing out to man seeking only himself this fallacy. It will not cease to tell him of his baseness, of his need for purification and to be lifted up. This is the first chapter in the story of penance: it is the awakening of the conscience, as we read of it in the parable of the prodigal son: « he came back to himself »: *reversus in se* (Lk. 15,17).

Then comes the time for choosing. Man is a very complicated being. He cannot develop himself unless he can choose a free and logical field of action, that of reason, of the truth. This entails abnegation and effort: *abstine et sustine*, the Stoics used to say: abstain and sustain. There is need for self-control, proper subordination among our acts,

moderation in some and development of others. That means that we must follow out a plan, a law, a model of the whole and true man. We know that this man is Christ, the Son of man. In the immense valuation he puts on man and in his immense love for him, he will tell us two things. These are: in man there is a mortal disorder, sin, and only he, Christ, can set it right. Having been instructed, therefore, by this unquestionable diagnosis, mankind will take up a corresponding attitude of inner sorrow and imploring love. All this is penitence.

We know how penitence is a necessary part of man's psychology, conscience and truth: the more he can appreciate the drama in which he is involved, the more will he be able to appreciate this redeeming wisdom.

Let us try, dearly beloved children, to make this wisdom our own, in this *tempus acceptabile*, this suitable time above all. For this time is Lent. We shall find that Lent does not bring sadness or deprive us of life, but guides us to the hope and joy of Easter, of Resurrection.

The Lateran Treaties

Before ending these few words with Our usual blessing. We wish to say something about a very different matter, though still linked to the spiritual welfare of those listening to us.

Today is February 11th. It is a date with special significance for Italy and for the Church of God within the boundaries of Italy. Nor is it of less importance for this Holy See, therefore for the whole of the great Catholic family spread all over the world. Today is the anniversary of the Reconciliation between the Italian State and the Holy See. It is the anniversary of the Lateran Treaties.

Forty-one years ago those Treaties put an end to the prolonged and harmful conflict which had set in opposition to the Pope the country where, through the disposition of Providence, the Successor of Peter, First Bishop of Rome, has his residence and where he also has the organs necessary for him to carry out his function as Christ's Vicar in the service of the whole Church.

Those treaties were signed when the times were ripe, and sincere and generous spirits foresaw them and prepared for them. They put an end to that conflict. They achieved this, thanks partly to the renunciation which the Holy See made of its rights over what had been for

many centuries « the Papal States ». It contented itself with that minimum of territory which sufficed to demonstrate and guarantee civilly its sovereignty and independence in regard to every other civil power. Thanks also to the solemn recognition which this sovereignty and independence received from Italy in internationally valid forms. Thanks, last but not least, to the situation which the Concordat brought about for the Church and Catholics in regard to the Italian State, by comparison with the unsatisfactory and uncertain state of affairs that had existed before.

As the Apostolic See has often acknowledged, the concord which was thus re-established has been the source of good and useful results for Church and State; it has guaranteed the possibility of a harmony of relationships without confusion or subordination of one to the other, while emphasizing and extolling the independence and sovereignty of each in its proper sphere.

For the Holy See and for Italy We fervently hope that this equilibrium shall not suffer shocks, and still less wounds or ruptures.

We agreed without difficulty to the proposal for a bilateral revision — a revision carried through in common effort and in common accord, to revise those provisions of the Concordat which might seem to be no longer in harmony with the new situation. We sincerely hope and wish with all Our heart — for love of peace, for the very honour of Italy, and for the greater good of the Italian People — that every step will be avoided, which by a unilateral decision might harm what was solemnly agreed upon by common consent.

We are thinking particularly — and We are sure you have grasped this — of the very important matter of Christian marriage. The Concordat surrounded it with stable guarantees, which Our great Predecessor Pius XI of venerable memory considered among the most valuable results achieved in the Reconciliation.

And with these prayers We give Our Apostolic Blessing to you and to those who will wish to share it.

7. Greater Spiritual Intensity should mark Lenten Season

Paul VI, General Audience, February 25th, 1970

We are in Lent. That is, we are in the period of preparation for Easter. Our preparation for Easter may be described under two head-

ings: asceticism and mysticism, in other words penance and prayer.

Our penance consists first of all in abstinence: it is not only abstinence from food, fasting, in accordance with the discipline which has been so much mitigated today that it has almost been abolished. It is above all abstinence from everything that separates us from God, abstinence from sin and its tempting ways. Sin makes us less masters of ourselves, makes us less free, less persons and less Christians.

The second element means greater spiritual intensity, nourishment by God's word, reflection and prayer. The Church still maintains, with the Gospel in her hand, that these paths lead to Christ, that through this means we are prepared to celebrate the Easter mystery well in this year of grace also, and that Christians are formed through these moral and spiritual exercises. The Church's school is an austere and fervent one. It aims to form men in whom religious and moral life are closely linked and work together, people who watch themselves and watch the quality of their exterior impressions, people capable of imposing certain renunciations and rules upon themselves in regard to certain things which at first sight seem to be very interesting and part of full modern existence, people who are at the same time ready to assert themselves, by means of tacit but strong command of their wills, in free, practical commitment to those virtues which Christ taught us by his words and example.

Liberated Liberty

Could you describe the human type which comes out of this school? If you try you will have a valuable and ideal experience. You will find that it is not a uniform and impersonal sort of human being. You will find that there are as many features as there are persons in this school of the Gospel. Of course, they all have the main characteristics which mark Christ's followers, but at the same time each has his own particular features. These are unique in a certain sense. The typical products of this school are the saints, that is, true and perfect Christians. Two indispensable factors prevail in them. One, grace, is efficacious; the other, the will, co-operates with it. This second factor, the will, is better known to our experience than is the former, grace, and we are therefore very much inclined to define the perfect, the saints, by the use they made of their wills. That is to say, we define them almost by

describing their virtues, which we like to find in a higher, even heroic, degree in them.

From this outline of anthropology, that is, the gauge by which we measure man's stature, we can see that we, pupils and teachers in the Church, like to define a good man in terms of his moral fortitude. The Church does not wish to bring up petty, mediocre human beings. She tries to make them strong through her education. She wants to see virile virtues in them (take St. Catherine of Siena as an example). As St. Augustine said, she wants them to have « liberated liberty » (*Retractiones* 1,15; PL 1,609) liberty which has been freed from lower and external impulses and impressions.

The question now arises: Is this ideal of the Christian as a strong man still suitable for our time? Does it not belong to other times? This doubt becomes more pressing when we appeal to the Council, for did not the Council relieve the Christian life of many burdens which had been superimposed on it by the medieval ascetic and monastic concept of Christianity? Did not the Council tell us that « by this holiness a more human way of life is promoted even in this earthly society » (*Lumen gentium* n. 40)? Did not the Council defend the person and his liberty?

Incredulous and Perverse Generation

Here is a most interesting problem, and we put it before you to think about. The maturity of modern man and the pedagogy of the Church herself not only acknowledge, but also recommend, the use of personal liberty in forming and asserting the human person. Does this use of personal liberty do away with the ancient discipline of penance, abstinence, asceticism, in a word, of moral struggle, so as to grant to our generation a spontaneity of action which frees it from all binding rules that are not strictly necessary for ordinary social living? Does it authorize man to enjoy to the full every vital instinct and, at least for the sake of experience and knowledge, allow him to enjoy what was formerly forbidden and judged to be sinful?

Apply this question by way of example to two expressions of modern autonomy: disobedience and eroticism. The former is rejection of authority, whatever its nature, and the higher the authority the greater the challenge to it. The latter is the acceptance of, indeed the seeking after, a hundred forms of exhibitionist sensuality, which is described

as naturalness, youthfulness, art, beauty, and liberation. You will see that these paths lead far from the Christian concept of life, and that the Cross is not the pole by which their course is set.

The result of this enquiry, simple as it is, is discouraging. We, children of our age, are not on the right road in following this order or disorder in thought. We are always looking for what is useful to us, what is convenient and what is pleasing. We have many pretences and many indulgences in this regard in our religious and ecclesial sphere also. We wish to remove from our programme of life renunciation, effort and the Cross. We desire to know everything, and unfortunately we often wish to try everything.

The world, which we ought so much to pity and to love under its human aspect, does not frighten us when it presents itself to us under its no less real aspect of amorality or a theoretical and practical rule for enjoying life. We no longer hear Christ's indignant voice, exorcizing this pleasure-loving world which is so ready for moral vileness: « Oh unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear you? » (*Matt.* 17,16; 11,16; etc.).

Repentance of the Spirit

However, dearly beloved children, we must not end this rapid account of the moral orientations of our time without noting certain positive tendencies. Whether they intend to or not, they endorse the Church's ancient ascetical wisdom, and we find them coming from many directions. Did not St. Paul make use of the fighting spirit of the soldier (cf. *Eph.* 6,11-13), or the athlete (cf. *1 Cor.* 9,24-27), to instruct new Christians in the energetic and ascetical exercise of the will, now stimulated and strengthened by grace (cf. *Rom.* 12,2; *1 Peter* 5,10)? Do not some forms and some profound motives of current contestation conceal perhaps a rejection of conventional hedonism, bourgeois mediocrity, and spineless conformity? Do they not perhaps express a yearning for a simpler and harder life, and a more personal way of leading one's own life? Are not our consciences touched by some austere demands of youth, demands for sincerity in speech and in life, for poverty, for liberation from the nightmare of the worship of economics and for a courageous attempt to imitate Christ?

Even the decadent customs of our century have some positive phenomena in them, and the Council texts contain optimum programmes

for Christian perfection (cf. *Lumen gentium* n. 40). Many superficial and short-sighted people, or lazy and lax people, have sought to interpret them as an indulgent amnesty for hedonistic and naturalistic concepts of modern behaviour. Today we need valiant Christians. The Church, though at present very moderate in her practical and ascetical demands, has need of courageous children educated in the school of the Gospel. This is why her call to mortification of the flesh and penitence of the spirit is more than ever relevant today. May the Lord help you to meditate on this and comply with it.

8. Christian perfection demands an Inquiry into Fundamentals

Paul VI, General Audience, March 4th, 1970

We are in Lent. We can widen our perspective, saying: we are also in the post-conciliar period. This suggests to us a revision of our way of life, which raises many difficult questions for our consciences. The reform promoted by the Church in this age of ours, the so-called « *aggiornamento* », does not concern only the « structures », the exterior methods of ecclesial organization, as people are wont to think. It concerns our personal life, it concerns the ideal line we must impress on our conduct, it concerns the principles directing our moral sense.

How are we to live? Taking life as it comes, without thinking about it? Are we to conform passively to the environment, customs, fashions, laws, necessities that happen to surround us, or are we to react somehow, that is, act with a criterion of our own, with a certain freedom, at least of judgment and, where possible, of choice? Are we to be content to be impersonal and mediocre, and perhaps also full of shortcomings, dishonest and bad, or are we to impose a rule, a law on ourselves? Are we to demand of ourselves a style of life, a moral discipline, perfection, or can we live without scruples, in the easiest, most pleasant way? And if love is the essential qualification of moral life, how are we to understand it, as an affirmation of selfishness, or as a profession of altruism?

Moral discipline

So many questions, which we must all ask ourselves... But even if they conceal delicate, speculative and difficult problems, the answer is

not difficult to find, especially for us who have a Master of life, such as Christ is. In his Gospel Christ teaches us by word and example how we must live. And with the inner help of his Spirit, grace, and the exterior assistance of his community, the Church, he makes it possible for us to carry out his bidding.

Let no one delude himself. Christ is demanding. Christ's life is the narrow way (cfr. *Mt.* 7,14). To be worthy of him, we must take up our cross (cfr. *Mt.* 10,38). It is not enough to be religious, it is necessary to carry out the divine will in actual fact (*Mt.* 7,21). And the Council will say that, if we are aware of what baptism operates in our regenerated human being, we must feel obliged to live as sons of God, according to the requirement of perfection and holiness, which derives precisely from our elevation to the supernatural order (*Lumen gentium*, n. 40).

Natural law

But let no one take fright. For the perfection to which we are called by our Christian election does not complicate and aggravate life, even if it requires us to observe many practical norms, calculated rather to help our faithfulness than to make it more difficult. Christian perfection demands from us above all an inquiry into the fundamental principles of our human being. Our duty seeks to equate itself with our being. We should be what we are. This is the principle of natural law, about which there is so much discussion today, but which mere reason vindicates in its fundamental demands. These demands are derived from life itself, and they are interpreted by common sense, ordinary reason (cfr. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 36). It is the law we bear in ourselves, as men: « a law not written, but innate » (Cicero); the law that St. Paul recognizes also in peoples to whom the Mosaic law was not announced (cfr. *Rom.* 2,14), and which the Gospel has absorbed, confirmed and perfected (cfr. Schüller, *La théologie morale, etc.*, in « *Nouv. Revue Théol.* », May 1966, p. 449 ff.).

We have all, moreover, sufficient knowledge of this law, the most important precepts of which we find enunciated in the Ten Commandments. And obedience to this law makes us men and Christians. It defends us from the accusation with which literature often charges devout persons, that is, of being scrupulous in the observance of pious,

detailed rules, and less so in uncompromising fidelity to the fundamental norms of human honesty, such as sincerity, respect for life or for one's pledged word, administrative honesty, consistency of morals with the profession of Christianity, and so on. It is this integrity that confers dignity on man in his inner self and in society. It is this consistency between the believer and the non-Christian. It is this profession of rational justice which upholds the legislative system of civil society, and offers social justice a reason for progress. Even the rebel contestations of our days appeal, after all, to the necessity of a normative rationality that is more advanced and more in conformity with the new needs of a society in evolution. In the present-day confusion of the notion of good and evil, licit and illicit, just and unjust, and in the demoralizing spread of crime and immorality, we will do well to preserve and deepen this sense of natural law, that is, of justice, of integrity and of the good, that upright reason inspires continually within our consciences.

A new life

But we cannot stop here. We must enter the realistic vision of faith, which shows us the inevitable inability of man to be good and just, when left to himself and unaided. It is not only our catechism that tells us so. A large part of modern literature and of films and plays today provide despairing documentary evidence on this point. The pessimism that prevails in art steeped in modern psychology tells us even more eloquently than the religious teacher how sick man is in the innermost recesses of his existence, how he dreams and struggles in vain to reach happiness and the fullness of his being, how inexorably he betrays his moral insufficiency and his inner corruption, and how he feels condemned to scepticism, despair, nothingness.

For us it is clear. We need to be saved. We need Christ. We need One to take upon himself all our sin and expiate it for us. We need a Saviour who will give his life for us and rise again immediately for our justification (cfr. *Rom.* 4,25), that is, to enable us to lead a new life, the supernatural life, the paschal life.

It is for this redeemed life that the Church was instituted. This year, too, she calls us, gathers us and prepares us for the announcement that is hers: that of the resurrection of Christ and our own.

VIII. NECROLOGY

Fr. Thomas Agostoni

* S. Maria Hoé (Italy) 22.10.1907, † Sesto S. Giovanni (Italy) 30.1.1970, age 62, 29 profession, 22 priesthood.

He lived his religious life in humble and exemplary dedication. He serenely accepted the long illness God sent him, enduring it with priestly spirit as a purification and preparation for meeting his Father.

Coad. Joseph Appendino

* Pralormo (Italy) 8.1.1913, † Chatillon (Italy) 28.1.1970, age 67, 37 profession.

Entering the Congregation at a mature age he spent his Salesian apostolate as a very able band-master and showed great love for the boys. He assisted in the Provincial Office (Subalpine), fulfilling his duties intelligently and discreetly, even in delicate and difficult cases. He was of a cheerful temperament and knew how to entertain the boys with games and friendliness. He loved his Province and confreres intensely.

Fr. Alfred Augenbraun

* Essen (Germany) 21.1.1908, † Marienhausen (Germany) 14.1.1970, age 62, 43 profession, 34 priesthood, 14 rector.

He generously sacrificed himself for the young confreres right until the end of his serious illness. He was an optimist, friendly, generous, conciliating. The foundation of his fine virtues was his solid piety, which was genuinely Salesian and permeated with love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco.

Fr. Faustinus Bellotti

* Pedenosso (Italy) 15.2.1869, † Pindamonhangaba (Brazil) 4.1.1970, age 101, 79 profession, 73 priesthood.

When he left for America Don Rua told him that he would never return to his homeland. This came true for he stayed 80 years in America without returning to Italy. He was always a man of prayer, and even in the last months of his life, when he lay almost unconscious, he always began his day with vocal prayers clearly uttered. From 1938 he was confessor of the novices.

Coad. Santino Bellotti

* Novara (Italy) 2.11.1891, † Canelli (Italy) 22.1.1970, age 78, 3 profession.

After a life spent almost entirely in teaching in elementary schools, he obtained the special privilege of crowning his lifelong dream of becoming a Salesian at the age of almost 75. He worked right until the end in giving all his energies for the boys whom he loved. A very limpid soul, he was always an example of deep piety, knowing how to make himself loved and to infuse into those who approached him an enthusiasm and love for the religious and Salesian life.

Fr. Aloysius Boccassino

* Valfenera (Italy) 30.10.1886, † Bologna (Italy) 7.11.1969, age 83, 65 profession, 56 priesthood, 9 rector.

A man of uncommon talent and extraordinary tenacity, he formed part of the first group of missionaries destined for the new Vicariate apostolic of Shiu-Chow, China. For thirty years, 1919-49, he was a humble but courageous protagonist of Salesian history in that country. He returned home on account of health but continued to work for the missions by spreading knowledge of them and seeking financial help.

Fr. Joseph Brambilla

* Santa Fe (Argentina) 15.11.1930, † Vignaud (Argentina) 23.1.1970, age 39, 22 profession, 13 priesthood.

He was an exemplary Prefect-Vicar, taking for himself the least pleasant jobs and thus inspiring in the confreres and aspirants a greater confidence in the Rector. He was a wise administrator and sought

always the interests of the Congregation without neglecting those of others. He was the victim of a street accident whilst performing an act of charity towards a seriously ill family.

Fr. Amedeus Burchiellaro

* Urbena (Italy) 18.8.1894, † Varazze (Italy) 23.11.1969, age 75, 55 profession, 48 priesthood.

A fine priest and educator, he was unreservedly bound to his duties of teaching to which he dedicated so many years of his life. The confreres and past pupils remember his simple goodness, constant good humour and that human understanding that made him acceptable to big and small alike.

Fr. Alfred Buttignol

* Pianzano (Italy) 13.8.1909, † Bahia Blanca (Argentina) 18.12.1969, age 60, 42 profession, 32 priesthood, 17 rector.

He arrived in Patagonia as a young missionary and in that land of Don Bosco's dreams he poured out all the treasures of his good soul. Characteristic of him was a great love of Don Bosco and the Congregation, something he inculcated in others by his exemplary life and conversation. He had a great spirit of work, a high sense of responsibility and a generous heart towards all.

Fr. Joseph Capanini

* Parma (Italy) 4.9.1883, † Turin 7.3.1970, age 86, 70 profession, 60 priesthood.

Aged 17, he left for Chile and worked there intensely for 33 years. On his return to Italy he was confessor in various houses of formation, especially at the Rebaudengo, Turin. A man of great simplicity and goodness, with an unalterable smile on his lips, he showed cordial understanding towards all, confreres and boys, and especially towards the tiny ones. A man of prayer, he was always present at community practices of piety. As a confessor, his spontaneous ardour inflamed his words of consolation for souls and he was a true spiritual support for the community.

Coad. Guy Canestrini

* Verghereto (Italy) 9.7.1886, † Bologna (Italy) 25.12.1969, age 83, 47 profession.

Becoming a Salesian at a mature age, he kept the authentic virtues of simple peasant family life, viz. honesty, a spirit of work and sacrifice, serenity, simple and robust faith, wisdom. He spent 40 years as a cook, 10 in charge of the refectory, never relaxing his humble, joyful and faithful service to the boys and confreres.

Fr. Joseph Cont

* Aldeno (Italy) 13.5.1883, † Albarè (Italy) 27.1.1970, age 86, 65 profession, 57 priesthood.

His soul full of God, he was always enthusiastic about his Salesian vocation. As a priest he was exemplary and sound, an apostle of the word of God and confessions, a tremendous lover of Jesus in the Eucharist and Mary Help of Christians. In the first years of his priesthood he worked in our oratories, then he was a confessor for 30 years. Resigned to the will of God, he said on his deathbed: « My hour has come, I'm going to Paradise ».

Fr. Eugene Diz

* Quilmes (Argentine) 5.7.1904, † Corrientes (Argentine) 2.3.1970, age 65, 48 profession, 38 priesthood.

He spent his Salesian apostolate as a teacher, assistant, headmaster, prefect and rector, a true son of Don Bosco whom he dearly loved. He consecrated the last ten years entirely to the priestly ministry as an indefatigable confessor and preacher, in spite of sufferings. Acute peritonitis ended his life rather suddenly.

Coad. Modesto Dominguez

* Llerena (Spain) 15.6.1879, † Seville (Spain) 28.1.1970, age 90, 43 profession.

Well-bred in person and manner, he was the same in his spiritual life. Without accomplishing great things he knew how to show his love for God and the Congregation in the dedication he brought to his work as book-binder, librarian, and above all as a musician.

Fr. Adelmo Dondini

* Castel di Casio (Italy) 6.5.1913, † La Spezia (Italy) 9.11.1969, age 56, 36 profession, 26 priesthood, 17 rector.

His religious life was that of a brother and father; in social life he was an affectionate friend. He suffered greatly in life but was a luminous example of faith and total abandonment into the hands of God.

Fr. Fernando Fagalde

* Paysandù (Uruguay) 7.6.1896, † Montevideo (Uruguay) 5.1.1970, age 73, 45 profession, 39 priesthood, 19 rector.

After being an advocate of law he became a Salesian, rector and parish priest, giving proof of his zeal in very many apostolic works. He was also a great student of the Holy Shroud. He gave the best part of himself to the formation of thousands of young people whose great admiration and affection he easily won.

Fr. Emidio Farolfi

* Fognano (Italy) 7.11.1884, † Bologna (Italy) 11.1.1970, age 85, 40 profession, 60 priesthood.

He brought into his school work and apostolate a profound sense of duty and great generosity. For 30 years, as vicar, he worked alongside Fr. Anthony Gavinelli, parish priest and re-constructor of the Sacred Heart Sanctuary at Bologna, enjoying his full confidence. His extraordinary charity showed itself above all during the war, when the Sanctuary and the Salesian House were destroyed during the bombings.

Fr. Paul Frantzen

* Bremen (Germany) 27.1.1913, † Ens Dorf (Germany) 11.12.1969, age 56, 39 profession, 31 priesthood.

After fruitful work as a missionary in Japan, his health forced him to return home. He taught for 14 years then but his weak heart made him retire to the novitiate, where he made himself as useful as he could. He was faithful even in little things, an exemplary priest and religious, always ready for sacrifice.

Fr. John Gil Pérez

* Vitoria (Spain) 8.8.1917, † Salamanca (Spain) 26.11.1969, age 52, 34 profession, 23 priesthood.

The generations of theology students who knew him as professor of Scripture testify to his complete dedication to his teaching and the activities and life of the studentate. He was a man of initiative and action, of facile and convincing speech, of exquisite sensibility and profound religious sense, a friend on whom one could always rely. Progressive paralysis in his last three years placed him on a cross which he endured with joyful patience.

Fr. Leopold Kaucic

* Lomanosi (Jugoslavia) 15.11.1914, † Sevnica (Jugoslavia) 14.12.1969, age 55, 26 profession, 21 priesthood, 5 rector.

His sudden death, caused by cardiac complications after influenza, came as a grave loss to the Province. He was a real father in his parish at Sevnica, as proved by his funeral. Even in Peru, where he worked for nearly 20 years, he was greatly loved and esteemed.

Fr. George Kretschmer

* Breslau (Germany) 1.6.1902, † Cologne (Germany) 31.1.1970, age 67, 41 profession, 33 priesthood, 15 rector.

A late vocation, he gave himself with such affection to the work among boys that he was called the Don Bosco of our times. After the war he was rector of Don Bosco Hostel in East Berlin and even there succeeded in winning the hearts of the young men, especially the university students. Through him happiness and piety reigned supreme in that house.

Fr. Matthias Kreutzer

* Bubach (Germany) 24.3.1905, † Munich (Germany) 28.1.1970, age 64, 39 profession, 30 priesthood, 1 rector.

In 1939 he went as a missionary to China and did great work as prefect in various houses. When the Salesians were expelled from China he went as rector to the new work in the Philippines, but in 1957 a serious illness forced him to return to Germany. A cure was sought in

vain in different hospitals but he accepted God's will with serenity and offered himself as a victim for souls.

Fr. Ignatius Kuczkowicz

* Orawka (Poland) 30.3.1892, † Gdansk (Poland) 25.1.1970, age 77, 58 profession, 51 priesthood, 20 rector.

An exemplary confrere in the observance of the rules and the Salesian spirit, he was known above all as a mathematics teacher greatly appreciated by the boys. After the war he was for many years rector of our schools. Finally he was confessor and translated the documents of the Congregation from Italian into Polish.

Fr. Alexander Labancz

* Obecse (Hungary) 16.2.1901, † Pannonhalma (Hungary) 24.2.1970, age 69, 46 profession, 38 priesthood.

He worked as prefect in several houses and was then given the spiritual care of the Karolyi hospital in Budapest. After the suppression of religious communities in 1950 he became an accountant in a big firm in the capital, attained pension age and frequented the Franciscan church at Buda. Suffering badly from cerebral arteriosclerosis, in September 1969 he retired to the hostel for old and sick religious and there ended his days through sudden death.

Fr. Ceslas Madej

* Krakow (Poland) 1.6.1909, † Lodz (Poland) 12.2.1970, age 60, 40 profession, 31 priesthood.

A man of high and precise ideals, he faithfully carried out his duties as assistant, administrator and catechist. He then became a parish priest and in spite of grave difficulties worked with extraordinary zeal. He found it difficult to preach but did his best to overcome this. He demanded a lot from himself, but towards others he was a real father and has left behind him a wonderful record as a Salesian priest who was faithful to Christ and to Don Bosco.

Fr. Joseph Mezöfenyi

* Mezöfenyi (Hungary) 12.3.1911, † Budapest (Hungary) 30.11.1969, age 58, 41 profession, 31 priesthood, 3 rector.

In the spirit of Don Bosco he made himself all things to all in the festive oratories, schools and parochial apostolate. After the suppression of religious he was a chaplain in various places where great prudence was required. Everywhere he was loved and sought after. In his last years he went through a painful calvary at the hands of surgeons but bore everything with great strength of soul and abandonment to God.

Fr. Joseph Oleksy

* Jordanow (Poland) 9.7.1892, † Warsaw (Poland) 17.10.1969, age 77, 60 profession, 51 priesthood.

He was a teacher of religion in the schools of Warsaw for 40 years, a highly talented pedagogue with a love for the catechetical apostolate, a systematic and hard worker. He had great influence over boys, finding vocations to the Congregation among them. Thousands of people present at his funeral gave proof of their appreciation and love towards our good confrere.

Coad. John Osomanski

* Poreba Gorna (Poland) 29.8.1894, † Czerwinski (Poland) 4.1.1970, age 75, 53 profession.

After being a student at our school at Oswiecim, he entered the Congregation and gave tailoring instructions with great zeal. Later he worked as secretary in our houses and stayed at this until his last days, receiving the last sacraments with admirable faith.

Coad. Nicholas Pierro

* Monte San Giacomo (Italy) 5.12.1908, † New York (U.S.A.) 23.12.1969, age 61, 37 profession.

He was a confrere of enviable simplicity and unreserved faithfulness to his vocation. In an unassuming way he was always ready to serve others. Although of weak health he made very few demands. He never

dared give much advice but knew how to obey promptly and always with a smile. He didn't know how to criticize but always found some good thing to say about everything and everyone. He spent the greater part of his life as a sacristan, happiest when surrounded by his servers.

Coad. Joseph Sabaté

* Sabadell (Spain) 9.3.1887, † Virgo (Spain) 23.12.1969, age 82, 64 profession.

He was a fine figure of a Salesian coadjutor with an extraordinary fund of goodness, interior life, joy and total dedication to the boys. His love for Christ made him happy to prepare many generations of children for their First Communion. He received several military, civil and educational decorations, always attributing the honour to the Congregation.

Fr. Peter Saracino

* Avetrana (Italy) 18.11.1902, † Bari (Italy) 4.3.1970, age 67, 32 profession, 24 priesthood.

Ordained priest in 1945 he was always the assistant parish priest at the Sacred Heart parish, Taranto. Simple, humble and poor, he spent his priesthood at the total service of the really poor in a work that was most exemplary and with a dedication that was spontaneous and natural even when it demanded very heavy sacrifices.

Fr. Joseph Clement Silva Bernard

* Concepcion (Argentina) 29.11.1888, † Buenos Aires (Argentina) 22.1.1970, age 81, 62 profession, 56 priesthood, 24 rector.

The Province lost in him one of its oldest and most deserving Salesians. He built and enlarged colleges, directed social works, and was for 45 years promotor of the Union of Fathers of Families in Catholic colleges. An eloquent orator, he took part in important world educational conferences, and he was Minister Plenipotentiary at Rome for the promotion of immigration of Italian and Spanish families to the Argentine. Characteristic of him was his large heart that was so

prompt to help and console all, whether of the poorest or highest state in society.

Coad. Frederick Sustersic

* Veliki (Jugoslavia) 28.2.1885, † Ljubljana (Jugoslavia) 10.1.1970, age 84, 61 profession.

He spent the greater part of his Salesian life as shoe-making instructor, giving an example of fidelity to Don Bosco, Salesian youthfulness and orderly hard work right until the end, as well as deep eucharistic and marian piety. His memory will be indelible in the annals of the house of Rakovnik.

Fr. Sylvester Taliga

* Sucha nad Parnou (Slovakia) 31.12.1901, † PAS, Rome, 21.12.1969, age 68, 46 profession, 38 priesthood.

For about 25 years he was librarian at the P.A.S., an indefatigable worker and a humble and zealous apostle among the most poor and abandoned. His whole life seemed summed up in one word: serve. He served everyone, always and on every occasion, with only one defect: he never knew when to say enough. After the war he was at the centre of various enterprises to help his confreres who came over from Czechoslovakia and the indefatigable organizer of the Slovak Salesian Cooperators residing abroad. He died rather suddenly of a cerebral haemorrhage.

Fr. Michael Torda

* Pazmand (Hungary) 16.4.1887, † Budapest (Hungary) 17.1.1970, age 82, 59 profession, 51 priesthood.

He was one of the first Hungarian Salesians and worked for a number of years in Italy and Spain. In 1941 he returned to his homeland and was for many years provincial secretary and confessor. In 1950, at the suppression, he went to live with his brother, remaining firmly faithful to his priestly cassock and continuing, with great sacrifice and amid many difficulties, to exercise his ministry in a parish on the outskirts of Budapest.

Fr. Philip Traversi

* Cave, Rome, 4.1.1882, † Rome, 28.6.1969, age 87, 71 profession, 63 priesthood, 6 rector.

An exceptional worker, he was a great apostle, educator and teacher, winning the affection and sympathy of his pupils and acquaintances. His sincere and deep religious spirit made him available for every service, capable of generous sacrifices, simple, humble and kind in his dealings with all.

Coad. Sebastian Turello

* Ciconico (Italy) 11.5.1902, † Guayaquil (Ecuador) 12.12.1969, age 67, 42 profession.

He went from Ivrea to do his novitiate in Ecuador in 1927. Simple, good, frank and happy, he spent his Salesian life working with enthusiasm and sacrifice as economer, farmer and cook in various houses and missions. In spite of delicate health he continued working until a ruthless illness cut short his life. He had great love for Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and the Congregation, and was very edifying in his piety.

Fr. Alfred Valderrama

* Buenos Aires (Argentine) 18.11.1909, † Resistencia (Argentine) 20.12.1969, age 60, 32 profession, 26 priesthood.

He died almost suddenly whilst getting ready for new work in a parish. He left a large circle of mourners, above all among the past pupils whose prefect of studies he had been for many years.

1° elenco 1970

N.	COGNOME E NOME	LUOGO DI NASCITA	DATA DI NASC. E MORTE	ETÀ	LUOGO DI M.	ISP.
1	Sac. AGOSTONI Tomaso	S. Maria Hoé (I)	22.10.1907	30.1.1970	62	Sesto S. Giovanni (I) Lo
2	Coad. APPENDINO Giuseppe	Pralormo (I)	8.1.1913	28.1.1970	57	Châtillon (I) Sb
3	Sac. AUGENBRAUN Alfredo	Essen (D)	21.1.1908	14.1.1970	62	Marienthausen (D) KÖ
4	Sac. BELLOTTI Faustino	Pedenosso (I)	15.2.1869	4.1.1970	101	Pindamonhangaba (BR) SP
5	Coad. BELLOTTI Santino	Novara (I)	2.11.1891	22.1.1970	78	Canelli (I) No
6	Sac. BOCCASSINO Luigi	Valfenera (I)	30.10.1886	7.11.1969	83	Bologna (I) Lo
7	Sac. BRAMBILLA Giuseppe	Santa Fe (AR)	15.11.1930	23.1.1970	39	Vignaud (RA) Rr
8	Sac. BURCHIELLARO Amedeo	Urbena (I)	18.8.1894	23.11.1969	75	Varazze (I) Li
9	Sac. BUTTIGNOL Alfredo	Pianzano (I)	13.8.1909	18.12.1969	60	Bahía Blanca (RA) BB
10	Sac. CAMPANINI Giuseppe	Parma (I)	4.9.1883	7.3.1970	86	Torino (I) Cn
11	Coad. CANESTRINI Guido	Verghereto (I)	9.7.1886	25.12.1969	83	Bologna (I) Lo
12	Sac. CONT Giuseppe	Aldeno (I)	13.5.1883	27.1.1970	86	Albarè (I) Vr
13	Sac. DIZ Eugenio	Quilmes (AR)	5.7.1904	2.3.1970	65	Corrientes (RA) Rr
14	Coad. DOMINGUEZ Modesto	Llerena (E)	15.6.1879	28.1.1970	90	Sevilla (E) Se
15	Sac. DONDINI Adelmo	Castel di Casio (I)	6.5.1913	9.11.1969	56	La Spezia (I) Li
16	Sac. FAGALDE Fernando	Paysandú (U)	7.6.1896	5.1.1970	73	Montevideo (U) U
17	Sac. FAROLFI Emidio	Fognano (I)	7.11.1884	11.1.1970	85	Bologna (I) Lo
18	Sac. FRANTZEN Paolo	Bremen (D)	27.1.1913	11.12.1969	56	Ensdorf (D) Mü
19	Sac. GIL Giovanni (Pérez)	Vitoria (E)	18.8.1917	26.12.1969	52	Salamanca (E) Ma
20	Sac. KAUCIC Leopoldo	Lomanosi (YU)	15.11.1914	14.12.1969	55	Sevnica (YU) Ju
21	Sac. KRETSCHMER Giorgio	Breslau (D)	1.6.1902	31.1.1970	67	Köln (D) KÖ
22	Sac. KREUTZER Mattia	Bubach (D)	24.3.1905	28.1.1970	64	München (D) Mü
23	Sac. KUCZKOWICZ Ignazio	Orawka (PL)	30.3.1892	25.1.1970	77	Gdansk (PL) Ló
24	Sac. LABANCZ Alessandro	Obecse (H)	16.2.1901	24.2.1970	69	Pannonhalma (H) Un
25	Sac. MADEJ Ceslao	Kraków (PL)	1.6.1909	12.2.1970	60	Lódz (PL) Ló
26	Sac. MEZOFÉNYI Giuseppe	Mezőfény (H)	12.3.1911	30.11.1969	58	Budapest (H) Un
27	Sac. OLEKSY Giuseppe	Jordanów (PL)	9.7.1892	17.10.1969	77	Warszawa (PL) Ló
28	Coad. OSOMANSKI Giovanni	Poreba Gorno (PL)	29.8.1894	4.1.1970	75	Czerwinsk (PL) Ló
29	Coad. PIERRO Nicola	Monte S. Giacomo (I)	5.12.1908	23.12.1969	61	New York (USA) NR
30	Coad. SABATÉ Giuseppe	Sabadell (E)	9.3.1887	23.12.1969	82	Vigo (E) Le
31	Sac. SARACINO Pietro	Avetrana (I)	18.11.1902	4.3.1970	67	Bari (I) Pu
32	Sac. SILVA Giuseppe C.	Concepción (RA)	29.11.1888	22.1.1970	81	Buenos Aires (RA) BA
33	Coad. SUSTERSIC Federico	Veliki Dol (YU)	28.2.1885	10.1.1970	84	Ljubljana (Yu) Ju
34	Sac. TALIGA Silvestro	Sucha (CS)	31.12.1901	21.12.1969	68	Roma PAS (I) PAS
35	Sac. TORDA Michele	Pázmánd (H)	16.4.1887	17.1.1970	82	Budapest (H) Un
36	Sac. TRAVERSI Filippo	Cave (I)	4.1.1882	28.6.1969	87	Roma (I) Ro
37	Coad. TURELLO Sebastiano	Ciconicco-Fagagna (I)	11.5.1902	12.12.1969	67	Guayaquil (ER) Qu
38	Sac. VALDERRAMA Alfredo	Buenos Aires (RA)	18.11.1909	20.12.1969	60	Resistencia (RA) Rr

