



acts

of the general council

year LXVI july-september 1985

N. 314

**official organ
of animation
and communication
for the
salesian congregation**

**Roma
Direzione Generale
Opere Don Bosco**

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**of the General 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

THE LETTER OF POPE JOHN PAUL II TO THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD

Introduction. – The Year of Youth. – Values of youth. – Light of the Gospel. – Difficult challenge of the future. – Plan of life. – Pastoral love for the young. – Homeland of our mission. – Mary's intercession.

Rome, 31 May 1985

My dear confreres,

I am writing to you at a time when we are still experiencing the joy of the recent consistory in which the Holy Father raised to membership of the Sacred College of Cardinals, for a closer and more competent service to the ministry of Peter, three of our well-deserving confreres: His Eminence Rosalio Castillo Lara, titular Archbishop of Precausa and President of the Pontifical Commission for the authentic interpretation of the Code of Canon Law; His Eminence Michael Obando Bravo, Archbishop of Managua in Nicaragua (Central America); and His Eminence Alfons Stickler, titular Archbishop of Bolsena and Librarian and Archivist of the Holy Roman Church.

We can describe the event as one of outstanding importance in our brief history which, if on the one hand it gives honour to our Congregation, at the same time is a strong call to live with renewed intensity and fidelity our charism in the Church.

We congratulate our beloved confreres, and wish them ever greater wisdom and much ecclesial courage in the collaboration they have to give to the Roman Pontiff in his solicitude for the universal Church.

To each of them and also to our fourth Cardinal confrere, His Eminence Raul Silva Henríquez, former Archbishop of Santiago, Chile, we assure our solidarity, brotherly affection and a constant remembrance in our prayers.

Whilst we thank our Holy Father for this gracious choice, which indirectly involves also our own joint responsibility and strengthens the deep and keenly felt adherence to the Apostolic See spiritually bequeathed to us by Don Bosco, I invite you to read attentively once again the recent "Letter" written by John Paul II to the Youth of the world and to make its contents the subject of individual and community meditation: it is a precious document and one that makes us think.

The year of youth

The United Nations Organization has proclaimed 1985 "International Youth Year", and worldwide attention has been concentrated on the choice. The mass media are making it the object of study and carry repeated messages of commitment and hope. In the cultural field a series of publications invite us to acquire a greater understanding of the place of youth in human life and of the decisive impact of its dynamism on the evolution of society. The shocks associated with the youth phenomenon at the present day are a reflection of the prevailing social and cultural

conditions, an indication of emerging desires and the harbinger of the possibility of certain changes.

More than just a simple youth celebration, this year should be for us an invitation to look again at the specific mission the Lord has assigned to us among young people. To this we are prompted both by the above-mentioned letter of the Pope to the youth of the world, and by the associated letter to all priests of the Church for Holy Thursday 1985.

It should be noticed that these two letters are not just isolated items in the teaching of John Paul II; there are by now at least thirty specific addresses to the young made by the Pope during his apostolic journeys, to say nothing of the many others he has made to youth groups on so many different occasions.

It can be said that these two letters represent the vertex of a constant predilection and pastoral concern. They provide us with a profound and deeply original view not of mere sympathy or cultural interest, but of social and ecclesial sensitivity and responsibility. They are an appeal from one who is trying to shape the future, a prophetic message from a shepherd and leader, the intuitive foresight of a precursor of the advent of the third christian millennium.

The Church, which sees in man "the way for her daily life",¹ attributes an extraordinary importance to the period of youth in the existence of each individual, and to young people in general as regards the future of humanity, even going as far as considering the period of youth not merely as "a special possession belonging to everyone; it is a possession of humanity itself".² History's

1. Redemptor
hominis 18

2. Letter
to Youth (LY) 1

possibilities are not exhausted with the generations now in the evening of their lives, but are renewed in every generation as it takes further steps towards the fullness of reality.

Now this kind of outlook is inbred in our vocation. The SGC³ and the GC21⁴ moved us in this sense to look at the young with hope and realism, without disguising the difficulties but without losing hope in the available resources, seeing in the turmoil and anguish of youth mankind's fervent plea. "The decisive point", said the GC21, "is to encourage the deep and healthy aspirations of young people by bringing to maturity their solidarity, explicit or implicit, with the Gospel".⁵

3. cf. SGC 34-44

4. cf. GC21 21-29

5. CG21, 27

I must tell you that I have seen with pleasure that the two letters of the Holy Father have been the subject of emphasis and comment in some provincial newsletters, and have also been used for conferences and study by many confreres and youth groups.

Values proper to the stage of youth

Reading the various addresses of the Pope and especially this last letter reveals the deep reflections he has made on the period of youth: it represents a heritage of values for the individual, for society and for the Church.

Youth is a treasure in itself "for what it is" and "for what it gives": the richness of its "being" and the fruitfulness of its "sharing".

— What "is" youth?

It is springtime, a beginning, an offering of fresh possibilities, a sowing for a future in which

good is stronger than evil: the human face has no wrinkles, the heart has not yet any hidden nooks and crannies, the intelligence is joyfully engaged in search of all that is true, and the spirit takes bold steps towards the attainment of the great ideals which attract it.

With every new generation mankind can begin again with new hope: Don Bosco was convinced that even in a rotten apple the seeds were still good and promising. It is not a matter of dreaming up or creating the phantasm of an idyllic vision of the prevailing youth condition, as though dazzled by the innocent eyes and transparent smile of a baby, but of becoming aware by solid and objective reflection that youth is "that part of human society which is so exposed and yet so rich in promise".⁶ We can list the different qualities to which the Pope is accustomed to refer in his addresses: joyfulness, hope, transparency, daring, creativity, idealism, enthusiasm, generosity, loyalty, vivacity, sense of justice, availability for service, rejection of half-measures, disdain for niggardly behaviour, and a disgust for every kind of hypocrisy, intolerance and arrogance.

Youth is a time for making discoveries, a time when future prospects are seen, a time for making choices, for planning, a time for making responsible and fruitful personal decisions.

All this, it is true, is a possibility that in practice is not always realized; but the possibility is nevertheless an objective one, especially in the light of the additional energy and life enjoyed by the 'new man' risen through baptism.

The Pope himself, in posing and answering the question "who are the young?" bewails the

unfortunate fact that there are some who become old before their time by a sluggish renunciation of youthful values: youth is not simply a matter of biology, it is in the heart that its true measure is to be found. As well as being in the springtime of life, being young means feeling in oneself the pressing stimulus of what is good and what is true; it means the possession of an incessant impulse of the spirit, it means the internal fostering of the searching after ideals and perseverance in attaining the goal, even through sacrifice.

Youth therefore is undoubtedly and of its very nature a period of extraordinary benefit not only to each individual but to all mankind, to whom it continually offers possibilities for growth and renewal. This is why it is indispensable for us to be solicitously concerned about it.

— What can the period of youth “give” to us?

Here, if we want to be realistic, we must have in mind young people of the present day, in the concrete society that wraps them round and brings them face to face with crucial problems of life and history: conscience and the ethical sense, love and family, culture and peace, work and political responsibility, a positive relationship with nature, scientific progress, man’s use of technology, the way to truth and the integral emancipation of man. This is where so many difficulties and obstacles arise. Here open up wide horizons for commitment, the whole vast area of education which involves both adults and youngsters in a common project of growth, revision and renewal.

The difficulties which young people meet in bringing to fruition what they are able to give,

arise especially from two sources: from the diversity and contrast in the interpretation of values by the society which puts them forward, and from the discontinuous and confused rhythm of the ideologies and concrete life-models that are offered to the young in a thousand and one different ways.

They are bombarded with messages, attitudes, promises, aspirations and objectives, and utopian ideas that ill harmonize with a lack of time and unhelpful setting for thinking, appraising, discerning and assimilating. All this provokes among youngsters a sad and disturbing fragmentation, not only as regards facts but also because of the general mentality to which it gives rise, a mentality which has no faith in an organic and coherent educational commitment. There seems to be a vague attitude about, which is loath to attribute stable significance to any choice in life in a way that would transcend simple personal taste or a temptation to hedonistic satisfaction.

In such a case the youth period, instead of being a seed that could be made to bear fruit for all, can become an object of restricted consumption, of profit to only a few people before it is gone, or a useful source of energy to be channelled and exploited in favour of some domineering Moloch.

What the youth period is capable of giving must be the object of care and attention on the part of all: young people, adults and the educating society.

The tasks of education relate to the formation of conscience, the values of existence, the events of salvation, the problems of society, the demands

of love, the needs of those in want, and the personal lifeplan of each one, considered as an authentic vocation in history.

In this way the period of youth finds its place on the road of hope and can renew the individual, love, marriage, the family, peace, development, society and the Church.

In this educational involvement with the young the Holy Father reminds us that youth implies also "inheritance" and "growth".

"Inheritance", because "the heritage of being a human person", "the heritage of culture", "the confines of a people or a nation" mean a concrete participation in history and a call to commit oneself to the assuming of an heirloom of values, so as to confirm, maintain and increase it. The youth period is innate in a history, in a process of becoming, in a definite task. Family, country and the common good all demand an education to social love.⁷

7. cf. LY 11

"Growth", because youth should be a process bringing with it "the gradual accumulation of all that is true, good and beautiful, even when this growth is linked 'from outside' to suffering, the loss of loved ones, and the whole experience of evil that constantly makes itself felt in the world in which we live".⁸

8. LY 14

For this reason too it must be able to accept fatigue and effort, overcome obstacles and opposition, foster relationships with others, develop a critical sense and acquire the ability for discernment.

A consideration of the values of youth is something that poses a deep challenge to us

salesians, because "as educators we work together with our young people to bring all their talents and aptitudes to full maturity. Always and in every case we help them to be open to truth and to develop in themselves a responsible freedom. To this end we commit ourselves to inculcating in them a convinced appreciation of true values which will lead them to a life of dialogue and service".⁹

9. Const. 32

This is why, in addition to the concern we have for each youngster personally, we dedicate ourselves at the same time to the provision of an adequate youth "setting", because the assimilation of values does not come as the result of simple teaching, but is the consequence of a lived and shared experience. I made the point in my closing address to the GC22: "It is a question of seeing whether in the light of faith we can put together a wise pedagogical system which will be able to create settings, experiences, symbols and commitment for the discovery and vital assimilation of the fundamental qualities that we want to make grow. The period of life we call 'youth' is getting longer. The cultural synthesis and context in which we have to operate presents ever new difficulties. To be a 'missionary' today in the field of education is a real challenge. The new and stimulating article of the Constitutions on the Oratory¹⁰ is an invitation to incessant originality and creativeness".¹¹

10. Const. 40

11. CG22, 70

The light of the Gospel

The Pope's dialogue with young people is a always marked by truly prophetic intuition. He

does not get lost in a facile benevolent approach, but challenges them with the clarity and integrity of the Gospel; he does it with love and sympathy for them, but with unswerving loyalty to its demands.

And in that there is a lesson for all of us: to be clear and outspoken in our pedagogy of presenting to the young the teachings of Christ. We have tried to do this with the Strenna of the Beatitudes: youngsters willingly adopt an attitude of harmony with Christ and open themselves with enthusiasm to the great ideals of the Gospel.

"Dear friends," said the Pope to the young people of Lima, Perù, "the gospel programme of the Beatitudes is a simple and attractive programme for young men and women. Certainly it proposes an ideal which is lofty and demanding. But for this very reason it amounts to a programme of life custom-made for young people. I, a pilgrim of evangelization, feel the duty to proclaim before you this evening that only in Christ can you find the answer to the deepest longings of your heart, to the fullness of all your aspirations; only in the Gospel of the beatitudes will you find the full meaning of life and the full light on the dignity and mystery of the human person!".¹²

12. Address, 2 Feb. 1985

Christ's Word, in fact, displays, a peculiar affinity with youth values because of its novelty, its authenticity, its emancipating and regenerating force; it has a mysterious capacity for stirring up enthusiasm and ensuring a constant rhythm of the performance of good works, despite weakness and occasional falls.

And then too, the Word of Jesus is intrinsically

linked with the great events of salvation: his paschal mystery.

Hence Christ, his Word and all his reality appear as the supreme novelty and the permanent youth of all history: in past ages and in centuries still to come nothing was and nothing ever will be newer and more youthful than the risen Christ; he is the alpha and omega, the first beginning and the last end, the greatest of all values, absolute and always up to date, who makes the future of humanity an explosive event. He carries with him the enthusiasm of rebirth; he is the springtime of every generation, the stimulus of all renewal, the light and daring behind all reform. The mystery of Christ, reflected in the eschatological dimension of his Church, is a perpetual message of youthfulness.

In this way the affinity of the Gospel with the period of youth becomes understandable. Hence the need to follow the Pope's example and constantly listen again with the young to the Word of Jesus.

The content of the Letter we are considering centres around Christ's meeting with a young man, as recounted in Mark's Gospel. It is chosen and included as a model for present-day dialogue with young people: "Christ speaks in this way to a young person, a boy or a girl; his conversation takes place in different parts of the world, in the midst of the different nations, races and cultures. Each of you (young people) in this conversation is potentially the one he will speak to".¹³

The meeting becomes a conversation, a dialogue about "eternal life": question and answer, confidence and invitation.

The deepest questions about existence find a response in dialogue with Christ. The attraction of the Gospel not only persists, despite the assaults of a positivist mentality dedicated to technology and even to an explicitly atheistic programme, but constantly rises again with new intensity, even though in some cases this be accompanied by subjective overtones.

Rightly did our SGC remind us of this in trenchant words: "For the salesian, the existence of young people living without Christ, and a Christ unable to find a welcome among young people, is not just a cause for regret but is also a challenge and an incentive to renew himself and to discover new ways and take any risks in order to proclaim efficaciously the salvation of God and to help young people 'to be themselves and to give authentically their human and christian experience, helping them to find in their friendship with the Redeemer the power to reach full maturity'." ¹⁴

14. SGC 306

The person and words of Jesus never leave young people indifferent; they attract them, challenge them, fascinate them, disturb them. Jesus fixes his gaze on them and loves them; maybe they will go away, but they will never be able to forget his face.

"Young people, precisely because they accept only those persons who lead coherent lives of integrity, more willingly give themselves to a catechesis which presents Christ as Love at the disposition of all, and as achieving the liberation of man by the total gift of himself in sacrifice. They question in depth the meaning of life and of suffering and, spurred on by their own experience

15. Acts 17, 26-27

16. SGC 304

which is not always positive, of friendship, of love and of work, they seek God 'trying to sense his presence and lay hold of him'.¹⁵ For them Christ can become the only response to an irresistible attraction.¹⁶

The difficult challenge of the future

17. LY 15

John Paul II forthrightly declares that "the Church looks to the young; or rather, the Church in a special way sees herself in the young".¹⁷

By this the Pope means that the Church's mission as "the universal sacrament of salvation" on the way of reconciliation, of ecumenism, of development and of peace, is confided particularly to the young; he has said, for example, that "peace and youth go forward together"!

The themes of dialogue, penance, solidarity, apostolic commitment and social justice are centres of interest in the formation of the young. Sometimes the accusation is made that our process of education prepares people capable of setting themselves up personally in life, but it does not lead them to commit themselves to a work of transformation, especially when they find themselves in structures and systems which debase human dignity and trample on human rights. An adequate preparation for political responsibility, for participation in social life and for an active ecclesial commitment, is an indispensable aspect in the education of the young to professionalism, to the development of a civil conscience and to the christian faith choice.

But the situation in the world is very complex and difficult; inequalities abound and there are threats from all quarters: "We are all aware", says the Pope, "that the horizon of the lives of billions of people who make up the human family at the close of the second millennium after Christ, seems to portend the possibility of calamities and catastrophes on a truly apocalyptic scale".¹⁸

18. LY 15

But is it possible to change such a world? Will young people succeed in doing so? Will they know how to do so?

The Pope does not shilly-shally in the face of such distressing questions, but urges all to have constancy and trust. "Christ answers as he answered the young people of the first generation of the Church through the words of the Apostle: 'I am writing to you, young people, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, young people, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you'".¹⁹

19. 1 Jn 2, 13 ff.

It is a matter of trusting in the strength of the resurrection of the Lord and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Life is a struggle: not a "struggle of one against another in the name of some ideology or practice separated from the very roots of the Gospel", but a struggle against evil itself, against every injustice and exploitation, against every falsehood and deceit, against every sin.

The Word of God therefore must dwell in the young. Then they will be "strong"; then they will "succeed in getting at the hidden workings of evil and its sources, and thus they will gradually succeed in changing the world, transforming it,

20. LY 15

making it more human, more fraternal — and at the same time more of God”.²⁰

The plan of life

21. LY 8, 9

The theme of vocation is central to this letter of the Pope, just as it is central to the conversation between Christ and the young man in the Gospel: the evangelist presents the encounter as so many steps leading to that “Follow me”. The argument is the fabric which connects up all the adumbrations: vocation to life, to christian witness, to a specific ecclesial commitment.²¹

In the designs of God youth is the time for the making of a life plan, for considering vocation; it has a decisively personal aspect. The range of vocations is a wide one, but privileged among them are those to the priesthood and to the consecrated life.

The first motive in this connection is not the shortage of workers in the vineyard, but the maturing in faith of every young person and the happiness attained by planning one's own life in such a way as to insert it in the loving plan of God the creator and redeemer so as to fit oneself to realize his designs: “I desire therefore to entrust to all of you, the young people to whom this Letter is addressed, this marvellous task which is linked with the discovery before God of each one's life vocation. This is an exciting task. It is a fascinating interior undertaking. In this undertaking your humanity develops and grows, while your young personality acquires ever greater inner maturity. You become rooted in that which each of you is,

in order to become that which you must become: for yourself, for other people, for God".²²

22. LY 9

It will be a fine thing if educators can see the vocational problem from the aspect of the growth of the subject, even though they still have in mind the compelling needs arising from the extent of the harvest and the pressing need for workers to gather it in.

The urgency of better pastoral work for vocations could give rise here to many comments. Suitable initiatives have not been wanting in the Congregation with regard to discernment, pedagogy and practical expertise in this field. They take their place among others at a more authoritative level, such as the second World Congress which was realized with the collaboration of various religious organizations and congregations, under the aegis of the Apostolic See and with the concurrence of the Episcopal Conferences.

Rather than repeat the very valid contributions made in these assemblies, and in the annual message for Vocations Day, I prefer to emphasize some observations that I have picked up from numerous fraternal meetings in which I have taken part in various regions.

The first can almost be taken for granted: the conviction that *it is life that generates life*. "Just as a terrain gives evidence of the richness of its vital humours by the freshness and luxuriousness of the harvest it bears, so a society gives proof of its vigour and its maturity through the flourishing of vocations".²³

23. John Paul II, homily 10 May 1985

There is no doubt that a youngster is led in his process of discernment more by what he has

learned from experience than by what he is told. Article 16 of the Constitutions prompts us to follow the same fruitful line, when describing our family spirit: "This is a witness that enkindles in the young the desire to get to know and to follow the salesian vocation".²⁴

24. Const. 16'

The kindling of vocations is more a matter of "generation" than of recruitment. Our witness is "the most precious gift we can offer to the young".²⁵ Solid christian surroundings form the best soil in which to sow the seed.

25. Const. 25

"Pastoral work for the young and for vocations are complementary", declared the second International Congress on Vocations (1982) in its concluding document. Specific pastoral work for vocations finds in the corresponding work for youth its vital living space. The work for youth becomes complete and efficacious when it includes the vocational dimension".²⁶

26. Final document
"Internat. Voca-
tions Congress", 42

"Pastoral vocational work, in fact, is not just one branch of youth pastoral work in general, but rather its unifying perspective, because all pastoral work is vocational of its very nature. Either youth pastoral work, as it grows, automatically generates specific vocational proposals, or pastoral vocational work finds that it needs work for youth as a suitable context within which it can take place".²⁷

27. CEI (Italian Bishops
Conf.) Vocations in
the Church, 23

But a further indispensable observation must be made at once: *a healthy pastoral pedagogy* requires the intelligence and courage to make concrete suggestions! This not only to groups, but to individuals, to this or that particular person, in the intimacy of a conversation about spiritual discernment.

"Do not be afraid to give a call", the Pope has told us. "There should be no fear about suggesting to a young (or not so young) person that the Lord is calling him".²⁸

28. Message for World day of prayer for Vocations, 1979

And in his letter for Holy Thursday 1985 to priests, the Pope is still more explicit: "Love enables us to propose what is good. Jesus 'looked' at his young questioner in the Gospel 'with love' and said to him: 'Follow me'. This good that we can propose to young people is always expressed in the exhortation: Follow Christ! We have no other good to propose; no one has a better good to propose."

What this means is that the young person must rediscover himself in a most profound and authentic way; he must try to find that vocation, which Christ shows to man, of finding himself as a man: "for it is precisely Christ who fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his highest calling".²⁹

29. Letter to Priests (1985), 7

"If there is love for young people in our hearts, we shall know how to help them to find the answer to what constitutes the life vocation of each one."³⁰

30. *ibid.* 7

As educators we need to convince ourselves that *this personal mediation is necessary*. It helps the young person to make explicit the voice he seems to hear within himself, and gives him courage to follow it. For quite a number this is the indispensable touch that leads them to make a decision, and is a concrete sign for them that the Lord has spoken to them personally.

Lastly I would like to emphasize the necessity for "follow-up", at both personal and group level,

by means of suitable welcoming and growth communities, of vocations which are beginning to emerge in young people's awareness.

This, I think, is one of the practical conclusions which we are compelled to draw at the present day after the very different kinds of experiments we have tried. It is true that a common kind of setting has to become strongly personalized if it is to be successful in the development and discernment of any vocation; but a 'setting' as such is indispensable if the germs of a vocation are to grow.

"Individual follow-up, adapted to each single individual in a wise work of discernment and spiritual direction, and group follow-up in a gradual and shared community journey of faith, are complementary and decisive for a mature vocational choice."³¹

31. CEI op. cit. 48

Pastoral love for the young

The letter of the Pope for Holy Thursday 1985 to priests provides a valuable complement to his letter to young people. In it he describes the figure of the priest dedicated to the young and analyses the characteristics of his specific pastoral charity.

It is interesting and stimulating for us to note that the nature of such charity is precisely that which is at the centre of our salesian spirit.³² It is a charity which permeates and guides all our personal and community energies so as to be in the Church, as our Constitutions say, "signs and bearers of the love of God for the young".

32. cf. Const. 10, 14, 15 ff.

In pastoral activity young people must occupy

a privileged place, which requires particular attitudes in the 'pastor'.

The Pope speaks in the first place of "*accessibility*", or in other words availability, openness, kindness, ease of contact, closeness and interest.

It is a question of being able to engage in friendly dialogue with sincere confidence on the problems involved in a plan of life, especially those of a fundamental nature which touch on the themes of salvation and 'eternal life'. It is essential to be able to arouse interest in these vital topics and then be able to listen to the youngsters and be able to reply to their questions and objections.

To this end the shepherd or guide needs a double "*sense of responsibility*": he needs to feel his responsibility to provide a clear and objective presentation of the truths of salvation, and equally he must be competent in discussion, eminently credible and endowed with moral authority.

To his sense of responsibility must be added also a transparent awareness of his *role of mediation*; of the need he has to do his utmost to penetrate into hearts, but without ever obscuring the priority of the role of Christ, the great Friend and Challenger par excellence.

But the principal quality, which is the root and soul of all the others, is *love*: "a sharing of that gaze with which Jesus looked at his young questioner in the Gospel, and a sharing in the love with which he loved him".³³ It is a love which becomes translated into goodness and loving kindness, into the ability to remain with them even through trials and sufferings, into firm and

33. Letter to Priests, 6

evangelical challenge of whatever may imperil the treasure of their youth, so as to foster the development of its qualities of heart and character.

"We must also earnestly pray", exhorts the Pope, "that this priestly and disinterested love may really match the expectations of all young people, both male and female, boys and girls. For we are aware of the rich diversity constituted by masculinity and femininity for the development of a concrete and unique human person. In relation to each individual young person we must learn from Christ that same love with which he himself 'loved'".³⁴

34. *ibid.* 6

Finally the holy Father recalls also that education and pastoral work for the young are the object of much systematic study and many publications; by this he means to suggest that genuine pastoral love will lead educators to study and update themselves in a serious manner so as to acquire that pedagogical competence which love runs the risk of sinking to the superficiality of sentimentalism or a first flash of sympathy devoid of any christian incisiveness.

The homeland of our mission

But the overall thought that remains with us Salesians after reading the two letters of John Paul II is the substantial and unbreakable link which unites salesian apostolic consecration with the young.

Don Albera made the striking remark that the gift of predilection for the young is the soul of our

mission: "It is not enough to feel a certain natural attraction for them; they must be the object of our real predilection. This predilection is in the first instance a gift of God, it is the salesian vocation itself, but it is up to us to use our intelligence and heart to develop and perfect it".³⁵

And so for us *the Year of Youth continues throughout the whole of our lives*: "The Lord made clear to Don Bosco", we are told by our Constitutions, "that he was to direct his mission first and foremost to the young".³⁶

Young people, especially those who are poor and from densely populated low-income areas, were Don Bosco's legacy and for them he had a charismatic passion; they were the hallmark of his vocational identity; he will always be first and foremost the Father and Teacher of the young.

It was precisely among youngsters that he worked out his style of holiness and his pastoral and pedagogical heritage: "With the boys of the first Oratory" he lived an experience of the Holy Spirit which he called the "Preventive System".³⁷

The Pope has called us "missionaries of the young";³⁸ youth provides the natural habitat for our mission; and predilection for needy youngsters has won for the Salesian Family the sympathy and goodwill of the masses, and a rich abundance of vocations which have made our Congregation a truly international Institute with roots in every continent.

From deeply felt sayings of Don Bosco and from many others of his successors one could compose a 'canticle' expressing the mutual harmony and attraction between salesians and

35. "Don Bosco our model": circular letters D. Albera, p. 372

36. Const. 26

37. Const. 20

38. Letter to GC22

youngsters; they belong to each other with a reciprocal affinity.

Some of these expressions have been taken up and perpetuated in the new text of the Constitutions: youth is "the part of human society so exposed and yet so rich in promise";³⁹ "for you (young people) I study, for you I work, for you I am ready even to give my life".⁴⁰

"Here in your midst I feel completely at home; for me, living means being here with you."⁴¹

"That you are young is enough to make me love you very much."⁴²

"In those things which are for the benefit of young people in danger I push ahead even to the point of recklessness",⁴³ using "all the means that christian charity suggests".⁴⁴

Don Bosco "took no step, he said no word, he took up no task that was not directed to the saving of the young";⁴⁵ and even the chastity desired by the Founder had to be such as to allow confreres to love the young in an open and uncomplicated way so that "they know they are loved".⁴⁶

If the Holy Spirit formed in Don Bosco the heart of a "father" and "teacher"⁴⁷ in view of the mission he had been given, so today the same Spirit infuses in every salesian the grace to experience the fatherhood of God working for the salvation of the young.⁴⁸

Our mission is intrinsically linked with the world of youth and finds in it its realization and the source of its joy and inventiveness, because there it finds its natural habitat or homeland.

To every new salesian generation it belongs to

39. Const. 1

40. Const. 14

41. Const. 39

42. Const. 14

43. Const. 19

44. Const. 29

45. Const. 21

46. Const. 81

47. Const. 1

48. Const. 12

rediscover, re-explore and intensely love this homeland. It may be asked how it can be done in a meaningful and efficacious way at the present day, when the condition of youth is so fragmented and varied, easily changing in the course of an accelerated social evolution in which educational institutions are becoming ever more complex and flexible. The Pope's letter must be for us both an appeal and an invitation to ensure some aspects of commitment.

— The first can be that of “*not deserting the youth sector*”,⁴⁹ but of remaining permanently rooted in this our perennial homeland. To stay is an indispensable condition, to be with the young, sharing their hopes and problems. It may be that in some situations the advancing age of the confreres pushes us unconsciously towards a kind of indirect activity, thinking that through others, under our guidance, we can carry out the same mission. It is certainly true that we must be able to involve the greatest possible number of collaborators; but our work will be fruitful from a salesian point of view only if the confreres themselves do not lose their vital contact with the youngsters. A sad reminder is addressed to us by the GC22; it “asks all salesians to ‘return’ to young people, to their world, their needs, their poverty, by giving them true priority expressed in a renewed educational, spiritual and affective presence among them”.⁵⁰

49. cf. GC21, 13

50. GC22 6

— A second important aspect is that of trying assiduously to acquire a real understanding of what is implied in the requests and problems of youth. To our presence and our living among them we must add the need to be tuned in to the

youthful mind. What youngsters are concerned about at the present day is no longer the conflict, contestation and rejection of the past but rather the silent subjective choice of a road to be followed. It is supremely necessary to be able to listen to them and to lead them to express themselves so as to seek together and programme their own existence in the light of the great mystery of Christ, the way, the truth and the life.

— Finally I think it is urgent that we be able to give to all our works that youthful air which gives rise to vocations and is a sign of the authenticity of our mission,⁵¹ even when a work extends beyond the youth sector. The new Regulations remind us of this, for instance, when dealing with parishes: "A parish entrusted to the Congregation should be distinguished by its low-income population and its interest in the young. It should consider the oratory and youth centre an integral part of its pastoral project."⁵²

Hence "presence", "tuning in", and "operative preference" are necessary conditions for the effectiveness of the specific gift of predilection in our pastoral charity. They ensure that our living and working among young people places us in the true homeland of our salesian mission.

I think it would be a useful and even urgent thing if every province, house and confrere made a careful review of how we stand as regards these three conditions. It will also serve to give a more concrete and committed dimension to one of the important Practical Directives of the last General Chapter, that of giving a greater pastoral qualification to our activity.⁵³

51. cf. Const. 6

52. Reg. 26

53. cf. GC22 5-7

Mary's intercession

The Pope concludes these two valuable letters with a fervent reference to our Blessed Lady: "Mary of Cana of Galilee, who intercedes for the young people, for the newly married couple";⁵⁴ and the Virgin Mother of whom was born among us "the youthfulness of God."⁵⁵

54. LY 16

55. Letter to Priests, 8

She is there with her motherly presence at the origins of our mission,⁵⁶ and we "entrust ourselves to her that we may become witnesses to the young of her Son's boundless love."⁵⁷

56. cf. Const. 1, 8, 20

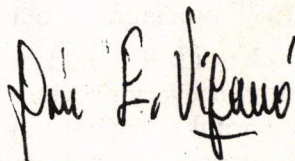
57. Const. 8

I invite you to trust always in her powerful intercession and to ask her to obtain for every confrere and for all our communities an increase in the gift of predilection for the young and the ability to plan a concrete pattern of youthful spirituality which will reproduce for young people of the present day that miracle of christian existence which Don Bosco, "under the guidance of Mary his teacher",⁵⁸ was able to bring about in the Oratory at Valdocco.

58. Const. 20

May Mary help us to be always and everywhere "missionaries of the young".

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Paul VI". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent 'P' and 'V'.

2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

2.1 THE GENERAL REGULATIONS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR RULE OF LIFE

The Vicar General

Throughout the Congregation the renewed text of our "Rule of life" is being presented, and many useful initiatives have been promoted to make the Constitutions known and welcomed "as Don Bosco's will and testament, for us our book of life and for the poor and the little ones a pledge of hope" (C. 196).

At this time, when we are able to note with joy a renewed awareness of the value of the Constitutions, it may be useful to draw attention to the specific function of the general Regulations which accompany the text of the Constitutions.

1. Nature of the Regulations

On presenting its deliberations, the GC21 clarified the particular character of the Constitutions and of the general Regulations and specified their spiritual characteristics and binding force.

Concerning the Regulations, the Chapter stated: "The general Regulations represent the collection of prescriptions which apply the general principles of the "Rule of life" in a manner adaptable to changeable situations. Thus they contain the concrete practical applications of the Constitutions to matters of universal import and are consequently valid throughout the Congregation. ... Juridically the Regulations form with the Constitutions a single body of binding norms. They both have legal value, even though their binding force may differ because of their specific content or because of the explicit dispositions of the legislator (GC21 376, 381a).

From this point of view the difference in nature of the two texts does not imply any difference in importance, but rather a mutual integration in so far as the Constitutions have a natural need for further specification in norms and guidelines, and the purpose of the general Regulations is precisely to meet this need by providing a channel through which the Constitutions can be applied to the practical life (cf. AGC 312, pp. 20, 44).

In point of fact, all juridical rules which regulate ecclesiastical and religious associations pay heed to this requirement. A criterion in this sense for religious Institutes was given some time ago by the *motu proprio* "Ecclesiae Sanctae" which gave indications to Special General Chapters concerning what should be included in their fundamental code and what should find a place in supplementary manuals.

The new Code of Canon Law has expressed these indications in can. 587, which is the basis of the particular law of religious Institutes. With this canon in mind the GC22 has clarified and defined the extent of our Rule of life: it is expressed not only in the Constitutions, which represent our basic code, but also in the other official texts which constitute our particular law, among which the general Regulations have pride of place (C 191). A reductive interpretation therefore, which sought to limit our Rule of life to the Constitutions alone, would be out of line with the thought of the Church and of the Congregation.

2. The universal validity of the Regulations

The general Regulations have been approved by the highest authority of our Society and hence their validity extends of their very nature to the whole Congregation. With this explicit intention they were formulated and approved by the recent General Chapters, in which confreres from the entire salesian world took part, with their diverse sensitivities, including those of a cultural nature. They therefore represent concrete practical norms seen not from a regional but from a universal standpoint, a proof of which is the very

big majority by which each article was approved.

In this regard it is well to recall that the GC22 reconfirmed in the Constitutions the principle of subsidiarity and decentralization in the service of authority (C 124); it considered initiative and flexibility to be characteristic components of the salesian spirit (C 19); it showed attentive sensitivity as regards the requirements of inculturation (C 30).

Logically therefore the General Chapter could not insert in the Regulations any article which might seem an impoverishment or, worse still, an obstacle to the lawful expression of the three above-mentioned values. The individual articles were in fact approved precisely because they were seen to be expressions of our vocational unity and channels of salesian incarnation in every region.

3. Putting the Regulations Into practice

From what we have already said about the nature of the Regulations and their relationship with the Constitutions it is already clear what importance attaches to their application in practice. And therefore rather than insist on the observance of the Regulations I think it more fitting to present three grounds for doing so.

The first reason is based on the fact that a careful study of the content of the Regulations leads us to the conclusion that underlying the norms they contain there are values and requirements which relate to our vocation. The literal material observance of a norm is insufficient by itself to guarantee the value and consistency of a whole lifestyle, and could lead to mere formalism. The fairly widespread allergy at the present day to anything that savours of norm or regulation may owe its origin to excessive and untimely emphasis. But this is not difficult to overcome once are seen in the content of our Regulations a sign and a concrete expression of salesian religious values. And this is a conviction that we need to deepen in ourselves and perhaps in more than a few cases to reacquire.

Some important values of our vocation are linked in fact, to a greater or lesser extent, with the observance of the Regulations. It is not just by chance that in the printing of the new Constitutions, at the side of many articles there is a reference to one or more articles of the Regulations: in all, 177 are referred to in this way. This is a novelty which has been introduced into the new edition which, in addition to being a practical aid for consultation and study, also emphasizes the strict linkage between Constitutions and Regulations. Each of these references provides, albeit in different ways according to the matter concerned, an indication or concrete method for the realization of the relevant article of the Constitutions.

A second reason arises from the particular incidence of the Regulations on community life. In art. 52 of the Constitutions we read: "The confrere pledges himself to build up the community in which he lives... He accepts fraternal correction, fights whatever he discovers in himself which militates against the community, and gives his own generous contribution to the community life and work." Now the specific character of the Regulations is such that their observance or lack of it is normally shown through external manifestations, concrete facts and behaviour which are obvious to the community. It follows therefore that, quite apart from the intentions of the individual, observance builds communion whereas lack of it militates against community life. Both witness and counter-witness in fact have an innate capacity for penetration and diffusion which cannot always be estimated because they can be enduring in time.

At this point our thoughts turn spontaneously and especially to those to whom has been entrusted the service of authority. Such service calls not only for personal witness, but also for care in promoting whatever makes for the building up of the community, and implies the duty of foreseeing and correcting with patience and charity situations and behaviour opposed to the fostering of community life. A policy of non-intervention in such cases may at first sight appear to be a choice dictated by human prudence and the desire for peace, but sooner or later it is seen to be rather an option which opens up the way to spiritual superficiality, to the obscuring

of the gospel sense of asceticism, and to a lessening of the apostolic thrust of the community. In any case it is a policy inconsistent with the very precise requirements of the service of authority specified in the Constitutions: it is "directed to fostering charity, coordinating the efforts of all, animating, orientating, making decisions, giving corrections, so that our mission may be accomplished" (C 21).

The third reason is provided by the present moment in history. In his presentation of the renewed text of our Rule of life, the Rector Major emphasizes the fact that "there is now beginning in the life of religious Institutes a stage which should be characterized by a striving for realization and practical application... and the Congregation is on the threshold of a period of more clear-cut practice" (AGC 312. p. 44).

Experience makes it ever more clear to us that renewal requires not only a clear perception of the values to be lived and the ideals to be achieved, but also a practical methodology for discerning the ways and programming the necessary steps so that our plans in the different sectors may be gradually accomplished (cf. RRM, 331). Only in this way will words be translated into facts.

It is true that despite all this the Regulations by themselves are not sufficient, but neither can they be left on one side. To do so would be to seriously compromise the necessary synthesis between the means and the end, and the mutual integration of Constitutions and Regulations.

4. The thought and practice of Don Bosco

I will conclude these considerations with a reference to the thought and practice of Don Bosco.

Lofty ideals and the courage of pushing ahead to the point of recklessness were accompanied in our Founder by constant realism and practical artistry that make him outstanding in functional achievements. We are led to admire in him an intuitive gift of perceptive anticipation and brilliant initiative, combined with

determination in the field of organization which ensured stability and continuity for his work.

His concern for organization and practical detail led him to write several sets of regulations for various purposes. In this connection Fr Braidò declares: "The place and function of the Regulations in the educative community of Don Bosco and in the setting of his pedagogical outlook should not be exaggerated, but neither should they be undervalued. Some things Don Bosco said appear contradictory at first sight, but in practice are found to be complementary. 'These are the preliminary articles of our Regulations', he wrote at the end of the introductory general articles, 'but patience, diligence and a great deal of prayer are indispensable on the part of all, and it is my belief that without them even the best regulations are useless'. But when regulations were not obeyed after reminders had been given, he told his boys: 'These are things which Don Bosco cannot tolerate, because in our house discipline is everything...' (MB VIII, 77; BM VIII, 48). The pedagogy of loving kindness is not something weak, soft and vague, but is strong, well-ordered and disciplined, leading to the formation of serious-minded men and christians of upright character" ('The preventive system in the education of the young' 1965).

We can discern an analogous attitude in the various stages in the foundation of our Society. It is significant that after the definitive approval of the Constitutions had been received (13 April 1874), Don Bosco felt the need for a complete and uniform set of regulations, which would give due recognition to the preceding regulations which had been designed for the Oratory and the house attached to it, but would be more appropriate to the new situation which had developed.

As is clear from the Biographical Memoirs he set to work on them in the summer of 1976 and devoted a lot of thought to their composition; he had the part referring to personnel read to the Rectors at their meeting for the conference of St Francis; then he had Don Rua go over them again from beginning to end, and he got Don Barberis to examine carefully the disciplinary articles on the

basis of principles they had frequently discussed together. After that he went through them once again himself, carefully weighing each word and examining all the suggestions that had been made. Finally Don Vespignani, in Don Rua's office, put the definitive version together. This was quickly printed, and in November 1877 was distributed to all the houses under the title "Regulations for the Houses of the Society of St Francis de Sales" (cf. MB XIII, 441: BM XIII, 348).

This text, which took twenty years to mature, is one of the most important that Don Bosco has left to his sons. With the deliberations made on the occasion of the Conferences of St Francis de Sales and in the first four General Chapters in which Don Bosco took part, they constitute the first nucleus of the future Regulations and are a documentation of Don Bosco's firm purpose to codify a "tradition" he had begun and subsequently lived, so as to pass it on to his sons as a particular way of ascetics and pedagogy of the great salesian discipline.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

In keeping with tradition, on the last day of 1984 the Rector Major presented and explained the "Strenna" for 1985 first to the FMA gathered at their Generalate in the afternoon, and then to the confreres at the Pisana in the evening (cf. the more detailed comment in AGC 313, p. 30).

In the early days of January he had two important engagements: on the 2nd he was present at the UPS for the inauguration of the Convention on the subject of "Youth and peace", and on the 5th he had a personal meeting with Pope John Paul II.

From 26 January to 3 February the Rector Major visited various communities in Lombardy and Piedmont, celebrating the Feast of our Father Don Bosco at Valdocco. There too on 2 February he presided at a wonderful ceremony: the presentation of the new Constitutions to about a thousand salesians from Piedmont, who thronged the Basilica. It was a historic moment, and one that was very moving.

He was back in Turin once again for 27 February. On that day the National Museum of the Alpine Club of Italy inaugurated an exhibition

centred on our late confrere Don Alberto De Agostini: the Successor of Don Bosco was there as an honoured guest.

Among the numerous contacts, meetings and conferences on the Rector Major's programme during this period, special mention must be given to those with the salesian novice masters from all over the world, who were gathered at the Generalate for an updating course. He made himself available to them for conferences, group discussions and private talks with each one.

Other journeys took him to Sondrio (9-10 March, for the presentation of Don Vasco Tassinari's book on Don Luigi Borghino), to Cagliari (16-17 March, for the 75th anniversary celebrations of the salesian work at Lanusei: celebrations which were unfortunately interrupted by the grievous tragedy that befell that community), to Cisternino, Taranto and Brindisi (27-29 April, for the golden jubilee of the foundation), at Cesano Maderno (18-19 May, for the 75th anniversary of the work of the FMA), and at Potenza (1-2 June, for the inauguration of the new social work).

Of special importance were the days he spent in Spain (9-20 April). The main purpose of the Rector

Major's visit was to take part in the 14th National Week for Religious in Madrid, during which he gave an address ("Postconciliar renewal in Religious Life: the present reality seen against the criteria of the Council"), and a communication ("New relationships between Religious and Laity after Vatican II"). He took the opportunity also to visit various communities and meet confreres of the three provinces of Madrid, Leon and Bilbao.

On 29 April he left Rome once again, this time for East Africa, where he visited our new foundations in Tanzania and Kenya. (Difficulties of time and means of communication prevented him from gaining entry to Sudan). In the space of two weeks he visited every foundation, spoke with the confreres, the FMA, the two Cardinals of Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam and with many Bishops. He was accompanied by Fr Chrys Saldanha, Provincial of Bombay, and Fr Tony D'Souza, the Delegate for East Africa. Once again he was able to see for himself that Project Africa is a grace for the future of the Congregation. The visit ended with a day of reflection which brought together at Nairobi those in charge of all the communities of the Delegation and of the two communities of the Central Province in Kenya.

The last part of May found the Rector Major occupied with the annual meeting of the Superiors General (at Villa Cavalletti, near Frascati, during which he was

elected as one of the three Superiors General to take part in the Extraordinary Synod later this year), the Feast of Mary Help of Christians, for which he was present at Valdocco, and the public Consistory on 25 May when the three new salesian Cardinals were installed.

4.2 Activity of the Councillors

The Vicar General

In addition to his daily commitments at the Generalate in Rome, there have been some important occasions when the Vicar General has been involved in work of animation elsewhere.

On the Feast of Don Bosco and in the days immediately before and afterwards he was in various provinces of Italy for the solemn presentation to the confreres of the renewed Constitutions: to those of the Ligurian-Tuscan Province gathered at Genoa, to those of the Vice-province of Sardinia at Lanusei, to those of the Southern Province in three groups at Naples, Bari and Soverato respectively, and finally to the members of the Sicilian Province at Catania, Messina and Ragusa.

From 26-29 March he made a brief animating visit to the Province of Lisbon, where he had meetings with the provincial council, the formation communities, and the confreres who had come together in groups at Lisbon, Porto, Mogofores and Estoril.

On leaving Portugal he went to Escorial in Spain, where he preached a retreat to the rectors of the Spanish Provinces of Madrid, Leon and Bilbao.

The Councillor for Formation

In addition to visits to several communities for various initiatives to which he is customarily invited, Fr Paul Natali has been engaged more especially in the organization of the work of his Department.

He has taken an active part in several internal meetings to decide on the criteria to be adopted in the redrafting of the "Ratio" and the "Directives and norms for salesian vocation discernment". The observations which have been received from consultants, provincial formation commissions, those with direct experience in the formation field, and from others, e.g. Superiors, who have an extensive knowledge arising from their service at world level, have been indexed, discussed and put in order. The redrafting of the "Ratio" is still in progress, whilst that of the "Directives and norms" has been completed.

Fr Natali also took part in the updating and renewal course for novice masters of the Congregation, which was organized and followed up with care by the members of his Department. 42 confreres participated in the course which lasted 48 days altogether. From an evaluation made at the end, it seems that the objectives of a better

knowledge and assimilation of the Constitutions, a more efficacious method for making them known to novices, and a personal spiritual renewal were all achieved. In the meantime thought is being given to the organization of a similar course for those in charge of formation at postnovitiate level. Particular attention will be given in this course to those who have the task of formation of lay salesians, i.e. salesian brothers. This course will begin on 11 November next.

From 8 April to 10 May Fr. Natali was in Brazil, Argentina and Chile:

— From 10-13 April he presided over a meeting at Campos do Jordão (San Paolo) of the formation personnel of the provinces of Brazil, a meeting which was also attended by the respective provincials. In harmony with the theme of the meeting ("The first formation in the context of different cultures, with special reference to the cultural context of Brazil"), he gave an address on "The Congregation's guidelines on initial salesian formation and its adaptation to different cultures".

— In Argentina, first at S. Miguel (Buenos Aires), from 14-20 April and later at Cabana (Cordoba) from 1-7 May he preached retreats to the rectors of the provincial conference of La Plata and the respective provincials, and developed updating topics concerning the animation of local communities. At Cabana too from 28-30 April he gave some conferences to the provincials and formation personnel of the La Plata

provincial conference on points concerning methodology to be adopted in formation work. He also visited the Novitiate of La Plata, met the members of the formation communities of Cordoba, and the students of theology, the confreres in practical training and the postnovices of the Province of Buenos Aires.

— From 21-26 April in Chile, he had meetings with the rectors, with those in charge of first formation, with the provincial council and the provincial commission for formation, and with the provincial council of the FMA. He also met the individual formation communities and their councils. In all such meetings he dealt for the most part with topics related to the methodology of formation activity.

He was present in Madrid between 26 May and 1 June at the meeting of teachers of moral theology from the studentates and study centres affiliated to the Faculty of Theology of the UPS, to whom he gave an introductory conference on "Moral theology and salesian spiritual experience". The meeting dwelt on updated approaches to theoretical points which are of great importance at the present day (e.g. the concept of 'intrinsece malum') and on various other aspects of immediate application: moral theology and salesian formation, the teaching of moral theology, programmes of courses for the purpose, and the exchange of pastoral and cultural experiences.

The Councillor for Youth Pastoral Work

During February Fr Juan Vecchi went to India for a meeting with the rectors of the provinces of Madras and Bangalore gathered at Madras, and with the rectors of the provinces of Calcutta, Gauhati and Dimapur at Calcutta. Both meetings dealt with the renewed Constitutions.

The province of Bombay on the other hand had organized a week of work of the rectors for a deeper study of the educative and pastoral plan at provincial level. Fr Vecchi took part and gave an address on "Criteria for a salesian pastoral plan".

Still in February he went also to the Philippines where the Asian Region had arranged a meeting of the rectors of Japan, China, Thailand, and the Philippines itself, for a week's deeper analysis of the renewed Constitutions.

Fr Vecchi also had a meeting with the appropriate team of the Philippines to clarify the definition and organization of animating roles at provincial level and to offer some indications for the formulation and realization of projects which would otherwise risk remaining at the level of simple statements.

The visit to the Philippines was followed by a brief period at headquarters in Rome, after which Fr Vecchi dedicated the month of March to Latin America. His programme there involved meetings with the 24 provinces which make up the two Latin America regions. This was the fourth time such a

series of meetings had taken place in the last 18 years, for the purpose of following up salesian pastoral work in those areas. Taking part were all the provincial delegates for this sector and the animators of youth movements and vocational work.

An evaluation was made of the commitments made at the previous meeting (1979), included in a 'statement of intent' drawn up at that time, and substantial progress was reported along the lines that had been then indicated, lines which corresponded to the indications given by the GC21. An examination was then made of the salient points emerging at the beginning of this new period. These were:

- The points that need to be covered in the education of young people in the present context of Latin America.

- Salesian group movements in Latin America at the present day.

- Some aspects of work for vocations.

- Animation of the provinces and communication between them.

Subsequently Fr Vecchi had a three-day meeting with the provincial conferences of La Plata and Brazil respectively to take up with the provincials the points that had emerged from the meetings with the delegates for youth pastoral work, and to pave the way for some decisions.

The month of May witnessed in Spain (El Plantío) some days of study by a group from the

Department on the drawing up of a plan for the formation of members of educative communities. Previously various provinces had expressed the urgent need for taking up once again the topic of the ongoing formation of the lay people who collaborate in our works. The Department had prepared a list of 34 items corresponding to the same number of key-points for the christian, pedagogical and salesian formation of members of the educative community, with particular reference to the development of the educative plan. A first draft had been prepared for each item, and the study group spent its time analysing these and adapting them more precisely to the conditions found on the spot. It is hoped to have the results ready by early October.

In a visit to the Milan province, on the invitation of the provincial, Fr Vecchi had a meeting with a group of confreres on "The characteristics of salesian pastoral work according to the new Constitutions"; he then met the group charged with the pastoral animation of the province and also the provincial council, to take stock of the problems and commitments arising from their respective competences, particularly in the light of the new requirements in the field of youth pastoral work.

In the meantime two communications were sent out to the provinces by the Department: the first concerned the centenary of the death of Don Bosco, the international youth year and the

opportunities envisaged for the qualification of confreres at world level. The second provided information on seminars which were being programmed for collecting and socializing pedagogical and pastoral experiences that had been gained with regard to young people living on the fringe of society and in danger of going astray.

An analysis has also been made of the replies sent in by 65 provinces to the questionnaire on youth movements. The results will be included in a dossier on the subject.

A study group organized by the Department spent a week in December and a further week in June in bringing to a conclusion the study of two themes linked with the educative plan and the educative community: "Elements and guidelines for salesian group activities"; and "The salesian pastoral and educative community and the neighbourhood".

The Councillor for the Salesian Family and Social Communication

Between January and June 1985 Fr Sergio Cuevas has been engaged in many and diverse activities.

At the beginning of January he went to Argentina, where he took part in the Argentinian national congress of the salesian Cooperators held at La Plata from 3-7 January, and immediately afterwards proceeded to Buenos Aires where he had a two-day meeting with the salesian provincial delegates for social communication (7-8 January).

The next few days found him in Santiago (Chile) for a meeting with the delegates for the cooperators and past pupils; he was also able to have meetings with those engaged in social communication in the various structures which the Congregation has in that city (8-11 January).

On his return to Europe he preached a retreat at Sanlucar La Mayor, Spain, from 17-23 January to the rectors of the provinces of Seville and Cordoba, and took the opportunity afterwards to have meetings with groups of cooperators and past pupils in the province of Seville, and also with formation communities of the same province.

At the beginning of February he took part in the meeting of the delegates for the cooperators of the Italian provinces (5-6 February).

He next presided (7-10 February) over the special meeting of the presidents of the European Federations of past pupils. The principal point on the agenda was the preparations for Eurobosco (11-15 September 1985), and the programming of the main theme: "Youth unemployment in Europe and the action of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco".

On 16 and 17 February he was also present at the meeting of the national council of the past pupils of Italy.

Subsequently from 20-26 February Fr Cuevas organized and animated at the Salesianum, Rome, the 11th Salesian Family Week of Spirituality on the theme: "The

Gospel Beatitudes: reflections for a youth spirituality”.

During the month of March, among various animating activities, the following were the most outstanding:

- He presided over a meeting of the International Consulting Board for Social Communication, which tried to define in the period 6-10 March a policy for the Department for Social Communication in the service of the Congregation.

- On 14 and 15 March he addressed the novice masters as part of their course at the Salesianum.

- He presided over the pre-congress commission which prepared the draft text of the Regulations for Salesian Cooperators.

- From 21-23 March he was in contact with those responsible for the film work on Don Bosco at Munich in Germany.

- He took part in the national meeting of young Italian cooperators at Rome (29-30 March), in preparation for the international youth day called for by the Pope on Palm Sunday.

In April too he was engaged in another important work in the weekly meetings of the commission preparing the World Congress of the Cooperators, which will take place at the end of October next.

Fr Cuevas attended the meeting of the Confederal Council of the Past Pupils on 6 April, and subsequently (11-13 April) presided over a special

meeting of delegates of the cooperators and past pupils to study the ways in which young people can be inserted into the associations of the Salesian Family.

Next came meetings and contacts with the salesian and lay personnel engaged in the salesian publishing work in Turin: SEI, LDC, SAF.

From 25-27 April he took part in the meeting of the 22nd National Council of the Italian Salesian Cooperators at Frascati.

At the end of April he began a journey, from which he returned to Rome only on 3 June, for the animation of groups of the Salesian Family and those engaged in social communication in various countries of the American continent: Uruguay, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, United States and Canada.

In the various provinces of these countries he was able to meet, as opportunity offered, confreres and groups of the Salesian Family, and also animating groups such as salesian provincial councils (in some places at least), provincial councils of the cooperators, delegates and council members of the past pupils, etc.; he also met those responsible for social communication and visited some of our specialized centres, especially in Brazil.

Finally, from 26 May to 1 June at West Haverstraw in the United States, he presided over the 4th international meeting of salesian publishers, which studied the theme: “New technologies for publishers”. The meeting was

attended by 54 salesians and lay personnel attached to our publishing houses.

The Councillor for the Missions

From 22 December 1984 to 2 January 1985 Fr Luc Van Looy visited the communities of Dilla (ILE province) and Makallè (MOR province) in Ethiopia, to demonstrate the solidarity of the General Council and the whole Congregation with them, and especially with those confreres directly engaged in the relief of the large numbers of people stricken by drought and famine.

Then after a brief period at headquarters he left on 16 January for Latin America where he remained until 7 March, getting to know the mission territory and providing animation.

He began with a visit to the houses of the Mixopolitano territory in Mexico (MEM) and celebrated the feast of St Francis de Sales at Guadalajara (MEG) with the confreres of that city. After visiting the houses of the city of Guatemala and the Kekchi missions (CAM), he went on to visit the two salesian communities in Panama (CAM).

For the feast of St John Bosco he had a meeting with all the missionaries of the Ariari area together with three Bishops of Colombia at Granada (COM), where the new Church was consecrated. He was able to visit our works in the cities of Bogota and Medellin, and had the opportunity of speaking to

the novices and all the confreres in formation of both provinces.

Next he went to Ecuador where he visited the houses of the Amazonica Mission of the Vicariate Apostolic of Mendez, and also our centres on the Altopiano at Zumbagua and Salinas.

In Venezuela, so as to get to know the Vicariate Apostolic of Puerto Ayacucho he made visits to the missions of Alto Orinoco and the Rio Negro. He then went on to the Amazonian region of Brazil (BMA), following the Rio Uapes and the Rio Negro in the Diocese of Sao Gabriel, and finished up in Manaus. In this way he was able to acquire some first-hand knowledge of the three High Plateau territories and of the four amazonian sectors where salesians are working.

On his return from Latin America, Fr Van Looy represented the Rector Major at the enthronement of Mgr. Ter Schure in the Cathedral of s'Hertogenbosch in Holland.

From 25-29 March the Councillor for the Missions and the Economist General presided over a meeting at Bonn (Germany) of Mission Procurators from 11 countries of Europe and North America. The purpose of the meeting was to seek greater coordination between them and a more efficacious mutual collaboration.

Between 19 April and 18 May, Fr Van Looy visited our salesian works in Senegal, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin and Nigeria, to acquaint himself with the present situation and future prospects in these new

foundations. During his time in West Africa he was also able to spend a few days in Guinea (Conakry) and in Sierra Leone to assess the possibilities for eventual salesian foundations in those countries too.

Finally, from 29 May to 3 June, he visited several houses in North and South Belgium for the purpose of doing some intense missionary animation.

The Economist General

On 31 January, Feast of Don Bosco, Fr Paron presented the Constitutions to the community of the Generalate, a ceremony which he repeated on 12 February for all the communities of the city of Palermo, gathered at Ranchibile.

On 14 February he presided over a meeting which he had convoked at the Generalate of the Superior Administrative Council of the Salesian University, for the revision and approval of the budget for 1984/85.

He took part in several meetings concerning the "Project Colle", and in one in particular, held on 19 February at Turin-Crocetta, at which were present also the Regional (Fr Bosoni), the Provincial and Provincial Council of the Central Province, the Rector of the community of Colle Don Bosco, and the Director of the Sanctuary.

On 12 March he was with the provincial economists of the Italian provinces at the Sacred Heart, Rome, and took part in their six-

monthly meeting.

He went to Bonn from 24-28 March in response to an invitation to be present at the meeting of those in charge of Salesian Mission Offices.

At Tolmezzo he took part in the celebration of the feast of the provincial community, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the erection of the Province of Saint Mark, East Venice (25 April).

On 8 May he was at Turin for the ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the SEI for the approval of the financial statement for the year ending 31 December 1984.

Between 11 and 27 May Fr Paron was in Poland where he visited all four salesian provinces and inspected the various building projects, some only at their beginnings, others well advanced, and many near completion. He brought back with him a wonderful impression of the enterprising courage which renovates, qualifies and characterizes our works in Poland even from the aspect of the appearance of the buildings.

At Warsaw on 26 May Fr Paron represented the Rector Major at the National Congress of Polish Salesian Youth.

The Regional Councillor for Latin America (Atlantic Region)

Fr Charles Techera left Rome on 1 January 1985 for Buenos Aires, where he began a rapid visit to the province and held a meeting with the provincial and provincial

council. He took part in the National Congress of Salesian Cooperators (4-6 January), and then continued with a series of short visits to all the SDB and FMA communities in the La Plata province. This was followed by a visit, accompanied by the provincial of Buenos Aires to the whole of Southern Patagonia from Ushuaia, the southernmost point, right up to the extreme north.

On 31 January, the feast of Don Bosco, he presided at the concelebration at which 41 novices of Argentina and Paraguay made their first profession.

He was back at the interprovincial novitiate of La Plata on 16 February to begin the extraordinary Visitation of the Cordoba province of San Francesco Solano by meeting the novices of that province. Immediately afterwards at the postnovitiate at Cordoba he took part in a meeting of salesians and lay personnel engaged in youth pastoral work.

Another noteworthy event occurring during the extraordinary visitation was the 4th Latin American meeting concerning salesian youth pastoral work in the whole area, which took place at Cumbaya (Quito) from 20-30 March. On 1 April the meeting of the provincial conference of La Plata began in Asuncion. This was followed by the visitation of the studentate of theology at Lapa in the province of San Paolo, and a meeting of the provincial conference of Brazil beginning on 9 April, followed in turn by a meeting of the

formation personnel of Brazil which was held at Campos de Jordao.

Sunday, 14 April, saw the beginning at Buenos Aires of the first retreat for all the rectors of the La Plata zone, preached by Fr Paul Natali. At Caban, Cordoba, on 28 April began the meeting of the formation personnel of La Plata, and after this came the second retreat for rectors.

The extraordinary visitation came to an end on 18th May, after Fr Techera had met the respective Bishops, the FMA working in the Cordoba province, the DBV, Cooperators and Past Pupils.

On 20 and 21 May he had a second meeting with the provincials of Brazil to study, together with Fr Cuevas who was present, matters concerning the Salesian family and social communication in the six provinces concerned.

Immediately after returning to Italy he was in Turin for the Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians, and returned to Rome for the installation of the three new salesian Cardinals.

The Regional Councillor for Latin America (Pacific-Caribbean Region)

In the early part of January Fr Velasco first made a quick visit to the Antilles province to consult with the provincial, Fr Angel Soto, on the names to be suggested for appointment as provincial councillors. He was also able to make a brief visit to the area of Moca Jarabacoa and to the postnovitiate.

Next he went on to begin the extraordinary visitation of the province of North Mexico (Province of Christ the King and Mary Help of Christians, centred on Guadalajara); he remained in this province until 15 March.

Afterwards he took part with Fr Vecchi and the Councillor for the Atlantic Region in the meeting at Cumbaya (Ecuador) on salesian pastoral work in the continent. This meeting was followed by a tour of the missions of the Vicariate Apostolic of Mendez for the purpose of acquiring information and making contacts. The principal places visited were Macas, Sucúa, Sevilla Don Bosco, Taisha, Wapuik, Yapui, Santiago, Gualaquiza and Bamboiza.

Fr Veasco then returned to Guadalajara to finish the visitation and remained there until 25 April.

From Mexico he went on to make a rapid visit to the provinces of Chile, Peru and Bolivia, making contact with numerous confreres, with the formation communities, with provincial councils and the various commissions working in the provinces.

His last seven days in the region were spent in Venezuela, where he met the provincial and paid a visit in particular to the new salesian agricultural school at Barinas. On 30 May he returned to Rome.

The Regional Councillor for Asia

Fr Thomas Panakezham arrived

in Bangkok on 11 January 1985 to begin the extraordinary visitation of the province of Thailand. He began with a meeting with the provincial council and the provincial delegates. The visitation continued until 18 March, but was interrupted to enable the Regional Councillor to take part in the 11th meeting of the rectors of the Far East (Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines), which took place at Manila-Botulao for a deeper study of the new Constitutions under the presidency of Fr Vecchi. At the end of the visitation of Thailand, he made a short visit to Hong Kong.

On 25 March, after a brief call at the provincial house of Calcutta (where he was able to meet the new provincial, Fr Sebastian Alancheril), Fr Panakezham travelled to New Delhi to preside at a meeting of the Indian provincial conference. At this meeting it was decided to establish a centre for ongoing formation for the whole of India, and the place chosen was Kalyani (Calcutta), where there already exists a training centre for Brother postnovices of India. It was decided to hold at least an annual course (for the present), to meet the requirements of articles 116,2 of the Constitutions and 98 of the general Regulations; the conference also set up a commission to go into the problem of inculturation during the teaching of philosophy; in addition the provincials committed themselves to sending a priest or a perpetually professed Brother to East Africa every year (and clerics too according to the possibilities of each

province).

During April the Regional Councillor visited some communities of the province of Madras, and in particular the new novitiate of Coimbatore, destined for novices from Madras alone and which this year has 36 novices. Subsequently Fr Panakezham went to Sri Lanka and then to Bangalore where he preached two retreats for the confreres and met with the new provincial, Fr Joseph Thekedathu. Finally at the end of May he visited the novitiate and postnovitiate of the Bombay province at Nasik.

**The Regional Councillor
for the English-speaking Region**

Between January and May 1985, Fr Martin McPake visited all the provinces of the Region, except for the Southern African part of the Dublin province.

The scope of his visit varied from one province to another. In Australia he presided at an Assembly of all the confreres, who had come together for a reflection in faith on the new Constitutions. Later he went to Samoa for a first view of the missionary work being carried out there by confreres of the Australian province.

From Samoa he went to the United States, where he announced in both provinces the names of the new provincials appointed by the Rector Major, and gave some conferences to the formation communities.

Fr McPake dedicated the greater part of the time, nevertheless, to the carrying out of the extraordinary visitation of the province of Great Britain. The visitation lasted from 2 February to 18 May, and involved the spending of a week in Liberia, in the missionary communities entrusted to the same province.

Before returning to Rome he found time to visit the provincial house in Dublin and the salesian houses in Malta.

**The Regional Councillor
for Europe and Central Africa**

As soon as he could free himself from his former duties, Fr Dominic Britschu began to make personal contact with the provinces of his region. These contacts had to take place as opportunity offered (e.g. celebrations of various kinds) or were limited to meetings with provincial councils. Although they were unfortunately too brief, they proved nevertheless very useful. Unfortunately lack of time and a succession of unexpected hitches made it impossible for him to fulfil some engagements that had been already made in Austria, Germany and Yugoslavia.

He was able to stay for a longer time in Central Africa. In May he visited the confreres of Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi, and made contact with the various ecclesiastical authorities, as well as with other religious communities and with groups of Cooperators.

On his return to Rome he found a small mountain of letters (some 300 in all) waiting for him. Many of them proved to be replies to the consultation that had been made with a view to the appointment of the new provincial of Munich.

**The Regional Councillor
for the Iberian Peninsula**

From 13 January to 19 March Fr Jose A. Rico carried out the extraordinary visitation of Portugal, a province with some 200 confreres. During the visitation he went also to San Vicente in the Cape Verde Islands where our work has developed, but unfortunately a continued drought is still the order of the day. Visits to the confreres in Macau and Mozambique had to be deferred to a more favourable moment. On 3 March he was at Fatima with the salesian coadjutor brothers who had come together there for a day of vocational and pastoral reflection and of prayer at the feet of Our Lady, Patroness of Portugal.

On 21 March Fr Rico began the extraordinary visitation of the province of Bilbao, Spain, which has more than 260 confreres; the visitation continued until 31 May, when it ended with a meeting of all the rectors. This visitation too involved a journey to Africa, where the province has three foundations in the People's Republic of Benin.

In Easter Week he accompanied the Rector Major, who was making a visit to three of the Spanish

provinces, and was with him at the ceremony on April 10 when he presented the Constitutions to all the confreres of Spain in the persons of their respective provincials.

Among the commitments which characterized the last month of the Regional's stay were some of national importance. On 29 and 30 April, he presided at a meeting of the Iberian provincial conference in Madrid. On 5 May at Seville he gave an address for the 18th provincial assembly of the Association of Mary Help of Christians, which coincided with the celebrations for the golden jubilee of the house of Triana. Finally, on 1 June he took part in the National Congress of Salesian Cooperators.

**The Regional Councillor for Italy,
Switzerland and the Middle East**

After taking part in the meeting of the SDB and FMA provincials of Italy, and a further meeting of the presidential council of the Italian provincial conference, Fr Luigi Bosoni was able to take up again the extraordinary visitation which he had begun earlier of the Central province, which kept him fully occupied until 23 February.

On 25 February he was present at a meeting in Rome at national level on experimentation in Italian secondary schools, and on the 26th at a meeting of formation personnel on the theme of meditation.

On 27 February he began the extraordinary visitation of the

province of San Zeno, Verona, which did not end until 20 May.

On 9 and 10 March he presided at an extraordinary meeting of the provincials of Italy to consider the question of mixed schools, and from 28 March to 9 April he accompanied the Italian provincials who went to the Holy Land to make their annual retreat.

From 21 to 23 May he organized the consultation for the appointment of the new provincial of the Central province; from 25-28 May he presided at Frascati over a meeting of the Italian provincial conference for the study of the topics of the Salesian Family and pastoral work for vocations; and finally on 1 June he met all the communities of the Roman province to launch the consultation preceding the appointment of the new provincial.

The Delegate of the Rector Major for Poland

The chief task of Fr Augustine Dziedziel during the past months has been the extraordinary visitation

of the Southern Polish province of Cracow.

In addition he visited the formation communities in all four of the Polish provinces and also the two novitiates of the FMA. In all these communities he was engaged in meetings for animation purposes. He took part too in meetings of other groups forming part of the Salesian Family.

In particular he was present at the youth congress organized at Warsaw by the Eastern Polish province of Lodz for young people from our foundations in the same province; large numbers of youngsters attended also from the other provinces and from the Salesian Family of Poland in general.

Of considerable importance for animation purposes were the meetings with the consultant group of the Polish provincial conference for an ever more efficacious realization of the salesian mission.

Finally Fr Dziedziel accompanied the Economer General during the visit he made to Poland.

5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

5.1 New Salesian Cardinals

In the Consistory, which took place on 25 May 1985, Pope John Paul II added 28 new Cardinals to the Sacred College. Three of them are Salesians.

As we rejoice at the esteem and trust shown by the Holy Father for our confreres, we accompany them with our brotherly prayers in the new responsibilities of service which have been laid upon them. And we are conscious of "the concrete invitation to docility, to collaboration with and adherence to Peter's Successor" which is implied for the entire Salesian Society (from an interview with the Rector Major).

We present some brief biographical details of the new Cardinals.

1. CARDINAL ALFONS M. STICKLER

He was born on 23 August 1910 at Neunkirchen (Nieserösterreich, Diocese of Vienna) of parents Michael Stickler and Teresa Schechner, and at the age of 11 years entered the Salesian College of Vienna III.

At the end of his novitiate, which he made at Ens Dorf (Germany), he his first religious vows in the Salesian Congregation on 15 August 1928. After the years of practical training and study of theology,

carried out first at Benediktbeuern (Germany) and subsequently at Turin (Crocetta) and then at Rome, he was ordained priest in the Roman Basilica of St John Lateran on 27 March 1937.

In 1940 he gained his doctorate "in utroque iure" from the Lateran University, and immediately became a professor of canon law in the Salesian Pontifical Atheneum (which had been approved on 3 May of the same year), first at Turin and then at Rome.

From 1953 to 1958 he was Dean of the Faculty of Canon Law, and from 1958 to 1966 Rector Magnificus of the Atheneum. At the end of his period of office as Rector Magnificus he was appointed President of the Pontifical Institute of Higher Latin (annexed to the Salesian Pontifical Atheneum), and filled this office until 1968, after which he returned to his role of teaching canon law, but on 25 March 1971 was called by Pope Paul VI to collaborate in the work of the Apostolic Vatican Library.

On 8 September 1983 Pope John Paul II named him Pro-Librarian of the Holy Roman Church and personally ordained him Bishop in the Sistine Chapel on 1 November of the same year with the title of Titular Archbishop of Bolsena. Subsequently on 7 July 1984 he was

appointed Pro-Archivist of the Church and installed as a Cardinal by John Paul II on 25 May 1985. He is now Librarian and Archivist of the Holy Roman Church.

2. CARDINAL ROSALIO JOSÉ CASTILLO LARA

He was born on 4 September 1922 at San Casimiro (Diocese of Maracay, Venezuela) on 4 September 1922. His parents were Rosalio Castillo and Wilhelmina Lara, and he entered the Salesian College of Valencia in 1934.

After completing his study of humanities, followed by his novitiate at Usaquen, he made his first profession on 18 January 1942. After his practical training and after theological studies at Mosquera (Colombia) he was ordained priest at Caracas on 4 September 1949.

After a year at the Salesian College of Los Teques as Prefect of Studies he was sent to Turin-Crocetta to study in the Faculty of Canon Law of the Salesian Pontifical Atheneum, where one of his teachers was Prof. Alfons Stickler, recently named a cardinal like himself.

In 1953 at the end of his studies he returned to Venezuela and taught in the studentate of philosophy at Caracas-Altamira, but in the following year was called to Italy again to teach in the Canon Law Faculty of the Salesian Pontifical Atheneum, first at Turin (1954-57) and then at Rome (1957-65).

He returned to Venezuela in 1966

and was immediately appointed Provincial of Caracas. But the following year he was called to be a member of the Superior Council of the Salesian Congregation as Regional Councillor for the Provinces of Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Peru and Bolivia; This office he held until the Special General Chapter of 1971, which elected him Councillor for Youth Pastoral Work.

On 26 March 1973 Paul VI appointed him Titular Bishop of Precausa and Coadjutor with the right of succession to Mgr José Leon Rojas Chaparro, Bishop of Trujillo in Venezuela. He received episcopal ordination at Caracas on 24 May of the same year. Two years later, 21 February 1975, Paul VI called him to Italy once again as Secretary of the Pontifical Commission for the revision of the Code of Canon Law.

On 26 May 1982, at the conclusion of the work of revision of the new Code, John Paul II promoted him to Archbishop and appointed him Pro-President of the Pontifical Commission for the authentic interpretation of the Code. He became President of the same Commission on his elevation to the dignity of Cardinal on 25 May 1985.

3. CARDINAL MICHAEL OBANDO BRAVO

He was born on 2 February 1926 at La Libertad (Chontales, Prelature of Juigalpa, a suffragan of the Diocese of Managua) in Nicaragua. His parents were Anthony Obando and Nicolina Bravo, and he entered

the Salesian College at Granada at the age of 16.

After his high-school studies he embraced the salesian life, making his novitiate at Ayagualo (El Salvador) and his first profession on 31 January 1950.

At the end of his philosophical course and practical training he began his theological studies at Guatemala, where for the final two years he had as a teacher the present Archbishop of San Salvador, Mgr Rivera Damas. He was ordained priest at Antigua, Guatemala, 10 August 1958, and was then assigned to the aspirantate and novitiate at Ayagualo (El Salvador) where he was Prefect of Studies and subsequently Rector from 23 January 1962.

The following year the aspirants moved to Planes de Renderos, and he went with them as Rector, a post he retained until 18 January 1968 when he was appointed Titular Bishop of Puzia di Bizacena and Auxiliary of Mgr Octavio José Calderon y Padilla, Bishop of Matagalpa (Nicaragua). He received episcopal ordination at Matagalpa on 31 March 1968.

On 16 February 1970 he was transferred to the Metropolitan See of Managua (Nicaragua) as Archbishop.

He was installed as a member of the Sacred College of Cardinals by John Paul II on 25 May 1985.

5.2 Central Commission for the Salesian Archives and Regulations for the Salesian Central Archives

By a letter of 24 May 1985, addressed to the Secretary General, the Rector Major has constituted a Central Commission for the Archives of the Salesian Congregation, and has approved for an experimental period of two years the "Regulations for the Salesian Central Archives", which are sited at the Generalate in Rome. The Regulations have recently been revised.

Both letter and regulations are set out below.

5.2.1 Letter of the Rector Major concerning the Salesian Central Archives and other Archives of the Congregation

Dear Father Maraccani,

As part of the process of modernization of the Offices of the Generalate, commendably set on foot by your predecessor and furthered with competence and dedication by you and your collaborators, work has started recently on the ordering, classification and computerizing of the documents deposited in the Salesian Central Archives and in the other archives of the General Council and of the Generalate House.

No one is unaware of the importance of our Central Archives for the life and history of the Congregation and of the Salesian Family. It is also a very old salesian tradition that we take particular care

to preserve documents belonging to the Congregation's patrimony. For this reason it has been my desire to give greater momentum and thrust to the realization begun some years ago of some important projects, of which an outstanding example is that of the microfilming of the "Fondo Don Bosco".

And so I have given instructions for an increase in the personnel involved in this important service and have chosen Fr Raphael Farina as Director of the Salesian Central Archives. It is my hope that he will be able to give us the benefit of his expertise in this sector too, at least for some years.

I hope too that the solving of problems of the Central Archives may help us in the solution of problems of archives at a lower level in the Congregation. Some of these, even though of small dimensions, are of considerable importance for the history of our Congregation and of local Churches. All archives, provincial archives in the first place but those of the individual houses too, have their importance and should be carefully preserved and added to, using the relevant scientific norms and modern technology. Nor should those archives be overlooked (and in some cases it may be necessary to begin them from scratch) of the many organizations and corporate bodies which enrich salesian works and activities or refer to them in some way.

All these reasons have led to the constitution of a Central

Commission which will have the overall care of all the archives of our Congregation. As Members of this commission I have thought well to appoint the Vicar General (who will be its president), the Economer General, the Secretary General, the Director of the Archives and the Director of the Salesian Historical Institute.

Attached as an appendix to this letter are the Regulations for the Salesian Central Archives, which it is my intention to approve for an experimental period of two years beginning from this present date.

With this letter I also decree that the Salesian Central Archives shall be open to consultation by all scholars, especially Salesians, who in accordance with the established rules make request to do so, but not more recently than 1931, the year of the death of the revered fourth successor of St John Bosco, Fr Philip Rinaldi.

I would ask you to make it your personal concern, and that all your collaborators do likewise, to ensure that the dispositions of the Regulations are faithfully put into practice.

With every best wish, and affectionately invoking the protection of Don Bosco on your work,

Fr Egidio Viganò
Rector Major

Roma, 24 May 1985

Rev. Fr Francesco Maraccani
Secretary General
Via della Pisana, 1111
00163 Rome

5.2.2 Regulations for the SALESIAN CENTRAL ARCHIVES

I. The Salesian Central Archives

1. The Salesian Central Archives gather together, in suitably equipped premises, all the acts and documentation which relate to the central government of the Salesian Society of St John Bosco. They are administered through an appropriate Office, under the responsibility of the Secretary General of the Salesian Society (Const. 144).

2. They are primarily and principally for the service of the Rector Major, his Council and the Departments which make up the headquarters organization. They are also available, under conditions set out later in these Regulations, to scholars and researchers who ask to consult them.

3. §1. Overall control and administration of the Archives belongs to the Rector Major with his Council, who exercise it by laying down regulations, appointing officials and providing for the expenses of maintenance and growth.

§2. For maintenance purposes the Rector Major works through the *Commission for the Archives*; for control he makes use of the advice and work of the Director of the Archives who, under the responsibility of the Secretary General, presides over an appropriate bureau.

II. Management and Administration

4. At the end of each civil year,

the Archives Commission will meet to approve the budget of the Salesian Central Archives and the plan of action for the coming year, and to decide on priorities.

5. §1. General responsibility for the Archives belongs to the Secretary General. In particular he will take care to create an effective liaison and to coordinate work between the Archives and the other sectors which depend on him, and in particular the Protocol Office, Juridical Office, Statistics Office, the Office for photographic documentation, the historical library of the Generalate, the Registry for works by Salesians, and the General Secretariate.

§2. Also his particular concern is the relationship between the various Departments of the Headquarters Administration and the Central Archives, especially as regards the preservation and ordering of their respective current and unclassified archives, and the transfer of material between these and the Central Archives at the end of each year and at the end of each six-year period.

6. §1. The ordinary management of the Archives is the concern of the Director, who is appointed by the Rector Major after consulting his Council and the Secretary General, and remains in office *ad nutum*.

§2. Without prejudice to the competence of Superiors and other Offices of the Headquarters Administration, his authority extends to all the personnel attached

to the Archives, among whom he makes a suitable division of work; he controls the publication of documents, purchases and other administrative operations; he deals with requests for admission to the Archives, for relevant information, for the copying of documents, and for special permissions.

7. The Director holds the keys of the Archives and allows their use to those assigned to the sector. He sees to it that the Regulations are observed. He keeps a chronicle of the more important happenings and reports on them to the appropriate Superiors.

8. §1. In the carrying out of his duties the Director will normally work through a Vice-director.

§2. The Vice-director, in addition to what is laid down in the preceding articles, has the particular task of the daily distribution and supervision of the work of the archives personnel. He also watches over the study and consulting rooms; he sees to the due registration of researchers or others using the archives, prepares any necessary permissions, preserves consultation requests, arranges for a rapid and ordered service and ensures that material is eventually returned to its proper place.

III. The Archivists

9. Salesians working in the archives are chosen by the Rector Major after hearing the opinion of the Secretary General and Archives Director. External personnel are

taken on by the Economist General after consulting the same two people.

10. On taking office each archivist will take an oath, in the presence of the Secretary General, that he will maintain secrecy as regards documents in the secret, current and unclassified archives (cf. arts. 15-16), as is required by common and canon law.

11. Archives personnel have as their chief duties: the ordering, classification and inventorying, the codifying, computerizing and preservation of the documentation contained in the Archives.

12. For the fulfilment of these duties it is necessary that the archivists be adequately prepared, and that they keep themselves updated by attendance at appropriate courses and meetings and by reading specialized publications.

13. Every six years, on the occasion of the canonical visitation of the Generalate, problems concerning the preparation, updating and rotation of the personnel will be made known to the Visitor, together with a detailed plan that has been prepared and discussed by all the salesian confreres attached to the sector.

14. The archivists will adhere to the kind and time-table of work assigned to them by the Archives Director or Vice-director, and will not take on any other tasks which may interfere with their full-time obligations in the Archives.

IV. Consultation of the Archives

15. §1. The documentary material in the Salesian Central Archives is divided for practical reasons into four sections: historical archives, unclassified archives, current archives and reserved or secret archives.

§2. The historical archives contain documentation (ordered, classified, codified and indexed) which is open to consultation by scholars and researchers up to a prescribed year laid down by the Rector Major and his Council, with due regard to the rights of persons still alive.

§3. The archives have also an "unclassified" section, in which is collected documentation coming from any source, which has been sent to the archives but which has not yet been ordered, classified, and indexed or computerized.

§4. To the current archives on the other hand belong all documentation coming from the various offices of the headquarters administration, which does not form part of the historical archives but is already ordered, classified and indexed or computerized.

§5. Entirely separate are the secret archives, a section for confidential cases and material which is excluded from all consultation (cf. CIC can. 489-490).

16. The historical and current archives are not always and completely separated one from the other, granted the present system of access to archives material. The unclassified and secret archives are

well separated from the other two.

17. §1. All documents in the historical archives are available to scholars and researchers, with due regard to the rights of persons still living. Documents in the current and unclassified archives relating to the preparation and course of General Chapters of the Salesian Society are also available for consultation by Salesians, with the express authorization of the Rector Major.

§2. With the previous authorization of the Secretary General, and for dealing with matters belonging to their respective offices, the departments of the headquarters administration are permitted access to the current and unclassified archives on submission of the appropriate form of request.

18. Consultation of archives material is to take place in a room set aside for the purpose. It is rigorously forbidden to anyone other than archives personnel to enter the actual places of reservation of material or of work of documentation in the Archives.

19. The consultation room is open to researchers from 1 October to 15 July, from 08.30 to 12.30 hours every weekday except Saturday, with the following exceptions: 2 November, the Christmas holidays (23 December - 6 January), the Easter holidays (from the Monday before to the Tuesday after Easter), and the Feasts of Mary Help of Christians (24 May) and St John Bosco (31 January).

20. Consultation is permitted to those researchers who make their request on the appropriate form to the Archives Director, and are furnished with a letter of recommendation from their own religious or academic superior (unless they themselves exercise such a function or an analogous one) or from some person in an official position who can guarantee their trustworthiness. The period of validity of such a letter is to be stated by the person whose signature it bears, but is in no case to exceed one year.

21. The distribution of material for consultation from the archives begins half an hour after opening time, and ends half an hour before closing time.

22. §1. No document or part of a document may be removed from the Archives for any reason at all, either by those using it or by archives personnel. For the copying of documents the Archives are equipped with appropriate apparatus on the spot.

§2. Exceptions are made to the norm of §1 for the following cases: (a) for the use of the departments of the Headquarters Administration as regards material from the unclassified and current archives of the previous six years, to be calculated from the date of the request, the latter being made on the appropriate form; (b) for the reproduction of documents which, in the opinion of the Director, cannot be made by use of the equipment within the archives area; (c) for documentary exhibi-

tions of civil or ecclesiastical importance, recognized as such by the Rector Major. Outside these cases a document may be taken temporarily outside the precincts of the archives only for exceptional reasons recognized as such by the Rector Major.

23. Every box, file or volume in the Archives contains an appropriate sheet or series of sheets on which the archivist will make an accurate note of the names of those who consult the documents contained therein, together with the protocol number of the request and the dates of removal and replacement of the document concerned, together with the signature of the user, and the identifying code and type of the document consulted.

24. At the entrance to the Archives a register will be placed in which the archives personnel and those consulting the archives will enter each day under the appropriate date their times of entering and leaving, together with their signature.

25. The principal task of the archives personnel is that of attending to the documentation of the archives, and of meeting (when properly requested) the requirements of the different departments of the headquarters administration. This implies a full-time commitment, with which meeting the requests of researchers may not always be compatible. It may be therefore that not every request can be satisfied on the day it is presented,

nor can the archives personnel assist users in a continuous manner.

26. §1. The reproduction of documents by photocopying or on microfilm or microcards is permitted for reasons of study. Their reproduction for publication, in facsimile or in photographs and illustrations, requires the written authorization of the Archives Director and mention of the Archives in the publication; it also implies the furnishing to the Archives of a copy of the published work.

§2. The reproduction of entire sections of the archives, or a notable part of them, or of a significant collection of documents, is not normally permitted. In particular cases, in the case of Institutes or corporate bodies, the authorization of the Rector Major will be sought.

27. §1. The Director has the faculty of authenticating on request, by simple written statement or in legal form, copies of manuscripts and printed documents made by photographic or other means.

§2. Persons concerned have the right to receive, personally or by proxy, an authentic written or photostat copy of documents which are of their nature public and which concern their own personal status. (CIC can. 487 §2).

V. Organization of the Archives

28. §1. The documents in the Archives are in the majority of cases ordered and classified individually;

they bear the stamp of the Archives and are collected in numbered boxes of uniform shape and size as far as possible.

§2. Each document or volume bears a classifying code which refers to the subject index of the archives (found as an appendix to the present Regulations), and a series number which identifies the section, shelf and box where the document is to be found.

§3. For objects other than books and documents, the above indications are written on cards attached to the article concerned in such a way as not to lessen their legibility, nor cause offence aesthetically. When aesthetic and practical reasons make it possible, the indications may be inscribed directly on the object concerned at a place and using means which are considered most suitable.

29. Every box or volume must have an index of the documents it contains. The combined indexes of all the items in the Archives constitute the general index.

30. Each of the objects referred to in art. 29 must carry a stamp bearing the name of the Archives:

(a) on the reverse of the title-page, or if there is no title page on the first page of text, and also on one or more other pages making up the volume or work;

(b) on the reverse of any table not part of the printed text, or of any printed page reduced in size or manuscript;

(c) on the front of an isolated sheet;

(d) on the card attached to an object other than a book or document in nature.

The type, colour, dimensions and position of the stamp should be such as not to damage the aesthetic appearance or use of the object.

31. For leaflets and handbills, and for small works of little importance or intrinsic value, periodicals, drawings, plans, designs and photographs, even though not bound in volumes which can form a series, it is allowable to codify and index them in groups according to similarity of content or form, but the obligation remains of assigning to each unit its own identification code.

32. The Archives must possess:

(a) a topographical inventory or card-index, and an inventory or card-index classifying all the documents and objects preserved in the Archives;

(b) an alphabetic thematic card-index of books and periodicals for the use of the archivists, and of those available for consultation by scholars and researchers in the room set aside for the purpose;

(c) a topographical inventory of all the equipment and furniture of the Archives.

33. §1. The Vice-director will keep:

(a) the requests for consultation (Forms ASC01 and ASC04), for loans (Form ASC03) and for copies and

reproductions (Form ASC08), arranged according to their protocol number or according to the alphabetical order of the names of the applicants;

(b) the protocol register of the above-mentioned requests;

(c) the register of those entering and leaving the Archives;

(d) the list of documents which have gone astray or been taken from the Archives.

§2. He will also keep an accounts register, and will see to the protocoling of incoming and outgoing correspondence.

34. Every year in the month of July, during the period of the summer closure, at least a partial revision of the Archives will be made and the inventories and registers will be checked.

35. The "Guide to the Archives" will be made available to researchers; it will contain a brief description of the archives with reference to its history, formation, sectors (with the consistency and description of each), the list of headings under which the archives are organized, the relevant regulations, and practical details regarding requests for documents and the making of copies of them.

36. Material will be transferred to the Archives from the different Departments at the Generalate normally between the months of July and October each year; but this will be done especially and in a more substantial way at the end of the six-

year period of office of a General Council. No document may be kept more than 12 years before being sent to the Archives.

37. §1. The transference will take place after such documents as are duplicates or of no importance have been discarded. This process takes place in the individual departments in consultation with archives personnel.

§2. As regards the discarding of material from the Central Archives themselves and not from the other Offices, the documents are to be divided into three categories: (a) documents that can be discarded at once, *sic et simpliciter*; (b) documents to be microfilmed and then discarded; (c) documents to be eliminated at set dates or at dates to be decided.

38. Each year documents of criminal cases concerning moral matters are to be destroyed whenever the guilty parties have died, or ten years have elapsed since a condemnatory sentence concluded the affair. A short summary of the facts is to be kept, together with the text of the definitive judgement. (CIC can. 489, §2).

VI. Final disposition

39. §1. In the case of any matter not foreseen in the articles of the present regulations the relevant dispositions are to be applied of the Code of Canon Law, of the Constitutions and General Regulations of the

Salesian Society, and of the Holy See.

§2. Cases of doubt will be decided by the Rector Major by his own authority, after hearing the views of the Secretary General and the Director of the Archives.

5.3 Don Bosco and the First Vatican Council An unpublished letter

We publish a hitherto unpublished letter of Don Bosco, preserved in the "Acts of the Sacred Vatican Council" kept in the Vatican Archives.

The letter is addressed to the Secretary of the First Vatican Council, and shows Don Bosco's interest in that great ecclesial event. It is also a sign of his love for the Church and of his availability for service of the Apostolic See.

Turin, 22 November 1869

Most Reverend Excellency,

Being in need of a clarification concerning membership of the coming ecumenical council, I make bold to express a humble request to your Excellency in that regard. My question can be briefly expressed as follows.

From letters and private information received from friends, I have heard it said that the Superiors General of religious orders which have been definitely approved and have

jurisdiction may be admitted to the coming council; but I have not been able to ascertain whether ecclesiastical congregations are included in their number.

I am the Superior General of the Congregation known as the *Society of St Francis de Sales*. definitively approved and with jurisdiction, a congregation with vows which are simple, but perpetual and reserved to the Holy See.

I would deem it a great favour if your Excellency in your great kindness would be good enough to drop me a line indicating whether this Society is to be included among those to be admitted or excepted. I would not wish to be found wanting in any matter concerning respect and deference for the Holy See, and at the same time I would not want to

interfere in anything in which I should not intrude.

I am sure you will forgive the disturbance I am causing you, and I pray that heaven may grant you health and happiness.

With deep gratitude, I have the honour to be

Your Excellency's dutiful servant

Fr John Bosco

To His Excellency
The Most Reverend Mgr. Fessler,
Bishop of S. Ippolito
Secretary of the Ecumenical Vatican Council
Borgo Nuovo Rome

R. 29 November: Respond. quod Superiores Generales Congregationum Ecclesiastic. in quibus nonnisi vota simplicia, etsi fuerint perpetua et S. Sedi reservata, emittantur juxta normas generales ad Synodum Oec.um non admittantur.

5.4 Our dead confreres 1985 – 2nd list

"Faith in the risen Christ sustains our hope and keeps alive our communion with our brothers who rest in Christ's peace... Their remembrance is an incentive to continue faithfully in our mission." (C 94).

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P. Bacchiarello Giuseppe	Shillong	9.05.85	78	ING
P. Barucci Giovanni	Kotagiri	26.04.85	79	INK
P. Bonamigo Antonio	Alessandria (Egitto)	16.04.85	82	MOR
P. Bonello Mario	Torino	20.04.85	71	ISU
P. Bonilla Luis	Medellin	23.02.85	90	COM
P. Bordin Ubaldo	Port Chester	25.11.84	75	SUE
P. Breen Patrick	Limerick	29.05.85	88	ING
P. Buazzelli Rinaldo	Latina	6.04.85	60	IRO
P. Caluwé Charles	Groot Bijgaarden	31.05.85	40	BEN
P. Cerrano Aldo	Vallecrosia (Imperia)	24.04.85	62	ISU
P. Cofalka Francizek	Różanystok	27.05.85	87	PLE
P. Correggia Albert	Shillong	15.05.84	78	ING
L. Dalla Riva Silvio	Maroggia (Svizzera)	05.04.85	76	INE
P. Del Favero Giuseppe	Mogliano V. (Treviso)	22.04.85	89	IVE
P. De Muru Benito	Santa Cruz	22.11.84	61	BOL
L. Drózdź Władysław	Szczyrk	23.02.85	75	PLS
L. Duarte Antonio	Porto	12.12.84	70	POR
P. Fekete József	Gamás	4.05.85	75	UNG
L. Gleeson Anthony	London, Battersea	5.05.85	75	GBR
P. Hernandez Alv. José	Bogotá	1.08.84	88	COB
P. Kozieł Iósef	Kraków	30.05.85	64	PLS
L. Kucharski Serwacy	Czerwińsk	14.03.85	76	PLE
L. Lavarda Giovanni	Albaré (Verona)	29.05.85	86	IVO
P. Lunate Jaime	Paris	12.05.85	58	SMA
P. Macias Celedonio	Barcelona	7.04.85	85	SBA
L. Mambrin Vittorio	Latina	29.04.85	72	IRO
P. Marin Del Amor	Alcoy	16.01.85	73	SVA
P. Migliasso Giovanni	Vercelli	29.03.85	85	INE
P. Mora Bohorquez Juan	Bogotá	21.03.85	69	COB
P. Morra Remo	Barpeta Road	29.04.85	67	ING
L. Opaka Jakoh	Cadíz	11.03.85	85	SSE

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
E. Pérez Estava Carlos <i>7 years Provincial, 6 years Bishop of Comodoro Rivadavia, 21 years Archbishop of Salta</i>	F. Mercedes (Argentina)	25.03.85	77	—
P. Saeyens Theophiel	Boortmeerbeek (Belgio)	2.05.85	75	AFC
P. Sauchelli Luigi	Napoli	8.04.85	71	IME
P. Sitzia Francesco	Arborea (Oristano)	30.11.84	86	ISA
P. Spitzer Johannes	Ensdorf	22.04.85	70	GEM
P. Tuberet Michael	Bolton	3.06.85	65	GBR
P. Unterthiner Alois	Klagenfurt	11.05.85	76	AUS
P. van der Linden Antonius	Rotterdam	25.05.85	83	OLA
P. Waloszek Valentin	Bamberg (Germania)	1.05.85	82	PLS
S. Woroniecki Andrzej	Dąbrowa Białostocka	27.05.85	19	PLE

