

acts

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of the Salesian Society
of St John Bosco**

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco
Via della Pisana, 1111
Casella Postale 9092

00163 Roma-Aurelio

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1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE LAY PERSON IN THE SALESIAN FAMILY

An invitation to renew our identity card. - Who are the laity who share the mission with us. - The new ecclesial mentality. - Vatican II our guide in a "pilgrimage of discovery". - A valuable initiative of communion. - What our objectives are. - Giving life to a "spiritual movement".

Rome, 24 February 1986

My dear confreres,

The theme expressed in the Strenna for 1986 is deserving of careful consideration in the Congregation.

The vocation and mission of the lay person at the present day is one of the great fronts of renewal opened up by Vatican II. The Council's action of analysis and relaunching has its repercussions also on our Family, which detects in the development of this vocation an enriching experience of returning to its origins. Don Bosco in fact always involved a large number of lay people in his mission for the young and the poor.

An invitation to renew our identity card

In putting forward this theme we are not prompted by an eagerness to feel up to date (which could be nothing more than a fleeting and short-lived attitude), but by docility to the Spirit of the Lord and fidelity to the apostolic project of our Founder.

Failure indeed to follow this line would mean that we had lost interest in our vocational identity. After a hundred years of life we need to rejuvenate our salesian features, so that our authentic physiognomy may be more evident and attractive.

Little by little, in fact, a certain involution was taking place in this sector which would have converted us into self-sufficient administrators of the works already existing rather than animators of an apostolic movement in a Church which is on the move: more tutors of pupils than missionaries of the young.

Fortunately the Council produced a lot of fresh air which reached the lungs of our General Chapters, and in particular the Special one. Today we have available a rich and striking doctrine on the laity with practical and stimulating guidelines, and to some extent we have already committed ourselves to them in various provinces.

Something is certainly happening. We saw it, for example, a few months ago in the 2nd World Congress of the Cooperators. It has been evident for some time in work with the Past Pupils. We watch with fresh attention the "Lay Collaborators" and the "Friends of Don Bosco". But in some provinces progress is very slow; they find it difficult to get going.

What is lacking? A renewed conciliar mentality? A greater sense of the Church as communion? A more objective social sensitivity? A more courageous and compelling vision of our commitment to the young and the poor? More drive from our spiritual batteries?

One thing is quite certain: if Don Bosco were alive at the present day, with the vast horizons

of Vatican II available to him, he would immediately set about involving a multitude of the laity in his working plans.

And why should not we do the same, we who are his sons and who want to show, for the coming centenary celebrations of his death, that the charisma of the Oratory is still fully alive and up to date?

The lay people who are with us in the mission

We want to foster the vocation of the laity involved with us in the service of the young, and we want to do this on the basis of the genuine spirit of the Council. But when we approach the matter from a different angle, and instead of speaking of the laity according to the Council we pass to a consideration of the lay people with whom we ourselves deal and work, we find that a strange difficulty arises from the elastic nature of the meanings given to this term. We seem to be on different levels, which obscure the true ecclesial concept of the lay person, and reduce our consideration to a generic kind of idea which seems to rule out the possibility of speaking explicitly of "vocation" and "mission".

The trouble is due to the many different meanings currently attached to the term "lay"; the variety is now so firmly rooted in our common way of speaking that if we are not careful we ourselves may become victims of mistaken ideas.

Let me give you some examples of the way in which this term is used (at least in the Italian environment). We speak of "lay collaborators",

but what meaning do we attach to the expression? The newspapers often refer to the "lay" parties in politics, and what does it mean there? Or why is it that one can speak of a "'lay' State" but is suspicious of the term "'lay' morality". There is a real difference of meaning in the two cases.

What we are concerned with is the meaning of the term in the context of the Salesian Family: who are the "lay people" in it, the people referred to in the *Strenna*? The answer needs to be an exact one because it is intimately connected with our fidelity to the Council and to Don Bosco. Lack of precision here will lead to activities which are confused and not incisive, which lack concreteness as regards their vocational aspect and in consequence are superficial from a salesian standpoint.

In replying to the question therefore, we must state with deliberate precision that by the term "laity" or "lay people" here we mean those christians who are members of the Catholic Church and who, while remaining in the world according to their characteristic secular status, are disposed to live out their Baptism in the mission with us. In other words, as is obvious, we mean to apply to them and to make flourish in our Family the concrete description of the lay person as was given by Vatican II.

I consider it of vital importance to be exact about this; if we are not we shall never launch in the Church a real spiritual movement among people.¹

1. C 5.

It is not a question of excluding from our consideration and from appropriate involvement at different levels so many other collaborators,

past pupils and friends. We know that Don Bosco sought collaborators everywhere, so long as they had a bit of goodwill and did some good ("bene - factors"), even if they belonged to no religion at all. And this is a very valid trait which we have inherited, one which must be preserved in the Congregation and which at the present day has been endorsed by the Council's opening to ecumenism, to dialogue with non-christian religions and even with non-believers. But this year's Strenna does not refer to this particular aspect, which in many of our communities is already functioning reasonably well.

What we have to do is eliminate the dangerous superficiality of which I spoke in my Report on the state of the Congregation to the 22nd General Chapter; it goes with and characterizes the busy-body jack of all trades who may seem the friend of many but is spiritual father to none.

In our Family we find lay people (in the conciliar sense), or we involve them in fact, among the Cooperators, among those Past Pupils who (according to GC21) "have made the choice of the gospel",² and among those external "collaborators" and "friends" who want to bear witness to their Catholic faith.

The concrete task to which we are called is a greater and better dedication of ourselves to promoting in the first place the Association of the Cooperators in its lay members, and to intensify our care of those who, without being ordained or consecrated, want to be active Catholics among the Past Pupils (in their local Associations and in the World Confederation), among the Collaborators and among the Friends.

These are the laity of our Family to whom

2. GC21 69.

we are referring. We must act in concert with the FMA and the other consecrated Groups in the Family to make these lay people feel the joy of living a wonderful vocation and of sharing with us in the work of the Church's mission in the world in the spirit of Don Bosco.

The new ecclesial mentality

The mature man must have wisdom and be open to the innovations of the Spirit. But in recent years we have seen for ourselves that there are people who on reaching a certain age can easily become sceptical; there is no longer anything new for them, they sit back, they have arrived, and they settle little by little into a comfortable middle-class life style. It is a sad experience to meet people who are mature in age but so lacking in spirit.

I said to you in my last letter that it has been said that the Council produced no unpublished definitions or condemnations, but this notwithstanding there emerged from it an extraordinarily new state of affairs: "*nihil novi et omnia nova*".

As regards the laity in the Church there is a great innovation that should be noticed, and whoever is unaware of it runs the risk of not being docile to the Spirit, and therefore of not being able to contribute effectively to renewal.

The vocation of the lay person, as presented by Vatican II, makes concrete demands which impose on all of us two simultaneous and complementary obligations: to have a sound knowledge of the Council's doctrine in this regard, and

in addition to take another and discerning look at the thought of Don Bosco and his initiatives. We can never separate these two aspects; if we did, we should fall into either fleeting caprice or static rigidity.

Now, with regard to Don Bosco's thoughts and actions we can say (or at least I hope we can) that we have a sufficient bibliography and a living tradition which can facilitate a serious historical assessment of the presence of the lay person in our mission. We are all fully convinced that our Founder was always concerned to involve the greatest possible number of collaborators in the working out of his plan, from Mamma Margaret to employers, to ordinary good citizens, to theologians, to the nobility, and even to the politicians of the time; he thought, he planned, he sought the opinion of others, and finally he instituted as an organized expression of what was in his mind the Pious Union of Salesian Cooperators. "The Cooperators", he declared with conviction and hope, "will be the ones who will promote the Catholic spirit".³

But as far as our knowledge of Vatican II is concerned, there remains some doubt.

As I said in the previous letter, it is the sad opinion of the Pastors of the Church (and I think that unfortunately the opinion applies also to more than a few religious) that Vatican II is not sufficiently known, and still less has it been assimilated and put into practice; indeed interpretations have been more readily followed that are superficial, reductive, partial and even distorted.⁴ Hence the urgent need for all to go back to the Council texts and make an ordered study of them.⁵

3. MB 18 161.

4. Cf. AGC 316, p. 9-12.

5. Cf. Extraordinary Synod, Final report, I, 5-6.

It is necessary therefore, and the task falls particularly on provincials and rectors, to organize concrete initiatives in this regard. It is a duty for every province. Every house too must seek a practical means of acquiring a deeper and systematic knowledge of the Council's doctrine. After the appeal of the Extraordinary Synod such an urgent task must find a place in our plan of life. For my own part I thought it opportune to do this even when I was recently preaching the Spiritual Exercises to the Holy Father and the Roman Curia.⁶

If the Council is a prophetic event, "a gift of God to the Church and to the world", "the great grace of the present century", "a new Pentecost", "the Magna Carta for the future"⁷ and "the great Catechism of modern times",⁸ our pastoral mentality must be adapted constantly and ever better to its great indicational guidelines. One of these is precisely the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church.

6. Cf. in this number of the ACTS, p. 37.

7. Extraordinary Synod.

8. CT 2.

Vatican II our guide in a "pilgrimage of discovery"

In his Message for the 1985 World Day of Peace, John Paul II declared that the passage of man through history is like a "pilgrimage of discovery".⁹

Certainly Vatican II is for believers a rich and fruitful source of discoveries.

One of them is the positive view of the World as an authentic religious value, despite the ruin caused by sin: the Father created it for man and loved it so much that he sent to it his only Son.

9. Message of 1985, 10.

Such a vision brings with it an entirely new manner of looking at the Church in its overall relationship with the world. It lives for the latter's service: in fact the entire People of God is inserted in human history as a sacrament of salvation.

This is the context in which the doctrine of the vocation and mission of the lay person finds its place. The Council gave a formidable response to the prevailing laicism; it stripped it of the banner of the lay or secular state, which it was proudly waving as a post-Christian conquest; it was purely and simply "laicism" which represents the backtracking of an illuminism which is reductive of reality.

The bearer of the banner for the re-assertion of the true secular or lay state in the world is, among the People of God, the lay person. In fact the rediscovery of the World as the creation of the Father, an expression of his omnipotent love; of the World as the story of mankind, in which Christ, the presence of liberating love, became incarnate; of the World moving forward to its final destiny as a plan in developing transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit, the bearer of sanctifying love, all leads to the emergence of the fascinating and inseparable double concept of "God and the World".

We do not know a God without the World, and a World without God is impossible.

The idea of "laity" does not mean thinking of the World as though God did not exist: that would be laicism; but thinking of it precisely as he created it, with its laws, its autonomous values, the consistency of the respective ends, the regality and protagonism of man, his tremen-

dous task in history, his personal dignity, his work, knowledge, technical ability — everything harmonized in a return dialogue of love with which man must meet God's initiative.¹⁰

10. Cf. GS 43.

The more one knows of the World and human history, the more does one realize that God can only be Love. The laicist who accepts the existence of God, but then thinks of him as having no interest in the World reduces him at the best to an unmoved mover but one without a heart, and that is a blasphemous caricature!

A similar rediscovery of the World creates for us an image of the Church which is no longer that of a pyramid, narrow at the top (the hierarchy) and broad at the base (the laity), but that of an immense circle expanding in history, which receives energy and stimulus from the centre for continual extension.

And it is precisely the layman who is on the circumference, on the frontier of progress, of liberation and of transformation of the World. For this he needs Christ and his Spirit (the centre!); he needs light and grace and the values of the Beatitudes which come to him through the service of the Ministry and the witness of consecrated life (close to the centre); he needs communion with everyone so as to feel himself to be a living member of the Body of Christ in history (the Church of all, one and holy), but he is in the front line, he is truly a protagonist. While he receives he also gives; and the "ministers" and "consecrated" persons, while they help him, are also enriched by what his vocation gives to them.

Don Bosco had immediately understood these values of the World and felt himself called to

11. Cf. C 33.

work for the betterment of human society.¹¹ He dedicated himself to young people of the poorer classes, in need and lacking care, so as to make of them upright citizens. He was a realist and had a strong sense of history. His strategy was built on the conviction that religion (i.e. "christian faith") was an indispensable value to be inserted at the centre of culture (and in the heart of every young person) if society was going to be renewed in line with the dignity of the human person.

With his practical and industrious mentality he scrutinized the complex events and circumstances of the time, and in the light of history and faith came to the conclusion (so very clear today in "*Gaudium et spes*") that God really loves the World, and that he sends all christians to it to save it. In particular he felt that he himself was sent with that purpose, with a mission to the young and the poor. This was the reason for his rich humanism, his appreciation of progress in science and technology, his flair for method and organization; this was why he was so concerned to discuss matters with civil authorities; for this reason he was so anxious to move so many people of good will to be active and share in responsibility, and to appeal to Catholics to be united in doing all the good they possibly could.

Without any doubt he was a holy Founder raised up by the Lord for a prophetic anticipation of what was to come in later times.

The Council invites us today to rediscover this ecclesial vision so as to give a clearer and more committed physiognomy to the salesian dimension of service to the world's youth.

A valuable initiative of communion

One important aspect of the innovation produced by the Council must be considered, because it is closely related to the presence of the laity in our Family.

The fact that the laity are in the mission with us, and we with them, is not simply a matter of a quantitative summation of forces, and still less is it an addition forced upon us by our losses and absences.

It is a question of a mutually enriching communion between distinct but complementary vocations in the Church. There is an interchange of values which improves the qualities of each of the vocations concerned, strengthening their identity, making them more incisive and enriching them with the element of being up to date.

It is evidently necessary to be able to bring about between lay and consecrated persons a true ecclesial communion of complementary vocations, founded on Christ, moved by his Spirit, and nourished by convictions of faith, by mutual witness, and by a concrete and practical choice of tasks. In other words it is a question of a deep communion in the same apostolic spirituality.

And this brings us back once again from another standpoint to the urgent need to root out superficiality!

The communion starts substantially from two distinct poles which however are related one to the other and in mutual tension.

The Layman fulfils his ecclesial vocation by passing from within secular values, from the World as a starting point, to the vertex of a

religious attitude. The Salesian fulfils his vocation by moving from within his consecration towards the World, from the religious vertex towards human values. If we keep in mind the eloquent assertion of "Gaudium et spes" that earthly activity must be carried out in such a way "as to integrate human, domestic, professional, scientific and technical enterprises with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are ordered to the glory of God",¹² we shall understand the difference in direction of the two vocations and also their mutual complementarity.

We may think, for example, of the different and complementary tasks of parents (lay people) towards their children, and of educators (Salesians) in respect of the same children.

Don Bosco reminds us of this in a fatherly letter addressed to the confreres: "Above all, if we want to be seen as desiring the real good of our pupils, we must never forget that we take the place of the parents of the dear lads".¹³ (After the Synod of Bishops on the theme of the family, I wrote a circular letter to you in which I emphasized precisely the need to link youth ministry with family ministry; cf. ASC 299).

The lay parent dedicates himself in a christian fashion to the education of the young, but beginning from the human demands inherent in generation.

The salesian educator, on the other hand, dedicates himself to the education of the young beginning from the standpoint of the supernatural motherhood of the Church.

The two movements converge, meet, enter into communion and mutually enrich each other.

12. GS 43.

13. Collected Letters, Turin 1959, IV, 201-205.

How much the Salesian has to learn from the Layman! And on the other hand, how much the Layman has to learn from the Salesian! Both one and the other, acting alone and merely on their own account, would find themselves very much impoverished in their own particular vocation.¹⁴

14. Cf. C 47.

And we could give many other similar examples in which the Layman, starting from secular values, enriches the Salesian, and vice versa the Salesian, starting from religious values, enriches the Layman with whom he comes in contact in the service of the young.

Between the laity in mission with us and us in mission with them, there is a common purpose which is the apostolate for the young and the poor. But the manner in which the purpose is achieved is different in each case; as the Council puts it: "in the Church there is diversity of ministry, but unity of mission".¹⁵

15. AA 2.

Both of them draw on the same evangelical spirit of Don Bosco, but they do so in different keys and with details which are different but mutually correlated: they mutually enrich each other, as in the classic interchange between celibacy for the Kingdom and marriage in Christ.¹⁶

16. Cf. ASC 299,
p. 24-26.

Don Bosco lived concretely, and has taught us to do likewise, a similar precious communion. We were born in communion with the laity, and they with us, and our historical growth has followed the same line.

After a Council which has studied so deeply and launched this tremendous ecclesial value, how could we fail to commit ourselves to its growth: to improve the quality of communion

and increase the number of those sharing in it?

But it is precisely together that we must speak of Christ, live in Christ and witness to Christ! We have a common christian vocation of being authentic disciples of the Lord, even though it be expressed in different ways.

What are our objectives?

If we are to promote in our communities this precious communion we must have certain concrete objectives at which to aim, seeking and using means which every house has available or which the province can offer.

- The first goal to be attained, and it will subsequently throw light on whatever else has to be done, is a more organic knowledge of Vatican II with a special analysis of its doctrine on the vocation and mission of the laity. I have already referred to this above, and I dealt with at length in the earlier circular.¹⁷ Once again I remind provincials and rectors of their responsibility in this regard. It will be opportune too to promote some well planned study meetings with the lay people themselves.

17. AGC 316.

- As one of the fruits of this deeper study, it will be necessary to instil in the laity the knowledge of being true committed Catholics, witnesses of their Baptism, aware of their secular vocation, courageous members of a Church-Sacrament of salvation, in the family, in the neighbourhood, in society, and in fact everywhere.

Don Bosco sought to bind actively and in spiritual depth with the Salesians "those Catho-

lics who so desire"; "in these difficult times", he said, "we christians must unite to foster the spirit of prayer and charity by all the means that religion provides".¹⁸

18. Cooperators
Regulations.

The sense of being a responsible member of the Catholic Church must become the moving nucleus of this apostolic activity.

- A third objective to be ensured is that of centring the apostolic interest of the laity who collaborate with us on the integral promotion of young people and on the needs of evangelization of the poorer classes. The common mission gives to all the Salesian Family its concrete tone and defines its characteristic place in the People of God.

Don Bosco involved the laity precisely to "remove or at least mitigate those evils which put at risk the morality of the new generations, in whose hands lie the destinies of civil society".¹⁹

19. *ibid.*

The apostolic interest of the laity for the young and for poor neighbourhoods can be "direct and immediate" (parents, educators, teachers, catechists, social communicators, etc.), or it can be "indirect and mediate" through participation in cultural, social and political tasks etc. which have particular relevance to the young and the poor. It is not a case of listing activities and functions, but of opening horizons before apostolic desires.

- And then, as regards practical kinds of apostolate we need to intensify in the laity generosity and creativity, but keeping always in mind certain aspects which open up a great range of possibilities.

In the first place, insistence is needed on the

daily witness which the laity must be able to provide by their state of life and in their work or profession: this is what gives its christian aspect to their specific secular character.

In addition it is particularly meaningful and enhancing if the laity can be convinced about reserving a space for apostolic activity in their free time. Whether this be much or little, it is certainly one of the best signs of responsible and committed membership of the Church according to the mission proper to the Salesian Family.

The Council's decree "*Apostolicam actuositatem*" presents three "areas" of apostolic perspective: the first concerns specific tasks in the field of evangelization, the second (and most characteristic) refers to the christian animation of the temporal order, and the third involves initiatives in charitable works and social aid.²⁰ It is not therefore a restrictive, closed and unilateral perspective, but one that is open to ample possibilities of action.

The decree also presents various possible "forms" of apostolate. The two basic ones are: the 'individual' form, which in some countries is frequently the only one possible in practice; and the 'associative' form, particularly recommended by the Council, because "it is in happy harmony with a fundamental need in the faithful, a need that is both human and christian; and at the same time it offers a sign of the communion and unity of the Church in Christ".²¹

In our Family various possibilities can be found for apostolic work in groups or associations.

But there exists an outstanding Association,

20. Cf. AA 5-8.

21. Cf. *Ibid.* 15-19.

that of the Salesian Cooperators. From the point of view of the christian vocation of the lay person in our Family, this must be considered the centre of reference for all such possibilities, because it is not an alternative to other associations, but rather aims at animating those others. The Cooperators are not an association which, as such, organizes works and specific initiatives; the Association is aware that it shares responsibility with us in preserving in all its members and in our Family the vitality of Don Bosco's plan, bringing to it the riches of its own secular condition. In doing this it retains the possibility of offering animators for the identity of any other group or association whose specific nature needs to be known and appreciated, without prejudice to its autonomy.

On account of this vocational character, the Cooperators' Association has particular bonds with our Congregation; it is in fact called upon to ensure, in special communion with us, the identity and vitality of the spiritual and apostolic heritage of Don Bosco in the world.

The Founder did not conceive the Association as being independent and made up only of lay people, but rather as an integral part or group aggregated to the Congregation. The great majority of its members are in fact lay, and the Association promotes their secular character; but it also includes diocesan priests and deacons (and even Bishops). It enjoys too its own peculiar autonomy, which however must be efficaciously harmonized with the serious responsibility of taking care (together with us) of the specific character and efficacy of the salesian vocation.

If all the authentic laity who are in mission

with us (Past Pupils, Collaborators, Friends) became members of this special Association, it would strengthen their personal salesian identity and in addition they would bring to the other associations of which they might be members a greater commitment in a better Family communion.

This is what Don Bosco wanted.

• Finally, another important objective to be attained is that of making known and loved the evangelical patrimony of Don Bosco with its specific values of his charisma and criteria for activity. This means helping lay people to grow in the salesian spirit and apostolic method left to us by our Founder as a heritage; but in this formative task it is always necessary to see that everything is in harmony with their secular vocation.²²

22. Cf. C 47.

To achieve these objectives it will be obvious, I think, to everyone that some priorities must be laid down for competent and efficacious action.

I recall some of these, especially for the benefit of provincials:

— To make sure that the confreres in charge of this sector are adequate in number and quality, that they are up to date and have the necessary time available for the work involved.

— Constantly to promote the calling together, friendship and formation of lay people in view of an apostolic involvement; in this connection those who are young should not be overlooked but rather given special attention.²³

23. Cf. AA 12.

— To help individuals to choose concrete and practical commitments in keeping with their personal possibilities in educational, pastoral,

charitable and other works for the common good, either individually or in association with others.

— To organize initiatives at provincial level which will create a climate of renewal and relaunching in every community.

Giving life to a true “spiritual movement”

Vatican II brought with it a vast spiritual renewal. As Paul VI said: “We are living in the Church at a privileged moment of the Spirit. Everywhere people are trying to know him better, as the Scripture reveals him. They are happy to place themselves under his inspiration. They are gathering about him; they want to let themselves be led by him”.²⁴

24. EN 75.

Now if the Spirit of the Lord is providing the Church at the present day with a special period of spiritual rebirth, it would indeed be strange if we, who are precisely bearers of one of his charismata, remained passive or were satisfied with the simple and meagre effort of repeating what had been done before: that would not be movement, but rather a comfortable way of standing still.

In commenting on the Strenna, I said that the life of the Church provides a yardstick for measuring ourselves: either we launch a characteristic “spiritual movement” with the contribution of the whole Salesian Family and we shall be leaders for the future, bearing the Council towards the third millennium, or else we shall resign ourselves to remaining in the rear, closing ourselves in nostalgic musings on the past and

running the risk of imprisoning ourselves up in a museum of past memories.

We need something to shake us up; and 1988 offers a magnificent opportunity for the purpose.

A significant majority of confreres in the Congregation are already breathing the fresh air of this renewal, nourished and supported (for more than a year now) by the renewed Constitutions.

And so the conditions exist, and indeed in various provinces very positive steps have already been taken for the growth and expansion of a characteristically apostolic "spiritual movement", which involves and catalyzes a large number of lay people together with ourselves.

To this end we must be able to give back to our consecrated life its specific feature of "charisma". This means, as "Mutuae relationes" says, "bringing an element of real originality into the spiritual life of the Church along with fresh initiatives for action". Such a characteristic demands "a constant re-examination of fidelity to the Lord, docility to his Spirit, prudent weighing of circumstances and careful reading of the signs of the times, the will to be integrated in the Church, awareness of obedience to the hierarchy, boldness in initiatives, perseverance in self-giving, humility in the face of adversity. In a genuine charism there is always a mixture of new creativity and interior suffering".²⁵

These expressions provide us with a very useful yardstick for comparison and revision.

From the very beginnings the charism of Don Bosco has given rise in the world to a concrete, attractive and adequate "youth spirituality"; St Dominic Savio provides proof of this. At the present day, after the Council, the

members of the Salesian Family must renew in their own Group and in mutual encounters with others the most genuine spirit of the Founder, so as to manifest the existence in all of them of a dynamism of holiness, of a "movement of people" which inspires, guides and sustains a genuine spirituality for young people of the middle and lower classes.

We know that Mary Help of Christians, Mother of the Church, was present in the origins of many charisms in favour of the People of God; we are well aware of her motherly initiative and particular care in the case of our own Family. Let us ask her insistently, in view also of what we want to do for 1988, for the lights, energy and practical gifts which will enable us to make our family in the Church truly "a vast movement of persons who in different ways work for the salvation of the young".²⁶

26. C 5.

May she give special help to us Salesians who, in this movement of people, "by the will of the Founder... have particular responsibilities: to preserve unity of spirit and to foster dialogue and fraternal collaboration for our mutual enrichment and greater apostolic effectiveness".²⁷

27 *ibid.*

My greetings to all of you, with my best wishes to every community that it may be a lively and dynamic centre of "youth spirituality".

Affectionately in the Lord,



2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Centenary of the death of Don Bosco: guidelines for the preparation

The following guidelines for the preparation of the centenary of the death of Don Bosco were contained in two letters, sent by the Rector Major and the Vicar General respectively, to those responsible for the different Groups of the Salesian Family. Such guidelines are of immediate concern to our provincial and local communities.

A. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

*To all those Responsible
for the various Groups
of the Salesian Family*

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

After my letter of 27 June 1983, I come back to you once again to take up the matter of the CENTENARY of the death of Don Bosco, which is now quite near.

In the previous letter I said to you: "We want to propose once again with greater efficacy and credibility, to the People of God and to today's world, the figure and work of Don Bosco, the Founder: to enhance the historical stature of this Saint who was the friend of youth and the bearer of an original message that is at one and the same time evangelical, pastoral, social and pedagogical".

In the plenary sessions of the General Council that have been held since the last General Chapter, we have reflected on the preparations to be made for the celebrations so that the objectives we have set before ourselves may be achieved.

Subsequently, in agreement with those responsible for the various Groups in our Family, we have decided to set up a Central Coordinating Commission, made up of members of the General or Central Councils of the different Groups.

I have entrusted the presidency of the Commission to the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr Gaetano Scrivo.

The first meeting took place on 21 December 1985, for the purpose of drawing up some basic lines of procedure and a general programme which will be presented to you by Fr Scrivo himself.

The celebrations, if well prepared, will be the source of great spiritual benefit for the young and for all the Salesian Family, because they will help to a better identification and deeper understanding of God's action in Don Bosco, and give further impetus to its ecclesial vitality.

My cordial greetings to all of you with best wishes for the success of the work you will be undertaking.

That their labours may be crowned with success, I send to every Group a special blessing of Mary Help of Christians.

With gratitude and expectation,

Fr EGIDIO VIGANÒ

B. LETTER OF THE VICAR GENERAL

*To all those Responsible
for the various Groups
of the Salesian Family*

I accompany the letter of the Rector Major with some guidelines and proposals which have emerged from various meetings of the General Council and from meetings with those responsible at central level for the Groups of the Salesian Family.

1. Significance and value of the centenary celebration

From various interventions of the Rector Major (RRM n. 305-307; GC22 Docs. n. 58; AGC 313) we can synthesize the significance of the centenary in the following fashion: "We are invited to make a commemoration with dynamic fidelity; to make a deep return to our origins so as to launch ourselves forward: our year 2000 begins in the past century so as to continue in others still to come".

Commemoration and commitment go hand in hand, and bring together three aspects in a vital unity: celebration — verification — process of growth in the salesian vocation.

In this way we shall avoid two attitudes, opposite indeed in tendency but both equally misleading: a triumphalism which is out of date and therefore no longer understood, difficult to accept and of short lived impact at the present day; and a reductive minimization incapable of living the centenary as an outstanding event through which the Holy Spirit, who "through the motherly intervention of Mary raised up St John Bosco" (C 1), asks us to intensify our commitment to be "the living Don Bosco" in our own time.

2. Involvement and participation

The call of the centenary is of value to the extent that it takes its rise from the person of Don Bosco, from his holiness, from his mission and founding charisma.

It is a call to involvement and participation, which reaches in the first place those who have identified their own christian vocation with the realization — in different ways of life — of Don Bosco's apostolic project.

The call is at the same time, and with particular significance, to those to whom Don Bosco was sent: young people. Don Bosco is theirs and he would feel out of place in an environment

where there were no youngsters or where they were lacking in self-expression.

The call too, through the very nature of Don Bosco's charism, has many reasons at the present day for involving local and particular Churches, civil and social organisms, and in general all persons and institutions who are available and/or open in various ways to meet the needs of the young and of poor areas.

3. Animation of the centenary

It is evident that to achieve such involvement and participation in the sense just indicated, a work of animation will be necessary throughout the process of preparation and celebration of the centenary, with two complementary aspects always in mind:

— *Decentralization*: this is necessary for the adaptation of programmes for the centenary to the specific vocation of individual Groups of the Salesian Family; to different structural working levels (world, national, provincial, local); and to the demands of the environment in which our mission is carried out.

— *Coordination*: this too is necessary, because the common vocation of the Salesian Family will imply at every level, in the celebration of the centenary, moments when the different Groups come together for common events.

4. The "Don Bosco 88" Commission

Animation within each of the individual Groups is obviously the concern of the structures of animation and government foreseen by their respective Constitutions, Regulations or Statutes.

The task, on the other hand, of coordinating the animation

(referred to above at n. 3) could be efficaciously undertaken by the provincial "DB 88" commissions, which should be set up as soon as possible because they are the key point for the animation of the centenary. Their composition must be an expression of the whole Salesian Family. For this reason the consultant group for the Salesian Family, in those provinces where it already exists, could well carry out this task.

The principal duties of the provincial "DB 88" commission are: to provide suitable guidelines for the setting up of local "DB 88" commissions; to provide them with information — coordination — animation; to keep in touch with the national commission (where it has been thought well to institute one) and with the Central "DB 88" Commission, already organized and functioning at the Salesian Generalate in Rome.

5. Outline calendar

- *year 86*: setting up of "DB 88" commissions at various levels; study and elaboration of projects, initiatives, aids and instruments of animation.

- *year 87*: with the young on the way to 88.

- *31 Jan. 88 - 31 Jan. 89*: "with Don Bosco very much alive": celebration of the centenary.

6. General theme of the centenary

The general theme proposed to us by the Rector Major is presented in the enclosure, together with a scheme for reflection which provides some basic indications and can serve for meetings of various kinds: study, prayer, verification, commitment.

It is an "open" scheme which, within the unity of the one theme, leaves ample space for development and selection by

every Group of the Salesian Family and for adaptation to local practical circumstances. It is not therefore superimposed on programmes, practical priorities and pastoral projects devised by the different Groups, but inserts them all into a unified and common framework.

7. Common moments of special importance

31 Jan. 88: beginning of the centenary.

Celebration to be prepared at every level with salesian, ecclesial and civil dimensions. This date will naturally have particular relevance at Turin.

31 Jan. 88: conclusion of the centenary.

"Appraisal 88": this "appraisal" is intended to be one of the significant moments at world level in the celebration of the centenary by youth. The plan is for it to take place in the first ten days of September 1988 at Turin and Colle Don Bosco, with a programme to be drawn up by the Central "DB 88" Commission and communicated in good time.

"Contest 88": there will be an artistic competition, in three sections:

- *DB 88 Exhibition:* painting - sculpture - drawing - engraving;
- *DB 88 Festival:* stage productions - singing - other events;
- *DB 88 in Literature:* articles - essays - poetry.

The contest will take place in progressive stages at local, provincial, (national) and world levels.

Basic regulations will be sent out as soon as possible, which can be expressed in greater detail by provincial (and/or national) DB 88 commissions to meet the conditions of their own territories.

8. Communications

a) Attention is drawn to the initiatives to be realized with the concurrence of everyone, presented by the Rector Major in AGC 313, p. 15 ff.

b) *Central "DB 88" Commission.* The members are:

Fr Gaetano Scrivo, President

Fr Juan Vecchi, Councillor for Youth Pastoral Work

Fr Sergio Cuevas, Councillor for Sal. Family and Soc. Comm.

Fr Luigi Bosoni, Reg. Councillor for Italy and Middle East

Fr Luigi Testa, Provincial of Subalpine province

Fr Eugenio Fizzotti, Director of ANS

Mother Maria del Pilar Leton, Vicar General FMA

Mother Elisabetta Maioli, Councillor for Youth Pastoral Work

Fr Mario Cogliandro, Delegate General for Cooperators

Sig. Paolo Santoni, National Coordinator of Cooperators

Fr Charles Cini, Confederal Delegate for Past Pupils

Dr Joseph Castelli, Confederal President of Past Pupils

Sig.a Rosadele Regge, Confederal V.President FMA Past Pupils

Fr Rinaldo Vallino, Assistant General of DBV

Sig.na Clara Bargi, Central Councillor DBV

Fr Mario Mauri, Secretary

c) *Coordinating team at Turin.* To coordinate replies which will have to be given from Turin to questions concerning transport, accommodation, guides, liturgy, etc. there will be a coordinating team under the presidency of the Provincial of the Subalpine province, and with the following as members: the Provincials of the Central and Novara Provinces, the FMA Provincials of Turin, the Director of the Marian Centre and the Rector of the Sanctuary of Colle Don Bosco.

A similar coordinating team will work in Rome, under the presidency of the Provincial of the Roman Province for analogous purposes.

d) *TV Film on Don Bosco.* At the request of the Department

for Social Communication, the Italian Television Network has included in its programmes for 1988 a TV Film on Don Bosco. Contact will be made with TV companies of other countries to ensure the widest possible telecast.

e) Various *publishing initiatives* are also in progress. The Department for Social Communication is preparing a completely new edition of "Don Bosco in the World". Other publications are foreseen from the UPS, the ISS, the FMA Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences, various study centres and salesian publishing houses.

f) To conclude this informational synthesis, attention is drawn to the need for each provincial "DB 88" commission to appoint an *information-officer*, with the duty of collecting and sending to the Director of the ANS news of the more significant centenary celebrations taking place within the province.

In the name of the Central "DB 88" Commission I thank you in anticipation for the attention I know you will give to this communication, and for the observations and suggestions that you may wish to send us. We certainly feel the need of your collaboration.

Cordially,

Fr GAETANO SCRIVO

P.S. - I would ask the Provincials to inform me as soon as possible of the constitution and composition of the provincial "DB 88" commission referred to in n. 4 above.

C. ENCLOSURE

GENERAL THEME FOR "DON BOSCO 88"

AND SCHEME FOR REFLECTION

In the concluding document of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, convoked by the Pope to commemorate Vatican II twenty years after its ending, the Final Report asserts: "The Council referred to the young as the hope of the Church (cf. GE 2). This Synod addresses young people with a special love and with great confidence. It expects much from their generous dedication, urging them to play their part in the Church's mission, accepting the Council's inheritance and dynamically developing it".

"There, dear confreres", writes the Rector Major, "you have an appeal of the Synod which we must consider addressed in a particular way to us who are called to be 'missionaries of the young'. We feel ourselves challenged to become valid transmitters of the Councils' riches to today's youth. Let us widen our pastoral horizons and direct the attention and ideals of the young towards the great themes of Vatican II, as they have been relaunched by the Synod. We must first understand and deepen our knowledge of the pentecostal significance of the Council, so as to transmit it to them: this is the great orbit in which the Church must move in the next decades... If Don Bosco were among us today he would feel great joy, and would concentrate all his pastoral charity, his pedagogical brilliance and his tireless spirit of initiative in this great ecclesial enterprise among young people. We are heirs of his mission. Let us set to work with goodwill to carry it out" (AGC 316, p. 27-28).

GENERAL THEME

In the light of the above quotation it is not difficult to understand the motives which inspired the Rector Major in his choice of the general theme for our approach to "Don Bosco 88".

**WITH OUR YOUNG PEOPLE
LET US ACCEPT THE COUNCIL'S INHERITANCE
AND DYNAMICALLY DEVELOP IT**

SCHEME FOR REFLECTION

This scheme concentrates on certain themes of Vatican II which are of particular significance and interest for our mission.

To the "DB 88" Commissions — especially at provincial level — are left the development and translation of the scheme, i.e. a translation into cultural and youthful terms suited to the environment in which we live and work and to the sensitivities of the young.

1. Being Church...

a) *Get a clear awareness of the Church as "mystery":*

- the plan of God's love in its three fundamental expressions creation - redemption - sanctification;
- the Church, sacrament of Christ in the world, and its mission;
- Mary most holy, type and model of the Church.

b) *Living the meeting with Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life through:*

- listening to the Word, and prayer;
- eucharist and reconciliation for human growth in Christ
- the liturgy, signs, seasons, feasts...;
- meeting God in persons who are witnesses of faith through their ministry and their charisma.

c) *Gain progressive experience of communion and participation especially in those dimensions which are closer, more*

visible and more meaningful to young people: group movements and group activities, educative communities, in constant dialogue, appraisal and openness to other expressions of the christian community.

Council references: LG - SC - DV - GS

2. ...in the contemporary world...

a) *Accept the cultural challenges characteristic of the environment*, by comparing them with those of the world context, as for example: life values, life qualities, dignity of the human person, civilization of love, solidarity, woman, work, poverty etc.

b) *Attention to the major themes emerging from the above*, such as action by youth, peace, justice, communion of all men, voluntary organizations, future professionalism etc.

c) *Faith and life*:

- in the face of these challenges, living the fundamental call to holiness;

- a youthful spirituality capable of 'reconciling' in daily life belonging to Christ and the Church with a commitment to dialogue and confrontation with the values of the present day.

- Christ the perfect man: in his life he reveals man to man (the fullness of humanism).

3. ...continuing the apostolic project of Don Bosco the founder

a) *Verification and growth in the vocational identity* specific to each group of the Salesian Family, and of the Family itself in its unity.

b) *Typical ways of intervening*:

- openness to educational values

- concrete methods
- in communion.

References:

The life plan indicated for each group of the Salesian Family by the respective Constitutions, Regulations or Statutes.

The letters of the Rector Major on topics contained in this scheme (cf. in particular: ASC 290, 294, 303, 304; AGC 313, 314, 316).

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

On 15 and 16 December 1985 the Rector Major was at Turin, to take part in the commemorative celebrations at our "Agnelli" Institute.

He closed the year on 31 December by presenting, as is the custom, the STRENNA '86: to the FMA at their Generalate in the afternoon, and later to the community of our own Generalate in Via della Pisana.

After the plenary session of the General Council he was in the Province of East-Venice from 17-19 January for a meeting with the confreres and for the great Youth Festival at Treviso; on January 30 and 31 he took part in the celebrations for the Feast of Don Bosco at Turin.

No sooner was he back in Rome than he had to leave again on 2 February as a consequence of the great loss suffered by the Ligurian Province in the tragic death of Fr Oreste Ron and Fr Gino Cencini; he went to Genoa for the funeral, accompanied by some confreres from the Economist's Department at the Generalate.

Between 16 and 22 February he was busy at the Vatican, preaching the Spiritual Exercises to the Pope and the Roman Curia.

The following is the scheme of his meditations, the preparation of which occupied nearly all his time for the previous month:

MEDITATIONS ON VATICAN II

Spiritual Exercises:

16-22 February 1986

1. *Introduction* (Sunday)
 1. A paschal pilgrimage with reflections on the Council.
2. *Church - Mystery* (Monday)
 - 2.1 History and Mystery.
 - 2.2 Life in the Spirit.
 - 2.3 Grace of unity.
 - 2.4 Beatitudes.
3. *Church - Sacrament* (Tuesday)
 - 3.1 Being Church.
 - 3.2 Being Pastors in the Church.
 - 3.3 Being the Pope's Curia in the Church.
 - 3.4 Being Religious or Laity in the Church.
4. *Church: Source of life* (Wednesday)
 - 4.1 Word of God.
 - 4.2 Eucharist.
 - 4.3 Reconciliation.
 - 4.4 Radical sequence.
5. *Church in Mission* (Thursday)
 - 5.1 Originality of Pastoral work.

- 5.2 Evangelization.
- 5.3 Option for the poor and for peace.
- 5.4 Martyrdom and the cross.
- 6. *Church and Eschatology* (Friday)
 - 6.1 Gift of youth.
 - 6.2 Force of experience.
 - 6.3 Communion with the future City.
 - 6.4 Christ alpha and omega.
- 7. *Conclusion* (Saturday)
 - 7. With Mary, Mother of the Church.

4.2 Activities of the Councillors

The Councillor for Formation

The Councillor General for formation, Fr Paul Natali, and his collaborators were involved in the month of January in the concluding part of the renewal course for confreres in charge of the post-novitiate, and also planned out the work for the revision of the so-called Rectors' "Manual". They decided on criteria to be applied, examined and put in order the observations that had been received on the previous edition, and decided on a provisional calendar.

Fr Natali spent the whole of February in Latin America, where he visited the provinces of the

Antilles, Venezuela, Bogotá and Medellín in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay. In each of them, following the publication of the Ratio-1985, he had meetings with the provincial council, the provincial formation commission, those working in formation communities, and the young confreres themselves in formation, and sometimes also with the rectors.

In all these meetings the Councillor General was able to take stock of the situation, note the positive elements, become aware of the problems and try to find solutions by suggestions of immediate action or of longer-term plans regarding structures, roles, content and methods in the formation process.

At Fusagasugá, between 9 and 12 February, he had a meeting with representatives of the formation personnel of the Pacific-Caribbean Region, at which the following themes were studied: The presentation of the Ratio-1985 and the "Criteria and Norms for Salesian Vocation Discernment"; the gradual and systematic study of the history of Don Bosco, of the Society, and of salesian spirituality and pedagogy; affective maturity and consecration in a celibacy lived according to the spirit of Don Bosco; authentic motivations for the vocational

option; and the formation of the salesian coadjutor.

The Councillor for Youth Pastoral Work

Prominent among the activities in February of the Councillor for Youth Pastoral Work was the FIRST SEMINAR ON "SALESIAN PEDAGOGY AND EMARGINATION", on which the following is a report.

One of the practical directives of the GC22 asked 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. Let the confreres make the courageous choice of going to the poorest among them, relocating our works if necessary in the places where poverty is greatest" (GC22, 6). And the Rector Major indicated as one of the areas of significant commitment for the next six years "a bolder presence among the poor" (GC22, 72).

In pursuance of these directives the Youth Pastoral Department and the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the UPS have organized three international seminars for the assessment, verification and relaunching of salesian educative experiences of emarginated, maladjusted and difficult youth.

The objectives of these seminars are: in the first place to exploit, document and socialize the patrimony of educative experience that has accumulated in various front-line sectors of salesian pedagogical and pastoral activity; a second objective is to attempt a critical appraisal of the experiences themselves, by comparison with analogous initiatives and with the help of experts; and a third aim is to plan possible initiatives for a relaunching, development and deeper analysis of these activities and identify new fields for our involvement.

Preparations began on 15 March 1985 with a request to Provincials to provide information concerning work of this kind already being done in the provinces. This was followed by a classification and the request to draw up a report for each work on a form specifically prepared for the purpose. On the basis of these reports a method of work was decided on, together with the themes to be developed in the seminars. In some areas (Italy, Spain) preliminary seminars were organized to prepare a more accurate assessment of the regional reality.

The first of these international seminars (covering Europe and U.S.A.) took place at Benedikt-

beuern (Germany) from 7-12 February 1986. Those taking part were 56 salesians and two FMA, coming from 13 different countries. It was presided over by the Councillor General for Youth Pastoral Work and had the assistance of provincials, vice-provincials, and experts, as well as numerous people working directly in the field concerned. The "Actionzentrum" placed its facilities and personnel at the disposal of the seminar to ensure its best possible realization.

A significant amount of time was taken up by the presentation of the experiences that had been selected, which provided a varied and stimulating picture of what was being done: reception communities for drug-addicts, chaplaincies and voluntary assistance for young prisoners; work in strongly deprived areas on the fringe of big cities; reference and assistance centres for immigrants, especially from the third world; houses for helping physically handicapped youngsters who are retarded intellectually or who have relational difficulties that prevent social integration; communities for the re-education of juveniles who have fallen foul of the law and run away from home: a panorama therefore with numerous new incentives and one which well illustrated the "youth

poverty" to be found in the European context.

Four introductory addresses provided a basis for assessment and deeper analysis. The first, presented by Fr Giancarlo Milanesi who coordinated the seminar, focussed on the theme: "old and new forms of social emargination in Europe"; it provided also elements for an interpretation of the causes and process of emargination, with the consequent pedagogical requirements. The second, given by Fr Adolf Heimler, concentrated on "Structural disturbances of the personality of the subject", a central problem for the understanding, treatment and prevention of emargination. The third address, that of Fr Jean Marie Petitclerc, offered pedagogical criteria for "evaluating action for the re-education of emarginated youth". And finally Fr Juan Vecchi presented the sense and position of commitment to emarginated youngsters in the salesian pastoral and educative plan.

The visit to the house of Waldwinkel, which takes care of the education and social and professional integration of 320 physically handicapped young people by means of advanced pedagogical principles and with particularly qualified personnel and appropriate structures, pro-

vided an excellent complement to the discussions.

At the end of the seminar observations and suggestions were made concerning the means for getting to know the problems leading to situations of emargination, the sensitivity of the Congregation in this respect, the preparation of personnel, ways of coordinating work in this sector, and initiatives which could be set on foot in the light of the coming centenary.

The Councillor for the Salesian Family and Social Communication

As soon as the plenary session of the General Council ended, Fr Sergio Cuevas presided over the International Seminar of the Directors of Salesian Bulletins, which took place at the Generalate from 9-21 January 1986. The purpose of this seminar was to assess the journalistic, ecclesial and salesian impact made by the Bulletin in the various countries in which it is published (34 editions in 19 languages circulate in 70 countries). In the section "Documents and News Items" of this issue of the AGC will be found some information on the seminar, in the course of which a relaunching of the publication was studied with a view to improving the pastoral and cultural

service we offer and the professional ability of the personnel responsible for the Bulletin itself (cf. 5.2, p. 47).

From 9-11 January Fr Cuevas was also present at the meeting of the European consultant group of young past-pupils, held at the Generalate, with the purpose of relaunching the Movement with a more specific and detailed programme which will involve each of the Federations concerned and make it possible for them to assess results.

As is customary each year the Councillor arranged for the organization and realization of the 12th annual Week of Salesian Spirituality. The meeting took place at the "Salesianum", Rome, from 23-29 January, and was devoted to a deeper study of the Strenna of the Rector Major for 1986 with the theme: "The lay dimension in the activity of the Salesian Family". Further information will be found in the section "Documents and News Items" (cf. 5.4, p. 56).

After these important meetings and seminars Fr Cuevas was concerned in the provision of animation in various places. At the end of January he visited and gave conferences to various groups of the Salesian Family in Rome and Lazio. In the early part of February he took part in

meetings with Cooperators involved in missionary work and development at the salesian Missions Office at Bonn, in the Federal German Republic. On his return to Rome he attended the annual meeting of salesian provincial delegates for cooperators and past-pupils at the national headquarters at Via Marsala, Rome; the theme of the meeting was "The role of the salesian delegate in groups of the Salesian Family".

From 6-22 February he visited the Far East and made contact with the Institutes and groups of the Salesian Family in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and Hong Kong. Particularly valuable for purposes of mutual information were the meetings with the Institutes of Religious Women founded by salesian missionaries, e.g.: the Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki (Japan), the Handmaids of Mary Immaculate and the Daughters of the Queenship of Mary in Thailand, and the Sister Announcers of the Lord in Hong Kong. In the provincial centres it was possible to meet groups of Cooperators and Past Pupils, Don Bosco Volunteers, and the confreres responsible for the animation of the various groups.

A significant moment was the handing over of the Letter by

which the Rector Major communicated the official recognition of the Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki as members of the Salesian Family. This was an important event which confirmed the salesian characteristics of the Institute founded by Fr Cavoli and Fr Cimatti, which at the present day is flourishing as regards vocations in Japan, Korea and Latin America.

During his journey Fr Cuevas saw for himself the work of the salesians involved in social communication in the fields of publishing, audiovisuals, youth publications, the Salesian Bulletin and retail bookshops. Prospects for the future are open and promising, especially as regards animation of the christian faith, the education and evangelization of young people, and the ecumenical approach in the content of salesian printing activity.

The Councillor was also able to visit aspirantates, formation communities, study centres and the more significant cultural and social works in these salesian provinces.

Valid work is done through assistance offered to street lads, to young ex-prisoners and to those living on the outskirts of towns in Cebu, and to lepers in Macau; significant too is the work done by the technical schools of Tokyo,

Seoul, Macau, Banpong and Manila.

Fr Cuevas returned to Rome after the visit to Hong Kong on 22 February.

The Councillor General for the Missions

Between 11 January and 20 February Fr Luc Van Looy made a visit of animation to five provinces of India.

After taking part in a meeting of the Provincial Conference of India at Sulcorna and visiting the houses of Goa, his particular interest was in the areas of front-line missionary activity and the houses of formation.

At Chotta Udepur and at Dakor, in the State of Gujurat, the confreres of the Province of Bombay are developing a work among tribal and emarginated peoples. At Nasik, in the novitiate and postnovitiate, he found a strongly missionary sensitivity.

In the State of Andhra Pradesh, the Bangalore Province has missions at Ravulapalem, Munipally, Bhimanapally, while works are in process of development at Vijayawada and Chandur.

He visited the houses of Hyderabad and Bangalore before going on to the novitiate at Coimbatore and the postnovitiate at Yercaud.

At Madras he visited several

houses and had a meeting with a group of some sixty confreres in the evening of 26 January.

In the Province of Calcutta he spent two days in the mission of the Santhals, north of Krishnagar. He met with the clergy of the diocese and was able to visit Mgr Morrow in the Convent of the Sisters of Mary Immaculate. At Bandel he had a meeting with the postnovices and with the aspirants.

The Feast of Don Bosco he celebrated with the boys of the technical school at Okhla (New Delhi); in the evening of the Feast he was able to have a meeting with all six salesian bishops of India who had come to New Delhi to welcome the Holy Father to India.

Not having the necessary permission to stay in Assam, he left on 1 February for Gauhati and went straight on from there to Shillong. The visit of the Holy Father to Shillong gave him the opportunity on 4 February of meeting many confreres from the Province of Dimapur, which he could not visit because of the lack of the required authorization. After the solemn concelebration with the Pope which took place in the midst of a huge throng of people, an eloquent and stimulating experience, he visited all the missionary centres in the Khasi

Hills, the Garo Hills and the Jaintia Hills, and saw for himself the enthusiastic work of evangelization that is being done by the salesians. In the final days he was able to visit also the salesian centres of Shillong and the suburbs of the city.

On the way back he made brief stops at Calcutta and at Bombay, where he found himself in the company of a large group of confreres and FMA who were taking part in a study of the theme "Social commitment in our schools" in the Province of Bombay. A visit to the aspirantate at Lonavla brought his journey to a close.

The Economer General

From 18 January to 6 February Fr Paron was the guest of the Atlantic Region of Latin America, and presided over the meeting of the provincial economers of the Region at Campos do Jordao, Brazil (26-28 January). Present also at the meeting was the Regional Councillor (Fr Carlos Techera), the local provincial (Fr Hilario Moser) and all the provincial economers of the Region, each one accompanied by another confrere of his own province.

Matters dealt with at the meet-

ing concerned temporal goods and their administration in the light of the new Code of Canon Law; the services provided by the Economer General's Department and its relationship with the provinces; the section of the provincial directory which dealt with the administration of goods; relations between Religious Institutes and the Local Churches as regards economic management; and finally the training and updating of economers. The three-day meeting took place in a family atmosphere with plenty of dialogue. After the meeting the desire was expressed to have another one in a few years time, but with a separate one for each provincial conference.

Before the meeting at Campos do Jordao, the Economer General and Fr Techera had visited some important houses in the provinces of Belo Horizonte and of San Paulo in Brazil. After it he passed through the Argentine Provinces of Rosario, La Plata and Buenos Aires.

On 31 January, Feast of Don Bosco, at La Plata he received the profession of 31 novices who had finished their novitiate.

Finally, just before his return to Rome he visited the salesian works in Montevideo in the Province of Uruguay, and other works in the same country.

5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

5.1 Spiritual Exercises in the Vatican

Concluding address of the Holy Father

The following is a transcript of the closing address of the Holy Father (from the Osservatore Romano - English edition), spoken on 22 February at the conclusion of the Retreat preached at the Vatican by our Rector Major. We welcome his words with gratitude; they are an expression of esteem and appreciation for the Successor of Don Bosco and in him for all our Family.

Dearest Brothers,

This is intended to be just a brief word of thanksgiving. A thanksgiving especially for this special feast-day dedicated to the Chair of Peter: providentially the conclusion of our spiritual exercises occurs in the light of this liturgical mystery that we celebrate today.

Next, we thank the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for the great gift of the spiritual exercises, with which we have been able to fill the first week of Lent and so begin our Lenten

journey towards the Easter of 1986.

When I speak of "thanksgiving" I think above all of those who have accompanied us with their prayer; there are many, who do this continually, just as the Church has done from its earliest times, accompanying the Petrine ministry with prayer and sacrifices. Such prayer goes on in the Church of our times, even for our spiritual exercises which are an important part of the Petrine ministry in the Church.

We are grateful then for the intimate community spirit we have enjoyed during these days, the communion of minds, in prayerful listening, as our preacher was saying, i.e. in a listening, full of charity, to the Word of God.

And we are thankful for the Word of God that has been given to us during these days: thankful for the charity with which we have been able to listen to and to welcome the seed of this Word. We thank our very dear preacher; we thank him, but above all we thank the Lord for his Lenten ministry which the preacher has accomplished for us. Our gratitude is especially intense because

it is he who has been the sower of the Word of God and who has facilitated for us that prayerful listening, that attitude of openness in the fullness of love to the Divine source of the Word. We are very grateful for everything he has given us during this week — expressed in an articulate, very clear and very systematic way. He chose a theme of very great current interest; and we can say that it was a providential choice. Indeed, more than twenty years from the closing of the Second Vatican Council, to return on the tracks of that Council, all the more so in the light of the last Extraordinary Synod of the Bishops, was certainly a providential choice for us all. In this way all of us were able to meditate on the directives offered by the last Extraordinary Synod to the whole Church, Holy See included. We are thankful again for the choice made by the preacher and for his methodology, because not only did he help us to relive the Council, but he did so precisely in the way that the Council should be relived twenty years after its conclusion, i.e. in the common experience of the spiritual exercises, as a light, as a nourishment for our minds, especially for the mind of the Pope, of his closest collaborators, of all of us who during this week

have constituted this praying community, in listening, in meditation.

The reasons for this word of thanks that I wish to address to our preacher are many: but I would like to add that, in the manner in which he presented to us a theme of such great importance he revealed not only his special charism as a preacher, but also his fidelity to the charism of the founder, of the founder of his society, the well-deserving Salesian Society; and I think it is only right that the Rector Major of the Society of St John Bosco should be an outstanding bearer of the charism of such a founder. For this we are grateful to the Lord, to the Holy Spirit and also to our very dear preacher. There would of course be very many other reasons for expressing our gratitude, but let us leave space for the personal initiative of each of those here present who will want to express his own gratitude in prayer before the Lord.

Now I wish to invite all those here present to the solemn act of that Lenten thanksgiving, a thanksgiving that goes specifically with every day of the Church's liturgical life, but in a special way with this moment.

For what we now have to express, it would be practically

impossible to find a word more appropriate and more moving than that of the *Magnificat*: so let us conclude our meeting now with the *Magnificat*.

5.2 Seminar for the Directors of Salesian Bulletins

Concluding words of the Rector Major

The Department for Social Communication organized (through the Italian edition of the Bulletin, in the person of its Director, Fr Joseph Costa) a *Seminar for the Directors of the various national editions of the Salesian Bulletin*. It took place at the Generalate from 9-21 January 1986.

The initiative, in which almost all those responsible for the 39 national editions of the Bulletin took part, consisted in a series of evaluations and stimuli offered by experts and technicians from various places. Among them were Fr Piero Gheddo, director of "Mondo e Missioni", who spoke on the provision of missionary information; Fr Giancarlo Milanesi of the UPS - information on young people; Tito Zecca - relationship between the press and popular devotion; journalists Luigi Accattoli, Angelo Montonati, Gerard Reifert and Joseph Vandrisse - religious information; Ser-

gio Lepri, director of ANSA - press agencies. A comparison was made with the experience of the "Eco di San Gabriele", a religious publication in constant expansion in Italy; other contributions came from television journalists Nino Cascino and Goffredo Donato, and from Fr Pietro Stella. To all of these were added the interventions of the President of the Pontifical Commission for Social Communication (Mgr Foley), the Rector Major and various members of the General Council: the Vicar General, Fr Gaetano Scivo, who presented the centenary year of the death of Don Bosco; the Councillor for Social Communication, Fr Sergio Cuevas, who presided over the seminar; Fr Juan Vecchi, Fr Luc Van Looy and Fr Agostino Dziedziel who brought the Seminar up to date on the activities of the central Departments.

In addition to the experience of journalism gained during the seminar, the participants were able to examine the questions relating to the Bulletin in its various editions, and to decide on some practical lines of action with a view to making the Bulletin a ready and valid instrument, rich in content, for spreading salesian spirit and activity in the world (having particularly in mind at present the celebration

of the centenary of 1988). All the participants had immediately the lively feeling that with opportune organization and technique of the kind required at the present day, the Bulletin is capable of further growth. The conclusions made clear the important journalistic and pastoral potential that we can place at the service of the Church and of the salesian vocation in the world.

As the end of the seminar the Rector Major spoke enthusiastically to those taking part. The following address is translated from the recording that was made.

*Concluding address
of the Rector Major*

I felt unable to prepare a written message for so highly qualified an assembly as this one. I am sorry that unfortunately I was not able to participate more deeply in your meetings. Nevertheless I studied the programme, I have seen the various speakers who have contributed, I followed the work and I have formed a very good idea of the commitment you have shown. Sometimes I have felt a touch of fear because when I see the Bulletins which arrive here and then I look at the highly competent people who have come to speak to you, I

thought that after a time a certain feeling of discouragement might develop: comparing what we are humbly managing to do with what we could and should be doing and with what others are doing, one becomes aware of the intervening gap and of the fact that the Congregation is lagging behind in social communication. The point was considered by the last General Chapter which decided to establish a Department for social communication, and that Department is now making efforts to raise the level of communication, especially (as you can see) by training personnel, both those in charge and those working at lower levels.

The last General Chapter also faced up to the problem of the Salesian Bulletin, and formulated an article of the Regulations (art. 41) which you will certainly have read and commented on during these days. You know too that the General Council, in advance of this meeting, had already given some thought to the Salesian Bulletin, because the decision of the GC22 implies a commitment to renewal on the part of the Congregation, and the first people to show docility to the Chapter's decision are the Rector Major with his Council. The Councillor for social communication will certainly have

spoken of and presented the guidelines which came from the Rector Major and his Council: he himself prepared a synthesis which was published in n. 315 of the Acts of the General Council.

An important element in the realization of your tasks is precisely this: that the Bulletins in their various editions and languages are to be edited according to the directives of the Rector Major and his Council. Evidently it is a question of wide directives, but which give a deep sense to this organ of communication in the Salesian Family. If the Bulletin is a periodical which follows the directives of one who carries the principal responsibility for an apostolic family, it follows that the publication concerned cannot be allowed to become static and settle down under a routine kind of management; the apostolate and activity of the salesian vocation, and therefore the directives stemming from the responsibility of the Rector Major and his Council, are something alive; they are subject to revision, not only every six years when the Rector Major changes; whenever there are special events or special objectives to be achieved the Rector Major with his Council can emphasize certain things which must be done and which must be reflected in some way

in this organ of communication (though evidently in a different way from the Acts of the General Council or a circular of the Provincial etc.).

If I may now refer concretely to the present time, I would say that this six-year period is centred around '88; but the celebration of '88 is an occasion for going much further: I have addressed a letter to all the confreres on "Don Bosco '88" for the express purpose of pointing out that 1988 is a year which concentrates our attention on the significance of what we are doing in these years following Vatican II, and especially now after the definitive approval of our Constitutions and Regulations. It is a matter of a deep renewal to relaunch Don Bosco's charisma: a youth spirituality, a lay spirituality, the stimuli of the salesian movement. What I mean is this: through our publications, according to their nature, we must be able to make it clearly seen that we are bearers of a charisma. The Salesian Bulletin is not simply a chronicle of superficial facts; it is the bearer of a charism: it informs, it communicates, it discloses the vitality of the salesian movement, of the need to consider practical problems of the present day so as to bring timely collaboration to the work of a new

evangelization.

It is easy therefore to understand the need for harmony with the directives of the Rector Major and his Council. There is no need to fill the pages with spiritual conferences; the periodical has its own way of presenting apostolic initiatives, youth problems, missionary situations and so many other things; but it is always prompted by the preoccupation, typical of the salesian charism, to throw evangelical light on the condition of youth, especially those in greater need at the present day. If I insist on this point it is because I am convinced that a very common defect today is that of spiritual superficiality, which is reflected among other ways in social communication.

You therefore must be able to direct the review with taste and journalistic professionalism, but at the same time with evangelical depth. Mere technique without this accompanying depth would mean that the mandate of the General Chapter was not being fulfilled, and similarly spiritual sense without the necessary technique would mean a lack of due efficacy.

Now all this leads us to some wider considerations. To speak of a youthful and lay spirituality, proper to the spirit of Don Bosco,

might become something we could call a closed circuit, in a small domestic environment: and that is just what we must avoid! We don't want to make of the Salesian Family a watertight compartment, but a charism for the Church. There is room therefore for the big problems of the Church which touch our charism (and nearly all of them do touch it, even the life of the Trappists — if we want it to): the Bulletin must therefore appear more universal, more ecclesial and, since the Church is the servant of the world, more social and more human.

In other words, if I take a Salesian Bulletin and find that from the first page to the last there are only photographs of salesians of the last century or the beginning of the present one, good and holy men though they were, and there is little or nothing of the Pope, of pastoral workers and ecclesial events, certainly I will look at it with interest the first time, but after that I say to myself: I've seen all this before! It is the life of the Church, the life of the young, the life of the world that should be there, but always seen from the standpoint and in the perspective of our own charism.

This is easier said than done, I know; but if it is not said,

certain defects will never be corrected.

This is why I said that sometimes, as I leafed through different Salesian Bulletins (I am speaking now of a time some years back, because all of them are now improving) I became aware of a gap between what the speakers have recommended in this meeting and what I used to see printed.

Another suggestion: how can we improve the Bulletins? To be realistic I would say that it must be done in small stages; we must take small steps, but always moving forward, and in this way we shall go a long way, even though slowly. I was recently at a meeting in Venice, and a confrere there made an enthusiastic if naive suggestion: he suggested that the Congregation should have a social communication satellite, a national or continental television network and other similar things. I let him talk, but then I put forward some practical considerations: let us be dreamers by all means, but with our feet firmly on the ground. We want to make progress, but we must do it a little at a time with careful planning of the direction we want to take.

And thinking of these small steps, which are the realistic way of bringing about improve-

ment, I look at the figure of the *Director of the Bulletin*. The Director holds the key to the renewal and growth of the Bulletin. He must be well chosen (but you have been well chosen already); he must have the qualities and capabilities which correspond to his role. I am not going to make a list of such qualities for you, but there are two or three which I believe to be fundamental, and I would like to say a word or two about them.

First among them I would put *salesian sensitivity*: if the presentation of the contents in an engaging and modern way has an underlying purpose, this purpose should be clear and felt and lived out by the one who gives the publication its tone. Sensitivity to salesian life (and today that means the sensitivity which the Salesian Family has in the charismatic renewal of the post-conciliar period) is acquired by living in a salesian manner, being interested in and keen on getting to know about salesian things, visiting salesian works, making contact with practical situations, etc. This salesian sensitivity is fundamental, because it gives the tone to everything!

Immediately after salesian sensitivity but strictly united with it comes *the necessary competence to be the director of a*

magazine. Salesian sensitivity is at the root of the very meaning of the Bulletin, but it calls for an indispensable competence and ability — call it *professionalism* if you like: a competence which is assumed, inserted and assimilated in the salesian sensitivity.

This is where we sometimes find a divergence of ideas, or dualism. I was once talking with a Cardinal about the cause of losses of vocations in religious institutes of apostolic life, a crisis which has been more intense than in institutes of contemplative life; he was of the opinion that professionalism had ruined consecration. At that very time I was preparing for a meeting of Superiors General on the theology of apostolic spirituality, and I was trying to demonstrate the very opposite, i.e. that one of the characteristics of apostolic spirituality was precisely that of being interested in human professions and able to assume and include them; with this idea I explained the famous para. 8 of "Perfectae caritatis". We talked for some time, without — I think — either of us changing his ideas, but the Cardinal became aware at least that what he thought was an unchallengeable principle was not shared by everyone.

In what does the formation

consist of a salesian who has to work in the field of education, in the context of the human sciences, of the advancement of the young, of insertion in the world of work, if he is not interested in the professionalism and competence needed in these sectors? I put to myself the question: are temporal realities and professionalism opposed of their very nature to the vocation and sensitivity of consecration? Certainly not! Today we have consecration in secular institutes, which we might call a practical exemplification of this principle: they show that not only is it possible, but it is the point to which they tend for their own perfection.

I say then that a Director of the Salesian Bulletin who is not concerned about acquiring journalistic competence will never see the publication make any progress, because he is lacking in the technique of communication. When one reads a magazine one is immediately aware if professionalism is wanting in the communicator, especially if it is directed to simple, youthful and working-class environments. One has to learn, to acquire the taste, the brilliance, the technique to be able to present suitable and attractive contents in a lively way.

I want to emphasize how indispensable it is that these two elements should be always in harmony and never in conflict: I mean that professionalism must never be a reason for excluding salesianity, and vice versa that salesianity must not be an ingenious pretext for excluding professionalism and competence. For the Director of a Bulletin his very salesianity demands that he seriously set about becoming professional; and his professionalism will be an expression of his vocation to the extent that he is able to perceive and communicate the spirit of Don Bosco for youth and the man in the street. They are two aspects of the same reality: even though the two qualities can exist separately they must be fused in the Bulletin Director, and exist together as two characteristic aspects of his person.

And then there are other qualities which the Director should cultivate; I will mention just one or two of them.

— The *ability to collaborate and to find collaborators*, i.e. to be able to form an editorial team. A publication cannot be the work of a single person; it needs a council of competent collaborators who meet from time to time, who think and plan, who revise and criticize, who organize

and approve and disapprove etc. I remember that I too was at one time a member of the editorial team of a theological review. We used to meet, read the articles submitted and give our opinion, or else we prepared some particular issue by choosing specific collaborators. This ability to coordinate a whole lot of help is important, especially since in more recent years the Bulletin has become an organ of the Salesian Family: it is a good thing therefore if all the different groups of the Family can feel directly involved in the periodical in whatever different ways may be possible.

— And then it is necessary to be *fond of revision*: it is a good thing if from one issue to the next, or at least after a certain period (which should not be a long one), there should be a revision of the work, carried out with others if possible, by prompting criticisms and accepting willingly letters and suggestions which give cause for thought. We are well aware, especially if we do a lot of writing, that sometimes criticisms which come in are no more than the expression of a nostalgia for things the writers knew when they were younger: signs of an inflexible mentality; nevertheless I consider the desire for revision and criti-

cism to be important, especially at a time like ours when the Bulletins are emerging from an over-humble physiognomy and moving towards a service of greater competence and dignity.

Finally I want to thank and congratulate you and to give you courage, because without any doubt at all the Salesian Bulletin is an instrument which is doing a power of good and which, if we are able to improve it still further, will be able to make an even better contribution to providing knowledge of the wonderful charism of Don Bosco. In this way we shall be able to make a good preparation for 1988 as well, which I think must not be a simple celebration but an occasion for the rejuvenation of the whole Family, drinking fresh water from the source and so being able to move in salesian style in the orbit of Vatican II.

A few days ago I was at Treviso at a youth manifestation at Paslaverde di Villarba. There were five thousand young people taking part, animated and prepared by various groups of the Salesian Family; it was an event marked by tremendous enthusiasm! With me was the journalist Vittorio Messori, who was a great stimulus in an interview with me. At the sight of so many young people he said to me,

obviously deeply moved: "I have never been at the centre of an uproarious gathering like this one; and how do you manage to keep calm in the midst of it all?" And after our dialogue he added: "It is incredible how much alive Don Bosco is after a hundred years!" We dealt with ecclesial and youth topics, topics very relevant at the present day, in which Don Bosco's charism is very much *ad rem*; and of course there were also singing, sketches and the usual general joy and happiness.

The Salesian Bulletin must be able to communicate a similar spirit; it must not present a series of museum pieces, but must be promoting the reality of life in growth. For this purpose it must be creative. If you go into a museum you will find everything clean and tidy, the floors waxed and polished and everything in its place; but enter the studio of an artist and you will find things scattered all over the place, paint and marks on the floor, and everything far from being in good order — but all this is because something creative is taking place there. I encourage you not to produce Bulletins which are clean and well polished, with lots of memories of the past (even though in the past lie the roots of our future), but

to be creative in the sense of centring salesian sensitivity on the life of the Church, on the needs of youth at the present day, on the middle and lower class neighbourhoods which have greater need of the proclamation of the Gospel and defence of the faith, in short on our mission to the young and the poor.

And so there you have some ideas which can help you, at the end of these days of intense work and discussion, to reflect from a salesian standpoint on your great and important work as Directors of Salesian Bulletins. My best wishes to you all, and many thanks!

5.3 The Institute of the "Sisters of Charity of Miyazaky" becomes part of the Salesian Family

The following letter was sent by the Rector Major to the Superior General of the Sisters of Charity of Miyazaky, to inform her that the request for their official recognition as members of the Salesian Family had been granted.

Rome, 31 January 1986

Reverend Mother,

It gives me great pleasure to let you and all the Sisters know

that your request for official recognition as members of the Salesian Family has been granted.

You had made the request at the end of your last General Chapter, on 15 August 1985, after the explicit insertion of this perspective in your renewed Constitutions. The Rector Major with his Council has examined the constitutional text and also the history of your foundation, and was happy to observe that your plan of life and action conforms to the charism of Don Bosco in the Church.

By a singular grace of the Lord, there is found at your origins the presence of an ardent salesian missionary, Fr Antonio CAVOLI, and also the one you call your co-founder, the dear and well-deserving Mgr Vincenzo CIMATTI, whose cause for beatification has been introduced.

With guides of such exceptional values, and notwithstanding moments of trial, the Institute could not fail to grow rapidly, and to follow a sure and exquisitely salesian path.

In fact the works in favour of so many poor and suffering children, the pastoral method which takes its inspiration from the Preventive System, the spirit of simplicity and joy, of work and temperance, of eucharistic and Marian piety hinging on

pastoral charity, constant reference to the Salesians of Don Bosco — all this is a clear manifestation of the presence in the Institute of so many specific values of the Salesian Family.

Within this family you occupy a new and novel position, and on this account you will embellish and enrich the other members.

Outstanding in your Institute in fact are some characteristics worthy of emphasis:

— a lively missionary thrust which soon led you to Latin America and to Europe;

— concern for the apostolate among families;

— and, in a special way, the contemplation of the mystery of the Heart of Christ as the living fount of saving charity.

These will help you all to deepen your salesian pastoral charity.

In the fraternal relationship which animates our whole Family, it is our sincere hope that there may truly take place a mutual exchange of vital qualities for our common enrichment, and in particular that you may find in the Salesians both spiritual assistance and guidance in your pedagogical, catechetical and vocational pastoral work.

We pray that the good Lord, through the intercession of Mary

Help of Christians and of St John Bosco, may continue to grant you an increase in numbers, in fervour and in good works, for his glory and for the benefit of the poor and little ones.

To you, Reverend Mother, and to all your well-deserving Sisters, I send my cordial greetings.

FR EGIDIO VIGANÒ

The Reverend Mother
Theresia IWANAGA
Superior General
Sisters of Charity of Miyazaky

5.4 12th Week of Spirituality of the Salesian Family

The 12th Week of Spirituality of the Salesian Family took place from 23-29 January 1986 at the "Salesianum" in Rome, with the participation of more than 120 representatives of the different groups of the Family, coming from many countries of Europe as well as some parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The reflections and exchange of experiences were designed to probe more deeply the Rector Major's Strenna for 1986, in view of its incidence on salesian spirituality and the efficacious realization of Don Bosco's apostolic project. The general theme was: *"The Laity: a dimension of action*

in the Salesian Family". It was developed from the following standpoints:

— the theological foundation: "The Laity in Vatican II and the subsequent period" (Fr Severino Dianich);

— the historical background: "Evolution of the Catholic laity between 1800 and 1900" (Prof. Pietro Borzomati);

— the salesian aspects: "Lay people in Don Bosco's practical plan" (Fr Pietro Braidò); "Lay values lived and offered by salesian educators" (Fr Morand Wirth);

— repercussions in the youth sector: "What young people are looking for today" (Fr Aldo Ellena);

— consequences for the spirituality of the Salesian Family: "Reformulation of our spirituality, starting from the concept of Laity" (Fr Antonio Martinelli).

These keynote addresses formed the basis of group work, and were enriched by the communication and witness of experiences and moments of relaxation. Everything took place in a true family atmosphere. The meeting was organized and animated by the Department for the Salesian Family and was presided over by the Councillor General

for that Department. The concluding address was given by the Rector Major who commented on the Strenna and indicated some guidelines.

The Acts of the Week are in process of publication; they will carry the text of the papers that were read and the rich contributions of the working groups.

5.5 New Provincials

In the plenary session of the General Council between 5 November 1985 and 10 January 1986 (cf. AGC 316, p. 51), six new provincials were appointed. The following are brief notes on each of them.

1. Fr ANDREA ASMA, *Provincial of Holland*

Born at Denekamp in the Diocese of Utrecht (Holland) 8 June 1932, he made his first profession in August 1953. He was ordained priest in Belgium 6 May 1962 and was then animator of the school at Rijswijk for several years. In 1967 he became rector of the salesian house at Rotterdam, and in 1969 of that at s'Heerenberg; subsequently he was rector at Apeldoorn (1971), at Schiedam (1977) and at Lauradorp (1981). He became a member of the

provincial council in 1975, and since June 1985 had been Vice-provincial.

2. Fr UMBERTO MENESES,
Provincial of Mexico, Mexico

He was born at Puebla, Mexico, 21 November 1940, made his novitiate at Coacalco and his first profession at the same place on 16 August 1958. After his ordination (30 March 1968) and first priestly experience, he was appointed in 1972 rector of the house of S. Pedro Tlaquepaque. Subsequently he was rector also of the house of "S. Cuore" at Guadalajara (1973) and of that at Colima (1978) where he remained until his appointment as provincial.

3. Fr BENJAMIN MORANDO,
Provincial of Manaus, Brazil

Italian by origin, he was born at Camposampiero (Padua) 4 July 1943, and made his novitiate at Albare (Verona) where he also made his first profession, 16 July 1964. He then left for Brazil and did his postnovitiate studies and practical training in that country. He returned to Italy for his theological studies at Rome and was ordained priest at Milan in 1947. He returned to the Prov-

ince of Manaus with a licentiate in pedagogy, which he used in his ministry of priest and educator. In 1981 he was appointed rector of the house of Belem-Carmo, an office he retained until his appointment as provincial. He had been a provincial councillor from 1985.

4. ZACHARIAS ORTIZ,
Provincial of Paraguay

A native of Paraguay, he was born at Arroyos y Esteros 6 September 1934, did his novitiate at Alvear (Argentina) and made his first profession there 31 January 1955. He studied theology at Cordoba in Argentina where he was also ordained, 14 August 1965. He obtained the licentiate in pastoral theology and became parish priest at San Vicente - Assuncion where in 1981 he was appointed also rector. Subsequently in 1983 he became rector at Ypacara. He had been a provincial councillor from 1981 and was a member of the GC22. In 1985 he was appointed Vice-provincial.

5. Fr TITO PEDRON,
Provincial of Thailand

Born 9 April 1936 at Soccolongo (Padua), he was still an aspirant

at Ivrea when he left for Thailand. There he made his novitiate at Hua Hin and made his first profession 25 March 1960. After his practical training he went to Cremisan (Israel) for theology and was ordained at Jerusalem 20 December 1969. After obtaining the licentiate in theology and the diploma in pedagogy and catechetics at the UPS he returned to Thailand and was an animator in the aspirantate and technical school at Bangkok. In 1978 he became rector of the provincial house, and in 1981 rector of the technical school, both in Bangkok. Since 1978 he had also been Vice-provincial.

6. Fr MICHAEL WINSTANLEY,
Provincial of Great Britain

Born at Wigan in the Diocese of Liverpool 25 February 1941, he entered the salesian house of Shrigley in 1954, and after the novitiate at Burwash made his first profession 8 September 1959. After practical training he studied theology at the UPS where he obtained the licentiate in theology, and subsequently at London for the M.Th. He was ordained priest at Shrigley 15 December 1972. He was attached to the Centre of Spirituality at Ingersley for some years and then moved to

the salesian community at the Northern Interdiocesan Seminary at Ushaw, England, where he taught Scripture and became rector of the community in 1979. From 1981 he was also a member of the provincial council.

5.6 Salesians appointed to the Roman Curia

Two salesians have recently been called to fill posts of responsibility in the Roman Curia. The following are their biographical details.

1. Fr JOAO CORSO

In October 1985, Fr Joao CORSO was appointed a "Prelate Auditor of the Roman Rota", the ordinary court of appeal for cases appealed to the Holy See, which judges all ecclesiastical cases of the Roman Curia.

Fr Corso was born in San Paolo (Brazil) on 2 March 1928. He holds a doctorate in canon law and a diploma in sociology. He was a rector in the province of San Paolo and President of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal of the Archdiocese of San Paolo.

Called to Rome as a professor in the Faculty of Canon Law of the UPS, he was from 1984 rector of the "Gesù Maestro" community

at the UPS and a councillor of the UPS Vice-Province.

2. Fr RAFFAELE FARINA

On 16 February 1986 Fr Raffaele FARINA was appointed Under-secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture, a recently constituted organ with the purpose of "witnessing to the deep interest of the Holy See in the progress of culture" and of "creating a flourishing dialogue with the various cultures, fostering the coordination of the cultural activities of the Holy See and of the local Churches, and collaborating with international organizations in the various cultural fields".

Fr Farina is 52 and was born at Buonalbergo (Benevento). He holds doctorates in philosophy and history with also a teaching diploma. He has taught for several years in the Pontifical Salesian University and was Rector Magnificus of the University for six years (1977-83). He was Moderator of the GC21 and is at present also Director of the salesian central archives.

5.7 Brotherly Solidarity (47th Report)

In presenting the six-monthly report on brotherly solidarity, we

want to make the remark first of all that the generosity of the Congregation is reflected in the missionary availability of the confreres and in the contributions made by the provinces and communities to other communities in greater need.

In allotting the sums that became available in the period July-December 1985, particular attention has been given to means of communication, because of their importance in work of education, evangelization and development.

We wish to emphasize in general the *purpose of brotherly solidarity*, which is that of drawing special attention to those countries where regular help is not possible, where the normal channels do not function, where the confreres share more directly in the famine of the local people.

We reserve space in our budget for confreres who cannot make any plans for fraternal help for their people, because they live each day from hand to mouth, relying on what Providence sends!

The following is the list of sums received and distributed.

a) PROVINCES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE SOLIDARITY FUND:

LATIN AMERICA

Chile - Santiago province	L. 3,800,000
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NORTH AMERICA

U.S.A. - San Francisco
province 30,000,000

EUROPE

North Belgium 22,000,000

Germany - Cologne
province 1,950,000

Italy - Ligurian prov-
ince (Sampierdarena
parish) 1,000,000

Italy - East Venice
province (Udine) 2,000,000

Italy - A past pupil
(anon.) 10,000,000

Holland - Leusden
province 5,340,000

Spain - Leon province 2,200,000

Spain - Madrid prov-
ince 3,000,000

Anon 9,750,000

b) DISTRIBUTION OF MONIES RECEIVED
THROUGH THE SOLIDARITY FUND:

LATIN AMERICA

Antilles - La Vega
(Dom. Rep.): for
means of transport L. 12,000,000

Argentina
(Buenos Aires): Edi-
torial D. Bosco con-
tribution for Sale-
sian Bulletin 4,000,000

Argentina (Bahia Blan-
ca): Juan XXIII, for
publications 2,000,000

Argentina (Cordoba):
S. Antonio, for pub-
lications 10,000,000

Bolivia (La Paz): for
the church 10,000,000

Bolivia (Cochabamba):
for the library 10,000,000

Brazil (Porto Alegre):
Sao Michel, Youth
Centre for audiovi-
suals 4,000,000

Ecuador (Quito):
audiovisuals for
young cooperators 6,000,000

Peru (Piura): S. Mi-
guel: for means of
transport 10,000,000

Uruguay (Montevideo):
salesian seminary
for social commu-
nications 10,000,000

Colombia (Bogota):
Hijas Sagrados Co-
razones: contribu-
tion for 1st depar-
ture for Africa 10,000,000

ASIA

India (Bangalore):
for publications 10,000,000

5.8 S.D.B. Statistics 31/12/85 Summarized figures

ISPETTORIA	TOT. PROFESSI + NOVIZI al 31.12.1984	PROFESSI temporanei				PROFESSI perpetui				TOTALE PROFESSI al 31.12.1985	NOVIZI			TOTALE NOVIZI al 31.12.1985	TOT. PROFESSI + NOVIZI al 31.12.1985
		L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P		L	S	P		
RMG	81	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	67	87	-	-	-	-	87
UPS	119	-	-	-	-	16	-	1	103	120	-	-	-	-	120
AFC	219	11	18	-	-	24	9	-	153	215	2	6	-	8	223
ANT	172	-	22	-	2	17	9	-	121	171	1	12	-	13	184
ABA	232	2	20	-	-	14	14	-	168	218	-	3	-	3	221
ABB	181	4	18	-	-	17	4	-	134	177	1	1	-	2	179
ACO	195	11	14	-	-	7	9	-	118	186	3	9	-	12	198
ALP	138	1	26	-	-	15	5	-	87	134	-	5	-	5	139
ARO	151	3	15	-	-	18	4	-	103	143	-	5	-	5	148
AUL	129	5	8	-	-	22	8	-	83	126	-	4	-	4	130
AUS	161	4	8	-	1	14	2	1	125	155	2	2	-	4	159
BEN	235	1	15	-	-	22	5	-	185	228	1	4	-	5	233
BES	119	1	6	-	-	8	2	-	101	118	-	1	-	1	119
BOL	112	3	22	-	-	14	2	-	71	112	1	5	-	6	118
BBH	179	1	19	-	-	23	4	-	125	172	3	3	-	6	178
BCG	183	5	23	-	-	28	4	-	117	177	-	6	-	6	183
BMA	126	3	18	-	-	22	3	-	76	122	3	13	-	16	138
BPA	144	-	32	-	-	11	2	-	90	135	-	4	-	4	139
BRE	99	6	11	-	-	15	2	-	62	96	2	3	-	5	101
BSP	237	5	45	-	-	30	6	-	140	226	3	11	-	14	240
CAM	236	3	45	-	-	26	9	-	143	226	-	23	-	23	249
CIL	248	5	49	-	-	24	10	-	153	241	-	-	-	-	241
CIN	156	1	14	-	-	38	2	-	95	150	-	1	-	1	151
COB	205	4	21	-	-	43	11	-	118	197	-	8	-	8	205
COM	162	1	30	-	-	25	9	-	88	153	-	11	-	11	164
ECU	266	5	32	-	-	32	16	-	174	259	1	9	-	10	269
FIL	319	26	121	-	-	21	8	1	130	307	5	17	-	22	329
FLY	178	1	4	-	-	34	3	-	139	181	-	-	-	-	181
FPA	247	2	6	-	-	32	2	-	200	242	1	3	-	4	246
GBR	182	3	11	-	-	21	1	-	141	177	1	2	-	3	180
GEK	198	12	18	-	-	41	3	-	121	195	2	8	-	10	205
GEM	288	10	25	-	-	67	7	-	168	277	2	8	-	10	287
GIA	124	-	8	-	-	21	2	-	91	122	-	-	-	-	122
INB	277	10	90	-	-	22	21	-	126	269	1	17	-	18	287
INC	317	12	90	-	-	27	30	-	146	305	2	16	-	18	323
IND	179	6	52	-	-	3	25	-	79	165	1	14	-	15	180
ING	287	8	56	-	-	27	23	-	136	250	1	16	-	17	267
INK	281	2	118	-	-	13	26	-	104	263	-	32	-	32	295
INM	325	10	107	-	-	23	23	-	146	309	1	36	-	37	346
IRL	226	7	30	-	-	17	13	-	146	213	2	5	-	7	220
IAD	174	1	1	-	-	34	-	-	132	168	-	-	-	-	168
ICE	391	9	15	-	-	149	1	1	206	381	2	2	-	4	385
ILE	433	4	20	-	-	77	3	-	324	428	-	2	-	2	430

ISPETTORIA	TOT. PROFESSI + NOVIZI al 31.12.1984	PROFESSI temporanei				PROFESSI perpetui				TOTALE PROFESSI al 31.12.1985	NOVIZI			TOTALE NOVIZI al 31.12.1985	TOT. PROFESSI + NOVIZI al 31.12.1985
		L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P		L	S	P		
ILT	240	1	9	-	-	44	3	-	180	237	-	-	-	-	237
IME	364	2	28	-	-	57	7	2	260	356	-	2	-	2	358
INE	242	2	9	-	-	52	2	-	169	234	-	1	-	1	235
IRO	328	3	8	-	1	61	7	2	237	319	2	1	-	3	322
ISA	84	-	5	-	-	9	6	-	66	86	-	-	-	-	86
ISI	404	3	23	-	-	42	13	-	319	400	-	1	-	1	401
ISU	499	4	15	-	-	113	8	-	358	498	1	3	-	4	502
IVE	322	1	18	-	-	66	6	1	220	312	1	4	-	5	317
IVO	260	1	8	-	-	54	-	-	185	248	-	2	-	2	250
JUL	172	-	28	-	-	23	15	-	101	167	1	4	-	5	172
JUZ	121	-	24	-	-	8	3	-	81	116	-	-	-	-	116
KOR	37	3	12	-	-	6	1	-	14	36	-	6	-	6	42
MEG	147	2	27	-	-	10	6	-	97	142	-	10	-	10	152
MEM	184	5	45	-	-	15	6	-	102	173	2	13	-	15	188
MOR	143	-	6	-	-	33	-	1	104	144	-	1	-	1	145
OLA	95	-	-	-	-	27	-	1	65	93	-	-	-	-	93
PAR	100	4	22	-	-	8	2	-	66	102	-	7	-	7	109
PER	169	6	31	-	-	11	8	-	109	165	2	5	-	7	172
PLE	380	8	132	-	-	22	7	-	182	351	4	47	-	51	402
PLN	306	3	87	-	-	13	9	-	182	294	2	28	-	30	324
PLO	243	1	49	-	-	1	12	-	176	239	-	19	-	19	258
PLS	266	2	90	-	-	1	5	-	130	228	-	31	-	31	259
POR	188	3	11	-	-	50	4	1	112	181	1	5	-	6	187
SBA	295	4	26	-	-	46	9	-	199	284	-	2	-	2	286
SBI	271	7	35	-	-	58	34	-	126	260	-	11	-	11	271
SCO	164	4	20	-	-	9	3	2	115	153	1	4	-	5	158
SLE	293	13	29	-	-	68	18	-	160	288	5	5	-	10	298
SMA	464	26	42	-	-	102	25	-	261	456	7	9	-	16	472
SSE	202	1	14	-	-	36	7	-	144	202	-	2	-	2	204
SVI	219	1	12	-	-	36	10	-	153	212	1	10	-	11	223
SUE	304	2	20	-	-	60	9	-	209	300	-	3	-	3	303
SVO	135	2	8	-	-	28	5	-	91	134	-	-	-	-	134
THA	105	3	20	-	-	10	7	-	64	104	1	5	-	6	110
URU	158	-	21	-	-	11	1	-	117	150	1	3	-	4	154
VEN	243	1	23	-	1	26	5	1	188	245	-	9	-	9	254
Totale	17058	326	2287	-	5	2390	605	15	10877	16505	76	580	-	656	17161
Vescovi Prel.	77	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	77	77	-	-	-	-	77
Non catal.	470	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	464	464	-	-	-	-	464

TOT.

17605	326	2287	-	2390	605	15	10954	17046	76	580	-	656	17702
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5.9 Our dead confreres (1986 - 1st 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.
L ALOI Luigi	Torino	10-01-86	72	ISU
L ALONSO Felipe	Santander	30-03-85	87	SBI
L AMISANO Valentino	Torino	24-01-86	83	ICE
P BERICHEL Ange <i>Fu Ispettore per 12 a.</i>	Saint-Brieuc	30-01-85	78	FPA
P BISIO Giovanni	Varazze	27-01-86	76	ILT
P BREA Pedro	General Pico	24-01-86	73	ABB
P BRIANZA Cesare	Macau	18-01-86	67	POR
P CABY Jean-Marie	Tournai	3-03-86	57	BES
P CALLEGHER Angelo	Tolmezzo	23-01-85	69	IVE
P CAPIAGHI Federico	Tiruvannamalai	14-12-85	77	INM
P CARPANI Enrico	Varese	8-01-86	68	ILE
P CENCINI Gino	Viareggio	31-01-86	53	ILT
P CESARIN Sante	Corigliano d'Otranto	4-03-86	84	IME
P COLLETT James	Liverpool	19-02-86	57	GBR
P CORRADO José	San Salvador	9-02-86	72	CAM
P de la IGLESIA Domingo	Bahia Blanca	10-01-86	73	ABB
P DE MARTINI Edward	Oakland	9-01-86	86	SUO
P DONZELLI Giovanni	Catania	4-01-86	73	ISI
P FARINA Carlo	Los Angeles	9-01-86	74	SUO
P FAVITTA Salvatore	Randazzo	1-11-85	81	ISI
P FELFOLDI István	Budapest	31-01-86	66	UNG
L FRANZERO Leonardo	Lima	21-12-85	79	PER
P GIULIANI Emanuele	Borgovalsugana	4-01-86	71	IVO
P GOI Fabrizio	Alassio	12-01-86	45	ILT
E GONZALEZ RUIZ Julio <i>Fu Vescovo per 26 a.</i>	Lima	6-01-86	62	
P GUARIENTO Guerrino	Conegliano	2-02-86	70	IVE
P IZURIETA Carlos	Quito	25-12-85	91	ECU
P JACEWIZ Viktor	Włocławek	19-04-85	75	PLN
L KALTENBACKER Matthias	Unterwaltersdorf	21-12-85	77	AUS

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P KEIJZER Guillaume	Le Havre	11-06-85	57	FPA
P KOSTEK Wojciech	Przemysl	29-01-86	85	PLS
P LUVISOTTO Guerrino	Pordenone	6-02-86	73	IVE
P MANZONI Giuseppe	Verona	6-01-86	86	IVO
P McKENNA Thomas	London-Battersea	8-02-86	81	GBR
P NATALINI Giovanni	Udine	1-03-86	66	IVE
P ODZIEMCZYCK Władisław	Wałcz	12-09-85	62	PLN
P PANAMATAMPARAMBIL Zacchary	Dibrugarh	24-11-85	50	IND
P REBOLLO Teofilo	Barcelona	2-01-86	80	SBA
P ROBAKOWSKI Tytus	Wola Gołkowska	12-01-86	75	PLE
P RON Oreste	Viareggio	31-01-86	73	ILT
P SATTLER Silvio	Curitiba	29-12-85	77	BPA
L SCHWENDNER Johannes	München	22-01-86	73	GEM
L SEIJAS Manuel	Valencia (Venez.)	23-12-85	88	VEN
P SKORCIK Stefan	Lubumbasji	22-08-85	54	AFC
P T'HORT Theo	Doetinchem	3-01-86	74	OLA
P TRAVAGLINI Marino	Civitanova Marche	28-01-86	81	IAD
P UREÑA Francisco	Ubeda	1-01-86	74	SCO
L VERDAGUER Lorenzo	Barcelona	22-01-86	84	SBA

