

acts

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1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

Father Egidio VIGANÒ

THE CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF SAINT MARY DOMENICA MAZZARELLO

"REDISCOVERING THE SPIRIT OF MORNESE" - Introduction. - A new gift of the Spirit to the Church: Need for clarifying the distinctive ethos; Preconceived ideas to be rejected. - In recalling the past we plan for the future. - Many persons and events go to make up a unified project: A few of the innumerable facts of history; names and dates worth pondering; Significant coincidences; A wide margin for Initiative at Mornese. - The Salesian heritage of our Founder: Valdocco: the burdens of a Founder; Our Founder's uniqueness; Constituents of the Salesian heritage. - The distinctive contribution of Mother Mazzarello: Stars in the firmament of our Salesian origins; The distinctive light of Mother Mazzarello. - The deep significance of her death: Final perfecting touch; Solemn testament; The role of Co-foundress. - The spirit of Mornese: Frame of reference; Salient characteristics of the spirit of Mornese. - Features of the Mornese mystique: The august personage; Visible characteristics; The supporting ascetic and religious framework. - Under the spell of the Salesian identity at Mornese: A long journey; A clear task to be achieved; Conclusion.

Dear Confreres,

The centenary of the death of Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello presents us with the opportunity to journey back to our sources and gain a deeper knowledge of our identity and its history. It is also an invitation for us to strengthen the bonds of communion, service and collaboration with the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

On the occasion of this important celebration I have written a spiritual monograph to our Salesian Sisters, and I feel it is a suitable and relevant document to offer to you also as food for reflection.

May the perusal of this letter help towards a clearer perception, if need be, of God's infinite goodness and marvellous intervention in the early days of our Salesian origins; may it also increase our knowledge of the grand Salesian principles that

have been such an inspiration in the past and are still a vitalising source of fruitful abundance for the common heritage of our Salesian Family.

REDISCOVERING THE SPIRIT OF MORNESE

**Letter of the Rector Major Father Egidio Viganò
on the occasion of the centenary of the death of
Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello**

*To Reverend Mother General, the Superiors
and all Sisters of the Institute of the Daughters of
Mary Help of Christians.*

On the occasion of the centenary of the death of Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello (14 May 1881), you very kindly invited me, Mother Ersilia, to address the Sisters of your Institute on our common interests and spiritual bond and also to offer a few words of guidance. I accept your invitation with the greatest of pleasure. I feel at home as one of the family, and I share the joy of your festivities as a close spiritual relation. I am truly grateful.

As the successor of Don Bosco I also feel it my pleasant duty on this significant occasion to hearken to the urge of the Holy Spirit and help foster an ever greater understanding and love of our common spiritual heritage of labouring for the salvation of the young.

Mary Mazzarello and the spirit of Mornese are important not only for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians but also for us Salesians and indeed for all members of the Salesian Family, and to understand them better will increase the Salesian spiritual wealth of all.

I have read over again the letters of Mother

Mary that express with such simplicity and directness the essence of her spirituality. I have also meditated on the thoughtful and kindly annual practices or "strennas" suggested by Don Phillip Rinaldi to Mother Luisa Vaschetti from 1928 to 1931. I have endeavoured to recapture the wonderful fatherly spirit and encouragement they contain, for indeed this third successor of Don Bosco was not only a man of profound holiness: he also had a deep understanding of Don Bosco, having lived and matured under his care for many years and absorbed the authentic spirit of the Founder.

I consider your invitation so important that I cannot restrict my words to a mere formal greeting; indeed I have reflected and prayed for some time and have pondered deeply and at length on the values and import of the Salesian origins we share.

I have before me your motto for the centenary celebrations: "Let us rediscover the spirit of Mornese: it must inspire the renewal of our communities". Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello will help us carry out this project with exceptional competence, for the *spirit of Mornese* is her own special masterpiece.

Mornese, like Valdocco, is holy ground for us, and we feel the longing for this land of our Salesian birth as we ponder its wealth of golden memories. Truly "with humble gratitude we believe" that our common vocation "came into being not only by human agency but by the providence of God",¹ in other words, "by a gift of the Holy Spirit and through the direct intervention of Mary".²

On the 50th anniversary of the saintly death of the humble Servant of God Mary Mazzarello (the foundation stone of your Institute laid by Don

1. Const. SDB 1.

2. Const. FMA 1.

Bosco himself), Don Rinaldi wrote to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and invited them to "study and perfect themselves in Don Bosco's interior life". He was deeply convinced that "Mary Mazzarello's great forte had been the wonderful acquisition of our Founder's interior life and apostolate, of which she proved a special guardian and a model to be imitated".³

3. Don RINALDI: *Strenna per l'anno 1931*.

A NEW GIFT OF THE SPIRIT TO THE CHURCH

I should like to delve right down to the beginnings with a general observation on the divine intervention in our common vocation.

Vatican II invited us to return to the charismatic dimension of the religious life and establish its spiritual wealth. Institutes did not begin with theories and systems worked out by a thinker: they began with particular events and experiences lived out in docility to the Holy Spirit. Each of the many and varied "experiences of the Holy Spirit" in the Church has its own special function among the People of God; and thus every religious family has a distinctive character and a "particular style of holiness and apostolate"⁴ that must be further developed and practised through the centuries according to the genuine spirit of its early days.

4. MR 11.

Need for clarifying the distinctive ethos

The return to the sources that Vatican II speaks of not only refers back to the Gospel foundations of every religious family, but also to the numerous ways these latter are realised.⁵ It follows then that for the further study and practice of its distinctive charisma, a religious family cannot limit itself to

5. v. LG 41-42, PC 1.

the Gospel alone. It is true of course that the Gospel is the common basis for every religious family; but this basis needs to be further clarified, specified and detailed according to the special experience of the Holy Spirit as lived in each particular Institute. The Church has a real concern that this distinctive ethos and mission be preserved⁶, for it is a gift from the Lord. The Gospel is the absolute and supreme rule for all⁷, and for each religious family the proximate and binding pledge is the spiritual and apostolic project of its Founder⁸.

The history of our Salesian birth in the Church is linked to the dawn of a new industrial and technical era. The gift entrusted to us by the Holy Spirit has the beauty and richness of a religious novelty: we are called to be for tomorrow's world the witnesses and bearers of the permanent values of a radical *sequela Christi* in a secularised and pluralistic society. It is urgent that we renew our awareness of such an important mission so as to be equal to the task of dealing with this cultural transition without being tainted by the opinion of those who maintain that the new emerging culture means the end of religious life.

It is unthinkable that the Holy Spirit at Valdocco and Mornese envisaged such a restricted existence — to end at the year 2000! On the contrary, history throughout the centuries makes it clear that great founders have been raised up precisely at the right times for specific problems; their work is future-oriented; in every century they emphasise for us one of the most important consequences of the paschal mystery — that Christ is indeed the true Lord of history.

6. PC 2b.

7. PC 2a.

8. PC 2b.

Preconceived ideas to be rejected

We should reject certain fashionable preconceptions that some pundits of the religious life mouth so facetiously.

- One of these theories would have us believe that all religious life should be measured by the yardstick of monasticism. Religious life is shown in its plenitude in the ancient monastic models. Later forms imply willy-nilly some sort of decadence. The challenge of our new era only shows how unstable are the Institutes of the active life and how they have dimmed the clarity of the consecrated life. If they are not to become defunct they must set their sights on a new monasticism.

- The opposing theory maintains that the religious life began as a kind of embryo that was to grow and develop throughout the centuries. The recent accelerated changes speeded up development and full maturity is now achieved in the Secular Institutes. These latter are the final and perfected stage of the religious life. Thus all the various historical forms of religious life are now outmoded: and hence our present-day crisis.

It is immediately obvious that neither of these two theories takes stock of the singular workings of the Holy Spirit in the many charisms of the different Founders.

Our theoreticians would have us believe that there is a one and only basic charism for the consecrated life (either a finished product or a charism in embryo); that the signs of the times require that our two Congregations should change course towards whichever ideal appeals to us: a kind of monasticism or some sort of secular institute.

Our own point of departure, however, is a very different one indeed. We are in all humility absolutely convinced that our evangelical way of life is especially valid for the future for the simple reason that it bears within itself a new kind of gift of the Holy Spirit that gives the religious life a unique adaptability to modern changes. Furthermore it is our experience (borne out also by our many-faceted and flourishing Salesian Family) that there is no opposition between the various Institutes and forms of consecrated life: rather is there a wonderful complementarity and a consoling emulation in the service of Christ. This conclusion is a help to greater fidelity and a spur to deeper understanding and appreciation of the values of our vocation.

It is just as well to be aware of these two outlandish hypotheses. Even if they insinuated themselves into our minds and remained merely at the theoretical level they would play havoc with the important values the centenary is celebrating. These opinions are not just inventions to prove a point: unfortunately their existence is only too real.

IN RECALLING THE PAST WE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

A hundred years ago the Mornese of 1881 was wrapped in a thick mist for us; we looked at it from afar with sadness; it was a place where we paid our respects at the tombs of the departed. Today the sun has dispersed the mist, the soil is sacred and productive and full of stimulating memories. In its beauty now Mornese reaches out to the future and fills the heart with a nostalgia as for our native land. The life born there over

a hundred years ago has developed and flourishes apace.

Mornese can truly claim that the future has its roots in the past. We recall the past (certainly with a touch of nostalgia, for we are human and have our feelings); but we have no intention of "holing up" in the past: we intend to refuel for the future.

We are recalling a death in 1881: actually we are referring to a birth; the event took place at Nizza: yet we think of Mornese; Mary Domenica's short span of life was a mere fortyfour years and five days: but our thoughts span the centuries. How so?

The reason comes easily to one who believes in a new gift of the Holy Spirit. We see a rich and vital heritage with such tiny beginnings in the Church. The death of Mary Domenica is celebrated, not mourned, because it bespeaks the sum total of all her life in the Spirit.

● *The dawn of 14 May 1881 began Mother Mary's birthday in heaven.* She gave her earthly life as a sacramental donation. To give oneself is the greatest love of all and Mother Mary offered herself as a victim for the future of the Institute. There are some deaths (like Christ's death on the cross) that proclaim the abundance of the heart's virtues: they are not the last drop from the cup of life but the climax of a life rich and fruitful.

● *Nizza Monferrato was the actual place of Mother Mary's death.* It has its own interesting history and its own excellent values. The tiny plant that took root and grew in Mornese was transplanted in Nizza and flourished there — and that is the main reason why Nizza is dear to us. At

Nizza we experience gratitude, admiration and involvement, but we miss the countryside with its bell-towers. Still, from Nizza the campanile of Mornese is visible.

- *Mother Mazzarello died young*, after only eight years and some nine months of profession as a daughter of Mary Help of Christians. Yet her life evinced a *singular experience of the Holy Spirit* that remains vital with the passage of time and across the centuries will always refer back to her. This is how we can claim to be recalling yesterday to plan for tomorrow.

- *An experience of the Holy Spirit*, such as the Salesian heritage of Don Bosco, does not finish developing with the death of the Founder and his main collaborators. Indeed at that moment it is still in its early stages like a healthy bouncing babe to whom the Holy Spirit has given a special character so that it can grow and develop in harmony with the Body of Christ, the Church, which is itself in continual development. The Holy Spirit helps his new gift to develop with the aid of co-workers, disciples and successors, lavishing on them all the means necessary to keep them loyal participants in the original charism.⁹

- *The "Salesian experience" did not happen once and for all* and in a uniform way — neither at Valdocco nor at Mornese; it is no static marble monument: it is something living and inspired by the Holy Spirit; it has an unforeseeable and vital ability for transplantation, adaptation and growth — always faithfully developing the distinctive features of the same well-defined character.

The Council spoke of returning to our sources. It wanted to make sure that the initial charism

evolved in a stable and characteristic way. The original source is our frame of reference to check that the water is clear and pure from the spring and not tainted by a long journey downstream.

● *Pausing to meditate on Mother Mazzarello's death* will give us fresh energy for the future. We return to the past and contemplate the driving afflatus of the Holy Spirit in Mornese a century ago that set in a feminine context the Salesian charism given Don Bosco. We revisit the sources of the Spirit's gift to see to its genuine development and adaptation in other times and climes.

● *Furthermore we are celebrating our communion with the Church triumphant.* SAINT MARY DOMENICA MAZZARELLO LIVES NOW WITH SAINT JOHN BOSCO. In glory they continue to tread the paths of history and are present in both our Congregations and indeed in the whole Salesian Family. In a vital and glorious way they link our origins, our present and our future. They are part of the mysterious communion between the pilgrim Church and the Church triumphant. "We cherish the memory of those in heaven not only because of their good example: we seek rather that by the exercise of fraternal charity the union of the whole Church in the Spirit may be strengthened".¹⁰ So this centenary becomes the extraordinary expression of the wonderful and unfathomable reality that links yesterday's Founder and Co-foundress to their sons and daughters of today and tomorrow; it involves them in the singular and many-faceted experience of the Holy Spirit that flowed from the heart of Don Bosco, and is lived now in glory by Mary Domenica together with Don Bosco — and shared by their sons and daughters as they work with faith

10. LC 50.

and courage journeying through the world and treading the paths of history.

There is no wallowing in nostalgia nor mere regrets. For us the communion of saints means that we go questing with them in the past for motivation and vigour for the future; we seek out from those early days the important principles of the Spirit's special gift and launch this charism into the future with all its overflowing vitality for development.

MANY PERSONS AND EVENTS GO TO MAKE UP A UNIFIED PROJECT

A few of the innumerable facts of history Names and dates worth pondering

Among the memorable names we meet with in our reflections are Mamma Margaret at the Becchi and Papà Giuseppe at Mornese; then there were the poor working families that belonged to a Christian countryside soon to die away; and of course there were Giovannino and Main, who both chose a way of life different from their companions'.

John Bosco became a priest and was called to weave a very special cloth. He had the help and advice of Don Giuseppe Cafasso and Pope Pius IX. Mary Domenica Mazzarello also felt the call to something special and finally became Don Bosco's collaborator. She too was helped and advised — by Don Pestarino first and then by Don Giovanni Cagliero.

1854 saw the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. At Valdocco the Sodality of Mary Immaculate was founded, and at Mor-

nese the Daughters of Mary Immaculate. The chief protagonists were Dominic Savio and Angelina Maccagno.

1859: the inauguration of the Society of St Francis de Sales at Turin.

1860: Mornese is ravaged by typhoid fever. Mary Domenica feels called to a new way of life.

1862: Don Pestarino becomes a Salesian with Don Bosco. From Turin he brings the Founder's first message to Mary Domenica and Petronilla: "Keep up your prayers by all means; but throw yourselves completely into your good works especially for the young".

It was in the sixties that Don Bosco began his campaign of devotion to Mary Help of Christians and built the Valdocco basilica. (Already back in 1843 a chapel dedicated to Mary Help of Christians had been opened on 24 May in the Mazzarelli municipality.)

1864: Don Bosco arrives for the first time at Mornese with his boys on one of his famous autumn hikes. Mary Domenica is struck by his sanctity.

1865: A start is made on the famous college of Mornese (which had been planned as a Salesian college for boys).

1866: Don Bosco makes it known that he is also called to found a Congregation for women.

1869: Don Bosco, again at Mornese, leaves four important counsels for the Daughters of Mary Immaculate now living in community in a house built by Don Pestarino: awareness of God's presence; love of work; practice of kindliness and joy; zeal for the salvation of souls.

1871: Don Bosco, on the advice of Pius IX and with the consent of his young Superior Council, decides on the foundation of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. It is interesting to note that Don Bosco wished to have the advice of his Council and that he gave them a month to think things over; only after this period of spiritual discernment did he ask their opinion.¹¹ It was clearly not only a matter of great importance but also a decision that impinged on the life and responsibilities of the Salesian Congregation.

1872: Mary Domenica and fourteen other young women consecrate themselves to God: eleven by religious profession and four by receiving the habit. Don Bosco inducts Mary Domenica as their Superior, remarking that the real Mother Rectress was Our Blessed Lady herself.

1874: Sudden death of Don Pestarino. In the preface of the first FMA Constitutions Don Bosco was to ask the Sisters to pray for the soul of Rev. Domenico Pestarino, first Director of the Sisters of Mary Help of Christians and instrument of the Lord in the foundation of the Institute.¹² Esteem for Mother Mary grows more and more and the Institute expands in an amazing way, opening up new houses and extending its work abroad to the missions.

1879: Transfer to Nizza Monferrato and farewell to Mornese.

1880: Mother Mary re-elected as Superior General by unanimous vote.

1881: Mother Mary tells one of her young missionaries, "I have offered myself as a victim to the Lord", and Don Bosco confirms her statement,

11. v. MB X 597.

12. *Cronistoria dell'Istituto delle FMA* III 432: Rome FMA 1977.

saying, "The victim was pleasing to the Lord and accepted by him".

1881 (14 May): Mother Mary went to God.

This brief selection of persons and facts makes it obvious that the weaver at the loom was greater than Mother Mary or Don Bosco — in fact no less than the Holy Spirit himself. Don Bosco became the Founder of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians through a design that he had not envisaged and that was manifested to him before any such project had even occurred to him. He committed himself to the work only in docility to the clear signs of God's explicit will; and Mother Mary Domenica Mazzarello became the Co-foundress not through any choice of her own but through a web of providential circumstances that drew her step by step to place her talents in all humility at the service of a project willed by God: she prepared herself for God's work by a number of humble initiatives along the same lines as those at Valdocco.

This brief glance at our origins also makes it clear that the Holy Spirit revealed his designs to Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello through the explicit intervention of Mary. The Holy Spirit made use of persons and events to set in motion his important work.

Significant coincidences

The divine Weaver also included a number of human conditions and situations in the design of his cloth; all went to form the general pattern.

There are surprising similarities to be seen in the early days of Mornese and Valdocco, and they

make it understandable how Mother Mary felt so much in common with Don Bosco.

Both saints belonged to the Piedmontese countryside of simplicity, poverty and hard work. Both in their own ways had robust and practical temperaments; both were active and full of initiative; both influenced and attracted others, had penetrating intuition, reliable balanced judgement and a powerful spiritual drive that found expression in action.

Both John and Mary Domenica had the practical nature of country workers and the mature Christian sagacity that belonged to both field and workshop — a heritage to be preserved and passed on to future ages.

Both experienced a burgeoning love and predilection for young people in need: Don Bosco from his dream at nine years of age, and Mary Domenica at eighteen, when she offered herself to Our Blessed Lady, catechised children and their mothers and became at twentyfive the head of the small group of Daughters of Mary Immaculate working for girls in need.

Our Lady's intervention was clear in each case. The first members of both Congregations of Mary Help of Christians were all trained under the aegis of Mary Immaculate. Don Bosco was the patriarchal Founder of the Salesian charism for the young; yet his founding efforts for the Institute of Mary Help of Christians left plenty of room for the intervention and active participation of Mary Mazzarello and her companions.

A wide margin for initiative at Mornese

Don Bosco knew that the pioneering Daughters of Mary Immaculate, under the guidance of Don Pestarino, had had a solid spiritual formation that had its roots in the widespread influence of his friend the Genoan theologian Don Frassinetti. They were a group of young women who followed Christ in a way that gave Don Bosco confidence that they would fit in well with his own special charismatic project. Mary Mazzarello's first contact with Don Bosco was on 8 October 1864, and she was attracted to the saintly Founder as a compass needle to a magnet.

During those foundation years Don Bosco's visits to Mornese were somewhat sporadic — some fifteen rather short visits in all; but he made the most of them and knew how the young community was progressing. He gave them suitable advice (also on practical matters), received each of the Sisters individually, addressed the novices and the superiors and helped them in their formation. He was unable to remain for long because of his full-time commitment as a Founder preparing the groundwork of a permanent heritage in the Church.

As a matter of fact he had found a practical and efficient way of being always present at Mornese: he personally chose a well-equipped Salesian priest and appointed him his delegate. Don Pestarino was his first proxy; he had been at Mornese from the very beginnings and then returned in 1862 full of the spirit of Don Bosco. After his death Don Giovanni Cagliari was appointed Don Bosco's longstanding lieutenant, with the title of Director General. He had a marked influence on the Sisters, for he was a man of many talents, a powerful

personality and was ever enthusiastic regarding the experience of the Spirit lived at Valdocco.

I would suggest two reasons why Don Bosco never went to stay at Mornese to initiate the formation of the little group of young women as he had so laboriously done with his first disciples at Valdocco. First of all, his charismatic experience was by now matured and authoritatively recognised by the Church and hence was a safe frame of reference for the incipient "feminine spiritual experience" so close to it by "affinity and consanguinity". The second reason was that Don Bosco had providentially found that little group of young women under the leadership of Mary Domenica Mazzarello already established and trained by the Holy Spirit (who had guided and was still guiding all their undertakings); and our Founder was well persuaded that the little community, under the direction of a suitable and holy priest, was well able, in its own unique and feminine way, to imbue its holiness and work for girls with the spirit of Valdocco.

THE SALESIAN HERITAGE OF OUR FOUNDER

To present Mother Mazzarello properly and to understand her secret in building up the spirit of Mornese, it is necessary to refer back to the original experience of the Holy Spirit begun and lived by Don Bosco. No one can understand Mornese without understanding Valdocco; and this is all the more important when we bear in mind why the Spirit of the Lord had Mary Domenica meet Don Bosco: the event was not just an historic moment connected with the origins of the Institute, but a presage of a future project in which history would see both

sons and daughters vocationally united and engaged in the same service to working class youngsters in need of help.

Now I should like to touch on a matter of particular importance to us today. I wish to examine with sincerity and objectivity our mutual communion in the charismatic heritage of our origins; and I am convinced that this will make us more faithful to both Don Bosco and Mother Mary Mazzarello. So I beg you to bear with me, dear Sisters, as I spend some time on the touchstone of our whole spiritual family, namely the *Salesian heritage left by Don Bosco, his experience of the Spirit*,¹³ his *charism*.

13. MR 11.

I already had the opportunity of addressing you on this topic on 20 April 1975 during your 16th General Chapter. Here I wish to tackle the subject from another angle: to examine the matter of communion and the elements that make up the spirit of Mornese.

My first remark touches on the original "Salesian experience", the "new gift of the Spirit" at Valdocco. In the past this "experience of the Spirit" was referred to generally as the "spirit of Don Bosco", the "spirit of Valdocco", or the "Salesian spirit". Such expressions used to comprise all the various aspects and different elements of Don Bosco's charismatic experience as a Founder. Today, however, some scholars prefer to distinguish in the sum total of the Founder's experience the "charism" and the "spirit". They see the "charism" as God's initiative in the specific gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the "spirit" as the Founder's human response in heart and mind together with the various ascetic, moral, pedagogical and pastoral aspects with which he expressed this response.

These distinctions are clear enough in theory

and are useful in themselves; but they run the risk of presenting our traditional word "spirit" (that is, the spirit of Don Bosco, the spirit of Valdocco, the spirit of Mornese) in an over-restricted sense, not taking account of all the objective elements found in the "living experience". Hence I prefer to use the broader expression *Salesian heritage of Don Bosco* instead of "charism" or "spirit"; and by that I mean what today is called "the charism of the Founder".¹⁴

¹⁴ In the documents of Vatican II the expression "charism of the Founder" does not appear. Some of its elements are described, but the terminology used is "spirit of the Founder", "original inspiration of the Institute", "spirit and special scope of the Founder", "particular vocation of the Institute", "distinctive character", "original inspiration of the Institute" (v. LG 45, PC 2 20 22, CD 33 35(i) 35(ii), ES 16(ii)). We refer to the Latin text: some of the translations were hurried and inaccurate.)

The first official use in the magisterium documents of the term "charism of the Founder" is found in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelica Testificatio* of Pope Paul VI. The document speaks of renewal "according to the charisms of the Founders", that is, putting into practice whatever the conciliar documents say regarding fidelity "to the spirit of the Founders, to their evangelical intentions, to their holy example" (ET 11).

An authoritative clarification of Paul VI's "charism of the Founder" is found in the document *Mutuae Relationes* in which a general description of such a charism is given. This shows that several aspects converge both at the time of founding and in the subsequent genuine living traditions: "The very charism of the Founder appears as an 'experience of the Spirit' transmitted to his disciples to be lived, safeguarded, deepened and constantly developed by them in harmony with the Body of Christ continually in the process of growth...This *distinctive character* also involves a particular style of sanctification and apostolate which creates its particular tradition, with the result that one can readily perceive its objective elements" (MR 11).

Hence we have avoided terminology that would restrict the meaning of "the charism of Don Bosco" and the "spirit of Mornese".

Valdocco: the burdens of a Founder

We know that Don Bosco was raised up by God to initiate a special "experience of holiness" and apostolate for the young. He was clearly aware that he was called to be a Founder (and this was exceptional in the history of Founders). His was an undertaking of the most arduous kind. Other Founders of religious institutes were helped by collaborators mature in virtue, knowledge and experience; Don Bosco had to train his helpers from their early years as mere boys. It is true that he had an extraordinary helper in Pope Pius IX, whom he used call "our Co-founder";¹⁵ but Pius IX's help was more in the line of clear and authoritative discernment, choosing the Congregation's particular form of life, big-hearted and courageous planning of a multiple spiritual family, encouragement and resoluteness in the face of all difficulties. But as to the practical problems of forming a pioneering group of faithful disciples to accompany him in his daily vicissitudes, Don Bosco had to go in search of them and educate them over a long period and with infinite patience.

15. MB X 6.

"I need young men willing to help me with the Oratory. Would you be willing to be my helpers?"¹⁶

16. MB III 548-550.

He undertook this lengthy and fatiguing formation with his usual kindness, and was always sustained by the deep conviction that he was conforming to an explicit divine project. "I hardly know how things came about. But this I do know: God willed everything".¹⁷ "I told the Holy Father all I am telling you now. No one else has ever known about these things. Someone might say, 'These

17. MB XII 78.

things all redound to the glory of Don Bosco!’ Not at all. I shall have to render an exact account of how I have carried out God’s will. I have always gone ahead with this design made known to us by the Lord, and this has been my one and only aim in all I have ever done. For this reason I have never allowed myself to be intimidated by adversities, persecutions, serious problems; and the Lord always stood by me”¹⁸.

18. MB VI 664.

There was a time when Don Bosco sought to escape from the responsibilities of being a Founder, but he had to change his mind; he then threw his whole heart and soul into the task — but only in obedience to God’s will. We know that he dissuaded a certain Don Allievi from founding a Congregation¹⁹ because he did not see in the circumstances a sufficient and explicit supernatural calling.

19. MB VII 49.

Left to his own inclinations, he would have entered a religious Institute. He did not do so because he saw that God had other designs for him. In his own words, “The Virgin Mary appeared in a vision and pointed out to me the field of my labours. Her plan was well-devised and complete and she could not and would not free me from it. I went to great pains to discover if there were any religious Institutes in which I would be able to carry out my mandate: it was soon plain to me that there were none. So I did not enter any Order or Congregation and remained alone. I found trustworthy companions. As instructed in my dreams I had to go in search of young associates, choose them carefully, instruct and train them”²⁰.

20. MB III 247.

It is plain that Don Bosco was a Founder in pure docility to the Holy Spirit, accepting a design made known to him by the Holy Spirit. He was

the bearer of a "new gift" that was to embellish Christ's Church: this was his task in history, and in it lies his grandeur, his transcendence.

Our Founder's uniqueness

Father Ricceri once remarked that "to speak of our unique charism does not mean that we consider Don Bosco a thinking genius who opened up new avenues of thought in the sciences that treat of God and man. What we look for in our father is the uniqueness of the Founder, in other words, his remarkable and fruitful collaboration in developing and spreading the gift of the Holy Spirit throughout the world for the salvation of the young".²¹

21. ASC 272.

The passage of time makes it more and more obvious that we are dealing with a truly remarkable saint. We can now firmly state what in the past we only conjectured, namely, that Don Bosco was responsible for a "great spiritual current" in the Church, and his living traditions and practical concepts have laid the foundations of a genuine and creative new school of holiness and apostolate.

In the history of the Church foundations are many, but genuine "new spiritual currents" or schools of thought that permeate the world with a special Gospel inspiration are indeed rare. In this perspective Don Bosco's importance looms larger and larger, and ever-increasing light is shed on the personalities of the saints formed in his tradition, such as St Mary Domenica Mazzarello, St Dominic Savio, Blessed Michael Rua and others. Similarly he enlightens and guides the whole growing Salesian Family — so that Paul VI was moved to speak of "a Salesian happening" in the Church.

Certain facets of our Founder's dynamic personality were responsible for his unique and striking spiritual current; they emanated from that "first spark", that brilliant intuition, that new concept implanted by the Holy Spirit deep down in his personality. It coloured his whole life and was never to leave him.

Right from the clear indications of his first dream as a nine-year-old, Don Bosco carried within him the overpowering conviction that he was a sign and bearer of Christ's love for the young. This spark of the Holy Spirit, this central trait in his personality, developed in him certain characteristics that showed forth his uniqueness.

- *He had a distinctive afflatus.* Don Bosco saw no other way to fulfil his calling except by being a Founder. He was practically obliged to embark on a brand new kind of sanctification and apostolate, a personal interpretation of the Gospel and the mystery of Christ with a special adaptation to the signs of the times. This originality meant a new "fusion" of the common elements of Christian holiness that was well balanced, congenial and regulated; the virtues and the means to holiness had their own proper place, quantity, symmetry and beauty that were characteristic.

- *He achieved an extraordinary form of holiness.* It is difficult to establish the level of this holiness, but it cannot be identified with the holiness of a saint who was not a Founder (e.g., St Joseph Cafasso). Don Bosco's extraordinary holiness invested him with something of the novelty of a precursor. It drew people to him; it made him a referral point for agreements and differences; it made him a pa-

triarch, a prophet. He was never a recluse, but rather a catalyst; he carried the future in his hands.

● *He worked indefatigably to increase his spiritual family.* If the "experience of the Holy Spirit" is not transmitted, received and then lived, cherished, perfected and developed by the Founder's direct disciples and their adherents, there is no founding charism. This is of basic importance. Don Bosco possessed his own proper gifts and they remained with him until his death; through a divine disposition they made him a fruitful centre of radiation and attraction, a "giant of the spirit", as Pius XI called him; and he bequeathed to us a rich and well-defined spiritual heritage.

Thus it is plain that certain qualities are possessed by a Founder that are not possessed by his saintly collaborators (we are not speaking of degrees of perfection in charity); such qualities are: a distinctive afflatus, a sanctity that manifests itself in an extraordinary way, and a remarkable ability to attract followers. These qualities really shone in Don Bosco.

Constituents of the Salesian heritage

The "new gift" and the "design made known by the Lord" to Don Bosco constituted *a spiritual and apostolic experience* lived initially at Valdocco; it grew and acquired further clarity through the years; it flourished in innumerable new places and flowed in the passage of time in an adequately defined and regulated tradition. The Holy See's document on relations between bishops and religious is very apposite here: it speaks of "an experience of the

22. MR 11.

Spirit transmitted to disciples to be lived, safeguarded, deepened and constantly developed in harmony with the Body of Christ in constant development".²² This "Founder's heritage" is manifested in the "special style of sanctification and apostolate" lived according to its "particular tradition" that allows its elements to be adequately visible and objectively distinguished.

What then are the constituents of the special holiness and apostolate of Don Bosco?

23. v. ASC 272.

Father Ricceri pointed out to us that our Special General Chapter gave a practical reply to this question; along these lines then we set out the main points of the charismatic and spiritual afflatus of Don Bosco²³ as follows.

● *A unique covenant with God* which gives Don Bosco the air of a patriarch of a new spiritual family. It is a case of envisaging the mystery of God as of a Father who has special designs in our regard; we must ponder and listen to him according to this covenant, experience his presence as we follow in Christ's steps, seeing our Saviour from a singular point of view that emphasises his infinite goodness, peace and joy, his untiring concern for our salvation, his deep feeling for his little ones and the poor, and his love of the Father that is inextricably linked with the redemption of mankind.

It is not easy to define the special qualities of this covenant. We have to perceive and describe it according to the practical way Don Bosco lived and witnessed to the *virtues of the covenant*, in other words, his faith, his hope and his charity. The first element in his "experience of the Spirit" is this singular work of God realised in a God-centred interior life constantly animated and sustained by the grace of unity; this welds together into

a pastoral charity, love of God and love of neighbour that are both characterised by predilection of the young.²⁴

● *A second element is God's mandate to participate in a specialised and active way in the mission of the Church, namely, a practical mandate from the Father through Christ and his Spirit. "The mission can never consist solely in the activity of the exterior life... in fact the Church's mission is by its very nature nothing else than the mission of Christ continued in the history of the world. It consists principally in sharing in the obedience of him who offered himself to the Father for the life of the world".*²⁵

We know that for Don Bosco Mary is the constant motherly intermediary of this mission, and she directs it preferentially towards the needy youth of the masses. He was chosen to be the friend of the young, their guide, their father, their master. He was assigned a special place in the Church as "missionary of the young", particularly of the poor and needy.

"Mission" is not made up directly of external action or material and human drive, for that is not what a charism is. It is the authoritative mandate that stirs up in the heart, with the help of a God-centred interior life, a special attitude of docility and obedience. Such an attitude constantly illumines and nourishes the awareness of a particular ministerial function in the Church, namely, to be "signs and bearers of the love of God to the young",²⁶ to "work among youth to help them attain full maturity in Christ".²⁷

● *A third element is a distinctive mentality and spiritual life. This means using our human talents,*

24. v. Practice for 1981: Don Bosco's interior life.

25. MR 15.

26. Const. SDB 2.

27. Const. FMA 1.

our temperaments, our hearts, our communion, our special environment and style of life, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and Don Bosco, so that we give an adequate response to our covenant and our mission.

This third element is complex and full of important values; it is difficult to define; it is transmitted in a truly vital way; it implies great kindness, friendliness and understanding (in dealing with the young it is not enough to love them: we must make ourselves loved by them). It implies also that we be contemplatives in action, practising "work and temperance"; keenly ascetical too, since loving-kindness is impossible without a prudent mortification of the senses to guard purity. It implies an optimism inspired by the humanism of St Francis de Sales; courage in matters ecclesial, and in social matters common sense, so that our Catholicity will be active, without human respect, without extremist ideologies; and it also implies an ardent and creative zeal for the salvation of the young in accordance with Don Bosco's "Give me souls; away with all else".

- *Another element is the so-called Preventive System*, our distinctive principles and methods of practising the apostolate among the young. To translate our God-given mission into a relevant and practical apostolate capable of dealing with concrete situations in all cultures, we need a system of pastoral and methodological principles and spiritual attitudes to guide us in practical procedure. Don Bosco, with the help of the Holy Spirit, was at all times a past master of this art, so that this pedagogical and pastoral project must be considered as an integral part of his "experience of the Spirit".

The Preventive System is not just a set of for-

mulas to achieve a proper functioning of a work; nor is it a system of principles for a pedagogical treatise. It is "wisdom in action" and a pastoral know-how in the mind and heart of the educator; it is evangelising by educating and educating by evangelising through reason, religion and loving-kindness.

Rightly did the great Pope Paul VI, alluding to the permanent values of the Preventive System, remark that "the human and Christian principles that formed the basis of Don Bosco's educational wisdom are made up of values that are ageless. But it is difficult to discover the secret, for the roots of his incomparable Christian pedagogical humanism are hidden deep down in the Gospel".²⁸

28. Address at PAS
1966.

• *The last element to consider is our distinctive form of evangelical life.* Don Bosco chose for his Salesians (and what he laid down for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians confirmed it even more clearly) a way of life based on obedience (in view of their special mission) and a family manner of living and working together. We know how much this project cost Don Bosco and how he had patiently worked to ensure it whilst drawing up the Constitutions for Papal approval.

To be a religious Congregation and not a Secular Institute or one of the other possible ecclesial Associations is not a matter of spiritual indifference for the particular interested group — and, in our case, for the whole Salesian Family. On the contrary, it has an integrating and qualifying influence on the "experience of the Holy Spirit" lived und transmitted by the Founder to that particular group. It also affects the Founder's whole spiritual family insofar as the particular group provides for it a compact and powerful centre of identity and vitality.

29. v. ASC 300: Dream of the ten diamonds.

Don Bosco was inspired by God to prescribe for us a distinctive form of evangelical life, adaptable to the times, actively available for the young; truly religious as well as concerned with social problems;²⁹ faithfully following Christ and open to the signs of the times; including in its Constitutions certain institutional, structural and juridical elements that can also claim charismatic inspiration. Indeed in the mystery of the Church as a "sacrament of salvation", the "Body of Christ", the "Temple of the Spirit", there is no opposition between "institutional elements" and "charismatic values"; rather is there a vital interchange through which (in our particular "experience of the Holy Spirit") there are certain institutional aspects that belong definitely to the charism of the Founder.

Hence for both SDBs and FMAs a special part of the heritage bequeathed by Don Bosco is an evangelical community life that is truly distinctive.

It has been advisable to make this preamble so that we can deal more practically and profoundly with what we admire and celebrate as St Mary Domenica Mazzarello's own special masterpiece, the "spirit of Mornese".

THE DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION OF MOTHER MAZZARELLO

In the first article of your Constitutions we read, "St John Bosco founded our Institute... St Mary Domenica Mazzarello, who shared in a special way and with creative fidelity in the charism of foundation, became the mother and Co-foundress of the Institute".³⁰

Cardinal Cagliero has left us an invaluable testimony that admirably epitomises Don Bosco's role

30. Const. FMA 1.

of Founder of your Institute and Mother Mazzarello's role of collaboration. He writes, "Don Bosco appointed me Director of the new Institute and I used confer with him frequently and seek his sound advice regarding the formation of the Sisters and their religious and moral spirit. In his usual kindly way he would put me at ease, saying, 'You know the spirit of our Oratory, our Preventive System, the secret of gaining the affection, attention and obedience of the boys, loving them all and never hurting their feelings, assisting them day and night with fatherly care, patient charity and unfailing kindness. Well, our good Mother Mazzarello possesses all these qualities, and we can be quite confident that the government of the Institute and the Sisters is in good hands. She has only to align herself, as she does, with the spirit, system and distinctive character of our Oratory and our Salesian Constitutions and deliberations. The Sisters' Congregation is the same as ours. It has the same aim and uses the same means, and with example and word Mother Mazzarello inculcates both in her Sisters. They in their turn imitate their Mother, and rather than superiors, rectresses and mistresses, they are tender mothers among the girls they are educating.'" (*Memoria Storica* of Cardinal Cagliero, written in 1918 and kept in the FMA Generalate; cited by Maccono in *St Mary Domenica Mazzarello, Co-foundress and first Superior General of the FMA*, I 274; Turin-FMA 1960).

This is a fine and telling testimony from Cardinal Cagliero. It makes it eminently clear that Don Bosco was also the Founder of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians; that his charismatic experience reached out to the Institute; that Mother Mazzarello was totally en-

lightened by Don Bosco and polarised towards his charism, his Salesian heritage: she lived it and expressed it fruitfully in a feminine way.

Here too we can note another aspect, subtle but most important.

The Institute of Mary Help of Christians was not founded simply and solely to live an independent life, but to be also incorporated into the overall charismatic project of Don Bosco, his spiritual and apostolic family then in existence.

Don Bosco closely linked the Institute with his Congregation; he unified its apostolic drive and missionary plans; he directed its services to assist the Association of the Salesian Co-operators.³¹

³¹ The Institute's first Constitutions were significantly entitled *Rule or Constitutions for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians incorporated with the Salesian Society* (Turin 1885; *Cronistoria* III 431 et seq.). In the preface, after a list of intentions, Don Bosco wrote, "Pray also for the Pious Salesian Society with which you are incorporated, and please remember me too, who wish you every blessing" (ibid. 432).

We know how Mother Daghero, Don Rua and all were deeply concerned about the right application of the famous decree *Normae secundum quas* of 1901: all were afraid that the change in the juridical form of incorporation might upset their deep-seated spiritual communion and common Salesian foundation (v. Capetti: *Il cammino dell'Istituto nel corso di un secolo* II 202 et seq., Rome FMA 1973). The decree demanded the separation of women's Institutes of simple vows from their respective Congregations of men.

Later another decree of 19 June 1917 appointed the Rector Major of the Salesians pro tem. Delegate Apostolic for the FMA. This re-introduced a certain juridical bond that both safeguarded the autonomy of the Institute and brought back the old spiritual relationship (v. ibid III 115 et seq.). It was the result of representations made by Cardinal Cagliero to Pope Benedict XV, who kindly acceded, established and decreed that the Rector Major should be appointed Delegate Apostolic for five years. The decree was renewed regularly until another decree of 24

(Footnote continued overleaf)

He was inspired by God not only to found the SDB Congregation and the FMA Institute so that each would have its own development and history, but also that they should both be vocationally, spiritually and apostolically related, members of the same Salesian Family, to face the future in solidarity of spirit and mission in the service of the young.

It was his wish that your Institute should find a source of unity, support and animation in the Congregation of Salesians founded by him on the gifts and functions of the priestly ministry.

Far be it from us to suggest the slightest impression of dependence: "Their Congregation is on the same footing as ours", said Don Bosco. What we have in mind is the importance of real communion. "The Institute uses the same means, has the same aim, system and character as our Oratory." In the past our mutual communion was on a specific juridical footing; today the juridical form is different and more in keeping with the social and ecclesial promotion of women. What matters is that the thought of our origins should inspire us with an ever greater family sensitivity.

(Footnote continued from previous page)

April 1940 included the faculty for the Rector Major in the list of privileges granted by Pius XII.

Juridical forms can change. What matters is our loyalty to our origins and our practical concern to develop mutual communion of spirit and mission.

When Don Albera became the first Delegate his comment was, "We shall progress together so that our minds and hearts, united to Don Bosco, will strive to attain the end he envisaged for the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians".

Mother Daghero too made known her joy in a circular letter, recalling the history of the Institute and its Marian aspect. She recorded how Don Bosco, at Mary's inspiration, wanted the Institute right from its beginnings to have "the same spirit and mission as the Salesian Society" (ibid. III 119-120).

Stars in the firmament of our Salesian origins

It is a rewarding experience to study the personality of Mary Mazzarello, not as an isolated individual, but within the framework of Don Bosco's heritage to his Salesians. We should not only look to her virtues and personal merits, but to the founding charism Providence granted her; we must envisage her in relation to the spiritual and apostolic wealth of the whole vast Salesian Family.

As we examine the actual founding of the Salesian Family, it is plain that though Don Bosco was the central and unifying force he was not alone. To better understand and assess Don Bosco and the many-faceted impelling gift given him by the Holy Spirit, we have to refer also to Mamma Margaret, Don Cafasso, Pius IX, Mother Mazzarello, Don Rua, Don Pestarino and others. As a founder Don Bosco moved within a circle of persons imbued with the Holy Spirit and a tissue of providential events that all contributed to setting afoot his great charismatic heritage.

Naturally we realise the central fact that in respect of God's plan for the Saint's founding charism these persons are like satellites around him, accompanying him, counselling him, helping him: but their effect is not essentially a determining one. The author of the charism is the Holy Spirit; it is he who lit the spark in the depths of Don Bosco's heart.

We have to recognise that much thought and research are needed in this matter to arrive at a true understanding of God's design regarding our common vocation. I suggest that the following lines of thought be followed through.

Up to the present the emphasis has been put

by each Congregation on its own Founder or Foundress, viewing the personal goodness and activity of each within the ambit of his or her Religious Institute. But if we look at them in the broad horizon of our common Salesian heritage and the even broader perspective of the Salesian Family, we are rewarded with a clearer and more extensive picture of the historical and founding qualities of each.

Mother Mazzarello shows us how the Salesian charism is just as suitably extended to the feminine world. Her spiritual role was to collaborate in the creation of a feminine Salesianity; thus she became the means used by the Holy Spirit to widen the Salesian charismatic experience for the good of girls.

The distinctive light of Mother Mazzarello

The celebration of this centenary is an excellent occasion to reflect on the important role Mother Mazzarello played as the first typical Salesian woman religious in our Family and the Co-foundress of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

Without a doubt the supreme author of our common charism is the Holy Spirit. He is the divine weaver of the Salesian cloth and endowed each collaborator with the qualities necessary to carry out with precision his or her complementary role.

Don Bosco's substantial intervention in the founding of your Institute, far from harming the little seed sown by the Spirit in Mornese through Mary Mazzarello,³² left more than sufficient space for her creative contribution.

One of the Saint's biographers confirms this affirmation and states that even before meeting Don

32. Colli: **Contributions of DB and MDM to the charismatic founding of the Inst. of DMHC**, Rome FMA 1978, p. 92.

Bosco Mary Domenica "had always felt the divine impulse to show her concern for young girls. As a young woman she had already opened a model workshop for girls in her town and founded a flourishing festive oratory; yet she had no experience of workshops or oratories and probably knew little or nothing about them. In the Maccagno house, together with the good and gentle Petronilla, she already had a charitable institution in embryo; in the House of Mary Immaculate she had taken in three other young girls and some of her companions had joined her as helpers and had elected her their superior. Mother Mazzarello was already at the head of a community when she met Don Bosco. Without her realising it the seed of the educative vocation that God had planted in her heart was already well developed and ready to bear much fruit. Indeed when she came to know Don Bosco and his projects and methods she found that everything corresponded fully with her views. She was immediately deeply convinced that she must help this holy priest in every possible way in his apostolate for good.³³

33. Maccono: St MDM
I 239.

34. v. Cronistoria II
26.

35. *ibid.* II 106.

All this makes it clear that when the two Sisters of St Anne (sent by Don Bosco to help put the new foundation on its feet) reported that Mary Domenica had a "natural aptitude" for forming the nascent Institute in the spirit of the Founder,³⁴ they were not dealing with an ingenuous country lass who was merely copying Don Bosco. The same holds too for Cagliero's remark when he spoke of her "pleasing and zealous efforts to imitate Don Bosco in everything".³⁵ Mary Domenica had made a conscious and free choice to obey the interior call of the Holy Spirit; and it was in Don Bosco and his charism that she saw the full meaning of

her choice clearly defined.

Furthermore, Mother Mazzarello, a mature woman, under the wise and exacting guidance of Don Pestarino, threw herself into her vital and creative commitment, and imbued it with her strong, many-faceted personality and powerful initiative.³⁶ The more one studies the atmosphere and ambience of the various "origins" of Mornese the more outstanding is the obvious influence of Mary Mazzarello.

36. v. Maccono: St MDM
I 29-30.

The sum total of these elements constitute a well integrated whole and has rightly earned the name of the "spirit of Mornese", her distinctive contribution as Co-foundress.

It should be added that the spirit of Mornese is totally modelled on the living witness of Mother Mazzarello. In her brief life as a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians she was the personification of the spirit of Mornese. At her death she bequeathed it as a complete and fruitful spiritual heritage.

THE DEEP SIGNIFICANCE OF HER DEATH

On 4 February 1879 Mother Mazzarello left Mornese for good. It was a generous act of detachment. On 23 September of the same year she paid a brief visit there on the occasion of the death of her dearly loved father. A few months later, on 12 April 1880, the historic first house of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians at Mornese was sold.

From February 1879 to May 1881 (two years and a few months) the history of the Institute has nothing to relate of spiritual novelty at Nizza Monferrato except that the community transplanted from Mornese continued to flourish.

These two years in Mother Mazzarello's life proved that the spirit of Mornese truly survived

its transplant. From the holy death of the humble, creative and mature pioneer Daughter of Mary Help of Christians it received its final perfecting touch and became her solemn testament.

Enlightened by her profound union with God and sustained by the safe and solid forward-looking vision of Don Bosco, Mother Mazzarello had the clearest notions of her important influence as a Foundress on the future of the Institute. Hence she made sure that the experience of those first years and all they symbolised (the spirit of Mornese) became a rich and distinctive heritage that would enlighten and guide the growing Institute as its God-given authoritative model. Some of Mother Mazzarello's statements make it obvious that she was convinced of her "foundation-stone role" in the great future edifice. "If Don Bosco's predictions come true," she would say, "our Congregation will spread to all parts of the world — even as far as South America. But if we wish the same spirit to flourish and continue its good work, then we pioneers of the Congregation must not only be full of virtue: we must be the mirrors in which future members will see the resplendent reflection of the true spirit of the Institute. We must live, work and speak in such a way that they will be constrained to say, 'How fervent were our first Sisters. What observance, what humility, what poverty, what obedience!' Thus they will be able to follow our example and the true spirit of the Institute will continue to flourish in their lives. This is important, because when the Sisters will be great in number it will be hard for them to have the same fervour as we who are so few. As the Sisters multiply and the Congregation grows, perforce the spirit will suffer and zeal and fervour

will gradually diminish. Don Bosco said this was the case in so many Congregations. If we pioneers become lax, if we do not love, if we do not practise humility and poverty, if we do not observe the silence, if we do not live united with the Lord, what can we expect of those who will follow us?"³⁷

37. Maccono: St MDM
I 399-400.

How simple, holy and expressive are these words. There is a refreshing unaffectedness and humility about them; yet they are alive with the awareness of an historic mission received from God.

Final perfecting touch

We have remarked that in the last two years Mother Mazzarello gave the final touch that perfected the spirit of Mornese.

This did not take place at Mornese, but it completed and perfected what Mornese stood for. She made her life totally available for the Kingdom; she was utterly detached even from what was humanly closest to her heart; she was willing to accept the "transplanting": she would go anywhere — Nizza, France, South America, any continent whatsoever. It meant even more: it was a case of self-donation right to the last drop of her blood, right to the final oblation of her very existence, a death that was the expression of her love, and is still seen as a gesture that was to bear much fruit.

The love that prompted her to move from Mornese, to be totally detached, to accept her death so willingly, was Mother Mazzarello's final perfecting touch to the spirit of Mornese. This makes it clear then that the spirit of Mornese not only permeates and matures your Salesian lives but also infuses them with a profound commitment for the Salesian

mission, even to the extent of self-immolation in a paschal offering.

Mother Mazzarello lived her last two years away from Mornese, one might say to perfect its spiritual heritage. She thought of the Institute rather than of herself; she visited their first foundations so recently opened; she accompanied the missionary Sisters to their embarkation ports for South America; she journeyed to France, became ill at St Cyr (where she was visited by Don Bosco three times) and offered herself as a victim to God; she returned to Nizza for the final sacrifice: it was in all a fitting finale to the masterpiece of her whole life, the spirit of Mornese.

Solemn testament

Mother Mary's death at Nizza was her authentic signature to her work as Co-foundress: it was her solemn testament. Only with her death have we gradually come to realise the full extent of her distinctive and determining contribution to the Salesian heritage. By her death too we have at last been able to discover the nature of her historic mission.

Everybody thought it would have been better for the first Superior General of the Institute to have lived longer; but her death made it clear that the Co-foundress of the Institute had admirably fulfilled her specific role.

Some may query why God so shortened the years of Mother Mary Domenica as Superior General and prolonged those of her successor (Mother Caterina Daghero held office for forty-three years). The chief reason comes immediately to mind: Mother Mary's task was to create the spirit of Mornese and

bring it to final maturity; and this task was already completed at the dawn of 14 May 1881.

Thus did Mother Mary Domenica carry out her exacting and distinctive responsibilities as Co-foundress.

The role of Co-foundress

The true role of Co-foundress began when Mary Mazzarello became head of the nascent Institute. It was a kind of investiture that imbued her whole personality; it conferred on her a specific role, greater and more important than that of Superior with which she was always associated.

The unexpected death of Don Pestarino on 15 May 1874, less than two years after his first profession, could be interpreted in a similar way. It was a death that greatly saddened Mary Domenica and her companions because he had played such an important part in their spiritual growth. From a human point of view it seemed sadly premature; but with hindsight and the spirit of faith we see that his death served to throw into relief the role of protagonist for Mother Mazzarello in those early "founding" days.

Paradoxically one could quote here her incredible remark that made such spiritual sense: "Even if by some impossible circumstance Don Pestarino were to leave Don Bosco, I would remain with Don Bosco".³⁸

We have already established how conscientiously Mother Mazzarello realised and carried out her great responsibility. Today we admire her in her role of Co-foundress, seeing it as a sublime mission and a glorious duty. She however performed the role

in sincere simplicity; it seemed to her a spontaneous act of docility to the Holy Spirit; she bore the day to day responsibilities unaffectedly and with the deepest humility.

It is curious that for a number of reasons, but particularly because of her natural humility, it was not until the process of her beatification that Mother Mazzarello received the title of Co-foundress. (The remark was even made that she was "too humble" to assume such a role.) It is interesting too that the title of Co-foundress was not a suggestion that came from FMA or SDB Superiors: it was the officials of the Holy See studying her life and work who conferred the title — even if it did not in those days carry the extensive connotation it has now gained through the pronouncements of Vatican II.

Father Ferdinando Maccono, who was vice-postulator of Mother Mazzarello's Cause and had a profound knowledge of her life, was delighted with the statement from Rome, even though it was expressed with low-key caution. It was not till 20 November 1935 (and after considerable discussion) that the definitive approval of Pope Pius XI attributed to the Servant of God the "title of Co-foundress" of the Institute of The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

The actual significance of such a title varies according to circumstances. One could instance Benedict and Scholastica, Francis of Assisi and Clare, Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac. Each case must be defined on its own merits in correlation to the respective Founder and according to the historical facts regarding the co-founding partner. In our case we are dealing with an Institute "incorporated" or "affiliated" (Don Bosco used

“incorporato” and “aggregato”) with a spiritual family comprising, in those days, the Salesian Congregation and the Co-operators.³⁹

39. Central SDB Archives, Rome.

I do not need to list all the arguments that confirm the validity of the title. Suffice it to quote from an unpublished letter of Father Maccono written at Nizza 22 March 1935 to the then Procurator General Father Tomasetti: “I would like to set forth my own thoughts on the matter”, he writes. “I admit that anyone who reads Mother Mazzarello’s life carefully must realise that Don Bosco is the Founder. But the one who trained the future religious, formed them and taught them to accept and love sacrifice and hunger (and their conditions were poverty-stricken and wretched enough, goodness knows!), the one who sustained them when problems were great and all seemed lost, was Mary Mazzarello. Don Bosco, because of his temperament, and also to forestall gossip and friction with the Turin Curia, etc., was a rare visitor at Mornese (about fifteen visits in all). The burden was borne by Mother Mary.

“One could list Cagliari and Costamagna, but both were after Don Pestarino’s death. Both men were men of quality; but between you and me, their characters were vastly different from those of Mary Mazzarello and Don Pestarino — especially was this the case with Don Costamagna. Indeed it was only because of the virtue and exceptional prudence of Mother Mazzarello that things went ahead so well. She made her observations to them courageously, yet always yielded for prudence’ sake, even when she saw that they were in the wrong. (Both men were upright and humble enough to admit their mistakes.) The governing of the Institute was thus rendered more difficult for Mother Mary.

It would have been far easier for her if she had had only to deal with Don Bosco or Don Pestarino.

"In the *Life of Mother Mazzarello* I have not mentioned these things openly to avoid disturbing people; but I have kept rigidly to the truth, and a discerning reader would understand the great number of difficulties Mother Mazzarello had to overcome with her heroic prudence and self-control, with her ever-present smile and cheerful mien that bespoke her intrepid virtue.

"For these and other reasons, I for one am convinced that Mother Mazzarello merits the title of Co-foundress".⁴⁰

Indeed the death of the Saint was a final perfecting touch to the spirit of Mornese and all it stands for: it made it "transplantable" anywhere and always. Her death also lifted the veil that had concealed her personal contribution so important and influential in the early days of the founding of the Institute.

The essential of her contribution is the SPIRIT OF MORNESE, and it will always be the life-blood of your flourishing Institute.

THE SPIRIT OF MORNESE

This is a vital and complex topic and difficult to deal with in a few pages. Its characteristics are numerous; it is not possible to analyse each separately and it is not easy to discern the links that bind them together into an harmonious and dynamic whole.

We have reflected on the overall vision of the Salesian heritage and have arrived at a point where we can now limit ourselves to noting some of the

40. Central Archives
SDB, Generalate, Rome.

main facets in the spiritual make-up of a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians in the Family of Don Bosco. To meditate on these features so clear and thriving in your living traditions seems to me the best way to celebrate the death of Mother Mazzeello.

I should like to repeat some of the thoughts I put to your Provincials three years ago.⁴¹ Also I would recall Don Bosco's *Dream of the Ten Diamonds*. A few months ago, Reverend Mother, you reminded me that the centenary of this Dream was in September next; and you suggested that I should make a few reflections on it. I did make a study of it (you may read it in our *Acts of the Superior Council*),⁴² and I believe it sheds some light too on the thoughts I am offering you now on the spirit of Mornese.

When I began to prepare my talks for your Provincials, the spirit of Mornese presented two great problems for me. Firstly, I thought it portrayed a cultural and religious situation that was now a thing of the past; and secondly, at first glance I could not see any clear and attractive characteristics that pointed up an appealing spiritual personality. It appealed to me rather as a system of ascetic and moral practices that were heroic, yes, but probably discouraging to people of today.

It was only a first impression, however, like a morning mist that clears with the rising of the sun.

It is obvious that with the passage of time, no institution, not even the Church, continues to live according to the cultural manner of its origins; though the early days remain symbolic and their heroicity is forever an entrancing ideal.

The way of life at Mornese also reflected a heroicity born of harsh conditions and a destitution

41. v. E. Viganò: *Non secondo la carne ma secondo lo spirito*; Rome FMA 1978, pp. 101-124.

42. ASC 300.

and mortality not unusual in many other impoverished countries besides Piedmont. To re-establish such conditions today would be against the Gospel. Besides, the asceticism practised at Mornese obeyed local canons of another era now totally out of fashion. Nobody today would demand the same timetable, the same diet, the same formation, etc., of those times. We have to cull from the practice of those days the permanent underlying principles that must be relived and expressed in the light of Vatican II and according to the cultural, religious and ecclesial form of today, taking account of the different situations and cultural variations of the many communities throughout the world; and at the same time being utterly loyal to Christian asceticism and the genuine Salesian tradition.

Dear Superiors, Provincials and Rectresses, if this "re-interpretation" and "re-inculturation" is not followed through there is the very real danger of creating false ideals, conflicts of conscience; and the spirit of Mornese could be presented as an ascetical medieval gargoyle instead of what it really is: an attractive and enthusing ideal that characterises every Daughter of Mary Help of Christians.

Fortunately, one who lived at Mornese in those days has left us a wonderful description of life there. Mother Sorbone called it "paradise"; she has described a "pentecostal atmosphere"; she cried out with joy, "How wonderful life was!" In the face of such expressions, the cultural differences between past and present simply melt away. I found it easy to distinguish and admire in the spirit of Mornese those wonderful, simple and sturdy values that must flourish in your Institute not only today but always.

When I addressed your Provincials I also en-

deavoured to answer the second problem by treating the main lines of the Mornese tradition under two aspects, the mystical and the ascetical. (The former has reference to enthusiasm for your vocation; the latter to education in fidelity.) I told the Provincials that "I desired to speak first on the mystical aspect because I thought people tended to over-stress the intense asceticism (that made such an impression at first sight). However, it is important to remember that asceticism is a fruitful harvest reaped from a convinced and enthusiastic union with God".⁴³

Today, after reflecting on the *Dream of the Ten Diamonds*, I can see that these two aspects have further values to discover, clarify and develop authoritatively and explicitly. And this I shall try to do right now.

43. E. Viganò: Non secondo la carne ma secondo lo Spirito; Rome FMA 1978, p. 113.

Frame of reference

In the spirit of Mornese there is a central ethos that Mother Mazzarello stressed constantly and that was more or less taken for granted; it constituted the atmosphere and was the regular structure for all the various characteristics; it was the Salesian heritage. Don Bosco was the centre and catalyst for all the elements that made up the spirit of Mornese and gave them character and consistency.

It has been said that Mother Mazzarello and her companions at Mornese were quite able to translate the "new gift" given by the Spirit to Don Bosco into a feminine context. This is true, but the work of Mother Mazzarello and her companions was far more than a mere "translation". Today we speak much of "inculturation", and in certain

situations (such as Africa) the problems that surface are profound and widespread. One could say that Mary Mazzarello's creation of a feminine Salesianity is closer to the complicated travail of an inculturation process than the much more simple process of a "translation".

Indeed at Mornese it was a case of living with the heart and style of a woman the following principles:

- the unique Salesian covenant with God through an interior life of faith, hope and charity energised by predilection for the young;
- the active participation in the mission of the Church with a lively awareness of being sent by God for a specialised apostolate among youth in need;
- the typical, ascetical, mystical and Salesian way of spiritual life created by Don Bosco at Valdocco, with all its various and notable characteristics;
- the Preventive System with its practical wisdom and pastoral principles as a way to achieve the Salesian mission;
- the distinctive form of evangelical life chosen with clarity of vision and practical sense in a Congregation open and adaptable to the times.

These various aspects presented a complex situation; yet the task was achieved despite a vast array of problems. What we call the *spirit of Mornese* was deeply involved in every aspect, and it would be rash to limit it to any scheme drawn up according to preconceived principles.

We have already remarked that the spirit of Mornese was the work of Mother Mazzarello and her companions. *But this spirit referred back in*

all details to the Salesian heritage of Don Bosco as its guiding light, its source of inspiration its centre of polarisation.

As in those early days, so also today (and indeed in the future), the spirit of Mornese, to be genuine, must revolve around this central principle: the knowledge, assimilation and practice of Don Bosco's Salesian heritage.

Salient characteristics of the spirit of Mornese

With these principles established, it is possible to define the salient characteristics of the spirit of Mornese. We list the main ones without detailing their make-up.

- First of all, the spirit of faith; fervent, simple and practical piety; constant union with God and devotion to the Eucharist; confidence in the help of Providence; a lively sense of the reward of heaven; a special devotion to our Blessed Lady, St Joseph and the Guardian Angel;

- a lively distaste for worldly values; courageous acceptance of the cross of Christ; mortification and heroic poverty; a shining and delicate purity and unflagging control of the senses and affections; a profound abnegation; an ever-present temperance;

- simplicity of life; common sense and balanced judgement; a spontaneous predilection for humility; ceaseless and joyful work that imparts a Spartan tone to each day; a family spirit that facilitates communion; living a community life in holy joy; instinctive and conscious co-responsibility; profound obedience and sense of duty; admirable exercise of

religious authority with confidence and community participation; a filial respect for Don Bosco and the Superiors;

- an ardent zeal for the salvation of the young according to the Preventive System; a motherly affection that is both tender and firm; an impartial love that can adapt itself to individual weaknesses; missionary availability linked to a generous ecclesial sense; loyalty to the Pope and bishops; generosity in apostolic initiatives with sacrificing acceptance of their cultural requirements;

- sincere attachment to one's personal religious consecration; clear and enthusiastic awareness of the option made by religious profession and a lively sense of belonging to the Institute; desire to know, reverence and practise the Constitutions; constant practical concern for personal formation and for the new vocations that keep coming to the Congregation.

All these things constituted the deep wealth of that first tiny and poor community of young women at Mornese. True, all the Sisters contributed their share to formation development and the common good; but the one who inspired, created, encouraged, guided and gave the example was Mother Mary Domenica. She was both the main fashioner and principal model of the spirit of Mornese. In her were mirrored in a practical and vital way all the salient characteristics noted above.

FEATURES OF THE MORNESE MYSTIQUE

Here I would attempt an interesting experiment: to trace the Salesian characteristics incorporated and embellished in the spirit of Mornese. It was your-

self, Reverend Mother, who gave me the idea; and the *Dream of the Ten Diamonds*, admirably interpreted by Don Philip Rinaldi will help in the experiment.

Our perception of the spirit of Mornese is put into clear focus by Scene I of the Dream. This is important, since the uniqueness and distinctive ethos of a spiritual life is not grasped by a mere list of characteristics (which in the various paths of holiness would be substantially the same). A distinctive idiom is characterised rather by the disposition, symmetry and overall harmony of these features and also their relationships and subtle emphases.

The diamonds of the Dream indicate the main characteristics of the Salesian spiritual life. They are not a mere list of virtues but rather certain attitudes and practical principles that go to make up an actual life-style.

There are five diamonds on the front of the mantle: Faith, Hope, Charity, Work and Temperance; and five on the back: Obedience, Poverty, Reward, Chastity and Fasting. Before explaining the diamonds one by one, Don Rinaldi notes three aspects of the vision: the august personage wearing the mantle; the front view of the august personage with the diamonds on the breast of his mantle; and thirdly the diamonds on the back of the mantle.

For Don Rinaldi the august personage wearing the mantle, and on whom, all the rays of the diamonds converge with dazzling splendour, is Don Bosco himself.

The august personage seen from the front, and the special positioning of the five diamonds on the breast and the shoulders represent the characteristics of the Salesian spiritual life that should be clear and visible to all.

Seen from the back the other diamonds represent the supporting spiritual framework. These virtues are not necessarily immediately visible in the Salesian spiritual life and hence should have a somewhat private character. They infuse harmony and dynamic constancy into the Salesian spiritual life; they hold the secret of Salesian drive.⁴⁴

44. v. comments in ASC 300.

I feel this threefold aspect of the Dream could open up new avenues in the methodical interpretation of the spirit of Mornese.

The august personage

At the centre, as the august personage, sustaining all, and on whom converge the characteristics outlined above, is *Don Bosco with his wonderful experience in the Spirit*. The brief reference we have made to him above will suffice here and now.

What was the basic concern of Mary Domenica Mazzarello, of her young companions, and also of Don Pestarino? Don Bosco has the answer: to be totally committed to one's project for the reason that it is inspired by God.

To incorporate in the new Institute this experience of the Spirit and endow it with feminine qualities, beauty and attributes required versatile creativity and spiritual motherliness, both imbued with thorough and minute docility and fidelity to the Founder.

Visible characteristics

The positioning of the five diamonds on the front of the mantle help us to delineate the visible

Salesian characteristics of the Daughter of Mary Help of Christians.

The diamond over the heart is charity in its twofold aspect: towards the mystery of God and the needs of the young; in other words, union with God with the fervour of a bride; and ardent zeal for the salvation of the young with the delicacy and grace of a mother; the heart of a virgin-spouse filled with a mother's predilection for the young.

Then, on the breast, near the heart, were the diamonds of Faith and Hope. Faith is characterised by constantly seeing God in life and creation and manifests the supernatural atmosphere and profound piety in the spirit of Mornese. Hope indicates an awareness and generosity for apostolic projects, and makes it clear that the spirit of Mornese is based on the sure help of God, especially through the risen Christ and his Mother: Christ present for us in the Eucharist and his loving Mother as the Help of Christians.

These three diamonds show the absolute primacy of certain values in the spirit of Mornese: the vital theological virtues ("the virtues of the covenant") that imbue every attitude in a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians and constitute the active principle that gives personality and verve to her spiritual life.

This year's annual practice or "strenna" is a reminder to us that Mary Mazzarello's grandeur lies in her imitation and development of the distinctive interior life of Don Bosco.

Finally, on the front of the shoulders are the diamonds of Work and Temperance; they support the mantle of the august personage. Don Bosco never ceased to insist on these two virtues: they would ensure the flourishing development of our Congregations.

I have already noted two of the significant characteristics woven into the cloth that was to become the spirit of Mornese: the two counsels given by Don Bosco to Mary Domenica and her Daughters of Mary Immaculate — “Keep up your prayers by all means; but throw yourselves completely into your good works”; and the second advice for 1869, “Love work. We live by the sweat of our brows.”

These are indeed characteristic counsels. Unflagging work was assuredly one of the main features of life at Mornese: work was spontaneous and always welcome; it was performed with love and joy, humility and serenity; it was work with a feminine touch and extended to cooking, cleaning, laundering, mending and ironing.

It is interesting to note that when Don Bosco discussed prayer with the Sisters at Mornese, he would mention work almost instinctively. We know well that for him piety expressed itself in unselfish and self-sacrificing work; as he understood it, work was impossible, indeed inconceivable, without an intense and profound piety; and this piety was not to be a mere adjunct to the work: it was to totally impregnate it and make it utterly meaningful.

A word about Temperance, or moderation in all things. It should be reflected in simplicity of life, in good judgement and common sense, in a daily austerity and serenity that eschews all coarseness, and embellishes all with feminine kindness; in self-control and in astute judgement when dealing with others — and a little admixture of feminine shrewdness and intuition.

These visible characteristics in the spirit of Mornese are the qualities of a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians that are in the public eye; they express

her social image, that which renders the distinctive ethos of the Salesian vocation of Don Bosco attractive to all people and especially to the young.

The supporting ascetic and religious framework

Finally, on the back of the mantle we have the supporting framework that imparts energy and constancy.

The disposition of the five diamonds on the back of the mantle reveals the ascetic and religious means that add strength and perseverance to the spiritual life of the Daughter of Mary Help of Christians.

It should be noted immediately that the delicate feminising of Don Bosco's Salesianity must be effected in the extensive area of an ascetic education; and it was here that Mother Mazzarello really shone with her intuition and creativeness. Something of this is adumbrated, perhaps unwittingly, by her biographer when he compares the education received by Don Bosco with that received by Mary Domenica. He writes, "Don Bosco needed not only a father's affection but also a mother's heart for his boys and spiritual sons, and he received his training in virtue from a mother who was holy, wise and virile. Mother Mary, on the other hand, needed to add to her feminine gentleness a manly firmness for the education of her girls and her Sisters, and she had received her training in virtue from her father".⁴⁵

Dear Sisters, it is your task to understand and cherish these many distinctive characteristics of your heritage. They are certainly authoritative after a hundred years of well tested living tradition.

• *Obedience is central.* At the centre of the square of diamonds there is the dazzling diamond

45. Maccono: St MDM
ASC 300.
1 6.

of obedience with all the other rays converging on it.

Whenever Don Bosco spoke to the Sisters in those days, cheerful obedience was a recurring theme. To help Don Pestarino discern who were to be the "pillars of the Institute" he gave him this criterion: "Those who are obedient even in the smallest matters".⁴⁶ Obedience loomed large in his judgment right to the end. On his deathbed he left this memento for his Sisters: "Obedience. Practise it and see that it is practised".⁴⁷ He always gave religious obedience top rating,⁴⁸ for (he used say) "if a sack is not sewn up, everything will fall out; and it is the same with a Sister: if her sack of virtues is not well sewn up by obedience, she will lose all the contents and will cease to be a religious".⁴⁹ And one should add that cheerful, spontaneous, cordial and filial obedience is possible only when authority is exercised in a truly maternal (not "maternalistic") way.

Religious obedience presupposes a strong and constant sense of belonging to one's Institute. (This was so strong in Mornese that in actually gave birth to your Congregation.) It also presupposes that the Constitutions are known, loved and practised.

• In the spirit of Mornese the *diamond of Poverty* stands for personal decorum, dignity and modesty that reject comfortable and easy living and fashionable affectations. The community attitude to ownership and use regarding the few belongings at Mornese was truly natural, indeed instinctive.

When we consider the apostolic aspect of Mornese we realise that the pupils, as well as the style and means of the little community, reflected the environment of the district: it was not to be an Institute for the well-to-do or the higher echelons

46. MB X 598.

47. MB XVIII 502.

48. Cronistoria II 37.

49. Cronistoria II 339.

of society. In fact Don Bosco sent two Sisters from the Marchioness Barolo Institute and certain lay women to help instil the various social graces necessary for Sisters engaged in educating the young.

This escutcheon of your origins should never be forgotten, just as Jesus never forgot Bethlehem and Nazareth ("What good can come out of Nazareth?") It must direct your preferential option towards the poor — not motivated by a false class-consciousness, but by the poverty of the Beatitudes as lived with joy by the Virgin Mary.

● *The splendid diamond of Purity.* Don Pestarino referred Mary Domenica to Don Bosco as "a lily of purity".⁵⁰ Hers was not a sombre chastity of complexes and taboos, but serene and unembarrassed. A pupil of those times spoke of chastity as Mother Mazzarello's "virtue of predilection". Her demeanour, her dress, her speech bespoke a total modesty. In speaking to the girls of this virtue her words were convincing and sincere, and she impressed her young pupils by her saintly fervour".⁵¹

Mother Mazzarello encouraged an unembarrassed, fresh and pleasant comportment; she had no time for mawkishness or simpering.

From the pedagogical point of view her great concern in this matter had in mind the kindness required by the Preventive System. I think that Mother Mazzarello had here a new and important problem to solve.

We know that for Don Bosco "education is a matter of the heart", and that a charity that translates itself into kindness, pleasantness, friendliness (i.e., "loving-kindness") is the very hinge of his educational project. We know that in a Salesian house it is not enough that the boys be loved: "they must know they are loved".⁵² All this in a feminine

50. Maccono: St MDM I 206.

51. *ibid.* 121 122.

52. MB XVII 111.

Salesian context presented problems. Would emotionalism and sentimentality prove too strong and compromise chastity or educational activities? — or would the movements of the heart be so suppressed as to cause Don Bosco's educational system to founder?

In Cardinal Cagliero's *Memoria Storica* is found the following passage from an address by Mother Mazzarello to her Sisters: "We have the same mission among the young as Don Bosco has and we must use our hearts as Don Bosco does. But Don Bosco is a saint and we are not yet saints. Hence we must beware of our weakness, for by nature we and the girls have more heart than head; and a woman's heart is emotional, demonstrative and weak".⁵³

Cagliero further witnesses. "I remember her last words to me on the eve of her death. After speaking of her own soul she turned to the subject of controlling the inclinations of the heart, the tendency to mawkishness and too-human and over-sensitive affections that had crept into the community".⁵⁴

Mother Mazzarello's own life was a wonderful answer to this problem. Don Pestarino had described her as having "a most sensitive heart"⁵⁵ and as having "carried out her office as superior in a truly motherly way; there was no sentimental softness about her: she was, if anything, rather on the firm side, but she had great powers of persuasion".⁵⁶

Speaking of those early years, Enrichetta Sorbone testifies, "Her rule was energetic, resolute but kind. She was direct with us, but she loved us as a true religious mother. There was a kind of sweetness about her that did not force but attract us to do good, to make sacrifices, to draw closer to Jesus. She had an eye for everything and was

53. Maccono: St MDM
II 135.

54. Ibid. 234.
II 135.

55. Ibid. 207.

56. Ibid. II 239.

on the watch for what would be good or bad for her daughters. She was ever ready to provide for their physical and moral good to the best of her ability".⁵⁷

57. *Ibid.* 240.

I have dwelt somewhat on this aspect since it has a special place in Salesian asceticism, and also because it was one of the more delicate areas of Don Bosco's Salesian heritage feminised by Mother Mazzarello.

In our spirituality this aspect is important because it transcends chastity and seeks out its special splendour: it means more than being chaste: it means being engagingly resplendent in purity.

Nevertheless despite the singular importance of this virtue and Don Bosco's great insistence on it, the diamond is on the back of the mantle and subordinate to obedience. This is indeed something to think about.

● *Below the diamond of Chastity is that of Fasting.* Don Rinaldi tells us that it does not refer only to food and drink but to the *mortification of the senses*, as if to indicate that Salesian kindness needs the splendour of purity but cannot achieve it without an ascetical discipline.

If there is anything clear and practical in the spirit of Mornese and that stands out like a beacon in Mother Mazzarello's biography and the three volumes of the *Cronistoria*, it is daily mortification and abnegation. Life at Mornese meant an emphatic cleavage with worldly tastes and a generous active acceptance of the cross of Christ. It suffices to recall Mother Mazzarello's words to her Sisters towards the end of 1880; they were a kind of testament: "The religious life is of its nature a life of sacrifice, of renunciation, of deprivation; community life and one's duties provide plenty of mor-

tification. But that is by no means sufficient. A good Sister is not satisfied with what circumstances provide: she will find ways and means to forge further ahead in her love for the Lord, for the souls of others and her own poor soul. We must mortify our thoughts, our wills, our hearts, our senses. Then there is obedience and humility that can cost us so much, even though they go unheard and unseen by our neighbour. My dear Sisters and daughters, poverty and mortification, obedience and humility, observance of the Constitutions and chastity are virtues so interwoven as to form one great unity. If we wish to become saints (and who doesn't? Stand up, anyone who doesn't!) we must practise all these virtues. We have given our solemn word before the altar. Our consecration has been written in letters of gold by our guardian angels, to be set before our eyes frequently during life and especially at the hour of our death. Let us be Sisters in real earnest; may the New Year mean for all a new life".⁵⁸

58. *Cronistoria* III 300-301.

Of a truth, abnegation and mortification were quite at home at Mornese. Don Bosco himself confided to Cagliero "his great surprise" at finding such profound detachment from the world and enthusiasm for the mystery of the cross.⁵⁹ In fact it seemed to him somewhat exaggerated; and after a number of deaths among the young members he intervened several times personally to moderate the rigours of the community.⁶⁰

59. v. *Maccono: St MDM* I 148.

60. v. *Cronistoria* II 235-236; *Maccono: Ibid.* II 59-60.

In regard to certain mortifications particularly suitable to feminine psychology, Mother Mazzarello insisted on the following: "Eschew vanity: it is an impediment to everything that is good; be sincere at all costs: the devil is the father of all lies; avoid idleness: it corrodes the soul".⁶¹ She often spoke

61. *Cronistoria* I 127-128.
I 421-422.

against vanity and insincerity. Mother Eulalia Bosco wrote that "the faults she most often deplored were vanity, ambition and deceit. She continually encouraged us to look to being beautiful in the eyes of the Lord and to imitate the Virgin Mary".⁶² Elsewhere we find written that "at Nizza just as at Mornese, she spoke often against vanity and deceit. Woe to anyone who told an untruth or who made pretence to a non-existent good quality".⁶³

62. Maccono: St MDM

63. Ibid. II 104.

This "ascetical fasting" really got to the heart of feminine psychology.

As a final word about the intense asceticism at Mornese, it seems fitting and meaningful to recall Don Bosco's dream of the chestnuts. It suggested certain criteria for gauging the suitability of candidates for the Institute. It certainly brings to light some of the requirements of the spirit of Mornese.

"Go ahead", said the lady in the dream, "Put the chestnuts in a pot of water: this is the obedience test. Now boil them. If you squeeze the bad ones between your fingers the decayed pulp will ooze out. Throw these away. The empty ones will float to the top. They are the vain ones who will not remain under the surface with the others but want to emerge and be noticed in some way or other. Skim them off and throw them away. Note that the good chestnuts, when cooked, are still not yet ready for eating. The shell must be removed and then the skin. Now you will find them pure white. Even then, look well. Some are double, and you will discover hidden between them another skin — full of bitterness".⁶⁴

64. MB XV 366.

The analogy reveals a whole subtle praxis of discernment and pedagogical asceticism.

• *And now finally the diamond of Reward.* Salesian asceticism is imbued with the confidence that

comes of lifting up our eyes to the sure reward of heaven; and it was the same at Mornese, with the added family touch derived from a feminine delicacy and intuition.

The first thing to remark is a kind of "education for paradise", the effort to be spiritually recollected in times of silence. The significance and value of this is important for us today, immersed as we are in a civilisation of technology and bombarded continually by noise and sensationalism. Again let us listen to Mother Mazzarello: "Why is silence important for a Sister? — so that she can the more easily be united with God and speak to him, let him know her needs, hearken to his voice, his counsels, his teachings. If a Sister does not pray to God and is lost in vain and useless thoughts, with her mind filled with worldly things, and is always wondering what people think of her or how they will treat her; if she is thinking about how certain tasks will succeed, or about conversations heard here and there — I ask you, has such a Sister been observing silence? Far from it. Physically she has been silent, but in mind and heart she has been talking away ceaselessly and has not been united to God at all".⁶⁵

65. Maccono: St MDM
I 400.

Indeed the practice of silent recollection is to be like a glimpse of paradise during the daily grind of workaday chores.

But then there was a very practical awareness of paradise in the community. Prayer meant real friendships and conversations with people who were very much alive and members of the family; who brought help, joy, encouragement and inspiration, serenity and perseverance. Enrichetta Sorbone put it in a nutshell when she said, "It is paradise here, real paradise".

It was the risen Christ and his Holy Mother who put value and significance into the diamond of Reward; for they proclaimed daily what lay beyond the cross.

In this regard the following episode at Mornese speaks volumes. We are told that one day, among the many happy and serene faces there was the one sad face of a postulant. "Why so serious?" she was asked. "I was unable to go to communion this morning, and today seems an eternity for me. Yesterday Mother Mazzarello did so much to inflame our hearts with the desire for communion. In this house communion is everything in our lives".⁶⁶

66. *Cronistoria* II 363.

Bishop Costamagna put it well when he said that "Jesus was the absolute master in that house". The Sisters lived in his presence and it was to him they turned for happiness and relief from their worries.

Besides Christ there was also Mary who helped whet their appetites for the reward of heaven. She was accepted as the true Superior of the community, vividly present and ever solicitous. Mother Mazzarello always considered herself her vice-rectress, and "every evening placed at the foot of her statue the keys of the house".⁶⁷ I would go so far as to say that Mother Mazzarello's whole spirituality had a Marian inspiration. Indeed the ascetical aspects of the spirit of Mornese bore the imprint of Mary: the loving obedience, spontaneous poverty, resplendent purity, prudent mortification, simplicity and humility and motherly self-sacrifice that lovingly referred all things to Jesus. In fact Mary could look at your first community at Mornese as she did at the basilica at Valdocco and say, "This is my house whence my glory will issue forth".

67. Maccono: St MDM
I 310.

UNDER THE SPELL OF THE SALESIAN IDENTITY AT MORNESE

We set out to search into the motto you proposed for the centenary celebrations: "to rediscover the spirit of Mornese for the renewal of our communities".

I think some light has been shed on the topic; at least for my own part I have had the joy of a deeper appreciation of the spell-binding Salesian identity as lived at Mother Mazzarello's Mornese.

A long journey

I began a long way back with general principles. It was plain as we continued our reflections that all was based on the very core of *the Salesian identity*; in other words we were dealing with a "new gift" in the Church, a gift that was innovatory and relevant, full of vitality for the future. The return to our origins was a good preparation for the rediscovery of the spirit of Mornese. We have considered many persons and events and have perceived the splendid unity of a project that could not have depended on the gifted talents of Don Bosco nor the sanctity of Mother Mazzarello: this has been a consoling reassurance that we are dealing with something set afoot by God and guided by the motherly solicitude of Mary — a "gift", an "experience of the Holy Spirit", a "charism".

We can truly call the Salesian heritage "the charism of Don Bosco", for he was the first to propose it and put it into practice: he was its "founder".

It was his singular covenant with God, his way of life and apostolate; it flowed from him and became a fruitful part of history, forming a great Family with a common vocation.

We sought out carefully the specific elements of this experience of the Spirit: they were already clear and definite, albeit in embryo, at Valdocco. It was a matter of joy to establish that God's design extended this charism to girls too. We have marvelled at God's wonderful (and humanly inexplicable) interweaving interventions, and Mother Mazzarello's singular and creative participation in revealing the unity and fascination of this divine project. Pius XI had good reason to grace Mother Mazzarello with the title of true Co-foundress of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

Her contribution certainly had all the characteristics of a Founder. Within the short span of ten years from her religious profession to her death, she guided, tended and achieved that so-called "translation" of Don Bosco's Salesianity into the world of women: it was her masterpiece and the greatest spiritual heritage she bequeathed — the spirit of Mornese.

We set about pondering the riches of this spirit: not just to sort out its elements (without much detail), but to determine its basic lines, its way of life and action, its special character; what ought to show up most and attract the adherence and enthusiasm of your girls; and what is preferably not so obvious to the public: the supporting spiritual framework, the defence and reservoir of all its energy.

In all this our aim was to rediscover the immediacy of its extraordinary value; to reassess its riches in the one spiritual heritage of Don Bosco; to reawaken the spell of our Salesian identity.

A clear task to be achieved

Dear Sisters, as you refresh your memories with the recollection of the vital message left you at the death of Mother Mazzarello, you will be ready now to plan and achieve the second part of your proposal: "to renew the Sisters' communities in the spirit of Mornese".

The *Cronistoria* tells us that when Mother Mazzarello was speaking with difficulty to Mother Caterina Daghero, she paused a moment, "became thoughtful and uttered these comforting words, 'What a good father Don Bosco is to us. He means everything to the Institute; I am a nonentity. His work belongs to God and Mary. As Don Cagliero has assured me, the Institute will always have the support of his holiness and his counsel!'

"In the afternoon the Director Don Cagliero returned and Mother Mary conversed with him for some fortyfive minutes about her spiritual welfare and about certain faults that seemed to be growing among some of her daughters; she begged that something be done as soon as possible so as to prevent any harm to the good spirit of the Institute. She concluded with an act of profound gratitude and prayer, 'What a great grace the Lord has given me, to live and die a spouse of Jesus, a daughter of Mary and Don Bosco. May God grant this grace to all my Sisters I have so loved and hope to meet in heaven'.

"When Don Cagliero blessed her in his own name and in the name of Don Bosco, her face lit up and she cried out, 'After God's blessing, this blessing from my dear father is the greatest comfort I can have' ".⁶⁸

This extraordinary attachment Mother Mary had

68. *Cronistoria* III 388-389.

towards Don Bosco, and reiterated at the solemn moment that concluded her earthly labours as Co-foundress, should be continually pondered and turned to account. It is a wide and unexplored area, and Mother Mary surveys its future with the greatest confidence.

In fact the spirit of Valdocco existed before that of Mornese, and the mission of Don Bosco as a Founder was already active while he was living. For Mother Mazzarello the "Salesian heritage" had not yet been "sealed" with the finishing touches by the death of Don Bosco. For her it was normal and fitting to look to Don Bosco as the still living sign of the Holy Spirit and to see for the "primal spark of the Spirit" future possibilities of development and opportunities to adapt itself to the changing times.

It seems to me that in this lies the great message of this centenary: TO REINFORCE THE SALESIAN IDENTITY, SEEING DON BOSCO AS "LIVING" IN A CHURCH THAT IS EVER PROGRESSING TOWARDS THAT FINAL PERFECTION OF ALL IN CHRIST.

Conclusion

Dear Reverend Mother and all Sisters, I recently read some of the profound thinking of a Greek Orthodox theologian on "woman and the salvation of the world". He was speaking on the strong link in salvation-history between the Holy Spirit and woman.

According to a well-known Orthodox conception, in the intimacy of God, the Spirit is the "hypostatic maternity"; he reveals the Son to the Father and the Father to the Son; and in our earthly economy the Spirit descended on Mary to bring to birth for

us the image of the Father. In the Incarnation the Spirit did not intervene through the sublime act of man: he lavished the riches of maternity on Mary in a resplendent virginity. And so when he descended on the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday he brought to birth the Church, the Body of Christ; and when he descends on the bread and wine in the eucharistic celebration he brings to birth the real presence of the flesh and blood of Christ. "According to the prophecy of Joel (quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost), the Spirit works throughout the ages and transforms the body of history into the body of the Kingdom".⁶⁹ It is a work of "motherhood".

The operation of the Holy Spirit is a mother's solicitous care. The Church is his temple and is moved by the Spirit to be a mother in time; and the great charisms of the Founders are gifts of the Spirit for this fruitful ecclesial union. Thus it is important that there be a strong feminine presence in a religious family in order to grasp with special acumen and achieve with delicate generosity the values and projects of a particular distinctive vocation in the Church.

When in the early days of the Spirit's inspiration the Lord adds to the work of an "outstanding man"⁷⁰ the work of an "outstanding woman", then he infuses into his "experience of the Spirit" a particularly important and promising perspective of mission and growth. He enriches it with a fine sensitivity for the "spiritual"; he attunes it in a special way to the motherhood of the Church and imbues it with a deep loyalty to its ideals; he strengthens it against certain temptations to atheistic materialism that usually show up as "essentially masculine in the deadening of the religious sense of dependence on the Father".⁷¹

69. Evdokimov: *La donna e la salvezza del mondo*, Milan, Jaca Book, 1980.

70. LG 45; PC 1-2.

71. Evdokimov, *Ibid.* 154 et seq.

If we consider the profound significance in Revelation of the complementarity of man-woman, a spiritual family so composed will seem more perfect. Man and woman in Eden formed the living image of God. Each revealed in complementary form something of God's unfathomable intimacy. In the mystery of the Trinity two Persons were sent for our salvation, the Word and the Spirit. They project the features of their personalities into Christ the Incarnate Word, into Mary and the Church (the temple of the Spirit). Christ and Mary, the new Adam and the new Eve are the first fruits of the Resurrection who proclaim together the clear image of the great Mystery.

In the first of the great spiritual families, St Augustine's (unnamed) sister and her companions were responsible for giving a feminine slant to the Augustinian Rule. Then there were St Benedict and St Scholastica, St Francis and St Clare, and others. Feminine complementarity is a sign of the peculiar plenitude and importance of the charism, of long life and fruitfulness and of abundant contribution to the mission of the Church.

On this assumption it will mean that the feminine contribution of Mary Domenica Mazzarello and her spirit of Mornese to the Salesian charism has only made a beginning in the past: the future must see its real growth. It must not be reduced to a kind of privilege to be pondered on within the Institute: it is a task still to be developed in courageous expansion. Dear Sisters, you are called on to make your spiritual complementarity a fruitful contribution that is vividly real and present. You are called on to spread your feminine Salesianity beyond the confines of your Institute. Do not keep it hidden. Let there be no defenses or complexes; live your special Sale-

sianity with enthusiasm in the conviction of its ecclesial and historical value; spread throughout the world its spiritual attraction. Your testimony will give new life to the entire spiritual heritage of the whole Salesian Family.

With Mother Mazzarello look to Don Bosco. Listen again to those first counsels: "Pray by all means, but throw yourselves heart and soul into your good works, especially for the young". "Increase your sense of the presence of God; love your work; spread your joy and kindness everywhere; with Mary Help of Christians be helpers in the Church for the salvation of all."

May Don Bosco and Mary Mazzarello obtain for your Institute and indeed for all our Salesian Family the grace to perfect ourselves in that Salesian holiness which will make us all "signs and bearers" of God's love to the young.

Please pray daily for the Salesian Family and please include Don Bosco's successor in that Family. Affectionately in the Lord,

*Egidio VIGANÒ,
Rector Major.*

Rome, 24 February 1981

2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

The Councillor for Formation

Father Paul NATALI

TO THE SALESIAN PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY (UPS)

In the document *Formation of Salesians of Don Bosco* there is a quote from the Rector Major to the Rector Magnificus of the UPS: it states that "the Congregation looks on the UPS in Rome as one of the very special commitments of the Salesian mission in the Church. Our university is not an end in itself but is geared to a specific service in the Church and the Congregation: and this service is essentially pastoral and pedagogical" (FSDB 519).

In the light of this principle and as its first practical step, *a new course for youth and catechetical apostolate* has been organised by the department for youth and catechetics and will be inaugurated at the UPS on 15 October 1981. The Faculties of Theology and Educational Science will collaborate for this project, and the co-ordinating committee consists of Guido Gatti, Mario Midali and Riccardo Tonelli (for the Theology Faculty) and Cesare Bissoli, Roberto Giannatelli and Giuseppe Groppo (for the Faculty of Educational Science). The principal co-ordinator is Father Roberto Giannatelli, vice-rector of the UPS.

This new course for the apostolate of youth and catechetics, together with the new Statutes of the UPS conclude the long and laborious renewal procedure in our university. When Father Ricceri was its Grand Chancellor he proposed in his letter of 10-1-77 a clear and well-organised programme to bring the UPS in line with the new requirements of the Church and the Congregation. After the lengthy discussions and directives of GC21 (doc. 4), the present Rector Major, Father Egidio Viganò, collated the various findings that came from the UPS study groups into a working document published in the ASC no. 296, pp. 59-68. In these last months the study commissions at the UPS have worked at translating the directives of the Rector Major into teaching programmes and academic structures.

The result of this work is something new and original in Roman

ecclesiastical universities; it points to the distinctive commitment of our university to "that wide human and ecclesial area that could be called 'the young and the Gospel' " (v. address of Rector Major at UPS in the presence of the Holy Father, ASC 300, p. 62). Detailed information of the programme can be found in the requisite documents. Below are four important features regarding the new venture.

— The new course meets the qualification requirements and interests of our Congregation. In the field of catechetics and youth apostolate it aims at the training of lecturers for our studentates and study centres, of provincial animators and of qualified consultants in specific branches such as catechetical and editorial centres, youth movements, the classroom, audiovisuals and the media.

— It envisages a high level of qualification and a broad spectrum of studies: three years for the *licentiate* (which can begin each academic year either on 15 February or 15 October); and a two-year course is possible for *diploma* qualification.

— The contents of the new course will be elaborated by interdisciplinary collaboration between the Faculty of Theology and the Faculty of Educational Science. They will be based on an in-depth study of theological themes and an openness to what is new in the human sciences: the aim is the integrated development of the person as a human being and a Christian.

— The UPS department responsible for organising the course is the result of the collaboration of the Faculties of Theology and Educational Science, and has planned various specialisations so that a student may take out the degree in either theology or educational science according to the emphasis of his studies. Nevertheless the course is unified and complete in its approach to catechetics and youth apostolate, drawing on the help of all those branches that today are considered necessary for deep research and practical orientation.

This new course for catechetics and youth apostolate is an important and authoritative step in our Salesian mission of bringing the Gospel to the young. It will certainly help to avoid what the Rector Major, in his concluding address at the GC21, called "the danger of Salesians being generalised and indeterminate, that is, no longer missionaries

specialising in boys and young men, but being ordinary workers. We must not hide the fact that this is a delicate point and must be examined with calm discernment. It touches an element of our mission, of our specific field of activity, our educational method, and hence our very identity and practical effectiveness" (GC21 575).

May the new course be most useful to our priests and brothers who have the necessary basic theological training and two or three years of practical experience behind them: we look forward to the various provincial communities sending them to the UPS in good numbers for the course.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

4.1 The Rector Major

Father Egidio Viganò

On 14 March the Rector Major left for the provinces of the Pacific-Caribbean Region not yet visited by him: Venezuela, Bogotá, Medellín, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. Then from 5 to 12 April at Buenos Aires he presided at a meeting of the provincials and delegates of the 24 provinces of Latin America; during this week he also spent an afternoon at houses in Montevideo and Córdoba. Finally during Holy Week he visited Santiago and Punta Arenas in Chile and returned to Rome 22 April.

As in other similar visits Father Viganò made special contact with provincial councils, rectors, formation personnel and young Salesians in formation. On this occasion he presented the new *Ratio*. In all provinces he was able to spend considerable time meeting the confreres, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Co-operators and other groups of the Salesian Family, especially the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary who were about to begin their General Chapter at Bogotá. He also addressed other religious communities, men and women, and met ecclesiastical and civil autho-

rities. He was also able to speak with Cardinals, Bishops and Apostolic Nuncios (over 50 in all).

He was welcomed royally wherever he went and received wide coverage on radio, television and the newspapers. In many countries he was interviewed by the press. He was besieged by the young, especially in Chile. Towards the end of his sojourn in South America he exclaimed, "In these weeks I have lost all sense of time and seasons; but in meetings with the young it is always Spring". And later, "Don Bosco visited South America in a one-night dream. I have spent 40 days here and have only visited a part of our work — and yet I think I am much more tired than he was. May God grant that the Salesian work in South America even exceed our Founder's prophetic dream".

Vocations are booming. In the Pacific-Caribbean Region alone there are 148 pre-novices, 82 novices and 138 post-novices. There is great optimism among the confreres. Their pastoral fidelity and creativity give firm promise of a new era.

On 13 May the Rector Major was invited to Turin by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians for the solemn celebration in honour of St Mary Mazzarello. The basilica was

crammed with girls and he spoke to them of the relevance of Mother Mary's message for today.

Next day he travelled to Nizza Monferrato to commemorate the death of the Foundress. Present for the occasion were the Mother General, her council, many provincials and a multitude of sisters. In the afternoon he blessed a commemorative stone in the room where Mother Mary died, and later assisted at a civil ceremony during which the Mayor, in the presence of a large crowd of citizens, named a street after the Saint.

From 15 to 25 May (during the novena to Mary Help of Christians) Father Viganò was in Spain for the centenary celebrations; Barcelona, Madrid and Seville were his main "ports of call". The highlights were:

Barcelona (16-18 May): the very successful seminar on trade schools;

Madrid (19-21 May): among other things, an audience with King Juan Carlos, and the academy given in the presence of Queen Donna Sophia;

Seville (22-24 May): the main function was the solemn coronation of the statue of Mary Help of Christians sent by Don Bosco to the Salesians in Spain in 1885.

4.2 The Vicar of the Rector Major Father Cajetan Scrivo

From 30 January to 7 February Father Scrivo was in the Paris province and represented the Rector

Major at the centenary commemoration of the "Patronage de Saint Pierre". He was able to meet all the members of the various Paris houses to speak with confreres, house communities and also visited several councils, novices and post-novices.

From 13 to 23 February he was in the province of Seville for the inaugural celebrations for the centenary of Utrera. He was able to participate in many of the functions and commemorated the centenary with various days of recollection: for rectors of the Seville and Córdoba provinces; the confreres of the Seville province; and the confreres of Las Palmas and Santa Cruz de Tenerife in the Canary Islands.

From 14 to 31 March he was in the Middle East province and met the communities of Cairo, Alexandria, Beit Gemal and Nazareth. At Cremsan he attended a meeting of all the rectors of the province and a meeting of the provincial council; he also preached the retreat for the students of theology.

From 28 May to 3 June he visited the province of southern Germany for the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the studentate of Benediktbeuern and also met the nearby communities.

4.3 The Councillor for Formation Father Paul Natali

From 14 March to 3 May Father Natali was in Latin America. The

period 16-21 March was spent discussing the practical applications of new document FSDB (v. ASC 300, p. 44) with provincials, formation personnel and teachers from the provinces of Mexico-Guadalajara, Antilles, Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Chile, and two representatives from the San Francisco and New Rochelle provinces. Similar meetings were held with the provinces of the Atlantic Region from 20 to 26 April. Altogether 120 confreres were involved and will now be well qualified to speak on the subject.

In the meantime Father Natali attended the joint visit of superior council members at Buenos Aires from 5 to 12 April. He also met the formation communities and commissions, the members directly concerned with formation, the provincial councils and the confreres in general (who were sometimes able to assemble together) at the following places: Quito, Lima, Santiago, Buenos Aires, La Plata, Montevideo, Córdoba, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte and Sao Paulo.

From 17 to 20 May, Father Natali visited the provinces of Barcelona and Valencia to meet the provincial council members, the formation personnel and teachers of the study centres, and also the communities of young Salesians in formation. The purpose was to discuss the new *Ratio* and local matters.

Meantime the Department of For-

mation helped with the animation of the course of ongoing formation and continued the preparation of the *Manual for Rectors* — which also entailed several commission meetings.

4.4 The Councillor for Youth Apostolate

Father Juan Edmundo Vecchi

During the month of April, Father Vecchi journeyed to South America. In Brazil he presided at a meeting of parish priests of the nation's six provinces. This was the fifth meeting of parish personnel attended by the Department of Youth Apostolate in the last three years. In the discussions, constant reference was made to the last two General Chapters as synthesised in the Department's Aid 3a. Special attention was given to the distinctively Salesian "presence" in our parishes.

At Buenos Aires Father Vecchi attended a gathering of all the provincials of Latin America.

In Uruguay he met the provincial community and discussed youth apostolate matters with them.

In the Pacific Region he called two meetings (at Cumbayá and San José de Costa Rica) on planning and practice in the apostolate of life-vocations for the young, using a provisional draft of the vocational document the Department is now drawing up, and asking for criticism.

Along the same lines a similar meeting was held at Rome with the vocational animators of the provinces of Italy.

From 10 to 16 May the councillor represented the Rector Major at the International Vocational Congress called by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education.

Finally he attended the Barcelona seminar on trade schools organised by the Iberian Conference for the occasion of the Salesian centenary celebrations in Spain.

4.5 The Councillor for the Salesian Family & the Media Father John Raineri

From 26 to 29 March Father Raineri presided at Recife-Brazil at a meeting of rectors, delegates and representatives of co-operators and past pupils for a day of reflection on the Salesian Family; another day was spent discussing the media. The visit concluded by calling at the new foundation at Bongi.

Next day Father Raineri met the staff of "Editorial Don Bosco" at Buenos Aires, Argentina, and on the 31 March the Superior of the Don Bosco Volunteers of that particular zone.

The 31 March and 1 April were spent with the national council of the co-operators of Argentina. This took place also at Buenos Aires and was a heartening demonstration of

the vitality of the association, its many apostolic activities, its many young co-operators and the cordial co-operation between Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

On 1 and 2 April Father Raineri met the national council of past pupils with their delegates. The most pressing problem is the renewal of the association through the formation of its animators and the enlistment and care of young past pupils (who were represented by a very vocal delegation).

From 3 to 5 April the councillor presided in the province of Rosario at a well attended seminar of young co-operators that concluded with a lively get-together of the Salesian Family (including SDBs and FMAs and their Provincials Father Buccolini and Mother Sack Juan Benita).

The period 5-12 April was passed with the superior council joint visit at San Miguel for provincials and delegates. Father Raineri presented the topics of the Salesian Family and the media.

From 13 to 15 April at Montevideo he attended a meeting of rectors, delegates and confreres, also on the Salesian Family and the media. Here he met the commission for the media, the national federation of past pupils, the DBV, the national council for the co-operators and a numerous group of FMAs with their Mother Provincial Dolores Acosta.

From 16 to 18 April at Sao Paulo

Brazil he met the staff of the *Editoria Salesiana* and visited the novitiate of San Carlos and its new foundation *Educandario Sao Carlos*.

From 1 to 3 May Father Raineri attended the opening and closing sessions of the Italian national council of co-operators (during which a new committee was elected). He spoke on renewal, the young co-operators, priest co-operators and the enlisting of co-operators from the work force.

On 9 and 10 May at El Plantio-Madrid he joined Mother Martin Moreno Carmen and Mother Maria Leton del Pilar for the centenary celebrations of Saint Mary Mazzarello; these functions were organised by the FMA provinces in Spain for the provincial councils of FMA & SDB, Co-operators, Past Pupils FMA and Past Pupils SDB. Highlights were the emphases on the personality of Mother Mary, the relevance of her message for today, the great friendliness of the Salesian Family spirit and the meeting's practical conclusions.

On 12 May at Lisbon Father Raineri called meetings of the media commission, the national federation of past pupils and the national council of the co-operators. On 13 May at Manique he addressed the post-novices and theologians and went to the Casa di Estoril for the commemoration of Saint Mary Mazzarello. Present were Salesians SDB and FMA with their respective provincials.

At Valencia 15 to 16 May he met

the provincial council, spoke on Saint Mary Mazzarello to Salesians SDB and FMA at a meeting of the Salesian Family, and attended a gathering of the past pupils' federation at the "Salesian Family House" at Alicante.

On 29 May at Rome he presided at a meeting of the world governing council of the past pupils and on the 30 and 31 May met the national presidents of Europe with a number of delegates, to prepare for Eurobosco.

During these months preparations have been proceeding apace for:

- the European Congress of Past Pupils (Eurobosco) to be held at Lugano, Switzerland, 15-19 October 1981;

- the World Advisory Body of the Salesian Co-operators at Rome 24-28 June 1981;

- the Latin American Congress of Past Pupils at Lima, Peru, 8-11 October 1981;

- the 2nd Symposium on the Salesian Family, 19-22 February 1982. A meeting for reports on the preparations for this function was held on 23 and 24 May. Reflection and research topics will help much towards clarifying the "doctrine" regarding the Salesian Family.

The central group of Salesian animators with consultants from the Department have conducted a series of meetings on animation guidelines at provincial level regarding criteria

for belonging to the Salesian Family; also on Marian devotion in the various groups, and the study of the Constitutions and Regulations that refer to the Salesian Family (as a preparation for GC22).

In the *Secretariate for the media* the normal work has continued with the Salesian Bulletin, the Dossier BS and ANS. To meet the various requests from Salesians SDB and FMA, a number of programmes and aids have been developed. A much appreciated service has been the documentary of the celebrations of Saint Mary Mazzarello's centenary at Rome, Turin, Nizza and Mornese. The Secretariate's ACV (audio-cine-video) studio at Rome has prepared a number of radio and TV programmes on youth apostolate and the Salesian missions.

Members of the Secretariate have been active in ecclesial and Salesian areas regarding information and the media.

A special effort was made with the first *World Seminar of Salesian publishing directors* held in Turin from 22 June to 2 July. This latter was organised by the SEI, the first publishing house founded by Don Bosco for the Salesian mission. Indeed the SEI still holds an important place in promoting Christian culture, in school texts, and in the various popular series on scientific, recreational and cultural topics, especially for the young.

4.6 The Councillor for the Missions Father Bernard Tohill

From 20 February to 12 March the Councillor for the Missions made his first visit to the Central African province of Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi, calling at 26 of the 27 foundations. Much in evidence was the enthusiasm and apostolic commitment resulting from the Rector Major's visit in 1980. Father Tohill was also deeply impressed by the great numbers of the faithful, young and old, in the pastoral care of the Salesians; also by the happiness of the young people despite their great poverty. He was also profoundly edified by the self-sacrificing work of the confreres who, though insufficient in numbers and for the most part elderly and in poor health, are fully determined to carry on their work. In so many of these missions the presence of the missionary is the one ray of hope that sustains the people.

After his return from Africa Father Tohill was present at a large national gathering of co-operators at Campello (Valencia-Spain) to join in the Salesian centenary celebrations. He addressed the gathering on Project Africa and Salesian lay missionaries.

From 5 to 12 April he was at Buenos Aires for the superior council joint visit, after which he paid rapid visits to the mission centres in Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego and Chile.

At the beginning of May he con-

ducted the canonical visitation of the missions of the Vicariate Apostolic of Puerto Ayacucho and thus completed the canonical visitation that Father Sergio Cuevas was carrying out in the province of Venezuela.

(A report on *Project Africa* is given on page 88 of this issue of ASC.)

4.7 The Councillor for the Asian Region

Father Thomas Panakezhram

From 15 January to 24 May Father Panakezhram made the canonical visitation of the Gauhati province in Assam-India; then a fifteen-day visit to Burma, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. (The Archbishop of Singapore had made a request for the Salesians to work in that city.)

In the Philippines he presided at meetings of five provincials of the Far East. Amongst various matters discussed were the preparations for the joint visit of the Rector Major and his councillors at Hong Kong next October.

During the canonical visitation of the Gauhati province Father Panakezhram presided at the Provincial Conference of India (28-29 April) held at Shillong-Assam. Two of the interesting decisions taken were:

1) to continue at Calcutta with the inter-provincial post-novitiate training for brothers; and

2) to make India the host country for the next Past Pupils Congress for Asia and Australia.

In accordance with the decision of the superior council to examine the possibility of dividing the Gauhati province, Father Panakezhram conducted a consultation among the members of the province.

4.8 The Councillor for the Atlantic Region

Father Walter Bini

Father Bini's main work was the canonical visitation of the province of Buenos Aires (22 February to 26 May). From 5 to 12 April he was present at the joint meeting of the Rector Major and his councillors with the provincials and delegates of the Latin American provinces at San Miguel, Buenos Aires. He and Father Cuevas acted as moderators.

From 20 to 26 April at Rio de Janeiro Father Bini attended Father Natali's meeting with the formation personnel of the whole Region. He also presided at meetings of the provincials of La Plata (at Buenos Aires, 1 February) and of Brazil (at Porto Alegre, 6 February, and Rio de Janeiro, 25 April).

Finally he helped with the preparations for perpetual professions at Barbacena (24-26 January) and presided at the first professions of the novices at La Plata (31 January).

4.9 The Councillor for central & Northern Europe and Central Africa

Father Roger Vanseveren

During January and February Father Vanseveren made the canonical visitation of the province of Belgium North. With Father Scrivo he was in Paris for the inauguration of the renovations at "Patronage St Pierre".

From 1 to 4 March he presided at Bièvres at a meeting with the provincial councils of the three French-speaking provinces. From 5 March to 14 April he made the canonical visitation of the province of Germany North.

He then travelled to Africa for the canonical visitation of the houses in Cameroun, Gabon, Congo (Brazzaville), Ivory Coast and Morocco. He was also present (again with Father Scrivo) at the Golden Jubilee of the studentate of Benediktbeuern. Here also he presided at the provincial conference of the German-speaking provinces in which the provinces of Holland and Belgium North also participated.

4.10 The Councillor for the English-speaking Region Father George Williams

After a brief visit to England and Ireland to discuss certain matters with the provincials and vice-provincials, Father Williams spent the last

week of January in the province of New Rochelle where he was with various communities and schools for the feast of Don Bosco. The celebrations culminated in a Salesian Family concelebration at Newton presided over by the Bishop of Paterson.

He next journeyed to Savannah-Georgia to discuss with the Bishop certain Salesian projects in his diocese. After a short visit to the SDB and FMA communities at Marrero he journeyed to the southernmost community of the Salesians in the USA, the parish of Laredo near the Mexican border. This began the canonical visitation of the San Francisco province (which includes Canada West). The visitation lasted till the end of April and concluded with a three to four day meeting with the provincial council, and a day-long meeting with the rectors.

On the way back to Rome Father Williams attended the provincial community celebrations at New Rochelle. He also visited the formation communities at Columbus and Newton, Dublin and Maynooth, and Ushaw and Dingli.

4.11 The Councillor for the Iberian Region Father José Rico

In the latter half of December Father Rico spent Christmas with the confreres in Mozambique, preaching

the annual retreat for them and also for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. He was a witness of the fine work of the Salesians to keep the apostolate progressing under very trying circumstances.

Back in Italy he carried out the canonical visitation of the Central Province from January to March.

On 1 April he journeyed to Spain for the canonical visitation of the province of Seville; and in May accompanied the Rector Major to Barcelona, Madrid and Seville for some of the functions relating to the centenary celebrations.

He spent two days in Lisbon and met the rectors of Portugal to prepare the consultation for the new provincial. He was also present at the provincial chapter of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Portugal.

4.12 The Councillor for Italy and the Middle East Father Luigi Bosoni

Father Bosoni spent most of this period (5 January to 24 May) in the canonical visitation of the Subalpine province Maria Ausiliatrice, Valdocco.

During early April he visited Sicily for the consultation for the new provincial, meeting the rectors and many of the communities. Meantime the Subalpine, Milan and Adriatic provinces also carried out their con-

sultation for new provincials with the help of their canonical visitors Fr Bosoni, Fr Pasquale Liberatore and Fr Mario Bassi.

From 23 to 30 May Father Bosoni presided at a meeting of Italian provincials at Zafferana Etnea, and took occasion to attend various other meetings in the zone.

Mention should be made of a tragic happening in the Region. On 29 May at 8.05 a.m. four members of the Red Brigade walked into the Gerini Trade School in Rome and shot Brother Giuseppe Magagna (38 years) three times in the legs. Red Brigade "logic" pronounced the act as not against Brother Magagna nor against the Salesians, but against the trade school as such: on the grounds that it is selective, that is, it is training certain young people for more advanced and better paid work.

The solidarity of the various bodies, individuals, trade unions and workers revealed that our trade schools are held in high esteem. The tragic happening at least publicised the good work of Salesians for young workers and the sterling vocation of the Salesian brother.

4.13 The Councillor for the Pacific and Caribbean Region Father Sergio Cuevas

At the beginning of January Father Cuevas began the canonical visitation of the province of the Antilles, visit-

ing communities and works in Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. He then travelled to Central America and met the new provincial with his council at San José de Costa Rica.

Towards the end of February he began the canonical visitation of the province of Venezuela: the new foundation on the island of Curaçao in the Dutch Antilles, then the houses on the mainland.

In early April, during the Rector Major's visit to the Region, he conducted the provincial consultation for the appointment of the new provincials for Ecuador and Bolivia. He then joined the Rector Major and other councillors for their joint visit to South America held at Buenos Aires (6-12 April). During this time Father Cuevas was also able to meet the provincial council of Chile; also at Guayaquil all the rectors of Ecuador.

During Holy Week Father Cuevas continued his canonical visitation of the Venezuelan province. He then travelled to Colombia to conduct the consultation for the new Provincial of Medellín. Then followed meetings with the two provincial councils of Bogotá and Medellín to study the situation regarding initial formation. He also visited the formation communities at Medellín (Rio Negro and La Cega) and Bogotá (El Porvenir).

Finally Father Cuevas accompanied Father Tohill to Puerto Ayacucho to

meet the missionaries of Upper Orinoco. He returned to Rome towards the end of May.

4.14 The Delegate for Poland **Father Augustine Dziedziel**

At the beginning of January Father Dziedziel arranged meetings with the four provincials of Poland. He then visited the five houses of formation to bring them up to date with information from the Generalate and also to report on his visit to Zaire and Zambia.

He called together the 13 confreres who are to go to Zambia and at Czestochowa told them about his visit to their future mission. He also discussed their missionary plans and preparations for this first missionary venture to that part of Africa.

Father Dziedziel's main work at this time was the canonical visitation of the province of St Stanislaus Kostka at Lodz, and at its conclusion he called a meeting of the provincial council. He also attended a meeting for rectors and parish priests of both provinces in Poland North; he did the same for the two provinces of Poland South.

Father Dziedziel also attended the opening of the provincial chapter of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians at Pogrzebien.

He also presided at the first meet-

ing of the Polish provincial conference. Since the topic discussed was the Salesian Family, provincial delegates for the Salesian Family were also invited to be present.

Finally he called a meeting of the

four provincials to discuss their common problems.

On 31 May Father Dzedziel was at Warsaw for the solemn obsequies of Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate of Poland.

5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

5.1 Brotherly Solidarity (36th report)

a) PROVINCES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED

THE AMERICAS

	<i>Italian lire</i>
Ecuador - Quito	10,300.000
USA - West	6,625.000

EUROPE

Germany - Cologne	4,850.000
Germany - Cologne (for Goma, Central Africa)	2,450.000
Italy - Chioggia	1,000.000
Italy - Frascati (Lithuan- ians)	500.000
Italy - Genoa, Sampierda- rena	500.000
Italy - Udine	900.000
Italy - Salesians, Vatican	500.000
Italy - Anonymous	340.000
Portugal - Lisbon	1,125.000
Spain - Bilbao	1,500.000
Spain - León	1,000.000
Spain - Córdoba	4,000.000
Middle East - Cremsan	1,000.000
Middle East - Makalé	400.000

*Total monies received from
14 February 1981 to 12
June 1981* 36,990.000

Plus cash in hand 44.819

*Amount for distribution as
at 12 June 1981* 37,034.819

b) DISTRIBUTION OF MONIES RECEIVED

AFRICA

Central Africa - Lubumba- shi: for ongoing formation course	1,000.000
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Central Africa - Lubumba-
shi: for invalids and deaf-
mutes 2,000.000

Central Africa - Goma: for
a new trade school 2,450.000

LATIN AMERICA

Antilles Haiti: for the poor
in Brooklyn 800.000

Antilles - Mao: for poor
students 1,000.000

Argentina - Buenos Aires:
for ongoing formation
course 1,000.000

Argentina - Bahía Blanca:
for ongoing formation
course 500.000

Argentina - Bahía Blanca:
for subscription 200.000

Argentina - Bahía Blanca:
Esquel: for destitute In-
dians 500.000

Argentina - Bahía Blanca:
Chos Malal: for destitute
Indians 500.000

Argentina - Bahía Blanca:
Malleo (FMA): for desti-
tute Indians 500.000

Argentina - Bahía Blanca:
Junín de los Andes: for
destitute Indians 500.000

Argentina - Córdoba: for
ongoing formation course 500.000

Argentina - Rosario: for
ongoing formation course 1,000.000

Brazil - Belo Horizonte: for
ongoing formation course 500.000

Brazil - Campo Grande:

Corumbá: furnishings for chapel on outskirts	1,000.000	India - Gauhati - Rangblang: for a new boarding school	500.000
Brazil - Porto Alegre: for ongoing formation course	500.000	India - Gauhati - Sojong: for catechetical material	1,000.000
Central America - San Salvador: for ongoing formation course	500.000	India - Madras: for ongoing formation course	1,800.000
Colombia - Bogotá: for despatch of medicines	762.796	India - Madras - Kovillor: for a well	1,500.000
Ecuador - Quito - Macas: for air service for the sick, catechists, etc.	1,000.000	India - Madras - Poonamallee: for a new catechetical centre	1,000.000
Mexico - Mexico City: for ongoing formation course	500.000	Korea - Seoul: for ongoing formation course	900.000
Paraguay - Asunción: for ongoing formation course	900.000	Thailand - Bangkok: for ongoing formation course	900.000
Peru - Lima: for ongoing formation course	900.000	EUROPE	
Uruguay - Montevideo - Canelones: to Provincial FMA chapel	500.000	Jugoslavia - Ljubljana: for ongoing formation course	500.000
ASIA		Jugoslavia - Zagreb: for ongoing formation course	500.000
Philippines - Manila - Papua: for boarding school at Araimiri	800.000	Poland - Pila: for ongoing formation course	500.000
Philippines - Manila: for the slum dwellers of Tondo	800.000	Portugal - Timor: for boarding school at Fatumaca	800.000
India - Bangalore: for 8 mm film	121.000	Ireland - South Africa: for a school for negroes	2,000.000
India - Bombay: for ongoing formation course	500.000	<i>Total monies disbursed as from 14 February 1981 to 12 June 1981</i>	37,033.796
India - Gauhati: for Father John Med's enterprises	1,500.000	<i>Plus cash in hand</i>	1.023
India - Gauhati: for ongoing formation course	900.000	<i>Total</i>	37,034.819
India - Gauhati - Haflong: for a new missionary school	1,000.000	c) GENERAL SUMMATION OF BROTHERLY SOLIDARITY FUND	
		<i>Total donations received up to 12 June 1981</i>	1,167,506.507
		<i>Total disbursements up to 12 June 1981</i>	1,167,505.484
		<i>Cash in hand</i>	1.023

5.2 Report on Project Africa

The Councillor for the Missions

Father Bernard Tohill

Below are a few updating facts on *Project Africa*.

ANGOLA. The confreres from Brazil and Uruguay are still awaiting entry permits for Angola to begin their work in Dondo and Luena. Meantime they are engaged in a missionary and community apostolate in the diocese of Maceió in the province of Recife.

BENIN. The Bilbao province is to send a third confrere to the new community of Lokossa.

ETHIOPIA. The Milan Province is studying the possibility of work among the animists of Sidamo.

KENYA. On 24 May this year three Indian confreres officially took possession of the missionary parish in the semi-desert zone of Korr in the diocese of Marsabit.

LIBERIA. The provincial of the Oxford province recently visited Monrovia. The four confreres there have been joined by another brother. A rector of one of the largest schools in England, about to finish his six-year appointment, is also to go to Monrovia. Thus in the short space of two years six confreres will have gone to set the new mission on its feet.

MADAGASCAR. The Bishop of Ambanja paid a visit to the Generalate

to thank the Rector Major for the two confreres from the Naples province who have gone to help in his diocese. The Sicilian province is completing preparations for sending four confreres to the diocese of Tular by November. The provincial of the Rome province and the vice-provincial of St Mark's province are due to visit certain dioceses in Madagascar with a view to opening up Salesian works there.

MALI. The provincial of the Valencia province has proposed to the Rector Major the opening of two missions, Tuba and Sicasso, in the diocese of San.

NIGERIA. The provincials of Subalpina and Novara will visit Nigeria in July for an on the spot assessment of various requests from sundry bishops.

SENEGAL. The province of León will send four more confreres to open up a third foundation.

TOGO. The provincials of Córdoba and Seville will visit Togo whence requests for Salesian foundations have been received for Lomé and Sokodé.

ZAMBIA. From September, thirteen Polish Salesians will study English in Salesian houses of the Oxford province to prepare for missionary work in Zambia in 1982.

Another Italian province has expressed the wish to accept responsibility for new work in Africa, and the Councillor for the Missions will

go shortly to discuss with them what particular nation they should choose.

The provincial of Bombay will be in Africa during July and will be able to assess the progress of the five new foundations of the 15 Indian confreres in Kenya, Tanzania and Sudan. He will also examine other proposals recently received.

Father Harry Rasmussen has just completed his seventh journey to Africa. He visited Equatorial Guinea, Zaire and Ethiopia. His work is very important, indeed necessary, for the solid setting up of the new foundations of Project Africa.

Our African commitment is a vast one: yet it seems within the bounds of prudence to say that things are going well, thanks to the blessing of the Lord, the protection of Mary Help of Christians and the praiseworthy generosity of the provinces and confreres concerned.

5.3 New provincials

FRANCE NORTH: *Father Yves Le Carrères*

Father Le Carrères was born at Kerfot, Côte du Nord, France and became a Salesian at the age of 24 years in 1952. He was ordained at Paris in 1960 and was for some years teacher and animator of the scholastic centre of Saint-Dizier, a member of the provincial council, and

for three years rector of the trade school at Giel. At the time of his appointment as provincial he was teacher and headmaster of the secondary school of Saint-Dizier.

HOLLAND: *Father Nico Meijer*

Father Meijer was born in Groningen-Holland in 1940 and became a Salesian at 18 years of age. He was ordained at Oud-Heverlee in 1967 and took out a philosophy degree at Nijmegen. For five years he was assistant parish priest and a member of the provincial council. From 1979 he was rector of the youth centre at Rijswijk.

IRELAND: *Father Joseph Harrington*

Father Harrington was born in Ireland 8 January 1933 and became a Salesian at the age of 22. He was ordained at Warrenstown, Ireland, in 1968. With a degree in agriculture he was appointed rector of the agricultural college of Pallas-kenry and was also a member of the provincial council. In 1979 he was appointed provincial economer. He has just completed a year at the UPS-Rome for pastoral aggiornamento.

PHILIPPINES: *Father Lazaro Revilla*

Father Revilla was born in Burgos-Spain 17 May 1939. He entered the Congregation at Mohernando in

1955, was ordained at Salamanca in 1965, and after obtaining his STL left for the Philippines as novice-master. He was a member of the provincial council, and became vice-provincial and rector of the provincial house at Makati.

5.4 Address of the Rector Major Father Egidio Viganò on the occasion of the coronation of the Madonna of Ròzanystok (18 June 1981)

Your Eminence, Your Grace, my Lord-bishops, brothers and sisters:

This is indeed a happy occasion for me to express the gratitude of the Salesian Family to Your Eminence Cardinal Francis Macharski, successor of our Holy Father in the see of Cracow, and to Your Grace Archbishop Edward Kisiel, Administrator Apostolic of the Archdiocese of Białystok, for having entrusted this Marian sanctuary to the Salesians. We also thank the Dominican Fathers for the fine heritage bequeathed to us.

I also take this opportunity to offer our filial gratitude to Our Blessed Lady for the many graces she has obtained for us, especially the many local vocations. To the powerful protection of the Blessed Virgin of Rózanystok I confide myself and the Salesian Family of Poland and the neighbouring nations.

It gives me much pleasure to recall that one of the documents of the very brief reign of Pope John Paul I was the decree of 20 September 1978 to Archbishop Kiesel authorising the coronation of the miraculous image of the Madonna of Ròzanystok in the sanctuary confided to the Salesians.

The special devotion to the Mother of God in this place began in 1658 and is part of the history of this eastern region of Poland, with its people, their devotion, their culture, their sufferings, and their struggles for national and religious freedom. Catholics of both Latin and Greek rites used assemble here, and also our Greek Orthodox brethren: they all shared a profound devotion to the Mother of our Saviour.

The sanctuary flourished in the care of the Dominican Fathers. Then under the Czarist occupation it was in the hands of the Orthodox priests for some fifty years. When Polish independence was proclaimed in 1919 it passed into the care of the Salesians.

Here under the motherly protection of the miraculous Madonna the Salesians opened a school and a minor seminary; and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians founded their first novitiate. The Salesians are still the sanctuary custodians and pastors to the local population and the numerous pilgrims.

And now a brief look to the

future. From 1956 to 1957 at Lusaka, the capital of Zambia in the heart of Africa, the Jesuit Father Vincent Cichcki, with the help of the African people and some Polish emigrants from the United States, built a temple dedicated to the Madonna of Różanystok. Today, Father Cichcki's brother, Salesian Father Casimir, is preparing a missionary expedition for Zambia: it will include thirteen Salesians from your country. May Mary be their mistress and guide.

And now I must voice a sentiment from the depths of my heart. I come from Rome and I bring with me the deepest love and concern for the Holy Father, your great compatriot, Bishop of the Eternal City and Universal Pastor of the Catholic Church. To a certain extent he symbolises your country. The attack on his life has brought him much suffering. He is now on the mend, thank God. He is a magnificent protagonist for the dignity of man, a great prophet of the mystery of Christ. Let us remember Pope John Paul II, place him in Mary's care, and let us be ever faithful to him as the successor of Peter.

I pay my humble respects to the Polish bishops, the clergy, the religious, the faithful, all pilgrims, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Salesian Co-operators, the Past Pupils, and all friends of Don Bosco.

I am greatly edified by your great devotion to Mary; I thank you for your kindness and generosity to the Salesians; and I pray that Mary Help of Christians will continue her generous and efficacious help for the many faithful and the pilgrims of Poland, and indeed for all your brave, courageous and beautiful country.

God bless Poland. Mary Help of Christians, pray for us.

5.5 Letter of the Rector Major to the Institute of Church History at the Catholic University of Lublin on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of Cardinal Augustus Hlond

Rome 24 June 1981

*Reverend Father
Mieczysław Kaczmarzyk
Province of St Hyacinth
Krakow - Poland*

Dear Father Provincial,

Greetings to you and the members of the Institute of Church History at the Catholic University of Lublin.

This 5 July is the centenary of the birth of Augustus Hlond, Cardinal Primate of Poland (5-7-81), an event that will assuredly highlight this great son of Poland and disciple of Don Bosco.

Educated as he was at Turin, the cradle of Salesian life, he inherited

from the apostle of youth an all-absorbing interest in the salvation of souls; and when he returned to his native country he worked tirelessly in the Salesian apostolate.

He lived in a unique and complex era of history and his pastoral activity was necessarily linked to the social, economic, cultural and political context of the day.

In 1922 Pius XI appointed him the first Polish Administrator Apostolic of Upper Silesia, and in 1925 its first bishop. Next year he transferred him from Katowice to the archdiocese of Gniezno and Poznan, which made him at the same time Primate of Poland.

In those years, while Europe was licking its wounds after World War I, Poland had to lay her foundations as an independent nation. They were indeed years of political resurrection after more than a century of occupation which had all but removed the country from the map. Unfortunately it was a freedom that Poland was to enjoy for a mere score of years.

When World War II broke out she was the powerless but far from resigned witness of her sons who died in concentration camps and on so many different fronts. Those responsible for the world conflict would also gladly have seen Cardinal Hlond among its victims.

When the war was over the Primate of Poland returned from exile and undertook the organisation of

ecclesiastical life in the present Polish territory. He displayed immense activity and initiative, as we can read in the voluminous documentation "Acta Hlondiana" — 80 typescript volumes edited by Salesian Father Stanislaus Kosinski, professor of Church History in the Salesian studentate of Lad. This is excellent source material for research and will serve for theses and doctoral dissertations that will confirm the relevance of Cardinal Hlond's thought for present times.

One of the Cardinal's special initiatives was the founding of the "Societas Christi pro emigrantibus Polonis". This Congregation is characteristic of the Primate's pastoral heart: he did not want "the souls of his emigrant fellow citizens to be lost in their exile".

He was also a zealous promoter of Catholic Action so dear to Pius XI; and he worked indefatigably for Polish youth, family life and members of the work force.

I must also emphasise his efforts for suffering Poland, when from 1939 to 1945 he willingly shared the lot of so many Polish refugees; and there are many other aspects of his activity that could be singled out.

The Symposium at the Catholic University of Lublin, dedicated to the personality of the Cardinal and his social and pastoral thinking, is indeed a fitting contribution to the truly relevant records of this well-

deserving son of Poland.

I trust that this commemoration will help renew and vitalise the ecclesial and Salesian apostolate among the Polish people.

Let us renew our prayer together for the Holy Father, that the Lord may quickly restore this outstanding fellow-citizen of yours to those who love him and believe in him and his work; and may all listen to and heed his teaching as Vicar of Christ.

Fraternally yours in Don Bosco,

Father Egidio VIGANÒ

Rector Major

5.6 Letter of the Rector Major to the confreres of St Hyacinth's province on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of Cardinal Augustus Hlond

24 June 1981

Reverend Father

Mieczysław Kaczmarzyk

Province of St Hyacinth

Krakow - Poland

Dear Father Provincial,

My kindest regards to you and all Salesians of Oswiecim. I am writing to you about the centenary of the birth of our revered Cardinal Hlond (5 July 1881). It is an event of no little importance and one that reminds us automatically of his great successor Cardinal Wyszyński who died recently.

There seems to have been a very close link between these two eminent Pastors of the Church. Though they lived in different times and circumstances, they were at one in their concern for the Church and their love for their country. History will attest what they had in common and note the continuity in the work they both directed at different times.

However, the centenary celebrations focus our attention in a special manner on our worthy confrere Augustus Hlond who bore witness in difficult times to the mystery of Christ.

He was the first Polish Apostolic Administrator of Upper Silesia, subsequently becoming Archbishop of Gniezno and Poznań, Primate of Poland, and a Cardinal of the Church. Each of these roles demanded from him a responsibility and dedication to duty to which he always gave the most faithful witness.

He was born into a large family in Upper Silesia and received a deeply Christian education from his tenderest years, with a genuine understanding of the meaning of self-sacrifice.

At the age of twelve he went to Turin, where with several Polish companions he began his studies at Valsalice, then moved to Lombriasco and later to Foglizzo. Here he received the clerical habit at the hands of Blessed Michael Rua on 12 November 1896.

He was ordained at Krakow on

23 September 1905 and began his priestly work educating Polish youth in Christian faith and patriotic lore. This apostolic concern for his Polish people was to characterise his whole life. It was not a matter of Chauvinism but respect for his fellowmen scarred by circumstances and deprived of their material and cultural heritage. This zealous dedication was in fact nothing other than the programme of St John Bosco, whose aim was to produce "good Christians and upright citizens".

The spiritual stature of Cardinal Augustus Hlond was based on Don Bosco's motto, "Give me souls" and its realisation through the Eucharist, Marian devotion and fidelity to the Pope — all in a spirit of joy and trust.

Much could be said on each of these points, but I limit myself to his devotion to the Blessed Virgin, so characteristic of all the Polish people. Cardinal Hlond's prophetic words on his deathbed reflect his Marian heart full of trust in her motherly help: "Victory, when it comes, will be Mary's victory". The well-known motto of our present great Polish Pope John Paul II, "Totus tuus" carries out Cardinal Hlond's spiritual testament in a most consoling way.

The dying Cardinal Wyszynski too showed his devotion to Mary when he said, "I too entrusted everything to Mary most holy" (16 May 1981).

With this wonderful spiritual heritage in mind, we too must deepen our devotion and take practical steps to renew it for the good of all.

The Oswiecim celebrations for Cardinal Hlond's centenary provide an excellent opportunity for a deeper knowledge of his personality, which owed its origin and growth to the greatness of his country, the vitality of his Catholic faith and the educational ideals of Don Bosco.

The Primate of Poland, Cardinal Augustus Hlond has a secure place in the history of the Church and of Poland. He was an outstanding pastor, priest and patriot, and a sure guide for the Polish people in their true ideals of freedom and Christian faith. Do your best to make him well known.

I close my letter with a further thought for the Holy Father. Let us pray for our Pope, a wonderful example of fidelity, pardon, courage, and concern for his fellowmen.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Father Egidio VIGANÒ,
Rector Major

5.8 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).

L ACETO Igino (ILE) aged 82	* Camagna, Italy	9- 2-99
	Castel de' Britti, Italy	1-11-24
P AREVALO José (ABA) aged 57	† La Spezia, Italy	17- 4-81
	* Buenos Aires, Argentina	8-11-23
	Morón, Argentina	31- 1-45
	Córdoba, Argentina	1- 8-54
P BADER Hans (GEM) aged 33	† Buenos Aires, Argentina	15-12-90
	* Untereg, Germany	6- 1-48
	Ensdorf, Germany	15- 8-67
	Benediktbeuern, Germany	29- 6-78
P BELLONE Virgilio (ISU) aged 73	† Buxheim, Germany	3- 3-81
	* Costigliole, Italy	6-12-07
	Fogizzo, Italy	4-10-24
	Cuneo, Italy	9- 7-33
P BRAMBATI Martino (ILE) age 57	† Turin, Italy	26- 3-81
	* Fossarmato, Italy	10-12-23
	Montodine, Italy	16- 8-41
	Monteortone, Italy	29- 6-53
P BRANCALION Alfredo (IVO) aged 88	† Bologna, Italy	27- 3-81
	* Villamarzana, Italy	13- 6-20
	Ivrea, Italy	13- 6-20
	Verona, Italy	27- 2-26
P CAZZOLA Luigi (IAD) aged 75	† Schio, Italy	13-11-80
	* Savona, Italy	5- 6-05
	Strada Casentino, Italy	22- 9-28
	Hong Kong	15- 6-35
P CHALONNEAU Marcel (FPA) aged 72	† Macerata, Italy	9- 1-81
	* St Aubin de Luigné, France	29- 1-09
	Binson, France	13- 9-35
	Angers, France	8-10-39
P DE CENSI Ferruccio (ILE) aged 59	† Giel, France	13- 2-81
	* Berbenno, Italy	29- 3-22
	Montodine, Italy	1- 9-38
	Monteortone, Italy	29- 6-48
P DENAULT Napoléon (SUE) aged 71	† Arese, Italy	13- 4-81
	* Montreal, Canada	28- 7-09
	Sonada, India	8-12-43
	Shillong, India	7- 8-49
	† Montreal, Canada	26-12-80

P GAIS Ottone (ABB) aged 77	* Schromberg, Germany Ensdorf, Germany	23-10-03 23-10-03
	Ramos Mejía, Argentina	22-12-34
P GALLAVERNA Antonio (ILT) aged 63	† Bariloche, Argentina	20- 4-81
	* Fossano, Italy	5-11-17
	Varazze, Italy	9-11-33
	Genoa, Italy	3- 6-44
P GALLO Louis (SUO) aged 78	† La Spezia, Italy	21- 3-81
	* Vinzaglio, Italy	14-12-02
	Villa Moglia, Italy	1-10-32
	Padua, Italy	29- 6-40
	† Bellflower, USA	5- 2-81
P GRENA Luigi (ICE) aged 67	* Ricaldone, Italy	29-10-13
	Villa Moglia, Italy	18- 9-31
	Turin, Italy	2- 6-40
	† Turin, Italy	11- 3-81
P JOYEUSAZ Marcello (ICE) aged 78	* St Pierre, Italy	31-12-03
	Ivrea, Italy	4-10-21
	Casale Monferrato, Italy	29- 6-30
	† Colle Don Bosco, Italy (Provincial for 5 years)	5- 4-81
L LOMAZZI Massimo (RMG) aged 64	* Gravellona, Italy	28- 5-16
	Villa Moglia, Italy	12- 9-34
P LORENZO Abraham (SCO) aged 77	† Rome, Italy	14- 2-81
	* Aldeávilla, Spain	10- 6-04
	S. José del Valle, Spain	13- 9-23
	Seville, Spain	27-12-32
	† Ronda, Spain	5- 3-81
P LOVATO Vittorio (BCG) aged 87	* Schio, Italy	15- 6-93
	Turin, Italy	1- 8-12
	Turin, Italy	20- 7-24
	† Guiratinga, Brazil	7-11-80
L MARTIN Antonio (SVA) aged 81	* Casas del Puerto, Spain	18- 1-00
	Madrid, Spain	24- 7-19
	† Cabezo de Torres, Spain	11- 1-81
L MELANI Giuseppe (IME) aged 59	* Naples, Italy	17- 8-21
	Naples, Italy	21- 8-44
	† Naples, Italy	15- 2-81
P MIOTTO Serafino (IME) aged 75	* Cassacco, Italy	8- 7-06
	Este, Italy	18- 9-26
	Turin, Italy	7- 7-35
	† Naples, Italy	2- 3-81
P MURRAY Michael (FIL) aged 81	* Abbeyside, Ireland	26-11-99
	Oxford, England	16- 9-22
	Cape Town, South Africa	16-12-28
	† Port Law, Ireland	14- 1-81

P PAIREL Albert (FLY) aged 79	* Cornillé, France Château d'Aix, France Carthage, Tunisia † La Crau, France	25-11-01 29- 9-21 2- 2-30 6- 3-81
P PELLEGRINO Peter (SUE) aged 91	* Chiusa Pesio, Italy New Rochelle, USA New York, USA † New York, USA	18-11-89 29- 8-25 7- 6-30 21-12-80
P PERRO Pierre (FPA) aged 67	* Guingamp, France Binson, France St Brieuc, France † Grentheville, France	13- 6-13 22- 9-31 6- 4-42 21- 2-81
P PIAN João (BCG) aged 82	* Chiopris, Italy Ivrea, Italy Turin, Italy † Campo Grande, Brazil	20- 4-98 1- 2-21 10- 7-27 15-10-80
L ROMERO Vicente (ACO) aged 72	* La Rioja, Argentina Bernal, Argentina † Mendoza, Argentina	5- 1-09 29- 1-27 12-12-80
P RUGGERI Antonino (PAR) aged 78	* Trecastagni, Italy San Gregorio, Italy Catania, Italy † Asunción, Paraguay	12- 2-03 1- 5-19 27- 1-29 24- 3-81
P SCHNEIDTBERGER Martin (GEM) aged 75	* Operpriel, Germany Ensdorf, Germany Benediktbeuern, Germany † Bamberg, Germany	26-10-05 15- 8-29 4- 7-37 9- 2-81
P SEMELA Josef aged 78	* Luhacovice, Czechoslovakia Arequipa, Peru Lima, Peru † Senohrad, Czechoslovakia	25- 9-02 24- 1-29 15- 8-37 18- 2-81
L TIMMERMANS Wim (OLA) aged 65	* Amersfoort, Holland Ugchelen, Holland † Hoog Soeren, Holland	8- 3-14 16- 8-43 2- 2-81
P TOMANIK Maurilio (BSP) aged 81	* Jundiá, Brazil Lavrinhas, Brazil Turin, Italy † Americana, Brazil	7- 5-00 28- 1-22 6- 7-30 2- 4-81
P VELLERO Domingos (BCG) aged 64	* Foglizzo, Italy Cuiabá, Brazil São Paulo, Brazil † Alto Araguaia, Brazil	26- 7-16 29- 1-35 8-12-44 24- 5-80
P. WOJCICKI Simon (CIL) aged 75	* Lysobyki, Poland Klexza Dolna, Poland Turin, Italy † Santiago, Chile	28-10-05 12- 8-24 8- 7-34 6- 2-81

P WILLMUTH Adolf (GEK)
aged 76

L ZODO Fulvio (MOR)
aged 69

• Alt-Forweiler, Germany	15- 9-04
Ensdorf, Germany	15- 8-27
Benediktbeuern, Germany	7- 7-35
† Fulda-Sannerz, Germany	23- 2-81
• Campagnola, Italy	31- 3-81
Cremisan, Israel	6-11-31
† Cairo, Egypt	16- 3-81

