

acts

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

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

Father Egidio VIGANO'

REPLANNING OUR HOLINESS TOGETHER

« REPLANNING OUR HOLINESS TOGETHER » - Introduction - Dialogue with the provinces - A checking-up process with positive results - Limitations and lacunae - The basic problem - The best gift we can offer to the young - The daily meeting with Christ - Ascetical commitment - Don Bosco's style - Conclusion.

Rome, 12 December 1981

My dear confreres,

Today, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the members of the General Chapter of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians were received in special audience by the Holy Father. The meeting was preceded by a solemn eucharistic celebration in St Peter's Basilica, a liturgy of great ecclesial significance. We prayed for the new Superior Council of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, for the growth of mutual communion among members of the Salesian Family and for an ever more courageous and efficacious approach to the evangelization of the young.

While our Sisters are intensifying their work on the final formulation of their Constitutions, we are already thinking of our own 22nd General Chapter which will deal with the same question. To ensure adequate preparation for so important a Chapter I have appointed as its Moderator, in accordance with art. 100 of the Regulations, Fr JOHN VECCHI, the present Councillor for the Youth Apostolate. Let us help him by our prayers and ready cooperation.

Dialogue with the provinces

Last October we finished the series of so-called "joint visits" with a meeting in Hong Kong with the provinces of the Far East.

I would like to say something about these visits because everyone is aware by now of the importance of this new way in which the Superior Council is able to be present in the different parts of the Congregation and which has now become a necessity for religious institutes in the present context of unity in decentralization and vice versa. I offer you some practical ideas which will enable everyone to be open to a universal vision of our Congregation at the present day and to be aware in some way of its strengths and weaknesses; this in turn will provide us with a realistic platform for our further reflections on the urgent need for holiness.

Each one of these joint visits has been a shared review of our Salesian life and a planning of its further development in the light of the guidelines of GC21. There was a discussion in each case between a group of Provincials with members of their Councils on the one hand, and the Rector Major with the Councillors in charge of various Departments and the appropriate Regional Councillors on the other. The matters to be discussed were put forward by the individual provinces and subsequently coordinated and synthesised by the various groups in agreement with their Regional Councillor.

There have been ten such visits in all:

Two of them, the first and the last, were in Asia:

— at Calcutta, for the Indian provinces (October 1979);

— at Hong Kong, for the provinces and delegations of the Far East (October 1981).

Six were in Europe:

— at Benediktbeuern, for the three German-speaking provinces (January 1980);

— at Brussels, for the two Dutch-speaking provinces (February 1980);

— at Lodz (Poland), for the various East European provinces (April 1980);

— at Farnières, for the three French-speaking provinces (August 1980);

— at Pacognano, for the provinces of Italy and the Middle East (January 1981);

— at Barcelona, for the provinces of Spain and Portugal (July 1981).

Two were in America:

— at Malibu (California, U.S.A.) for the Western English-speaking provinces (September 1980);

— at San Miguel (Buenos Aires) for the many Latin-American provinces (April 1981).

The central points discussed were the fundamental issues of the GC21:

— the evangelisation of the Salesian community in respect of some of the fundamental aspects of our religious life;

— the formation of all the confreres;

— the educative project and the success of our search for vocations;

— the Missions, especially in Africa;

— the Salesian Family, with particular concern for a greater involvement of lay people.

It has been necessary to increase the number of these meetings, dividing them up so as to deal with groups having a certain cultural and ecclesial similarity. The objective situations of the provinces differ very widely. Those of Western Europe, for instance, find themselves in an atmosphere shot through with a secularism which unfortunately leads to dangerous irreligious attitudes. The Eastern European provinces on the other hand are situated in marxist societies where there are very definite problems caused by an arrogant crippling of apostolic values, especially in the field of youth pastoral work.

The provinces of the Anglo-Saxon areas are working in a society which is characterised by a pragmatic realism which is not always helpful in gaining a deeper appreciation of the far-reaching motivations that provoked the changes effected by Vatican II.

The provinces of Latin America are actively engaged in the adaptation of their pastoral work along the lines expressed by the Bishops' Conference at Medellín and Puebla; here and there in different countries one can note signs of nascent controversy with temporal overtones of one kind or another.

The provinces of Asia are acutely aware of the delicate problems involved in the inculturation process.

In Africa the Congregation is still at the stage of sowing the seeds, and this gives rise to specific needs and problems not experienced elsewhere.

Because of all this the discussions with the groups of provinces often followed different lines with different emphases.

Positive assessment

In the previous six-year period the Special General Chapter had programmed review-discussions by continents, and there were four big meetings. The new scheme, although demanding bigger sacrifices because of the greater number of meetings, has turned out to be more practicable and down to earth. The overall appraisal of the results is a very positive one. Certainly defects and lacunae have been found, but the very fact of holding the meetings was something constructive and it led to greater union, clearer ideas on certain matters and greater commitment.

I would like to emphasise a few of the more positive aspects which may serve to strengthen our increasing hope for the future.

First of all, in all these meetings there was a strong feeling of unity about certain points: love of Don Bosco, agreement about the significance of our identity, adherence to the recent General Chapters, solidarity and close communion with the Rector Major and Superior Council, the keenly felt atmosphere of real brotherhood; the freedom, clear speaking and mutual respect with which problems were faced. A religious and friendly relationship was built up with a greater feeling of shared responsibility, and the Provincials and members of their Councils were able to get a better idea of the wider dimensions of the Congregation and of their own Salesian responsibility in the fulfilment of their local role. The individual and global study of the various problems has made everyone more aware of important aspects of our vocation. In only a few days we were able to

reach an effective synthesis with new and zealous commitment.

And then there was also a new sense of provincial unity, even though in some cases this is still at an early stage; a general atmosphere of hope, and a determination to reach practical decisions; the overall and realistic panorama acquired by the Rector Major and his Council of Salesian life and mission in the world; the possibility of drawing up a better animation program to meet the concrete situations which had now become better known; an increased sensitivity to the Gospel demands in religious life, and to the pastoral and pedagogical heritage of the Preventive System.

Our incorporation into the local Church has become more clearly understood as part of a practical convergence of all the forces working for the evangelization of today's youth, and in this way the sense of our specific place in pastoral work has been renewed; the idea of the Salesian Project has been better understood as a synthesis of different aspects of our life and work, as the realisation of our overall pastoral objective, and as the way in which our traditional inspirations meet the new requirements of the present day.

There were also significant proposals for further commitment to the deepening of a particular spirituality for our young people: the appearance of more groups and youth movements in fact betokens a common source of inspiration in Don Bosco's spirit.

The topic of the Salesian Family has launched us decisively on a new plan of action in which the Salesian community is seen as the centre of animation and greater union that has become an active frame of reference for numerous lay endeavours.

The basic topic of religious life has led to a deeper understanding of the importance and significance of the community aspect of our lives and of animation as a service of authority, and to special insistence on the need to give back to the Rectors, and also to Provincials and their Councils, their true Salesian image.

The urgent question of formation has led first to requests for, and then (in the meetings that have taken place after the publication of the Ratio) to the acceptance of, the fundamental basic principles, the rulings and guidelines set out in the document "The Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco", which was asked for by the GC21.

The topic of the missions and information on the African Project have reawakened and strengthened Salesian enthusiasm on this very necessary front and have served to clarify and encourage many generous and practical initiatives on the part of a large number of provinces.

At the end of each of the visits practical conclusions were reached which are now being implemented and which are promoting the provinces' growth. Let us give heartfelt thanks to the Lord for so much good that has been done.

Limitations and lacunae

Certainly we have become aware of certain defects. Some of the joint visits were less well prepared than others. Sometimes there was more accent on receiving than on active participation and giving; sometimes more ability was shown in analysing and expounding problems than in seeking for solutions for them (at least in the beginning) and in drawing practical conclusions. It should be kept well

in mind that this was the first time this kind of dialogue had been attempted and there was in consequence no experience to fall back on.

A overall evaluation has been made of these visits by the Superior Council, and as a result it seems important and necessary to revise the manner of their organisation so that the various Councillors involved can determine more accurately the objectives to be achieved and the matters to be dealt with; in this way the points of view of the different Departments can be better harmonised one with another. It has also been noted that greater attention needs to be given to the role of the Regional Councillors, especially in the planning of the meetings and in the identification of practical conclusions to be drawn. It is hoped that the Superior Council will be able to clarify in good time the specific purpose of each meeting and the range of points to be dealt with, so that attention and work can be concentrated on a few key points, leaving other aspects more as matter for information than for dialogue input.

The variety in situations and in the geographical extent of the different regions did not permit of the same kind of participation at every meeting. Sometimes all the members of a Provincial Council took part (as was indeed desirable), in other cases only one or two could be present, with a consequent impoverishment of the value of the discussions and an impaired standard of communication and of ability to realise an effective follow-up.

A great deal of work is done in the provinces, but here and there one notes an unreasonable division of responsibility which is sometimes a hangover from an old kind of apostolic individualism,

and in general betrays a lack of planning by provincial and local communities.

Another consequence of a certain pragmatism in work and lack of community planning is a dangerous neglect of the spiritual life, of pastoral updating, and of ongoing formation. In some provinces these latter are not really up to the required level. I think that this is one of the reasons why assimilation of documents and directives of the Church and Congregation has been rather slow. A shallowness of thought about our religious profession is at the root of a far from imaginary danger, that of superficiality.

The basic problem

My dear confreres, at the present time, which is one of cultural transition, the enemy we need to fear most is precisely this superficiality in spiritual matters.

We run the risk of making our whole renewal consist in organisation and initiatives 'for external use', so to speak. The restructuring of a province and its works is certainly important, and even indispensable. There is urgent need to revise our community dimension, to re-establish the true image of the Rector, to assimilate and apply the Ratio, to formulate our pastoral and educational plan, to broaden the perspectives of the Salesian Family, to be generous in our missionary commitment. But underlying all this, as its source and moving spirit *we have to replan the way to make ourselves holy*, both individually and as a community: we have to rethink and re-live the real meaning of our religious profession and the vitalizing drive of the consecration it implies.

If we want our vast and enthusiastic renewal process to be something more than for mere 'external use', we have to be vigorous in our fresh drive to do what we are told in art. 2 of the Constitutions: to become in true Salesian fashion "the signs and bearers of the love of God for young people, especially those who are poorest. It is by fulfilling this mission in the imitation of Christ that we find our path to holiness".

We are not just 'catechists': we are 'educators' too; it is by educating that we evangelize. But we are not just 'educators' either, but rather 'guides' or 'mystagogues', terms dear to the Fathers of the Church to indicate initiation into the mystery of Christ. In other words we are concerned about providing a pedagogy designed to bring about a vital insertion of youth into the reality of the faith: it is by evangelizing that we educate, in the sense that all our educational activity is animated by and takes its concrete objectives from a concern to introduce young people to the mystery of Christ and let them live in his paschal victory. The vital principle of the Preventive System is always and everywhere the "Da mihi animas", which stems from a spirituality centred on pastoral charity conceived and lived out in the style of Don Bosco.¹ Our Constitutions tell us that "we accept youth as we find them and imitate the patience of God himself, whatever the state of their present freedom or faith. By a friendly presence we support them in the face of evil and help them through shared understanding to free themselves from every enslavement. We seek to enlighten them while recognising the subtle process by which faith grows".²

But in order to do this with patience and constancy, i.e., to live the daily intention of guid-

1. Const. 40.

2. ib. 25.

ing the young and initiating them into the Mystery of Christ, 'sanctity' or holiness is absolutely indispensable. This is therefore the first objective of our real renewal!

Our best gift to the young: our own holiness

The worldwide vision of the life of the Congregation that I have acquired through long contact (nearly three years) with the provinces through these joint visits leads me to say without any doubt that the biggest problem we still have to solve at the present day is that of renewing our holiness.

Yes, it is true: today's young people have an urgent need of our holiness. It is precisely for this that Christ and Mary have called us; our holiness is the best and most useful gift we can give to the young.

Unfortunately the word 'holiness' or 'sanctity' can be easily misunderstood by a confused mentality that is fairly common nowadays and born of an environment which puts a kind of cultural blockage in the way of its genuine meaning and implications. It can become identified with a false kind of spirituality which veers away from practical things; with an asceticism attainable only by rare heroes; with a feeling of ecstasy that looks down on active life; with an outdated understanding of the values of the present turning point in the history of man. Such a caricature as this can only be deplored.

We on the other hand believe firmly in holiness and in its relevance today. Rather than looking to the abstract concept of holiness or sanctity, we look to the living witness of Don Bosco as a saint.

When we assert that our holiness is our best

gift to the young, what we mean is that young people need to find in each one of us another Don Bosco with his "oratorian heart". And it is in this sense that it seems both fundamental and urgent that we should revive and enhance our sanctity, and at the same time restore to the word its relevance and appeal, which have been somewhat damaged by the prevailing misrepresentation. Don Bosco's sanctity is uncomplicated and attractive, it is strong and inspiring.

God alone is holy. Human holiness is a communion and participation of divine love; it confirms us in the knowledge that the Spirit of the Lord enters in a vital way into man's heart and history; without it humanity cannot attain its goal.

Among the very large number of saints (they are indeed the leaven of human integrity in the Father's design) Don Bosco is an outstanding witness and purveyor to the young of the indispensable values of sanctity; and Dominic Savio gives us the same message with enthusiastic hope and trust.

I have spoken of Don Bosco's sanctity as at once uncomplicated and attractive, one which inspired trust and built up friendship, but at the same time was unyielding in its Gospel demands. This holiness is not attainable without a special call of the Spirit, nor can one persevere in it without continual recourse to him and fidelity to his inspirations. Although this kind of sanctity is uncomplicated and attractive it is neither easy nor comfortable!

For us "it is not enough to love". Don Bosco has taught us that the ideal of Salesian sanctity lies rather in *making ourselves loved*; and the dream of the rose arbour provides us with a clear reminder

of what that can demand of us. His style of holiness is an instrument for educating. In us it would lose all its distinctiveness if it led to the interposing of a barrier between us and the young, or if it became distasteful to them.

The present situation in the provinces brings to my mind two fundamental elements of Salesian holiness to which we must give priority in practice if we are to succeed in making it a living reality once again at the present day.

The first is a close intimacy with Christ so as to ensure the daily source of pastoral charity in our educational activity. The second is an ascetical commitment to a constant kindness which is itself an element of pedagogy. Without a clear friendship with Christ, felt personally and lived out in community, and without a serious ascetical background, no effort at renewal will ever make us signs and bearers of the love of God for the young.

I would like to offer you a few thoughts on these last two points which provide the main thrust for the launching of our new effort.

The daily meeting with Christ

Let us first read attentively what Don Bosco wrote in his spiritual testament: "Your first Rector Major is dead. But our true Superior is Jesus Christ, and he will never die. He will always be our master, our guide and our model".³ Let us keep in mind too what our spiritual tradition asserts: "Pastoral love, young and alive, is at the very heart of our spirit just as it was so powerfully conspicuous in our Founder in the beginnings of our Society. It is this ardent apostolic drive which makes us 'seek souls and serve God alone' ".⁴ Holiness lives and is manifested in that love which

3. Mem. Biog. 17: 258-273.

4. Const. 40

is the love of God (the "agape" of the evangelist St John).

Salesian sanctity or holiness looks from a particular point of view at the charity of the Father, who loved man so much that he sent his Son and his Spirit to save him. And it emphasises in this love the gift of himself in the plan of salvation, especially for the young.⁵ It is not limited to words but is built on facts: pastoral love shows itself in deeds.

5. ASC n. 290, July-December 1978.

Action imbues an entity with a special vigour and graces it with a genuine and fertile attraction. Sacred Scripture is always proclaiming the necessity of *doing* something: "Not every one who says to me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven".⁶ It is a question therefore of a pastoral charity that is concrete and active, and that lives in us together with a constant friendly relationship toward two kinds of persons: the infinite persons in God, and the persons of men, especially "the poor and the little ones". In this way we become aware of the internal force of charity which provides a close link between our relationship of friendship with God and with the young.

6. Mt 7: 21.

Which of these relationships comes first: the one with needy man or the one with God? Is there some kind of dependence of one on the other? Does one of them influence the other? These are interesting questions, and in replying to them we come to the crux of the problem of how we are to renew our sanctity.

They are questions which are not just pleonastic; nor are they artificial or superfluous. They come directly to grips at a deep level with certain suggestions that certain secularists put forward.

7. Evangelii Nuntiandi 55.

8. cf. Gaudium et Spes
22.

In fact the present-day cultural changes, which have caused the greatest crisis in the history of religious life, are characterised by strong man-centred ideas with "a concept of a self-explanatory world without any need for recourse to God".⁷ This kind of mentality has been able to make a subtle infiltration into faith areas, disguised under religious trappings. The biblical and patristic view of man as the "image of God", implying that one cannot really know man unless one knows Christ who is God made man,⁸ has veered to the opposite view that man knows the mystery of God (if he exists!) by knowing himself.

Such an attitude as this can give only a devastating reply to the above questions; without explicitly asserting the primacy of love for man the emphasis is nevertheless almost exclusively on man, on his needs, on situations of social injustice, which are assumed as a point of departure for rethinking the meaning of God's love and hence of religious consecration.

Such an interpretation fosters a dangerous man-centred attitude which leads very easily to a clouding over of pastoral charity and hence to a progressive adulteration of our sanctity. True enough the apostle St John proclaims the absolute necessity of love for our neighbour: "he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen".⁹ But here John is talking about how we can check up on the practicality of our love; and in fact a little earlier he had written: "love is of God...; in this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us...; if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another; we love God because he first loved us".¹⁰

The Old Testament had already spoken of love

9. Jn 4: 20.

10. 1 Jn 4: 7; 10; 11; 19.

of God and of neighbour in terms of absolute primacy, but it is in the New Testament that the extent and inner force of such love takes on extraordinary dimensions.

The command of Jesus Christ in this regard is crystal clear: "Love one another *as I have loved you!*"¹¹ That little word 'as' is a very precise and fundamental reply to the question posed above. In our pastoral charity love for the young flows intimately and of its very nature from our love for God; our friendship with youth is the precious and natural consequence of our friendship with God. Without love for God there can be no pastoral love for the young!

11. Jn 15: 12.

Pope Paul VI in his inaugural address to the Second General Conference of the Latin-American Bishops (Medellín 1968) drew the attention of the bishops of Latin-America to a doctrinal point concerning pastoral charity. He spoke of the *dependence* of love of neighbour *on love of God*. "You are aware", he said, "of the attacks made at the present day on *this doctrine which is so clearly and irrefutably derived from the Gospels*: the aim is to secularise Christianity, ignoring its essential reference to religious truth, to the ineffable and superabundant love of God for men, ignoring also its reference to the duty of man's *response* to love him and to call him Father and *in consequence* to call men in all truth by the word 'brothers', so as to free Christianity itself from what Cox calls 'that form of neurosis which goes by the name of religion', so as to avoid all theological concern and offer to christianity a new and entirely pragmatic efficacy, which alone would make it acceptable and workable in today's secular and technological civilisation".¹²

12. CELAM: "La Iglesia en la actual transformación de América Latina a la luz del Consilio", vol. I, p. 31 (Bogotá 1968).

And so our friendship with God is the true source and lifeblood of our pastoral predilection for the young; and we come next to the question: How can we nourish and continually increase our love for God? And the reply can only be: by a daily encounter with Christ.

St John, who is not only called the "theologian of love" but also its most outstanding witness, has left us the classical definition of substantial sanctity when he asserts that "God is love".¹³ This declaration was not made by Jesus, nor was it an abstract dogmatic pronouncement; it was the result of John's lengthy reflections on the life and paschal mystery of his friend Jesus and on Christ's personal relations with the Father. The more John contemplates the words, deeds and psychology of Jesus the more does he see that they point vividly to the fact that charity (or love, or "agape") sums up the whole historic meaning of the incarnation of the Word, and the full explanation of the whole mystery of God made man.

What distinguishes believers of the New Covenant from others is for John precisely this manner of looking at Christ. It is not enough to recognise him as the Messiah and Lord of history. A vital adherence is needed to his way of loving with an active sharing in its efficacy.

The realism of the love of God is found totally in Christ, who lives out its distinctiveness and power. God is pure spirit;¹⁴ no one has seen him.¹⁵ He is present in Christ who is the perfect image of the Father,¹⁶ and in him is concentrated all the divine transcendence of love. Christian knowledge and love of God does not mean simply reflecting admiringly on his omnipotence, wisdom and justice,

13. 1 Jn 4: 8.

14. 1 Jn 4: 24.

15. 1 Jn 4: 12.

16. Jn 14: 9.

but rather in feeling oneself practically involved with Christ so as to share actively in his love.

The "saint" is one who is fully open to this love and becomes a channel for passing it on to others. Relaunching our Salesian sanctity therefore means primarily the cultivation of our friendship with Christ by both the individual and the community. This is why the daily encounter with Christ is indeed the alpha and omega of pastoral charity.

"Encounter" in this context certainly implies a permanent relationship of friendship; but what I have in mind here is a definite time-slot inserted in each day for practices like meditation and personal prayer, the liturgy of the hours and the Eucharist. The sacrament of his paschal memorial which comprises the greatest act of love in all history must become again the vital and impelling centre of our own lives and of all our communities.

The essential and indispensable aspects of our personal and community meeting with Christ were treated at length by the Special General Chapter with objective application to the realities of our own life; I invite you to meditate once again on its 9th document, "The praying community".¹⁷

17. ASGC, 517-555.

Ascetical commitment

The second pillar that sustains the whole edifice of our sanctity is a daily practical ascetical program for our personal conduct and our community life style. One of the dangerous phenomena we have become aware of in these years of crisis for religious life is an almost complete disintegration of ascetical ideas; this appears as a loss of the *methodical effort* to eliminate with the help of God's grace whatever may be opposed to growth

18. cf. Mt 16: 24.
 19. cf. Col 1: 24.
 20. cf. 1 Cor 9: 24-25.

of life in Christ and to a rugged determination to face up to the sacrifices involved: renunciation and self-denial,¹⁸ the acceptance of suffering,¹⁹ spiritual combat,²⁰ not for their own sake but as a sharing in the paschal mystery of Christ and a willing cooperation with the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

This is a very serious loss; it removes from religious life its quality of being a 'sign' in the world. Without some visible ascetical commitment no clear witness is given to the great value of the vows, which are in themselves a formidable Gospel challenge to today's permissive society. Indeed, without an ascetic aspect the objective veracity of the vows cannot exist, or in other words specifically religious sanctity would be robbed of all its meaning.

Pope Paul VI, speaking on one occasion to religious, sadly lamented: "The most dangerous scourge threatening your Institutes is that of *the present-day laxity* in which we are immersed. *Resist it at all costs!* Today more than ever in the past, religious life must be lived out in full in conformity with the *lofty and rigorous demands* of prayer, humility, a spirit of sacrifice, and the *austere practice of the vows*. In a word: *religious life must be a holy life, or else there is no reason why it should exist at all*".²¹

21. Paul VI, 27 June 1965.

The history of christianity shows that because of differing anthropological ideas prevailing in various times and places, the practical expressions of asceticism have been frequently changed to new forms. A healthy ascetical pedagogy is always linked with local culture and requires adaptation to the particular kind of vocation chosen. Thus in a setting of platonic mentality it was not difficult to invest asceticism with a certain dualism characterised by a harmful concept of material values.

On the other hand the asceticism of a 'contemplative' cannot be measured by the same yardstick as that of an 'active' religious, and vice versa.

Man is a composite of flesh and spirit, and lives out his personal vocation in a particular culture with its own anthropological perspective. A proper asceticism must take account of the requirements of God's plan for man, flesh and spirit, in accordance with an ever deeper understanding of man's reality. The present turning point in man's history certainly calls for inculturation and acculturation, or a wise adaptation of Christian asceticism in general, and our Salesian asceticism in particular, to new human values which have recently appeared, and to the demands posed by the signs of the times; but it must remain clearly *ascetical* and still more clearly *Christian*, and also (for us) *Salesian*: a homogeneous growth determined by Christ's paschal mystery and our own spiritual traditions.

Indeed asceticism implies the offering of oneself to God through a radical following of Christ, and for us it means the dedication of all our energies to pastoral activity: the apostolate can be looked upon as a kind of athletic exercise of charity because of which, as says St Paul: "I treat my body hard and make it obey me, lest I be disqualified".²²

22. cf. 1 Cor 9: 24-27.

Today our asceticism must pay due regard to scientific progress made in the study of man, but it must also see such progress in a paschal light. "Christ, the new Adam", says Vatican II in *Gaudium et Spes*, "in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling... It is through Christ and in Christ that light is thrown on the riddle of suffering and death

23. Gaudium et Spes
22.

which, apart from his Gospel, overwhelms us".²³

Man's historical turning point, already referred to, has given proper emphasis to the values of freedom, the body, personal development and the importance of self-realisation. But all this remains at a pagan level and can deteriorate into self-centredness unless it is washed in the paschal waters of baptism.

24. Perfectae Caritatis
13.

New cultural concepts cannot change the Gospel content of consecrated life; thus, for example, "far from lowering the dignity of the human person, religious obedience leads it to maturity by extending the freedom of the sons of God".²⁴

25. cf. Rom 7: 21-25.

We are living in a civilization which has put the primacy of God aside and in consequence has lost the sense of sin: our own sins and those of others and particularly, for us, the sins of the young. In today's society the triumph of concupiscence is applauded (with its emphasis on power, well-being, the flesh and the pride of life). And on the other hand each of us feels in his own heart the irrepressible strength of his passions,²⁵ fed by so many enticements flaunted before him. The vast number of our weaknesses and sins, and those of other people (and especially the young) is a sad reality. Don Bosco, we know, was an implacable enemy of sin; he knew that it cuts us off from God and his friendship, and in consequence it disfigures both man and society.

We have an urgent need to stir up in ourselves the ability to be converted, to make expiation, to avoid future falls, or in other words to foster a love and sorrow which will be expressed in a permanent attitude of compunction which reserves a privileged place for humility and Christian self-abnegation.²⁶ All this is not in any way opposed

26. cf. Phil 2: 6-9.

to self-realisation, but is in fact an indispensable aspect of it. In a paradoxically unique and perennial way, the mystery of the Cross proclaims the importance of *obedience in faith*. Remember the Garden of Olives: "Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup away from me. *But let it be as you, not I, would have it*".²⁷ In Christ's own self-realisation he saw the horizons of his own development not in a subjective plan in accord with his own desires and inclinations, but in the context of a wider project, which involved God as Father: a vast project of love and victory, but which passed through Calvary.

27. Mk 14: 36.

Human sciences are not sufficient for understanding and living out such a plan of the Father. The wisdom of faith is required. "Instead of the spirit of the world", says St Paul, "we have received the Spirit that comes from God... And we teach in words that come not from human wisdom but in the way the Spirit teaches us."²⁸ "Let me put it like this: if you are guided by the Spirit you will be in no danger of yielding to self-indulgence, since self-indulgence is the opposite of the Spirit, the Spirit is totally against such a thing; the two are opposed to each other... When self-indulgence is at work the results are obvious: fornication, gross indecency and sexual irresponsibility, idolatry and sorcery, feuds and wrangling; jealousy, bad temper and quarrels; disagreements, factions, envy; drunkenness, orgies and similar things... What the Spirit brings is very different: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control."²⁹ "My brothers, there is no necessity for us to obey our unspiritual selves or to live unspiritual lives. If you do live in that way, you are doomed to die; but if by the Spirit you

28. 1 Cor 2: 12-13.

29. Gal 5: 16-22.

30. Rom 8: 11-13.

31. *ib.* 8: 18.

put an end to the misdeeds of the body you will live.”³⁰ “I think”, concludes St Paul, “that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us.”³¹

And so the riches of charity in us must be defended by strong self-discipline. It is a most serious mistake at the present day to think that an ascetical commitment is an out-of-date element no longer needed. The opposite is the case: in a permissive society like ours there is more need than ever of conversion and self-control in a down-to-earth pedagogy of penance and prevention.

32. ASC n. 293, July-Sept. 1979.

To ensure our commitment and to make it constant and vital, personal and community discipline is needed.³² To this end Christ has offered us a special meeting with his paschal mystery in the sacrament of Penance. Sincerity and a personal use of this sacrament are indispensable elements for the development of sanctity. In fact the sacrament of Penance provides special and abundant light and energy from Christ for conversion, expiation and prevention. And in this way our ascetical zeal becomes a vital part of our encounter with Christ so as to live it and communicate it to the young.

Don Bosco's style

Some months ago when writing to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and referring to Don Bosco, I said: “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, 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".³³ This may still seem a daring statement to make, but we are experiencing its truth. And we need to feel a special responsibility in this regard, because our Congregation is placed at the heart of the Salesian Family for its spiritual animation.

It is of the utmost importance that we foster and intensify our Christ-encounter and our ascetical commitment, and we must know and deepen our way of putting them into practice, because in this way there is brought into being that style of holiness that corresponds to our particular mission.³⁴

* I have already tried in the Strenna for 1981 which dealt with our interior life to stress the aspect of our daily meeting with Christ. And the Strenna for 1982 concentrates our attention on the characteristic ascetical dedication involved in work and temperance. Don Bosco wanted these two ideas of work and temperance to be the two parallel lines on which the Congregation would move forward; he wanted them to be our watchword. They appear as the two diamonds on the shoulders of the personage in the famous dream, as if to indicate the part they play in sustaining and putting into effect the values and requirements represented by the other diamonds.

* After GC21 we pledged ourselves to study more deeply the preventive system in its various dimensions, and here we are particularly concerned about the characteristics which give it its own peculiar spirituality. The two pillars of which Don Bosco speaks (the Eucharist and Penance) appear once again, in the light of the Council, papal teaching³⁵ and our own experience of recent years, as the two basic principles or central points for

33. ASC n. 301, July-Sept. 1981.

34. cf. *Mutuae Relationes* 11.

35. *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in misericordia*.

our spiritual renewal. They emphasise in complementary fashion both our daily encounter with Christ and our ascetical commitment.

* Moreover the community aspect of our Gospel plan for the following of Christ³⁶ offers us new elements for our spiritual life. These elements place our meeting with Christ in a setting of brotherly community; our family spirit must be seen and lived in our houses in the light of Christ, and this goes beyond considerations of flesh and blood and natural feelings. These same elements too give a special slant to our zealous asceticism, in the sense that obedience (which for us has a strong community dimension) was placed by Don Bosco at the foundation of our Salesian mission. In the light of this style of Salesian obedience how much individualism and how many independent initiatives have need of revision and correction!

* Finally, and I touch on these points only briefly, healthy tradition as lived out in the spartan conditions of the early generations and the witness of our great predecessors, together with the directives of the Constitutions and Regulations, provide us with practical and impelling means of ensuring union with God and ascetical practice; for instance:

— To improve the quality of our daily encounter with Christ, it will help to read again, with a view to practical resolutions, Chapter 8 of the Constitutions³⁷ regarding listening to God, prayer, the Eucharist, Penance, Marian devotion, and a liturgy of life in which we offer ourselves and our daily work as “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God”.

— In connection with the ascetical commitment, I offer you some very practical indications taken from the Constitutions and Regulations:

36. cf. Const. 34, 50

37. Const. 58-67.

Const. 42: Work and temperance in opposition to comfort and a life of ease; readiness to suffer heat and cold, hunger and thirst, fatigue and rejection, whenever the glory of God and the salvation of souls require it.

Const. 79: The use of mortification and custody of the senses to preserve chastity.

Const. 83, 85, 87: To live our poverty, accept its inconveniences and adopt a simple and frugal tenor of life in a spirit of sacrifice.

Const. 91, 93, 94: To live our obedience; to offer our will to God in the Congregation; to be always available; to consider the superiors and community as special means for knowing the Father's will; to be flexible in dialogue; to place our abilities and special gifts at the service of our common mission. Don Bosco rightly teaches us that instead of doing works of penance we should practise obedience.

Reg. 36: We must keep our critical sense and our conscience alert to our moral obligations in the choice of reading matter, film shows, radio and television programs; we should recall the austerity demanded by religious life and the obligations of our community life and work.

Reg. 50: There is a special personal and community penance to be practised on Fridays and during Lent.

Reg. 55: We are to avoid the comforts and attractions of the world.

Reg. 61: We are committed to temperance in food and drink, simplicity in dress, moderate use of holidays and amusements, abstention from smoking as a form of Salesian temperance and a witness to our work of education.

Don Bosco, the other great Founders, and the

Saints are the kind of people who do honour to humanity. They have spread love and joy about them, as true disciples of Christ with their eyes fixed on the annihilation, the kenosis, to which he submitted. Before all else they teach us to fill our hearts with love, love that is nourished and defended by a courageous asceticism; and we should remember that pedagogical asceticism makes use of things that may appear small but have in fact a characteristic significance and are a vital and permanent means for strengthening the will in line with the Gospels.

* And there, dear confreres, you have some useful reflections developed after a global review of the life of the Congregation made through our combined visits.

It is urgent that we replan our holiness together, and bear witness to it by a more credible style of life and apostolate. This is a challenge forced upon us by the needs of people, especially young people. Recent years have seen a considerable change in our way of life to adapt ourselves to cultural modifications and to ensure a more adequate and practical presence in the world. Unfortunately we are not always awake to the fact that certain secular customs and attitudes call in question little by little the very essence of consecrated life.

We must become in the world so many *saints*. We are the signs and bearers of the love of God for the young: we cannot therefore fail to be in touch with them; but we are called to be among them as true disciples of Christ after the manner of Don Bosco. Superficiality in spiritual matters makes us naive and oversimple in adapting ourselves to the world in which we live; holiness on the other hand calls for adaptation not to the world

itself but to the world's evangelical requirements and needs!

Hence we have to be in the world, but not worldly; not aliens, but with our own particular identity; not relics of the past, but modern proclaimers of the eschatological reality of the paschal mystery; not blind followers of popular trends, but courageous promoters of a pressing renewal; not remaining aloof from human events, but protagonists of the history of salvation.

In following Christ according to Don Bosco's spirit we make use of all the circumstances, events, signs of the times, and even negative or unjust situations to promote our growth in holiness. In this bold enterprise, a far from easy one because our role is that of a challenger (we must be 'signs of contradiction' as Jesus was), the desired results are not achieved 'ex opere operato' as the saying goes, i.e., by simple change of structures or organisation or by adopting forms of life and apostolate better fitted to today's needs; such changes are indeed indispensable but they must be founded on something else, something deeper which will support them. The worth of sanctity depends on the heart; it is attained and it increases rather 'ex opere operantis', or in other words by the thinking power of our intelligence, by the commitment of our will, by the initiative of our love.

There is no other way. Evasion, by criticising structures or putting the blame on others, is of no avail. Here I am face to face with my own conscience in the depths of the reality which is myself. There is the source of the atomic energy that can resolve the crisis; it is there in the sanctuary of my own person. This is the great truth; let us think about it!

Pope John Paul II tells us that "it is truth that gives the courage to make great decisions, heroic options, perpetual commitments. Truth provides the strength for practising difficult virtues, for living the Beatitudes of the Gospel. And the truth is Christ whom we know and whom we follow. And from this truth there stems an ardent desire for sanctity".³⁸

Let us ask Mary to obtain for us clarity of understanding. In the divine plan of redemption it was she who gave Christ to the world; she first brought him to us at Christmas, and she continues to bring him to every age of the Church's history; she brings him at the foundation of religious Institutes (as at Becchi and Valdocco); she brings him into the life of every individual.

May Mary Help of Christians be always with us and be our guide.

My wish for each one of you is for a New Year that will see your enthusiastic and determined commitment to sanctity.

Fraternally in Don Bosco,

Father EGIDIO VIGANÒ,
Rector Major.

38. Osservatore Romano
19 - 20 October 1981.

2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Father Juan Edmundo VECCHI, Councillor for Youth Apostolate

THE SALESIAN SCHOOL

1. The Present-day Problem

In recent years both the Church and the Congregation have taken a stand in favour of the cultural and pastoral validity of schools. It would seem that the principles, foundations and aims of Catholic schools have been made sufficiently clear. Nevertheless the problem of creating a 'model' which incorporates all the values and possibilities referred to in the official documents is a very real one.

The foundations of the institution which we commonly refer to as the school have recently been shaken by certain social, cultural and ecclesial phenomena. Though these influences have in no way disproved its basic value, they have shown that the previous way of running schools is inadequate. This new situation called for fresh planning and new approaches, and as we analysed the causes of these phenomena, we discovered new educational and pastoral perspectives.

We feel the influence of these phenomena in the day to day life of our schools. The following are a few examples; the increasing lay personnel in the schools and the need for shared responsibility; the cultural identity in a pluralistic setting of a school which purports to be Catholic; the constant renewal of educational methods; a new outlook on cultural communication; the technical demands of modern teaching methods; the relationship with the area in which the school is located; the pastoral approaches most suitable in an institution which is *per se* a secular one.

It is of no use to insist that the Catholic school is a valid and viable institution if we fail to find practical solutions for each of these

challenges in terms of personnel, updating and attainable objectives. The documents would remain a dead letter.

The Salesian Congregation runs a considerable number of schools. Schools give us the opportunity for sustained contact with a large number of youngsters in an organised way. Schools also provide an opportunity of involving an increasingly large number of lay educators.

The document "Salesians, Evangelizers of the Young" of the GC21 presents the school as a valid environment and way of evangelization, to the extent that it allows us to evangelize young people according to a basic Salesian pastoral plan.

There are two main concerns therefore: the school must have a pastoral thrust and a true Salesian identity. This is the time for us to do some evaluating and to make sure that all those conditions are fully implemented which make our presence in the school apostolate a true expression of the Salesian mission to the young.

2. A Working Model

Planning a working model means giving a lasting and in-depth solution to the challenge which we face in the running of schools by getting beyond individual experimentation and arriving at a common fund of positive experiences. It also implies practical solutions which can be applied, at least in an analogous way, to other Salesian presences of the same kind.

The idea of a "basic plan of Salesian education to which each school of the province can conform" (GC21) means precisely to create a **WORKING MODEL**. This should serve as a means of implementing the general principles in the real life situations in which Salesians work. It should be a help in translating theory into concrete aims and measures and in creating a community mentality and a community way of doing things.

In order to arrive at this working model it is necessary to co-ordinate aims, objectives and procedures for the implementation of certain key points, which we shall now illustrate.

3. The Educative Community

This is the first and perhaps the newest among the points which demand our attention. In dealing with it we take for granted that both at the local and the provincial level there is an acceptance of the need for the co-responsibility of lay people and of their active involvement in our schools if these are to attain their educational goals and truly mirror the image of the Church itself.

The idea of the educative community also implies acknowledgement of the role the students themselves play in the educational process, and therefore of their right to participate in accordance with their own level of development.

Moreover this concept recognises the fact that the school and the family complement each other and that there is likewise a relationship of complementarity between them and the neighbourhood and society. Thus the isolation of the school both in terms of its programs and relationships as well as in terms of an evaluation of its effectiveness is done away with. The family is expected not only to back up the discipline of the school and to provide financial support, but to participate in the process of formulating educational objectives and methods. Cultural and professional ties are established with the neighbourhood and with society, as well as a spirit of service, aid and collaboration in common causes.

The ongoing effort to build a community leads us to choose certain tasks as priorities and to concentrate on them our services as religious and as Salesians. It is a well-known fact that force of circumstances has often led Salesians to take on jobs that involve administration, technical direction, liaison work or management which sometimes leave them very little time for tasks which are just as important, if not more so. This is a trend which should be corrected.

A religious community which deeply experiences the mission of the Church and gives witness to this mission in a visible way must become a centre and source of communion and participation. Hence there is a need for all our confreres to acquire or reacquire competency as animators of communities. In other words they must foster and appreciate the value of participation and co-responsibility; they must

have the ability to get people together, to promote unity, to coordinate activities, to concentrate and summarize, to share responsibility, and above all to communicate an understanding of the educative and Christian mission.

If the religious community is renewed in this way, it will be ready to accept as its main task the ongoing professional, Christian and Salesian formation of lay collaborators and to foster a unity of ideals, action and mutual appreciation among the various members of the educative community. This unity will be built by means of structures which allow participation through personal relationships and through working out together the goals to be pursued and the steps to be taken to reach these goals.

In some provinces these items depend solely on the personal initiative and personal talents of individual Salesians. In other provinces a general and systematic effort is made to learn the skills necessary to attain the above-mentioned goals as an integral part of the province's pastoral plan. This latter procedure has proved much more effective.

For years we have been talking about the educative community in our Congregation. It is understandable that it took time to assimilate the demands which this project has made on us. We have moved rather slowly and hesitatingly toward goals which in themselves seemed quite evident: the introduction of lay staff into our schools, the need to animate them and to give them status within our structures. In some places this process of renewal was interrupted at the first sign of obstacles, and the Salesians went back to the old ways. And this despite the fact that all around us the Church was providing more opportunities for lay people and for the community, in the broader sense of the word, to share in the running of schools. Apparently there is no way for us to make progress in the present-day situation unless we learn to move, even though only gradually, in the direction of forming genuine educative communities. This is precisely the direction marked out for us in article 39 of our Constitutions: "Lay people often play a direct part in our educative and pastoral work. They make a special contribution to the formation of youth and also to the preparation of a committed laity either in the parish or on the missions.

Our relationship with them should be one of mutual confidence and loyalty. We offer them the witness of our lives according to the Gospels and we give them the spiritual help they expect.

"In our youth work we aim at bringing into being an 'educative community' in which parents, the prime and principal educators, join us in dialogue and co-responsibility, together with the boys themselves".

4. Professional Standards

Any school which does not reproduce the characteristic features of a school cannot be a Catholic school (cf "The Catholic School" n. 25). The whole religious thrust and message does not in any way lose its originality by becoming part of an educative program, a program of integral growth based on an orderly and critical assimilation of culture. After all, a school's primary task is to educate.

This demand for sound educational standards means that there must be a sufficient number of Salesians to animate the school. Experience teaches that if the number of Salesians is too low they cannot succeed in giving the proper orientation and educational thrust to the school.

It is also necessary that the professional training of our personnel should be up to the required level. The school nowadays constitutes a specifically professional area, and the days are gone when it was sufficient to be a priest or a religious to manage one or provide the needed animation. At the most such people might now be chaplains or religion teachers. But clearly it is not our desire or intention to be limited to these sectors; we want to give shape, drive and inspiration to the whole educational program.

For this reason, as in other areas of human endeavour, a Salesian who is to be effective in the school apostolate should be given specific training and acquire certain skills. He should also stay in this kind of work long enough to develop a certain professional competence.

In some parts of the world our schools are faced with obstacles which come from without. But it seems too that quite a few of them are also prone to the defect of a lowering in our own professional qualifications. If a province has a number of schools and has every

intention of keeping them going in the future, should it not do some serious planning in terms of training specialists in pastoral and religious education? Nowadays it is not possible to plan a true pastoral approach to education unless the qualified personnel is available.

Finally, the new demands for professional educational standards will also lead us to improve our structures in terms of providing those services which are an aid in the learning process, in the guidance of people and in the development of a better synthesis of all the factors involved in the task of education. Some of these services have to do with counselling and guidance, with articulation between the various school subjects, and with the use of the means of social communication.

Art. 9 of our Regulations encourages us along these very lines: "To make pastoral care valid and effective, our schools should be distinguished for their high cultural values and recognised technical and teaching capacity".

5. A distinctive approach to education

The Catholic school sets out with a deep awareness of the value of knowledge as such (cf. Catholic School, n. 38). It instructs in order to educate. Its aim is not merely the attainment of knowledge but the acquisition of values (ibid. n. 39). The kind of cultural synthesis that it aims at and the type of man it hopes to form are distinctive and unique. Thus it has every right to differ from other types of educational programs found in today's society: programs which are based on a different idea of what culture is and on a different view of man.

This is brought about in practice not simply by superimposing some moral recommendations or a religion program on just any cultural premises; the doctrine taught and the way in which it is taught must foster the development of each student's intellect and help him to walk with freedom along the path that leads to the discovery of the truth. The student's awareness of values must be awakened; he must be given a view of reality which opens his mind to God and prepares him to accept the Gospel.

All this is communicated throughout the educative process; one phase cannot be separated from the other.

It is obvious that every organised educational program leads the students to take certain definite positions and to make certain choices, once they have sharpened their ability to use the tools of cultural and social analysis. Many times these choices are made in terms of the interests of the group, not just of the individual. The claim that education means transmitting culture as such is scaled down to more modest dimensions: education aims at providing a vision of reality and guidance towards dealing with reality.

Schools acquire their identity in the process of defining the particular concept of man and society toward which they wish to tend as an ideal. Schools which have made a proper choice of goals can truly be forces to help the students toward genuine human development, liberation and integration in society. They can help students find their way in life and develop a sense of service and solidarity. Or on the contrary they can reinforce in their positions the rich and the powerful, rather than educate them to brotherhood and justice.

The Church asserts that the Catholic school offers a Christian concept of life (cf *Catholic School*, n. 33). This statement has a very important application in the educational process, but it does not mean that individual subjects should be taught as mere adjuncts to the faith or as a useful means for teaching apologetics. Individual subjects must be taught according to their own particular methods (ibid. n. 39).

Catholic educators also face a number of urgent tasks in terms of the guidance offered to their students; they must constantly review the frame of reference in which they are working, as well as the content and methods of teaching. The overall aim must be to train students to have an active and critical stance toward culture instead of being mere consumers of culture. They want to help their students to develop a love for absolute truth and a deep sense of real values, rather than a mere concern for the interests of a particular group or individualistic projects.

Here too we have clear guidelines in our Regulations: "Our schools should be distinguished for their high cultural values..." (art. 9). "Salesians should encourage within the 'educative community' a constant

dialogue concerning the Christian and human values we foster... and their relationship with the surrounding area" (art. 10).

6. Pastoral Animation

The apostolic or pastoral thrust of a school includes everything we have said thus far. It would be a mistake to think of it only in terms of those activities and subjects which have an exclusively religious content. It is not simply a particular item or area; it is the soul which pervades the whole educational process.

The integration of faith and culture as well as of faith and life depends on the quality of the culture, but it also depends on the quality of the faith which is presented as a life experience and as doctrine to be assimilated by means of the environment, religious teaching and challenges for Christian commitment which the school offers. If the faith of the students really matures and influences their personal attitudes and their basic outlook on life, it is possible that their hearts will be converted. This is what evangelization is all about. If their faith remains at the level of an institutional obligation, of reflection which does not lead to commitment, of unreal language whose words have nothing to do with life's real problems, then it will be an element which is extraneous to both life and culture and totally irrelevant to human existence.

It is imperative therefore to define clearly the objectives, content and methods of religious teaching. The teaching of religion demands enthusiasm on the part of the catechist and expertise by the religion teacher if it is to fit well into an academic program geared to the needs of students who have a variety of backgrounds. This calls for specific preparation and special methods; teaching aids and team-work are needed. If religious teaching is to help students to personally assimilate learning in Christian fashion, religion classes must have a close relationship with other areas of knowledge and of the educative process.

The teaching of religion can help to overcome indifferentism and to develop a positive interest in religious problems, for teachers have

the possibility not only of proclaiming Christ but of stirring up the desire to delve more deeply into the mystery of Christ. The teaching of religion is not by itself the way to attain all the objectives of catechesis. Therefore a pastoral approach to education in the faith means that we shall offer other religious experiences in a spirit of freedom consonant with the age of the pupils but without just marking time. Some of these might be the following: group activities, liturgical and other celebrations, teaching catechism, and retreats.

If we broaden our perspective we also discover other pastoral challenges for a Salesian community involved in a school. The relationship with the parents of the students becomes a pastoral one if our concern is directed toward helping them to grow in faith through their educative and family experience. Our concern for the area in which we work becomes pastoral if our presence fosters the growth of human and Gospel values in the life of the neighbourhood. A dialogue with institutions similar to our own can be pastoral if the Gospel message about reality and man comes to the fore. Finally a faith community can fulfil its pastoral mission by aiding each of the educators to live his faith and to be active in the parish community by rendering specific services.

The sum total of these factors gives a direction to the overall pastoral approach of a school. This is partially the natural result of the school's basic obligations, but to an even greater extent the pastoral thrust comes from creative planning.

Recently new kinds of organisations and roles more suited to the needs of particular situations have been established to foster this creativity. We might mention two such successful experiments. One is the setting up of a department for religious teaching to give to this subject the same seriousness of approach and planning that is given to other areas of learning. A second example is the creation of a pastoral council, made up of members from among the religious, lay collaborators, parents and students. It expresses its concern for the pastoral animation of the school by suggesting individual and group religious activities, either as part of the school curriculum or as extra-curricular activities.

7. An Oratorian Heart

The Salesian school was born within the Oratory and takes its spirit from the Oratory, without giving up the organisational structure and the discipline which are necessary aspects of its educational program.

Among the many possible characteristics of Catholic schools, the GC21 describes the following as features of the Salesian school: it caters for the common people; it is an effective agent in the transformation of the local environment; it fosters freedom; it accepts a student as he is; it requires that teachers be present with their students in a friendly and kindly way; it teaches the spiritual dimension of work and the value of shared responsibility; it emphasises faith values in various ways; it assists each student to mature in his God-given vocation; it helps students to make good use of their time even outside of the classroom by fostering extra-curricular activities (cf GC21, n. 131).

All the elements we have mentioned above (educative community, professionalism, cultural standards, pastoral animation, Salesian features), when brought to bear simultaneously and in an integrated manner, go to make up the working model we are looking for. It is not a matter of emphasising one particular element but of creating a new synthesis and above all of implementing this plan. This means surmounting divisions which might exist either in theory or in practice between what is academic and what is pastoral.

To do this we must begin or continue a planning process in which our confreres by reflecting together arrive at a set of guidelines which spell out objectives, subject matter, activities and roles, and guarantee the necessary personnel.

The confreres who have kept our Salesian schools going with such admirable dedication up to the present are certainly capable of doing the kind of planning that will enable them to meet the needs of the future.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

4.1 The Rector Major

Father Egidio Viganò

From September 26 to October 17 the Rector Major was engaged in a visit to the Far East for the animation and encouragement of the confreres of that area. Accompanied by the Regional Superior, Fr Thomas Panakezham, he spent some time in Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macau, Taiwan and Thailand. Everywhere there was an exhaustive programme of meetings with Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and other members of the Salesian Family, as well as calls on various Bishops, Apostolic Nuncios, etc.

The longest stay was in Hong Kong (5-10 October), where he presided over an inter-provincial meeting attended by provincials and other representatives of China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines and Thailand. Viet Nam could not be represented but Fr Viganò was able to talk briefly with his delegate in Viet Nam, Fr John Ty.

This was a journey which once again enabled the Rector Major to see for himself that Don Bosco's dreams are becoming a reality.

On his return to Rome he took part again in the General Chapter of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. And so he was able to be present for the election of the new Superior General (Mother Rosetta Marchese), the new Vicar General (Mother Maria del Pilar Letón) and the other members of the Council: Formation, Mother Ilka Perillier Moraes; Pastoral work, Mother Marinella Castagno; Missions, Mother M. Carmen Martin Moreno; Economer General, Mother Laura Maraviglia; Visitors: Mother Dolores Acosta, Mother Lina Chiandotto, Mother Maria Ausilia Corallo, Mother Anna Maria Deumer, Mother Letizia Galletti; Mother Elisabetta Maioli and Mother Elba Montaldi.

He also took part in the plenary meeting of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes (November 17 - 20) and was present with the other members of the Superior Council at Bari for their annual retreat which was preached by the Archbishop, Mgr. Mariano Magrassi. After the close of the retreat he was at Lecce for the annual "Feast of the Rector Major", which

the Italian provinces had organised for November 29.

Finally from 5 to 8 December he was in the Ligurian-Tuscan province for meetings in different places, and especially for the commemoration of the centenary of the Salesians' arrival in Florence.

4.2 The Vicar of the Rector Major Father Gaetano Scrivo

From 5 to 14 November Fr Scrivo was in Spain in the provinces of Cordoba and Seville. He had meetings with the Provincial Councils and the formation communities.

Afterwards he preached a retreat at Sanlúcar La Mayor for the rectors of the two provinces.

4.3 The Councillor for Formation Father Paolo Natali

The work of Fr Natali and his Department was concerned with the production of the first draft of the Rector's Manual, the animation of various courses of ongoing formation, the preaching of retreats and the giving of conferences in various places.

Towards the end of July Fr Natali had a meeting with the Provincials of Italy and the teaching staff of Benediktbeuern for a brief presentation of the document "The Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco".

After the joint visit at Barcelona at the end of July for the provinces

of Spain and Portugal, he gave another week's course at Cuenca (Spain) on the same topic for the formation and teaching personnel of the Spanish Region.

From 23 to 26 September he took part in an international meeting, promoted by his Department with the collaboration of the Faculty of Theology at the UPS, to study the question: "The place of intellectual formation in overall Salesian formation". The Presidents and Rectors of Salesian study-centres affiliated to the UPS were present, and also some other centres not yet affiliated.

From 30 September to 24 October Fr Natali was in the Far East. He held meetings at Bangkok, Manila, Calcutta and Bangalore for the study of the *Ratio* with formation and teaching personnel from eight provinces. In the Philippines, Thailand and Madras he visited some of the formation communities.

He next took part with other members of the Superior Council in the joint visit at Hong Kong for the provinces of the Far East. He then returned to Italy and gave conferences in various places in November.

On February 9, 1981, at the request of the Rector Major, he had presided over a meeting of the *curatorium* of the UPS. Further meetings of the same kind took place on 4 and 19 December. The *curatorium* is a consultative body at the service of the Rector Major for

his government of the UPS in his role of Grand Chancellor. It is made up of three members of the Superior Council (the Councillors for Formation, Youth Apostolate and the Salesian Family), the Delegate of the Rector Major for the Opera-PAS, the Rector of the UPS and the Deans of three Faculties. The principal question dealt with in these three meetings (the last of which was followed by a meeting with the Regional Councillors) was the recruitment of teaching and technical personnel for the UPS, with the criteria to be applied and the process to be followed. A first list of names was drawn up for submission to the Rector Major for his approval.

The impending preparations for the next General Chapter make urgent the fulfilling of all the tasks confided to the Superior Council by the GC21 to enable the UPS to provide a better and more adequate service to the Congregation and to the Church. Some of these have been already completed or soon will be, but one of the most urgent and important still remaining is precisely that of finding teaching and technical personnel and giving to this sector an international aspect.

4.4 The Councillor for Youth Apostolate

Father Juan Edmundo Vecchi

In the first part of October Fr Vecchi was in the Far East for the

joint visit already referred to. At Bombay he had a four-day meeting with Provincials, Provincial Councillors and animators of the Youth Pastoral Sector for the deeper study of certain points: the pastoral animation of the province, the role of the provincial council and the pastoral team, the pastoral and educational project. This was really a continuation of an earlier meeting at Madras two years previously which dealt with the same points.

At the Generalate from 19 to 23 October Fr Vecchi took part in the meeting of Provincials and Provincial Councillors of Italy and the Middle East which studied the question of the animation of the province; and immediately afterwards he attended the meeting of the Italian Provincial Conference for an exchange of ideas on animation structures in the Region. He was present too at the meetings of all the Rectors of the Italian Region (organised at the Generalate in three groups) and discussed with them the implementation of the Salesian mission in the local community.

On 26 October there began at the Salesianum the special ongoing formation course intended for those working in the youth pastoral field, which was offered to the provinces on 24 February 1981. The course aimed at the general objectives of formation, but with the emphasis on the content of pastoral ideas and

practice. Forty confreres have taken part in this course, representing thirty-four provinces and twenty-two nationalities.

The Department is beginning to receive the first reactions of the provinces to Aid 4 (on pastoral work for vocations) and awaits more such reactions.

4.5 The Councillor for the Salesian Family & the Media

Father Giovanni Raineri

In addition to the ordinary activities and meetings of those working in the different sectors of the Department and of the Secretariate for the Media, the following important activities have occupied Fr Raineri in the period June - November 1981:

30 - 31 May. Meeting of Presidents and Delegates of the National Federations of Salesian Past Pupils of Europe.

22 June. Inauguration of 1st International Symposium of Salesian Publishers organised by the Secretariate for the Media in the premises of the SEI, Turin. Fr Raineri gave an address on the publishing activities of Don Bosco (cf. ASC, n. 302, p. 32).

24 - 28 June. Meeting of the World Consultative Body of the Salesian Cooperators at the Salesianum, Rome. Twenty-four consultants were present

from all five continents. The work done in the previous three years both by the executive secretariate and by the consultants was reviewed. The global situation of the Cooperators' Association in the different Regions was assessed, points were discussed with the Superior Council, and the plan for the animation and coordination of Salesian Cooperators was defined. The Acts of the meeting are published in n. 40 of the Newsletter "Cooperatori".

11 - 12 July. Meeting of the Confederation Council of the Past Pupils for the proximate preparation of the fourth Eurobosco meeting at Lugano.

26 July - 1 August. Meeting of members of the Superior Council with the Provincial Councils of the Spanish Region at Barcelona.

17 - 19 September. BOMBAY. Meeting with the Indian National Council of Past Pupils to decide on the date, topics and other details for the next Asian Congress in 1984, and for the setting up of the coordination office for Asia called for by the Manila Congress. Fr Raineri had many meetings with delegates, rectors, and those in charge of different sectors of activity for which his Department is responsible. He also gave the missionary cross to three Indians due to leave for Africa: Fr Cherian Palathunkal, Bro. Dominic Padinja-raparambil, and a Cooperator John William.

The confreres organised a joyful

commemoration of Fr Raineri's golden jubilee of profession.

20 - 22 September. CALCUTTA. In addition to meetings with those responsible for the different groups of the Salesian Family, Fr Raineri had further meetings with the young coadjutors in training, with the Indian Catechetical Commission; and at Krishnagar with the General Council and many Superiors and Sisters of the "Missionary Sisters of Mary the Immaculate Help of Christians", founded by Bishop Laravoire-Morrow; they explained the results of their last General Chapter in which they proclaimed their adherence to the Salesian Family.

23 - 25 September. PROVINCE OF THAILAND. Meetings were held with the Provincial Council and with those in charge of the Salesian Family and the Media, as well as with the leaders of the Cooperators and Past Pupils and with the Superiors and Vice-Superiors of the "Daughters of the Queenship of the Immaculate Heart of Mary" founded by Fr Charles Della Torre, who also expressed their adherence to the Salesian Family and sought advice about certain problems concerning the animation of their Institute.

27 - 30 September. DELEGATION OF SOUTH KOREA. Meetings with those responsible for the Cooperators and Past Pupils, attended also by Salesians and Daughters of Mary

Help of Christians, as well as lay people.

30 September - 4 October. PROVINCE OF JAPAN. As well as the usual meetings with those responsible for the Salesian Family, Fr Raineri studied with the Provincial, Vice-Provincial and those concerned with the Don Bosco Sha publishing house, a plan for enhancing the effect of this work which was founded by Fr Cimatti. In Tokyo he also had a meeting with the General Council and local Superiors of the "Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki" founded by Fr Cavoli.

5 - 11 October. Fr Raineri joined the other Major Superiors for the joint visit at HONG KONG, already referred to above, and included also various initiatives for the animation of the Salesian Family.

17 - 19 October. Fr Raineri was at LUGANO for Eurobosco IV, which studied the theme: "With youth and for youth in Europe". The object was to investigate in what way the educative project of Don Bosco could be applied to Past Pupils. The keynote address was given by Dr. Dominic Volpi, a past pupil and also a journalist and a writer on youth problems. There followed a study of the ways in which Past Pupils could play an effective part in implanting Christian values in the emerging continental unity. An address of the Hon. Joseph Petrilli was followed by a 'round table' with

the participation (in addition to Mr Petrilli) of Mr Zamberletti (past pupil and Commissioner for the earthquake disaster areas of Southern Italy), Mr Cotti (President of the Ticino Canton Government) and Fr Raineri. The chairman was Dr. James Pedrazzi, journalist and manager of the Italian service of the Swiss Radio.

Among the delegates to the Congress were some forty young past pupils who made valuable and constructive proposals and enlivened the proceedings by their very presence. On 18 October the President and National Delegates met to consider some points concerning organisational matters. Some Delegates from the Past Pupils Associations of Asia and America attended as observers. The Congress ended on 19 October at the sanctuary of Einsiedeln.

31 October - 1 November. Meeting at Rome of the Executive Secretariate of the World Consultative Body of the Cooperators to draw up the Acts of the June meeting. On 7 - 8 November there was a series of discussions at Turin on the problems of the SEI and on 11 November a meeting with those giving the principal addresses at the forthcoming *Spirituality Week* which will be concerned with vocations in the Church and the Salesian Family and which will take place in Rome, 25 - 30 January 1982.

15 - 16 November. Fr Raineri was

in Malta for meetings with the National Council of the Past Pupils, and with groups of Cooperators and their delegates; he spoke to the confreres on various aspects of the Salesian Family, and discussed a project for future publishing and social communication activities. He concluded his visit by presiding at a ceremony at which four new Cooperators made their commitment.

4.6 The Councillor for the Missions

Father Bernard Tohill

On 4 October Fr Tohill presided at the ceremony of the departure of the missionaries at the Basilica in Turin. 21 of the 56 confreres leaving for the missions this year were present, among them a group of 10 confreres destined for Madagascar.

The following day Fr Tohill left for Ecuador where he was engaged on the Extraordinary Visitation of the Vicariate Apostolic of Méndez until 20 November.

On 29 November he was at Catania where 1500 young people took part in a very moving departure ceremony for four Sicilian confreres leaving for Madagascar. The Cathedral was packed with an immense crowd of young people who had come to witness the reception of the missionary cross by the four confreres during a concelebration in which two Bishops and 120 priests took part.

4.7 The Councillor for the Atlantic Region

Father Walter Bini

Fr Bini's chief engagements were the Extraordinary Visitations of the provinces of Recife (Brazil), 31 July - 20 September, and Montevideo (Uruguay), 23 September - 8 November.

His most novel experience was a subsequent nine-day visit to Angola in Africa, to see the first six missionaries settling down in that nation. He visited Dondo and Luena, where two new Salesian communities are being formed, and also Luanda, Calulo and Saurino where the Bishops would also like us to work. He was able to see for himself the great scarcity of the clergy, the faith and openness of the people to the Word of God, the very high proportion of young people and the extreme poverty in which they live.

Fr Bini also presided at a meeting of the Provincial Conference at Asuncion (Paraguay) from 1 - 5 September, and took part in the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Salesian Theological Institute of São Paulo (Brazil) on 10 October.

4.8 The Councillor for the Pacific and Caribbean Region

Father Sergio Cuevas

Fr Cuevas' chief occupation in this period was the Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Ecuador

from 26 August to 4 November 1981. In addition, in the first half of August he was in Chile for a meeting with the Provincial Council at Santiago, and for visits to the 'formatori' and formation communities. He was also able to visit some other communities at Santiago, Talca, Linares and Concepción.

While making the visitation of Ecuador he took part with Fr Tohill in a seminar on the Salesian Missions of Latin America, which was held at Quito from 18 - 24 October, and which brought together several missionary Bishops and Provincials, and numerous confreres working in the missions.

After the visitation, Fr Cuevas went to Central America to make contact with Salesians working in Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. He spent a longer time with the Provincial Council at a meeting in San Salvador, and then visited the formation communities and studentates of Guatemala. He was also able to talk with the Salesian Bishops in these countries which have been so sorely tried.

The last part of Fr Cuevas' journey took place in Mexico where he met the Provincial Councils of the two provinces and visited the new aspirantate for coadjutor Brothers organised by the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Coacalco. He was also able to visit the other aspirantates at Puebla and Guada-

lajara. Important meetings also took place with those in charge of formation in the two provinces and with the young Salesians in formation, both at Mexico City and Guadalajara.

On 20 November he returned to Rome.

4.9 The Councillor for the English-speaking Region

Father George Williams

Fr Williams was present for part of an interprovincial ongoing formation course at Maynooth (Ireland), and presided at the function marking the change of Provincials of the Dublin Province.

He then passed through the United States to study various problems with the Provincials. Subsequently he spent ten days with the confreres in Samoa before going on to Australia where he visited all but one of the communities and discussed various questions with the Provincial Council. He next went to Papua New Guinea where he was able to visit both communities and see at first hand the great progress that has been made.

On the return journey to Rome he was able to pass once again through the provinces of San Francisco, New Rochelle and Dublin for the purpose of presenting the new *Ratio* in its English translation to Provincial Councils and various

groups of confreres. In England he took part in meetings of all the confreres of the Oxford province divided into two groups.

Before returning to Rome he made a brief visit to the communities of Malta.

4.10 The Councillor for Asia

Father Thomas Panakezham

Fr Panakezham carried out the Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Madras (India) from 12 August to 18 November 1981, with an interval of 22 days during which he accompanied the Rector Major on his visits to Japan, South Korea, Macau, Hong Kong, Taiwan (Formosa) and Thailand, and took part in the joint meeting of the Rector Major and other Superiors at Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong meeting dealt with religious life, youth pastoral work, Salesian formation, the Salesian Family and the means of social communication. At the end of the meeting some general conclusions were made which were to be put into practice subsequently in ways suited to the widely different conditions in the provinces of the group. Fr Panakezham was also able to take part in the celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Salesians in China.

During the visitation of Madras he was present at the opening of a Marian Congress held to render

thanks to Mary Help of Christians for all the graces received during the 75 years of Salesian presence in the province.

After the decision of the Superior Council to divide the Gauhati Province, he conducted a consultation for the appointment of a Provincial for the new province. He also carried out a similar consultation in the Province of Bombay.

4.11 The Councillor for Europe and Central Africa

Father Roger Vanseveren

After taking part in meetings at Barcelona, Fr Vanseveren carried out the Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Southern France from 1 September to 4 November, making at the same time the consultation for the new Provincial of Lyons. He also took part in Eurobosco IV at Lugano 15 to 18 October, and then went immediately to Cologne for a meeting of the German-speaking Provincial Conference.

On 13 November he went to Yugoslavia for a brief visit to the provinces of Ljubljana and Zagreb. At Zelimlje, where the house was celebrating its tenth anniversary, he met the post-novitiate group of confreres with the novices and aspirants.

At Ljubljana Rakovnik he met the students of theology, presided at the perpetual profession of five confreres,

and took part in a function marking the 80th anniversary of our Salesian presence in Slovenia. He also held a meeting with the Rectors and the Vice-Rectors of the local communities of the Slovene provinces.

Just before the final meeting he received word of the tragic road accident near Bordeaux on 14 November, in which the Rector of Gragnan, Fr Max Badet, was killed. The Provincial Economer, Fr Jacques Gateau was less seriously injured but the Provincial, Fr George Linel, was so badly hurt that for a time his life was in danger.

After a brief visit to the house of Zagreb, Fr Vanseveren went to France to express the sympathy and solidarity of the Congregation with the Lyons Province, so sorely tried.

4.12 The Councillor for the Spanish Region

Father José Rico

From August to November Fr Rico took part in the joint visit to the Region which was held at Barcelona from 27 July to 4 August, and then was present with Fr Natali at a course for 'formatori' of the Region held at Cuenca (Spain).

He was then in Portugal for the changeover of Provincials and preached a retreat there to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, followed by a renewal course for their Superiors and local Councils.

In the Province of Bilbao he preached a retreat for the Salesians and then took part with Fr Vecchi in a meeting of several days to discuss pastoral work in Salesian schools. This was attended by Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and lay collaborators from the cities of Barcelona, Valladolid, Seville and Lisbon.

At Aronca (the Portuguese novitiate) he attended an intensive three-day course for the Portuguese 'formatori' for the purpose of explaining the new *Ratio*. At the novitiate of Mohernando he preached the retreat to the novices.

In October Fr Rico presided over a meeting of the Spanish Provincial Conference, and then took part in Eurobosco IV at Lugano.

He held meetings at the Catechetical Centre in Madrid to give emphasis and direction to our publishing work there.

He visited the course of ongoing formation at Campello and all the formation communities of the Provinces of Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona, Bilbao and Portugal. He was also present at the ceremony at which six missionaries of the Valencia province received their missionary crosses before leaving for Mali in Africa.

Finally he went to the Cape Verde Islands to spend a week with the confreres there.

4.13 The Councillor for Italy and the Middle East

Father Luigi Bosoni

From 5 to 7 August Fr Bosoni was at L'Aquila for an updating course for confreres of the Adriatic Province, and from 27 - 31 August at Messina for the 7th Congress of the Salesian Youth Movement of Sicily. On this occasion he also met the Young Cooperators of Sicily who were gathered at Erna-Auxilium, and the Past Pupils who were making their retreat at Zafferana.

In early September he was with the young confreres preparing for their perpetual profession at the Salesianum, Rome, and then went to Milan and Turin for the installation of the new Provincials, and to Pinerolo on 8 September for the first profession of the novices.

From 10 September to 4 October he visited some of the Middle East houses (Egypt, Cisjordan, Israel), and was also able to visit some of the FMA communities and meet the Apostolic Nuncio at Cairo and the Latin Vicar Apostolic at Alexandria. At Cremisan he was present for the opening of the new academic year.

From 9 to 10 October he was at Turin with the Provincial Delegates for vocation work; on the 11th he was at Alessandria for the inauguration of the new marble monument to Don Bosco, and he then visited the Crocetta community, the novi-

tiate at Pinerolo and some houses of the Novara province.

Between 15 - 18 October he was at Lugano for Eurobosco IV with the Past Pupils.

On 19 October the meeting began at the Generalate, Rome, of the Provincials and Provincial Councillors of the Italian and Middle East Region on the theme of "animation".

From 24 to 27 October Fr Bosoni presided at a meeting of the Italian Provincial Conference, called to study its own structure and to bring its Regulations up to date. Professor Joseph De Rita gave an address on this occasion on the trends of Italian society.

On 25 October, the day following the election of the new Mother General, he concelebrated Mass with the Provincials of the Region and their Delegates at the FMA Generalate with all the members of the General Chapter present.

There followed three meetings with the Rectors of the Region: 18 - 21 November; 30 November - 3 December; 9 - 12 December. These were held to discuss the topics: the local community, the primacy of ongoing formation; the role of the rector in formation for prayer, communion and mission.

He took part with the rest of the Superior Council in their retreat at Noci, and in the celebration of the Feast of the Rector Major at Lecce in accordance with a recent

tradition this Feast is now being celebrated in different Italian provinces each year.

Fr Bosoni was also present at Frascati for the National Congress of Salesian Cooperators from 6 to 8 December, and at a meeting of Provincial Delegates for the Media, and the Salesian Youth Sports Association.

4.14 The Rector Major's Delegate for Poland

Father Augustyn Dziedziel

Fr Dziedziel's activities from 1 August to 20 November 1981 included the following items:

— He presided at two meetings of the preparatory commission for the first full gathering of the Polish Provincial Conference (CISP).

— He directed the first meeting of the Conference itself at Lutomiersk from 13 to 16 September. This meeting drew up the regulations of the Conference, an interprovincial program for the formation and animation of members of the Salesian Family, an interprovincial plan for Salesian publications, and established an interprovincial missionary centre at Lodz with Fr Bronislaw Kant as its director.

— He was in London from 25 August to 5 September to make arrangements in conjunction with Fr Tohill for the residential courses in English for the eleven Polish mis-

sionary priests destined for Zambia.

— He met all four of the Polish provincials.

— He visited the four formation communities of Poland.

— He made the Extraordinary

Visitation of the Province of Kraków from 29 September - 12 November.

— He took part in the celebrations at Oswiecim (14 to 15 November) to mark the centenary of the birth of Cardinal Hlond.

5. DOCUMENTS & NEWS ITEMS

5.1 "Strenna 82" - Salesian Practice for 1982

Following the teaching of Don Bosco let WORK AND TEMPERANCE be for us a radical witness of pastoral love and a challenge to a world that sees love and sacrifice as contradictory notions.

LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR TO THE SALESIAN FAMILY

**A way of life that poses a challenge
to the world**

Fr Egidio Viganò has given to the Salesian Family as the "strenna" for 1982 Don Bosco's motto WORK AND TEMPERANCE. In this letter he comments on the choice and invites all friends of Don Bosco to translate work and temperance into concrete attitudes in their lives and so present a challenge to today's world so steeped in materialism.

Dear friends of the Salesian Family, I extend to each and every one of you my very best wishes for the New Year. May the Lord fill you with his grace; and in accordance with our genial family tradition begun by Don Bosco, I present you with my message for the New Year based on the two concepts of WORK AND TEMPERANCE.

Why this particular topic?

It was born of concern for the Salesian vocation which we possess in common and which we carry out in different ways. When one looks at today's world, especially in the youth sector (and indeed throughout all the structures of our society) one is struck by a style of life which is steeped in the materialism of either liberal ideologies of ever-increasing prosperity or collectivism. This widespread life-style, founded entirely on a materialistic interpretation of life, is seen particularly in young people — and this is something that touches us closely. At the very heart of Salesian spirituality and our vocation is a predilection for the young, a concern to be of service to them. The central element of our vocation is a pastoral love which impels us to activity. In the face of the disturbing youth scene our "oration heart"

cannot remain inactive. We sense the urgent need to do something for these young people, to change the style of a society which sees love merely as an element of selfish pleasure, and sacrifice as something negative to be avoided. We feel it urgently necessary to *oppose a society* which does not permit the proper development of the individual and society. Our work with young people should lead them to understand that this disjunction between love and sacrifice is one of the most serious errors in modern society and should be opposed in every possible way.

Besides these reasons, the strenna was suggested also by a particular event: last September was the anniversary of an outstanding dream of Don Bosco, that of the "ten diamonds". In that dream a mysterious personage, wearing a garment ornamented with diamonds, explained to Don Bosco by means of apposite references the essential characteristics of Salesian spirituality. Two of the diamonds were in prominent positions, supporting the garment at the shoulders: the diamonds of work and temperance. The occurrence of this centenary prompted me to write to our Salesian confreres a few months ago and offer them a few comments on the dream. I pointed out, amongst other things, that these two diamonds of work and temperance provided in my opinion a

Salesian retort to this world so besotted with materialism. Several people subsequently wrote to me on this point, and one of them suggested that it would be very appropriate to base next year's "strenna" on the same double concept.

A distinctive badge and a style of life

We can therefore see how the phrase **WORK AND TEMPERANCE** should be understood. In the first place the two words go together as constituents of the distinctive Salesian badge. In a letter to the missionary Fr Fagnano in 1877 Don Bosco said, "Always remind the Salesians of the slogan we have adopted: work and temperance. They are two means by which we shall be able to overcome every difficulty".

And there is another dream of Don Bosco known as the dream of the mad bull, in which the saint heard the words, "You must have these words printed as your special armorial bearings, as your password, your distinctive badge. Take good notice of them — *Work and Temperance will prosper the Salesian Congregation*. "Explain these words well; repeat them and insist on them. Have the explanation printed and see that all understand that work and temperance are your heritage to the Congregation, and its glory".

We are all aware of the importance of the "dreams" in the life of Don

Bosco and the influence they have had on Salesian spirituality and practice. And so what we are dealing with here is a Salesian characteristic, a heritage left us by Don Bosco himself.

It remains for us to see how this slogan can become for us a style of life. A first suggestion could be that when we speak of work and temperance we are not using these terms in a moralising sense, as though they were two minor helps to achieve some vague ascetical goal. Far from it. *In the Salesian meaning, work and temperance constitute a style of life which serves as a revelational proclamation for the new modern culture.*

To develop this concept: we are aware of great cultural changes at various stages in the history of the Church — for instance, at the end of the Roman Empire. Those centuries saw the conversion to Christianity of peoples who had migrated to Europe from distant parts. When these people united in the same faith, Roman culture still had great qualities despite its serious defects. And that was just the time when there arose in the Church outstanding saints such as Augustine, Ambrose, Paulinus of Nola, Leo the Great, et al., who were able to assimilate into Christianity the great ethical values that formed part of the Roman culture, and were able to pass them

on as constructive factors of the new society.

Now it seems to me that Don Bosco belonged to an era that marked the end of a cultural period (we might call it a peasant culture) which had accumulated centuries of fine qualities, some of them the fruits of the Church's evangelising efforts. This peasant culture is well illustrated, for instance, in the film "L'Albero degli Zoccoli", in which we see how the Gospel permeates the entire daily life of the peasantry. The same fine qualities are to be seen in our early Salesian history: for example, in Mamma Margaret and in the countryside of the Mazzarelli family. Closer to the present day, many of the older ones among us can think back to the culture and mentality, permeated by faith, of our parents and grand-parents.

All these people possessed a wealth of values linked with the culture of their day, amongst which it is not difficult to find the fundamental ones of work and temperance. It was not a question of two small isolated ascetical factors but of basic attitudes, in the formation of which so many virtues played their part. These two virtues were like two solid columns which sustained in our Christian peoples the manner of living their own culture.

Now I maintain that this style of life, these two profoundly Christian values canonised in Don Bosco and

Mother Mazzarello, became for the first Salesians (and must continue to be also for us) an authentic portent of the new culture now emerging, a living Gospel proclamation for our technical and industrial society that is so concerned about work but so ruined by materialism and so negative with regard to temperance. In other words, the attitude to both work and temperance constitutes for us in the Salesian Family a style of spirituality that in this new culture renders us heralds of the Gospel, i.e., witnesses of the fact that certain popular values of the past stemming from the Gospel can and must also be realised in a civilisation as dynamic and pragmatic as the present one.

The Salesian style of work

Let us see then how work can be lived in Salesian style. Right at the outset we must realise that work in its specific and social sense is at the present day a central element in our society; indeed various States have declared that they are "founded on work". The Pope too in his recent encyclical "Laborem Exercens" made a deep analysis of human work and its problems and of the causes that have led to the arbitrary manipulation of human activity and to so much injustice in the organisation of society. Here we are concerned with work in the Salesian

sense, and it is the last part of the Pope's encyclical that interests us most: where he outlines a spirituality of work and suggests what kind of Christian attitude should be taken by the worker himself so as to play his part in perfecting society.

For us who belong to the Salesian Family work is the specific way in which we live out our pastoral charity. It is a dynamic way of translating faith, hope and love into an active life-style. In this context St Francis of Sales used the expression "ecstasy of action". Let us look more closely at this profound expression.

The Salesian is a person who lives not for himself but for God, and in consequence also for other people; he sees in particular the needs of the young and their problems: his life is dedicated to their education, to their human and Christian development. And hence with an eye to the future the Salesian works for the building of a new society, for he is engaged in the preparation of upright citizens for that very society.

The Salesian scans this wide horizon through the lens of pastoral charity; he begins, in other words, from the concept of union with God. The thought of God's love compels him to take action and he throws himself into a life of activity for the Lord — which is

precisely what St Francis of Sales referred to as "ecstasy of action". There is no self-interest; he spends his life helping others; his love of God is the source of his love for his fellow men. He raises his eyes to the Father who so loved the world that he sent his only Son not to condemn it but to save it.

And so it is apostolic work we are talking about, though it is not necessary that it be directly apostolic (someone must cook, someone has to work in the factory). But it is expressly work done for others in Christ which leads to a creative search for practical expressions of supernatural love.

Such work means that the Salesian is always busy, always concerned about others, always on the lookout for better ways of doing good to everyone. Don Bosco used to say: "When I see or hear that a great deal of work is being done in our houses, I have no worries". And he used to say also: "Work keeps away the spirit of evil". He was not so much concerned with shortcomings (which will always be there) as with a dedicated effort to attain the apostolic goal for which a work had been begun.

In a sense we too at the present day must see whether our works, the Cooperators' groups and those of the Past Pupils are all engaged in solid work of this kind.

The Salesian style of temperance

Temperance immediately evokes the idea of mortification, of self-denial, of "agere contra". But although there is in fact this association of ideas, temperance means something more. Don Bosco wanted self-denial to be something hidden, but temperance he wanted to be clearly visible, because in one who practises it in pastoral charity it must become a pleasant and attractive quality. In fact the natural consequence of this temperance is a cheerful capacity for self-control, for moderation and level-headedness; and this in turn leads to the truly regal quality of the baptised person who has acquired self-discipline.

This self-discipline is a very necessary quality, because everyone has his own instincts, inclinations, tastes, inordinate desires and personal choices. And since the Salesian must commit himself completely to activity, it would be an unpardonable mistake if his primary motivation were to be the turmoil of passion or attachment to his own ideas instead of pastoral charity.

Temperance is necessary therefore to keep these instincts, inclinations, tastes, yearnings and personal choices under control. But temperance should not be regarded as a single virtue, but rather as the result of the convergence of various virtues. This is why it is called a "cardinal" virtue, because it is like a hinge on which

many other virtues depend. Let us try to identify these other virtues: they will help clarify the real meaning of temperance.

For instance: continence against lustful tendencies, humility against inclinations to pride, meekness against temptations to violence, modesty against the tendency to bodily exposure, clemency against a proclivity towards cruelty or revenge, sobriety and abstinence against tendencies to over-indulgence in food and drink, economy and simplicity of life-style against an inclination to waste and luxury, austerity in living against the desire for ease and comfort.

All these things contribute to what we call temperance, and they produce a use of the intelligence that guides the will in controlling excesses and its natural tendencies and passions. As a result of the ability to put a brake on one's reactions there follows a Spartan way of life based on sacrifice and a strict time-table and characterised by a sense of strict proportion and steadiness; and this has a beneficial effect on young people in their constant search for authentic models to imitate.

The effect on the young

In temperance we also find a curious characteristic of the spirituality of Don Bosco first pointed out by Father Rinaldi: a kind of shrewd-

ness — intended obviously not as cunning or deception but as a truly positive and spiritual quality. By this I mean that by self-discipline one is able to win people over, and especially young people. In everything that he does the Salesian should know how to make himself loved, not for his own sake but for God's. Now making oneself loved means presenting an image which has a certain appeal, a certain attraction. On the other hand, a show of immoderateness, lack of control or irascibility in an educator always provokes resistance and opposition. And conversely whatever contributes to self-controlled and moderate reactions is a help in making real contact with young people.

In this way self-control makes possible that shrewdness in dealing with the young that enables interventions to be timely and moderate, that is, not rushing in immediately but choosing the opportune moment. It is often necessary with the young to show no adverse reaction in the face of an offensive word or gesture, not because the latter has escaped notice but for the good of the youngster himself. In such cases self-control helps one not to exact justice and reparation for one's own offended dignity, but to patiently help the boy who has still to mature.

Father Rinaldi wanted the Salesian to follow Don Bosco's example and be self-controlled even in the heat of

a game, calm and restrained even with the bothersome boy, able to hold his peace, speak at the right time — and “exercise a measure of shrewdness”. Such an attitude is made possible by self-control, and it arouses affection for the educator which makes possible the friendly relationship that is at the basis of true education.

The example of work is equally efficacious with the young when it stems from pastoral charity. Young people are impressed when they see someone who is not only concerned about others but shows his concern in practical ways: someone who does not limit himself to giving advice but rolls up his sleeves and gets down to the job himself. Fr Rasmussen, who has the task of overseeing the new missionary foundations in Africa, on his return recently from a visit to Liberia, said that what had greatly impressed the local people had been the sight of the three Salesian missionaries building their own house, working as carpenters and bricklayers. And the same sort of thing happens to the Salesian educator who takes an active interest in youth organisations, who trains teams for games, who organises cineforums, and so on.

Our young people need to have such Salesians before their eyes, men who are so resourceful and full of initiative. They have faith in these men who are always available, who are not counting their work-hours,

who forget their own ease and comfort, who are not deterred by poor health, and who spend themselves with such generosity.

All these things follow naturally on work and temperance lived in the Salesian style: and they are a challenge to present-day society which by and large is always seeking the soft and easy life. But the way we do our challenging must be well understood: it does not mean that the Salesian (or anyone else who takes Don Bosco as his model) deliberately sets out to be a revolutionary or a soap-box orator. The challenge is an automatic consequence of the commitment to make this kind of work and temperance a permanent life-style, and so stand up in opposition to the floodtide of comfort-seeking.

A happy New Year to all — with plenty of work

All these considerations are already enshrined for the Salesians in their Constitutions. Article 42 recalls the words of the dream: “Work and temperance will make the Congregation flourish”, and then goes on to warn against the corresponding danger: “On the other hand, the search for comfort and a life of ease will kill it”. The Salesian “gives himself to his mission with tireless energy. Apostolic work has a mystic value for him, for he sees that it

has something of the greatness of God and clamours for achievement; it is also his path of purification, for he accepts its rugged requirements and is ready to suffer heat and cold, hunger and thirst, fatigue and rejection, whenever the glory of God and the salvation of souls require it".

The Salesian knows all this, and so every morning when he renews his dedication to God he asks of Mary Help of Christians Don Bosco's "love for work and temperance, his kindness and whole-hearted service of others". May Mary Help of Christians grant these same sentiments to all the friends of Don Bosco.

It is my earnest hope that all of you will dedicate yourselves to the efficacious practice of this "Strenna 82". It is far from easy but invaluable for the young and for society in general.

My hearty greetings to you in the Lord for a happy New Year — with plenty of work.

Father EGIDIO VIGANÒ,
Rector Major.

as a conclusion to your work of the past week. Unfortunately I could not be present at your discussions and so I cannot avail myself of the enriching and serious work you have achieved and present a synthesis of it. That is something you have done already or will do in the near future.

I do not know what were the main points you studied or discussed, and so I will not attempt to add anything to them either by way of clarification or decision. What I am going to say is based on a continual practice of animation; it is a task which I carry out from morning till night. The Rector Major's job is precisely to be an animator; he is by his very office the first of the Congregation's animators.

And so I offer you some reflections which are the fruit of my daily experience and which may be of help to you. They are by no means exhaustive: they are merely suggestions prompted by my daily experience.

Significance of the topic

It will be well at the outset to specify the sense in which we shall deal with this matter of the "spirituality of the animator".

a) *Let us begin by defining the concept of 'spirituality'.* I think that in the present context we can take it to mean the religious attitude which characterises the person doing the

5.2 The spirituality of the animator

Address of the Rector Major to the Provincials and Provincial Councillors of Italy and the Middle East, Rome - 23 October 1981

The topic I have to deal with is a far-reaching one, and it will serve

animating. What should his general religious attitude be?

Perhaps the word that best suits my purpose is that of 'sanctity' or 'holiness'... It is a word which nowadays causes in some people a psychological blockage or a kind of cultural rejection. Be that as it may, the genuine idea of holiness sheds most light on the spiritual characteristics called for in an animator. I will try to give some practical illustrations of what I mean: they are aspects and convictions of a religious kind which in my opinion are indispensable in the heart of an animator.

And so by "spirituality" here we do not mean an area of theological study but rather the complex of attitudes and personal convictions which constitute what we may call the characteristic spiritual stamp of the animator.

b) *And then there is the concept of the 'animator' himself.* Here I will start from your own concrete situation so as to be realistic. The animator we are talking about here is the Provincial or one of his close collaborators, a member of the Provincial Council.

We shall not spend time analysing what kind of "authority" such an animator has. We shall be more concerned with his "religious credentials", or in other words his personal spirituality. We shall not therefore go into the relations between animation and authority (or

at least I shall not do so), even though they are profound, important and interesting; I am sure you have already covered these matters during the week. We shall also take for granted that the aspect of service is inherent in religious authority.

I repeat therefore that when I speak of an animator I have in mind someone of prestige, one who cultivates and bears witness to spiritual values, a mentor and guide in the achievement of Salesian sanctity.

c) *And finally there is a third idea to keep in mind: "the vitality of the Salesian vocation".* This is not expressed explicitly in the theme, but it is evident in the very composition of this present group. All of you, through your ministry, give substance to the idea. What kind of animation have you been talking about during these past days? Were you not concerned with the vitality of the Salesian vocation? What is the specific field in which the Provincial or Provincial Councillor has to provide his animating service? It is Don Bosco's Gospel plan of life as described in our Constitutions. That is his area of competence; that is where his service must be given; that is where he has to provide witness, and be an authoritative teacher and guide.

The animation we are speaking of calls for a spirituality which will bring about in the province a growth in fidelity to Christ in the spirit of

Don Bosco, the sense of belonging, of active partnership, of collaboration and concord, of communion both in the provinces as a whole, in the local communities and in the individual confreres.

With these three preliminary clarifications I think we have now defined sufficiently well the area we want to develop.

And so these thoughts I offer you will deal with some characteristic traits that must be found in a Salesian animator at the level of the Provincial and his Councillors. And I propose to approach the subject not as a theological question but rather from a spiritual point of view; and I would say that in this case ten conditions must be fulfilled.

Ten conditions

Ten conditions are necessary, but do not be put off by the number. I shall deal with them only briefly; in fact I shall do little more than enumerate them. When I was reflecting on the different conditions and trying to group them together I found a large number, but I stopped at ten. Ten is a classical kind of number which helps us to remember things; there are ten Commandments, and there were ten diamonds in Don Bosco's dream. These conditions refer to points already known to you, but they seem to me to be of peculiar and practical importance. I

give them to you in some kind of order, but I have not bothered too much about either logical or ontological priority; they are more or less in the order in which they came to my mind.

1. The joy of having a worthwhile task to perform

You know what I mean? I am thinking of my own particular task too. It is a matter of joy that one's service is of great value, something fine, something which makes life worthwhile, something which enters into the designs of God's providence. The animator does not have to be a tortuous and complex person; he must not have an attitude of anxiety and fear. Rather should he be, and be seen to be, calm and undisturbed in his work, like one who is pleased with his Salesian vocation and happy to live it in obedience. He would be a poor animator who approached his tasks nervously, worried because he saw his works as Provincial or Councillor as lofty and difficult and far above his capacity. What about "Si isti et illi... cur non ego?". Sometimes one meets people who seem to have grown up with the kind of mentality that makes the weight of responsibility unbearable. Humble simplicity is needed — the simplicity that comes from realism and a generous soul: you can do it! and the good Lord will help you.

To have the happy consciousness

of being in the right place because God chose us for it, to be doing something that is not only possible but wonderful, which makes life worth living because we are being useful to the Church and to our brethren: these are great things — and so away immediately with all false and artificial anxiety! We need an attitude that is truly spiritual, one born not of pride but of obedience, and it will prove a sound foundation for the spirituality of the animator.

2. A warm heart and common sense

The second condition, and it is closely linked with the first, is to live the spirit of the Preventive System in the exercise of one's own particular ministry in the province. And that implies the daily cultivation of a warm heart and common sense in dealing with confreres.

A "warm heart" is a genial and intimate expression. It describes a Salesian attitude which should not be difficult to acquire but should be quite common and even spontaneous: the attitude of one who is trying to understand his brothers, fostering a family spirit, trying to be close to others and their problems because he believes in them and trusts them, because he is interested in them in an unforced and genuine way; the attitude of one who trusts his confreres as mature people (yes, he must set out with the supposition that all of them are mature, and then

when necessary he will try to make allowances for any deficiencies). The conviction that we are dealing with mature colleagues helps us to be more friendly in speaking to them and dealing with them, and it makes animation something that comes from the heart.

Animation at provincial level is something that takes place between people who have opted freely and deeply for the Salesian vocation, all of them equally committed to the common choice made at their religious profession. I know very well that there are exceptions, sometimes a fair number of them, but animation has to be planned on the basis (and it is more than a simple supposition) that all confreres are sharers in the same life and ideals which they have freely chosen in an adult way. Difficulties and exceptions should not provoke over-reactions. They are not tragedies but examples of understandable human defects and problems to which a remedy can often be applied by a kind approach.

Cordiality is a Salesian characteristic that should be cultivated right from the novitiate: kindness with everyone, beginning with one's confreres. But it is not to be confused with an expansive temperament or with naiveté or weakness. It is well known that a man may be rather austere in temperament, less communicative or more reserved, and even somewhat gruff in his reactions;

but it is not really a question of temperament at all but of spirituality. Warmheartedness is immediately recognisable when there is no sense of remaining aloof, but rather a self-sacrificing and sympathetic concern.

But in the Preventive System cordiality is always accompanied by common sense. This is something difficult to define, but we all know what it means (... especially when it is not there!). Common sense stems from an alert and well-balanced intelligence which quickly grasps the importance and ramifications of a problem; it implies too the courage to be frank without being pompous, so that one can say to a confrere: "But don't you see that we cannot very well continue like this? Did you never think of trying...?" And one is able to talk about a problem calmly and reasonably.

Giving fraternal corrections with good common sense is not so easy, but an animator at provincial level must know how to do it; he cannot just let defects and abuses linger on; he must be able to show people that certain standpoints or decisions are unreasonable; (even in Salesian houses unreasonable things do sometimes happen!); that certain attitudes are caused by a lack of judgement or of virtue. The Provincial and his Councillors must be capable of taking to the houses that little extra spirit that promotes reasonableness in the family.

3. An intimate conviction of the vitalizing presence of the Holy Spirit

A third condition, and the most fundamental one, is a permanent conviction of the vital reality of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, in the world and in our own personal lives. The very word 'animator' comes from him, since he is the 'anima' or 'soul' of the Church.

I say "conviction". It is not a question of an abstract notion in the mind. I have to be truly convinced of this presence, and my certainty has to show through in the way I think and judge, in the way I make distinctions and plan for the future.

This is a quite indispensable and basic attitude: the joyful daily sixth sense that is always there, of the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit among men. This is a topic that would merit a lengthy separate treatment because of its vast nature and its importance. Here I can only point it out as something essential for a good animator. This is the launching-pad for his spirituality; this is where it begins: the absolute certainty of the existence of the Holy Spirit, who is active among men, who lives in the Church as in his Temple, who has an influence and effect on my community and on the whole province, who aids the Pope, the Bishops and superiors.

The New Testament shows us two complementary ways in which the Holy Spirit provides his vitalizing

presence: St Paul emphasises chiefly his indwelling in the hearts of believers; St Luke on the other hand underlines his intervention in Church history, at Pentecost and other decisive turning points. The animator must be keenly aware of this second aspect, not because the first one is unimportant but because this is the one that gives direction to the life of the community. The intimate conviction therefore of which we are speaking is not limited to the conscious perception of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts through our feelings and the growth of intimate dialogue with God. That is taken for granted. What we are talking about is the conviction that history is not a meaningless labyrinth or an evolutionary process pre-determined by rigorous laws, but a free process of man's growth, with his intelligence and will illumined and guided by special interventions and promptings of the Spirit of the Lord.

The animator must be able to discern in daily events, in everything that happens, in the aspirations of peoples, and especially in the various ideas and movements in the Church, that special supplement to our intelligence and planning which is offered by the Holy Spirit at this present juncture of the life of the community.

The *Acts of the Apostles* emphasise the presence of the Holy Spirit in two pentecostal events: that of Pentecost itself at Jerusalem, and the

so-called Pentecost of Cornelius; the first gave life to the Church, and the second showed Cornelius the way he was to follow. But we can perceive other pentecostal events in history, such as the pentecost of Vatican II, the little pentecost of our Special General Chapter; and there are also gifts of the Holy Spirit in the lives of certain persons who are creators of particular ecclesial orbits through their charisms as Founders: they have a name and life style, a singular mode of apostolate, and a manner of existence in today's Church meant for me and my community. We must have a conviction about this — and this is for me the main foundation for the spirituality of the animator.

It is a spirituality therefore which demands a living sense of the history of our time, shot through with the rays of faith; a spirituality which is not an evasion but which can sound out everything that makes up the reality in which the community, the Congregation, the Church, are living. The mentality of modern culture favours the historical dimension of the study of human reality. But there is no keener historical sense than that shown by the one who can discover the Holy Spirit in the unfolding of events, a treasure that can be discovered only by searchers who have a living faith.

This intimate conviction we are speaking of ensures in the animator a robust overall basic optimism,

because if the whole existence of the Church is pervaded by the Holy Spirit, if there are concrete events and circumstances which can reveal to me the indications which the Spirit of the Lord is giving me, then I am conscious of moving towards a victorious future, even if there are difficulties to be overcome on the way: "This is the victory which overcomes the world, our faith!".

How otherwise can we hope to be effective animators in a period of cultural transition when culture, society and everything around us, even from an ecclesial and pastoral point of view, have that fleeting and unstable aspect common to any metamorphosis. Everything seems to proceed by fits and starts; everything is submitted to scrutiny, examination and re-assessment — even the greatest values. Those who believe in the presence of the Spirit know for certain that this reassessment can result only in a more intense and noble growth and not in collapse and extinction.

The Holy Spirit gives the animator the zest and creativity that goes with optimism, and so whoever is convinced of his activity can never become a prophet of doom. And on the other hand a defect which betrays a lack of belief in the Holy Spirit is the pessimistic attitude of those who seem always on the road to the cemetery; you will hear them bewailing: "We shall never get over this

crisis... there is no way out... the Congregation's numbers are going down... before long it will be the end...". They seem to think that in expressions like this, sometimes bolstered by statistics, there lies the whole future story; they have no eyes for the Holy Spirit!

I know that it is possible to confuse the Spirit of the Lord with one's own vivid imagination, and fall into a naive and alienating subjectivism, sometimes superficial to a quite ridiculous extent and even reaching a state of mental unbalance: one has to be able to make proper use of the means for attaining a genuine knowledge of what the Holy Spirit is saying.

Let us look to the first animator of the Church, the successor of Peter. I wonder how the Pope could possibly animate the faithful if he thought that by the year 2000 the Church's role in history would be finished. Pope John Paul II is doing the exact opposite: he has spoken to us of the Advent of the year 2000, of the Church blooming again, of a second spring after the pentecostal air of Vatican II; he is certain that the people of God have ahead of them a new period of special vitality, of urgent and indispensable service to humanity, an original and integral freedom for all peoples.

And this is precisely the kind of attitude needed in a provincial animator. The frame of mind of an optimistic

believer (and here I have not done more than briefly touch on it) is the element that best characterises the spirituality of the animator.

4. A vision of hope and trust

A fourth necessary spiritual trait of the animator, flowing from the interior conviction we have talked about, is a constant vision of hope. The presence of the Holy Spirit in history is productive of good. He is a creator; he brings new things to birth, and when new things are born they are all born small, even elephants! Good things have their beginnings in seeds so small as to be almost invisible, but the seed is there and is sown nevertheless. There is so much good in history; and in a time of transformation so many good seeds are sown. Hope is what discovers them; hope it is that feels called to help them grow. Yes: we are invited by the Spirit to collaborate in the development of what is good.

This vision of hope helps us in the first place to detect the numerous good seeds that exist: in creation, in history, in the life of the Church and the Congregation at the present day; there has been an ample sowing. This is a moment of rebirth, this is springtime, a time when the seeds begin to send out shoots through the soil. Some of the seeds may have been sown only recently in the furrows; they can hardly be

distinguished from soil or grains of sand, but they are there, they have life, and in due time they will germinate and grow.

A famous Chinese proverb which I am fond of quoting says: "One falling tree makes more noise than a growing forest". We certainly must be aware of the growing forest, because a great deal of good is growing. He who hears only the crash of the falling tree is not a good animator. Instinctively he takes fright, and then he causes fear and anxiety in others; he is so afraid of trees falling that he neglects to cultivate those that are growing.

A vision of hope is of great importance at the present day, because the cultural environment is permeated by a series of criticisms based on certain ideologies, especially in the sociological field. Certain thinkers and so many programs of the media guide (and manipulate) public opinion and condition it to be sensitive only to certain social ills: things going badly in government administration, economic injustice, mistaken structures, class distinctions, and all leading in the direction of rebellion and strife. They fill people's heads with a kind of partial psychology of evil which exhausts all capacity for appraisal. And so criticism becomes entirely negative, because it has been sensitized to only one particular

branch of evil that needs to be rooted out.

Against this kind of indoctrination we have to react by cultivating daily a realistic sense of what is good, because an animator must be a promoter of what is positive, not a propagandist for class warfare. A provincial animator has to develop in himself the psychology of one who promotes what is good. He is convinced that a great deal of good exists, and he sets out to find it and then help it to develop by every possible means. He will also learn how to become an "exorcist" and know how to rid certain confreres of their pessimism.

Just as one may say that true optimism comes from the Holy Spirit, so in the same sense it is true to say that pessimism comes from the devil, the enemy of the presence of God the Creator and Redeemer. As well as a theology of hope there is also a metaphysics of hope, and it can be expressed in the following way: Good is always stronger and more abundant than evil at any moment in history and everywhere in the world! Our chief task is to discover it.

I repeat: good is stronger and more abundant than evil, not only from a theological standpoint but also from the point of view of sound reason.

And there you have it. A vision of hope and trust is something not

too easy to acquire; it calls for intelligence, faith, dedication and prayer. It is clear that it implies a way of making judgements quite different from that adopted by the world: if anyone had said on that first Good Friday, looking at the life of Christ, that good was stronger than evil, it would have seemed at first to be bitter irony; and yet in that case more than any other it was extraordinarily and paradoxically true.

5. Evangelizing methods for tomorrow

A fifth condition for a modern spirituality of the animator is to accept the permanent values of the new conditions now emerging. You may be thinking that I am simply performing an exercise in semantics. I am not really; let me explain.

The animator must insist on values that are lasting, that endure, such as the great manifestations of God in history. He must be able to speak in an attractive and winning way of the Gospel and Christ's paschal action. But he has to do it by translating the Bible and Tradition into a message intelligible at the present day. His attitude must be that of one who feels he has been sent to proclaim new truths, and who is looking for ways to do it.

Now the purpose of this mystagogical search is not to satisfy a hankering after originality or to look for novelty for its own sake, as though

it were enough for something to be new for it to be also valid. Perish the thought! It is not a question of looking for novelty as an end in itself, but rather as a more intelligible expression, in modern times, of the great Gospel values we already know, but which we need to proclaim today in a new and attractive way.

Let us take as an example one of the Christian traits least congenial to people in today's world: mortification. If I talk in the style of yesterday, even making the distinction called for by anthropology but without attention to the new and important aspects that have recently emerged as a result of deeper knowledge of the science of man, and without any acquaintance with the process of personalization and the importance of somatic values, I shall not be able to talk about evangelical mortification in an up-to-date way, and therefore I shall not be able to put it across as an indispensable means for the development of a Christian personality. I shall merely repeat statements that today mean nothing, and will be quite useless for influencing people or moving their hearts.

And so, dear confreres, here is a vast field for our preaching and teaching: everything that constitutes the Salesian vocation and that we heard about in the novitiate, has today a fresh and demanding aspect.

I have to discover just what the new aspect calls for, what it consists in, and why precisely it is new. Only by this kind of search can I put forward to people in modern times the great unchanging value of, for instance, mortification.

The animator therefore must zealously cultivate a mentality which is open in a well balanced way to the sense of the new culture that is emerging, and in this light he must do some hard thinking so as to present the permanent truths of our Gospel heritage in a language that modern man can understand.

I know of course that this is not as easy as it sounds. But it is quite normal in a period of cultural transition for the latter to be accompanied also by a change in terminology which many people find more difficult, and I am afraid there is very little you can do about that; but in the present cultural situation it is more urgent to be up-to-date than to have a simple vocabulary: up-to-date not out of pride for being original or fashionable, but because of concern to be able to offer a valid reply to today's challenges.

I have spoken of new cultural manifestations, part of which is the development of new aspects of anthropology. This is a delicate field with so many new points of view appearing that they have brought this science to a real turning point. How many other sciences there are

that shed light on it! Let us profit by the progress that has been made and apply it, for example, to the relaunching of the Preventive System and its intrinsic values; they have anthropological overtones that were unknown in Don Bosco's time. And if the animator is not able to take account of them he will never give new life to the Preventive System; all he will do will be to make it appear a thing of the past and no longer valid. If you are going to speak effectively today of "reason, religion and loving kindness" you have to be aware of a lot of new anthropological elements (and theological ones as well) that have emerged in recent years, and so this search for new methods of presentation that we have been talking about is not something far-fetched, but is something called for by an understanding and appreciation of the relevance of our vocation which has to be a living response to today's challenges.

And it is not only culture and anthropology that have acquired a new look; at the same time theological rethinking has been going on with new aspects emerging also in that sector which enable us to speak of an ecclesiological turning point too. And so it will be necessary also to update ourselves in conciliar ecclesiology and adapt our pastoral work to its new demands, which are neither few in number nor negli-

ible in importance.

Here indeed a whole lot of rethinking needs to be done. When and how does an apostolic work need renewal? How for instance does one run a school in accordance with the new cultural and anthropological requirements called for at the present day, and at the same time in line with the new ecclesiology of Vatican II? Do you think it possible to do this without an intense study of these new aspects?

In my opinion this study to see how we can integrate these new discoveries into our apostolic mission must lead the animator to arouse in the community the desire for a plan of renewal so that the Salesian vocation may appear in every one of our works as a practical commitment to the solving of today's urgent problems. And to be able to do this he needs to have in his heart an apostolic spirituality joined with no little competence in the cultural field. To be good Salesians requires more than simply remembering what we were taught years ago, and more than simple observance; it means being seriously involved in pastoral work for today and tomorrow. The Vatican Council, the Episcopal Synods, the teaching of the Popes, our General Chapters, indications given by the Rector Major and his Council, these are all so many aids to a prophetic commitment in this area of new concepts and ideas.

6. Self-criticism and discernment

At a time of transition everything is questioned. A keen critical sense is needed, with the humility and readiness to accept that we can make mistakes, that we can make decisions that may not be the best ones. The present times call for a frequent 'revision of life', a frequent appraisal of our works, a replanning of our pastoral activity every year, or even every six months.

And this implies a certain spiritual agility, a readiness for continual conversion. One of the qualities an animator needs is the ability and flexibility to be able to rethink, to be adaptable, to be resourceful, to have the humility to be objective and recognise the fact when things are going wrong, etc. It is important to be able to practise self-criticism on one's own account, as a preliminary to guiding a community in the same exercise. And self-criticism should always include an investigation of its spiritual and evangelical significance.

Discernment enables the animator to spot what is negative, to be intelligent in picking out also what is positive, so as to look at both aspects in the light of the Gospel and devise a practical solution that can be carried out with the resources available.

7. A serious reflection on the living and directing word of God

This is another basic characteristic for any animator. The living and directing word of God that I refer to here is not only the Bible as a book, but also and more importantly the living presentation of the Sacred Scripture by the Church in the liturgical action by which she consecrates the course of mankind. And there are also Tradition and the Church's Magisterium, the great means left to the People of God by Christ for their enlightenment and guidance.

In this whole field there is a wealth of activity at the present day. For example, there was the recent publication of the Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*. One of our own special characteristics has always been the formation of young workers; trade schools came into being as a privileged expression of the Salesian mission. Has this Encyclical then nothing special to say to today's Salesian? It should be a document which we welcome with love, and study closely. The animator will be eager to use it, emphasising and giving further explanations of its contents, suggesting practical applications, drawing attention to the educative conclusions that stem from it for the social and ecclesial fields.

It seems to me that in recent years we have had a superabundance of help to guide us in our reflection

on the living and guiding word of God. If there is a point deserving criticism it is the fact that so many seem deaf to it or give it little attention, on the specious pretext that they do not have the necessary time. I am sorry I did not bring with me the time-table followed by Fr Bonetti when he was Rector at Borgo San Martino between 1870 and 1877. We found it in our archives a short time ago. It is a very interesting little document and it illustrates the concern for study shown by a Rector in the early days: he has periods set aside for it in the morning, in the evening, and again just before going to bed. This is an example of an animator at the time of Don Bosco himself.

But a provincial or provincial councillor who claims that he has not got time to make an attentive study of what God is saying to us suffers from a serious and dangerous deficiency which will slowly weaken him in his animating ability. Let me tell you, dear confreres, of a sad conviction that I have acquired: one of the big defects of the Salesian Congregation today, and indeed for me it is the biggest of them all, is spiritual superficiality. You cannot pass through a period of transitions as critical as this one we are experiencing, in a superficial way. The remedy is reflection: meditation, study, meetings for deeper investigations! A probing of the living and direct-

ing word of God is a daily task which an effective animator will be anxious to fulfil.

8. Study of the spiritual ethos of Don Bosco

An example of the living word of God for us is the charism of our Founder. We must recognise the fact that in recent years there has been great progress in this sector, and that is all to the good! But it is a far cry from this to the study done becoming the common heritage of the confreres. Unfortunately the progress achieved through Chapters and the indications of Superiors and competent scholars is not always passed on to all the confreres or circulated among them in an efficacious way.

I am not referring so much to Don Bosco's biographies of the history of the Congregation. In these areas we all know a certain amount, and the more the better! What I am speaking of is Don Bosco's spiritual afflatus, his "experience of the Holy Spirit", his charism as a Founder. What comes through quite clearly about it is the "grace of unity", even if we distinguish in him the spiritual and pastoral aspects. In other words, in Don Bosco's spirit it is not possible to detect a real division between what is spiritual and what is apostolic. A dual vision of these two aspects cannot be admitted from

a Salesian point of view; opposing what is spiritual to what is pastoral and vice versa goes contrary to the specific nature of our vocation.

For this reason one of the objectives of the work of animation must be a deeper knowledge of Salesian spirituality with its capacity for harmonising and integrating the two elements which would normally be opposed to each other. It used to be asked when Don Bosco prayed; and the reply was quite rightly another question: "When did he *not* pray?"

In a similar way one might ask in connection with the Preventive System: "When do I do any evangelizing?", and the reply should be: "When do we *not* evangelize?" But that raises the question as to what precisely we mean by the phrase "we evangelize by educating". Unfortunately it is all too easy to upset the balance between human development and evangelization, just as it is easy to upset the balance between what is spiritual and what is pastoral.

And so the animator must have a deep knowledge of the famous "grace of unity" so well spoken of by the Special General Chapter (ASGC 127). What is said there is in my opinion quite fundamental for the spirituality of the Salesian animator.

We have also to preserve a balance between organisation and pastoral work. We are all well aware that

for us organisation does not present any great difficulty: an educator must be a good organiser! The problem is to ensure that organisation does not engulf the pastoral work; it should indeed be completely at its service, so that all Salesian activity becomes an expression of apostolic zeal: *Da mihi animas!* There is also the need to maintain a balance between economic management and the demands of religious consecration (even though we have seen Provincial Economers become splendid Provincials!).

When all is said and done, the secret of the grace of unity for the Salesian consists in the cultivation of the absolute primacy of pastoral charity. That is why the spirituality of the animator must draw daily nourishment from the characteristic sources of such pastoral charity.

9. Intense personal prayer

This is another indispensable quality for any animator. I am not speaking here of practices of piety nor of observance of the community life of prayer. I am talking about what goes on inside the animator himself. I am referring to the intensity of concentration, the heart-warming process that he experiences, his custom of remaining always in God's presence so as to see things in the perspective of faith. In this way he becomes a real contemplative, not

in the sense that he does not lead a committed active life but because in the midst of such a life he maintains his union with God.

The classic example of this kind of prayer is Mary. The Gospel tells us that Our Lady looked on the great events and people of her acquaintance with a sense of adoration; she kept them in her heart, she could not contemplate them without thinking of God. This Marian type of prayer has become familiar to us in the Rosary when in the company of Mary, Virgin and Mother, we consider the same events (the fifteen mysteries) and we let our minds and hearts run on them, trying to stir up in ourselves the same sentiments felt by Our Lady.

This kind of prayer does not detach us from our daily occupations but enables us to live them more profoundly in harmony with God's designs. In this way the animator learns to discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit in the diverse and unforeseeable situations of daily life. But if this personal prayer is to reach a proper intensity, the animator will need to ensure for himself the possibility of a regular 'desert experience' for recollection, thought and study. I think you understand what I mean.

10. Affinity with the mystery of the Cross

The last condition I suggest to you is a deep consciousness of the

paschal paradox. There is no getting around it: the building of God's kingdom throughout history follows a plan that we do not understand; and yet we are called upon to collaborate in its construction.

Christ spoke of his 'hour', i.e., the central point of all his historical existence, the moment for which he came into the world, the least important moment from a purely human point of view, the moment of his passion and death on the Cross.

We, perhaps, being men of action and organisation, would like to see the same efficiency in the Kingdom that we live in our works. But when God set about solving the greatest of all problems, that of man's salvation, he chose a different way, a paradoxical way which at first sight seemed frightening. The animator must be able to penetrate gradually the mystery of the Cross. There is a lot of glib talk nowadays about "personal fulfilment", often on a pseudo-scientific level which would tend to make us forget the stark realism of the Gospel ("Not my will, but thine be done").

Personal realisation or fulfilment is achieved in a historical setting which is far from coinciding with a collection of psychological data. It is a process which involves difficulties, contradictions, misunderstandings, sickness, suffering and death; a process linked only partially to my freedom, from which it demands that

I be willing to love even to the point of sacrificing my own existence. One has to go back to God himself to find the great architect of this process. Growth in faith and personal Christian fulfilment means an understanding and practical assuming of the mystery of the Cross.

A deep consciousness of this mystery will render us docile to God's will without being surprised at anything that may happen, be it sickness, unforeseen misfortunes, or even disasters: they all enter into the mystery of the Cross for the building up of the Kingdom of God. Often it will not be possible to know what to say, how to reply, how to interpret such things; but the ability to bow our head before what we know to be an element in God's plan and to adore his holy will is very important and much more constructive spiritually than exhortations and pro-gammings.

This is where we enter into the most obscure part of the paschal mystery, where God's initiative calls for our passive acceptance rather than any active collaboration. For us believers it is more important to accept in this way than to act; "passion" is more important than "action", because passion (as we see clearly in Christ) implies an initiative on the part of God, which is without any doubt of much greater importance than any initiative on our part.

These ideas are deep and fright-

ening, but genuinely Christian! We see them shining clearly in Christ's paschal mystery. When our own 'hour' comes and we or our confreres are touched personally, we shall feel the burden, and then it is that we have to look to Calvary to be able to understand the salvific value involved.

And so in the spirituality of the animator there must be a privileged position for an easy relationship with this paschal paradox. Close contact with the mystery of the Cross will make of him a realistic and valuable guide, even in the most bitter moments. This spirituality will find an affinity once again with Mary, this time on Calvary at the foot of the Cross; she probably did not understand very much I dare say, but she stood in profound adoration and full of hope and trust ("contra spem in spem credidit").

Conclusion

You can see that the spirituality of the animator is a topic with many ramifications. I have put to you ten aspects of it which seem to me to be particularly significant. I am sure you will be able to find others for yourselves. But even if you do not, I think these ten will be more than sufficient to suggest to you the basic attitude that a provincial or provincial councillor must cultivate in order to make daily progress in his level

of spirituality and become of ever greater service to his confreres. It is really a question, as I said earlier today, of growing in Salesian sanctity.

5.3 111th Salesian Missionary Expedition 1981

During 1981 there were 56 new Salesian missionaries, 46 of whom were destined for Africa, in keeping with the guidelines of GC21. The 1981 missionaries came from the following countries: Spain, 19; Italy, 18; Brazil, 4; India, 4; Philippines, 3; one each from Australia, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Yugoslavia, Korea, Mexico, Uruguay and USA. Thus the Americas sent 7, Asia 8 and Europe 41, Australia 1.

Destinations:

Africa: Angola 5, Benin 5, Ivory Coast 3, Kenya 4, Lesotho 3, Madagascar 12, Mali 6, Rwanda 1, Senegal 1, Tanzania 1 (plus a Salesian Co-operator).

Latin America: Bolivia 2, Chile 1, Mexico 3, Peru 1.

Asia: Philippines 2.

Oceania: Papua New Guinea 3, Samoa 2.

The African nations Angola, Madagascar and Mali have now received Salesian missionaries for the first time. At last our confreres from Brazil (4) and Uruguay (1) have received permits to enter Angola, and

a sixth confrere will join them early in 1982. The Brazilians have been directed to Angola since the official language in both countries is Portuguese.

Mali. The Valencia Province has sent six confreres to open up two new missions in Mali.

Madagascar. Two confreres went to Madagascar in January 1981, and on 15 December two others joined them and are now studying the local language.

Since GC21 the Congregation has been able to send confreres to Africa as follows: 1978: 17; 1979: 18; 1980: 51; 1981: 42.

In this coming year 1982 the Seville and Cordoba Provinces will open up a new mission in Togo; and the Subalpine and Novara Provinces are planning new foundations in Nigeria. The Genoa Province is studying the findings of three confreres who recently visited the diocese of Sangmelina, Cameroon, and something definite should emerge early in the year.

5.4 Salesian Publishers: Technical Commission

In pursuance of the guidelines set out by the World Council for the Media, the Salesian publishers convened at Caracas by the Central Secretariate have set up an experimental Technical Commission to help in the development of Salesian

publishing houses according to the spirit and mission of Don Bosco.

This Commission has been officially confirmed and receives its mandate from the Councillor for the Salesian Family and the Media. The following regulations set out its structure and *modus operandi*.

1. The International Technical Commission of Salesian Publishers (CTIES) is constituted and works within the ambit of the Salesian Central Secretariate for the Media and is at the service of Salesian publishing houses.

2. The Commission is composed of five members who are appointed by the Assembly of Salesian Publishers and confirmed by the Superior Council. The Commission may coopt other publishers to help study matters requiring special competence.

3. It is the duty of the Commission to promote publishing activities recommended by the competent Department; to keep the Department and the Superior Council informed regarding the state, the problems and the projects of the Salesian publishers, and to promote projects of common interest.

4. The Commission will give close attention to consultation and special formation courses for Salesian publishers (dealing with such matters as financial, economic, commercial and technical management).

5. The Commission will convoke

an annual Assembly of Publishers to examine their individual programmes, distribution methods, and various ways and means of mutual collaboration between Salesian publishers throughout the world.

6. Financial costs of the Commission and its services will be borne proportionately by Salesian publishers and will be assessed by the Assembly.

7. The Commission members hold office for three years and may be re-elected by the Assembly.

8. The Turin-SEI, in the name of the Central Secretariate for the Media, will keep Salesian publishers informed by means of a "Salesian Publishers Bulletin".

Members of the Commission: Father F. Meotto (SEI), Father C. Garulo (Edebé), Father J. Chiosso (Don Bosco Multimedia), Don Manas (EDBA), Father R. Mendez de Oliveira (EDDB).

5.5 Salesian Publishers hold international seminar

Conclusions of the first International Seminar of Salesian Publishers at Turin, 21 June to 1 July 1981

The seminar was inaugurated by Father Raineri together with an audiovisual message from the Rector Major in the presence of 31 publishers from 16 different nations and 20 publishing houses. It was the first

to be organised by the International Technical Commission operating within the Secretariate for the Media. The seminar was organised and directed by the SEI and offered the following conclusions.

1. At the conclusion of the first International Seminar for the formation of editor-groups of Salesian publishers held at Turin from 21 June to 1 July 1981, the participants expressed the hope that there would be an ever-increasing commitment of the whole Congregation in the development of Salesian publishing houses throughout the world.

2. They urge that this work be considered as a genuine service in the Salesian mission and that it be re-assessed according to modern standards. To fulfil its mission of evangelisation and human development it needs the services of Salesians with the requisite professional training; it should also receive help in economic, financial and business matters so as to be able to deal efficiently with the profane and religious realities of the modern world. The publishing centres should plan on an international scale, and this will make for unity and strength.

3. The participants thank Father John Raineri, Councillor for the Salesian Family, and through him the Superior Council, for the effective help given in recent years; and

they also thank the Provincials for their sympathetic support of the seminar. They beg for greater co-ordination and collaboration, and for this they consider indispensable the work of the International Technical Commission set up at Caracas. There should be representatives of all the continents so that a solid work-plan may be developed within the ambit of the General Secretariate for the Media.

4. They consider useful and important for creating community work that publishers meet to discuss their many problems and projects — scholastic and general matters, cultural centres, audio-visuals, the multi-media and periodicals.

5. They express their gratitude to the Rector Major for his televised message sent for the opening session. They appreciate its validity, importance and practicality. They commit themselves to implement the guidelines and directives of the message.

The participants intend, as the Rector Major has requested, to work with joy and brotherliness in the Salesian Spirit, with perceptive vision, with ever-expanding horizons and with highest hope.

Turin, 1 July 1981

Bolivia (La Paz): German Herráez Tardío. *Brazil (Sao Paulo):* Essetino Andreazza, Cintra Geraldo Leite. *China (Taipei):* Peter Pomati. *France (Caen):* Gouriou Julien. *Italy (Turin):* Francesco

Meotto (SEI), Mario Filippi (LDC). *Italy (Rome)*: Cavagnero Matteo. *Japan (Tokyo)*: Santi Giuseppe. *Mexico (Guadalajara)*: Manuel Ruiz V. *Mexico (Mexico City)*: Enrique Zenil Nogueira, Alfonso J. Burciada, Francisco Erdey. *Philippines (Makati Metro Manila)*: Gianluigi Colombo. *Paraguay (Asuncion)*: Petris Arduino. *Peru (Lima)*: Casimir Kochanek, José Antonio Lopez. *Poland (Lodz)*: Prus Stefan, Kucinski Stanislaw, Lechochki Wictor. *Portugal (Oporto)*: Pedrosa Ferreira, Elias De Jesús, Joa Machado. *Spain (Barcelona)*: Carlos Garulo. *Spain (Madrid)*: Ramón Gutierrez, Mena José Luis. *Uruguay (Montevideo)*: Jorge Martinez. *USA (New Rochelle)*: James L. Chiosso, James Hurley. *Venezuela (Caracas)*: Gustav Díaz, Julio Castro López.

5.6 Brotherly Solidarity (38th report)

a) PROVINCES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED

THE AMERICAS

	Italian lire
United States - San Francisco	348.000
Brazil - Porto Alegre	550.000

ASIA

India - Calcutta	1,700.000
Japan - Tokyo	12,000.000

EUROPE

Italy - Naples	2,000.000
Italy - St Mark's (Udine)	1,000.000

<i>Total monies received from</i>	
9 September 1981 to	
4 December 1981	17,598.000

<i>Plus cash in hand</i>	28.423
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<i>Amount for distribution as</i>	
at 4 December 1981	17,626.423

b) DISTRIBUTION OF MONIES RECEIVED

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina - Bahia Blanca: for a new church	1,100.000
Brazil - Manaus: for a new aspirantate	3,000.000
Brazil - Manaus: for a new church	1,100.000
Chile - Santiago: for catechetical material	255.735

ASIA

China - Taiwan: for catechetical material	154.744
Philippines: for Tondo (from Japan)	5,000.000
India - Gauhati: Raliang, for educating impoverished youth	1,000.000

EUROPE

Jugoslavia - Ljubljana: for a study bursary	2,000.000
Jugoslavia - Zagreb: for a new church	4,000.000

<i>Total monies disbursed as</i>	
9 September 1981 to	
4 December 1981	17,610.479

<i>Plus cash in hand</i>	15.944
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<i>Total</i>	17,626.423
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c) GENERAL SUMMATION OF BROTHERLY SOLIDARITY FUND

<i>Total donations received</i>	
up to 4 December 1981	1,302,379.507

<i>Total disbursements up</i>	
to 4 December 1981	1,302,363.563

<i>Cash in hand</i>	15.944
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5.7 Eurobosco 81

Conclusions of the 4th Eurobosco Congress at Lugano 15-19 October 1981

European Salesian past pupils at their 4th Eurobosco Congress at Lugano from 15 to 18 October 1981 reaffirmed their fidelity to the spirit of Don Bosco and proposed the following reflections.

1. Analysis

Discussion at the Congress revealed that the matter of *communication* is at the base of all youth problems: communication is either lacking entirely or at least is insufficient.

Communication must aim at a *communion* that is truly human and Christian. This implies an openness to communication and a knowledge of how it functions and how it may be hindered.

Communication is difficult these days because:

- society is becoming ever more disintegrated;

- time and place are lacking for genuine interpersonal communication;

- people have lost the art of speaking to their charges in language they can understand;

- new communication techniques (especially audiovisuals) have created the need for a "new literacy".

These particular communication problems affect youth in a special way. Young people have an urge

to communicate that leads them to challenge family, school, society and Church in order to satisfy this need; and unfortunately it seems that these institutions have no suitable solutions at present.

Adults try in all good faith to impose set principles derived from their own experience, but they are not applicable to the new generation; and the younger generation either cannot or will not understand that adults too are moulded by their own experiences and cannot be separated from them.

In times such as ours, the ever-quickenning economic, cultural and social evolution means that generation gaps are brought about much more quickly now than in the past.

To achieve a true human communion, it is obviously not enough to solve the technical problems of communication: we must propagate certain basic values of the Salesian educational project that will be valid also for the future.

2. Principles

Don Bosco's pedagogy always looks at the young in a positive way. Youth is not merely a preparation or a transition period:

- it has a constructive wealth in society and in the Church;

- it is a characteristic aspect of human life;

— it is an active and responsible time of faith.

The Salesian approach seeks to be at one with the young, "to love what they love"; and this holds also for us past pupils if we wish to mingle with the young in the spirit of Don Bosco.

— In the words of John Paul II at the UPS in 1981: "The charisma of Don Bosco calls for the development of the whole man, his intellectual, moral and social formation according to the light of the Gospel". The project therefore aims to develop all human, Christian and religious values. It seeks the unity of the person by the development of his faith as a vital motive.

— What is the specific role of the past pupils in this project? What are our functions, our autonomy, the distinctiveness and importance of the commitment that is now expected of us?

— The purpose of our association as part of the Salesian Family is to meet in order to *communicate*, exchange ideas and help one another. Layfolk meet priests and religious and renew a relationship that is not of dependence but rather of common descent and union. Different generations meet, and hence when past pupils meet they should avoid divisions according to age, scholastic achievements, etc. People from different social strata and different occupations meet, to reflect how best

they can serve God in the spirit of Don Bosco in their several professions. People meet after they have pursued their own particular ways in life and still hold to certain principles but risk being isolated and lonely.

3. Commitment

Since the Past Pupils' Movement is one of ongoing formation and self-education, it is committed to building up communion through communication.

In view of the European situation, Eurobosco 81 has drawn up the following priorities:

— Plan and carry out new apostolic activities in the field of catechesis and evangelisation.

— Arrange for places where young people from Europe can meet together — such as holiday resorts and centres for study, reflection, exchange of cultural and faith experiences. An organisation should be set up to implement this plan and a list of available houses should be compiled.

— Promote twinning between the Federations of eastern and western Europe under the special patronage of Saint Benedict and Saints Cyril & Methodius. National Federations should look into ways and means of implementation and keep the World Secretariate informed of their proceedings.

— Foster the idea of communion in a special way between the different Federations and extend help to the members of the poorer Federations to enable them to participate in international meetings.

— Arrange vocational guidance centres where past pupils already in the world of labour can help past pupils about to begin.

— Visit the schools to share experiences and encourage the students to enrol as past pupils.

— Encourage past pupils to join the teaching staffs in Salesian schools so that they can give better witness to the younger generations of the fruits of their Salesian education.

— Set up courses of instruction in the new "audiovisual languages".

— Encourage Federations in European countries that receive migrants to help young migrants and particularly past pupil migrants.

— Work in close collaboration with the FMA past pupils.

— Involve past pupils in the Salesian Family in all possible ways as integral and responsible members.

— Propose to the next SDB General Chapter to look into ways of co-ordinating the different groups of the Salesian Family to help implement the conclusions of the

various congresses and conventions.

— Appeal to the already committed past pupils to become Salesian Co-operators while continuing their work with the Past Pupils Movement.

5.8 Appointments

New Salesian bishop

The *Osservatore Romano* of 9 December 1981 gave notice of the appointment of Vittorio Pavanello as Bishop of Corumbá, Brazil. Bishop Pavanello is a native of Presidente Getulio in the State of Santa Catarina, Brazil, where he was born on 20 January 1936. He made his first profession at Pindamonhangaba, Brazil, on 31 January 1957, and was ordained at Sao Paulo, Brazil, by Bishop Resende Costa on 31 July 1966.

He was appointed rector of the secondary school in Sao Paulo Campo Elisios in 1971, then rector of the novitiate at Pindamonhangaba. When the novitiate was transferred to Sao Carlos, he was appointed rector and master of novices (1978). The new bishop succeeds Bishop Onofre Candido Rosa who has been transferred to the new See of Jardim, Brazil.

This appointment brings the number of Salesian bishops in Brazil to fourteen.

5.9 Deceased confreres

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

L AREVALO Giuseppe (SSE) aged 74	* Fregeneda, Spain S. José del Valle, Spain † Salamanca, Spain	16- 1-07 8- 9-27 10- 8-81
P BADET Max (FLY) aged 52	* St Marcel d'Ardeche, France La Navarre, France Lyons, France † Bordeaux, France	6- 7-29 4- 9-55 1- 5-65 14-11-81
P BAGINSKI Franz (AUS) aged 71	* Rummy, Germany Ayagualo, El Salvador Santa Tecla, El Salvador Fulpmes, Australia	31-12-08 14- 2-34 23- 9-44 27- 9-81
L BECHELLI Giuseppe (ILT) aged 68	* Pieve Fosciana, Italy Varazze, Italy † Pietrasanta, Italy	11-11-13 8- 9-38 12-11-81
P CARBALLO Salomone (CAM) aged 74	* Estanzuelas, El Salvador Ayagualo, El Salvador San Salvador, El Salvador † San Salvador, El Salvador	30- 5-07 8-12-34 18-12-37 20- 9-81
P CARBONI Lucio (MOR) aged 69	* Osio Sopra, Italy Cremisan, Israel Jerusalem, Israel † Treviglio, Italy	23- 3-12 22-11-33 19- 7-43 23-11-81
L CASCANTE Ruffino (CAM) aged 87	* S. Francisco de Heredia, Costa Rica Ayagualo, El Salvador † Panama	18-11-94 24- 6-19 31-10-81
P CAVALLA Costanzo (INE) aged 74	* Villafranca, Italy Bang Nok Khuek, Thailand Banpong, Thailand † Casale, Italy	20-10-07 19-12-29 26- 1-36 3-10-81
B CHAVES Orlando aged 81	* Campina Verde Lorena, Brazil Turin, Italy † Cuiabá, Brazil Provincial 7 years Bishop of Corumbá 8 years Archbishop of Cuiabá 25 years	17- 2-00 28- 1-19 10- 7-27 15- 8-81

P DALY Thomas (GBR)	* Blantyre, Scotland	11- 2-95
	Cowley, England	17- 9-21
	Turin, Italy	10- 7-21
	† Aberdour, Scotland	18- 7-81
L D'ARDES Luigi (IME)	* Casalnuovo Monterotaro, Italy	28- 3-12
aged 69	Naples, Italy	8- 9-34
	† Bari, Italy	19-10-81
P DE LA TORRE Alfonso (MEM)	* S. Francisco del Rincon, Mexico	14-11-40
aged 40	Coacalco, Mexico	16- 8-58
	Mexico City, Mexico	30- 3-68
	† Mexico City, Mexico	24- 1-81
P FALCIER Domenico Giovanni (IVE)	* Fossalta di Piave, Italy	3-10-14
aged 67	Este, Italy	15- 9-32
	Padua, Italy	29- 6-40
	† Mogliano Veneto, Italy	21- 2-81
L FUSARI Delmo (INE)	* Domodossola, Italy	14- 3-12
aged 69	Borgomanero, Italy	9- 9-32
	† Novara, Italy	22-10-81
L GALIZIA Luigi (ISI)	* Mazzarino, Italy	29- 6-05
aged 76	Varazze, Italy	19- 9-35
	† Palermo, Italy	3-11-81
P GORGOGNONE Giuseppe (IRO)	* S. Giovanni Rotondo	13- 7-07
aged 74	Genzano, Italy	12- 9-23
	Grottaferrata, Italy	25- 6-32
	† Rome, Italy	12-10-81
P HERNÁNDEZ Cristino (SSE)	* Barruecopardo, Spain	8- 3-03
aged 78	S. José del Valle, Spain	10- 9-20
	Seville, Spain	21- 5-32
	† Badajoz, Spain	17- 6-81
S JASKOLSKI Marek (PLS)	* Gróiec, Poland	5- 2-54
aged 27	Kopiec, Poland	19- 8-73
	† Kolobrzeg, Poland	25- 8-81
L JOPP Klemens (PLE)	* Gorzewo, Poland	13- 9-06
aged 75	Czerwinsk, Poland	27- 7-31
	† Lutomiersk, Poland	12-11-81
P LADWIK Alojzy (PLS)	* Trzemesna, Poland	11- 9-05
aged 76	Klecza Dolna, Poland	7- 8-22
	Lodz, Poland	19- 7-31
	† Pogrzebień, Poland	11-11-81
P BOULCH Adolphe (FPA)	* Pont-Scorff, France	5- 1-10
aged 71	La Navarre, France	14- 9-30
	Turin, Italy	2- 7-39
	† Issy-les-Moulineaux	29- 9-81
	Provincial 12 years	

P LEODOLTER Leopold (AUS) aged 79	* Kattenbach, Austria Ensdorf, Germany Munich, Germany † Eisenstadt, Germany	4-11-02 8- 9-23 17- 7-32 22-11-81
L LOI Efisio (IRO) aged 59	* Ussassai, Italy Rome, Italy † Cagliari, Italy	22-11-22 1-11-45 28- 5-81
L MARCHETTI André (FLY) aged 52	* Beyrouth, Lebanon La Navarre, France † La Crau, France	9- 3-29 14- 9-53 25-10-81
P MARIOTTO Ettore (IRO) aged 75	* Este, Italy Naples, Italy Turin, Italy † Rome, Italy	10- 1-06 8-12-30 8- 7-34 4- 3-81
L MARTINEZ Pedro (SBA) aged 85	* Zaragoza, Spain Madrid, Spain † Barcelona, Spain	8- 6-96 28- 7-15 14- 8-81
P McCLUSKEY Daniel (IRL) aged 73	* Manchester, England Cowley, England Turin, Italy † Cape Town, South Africa	21-12-07 14- 9-29 3- 7-38 14-10-81
L MENDOZA Clarencio (VEN) aged 69	* Cubiro, Venezuela Los Teques, Venezuela † S. Antonio, Venezuela	12- 8-12 19- 9-36 31- 8-81
P MIHELIC Silvester (AUS) aged 76	* Trieste, Italy Radna, Yugoslavia Turin, Italy † Tainach, Austria	14-12-05 10- 8-24 8- 7-34 22- 9-81
P MONSERRAT José (SSE) aged 89	* Posadas, Spain Seville, Spain Seville, Spain † Cadiz, Spain	6- 8-92 26-11-08 22- 9-17 10- 8-81
L MÜCKSTEIN Franz (AUS) aged 71	* Biala, Poland Fulpmes, Austria † Gras, Austria	18- 7-10 29- 8-35 11-11-81
P OLMEDO Francisco (SSE) aged 72	* Seville, Spain S. José del Valle, Spain Madrid, Spain † Carmona, Spain	31- 7-08 10- 9-25 15- 6-35 12- 1-81
L PUENTE Juan (ECU) aged 70	* Sigisig, Ecuador Quito, Ecuador † Paute, Ecuador	22-12-12 21- 9-29 11-11-81
L RAMPF Ernst (GEM) aged 72	* Munich, Germany Ensdorf, Germany † Munich, Germany	24- 3-09 15- 8-30 2- 9-81

L ROLDEN Agapito (SMA) aged 85	* Horcajo de Santiago, Spain Madrid, Spain † Madrid, Spain	25- 3-96 27- 9-16 7- 7-81
P ROMERO Benito (MEM) aged 68	* León, Mexico Ayagualo, Mexico San Salvador, El Salvador † Puebla, Mexico	21- 3-13 12-12-39 28-10-51 22- 2-81
L SCHARFL Josef (GEM) aged 71	* Balkham, Germany Ensdorf, Germany † Buxheim, Germany	22- 1-10 15- 8-29 10-11-81
L SCHNABL Johann (AUS) aged 54	* Rabenstein, Austria Oberthalheim, Austria † Vienna, Austria	7-10-28 12-11-50 18-11-81
P SCIANCE Sebastián (ACO) aged 75	* S. Cristobal, Argentina Bernal, Argentina Córdoba, Argentina † Alta Gracia, Argentina	4-12-06 21- 1-26 2-12-34 21-10-81
P SIMEONE Ralph (SUE) aged 60	* Kensington, USA Castelnuovo Don Bosco, Italy Bollengo, Italy † Newton, USA	17- 8-21 16- 8-41 2- 7-50 19-10-81
L SPANDRI Angelo (BCG) aged 70	* Cortenova, Italy Villa Moglia, Italy † Gulratinga, Brazil	11- 4-11 12- 9-35 1-11-81
P SOLTYS André (BCG) aged 82	* Mokroluh, Czechoslovakia Radna, Yugoslavia Turin, Italy † Campo Grande, Brazil	28- 7-99 13- 8-27 7- 7-35 4-10-81
P STEFANI Antonio (IVO) aged 75	* Tezze Valsugana, Italy Este, Italy Turin, Italy † Tezze Valsugana, Italy	11-11-06 12- 9-27 4- 7-37 29- 5-81
P SZEPESL Jenő (UNG) aged 69	* Csongrád, Hungary Szentkereszt, Hungary Esztergom, Hungary † Budapest, Hungary	25- 5-12 22-10-33 23- 6-40 15-11-81
P TRAMPUS Eduardo (VEN) aged 69	* Dob, Austria Radna, Yugoslavia Caracas, Venezuela † Los Teques, Venezuela	15- 3-12 12- 9-32 9- 8-42 4- 8-81
L VARGAS Ernesto (MEM) aged 53	* Mexico City, Mexico Coacalco, Mexico † Mexico City, Mexico	23- 6-28 16- 8-59 29- 8-81

P **VIGHETTI Annibale** (ILT)
aged 69

* Bussoleno, Italy 4-10-12
Villa Moglia, Italy 12- 9-34
Rome, Italy 9- 6-40
† Florence, Italy 26-10-81

L **ZOLBRECHT Johannes** (GEM)
aged 81

* Glonn, Germany 29- 4-00
Ensdorf, Germany 15- 8-28
† Kempten, Germany 20- 9-81