

acts

**of the Superior Council
of the Salesian Society
of St John Bosco**

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

Father Egidio VIGANO'

1.1 THE SALESIAN ACCORDING TO DON BOSCO'S DREAM OF THE TEN DIAMONDS

1.1 « THE SALESIAN ACCORDING TO DON BOSCO'S DREAM OF THE TEN DIAMONDS » - Introduction - « The model of the true Salesian » - Importance given to the dream by Don Bosco - Importance of the dream in our Salesian traditions - Don Rinaldi the most enlightened interpreter - Our specific spirituality: The august personage; The august personage: front and back - The visible image of the Salesian: Visible characteristics; Basic elements; Christ the fountainhead - The supporting spiritual framework: Obedience is central; Practical poverty; Demands of chastity; The guerdon of heaven - Distinctive Salesian spirituality - Destruction of Salesian identity: The Salesian image debased; Collapse of the supporting spiritual structure - Appeal for formation and vocations for the future.

Rome, Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, 1981

Dear Confreres,

My first duty is to invite you to share the joy and hope of our confreres in Spain as they begin on 16 February the celebration of the centenary of Don Bosco's charisma in Spain. Together with the 4th missionary expedition in late January of 1881, Father John Branda left Turin with four other confreres and a layman and travelled to Andalusia to set up the Salesian foundation at Utrera. With them went Father John Cagliero to help them with his five years of founding expertise in South America.

Today Spain has over 3,200 Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and also many missionaries, thousands of Co-operators, innumerable past pupils, an active group of Don Bosco Volunteers, and friends throughout the length and breadth of the Peninsula. The pioneers possessed the secret of expansion and the courage to face the

future; they had been trained at Valdocco and their model was our great-hearted Founder himself.

We congratulate the confreres of Spain for their generous and inspired sharing of this "experience of the Holy Spirit" that had its beginnings so humbly in that tiny southern Spanish town. We wish to imitate the spiritual zeal they are displaying this year and explore the secret of *the true Salesian model* the early pioneers projected so magnificently.

On this same line of thought, there is another significant centenary in September next: Don Bosco's important dream of the future of his Society. He saw an "august personage" wearing a mantle "richly adorned" with ten large and brilliant diamonds. The dream took place at San Benigno Canavese on the night of 10 September 1881.

The model of the true Salesian

The dream has three parts. In Scene I the august personage portrays the ideal Salesian. The front of his mantle is adorned with five diamonds, three on the breast representing Faith, Hope and Charity, and two at shoulder level for Work and Temperance. On the back of the garment are another five diamonds: they stand for Obedience, Poverty, Reward, Chastity and Fasting.

Don Rinaldi calls this august personage of the ten diamonds "the model of the true Salesian".¹

1. ASC 55, 1930.

In Scene II the august personage depicts the model completely debased. The mantle "is faded, moth-eaten and torn. Where the diamonds, had been, the cloth was in tatters and eaten away by grubs". This depressing scene portrays "the ruin, the anti-thesis of the true Salesian".²

2. ASC 55, p. 923.

In Scene III there is a handsome young man of imposing and charming mien, dressed in white garments delicately worked in gold and silver thread. His message to the Salesians is to "listen, take heed and be strong and courageous; to bear witness in their words and lives, to be prudent in accepting and training the new generation, and to see to the healthy growth of the Congregation".

The three scenes of the dream are realistic and challenging. They present a deft, personalised and dramatic exposition of Salesian spirituality. Don Bosco considered them an important frame of reference for our Salesian vocation. The careful choice and presentation of the special characteristics must be seen as an authoritative identikit of a true Salesian, and Don Bosco tells us that as long as we cherish these characteristics the future of our vocation in the Church is assured; however, if we neglect them the Congregation will face total extinction.

In his description of the dream Don Bosco remarked on two events: first, that 10 September was the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary,³ and secondly, that the Salesians at San Benigno were making their Retreat and he seemed to be walking up and down with the Rectors. These are two matters worth reflecting on: they link the dream with Marian devotion, and suggest that the dream is particularly suitable for days of reflection and meditation (such as Retreats), and of special importance for those responsible for animation (such as Superiors).

It is a dream offered to every Salesian because he is a Salesian. There is no direct reference to the young (though obviously it is totally oriented to their good). Don Bosco is speaking to us in our

3. The Feast of the Holy Name of Mary was instituted by Innocent XI to commemorate the Christian victory over the Turks at Vienna on 13 September 1683. It was kept on the first Sunday after the Nativity of Mary. In 1881, the year of Don Bosco's dream, this was 10 September. At the beginning of the 20th century Pope St Pius X changed the date of the feast to 12 September to free the Sunday for liturgical reasons.

own Salesian house; or whilst we are making our Retreat; or in our character as animators and educators. It is a topic that affects us intimately; it calls for a "revision of life".

Importance given to the dream by Don Bosco

The dream made such an impression on the Saint that he not only expounded it by word of mouth but also set it down in writing.⁴

In the archives we have his own hand-written text that Don Ceria had been unable to find for inclusion in Volume XV of the *Memorie Biografiche*. Now, thanks to the patient and painstaking labours of a Salesian Sister, we have at our disposal even a critical edition of the dream.⁵

The text was written some weeks after the 11 September and reflects Don Bosco's concern that the dream be understood and applied to our living traditions.

The rough copy of the manuscript has many corrections and shows Don Bosco's painstaking care in editing for publication;⁶ also his concern to recall accurately the details of the dream — a profound effort to record faithfully what he humbly believed to be an admonition from on high. Don Bosco prefaces his dream with words that imbue it with mystery, solemnity and prophecy: "May the grace of the Holy Spirit enlighten us all. Amen".

From these pages, filled with Don Bosco's minute and painstaking corrections, Don Berto made a fair copy and gave it to the Saint to check. Don Bosco added yet another addendum which read: "This dream lasted almost the whole night, and in the morning I was exhausted. Still, for

4. MB XV 182.

5. Sister Cecilia Romero: *I sogni di Don Bosco - edizione critica*; LDC 1978. The authress groups this dream with a number of others Don Bosco had towards the close of his life (1870-87). Sister Romero remarks on p. 10 that the current events of his history "had a considerable bearing on the content of the dreams; for this was the period following the abolition of the temporal power of the Popes and characterised by profound social, political and religious changes. One of the serious problems that resulted was that of religious and priestly vocations.

"Also, this was a time of soul-searching for Don Bosco in regard to his educational work and his Congregation. It was in need of consolidation to meet the present and future needs of the Church and society, and so it required a solid increase — all the more so because of the great missionary expansion taking place at that time.

"This soul-searching is very obvious in a number of his writings in this second half of the 19th century — for instance, the *Memoirs of the Oratory* (1873-75) and the pamphlet on the *Preventive System* (1877).

"Seen in this light the dreams assume a marked importance both in view of their content and their common characteristics; they can be analysed under various aspects: psychological, pedagogical, theological, historical, and so forth."

6. P. Stella: *Don Bosco nella storia della religiosità cattolica*; Vol. II, p. 527.

fear of forgetting it, I rose quickly and made a few notes that have helped me recall what I have written here on the Feast of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple" (21 November).

Don Bosco's concern is noteworthy: he *immediately* made notes; *later* he applied himself personally to writing the details. He plainly saw it as something important, and it is not out of place to add his own words: "I was not able to remember everything".

And note again Don Bosco's repeated reference to a Feast of our Heavenly Mother.

Because of our Founder's special effort to keep alive the memory of this dream, Father Ceria, in the *Memorie Biografiche*, ranks it as *one of the most important* of his many dreams.⁷

7. MB XV 182.

Importance of the dream in our Salesian traditions

At San Benigno Canavese today one can still see the room and bed where Don Bosco had the dream: such is the desire to keep it ever in mind; and it is no overstatement to say that almost straight away Salesians used the dream for meditation, spiritual formation and revision of life. The oldest extant printed edition has the title in Latin: *Futura Salesianorum Societatem respicientia*, and it was used for innumerable conferences, sermons and spiritual retreats.

Don Albera refers to it as a well-known theme in his famous letter of 1920; and it is significant that he is developing the concept of *Don Bosco our model*.⁸

Don Rinaldi spoke frequently of it and referred to it several times in various Acts of the Superior

8.v. Lettere circolari di D. Paolo Albera ai salesiani, ed. 1985, p. 370.

Council (in those days called the "Superior Chapter").⁹ He also published the dream twice: in 1924 and 1930.¹⁰ The first edition contained the complete text referred to above; the second edition had the Latin expressions translated and certain dates omitted that did not affect the content in any way. Each confrere was presented with a copy.

Don Rinaldi considered that the rays of the ten diamonds had their best authentic and practical explanation in the writings of St Francis of Sales, particularly his *Theotimus* and *Spiritual Treatises*¹¹ that were daily fare for Salesian formation. Furthermore, in two of his more significant circular letters he has linked the teachings of the dream to the most authoritative sources of our Salesian spirituality: the *Constitutions*, the *Regulations*, and our authentic *Traditions*. It was the golden jubilee of the *Constitutions*, and there had been a recent revision of the *Regulations* (both basic and authoritative texts and at the very heart of the Congregation);¹² and Don Rinaldi also spoke of the traditions as giving to our Society and mission a colour and character without which we might still be religious and educators according to the mere letter of our Rule, but we would no longer be Salesians of Don Bosco.¹³

In fact the dream was a constantly recurring theme in Don Rinaldi's conferences and homilies, especially in his latter years. He saw it as essentially linked to the Holy Rule and the Salesian traditions; it was a frame of reference for delineating the Salesian identity.

Don Zaggiotti too in his Motto for 1964 drew the attention of Salesians to the dream. He presented it as an authoritative means for life-revision, conversion and the development of our charisma.

9. v. ASC 23, p. 197; 55, p. 923; 56, p. 933; 57, p. 985.
10. ASC 23, pp. 200-3; ASC 55, pp. 925-30.

11. ASC 23, p. 175.

12. v. ASC 23, pp. 174 et seq.

13. ASC 56, p. 933.

"The dream of the ten diamonds", he wrote, "invites us to practise the virtues most vital for us".

It has been rightly maintained that this is one of the best-known dreams in our Salesian tradition, and among the most popular for meditation and reflection.¹⁴

14. Romero: I sogni di Don Bosco; v. note on page 6.

At this point, specialists in certain fields of study might justly remark that "a minute examination should be made of the documentary tradition of the dreams of Don Bosco before subjecting them to psychological, theological and pedagogical analysis". This is hardly the place for a scientific assessment of the textual criticism or the specific nature of Don Bosco's dreams. We are interested in something more important and sublime: our living and authoritative spirituality. After all, life must be lived before it can be studied; and the elements that go to nourish and stimulate life must find expression by means of an authoritative and timely charisma. (If these elements had to wait to be detailed and programmed by scholars, it would be too late!) Don Bosco and his successors, especially Don Rinaldi, made use of this charisma with confident assurance; so did their co-workers in Salesian formation. In other words, our spirituality came to us by means of a living transmission.

The following words of Don Rinaldi are thought-provoking in this regard: he tells us the model presented by the dream "should be studied and elucidated in daily meditation; every opportunity should be used to speak of it; it should enlighten every angle of our perspective. Provincials and Rectors are asked to base their conferences on it; and retreat preachers should use the material in their instructions and impress the confreres with the beauty of our Salesian spirituality".¹⁵

15. ASC 56, p. 934.

Don Rinaldi the most enlightened interpreter

Without a doubt Don Rinaldi would have pondered this dream more than anyone else; and time and time again he spoke of it to the whole Congregation. He was actually at the house of San Benigno when Don Bosco had the dream and related it to the confreres; and hence he was impressed by it in a particularly vivid manner.

As Don Bosco's third successor he wrote often to the confreres regarding its contents, as we have already indicated. There are still many Salesians who actually heard him dilate on the topic — for example, in the final sermon to the young confreres in formation at Foglizzo in the early summer of 1931 when the souvenir cards were given out.

(Notes of this sermon are extant in the archives.)

A perusal of Don Rinaldi's writings reveals a profound study and a progressive elucidation of the dream, and we see in his last two pronouncements an interpretation that is original, excellently devised, penetrating and detailed; the perfected fruit of long meditation and assiduous exploration. He has described with exactness the real significance of the august personage and interpreted the particular disposition of the diamonds. These latter, mounted on the front and back of the garment, each suitably positioned and luminous, present our Salesian spirituality both forcefully and methodically. Don Rinaldi comments that the disposition of the diamonds is important: set in any other way they

would not show forth the splendour of our life-style.¹⁶

16. ASC 56, p. 934.

Many times did Don Rinaldi affirm that the dream portrayed "the model of the true Salesian"¹⁷ as Don Bosco envisaged him and "handed down to us to be not just a memory but the reality of our life".¹⁸

17. ASC 57, p. 985.

18. ASC 56, pp. 933-4.

In summation, according to Don Rinaldi, the august personage clad in the mantle and the particular disposition of the diamonds are important, as they combine to give a true picture of our distinctive spiritual character. This is interesting and has the backing of scholarly researchers as they study the special qualities of the various vocations.

Don Rinaldi is one of the most faithful witnesses of our Salesian spirituality and his reflections on the dream belong mainly to the last years of his life as Rector Major. I am convinced that his interpretation was the integrated and seasoned fusion of ideas achieved by one who was utterly conscious of his Salesian vocation and totally at one with it; who had meditated and prayed; and had perhaps been blessed by some special enlightenment from on high.

The thoughts I now offer you are inspired by Don Rinaldi's exact and penetrating understanding of the dream; and I have endeavoured to develop certain particular aspects. My hope is that they will help all to be ever more loyal to our vocation in the Church and that we shall all gain an ever greater insight into its distinctive character.

Our specific spirituality

Scene I of the dream presents us with the model of the Salesian not by means of the diamonds alone but rather by the vision taken as a whole.

The august personage

The protagonist is a "man of majestic mien" and represents the ideal of our Salesian spirituality. He should be a reflection of every Salesian present and future.¹⁹ Today, a hundred years later, we can assuredly state that Don Bosco himself "was throughout his life the living incarnation of that symbolic personage". Indeed we can go even further and use Don Rinaldi's imaginative words: "All the diamonds had their own special ray, but all the rays make up but one sole ray of light — Don Bosco".²⁰

19. ASC 55, p. 923.

20. ASC 55, p. 923.

Naturally Don Bosco did not explain the dream in this way: the thought would not even have occurred to him. But the acute and practical interpretation of Don Rinaldi rings true.

Indeed the new Constitutions speak of Don Bosco as the *model* whom "the Salesian studies and imitates very closely; he is the father given us by God and by the Church".²¹

21. Const. 49.

The august personage: front and back

The dream portrays the august personage from both front and back. To remark that these positions are complementary may seem a platitude; but there is more in it than meets the eye. It was one of Don Rinaldi's suggestive and meaningful observa-

tions that had not occurred to others. He mentioned it in many of his talks (for instance, in the already cited sermon of the Retreat souvenirs at Foglizzo in 1931), and we find it briefly but clearly in his April circular letter of that same year: the Salesian life is symbolised "in its activity", by the diamonds in front, and "in its interior life" by the diamonds at the back.²²

22. ASC 56, p. 934.

We could speak of the front and back of the Salesian coin: the social work of the Salesian, the *Da mihi animas* (the obverse), and the secret constancy and asceticism, the spiritual supporting structure, the *coetera tolle* (the reverse).

The visible image of the Salesian

The five shining diamonds in front (Faith, Hope, Charity, Work and Temperance) show the Salesian in his public witness of self-donation to the young. From this frontal view he is not classified as a religious but rather as a Christian overflowing with enthusiasm for the mystery of Christ and full of kindness and charity. He is dynamic and balanced, hard-working and temperate, imbued with creativity and common sense. *Work* and *Temperance* support the whole mantle. Don Rinaldi writes, "Here we see the Salesian life: considered in its activity it is *work* and *temperance* enlivened by profound *charity* in the evergrowing light of *faith* and *hope*".²³

23. ASC 56, p. 934.

I do not envisage at this point a Salesian meditation on these first five diamonds; but I think it well to make a few general remarks that may serve as food for reflection by all.

Visible characteristics

It should be pointed out that the diamonds must not be interpreted simplistically as a mere list of generic virtues to be considered one by one as in a theological treatise. Nor are we interested in the fact that they are all found in the classical list of virtues. For us they are seen as practical attitudes and in particular (referring to the front part of the mantle) as external and clearly perceptible. The diamonds add up to a portrait of the Salesian that shows forth his Salesian traits, that limns the features that characterise the disciple of Christ as Don Bosco wanted him to appear in a society that unfortunately no longer seemed to appreciate the classic forms of the religious life.

Recently in my letter to you on the Salesian Brother I wrote that our Congregation was founded with an unusual "secular slant".²⁴ I was struck by Don Rinaldi's insistence on "certain modern principles (sic) on which Don Bosco was inspired to base his while Institute, and which are our most precious heritage".²⁵

24. ASC 298, p. 32.

25. ASC 23, p. 184.

The best way to illustrate these "principles" is to quote the memorable words of Pius IX to Don Bosco at the audience granted to him in his bedroom on 21 January 1877: "I am certain that your Congregation has been raised up by Divine Providence to show forth the power of God. I am certain that God had willed to keep hidden an important secret till our times, a secret unknown to so many centuries and so many other Congregations of the past. Your Congregation is new in the Church; *it has a new nature*; it has arisen in these times and is both *religious and secular*; it has the vow of poverty and allows ownership; *it belongs to the*

cloister and also to the world; its members are both religious and secular, cloistered and free citizens. It was instituted to show how religious can render to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's"²⁶

26. Quoted by Don Rinaldi ASC 23, p. 184; v. MB XIII 82-83.

Thus the characteristics of a Salesian shown by the first five diamonds *are not primarily a description of the Salesian as a religious*, even though, as we shall demonstrate, we definitely are true and solid religious.

The first and principal aspect of the august personage is that of a *loyal hardworking citizen spurred on by the profound mystery of Christ*. The fact that he is also a 100% religious should create no problem whatsoever. The Salesian is normal and at his ease in a secularised society. He is an active and reponsible citizen yet totally Christian because of his vigorously committed interior life.

The same holds for the larger circle of the Salesian Family, in which numerous groups of non-religious "commit themselves to work according to the Salesian spirit. The form of their work is not identical but varies with the actual situation of each one and the real need of youth in a particular case and at a given moment"²⁷

27. SGC 729.

Basic elements

The mantle of the august personage hangs from the shoulders and seems to be held in position by the two large diamonds of *Work* and *Temperance*, so often referred to as Don Bosco's escutcheon.²⁸

28. v. Const. 42, 43, 87.

In the dream of the angry bull (1876) we have the conditions for the future of our vocation: "You must etch these words into your minds as your special armorial bearings, as your password, your

distinctive badge. Take good notice of them — *Work and Temperance will prosper the Salesian Congregation*. Explain these words well; repeat them and insist on them. Have the explanation printed and see that all understand that work and temperance are your heritage to the Congregation, and its glory".²⁹

29. MB XII 466-7.

The *diamond of Work* is on the right shoulder as if to indicate the primacy for Salesians of that "ecstasy in work" spoken of in St Francis de Sales' *Theotimus*,³⁰ and that is animated utterly by the urge of Faith, Hope, and especially Charity. This kind of activity must not reduce the Salesian to a frenzied fusspot but make him a genuine worker in the cause of salvation in his ceaseless and updated educational efforts for man's betterment.

30. Treatise on the Love of God, Bk. VII, ch. 7.

The *diamond of Temperance*, on the left shoulder, must not be confused with the *diamond of Fasting*; and to emphasise the difference in these two virtues, so seemingly alike, one is positioned on the front of the mantle and the other on the back. As we shall see, the *diamond of Fasting* stands for mortification of the senses; whereas *Temperance* indicates a general Spartanlike self-control achieved through a cogent work-plan, self-sacrifice, moderation and balance that are the fruit of self denial. Our temperance will be linked with a general mien that is congenial and in keeping with the ordinary working folk, full of common sense and tinged with a healthy shrewdness. To quote Don Rinaldi: "The Salesian must practise self control: he does not go about with his eyes closed; he opens them but goes no further; if something is wrong, he stops. He will control himself also in his games; he will be restrained with the bothersome boy; he will be able to hold

his peace, hide his feelings, speak at the right time, and exercise a measure of shrewdness”.

Christ the fountainhead

The three magnificent diamonds on the breast of the mantle symbolise the sparkling fountainhead of the whole personality of the Salesian: his constant openness to the mystery of God as he follows in the steps of Christ. This is the fundamental secret of Don Bosco's special vocation and hence of Salesian spirituality in its totality.

31. ASC 290.

In my letter on the *Preventive System*³¹ I wrote that the Salesian spirit derives from the enthusiastic and total bond with Christ; and under Mary's guiding hand it brings to today's world the mystery of Christ "blessing the young and doing good to all", as Vatican II affirms.³²

32. Lumen Gentium 46.

It is not possible to develop fully in this letter the Salesian contents of the diamonds of Faith, Hope and Charity. Still, it should be noted that the *diamond of Faith* stands for a totally supernatural vision of the world in which we are immersed, and it is a vision full of optimism: "This is the victory over the world, our faith".³³ It provides our activities with clear pastoral motivations; it permeates and sustains that healthy humanism that characterises the Salesian apostolate.³⁴

33. 1 John V 4.

34. v. Const. 47.

The *diamond of Hope* assures us that as we live our daily lives in creative and practical dedication to the young our help from on high is certain (after all, we honour Mary as our *help*).³⁵

35. v. Const. 43.

The *diamond of Charity* calls for special attention. It is positioned over the heart of the august personage; and Scene I of the dream closes with Father Costamagna telling Father Fagnano, "Char-

ity understands all things, sustains, all things, conquers all things; let us preach it in word and deed".

For Don Bosco charity means a constant attitude of sincere love for persons, treating each individual as God himself or his image; it means being one with Christ and living in him our sonship to the Father in an uninterrupted spirit of prayer; uniting ourselves with him in total dedication to our neighbour — our boys. Is it here that we discover the heart of Don Bosco in its overflowing *kindness*, endowed with his singular predilection for the young.

This charity, says Don Albera, "does not consist in a kind of natural attraction towards the young: it is a true *love of predilection*. This predilection is initially a gift from God, it is the *actual Salesian vocation*; but it is up to us to put our intelligence and our heart into developing and perfecting it".³⁶ In short, we are speaking of that pastoral charity that is at the very centre of the Salesian spirit³⁷ and the perennial source of an extraordinary kindliness that characterises our whole pedagogy and permeates it with an *aura of joy and spontaneous happiness*.

Thus it is that the diamonds on the front of the mantle present the basic Salesian image.

36. Lettere circolari di Don Paolo Albera, ed. 1965.

37. v. Const. 40, 41.

The supporting spiritual framework

On the reserve side of the mantle the rays of the five *diamonds of Obedience, Poverty, Reward, Chastity and Fasting* present the Salesian's strong and hidden spiritual framework. Here lies fulfilment of the second part of the Salesian motto,

Coetera tolle; here lies too our special style of consecrated life.

Again it goes without saying that the five diamonds are not just a list of virtues but rather the principal paths of an ascetical *sequela Christi*.

Following Don Rinaldi's line of thought, it is important to indicate that these principal ways are positioned on the back of the mantle and characterise the Salesian's interior life. They are not directly obvious in the basic exterior image of the Salesian, but rather are they a hidden and absolutely necessary supporting structure.

Don Bosco was very concerned that his Salesians should not present a public image as monks or friars, and in this he had the backing of Pius IX. There are many witnesses and facts that make it clear he did not want his Salesians to have the external appearance (in habit, customs and style) of the traditional religious. They were not to catch the public eye and invite antagonism in the new secularist society — although he wished them to be 100% "priests" and "faithful", no matter what kind of society they lived in.

However, for Don Bosco, the more hidden the more profound must be the Salesian's conscious determination to strive after a genuine asceticism in his following of Christ. He considered it absolutely necessary that the backing strength, the power from within, should be provided by the inexhaustible drive that derived from strongholds hidden and well defended (hence the square of diamonds on the back of the mantle). John Cagliero understood this well when he said, "Friar or no friar, I'm staying with Don Bosco".

The front of the mantle depicts the Salesian's public image in society and among his boys; the

secret of his spiritual energy, his constancy, and his solid hard work is to be found in his profound awareness that he is a consecrated person and hence must walk in the steps of asceticism.

Again, rather than a detailed analysis of the five diamonds, here are a few general thoughts.

Obedience is central

The first thing that strikes one about the diamonds at the back of the mantle is the central position given to the diamond of obedience. Don Rinaldi comments, "The spirituality of a Salesian is guided by obedience".³⁸

38. ASC 56, p. 934.

In the Constitutions Don Bosco always put obedience as the first of the vows for his Salesians. Speaking of the spiritual formation of his sons he insisted on obedience as the first religious principle to be cultivated. "In the Congregation", he said, "obedience is everything";³⁹ "it is the basis and support of every virtue";⁴⁰ "it is the very soul of a Religious Congregation".⁴¹ In his *Introduction to the Holy Rule* he quotes St Jerome, St Bonaventure and St Gregory, and adds that the primacy given to obedience was also noticeable in a negative sense: one's religious identity and sense of belonging was lost when one placed one's own will before obedience. "On that day", Don Bosco wrote, "you will begin to be discontented with your state of life".⁴²

39. MB X 1059.

40. MB XVII 890.

41. MB XII 459.

42. Const. Appendix, p. 237.

This central position could also suggest a Marian thought when we consider Don Bosco's dream of the ribbon.⁴³ Our Blessed Mother tells Don Bosco to "tie them together with the ribbon of obedience".

43. MB II 298 et seq.

One of the main reasons of this priority of

44. Const. 3.
45. Const. 35, 50.

46. v. P. Stella: Don Bosco nella storia della religiosità cattolica: Vol. II, pp. 402-7.
47. Ibid. v Vol. II, pp. 227-240.

obedience in the life of a Salesian is the *importance of our mission*⁴⁴ and *our community life*.⁴⁵ Availability is part of the very foundation of a Salesian's religious profession;⁴⁶ for Don Bosco a genuine and suitable obedience was a priority even in the young when being educated.⁴⁷

Indeed in the writing up of his dream Don Bosco asserts that the "largest and most brilliant diamond was in the middle of the square formed by the others, and it carried the inscription, *Obedience*".

It is also significant that the central position of the *diamond of Obedience* is matched by the centrality of *Charity* on the front of the mantle: Salesian obedience must help in giving practical expression to the "one heart and one soul" of our community life, which in turn is the fruit of that bond of brotherly love that gives foundation and life to our communion.⁴⁸

48. v. Const. 5.

Practical Poverty

On the rays emanating from the *diamond of Poverty* is written, "Poverty is not lived in words but in love and deeds". In its place on the torn and tattered mantle in Scene II of the dream the voracious grub carries the inscription, "Bed, dress, drink and money".

The diamond of Poverty reminds us too that this vow should be considered according to the characteristics common to all the diamonds on the back of the mantle: it is not immediately visible; it forms part of our renouncement, our asceticism as consecrated souls, both as individuals and as communities.

To quote Don Bosco: "The dignity of a reli-

gious lies in his practice of poverty",⁴⁹ "which must be coupled with scrupulous personal cleanliness";⁵⁰ "*we must eschew the abuse of the superfluous... what we possess is not ours, it belongs to the poor; woe to us if we do not make good use of it*".⁵¹ "We must love poverty and the companions of poverty".⁵² Hence, no soft living; let us be Spartanlike; we must "have poverty in our hearts if we wish to practise it".

The diamond of poverty stands for an attitude of the heart and a personal and community way of life by which, "like the apostles at our Lord's invitation, we free ourselves from the burden of earthly goods, trust in the providence of the Father, and dedicate ourselves completely to the service of the Gospel".⁵³

The apostolic and more obvious aspect of our poverty appears rather on the front part of the mantle. Don Bosco remarked that "we must possess the spirit of poverty not only in our hearts and in detachment from material things, but we must show the world we are poor".⁵⁴

Our poverty will be evident to all by the kind of people we work for, and especially by our public way of life and apostolate. *The diamonds of Work and Temperance* are rightly considered the social expressions of our poverty;⁵⁵ for by them we associate ourselves with the poor, and with them we testify to a common life inspired by the poverty preached by Christ in his sermon on the mount. This witness we give shows the world the inspiring alternative to materialism. To quote Puebla: "In today's world, Gospel poverty is a challenge to materialism and makes *alternative solutions to consumerism* possible".⁵⁶ Our life must be the antithesis of capitalistic schemes and socio-political

49. MB XIV 549.

50. MB XV 682.

51. MB XV 682.

52. MB X 1046.

53. Const. 81; cf also.

54. MB V 675.

55. v. Cost. 87.

56. Puebla 1152.

intrigues. We do not seek ideological subjection or class warfare: we go to the Gospel for our inspirations; we seek continuous nourishment and updating from the mystery of Christ; we live the Gospel in well-balanced common sense; we are able to dialogue with all. This was how Don Bosco acted in a society in travail and in search of new structures.

Demands of Chastity

The dream tells us, "This diamond of Chastity had a *splendour* all its own. It drew and held the attention as a magnet attracts metal".

Don Bosco spoke often of the splendour of chastity in a Salesian. The Benedictine Rule says that "chastity must be loved". Don Bosco went further: *not only must chastity be loved and practised, it must be made to shine splendidly.*

We are well aware how our Father insisted on the value of chastity. The Salesian must work amongst the young and must show to all a heart brimming over with pastoral charity in order to build up friendship. For him it is not enough to love his boys: he must make himself loved by them. This is not an easy task (suffice it to recall the dream of the bower of roses).⁵⁷ It is essential that the Salesian's spiritual formation be such as to make him a model of chastity beyond reproach, taking wise preventive precautions in defence of this virtue. Salesian loving-kindness is impossible without purity.

Chastity for us is "the supremely necessary virtue" also in regard to our mission as educators: in a special way must we be bearers of the message of love in the young people's world so plagued

57. MB III 32.

by eroticism today. Also, as Don Bosco writes in his *Introduction to the Holy Rule*, "this pearl beyond price is everywhere beset by the enemy of souls, because he well knows that if he succeeds in snatching it from us the whole affair of our sanctification may be said to be ruined".⁵⁸ Hence the need of precaution, prevention and defence that must form an intelligent part of our Salesian spirituality.

58. Const. Appendix, p. 241.

Such precautions are part of the *diamond of Fasting*.

This diamond is, as already stated, quite distinct from that of *Temperance*. Its being on the back of the mantle emphasises its indispensable place in Salesian spiritual formation; whereas *Temperance* indicates one of the qualities of the external image of the Salesian.

For Don Rinaldi the *diamond of Fasting* stood for the large area of asceticism covering the mortification of the senses: chastity is inconceivable without mortification. Don Bosco spoke often of "the beautiful virtue", but he always linked it with a spirit of mortification — many daily acts of self denial. He was more concerned with *how* to guard chastity than with its beauty (which he was heard to laud so often). This certainly shows how practical our Founder's pedagogy was.

The guerdon of heaven

The *diamond of Reward* is quite different from that of *Hope*, which displays visibly the drive and activity of the Salesian in building up the Kingdom; his persevering efforts and enthusiastic dedication are based on the certainty of God's help given through the risen Christ and his Holy Mother.

The *diamond of Reward*, on the other hand, lays the emphasis on the *constant attitude of mind* that imbues every effort of a man of the spirit — “a little bit of Paradise puts everything right”.

The Salesian, according to Don Bosco, “should be ready to suffer cold and heat, hunger and thirst, fatigue and rejection whenever the glory of God and the salvation of souls require it”.⁵⁹ The interior support for this spiritual urge is the thought of heaven that accompanies a good conscience. “In all we do, our duty, hard work, troubles and sufferings, we must never forget that the least thing done for his name’s sake is not forgotten. It is of faith that in his own good time he will give us rich recompense. At the end of our lives, radiant with love, he will say to us as we stand before his judgement seat, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little: I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your Master’.”⁶⁰ “In fatigue and suffering, never forget that there is a great reward awaiting us in heaven.”⁶¹ And when Don Bosco tells us that a “Salesian worn out with overwork” is a triumph for *the whole Congregation*, he seems to imply that the diamond of Reward includes brotherly communion — the community sharing the guerdon of heaven.

The continual awareness of heaven is one of the pivot-principles that gives thrust to Don Bosco’s distinctive spirituality and pedagogy. It sheds light and deep understanding on the basic instinct of a soul in vital quest of its own proper goal. This is instanced in the seven “Goodnights” on “Why we must be convinced that God wills Paradise for us”.⁶²

59. Const. 42.

60. Matt. XXV 21; Const. Appendix, p. 256.

61. MB VI 442.

62. MB V 554-6.

Distinctive Salesian spirituality

The front and back diamonds are complementary and portray the Salesian idiom, or, according to Don Rinaldi, the "distinctive spirituality of the Salesian life".⁶³ With the help of the dream it is not difficult to describe this specific spirituality point by point. It consists in the blending of the ten diamonds in the vital and radiant unity of the august personage wearing the mantle. It is plain the complementary front and back diamonds are inseparable. The dream portrays a person (or a dedicated community) committed utterly to the mystery of Christ, convinced of the ultimate triumph of good over evil, given tirelessly to the building up of the Kingdom, with a heart permeated with that pastoral charity which is love translated into kindness and firmly engaged in constant and practical asceticism. History has presented us with a living and visible example of this in that masterpiece of the Holy Spirit, Saint John Bosco. To quote again Don Rinaldi's words: "All the diamonds had their own specific rays; however, all these rays make up but one single ray — Don Bosco".

63. ASC 55, p. 923.

The distinctive quality of the Salesian spirit is not one single characteristic or virtue: it is a blending of attitudes, of profound convictions and well-tested methodological experiences, all combining to create a unique and peculiar style of holiness and apostolate. For a true understanding of this idiom it is better to look to the dream than to an abstract definition, to Don Bosco rather than a theoretical tabulation of items.

The practice of this distinctive Salesian idiom makes us (as Don Rinaldi puts it) "living examples

64. ASC 55, p. 924.

of the august personage";⁶⁴ but to achieve this ideal requires a community life and a formation totally in accord with the Constitutions and our genuine Traditions. These latter are our help in vitally and authentically transmitting that *experience of the Holy Spirit* created and lived in the early days in communion with our Father and Founder.

Don Rinaldi calls on us to imitate the august personage of the dream (not only as individuals but also as communities) "in every minute detail, so that the Salesian Society may shed its splendour as it ought throughout the world. Don Bosco sees us, the Society, in the august personage and all the magnificence of his mantle with its radiant beams of light. Each individual Salesian must set about acquiring for himself and perfecting the diamonds; but if we wish them to blaze in all their splendour, we must be united into *one sole body* (just as the mantle is one) by observing the Constitutions in accordance with our Regulations and genuine Traditions".⁶⁵

65. ASC 56, p. 934-5.

Destruction of Salesian Identity

66. ASC 55, p. 924.

Scene II of the dream is dramatic. It describes the "ruination of the true Salesian",⁶⁶ the "anti-Salesian". The frightening argument of "Salesian/anti-Salesian" threatens us like the sword of Damocles, and it behooves us to be continually on the defence. The scene was depressing enough for our early Salesians. For us today, after the grave crisis in the last two decades, it should constitute a very special frame of reference regarding our too numerous losses.

Among those who asked me to write about

the dream was one who argued strongly for an original interpretation of the date "1900" found at the beginning of Scene II. According to him, the date in the title "What the Salesian is in danger of becoming in 1900" could refer to any specific year in the 1900's; there are still a couple of decades left to fix that date, and perhaps the serious crisis of recent years could then be better understood in relation to the grave warning on the tattered mantle.

But even without this interesting hypothesis it is still relevant and fruitful to apply ourselves to what Don Bosco wanted to say to us. More than once his conferences and dreams had severe warnings about the future of our Society. (For instance there was the dream of the meeting of devils to discuss ways and means of destroying the Congregation).⁶⁷ The distressing Scene II of the dream of the diamonds is so full of dramatic warning that it is unnecessary to bother about dates. In times of travail such as today the warnings become desperately relevant; but they are valid for all periods of history.

We have already reflected on the alarming crisis in religious life in my letter *Strengthen your brothers*.⁶⁸ Here and now we shall limit our remarks to emphasise the gravity of the dream's warning.

In Scene II the august personage is "distressed and seemingly on the verge of tears". His mantle is faded, tattered and moth-eaten. In place of the diamonds are moth-eaten holes. In fact the diamonds have become so many grubs gnawing away at the garment.

67. MB XVII 385.

68. ASC 295.

The Salesian image defaced

Instead of the *diamonds of Faith, Hope and Charity* there were words indicating a *complete weakening of the sense of the supernatural* and the subsequent grave spiritual decline. We know how the failing sense of the supernatural is usually substituted by current ideologies that in various ways tend to justify the change in identity that is taking place — which in turn leads to final abandonment. *Work and Temperance* will be exchanged for *idleness and neglect of the apostolate* and the *easy life* with the frivolities, fads and superficialities of consumerism (and of course sporting some fashionable ideology of the moment).

Collapse of the supporting spiritual structure

The back of the mantle shows a progressive destruction of the whole spiritual structure with the neglect of *obedience*. Thus is destroyed the practical basis of our spirituality; the bonds of communion are severed, individualism is lionised, and there is little chance of recovery.

Concupiscence replaces chastity, with an immature and compulsive need for sensory affection that quickly leads to the most unforeseen falls.

Poverty, with its detachment, its dependence, its sharing and its regulated use of material things, is considered out of step with modern times: it is replaced by constant selfish *pursuit of comforts* and an unhealthy independence in the use of money.

In place of the *diamond of Reward* there is no daily effort in asceticism, and no longer are eyes lifted up to the joys of heaven. There is an increasing inclination towards temporal things and a well-

heeled *horizontalism that seeks man's development* only in the present life.

In place of the *diamond of Fasting* there is now only an empty hole and no writing. When custody of the senses is missing the gate is thrown open to all sorts of temptations and deviations.

It is plain that Scene II more than sufficiently portrays our crisis, and we summarise it thus:

— *the front of the mantle*: a weakening of the sense of the supernatural; the substitution of ideologies to rationalise the change; and the acceptance of soft and easy living;

— *the back of the mantle*: instead of the supporting structure of asceticism there is individualism, concupiscence, money, horizontalism and rejection of mortification.

Here indeed is a complete programme for an impelling revision of life.

Appeal for formation and vocations in the years to come

Scene III of the dream presents a young man dressed in white who encourages and exhorts the Salesians. He reminds us that we are not alone in our labours; we are servants and tools of the Lord: hence even in the face of a distressing challenge *we can really fight and conquer*. He tells us to "be strong and brave".

We know only too well that of ourselves we are weak and inconstant, (as we wrote in "Strengthen your brothers").⁶⁹ God alone is strong. He alone therefore can strengthen us. He alone will keep us firm to the end, since he has set us on the solid foundation of Christ. He is faithful by

69. ASC, 295, p. 5.

his very nature and will protect us from evil. His is the power and the glory forever.

So the young man's first word to us is of courage and hope.

Then he speaks of certain *indispensable means* for our defence and growth — which are particularly relevant after the recent publication of the *Ratio*.

The first means he suggests is to translate the many teachings of the dream into our *ongoing formation*. The young man insists time and time again: "Pay attention. Understand well. Take heed of and preach. Constantly practise what you preach so that your works shine before men. Love our traditions and pass them on from generation to generation".

The second means recommended by the young man is the *care of vocations* and the *formation of the new generations*: "Be circumspect in accepting novices. Cultivate them with great care. Be prudent in admitting them to vows. Test them well. Send away the frivolous and fickle".

The third means is daily and practical fidelity to the Founder by means of our knowledge, love and practice of the Constitutions: this must be the food of morning and evening personal and community reflection.

Will the Salesian of today, will the community of every house, heed these admonitions? This indeed is a worrying question. On its answer will depend the future of the Congregation. Don Bosco himself was the first to be exercised by this doubt. He had this dream in 1881, at the eve of his life; the temporal power of the Papacy had been abolished; the Church was agonising over new and serious difficulties; could a new Institute survive in these troublous times after the

death of its Founder? This was no rhetorical question; we know that after Don Bosco's death, during the reign of Leo XIII, it was proposed to join the Salesian Society to the Scolopian Fathers.⁷⁰ The dream was indeed a realistic presage of the future of the Congregation up to the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the present one.

Rightly was the dream considered by the first generation of Salesians as a prophecy; the various dates inserted into it helped in its interpretation and it came to be dubbed *The Dream of the Future of the Congregation*. Such an attitude is interesting and could suggest that we today might also make a sounding or two regarding the future of the Congregation. In any vocation there is a vital link between fidelity, distinctive identity and the future. Such a reflection could take a number of directions.

One direction could that of a holy super-optimism — somewhat after the manner of Pius IX and Don Bosco from time to time. For example, Pius IX, sensitive man of God that he was, once spoke in prophetic vein discussing the pastoral relevance and transcendence of the charisma of Don Bosco. "I predict", he said to Don Bosco in 1877, "and you must put it in writing for your sons, that your Congregation will flourish, will spread miraculously, and will last for centuries so long as it promotes the spirit of piety and religion, and especially morality and chastity".⁷¹

Don Bosco also spoke of the future, and "in centuries" (as Pius IX did) as well as "in decades". He was inspired from on high, convinced he was predicting the development of a charisma created by God and of great use to the new society. Speaking "in centuries", we have from him several super-optimistic presages in which our Founder makes

70. v. E. Ceria: *Annali della Società Salesiana*, I, pp. 747-8.

71. ASC 23, p. 184.

statements that would seem quite incredible except that they came from his firm conviction that he was dealing with a work set up by God himself. One day he exclaimed, "Oh, if I could only keep alive for *five hundred years* fifty of our present Salesians, they would see what an amazing destiny Providence has reserved for us if we remain faithful. There might be a few crazy people who would like to see us destroyed, but they would be isolated cases and without backing from others. It all depends on whether the Salesians can resist the love of comfort and the temptation to idleness".⁷²

72. MB XVII 645.

Speaking "in decades", Don Bosco has bequeathed us many statements and various dreams with concrete facts and details amazingly exact (an instance is the dream of the wheel).⁷³ But it was the dream of San Benigno that he favoured as the *Dream of the Future of the Congregation*, and he appended certain dates to various parts: the first part 1881, the second part 1909. Then he noted, "I can reveal that there are many thorny problems, and also many great consolations: great fear in 1890; in 1895 great triumph".⁷⁴

74. MB XV 187.

In fact the Congregation survived that decade safe and sound: it was not annexed to another Congregation; and it grew so vigorously in all parts of the world that Paul VI exclaimed that in the last century of Church history one had to admit to the appearance of "a Salesian happening".

As has been already stated, fifty years later Don Rinaldi, considering Don Bosco had gone to extraordinary pains to pass on this dream to us "for our instruction and for the preservation of the Society in the future", had it published in the 1930 Acts (omitting the dates already past). He wrote, "You will find below the original first draft, without

Don Bosco's personal observations (the limitations of dates would only lessen its universal importance)"⁷⁵.

75. ASC 55, p. 923.

Thus presented, the dream has become a vital message for the future of the Congregation for all time. It teaches, it warns, it is a singular vision for reflection, and a rich theme for study as a frame of reference for Salesianity throughout the centuries.

The dream's exhortation to "pay attention and understand well" is just as valid for us in these times.

In practice, the only realistic way for us to reflect on the future of the Congregation is the way traced out in the letter, *Strengthen your brothers*.⁷⁶ There we have an examination of the crisis we are undergoing, and an invitation to look at the positive symptoms and try to grasp the significance of the extraordinary working of the Holy Spirit in the Church today; but we should also pay serious attention to the many defections. Indeed we would do well to meditate on the dream in relation to the critical situation of our present times.

76. ASC 295.

The contrast between Scene I and Scene II is frightening: *corruptio optimi pessima*. Each one of us, unfortunately, has seen with his own eyes the *debasement of the Salesian image* in various places and in flesh and blood. The risk for the Congregation is not imaginary. One wonders whether certain basic principles (such as Work and Temperance, so cherished and practised in the early days of the Congregation) still carry the same weight with us today.

Can we say that our community atmosphere and our daily activities are genuinely inspired by the supernatural and an authentic pastoral urge

(which is none other than the Holy Spirit's gift of love to us)? At the heart of all our work, is there a motive of religious obedience? Do we still believe in the indispensability of a healthy discipline that inspires us daily to be true disciples of the chaste, poor and obedient Christ?

Indeed this century-old dream still poses a challenge for us. In a way, the inscription, "What the Salesian is in danger of becoming", is more relevant today than ever.

Let us meditate on this warning dream in private and in communities. Let us ponder well the appeal from the harrowed heart of the young man in white. Especially let us enthuse over the profound values of our special vocation; let us cultivate them with care and pass them on with fidelity. Let us always consider the growth of the Salesian vocation as coming from on high, and let us sing with gratitude and sincerity, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give the glory".

Dear confreres, I offer you this letter as a humble spiritual heritage for reflection, meditation and practical application. In the warning voice of Scene III of the dream let us hear the appeal of the young people who need us. The Salesian vocation was created for the sake of the young. Don Bosco is God's gift to young people; he is their friend, the sign and bearer of Christ's predilection for them. They have great need of his friendship. To these youngsters around us God has given a kind of right to the Salesian vocation, in the sense that Christ and his Mother have set apart this Salesian Vocation especially for them. (We are reminded of the dream of the nine-year-old John Bosco).⁷⁷ It is a matter of urgency that we put the Salesian Charisma at the disposal of today's youth

77. MB I 123 et seq.

with all its genuine values, and our lives must be shining examples of these same values.

The centenary of the dream is an occasion to re-examine it and fathom its riches. Let us treasure its teachings and warnings.

May Mary be our inspiration and help. The dream took place following the feast of her Holy Name.

My sincere greetings to all. I pray for you in my daily Mass and rosary.

Affectionately yours,

Father EGIDIO VIGANÒ,
Rector Major.

1.2 THE TEXT OF THE DREAM OF THE TEN DIAMONDS

San Benigno Canavese — night of 10 September 1881

The text printed below follows the fair copy made by Don Berto (with Don Bosco's personal corrections) from the first draft in the Saint's own handwriting (v. Salesian Central Archives: 132 Sogni 5). We have also used the critical edition of Sister Cecilia Romero (I sogni di Don Bosco — ed. crit., Turin, 1978 LDC). The following liberties have been taken:

- *The Latin expressions have been translated (as in Father Ziggionti's publication);*
- *Certain lapsed dates have been omitted (as in the second publication of Father Rinaldi).*
- *Titles and subtitles have been added where it seemed appropriate and helpful to do so.*

May the grace of the Holy Spirit enlighten us all. Amen.

For the instruction of the Salesian Society

On 10 September 1881, Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary, the Salesians at San Benigno Canavese were making their Retreat.

The model of the true Salesian

On the night of the 10 September I dreamed I was in a large and splendidly ornate hall. I seemed to be walking up and down with the Rectors of our houses when there appeared among us a man of such majestic mien that we could not take our eyes off him. He gazed at us, and without a word began to walk a few paces ahead of us.

He wore an imposing long mantle with a stole-like collar tied at the neck with a ribbon that hung down in front. On the stole was written in luminous characters, *The Salesian Society*, and on the ribbon, *as it should be*.

The august personage wore ten huge and splendid diamonds, and it was almost impossible to look away from him.

Three of the diamonds were on the breast of the mantle and were

inscribed FAITH, HOPE and CHARITY. THE DIAMOND OF CHARITY was positioned over the heart. On the right shoulder was a fourth diamond: WORK; and a fifth, TEMPERANCE, was affixed to the left shoulder.

The other five diamonds adorned the back of the mantle and were arranged in a square, with the largest and brightest diamond of OBEDIENCE in the middle. The upper right diamond was the Vow OF POVERTY, and under it, REWARD. On the upper left was the Vow OF CHASTITY, with a dazzling splendour all its own that caught and held the attention as a magnet attracts metal; below it was the diamond of FASTING. The bright rays from the square of diamonds were directed towards the central diamond of OBEDIENCE.

Clarifying maxims

To avoid confusion it should be noted that each diamond had rays like small tongues of flame on which various texts could be read.

FAITH carried the maxims: *Take up the buckler of faith and battle against the snares of the devil.* Another ray read, *Faith without works is dead. Not he who hears but he who keeps the law will possess the kingdom of God.*

On the rays of HOPE there was written, *Hope in the Lord and not in men. Let your hearts always be set on the attainment of true joy.*

The texts of CHARITY read, *Bear one another's burdens if you wish to fulfil my law. Love and you will be loved. Let your love be for your soul and the souls of others. Recite the Divine Office with devotion. Celebrate Holy Mass with care. Make loving visits to the Holy of Holies.*

The rays of WORK carried the inscription, *Remedy for concupiscence; powerful weapon against all the temptations of the devil.*

TEMPERANCE had the text, *Take away the fuel and the fire will die out. Make a pact with your eyes, your appetite, your sleep, so that these enemies may not ravage your souls. Intemperance and chastity cannot go together.*

On the rays of OBEDIENCE: *Obedience is the foundation and perfection of holiness.*

On POVERTY: *The kingdom of heaven is for the poor. Riches are thorns. Poverty is not practised by words but by love and deeds. Poverty opens the gates of heaven.*

On the rays of CHASTITY: *All virtues come together with it. The clean of heart see the secrets of God and shall contemplate God himself.*

On the rays of REWARD: *If the rich reward attracts you, do not be afraid of the many hardships. He who suffers with me rejoices with me. What we suffer on earth is momentary; the joys of my friends in heaven are eternal.*

On the rays of FASTING: *The most powerful weapon against the snares of the devil. It keeps watch over all the virtues. Fasting puts to flight all sorts of foes.*

Authoritative warning

On the lower part of the garment there was a wide pink hem on which was written, *Here is matter for preaching morning, noon and evening: Treasure small acts of virtue and you will build solid holiness. Woe to you if you neglect small things: little by little ruination will overtake you.*

Some of the Rectors were standing, some kneeling; all were in silent amazement. Suddenly Don Rua said excitedly, "We must write these things down lest we forget them". He looked for a pen but could not find one. He took out his notebook and searched for a pencil. "I shall remember", said Don Durando. "I must get it down in writing", Don Fagnano cried out, and began writing with the stem of a rose. We all watched and could read his writing. When he stopped, Don Costamagna continued to dictate, "Charity understands all things, sustains all things, conquers all things; we must preach it in word and deed".

The debasement of the true Salesian

Whilst Don Fagnano was writing, the light failed and we found ourselves in profound darkness. "Quiet"; said Don Ghivarello, "let us all kneel and pray and the light will return". Don Lasagna began the *Veni Creator*, then the *De Profundis*, *Mary Help of Christians*, etc., and we all responded.

At the words, "Pray for us" a light appeared and lit up a placard on which was written, *The Salesian Society as it runs the risk of becoming.* Then the light increased and we could see and recognise one another.

In the brightness now we saw again the august personage, but distressed

and seemingly on the verge of tears. His mantle was faded, moth-eaten and in tatters. In place of the diamonds there were gaping holes.

"Look carefully", he told us, "and understand".

I saw that the ten diamonds had become so many grubs gnawing away at the garment.

In place of the diamond of FAITH was written *Sleep and sloth*; HOPE had become *Indecent laughter and frivolity*; CHARITY: *Neglect of the things of God. They love and seek their own desires and not the ideals of Jesus Christ*; TEMPERENCE was now *Gluttony — their god is their belly*; WORK: *Sleep, dishonesty and idleness*; OBEDIENCE was replaced by a large hole with no message; CHASTITY carried the text, *Concupiscence of the eyes and pride of life*; POVERTY: *Bed, clothing, drink and money*; REWARD: *Our heritage will be earthly goods*; and FASTING was just a hole with no message.

We were all terrified. Don Lasagna fell in a faint. Don Cagliero was as white as a sheet, and leaning on a chair called out, "Is it possible that things have already come to such a sorry pass?" Don Lazzerio and Don Guidazio were beside themselves and reached for support. Don Francesia, Count Cays, Don Barberis and Don Leveratto were on their knees, rosaries in hand and praying.

Then we heard a sombre voice that told us, "See how that splendid colour is now faded".

The message of the young man

We were grouped together in the darkness when a remarkable thing happened.

We were plunged into pitch blackness, and suddenly there appeared a brilliant light in the form of a human body. At first the light dazzled our eyes. Then we were able to make out a handsome young man of imposing and charming mien, dressed in white garments delicately worked in gold and silver thread. He approached us and spoke these words:

"Servants and instruments of the omnipotent God, hark and take heed; be strong and courageous.

"What you have seen and heard is a message from heaven for you and your brethren. Pay attention to it and understand it well.

"Forewarned is forearmed, and the faults you have witnessed can be avoided.

"All the texts you have read must form the themes of your preaching. Speak of them unceasingly in season and out of season. But be careful to practise what you preach so that your works will shine forth and build up a strong and healthy tradition for your present brethren and future generations of your sons.

"Listen carefully and heed these words.

"Be circumspect in accepting novices. Cultivate them with great care. Be prudent in admitting them to vows. Test them well and keep only the good. Send away the frivolous and the fickle.

"Listen carefully and heed these words.

"Meditate morning and evening on the observance of the Constitutions. If you do this the help of God will never fail you. You will be a revelation before men and angels, and your glory will be God's glory. It will be said of you: This is the Lord's work and it is marvellous in our eyes. Then all your brethren and your sons will sing with one voice: Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name give glory".

These last words were sung, and to the speaker's voice there joined a multitude of other voices so melodious and resonant that we were left benumbed and bemused, and to prevent ourselves from swooning we joined in the singing.

When the music ended there was darkness. I awoke and saw that it was already daylight.

Don Bosco's footnote

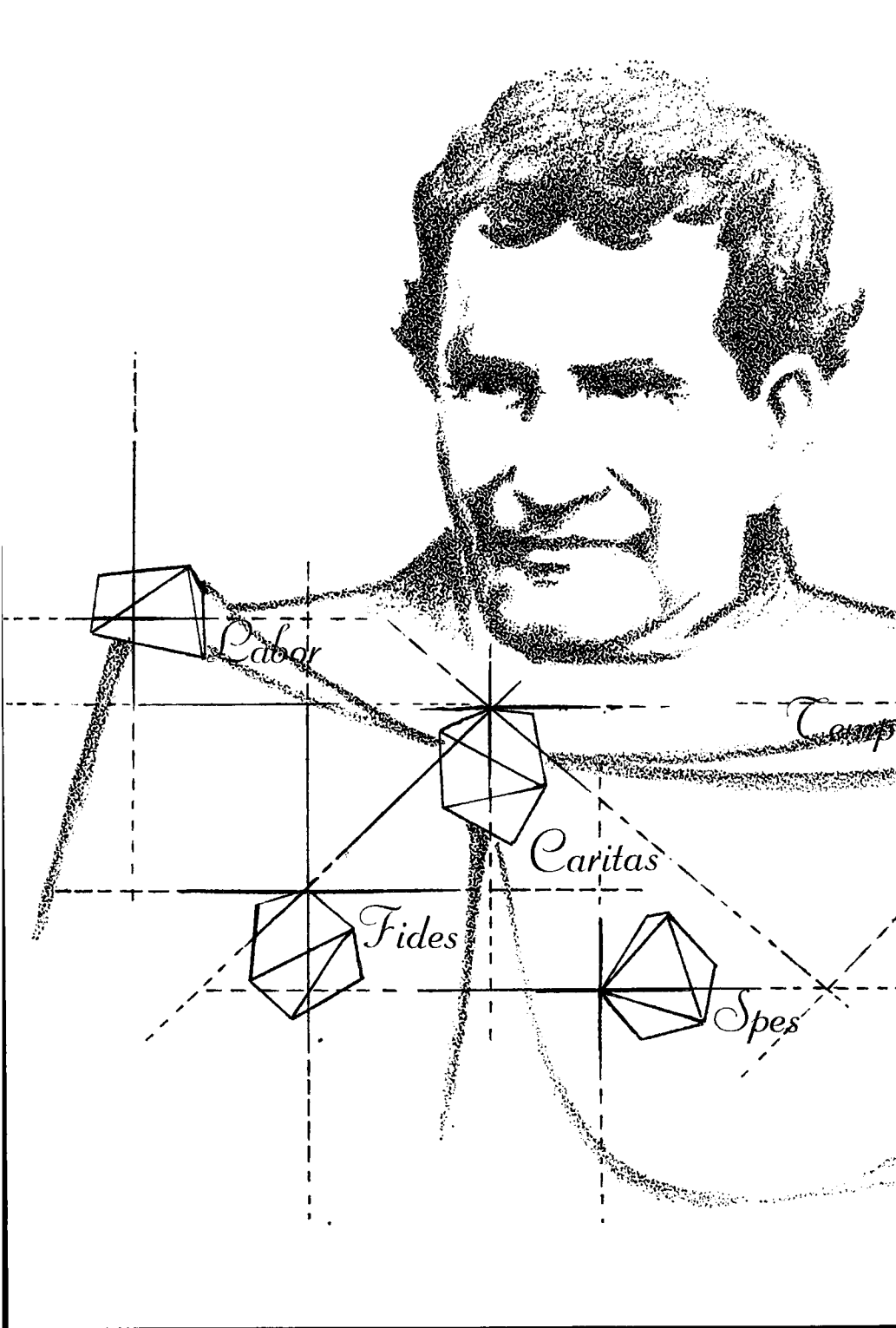
This dream lasted most of the night and in the morning I was exhausted. Still, for fear of forgetting it I rose quickly and made a few notes that have helped me recall what I have written here on the Feast of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple.

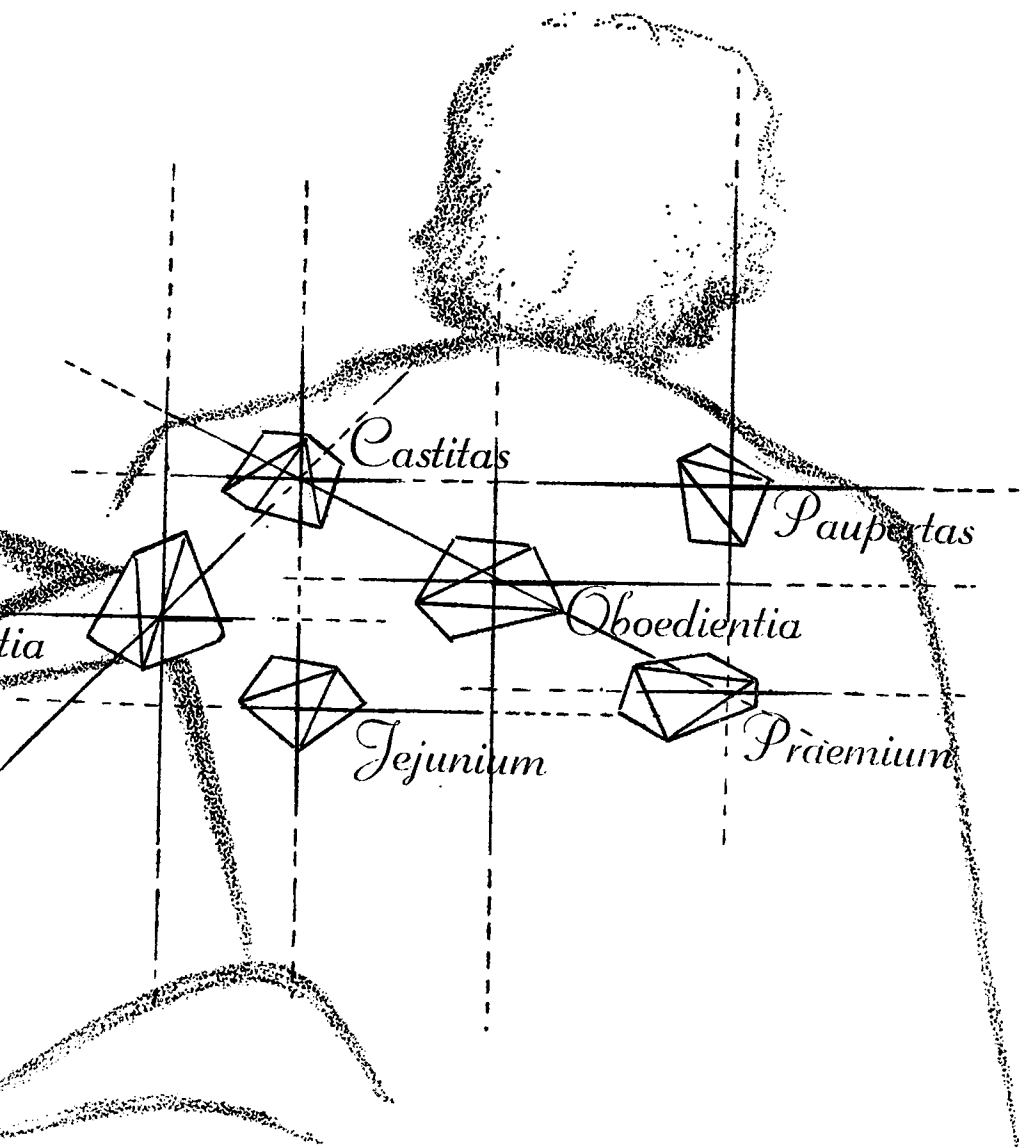
I was not able to recall everything.

One of the many things I have learned with certainty is this: immense is the Lord's mercy in our regard. Our Society is blessed by heaven. But the good Lord expects us to do our part.

We can forestall the evils that threaten us if we preach on the virtues and vices noted in the dream; if we practise what we preach and pass on to our brethren the authentic tradition of our past and future good works.

Mary Help of Christians, pray for us.





argumentum prædicationis: mane meridie et vespere!

2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Father Paul NATALI, Councillor for Formation

2.1 Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco

Principles & Norms

Ratio fundamentalis institutionis et studiorum

Towards the end of February the Formation Department issued the document, *Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco* (FSDB), commonly referred to as the *Ratio*.

In presenting the document the Rector Major outlines its history, its value and what it envisages; and gives it its official promulgation. The *Foreward* contains a few brief remarks regarding the plan of the document.¹

In these pages I wish to make a number of points regarding the *Ratio*, and exhort all Salesians, especially those closely involved,² to become acquainted with its contents and carry out its directives. In the Rector Major's words, "It is a document of particular importance for the Congregation. In view of the great changes in our times I would venture to say it will rank as one of our truly historic documents".³

Important and authoritative

The *Ratio* is important and authoritative because of its extensive frames of reference, the basis of its inspiration and structure, its general objective, and its extensive, and integrated formulation.

It culls its motivations, its dispositions and its guidelines from a wide variety of sources: Don Bosco, the youth situation, the magis-

¹ FSDB Introd. 4-7.

² FSDB Introd. 10.

³ FSDB Presentation 9 p. 7.

terium, the General Chapters (especially SGC and GC21, so Council-conscious), the writings of the Rector Major, the experiences of formation personnel, and young Salesians and their teachers in the houses of formation.

The *Ratio* has had a history of several editions.⁴ The source material has been subjected to long and penetrating discussions by confreres for whom the Salesian vocation is their very life and study. The document does not approach the source material in a mere generic or incidental way: and a sincere, concerned and combined study treated all findings and suggestions with sympathy, interest and charity. The results of these guided discussions open the way to a true knowledge of the Salesian vocation.⁵

It is in fact this very Salesian vocation and its requirements and aims⁶ that have been the basis and inspiration of the document, dictating its structure and, as it were, its direction and development; and the Salesian will thus be helped to give his free and mature response to God's invitation to fulfil himself in accordance with his almighty creative and saving act.⁷ Thus the Salesian identity motivates and restructures the whole life of the whole person and becomes his specific and unifying frame of reference.⁸

Through formation⁹ the ideals and values of a vocation are realised in personal and community experience.¹⁰ Indeed "experience" is the key word. "The distinctive character of the various Religious Institutes is revealed as *an experience in the Holy Spirit* transmitted by the Founder to his disciples to be lived by them, cherished, studied and constantly developed in harmony with the ever-growing Body of Christ".¹¹

Certain conditions and means flow from this experience, and this

⁴ FSDB Presentation p. 9.

⁵ FSDB 11-43.

⁶ FSDB 46-76.

⁷ SGC 661.

⁸ v. Const. 101.

⁹ Const. 101.

¹⁰ FSDB 155, 176.

¹¹ LG 44; cf. CD 33, 35 & 1,2.

in exactly the work of the *Ratio*: it is the pedagogical instrument that indicates the necessary suitable Salesian means and conditions for the fruitful realisation of the Salesian identity in each confrere and each community.¹²

The relevance of the document will make it fruitful and practical: formation progresses continuously and coherently in keeping with our Salesian origins and conditions and the changing times to which we are called by the Holy Spirit.¹³ This coherence provides a method of expression for the creative ethos of the Congregation¹⁴ and helps the Salesian to update his qualifications and in a special way to have greater confidence in the Spirit and in his unique gift to us.¹⁵

Plan for assimilating and applying the document

The very definite values that result from formation should make it superfluous to insist on the interest and concern of every Salesian to know, assimilate and apply the dispositions of the document.

The *Ratio* has much to say on vocation discernment.¹⁶ It states clearly¹⁷ that formation, whilst following the authoritative, coherent and Salesian guidelines, is primarily a matter of collaborating with the action of the Holy Spirit who "freely calls us to live the Salesian charisma both by a profound heartfelt conviction and also by the good use of the intermediaries he provides us with".¹⁸

Especially important among these spiritual intermediaries are Provincials, Rectors, formation personnel, the young Salesians in formation and their teachers, and animating bodies such as Provincial Councils, Provincial Formation Committees and other special groups whose work is so essential and exacting. These bodies are exhorted above all others to know the document well and encourage its assimilation.

¹² FSDB 83-153; 156-185; 187-202.

¹³ FSDB 3; 31-39; 73; 181-186; 465; 472.

¹⁴ GC21 9.

¹⁵ GC21 13.

¹⁶ FSDB 187-202.

¹⁷ FSDB 162-164.

¹⁸ FSDB 162.

lation. They can go a step further. When problems arise between the *Ratio* principles and factual situations, they should seek solutions in intelligent programming at the various levels and according to the different areas of competence, and perhaps discuss matters with groups of Provinces or inter-Provincial Conferences.

The Formation Department personnel is at the willing service of anyone who seeks help. The amount of priority that is accorded to the *Ratio* will have a great influence on the future of the Congregation and the renewal and efficacy of its apostolate.

I should like to think that this document, in guiding the way to aggiornamento and our Salesian identity, enjoys the efficacious inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it will transmit that wisdom our heavenly Mother taught Don Bosco.

2.2 Religious basis in economic and administrative activity of the Salesian

Father Roger PILLA, Economist General

In the six years that followed the Special General Chapter various meetings of Provincial Bursars were held in different parts of the Salesian world. Before dealing with the directives there was always a preliminary period set apart for something essential in the life of an administrator: *namely, the deep spiritual tone that should imbue every Salesian Religious Bursar.*

The topic was always treated in an integrated way and under various aspects, and regularly resulted in the unanimous and logical conclusion that those engaged in economic and administrative work in the Congregation could definitely endow it with a religious character.

This statement may seem a little daring, and a few considerations are called for to support it.

Those confreres whom obedience has burdened with economic management at the various levels of responsibility will be enlightened by such reflections and derive from them strength, courage, generosity, enthusiasm and missionary thrust in their work.

Consecration is a distinctive mark of all Religious and signifies a

total dedication to God, following Jesus Christ in the steps of the Founder. Such consecration invests the whole person — not only his interior life but all his activities, be they material or intellectual, pastoral or organisational, technical or spiritual. The work of a Religious must be characterised by the imprint of his consecration; and this very fact gives a certain thrust and direction to his attitude as well as a character to his work so that they really witness to the supernatural realities in the world (LG 44); in fact they will be a manifestation of the “sequela Christi” in keeping with his total, exclusive and complete dedication to God.

There is another relevant fact too: the works engaged in by the Salesian Society are quite different from those of industrial or commercial firms insofar as they have an ecclesial purpose and a character bordering on the sacramental; and the same holds for other Religious Orders, whatever their aims or charisms.

Indeed many of our institutions could not possibly balance their budgets without the sacrifices, dedication, moderation and self-denial of the confreres and donations of benefactors who, thank God, still have faith in the educational and charitable work of the Church.

Hence our work is essentially different from the management of any other kind of society, not only in its technique and administration but actually in its overall significance and, as it were, the spirit in which business is conducted. It is in this area that our tireless and zealous Founder can teach us so much. He knew how to enlist the wonderful help of Jesus and Mary Help of Christians in the intricacies of economic administration.

It should be added that *all temporal goods, seen in the light of faith, lead us to God*, the beginning and end of all things: “All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made”. Even in those goods that result from man’s work and initiative we can see God (v. GS 34).

There are, then, three basic elements in a bursar’s work that raise it to a supernatural level: the consecration of the person, the religious aim in the works he administers, and the temporal goods viewed in their origin and purpose.

Working on these principles the bursar can sanctify himself and

those with whom he has dealings; and by his witness of love he can effect a radical change in his own outlook; he can imbue his activities with a special and profound spirituality.

In his audience granted to Catholic bursars on 9 March 1966, Paul VI referred to the bursar as "the hidden and effective moving force that controls the orderly functioning of the whole organism; the wise and provident mind often bearing unsuspected and heavy burdens of responsibility — burdens shouldered in obedience and rarely noticeable, while others enjoy more congenial and acceptable duties in keeping with the priestly or religious vocation".

Following this line of thought, the Salesian administrator, living his vocation to the full, can see clearly the direction his work must take

a) Above all he will have a *deep faith in Providence* just as our Founder himself did. Don Bosco did not allow capitalisation of goods in order to produce a steady income resulting in economic security and serenity. Actually he insisted that his Congregation be totally in the hands of Divine Providence; he even tells us that "the retaining of regular interest-bearing funds is an insult to Divine Providence who is always coming to our help in a marvellous even miraculous way". Indeed we all know that Providence has never failed us when we have worked according to our Rule in this spirit.

b) Administrative duties must be carried out in the *spirit of poverty*. Every Salesian must live and work in this manner — and this holds in a special way for the Salesian bursar. It is all-important for him to be deeply poverty-conscious, giving a visible example to all by his moderation in all things, avoiding waste, superfluity, luxury and exaggerated comforts; he must envisage an individual and community life imbued with Salesian and religious temperance; he must administer temporal goods wisely and responsibly, treating them as sacred and belonging to God, to be used in the service of the Congregation; and he must help our confreres in formation to foster this spirit too.

c) Furthermore the bursar must carry out his duties in a *humble awareness of rendering a service*, just as the first deacons in the infant Church did: they managed its material goods in the service of the

faithful and in accord with the spirit of the Son of Man who "came not to be served but to serve". Indeed the Salesian bursar's work is a true and proper *ministry*; it confers on him a genuine pastoral dimension and emphasises the religious value of his economic and administrative activity.

Again, since there are in the Church all kinds of duties, including the office of authority in the service of our brothers, it would not be out of place to consider the service rendered by the bursar as linked to that of the deacon, and best characterised by the servant so often mentioned in the Gospel and the letters of Saint Paul.

d) The spiritual life of the bursar will also be one of *sacrifice*. Suffice it to mention one particular aspect of the sacrifice required by the Lord from those engaged in administration. Every confrere has chosen the Salesian vocation, attracted by the work of the Salesian apostolate. A bursar, however, is no longer able to engage directly and full time in many educative activities. Having to give up this kind of work calls for true sacrifice; and there is the renunciation of the personal satisfaction enjoyed by those directly engaged in the apostolate when (in all humility and before God) they find themselves duly respected and appreciated by others. Nor is it easy to totally accept the spiritual and apostolic value of such a renunciation in the face of the bursar's complex and lonely tasks that so many are unaware of.

The bursar must remember Christ's words: "I have chosen and appointed you that you should go and *bear fruit*, and that your fruit should abide". This fruit is not just some human result of the work of a Religious, for we are dealing with the supernatural plane of salvation. The grace that converts hearts is a gift of God and it can be sought not only by a direct apostolate but necessarily also by *prayer* and *sacrifice*. The bursar will reflect too that when in obedience to the Lord a Salesian assumes the economic and administrative burden he makes it possible for other confreres to spend more time in study, teaching and pastoral work; and there is no greater love than the sacrifice of oneself for others (v. John XV 13). Hence the bursar can manifest love for his confreres by willingly assuming these tasks.

The bursar must base his administration on the above solid

foundation and must frequently remind himself of these principles; for though the work is at times mere drudgery, it will be valuable in God's eyes and will help in the salvation of souls if it be inspired and enlivened by love.

The bursar will beg God's help in *prayer*; he will look with confidence to *Our Blessed Lady* who united contemplation to the duties of a diligent and loving mother; he will *imitate Don Bosco* who is his master and guide in his efforts in good administration coupled when possible with the direct apostolate. Then he will bear much fruit for the Congregation and its undertakings; and he will gain much spiritual benefit for himself, for the Congregation and for souls.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

4.1 Plenary sessions of the Superior Council 4 November to 2 January

4.1.1 Ordinary administration

- *Appointments*

- a) New Provincials:

- Fr Lázaro Revilla (Philippines)

- Fr Yves Le Carrères (France North)

- Fr Carmine di Prieto (Central America & Panama)

- Fr Joseph Harrington (Ireland)

- Fr Nico Meijer (Holland)

- b) 16 confreres elected or confirmed as Provincial Council members.

- c) Appointment of 45 Rectors.

- d) Appointment of 2 Novice Masters.

- 30 authorizations given for acquisitions, alienations and buildings.

- 10 cases of canonical opening or closing of houses, changing the scope of a foundation, acceptance of parish...

- Examination of 80 cases requiring intervention of the Holy See (recognition of legal representative, various sanations, change of personal juridical status...

- 34 dispensations within the competency of the Rector Major.

4.1.2 Matters of special importance

- Reports of the canonical visitations of the following Provinces: Bombay, La Paz, Paris, Rosario.

- Examination of the Provincial Council documents of the Provinces: Antilles, Buenos Aires, Bahía Blanca, Córdoba, La Plata, Rosario, Austria, Bolivia, Belo Horizonte, Campo Grande, Recife, São Paulo, Central America, Bogotá, Medellín, Ecuador, Japan, Bombay, Gauhati, Genoa, Novara, Sicily, Subalpine, Verona, St Mark's, Ljubljana, Middle East, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Barcelona, Bilbao, Córdoba, San Francisco, Uruguay.

- Reports on joint visits of Superior Council members.

- Reports on

- co-ordinating help for earthquake victims.

- publication of *Fondo Don Bosco* (v. ASC 299, p. 54).

- final examination of the document *Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco. Principles & norms. Ratio fundamentalis institutionis et studiorum*. (v. this issue, p. 44).

- Guidelines regarding certain problems presented by the Department

for the Salesian Family: the charismatic reality of the joint vocation of the Salesian Family; relationships between the various groups of the Salesian Family; relationship between the Salesian Congregation and the Co-operators; the Past Pupils and the Salesian Family; criteria for belonging to the Salesian Family.

- Examination of the possibility of dividing the Gauhati-Assam Province.
- Revision of the 1980 activities of the Superior Council and planning for 1981.

4.2 The Rector Major

Father Egidio VIGANO'

On 16 November 1980 Father Viganò and all the members of his Superior Council went to Turin for their annual spiritual retreat and visited the Salesian "holy places" as part of the exercises. The week concluded at Valdocco with the Feast of the Rector Major, and was an occasion full of Salesian tradition and communion.

On 8 December Father Viganò presided at the celebration at Este of Father Renato Ziggotti's 60th anniversary of ordination.

He spent 26 and 27 November in the earthquake area in southern Italy and saw at first hand the gravity of the situation and the sterling generosity of the confreres, the various groups of the Salesian Family and the

many young folk, all helping in a hundred different ways.

On New Year's Eve he presented the 1981 *Motto* to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and next day inaugurated the Sisters' celebrations for the centenary of the death of Mother Mary Mazzarello. (The text of the Rector Major's address has been published by the Sisters under the title *Don Bosco's interior life*.)

From 11 to 17 January Father Viganò attended the meeting of the Italian and Middle East Provincial Conference at Pacognano. On 24 January he was present at the 20th commemoration of the death of Father Luigi Borghino, quondam Rector of the Oratory of Sondrio.

4.3 The Councillor for Formation

Father Paul NATALI

After the Superior Council had examined a former draft of the *Ratio* presented at the end of October and had offered further comments and guidelines, the final draft of the document was at last completed and is now printed in Italian. At the moment of writing it is being translated into other languages.

With the Rector Major and other Department Councillors Father Natali attended a joint meeting with the Italian and Middle East Provincial Conference at Pacognano.

At Madrid he gave the inaugural

address at the new centre of theological studies; he then visited the formation communities of Moher-nando, Guadalajara, Carabanchel, and was able to meet all the students of the Madrid Province who are in practical training.

Back in Italy he attended other meetings with formation communities and also spent some time with the participants at the Salesianum Ongoing Formation Course for teachers of Salesianity.

The Formation Department is still working on the Rectors Manual; it is also preparing a commentary on the chapter in the *Ratio* dealing with the criteria for admission to vows and holy orders.

Besides help given to a number of formation communities and Provincial gatherings, the Department members assisted in the organisation, input and group discussions of the Salesianity Formation Course referred to above. The UPS professors also gave their highly competent co-operation; and the course proved very successful.

4.4 The Councillor for Youth Apostolate

Father Juan Edmondo VECCHI

The Department for Youth Apostolate has forwarded to all Provinces three *Aids* for the realisation of local and Provincial educational projects. They deal with Salesian

parishes (3a), youth centres (3b) and schools (3c), and are a follow-on to the two former *Aids*. *Aid 1* was essentially methodological; *Aid 2* presented the basis for the general lines of an educational and pastoral project in the various ways suitable for a Salesian presence.

Spanish-speaking Provinces desirous of a Spanish translation should apply to the *National Spanish Centre for Youth Apostolate* at Madrid.

Father Vecchi spent some days in the Seville Province and thus participated in the inauguration of the centenary celebrations of the Salesian work in Spain. He was thus able to attend meetings with Salesians and layfolk for the study of the youth apostolate in Spain. Then followed a meeting with the *National Commission for Spanish Youth Apostolate* to discuss certain plans for the centenary and to seek ways and means of rendering the Commission's work more effective.

He was also present at the Feast of the Provincial Community of Valencia, and with the Provincial Council discussed certain problems in the apostolate, and other matters of a more general nature.

Meantime the Department had completed the input material of the *Project* document in its totality and was working on the individual sections of the *Outline for a Vocational Apostolate* as required by GC21, 119d. Father Vecchi also arranged

for a consultative body to meet at the Generalate in early June to make a close study of catechetics.

4.5 The Councillor for the Salesian Family

Father John RAINERI

The main work of the Department was the preparation and organising of the *Week of Spirituality for the Salesian Family* on the theme, *The contribution of woman, especially Mary Mazzarello, to the Salesian Charisma*. The week was an important part of the centenary celebrations of Mother Mazzarello's death. The main two divisions for the week's input addresses and panel discussions were *Mary Mazzarello and the feminine groups of the Salesian Family*.

Father Joseph Aubry began with a paper on *The contribution of woman in the charismatic experience of Don Bosco as a Founder*. This broke new ground, and many interesting points raised should be further explored.

Father Charles Colli presented a paper on *The charismatic vocation of St Mary Domenica Mazzarello and her relationship with Don Pestarino and Don Bosco*. He examined the *Spirit of Mornese*, prepared by Don Pestarino, lived and developed by Mary Mazzarello and her early companions, and accepted, transformed and directed into a universal mission by Don Bosco.

Sister M. Esther Posada based her address on the beatification and canonisation documents of Mother Mazzarello and developed the theme of *Mary Mazzarello as a co-foundress with Don Bosco, and her contribution to the new Institute*.

Sister Margaret Maderni's theme was *"Mary Domenica Mazzarello is a challenge to modern women: the relevance in today's context of Mary Mazzarello and her message. She was a model for women in her work and in her educational and pastoral initiative in the Church"*.

What Mather Mazzarello means to me was discussed in a panel consisting of Sr Mary Pia Giudici, Fr Joseph Sangalli (Delegate for FMA), Miss Lella Foti (Co-op.), Mrs A. Maria Bonitatibus (Past Pupil), and two teenagers, Sandra Bona and Roberta Tomasi.

The second part of the week, after the Wednesday Papal Audience (28 January), dealt with the specific feminine vocations within the Salesian Family and were presented in a series of addresses, interventions and panels.

Miss Anna Marocco, Major Superior of the DBV, spoke on *The uniqueness and relevance of the DBV in the Salesian Family*. Miss Silvana Aloisi spoke on *FMA Past Pupils: their vision of woman and her contribution to the mission of the Church in a Salesian way*. Dr. Daniela Marletta dealt with *The*

uniqueness and relevance of the woman-Co-operator's vocation. Other papers were read by the Salesian Oblates of the Sacred Heart, the Sisters of the Most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the Daughters of Mary Co-redemptrix and other Institutes.

Finally the topic *Contribution of women to the life and work of the Salesian Family; complementarity and reciprocal animation* was examined by a panel including Fr Celestine Rivera SDB, Fr José Guijo SDB, Sr Anna Paternò FMA, Miss Clara Bargi DBV, Joseph Testaverde (Co-op.), Miss Enza Greco (Past Pupil FMA) and Prof. Francis Brugnaro (Past Pupil SDB).

The week concluded on the Feast of Don Bosco with concelebrated Mass presided over by the Rector Major. In the closing gathering, after the presentation of the findings and proposals, final speeches were made by Mother General Ersilia Canta FMA, Mother General M. Bice Carini of the Salesian Oblates of the Sacred Heart; and the Rector Major. Father Viganò spoke on the *growth in communion* among members of the Salesian Family. He argued from the uniqueness of the Salesian charisma "revealed" to Don Bosco by Pius IX; then, citing Father Ricceri, he enumerated the principles basic to communion, namely, the interior life, mission, Salesian spirit, Don Bosco's system, consecrated work,

and the distinctive Gospel calling of each group. Meeting and dialoguing with others will help in the better understanding and development of each individual autonomous identity.

The week produced very positive results and was a valuable period of Salesian togetherness, as many averred.

Past Pupils. The Governing Council has formulated the theme for the European Congress to be held at Lugano from 15 to 18 October 1981: *Our commitment to youth — youth and society, youth and school, youth and the Church, youth and the family, youth and the Past Pupils Movement.*

Co-operators. Preparations are afoot for the World Convention called for 24-28 June 1981. The main topic will be the "animation" of the Co-operators.

4.6 The Councillor for the Missions

Father Bernard TOHILL

Father Tohill attended the meeting of the Italian & Middle East Provincial Conference at Pacognano and spoke to the gathering on *Project Africa* and other items of missionary import.

From 22 January to 8 February he was in England to finalise with the Provincial and councillors the transferring to the Oxford Province of the new mission in Liberia opened

in August. He was also able to arrange with certain houses for eleven Polish confreres (due for Zambia) to spend a year in their communities for the study of English. He then visited a centre for the training of lay missionaries and outlined a plan to the organisers whereby they could be of great help to the Salesian missions.

In Ireland he spent some days at the studentate of Maynooth, a truly international community and very interested in the missions.

On 16 February he left Rome for central Africa to visit the missionaries in that area. He plans to return to Rome 13 March.

4.7 Joint visit to the Italian & Middle East Provincial Conference

From 12 to 17 January the Rector Major, Fr Natali (Formation), Fr Vecchi (Youth Apostolate), Fr Tohill (Missions) and Fr Raineri (Salesian

Family) attended the Italian & Middle East Provincial Conference held at Pacognano, Naples. The Conference included Provincials, a representative from each Province, the delegates of the various pastoral sectors of the Italian Provinces (CISI) and a number of consultants.

The week took the form of addresses, and group and plenary discussions. The topics included Salesian identity, youth apostolate (mainly educational project and animation), the missions, initial & ongoing formation, the Salesian Family (unity and relationship with the Congregation) and the media. Towards the end of the week the Provincial of the Middle East reported on the grave problems of his province resulting especially from sundry local factors.

Full marks to the Conference for hospitality, friendly atmosphere, prayerfulness, hard work and optimism.

5. DOCUMENTS & NEWS ITEMS

5.1 Holy Father's address at the Salesian Pontifical University, Rome

On Saturday 31 January 1981, the Feast of St John Bosco, the Holy Father visited the Salesian Pontifical University at Rome. He was officially welcomed by Cardinal William Wakefield Baum (Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education), Archbishop Antonio Javierre Ortas SDB (Secretary of the same Congregation), Father Egidio Vigano (Rector Major of the Salesians) and Father Raphael Farina (Rector Magnificus of the UPS). The Holy Father delivered the following address in the assembly hall of the University.

Venerable brothers and dear sons and daughters,

1. I reciprocate your joyful welcome to me on this feast of your Father, St John Bosco. We could also call him the founder of this university, for it is from his outstanding holiness and Christian wisdom that your Institute derives its distinctive drive and inspiration in its studies, research and practical organization.

Your apostolic works, *Opere Don Bosco*, flow from his special charisma and are a gift of the Holy Spirit to

the Church. Hence to be true to their nature they must be deeply ecclesial in spirit and activity and go hand in hand with the Church to meet and lead modern man (especially the young) to Christ and the Father.

2. I share your vision and love of the Church, and in this spirit I greet you all: first, Cardinal William Baum, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, and his close collaborator, Archbishop Antonio Javierre, who was for many years the Rector of this University. Also my special greetings to the Very Reverend Rector Major of the Salesian Society, the Rector Magnificus of the University, the professors and all the students. To all I say: be ever vitally aware of the primary ecclesial work of your University — especially the Salesians, both staff and students, and indeed all other students and co-workers, diocesan, religious and lay. I speak also to those students who are not Catholics and have found here in the name of the Church a warm welcome, sincere and faithful friends, and a place for solid study and preparation for life.

3. Your Rector in his address referred to your Institute of Higher Studies as a "small university, the latest arrival" among the ecclesiastical

universities of Rome. Indeed its youthfulness has a history of decades rather than centuries. The houses of formation founded by Don Bosco became in time international centres; and in 1940 three of them were elevated to ecclesiastical faculties for theology, canon law and philosophy, and became the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum. In 1961 the Institute of Pedagogy also reached its "academic majority" and juridical autonomy and became the Faculty of Educational Science. In 1971 the Pontifical Institute of Advanced Latin Studies joined the Athenaeum as the Faculty of Christian and Classical Literature. Finally, on 24 May 1973, Paul VI's *Motu proprio* "*Magisterium Vitae*" promoted the Athenaeum to the status of a Pontifical University. Being so young, you have an openness to life and look to the future in your planning.

All seeds are tiny but rich in promise. What is important is that they be full of vitality and develop into plants with good and abundant fruit. May your dedicated work realise the great hopes that have been placed in your Institution.

My visit today is an expression of the affection, appreciation and care that I have for you. Your Pope is greatly interested in the success of this centre of studies in the Church and for the Church.

The recent Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* obliges episcopal

conferences "to be vitally interested in the lives and progress of Universities and Ecclesiastical Faculties because of their particular ecclesial importance" (SC4). I consider it my important and pleasant duty to visit the Roman Athenaeums. I have already visited the Gregorian, the Angelicum, the Lateran and the Urbana, and here I am now at the Salesian University (in obedience to the guidelines and directives of the Church, particularly of *Sapientia Christiana*) to offer my contribution to your development. I invite you to reflect especially on the Introduction of *Sapientia Christiana*, for it presents the gist of the document: the appeal to aim constantly at uniting and imbuing human culture, sciences and activities with solid religious principles.

4. Your University has a very privileged position in this regard. Its distinctive characteristic flows directly from the charisma of St John Bosco: the development of the whole man, the intellectual, moral and social formation of the young in the light of the Gospel. Your holy Founder unashamedly professed that his "Society was from its very beginnings a simple catechism" (MB IX 61), and he included this programme in the Regulations for the Oratory.

In keeping with this vision, the Salesian Constitutions state, "Preaching the Gospel and catechising are fundamental to our mission; as Salesians we are all and at all times

educators in the faith" (Const. 20). When Father Ricaldone applied for the erection of the Faculty of the Salesian Athenaeum, he clearly defined its aim as "the ongoing training of Salesians in their lofty mission as educators according to the Preventive System left us as a precious heritage by our holy Founder".

Accordingly, the last two General Chapters of the Salesians laid down the following line of action: "Salesians are consecrated to the service of youth, especially the poor: they must work among them as God's Love personified. They must see catechesis of the young as the primary activity of the Salesian apostolate, and this calls for a rethinking and reorganisation in all their works to give prevalence to the formation of man in the faith".

The Salesian Pontifical University, without detriment to its character of an Institute of Higher Studies, is plainly called on to develop its evangelising function specifically in catechesis.

Your Salesian vocation is oriented to the man of today and especially youth. This could be summed up in the formula, *To see God in man and man in God*, which in practice means *To see Christ in man and man in Christ*. Naturally in a university this formula will be primarily treated as a field of study; but it also comprises the whole scope of your University.

5. It follows that your work must be God-centred and Christ-centred if it is to be genuinely man-centred. We must not live in an ivory tower of study and allow the world to run its own sweet course. Like watchful sentinels, we have to climb the *tower of faith*, and with the help of science and God's enlightenment, study man's present problems and where he is heading for. We can then give him timely help and use every means to assist him achieve a meaningful encounter with "the truth that enlightens and saves".

Indeed the development of the whole man is part of the specific mission of the Salesian University. Your Faculty of Educational Science gives a special character to the whole Athenaeum and could be described as an expression of the charisma of the sons and daughters of Don Bosco, for its work is to expound those sciences that deal with man. We see about us humanistic developments limited to the economic, biological and psychological areas of man's development and hence failing to arrive at the ultimate mystery of man himself. To remedy this is part of the special mission of this University.

6. I exhort you in a special way to be vitally aware of your responsibility to the Church: this is an essential part of your work as a Catholic Athenaeum where students, priests and layfolk are trained to be

skilled purveyors of Christ's teachings — "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. XXVIII 19-20). In practice, ecclesial responsibility means loyalty to the Apostolic See, to the hierarchy, to the People of God, and (especially for you) the young, "who pant after the certitude of the faith", and who have the right not to be confused by way-out theories and ideas on which they have not yet the ability to pass judgement (v. Paul VI, AAS 1977 p. 589). Each and every one has here a vast area for reflection, for generous service and application.

The normal way to salvation comes from the message of Christ transmitted integrally and effectively by the Church and from its realisation in the observance of moral and revealed law. Your University must research into the various sciences, and especially those concerned with man, his history, his psychology; and it must aim at a sensitive interpretation of the needs and problems of modern society. All this activity must never prescind from the fact that truth comes from on high and that genuine knowledge must be sought with intellectual humility, with worship and prayer, with asceticism and personal holiness.

From such an orderly and purposeful attitude, it follows that an Ecclesiastical Institute must have re-

course to revealed truth as a joint framework both constructive and critical. Only within this framework should research and teaching be carried out; thus the necessary dialogue between the various university disciplines and structures will throw light on our faith with the contributions of the human and humanistic sciences; at the same time, these sciences will have the chance to pay serious attention to the contributions of the theological sciences. Vatican II tells us, "Those involved in theological studies in seminaries and universities should be eager to co-operate with men versed in other fields of learning by pooling their resources and points of view. Theological research, while it deepens knowledge of revealed truth, should not lose contact with its own times, so that experts in various fields may be led to a deeper knowledge of the faith" (GS 62).

In the light of the ideal of truth and love that animated Don Bosco, dialogue with the modern world is possible — dialogue with every person, dialogue that is constructive, elevating and transforming, dialogue that witnesses to the certitude of the faith and yearns to bring all to Christ the *Redeemer of Man*.

7. Dear sons and daughters, I leave these thoughts for your reflection. I leave them primarily to the academic authorities and the teaching staff — but also to you the students; for

only when all the members of a university community share the same aim and spirit will there be valid and stable results.

May the merciful Father enlighten you through Christ the Son of his love. May the Spirit of love sustain you. May you be comforted by the intercession of Mary Help of Christians and her faithful servant St John Bosco.

I bless you from the bottom of my heart.

5.2 At the conclusion of the Holy Father's visit to the UPS

Address of Father Viganò before the Pope's "Good-night"

Once again, Holy Father, I wish to thank you for the great joy of your visit to us; and I speak in the name of the University, Don Bosco's Congregation, and all the Salesian Family.

No finer gift on our Founder's feastday was possible. It was from Don Bosco that the Salesians learned utter fidelity to the ministry of Peter in the Church. The very existence of the Congregation, with its many unusual facets as a Religious Institute, was due in no small part to Pius IX. In fact Don Bosco wrote to him in March 1873 and referred to the Salesian Society as founded, directed and consolidated by the Holy Father's labours and counsels. Your present visit and address has confirmed the Salesians as missionaries of

the children of the people and devoted to the study of their problems and conditions.

Don Bosco founded the Salesian Society in difficult times, when Congregations were being suppressed. He insisted on *work and prayer*; his Congregation was to enliven society and herald the dawn of a new civilisation so as to be, as Pius IX said, "religious and secular, cloistered and free citizens, able to render to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's". Don Bosco bequeathed to his Congregation a special kind of holiness, with a desire for serious study aimed at practicality in a realistic pedagogy — to which was added a "touch of honest shrewdness"!

We must turn to man without going astray ourselves; see to man's development by the preaching of the Gospel; build up society without waving political flags; blend science and theology; be happily in the world with the young and be utterly oriented to Christ.

Your visit, Holy Father, has reminded us of all these things, and we wish to show our gratitude in a practical way. You know that this University has co-ordinated its various Faculties in an inter-disciplinary effort to make a profound study of what could be called "Youth and the Gospel". This is a field that is full of hope, but also replete with complex problems. In loyalty to you we wish to ever bear

in mind the two frames of reference you have emphasised for us in this visit: the ministry of Peter and the charisma of Don Bosco. May the strength of this University derive from these two supports: fidelity to the Church's Magisterium and the true identity of our Salesian vocation.

As your final gift, Holy Father, we ask you to give us our traditional "Good-night".

5.3 Brotherly Solidarity (35th report)

a) PROVINCES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED

	<i>Italian lire</i>
Antilles	5,735.000
Córdoba-Argentina	2,000.000
Sao Paulo-Brazil	1,000.000
Madras	2,000.000
Macau	1,000.000
Belgium North	1,695.000
Adriatic	1,822.000
Genoa	4,000.000
Anonymous	43,400.000
Leon-Spain	550.000

Total monies received from

8 November 1980 to 14

February 1981

63,202.000

Plus cash in hand

13.457

Amount for distribution as

at 14 February 1981

63,215.457

b) DISTRIBUTION OF MONIES RECEIVED

Makalé-Ethiopia (from Adriatic Province)	322.000
Siakago-Kenya (from Cen- tral Province)	2,000.000
Lubumbashi-Zaire (from Adriatic Province)	250.000

Lubumbashi-Zaire: for the handicapped	2,000.000
Lubumbashi-Zaire: for on- going formation course	1,000.000
Antilles: for ongoing for- mation course	1,000.000
Cuba: for teaching mate- rials	1,122.732
Argentina: Ediciones Don Bosco	8,486.556
Buenos Aires-Argentina: for ongoing formation course	500.000
Bahía Blanca: for ongoing formation course	500.000
Córdoba-Argentina: for on- going formation course	500.000
La Plata-Argentina: for ongoing formation course	500.000
Belo Horizonte-Brazil: for the handicapped	1,000.000
Campo Grande-Brazil: for ongoing formation course	2,000.000
Porto Alegre-Brazil: for on- going formation course	500.000
Recife-Brazil: for ongoing formation course	1,000.000
São Paulo-Brazil: for on- going formation course	500.000
Central America: for on- going formation course	1,000.000
Santiago-Chile: for ongo- ing formation course	500.000
Bogotá-Colombia: for on- going formation course	1,000.000
Bogotá-Colombia: for the handicapped	1,000.000
Ariari-Bogotá-Colombia: for mission equipment	2,000.000
Medellín-Colombia: for the handicapped	1,000.000

Quito-Ecuador: for ongoing formation centre	500.000	Bombay-India: for ongoing formation course	500.000
Quito-Ecuador: for micro-films for ongoing formation centre	4,644.000	Calcutta-India (from Adriatic Province)	339.000
Quito-Ecuador: for ongoing formation course	2,000.000	Calcutta-India: for ongoing formation course	1,000.000
Mexico City: for ongoing formation course	1,000.000	Gauhati-India (from Adriatic Province)	339.000
Mexico: for Bp Braulio Sanchez Fuentes — missionary residence at Oaxaca	5,000.000	Gauhati-India: for the poor of Nongstoin mission	500.000
Valera-Venezuela (from Adriatic Province)	200.000	Gauhati-India: for the apostolate of the press	400.000
Macau: for the handicapped	1,000.000	Madras-India (from the Adriatic Province)	339.000
Manila-Philippines: for ongoing formation course	500.000	Madras-India: for ongoing formation course	500.000
Tokyo-Japan: for Shinjuku (from Adriatic Province)	200.000	Madras-India: for the handicapped	1,000.000
Seoul-Korea: for the handicapped	1,000.000	Madras-India: for Harmuty (from Adriatic Province)	200.000
Kwangju-Korea (from Adriatic Province)	250.000	Bangkok-Thailand: for the handicapped	500.000
Bangalore-India (from Adriatic Province)	339.000	Turin-Italy: for documentaries	3,000.000
Bangalore-India: for ongoing formation course	1,000.000	Nave-Italy (from Adriatic Province)	200.350
Bangalore-India: for an offset machine for Cochin-Palluruthy	5,000.000	<i>Total monies disbursed as from 8 November 1980 to 14 February 1981</i>	63,170.638
Bangalore-India: for the theologate library	500.000	<i>Cash in hand</i>	44.819
Bangalore-India: for the handicapped	1,000.000	<i>Total</i>	63,215.457
Bangalore-India: for Brahmanakodur (from Adriatic Province)	200.000	c) GENERAL SUMMATION OF BROTHERLY SOLIDARITY FUND	
Bombay-India: (from Adriatic Province)	339.000	<i>Total donations received up to 14 February 1981</i>	1,130,516.507
		<i>Total disbursements up to 14 February 1981</i>	1,130,471.688
		<i>Cash in hand</i>	44.819

5.4 Missionary activities

In the last number of the Acts of the Superior Council (no. 299, p. 30) an overall picture was presented of *Project Africa*, its history and growth. The whole Congregation is interested and active in this venture.

However the Society has not lessened its interest in *other missionary activities* both old and new; and in this it has the backing of GC21, which recommended Project Africa in a special away, but explicitly stated that missionary activities in other countries should be followed up.

So that confreres may have a better overall idea of our extensive 1980 missionary endeavours, we have compiled some statistics regarding the geographical distribution of our new missionaries. The media keep us up to date with happenings in all parts of the world, and often the news is tragic; so it is good for us to recall that in those very same places our confreres are working on the spiritual frontiers of the kingdom of God.

1980 missionary expedition

Last year 80 confreres left for the missions: 57 priests, 17 brothers and 10 clerics. Of these, 50 came from Europe, 23 from Asia, and one from Australia.

In *Europe* 18 Provinces in 8 different nations sent missionaries as

follows: 29 from Spain, 9 from Italy, 3 from France, 3 from Poland, 2 from England, 2 from Ireland, one from Portugal and one from Holland.

In *Asia* the Indian Provinces contributed 16 missionaries to the 1980 missionary expedition. The Philippines sent 6 to Papua New Guinea, and one to Hong Kong.

From the *Americas*: one from USA, one from Mexico, 2 from Central America, one from Colombia and one from Argentina.

The *Australian* Province sent one confrere to Africa.

Destinations

Africa received 50 missionaries, South America 17, and Asia 13.

In Africa they went to 12 nations. In 5 nations it was a case of pioneering new works. The León Province sent 8 to Senegal, 2 to Benin and one to Lesotho; Sudan received 3 from India and one from Australia, and Tanzania 9 from India. In 7 other nations the new missionaries went to already existing foundations: the Madrid Province sent 15 confreres to Equatorial Guinea, 4 to Kenya (together with 3 from India), 2 to Liberia and Morocco, and one each to Gabon, South Africa and Zaire.

From Asia the Philippines Province sent 6 confreres to open a new mission in Papua New Guinea, 2 to Japan, and one each to Bhutan, Phi-

ippines, Macau, Middle East and Thailand.

In South America 17 missionaries went to 10 nations: 4 to the Mexican tribes, 3 to Honduras, 2 to Ecuador, 2 to Chile, and one each to Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Paraguay.

An appeal

These statistics certainly proclaim the Society's magnificent missionary commitment. They confirm once again that the missions form one of the essential characteristics of our Salesian work, despite the great number of difficulties the individual Provinces are burdened with. We know that the sacrifices made in this area have a reinvigorating effect on the whole of the religious life of our communities and our works.

Despite this comforting fact, I feel obliged to remind all of the missionary appeal made by GC21 and the Rector Major. I call on the Provincials in particular to consider the desperately urgent need for personnel in some of the missionary Provinces of the Congregation. It is natural for each Province to see its own great needs and problems when faced with the local pastoral requirements. But perhaps the Major Superiors, with their overall vision of the Congregation are the best judges of the priorities in the various situations, and can best single out the more desperate cases most in

need of the solidarity of the Society. The requests that keep arriving at the Generalate are truly urgent and call for an immediate and exceptional response. I beg all to share the sensitivity of the Superior Councilors as they are inundated with cries for assistance from all parts of the world. We call on all for generous, appropriate and practical help.

As a spur to the goodwill of all, here is a list of some of the more urgent recent requests. Knowledge of a practical case may stir up a personal response in some confrere to a particular situation. I beg the Provincials to give their backing to any generous offers prompted by a genuine missionary vocation. Volunteering for the missions, and being backed when possible in the suitable choice of a particular field of work are both part of our Salesian tradition.

In the judgement of the Missions Department the following are urgent requests in order of priority.

Paraguay needs a priest for teaching and music in the aspirantate. Another excellent work may have to be closed down unless an engineer and carpenter can be found.

The Middle East. There is no call to repeat the facts given on p. 34 of ASC 295; all are urged to read them again. No Province in the whole Society is in such grave difficulties, for various local reasons, and they

are insurmountable with the Province's present resources. The Middle East Province desperately needs priests and brothers — the more so since the Church has urged us not to yield a single step in the religious works in those countries.

Manaus, Brazil. This missionary Province has recently lost seven confreres worn out by illness and fatigue. If reinforcements are not available soon the Rio Negro mission will have great difficulty in maintaining its position.

Bolivia has recently been deprived of a number of priests, thus aggravating an already critical shortage of personnel. The Province has also urgent need of mechanics and a carpenter.

Zaire, Rwanda & Burundi. In an effort to increase the drive for African vocations it is necessary to open up new foundations in areas that give promise of such vocations. Reinforcements are urgent.

El Chaco, Paraguay. This is a very primitive and isolated missionary territory where in a difficult climate a handful of confreres are hopelessly overworked attending to the pastoral needs of settlers and Indians. Our bishop there is hoping for a few confreres to help in the apostolate, in the Procura, and in the study of the indigenous culture.

Central America. Recent happen-

ings in the Central American republics have caused great hardships in this Province, which turns to us not only for comfort and sympathy but also for help in the way of personnel. It is a case of holding on to the many youth centres — they are the only hope for a better future for these countries plagued by violence.

Recife, Brazil. The school at Bongi appeals for car mechanics to run short courses for young people of the area to help improve their difficult lives.

Guatemala. The mission of S. Pedro Carcha (to the Kekchi) is in sore straits trying to attend adequately to the needs of a native population living in wretchedness and neglect. The people are unjustly exploited and short of priests.

Ecuador needs personnel for its youth centres, agricultural, trade and technical schools. The new Bishop Luis Theodore Arroyo is hoping for a few new missionaries to help the exhausted confreres who have worked so long in the vicariate of Mendez.

Uruguay. Bishop Andrés Rubio of Mercedes is in urgent need of a priest to take charge of a diocesan work of great pastoral importance.

San Domingo. The Provincial begs for personnel for the flourishing pastoral and educational works among the poor people of San Domingo and

Haiti. The Bishop of Barahona has made a very special plea for priests for his diocese that is so poor materially and spiritually.

Argentina. Patagonia still needs priests, at least for a few years, for the scattered rural populations. (The priests do not have to be young.) ASC 294 reads, "There are Provinces, such as Patagonia, that offer to confreres no longer young the chance of apostolic commitments in parish work, as chaplains, spiritual directors and so on". The Councillor for the Missions can furnish further information to interested confreres.

Mexico. Much has been done for the missions among the Mixes, Chinantecos and Zapatecos; but for better and more lasting results more priests and brothers are needed.

Bhutan is a tiny mountainous nation and exclusively Buddhist. The mission there has requested a car mechanic, a mechanic and an electrician.

Medellin, Colombia. Through lack of personnel the Province cannot grant the insistent request of two confreres to take over a home for abandoned young people.

Peru is anxiously hoping for a head mechanic. It is also greatly in need of missionary personnel.

May the good Lord inspire many confreres with the desire to be a

part of the great and vital missionary movement in our Salesian Congregation.

Father Bernard TOHILL
Councillor for the Missions

5.5 The 4th Russell Tribunal condemns Salesians for genocide and malpractice

Facts and clarifications of the case

The following document has been forwarded by the Rector Major to all Provincials and Delegates and to many Cardinals, Superiors of Congregations and Presidents of Religious Confederations, et al., from whom expressions of sympathy and solidarity continue to arrive.

Dear Very Reverend Father,

I present you herewith a statement of facts and clarifications regarding the 4th Russell Tribunal held in Rotterdam 24-30 November last, at which Bishop Alagna and the Salesian missionaries in the Prelature of Upper Rio Negro in Brazil were subjected to an unfortunate condemnation.

The accompanying statement was prepared at my request by Father Walter Bini, our Regional Superior for Brazil, and Father Bernard Tohill, our Councillor for the Missions.

May I ask your prayers for our Missions. Please accept the greetings and loyalty of our Salesians.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Egidio VIGANÒ,
Rector Major of the Salesians.

At Rotterdam from 24 to 30 November last, *the 4th Russell Tribunal for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Americas* accused the Salesian Congregation and Bishop Miguel Alagna of Rio Negro, Amazonia, Brazil, of discrimination, cultural destruction and genocide in the zone of the Prelature.

The *accusation* came from a Mario Souza, a playwright who lives at Manaus and has never lived in Upper Rio Negro.

The *witness* was Alvaro Sampaio of the Tucanos tribe, educated at a Salesian school in Rio Negro. He lives at Sao Luis do Maranhao, some 4000 km away from Upper Rio Negro.

The *accused* were (according to the official text) "the Salesian Order and its Bishop Miguel Alagna".

The Russell Tribunal did not even inform the Bishop of Rio Negro nor the Provincial of the Amazonian Province, nor the Rector Major at Rome of the impending accusations. They had no chance whatsoever of preparing a defence. Bishop Alagna received notification merely three days before the opening of the Tribunal: seven lines, in which the accusations were given in two words, "genocide and detribalisation".

The specific accusations were not known till after the Tribunal had closed on 30 November. They were three in number: genocide, cultural destruction and discrimination, and

had been sustained by Mr Sousa in a 35-page document presented to the panel of the Tribunal. The document was summarised (in Spanish) as follows:

"The Salesians have appropriated land traditionally belonging to the native Aruak and Tukanos tribes of Rio Negro. The result of this is that a group of people with their own distinctive cultures and languages, and owners of a vast territory have been reduced to mere neglected peasants, landless and desperately impoverished.

"The native peoples of Rio Negro have been radically detribalised by the deliberate destruction of their social organisation, which had been based on local inter-marrying tribes. This has been effected by the disintegration of the traditional family unit by division into smaller units to suit the Christian model.

"The Salesians have imposed an authoritarian system of education that separates children from parents and places them in boarding schools. They are cajoled into believing that this means social betterment; whereas in reality the boys become unsuited for tribal life and the girls enter domestic service or become prostitutes.

"The Salesians receive abundant funds from the Government of Brazil and international institutions, for these schools and also appropriate the small tribal resources for their

own private gain" (*Informe del 4º Tribunal Russell: Caso de Rio Negro*).

Necessary clarifications

The Salesians wish to establish the facts of the case and feel obliged to make the following clarifications.

1. The Salesian Congregation (the Salesian Missionary Province of Amazonia) possesses no land whatsoever in Upper Rio Negro. Parish churches, schools and clinics of the mission stations, as well as sports grounds, youth centres and agricultural areas, are all on land belonging to the Prelature of Rio Negro. All these properties were legally acquired for the Prelature's work for the benefit of the native peoples.

The Salesians of Rio Negro have always defended the rights of the native peoples to their land, just as have their confreres of Mato Grosso (one of whom lost his life in defending native rights). In recent years they have again and again requested the Government for land reservation laws for these people.

2. Neither the Prelature nor the Salesian Province has any control in the matter of transport or the media. The Prelature owns a number of motorboats for providing food and other necessities for the mission stations scattered throughout the zone. The transport of persons and things

is available for all and controlled by private and Government organisations. The native peoples have total freedom of movement, both as individuals and as groups.

3. The Salesians have encouraged the native peoples to form co-operatives for the sale of their products. For some years now two co-operatives have been functioning and a third is just about to be launched. The Salesians have acted as intermediaries with international organisations to help raise finance for these projects.

4. When we apply today's criteria to the first contacts the mission had with the native peoples in the past, there could probably be some justification in the criticism of the way certain elements of indigenous culture were treated. But over the years there has been an ever-growing respect for local culture. The mission guarantees the preservation of these cultures; but it must take cognisance of a subtle and complex evolution that is governed by realism and the light of Gospel principles. Throughout the world, increasingly accelerated cultural upheavals have marked recent decades, and they will not fit in with the ways and norms of an anthropological museum.

In Rio Negro 33 tribes freely practise their own customs of living; they preserve their traditional festivals, rites, dances and music, clothing,

society, lore, election of chiefs, inter-tribal marriage and languages. The Salesians have helped in the promotion and development of tribal customs and languages, etc., and have compiled grammars and vocabularies and written up their mythology. Their various publications have been highly lauded by anthropologists.

5. The Salesians conduct six large schools in the more densely populated areas and 119 small schools in the tribal zones along the river. The school teachers are all native women and teach in the tribal tongues. Of the 317 teachers in the Prelature, 280 are tribal.

The mission considers the schools, especially the small schools along the river, as unifying centres for the small villages; they are a realistic means for maintaining and cultivating the culture of each group; they are also an efficient means in helping the tribal people to take their proper place and have their say in the present context of modern society, bringing to it the distinctive influence of their own identity-culture. It is plain that there is much to be done regarding the adaptation of the scholastic programme to the local situation and the tribal cultures. Together with other missionaries and people interested in the natives and their way of life, the Salesians are making steady progress.

6. The tribal people who wish to

further their studies are able to do so in the larger schools in the Rio Negro zone. If it is necessary and their parents are willing, they can become boarders in any of the six boarding schools of the Prelature (which cater for a total 962 boarders). The Prelature has to bear the brunt of the heavy financial expenses involved in these complexes, and they absorb much of the help the Prelature receives.

II October 1979, because of criticism, the Bishop asked the tribal chiefs whether they wanted these boarding schools closed or continued. At a meeting (which the missionaries did not attend) the people gave their answer: "We can make our own decision without interference from outside. In the present circumstances we have decided that the boarding schools should continue".

7. The mission has made steady progress in applying the guidelines of Vatican II regarding evangelisation. No native has ever been pressured into becoming a Christian. Furthermore, one must always bear in mind the distinction between native peoples who have had dealings for centuries with missionaries and other non-natives, and those who have only made recent contact with "foreigners". (For example, for a dozen years or so the Salesians have been in contact with the Yanomami without a single baptism to date).

The Salesians are endeavouring to square their missionary activities with the Church's missionary renewal. Every year at Manaus there are courses of theological renewal and native studies for the missionaries. The Prelature Assembly meets yearly at Sao Gabriel, and its members include not only Salesians, Salesian Sisters and lay representatives, but also indigenous groups elected by their own villagers.

8. It is not fair to judge facts and situations in the distant past (the Salesians have worked in the Rio Negro zone since 1915) and condemn them according to today's criteria — especially when one considers the missionaries themselves: they have given their lives to save these native peoples from sickness and exploitation, from their helplessness in the face of a so-called civilisation that threatens their extinction. The missionaries are labouring to bring to these peoples the freedom of Jesus Christ. Many of these Indians would not exist today but for the missionaries, men and women. One should ask the peoples of Rio Negro themselves what they think of the missionaries.

9. The credibility of the witness, Alvaro Sampaio, who lives at Sao Luis do Maranhao, needs to be looked into. In October 1979, in the 13th General Assembly of the tribal chiefs of Brazil, he rose in defence

of the missionary work of the Salesians, especially the schools. "Thanks to the missionaries", he said, "my father had his first schooling. Before their arrival, my grandfather was sold for the price of a fryingpan. The native Indians must have schooling; this is of the utmost importance. Only in this way is it possible for us to become a people." (*Boletim do CIMI, April 1980, p. 36*).

Conclusions

1. The Salesian Congregation bitterly deplores the fact that the 4th Russell Tribunal did not even inform the Bishop of Rio Negro nor the Rector Major of the impending accusations. No Salesian representatives were invited to sit in on the Rotterdam Tribunal. This is in itself a violation of human rights: to accuse the Congregation and the Prelature without giving the accused the proper chance to defend themselves.

2. From the above clarifications it is plain that the accusations of the Russell Tribunal lack foundation and do not reflect the true situation in Rio Negro; indeed some of the statements are downright libellous. The indications are that there was no serious examination of the credibility of the witness nor of the validity of the accusations. This fact militates against the good name of the Tribunal — which claims to be dedicated to

the cause of the rights of indigenous peoples of the Americas.

3. The Salesians are sincerely willing to accept just criticism and valid suggestions that will help them in their work for the peoples of Rio Negro. They realise their arduous work is an ongoing process that calls for constant revision. They see their apostolate and its complex problems as needing workers inspired by love and ready to give themselves totally in sharing with the native peoples their humble laborious lives, and working for their rightful liberation.

Rome 15 December 1980

5.6 Educational planning in Catholic schools

Father Viganò's address at the UPS Convention, 2-1-81

In the name of the Salesian University I have much pleasure in wishing a happy New Year to the many participants at this convention. A hearty welcome to all; and may God bless your week's activities here.

I wish to congratulate the members of the Educational Faculty on choosing the theme, *educational planning in Catholic schools*, and for their excellent and enthusiastic preparation. The seminar is dedicated to the memory of Father Sinistrero who died recently after a life dedicated to the cause of the Catholic school. May we keep his memory

green among us by imitating his untiring dedication.

I would make the following reflections on the theme of the Convention.

1. Relevance of the theme

The school and its problems are in the forefront of society's concerns today. On an international level schooling is linked with liberation and development. In Europe the prospects of continental unity open up new possibilities of collaboration, co-ordination, reform and professionalism. As regards Italy, a long list of problems could be drawn up and discussed in the cultural, political and organisational fields that grow in importance from day to day.

There is an urgent need for the State to rethink its specific functions in cultural matters and especially in education. Politically the school and factual situations are viewed in an old-fashioned way: this is something lacking in democratic maturity in many nations. There is a need for united action in general school policy so that families and persons may have the scope and support that is rightfully theirs, and which so far (for a number of complex reasons) have been denied them.

With Vatican II and its subsequent efforts the Church has made a critical appraisal of her role, explaining the proper nature of culture and education and renewing her forward plan-

ning, especially in the Catholic school. This renewed ecclesiology has been slow to get off the ground, but at least a start has been made.

Recently too the Episcopal Magisterium has taken considerable steps forward in this area — as instanced at *Puebla* and at *Synod '80*.

Puebla was realistic and far-seeing in its consideration of man and religion, "his freedom and development and the importance of ideologies and politics in society": and at the root of all these considerations was the theme of *culture*. *Puebla* was right in affirming that the first step in Evangelisation renewal must deal with today's cultural upheaval. Hence the need of a critical and constructive assessment of the whole educational system.

In dealing with the Christian family *Synod '80* also dealt with this crucial matter. It made the point that cultural and social changes called for a re-defining of the very concept of education; and it urged a more courageous renewal of the Catholic school. It asserted that both State and Church have the duty of giving all possible assistance to the family in its proper and primary mission of education. (Prop. 29a).

The Church's action in education is mainly through Religious Institutes and consecrated persons; and it takes two forms: running Catholic schools and supplying dedicated Catholics to teach in State schools.

This present convention intends to concentrate on the Catholic school. Its planning will include research, coherence of principles, imaginative suggestions and optimism for the future.

2. Culture at the basis of the Catholic school

Puebla affirmed that education was a human activity in the order of culture conceived as a process of developing man and his personality. Hence the school must develop culture.

This is of prime importance today, now that culture is conceived not as unchangeable and belonging to the upper classes, but as creative, changeable and free. It is no longer seen as a kind of luxury added on to a person, but as something within him: he does not just "receive" culture, but perfects it; it is no longer the privilege of an élite but the heritage of everybody, perfected and shared by all.

A greater cultural sensitivity prompts the question as to what contribution the school makes to culture, especially in relation to the social situations that go to form it. Planning systems and projects today will depend on one's particular perspective. Educators must get down to basics and not limit their efforts to particular techniques of particular services.

Culture touches the very heart of a person, is basic to a society's renew-

al; for it creates attitudes and criteria that can make or mar an integrated and complete project for man.

The development of culture in the Catholic school is part of *general method* and *organisation* and is the business of the whole scholastic community. The imparting of principles of information must include the imparting of a proper active and critical judgement; and the Holy See's document on the Catholic school insists that culture be perfected; the school must teach its pupils to think, delve and discover, and understand practical experiences (v. SC 27).

It is more important that schools be able to cope with cultural emergencies than simply chalk up good examination results; so they must busy themselves with more than scholastic matters and inspire and develop the broader objectives. This is what the "community school" is all about. It does not deny anyone's particular responsibility; it puts an end to group-monopoly in education; it breaks through programme inertia.

3. Dynamic, creative and integrating project

Educators have to face the future with clear objectives regarding the development of the person; they need an overall vision of man, a vast outlook; they must know and respect the proper autonomy of all who have the duty of participating; they must be courageous, patient, practical, and

recognise the need for "gradualism". Good planning implies clear principles, professional competence, methods and structures suitable to particular needs, orderly divisions of subjects, specialised knowledge, good preparation and real dedication.

Education is a profession with its own needs and laws. The possibilities and achievements of an educational project will depend on the principles that enunciate its values and rights; on the quality of the actual educators (as individuals and as educative communities); on their methods of contribution, programming, development and environment. Indeed education in a Catholic school is a serious matter: we have to set up *real schools* with professionalism equal to the problems that have to be dealt with.

Professionalism has a special importance for us Catholics, for we see in the nature and autonomy of things a projection of the Creator inseparably linked with persons as individuals and as communities. At the centre of this unity is Christ, whose presence does not interfere with the nature of things but welds all human facets into an integrated person, all human progress into salvation-history. Thus the professionalism of a Catholic recognises and respects autonomy without descending to a vague neutrality or subjective agnosticism.

Faith tells us that at Christmas a

man was born. It follows that that moment saw the project for the integrated education of man. Creativity and professionalism in a Catholic school must always remain within the light of Christ.

Educational planning and programming are top-ranking matters for

the Catholic school today.

May this convention be able to bring light and enthusiasm to many educators and be a real help to the Catholic school in its renewal and its contribution to culture.

Father EGIDIO VIGANÒ

5.7 Houses canonically erected in 1980

<i>Province</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Nome</i>	<i>File no.</i>
ACO	Córdoba	Technical school	S. Joseph	214/80
ARO	Buenos Aires	Studentate	St Peter	37/79
BES	Brussels	Provincial House	Blessed Michael Rua	174/80
BCC	Lins	Technical school	St John Bosco	54/80
CIN	Chao Chou	Boys Town	Our Lady of the Rosary	373/80
COB	Bogotá	Provincial House	St John Bosco	70/80
COB	Bogotá-Bosconia	Trade school	St Dominic Savio	71/80
COB	Fuentedeoro	Missionary centre	St Anthony	73/80
COB	Granada-La Holanda	Missionary centre	Our Lady of Mt Carmel	72/80
COB	S. Juan de Arama	Missionary centre	St John Baptist	127/80
FIL	Araimiri	Missionary centre	St Peter	290/80
FPA	Granthville	Rest house	Sacred Heart	381/80
KOR	Shin Wol Dong	Youth centre	Mary Help of Christians	60/80
INC	Palsonda More	Novitiate	Holy Family	172/80
INM	Madras	Boys home	Don Bosco	128/80
IRL	Robertsham (South Africa)	Parish centre	St John Bosco	217/80
ILE	Arese	Parish	Sts Peter & Paul	245/80
ILE	Sesto San Giovanni	Parish	Mary Help of Christians	264/80
IRS	Formia	Youth centre	St John Bosco	219/80
IRS	Rome	Provincial centre	St Peter	213/80
PAR	Puerto Casado	Missionary centre	St Raymond Nonnatus	231/80
SLE	Santiago de Compostela	Studentate	St John Bosco	227/80
SLE	Saint-Louis (Senegal)	Missionary centre	Our Lady of Lourdes	228/80
SUE	Grand Bahama Island	Parish centre	St Agnes	35/80
SUE	New York (Harlem)	Parish centre	St Thomas the Apostle	40/80
SUE	Weston (Canada)	Middle secondary school	St John Bosco	34/80

5.8 Appointments

1. New bishop

The *Osservatore Romano* of 12 January 1981 announced the appointment of *Father Luis Arroyo Robelly* as Titular Bishop of Castello di Tatroporto and Vicar Apostolic of Mendez, Ecuador.

Bishop Arroyo was born in Biobamba-Ecuador on 27 July 1929, made his first religious profession at Cuenca-Ecuador on 2 August 1949 and was ordained at Riobamba on 8 November 1958. He was Rector of the Salesian houses at Guayaquil

and Quito, and Provincial of the Quito Province Ecuador from 1979.

2. New Provincial

Father *Carminé di Pietro* has been appointed Provincial of Central America. Father di Pietro was born 1928, made his first profession at Villa Moglia Turin in 1948, was ordained at Guatemala 1957, received his degree in philosophy at the UPS Rome, was Rector of the Studentate of St Thomas in San Salvador, and parish priest in Panama. He was Rector of the Provincial House at the time of his appointment as Provincial.

5.9 Deceased confreres

"We keep alive the memory of all confreres now asleep in the peace of Christ. Their remembrance is for us a stimulus to continue faithful in our mission" (Const. 66)

P ANTONIZIO Crescenzo (IME) aged 74	* Caserta, Italy Genzano, Italy Naples, Italy	31-10-06 1-11-22 14- 6-30
L ARIZA Felix (SBA) aged 83	† Vico Equensi, Italy * Mataró, Spain Salamanca, Spain	29-12-80 26- 8-97 19- 9-15
P BEGNI Angelo (ILE) aged 69	† Barcelona, Spain * Pontoglio, Italy Chiari, Italy Turin, Italy	24-12-80 28- 3-11 2-10-27 3- 7-38
L BENCETTI Aldo (ILE) aged 84	† Milan, Italy * Treviglio, Italy Schio, Italy	1- 2-81 2- 7-96 14-10-21
P BLAZQUEZ Luis (SVA) aged 75	† Varese, Italy * Alcalá de Henares Spain Barcelona, Spain Madrid, Spain	17- 1-81 7- 4-05 20- 7-24 21- 5-33
	† Campello, Spain	16-11-80

P BUJA Arnaldo (SUO) aged 66	* San Francisco, USA Newton, USA Newton, USA	1-12-14 8- 9-37 29- 6-47
P CONTRERAS Benito (CAM) aged 71	† Bellflower, USA * Santa Ana, El Salvador Ayagualo, El Salvador Santa Ana, El Salvador	17-12-80 23- 3-09 25- 3-25 20-10-35
P GAMARRO Francisco (SSE) aged 70	† San Salvador, El Salvador * Arriate, Spain S. José del Valle, Spain Seville, Spain	31-12-80 9-11-10 8- 9-29 11- 9-39
P GIANNI Ubaldo (ALP) aged 76	† Seville, Spain * Montevideo, Uruguay Bernal, Argentina La Plata, Argentina	12-12-80 22- 5-94 11- 1-19 25- 1-25
L GUGLIERI Luis (ACO) aged 89	† La Plata, Argentina * Buenos Aires, Argentina Córdoba, Argentina	2- 2-81 24- 3-91 2-10-67
L HAAS Franz (AUS) aged 78	† Rodeo del Medio, Argentina * Arbesbach, Austria Unterwaltersdorf, Austria	14- 9-80 22- 9-02 16- 8-47
P JAMAR Ludvig (GEM) aged 72	† Eusenstadt, Austria * Frankfurt, Germany Ensdorf, Germany Benediktbeuern, Germany	16-11-80 12- 5-08 15- 8-30 29- 6-39
P MAGNI Eugenio (POR) aged 81	† Schwandorf, Germany * Galbiate, Italy Foglizzo, Italy Turin, Italy	19-12-80 17- 3-99 21-10-16 11- 7-26
P MARTIN Manuel aged 69	† Estoril, Portugal * Barruecopardo, Spain S. José del Valle, Spain Seville, Spain	25-10-80 17- 8-11 8- 9-27 22- 5-37
P MOMMEYER Maurits (BEN) aged 56	† Algeciras, Spain * Zonhoven, Belgium Groot Bljgaarden, Belgium Oud Heverlee, Belgium	23-10-80 4- 3-24 2- 9-44 2- 5-54
P MULLER Joseph (GEM) aged 70	† Zonhoven, Belgium * Dillishausen, Germany Ensdorf, Germany Córdoba, Argentina	30-12-80 25- 2-10 12- 9-30 27-11-38
P MULLER Wilhelm (GEK) aged 82	† Algasling, Germany * Adenau, Germany Ensdorf, Germany Turin, Italy	12- 1-81 19- 7-98 15- 8-24 5- 7-31
	† Jünkerath, Germany	8-12-80

P NAESSENS Maurits (BEN) aged 66	* Waeregem, Belgium	19- 4-14
	Groot Bijgaarden, Belgium	25- 8-32
P NAZZI Juan (ACO) aged 90	Oud Heverlee, Belgium	5- 1-41
	† Kortrijk, Belgium	30- 1-81
P PEETERS Georges (BES) aged 63	* Slaunlcco, Italy	3- 1-90
	Buenos Aires, Argentina	29- 1-11
P PITZL Josef (AUS) aged 54	Buenos Aires, Argentina	14- 6-19
	† Córdoba, Argentina	24- 6 80
P POPELLA Julius (AUS) aged 67	* Liège, Belgium	21-10-17
	Groot Bijgaarden, Belgium	2- 9-37
P REBESCO Antonio (ILE) aged 77	Oud Heverlee, Belgium	3- 2-46
	† Aywaille, Belgium	31-12-80
P RIQUELME Luis (CIL) aged 76	* Gresten, Austria	10- 2-26
	Oberthalheim, Austria	16- 8-54
L STOPPA SADY Francesco (CIN) aged 67	Munich, Germany	4- 8-60
	† Vienna, Austria	9-11-80
P UGUCCIONI Vigilio (IVE) aged 81	Provincial 6 years	
	* Leobschutz, Poland	11- 4-13
	Ensdorf, Germany	2- 8-31
	Modling, Austria	21-12-40
	† Vienna, Austria	17-12-80
	* Casoni di Mussolente, Italy	2-11-03
	Foglizzo, Italy	2-11-19
	Turin, Italy	7- 7-29
	† Sesto S. Giovanni, Italy	10-12-80
	* Santiago, Chile	11- 9-02
	Santiago, Chile	12- 2-24
	Turin, Italy	5- 7-31
	† Santiago, Chile	27- 4-79
	* Pedrinate, Switzerland	26- 5-13
	Castelnuovo Don Bosco, Italy	16- 8-42
	† Hong Kong	22- 2-80
	* Castelluccio, Italy	3- 4-99
	Schio, Italy	14-10-21
	Turin, Italy	7- 7-29
	† Venice, Italy	2- 1-81

