

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 VIGANÒ

Introduction — Don Bosco's canonisation — Our religious consecration — The main qualities in salesian holiness — Serve the Lord in gladness — An oratorian heart — Attracting the love of our charges — The asceticism of the daily grind — Close to Jesus Christ our Redeemer — The two most harmful enemies of our holiness — A final word of farewell.

Dear confreres,

The time is fast approaching for our General Chapter: let us intensify our prayers of supplication and homage to God; let us beg him to grant the abundant enlightenment and gifts of his Holy Spirit to the members of the Chapter, one and all. *The Act of Entrustment to Mary Help of Christians* that we shall make at the beginning of the Chapter will be a reminder to us of Don Bosco's devotion to our Mother and Guide: she will intercede for us that our efforts to be interpreters and exemplars of our Founder's spiritual and apostolic heritage may be faithful and relevant.

The six-year mandate of your Rector Major and Superior Council is drawing to a close. My colleagues have laboured hard in brotherly union. In their name I wish to thank all provincials and confreres for the cooperation and spirit of communion they have shown us during these years that carried such a heavy work-load but were so full of hope. As for myself: now is the time for me to ask forgiveness of the Lord and all my friends for my inevitable failings and inadequacies in my dialoguing and in my ministry of animation and government of the Congregation.

We all need to increase our vitality and efficiency in the mission bequeathed to us by Don Bosco — which means achieving that maturity that belongs to his distinctive holiness.

In 1984 we shall commemorate the 50th anniversary of the canonisation of our Father and Founder (1 April 1934). May this event be a spur to us “to strive with fresh resolve for our distinctive salesian holiness” in accordance with *Strenna 84*, our practice for the coming year.

Don Bosco's canonisation

It was the desire of Pope Pius XI that Don Bosco should be canonised on Easter Sunday, at the conclusion of the Jubilee Year of our Redemption.

A re-reading of the Acts of the Superior Council and the Salesian Bulletin of the time evokes the extraordinary emotion of those days; one can sense the all-pervasive festive joy and the deeper appreciation of the salesian vocation. The Rector Major, Fr Peter Ricaldone, wrote, “This canonisation day is the most glorious event the Congregation has ever experienced; there will never be, I venture to say, another like it”.¹ He compared Easter Day of 1934 with that of 1846, when Don Bosco “had suffered rebuff after rebuff; he had been ousted from every part of the city where he had to make a start with his work; he found himself without the smallest patch of land which he could use for the good of his young charges. It was on that Easter Day that Providence put him in possession of enough land to settle into and make a solid start with his mission. These two Easter Days open and close an era in the history of salesian action and

1. Acts of the Superior Chapter, 21 January 1934, page 143.

lodge it soundly within the annals of Church history".²

For a religious family the canonisation of its Founder is of special importance and invested with a practical ecclesial significance. Such a Founder is publicly proclaimed as a transcendent expression of the vitality and holiness of the Church. The canonised Founder is not the "private property" of his religious family: he becomes a very special part of the universal heritage of the People of God, and is thus invested with a genuine spiritual authority for the benefit of his followers. In a religious family the Founder's canonisation is of greater ecclesial importance than the approval of the Holy Rule — and the procedure followed by the Holy See in the two cases bears this out. The first article of our Constitutions tells us that the canonisation of Don Bosco is one of the principal actions of the Church in officially recognising the hand of the Holy Spirit in the founding of our Society. Well may we say, "With humble gratitude we believe the Salesian Society came into being not only by human agency but by the providence of God".³

In my letter to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians on the occasion of the centenary of the death of Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello, I made the point that the holiness of a Founder has a very special character quite different from that of a canonised saint who is not a Founder; and this is not only because of his particular personal and historical features, but because of his distinctive and unique holiness and apostolate and the "experience of the Holy Spirit" that he transmits to his followers to be lived, safeguarded, deepened and constantly developed by them in harmony with

2. Acts of the Superior Chapter, 8 December 1933, page 116.

3. Constitutions art. 1.

the Body of Christ continually in the process of growth.⁴

4. *Mutuae Relationes* 11.

In Don Bosco we find the Saint and the Founder so blended as to make him our perfect father and model. To this end the Holy Spirit fashioned him by endowing him with a practical holiness that was further enriched by his talent for attracting and forming spiritual children so that he could say with the Apostle, "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ".⁵

5. 1 Cor. XI 1.

The events of history show us clearly that the only way open to Don Bosco to achieve his vocation and holiness was to be a Founder. As I wrote to our Salesian Sisters, "he was led by the Lord, and was practically obliged to embark on a brand new kind of sanctification and apostolate, a personal interpretation of the Gospel and the mystery of Christ with a special adaptation to the signs of the times. This originality meant a new fusion of the common elements of Christian holiness that was balanced, congenial and perfectly regulated; the virtues and the means to holiness had their own proper place, quantity, symmetry and beauty that were wholly characteristic".⁶

6. Acts of the Superior Council no. 301, page 25.

We know that what distinguishes our spiritual family in the Church from any other is not Christianity but a special way of translating into its life Christianity's message and mission. Thus the Salesian Family reads the Gospel through the eyes of Don Bosco and his distinctive holiness.

This concept is all-important for us; it establishes that our holiness is intimately related to that of our Founder to whom we are bonded by the religious consecration we made by our perpetual profession; and this religious consecration must grow and manifest itself in our salesian holiness.

Our religious consecration

On the part of the minister, the rite of perpetual profession focuses on a solemn blessing or liturgical consecration by which the Church signs the candidates with the gift of the Spirit, thus confirming their religious profession.

7. 1st formula of Ritual.

The minister of the Church extends his arms and invokes the Lord: "Look down, Father, on these your chosen ones; fill them with the Spirit of holiness so that with your help they may fulfil what they have joyfully promised through your bounteous grace".⁷

8. 2nd formula of Ritual.

"We humbly beg you, Father: send your Holy Spirit on these your sons; strengthen their resolve, that they may become signs and witnesses that you are the only true God and love all men with a love that is infinite".⁸

9. v. Constitutions article 74.

What the candidates "have joyfully promised and resolved" is expressed in the formula of the profession they make into the hands of their Superior. They undertake to practise the evangelical counsels according to the way marked out by the salesian Constitutions; they thus pledge themselves to live the spirit and mission of the Founder in communion with all the confreres of the Congregation.⁹

The seal of the Spirit is naturally an earnest of his special help: his many gifts, graces and providential circumstances that will help the salesian to achieve holiness as he lives the spirit and mission of Don Bosco in all fidelity.

Religious consecration, then, is totally directed to the achievement of that kind of holiness that is promised in the making of our vows and as described in our Constitutions. On the one hand

(as in the dream of the ten diamonds) it is the supporting structure and the impelling force, the nerve centre that constitutes the unobtrusive but indispensable bulwark to our holiness. On the other hand it is the professed member's authentic title guaranteeing the mediation of the Church that bestows on him the grace to live as a genuine sign and bearer of God's love; it incorporates him into an ecclesial life that is sealed by the Holy Spirit's action, thus assuring him of the means and strength to be a faithful and joyful witness to the spirit of the beatitudes.

Thus our religious consecration nourishes, develops and defends our salesian holiness. It is a seal of the Holy Spirit impressed by the Church on the heart of every confrere to make him a shining witness to that holiness that God implanted in Don Bosco.

At this point it is of interest to observe that Vatican II has made a profound restatement of the particular religious consecration of institutes of the active life. It is a special kind of covenant with God in which the action of the Holy Spirit impresses on our hearts a specific way of practising our dedication — it could well be described as an "apostolic consecration", that is, a religious consecration that is simultaneously apostolic and imbued with the *grace of a unity* that overflows into *pastoral charity*.

Above all, the Council restated the very concept of religious consecration as an act of God through his Church,¹⁰ and then described the uniqueness of the active religious life in the famous no. 8 of *Perfectae Caritatis*. These postconciliar years have made considerable progress in the study of the distinctive marks of *apostolic consecration*. Within

10. v. Lumen Gentium 44,
45; Mutuae Relationes 8.

this kind of religious consecration there is the vibrantly divine seal of an apostolic instinct and ethos that permeates the whole religious life with pastoral zeal and imbues every apostolic activity and initiative with a religious spirit.

In this consecration the Holy Spirit's graces unite and concur in a daily and distinctive way of life that unites love for God and love for our neighbour; we then become unique witnesses to the mystery of redemption. In this sense, through our apostolic consecration lived in fidelity to the Constitutions, the Spirit of the Lord invites and urges us to an ever deepened and practical realisation of the holiness characteristic of our Founder and Father.

The 50th anniversary of Don Bosco's canonisation is a happy occasion for providing a special opportunity for this.

The main qualities in salesian holiness

In last year's circular letter, "*Replanning our holiness together*", I wrote that "only God is holy". As far as we are concerned, holiness is nothing other than the life of God intimately incorporated in our existence. We become holy in accordance with God's indwelling in us.

When we consider Don Bosco's holiness we look to see the extent of the Holy Spirit's indwelling in him; and we know that the Spirit means to fashion our own hearts too, according to the same kind of faith, hope and charity, building up our strength and defence through the same special asceticism of total selflessness found in Don Bosco.

Serve the Lord in gladness

The first aspect that strikes us in Don Bosco's holiness (in fact it would seem designed to hide the remarkably intense presence of the Spirit) is his *simplicity and cheerfulness*; it made what was difficult and supernatural appear easy and natural. This was Don Bosco's *joie de vivre* in daily evidence; it was his acceptance of events as the hard and practical road leading to hope; it was his intuitive understanding of people, their talents and their limitations, with a view to forming a family; it was his acute and practical sense of goodness with its conviction that in man's past and present history good prevails over evil; it was his predilection for the young that opened his heart and imagination to the future, and engendered a creative adaptability capable of facing up to the values of the new generations with equilibrium; it was the affection of a friend who could make himself loved, and build up an educative confidence and dialogue that led to Christ; it was his bed of roses that he trod with a smile and a song — though well shod with boots as some protection against the innumerable thorns.

"We make holiness consist in being always happy": such an attitude was the very special fruit of the Holy Spirit; it was God's abundance clothed with a simplicity and joy that were seemingly designed to hide such a wondrous gift.

An "oratorian heart"

Beneath Don Bosco's obvious appearance of simplicity and affection, there beat a heart completely attuned to *Da mihi animas*; this was his great driving force. His soul was marked with a

unique and intense *apostolic consecration*. The Holy Spirit had graced him with a characteristic *gift for unity* and this brought the mystery of redemption to the fore in all his contemplation. His was a heart that admired and loved unceasingly the *redeeming God*. It was for this reason that his charity found its outlet in untiring labour.

Don Bosco has taught us that we must reconcile the active life with the contemplative, the life of the Apostles with that of the Angels.¹²

Don Albera describes our Founder's holiness well when he says that for him "religious perfection and the apostolate were one and the same thing";¹³ and Don Bosco clearly showed that God was his all-in-all by being always totally available for the mission of Christ and his Church.

In my circular letter on the Salesian Family¹⁴ I endeavoured to analyse that kind of supernatural love, that pastoral charity, that was peculiar to Don Bosco: his powerful spirit of union, the unique ethos of our religious consecration, and the living spring of our holiness.

It is essential that our hearts beat in time with his to the rhythm of *Da mihi animas*. I hope we can reach out to the reality beyond this metaphor and understand the practical significance and crucial scintilla that gives meaning to our whole way of holiness: a life of pastoral charity that finds its outlet in a predilection for the young and is characterised by kindness.

Here we have the crystalline and salvific spring of salesian holiness at its very source.

12. v. Constitutions FMA 1885, ch. XIII.

13. Don Albera: Letter of 18 October 1920 (*Lettere circolari di Don Paolo Albera*, Turin 1965, page 366).

14. Acts of the Superior Council no. 304, 1982.

Attracting the love of our charges

I have just spoken about *kindness*. It is an essential part of Don Bosco's attractive and congenial holiness. This was no ingenuous seeking after popularity (which would have been a contradiction of holiness); it had to be attractive because its source, pastoral charity, was intrinsically youth-oriented, and thus of pastoral necessity it was a *pedagogical charity*.

Kindness is a wonderful fusion of reasonableness, sociability, self-giving, humility, patience, good and lively sentiments, loving-kindliness, cheerfulness, communicability and infectious goodness; and all these qualities create an atmosphere of confidence.

In the practice I have given the Salesian Family for 1984, I have reminded all of the centenary of Don Bosco's famous letter from Rome as an incentive that we "strive after our distinctive salesian holiness with fresh resolve". The word "distinctive" is all-important: it explains and justifies the paradox that "it is not enough that we love our pupils".

Indeed the statement in Don Bosco's letter that "it is not enough that we love", could at first sight appear quite scandalous, especially in view of St Augustine's famous dictum, "Love, and then do what you will". However, Don Bosco was both saint and educator, and his long experience had proved that "it was not enough just to love". Charity that is educational demands something further: "We must make ourselves loved"; in other words, this love must be translated into kindly attitudes, methodological skills in making friends, dialogue as in a family, and cheerful sociability.

It is well worth pondering some of the thoughts in this "Roman letter":

"Affection was our rule of life"; "we must be considered as fathers, brothers, friends"; "we should develop in our charges an affectionate confidence"; "if we want to be loved, we must make it clear to our pupils that we really love them"; "anyone who is loved can get whatever he wants, especially from the young"; "this love makes us willing to suffer fatigue, annoyance, ingratitude, upsets and failings when dealing with our boys"; "when this love begins to fail, it is then that things no longer go well"; "the best course in a meal is a cheerful face"; and finally, Don Bosco's call from the heart: "This poor old man who has spent his life for his dear young people — do you know what he wants of you? He yearns for the return of the times when everywhere could be seen affection and Christian confidence, the spirit of toleration and forbearance for the love of Jesus Christ. Oh for those days when hearts were open with simplicity and candour — the days of charity and true happiness among all".¹⁵

In short, the secret of our pastoral and educational charity, i.e., our "oratorian heart" lies in that kindness that attracts the love of our charges.

It is for this very reason that we are called salesians — from St Francis de Sales, the saint of gentleness and kindness.

The asceticism of the daily grind

To be cheerful and attract the affection of our charges is all very fine and charming, but such qualities may exist without holiness. In order to

15. *Memorie Biografiche*
XVII 107-114.

clothe his holiness with these attractive pedagogical and pastoral characteristics Don Bosco made ceaseless and enormous efforts in the way of asceticism. He was constantly concerned for himself and for others with serious training in self-domination. This he expressed in his motto, *Work and Temperance*; and these two inseparables imply a spiritual and practical sense of the daily grind, in which hour after hour and day after day we translate into practice the ideals and urges of our faith, our hope and our charity. In the burden and heat of our daily lives, the demands of our personal duties, the persons with whom we live and the circumstances that surround us, we have plenty to bevel away the edges of our selfishness and achieve a true self-discipline.

Work and Temperance, always coupled together, are a positive expression of the whole vast field of salesian ascetical practice; as Don Bosco said, "Through them the Congregation will flourish".¹⁶

16. v. Constitutions article 42.

In the very apposite dream of the "bed of roses" our Founder tells us, "All those (and they were many) who saw me walking through that rose-bed said, 'Don Bosco and his perpetual bed of roses! See how how comfortably he walks through it; all goes well with him'. But they did not see the thorns that tore at my poor legs! Many priests, clerics and layfolk whom I had invited to come with me, did so with alacrity, attracted by the beauty of the flowers; but when they found that they had to walk through thorns that were everywhere and lacerated them unceasingly, they cried out that they had been deceived. I replied, 'Those who expect to walk a charmed way through a bed of roses without thorns should go back; the others, follow me!'"¹⁷

17. *Memorie Biografiche*
III 34.

And indeed we will follow him, convinced that without the discipline of asceticism we will not succeed in building up our salesian holiness.

In short, our pastoral charity must be translated into untiring apostolic work; our kindness that engenders love in our charges must be sustained by an intelligent and constant temperance; (implied in this is humility, gentleness, purity, balance, holy shrewdness, sobriety and cheerful austerity); thus we shall avoid the dangers of comfort-seeking, easy-living, sentimentality and sensuality, that are the marks of those who are wordly and intent on creature comforts.

In bequeathing us *Work and Temperance* our Founder and Father has certainly left us a well-tested way of asceticism for the achieving of our salesian holiness. Without *Work and Temperance* we could not be faithful to that apostolic consecration with which we are signed with the seal of the Holy Spirit and through which we are graced with his gifts to become saintly salesians.

Close to Jesus Christ our Redeemer

The canonisation of Don Bosco took place on Easter Day of a Holy Year of Redemption. In the solemn audience Pius XI granted in St Peter's to all the Salesian Family gathered in Rome for the canonisation, he spoke of the connection between this happy event and the Holy Year of Redemption: "Jesus Christ stated clearly the purpose of his redemptive act when he said, 'I came that they may have life and have it abundantly' (Jn. X 10); and he meant Christian life, since it is Christ who has given it to the world. And so Don Bosco speaks to us today, 'Live your Christian lives as I have

done and as I have taught you to do'. But I think that Don Bosco has a few more specific words for you who are closer to him since you are his spiritual children. His first message for you is love of Christ, love of the redeeming Christ. One could go so far as to say that this was one of the dominant urges of his whole life; and this he revealed by his motto *Da mihi animas*. This love was a constant and uninterrupted theme in his prayers: he loved souls not for what they were in themselves but for what they meant in the thoughts, the works, the blood of Christ, the death of the divine Redeemer. This is how Don Bosco appreciated the inestimable and unimaginable value of human souls; hence his great desire and prayer, *Da mihi animas*. This is assuredly an expression of his love for his Redeemer, an expression that of happy necessity makes love of neighbour become love of the Redeemer, and love of the Redeemer love of the souls he has redeemed and for whose redemption he considers the price of his precious blood not to have been excessive". Pius XI then concluded, "It is this very love of our divine Redeemer that we have come here to commemorate in gratitude during the whole of this Holy Year of Christ's continuing redemption".¹⁸

We today enjoy a happy coincidence: we are commemorating the 50th anniversary of the canonisation of our Founder at the conclusion of another extraordinary Holy Year of our Redemption. Pius XI's comments on our Founder's *Da mihi animas* are a clear proclamation that Don Bosco's secret was an intimate friendship with Jesus Christ in his mission of redemption.

How indispensable it is, then, to foster this personal friendship with Jesus Christ so that each one of us may be his disciple as our Founder was.

18. Acts of the Superior
Chapter no. 66, 1934,
pages 181-182.

However, to be a *true disciple* two fundamental conditions are necessary: first, *we must have the same ideals as Christ had*; and secondly, *we must carry his cross with generosity*.

- The first condition: to have Christ's ideals. This is the fruit of meditation and prayer; in other words, that contemplation of our Redeemer that fills our hearts with the same ideals and aims as he had. This means cultivating a union with Christ that steepes us in the mystery of salvation — a witnessing and a mission that together signify love of God and zeal for redemption. This is a mystery that is situated at the very vitals of our person, and from its pastoral and pedagogical charity we derive our sustenance and energy.

It is clear that a salesian who seeks holiness must cultivate a constant encounter with Christ. As I wrote to you last year, this daily encounter “implies a permanent relationship of friendship; what I have in mind here is a definite time-slot inserted in each day for practices such as 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 principle of our own lives and of all our communities”.¹⁹

- The second condition to be true disciples is to cultivate a spirit of sacrifice, self-control and self-renunciation; this means a personal acceptance and shouldering of Christ's cross.

A Protestant biblical scholar has written, “To be a disciple without self-renunciation and suffering is a contradiction in terms — like salt that has lost its essential substance. The nature of a disciple

19. Acts of the Superior Council no. 303, page 19.

is inseparable from the function he must fulfil for the world, and vice-versa. To be a disciple means to be always a disciple for the world; and since discipleship demands a spirit of sacrifice, the world needs disciples who are ready for suffering, self-renunciation and sacrifice".²⁰

Let us recall again the lesson Don Bosco has given us on suffering the lacerations of the thorns: "Those who expect to walk a charmed way through a bed of roses without thorns must go back; the others, follow me".

A few months ago we meditated in this vein on the martyrdom and suffering that are found in the apostolic spirit of the salesian.²¹

Don Bosco has written, "Whoever seeks a life of ease would waste his time entering our Society, for it is founded on the words of our Saviour, 'He who wishes to be my disciple must follow me in prayer, penance and especially self-denial; he must take up his cross of daily tribulations and follow me', even to death, and if need be, death on a cross. This happens in our Society when a member spends himself utterly in the sacred ministry, in the classroom or in other apostolic labours — even to the extent of a violent death in prison or exile, or through fire, water or the sword — and finally, after having suffered and died with Jesus Christ on earth he joins him in the happiness of heaven".²²

20. O. Culmann: *La fe y el culto en la Iglesia primitiva*, Studium, Madrid 1971, page 308.

21. Acts of the Superior Council no. 308.

22. Circular letter, 9 June 1867, *Memorie Grafiche* VIII 828-830.

The two most harmful enemies of our holiness

The nature of our religious consecration is totally geared for leading us to holiness; indeed if we do not live our religious consecration with

holiness as our aim, it will become tainted and purposeless.

This is a fearsome statement, but unfortunately it is borne out in life's events: the crises of these recent years provide many practical examples.

In my experiences during these last six years, I have been able to individualise here and there the beginnings of two problems that I consider in the highest degree the two most dangerous enemies for salesian holiness. They are the *abandonment of our pastoral distinctiveness* and the *breakdown of religious discipline*.

- We have seen that *pastoral charity* is the very heart of our spirit, and hence of our holiness.

Pastoral concern is Jesus Christ's own invention; it is he who introduced it into human history; it derives from his mystery of redemption; it reaches out to all that is human, but is not identified with any of its aspects (such as culture, science, politics, development, economics, ideologies, etc.). It involves a mental attitude, and is a way of acting that is personal and distinctive, nourished and judged only by faith and supernatural charity. It is not enough that we be hard-working, generous, courageous, up-to-date and tuned to today's situations; it is absolutely necessary that our overall driving force be a *pastoral heart*. Unfortunately there are quite a few regions with a yen for horizontalism that makes for spiritual superficiality. This quickly deprives pastoral concern of its sublime uniqueness and draws its victims down to the level of trendy ideologies or an activism where mere activity is all that matters.

Such an enemy can only be defeated by cultivating an attitude of serious reflection and con-

temptation so as to restore to its central position our *Da mihi animas*.

• The second enemy is the breakdown of *religious discipline*. To be faithful to the self-donation of our religious profession it is necessary to cultivate a methodical practice of small and great acts of renunciation, to make good use of proper direction, to develop ascetical convictions, to give due importance to particular indications, to use disciplinary means, to cherish the well tested traditions of our Congregation and to practise personal mortifications, etc. It is not possible to live according to our religious ideals without asceticism.

Unfortunately it is not difficult these days to find a way of reasoning or judging that fancies itself capable of gazing down from a superior ideological plane and arguing itself out of the need for the concrete demands of our religious fidelity. For us salesians especially, who strive after a holiness characterised by a special pedagogical dimension, this presumptuous superficiality would constitute a glaring contradiction. How could such a salesian be holy if he thought he could practise pastoral and educative charity and at the same time condemn or neglect the renunciations that are inherent in the vows, the helps of the magisterium, the directives of the General Chapters and the Superiors, the daily battle against self, the ecclesial signs of the sacred liturgy, the discipline of community life, the ascetical demands of certain articles in our Constitutions and Regulations, the mortifying effort of self-domination! The comfortable life, worldly attitudes and deceptions, and fashionable trendiness are assuredly no help whatsoever to salesian holiness.

Saint John Bosco appeals to us never to neglect the demands of our religious profession. He has written, "The primary aim of our society is the sanctification of its members. Let everyone be convinced of this: from the Superior General down to the last confrere, no one is necessary to the Society. God alone must be its only head, its absolute and necessary master. Thus confreres must have recourse to their head, their true master, their rewarder, God himself; it is for love of him that each one enters our Congregation — for love of him must each one work, obey, abandon all his worldly possessions, so that at the end of his life he may utter Peter's words to the Saviour whom he has chosen for his model, 'Lo, we have left everything to follow you, Lord. What then shall we have?' "²³

23. *Memorie Biografiche*,
ibidem.

The canonisation of Don Bosco is indeed an incentive to us "to strive after our distinctive salesian holiness with fresh resolve" (Strenna 84).

A final word of farewell

Dear confreres, in these six years of my mandate I have written you twenty-two letters in the *Acts of the Superior Chapter*, and have chosen topics that are of importance for our renewal. My first letter was an appeal to welcome Mary into all our houses and to revivify our devotion to Mary Help of Christians according to the directives of Vatican II.²⁴ I have now concluded my series of letters to you with these brief thoughts and exhortations on the holiness of Don Bosco.

24. *Acts of the Superior Council* no. 289, 1978.

Our salesian vocation and mission is completely permeated with a religious consecration that is

geared towards a specific apostolic holiness. We are sons of saints and we live to be signs and bearers of holiness. Let us not be discouraged: part of our way along the path of holiness consists of conversion and penitence in our battle to overcome our failings.

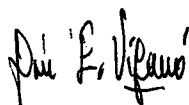
Don Bosco, in his last will and testament, bids us a loving adieu with these words, "Farewell my dearest sons, farewell. I shall await you in heaven. There we shall converse of God and of Mary, mother and support of our Congregation; there we shall for ever bless our Congregation whose Holy Rule was such a powerful and efficacious help for our salvation. Blessed be the name of the Lord now and forevermore. In you, Lord, I put my trust; I shall not be put to shame".²⁵

May Saint John Bosco always obtain for us the motherly help of Mary so that we may be able to give our young people the most desirable and fruitful salesian gift of our pastoral and educative holiness.

Let us pray fervently to the Lord for the success of our forthcoming General Chapter.

My warmest greetings to all.

With brotherly hope and deep gratitude,



Father EGIDIO VIGANÒ,
Rector Major.

25. *Memorie Biografiche*
XVII 258-259.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

4.1 The Rector Major

Father Egidio VIGANÒ

The Rector Major spent all July visiting the salesians in Brazil, leaving Rome on 30 June and returning on 2 August. He visited the provinces of San Paulo, Porto Alegre, Recife, Manaus, Campo Grande, and Belo Horizonte, and was accompanied throughout by the regional superior Father Walter Bini.

The visits were planned according to the needs and possibilities of the local situations, and included animation of provincial councils, houses of formation, confreres, FMAs, DBVs, SCs, Salesian Family groups, and endless gatherings of young people. There were also a number of significant and touching meetings with Indian tribes: the Tucanos at Jauareté, the Bororos at Meruri, and the Xavantes at San Marcos.

Visits of particular significance were made to Niteroi (9-11 July) and Brasilia (30 July-1 August). At Niteroi Father Viganò attended the official commemoration of the centenary of the first salesians' arrival; at Brasilia he was present for the special dedication of the Temple of

Don Bosco and the conclusion of the centenary celebrations. Also present for this occasion was Cardinal Raul Silva, who described himself as "a citizen of Latin America and Cardinal of the universal Church"; his presence as a salesian was in homage to Don Bosco on the centenary also of his famous dream of Latin America — today a wonderful reality. The month's visit of the Rector Major also included discussions with cardinals, bishops (sixteen of whom are salesians) and local pastors.

The Brazil journey now completes the Rector Major's visits to the whole of the salesian world.

Back in Rome he was able to go to Monte Oliveto for the profession ceremony of 25 novices (8 September). At the Generalate he continued his usual work which included preparing his *Report on the State of the Congregation* for GC22, the plenary sessions of the Superior Council, and the preparation for the episcopal synod in which he took part.

The election of the new Superior General of the Dominicans on 2 September meant that Father Viganò was appointed president of the Union of Superiors General.

4.2 The Councillor for Formation

Father Paolo NATALI

The Councillor for Formation has completed the draft of the manual *The salesian provincial, a ministry for the animation and government for the provincial community*. The suggestions made by the members of the Superior Council after reading the first draft proved to be very helpful.

Father Natali also presided at two conventions: a world convention on *Inculturation and salesian formation*; and the other a European convention on *Liturgy and music* in salesian formation.

The former convention (on inculturation) was held at the Rome Salesianum from 12 to 17 September. It was organised in collaboration with the *Faculty of Theology and Philosophy of the UPS*, and was reserved to the heads of affiliated salesian studentates and study centres; there were over 50 participants. For the first three days the accent was on the history and theory of inculturation; the latter three days concentrated on practical application when dealing with the delicate relationship between inculturation and salesian formative practice; an analysis was made of the criteria that should govern formation studies and curricula.

The second convention (on liturgy and music) was held from 18

to 21 September, also at the Rome Salesianum; it was attended by exponents of music and liturgy in Europe. It began with a survey of the situation and then dealt mainly with salesian formation in things liturgical and musical. The members stressed the salesian tradition in these areas, the theological documents of the Church and the Congregation, the practical application, the directives of the *Ratio FSDB*, and took note of the liturgical and musical situation in our formative communities. Planning for the future included salesian "propers", liturgy in the salesian educative project, and training in music.

Both conventions concluded with a number of principles, criteria, and suggestions to be offered to superiors to help in their task of animation in the Congregation. In other activities (visits to various formation communities in Italy, examination of a number of *Formation Directories* recently forwarded to the Generalate, and attendances at conventions) the Councillor was greatly helped by the members of his Formation Department.

4.3 The Councillor for the Salesian Family and the media

Father Giovanni RAINERI

The main activities of Father Raineri during the period February to September 1983 were as follows.

February: 26-27 — meeting of the Executive Secretariate of the World Council of Salesian Cooperators;

March: 19-20 — at Pacognano (province of Naples) for the study of the Rector Major's letter on the Salesian Family;

26-27 — meeting of the World Governing Council of Salesian Past Pupils;

April: 23-24 — representation of Past Pupils at OMAAEEC (World Organisation of Past Pupils of Catholic Schools); also meeting of World Governing Council of Salesian Past Pupils;

28-29 — addressed commemorative gathering for Cardinal Giuseppe Guarino, Salesian Cooperator and Founder of Apostolic Sisters of the Holy Family in Messina;

May: 14 — meeting of Executive Secretariate of the World Council of Salesian Cooperators;

June: 17 — conclusion of meeting of Cooperator Delegates at Villa Tuscolana (theme: "From collaborators to cooperators");

July: Journey to South America (4 July-2 August);

11-14 — National Congress of Salesian Cooperators of Brazil (Rio de Janeiro);

16-19 — meeting of salesian animators of Salesian Family at provincial level in Brazil (Rio de Janeiro);

23-26 — attendance at 3rd international course of formation for past pupil councillors in Latin America (San Antonio de los Altos, Venezuela);

27-28 — participated in and closed meeting for provincial delegates of salesian cooperators of Pacific-Caribbean region.

Other activities in Latin America:

Buenos Aires:

— visit to *Ediciones Don Bosco Argentina* (5 July);

— meeting with National Council of Salesian Cooperators (7 July);

— meeting with National Council of Salesian Bulletin representatives (7 July).

Los Teques:

— meeting with FMA provincial and rectresses (24 July);

Boa Vista:

— meeting with Mothers General of the Congregations of Sisters: Mediators of Peace, Missionaries of Jesus, Sisters of Christ Adolescent.

Porto Alegre:

— visit to *Centro Gaucho de Audiovisuais* (9-11 July).

Belo Horizonte:

— visit to *Centro Salesiano di Videocomunicazioni* (20 July).

Sao Paulo:

— visit to *Ediciones Don Bosco* (21 July).

Venezuela:

— visit to *Libreria Editrice Salesiana* of Sarriá (25 July) and meeting with Salesian Bulletin editors and directors of the Audiovisual Centre at Altamira.

During all of September Father Raineri worked with the World Government Council of Past Pupils to prepare for the World Convention of Delegates and National Presidents of Salesian Past Pupils which was held at the Rome Salesianum from 24 September to 1 October (theme: "The identity of the salesian past pupil").

The Secretariate for the Media

The International Technical Commission of Salesian Publishers has organised two important meetings for the study of matters dealing with direction for publishers:

— for publishers in Asia: at Calcutta (18-20 November);

— for publishers in Europe & America: at Mexico City (27-30 November).

4.4 The Councillor for the Missions

Father Bernard TOHILL

In the last few months Father Tohill was able to complete his six-year project to visit all salesian missions in the world. In the latter part of June and all the month of July he visited missionaries in Rio Negro, Humaitá, Porto Velho, Ji-Paraná and Varra do Garcas (which included the missions among the Bororos and Xavantes Indians).

When the Rector Major visited the missions in Brazil on the occasion of the centenary of the salesians' arrival there, the Councillor for the Missions participated in the unforgettable historic receptions given by the Tukanos and the Makus at Jauareté in Rio Negro, the Bororos in Merure, and the Xavantes in San Marcos.

Father Tohill also visited the formation centres of the six provinces and was able to address the young confreres on the missionary commitment of the Congregation on a world basis.

The thing that struck the Councillor most in these visits was that, though the bishops and missionaries were profoundly dedicated to their work (and with much satisfaction), there is a desperate scarcity of personnel. This is particularly the case in Manaus, and Father Tohill appeals urgently to the generosity of provincials and confreres to give what

help they can. The Rector Major too is deeply conscious of the desperate plight of these missions and adds his personal appeal, including the province of Recife, situated in the poverty-stricken north-east of Brazil.

It was from this latter province that the sad news was received that the rector of Fortaleza-Cantro had been killed in a car accident, and the vice-rector with him seriously injured.

The province of the Philippines has recently appealed for personnel to begin the salesian apostolate in Indonesia. The Philippines province is very young, and notwithstanding the many and urgent calls at home, has generously sent missionaries to Thailand, Ethiopia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor. Indonesia has a population of 145 million and is teeming with young people. If personnel were available the salesians could open up missions in Djakarta and one of the 13,500 islands so rich in vocations.

4.5 The Councillor for Asia

Father Thomas PANAKEZHAM

Father Panakezham arrived in Kenya on 13 June, and from then to 15 July he visited the Kenyan communities at Nairobi, Korr, and Marsabit; the Tanzanian communities at Dar-es-salaam, Iringa, Mafinga and Dodoma, and the South Sudanese

missions at Juba and Tonj. He was impressed with the work, progress, enthusiasm and sacrifice he found everywhere. The confreres are much appreciated by the hierarchy, their missionary colleagues, and the people. Most of the salesians are able to speak the local language with a certain facility. Already a start has been made with small technical schools for teaching printing, mechanics, carpentry and brick-laying — to say nothing of the youth centres. A most encouraging aspect is the opening of an aspirantate at Mafinga in Tanzania.

There is a desperate need of personnel in the two missions in Sudan; there will assuredly be zealous, self-sacrificing and courageous confreres willing to go to help a people who await them with open arms.

Beginning on 16 July Father Panakezham visited all the formation communities of the six Indian provinces (Bombay, Bangalore, Madras, Calcutta, Gauhati and Dimapur). From 26 to 28 July he presided at the Indian Provincial Conference which assessed its own services during the last six years, examined its commitment to Project Africa (each province pledged at least one confrere per year for Africa), and discussed the appointment of national delegates for cooperators and the media.

The Councillor then visited the formation houses in Thailand, the Philippines, Japan and Korea. In the

Philippines he was able to visit every community. In Japan he was present at the opening of a museum commemorating the apostolic work of Father Cimatti.

Other important meetings were held with:

- the provincials and councils of Dimapur (26 July), Gauhati (2 August), Calcutta (6 August) and the Philippines (18 August);

- the confreres of the Korean Delegation assembled for their retreat (25-27 August);

- the missions in Japan in the diocese of Oita (30 August).

4.6 The Councillor for the Atlantic region

Father Walter BINI

In June Father Bini passed ten days in Angola visiting confreres in Lwanda, Dondo and Luena. He found them in fine fettle, despite the local political tensions. He had travelled to Africa with Mother Carmen Martín Moreno, FMA Councillor, who was visiting for the first time to explore the possibilities of sending a pioneer community of sisters to Angola.

In July Father Bini accompanied the Rector Major on his visit to the salesian provinces of Brazil on the occasion of the centenary of the arrival of the first salesians at Niteroi on 14 July 1883.

Other activities in June-July were:

- participation in the meetings of the provincial conference of La Plata (23-25 June) and Brazil (2-4 August) to assess the activities of the last six years;

- participation in the meetings of formation personnel of the provinces of La Plata, to discuss matters relating to the tirocinium;

- visits to the province of Paraguay (6-11 August), especially the missions of El Chaco, still suffering the consequences of the floods; to Buenos Aires, mainly to meet the ongoing formation group at Ramos Mejía (11-14 August); to Córdoba (17-20 August); and to Uruguay to assist in the consultation for the new provincial (Montevideo: 22-24 August).

4.7 The Councillor for central and northern Europe and central Africa

Father Roger VANSEVEREN

After having participated in the centenary celebration of Don Bosco's visit to Austria, Father Vanseveren visited Germany, Holland and Belgium to meet the respective provincials.

During July he represented the Rector Major at the 2nd General Assembly of the Don Bosco Volunteers; he then travelled to Turin where Don Bosco's long journey

through France was being commemorated by a "pilgrimage to the salesian holy places" by SDBs, FMAs, DBVs, PPs, lay co-workers and friends of Don Bosco; the pilgrims came from the provinces of France south, France north and Belgium south.

After meeting confreres of central Europe, the Councillor attended the "Salesian Colloquies" at Leusden in Holland (21-26 August); the theme was *Educating for peace*.

Father Vanseveren then left for Yugoslavia and visited both provinces. At Ljubljana he attended the pastoral study week with confreres from Rakovnik and Trstenik and also the confreres from the postnovitiate together with novices and aspirants from Zelimlje.

In the Croatian province (at Rijeka) he met the confreres of the postnovitiate and the novices, and at Zagreb he spoke with the students of philosophy and theology and the confreres of Zagreb-Knezija. He then visited the other houses in that city.

From 25 September to 9 October he took part in the seminar on *African youth and Project Africa*, organised at Bonn by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in collaboration with the Salesian Mission Office at Bonn.

On 17 October he presided at the provincial conference of German-speaking nations at Munich.

From 10 to 13 November he

attended the meeting of French-speaking provincial councils at Castille, France.

4.8 The Councillor for the English-speaking region

Father George WILLIAMS

Father Williams spent two months in the provinces of Oxford and Dublin. With provincials and their councils, and other groups and persons, he was able to discuss matters regarding the formation of confreres and certain recent problems regarding the schools. He also presided at the religious professions of confreres and salesian sisters in Ireland.

4.9 The Councillor for the Iberian region

Father José RICO

On 18 and 19 June Father Rico attended the annual meeting at El Plantío of the National Council of Salesian Cooperators. He then called a meeting of the permanent commission of the Iberian conference and the governing council of the Madrid Salesian Catechetical Centre; this was followed by participation in the Madrid Salesian Family pilgrimage to the Marian sanctuary of Fuencisla, Segovia, on 26 June.

Father Rico then conducted an 8-day course of studies on the Church

for the novices at Mohernando; he also inducted the new provincial of Valencia, Father Miguel Asurmendi, successor to Father Joaquin Cardenal (10 July).

On 12 July he began his visits to all those salesian communities in Africa sponsored by Spanish provinces:

— Equatorial Guinea, where there are 14 Madrid salesians in 3 communities (Malabo, Banapá and Bata);

— Benín, with 7 Bilbao confreres in 2 communities (Porto Novo and Comé);

— Togo, with 3 confreres from Córdoba and Seville (Lomé);

— Ivory Coast, with 6 confreres in 2 communities from Barcelona (Duékoué and Korhago);

— Mali, with 6 confreres from Valencia in 2 communities (Sikasso and Tuba); and finally

— Senegal, with 10 confreres from León in two communities (Tambacounda and St Louis).

Father Rico was most favourably impressed. The salesians are greatly needed both because of the scarcity of missionaries and also because of the need of the salesian charisma in countries where young people are not considered important (as adults are) and have no means of preparing themselves for life. In these countries Christians are in an absolute minority (ranging from 1% to 5% to 10%). However, both Moslems

and Animists are respectful towards the Christians.

The confreres are working well despite the various problems such as the climate, and the lack of electricity and telephone in some places. Many have already gained a good knowledge of the local languages; and there is excellent cooperation with bishops, clergy and people — who all realise that something new has arrived with the salesians — especially their predilection for the young and the simple folk, and their devotion to Mary Help of Christians.

The salesian works are parochially structured and include youth centres, trade schools (in early development only), mission schools, high schools, youth groups — and all the usual missionary parish work on the spot and in the surrounding districts.

After a few days' rest Father Rico visited the Course of Ongoing Formation at Campello and then returned to Rome on 11 September.

4.10 The Councillor for Italy and the Middle East

Father Luigi BOSONI

From 20 September 1982 to 22 January 1983 Father Bosoni carried out the extraordinary canonical visitation in the Novara province. However, the visit was interrupted fairly often for other duties: visits to Chiari, Treviglio, Bresnia and

Sesto; then Nave, Pinerolo and the Crocetta (for the opening of the academic year). Other visits included Vallecrosia, Alassio, Genoa and Vazze. He attended the retreat of the provincials in Puglia, and back in Rome presided at a meeting of the Italian provincial conference; then to the national convention of Young Cooperators; three meetings with rectors of Italy to present the *Rectors' Manual*; a convention at the UPS on *Youth and morals*; a meeting with the Italian provincial conference committee.

On 25 January Father Bosoni returned to Rome for Superior Council meetings. In February he preached the retreat for the FMA provincials of Italy.

In March he visited the communities of the Adriatic province (Romagna region) and attended a youth gathering at Ancona. He then visited the houses of the Central province in Piedmont, and at Colle Don Bosco participated in the "Paschal youth gathering".

From 9 to 15 April he joined his Superior Council colleagues for the annual retreat at Biennio di Valcamonica, and the feast of the Rector Major at Treviglio (16-17 April).

On 18th he went to Novara for the meeting of the provincial council and next day visited Father Ziggotti at Albarè, a few hours before his saintly death. From 22 to 25 April he was in Sicily and visited the com-

munities at Pedara, San Gregorio, Modica, Ragusa and Gela. He also met the DBVs and was present for the provincial community day.

Back in Rome he met the confreres whose apostolate is among the "children at risk". In early May he completed the visits to the houses of the Central provinces in Rome. From 6-9 May he met the confreres of the new Delegation of Sardinia and spoke to the council and the rectors there. On 15 May he attended the beatification of our salesian martyrs at St Peter's, and the official celebrations at the UPS, Sacro Cuore, Pio XI and Cinecittà in the ensuing days.

On 23 May he was at Lugano and presided at the meeting of the Commission for Salesian Affairs in Switzerland; this was a special gathering called by the Rector Major, and also present were Father Raineri, Father Vanseveren, and the provincials of Munich, Paris and Novara.

On 25 and 26 May he met the provincials SDB and FMA of Italy; he then attended a meeting of the Italian provincial conference, and met the national directors and provincial delegates for the youth apostolate. At Verona (3 June) he met the vocation promoters of the region to discuss practical lines for their apostolate. He then visited the houses in Rovereto, Trent and Santo Zeno in Verona. Back at Rome he attended a number of lectures on

the new Code of Canon Law with the other members of the Superior Council. At Sacro Cuore in Rome he was present for the titular feastday and also the meeting of cooperator delegates. At Bologna and Nave he attended the close of the school year; then he visited Darfo. From 23 to 25 June Father Bosoni was at Pacognano for a convention on high schools; then to Rocca di Papa for the youth convention on animation. On 1 July he opened the 15th course of ongoing formation for the region; then back to the Generalate for a meeting of the committee of the Italian provincial conference. On 1 August he visited the novices at Lanuvio and from 4 to 12 August attended the course for new rectors. On 23 August he was at the FMA Generalate for the feastday of the Mother General; and on 24 August he left for Teheran, where (as far as circumstances would permit) he preached the retreat for the confreres. In Iran he was able to meet Archbishops Caldeo and Armeno and the Vicar Apostolic of the Latin rite; he also visited the Pro-Nuncio a number of times. He then left for Turkey, hoping to fly to Syria and Lebanon — but the flights were prevented at Teheran. Arriving unexpectedly therefore at Istanbul, he was welcomed by confreres, past pupils and friends; he paid his respects to the bishop, and (since Aleppo and Beirut were out

of the question) returned to Rome.

At Rome he assisted with the preparation for perpetual professions that were solemnised with the the Rector Major at San Tarcisio on 18 September.

On 9 September Father Bosoni went to Novara for a meeting on schools, and on 10 and 11 September he attended the national council meeting for past pupils at Messina.

4.11 The Councillor for the Pacific and Caribbean region

Father Sergio CUEVAS

During June, July and August Father Cuevas made contacts with most of the provincials of his region, concentrating mainly on meetings with provincial councils, formation personnel and formative communities; this meant visiting the Antilles, Santo Domingo, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia.

In Lima, Peru, from 9 to 15 July he attended a study week for all salesian rectors and presented the *Rectors' Manual* to them.

In Chile he assisted at Santiago and Punta Arenas with the consultation for the appointment of the new provincial. He was also able to meet several groups of the Salesian Family in Chile. On 16 July he received the first professions of 17 novices at Macul and participated in the receiving of the 16 new novices.

There was great rejoicing at these promising numbers for the province.

Father Cuevas then visited the catechetical centre, the media centre, the publishing house and the salesian radio stations at Santiago and Punta Arenas. He also met the "pastoral team" of the province, and the young councillors of the salesian youth movement.

At Quito in Ecuador he spent a few days with an ongoing formation group of 40 young priests from the provinces of the region. From 8 to 18 August he attended a meeting of all the novice-masters of the region together with the directors of pre-novitiates of various provinces; the aim was to discuss the application of the *Ratio* in these early stages of salesian formation. The meeting was organised by the permanent formation team of the region.

From 19 to 27 August Father Cuevas attended the annual meeting of the provincials of the region. The gathering (at Fusagasugá) discussed matters social, cultural, economic and ecclesial in Latin American and the effect they had on the development of the salesian vocation. The discussions were guided by a team from the Ilades Institute of Santiago.

Late August and early September were spent visiting the formative communities of Bogotá and Medellín. Some days were dedicated to meeting the formation personnel, the young confreres in formation, and

the two provincial councils of Colombia. In company with the provincials Father Cuevas visited the leper colony in Agua de Dios. On his visit to Mexico he was impressed by the great effort being made to set up (at Querétera, 160 kms from Mexico City) the new centre for the formation of salesian coadjutor brothers of the region. The new theological studentate in Guadalajara is now a reality, and will be officially opened in November. This academic centre will serve the needs of a number of the provinces in the northern part of the region.

Father Cuevas returned to Rome on 11 September.

4.12 The Delegate for Poland

Father Augustyn DZIEDZIEL

Father Augustyn Dziedziel visited all six of the formation communities in Poland; he also presided at the Polish provincial conference, which discussed the topic of formation. He was able too to meet various groups of the Salesian Family. He then went to England to help organise study centres and boarding facilities for the Polish missionaries who are studying English in preparation for their apostolate in Zambia. The candidates consist of five priests, three clerics, and one cooperator and five salesian sisters.

5. DOCUMENTS & NEWS ITEMS

5.1 22nd General Chapter

1. THE PRECAPITULAR COMMISSION

The precapitular commission appointed by the Rector Major, in accordance with article 101 of the Regulations, assembled at the Rome Generalate and worked from 27 June to 26 August 1983.

Step one was to study and define the kind of *precapitular schemata* it was expected to draw up according to Reg. 101, the specific objectives to be achieved by GC22, and the indications of the Superior Council.

Since the precapitular schemata should be working documents to aid discussion on the text of the constitutions, a threefold division was made of the tasks these schemata could usefully accomplish:

— a summary of the observations of the Congregation on the Constitutions and Regulations as proposed by the provincial chapters and individual confreres;

— a summary of the more important points of convergence, pointing out their main aspects regarding the text under discussion;

— a representation of the resultant problems and suitable sugges-

tions for helping the work of the General Chapter.

2. THE MATERIAL STUDIED BY THE PRECAPITULAR COMMISSION

The material received up to the 31 May was classified under four headings:

1) Provincial chapter contributions drawn up according to ASC 305, no. 28.

2) Signed proposals of individual confreres on provincial chapter forms according to ASC 305, no. 29.

3) A summation of the survey questionnaire on the Constitutions and Regulations as filled in by the provincial chapter members.

4) Various contributions: studies, unsigned proposals, suggestions of particular groups (neither the identity, number, or active/passive status of these latter was attainable), proposals from smaller groups, and suggestions for the Moderator.

For quick and easy reference the provincial council proposals regarding the Constitutions and Regulations were classified according to *themes, articles of the Constitutions and Regulations, and provinces*.

The individual proposals of the confreres were all numbered and suitably filed.

The results of the survey-questionnaire were so arranged as to show absolute totals and also each region's proportional answer to each particular question.

Finally the material listed in no. 4) above was suitably indexed in folders.

3. THE PRECAPITULAR SCHEMATA

The commission gave careful consideration to all the above contributions before systemising them into a functional *modus operandi*. The precapitular outlines are now drawn up in two volumes:

- *Volume I*. Proposals of the provincial chapters and individual confreres: a systemised collection of all the contributions of the Congregation.

- *Volume II*. Observations of the precapitular commission: a summary of the study of the precapitular commission and suggestions that will hopefully be of help to the General Chapter.

The following résumé of both volumes will make for a clearer understanding of their use.

3.1 *Proposals of the provincial chapters and individual confreres* (Vol. I)

In accordance with ASC 305 (re the contributions to be sent to the

General Chapter) the precapitular commission dealt mainly with the *proposals of the provincial chapters and the individual confreres* and the *results of the survey-questionnaire*. The various and anomalous material that arrived after the deadline or not according to the directives of the precapitular technical commission (ASC 305, 28-29) was used to amplify the findings and opinions regarding certain problems: however, it was not summarised and filed in this section because of obvious difficulties in classification and identification.

This part of the commission's work was drafted according to the following criteria.

Criterion 1 was concerned with *completeness*: nothing forwarded for the GC22 was to be ignored in this collecting and classifying phase. The commission combined similar proposals or complementary matters, and arranged the material in logical order so that everything could be immediately and readily comprehended.

Criterion 2 insisted on *impartiality*. All assessments were to be made at a later stage. At this point in the proceedings the commission merely interested itself in the origin and contents of the proposals. Thus, except in cases of obvious error, the commission filed the proposals according to the text of the Constitutions

indicated by the respective proponents.

Criterion 3 required *structural clarity* and good coordination in drafting the material; the aim was to facilitate the finding and reading of the information in *Vol. I* and to clarify the convergence of opinion in the Congregation regarding certain specific matters.

Criterion 4 called for *serviceability* and handiness so that the capitulars could use the material with ease. It is of course the task of GC22 to draw up the text of the Constitutions and Regulations for definitive approval, and to attend to confirmation or modification of content, structure, style and wording of the existing text; hence the commission did not focus on the problems themselves, but concentrated on the codification of these problems in the present text. The draft is thus understandably punctuated with the words *add, modify, expunge*, etc., to help maintain the reference any given proposal has to the existing text. However, the commission has not made a simple collection, but a résumé.

Observing these criteria, the commission's findings are structured according to the following principles.

The proposals for the text of the Constitutions are classified in eight sections, which correspond to the present distribution of themes in the

Constitutions, with the addition of an initial section devoted to general remarks.

Section 0. Requirements of a general nature regarding the Constitutions and Regulations.

Section 1. The Salesians of Don Bosco in the Church (Const. ch. I, arts. 1-8).

Section 2. Apostolic mission (Const. chs. II, III, IV, V, VI, arts. 9-49).

Section 3. Our life in communion (Const. chs. VII, VIII, arts. 50-67).

Section 4. Our consecration (Const. chs. IX, X, XI, XII, arts. 68-98).

Section 5. Formation and fidelity (Const. chs. XIII, XIV, XV, arts. 99-122).

Section 6. Organisation of our Society (Const. chs. XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX, arts. 123-198).

Section 7. Final articles (Const. arts. 199-200).

The proposals on the Constitutions in each section are followed by those relating to the Regulations. This makes possible the classification of the material and relative proposals both thematically and in their totality, and according to the different levels of codification.

The broader problems are dealt with first, descending then to the more detailed matters. Thus prior treatment is given to suggestions

and observations that refer to the *text in its entirety*; each part begins with general proposals dealing with restructuring, new chapters, perspectives that modify the general drafting, etc.; then follow the suggested modifications for each chapter; then for each article.

To facilitate reference, reading and comprehension, all proposals and observations regarding parts, chapters and articles are arranged under the following headings: *material supplied*, *section headings*, *content*, *form*, *positioning*, and *complete reformulation*.

A word of explanation on each of these classifications:

Material supplied. Under this heading are given contributions sent in by provincial chapters and individual confreres and the survey-questionnaire replies that refer to particular themes.

Section headings. This division lists, besides the matter normally included, the suggestions and observations that regard the biblical quotations which in the present text are printed under the titles of the various chapters.

Content. This heading sets out the proposed modifications to the text according to the different criteria (which are readily comprehensible but not always materially identical because of the diversity of the material). At times the basic text is followed, at other times the com-

mission has worked from the general to the particular to the detailed; or again from the more profound and basic to the less so. Proposals for reformulation are written in when they are not set out in full under their particular heading.

Form. This section lists words and expressions that proponents consider incorrect or inexact, and phraseology that they think is more precise to express the thought already contained in the present text.

Positioning. This heading contains proposals for repositioning certain articles (in different parts of chapters, etc.).

Complete reformulation. Here are found proposals for total or partial reformulation of articles with analytical indications for expression and articulation.

Each of the above sections (especially *Content*) adds the proponents' reasons when these are not obvious or when their addition helps towards a better understanding.

3.2 *Remarks of the precapitular commission*

Having completed the orderly arrangement of all the proposals of provincial chapters and individual confreres (*Vol. I*), the commission then set out its remarks in *Vol. II*, dividing them into *assessments* and *suggestions*.

Under *Assessments* are listed the points of convergence of the various proposals, reaching out beyond the material meaning of particular expressions, and at times setting them in a more general perspective. Difficulties and problems are pointed out that result from these convergences in regard to each part, chapter and article.

Under *Suggestions* a number of enlightening concepts are offered, drawn from such authoritative documents as the SGC, GC21 and the ASC; various sources are named for consultation, and clarifications are made regarding the treatment of the material in the existing text of the Constitutions. Wherever possible basic elements dealing with content are presented that GC22 could use as a starting point in tackling the matters raised by the proposals.

The order of *Vol. II* is exactly the same as in *Vol. I*. First dealt with are the more general problems that refer to a complete *Part*; then matters referring to particular *Chapters*.

Thus it is possible to see clearly the broad perspectives that have guided the work of the commission, and to better understand the specific suggestions regarding each particular article.

The commission's work thus presents a useful summary of the principal trends and demands of the Congregation in regard to the Con-

stitutions and Regulations in general. The members have endeavoured to be practical in all their suggestions. They found that it was not possible to present them in a totally uniform manner, for matter varies by its very nature, sometimes being doctrinal and sometimes juridical and affirmative. Furthermore, in the matter of layout and finer points there is an unequal standard in the various parts of the present text of the Constitutions.

Certain sections of the Constitutions such as *The fraternal and apostolic community*, *Our consecration*, *Formation*, and *Conclusion* (arts. 199-200) were not only carefully examined (with all of the text of the Constitutions) by GC21, but they also carried the proposals of GC21's *Commission I*. (These were included in *Sussidi I*, pp. 29-72, and duly sent by the precapitular technical commission to the provinces, from whom they received general approval). It was thus possible to comment on essential elements of content and details of terminology. The precapitular Commission sought to make good use of this situation, naturally aware that it was merely offering the capitulars (not imposing) this helpful material; it is GC22 that must do the deciding.

Regarding other sections of the Constitutions (such as *The Salesians of Don Bosco in the Church*, *Our apostolic mission*, *Structures of gov-*

ernment) the *Sussidi* made no specific proposal; there were only the questions in the *Outlines for Study*. The precapitular commission saw no point in approaching any formulation in this area, since the cut and dried nature of the articles conditions the wording of the text; this will be entirely a matter for GC22.

The commission, then, satisfied itself with the task of "enlightenment", although occasionally it got down to practicalities regarding essential elements of content in order to present GC22 with an initial textual draft which would facilitate its task of revision.

* * *

More often than not the contributions were limited, localised and divergent, and the precapitular commission sought to fill in the gap between them and the area proper to the General Chapter; while constantly bearing in mind the proposals of the provincial chapters and individual confreres, the commission aimed to overcome any material shortcomings and fragmentations and indicate ways of solving problems — but without usurping the work proper to a commission of the General Chapter.

Rome, 8 September.

Father JUAN VECCHI,
Moderator GC22.

5.2 Address of the Rector Major at the Episcopal Synod

Announcing reconciliation and penitence in today's emerging culture

* * *

"The rupture between Gospel and culture is undoubtedly the tragedy of our age" (EN 20).

In its evangelising mission the Church must enter into dialogue with contemporary culture. Today we face the challenge of an emerging culture that is permeated by atheistic humanism.

1. *Loss of sense of sin*

A common element in this cultural, man-centred and individualistic development is the *loss of the sense of sin*. This is not determined merely by a permissive society, but mainly by a radical change in the *consciousness of sin*. Secularism and the immense progress in the sciences (psychology, biology, sociology and cultural anthropology) have often been directed towards eliminating or dimming man's essential relationship with God. Sin is seen as an evil of society and the individual person is merely its victim; or it is a psychological disturbance with complex causes for which the individual erroneously blames himself.

This cultural atmosphere succeeds in ousting the true meaning of sin

as given in Revelation; and certain expressions used by the Church in its ministry of reconciliation become incomprehensible — such as “penitence”, “satisfaction”, “confession”, “absolution”, etc.

2. *Announcing reconciliation and penitence in a more effective way*

This calls for a suitable response.

— First, we must make a balanced assessment regarding the contributions made by the human sciences in order to understand the structural dynamics of the moral act. At the scientific level there is a pressing need for more effective interdisciplinary dialogue between theology and the human sciences, especially in the ecclesiastical and Catholic universities.

— Next, we should aim at being culturally and linguistically more comprehensible. In pastoral praxis, there should be less legalism in the formation of consciences and a special effort to understand the religious attitude of the common people — which is rich in transcendence and the desire for forgiveness.

3. *Certain priorities*

In revitalising reconciliation and penitence in our contemporary culture I consider three important aspects worthy of special treatment: the

psychological aspect of sin, the force of reconciliation in the history of man, and ecclesial communion as a source of grace.

a) *The psychological aspect of sin*

The discovery of biochemical determinant agents and many conditioning forces in the human mind make it more difficult today for many to believe in personal freedom. Personal morality would appear to be explained simply by a kind of “thought physics”. An attentive analysis of what is factually possible is indispensable if we wish to enlighten consciences on the reality of personal sin. One of the signs of the times is the “process of personalisation”. It should have an important place in the evangelisation of today’s emerging culture; and special attention should be given to the fact that human freedom is definitely capable of overcoming any kind of conditioning force.

Furthermore, at the psychological level, we must reconsider the educative and therapeutic function of the Church’s ministry of reconciliation. This ministry should aim at the mature development of the new creature born in Baptism, and the rebuilding of the virtues destroyed, weakened, or compromised by sin and evil habits.

The educative process of growth and healing demands that the Church’s ministry be exercised with

suitable methods and frequency. Hence seminary formation should give less time to over-juridical subjects and more time to the educative and pastoral.

b) *The force of reconciliation in the affairs of man*

In his opening address, Cardinal Martini has expounded the exact significance and importance of the social dimension of sin, and contemporary culture is especially sensitive in this area. Given this situation, our evangelising mission regarding sin must necessarily come to grips with the whole social context, paying close attention to structural, social and political implications.

The Church's task is to proclaim that a "Civilisation of love" is possible, and so a very large and important part of its ministry should be given to reconciliation and communion. One atheistic ideology has put forward "class warfare" (indeed "hatred") as the impelling force in human history. It is up to the Church to propose instead that the true driving force in man's new society is reconciliation (and hence love!): such a civilisation will be enlightened by Christ and thus its citizens will be conscious of God's mercy, capable of mutual forgiveness, and totally committed to peace.

This means we must do some pastoral rethinking about the things we stress, and the balanced way we

should present the various sectors of ethics and the moral demands of the Gospel.

Unfortunately we have to admit that one of the causes of the crisis in this area has been the confusion resulting from moral teaching that paid little attention to Revelation and the Magisterium of the Church: moral teaching that was tainted by certain anthropological branches of study and presented in pendulum fashion, going from one extreme to the other according to the particular trend in vogue.

c) *Ecclesial communion as a source of grace*

Theologically sin is a breaking of man's covenant with God and thus excludes the sinner from full communion with the Church, which is the "universal sacrament of salvation" and hence the all-embracing sacrament of reconciliation.

In particular does sin exclude the believer from communion in the benefits of the Church. On the other hand forgiveness of sin implies a reinstatement to full communion with the Church as sacrament of reconciliation. "Peace with the Church" thus emerges as the effect of the priestly ministry of penance and at the same time as the "res et sacramentum", i.e., the "sacramental grace of reconciliation with God". In other words, reinstatement in communion with the Church is the

source of full vitality in grace. The International Theological Commission hopes that this conception of the ancient Church regarding the sacrament of penance (i.e., peace with the Church as "res et sacramentum") be inculcated anew with greater clarity in the consciences of the faithful by means of preaching and catechesis. In this way the life of communion, the energising force of pardon and peace, and the active participation in the ecclesial community will have a more significant influence in Christian living, and make for a renewed use of this sacrament (which is often presented in a form that is too individualistic).

Conclusion

It is most necessary that we convince contemporary culture by an adequate presentation of the divine message of God's mercy given us through the Church. Reconciliation is essentially an initiative of the Father, a gesture of his ineffable love that does not stop at "condoning a debt": instead (with the Church and not without her) it renders our freedom truly free and makes us genuine sons and brothers. Through the Church the power of the Spirit nourishes an energising and *essentially community motive-force* for a more brotherly civilisation. When we present reconciliation and penitence to the People of God, our

motive and our witness must derive from the love of the Father offered to man through Christ's Church: and this today is probably the most potent Gospel message for cultivating in contemporary culture a deeper and more complete understanding of man — who will thus labour to build up a new civilisation, indeed not sinless, but certainly leavened with the presence of a community of penitents wherein will be found the highest values of reconciliation and conversion.

5.3 Brotherly Solidarity (44th report)

a) PROVINCES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina - Córdoba province	<i>Italian lire</i> 1,580.000
Brazil - São Paulo province	1,000.000
Central America - Sal Salvador province	4,003.200
Uruguay - Montevideo province	780.000

NORTH AMERICA

United States - New Rochelle province	14,900.000
United States - San Francisco province	9,375.000

ASIA		Brazil - Manaus, Porto Velho: for St Teresina's church	800.000
India - Bangalore province	1,600.000	Brazil - Manaus: for scholarship for study in Europe	3,000.000
India - Calcutta province	1,700.000	Brazil - Manaus, Ananindeua: for furnishings for the aspirantate	1,500.000
India - Gauhati province	2,000.000	Brazil - Porto Alegre: for the homeless of Itajaí, S. Catarina	3,000.000
EUROPE		Brazil - Porto Alegre: for boys' home in Viamão	1,000.000
Belgium north	8,100.000	Colombia - Bogotá, Ariari, El Castillo: for a parish hall	1,000.000
Italy - Rome province	3,000.000	Colombia - Medellín, Cali: for modifications in trade school	2,000.000
Italy - Subalpine province	7,650.000	Ecuador - for scholarship for student in Spain	3,000.000
Italy - Udine	1,000.000	Ecuador - Esmeraldas: for furnishings for a new building	2,270.000
Italy - Verona province	25,000.000	Ecuador - Macas: for an enclosed convent	2,000.000
b) DISTRIBUTION OF MONIES RECEIVED		Ecuador - Quito: for a new centre for indigenous documentation	3,250.000
AFRICA		Ecuador - Sevilla Don Bosco: for a dormitory	2,000.000
Mozambique - Moatize: help for the poor	5,000.000	Mexico - Guadalajara: for library for the novitiate	490.000
LATIN AMERICA		Mexico - Mixes-Totontepec: for a social project	2,000.000
Antilles - Cuba: for sundry expenses	8,955.000	Uruguay - Manga: for the poor	2,000.000
Antilles - San Domingo: for medicines	1,500.000		
Argentina - for course of ongoing formation	2,659.000		
Argentina - Córdoba: for medical treatment for a missionary	5,026.315		
Bolivia - Cochabamba: for parish needs	2,000.000		
Bolivia - Kami: for the new hospital	2,000.000		

ASIA

Philippines - Cebu: for the poor in the Lourdes parish	500.000
India - Bangalore: for a printery	1,500.000
India - Bangalore: for a new chapel at Hyderabad	2,000.000
India - Calcutta: for a new building in the Auxilium parish	1,000.000
India - Calcutta, Anisakan: for delegation needs	2,000.000
India - Dibrugarh, Tinsukia: for St Boniface's school	2,000.000
India - Gauhati: for catechetics	500.000
India - Gauhati, Bengtol (Assam): for a new building	2,000.000
India - Madras, Poona-mallee: for fund for ex-seminarists	1,000.000
India - Madras, Chingleput: to sink a well	700.000
Timor - for needs of the three missionaries	2,000.000
Timor - Diocese of Timor: for the poor	1,000.000

EUROPE

Jugoslavia - Ljubljana: scholarships for clerics	5,000.000
Middle East - Aleppo: for the needs of the youth centre	2,000.000

5.4 Act of Entrustment of the Congregation to Mary Help of Christians

Proposed formula for the occasion (14 January 1984)

It would be well to refresh our memories regarding this act of oblation by re-reading the Rector Major's letter in the Acts of the Superior Council (no. 309) of last May.

The text of the following formula has been inspired at least in part by Don Bosco's own Act of oblation found in one of the booklets of the Catholic Readings; it was dated May 1869, and is printed below after the following formula.

Solemn Act of Entrustment of the Salesian Congregation to Mary Help of Christians

O God, Father of infinite love, you so loved the world that you gave your only Son and sent the Holy Spirit for the redemption and sanctification of man; we salesians, gathered together in the unity of your Trinity, kneel in worship before you as Don Bosco has taught us. All glory to you, merciful Father, redeeming Son and sanctifying Spirit. We praise you, Triune God of infinite love, for having given Mary a part in your work of redemption, raising her up to be the mother of God and our own mother too.

And you, Lord Jesus, Son of Mary and first fruits of the new covenant, give us your Spirit so that our hearts may be enkindled with a share of your love. We beg you to renew for us your wondrous testament uttered on the cross, when in title and endowment you made the Apostle John the son of your own mother Mary.

Repeat also for each of us those words, *Woman, behold your Son*, so that we may live always with Mary in our home.

May she remain with us as our mother; may she take us by the hand and be our inspiration as we bring the Gospel message to the poor and the humble. May she help us to be active pillars of the Church, and order our lives and activities in union with the Pope and the bishops. May she help us to be attentive to God's word, zealous in the apostolate, and true prophets of hope in the forthcoming third millennium of our Christian faith. May she teach us creativity in our pastoral concern, and help us achieve that persuasive kindness and mortification that will make us skilled promoters of dialogue and friendship, especially among the young who are most in need.

O Help of Christians and Mother of the Church, we Salesians of Don Bosco entrust ourselves today to your kindly intercession on our behalf as individuals and as communities. We place in your care the priceless

riches of our Constitutions, our pledge to be faithful and united in our Congregation, the sanctification of all members, the work by which we worship in intention and act, the increase of vocations, the toilsome responsibility of formation, the courageous and generous labours of our missionaries, the animation of the Salesian Family, and in a special way our assiduous ministry of predilection for the young.

With joy we proclaim you mistress and guide of our Congregation.

Accept, we beg you, this filial *Act of Entrustment* and help us to participate ever more zealously in the final wish of your Son on Calvary: through him, with him and in him we resolve to live and labour untiringly to establish the Kingdom of our Father in the hearts of all men.

Mary Help of Christians, pray for us. Amen.

Don Bosco's Act of filial acceptance of the Blessed Virgin as mother

In 1869 Don Bosco founded the *Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Mary Help of Christians*. In a booklet he prepared for the members we find the following *Act of filial acceptance of the Blessed Virgin as mother*.

This formula of oblation also speaks of *entrustment to Mary*: indeed there is a total accord between

Don Bosco's prayer and the Rector Major's letter in ASC 309.

The Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians (canonically erected in the basilica dedicated to her in Turin) with historical notes on this title by Father John Bosco

ACT OF FILIAL ACCEPTANCE
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN AS MOTHER.

Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, only son of God and the Virgin Mary, I turn to you and worship you as my first beginning and final end. I beg you to renew for me the loving mystery of your last wish uttered on the cross, when you made the beloved disciple the son of your mother Mary both in title and endowment. Repeat again those words for me, dear Lord, "Woman, this is your son". *Give me the grace to belong to her as a son and to have her as my mother for as long as I live on this earth.*

Most Blessed Virgin Mary, you are loving advocate and mediatrix; and I (.....) am a poor sinner, most unworthy and the least of your servants. I humbly kneel before you and *confide myself to your kindness and mercy*; deeply desirous of imitating your virtues, *I choose you* today as my mother and beg you to receive me among the fortunate number of your sons. *I give myself to you entirely and*

irrevocably. Graciously accept my allegiance as I confidently *abandon myself into your care.* Grant me your motherly protection throughout my life and especially at the hour of death, when my soul, freed from bodily trammels, will leave this vale of tears to enjoy with you the eternal glory of the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

*Catholic Readings: Year XVII,
no. 5, Turin;
printed at the Oratory
of St Francis de Sales, 1869*

5.5 Reprint of the Repertorio delle Memorie Biografiche

This second edition of the *Repertorio alfabetico delle Memorie Biografiche di San Giovanni Bosco* has now been printed. It is a volume of 500 pages and is the excellent result of the labours of Fr Peter Ciccarelli. It is published in an extracommercial edition and can be ordered from the *Casa Generalizia Salesiana, via della Pisana 1111, 00163 Roma - Italy.*

This second edition has a number of improvements on its predecessor; it is an invaluable fund of information for preachers, researchers and devotees of our Founder, and indeed for all who see the *Memorie Biografiche* as an essential source for knowing Don Bosco and his work.

5.6 Brief notes on the missions

- The Rector Major's visits last May to the missionaries in Amazonia and Mato Grosso proved most beneficial and were happy events much appreciated by all concerned.

- This number of the *Acts* carries the letter of the Rector Major approving the setting up of a *Centre for Indigenous Documentation for Latin America* (with special reference to the salesian missions in Amazonia); also the operative proposals and conclusions of the Latin American meeting referred to in the letter.

- In a few months' time we shall have collated all the information regarding the help sent to Africa and elsewhere by the various provinces, together with full details of the missionary expedition of 1983 farewellled in Turin on 2 October.

- Of the 47 confreres that make up the 1983 missionary expedition, some have already arrived at their destination.

- The Rome province is about to send three priests and a permanent deacon to Madagascar; arrangements are being made to take over the direction of an orphanage for 160 boys near the capital Antananarivo.

- The Central province has asked the Superior Council's permission to build a trade school at Embu in the diocese of Meru, Kenya. There is

already a community there, and two coadjutor brothers will be sent to run the new school.

- A fifth confrere will go to Sudan to work in the printery in Juba. Six FMAs have arrived in Sudan: they will work in the parish of Tonj that is directed by two of our confreres.

- Two or three confreres of the Oxford province are doing a course in missiology prior to leaving soon for Liberia.

- India is sending 5 or 6 confreres to the Nairobi Delegation. Two clerics have already arrived at Marsabit in Kenya, and one at Mafinga in Tanzania.

- Venezuela has sent its first missionary to Zaire — a young cleric in practical training. Canada east is sending a priest to Rwanda.

- The 8 novices in Zaire have now risen to 10 — all local vocations, the first fruits of the Madrid mission in Equatorial Guinea.

- Seven Polish confreres and a cooperator are in England to study English; they will go to Zambia next year.

- The Pacific-Caribbean region has three confreres ready for Angola and another three for Central Africa; they are awaiting transit permits.

- Recently in Manila two young Filipino clerics received missionary

crosses prior to leaving for Papua New Guinea.

• Burma has nine prenovices preparing to enter the novitiate on 8 December next.

5.7 Letter of the Rector Major to the Rector of the Salesian Pontifical University

Topic: *Documentation Centre for Salesian Mission, Latin America.*

Dear Father Farina,

— Bearing in mind the history of the salesian missions that (especially in Latin America) have been so fruitful in apostolic achievements among the indigenous peoples, and so abundant in cultural and developmental initiatives;

— in the spirit of the Puebla documents;

— in line with the work undertaken now for some years by the *Salesian Missions Study Centre* at the UPS, Rome;

— after being informed of the conclusions of the 1st *Latin American Convention* at Quito, 18-24 October 1981;

— having heard the opinions of the regional councillors for Latin America.

I deem it opportune to approve the creation of the *Documentation*

Centre for indigenous peoples in Latin America, with special reference to the salesian missions in the Amazonian basin.

Please give official notice of this approval to the provincials concerned, and in particular to the provincial of Quito and Father John Bottasso (to whom the enterprise was entrusted by the above Latin American Convention).

Yours in Don Bosco,

Father EGIDIO VIGANÒ,
Grand Chancellor of the
Salesian Pontifical University.

THE SALESIAN MISSIONS IN A CHANGING CONTINENT

*1st Latin American Convention —
Quito, 18-24 October 1981*

Practical proposals and conclusions

I. At provincial level

1. The provincial council should have a missionary councillor to animate and nourish missionary co-responsibility in the province.

2. In every province or nation there should be a mission office or an office for

a) the missionary animation of the province or nation;

b) attending to the material needs of the missions;

c) managing public relations.

3. The provincial should arrange occasional changes of personnel and services between houses of the provinces and missionary centres (on such occasions as retreats, holidays, illness, etc.).

II. *At regional level*

It is proposed to set up an office for the missions to depend on the *Centre for Ongoing Formation* for coordination and animation regarding salesian missions in Latin America.

III. *At Latin American level*

It is proposed to set up a Latin American Centre for indigenous documentation.

Latin American Centre for Indigenous Documentation

0. *Premises*

0.1 Indigenous Latin Americans are going through a decisive moment in their history. The peoples of the Amazonian region are threatened with extinction; the cultural destruction has already begun for all Latin American Indians.

0.2 Dozens of SDBs and FMAs are presently working among these Indians. They form part of an international organisation which sends considerable numbers of trained personnel to work with the indigenous nations; these people dedicate their whole lives to such groups.

0.3 With more than a century of apostolate the salesians have accumulated an immense experience in this field, they have made scientific investigations, studied the languages, drawn up statistics, organised schools, etc. The greater part of the material they have accumulated is unpublished and found in many archives in various places. Many experiences of one nation are unknown to other nations.

0.4 The time has come to put a higher value on these experiences and to better organise the material that has been stored up.

1. *Objectives and Methods*

1. In the salesian province of Ecuador there is a movement to erect a *Latin American Centre for indigenous documentation*, with headquarters at Quito and in direct dependence on the local provincial.

The Centre proposes the following objectives:

1.1 to collect all material (even if not original — v. 1.4) that is illustrative of the various cultures of the area;

1.2 to make a minute documentation of the salesians' past and present work in all fields, but especially in the field of research;

1.3 to collect all news, documents and publications that refer to the indigenous peoples of the various

countries so as to facilitate greater knowledge by mutual exchange;

1.4 to make the Centre a point of reference and coordination, even though it need not necessarily house all the original material. Every nation will organise its archives, with the advice and collaboration of the Centre; the Centre should see to the interchange of news, bulletins, photocopies, etc.;

1.5 to be responsible for promoting the publication of what it judges opportune (v. 1.2), especially what regards ethnography; other material will be filed, the information circulated and put at the disposal of interested persons;

1.6 to be responsible for organising meetings and seminars of a scientific nature for the interchange of experiences and the results of research;

1.7 to have material of a popular, pastoral or didactic nature printed by local missionary centres and publishing houses for general distribution;

1.8 to encourage local scientific research, assuring supervision and economic support.

2. General organisation of the Centre

2.1 The Centre has a special relationship the *UPS Study Centre for Salesian Missions* and with the *University Centres of Latin America*;

this guarantees the scientific seriousness of the research, the studies and the documentation, and promotes the publication thereof.

2.2 The Centre is under the patronage of a Committee which includes the Councillor General for the Salesian Missions, the Councillor General of the Pacific and Caribbean region and the provincials in whose provinces there are groups of indigenous people. The Committee elects the director of the Centre with due attention to the proposals of the Councillor General for the Missions and the Director of the UPS Mission-Study Centre.

2.3 The Quito Centre is controlled by a Council composed of representatives of the interested provinces, the Director of the Centre and the Director of the UPS Mission-Study Centre. The representatives of the provinces are elected by the Councillor General for the Missions after hearing the suggestions of the provincials.

The Council is chaired by the provincial of Quito.

The Council meets at least once a year to define the objectives and plan of action for the coming year, and to approve the financial balance sheet and the projected expenditure of the coming year.

For all financial matters there will also be on the Council a delegate of the Councillor General for the Missions.

2.4 The Director will see to the ordinary direction and administration of the Centre. The personnel of the Centre is requested by the Director in accord with the provincial of Quito and the Director of the UPS Missions-Study Centre.

3. Finance

3.1 The Centre finances itself partly (25%) with the sale of its publications and charges for document consultation, photocopying, etc.

3.2 50% of the expenses should be provided for by public bodies (ecclesiastical and lay), who generally support this kind of initiative.

3.3 Help for the remaining expenses should come from salesian organisations: the UPS Mission-Study Centre at Rome, various vicariates and provinces, etc.

4. Relations with the UPS Mission-Study Centre

Relations with the UPS Centre follow the rulings of the latter.

5.8 Appointments

ALFONS STICKLER: Archbishop and pro-Librarian of the Holy Roman Church.

The *Osservatore Romano* of 9 September 1983 reports that "the Holy Father has appointed the Very Rev. ALFONS STICKLER SDB pro-Librarian of the Holy Roman Church, and also made him titular Archbishop of Bolsena".

Archbishop ALFONS STICKLER was born in Neunkirken, Austria, in 1910. He entered the salesian novitiate at Ensdorf, made his first profession in 1927, was ordained priest in Rome in 1937, graduated in Canon Law at the Lateran University, and was Rector Magnificus of the Salesian Pontifical Athenaeum from 1958 to 1966. In 1971 he was appointed Prefect Librarian of the Vatican Apostolic Library and still carries out this office in addition to his new appointment.

5.9 Deceased confreres

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

P ALVAREZ Alfredo (ABA)
aged 58

* Buenos Aires, Argentina	4.01.25
Moron, Argentina	31.01.42
Córdoba, Argentina	22.09.51
† Buenos Aires, Argentina	1.06.83

P ANTHONISWAMY Amaladoss (INM) aged 73	* Tiruchirapalli, India	3.02.10
	Shillong, India	11.12.33
	Shillong, India	5.06.41
	† Madras, India	20.08.83
P AVILA Rafael (COM) aged 73	* Vergara, Colombia	27.02.10
	Mosquera, Colombia	26.07.30
	Bogotá, Colombia	2.02.41
	† Pereira, Colombia	16.08.83
L BARBOSA Lessa José (BRE) aged 64	* Palmares, Brazil	6.01.19
	Jaboatão, Brazil	30.01.39
	† Recife, Brazil	25.06.83
S BAUER Christian (AUS) aged 19	* Vienna, Austria	2.09.63
	Johnsdorf, Austria	15.08.82
	† Mondsee, Austria	27.07.83
P BELTRAN Mariano (SVA) aged 88	* Jaso, Spain	8.09.94
	Madrid, Spain	31.07.12
	Barcelona, Spain	26.07.21
	† Campello, Spain	23.07.83
P BIROLO Luigi (INE) aged 68	* Ca'Bianca, Venice	19.06.15
	Ayagualo, El Salvador	12.03.35
	San Salvador, El Salvador	1.11.47
	† Borgomanero, Italy	29.08.83
P BISSONNETTE Earl (SUE) aged 48	* Springfield, USA	16.03.35
	Newton, USA	8.09.54
	Turin, Italy	11.02.65
	† Boston, USA	26.04.83
L BONOMI Bruno (INE) aged 70	* Varignano D'Arco, Italy	7.02.13
	Morzano, Italy	15.08.52
	† Vercelli, Italy	16.07.83
P BURSIEWICZ Antoni (PLS) aged 74	* Ostroleka, Poland	22.05.09
	Czerwinski, Poland	5.08.29
	Krakow, Poland	29.05.38
	† Krakow, Poland	9.09.83
P CAMPO Cesare (ABA) aged 81	* Frossano, Turin	30.06.02
	Bernal, Argentina	10.08.18
	Almagro, Argentina	2.02.27
	† Buenos Aires, Argentina	12.09.83
P CASTANO Andrés (VEN) aged 55	* Astudillo, Spain	9.06.28
	Mohernando, Spain	16.08.47
	Madrid, Spain	24.06.56
	† Los Teques, Venezuela	10.04.83
P CORTÉS Armando (COM) aged 54	* Bituima, Colombia	18.07.28
	Usaquén, Colombia	29.01.53
	Bogotá, Colombia	29.06.62
	† Bogotá, Colombia	23.05.83

L COTARELLA Ezio (IAD) aged 81	* Monterubiaglio, Italy Genzano, Italy † Rimini, Italy	14.10.98 7.09.29 15.02.80
L DALL'ALBA Celestino (INE) aged 72	* S. Rocco, Italy Este, Italy † Alessandria, Italy	3.05.11 26.08.30 26.08.83
P DE DIOS Manuel (SSE) aged 73	* Quintas de Coedo, Spain S. José del Valle, Spain Madrid, Spain † Huelva, Spain	1.05.09 8.09.30 1.06.41 23.12.82
L DELCURA Tomas (SBI) aged 75	* Zaragoza, Spain Barcelona, Spain † Pamplona, Spain	12.03.08 15.07.26 28.06.83
P DI VITA Santo (INM) aged 69	* Villarosa, Italy Tirupattur, India Tirupattur, India † Katpadi, India	16.04.14 29.01.36 11.10.45 29.07.83
P DORNER Josef (GEM) aged 61	* Wernberg, Germany Ensdorf, Germany Benediktbeuern, Germany † Buxeim, Germany	16.03.22 4.08.40 29.06.51 12.07.83
P ERDEY Francisco (MEM) aged 76	* Beodra, Hungary Szentkereszt, Hungary Havana, Cuba † Mexico City, Mexico	13.07.06 30.07.24 24.01.32 28.04.83
P FABBRI Francesco (BMA) aged 79	* Monticello, Italy Foglizzo, Italy Castellammare, Italy † Brasilia, Brazil	10.04.14 16.12.24 14.06.30 12.09.83
P FARGAS Juan (SBA) aged 75	* Manresa, Spain Barcelona, Spain Madrid, Spain † Barcelona, Spain	10.11.07 15.07.26 15.06.35 3.06.83
P FERRARI Rodolfo (ILT) aged 68	* Terzario, Italy Varazze, Italy Turin, Italy † Alassio, Italy	26.07.15 8.09.32 21.12.40 21.07.83
P GANASINSKI Feliks (PLS) aged 79	* Strzelno, Poland Klecza, Poland Turin, Italy † Witow, Poland	18.08.04 2.10.21 5.07.31 15.08.83
L GERMANO Nicola (IAD) aged 72	* S. Giovanni Rotondo, Italy Amelia, Italy † Loreto, Italy	5.12.07 8.09.39 28.08.80

P GIRAUDI Felice (MOR) aged 73	* Murello, Italy 3.03.09 Cremisan, Israel 12.04.25 Bethlehem, Israel 29.06.34 † Alexandria, Egypt 6.04.82
D GOMBOSI Antonio (VEN) aged 89	* Salamonci, Yugoslavia 24.04.94 Ivrea, Italy 24.09.13 Caracas, Venezuela 10.09.75 † Caracas Venezuela 25.08.83
P GONÇALVES Francisco (BPA) aged 78	* Oliveira, Brazil 8.08.04 Lavrinhas, Brazil 28.01.26 São Paulo, Brazil 30.11.34 † Porto Alegre, Brazil 13.05.83
P HICKMAN Anthony (INK) aged 71	* Tangasseri, India 13.06.12 Tirupattur, India 8.12.36 Bombay, India 30.01.46 † Trichur, India 9.06.83
P HONNAY Achille (AFC) aged 73	* Namur, Belgium 5.10.05 Groot Bijgaarden, Belgium 29.08.23 Cape Town, South Africa 27.04.30 † Benheiden, Belgium 27.12.78
P KANJUPARAMPIL Philip (IND) aged 34	* Chennankari, India 10.06.49 Shillong, India 24.05.68 Chennankari, India 19.12.76 † Vellore, India 7.07.83
P KOPER Jacobus (OLA) aged 66	* The Hague, Holland 18.07.17 Chieri, Italy 16.08.40 Bollengo, Italy 3.07.49 † Rijswijk, Holland 8.09.83
L KRANZ Elmar (GEM) aged 44	* Heilbronn, Germany 16.07.39 Jünkerath, Germany 15.08.78 † Munich, Germany 26.07.83
P LEDUC Victor (BES) aged 65	* Nafrature, Belgium 29.07.18 Groot Bijgaarden, Belgium 24.08.37 Oud Heverlee, Belgium 2.02.47 † Vielsalm, Belgium 7.06.83
P LEROY Fernand (BES) aged 66	* Antoing, Belgium 3.11.16 Groot Bijgaarden, Belgium 2.09.37 Oud Heverlee, Belgium 3.02.46 † Liège, Belgium 11.06.83
P LEVRIO Giuseppe (INE) aged 87	* Mercenasco, Italy 4.12.95 Ivrea, Italy 17.09.20 Turin, Italy 12.07.25 † Lugano, Switzerland 24.08.83

P LISCIOTTO Pietro (ICE) aged 78	* Fellette, Italy	9.05.05
	Cremisan, Israel	27.10.28
	Cairo, Egypt	4.04.37
	† Vadena, Italy	4.08.83
L LOSCHI Guido (INE) aged 91	* Caorle, Italy	3.10.91
	Ivrea, Italy	4.10.21
	† Lugano, Switzerland	29.09.82
P MAFFEIS Raul (ILE) aged 59	* La Plata, Argentina	11.04.24
	Varazze, Italy	16.08.41
	Bollengo, Italy	1.07.51
	† Sondrio, Italy	14.03.83
P MARRO Erminio (IAD) aged 74	* Cervinara, Italy	30.11.08
	Genzano, Italy	8.09.28
	Rome, Italy	27.03.37
	† Forlì, Italy	19.05.83
L MONTEVERDI Luigi (INE) aged 53	* Calvatone, Italy	23.09.30
	Morzano, Italy	15.08.52
	† Vercelli, Italy	12.09.83
L MOSER Cornelio (IVO) aged 78	* Palù, Italy	18.07.01
	Chieri-Moglia, Italy	15.10.30
	† Albaré, Italy	8.08.79
P MURRAY Thomas (IRL) aged 66	* Dublin, Ireland	21.05.17
	Beckford, England	29.08.37
	Blaisdon, England	14.07.46
	† Dublin, Ireland	15.06.83
L NISSEL Francisco (ABA) aged 88	* Pentling, Germany	15.05.95
	Ensdorf, Germany	15.08.27
	† Buenos Aires, Argentina	22.08.83
P NOVOSAD Josef (CEP) aged 72	* Francova Lhota, Czechoslovakia	18.07.10
	Chieri, Italy	13.10.28
	Rome, Italy	26.07.36
	† Ostravice, Czechoslovakia	15.04.83
P ORLANDO Carlo (RMG) aged 80	* Montonero, Italy	17.05.03
	Santiago, Chile	13.02.24
	Santiago, Chile	30.11.33
	† Rome, Italy	1.08.83
	<i>9 years provincial</i>	
P PATRICIC Alejandro aged 67	<i>16 years postulator general</i>	
	* Banfield, Argentina	2.10.15
	Bernal, Argentina	26.01.32
	Córdoba, Argentina	23.11.41
	† Buenos Aires, Argentina	21.06.83

L PASSARIN Luigi (ICE) aged 64	* S. Pietro in Gù, Italy Chieri-Moglia, Italy † Rome, Italy	15.01.19 8.09.38 18.09.83
P PEROZZI Joseph (SUE) aged 64	* Sorbolo, Italy Beckford, England Toronto, Canada † New Rochelle, USA	7.06.19 30.10.38 6.05.45 25.09.83
L PRATURLON Enrico (IVE) aged 71	* Casarsa, Italy Chieri, Italy † Gorizia, Italy	27.09.12 14.09.33 9.07.83
P PROSZT Juan (URU) aged 75	* Sarmellék, Hungary Szentkereszt, Hungary Córdoba, Argentina † Montevideo, Uruguay	5.05.08 15.08.28 27.11.38 24.07.83
L RAMON Walther (BES) aged 76	* Dottignies, Belgium Groot Bijgaarden, Belgium † Tournai, Belgium	12.06.07 29.08.27 27.07.83
P RODENBECK Josef (GEK) aged 79	* Liemke, Germany Ensdorf, Germany Benedikbeuern, Germany † Essen, Germany	1.12.03 15.08.24 1.07.34 5.07.83
L RUDZIK Józef (PLO) aged 81	* Sadowo, Poland Czerwinski, Poland † Kopiec, Poland	13.03.99 12.10.25 20.12.80
P RUPIK Pawel (PLO) aged 75	* Zielona, Poland Czerwinski, Poland Krakow, Poland † Katowice, Poland	11.05.06 15.08.26 19.05.35 12.05.81
P SALVARREDI Fermin (URU) aged 72	* S. Rosa, Uruguay Montevideo, Uruguay Córdoba, Argentina † Montevideo, Uruguay	12.10.05 2.02.27 29.11.35 28.07.83
P SCHILDER Jan (INC) aged 73	* Volendam, Holland Shillong, India Shillong, India † Calcutta, India	13.06.10 16.01.31 5.11.38 30.07.83
P SCHMID Stephan (AUS) aged 71	* Burglengenfeld, Germany Ensdorf, Germany Vienna, Austria † Vienna, Austria	3.11.11 2.08.31 23.02.41 24.06.83
P SCHÖN Vinzenz ged 76	* Budaörs, Hungary Szentkereszt, Hungary Turin, Italy † Horn, Austria	9.02.07 20.08.23 5.07.31 18.09.83

L SILENZI Angelo (IRO) aged 86	* Rome, Italy	31.05.97
	Genzano, Italy	15.09.15
	† Rome, Italy	31.07.83
P STRINGARI Gentile (BSP) aged 45	* Luiz Alves, Brazil	7.07.38
	Pindamonhangaba, Brazil	31.01.58
	Rio do Sul, Brazil	10.12.67
	† Lorena, Brazil	28.06.83
P TCHONG Matthew (CIN) aged 58	* Shien-Shien, China	15.08.23
	Shaukiwan, China	30.06.54
	Bollengo, Italy	1.07. 57
	† Macau	13.04.82
P USAI Efisio (ING) aged 72	* Quartu S. Elena, Italy	25.08.11
	Shillong, India	27.06.30
	Sonada, India	23.05.39
	† Turin, Italy	10.05.83
P VAMOS Jozsef (UNG) aged 67	* Harasztifalu, Hungary	4.12.15
	Szentkereszt, Hungary	6.08.32
	Rome, Italy	9.06.40
	† Sokoropatka, Hungary	20.07.83
	3 years provincial	
L VERCERE Nicola (IME) aged 71	* S. Elia a Pianisi, Italy	16.03.12
	Varazze, Italy	28.08.47
	† S. Elia a Pianisi, Italy	5.08.83
L VENTICINQUE Antonino (ISI) aged 74	* Leonforte, Italy	26.12.08
	San Gregorio, Italy	28.09.27
	† Catania, Italy	2.08.83
P VERMEIREN Albert (BEN) aged 68	* Opwijk, Belgium	18.02.15
	Groot Bijgaarden, Belgium	2.09.33
	Oud-Heverlee, Belgium	7.12.41
	† Erps-Kwerps, Belgium	28.06.83
L VETARI Roy (SUO) aged 64	* Aberdeen, USA	6.05.19
	Newton, USA	8.09.40
	† San Francisco, USA	24.05.83
P ZAMPETTI Giovanni (RMU) aged 75	* Serra S. Quirico, Italy	8.04.08
	Cumiana, Italy	23.09.29
	Hong Kong	15.06.35
	† Rome, Italy	27.07.83

6. COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 Changed addresses and telephone nos.

QUITO: *Procura*

Calle Equinoccio, 623 (not 167)

Casilla (not Apartado) 692

Tel. 551.012 (not 2313.56)

MADRID: *Provincial's address*

Marques de la Valdavia, 2 (not Rona de Atocha, 27)

Tel. (91) 227.14.44

NAPLES: *Provincial's address*

Tel. 75.11.029 (not 29.04.00)

75.11.970 (not 29.06.26)

75.11.987 (not 45.95.83)

NAPLES: *Istituto D. Bosco*

Tel. 75.11.340 (not 44.02.11 - or 29.01.06)

75.11.470 (not 44.00.19 - or 29.07.01)

Dir. 75.11.973 (not 29.13.64)

Adm. 75.11.972 (not 29.28.45)

C.F.P. 75.11.975 (not 29.28.45)

Par. not yet assigned (cf. Elenco '84)

Orat. 75.11.979 (not 44.18.27)