

ACTS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY

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1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

"Strengthen your brothers" (Luke XXII 32)

Rome, 8 December 1979

My dear confreres,

The feast of the Immaculate Conception is always a reminder to us of our Salesian origins and an occasion of fresh hope for the future. This year I spent the 8th of December with our boys at Arese, and I found it a deeply moving and disquieting experience.

Surrounded by poor boys at Arese (as in India, Latin America, Africa, China — anywhere) one is overwhelmed by a veritable host of thoughts: how beneficial our vocation is; how important it is to be totally Salesian, to increase our sincerity, our courage, our inventiveness — and our numbers too (yes, indeed, the need for far greater numbers is really urgent).

1. A disquieting challenge

Our vocation has its origins in the travail of our Mother Mary and our Mother the Church — both distressed and concerned for the salvation of the ever-growing numbers of youngsters in need. Like Mary, the Church has the strong love of a mother, fearless, untiring, constant; a love that resists rebuffs, that has its own special kindness, understanding, patience, generosity, intimacy; a love that only a mother knows.

The motherly love the Church and Mary have for us is a love so real and palpitating that it touches the very fibre

of our being, especially as we are Salesians and so close to Mary. The Holy Father, in his letter to priests, reminds them that they have “another fatherhood and, as it were, even another motherhood, recalling the Apostle’s words about the children whom he begets in suffering (*I Cor IV, 15; Gal IV, 19*)” (Letter to all priests, 8).

To consider the vastly increasing numbers of our charges in the various continents, the responsibility of Holy Mother Church, and our own specific mission within that Church, is indeed a startling and disturbing thought. We used to number 22,000; we are now 17,000. What has happened?

We certainly live in a confused world: divorce, birth-control and abortion are now acceptable; child-bearing and motherhood are rejected. Fortunately the Church is of God and bonded to the Paschal mystery; though enfleshed, she enriches every culture at all times without ever becoming entrained in transient modes.

Our vocation gives us a share in the Church’s motherhood: so we have to examine this unprecedented attack on fertility and fidelity.

Why do we lose so many Salesians after their perpetual profession? Why are so many priests laicized? Why do so many Religious have psychological problems and faith crises? Why are vocations so few, especially in many Western countries? How can courage and perseverance be increased? Is it a question of being influenced by harmful and worldly ideas both now and in the past?

This indeed proposes a disquieting challenge to our Religious fidelity.

2. “Strengthen your brothers”

Last November there was a meeting of the Union of Superiors General at Villa Cavalletti to tackle this problem. Papers were presented by specialists, experiences and ideas were

pooled, and there was an optimistic hope of good helpful results. The study centred on the responsibility of Superiors, but each confrere must apply the findings to his own sense of responsibility: for each one of us without exception has the duty to help and encourage his brothers (*Luke XXII, 32*).

We are weak and inconstant, but God is strong — indeed he alone is the source of our courage, our safety and our strength (*Rom XVI, 25*); he alone will keep us firm to the end (*I Cor I, 8*); it is he who has set us on the solid foundation that is Christ (*II Cor I, 21*); he is faithful and will save us from evil (*II Tb III, 3*); he is strong forever (*I Pet V, 10*). Still, we need to remember that God acts through us; his strengthening presence and active grace come to us through his chosen ones. This is seen in the mission of Peter and the Apostles, the mission of those in charge of communities, and indeed the mission of every man towards his neighbour. It is through man himself that God channels his empowering help to man.

Paul told the Thessalonians that he had sent Timothy to them to strengthen and encourage them in the faith so that none would fear the problems to be faced (*I Thes III.2*).

It is plain then that God has bountifully gifted each of us with the ability to strengthen and reassure others in their Baptismal and Religious vocation. With this gift comes commitment and discernment; we shall need to show initiative, and there will be times of tribulation. But there will also be the deep joyousness of a love that bears fruit. Peter writes in his first letter, "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder... Tend the flock of God that is your charge... willingly... eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory" (*I Pet V, 1-4*).

With this letter I wish to make everyone more efficaciously aware that he has a personal responsibility to strengthen his brothers and that there is a lively satisfaction that such action brings. This goes for Provincials, Rectors, confessors, those in

charge of formation, and indeed every single confrere. To encourage our brother is to share a little in Christ's solid foundation, to work with Peter the Rock, to experience the fruitful maternity of Mary and the Church, and to share with Don Bosco the certainty of our God-given vocation.

The age we live in demands that we adapt our methods to meet its special problems. The crisis in fidelity and personnel makes it essential that we encourage one another; and we shall need to tap new sources of energy for this. Some thought and resolution will be needed.

3. Appraising the crisis

The great number of Salesians who have left the Congregation in the last few years is a part of the overall picture of the Western Church, with its crises, Religious and sacerdotal defections and distressing drop in vocations.

A study has been made of the reason given by Superiors and laicized members for such a step; interviews have been conducted with those still in a state of anxious doubt and re-assessment; the attitudes of those who are resigned or indifferent have been pondered; observations of the unbalanced reactions of inert conservatives or superficial progressives have been weighed; and a close examination has been made especially of the great majority who have continued to persevere in their commitment and who make the effort to cope with their many problems. All this has led to two levels of interpreting the crisis: the *personal level* of each individual and his own circumstances (to be taken case by case), and the *cultural, social and ecclesial level*, which needs an overall vision, with help from Superiors and wise, competent and gifted men.

In practice these two aspects overlap, but to treat them separately will help towards a more understanding appraisal of the crisis.

THE PERSONAL LEVEL

Here we are chiefly interested in those who have abandoned their vocation. Their crises and the extreme decisions they have taken should help us understand others and their problems. It is well known that the leavers have been extremely numerous, and in an overall view a number of practical reasons stand out: human weakness, eccentric ideologies, professing unsuitable candidates, poor formation, institutional problems, out-of-date customs, and casuistic approaches to the vows and the Holy Rule.

There are a few further ideas I should like to add; and in this I acknowledge the help of Father Dho (Councillor for Formation) who has made certain analyses of the dispensation requests of the last ten years.

Reasons for these dispensations are gathered from two sources: the interested subject, and superiors and witnesses; each supplements the other. The subject presents his case: his disposition of mind and practical circumstances; the witness describes the subject's behaviour as it appears to him or other members of the community.

Special attention must be paid to the profound significance of the free act of the will involved in making the final profession, or in asking for a dispensation. It is a matter of a choice made in freedom, an overall option affecting one's whole life, penetrating to the innermost consciousness of a person, and yet cloaked in such a way as to be hidden not only to outside observers but even to the subject himself. Hence it is that we may know the motives for leaving without knowing the cause for leaving. To quote Father Dho, "Motives and causes are not exactly the same thing. Discussion of *causes* covers a much wider field and includes innumerable situations of various kind both objective and subjective. On the other hand, *motives* are limited to those elements which here and now lead to a decision, and are seen by the subject as a 'reason for such a decision'".

Let us begin with the motives presented (both subject's and witnesses').

As far as mere numbers go (and here more research is needed so as to avoid superficial and erroneous judgements) most problems are in the area of chastity, the emotions and sexuality. Lower down the list, in decreasing numbers, come problems of personality and character and psychological upsets; next, general immaturity, abandonment of prayer, lack of interest in the spiritual life, loss of the significance of one's vocation, ideological fixations, unadaptability to life in common, loss of contact with Superiors, discord and the spirit of contestation; and lastly (this is important) even the finding that no vocation exists. Apart from these motives there are also concrete cases that have reached the point of being quite irreversible.

The frequency of the motives of chastity, emotions and sexuality should not be judged as a "cause" of the present crisis. It is not to be seen in isolation: its significance is closely interwoven with the other motives and must be found in the overall context of a particular individual living in a host of individual circumstances and in a particular culture and spiritual ambience.

It would seem more objective and exact to treat the various motives given as one whole and thus achieve a clearer picture of this desertion-crisis. An overall appraisal could be summarised by describing a fairly complex state of mind. The case generally presents itself something like this: a state of mind unhappy and frustrated with the priestly and religious vocation, and rejecting norms, guidelines, directives and structures. All this is closely concerned with the three following problems:

- *a weakening of the sense of the supernatural* and a general spiritual debility;
- the acceptance of *ideologies* that tend to justify defection;
- *emotional needs that are immature and compulsive*, accompanied by more or less frequent falls in the matter of chastity.

In assessing the disposition of an individual, one would need to take into account his life-history right from childhood: family conditions, social environment, education, studies, religious formation, adjustment to community life, etc. Then consideration would need to be given to the vast cultural upheaval about us; it too has its own history of development more or less accelerated and variously characterised by each individual country. Finally there is the vigorous renewal in the Church initiated by Vatican II, with its difficult changes and its pulsating energy for the apostolate. These too vary in their practical manifestations according to the different regions in which they are found.

An analysis of these motives brings to the fore two very distinct categories of defection: firstly, the *lack of a genuine religious vocation in the first place* (and this could be latent for years and surface violently in circumstances that vary for each individual); and secondly, a *progressive deterioration of the vocation and the final collapse in perseverance*.

When we consider these two groups of leavers we must all feel we have much to answer for. Their motivations involve us too, and in the following ways: too facile admittance to vows; superficial discernment of vocations; overlooking the dangers of certain unorthodox ideologies; acceptance of comfortable living; lack of spiritual and apostolic animation; community improprieties or injustices; discord and lack of understanding; overtaxing or unsuitable work; suspicious attitudes, back-biting and calumnies; exploitation of confreres' talents; repression of initiative; and loneliness and frustration resulting from not finding in the community that genuine communion and understanding that charity demands.

Indeed considerable responsibility must be laid at the door not only of those who leave but also of those who remain. We are speaking, of course, objectively: nevertheless no per se justification from these problems may be assumed. Still, we must bear in mind that personal freedom is cloaked in a mantle of

mystery; it defies total analysis; and so we certainly have no call to condemn.

Yet even though our freedom is influenced by circumstances, it cannot be thought that personal crises are beyond the ambit of free will; there is no question of determinism. Every vocation is a two-way affair, enmeshed in personal relationships with God. It implies an individual rapport with him that is free and sincere; and it is through the daily events and vicissitudes of life and the mediation of others that we achieve this rapport. One thing we can be absolutely sure of, however: God is always faithful to the call he has given us, and his loving mercy is always at hand to sustain our waning efforts. Our responsibility is not negated by the circumstances in which we live, even though these circumstances will certainly be a frame of reference in the assessment of each individual's freedom.

With this distinction behind us, it is now up to us all to accept our personal responsibility not only for the part we may have played in quite a few of the complex and objective motivations, but above all to take up the challenge of this crisis and attack it with wisdom, perseverance and optimism.

THE CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND ECCLESIAL LEVEL

Modern man is developing in an ambience of vast changes in culture, in society, in the Church; and this is in accord with the signs of the times that surfaced in this century and ran wild particularly after World War II.

Humanity is going through an unprecedented era of enormous change: greater social activity, deeper awareness of the dignity of man, rejection of myths and superstitions, greater efforts for social justice, amazing growth in the sciences and technology. These phenomena have set us on the road to achieve a new vision of the overall development of man.

Social and political conditions have undergone rapid changes in their aims to build *a new society*. Into these plans has gone

a lot of thinking taken from ideologies that are often non-Christian and foreign to the spirit of the Gospel. The net result is tension, strife and cultural pluralism: aberrations naturally follow.

The sum total of these phenomena bespeaks a new era of *human development*; their signs show we are on the brink of a new chapter in history. "Gaudium et Spes" tells us "ours is a new age of history with critical and swift upheavals spreading gradually to all corners of the earth. They are the products of man's intelligence and creative activity, but they recoil on him, upon his judgements and his desires, both individual and collective, upon his ways of thinking and acting in regard to people and things. We are entitled then to speak of a real cultural and social transformation whose repercussions are felt too on the religious level. A transformation of this kind brings with it the serious problems associated with any crisis of growth" (GS 4).

Then there is the profound renewal in the Church set in motion by Vatican II. Its impact is seen in the deepening mystery of the Church in its communion and mission, the prime importance given to the Scriptures, the complementing service of ministers and charisms, the revival of the Local Church (with its resultant need for decentralisation and pluriformity), the apostolate of the laity, ecumenism, dialogue with non-Christian religions, religious freedom, the new aspect of the priest's ministry as "pastor" and "guide" in the community, collegiality of Orders, the Church's profound understanding of man as she assumes her new presence in the world, her sacramental nature and the rediscovery of religious consecration in the ecclesial sense. This vast movement has touched the nerve of Christian life — with a loss of some tranquillity, true, and even causing many to be deeply upset with so many subjective interpretations, variant opinions (especially in reference to what used to be regarded as solid and sacrosanct), and abuses and deviations.

Such profound changes have brought about uncertainties resulting in feelings of insecurity about certain matters of Faith; doubts, vagueness, equivocations, aberrations; and even a crisis

of identity within the Church herself — and generally speaking in the Religious life too: right down to every single Institute.

The *new presence* of the Church in the world has provoked a crisis in spirituality and ways of carrying out the apostolate: the relation between human development and Gospel salvation has been challenged and various interpretations given to the ascetical vision of “fleeing from the world” and to Christian morality.

The *laicizing process* has thrown into crisis the values of every consecration; the growth in democratic thinking has questioned authority; and the general accelerated pace of history has turned structures and institutions topsy turvy.

So it is that many Religious agonise as to whether there will be a different kind of future for the Religious life, or indeed whether there will be any future at all. The very principles of Religious life are under discussion: the real worth of perpetual profession, the essence of each vow, the Founder’s Gospel vision, the importance of community life and the methods of formation.

When speaking of crises and defections, this enormous complex of values, problems and difficulties has a far greater influence on individual confreres than can be explained simply by the personal motives adduced.

Nevertheless the Council, despite the increasing contradictions and distortions rampant in the world (GS 8), does not speak of human catastrophe but rather of the opening up of a “new chapter in history” (GS 4), and of the positive commitment of the Church and all Christians to be ever more generous in helping men in today’s world to build a new society and a new era. Vatican II is clearly urging us to view the overall situation in a positive way, in spite of the manifold woes, uncertainties, insecurities, deviations and negative influences that militate so heavily against Religious and priestly vocations.

So let us lift up our eyes in hope, well aware of the challenge to the stability and future prospects of Religious life in this modern world.

4. Our approach to a critical appraisal

The cultural transformation which we are witnessing prompts us to rethink and make a new start. It is not difficult to see in it the riches inherent in the mystery of history which enshrines the living presence of Christ its Lord. Our overall reading of its dramatic events could quite easily become a meditation on the hidden designs of God. In its ups and downs we can discern the Lord passing by and awaking us, correcting us, urging us on, helping us to grow, inciting us to persevere and make progress.

No Religious Institute at the present day can remain faithful in masterly inactivity; nor can it do so in an activity that is aimless and which becomes an end in itself and which impugns or disregards the vital force of the original charism. As he passes by, the Lord calls us to a "balanced activity" which combines fidelity with progress at a rate appropriate to the requirements of the existing situation. In this way the obligation to make proper and necessary changes becomes a vital part of authentic religious commitment.

But to be able to be aware of and interpret the Lord's passing, there is need of prayer, objective analysis, a lively relationship with the beginnings, attention to the signs of the times and to the condition of those to whose good the Institute is directed (which exerts a profound influence on the way its mission develops), a continual and enlightened reference to Vatican II, to the guidance of the Church, to the directives of the recent General Chapters, and to the practical stimulation of those who bear the chief responsibilities in the Congregation.

It is important to be able to develop this kind of meditation in community solidarity, without individualism or self-sufficient attitudes, and without the influence of ideological pressure groups.

SOME POSITIVE SIGNS

At the Rome meeting, the Superiors General were able to pinpoint certain positive elements which throw some light on the scene and allow us to look forward to a future of fruitful perseverance. Here are some of them.

— There are facts that make us aware that this new “season of God” is truly moving in the direction of renewal and not towards an agonizing death and burial.

— The greatly increased practice of examining in the light of faith the signs of the times, and the giving of proper weight to the vast changes that have taken place in human development (due to the great contributions of the human sciences) have made possible for us a synthesis at a higher level without equating fidelity with simple restoration.

— The increasing efforts to understand more deeply the deposit of faith in both its personal structure and its social implications have roused us to important initiatives with regard to ongoing intellectual formation.

— The Council’s image of the Church as a mystery is restoring to Religious life the primacy of its contemplative dimension.

— Sensitivity to the young and the poor is leading to the salvaging of the witness value of the vows and to a greater awareness of communion.

— The challenge of so many changes has prompted General Chapters to clarify and spell out the vocational identity of the individual Institutes.

— The need for intelligent future-planning has brought about a return to the charism of the Founder which is both objective and penetrating.

— Instability and soul-searching have prompted a revision, renewal and reaffirmation of the value of the Constitutions as a Gospel project enshrining religious profession.

— The falling numbers of professed members have led to

a more careful examination and concern regarding the *quality* in the various essential aspects of vocation: selection, admission, early formation.

— The crisis in general has aroused responsibility and encouraged the study of the spiritual and pastoral priorities to be cultivated.

It is true that with these hopeful signs, as the Holy Father says in his encyclical “Redemptor Hominis”, there still remains the spectacle “of disquiet, of conscious or unconscious fear or of menace, which in various ways is being communicated to the whole of the present-day human family and is manifesting itself under various aspects..., in various directions and various degrees of intensity” (RH 15).

Hence the importance and urgency to find a way in this time of transition to encourage and give heart to all our brothers.

5. Some primary obligations

Meanwhile, from an analysis carried out with hopeful prospects, there are some tasks that are urgent and may not be delayed. We must point them out because they become the main object of our obligation to plan our renewal. Our findings show that these are the keypoints that call for determined and efficacious action.

— In the first place comes a deepening of the *meaning of the faith* and its doctrinal content centred on the paschal mystery of Christ in the context of present day concerns. For us this means the giving of special attention to the theological study of the Religious life and a renewed awareness of its salient values, especially *perpetual profession*.

— Secondly there is the *quality* of the formation both initial and ongoing given to the candidates after an accurate and discriminating selection. The formation process must be aimed at reaching “the person in depth, and not only his intellect

and external behaviour, to help him freely understand and rectify his motivations" (G. Dho).

— Furthermore, analyses point to the urgency to salvage and give practical importance to *spiritual direction*. The Union of Superiors General considered this a vital necessity and have asked that means be found to alert all Religious Institutes to the problem. Likewise, emphasis was given to the image and role of the Superior as *spiritual director*, as described in the document "Mutuae Relationes" (Directives for Mutual Relations between Bishops & Religious) (MR 13).

— And then there is the importance of *brotherly fellowship* and *human relations* both inside and outside the consecrated life. This takes on a special urgency in religious communities in order to keep people well-balanced and encourage fidelity (one of today's problems). If it is true that each member has an obligation to the community, it is even truer to say that the community should take care of every member (*Const.* 4, 50-53, 54). The great possibilities of prevention and therapy that can be provided by genuine living fellowship need to be emphasised in these modern times. Every community must become "a strengthening community" to encourage and give new heart to its members.

— Finally attention needs to be given to mental and spiritual health. Mental health no less than physical health needs to be preserved and nurtured by a combination of conditions. "Many defections are clearly seen to be linked with a series of tensions, conflicts, worries, which frequently reveal an underlying way of life (both at a community and personal level) which is unacceptable to every norm of mental health, and even to common sense" (G. Dho). It is well to keep in mind that there are suitable modern therapies acceptable to Christians that are available if necessary.

On the other hand a vocation has need of spiritual hygiene as well: "a constant style of life out of tune with authentic

vocational values cannot fail to induce a progressive weakening" (G. Dho).

6. The foundations of strength and courage

Our attempt to understand the present day religious crisis has opened up horizons of hope, but it has also confirmed our distressing worries, for it presents us with a great and complicated problem far beyond our human powers of solution, and which on that account retains all oppressive and daunting aspects. The question here is not whether we are optimists or pessimists, but whether we are men of faith.

Perseverance and fidelity are possible: indeed they provide the only valid attitude that can look forward to a positive future.

In fact, the ability to remain faithful and give new heart to others, to bolster up their courage, does not stem from the ingenuous enthusiasm of one who has no inkling of the real problem and who is unaware of the corrosive effects of giving in and the complex dangers menacing the future of Religious life. But even taking for granted the natural upheaval and the insidious and subtle secularism that pervades all things and violently attacks the Gospel meaning of consecration, we can still be indisputably certain that we can persevere. We know from the Gospel that Christ is the ruler of history ("I have overcome the world" - *Jn XVI, 33*) and that our faith is indeed a victory (*I Jn V, 4*).

The ability to strengthen our brethren flows from the saving presence of God within us; and this presence is rooted in the grace that sanctifies us and enables us to act through the theological dynamism of faith, hope and charity.

These are the three great hinges that support our *efforts to strengthen our confreres* — truth enlightened by faith; looking to the future animated by hope; and kindness sustained by charity. Let us reflect briefly on these sources of energy offered us by God.

Here we shall have to take for granted the great Christian horizons of faith, hope and charity and limit ourselves to some of their tactical aspects that reflect back on the Religious life and which call for special attention and practical application.

From faith we can deduce certain strategies concerning truth, from hope some implications for our mission, and from charity a few basic points regarding communion.

TRUTH, ENLIGHTENED BY FAITH

First and foremost, to instil new heart and courage in our communities we must be able to make the *truth of the Religious life* crystal clear.

The Council, the Magisterium, and the Superiors at Congregational level have in recent years provided abundant material to make this plain. Noted theologians have also pinpointed the problem areas of religious consecration.

Unfortunately strange ideologies, superficial and ill-founded interpretations, and worldly attitudes have spread abroad and deceived the weak or immature. Let us recall how caustically the Apostles condemned false teachers who led the brethren astray (cf 2 Cor XI, 1 et seq; Tim VI, 3 et seq; Tit I, 10 et seq; 2 Pet II, 10 et seq; Jn II, 18 et seq; Jd I, 3 et seq).

It is essential that the values associated with certain basic truths of our vocation be clearly understood and conscientiously accepted.

For practical purposes we shall concentrate on two of these: *Religious Profession* and the *Distinctive Character of the Congregation*.

— First, *the rediscovery of the full meaning of the Religious profession* understood as a fundamental and definitive choice on the part of the subject, and a specific consecration on the part of God and the Church. By perpetual profession the Religious launches his whole existence, so to speak, into a particular ecclesial orbit. Perpetual profession is an all-embracing option

and consecration, which becomes the yardstick for every subsequent choice; it imposes a totally new outlook and demands a special witness that penetrates every aspect of one's life; nothing escapes its all-embracing survey. There is no such thing as an intermittent Religious. The oblation and intimate consecration inherent in profession is for the Religious the root commitment that defines every aspect of his life.

In the formula for our perpetual profession (*Cons* 74) we find the characteristics of the ancient Biblical covenant: fidelity of both parties meeting in a living pledge; a kind of nuptial entente which pervades the whole life and gives direction and drive to all actions; it is the fusion of two freedoms, full-time and all-embracing.

Rightly St. Thomas spoke of a "vow of profession" in the singular (cf *St. Thos* II-II, q 186), seeing the act of one making his profession not so much as three separate vows but rather as one single act made explicit by the threefold distinction of the individual vows: this he called the "vow of Religion" (cf Tillard: "Devant Dieu et pour le monde", ed. du Cerf, Paris 1974).

The motive force in perpetual profession, the secret of its vitality, all its mystique, is the "sequela Christi" — walking in the footsteps of the Master. Love and enthusiasm for Christ constitute the starting-point and goal of the life of every Religious.

The ceremony of the perpetual profession has an important *public dimension* which authoritatively places the Church's stamp on that profession and shows forth its social and community character. In fact this ceremony manifests a special intervention of the Lord through the ministry of the Church. In the past this intervention was called "consecration" — and even today the new "*Ordo professionis religiosae*", pp 30, 49, 73, 92, uses the term "*consecratio seu benedictio*" for perpetual profession. And it is precisely in this sense that the Council speaks of the "consecration" of the Religious: "(He) is consecrated more intimately (by God) to the divine service" (LG 44 - Latin text).

To the action of God (consecration and blessing) coming

from above there corresponds the act of the one making his profession (oblation and holocaust) rising from below.

Each one's vocation is an *individual divine call* evoking the free and personal response of a *decisive oblation*; God endorses it by a *special consecration*; as a result, a man's whole being receives a *new entitlement, a new union of friendship with him* that embraces his whole life and activity, and assigns to him a *particular role in the general sacramental action* of the Church.

It is not without significance that perpetual profession takes place as an integral part of a liturgical celebration; and its deepest import "is born of worship and is inseparable from the liturgy" (G. Philips, comm. on LG). Through profession the Religious is *consecrated by the Lord among his people* (in His role of Sacrament of Salvation) so that the newly professed may play a more specific part in His mission among men. Thus Religious life acquires a "sacramental" dimension, sharing in the Church's nature, to manifest and communicate to men an aspect of the mystery of Christ (LG 46), not simply as a private project of an individual or group, but as an official task — or rather as a public and ecclesial charism for the good of all. In this way the Religious, by his profession, becomes part of a "special corps" (of a Religious group) — a "witnessing sector" in the living Body of Christ which is the Church.

Hence we must discover once again the real significance of perpetual profession, so as to prepare for it and live it consistently; this is one of the main ways to strengthen and encourage the members and reveal the grandeur and responsibility of their vocation. It will help combat indifference, superficiality and certain ideological interpretations which alter the very nature of religious life or (more commonly the case) weaken perseverance.

We may quote here the pertinent and profound observation of the Holy Father in his letter to all priests: "One must think of all these things, especially at moments of crisis, and not have recourse to a dispensation that is understood as an 'administrative intervention', as though in fact it were not rather

a matter of a profound question of conscience and a test of humanity. God has a right to test each one of us in this way, since this earthly life is a time of testing for every human being" (Letter to all Priests 9).

The "Strengthen your brothers" is closely linked to the exposition of the true nature of perpetual profession: it is faith that sustains the certainty of hope and blessings of charity.

— *Sincere support for the distinctive character of the Congregation.* Another aspect of the true nature of the Religious life which is in urgent need of clear emphasis nowadays is the charismatic identity of one's own Institute — to ensure the development of a practical and decisive sense of belonging. Religious profession is not made in the abstract, but according to a definite way of living the Gospel as conceived and lived out by the Founder and authoritatively set forth in the Constitutions. In the very early days our first confreres expressed their idea of Religious life in the simple but intensely personal phrase, "I am going to stay with Don Bosco"!

The identity of an Institute is not to be found in an idea or a definition, but in an experience of "life in the Spirit". The Congregation into which one becomes incorporated by profession is an historical reality with names of people, dates and traditions; with its own style of holiness and apostolate; with specific objectives to attain and appropriate norms to this end. Religious life in the Church is not something *sui generis* or solitary, but the sum-total of various and well-defined Institutes perpetuating in a living way the spiritual heritages of St Benedict, St Francis, St Dominic, St Ignatius, St Alphonsus, Don Bosco, et al.

The specific character of an Institute is born through the action of the Holy Spirit in giving the Founder a particular charism. This is not something fabricated anew in each successive generation: it follows through uniformly from the beginning. Indeed the charism of the Founder "appears as an *experience of the Spirit* transmitted to his followers to be *lived* by them,

to be *preserved, deepened and constantly developed in harmony with the Body of Christ continually in a process of growth*. It is for this reason that the *distinctive characters* of the various Religious Institutes are preserved and fostered by the Church (LG 44; cf CD 33; 35, 1; 35, 2 etc.). Each distinctive character also involves a *particular style of sanctification and apostolate* which creates a definite *tradition* so that its *objective elements* can be easily recognised" (MR 11).

There is therefore in the distinctive character of the Congregation a very substantial layer which does not depend on ideological interpretations and which cannot be left to the mercy of individual judgements or pressure groups, but which is anchored to two very solid realities: *the Founder*, i.e., a clearly defined person who received a special gift of the Holy Spirit and translated it into his practical living; and a *community* of followers, continually enriched by the same spirit with new members, and *organically structured* so as to look after and develop the abiding nature of the Founder's charism.

With the passing of time, inventiveness and growth need to be attuned to these historical facts — to avoid distortions due to materialistic sociopolitical ideas or to subjective spiritual judgements claiming personal inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Experience shows only too well that abuses exist in both directions.

The task, therefore, of giving new strength and courage demands a clear understanding of the "distinctive character" of the Congregation. Thus new and energetic planning can be launched into a well-defined orbit so as to bring about a sound and uniform growth of the Founder's charism.

FUTURE PROSPECTS ENLIVENED BY HOPE

To give new heart and courage to our brothers, we must attend to another fundamental point: we need an outlook that emphasises the importance here and now of our mission among men.

Today we look to the future, to the new Advent of the year 2000, to the genuine promises of a new Gospel millenium. Such an attitude means being aware of the future without being overawed and conditioned by it. It is we who largely mould the future. We do not walk in a rigid predetermined path but one that admits of originality of thought and action based on valid criteria which take account of both the charism of the Institute and the signs of the times, so that our own efforts may fashion a better, vital and integrated future.

We have had ten years of crisis. Still, when we speak of restoring certain values, or of being tired of so much instability, we do not simply mean to return to the past: that would only prevent proper progress and show a lack of fidelity by inaction. Nor is it a question of a passing weariness, a kind of work-break, without positive efforts and clear aims for a better integrated future.

It is plain that we are witnessing a reassessment of many former values. There is an ever-growing and deeply felt criticism of change for change's sake. It is not a matter of weariness or a brief pause, but of a definite step forward.

The salvaging or recovery referred to is the sign of the beginning of a higher integration between the great permanent values and the new positive signs of the times. One begins to see a greater balance between the ever valid principles (equally true today as they were yesterday — because they transcend fleeting fashions) and the new values emerging from human developments. It is not the static balance or equilibrium of a statue on a pedestal, but a truly *balanced movement* where the very motion itself is one of the factors ensuring progress that is stable.

The cultural development towards a new era is only just beginning. The Church, Bishops and Religious Institutes must see their mission within a society in a state of transition. They must realise there is some courageous research to do.

Balanced movement or change demands that there be certain

points, fixed and clear, which provide a kind of launching-pad for many different orbits in space; it requires the ability to live a stable life in an unstable situation. The saint, for instance, by his obedience, his chastity and his poverty, is a man for all seasons; he is a bearer of perennial values; he is a focal point not only of the past but also of the future. What then are the unchanging principles that make him tick? We need to identify them so that they can be combined with the signs of the times, and so that we may achieve the better integrated future we are aiming for.

It is in this direction we shall find the elements of certainty we need in our research. Hope is of its nature projected towards the future, but it is founded on present certainties. It relies on the all-powerful kindness and mercy of God who loves us and is with us always; it relies on the living and active presence of Christ who guides us through the centuries; it relies on the intercession and motherly intervention of Mary who, in the Resurrection, shares the zeal of our Lord for the building of the Kingdom of God through the ages.

To provide a courageous and enthusiastic outlook for our mission we need these buttresses of Christian hope: they will keep us on an even keel during what is still to be a long period of transition.

It will help us here to recall two points that follow from the above, and which I consider strategic and urgent: practical attention to the "call of the young", and the renewal of our apostolic standards of judgement.

— *Practical attention to the "call of the young"*. It is indispensable for our apostolic work that we attend to the call of the young. We deem ourselves at the service of man precisely because the Father has sent us to be missionaries to the young. Our future is balanced on two closely-linked bases: God's sustaining and impelling help, and the stirring call of the young in all their urgent reality.

Our presence among the young is in obedience to God. We study their youthful problems: indeed we see Christ himself calling us through them. It is among the young in need that our mission feels truly at home. Their problems are the measure of our hope and dedication, sublimating our efforts and urging us to revise and replan constantly.

Today's apostolate certainly clamours for a "new presence". This does not mean of course that we have to condemn existing enterprises: but we have to be big enough to examine their worth, and, if need be, come up with some brand new ideas, study them carefully and try them out. The last two General Chapters made this abundantly clear.

This line of action is no cure-all: in fact it is likely to land a load of new problems at our door. It offers us no quiet armchair, but rather reawakens within us a truer discernment of our apostolate. Christ our Redeemer is summoning us to assist him in the difficult task of leading the young along the road to wholesome freedom. Acceptance of the easy life will soon kill off whatever energy and courage we have, for these thrive where there are problems and needs (especially among our chosen ones). Our vocation was born in troublous times, and it will flourish when we live it out amidst the stresses and perplexities of the here and now.

— *Renewing the criteria of our apostolate.* This is essential if our apostolate is to be valid for tomorrow's problems. As GC21 has pointed out, the answer lies totally in the Preventive System. The excellent document tabled by the Chapter urges us to be zealous in putting new life into its fine basic principles. This must be an indispensable feature of any apostolic planning we take on.

It is in the Preventive System that we find that particular "brand of holiness and apostolate" (MR 11) that the Spirit of the Lord evoked in Don Bosco; this is indeed the God-given basis of our hope.

The problems of transition-periods cannot be solved by set formulas — they need practical norms for thinking up and guiding the kaleidoscope of planning required. We need criteria that will pour new life into our pastoral dedication — not despite but because of the fact that we live in a social and cultural ambience that is so full of uncertainties.

Let us then arm ourselves with strong, well-proven, workable principles of pedagogy. They will be the practical boost our hope is in need of (cf circ. lett. ASC 290).

The more we study and practise these great pastoral and pedagogical criteria given us by Don Bosco in the Preventive System, the better will we be able to “strengthen our brothers”.

KINDNESS, SUSTAINED AND PERMEATED BY CHARITY

Finally the third basis for our “strengthening and encouraging our brothers” is kindness, sustained and permeated by charity.

Kindness is an attitude that does not condemn or attack. It is understanding, forgiving, discerning, patient, trusting, serene, warm-hearted, comforting, encouraging. It knows how to hearten and praise; and it corrects with humility and confidence. It is good to call to mind the paean in praise of charity in the First Letter to the Corinthians: “Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends” (1 Cor XIII, 4-8).

Assuredly, in an environment imbued with this kindness, communication is easy and encouraging dialogue gets results. When the young bricklayer, Bartholomew Garelli met Don Bosco at the Church of St. Francis of Sales, the kindness of the newly ordained priest led to a friendship that was the first step in the Salesian Family’s historic new mission on behalf of the young.

Of course, all of us are convinced of the importance of kindness; and we are quick to bewail the fact that Don Bosco’s

kind heart does not always beat in our communities. It is easier to lament the absence of kindness than to co-operate in its growth.

It is obvious that a kind person spreads warmth and hope in all about him. Of course the problem is to discover how to foster its growth.

And here I should like to dwell a little on two main facets that help in the diffusion of kindness. They have their roots in that charity infused in us by the Holy Spirit, namely the revival of "the primacy of contemplation" and a deep concern for "brotherly communion".

— *Restoring the primacy of contemplation*: this means increasing our charity in our relations with God: listening to his word, meditating on the mystery of salvation, pondering his loving mercy, his amazing and heroic sacrifice, admiring his kindly firmness, rejoicing at his generosity and enthusing over his gratuitous love.

The kindness that comes from charity is not just an expedient affability among people living in community: it is the fruit of our profound love of God, conscious and demanding.

If the Congregation becomes tainted with a way of acting in which God has no part, then our confreres will not know what true kindness is.

The kindness that is at the heart of the Salesian spirit comes from God, from a close friendship with him; it flows from a real charity in loving contemplation of the Father. In this kind of contemplation, the intellect subjects itself to love, and the will makes its resolves as a witness of service, sharing in the worship of the mystery that is God.

Our kindness must be a means of increasing the strength and encouragement we give to our brothers: and so we must intensify our ability to be in continual converse with God; he must be the earnestly loved friend of our Religious profession. It follows that personal and community prayer is of the utmost urgency: Holy Mass, Confessions, meditation on the

Word of God, the Divine Office, devotion to Mary — these are the indispensable means for fostering our kindness day after day.

Our ability to encourage others rests entirely on our vivid awareness of the friendship of God.

— *Deep concern for brotherly communion.* Another practical way of increasing our kindness is to practise brotherly communion.

So much has been said in the last few years regarding dialogue, friendship, brotherly communion, the ideal community. Let us keep our feet firmly on the ground and resist the temptation to fantasize about the community. The perfect community just does not exist in this world: it is to be found only in the Heavenly Jerusalem. We are only pilgrims in quest of perfect brotherly communion and trying to build up this ideal. Its development will be aided by the kindness each confrere contributes to his community: generous and unselfish kindness cradled in the mystery of God.

The defections and crises of quite a few confreres have brought to light a particular facet that we tend to overlook in the pressures of our daily work: from time to time and in varied degrees we are all weak and sinful and sometimes under mental stress; even among so-called normal Religious there is a variable level of such illnesses; we are not paragons of logic and mysticism.

Our very real weaknesses and failings, our moments of imbalance and illness, are reminders that kindness is understanding, forgiving and healing. Every community in its ongoing formation programme should set aside an important area for the "healing process": often this therapy will prevent or cure the symptoms and downfalls of various members. Quite a few confreres need an intelligent dose of this therapy: and this is truly "strengthening and encouraging our brothers". The renewal of each community should include dealing with personal feelings and crises with kindness, with understanding and respectful love; and we must

be motivated in this by the strength and constancy of God — not by indifference, permissiveness, connivance or fear of correcting.

7. Conclusion

My dear confreres, in these pages we have raised a number of issues rather rapidly and summarily in an effort to appraise the crisis we are going through, seize upon some signs of hope and point out the priorities of our activity. We have borne in mind the defection of many, the discouragement of quite a few, the wavering of others, the drop in vocations, and the anxiety of all for clearer future prospects.

The times we live in certainly put our growth and fidelity to the test. How should we react? Who will give us the strength and courage to tackle such problems?

It is the Lord who is the source of fidelity; Mary and the Church proclaim to us the Christian mystery of maternal increase and growth. All who are consecrated have the onus of bringing confidence and joy to their brothers. This *duty to encourage* is hinged on faith, hope and charity — and with these virtues we put the confirming stamp of validity on our life of consecration, our future mission and on the kindness inherent in our way of life.

The practical conclusions following from faith, hope and charity add up to a programme of renewal already formulated in the deep considerations of the last two General Chapters. The Spirit of the Lord certainly helped the Chapter members to draw up a valid series of tactics for the future, to clarify our identity and what it stands for, and to stimulate our perseverance and dedication.

Let us use these tactics with intelligence and generosity so that our fidelity may be renewed and our numbers increased.

Indeed Don Bosco's whole life was a witness to fidelity, growth and encouragement for the Congregation. He lived in difficult times, but they were only a spur to him to carry out

his vocation. Maybe we have forgotten that the very purpose of our vocation is to solve problems, small or great. The Church herself exists for the purpose of tackling difficulties and overcoming evil.

Great thinkers of centuries ago used to pose the question whether Christ would have become man if there had been no sin: we know, of course that his Incarnation is a redeeming and freeing act in a hand-to-hand conflict against the mystery of evil.

Our special devotion to Mary too is a reminder to us that she is our help and patroness when times are hard, and will help us fight the good fight and persevere to the end.

With confidence and hope let us renew our enthusiasm and deepen our understanding of our vocation, mindful of St. Paul's words to the Corinthians: "God will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord"! (*1 Cor I, 8-9*).

Warmest greetings and courage and strength to all.
You have a place in my daily Mass and Rosary.

Father EGIDIO VIGANÒ,
Rector Major.

2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

2.1 *Articles 196 & 197 of the Constitutions*

The above title at first glance may give the impression that these paragraphs intend to discuss the variations that GC XXI made to article 196, and the new limits of Provincial competency fixed by the Rector Major and his Council in regard to article 197 (and recently communicated to each Province). Such is not the case, however, for the Acts of GC XXI and the Letter to Provincials (16 July 1979) both set out clear and detailed reasons regarding these two articles.

Rather is it the intention of these pages to offer certain practical guidelines and make a few remarks regarding the observance and application of these two important articles touching all financial and economic operations Provinces and Houses may be interested in.

Those responsible for such operations should observe these articles in all their significance, not only as a duty of religious and administrative discipline but also as a prudent way of acting that will assure them of serenity and a guarantee of accurate judgements as far as humanly possible.

And now to article 197. This refers all the operations mentioned in article 196 to the competency of the Provincial and his Council (when they are within the limits of competency defined by the Superior Council as mentioned above). It is recommended that even in these instances of decentralization the relevant requirements be carried out with exactitude. Matters should not be treated as simple formalities: on each proposed operation a responsible judgement should be made regarding its suitability, purpose, usefulness, scope and accuracy.

If the operation (alienation, acquisition, loan, building, etc.) is proposed by a community, it must be studied and technically prepared by the competent bodies of the House — and perhaps also with a previous word with the Provincial and Provincial Economist.

When the House Council has given its approval, the project is then sent, with all relevant documents and the minutes of the Council to the Provincial. The latter will put it to the Provincial Economist so that it may be presented to the Provincial Council; he will then send, or have sent, an official written reply with suitable reasons for the decisions taken.

It goes without saying that the decision could be positive, or with suggestions or variations, or negative (perhaps with possible alternative solutions to be studied and the same procedure applied again).

When the operation directly interests the Province and not an existing House (and is still within Provincial competency) the relevant procedure is to be carried out by the Provincial Council, both as regards the promotion of the enterprise and the definitive approval or possible refusal.

Even in this latter case all must be based on documentation so as to be filed in the Provincial archives.

These procedures have been brought to your notice to forestall the idea (and it could well happen) that the Provincial community can do without documentation, without all these precautions and examinations, and without hearing the opinions of the competent bodies (who can only speak freely and responsibly when they have all the information and all the requisite documents).

A brief reminder that it is the job of the Provincial and his Council to establish a suitable economic and financial competency for the superiors of all the local communities.

When an operation exceeds the competency of a Province, the above procedure should be carried out and then the authorisation of the Rector Major and his Council must be requested

(v art 196). All the documents must be forwarded together with the minutes of the Council's deliberations. This procedure is obligatory, and care must be taken that the documents contain detailed and complete information so that the Superior Council may give its decision with full knowledge of the project.

Only this way can we avoid tedious delays aggravated by frequent postal holdups.

Furthermore, such requests should be made in good time and not when the operation is already well advanced and can hardly be halted — or is already completed.

For certain operations (say, a new building), to avoid unnecessary expenses and preparations, it would be wise to put the matter to the Superiors in a general way first and then act accordingly.

Obviously operations for a new enterprise will first of all require the authorisation to inaugurate the enterprise itself.

Enough now: we must spare those concerned; and there is a wealth of matter of higher import to read.

Rome, 31 October 1979.

2.2 Appeal for more missionaries

1. The 30 September saw the traditional Missionary Farewell in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians. This was the 109th Missionary Expedition and was presided over by His Lordship Emilio Vallebuona, Bishop of Huaraz in Peru.

2. From 1 January to 30 November 1979 there were 131 requests from confreres wishing to go on the missions.

3. The generosity of so many confreres volunteering for the missions certainly evokes deep admiration: it means giving up one's own way of life and facing the unknown with all its extraordinary difficulties. The Congregation puts on record its grateful recognition of these sacrifices. Nevertheless the incessant requests from Africa, Asia and Latin America make it painfully

aware of the dire need of missionary personnel: hence another SOS to those Provinces with greater numbers of confreres.

The usual objection is that all the Provinces are short of personnel. But we should recall the example of Don Bosco. When Europe was deperately in need of men he sent his best Salesians to the missions. The history of our Society shows that the greater the number of confreres sacrificed for the missions the more our numbers and enterprises grew. Let us take courage and increase our faith in these miracles in the life of the Church and the Congregation. It is a question of mobilizing our generosity and spirit of enterprise: we have to do our share in the greater spiritual renewal that the Holy Father is promoting throughout the world.

The Councillor for the missions, acting as spokesman for the Superior Council, proposes two urgent areas of activity.

The first is The Sudan (v ASC 292), and he can vouch for the truly desperate spiritual and material abandonment the people suffer there. This is the most urgent priority. We repeat, there is need of zealous and self-sacrificing men; and they will face enormous material problems. But those who volunteer will find the people enthusiastic and most willing to embrace the faith. Here is a true missionary undertaking, and already one confrere has offered himself. Others will hopefully join him in this missionary outpost.

The second area of activity is the Middle East; and there are many reasons why we should be active here: the explosive political and social problems; the great confusion of religions, including the various Christian Churches; and the relatively easy access for shorter or longer periods of organised collaboration.

The Middle East Province is having problems in continuing its many enterprises because of all sorts of complications: different languages, religions, customs, governments, etc. It cannot supply enough personnel. Hence the Rector Major makes an appeal for volunteers with a special call on our sense of missionary solidarity.

The African Venture is linked with this problem too. Various enterprises are directly interested in Egypt and Ethiopia; and others act as a kind of bridge between our presence in Europe and Asia. It would be tragic to break the continuity of this apostolic relation between West and East and become progressively weaker in a zone where the Church desperately needs the Catholic presence. The Holy See is deeply concerned lest the Church yield to defeat in the Middle East and calls on us and all Religious to make every possible effort to hold the fort.

The Middle East Province is our only Province that works entirely in the territory of the Eastern Churches, Catholic and non-Catholic. Its activity is unique too, with its oratories and professional schools among Arabs and Mahomedans.

There are few Catholic institutions today that are able to form a link with these peoples as the Middle East Province does with its works of human development.

Another point to ponder is that our House at Cremisan is invaluable as a centre of studies for priestly formation and Biblical scholarship.

The 30th Fraternal Solidarity Report shows that donations topped L. 800,000,000 in the last ten and a half years. The beneficiaries of these donations are deeply grateful for the help afforded by the generous Provinces that contributed to the Fund.

3. RULINGS AND DIRECTIONS

cf 2.1

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

The Rector Major

From 26 September to 21 October the *Rector Major* visited the confreres of India, Burma and Thailand. It was visit of encouragement and inspiration.

With Fr Panakezham he visited the five Provinces, beginning at Bombay, meeting the Provincial Councils, the formation confreres, the various communities (especially the formation communities) and the other branches of the Salesian Family. The last two days were spent in Calcutta at meetings of the Provincial Conference of India. Fr Dho and Fr Vecchi also attended, as the agenda included matters regarding formation and the youth apostolate.

The next leg of the journey was Rangoon, Burma. The Confreres assembled there from Lashio and discussed the progress of their work and its growth potential. It was a busy time.

Then came Bangkok. Fr Viganò blessed the new novitiate and spoke enthusiastically to the young confreres in formation.

Formation Department

From March to October the Formation Department worked in groups and individually on the preparation of the *Ratio Institutionis* and the *Ratio Studiorum*. The first draft was studied by the Superior Council in the November-December sittings.

The Department also organised an international course of

ongoing formation. It began in mid-October and is geared for confreres responsible for formation.

From 22 to 24 July Father Dho took part in a seminar for new Rectors (Spain & Portugal) at Braga, Portugal. From 25 September to mid-October he accompanied the Rector Major on a visit to the Indian Provinces. The main activities there were a meeting with the Rectors of the three Provinces of South India, a two-day meeting at Bangalore with all the confreres entrusted with formation in India, and visits to the studentates at Yercaud, Sonada, Shillong and the novitiates at Kotagiri and Shillong. Finally a stop-over in the Holy Land to visit the studentate of Cremisan and the other three communities at Bethlehem, Beitgemal and Nazareth.

Department for Youth Apostolate

In the first fortnight of September the Youth Apostolate Councillor (Fr. John Vecchi) assisted at a seminar organized by Spain and Portugal with the theme, "Salesian Education Planning for Today". Study groups were held in Santiago di Compostela, Alicante, Lisbon and Seville so that all the Provinces could participate. Those present included SDB, FMA, Co-operators, DBV and lay co-workers.

Fr. Vecchi also attended a meeting of the Spanish and Portuguese Provincial Conference. This was chaired by Fr. J. Anthony Rico, and its purpose was to clarify the regional planning in regard to animation and the theory and practice of the apostolate. A document of guidelines was accordingly formulated by the National Commission for the Youth Apostolate in accordance with the directives of Fr. Vecchi's Department.

In October Fr. Vecchi joined the Rector Major and the Councillor for Formation (Fr. Dho) at Calcutta for a meeting with the Indian Provincials and their Councils.

Next, Fr. Vecchi went to Madras to meet the “animators” of the Indian Provinces. This meeting lasted four days.

Matters prepared by the Department were discussed and applied to the local situations: they included “animation” in the Province, modern application of the Preventive System, plans for pastoral education, youth groups and movements, and practical guidelines for vocations.

Then a visit to Australia for ten days to follow through a schedule of meetings and contacts prepared by the Australian Province.

Any requests for aid along the lines of the above themes were willingly attended to by the members of the Department and the Councillor himself.

The Department has forwarded to the Provinces considerable documentation on youth movements, groups and communities, with a request that special attention be given to this aspect of our youth apostolate.

Part II has now added to the document, “Pastoral Educational Planning”, and deals with objectives, guidelines and desirable areas for our apostolate. Dated October 1979, it completes Part I of December 1978 (which dealt with the theory and practice of educational planning).

The Department has collaborated with the Educational Faculty of the UPS in planning a seminar for June 1980, when an in-depth study will be made of today’s problems in education, with special reference to the Preventive System and modern youth. The actual study has already begun, and Provinces will be asked to contribute their suggestions and experiences.

In November, at the Generalate, Rome, thirty confreres from various countries of Europe met to discuss Salesian parishes. Their findings will be duly forwarded to the Provinces with further comments by the Department.

Department for The Salesian Family

Father Raineri held a number of meetings with Fr. Aubry and Fr. Midali (both of the Department) and the "chief animators" of the Salesian Family (Fr. Sangalli for the FMA, Fr. Schinetti for the DBV, Fr. Bastasi for the Salesian Past Pupils, and Fr. Cogliandro for the Co-operators). The result was a *Symposium of Salesian Animation* held at Villa Tuscolana, Frascati, from 1 to 7 September 1979. Those present included Salesians SDB, FMA, DBV, Co-operators and Past Pupils. Present as observers were representatives of the Salesian Oblates, Miasaki Sisters of Charity and FMA Past Pupils. Reports were given by Sr. Michelina Secco for the FMA, Dr. Luigi Sarcheletti for the Co-operators, Miss Clara Bargi for the DBV, Sr. Lina Teresa for the Salesian Oblates, Sr. Gertrude Yamanaka for the Miasaki Sisters of Charity, Prof. Silvana Aloisi for the FMA Past Pupils, and Dr. Thomas Natale for the Don Bosco Past Pupils.

The reports and discussions gave rise to some very interesting suggestions, and these will be duly published with the reports.

Father Raineri also took part in the course for new Rectors held in Portugal, at a number of ongoing formation courses conducted by various Provinces, and at Salesian Family gatherings in Sicily.

In October Fr. Aubry and Fr. Cogliandro attended meetings of local delegates of Co-operators and Past Pupils in Italy. Fr. Aubry also travelled to Spain for meetings of the Salesian Family (Rectors and local delegates) organised by Fr. J. Rico. They were a great success.

To organise Eurobosco IV (Lugarno, September 1981) and the "Pre-Congress" of Young Past Pupils (Maroggia, September 1981) a meeting was held at Rome of the National Presidents of Past Pupils from Austria, Belgium, France, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Malta and Spain.

The Secretariate for Mass Media carried out the following

activities. In April and May the Central Delegate, Fr. Segneri, met the Provincials and Formation Personnel in Brazil and Argentina to discuss the training of Salesians for the mass media. He also met those in charge of Salesian Bulletins (Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay), Salesian Publishing Houses (Sao Paolo, and Buenos Aires), and the Audio-visual Centre of Porto Alegre. At Belo Horizonte he worked out with the Salesians in charge a plan for setting up a videotape centre.

In August and September a team travelled to Lourdes, Fatima and Rome, with the generous collaboration of the Valdocco confreres of SAF (Scuola Applicazioni Fotografiche) and made a documentary to be used in spreading devotion to Mary.

In October at Frankfurt Fr. Raineri and Fr. Segneri met the directors of the Salesian Publishing Houses (SEI & LDC Turin; EDB Barcellona & Oporto; and CCS Madrid). The aim was to prepare for the meeting of the Salesian editors of Latin America at Caracas.

From 19 to 23 November, at the Generalate, Rome, the first meeting was held of the Salesian World Council for Mass Media, in the presence of the Rector Major. Salesian delegates from other continents were present and a number of highly skilled professionals. The minutes will be published in a short time.

At the moment technical equipment (sound, film, TV) is being set up for a training course for Salesian confreres and Sisters. The film of Don Bosco has been re-edited in "toned" colour (i.e., tinted) and is available in Italian and English in 16 mm and 8 mm (sound).

Besides the ordinary information service, ANS is also putting out a series of "special editions". Current ones are "The Three Year Plan for the Secretariate for Mass Media", a monograph on "Salesian Patagonia" and "The Salesian Bulletin: its Conception". The photo-documentary centre and the photo-laboratory have produced sets of photos and slides on Salesian information suitable for various countries.

The Secretariate has also taken an active part in UNDA and OCIC (Catholic World Radio & TV Associations and Catholic International Cinema Organisation) in preparation for the Catholic World Congresses for Radio, Television and Cinema to be held in the Philippines in 1980.

The *Councillor for the English-speaking region*, Fr. George Williams, went to Australia to conduct the Extraordinary Canonical Visit. He then visited Fiji for a meeting with the Archbishop of Suva and the Prime Minister, to assess the suitability of opening up a school of arts and trades for the youth of Fiji. The invitation to the Salesians came from both the Prime Minister and the Archbishop.

Next, a visit to Cardinal Pio Taofinu'u in West Samoa, which has now become part of the Australian Province.

Visits were then made to a number of communities in the Province of San Francisco and in Canada. Fr. Williams was also present at a meeting of the Provincial Council assembled to discuss matters of local interest.

In the Province of New Rochelle he began with the communities of Toronto and Montreal, Canada, and then presided at a Provincial Council meeting.

Next he visited Dublin and organised with the Provincial the visit of the Rector Major to South Africa and Swaziland in February 1980. Then a stop-over in England for the consultation for the new Provincial; and finally a visit to Malta.

Towards the end of July, Father Thomas Panakazham *Regional for Asia*, attended the consultation for the new Provincial of Bangkok. In August and September he was engaged in the Extraordinary Canonical Visitation of the Philippines Province. Then he accompanied the Rector Major to India, Burma and Thailand. (Other pages of the Acts give details of these latter visits).

From 2 to 4 August, the *Regional Councillor for the Atlantic Zone of Latin America*, Father Walter Bini, presided at a meet-

ing of the Conference of the Brazilian Provinces at Campos do Jordao. He then visited the Ongoing Formation Course at Barbacena, after which he spent the last three weeks of August in consultation with all the communities of the St. Dominic Savio Province regarding the election of the new Provincial.

From 1 September to 20 October he performed the Extraordinary Canonical Visitation for the Province of St. Piux X, Porto Alegre. During this visit he journeyed to Montevideo, Uruguay, for the meeting of the Provincial Conference of Argentina and a group of representatives from the Provinces of Plata.

At the end of September he attended the highly successful Congress on the Preventive System in the Porto Alegre Province; and at the end of October, the Seminar on the Youth Apostolate promoted by the Provinces of Brazil.

Department for the Missions

In August the Councillor for the Missions (Fr. Tohill) accompanied the first Salesians to Liberia, remaining with them at the capital, Monrovia, till they took possession of the parish of St. Joseph.

He then visited Dakar, capital of Senegal, to examine the possibility of the Salesians' accepting the direction of a technical school at St. Louis.

In August, September and October Fr. Tohill visited the Mission Offices in Madrid, Bonn and New Rochelle. At the latter city he was present at a meeting of the Provincial Council.

August to October also saw important meetings with the Sicilian, Lombardo-Emiliano and Central Provincial Councils. As part of an overall programme with the other Provinces, Fr. Tohill discussed the "New African Frontier" and worked on certain practical missionary strategies.

In October Fr. Tohill made the Extraordinary Canonical Visitation to the Mexican "Prelatura dei Mixes" whilst the

Regional performed the same duty for the other parts of the Province.

Fr. Harry Rasmussen, who has been appointed to interest himself in a special way in the "African Frontier", visited the dioceses of Ambanja and Tulear in Madagascar, and Meru and Kisumu in Kenya, to assess the possibility of a Salesian presence in those places.

Father Roger Vanseveren, *Regional for Europe and Africa*, attended the "Salesian Week" at Francheville for confreres of the three French-speaking Provinces. (It had been a year in preparation). He then visited the two Provinces of Belgium and attended the Provincial Council of Belgium South.

In Holland he visited all the Houses and also attended the Provincial Council meeting.

After presiding at the Cologne Conference of German-speaking Provinces he went to Jugo-Slavia for the Canonical Visitation of Ljubljana and then to Zagreb to visit confreres and young men in the Houses of Formation.

The *Regional for Spain & Portugal*, Father G. Rico, carried out the following activities in the months August to October:

— A two-week course for some forty new Rectors, at which were present Fr. Dho and Fr. Raineri. The venue was Braga, Portugal.

— Two Retreats: one for the SDB at Bilbao and one for the DBV of Spain.

— A series of three-day seminars on Don Bosco's education system, prepared by the national commission for youth apostolate and held in three places in Spain and also in Lisbon. Those present included SDB, FMA, DBV, Co-operators, Past Pupils and lay teachers in our schools — in all, more than 800 participants. At each seminar Father Vecchi gave the first talk.

— "Two Days of Salesian Family Animation". This was organised in agreement with Fr. Raineri and the national delegates

of the Salesian Co-operators and Past Pupils. It was addressed to all Rectors and delegates. More than 300 confreres were present; and this seminar was also held in four different locations.

— A meeting of the Provincial Conference and the National Commission for Youth Apostolate in the presence of Fr. Vecchi. Plans were studied for the youth apostolate in the region for the next few years.

— A visit to the course of ongoing formation regularly held at Campello.

— A meeting with each Provincial Council to become better acquainted with the Salesian situation. Then visits to many Houses of Formation in the various Provinces.

— In August, twelve days at the Novitiate House in Arouca, Portugal. These were days in preparation for Profession Day, and a few days of rest for the Councillor.

The *Regional for the Pacific-Caribbean Zone of Latin America*, Father Sergio Cuevas, carried out the Canonical Visitations of the Provinces of Medellin, Colombia, and Mexico South.

After a brief time at the Course of Ongoing Formation at Jarabacoa, Dominican Republic, Fr. Cuevas spent a few days at the Provincial Centre of Guadalajara, Mexico, meeting the Provincial Council and the Formation Commission, to discuss how the guidelines of the Canonical Visitation could be realised. Then followed visits to the Houses of Formation in Chapalita and San Pedro de Tlaquepaque. Next, a visit to Quito, Ecuador, for meetings of the Provincial Council under the leadership of the new Provincial. After a short meeting with the Superiors at Lima, Peru, Fr. Cuevas went on to Santiago, Chile, and met the Provincial Council, the Formation Commission and various youth groups of the House of Formation at Lo Canas, Santiago. Before returning to Rome he joined the Provincials of the Region at Caracas, Venezuela for a meeting and a Regional seminar on the Salesian education apostolate.

The *Regional for Italy and the Middle East*, Father Paul Natali, visited all the communities of the Adriatic Province and many in the Southern Province. He joined the Provincials for their Retreat at Campiglioni, Florence; he met the CISI (Italian Conference of Salesian Provinces) at which their regulations were approved; and also attended two meetings of the National Delegates of the various CISI sectors. Fr. Natali was also invited by some of the Provinces to sundry pastoral activities — such as the Courses of Ongoing Formation.

5. DOCUMENTS AND NEW ITEMS

5.1 *Rector Major's letter from India to all Provincials*

Dear Father Provincial,

My greetings to you and all the confreres of your Province. I am writing to you from India and my mind is teeming with thoughts. Surrounded by myriads of boys and young men, I can only marvel at the importance of our vocation and our vision for the overall development of mankind as we head for the year 2000.

Writing from India is not the same as writing from Munich or San Francisco or Bogotá. Shortly after emplaning for Bombay, I was reading about an interview an Italian woman journalist was courageous enough to have with the Ayatollah Khomeini. It made me realise that I was flying to a part of the world totally different from our Western culture.

Here in India, every day shows clearly and in a thousand and one ways that religion is an essential part of living. Here one could not even imagine a vision for the overall development of man without the religious element — he would completely and irretrievably lose his identity. On the other hand, however, it is frighteningly obvious that not any kind of religion is sufficient to give man back his integrity. There is a sort of narcotic in many religions — and we know only too well how drugs are destroying man today.

All my thinking continually brings me back to Don Bosco's profound conviction expressed at the dawn of this modern age: a young person just cannot be trained to take his place in society without the Christian faith. Jesus Christ has set man free, and

without the Gospel of Christ the renewal of man is utterly impossible. Our whole vocation, from its mystic beginnings to its ideals and its practical implementation, is totally immersed in the religion of the redeeming Christ. We shall be useful, creative and up-to-date in our educative planning for the future in proportion to the burning zeal of our Christian faith. The secret is to foster within ourselves a spirituality that is religious, ascetical and mystic.

In India I see plainly, written in block capitals, that Western materialism with its various cultural trappings renders impossible any plan for the progress of man: it poisons the very roots of man's moral and spiritual fibre. But also the Eastern religions, in their various forms, seem to mutilate and ignore this vision of man's overall development by side-stepping his material development.

If we wish to work together for the renewal of man in the new millennium, we must, with Christ, be manifest bearers of the Spirit in evangelization and human development.

God bless Pope John Paul II for launching us into an orbit that is concerned with persons as human beings (material as well as spiritual); and God bless our Constitutions for demanding that we be holy with the feet-on-the-ground wisdom of Don Bosco.

Fraternal greetings from the confreres of the five Provinces of India. Every year they have some 100 novices (this year 121); and they are now preparing to send numerous missionaries to other countries and continents. May Mary Help of Christians enlighten and encourage you and yours always.

Cordially yours in Christ,

Father EGIDIO VIGANÒ.

5.2 Rector Major's letter to the Don Bosco Volunteers

To Miss Anna Marocco, President General, to the Central Council, and to all the Don Bosco Volunteers, cordial greetings.

Dear Miss Anna, it is with sincere pleasure that I write this letter to you on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the first profession of the seven votaries who initiated your Institute of Salesian Secular Consecration. My sincerest thanks to you, Miss Anna, for having invited me to write. Actually the thought had already been in my mind for some time; and your request that I comment on this historic event has encouraged me now to go ahead. I assure you of my humble collaboration in all that can help your Institute to continue to flourish in accordance with its special characteristics within the ambit of Don Bosco's Salesian Family.

I am deeply conscious of article 59 of your new Constitutions, which recognises the Rector Major, the Successor of Don Bosco, as the one who is called:

— to promote communion with the Salesian Family (cf art 60) of which your Institute is a living part (cf art 5);

— to foster fidelity to the spirit of Don Bosco and his Gospel message (cf arts 1, 4, 34, 35) and promote unity in the common Salesian mission;

— to help strengthen your commitment to Don Bosco's mission in the Church (cf arts 33, 49, 59);

— to nurture and develop the special nature of the Institute in friendly rapport with its Superiors (cf art 59);

— to afford spiritual assistance at all levels (cf art 59).

It is in view of this ministry that I wish to comment on the great significance of this first act of consecration. This will also help increase our spirit of communion. True, we already enjoy open dialogue, but can still increase and deepen this solidarity.

Sixty years of consecration

Exactly sixty years ago, on 26th October 1919, in the chapel next to Don Bosco's rooms, in the presence of John Cardinal Cagliero, Fr. Philip Rinaldi and a representative of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, there took place your Institute's first profession of the Evangelical Counsels. The participants were your first seven votaries; and their profession was the beginning of a new kind of Salesian consecration in the form of an association.

After this historic function, Cardinal Cagliero in his homily pointed out how symbolic it was that the new Institute "should begin its existence in a place so sacred to Don Bosco: for sixty years before the Saint had himself received the first vows and promises of those who had initiated and developed the great Salesian enterprise". (And John Cagliero had himself been one of those young men!) Cagliero alluded prophetically to this happy coincidence as a sign of predestination. "The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians", he said, "have their origins in Mornese, where Sister Mary Mazzarello lived and made her vows. You must see your own beginning here as a sign of special predestination" (v. Spir. Confs. of Fr. Philip Rinaldi, 1917-1928, QC p. 83).*

Apropos of this sixtieth anniversary, it is interesting to note that the first consecration of these first seven votaries took place exactly sixty years after the birth of the Salesian Congregation. In fact it was in December 1859 that Don Bosco spoke explicitly of his aim to form a Religious Congregation.

In short, your first group of secular Salesian votaries made their first act of consecration in the same place where the Salesian

* Reference to Miss Carpanera's notebook containing the minutes of the meetings in the early years of the Institute will be made henceforth simply by QC (Quaderno Carpanera).

Congregation had its origin; your consecration is, then, a vital and new offshoot of the healthy and vigorous tree charismatically planted by Don Bosco.

In the above-mentioned homily Cardinal Cagliero made the point that a new scion had now blossomed on the Salesian stock. "Now", he said, "it is necessary that Father Albera, Don Bosco's second successor, take good care of you; that he give this young scion, this first group, his special protection. I said this to Father Albera this very morning" (QC p. 84).

This fact has a lasting and vital significance, and I believe it essential that you give it deep meditation. Every Institute founded by the charism of the Holy Spirit has its own special character. You are numbered among these. This special character does not stem from pre-established canons or ideologies: it flows from a special practical life-experience induced by the Holy Spirit. This is clearly enunciated in the document "Mutuae Relationes", which states that this proper character "shows itself as an experience of the Holy Spirit; it is given to be practised, nurtured, examined and constantly developed to remain in harmony with the Mystical Body of Christ (which is constantly in a process of growth); its holiness and apostolate carries its own special brand; it develops its own special tradition, so that its objective elements can be easily recognised" (MR XII).

We could sum it up by saying that history presents us with a mass of "experience" of "transmitting", of "nurturing", of "examination and development, i.e., a living "Tradition", which on examination reveals the identity and vitality of a charismatic Institute. Hence it is important to ponder together the first consecration of 1919.

The sign of the Holy Spirit

Consecration is not primarily an act of a consecrated person. Rather it is an act of God, of the Spirit of Christ animating the

Church. The consecrated person responds, offers himself, gives himself. This is clearly seen in the sacramental consecration of Baptism, Confirmation and Orders. The initiative comes from God. It is he who "anoints the consecrated person with the oil of joy" of the Holy Spirit, marking him in the image of Christ with his spiritual and saving sign.

Something similar happens in the consecration that is brought about by professing the evangelical counsels. This profession reinforces the already existing sacramental consecration; it sets the professed member on the path of total commitment as a "sign and bearer" of some special aspect of the Mystery of Christ among the People of God.

This is how the seal of the Holy Spirit comes to one: a particular charisma is bestowed; it develops; the individual called makes a personal response; this results in a total self-donation with the pronouncing of the vows.

Naturally, in the beginning, every charismatic group must have an explicit ecclesial bearing, with hierarchical approval and liturgical mediation. From this the charism derives its authenticity as a part of the sacramental life of the Church. However, when it is a genuine case of a charism bestowed by the Holy Spirit, the developing embryo of the future Institute already exists, even before the official recognition by the Church.

So when your seven votaries made their first vows, that constituted the historical beginning of the "spiritual experience" of your group of consecrated women. The sign of the Holy Spirit had already placed there the essential elements of all later development. The uniform growth that was to follow would include all the changes required by the signs of the times and "in harmony with the Body of Christ" (cf MR XI). (History shows that Christ's Body is in constant process of growth yet possesses within itself throughout the whole of its existence one vital identity.)

We need to discover the Institute's vital identity in all its true historical objectivity. This is not a difficult search: Father

Philip Rinaldi's "Conferences" are a wealth of information. They were given to the first group of "Secular Votaries of Mary Help of Christians of the Society of St. Francis of Sales", and diligently copied down by the secretary, Miss Luigina Carpanera. They are an unpublished treasury of the spirit of Don Bosco with practical application to the laity: a new way of showing forth that "seal of the Spirit" already witnessed in Don Bosco's charisma; a scion, brand new and brave, living on the sap of its Salesian stock; a daring spiritual experience characterised by those Salesian values that Don Bosco has bequeathed to history. It is indeed fitting that you should be called Don Bosco Volunteers.

An objective appraisal of your traditions shows clearly that the consecrating action of the Holy Spirit was the source of all that this first act of consecration stood for. Your way of life follows the broad lines of the Gospel as shaped by God in Don Bosco's Salesianity. The newly professed Volunteers thus ordered their lives and attained a happy union between their own religious values and the practical needs of people living in the lay state. Yours is a vocation, a spirit, a mission, an apostolic style, thoroughly pondered, harmonised and evidenced in your explicit and total choice to live as laics.

The divine initiative of the Holy Spirit and the human response made in the profession of the evangelical counsels work together and produce a new kind of "anointing", a "lay consecration". This is something quite novel in the Salesian Family and it gives life and permanence to your original group.

The consecration you make is the underlying force that urges you to live your Christian faith selflessly and in accord with a Gospel plan formulated along the principles of Don Bosco; and you become signs and bearers of a peculiar aspect of Christ's love for man. The choice of living as laics is special: it pervades all your evangelical planning, yet it does not change your Salesian identity (even though the witness given by your Institute is quite different).

Indeed, Salesianity is not just something added on to your consecration: it belongs to its very essence and keeps it alive.

The long journey to achieve identity

There are certain facets of that 26 October 1919 that are clear, others that are far from clear.

The times were not ripe for this new venture. There was no clear distinction between “consecrated life” and “religious life”; “Secular Institutes” were an unknown quantity; our present positive vision of the world did not exist; and the Church’s attitude regarding the People of God was yet to be clarified by Vatican II.

On the other hand, Salesian consecration by means of the evangelical counsels was quite clear; so was the choice of living in the world. However the new group lacked definition. Were they “Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in the world” with a few rules for religious? Or were they women Co-operators with private vows, using Don Bosco’s rules for Salesian Co-operators?

For years they teetered to and fro: and then in 1947, after World War II, came Pius XII’s Apostolic Constitution “Provida Mater”.

The fact that the group changed its name twice was an indication of its being a little lost in its searching for a precisely defined way of life. First they called themselves Lay Votaries of Mary Help of Christians (Zelatrici di Maria Ausiliatrice nel mondo); then they changed to Co-operator Oblates of Don Bosco (Co-Operatrici Oblate di S. Giovanni Bosco). This change already showed some progress in their identity quest. From “RELIGIOUS in the world” they had now passed to LAY Co-operator Oblates.

One clear fact had emerged, however: right from the first consecration, an essential element of their way of life was that

they should be “signs and bearers in the world” of Christ’s love according to the spirit of Don Bosco. They saw clearly that their special way of life was to be “in the world”; they were to live and witness to the Salesian charisma in a way not yet formulated; they were in quest of an appropriate format, and neither Religious nor Laic filled the gap.

Indeed your special place in the Salesian Family differentiates you from the FMA by your *lay state*, and from the Co-operators by your *consecration*.

Our Family tree provided the sustenance and the favourable conditions for your new venture to flourish: but you were an implanted scion that was very special indeed. Don Bosco’s charism, with its strong creative urge to evangelize, reaches forward with courage to promote dialogue between the Church and the world. It evangelizes by educating and educates by evangelizing; it is anxious for man’s betterment; it takes up a courageous stance in society in favour of the young and the working classes.

True, we must see Don Bosco as a man of his times, mentally and ecclesially. But he was deeply imbued with the Holy Spirit and was conscious of being endowed with the important charisma of a Founder. Hence he was also ahead of his times. He sought to accomodate his work and his vast spiritual forces to whatever novelties the Divine Economy required. We should recall too that St. Francis of Sales had already rediscovered “holiness in the world” — as instanced by his “Philothea”.

When Father Rinaldi, also filled with the Holy Spirit, chose those young women and trained them so carefully for their “consecration in the world”, it was his intention “to effectuate the work Don Bosco had left uncompleted”. He spoke of this urge as far back as 20 May 1917: “For quite a while now the Superiors have been requested to set up a Society of Lay Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Such requests have always been welcomed, and the more so because this very matter

had been pondered and planned by the Venerable Don Bosco. Speaking of his work, he was clear about two kinds of persons with the same Rule, one group living in a community and the other in the world. These latter would promote the Salesian spirit in their day to day living" (QC pp. 3-4).

When Don Bosco or Don Rinaldi spoke of "extern Salesians", neither could have envisaged today's Secular Institutes. It would be simplistic to suggest that they had in mind this new kind of secular consecration when trying to sort out their ideas. Nevertheless each manifests an open and questing mind, and an almost innate homing-in on such a target.

It is also true to say that you were not founded on the day when your Association was declared a Secular Institute — for you existed well before the Apostolic Constitution "Provida Mater". The charisma of your special consecration was already ten years old. So your founding does not coincide with the setting up of the Secular Institutes in the Church: it preceded them; though naturally you have now gained in status and spirit. Of course, other Secular Institutes have had the same experience. It is one thing for this new kind of consecrated life to be instituted and validated by hierarchical mandate: it is quite another matter that every single Institute was founded by the Holy Spirit working through remarkable men and women.

Assuredly the fact that the Church has initiated Secular Institutes has truly clarified things for you, encouraged your development and urged you to renewal in the light of Vatican II thinking. The Motu Proprio "Primo Feliciter" says: "The Associations with all the elements and qualities required by the Apostolic Constitution 'Provida Mater Ecclesia' must not and cannot under any circumstances remain arbitrarily at the level of ordinary Associations of the Faithful (C 684-725); but it is absolutely essential that they be raised to the nature and form proper to Secular Institutes, which better suit their character and needs" (PF I). And no. 9 of "Provida Mater" emphasises exactly the same thing (Docs & Texts I).

Thus so many Secular Institutes have two identity highlights: first, their *foundation*, which is the charismatic source to turn to regarding peculiar aspects of identity; and secondly, their *formal institution* by the Church to the state of consecrated laity — and this is the essential frame of reference for defining and living out the nature and form of their identity.

You have travelled a long way from your foundation under Father Philip Rinaldi to your elevation to a Secular Institute of Pontifical Right: six decades, during which you progressed from a private lay Association to a public lay Association. Then came the real fillip and the important document of 6 January 1956; from then onwards (under Father Ziggiotti as Rector Major and with Father Ricceri and his helpers providing dynamic impetus) you were recognised as a Diocesan Secular Institute. Finally on 5 August 1978 you were made a Secular Institute of Pontifical Right under decree of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes. Pope Paul VI had already signed his approval of this promotion as noted in your Constitutions and Regulations (21 July 1978).

So now you have reached the goal of your identity: it is based on the rich charisma of its foundation and on the gradual evolution of the Church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This evolution began some decades before Vatican II, with “Provida Mater”; it developed in the Council itself and continues to become clearer in these post-conciliar times. It has been a long and complex evolution; and although substantially mature, it still goes on. Experts are still engaged in its study, and maybe further clarifications will emerge. Nevertheless, at this stage we have a very clear picture of your special identity.

It is well to emphasise here that this evolution in the Church’s thinking and attitude that has made Secular Institutes a reality has actually improved their nature: you see how it means a probing into the various constituents of your Salesian vocation, giving it a personal identity.

Pius XII rightly spoke of the novelty of Secular Institutes

as a gift of the Spirit, a great grace for the modern Church (cf PF introd.; Docs & Texts I); one can truly refer to the "charism" of Secular Institutes among the People of God. And Paul VI, commemorating the 25th anniversary of "Provida Mater" remarked that "that document was of immense importance in the life of the Church today" (Disc. 2 Feb.; Docs & Texts I).

Truly the elevation to the status of a Secular Institute adds a novel and radical dimension; it affects the very elements of an Institute and opens up new horizons for future development (Paul VI, Docs & Texts I).

Secular consecration

The essential novelty of your Institute lies in its secular consecration. It certainly sheds a new light on the Gospel counsels. To grasp this idea we need to look to one of the "more important thrusts of the Council: the presence of the Church in the world" (Paul VI). This novel line of renewal receives full treatment in "Gaudium et Spes": "The Church is conscious of the fact that it exists in the world and travels the same journey as all mankind and shares the same earthly lot with the world: it is to be a leaven, and, as it were, the soul of human society" (GS 40). "Hence secular living is an essential part of the Church; it is part of its innermost being and mission; it is rooted in the mystery of the Word Incarnate; it takes various practical forms for its members" (Paul VI, D & T, I).

Already before "Gaudium et Spes", in the Dogmatic Constitution "Lumen Gentium", there had been a veritable volte-face in the Church's attitude to the laity among the People of God. Instead of the former theological terminology (based on the distinction between the sacramental consecration of layfolk and ordained ministers), the Constitution looks at the actual conditions of layfolk and describes them as follows: "Their secular character is proper and peculiar to the laity... they live in the

world; there they are called by God to contribute to the sanctification of the world as from within like leaven. It pertains to them in a special way to illuminate and order all temporal things according to Christ" (LG 31).

This descriptive definition points up the difference between Laity and Religious; it is a practical distinction based on the nature of their life and commitment. It is a pity that the words "lay" and "laity" still carry their old connotation. (For instance, "Perfectae Caritatis" refers to non-clerical Religious Congregations as Lay Institutes!) The word "lay" is still used in Church circles with distressing ambiguity: sometimes it means "secular", sometimes "not ordained" — and of course some politicians use it as a gibe in reference to the Church.

At any rate "Lumen Gentium" has given us a description that is more positive and more in accord with the ups and downs of history: it has defined the secular character of the laity clearly and extensively; and so the post-conciliar guidelines of the Magisterium become more and more meaningful (cf Ev. Nun. no. 7).

It is well worth while recalling the first encyclical of Pope John Paul II, "Redemptor Hominis". In it he courageously opens up new vistas of the importance of human beings in Gospel teaching — Christ and his Church are closely bound together: it is man and his development that matters. This is the secular platform that your consecration is a part of and from which it has been launched.

Volunteers of Don Bosco, you do not belong to the "Religious area" of the Church: indeed you are definitely not Religious. You are not in step with the life of the FMA. You belong to the "Lay area": you are laics, and your place would be closer to the Co-operators. To quote Paul VI: "You are layfolk, and must develop yourselves according to values proper to the laity; but yours is a *consecrated laity* (D & T, II). It is in this special form of secular life that you must find your proper niche: and this will distinguish you even among the laity, and of course

from the Co-operators. Your consecration rests on the Evangelical counsels. There is nothing minimal or superficial about this. It is not a question of an artificial transplant from the Religious area to the Lay. On the contrary, your consecration is the very soul of your secularity and the essence of your vocation. Like layfolk, your work is in the world, but only because and in so far as you are consecrated souls. True, you live in the world — this is a fact; but you have made a fundamental option for a vocation offered you by the Holy Spirit. You have chosen to accept the secular state as a Gospel mission, your special activity in the Church. Hence your secularity differs in a way from ordinary layfolk: you are more aware of it, and in general more detached; you are engaged in matters of the world; you wish to live and work “not only to affirm the innate validity of things human, but also to explicitly orient them according to the beatitudes of the Gospel” (Paul VI, D & T, II).

It is not a question of understanding secularity in the sense of World-versus-Christ — and this is not being mildly radical. Secularity is a precious creation, capable of being permeated by Christ, even imbued with the truly radical evangelical counsels. The eschatological values of your consecration do not set up man’s world against life-in-Christ. Rather does it proclaim the primary truth of the Mystery of Christ, whose “resurrection, so far from contradicting the incarnation, is indeed its fulfilment” (Balthasar).

There is a beautiful thought in “Redemptor Hominis” that presents Christ as “the world’s redeemer. In him is revealed in a new and wonderful way the basic truth of creation. In him, the visible world, created by God for man (but immersed in sin and subjected to corruption) renews again its original bond with the divine source of Wisdom and Love” (RH).

Yours is a true consecration and a true secularity: a secular consecration, a consecrated secularity — you have welded the

two in a vital and remarkable way. This is what sets you apart from Religious and from the Laity (cf Paul VI, D & T, I).

The secularity that distinguishes you from Religious and the consecration that distinguishes you from the Laity are not two separate things; they are a single reality, two aspects of a single entity; and both are essential for your identity; they need to be nurtured and developed in harmony. Over-emphasis of your secularity will harm your consecration, just as over-emphasis of your consecration could alienate you from your mission in the world. The secret of your spirituality lies totally in unifying and harmonising both facets in your practical lives. Paul VI assures us that such a secular consecration constitutes the "main support of your life and work. Here lie your hidden riches, which are inexplicable and often unknown to those about you. Your Baptismal consecration is the more deep-rooted because the Holy Spirit urges you to ever deeper love. Yours is not a Religious consecration, but it urges you to live the Gospel beatitudes. You are truly consecrated and truly in the world. Your consecrated life and your activity in the world (both as individuals and as a society) set you on a more emphatic course godwards. You are, as it were, involved in the world yet transported beyond it. Your Baptismal consecration is assumed into your consecration as Volunteers" (D & T, II).

This is why I said above that the promotion of your Pious Association to the status of a Secular Institute introduces something quite novel in the spiritual life. It does not cut you off from your basic charisma, nor does it militate against it: rather does it clarify, strengthen and make it more profoundly ecclesial.

Your Salesianity

I have already mentioned that when the Holy Spirit made you Salesians sixty years ago, this fact reinforced the consecration of your Baptism and Confirmation. Similarly the approval of

your secular state in no way harms or changes your traditional Salesianity. In fact it renders it more clear, more precise, and opens up horizons for deeper insights and conciliar renewal in regard to the relations between the Church and the world.

Your consecrated secularity is not out of step with your Salesianity; you are no less Salesian; indeed your vocation is rendered more valid, more defined. Your secularity summons you to fidelity and creativity, to greater depth and understanding of the charism of Don Bosco: you must be a real force in the world. Your identity is both secular and Salesian: in the bonding of these two elements rests your holiness, your development, your future.

Your birth and growth belong to Don Bosco's spiritual family. Your Salesian character is not something tacked on to your Institute; it is not simply the sincere enunciation of a platitude or two; there is nothing extrinsic or accidental about it: it is vital and elemental. For a while your elevation to the status of a Secular Institute probably caused you to be taken up with the specific demands of your secularity and the manner of your development; but of course you see that really it should draw you closer to your Salesian foundation, not away from it.

Your secular aspect is not enough to determine your proper character. Firstly it is patent that among so many different Secular Institutes, each must have its own personal charismatic element from its own particular source, to distinguish it from all other Institutes; and secondly, secularity takes on many varied faces, has various undertakings and different degrees of service — all determined by the spirit of the Founders. No Institute can try to do everything! Each contributes its humble grain of sand. Each must be realistic and see itself as a simple part of a grand whole. Just as there are so many different Congregations in the Religious life, so are there various types of Secular Institutes.

This kind of pluralism is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It points up the need of accurately defining one's peculiar

character. This is the only way to an exact understanding of one's identity as a consecrated lay society. Here is where your Salesianity emerges as an absolute necessity.

Indeed your Salesianity distinguishes you from all other Secular Institutes. Your very name bespeaks the fact. In article 49 of your Constitutions you describe yourselves as spiritual daughters of Don Bosco and witnesses of his charism before Christ and the world. Article 1 of your new Constitutions reads: "We constitute a Secular Institute which aims to carry out a particular mission in the Church according to the spirit of Don Bosco"; and article 4 adds: "In carrying out this mission we embrace the spiritual message of Don Bosco, whom we hold as our ideal through the Servant of God, Father Philip Rinaldi, and we make the main object of our apostolic work the charges to whom Don Bosco was sent"; and article 33 says these latter are "the young (especially those most in need), the working classes, vocations, and the missions".

Your Salesianity will have preferences for certain secular fields of activity. The privileged area of the Salesian charisma is that of education, and (even more so) of culture. This was Don Bosco's deliberate choice for all his work (cf circ. of Fr. Ricceri on "Salesians & Polit. Respons.", ASC, Oct. 1976). Culture is not used here in the sense of intellectual elitism, or erudition, or refinement: rather it deals basically with human beings. "Gaudium et Spes" has described this very well (nn. 53-62), as have the bishops of Latin America at Puebla: "Culture in this sense includes all that has to do with the lives of a people; all the values (including harmful and false ones) by which they are influenced, the practice of which unites them and invests them with a "collective consciousness" (EN 18). It also includes the forms these good and evil values take and the ways they find expression: customs, language, institutions, social conditions — that is, when not impeded and repressed by the domination of other cultures" (Puebla, n. 387).

This is a field of human interest with special emphasis

on State education; it deals with the young, too, so easily hoodwinked yet so full of life and energy and so sociologically forward-looking.

Paul VI deplored the present-day tragic rift between culture and the Gospel and pointed to the urgent need of a true Christian presence in this area. Here is where you could do wonderful work, being women in a world of ever-growing feminism. There are so many ways layfolk can help in the area of culture. There are many organisations who give direct assistance to those whom the Salesian mission especially cares for; and there are professional people whose role is an indirect one: they have a free hand and can find a host of ways to help — and this is highly desirable. Father Rinaldi told his first consecrated lay votaries, "However busy you are, there is always some surplus energy: you should use this for some project in accordance with your circumstances. Don Bosco's work can be anywhere and everywhere" (QC pp. 46-47). Salesian enterprises are always open to the Volunteers, and their lay co-operation is welcome in all groups of the Salesian Family. Indeed the Volunteers' traditional way of life as consecrated laity could well include being co-workers and animators among the layfolk engaged in Salesian activities in the vast area of education and culture.

For the realisation of the Salesian mission the good Lord, through Mary, endowed Don Bosco and his followers with a characteristic Gospel spirit. It included the animating and nurturing of your own specific consecration. Thus you had Father Rinaldi as your incomparable master: and you must treasure this fact as of profound importance.

This is not the time to dilate on the nature of your Salesianity; but I wish to stress how necessary it is: in fact it is the basis, nay, the very essence, of your identity.

There is no abstract formula for measuring the proportions of Salesianity and consecrated secularity that will make an harmonious blend. What is needed is a well balanced spiritual life, faithful to your origins and with common ideas and aims.

Your consecrated secularity dictates your type of life; your Salesianity determines how you live it, its scope, its special style, the way you witness, and the particular area of involvement in the apostolate.

Thorough formation is essential

The consecration made sixty years ago assuredly bespeaks the urgency of formation. Father Rinaldi, preparing his first candidates, assumes the nature of a “formatore”, moulding their characters as their spiritual director under the all-pervading influence of the Holy Spirit.

The succeeding decades saw the Institute mature and achieve its indispensable and proper autonomy; and of course the natural result was the assumption of certain initiatives and responsibilities. Among these latter, pride of place must go to formation — a formation that is thorough and balanced, uniting Salesianity and Secularity in a total harmony. So far you are the only branch of the Salesian Family to carry the spirit of Don Bosco into a life of consecrated secularity and to assume secularity into Salesian consecration.

This is an interesting new venture — but it has its problems, its difficulties, its dangers. To live this life with sincerity is impossible without a strong inner spirituality. Father Rinaldi’s incisive conferences on “piety” show clearly how much he insisted on the interior life.

Paul VI saw the risks this new venture held for all Secular Institutes and pointed out that their members walked on sloping ground: there would be the temptation to take the easy way downwards; there was also the challenge to keep battling uphill — a kind of spiritual mountaineering (cf D & T, I).

To be “in the world, not of the world but for the world” certainly has its fascinating angle, but the dangers are many. Human life presents itself as a dazzling actuality, with its virtues, its passions; its potential for good, its proclivity towards evil;

its incredible modern progress, its secret failings and ever-present suffering. This is a field of work that needs a strong Christian faith and (for you) a lively mental attitude that is utterly Salesian.

As in your early days, this must be the goal of your preparatory and ongoing formation.

In your field of action theoretical treatises are not enough. You need principles that answer to life situations; and life is an organic whole that does not tolerate fragmentation.

Hence I consider it essential that your Institute put much effort into organising a system of thorough formation. This process of formation will require that different aspects of your vocation be presented at different times; but your main thrust will be always to integrate: each aspect must be seen not as a unit in itself but as part of an organic whole. Formation is not so much a learning process as a life-experience that is enlightened and sustained by reflection, prayer and spiritual direction. Its very nature eschews the unilateral, the divided, and thrives on a life-experience that is integrated.

Article 2 of your Constitutions touches the heart of the matter: "With a single special call we have been consecrated by God in the evangelical counsels and sent on an apostolate lived in the world according to the charism proper to our Institute". And whilst this charism has as co-existing elements both Salesianity and Secularity, it is the Salesianity that is the basic and specifying element.

All this calls for a lengthy and enthusiastic study of Don Bosco and his spirit, so that the Volunteer sees her vocation in its totality and as distinct from all other consecrated layfolk. This was exactly the way Father Rinaldi trained his first votaries.

An in-depth effort of this nature will ensure that the Salesian character will not be found wanting in the different aspects of your vocation (that is, your vocation seen as God's call and your response): in your way of viewing and living out the Gospel counsels and Christian virtues; in the prospects of your involvement in the Church; in your activities among the

young and the working classes; in your prayer-life and your personal holiness; in your communion with the Church and your Institute. At all times and in all her actions the Volunteer can and must be a joyful pupil of Don Bosco

This is a fine goal to achieve, difficult but necessary, if the Volunteers wish to avoid the dangers of an identity-crisis. Such a task, I believe, is the more urgent these days, now that the Volunteers come from various environments, and there is no longer the explicit obligation (as in Father Rinaldi's time) to have belonged to any Salesian organisation.

Furthermore, formation is all the more necessary because of the Institute's secular nature, which requires a strong grasp of the common and basic elements of the Salesian spirit. These need to be assimilated and practised in a way suitable to consecrated layfolk. Thus side by side with the SDB's, FMA's and the Co-operators, your contribution as Volunteers will become necessary and indispensable; you add a new dimension: consecrated women in the world, with a certain delicacy and life-experience quite your own, and not as yet shared by other groups of the Salesian Family.

In communion with the Salesian Family

You have chosen not to live in community: you are Laics, not Religious. However, as for every consecrated person, there is a communion which is the basis of your growth in love: God is communion; the history of man is a search for communion.

A very special area of communion for the Volunteer is the Salesian Family. Your first professions show clearly that your Institute was born into the communion of our Family. Hence you will grow and perfect your identity in proportion as you build up this communion.

In the aftermath of our Special General Council, we have given particular attention to the matter of the *Salesian Family* for the sake of the various groups who draw their inspiration

from Don Bosco. It became clear that none of these groups was able to re-assess its vocation thoroughly without reference to its fellow groups with the same spirit and mission as our Founder. This led to an effort to unify the various groups — naturally respecting the genuine differences in each (cf SGC 151).

We are all called to develop an awareness of a shared gift of the Holy Spirit and of more practical and explicit intercommunication and collaboration among Salesians. This can be achieved as we deepen our commitment to Christ, our fidelity to the spirit of Don Bosco, the renewal of his mission, our practical apostolate (with reference whenever possible to the young and the working classes). These aspects point up the values we have in common, even though the various branches of our Family take on different forms and work in different ways or in varying cultures and apostolates. The People of God should see that the “Salesian happening” so admired by Paul VI receives its animation from identical inspiration and commitment.

The common spiritual development of our Salesian Family in this post-conciliar renewal calls for greater awareness and growth in our communion. Each branch, within its own ambit, must strive for this joint action. We have one single historic aim: to announce Christ to the young and the working classes. With this in mind we have made a common renewal of our devotion to Mary, our Salesian educational system, our universal missionary commitment, our decentralised apostolate within the local Church and all that it implies, etc.

These days all must play an active part in re-assessing the service of our Salesian priestly ministry. There is need of vocational planning for our mutual interest and enrichment; better ways and means of exchanging ideas; generous co-operation in specialised study areas; better collaboration in the local scene in certain apostolates we share together. In summation, these modern times require a pooling of our energies; a more than ever effective fidelity to Don Bosco.

Dear Volunteers, to this pulsating Salesian Family you must

make your own excellent and novel contribution; and from it you will receive the common life-blood that will boost your progress and activity. Within the communion of our Family you will gain a better understanding of the spiritual identity of your consecrated secularity; you will render your apostolate more effective; you will re-discover your practical collaboration; you will adapt yourselves to the various social and political situations and to the particular stage of development of the local Salesian Family. These modern times and their social upheavals call for versatility and initiative if we wish to develop the charisma of Don Bosco and help the charges assigned him by Christ and his Holy Mother, the Help of Christians.

Dear Miss Anna, these are a few guiding thoughts I propose to you and your Volunteers. They were inspired by this sixtieth anniversary of your first professions in the rooms of Don Bosco. I dedicate them to Mary and ask her to render them fruitful. May she increase your fidelity as you ponder them and make suitable resolves.

Please pardon the length of this letter: it is my first opportunity to discuss with you the stimulating and delicate theme of your very special Salesian vocation. In expressing my support and congratulations I am also carrying out my duty as Rector Major and I hope I have done this with Salesian warmth and fellow-feeling. Be assured of my active interest in the Institute at all times. You have a place in my daily Mass and Rosary; I include you all: President General, the Central Council, every single Volunteer, and also my own confreres who are assistants to you.

May your joyousness, constancy and hope increase your fidelity and give you promising growth in Christ's Church.

Affectionately in Don Bosco,

Fr. EGIDIO VIGANÒ,

Rector Major,

Successor of Don Bosco.

5.3 Brotherly Solidarity (30th Report)

a) PROVINCES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina, Bahia Blanca	L. 820,000
Brasil, Recife	1,000,000
Colombia, Bogotá	1,000,000
Uruguay	1,968,000

ASIA

Japan	6,500,000
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EUROPE

Austria	7,137,320
Belgium North	6,500,000
Italy, Adriatica	1,000,000
Italy, Centro Regione N.N.	500,000
Italy, Meridionale	1,170,000
Italy, Subalpina	5,500,000
Italy, Veneto S. Marco	700,000
Holland	40,300,000

<i>Total monies received from 27 July 1979 to 27 November 1979</i>	74,095,320
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<i>Plus cash in hand</i>	8,187
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<i>Amount for distribution as at 27 November 1979</i>	74,103,507
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b) DISTRIBUTION OF MONIES RECEIVED

AFRICA

Central Africa, Hanover Park: study hall for indigent negro students	L. 1,000,000
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Central Africa, Lubumbashi: for poor boys at the Provincial Youth Centres	1,000,000
Ethiopia, Adigrat: for famine victims	2,000,000
Ethiopia, Makalè: for famine victims	2,000,000

LATIN AMERICA

Antilles: (from the Adriatic Province)	1,000,000
Antilles: (from Uruguay)	984,000
Antilles, Barahona: for medical supplies	1,000,000
Antilles, Haiti, Port-au-Prince: for young slum-dwellers	1,000,000
Antilles, Jarabacoa: for a youth centre	1,000,000
Antilles, Santo Domingo: for hurricane victims	2,000,000
Argentina, Bahia Blanca: for subscription to "Parola del Padre"	200,000
Argentina, Buenos Aires, Ramos Mejia: for library in house of ongoing formation	1,000,000
Brasil, Belo Horizonte, "Vigilantes Mirins": for office equipment	1,000,000
Brasil, Guiratinga: for education of destitute youth	1,000,000
Brasil, Manaus, Belem-Sacramenta: for a water-tank	1,000,000
Brasil, Porto Alegre, Curitiba: for equipment for new novitiate	1,000,000
Brasil, Recife, Scuola Don Bosco: for repairs	1,000,000
Central America, Nicaragua: (from Uruguay)	984,000
Central America, Nicaragua: (from Bogotá)	1,000,000
Chile, Santiago: for Youth Apostolate "Project 1980"	1,000,000

Chile: help for a missionary in the poor countries in the north	1,400,000
Colombia, Medellin, Ciudad Don Bosco: for destitute boys	1,000,000
Colombia, Medellin, Ibague: for abandoned boys	1,000,000
Ecuador, Quito, Procura: for air transport for sick natives	1,000,000
Ecuador, Macas: for the needs of the mission	150,000
Ecuador, Cuenca, Parish of Dominic Savio: for church furnishings	1,000,000
Ecuador, Riobamba: for pastoral needs	500,000
Mexico, Guadalajara, Leon Ciudad del Nino: for abandoned boys and orphans	1,000,000
Mexico, Mexico: for vocation bursary to missionary Sisters	1,000,000
Mexico, Mexico, San Cristobal de las Casas (Chiapas): for catechetical aids and youth enterprises	1,500,000
Mexico, Mixes, Arenal San Isidro: for a dispensary	1,000,000
Mexico, Arroyo Lirio: for a church	500,000
Mexico, Mazatlan: for a church	1,000,000
Mexico, Mixes, Tepantlali: for a means of transport	1,000,000
Mexico, Mixes, Totontepec: for equipment for a youth centre	1,000,000
Paraguay, Chaco Paraguayo: for flood victims	1,000,000
Uruguay, Mercedes: for church furnishings	500,000
Uruguay, Montevideo: for the new aspirantate	1,000,000

Uruguay, Montevideo, "Jackson" Agricultural School	1,000,000
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ASIA

Burma, Lashio: for social enterprises in the Prefecture Apostolic	1,000,000
Korea, Seoul: for the children of lepers	1,000,000
Hong Kong: for the confreres in China	1,000,000
Hong Kong: for the refugees from Indo-China	2,000,000
India, Bangalore: (from Belgium North)	6,500,000
India, Bangalore, Pallaruthy: for a new building	1,000,000
India, Bangalore, Vaduthala: for the enlargement of the mechanical department	1,000,000
India, Bombay, Antop Hill: for the fringe-dwellers	493,000
India, Gauhati: for catechetical aids	1,000,000
India, Gauhati, Jowai: to build a school	1,000,000
India, Gauhati, Nongstoin: for catechetical aids	1,000,000
India, Gauhati, Shillong: for catechetical aids	1,855,000
India, Tura, Mendal: for social development enterprises	1,000,000
India, Madras, Poonamallee: donation to charitable fund	1,000,000
Philippines, Joris, Pasil, Tondo: for fringe-dwellers	1,500,000
Thailand, Betong: for a water-tank	1,000,000
Thailand: for refugees from Indo-China	2,000,000
Vietnam: for the needs of the confreres	2,000,000

EUROPE

Poland, Krakow: (from Japan)	2,000,000
Portugal: for the needy children of Capo Verde	1,000,000
Portugal, Timor: for the three missions in Timor	3,000,000
Middle East: for destitute Arab youngsters in Bethlehem and Nazareth	1,000,000
<i>Total monies disbursed from 27 July 1979 to 27 November 1979</i>	74,066,000
<i>Plus cash in hand</i>	37,507
<i>Total</i>	74,103,507

c) GENERAL SUMMATION OF FRATERNAL SOLIDARITY FUND

<i>Monies received as at 27 November 1979</i>	827,664,574
<i>Monies disbursed as at same date</i>	827,627,067
<i>Cash in hand</i>	37,507

5.4 Deceased confreres

Alphabetical order

ACKERSCHOTT John, pr., b. Essen, Germany 13-6-1909; † Cologne, Germany 22-9-1979; 70 yrs. 50 pr. 41 priest.

ALENCAR Nestor, pr., b. Barreiros, Brazil, 31-5-1891; † Lorena, Brazil 8-11-1979; 89 yrs. 65 pr. 62 priest.

ANDRASI John, Bro., b. Jaszapati, Hungary, 27-12-1895; † Giel, France, 17-11-1979; 84 yrs. 44 prof.

BARALDI Dominic, Bro., b. Pieve di Cento, Bologna, 27-8-1903; † Bologna, 6-6-1979; 76 yrs. 58 prof.

BARBERO Simon, Bro., b. S. Sebastiano PO, Turin, 15-5-1903; † UPS, Rome, 30-10-1979; 75 yrs. 50 prof.

BARONE Alphonsus, pr., b. Salerno, 18-3-1909; † Culabá, Brazil, 5-11-1979; 70 yrs. 48 prof. 33 priest.

BIELAWSKI Edward, pr., b. Kamionka, Poland, 26-12-1930; † Lodz, Poland, 12-8-1979; 48 yrs. 28 prof. 21 priest.

BIZJAK Anthony, Bro., b. Gorny Lacnyc, Jugoslavia, 5-1-1896; † Lad, Poland, 17-9-1979; 83 yrs. 58 prof.

BOMONE Joseph, pr., b. San Martin, Argentina, 26-6-1900; † Ramos Mejía, Argentina, 23-6-1979; 79 yrs. 57 prof. 50 priest.

BOTTIN Albert, Bro., b. Maser, Treviso, 22-2-1900; † Monteortone, Padua, 24-8-1979; 79 yrs. 42 prof.

BURLINA Benedict, pr., b. Cordenons, Pordenone, 5-3-1915; † Cumiana, Turin, 25-8-1979; 64 yrs. 43 prof. 36 priest.

CESARIN Peter, pr., b. Casarsa, Pordenone, 8-4-1918; † Pordenone, 23-10-1979; 61 yrs. 42 prof. 32 priest.

CHOIM Mariano, Bro., b. Warsaw, Poland, 13-10-1923; † Gutkowo, Poland, 15-6-1979; 56 yrs. 35 prof.

CIAPPEI Charles, pr., b. Montecatini Terme, Pistoia, 1-2-1913; † Genoa, 14-11-1979; 66 yrs. 48 prof. 39 priest.

CICHON Adam, pr., b. Pobiedr, Poland, 28-9-1921; † Zywiec, Poland, 25-8-1979; 57 yrs. 37 prof. 32 priest.

CLARA Eustace, pr., b. Longiarù, Bolzano, 11-7-1928; † Fulpmes, Austria, 11-11-1979; 51 yrs. 20 prof. 15 priest.

COLMEGNA William, pr., b. Buenos Aires, Argentina, 5-9-1911; † there 10-12-1979; 68 yrs. 45 prof. 35 priest.

COSTABILE Vincent, pr., b. Casteluccio Superiore, Potenza, 18-6-1907; † Naples 31-7-1979; 72 yrs. 49 prof. 39 priest.

CZOP Anthony, pr., b. Porabka, Poland, 18-5-1901; † Pogrzebien, Poland, 8-8-1979; 78 yrs. 56 prof. 45 priest.

DONATO Cajetan, Bro., b. Messina, 1-9-1901; † there 10-9-1979; 79 yrs. 46 prof.

FALCAO Joachim, pr., b. Manaus, Brazil, 24-9-1906; † Recife, Brazil, 10-9-1979; 72 yrs. 50 prof. 41 priest.

GONZALEZ Joachim, pr., b. Valencia, Spain, 2-3-1901; † Elche, Spain, 29-6-1979; 78 yrs. 59 prof. 50 priest.

GRASSI Victor, pr., b. La Spezia, 14-5-1915; † Rome, 2-9-1979; 64 yrs. 44 prof. 34 priest.

HARO Albert, pr., b. Cotacachi, Ecuador, 2-1-1909; † Quito, Ecuador, 2-10-1979; 70 yrs. 52 prof. 42 priest.

HARTMANN Joseph, Bro., b. Ebersberg, Germany, 10-11-1900; † Benediktbeuern, Germany, 23-10-1979; 79 yrs. 43 prof.

HELLINCKH John, pr., b. Merchtem, Belgium, 2-1-1908; † Bonheiden, Belgium, 7-10-1979; 71 yrs. 49 prof. 40 priest.

HOGAN Thomas, Bro., b. Croagh, Ireland, 28-11-1908; † Burwash, England, 24-9-1979; 71 yrs. 55 prof.

IBANEZ Joseph, cl., b. Larraga, Spain, 3-3-1951; † there 7-8-1979; 28 yrs. 11 prof.

KAZMIERCZAK Francis, pr., b. Duszyni, Poland, 9-8-1911; † Pila, Poland, 5-10-1979; 68 yrs. 45 prof. 35 priest.

KITLAS Miecislao, pr., b. Slomianka, Poland, 29-6-1933; † Sztum, Poland, 18-4-1979; 46 yrs. 24 prof. 14 priest.

KNIFIC Francis, pr., b. Tupolice, Yugoslavia, 16-12-1893; † The Bronx USA, 21-4-1979; 85 yrs. 65 prof. 55 priest.

LEGER Marcellus, pr., b. St. Laurent-sur-Sèvres, France, 6-9-1920; † Champagnac, France, 10-9-1979; 59 yrs. 32 prof. 25 priest.

LO NIGRO Camillus, Bro., b. Palermo, Italy, 23-8-1911; † Ragusa, Italy, 6-8-1979; 67 yrs. 45 prof.

LO PICCOLO Joseph, Bro., b. Caltagirone, Italy, 27-3-1909; † Jauareté, Brazil, 22-10-1979; 70 yrs. 51 prof.

MACRINO John, Bro., b. Modica, Italy, 19-10-1892; † Genoa, Italy, 11-3-1979; 87 yrs. 60 prof.

MARCHETTI Achilles, Bro., b. Bagnacavallo, Italy, 19-10-1887; † Arouca, Portugal, 22-1-1979; 92 yrs. 70 prof.

PAOLA Francis, pr., b. S. Andrea dell'Jonio, Italy, 11-6-1899; † Bernal, Argentina, 24-11-1979; 80 yrs. 62 prof. 52 priest.

PAULUS Joseph, Bro., b. Aichkirchen, Germany, 29-4-1895; † Ens Dorf, Germany, 15-11-1979; 84 yrs. 52 prof.

PAVEL John, Bro., b. Skakovci, Yugoslavia, 5-12-1897; † Trstenik, Yugoslavia, 19-8-1979; 82 yrs. 50 prof.

PEGORARO Anthony (Zugno), pr., b. Rio S. Martino, Italy, 29-9-1931; † Florence, Italy, 26-8-1979; 48 yrs. 28 prof. 18 priest.

PRANDI Louis, Bro., b. Bellinzago, Italy, 1-11-1906; † Turin, Italy, 11-9-1979; 72 yrs. 53 prof.

PUGLISI Paul, pr., b. Catania, Italy, 8-11-1909; † Rome, 14-12-1979; 70 yrs. 53 prof. 43 priest.

PYREK Corrado, pr., b. Warsaw, Poland, 5-2-1910; † Lodz, Poland, 3-4-1979; 69 yrs. 43 prof. 36 priest.

REGGIO Anthony, pr., b. Usciah, Turkey, 30-1-1903; † Cairo, Egypt, 23-8-1979; 76 yrs. 47 prof. 39 priest.

RISATTI Joseph, pr., b. Tiarno di Sotto, Trent, 13-5-1900; † Alexandria, Egypt, 3-8-1979; 79 yrs. 60 prof. 52 priest.

ROBAKOWSKI Ladislaus, Bro., b. Kamienica, Poland, 1-1-1896; † Oswiecim, Poland, 5-11-1979; 83 yrs. 63 prof.

RUBIO Xavier, pr., b. Manchones, Spain, 14-11-1912; † Madrid, Spain, 1-10-1979; 67 yrs. 49 prof. 40 priest.

SANCHEZ Romulus, pr., b. Alpe, Colombia, 8-5-1888; † Coro, Venezuela, 16-4-1979; 91 yrs. 66 prof. 54 priest.

SARDI Louis, Bro., b. Milan, 29-6-1895; † Turin, 31-7-1979; 84 yrs. 49 prof.

SAVARE' Tarcisus, pr., b. Lodi, Milan, 21-12-1908; † Turin, 9-12-1979; 71 yrs. 54 prof. 46 priest.

SAVINO John, pr., b. San Giovanni Rotondo, Foggia, 29-4-1896; † Rome, 29-8-1979; 83 yrs. 57 prof. 53 priest.

SCALERANDI Chiaffredo, pr., b. Cavour, Turin, 8-5-1908; † Alexandria, 29-9-1979; 71 yrs. 53 prof. 44 priest.

SCOLARI Angelo, Bro., b. Ospitaletto, Brescia, 21-8-1903; † Turin, 2-9-1979; 76 yrs. 50 prof.

SETTI Guy, pr., b. Rovereto, Trent, 14-1-1909; † Pietrasanta, Lucca, 13-12-1978; 70 yrs. 45 prof. 39 priest.

SIGNORINO John, Bro., b. Verolengo, Turin, 17-9-1905; † Borgomanero, Novara, 25-8-1979; 74 yrs. 45 prof.

STOCKLMEIER Joseph, Bro., b. Giggelsberg, Germany, 1-3-1913; † Penzberg, Germany, 6-11-1979; 66 yrs. 45 prof.

TOMASINI Paul, pr., b. Buenos Aires, Argentina, 20-4-1892; † San Isidro, Argentina, 30-7-1979; 87 yrs. 69 prof. 60 priest

TRABUCCHI Peter, pr., b. Pian di Borno, Brescia, 21-9-1925; † Bogotá, Colombia, 20-7-1979; 54 yrs. 34 prof. 25 priest.

UITERWAAL Peter, Bro., b. Utrecht, Holland, 11-7-1925; † The Hague, Holland, 18-11-1979; 54 yrs. 32 prof.

VALENTINI Michael, pr., b. S. Gregorio di Ippona, Catanzaro, 21-12-1910; † Rome, 5-9-1979; 68 yrs. 52 prof. 43 priest.

VAN DER STAAL Cornelius, pr., b. The Hague, Holland, 7-11-1911; † Paris, France, 30-7-1979; 68 yrs. 47 prof. 39 priest.

WIEDMANN Otto, pr., b. Deggingen, Germany, 31-8-1901; † Bernal, Argentina, 14-11-1979; 78 yrs. 49 prof. 42 priest.

ZORZAL Joseph, pr., b. Caselo, Brazil, 8-8-1929; † Sao Paulo, Brazil, 4-11-1979; 50 yrs. 39 prof. 21 priest.



DECEASED CONFRERES - Chronological order

22 January

Br. **MARCHETTI Achilles** † Arouca (Portugal) 1979 aged 92

11 March

Br. **MACRINO John** † Genoa 1979 aged 87

3 April

Fr. **PYREK Corrado** † Lodz (Poland) 1979 aged 69

16 April

Fr. **SANCHEZ Romulus** † Coro (Venezuela) 1979 aged 88

18 April

Fr. **KITLAS Miecislaus** † Sztum (Poland) 1979 aged 46

21 April

Fr. **KNIFIC Francis** † The Bronx (USA) 1979 aged 85

6 June

Br. **BARALDI Dominic** † Bologna 1979 aged 76

15 June

Br. **CHOIM Marlano** † Gutkowo (Poland) 1979 aged 56

23 June

Fr. **BOMONE Joseph** † Ramos Meja (Argentina) 1978 aged 79

29 June

Fr. **GONZALEZ Joachim** † Elche (Spain) 1979 aged 78

20 July

Fr. **TRABUCCHI Peter** † Bogota (Colombia) 1979 aged 54

30 July

Fr. **TOMASINI Paul** † San Isidro (Argentina) 1979 aged 87

30 July

Fr. **VAN DER STAAL Cornelius** † Paris (France) 1979 aged 68

31 July

Fr. **COSTABILE Vincent** † Naples 1979 aged 72

31 July

Br. **SARDI Louis** † Turin 1979 aged 84

3 August

Fr. **RISATTI Joseph** † Alexandria (Egypt) 1979 aged 79

6 August

Br. **LO NIGRO Camillus** † Ragusa 1979 aged 67

7 August

Cl. **IBANEZ Joseph** † Larraga (Spain) 1979 aged 28

8 August

Fr. **CZOP Anthony** † Pogrzebien (Poland) 1979 aged 78

12 August

Fr. **BIELAWSKI Edward** † Lodz (Poland) 1979 aged 48

19 August

Br. **PAVEL John** † Trstenik (Yugoslavia) 1979 aged 82

23 August

Fr. **REGGIO Anthony** † Cairo (Egypt) 1979 aged 76

24 August

Br. **BOTTIN Albert** † Monteortone (Padua) 1979 aged 79

25 August

Fr. **BURLINA Benedict** † Cumiana (Turin) 1979 aged 64

25 August

Fr. **CICHON Adam** † Zywiec (Poland) 1979 aged 57

25 August

Br. **SIGNORINO John** † Borgomanero (Novara) 1979 aged 74

26 August

Fr. **PEGORARO Anthony** † Florence (Italy) 1979 aged 48

29 August

Fr. **SAVINO John** † Rome 1979 aged 83

2 September

Fr. **GRASSI Victor** † Rome 1979 aged 64

2 September

Br. **SCOLARI Angelo** † Turin 1979 aged 76

5 September

Fr. **VALENTIN Michael** † Rome 1979 aged 68

10 September

Br. **DONATO Cajetan** † Messina 1979 aged 79

10 September

Fr. **LEGER Marcellus** † Champagnac (France) 1979 aged 59

11 September

Br. **PRANDI Louis** † Turin 1979 aged 72

17 September

Br. **BIZJAK Anthony** † Lad (Poland) 1979 aged 83

22 September

Fr. **ACKERSCHOTT John** † Cologne (Germany) 1979 aged 70

24 September

Br. **HOGAN Thomas** † Burwash (England) 1979 aged 71

29 September

Fr. **SCALERANDI Chiaffredo** † Alessandria 1979 aged 71

1 October

Fr. **RUBIO Xavier** † Madrid (Spain) 1979 aged 67

2 October

Fr. **HARO Albert** † Quito (Ecuador) 1979 aged 70

5 October

Fr. **KAZMIERCZAK Francis** † Pila (Poland) 1979 aged 68

7 October

Fr. **HELLINCKH John** † Bonheiden (Belgium) 1979 aged 71

22 October

Br. **LO PICCOLO Joseph** † Jauarete (Brazil) 1979 aged 70

23 October

Fr. **CESARIN Peter** † Pordenone 1979 aged 61

23 October

Br. **HARTMANN Joseph** † Benediktbeuern (Germany) 1979 aged 79

30 October

Br. **BARBERO Simon** † Rome 1979 aged 75

4 November

Fr. **ZORZAL Joseph** † Sao Paulo (Brazil) 1979 aged 50

5 November

Fr. **BARONE Alphonsus** † Cuiaba (Brazil) 1979 aged 70

5 November

Br. **ROBAKOWSKI Ladislaus** † Oswiecim (Poland) 1979 aged 83

6 November

Br. **STOCKLMEIER Joseph** † Penzberg (Germany) 1979 aged 66

8 November

Fr. **ALENCAR Nestor** † Lorena (Brazil) 1979 aged 89

11 November

Fr. **CLARA Eustace** Fulpmes (Austria) 1979 aged 51

14 November

Fr. **CIAPPEI Charles** † Genoa 1979 aged 66

14 November

Fr. **WIEDMANN Otto** † Bernal (Argentina) 1979 aged 78

15 November

Br. **PAULUS Joseph** † Ens Dorf (Germany) 1979 aged 84

17 November

Br. **ANDRASI John** † Giel (France) 1979 aged 84

18 November

Br. **UITERWAAL Peter** † The Hague (Holland) 1979 aged 54

24 November

Fr. **PAOLO Francis** † Bernal (Argentina) 1979 aged 80

9 December

Fr. **SAVARE' Tarcisius** † Turin 1979 aged 71

10 December

Fr. **COLMEGNA William** † Buenos Aires (Argentina) 1979 aged 68

13 December

Fr. **SETTI Guy** † Pietrasanta (Lucca) 1978 aged 70

14 December

Fr. **PUGLISI Paul** † Rome 1979 aged 70
