



# acts

**of the general council**

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**year LXVIII april-june 1987**

**N. 321**

official organ  
of animation  
and communication  
for the  
salesian congregation

**Roma  
Direzione Generale  
Opere Don Bosco**

3





# acts

## of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St John Bosco

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

### N. 321

year LXVIII

april-june 1987

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## 1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

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### THE PAST-PUPILS OF DON BOSCO

Introduction. - Article 5 of the Constitutions. - The «education received». - 17 years with Don Bosco. - Don Rinaldi, inspirer and organizer. - Past-Pupils «of Don Bosco». - The values of salesian education. - Different degrees of assimilation of these values. - Some ways in which Past-Pupils can take part in Don Bosco's mission. - The task of salesian communities. - Vital importance of spirituality. - Conclusion.

Rome, Solemnity of St Joseph, 19 March 1987

*My dear confreres,*

I am glad to be able to pass on to you a special greeting and the apostolic blessing of the Holy Father. On Friday 13 February in fact, the Rector Major and his Council were received in special audience by the Supreme Pontiff. It was our desire to thank His Holiness for what he has granted us in connection with the centenary celebrations of '88, and in particular for the Apostolic Brief regarding the special "Year of grace" and his promise to come to Turin in the first half of September 1988.

The audience took place in a family atmosphere and with a friendly conversation during which we were able to note once again the Pope's concern for the young, his profound admiration for Don Bosco, and the fatherly esteem he has for our Congregation and the whole Salesian Family. He rejoiced to hear of the number of the Family's com-

ponent groups. Among the comments he made about the members and their activities, he reminded us that we are "charismatics of youth", and as we took our leave of him he repeated with a smile that we must be so especially in the present time of cultural transformation. The audience proved to be a significant anticipation of the spiritual and ecclesial depth with which we hope to commemorate the event of the centenary.

This encouraging encounter also marked the end of the plenary session of the General Council, which on 1 December had begun a period of work lasting more than two months. Among other things, we were able to examine and approve more than 40 provincial chapters, and it was consoling to note the serious and practical manner in which the provincial directories had been drawn up. I am more and more convinced of the Lord's love for us, and that he is with us as we lay solid foundations for a better future.

We shall prepare ourselves to express, all together, our gratitude to God our Father by an act of particular significance. On 14 May 1988 (as stated in this edition of the Acts, p. 42) we shall renew in our provinces and houses our religious profession. The date is a Saturday in the month of May, and marks the anniversary of the salesian profession made by Don Bosco and his first chosen young men of Valdocco. On that day the Congregation will feel itself spiritually renewed and ready to face up to the new times with the same enthusiasm and same creative daring of its founder. Let us take note of this at once, and set about preparing for it both individually and as communities.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. AGC 319



## Article 5 of the Constitutions

The Strenna of this year (and I hope you have made my commentary on it the subject of your meditation) invites us to intensify the community and activity of the Salesian Family so that it may approach 1988 (and beyond!) as a real "Ecclesial Movement" of missionaries of the Young. The various consecrated Groups in the Family already have their texts and subsidiary aids, born of the conciliar renewal, which can lead them to greater authenticity. More recently the Cooperators have drawn up the new text of their Regulations of Apostolic Life, of which I hope — dear confreres — that you all have a copy. You have also been already encouraged by one of my earlier circular letters to make a serious effort to gain a good understanding of Don Bosco's thought in their regard and to take up both as individuals and communities the responsibility for their animation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cf. AGC 318

I would like now to reflect more deeply with you on *the importance of the Past-Pupils*, the nature of their Association and the particular reason for their participation in the Family, and hence in Don Bosco's mission.

I consider this a matter of no little importance in the renewal of our Congregation. Every confrere needs to reflect on it, and provincial and local communities are invited to review and relaunch in a practical manner the responsibility they share for the animation and revitalization of this immense and promising Association.

The heart and activity of the Salesian cannot be circumscribed by the walls of his own house. The thoughts I now put before you may be considered as a deeper treatment and development of what I

have already said in the circulars on the Salesian Family<sup>3</sup> and on the Laity.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. AGC 304

<sup>4</sup> Cf. AGC 317

Our point of departure and reference can be art. 5 of the Constitutions, which states that the Past-Pupils form part of the Salesian Family. The reason for their membership is given as "the education they have received"; in reality this education gives rise in them to different levels of participation, some more closely linked with the salesian mission in the world, and some less so. The recent "Guide to the Salesian Constitutions" notes that "past pupils are particularly prepared, precisely because of the education they have received, to assume a responsibility in collaborating for the attainment of the objectives inherent in the salesian plan". The 'choice of the Gospel' made by many of them "is not an alternative to the title of 'education received', but rather a special expression of it: it is not therefore a separate title applicable to a kind of new group".<sup>5</sup> I think that what is stated by art. 5 needs further careful consideration on our part; it will serve to remind us certain practical obligations we must not overlook, and which require of us clarity of vision and awareness of our responsibility.

<sup>5</sup> Guide to the Constitutions, Italian edition p. 115

### **The "education received"**

The title of Past-Pupils to membership of the salesian Family "by reason of the education they have received" is dense in content with many fundamental qualities. It prompts us to make a wide-ranging examination of conscience with regard to our educational and pastoral activity. A glance at the history of our origins will show us how important this is, by pointing out the bonds that arise

from an authentic salesian educational system.

The Past-Pupils' Association had no direct "founder". Don Ceria tells us that it was born "like one of those things that arise from spontaneous natural causes";<sup>6</sup> it sprang from the family spirit of the preventive system at the Valdocco Oratory. Don Bosco himself has written that his style of education "makes the pupil a friend", and enables the educator to speak to him in the language of the heart, not only while he is at school *but later on as well*, even when the former pupil is in employment, civil service or business.<sup>7</sup> It is an educational method which has led to profound changes in behaviour (Michael Magone is an example), which has led to the heights of sanctify (Dominic Savio, for instance), and a permanent communion of ideals and feelings with the educators all through life (and that is where the Past-Pupils come in). The atmosphere of living together, of happiness, friendship and development breathed by youngsters of different cultural origins and social conditions, has the power to create between educators and pupils a kind of spiritual relationship with bonds of mutual esteem, affection and ideals of life which endure in time.

"The boys felt themselves loved by Don Bosco, not just as simple pupils but as sons, and because of this there arose naturally in them, when they grew up, the thought of going back to their father's house. And this spontaneous return continues to take place to the schools and houses where is sown this 'homing instinct' felt by former pupils, and where the spirit and method of Don Bosco is still to be found. The Past Pupils' Movement was not therefore something started up by the educators as an association for school-leavers for group activities

<sup>6</sup> E. Ceria, *Annali* I, 715

<sup>7</sup> "The preventive system", in appendix to *Constns. and Regs.* p. 248

with a selected membership; it "grew up on its own" with a charismatic vitality at its beginnings.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. U. Bastasi, "Guida organizzativa del Movimento Exallievi di Don Bosco", Turin 1965, p. 8

### 17 years with Don Bosco

The Past-Pupils Group began to take on a certain consistency even during Don Bosco's own lifetime. Its beginning can be assigned to Don Bosco's feastday on 24 June 1870. On that occasion a dozen or so former pupils came together officially under the leadership of the genial and generous Carlo Gastini, who always looked on the Oratory as his second family. They set about finding more members and then formed a commission for the better organization of future annual manifestations of their affection and gratitude.

In this way the feast increased in scope from year to year, becoming a triumphal expression of grateful appreciation. After some years it was found necessary to divide the manifestation into two sections or meetings: one on Sunday for the lay past-pupils, and another on the following Thursday for those who had become priests; the latter became quite numerous and to them the good Father continually recommended the care of the young.<sup>9</sup> Little by little, especially after Don Bosco's death, they became further subdivided into local groups, unions and societies, and it was Don Philip Rinaldi who eventually got them organized efficiently in a practical form.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. BM 14, 402-404

The period from 1870 to 1888, i.e. the 17 years during which Don Bosco was directly in touch with them, provide us with a great deal of food for thought; they enable us to see more clearly the meaning of their title to membership of the Family



“by reason of the education they have received”.

We know what a great love Don Bosco had for his pupils; when they had finished their schooling he never forgot them, but followed them up, helped them, invited them back, welcomed them, encouraged them, guided them still, admonished them if necessary, and was concerned especially for their spiritual good. In one of the numerous encounters with them, he said: “I see that quite a number of you have lost your hair; in others it has turned grey and your foreheads have become wrinkled. You are no longer the boys I once loved so much, but I feel an even greater love for you now than I did then, because your presence here today tells me that you still have firmly rooted in your heart those principles of our holy religion that I taught you and that they guide you in your life. And then I love you more than ever because I can see that your heart is still given to Don Bosco... (and I can tell you) that I in turn am all yours, in my thoughts and in all I do. You were once only a little group, but that group has grown, has increased enormously, and will grow greater yet. You will be a light shining in the midst of the world, and by your example you will teach others how they must do good and detest and avoid evil. I am sure you will continue to be Don Bosco’s consolation”.<sup>10</sup>

On another occasion he said to them: “My dear sons, one thing I recommend to you above all else: wherever you may be, always conduct yourselves as good christians and upright citizens... Many of you already have a family. Give your children the same education you received from Don Bosco here at the Oratory”.<sup>11</sup>

Canon Berrone tells us that “in those meetings with his former pupils Don Bosco always urged

<sup>10</sup> MB 17, 173-174

<sup>11</sup> BM 14, 401

them to keep the Oratory spirit alive in society, and many of them availed themselves of the opportunity to seek his counsel".<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> BM 9, 428

In 1883, during his visit to Paris, after he had spoken about his educational method he answered a question by a person who expressed doubts about the perseverance of the young artisans once they had left the Oratory and gone into the army or the world of work: "At Turin", he said, "there are many who come to confession on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings. And then in the Italian army it is well known that those who come from our workshops practise their faith; in fact, the others call them the 'Boscós'. You can find them at all levels in the army".<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> MB 16, 167

On 26 July 1884, he recommended to his former pupils, almost as though leaving them a legacy: "Wherever you are, wherever you go, always remember that you are sons of Don Bosco, sons of the Oratory... Happy you will be if you never forget those truths I tried to engrave on your hearts when you were youngsters".<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> MB 17, 489

In the other salesian houses too, those of recent foundation, the same communion of life, stemming from the education received, was observed. We read, for instance, that in Montevideo under the leadership of Don Lasagna, who took the spirit of the Oratory there, quite a number of youngsters "either when they went home for holidays or after leaving the college, set up real festive oratories in their own houses"; and in this way there gradually came into existence an organization of oratories presided over by a past-pupil Dr Linguas, with a small body of Regulations which bore the interesting title: "Festive oratories of Montevideo managed by Past Pupils of the Collegio Pio".<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> BM 13, 125

During the years of direct contact with Don Bosco there were two particularly significant initiatives regarding his former pupils.

The first was in 1876, when Don Bosco finally launched the Pious Union of Salesian Cooperators after long years of planning and experiments. He gave great importance to his tiring work as the Founder and he invited the more committed ones among his former pupils to join this Pious Union. In one of the yearly manifestations of the former pupils following that date Don Bosco said: "The suggestion to involve each of you in the development of the work of the Salesian Cooperators is an excellent idea, because the Cooperators are sustainers of God's works by means of the Salesians... it is a work designed to shake people out of the inertia in which so many christians are bogged down, and spread the energy of charity".<sup>16</sup> An so in 1877, as Don Favini writes (in "Don Bosco e gli Exallievi"), "the Cooperators were referred to officially for the first time; and since former pupils vied with each other in joining the Pious Union (as appears from a letter of Canon Anfossi: BM 13,475), they were probably among the leaders" (in the manifestations of the Past Pupils too).<sup>17</sup>

The second was in 1878: Don Bosco suggested to his former pupils the setting up of a "Mutual Help Society" to meet difficulties that might arise: "I suggest that you do not benefit just yourselves alone, but reach out in emergencies to some of the well-behaved students who have left the Oratory, or to your former companions, or to everyone here present".<sup>18</sup> Carlo Gastini, leader of the former pupils, immediately set to work to organize such an association, using as a basis a set of regulations for a mutual aid society that Don Bosco had already

<sup>16</sup> MB 18, 160-161

<sup>17</sup> U. Bastasi, *op.cit.*  
p. 235

<sup>18</sup> BM 13, 582

drawn up and published in 1850 when he started such a scheme for the young workers at the Oratory.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> BM 13, 583

### **Don Rinaldi, inspirer and organizer**

After Don Bosco's death his former pupils continued their annual manifestation around the person of Don Rua, making of the feast of the Rector Major a great demonstration of gratitude, and when on 1 April 1901 Don Rua recalled Don Philip Rinaldi to Turin from Spain (where he had been provincial) to take on the important office of Vicar General (or Prefect General, as it was then called), the various groups of former pupils found in him an extraordinary animator and a very efficient organizer.

During his twenty years as Prefect General Don Rinaldi managed to bring about a reorganization with humble discretion, arranging matters so that it seemed that the main architects were the former pupils themselves or one of the collaborators working with him. In this way he was able to give an organic structure to a movement based on affection, gratitude and ideals of living, which made of the "education received" a living and dynamic force.

In 1906 he founded among the past pupils of Turin the "Don Bosco Circle" which quickly developed into one of the best salesian dramatic societies, and served as an example for similar organizations.

In 1907 to a confrere leaving for Spain, he said: "Look after the Past-Pupils: they are our crown; or, if you prefer it, they are the reason why we exist, because being an educational Congregation it is clear that we educate not for school but for life.



<sup>20</sup> U. Bastasi, *op. cit.*  
p. 20

Now the true life, the real life, begins when they have left our houses".<sup>20</sup>

To his work of animation Don Rinaldi added his far-sighted realization of the need for an organization, and suggested practical ways of bringing this about. On 25 June 1909 he put forward the idea of an international confederation, and to promote it he made use of the well-deserving "Commission of Don Bosco's Former Pupils" which, from the time of Gastini, had been organizing the annual manifestations at Valdocco. The structure was formally inaugurated in the first international Congress of Past-Pupils in 1911, as a Federation of the many local unions, circles and societies. Until then they had been called "Former Pupils" ("Antichi Allievi"); from that date onwards they were known as "Past Pupils" ("Exallievi") a name Don Rinaldi had already begun to use earlier.

By June 1912 it was already possible to organize an "Administrative Council" and nominate the first President in the person of Prof. Piero Gribaudo. "It was said, not without justification", commented Don Ceria, "that this was something quite new in the history of pedagogy".<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> E. Ceria, *Annali I.*  
712

During those years Don Rinaldi, who was also confessor of the Sisters and zealous animator of their Oratory for girls, was also concerned with the organization of the Past Pupils of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, so that they too might grow and eventually be structured as a Federation.

As Rector Major he took a constant interest in the functioning and vitality of the Union of Past Pupils, and was distressed to discover that not all the confreres had understood its importance. For this reason he earnestly recommended it to the care of provincials and rectors: "There are some",

he said, addressing a gathering of 25 provincials and 300 rectors at Valsalice in 1926, "who think that the organization of the Past Pupils is a useless work, and so they do not bother about it. I want to remind them that the Past Pupils are the fruits of our own labours. In our houses we do not work for a pay packet, or to ensure that the youngsters remain good only while they remain with us, but to make them good christians. And for that reason this Organization is an ongoing work: through it we want to bring back those who have gone astray; ... we have sacrificed ourselves for them and our sacrifice must not be lost".<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> ASC 36, p. 518

Chevalier Arturo Poesio, in a deposition in connection with the cause for beatification, declared: "Once in a meeting of Past Pupils, hearing that the latter were in difficulties as to how they could meet the whole cost (Lire 1,500) of their ceremonial meal, which he enjoyed very much, without putting a strain on the finances of the local Institute, the Servant of God declared that if a salesian house had only 1,500 lire to its credit, he would gladly approve the spending of the whole lot on the meal for the Past Pupils, because no sacrifice would be more satisfying to his heart if it helped to bring together around him his beloved sons".<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Cong. for Causes of Saints, 'Positio', Rome 1972, p. 32

Don Ceria observes: "If was said very forcibly, but in all truth, that Don Rinaldi 'shaped and formed the Past-Pupils Movement through his genial intuition and wanted it to be a dynamic and living force doing good in the world by its work'".<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> E. Ceria, «Vita del Servo di Dio Sac. Filippo Rinaldi», SEI Turin, p. 252

Dear confreres, I have tried to emphasize, albeit briefly, the work and thought of Don Rinaldi because his figure comes to life again in our hearts at the present day, with the hope we have that soon he will be beatified. It was said of him by Don Fran-

cesia (who lived close to our Founder for so many years) that Don Rinaldi had everything of Don Bosco except his voice. He was a most faithful and fertile disciple of the Father, with a deep intuitive understanding of his greatness of heart and soul, and that of the latter he developed some precious seeds which had not yet germinated. We well know, for example, the story of the Don Bosco Volunteers; that of the Past Pupils is equally clear.

Arturo Poesio stated in fact: "Don Rinaldi's eloquence was simple and spontaneous and at the same time fatherly and convincing. Only once did I hear him speak with an aspect and language of authority, and that was when he declared in his capacity of Rector Major of the Salesian Society, that the Organization of the Past Pupils must be considered as being one of the "new families" which Don Bosco had the merit of causing to spring up in the Church, as was said in the Collect proper to the Mass of the Saint".<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> 'Positio', p. 28

May Don Rinaldi help us by his intercession to promote today, in a Church renewed by Vatican II, the auspicious Association of the Past Pupils as a dynamic Group of the Salesian Family.

### **Past Pupils "of Don Bosco"**

It is a fine and stimulating thing to note that the name given to those who have been pupils in our Houses is not "Salesian" Past Pupils, but Past Pupils "of Don Bosco". This I consider to be a choice which, though formulated for the first time at the Oratory and then continued everywhere in time and place, provides us at the present day with a concrete programme. As we have seen already, the

Past Pupils were born, so to speak, by spontaneous generation through the "education received" from Don Bosco and his first collaborators. It was an education that forged living bonds and would always want to be expressed solely in the name of him who had inspired and developed it through the donation of his heart and through his pedagogical brilliance, and who had concentrated all his talents and extraordinary personal qualities in passing it on to his followers: "that you are young is enough to make me love you very much; for you I study, for you I work, for you I live, for you I am ready even to give my life".<sup>26</sup> Indeed Don Bosco dedicated himself to the education of the young with all the sensitivity of his oratorian heart: "with firmness and constancy ... in the midst of difficulties and fatigue: 'he took no step, he said no word, he took up no task that was not directed to the saving of the young'".<sup>27</sup> His pupils experienced this personally, and felt growing in themselves the bonds of sonship, of gratitude, of witness to the values contained in his loving work of education.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. C 14

<sup>27</sup> Cf. C 21

It is in him that we find the original secret and the pedagogical riches of an education that creates family ties.

In the First Past Pupils Congress of 1911, it was decided to erect a monument to Don Bosco in the square in front of the Basilica at Valdocco. The monthly periodical "Federazione", which began publication in 1913, coordinated the collaboration and enthusiastic support of numerous men and women Past Pupils who appeared in the subscription lists without specific distinction.<sup>28</sup> It proved difficult to make a final selection from among the 62 sketch plans that were submitted for the monument. Finally that of the artist Gaetano Cellini was chosen,

<sup>28</sup> E. Ceria, *op. cit.*, p. 254



and the first President of the Past Pupils, Prof. Gribaudi, explained the reason; he wrote: "A monument in the meadows of Valdocco could not possibly portray Don Bosco without children around him. That is how we had seen him; that is how he always was. I myself, though I was only ten when I entered the Oratory, was amazed to see the crowds who surrounded him and held on to his hands as he crossed the playground. We crowded around and were happy if we could just touch his hand; and he used to smile at us with those dark lively eyes of his... That was Don Bosco, our father, the father of all us boys".<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> E. Ceria, *op. cit.*,  
p. 256

Because of the first world war the inauguration of the monument was delayed until 23 May 1920. The event was an apotheosis, with three international Congresses of Cooperators, SDB Past Pupils and FMA Past Pupils being held at the same time, representing no fewer than 23 different countries.

Whoever goes to Valdocco and looks at the great monument cannot but think of the living and worldwide significance of the "education received" in Don Bosco's works.

To speak today of "education received" as a title to membership of the Past Pupils in the Salesian Family means to call to mind once again the charismatic conditions of the origins and to dwell on the way they have been prolonged and homogeneously developed in more than a hundred years.

We find ourselves therefore contemplating a title to membership which forms a genuine part of the Founder's charism. For a better understanding of its nature and to clarify its practical and organizational requirements in the present cultural and ecclesial circumstances, one must refer back to the preventive system.

**The values of salesian education**

Education is not the same thing as a simple introduction to the environment and culture proper to a society; it is more than that. It is certainly true that at the present day one must take into account the profound process of human evolution which is in progress in both the World and in the Church, with its resulting problems, some negative and some positive. Among negative problems are a pluralistic relativism, doctrinal and ethical confusion, totalizing political tendencies unjust economic situations, conflicts and antagonisms, laicism and atheism, the family crisis, emargination and the new forms of neglect of the young. On the other hand there are the positive aspects: a new growth in human values stemming from the signs of the times, the courageous ecclesial perspectives opened up by the Council, the great commitment to a new evangelization, a more concrete sense of solidarity and peace, an efficacious desire to provide space for a civilization of love, etc. All this is an indication of the tremendous need to enlighten man's freedom and provide a better formation of it from his youth.

The period of history in which we are at present living gives primary emphasis to education, but at the same time raises numerous problems concerning its purposes, content, methods, means and institutions. A renewed concept of education is urgently needed, one that is concrete and to the point, not abstract and generic; one that is all-embracing from a human point of view, and up to date in line with the requirements of each country; one that is concerned about formulating objectives and strategies in the light of a genuine vision of an-

thropology and faith; one that is directed to the attainment of a mature and proper freedom through processes of growth appropriate to age and existential conditions; one that is capable of critical discernment as regards the development of the individual, so as not to be blinded by popular ideas and ideologies; one that will liberate effectively from oppressions and embargoes; one that is realistic and creative, and hence open to continual self-appraisal which helps to develop through it a plan of life.

This is not the place to go more deeply into a sector with vast and complex problems. But if we want to relaunch the Past Pupils in such a way that they are not merely people who have passed through our schools but a true Group of the Salesian Family, we must return to Don Bosco's preventive system, to discern its great principles and deepen our understanding of them in the light of future perspectives; only in this way will the title to membership of the Past Pupils "by reason of the education they have received" be something living and fruitful for them.

The preventive system is considered to be one of the components of Don Bosco's charisma; in this sense it has been analysed in depth in our postconciliar work, and especially in the GC21.

Education is for us like a road along which our salesian apostolic consecration moves. We evangelize "by educating"; we promote culture "by educating"; we play our part in the commitment to justice and peace "by educating"; we promote the development of the individual "by educating"; we contribute to the building up of the church "by educating".

The GC21 told us that the preventive system

“does not indicate only a set of contents to be transmitted or a series of methods or procedures for communicating them. It is not pure pedagogy, nor is it solely catechesis. The preventive system, as it has been lived by Don Bosco and by his followers, is always like a rich synthesis of contents and methods; of processes of human development and also of proclamation of the Gospel and of deepening the christian life. In its goals, in its content and in its actual implementation it brings to mind at once the three words by which Don Bosco defined it: reason, religion, kindness”.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> GC21, 80

This group of three words will go down through the centuries. What we have to do at present is rethink their application in the light of the different cultures in which we work, but with our eyes always on Don Bosco's Oratory as the model from which we draw inspiration.

Let us look rapidly, therefore, at some suggestions, which already seem very obvious to all of us, but which challenge our educational renewal with respect to the relaunching of the Past Pupils and the concrete purposes of their Association.

— In addition to its basic connotation of “common sense”, the term “reason” evokes at the present day the idea of the different anthropological disciplines which go to make up the so-called “educational sciences”, to whose deeper development and teaching are dedicated two salesian faculties in Rome, that of the UPS and the “Auxilium” of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. The different cultures and the changes stemming from the signs of the times call for new competence in educators and the ability to constantly revise the practical applications of the educative project. The humanistic outlook in its overall content, the formation to free-

dom in the pursuit and preservation of what is good ('preventiveness'), the authentic concept of love and an objective view of sexuality, the presentation of ideals in which life appears as mission, the responsibility for being professionally competent, introduction to the world of work, a correct moral conscience, the sense of solidarity, family and political aspects of life, the realities of the temporal order with respect to their authentic lay condition, the dignity and role of women, the broad horizons of justice and peace, introduction to the promoting of human values in collaboration with all men of good will, adequate self-discipline in life, etc.; these are all concrete challenges to today's educators if their pedagogical activity is to be really in accordance with «reason».

— The term "religion" for Don Bosco represented an absolutely indispensable component of education. In the central nucleus of every culture religious values are always to be found; even a hypothetical atheistic culture would have at its centre as the stimulation of its structure the negation of God. In Don Bosco religion is the motive and thrust behind all his work of education. For him religion meant, in fact, the Catholic Faith; he educated to the Gospel of Christ by the pedagogical promotion and maturing of the baptismal option of his boys. At the present day Vatican II has opened up broad frontiers of renewal in this regard, which demand of us who are educators a new and robust competence in evangelization and the teaching of catechism. There is an urgent need for us to take up this prophetic legacy left us by the Council. In particular, the term "religion", as well as implying an updated ecumenical sensitivity between non-Catholic Christians, requires in the case of many of

us a direct knowledge and appreciation of those non-christian religions which are practised in numerous areas where we have educational centres. Openness to what is transcendent, the search for truth about God, the pedagogy of prayer, the value of celebrations in different cults, the meaning of human brotherhood, the sacredness of life, an ethic and spirituality of behaviour, a concrete manner of ascetical practice, the gratuitous gift inherent in living and working, the particular values and also the defects of popular religious practices etc., are all of them important aspects of an educational system which sets out to form to practical freedom. In this field too the educator has the delicate but indispensable task of being on the alert to detect objectively and prudently eliminate certain superstitious attitudes and religious and cultural taboos unworthy of human dignity and in evident contradiction with salvation history.

— Finally, the term “loving kindness” (Italian: “amorevolezza”) indicates that emotional involvement which constitutes one of the most characteristic aspects of the educational method of Don Bosco. It implies the creation of an educational environment permeated by the family spirit, by mutual confidence, easy dialogue, joy and friendship; by a life together, not only with regard to scholastic matters but also in the great variety of possibilities for the use of free time: sport, theatre, music, group activities, initiatives in the fields of social service and the apostolate, etc. in other words it implies that “oratorian atmosphere” through which educational work becomes for the young what the Oratory was: “a home that welcomed, a school that prepared for life, and a playground where friends could meet and enjoy themselves”.<sup>31</sup>

In such an atmosphere one can foster and accompany initiatives in which the youngsters themselves are the protagonists in group activities which give added sense to free time and make it useful and attractive.

The formation of a similar "educational environment", in which friendly relations develop between educators and pupils, is without any doubt the element which most ensures the birth and growth of those bonds of affection and life (almost of kinship) which, when the stage of youthful education comes to an end, will stay on in the lives of the Past Pupils; this is the main reason why they continue to feel that they belong to Don Bosco and to his family.

#### **Different degrees of assimilation of these values**

Art. 5 of the Constitutions speaks of the "education they have 'received'". To have frequented a salesian work is not sufficient to make one a Past Pupil in the real sense of the word.

In the phrase 'Past-Pupil', the word 'Past' is ambiguous. If it simply implies the condition of one who when young frequented a salesian work and then left it as one might leave a hotel, or because disenchanted about it, it would not serve to indicate the nature of the Association and its membership of the Salesian Family; it would signify no more than a group of former companions (which might be numerous or otherwise) for which the Association might provide in some way for the development of some educational values which had not been properly developed in the earlier days and had subsequently been suffocated by the cares and problems of life. On the other hand what the word

'past' really implies in this context, when linked with 'pupil', is the reality of the assimilation of very many educative values, their maturing, and hence a continuing attitude of "ongoing formation" which goes on all through life. That is precisely the characteristic nature of the Association.

The Past Pupils come together and constitute the Association because they feel the bonds of gratitude and think that together with the Salesians they can update the "education they received" and make it fruitful.

Evidently the assimilation of the values will admit of differences in degree and method according to the receptive capacity of each member.

More specifically: the values of "reason" and "religion" can be developed in different situations with a certain pluriformity; but at the level of "loving kindness" there should be a uniformly intense degree of presence in every salesian work, and in this way it becomes a yardstick for measuring the fidelity to the preventive system on the part of the Salesians and their collaborators in the individual works. I really cannot understand how there can be a salesian work which does not look after its Past Pupils; the history of the Oratory at Valdocco is far different from this.

The fact that there are different ways and degrees of participation is expressed in the Constitutions themselves, when they say in art. 5 that "the bonds of membership are closer when they (the Past Pupils) commit themselves to take an active part in the salesian mission in the world".<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> C 5

It is important to note in the first place that every Past Pupil is in relationship with the Salesian family through his Association; for him too (as is the case for the Salesians, the Daughters of Mary



Help of Christians, and the Cooperators) it is a question of a commitment which he personally assumes: that of joining the Association, and thus acquiring a full of membership of one of the "instituted" groups".<sup>33</sup>

His own "instituted Group" is an Association which has as a basic characteristic common to all its members the "education received" and the intention to make it fruitful.

The "closer bonds" of membership will be expressed in practice in different ways, because the "salesian mission in the world" may be lived and shared in a variety of religious situations and according to personal convictions which may be objectively different, provided that in the group of Past Pupils there remains the real foundation of common values through the "education they have received".

In the Associations' Statute it is said that they "intend to consolidate the bond of friendship which binds them to their educators and unites them among themselves, and to preserve and develop the principles which were at the foundation of their formation, so as to express them in authentic life commitments;<sup>34</sup> and in connection with the World Confederation it is stated that "it has for its purpose that the members preserve, deepen and put into practice the salesian educational principles they received".<sup>35</sup>

As such, therefore, the Past Pupils Association presents a specific characterization all its own "with out ethnic or religious distinctions".<sup>36</sup> For this reason it is not easy to define at World Confederation level the possible variety of degrees of "closer" participation in the salesian mission; later we shall give some examples of ways in which it has been lived in practice.

<sup>33</sup> Guide to the Constitutions, Italian edition p. 114

<sup>34</sup> Statute, art. 1

<sup>35</sup> Statute, art. 3

<sup>36</sup> Statute, art. 1, d

Here it seems important to point out the life of the Association proceeds from the base, or in other words from the local Unions or Centres where the members know each other and have a more concrete and homogeneous concept of the "education received", and can therefore decide what in practice is implied by "a closer participation in the salesian mission" in their own territorial environment and their own religious, social and cultural condition of the Past Pupils varies from one place to another. Any tendency to 'over-structure' at higher levels may turn out to be counterproductive. The most incisive and appropriate form of animation is linked in the first instance with the vitality of local groups. It is there above all that attention must be given to the strategy of meetings above and of ongoing formation. The life of local Unions is more easily perceived by the members, and is more deeply felt.

Certainly an adequate organization at provincial, national and world level is not only useful but is also necessary; its purpose however, is to serve, animate, make suggestions, stimulate, support (and sometimes even provide) the initiatives of the individual local Unions, so that they may be able to express in a practical and fruitful form the "education they have received".

Today, in the aftermath of Vatican II, some light can be thrown on the meaning of a "closer" participation in the salesian mission by ecumenical guidelines,<sup>37</sup> by an opening up of dialogue with non-christian religions<sup>38</sup> and by activities of service to mankind with the involvement also of non-believers of good will.<sup>39</sup>

A particular aspect, emphasized by the GC21<sup>40</sup> is that of Catholic Past Pupils "who have made the

<sup>37</sup> Cf. "Unitatis redintegratio"

<sup>38</sup> Cf. "Nostra aetate"

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Institution of Secretariate for Non-believers in Roman Curia

<sup>40</sup> Cf. GC21, 69

choice of the Gospel". Their "closer" participation brings them nearer to the Salesian Cooperators. It is for this reason that they are invited to join the Cooperators: the community, say our Regulations, "should help those who are more sensitive to salesian values to develop in themselves the vocation of a Cooperator".<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless the two Associations are specifically different one from the other. That of the Past Pupils has its own physiognomy, linked with the communion and initiatives stemming from the "education received".

The Cooperators' Association is not in itself an alternative to that of the Past Pupils; it constitutes rather a centre of spiritual and ecclesial referral for those who have made the gospel option. Past Pupils who are Cooperators generously make their own, as convinced "laymen", the objectives of their own Past Pupils' Association and place at its disposal the riches of the grace of Christ in the spirit of Don Bosco to bring to fruition among their fellow members and their former companions the "education they received".

And so the assimilation of the values of the preventive system presents a whole range of possibilities for a more or less close participation in the salesian mission in the world. As far as our own communities are concerned, extraordinary importance attaches to the interest shown by provincials and rectors (and their delegates) in providing the animation that will ensure the fidelity of the members to the purposes of the Association and to the genuine inspiration of Don Bosco. We must all be able to recall and imitate the understanding, the willing acceptance, the dedication and the initiatives of our Founder and of Don Rinaldi. This is not an easy task; it needs competent and persuasive

<sup>41</sup> R 39

people who are able to deal with mature men, and who have a clear and updated grasp of the preventive system.

**Some ways in which Past Pupils  
can take part in Don Bosco's mission**

As we have seen, the title to membership by reason of education received is not something superficial imposed from without, like gold plating on metal. It is a vital reality of gratitude, of communion and of intentions in the light of that same educational plan of the past lived now in new experiences of life, work and study, and in personal and social perspectives.

The nature and activity of the Association is intrinsically linked with this title to membership. Its vast horizons must be capable of discernment without confusing it with either the Cooperators' Association or any independent secular association, thus distorting its identity.

In what way then can the Past Pupils' Association share in the life and activities of the Salesian Family? Let us try to give some orientative guidelines starting from its history and its present-day reality.

— A first way is that of showing practical concern for the “*ongoing formation*” of the members. This is a task inherent in that “education received”, in so far as all education (especially at this time of cultural change) needs to grow and make itself adequate to meet the new needs in a continual and modern way. The statute of the World Confederation declares that the Past Pupils intend “to preserve and develop the principles which were at the



<sup>42</sup> Statute, art.1,b

foundation of their formation, so as to express them in authentic life commitments",<sup>42</sup> and that "they see the Rector Major as the figure of Don Bosco himself and recognize him as their leader; they desire the assistance of the Salesians for an ongoing, incisive and adequate spiritual education".<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Statute, art.1,c

In this area there a very concrete setting for a service of animation on the part of our communities and confreres for the benefit of the Past Pupils. If we are able to programme initiatives in ongoing formation and make them function successfully, it will serve to strengthen the quality of local Centres and Unions and of provincial federations for participation in the mission.

— Another activity proper to the Association is that of giving effect to the exhortation made by Don Bosco himself to his early former pupils: to "*remain united and help each other*", not only with respect to strengthening the organization and functioning of the Association,<sup>44</sup> but also as regards mutual help given to individuals in need, and especially in the matter of maintaining helpful contacts with former companions who "are not enrolled in a particular local Centre are not effective members of the Confederation, but they are considered as still belonging to the Don Bosco Past Pupils' movement".<sup>45</sup> For this reason it is desirable that their names be kept in an appropriate register so as to keep their memory alive and try to involve them in activities of formation and doing good.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Appendix to Statute 5,1

<sup>45</sup> Appendix 2

This is a natural field of expansion for the Association in which particular help can be given by confreres who have known the former pupils now remaining at a distance.

— Another important task of the Association concerns the *family life* of individual members. This presupposes a knowledge and defence of the rights and duties of the family in society. The Statute states that the Past Pupils undertake to promote and defend the leading values of the human family,<sup>46</sup> which at the present time is passing through a period of crisis. Within their own families they have the possibility, as Don Bosco himself suggested to them, of practising the educational methods they learned during the time of their own education.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Statute, art. 3,a

Here we have another modern challenge which will enable us to assess the extent of the pedagogical commitment, now and in the past, of our educative communities. How is the preventive system applied, so that later it can be extended into future families of the pupils? What preparation do we give to young people to prepare them for marriage? What kind of programme is there for formation to love? How do we meet the requirements of a proper sex education? what kind of marriage ethics do we put forward? How do we emphasize the sacredness of life? etc. These aspects bring home to us the urgent need for a practical approach to *pastoral work for families* to be planned and realized (in harmony with youth pastoral work) in our houses according to the possibilities inherent in the type of our educational presence.

We may recall the penetrating observation made by a Bishop in the Synod of 1980 on the family; I spoke of this in an earlier circular, when I remarked that “the theme of the family is not just a discussion topic; it is a privileged vantage-point for more practical and intelligent thinking in our overall pastoral project, in line with God’s master-

<sup>47</sup> AGC 299, p. 8

plan".<sup>47</sup> Hence our plans for youth pastoral work and the concrete educational projects of the provinces and houses must always give due attention to this strategic aspect. What the Bishop said was: "The family is something small in itself, but there is within it a potential energy greater than that of the atom. Starting from the comparative individual insignificance of millions of humble families the Church can relaunch the power of love needed to make herself the sacrament of unity among men".<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Bishop Francis J. Cox: (14 Oct. 1980)

If the essence of all education is to lead people to love, the whole of the Church's pastoral work (and therefore ours as well) must converge on making the human family become effectively "the school of love". Let us help the Past Pupils to render salesian education efficacious within their own families!

— A further commitment characteristic of the Association's activity is that of giving priority to the big problem of the *education of youth* and of taking part in it. The Past Pupils themselves declare that "in the light of the urgent problems of youth at the present day, (the Association) strives to realize, to the maximum extent possible, activities designed to interest young people in the various fields of social and political action; it encourages their initiatives and helps them to assume responsibility at every level".<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Appendix 5,2

We are all aware of the urgency of this problem and the need for promoting multiple initiatives for collaboration in finding a solution, even on a limited scale. The problem is a universal one; it is met with all over the world, even in different kinds of youth conditions. Fortunately Don Bosco's spirit is universal too, and is found living and working in

every continent: one and the same spirit, in the same mission, but in a plurality of cultural, social and pastoral situations. In respect of which values for the benefit of youth should the Past Pupils commit themselves?

In fidelity to Don Bosco's charisma they should be able to analyse the urgent needs of the young in respect of the three dimensions of the preventive system. In the sphere of "reason", this includes problems concerning human values; in that of "religion", those relating to faith and a spirituality of life; and in that of "loving kindness", questions concerning method in the light of the deterioration frequently noted in the schools sector and especially in the spheres of the family and of love: there is indeed an urgent need to throw some light on the criteria for the application of a valid educational method.

This is a commitment which opens up a vast panorama of possible ways of intervening.

It is evident that here too a revision is needed of the whole programmes of our educative communities and the present significance of our works as regards the giving of a practical response to the challenges presented by the world of youth. In this way it will be possible to give better direction to the initiatives of the Past Pupils, so that they strengthen or complete our own interventions and even, according to the practical needs in the area concerned, reach some combined and integrated plan of action by the whole Salesian Family working there.

— Another objective which the Past Pupils' Association suggests is "*the defence and promotion of the values inherent in the human person and respect for man's dignity*"; and "*the fostering of a higher level in the cultural, social, moral, spiri-*



<sup>50</sup> Statute, art. 3,a

*tual and religious fields*, in line with the education received".<sup>50</sup> In the Appendix added to their Statute (to guide its application), the Past Pupils refer more explicitly to this so characteristic social and cultural area: (the objective is) "to stimulate a deep and sound *social and political preparation* of the Past Pupils, more urgently needed now than ever before, which does not stop at theory but goes also into the duty of fulfilling one's political duties as a good citizen, to practical commitment in the social sector, the creation of associations with a mutual help character, etc"; and "to prompt apostolic and social activities, with particular regard to the commitment for justice, peace and brotherhood".<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Appendix 5,d,c

To the above must be added the immense importance that attaches at the present day to *social communication*, and the way in which its various means (and even the most sophisticated of them) can be exploited and shaped for good by quite a number of Past Pupils who have become particularly competent in this sector.

This objective too presupposes an "education received" of particular clarity and quality with respect to the proper structuring of the temporal order. Vatican II and the social teaching of the Church's magisterium have opened vast horizons of renewal for educators, which call for competence and continual updating. Dear confreres, we need to take a long hard look at the way we educate in the whole of this sector, not indeed to get involved in party politics but to put efficaciously into practice the important art. 33 of our Constitutions. We have to promote justice and peace "by educating"; and in educating we must bear concrete witness to our preferential love for the poor. We are called to carry out a "liberating education",

drawing on the practice lived by Don Bosco the Church's living magisterium. The Past Pupils await clear guidelines from us in this regard.

— The Association's sharing in Don Bosco's mission also implies the intention to step up *active communion with the whole of the Salesian Family* and with each of its component Groups, both at directive world level and also at provincial and local level with the communities and individuals present in the same neighbourhood. The title to membership by reason of the education received provides an easy linkage between the Association and all members of the Family, but especially with the three Groups founded by Don Bosco himself: the Salesians, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and the Cooperators.

The renewal of Don Bosco's charisma is a call to the Past Pupils at the present day to intensify in a practical manner their bonds of participation and communion with these three Groups in particular, in ways which will vary according to the nature and role of each of them.

This intention of theirs should be continually recalled to mind and facilitated by our animation.

Art. 5 of the Constitutiones assigns to us Salesians, "by the will the Founder", the far from easy responsibility of "preserving unity of spirit and fostering dialogue and fraternal collaboration, for our mutual enrichment and greater apostolic effectiveness".

Unfortunately there are still some confreres who have yet to change their attitude in this regard and to consider this as one of the "major aspects on which we must concentrate our attention and our practical efforts"; as the Rector Major, Fr Luigi Ricceri, said in presenting the Acts of the SGC: "It

is a matter of urgency to give back to our communities the sense of their being a nucleus powerful enough to animate and invigorate other spiritual and apostolic forces (those of the Salesian Family!); these in their turn will enrich us (i.e. our communities) with great spiritual and apostolic advantages".<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> L. Ricceri, SGC, p. XIX

The cultivation and intensification of the relations between the Past Pupils and ourselves in the first place, and then with the other Groups (especially the Cooperators), is a task that will be delicate at times but one that is very fruitful and will make it possible in practice for our Family to appear, in each area, as a living and incisive "ecclesial Movement", in line with the suggestion of this year's Strenna.

A good sign of the Past Pupils' efficacious intention to carry out this policy is the mutual agreement they have come to with the Association of the Past Pupils of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians for the realization of a single common International Congress in November 1988, for the solemn commemoration of Don Bosco.

— A final task of some consequence is that of *getting in touch with pupils who are nearing the end of their school career*, and explaining to them the advantages of joining the Association. The influx of new blood is something sought after by the Past Pupils because they want to be a group which is "perpetually young"; "this will be possible if the Association is continually reinvigorated by the thousands and thousands of young people who come out of salesian schools and other works".<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Appendix 1, b

This praiseworthy and vital task implies for the Past Pupils themselves a practical dedication to promoting an involvement pleasing to the youngsters, but it also calls for an intelligent and agreed

arrangement for directing the older pupils towards the possibilities of further salesian growth in those groups of our Family most in keeping with their intended life-plan, and in particular (in the majority of cases) to the Past Pupils' Association.

And so the manner in which the association participates in Don Bosco's mission in the world is a matter of no little consequence. The possibilities are numerous: we have touched on seven of them. Participation of this kind constitutes a practical proof of membership of the Salesian Family, which will become "closer" in proportion to the degree of commitment shown in the concrete activities already indicated, without excluding levels of other kinds which may extend to ecumenical areas, inter-religious dialogue, or simple human good will.

### **The task of salesian communities**

The reflections we have made so far are an invitation to provincials and rectors, but also to individual confreres, to review their own sensitivity, their own personal work and that of the communities, and the validity and efficacy of the services we offer to the Past Pupils. We need to think deeply about art. 39 of the Regulations.

We can distinguish two complementary facets of our responsibility: that which concerns the quality of the education we impart in our various works, and that which is directly linked with the life and activity of their Association.

— The first aspect (the quality of education) has already been substantially dealt with as we considered the various activities realized by the Association. Here it will not be out of place to empha-

size once again the clear idea of Don Bosco and Don Rinaldi: that the Past Pupils represent in the world the fruit of our labours. The education given in our various works is entirely directed, in a practical social and ecclesial manner, to the mature life of an upright citizen and honest christian. We work therefore with the object of forming authentic Past Pupils; we foster a kind of education which will guarantee their later membership of the Salesian Family. To prescind from this would mean that we considered Don Bosco's preventive system out of date.

— The second aspect is that of promoting and animating the Association itself. If we think of the very large number of our former pupils, if we are convinced (because we have proof of it every day) that the legacy of Don Bosco's, spirit is very much alive at the present day and doing a lot of good, if we look at the huge and growing mass of needy youngsters towards whom our Founder felt that he had been divinely entrusted with a special mission, we shall feel compelled to seek out and galvanize all the forces available in the Salesian Family, and in the latter there is no doubt that the Past Pupils constitute a mine of rich possibilities. There is here a providential salesian potentiality which must be developed in each of the sectors of activity mentioned earlier.

We may add here as well the invitation to foster the "*volunteer movement*" (especially among young Past Pupils) with its many perspectives, some of them of a missionary nature.

But it is a question of being able to dialogue and foster communion of spirit and intent with an Association of mature individuals, which is of its nature a factor extending salesian education, and which

has an admirable in-built possibility for collaboration and the preparation of new and beneficial initiatives. To this end our communities must be aware of, and know how to turn to advantage, valid future perspectives, which means that they must be open and welcoming communities, available and prepared for dialogue.

In drawing up programmes for the animation and ongoing formation of the confreres, time and means of sensitization should be provided which will involve them in getting to know and put into effect the guidelines of the recent General Chapters in this respect.

The provincial in particular should consider it important to appoint a provincial delegate who is qualified and suitable in other ways. He should plan meetings of rectors of a kind that will lead the latter to a clear understanding of their communities' responsibility for animation and action, and will help them to select (if need be) local delegates who will be able to interpret and translate into practice this duty of every community. It goes without saying that the task of the delegates is not to substitute those responsible for animation (who remain the provincial, the rector, and the community as a whole), but to act as interpreter for them in their desire to give effective realization to the underlying policy. It will be a good thing too to promote a respectful and practical dialogue with the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in respect of rapport with the association of their own Past Pupils.

The provincial and the rectors, within the ambit of their own areas of responsibility, should make good use of the possibility of periodic consultations to review the realities of life in their area, and to

plan activities of common interest, especially for the good of youth.

As you can see, dear confreres, this task which stems from a mandate given us by the Constitutions, reminds us once again that the identity of a salesian community does not require that it do every thing itself, but rather that it be a true "animating nucleus" of a large number of other apostolic and social forces.

### **Vital importance of spirituality**

The Strenna for 1987 brings home to us the need for fostering and making fruitful some "leading ideas" which can enable the Salesian Family to be seen as an ecclesial Movement with an incidence on history. Without an interior mystical energy no one will become involved and we cannot be either "missionaries" or "charismatics" of the young.

If a salesian community is to become in reality an "animating nucleus", its members must have a rich interior life, it must be vibrant with spirituality, and as a community it must breathe a new pentecostal atmosphere. We refer to this nowadays as "*youth spirituality*", because it is totally oriented to the education and evangelization of the young, but before that it is above all proper to the adult members of our Family, so that they may bring to life in themselves an educative fatherhood. We have a brief but authoritative description of it in Chapter II of our Constitutions which presents "the salesian spirit of Don Bosco".

It is a question of a special style of being disciples of Christ, a characteristic way of living in his Spirit. It implies an attentive and meditative listen-

ing to the Word of God, like that of Mary; a frequent eucharistic and penitential meeting with Christ. It is an experience of faith, hope and charity which transforms the daily round. It is an eschatological sign of the "power of the resurrection"<sup>54</sup> in harmony with the fresh energies of youth. It is an uncontainable passion for the kingdom ("da mihi animas") in active collaboration with the Pastors of the Church. It is a love capable of self-giving in sacrifice. It is joy and optimism, without losing sight of the reality of sin and evil. It is flexibility as regards work, and temperance in family simplicity. It is a spontaneous means of communication of one who has sanctity at heart and wants to pass it on to others, especially the young.

In the last General Chapter (GC22) we declared war on spiritual superficiality; in 1988 it is our intention to absorb interiorly the new text of our Rule of life and to relaunch in our lives our salesian Profession. The whole Salesian Family, and in particular the Cooperators and Past Pupils, are waiting for us to infect them with Don Bosco's living and beneficial spirit; the young ask us for an attractive spirituality they will find satisfying, and the simple but powerful dynamism of a holiness for everyday life which will penetrate the monotonous reality and hardships of the ordinary daily existence and the occasional more difficult and exacting demands, with the life-giving transcendence of the Beatitudes.

A spirituality of this kind is needed in every culture, and it contains rich and vital elements which can be shared also with non-catholic christians, with members of non-christian religions, and even with non-believers of good will.

The experience of more than a century of the vi-



talities of Don Bosco's spirit and the concrete results of his educational system in every continent, provide a valuable stimulus for us in our intention to become like the Founder, true "charismatics of youth".

*Dear Confreres, I must bring this letter to an end.*

With all our heart we want to see Don Rinaldi beatified as soon as possible. He was the great inspirer of the Past Pupils' Association, and certainly watches over it from heaven.

Let us all invoke from God, the source of everything that is good the "gift" of the official recognition of his salesian holiness; it will be something significant and beneficial for the young and for all our Family, but especially for the Don Bosco Volunteers and the Past Pupils.

In these coming months, may Mary Help of Christians present to the Father this our insistent prayer:

"O Lord, in the Venerable Philip Rinaldi, the living image of Don Bosco, you have given new strength and greater extension to the charism of the Salesian Family. Glorify this your servant, and make us to be his generous imitators in our ability to animate many valid missionaries of the young!"

May Don Rinaldi intercede for us, for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, for the Cooperators and, in a particular way, for the Don Bosco Volunteers and the Past Pupils.

With my affectionate greetings, as we approach 1988.

*Don F. Viganò*

## 2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

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### **2.1 SATURDAY, 14 MAY 1988: DAY OF SALESIAN PROFESSION**

Fr Gaetano SCRIVO  
*Vicar General*

The commemoration of the centenary of the death of Don Bosco, as the Rector Major said in his circular letter of 1 September 1986, is an invitation to us to renew our profession in a special way. “*At Congregational level*”, he wrote, “we have put ourselves in a kind of ‘state of novitiate’ for an intense and lengthy work of ongoing formation. *We want in 1988 to make a solemn renewal of our religious profession* as a living expression of that apostolic consecration which the text of the Constitutions has taught us, in the spirit of the Council, to know better, to appreciate and to witness to with more authentic depth and prophetic application to the present day” (cf. AGC 319, p. 14).

The Rector Major has studied with his Council the practical possibilities for the date of such a renewal, and has chosen for the whole Congregation the date: 14 May 1988.

All the confreres, every province and every community (in line with a programme to be drawn up in each province) will renew on that day in a solemn and community form their salesian profession.

It will be deeply significant for us to feel ourselves united on the same day to give thanks to God and to offer ourselves to him, who has called us individually by name from every continent to be in the Church signs and bearers of his love the young (cf. C 2).

#### *Why May 14th?*

It is a Saturday in the month of Mary Help of Christians, and recalls the memorable day in 1862 on which Don Bosco and twenty-two of his young men made for the first time the salesian

profession at Valdocco. In the month dedicated to her, our Belessed Lady had prepared for the Founder a great consolation: it was an evening of inexpressible joy!

The minutes of the meeting include the following passage: "wearing a surplice, Don Bosco, our superior, asked us to kneel; then, kneeling himself (beside the little table on which a crucifix had been placed), he began to recite the 'Veni Creator' (and other prayers); these prayers over, the twenty-two loudly and clearly pronounced their vows together (repeating the formula phrase by phrase they were read out by Don Rua), and signed their names in a special register".

Don Bonetti, who was one of the twenty-two, recalls in his chronicle that: Afterwards Don Bosco alone stood up and gave us a few words of encouragement for the future. Among other things, he said: 'Perhaps may ask whether Don Bosco has made these vows too. Well, while you were making your vows (for three years) in front of me, I was making them in perpetuity before this crucifix. I offered myself in sacrifice to the Lord, ready to bear anything for his greater glory and the welfare of souls, particularly the souls of the young. May the Lord help us to be faithful to these promises'.

"We then arose and Don Bosco went on: 'My dear sons, we live in troubled times. It may almost seem foolhardy to try to set up a new religious community in this unhappy hour when the world and hell itself are jointly doing their utmost to destroy those already existing. But that does not matter. I have sound reasons, and not merely probable ones, that it is God's will that our Society be born and grow... Were I to tell you of the beginning of the Oratory, I should never finish this evening. Everything leads us to believe that God is with us. We know that we are doing God's holy will, and so we can confidently go ahead with our work" (BM 7, 101-103).

This historic and moving account has no need of comment. In the centenary year of Don Bosco's death we want to relive it in complete dedication and to continue to the end, guided by Mary, on the road of the salesian life, the way that leads to Love (cf. C 196).

Let us prepare ourselves then, both individually and as communities, for May 14th, 1988.

May the Lord on that day enrich our freedom with the power of his Spirit, so that adhering to Don Bosco we may all faithfully fulfil with God's help all that by his gift we shall once again promise with joy.

## **2.2 OUR CELEBRATIONS**

### **Liturgical renewal, creativity and norms**

Fr Paolo NATALI  
*Councillor for Formation*

“Let us reap with the young the harvest of Vatican II and vigorously develop it”: this is a commitment which brings our preparations for 1988 down to earth gives us breadth of vision in their regard.

One of the gifts given by Spirit to the Church through the Council has been the liturgical renewal, In these pages we shall dwell briefly on our liturgical celebrations with the purpose of stepping up the realization of our obligations in this field and giving the celebrations improved quality. It is an invitation to evaluate the present situation, to select means and foster initiatives for an authentic process of renewal.

In this perspective let us recall some points made in the Church's verification, and take up once again the indications given by our General Chapters.

#### **1. The liturgical renewal at ecclesial level: an appraisal for the purpose of a relaunching**

In recent years official verifications have been made in the liturgical field at both world level<sup>1</sup> and the level of the particular Churches; they have been carried out with the intention of encouraging and directing, of making suggestions and correcting when necessary, and they have concentrated on three aspects:

<sup>1</sup> Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, 1985; Final Report.

Meeting of presidents and secretaries of national liturgical commissions, Rome, October 1984; v. “Notitiae” n. 220 (1984).



- ascertaining the results that have been achieved;
- the need to overcome staleness, attitudes that merely exchange one kind of formality for another, or a 'do as you like' approach, which show little understanding of the Council or the Church's life.
- and especially the need to continually deepen the process of renewal.

### 1.1 *Positive aspects*

"The renewal of the liturgy has been the most visible fruit of the work of the Council. there were some difficulties, but in general it has been enthusiastically accepted" (Extraordinary Synod of the Bishops). It recalled that the process has given rise to feelings of wonder and gratitude.

It has not been a case of a simple updating or a superficial reform, but of a process which has brought about a deep renewal of the Church's cult and of the liturgical life of the communities and individual members of the faithful. Positive and encouraging aspects are not hard to find: a more conscious and active participation in the liturgical mysteries; a growth of the sense of community; doctrinal and catechetical enrichment through the use of the vernacular and the abundance of biblical readings; efforts to bridge the divide between life and cult, between liturgical and personal devotions; a growing concern for liturgical formation.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.2 *Situations lacking in consistency*

It was only natural that in a new process so wide in scope there should arise situations not entirely coherent, caused not only by differences in mentality and sensitivity, but also by a superficial understanding of what was implied by renewal and a weak ecclesial and community sense in bringing it about.

<sup>2</sup> Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, "Inestimabile donum" (ID) Rome 1980; Foreword.

Two mistaken attitudes that would seem to need correction are:

— *a new formalism*. It may not be so apparent as was its predecessor before the Council, but it is equally illusory and unproductive and is growing. It appears as a ritualism that is not concerned about assuming and bringing to life the meaning and authenticity of a rite, which is therefore not achieved; as a kind of celebration which has become a habit and is almost mechanical in form, giving rise to no feeling or rhythm of prayer; as a juridical approach which is concerned, on the one hand, only with what is binding, and on the other is entirely closed to what renewal and the Church's directives have entrusted to local sensitivities and pastoral needs, in the context of a prudent and balanced creativity.

— *a unreasonable mania for unjustified changes*. According to this practice it would seem that the liturgy is starting again from scratch. "Spontaneity" is confused with authenticity and given its head; there is a search for novelties which may at first arouse interest, but soon give rise to tedium and irritation, weariness and the feeling of "too much of a good thing". Some manifestations of this attitude are seen in a disregard for the ecclesial character of the liturgy (the use of private texts, the proliferation of unapproved eucharistic prayers, the exploitation of liturgical texts); in the confusion of different roles, especially in what concerns the priestly ministry and the role of the laity; in a growing loss of the sense of the sacred: the abandoning of liturgical vestments, lack of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, little concern for places of worship and musical expression.<sup>3</sup>

In his report to the GC22 the Rector Major noted: "In some areas the 'pedagogy of signs', or of what is sacred, is in decline, and arbitrary practices are introduced which are not in agreement with episcopal norms and directives".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ID.

<sup>4</sup> GC22, RRM n. 285.



Many and often *deeply rooted* reasons and motives are given to justify these attitudes. This was emphasized by the Rector Major in commenting on the Extraordinary Synod:

"A loss of the sense of the sacred and of the dense theology of the liturgy has had a negative effect on the true 'sacramental' dimension of the Church. This is a grave defect with consequences of two kinds. The first is an obscuring of the expressive character and artistic dignity of symbols, insofar as celebrations have been trivialized, and with them signs, vestments, music and texts; wrongly exploited too has been the delicate nature of the sacred for opening up the spirit to transcendence and to a vital participation in the salvific events of Jesus Christ. Such arbitrary attitudes have compromised the public and official aspect of the liturgy as an action of the whole Church. The second defect is that of giving attention almost exclusively to the external renewal of the symbolic aspect, to the introduction of new signs, to a proper concern for a more objective liturgical inculturation, to the improvement of ritual components, as though everything consisted in these alone. Unfortunately the indispensable priority has not always been given to the aspect of introduction to mystery (= mystagogy) which is proper to the liturgy, to its sense of adoration, to the reactualization of the sacrifice of the Cross, to the unique character of the priesthood of Christ who, now risen again, is present in the celebration through men, rites and things, and who now carries out personally true mediation between God and man. All this carries with it the grave danger of leaving mystery on the margin, of presenting a Church emptied of Christ, of reducing the Eucharist to a symbolic banquet of simple human brotherhood".<sup>5</sup>

In the face of situations of this kind, and of the criteria and mentality that derive from them, the Bishops invite all to motivate and "introduce", to form and to correct. The task goes beyond the mere setting right of erroneous practices: it is especially that of explaining the theological foundation of the sacramental discipline

<sup>5</sup> AGC 316, p. 11.



and of the liturgy, of making the criteria and spirit of renewal understood, of making of catechesis a process leading to liturgical life (mystagogical catechesis), of forming and preparing ministers through a sound knowledge of the theology of the liturgy.

### 1.3 *A renewal to be continued and deepened*

The verification tends in the first place to encourage and bring about growth in fidelity to the objectives and content of the reform. The Synod and various ecclesial documents emphasize *four points that need attention*:

#### a. *Overcome a superficial and reductive interpretation*

"Liturgical reform", says the Synod of Bishops, "cannot be restricted to ceremonies, rites and texts. Active participation does not consist in external activity only". The celebration is not just a succession of ceremonies nor the simple repetition of a rite. The rite must signify the celebration of life in the mystery of salvation in Christ and with the Church.

#### b. *Foster interior renewal*

First and foremost there must be that interior renewal which opens the heart to the mystery and is the foundation of an interior and spiritual participation, in lively and fruitful sharing in the paschal mystery of Christ. The liturgy must foster and make manifest a sense of the sacred. Liturgical action should be imbued with a spirit of reverence and of the worship and glorification of God. (cf. Synod).

#### c. *Ensure formation and cultural updating*

For all who wish to understand and make personal the liturgical language, which is strongly symbolic (words, signs, actions, rites) and imbued with a meaning that the ecclesial community and tradition of believers attribute to it, a necessary prerequisite is an appropriate formation in liturgy, spirituality, celebration and its vari-

ous expressions, and a cultural, theological and pastoral updating.<sup>6</sup> If the rites are to be meaningful and preserve their authenticity without being trivialized, if they are to evoke the memory of what God has done for the salvation of his people and is still doing today in the celebration, a knowledge is indispensable of the significance of the gestures and signs which accompany the celebration, together with the ability to fully evaluate them according to the needs of the assembly and the special features of local culture, in line with the dispositions of the Bishops' Conferences.

A first foundation for this knowledge is to be found in the liturgical books themselves and the documents accompanying them, which all too often are but little known.

d. *Foster creative adaptation combined with fidelity to the norms*

Experience in the period following the Council has shown that without an understanding of the spirit of the liturgy and the principles which animate it, the proper balance between creative adaptation and fidelity to the norms, that was aimed at by the reform, is not easily attainable.

If he is not to appear either the "proprietor" nor yet the "simple executor" of norms which are valid for all, but as a true mediator between the book and the assembly, between the universal norm and the requirements of the individual communities, the minister must be endowed with an ability which requires adequate preparation.

Two things must be kept constantly in mind:

— the sacred text, the liturgical book, the praying tradition of the Church, taking care not to fall into the kind of "wild creativity" which is opposed not only to norms but also to the profound nature itself of the liturgy; and

<sup>6</sup> Cong.Cath.Ed. Instruction on liturgical formation in seminaries Rome 1979; FSDB, Rome 1985;

Liturgica e musica nella formazione salesiana (ed. Manlio Sodi), Rome 1984.



— the celebrating assembly, with its sensitivities, its daily history and its level of evangelization and faith.

To bring the harmony between these two to the fore in the celebration it is important to be able to assess with animating and creative sensitivity the possibilities offered by the rite itself. An efficacious introduction, a prayer appropriate to the circumstances, a suitable hymn, the ability to put ever new life and meaning into the ritual repetition of the same liturgical actions, these are all elements which are recommended and which serve to render a celebration “incarnate” and up to date.

Just as one must not confuse true creativity with a seeking of novelty at all costs,<sup>7</sup> so the literal and scrupulous observance of a norm is not always a sign of a meritorious fidelity. Dodging the possibilities for choice and adaptation that exist could be a manifestation of inability and laziness. In the balance, not always easy to find, between fidelity to the norm and attention to those taking part lies the subtle boundary of a due and lawful creativity.<sup>8</sup>

## **2. For a verification and qualitative relaunching of our celebrations**

For us salesians as well as others, the Council marked a decisive turning point in our understanding of the liturgy. “The liturgical renewal set in motion by Vatican II has made us travel a long path which has not always been an easy one”.<sup>9</sup>

What we have already recalled, when looking at certain aspects of the verification made by the Church, may serve as a starting point for an evaluation and relaunching in our own case too. This is a topic that could be developed at great length under its various aspects: spiritual, formational, cultural, pedagogical, pastoral, minis-

<sup>7</sup> Cf. ID.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. document of Italian Bishops Conference on liturgical renewal in Italy, Rome 1983.

<sup>9</sup> Rector's Manual, 2nd edtn. n. 192.

terial, etc.; and in relationship with the salesian community, with the young, and with peoples at various stages of evangelization. What we are concerned about at present, as was said at the beginning of these pages, is the animation of the confreres to follow a path of renewal as far as our celebrations are concerned. We want to make sure they have the proper basic attitudes and that they select the most efficacious educational means for overcoming arbitrary situations or lines of conduct.

What we have already said gives rise at once to certain questions; in addition to what is contained in the "prænotanda" of the individual liturgical books, there are also some brief but significant *indications which emerge from our recent General Chapters*, and which help us to home in on some points worthy of our attention. We indicate some of them:

### 2.1 *For a living and renewed liturgy*

The SGC<sup>10</sup> wanted our prayer life to be living, liturgical and renewed. It is to be not just an ensemble of ceremonies and rites, but a participation in the life and paschal mystery of Christ, lived according to a spirituality nourished by a sense of the history of salvation and by an understanding of sacramental language. It is an experience which starts from an attitude of the heart, from faith and the unity between life and liturgy which transforms the celebration into a rite which is living, felt and creative.

### 2.2 *Drawing profit the riches of the liturgy*

The GC21 recognized that "the riches of the liturgy and the renewal within the Church offer excellent opportunities from which we can profit".<sup>11</sup>

The most authentic method for doing this is by achieving a harmonious unity between liturgical spirituality and the salesian spirit, as is indicated by our Constitutions. They give to our dialogue

<sup>10</sup> SGC, 544.

<sup>11</sup> GC21, 45.



with the Lord a dimension which is “deeply ecclesial, and which responds to the demands of liturgical renewal advanced by Vatican II”.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.3 *Accepting and giving practical effect to the indications and lines of approach given by the Church in the liturgical field*

One of the guidelines given by the SGC was’ “Faithful to the example of Don Bosco who in his own day was seen as, and indeed was, a real innovator in the field of liturgy for youth we *accept* the trends and the Church’s new approaches in the liturgical field with real enthusiasm and *we make them ours* in an active and practical way”.<sup>13</sup> It is the expression of a desire to “feel with the Church” by conforming actively and intelligently to the liturgy.

To “*accept*” means to know the objectives and content, the guidelines and possibilities, the obligations and norms. One sometimes gets the impression that we do not really know the content of the liturgical books and of the principal documents that go with them.

To “*make them ours in a practical way*” means to assume their spirit, to live them and cause them to be lived through the language proper to the liturgy in the sense and along the lines given by the Bishops. This is the basis of the well-balanced spontaneity and creativity in prayer that was referred to by the GC1.<sup>14</sup> Balance can mean a whole variety of things. It could be defined for us salesians as a kind of “ecclesiality”. It implies fidelity to the guidelines provided by the competent authorities in the field of celebrations. This fidelity is a guarantee of balance, and balance at the same time includes conscious discipline and an animating and creative responsibility. The love of Don Bosco and the salesians for the Church is shown also through this attitude.

<sup>12</sup> Guide to the Constitutions (Italian edtn.) p. 611.

<sup>13</sup> SGC, 544.

<sup>14</sup> GC21, 45.

## 2.4 *Fostering liturgical formation: initiation and conditions*

By analogy with what the SGC had to say about formation to prayer,<sup>15</sup> it can be taken as certain that there can be no authentic renewal without a serious liturgical formation under various aspects and exterior conditions necessary for every celebration. This is true not only for confreres in the initial formation period: the FSDB provides some opportune guidance in this regard. It is equally true for all confreres because each one bears the primary responsibility for his own formation; it is especially true for provincial and local animators who have the task of promoting by means of systematic or occasional initiatives the attitudes called for by the liturgical renewal.

## 2.5 *Intensification of the service of animation*

While asserting the importance of animation for salesian communities, the GC21 was aware of the unfortunate lack of masters of the spirit and of spiritual and liturgical animators to help those communities; it knew also that not sufficient commitment was being given to their preparation. Without any doubt this is a task to be undertaken at provincial level (the preparation of personnel, organization of meetings, the drawing up of aids etc.). But it must also be said that there are sometimes in local communities capable confreres, and simple but efficacious forms of animation are known; but it does not always happen that all the confreres are encouraged to make their contribution. How often it has happened that the presence of a generous, competent and enthusiastic confrere has helped the community to find a style of celebration suited to it. It is important to organize the manner of collaboration, to establish the different roles, to programme in a suitable way what is going to be done at the more significant points of the liturgical year, and when evaluations will be undertaken. In this connection those pages of the Rector's Manual that deal with the animation in the local community of "dialogue with the Lord" can be read again with profit.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> SGC, 551f.

<sup>16</sup> Rector's Manual, especially 192-196.



## 2.6 *Periodic evaluation of the quality of liturgical celebrations*

The General Regulations prescribe that every community shall programme, carry out and periodically review its prayer life (R 69, 174), and indicate the particular responsibilities of the Rector (R 174) and of the Assembly of the confreres (R 184). As a concrete application of this norm, the Rector's Manual speaks of a "scrutinium orationis".<sup>17</sup> For the same reason and in the present context it is appropriate that every community evaluate its "liturgical life", the quality of its liturgical celebrations, "allowing scope for opportune initiatives" (R 174).

From what we have briefly indicated above, a community evaluation might well begin from the following questions:

- what value do we place on liturgical renewal?
- among the various aspects of growth, which ones do we consider more significant at personal, community and pastoral levels?
- what situations (criteria, customs, expressions, conditions etc.) need to be straightened out, corrected or overcome?
- how can we get a deeper understanding of renewal so as to attain to a living liturgy?
- how can we improve the quality of our celebrations?
- how can we draw profit from the riches of the liturgy?
- how can we ensure an ongoing liturgical formation and liturgical animation?
- how can we overcome a formalism or passivity that has become habitual, or a practice not in conformity with ecclesial norms?
- how can we foster the interior and exterior conditions required for each celebration?

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 239.

## Conclusion

“Do not be satisfied with just ‘carrying out the liturgy’: live it, and make it come to life”.<sup>18</sup>

This is a piece of advice which is given to every salesian rector as animator of his community, but it holds good for everyone. It is important to accept the directives of the Church with enthusiasm and responsibility. It is also necessary to make use of whatever aids are available, and possibilities for updating at the levels of theology, liturgy and manner of celebration. And it is absolutely essential to allow oneself to be penetrated by the spirit and force of the liturgy.<sup>19</sup>

In the context and perspective of 1988, one of the best means of passing on the Council to the young is by living it.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 193.

<sup>19</sup> SC 14.



## **2.3 TOWARDS A SALESIAN RENEWAL IN SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Fr Sergio CUEVAS LEON

*Councillor for Social Communication*

In his letter on "The challenge of the Media" (ASC 302, p. 4, 1981) the Rector Major, Fr Egidio Viganò, wrote: "I see a great advantage in speaking to you about the importance we should give the mass media in our life and mission".

This is a concise statement that provides the starting point and line of thought that will be followed in these pages.

### **1. Why we are interested in social communication**

*1.1* Pope John Paul II used a happy expression when speaking to a group of French Bishops on 19 December 1982. He reminded them that «we must put God back into circulation at the present day», and in a message he sent to a meeting at Rimini in 1986 he added: "The field of social communication is an immense and fascinating one, and it must become one of the leading frontiers of the missionary endeavour of our various ecclesial communities and of individual believers" (*Osservatore Romano*, Eng.edtn. 8 Sept. 1986).

The Rector Major too in the letter from which we have already quoted says that we must not forget that social communication forms part of our mission as one of the principal services we render. As McLuhan reminds us, the mass media have become an "extension of ourselves"; they have changed not only the time-table of our daily life with our tastes and habits, but also the customs and mentality of whole peoples; they have created a new culture, a new language and even a new man: the audiovisual man!

*To live is to communicate, and to communicate is to live.* The very word 'communicate' bears in its etymological roots the idea of a necessary participation ("una cum). Taking the idea further, communication could be defined as "information with a return receipt", which emphasizes the development of relationships, a certain dialogue and even a certain amount of critical analysis; communication which fosters personal encounters and provides room for witness and for dialogue with God. Information is at the foundation of all communication and leads to involvement, the need for putting questions to oneself – and for providing answers. True education and adequate evangelization require a harmonious development of interpersonal and social communication.

The transition from *communication* to *communion*, and from this to its communal expression in a manner in accordance with man's social nature, is evident, and so the ecclesial community must obviously follow the same line. The root of all authentic ecclesial communication is Christ who is (as the Instruction "Comunio et Progressio" puts it) the perfect "Communicator of the Father": Jesus is the Word of God, and it is characteristic of every word that it is an instrument of communication.

This brings us to a final step: love is not something that can remain private; the gift of God is communicative by its very nature; "mission" and pastoral work form a necessary element in christian life; a true christian community attains self-realization only if it is missionary. Communication is inherent in the idea of mission, which implies an anxiety to communicate. Going back to the image used by John Paul II we could say that our mission at the present day is to put (or put back) God into circulation in the world. On our ability to communicate depends the impact of our educational and pastoral message.

1.2 We are passing from the industrial era to the *era of information*, so overpowering is the development of the mass-media and advanced communication technology in every sphere and at every level, and we cannot pass over in silence the significant coincidence



of the attention being given by the salesian Congregation at the present time to social communications. It is not unreasonable therefore to see the present situation as a great and providential opportunity for a deeper understanding and presence which cannot be let slip, and which places on the salesian family, and in it on our Congregation, a particular responsibility: that of being prophets of a new world!

Today the means of social communication are a fact of life: no one can do without them if he wants to be up to date and a man of his time, this time in which God has given him existence. At the present day the life of the great majority of humanity is shaped by the mass media, which "touch more closely the life of the spirit and serve, either directly or by means of sound or image, to communicate news, ideas and teaching to millions of peoples with the greatest ease" (Pius XII, "Miranda prorsus"). The mass media "have a tremendous importance for the formation of public opinion and the christian conscience, and for catechesis, pastoral work, and human and religious life itself" ("Inter mirifica").

Salesians should feel themselves directed to this personal dimension and this kind of apostolate by the thought and example of Don Bosco, 19 March 1885) and by the Constitutions: the field of social communication "*which constitutes one of the apostolic priorities of the salesian mission*" (C 43); and by our whole tradition and the nature of our mission for the ordinary people.

## 2. Social communication and youth

2.1 In themselves the means of social communication are neither good nor evil; but because they create mentalities, language, expressions, culture, civilization, life systems, opinions, codes of conduct etc., and are "unifying" the world, it is necessary and urgent that they be directed to what is good, especially because their influence is a determining factor for the world of the young at the present day: "Our vocation is graced by a special gift of God: predilection for the young" (C 14) for whom the Congregation has a

special responsibility: "As educators we work together with our young people to bring all their talents and aptitudes to full maturity" (C 32). the influence of the mass media will have a still greater impact in the world of tomorrow when the voice will be heard of the youngsters who are at present being educated in our schools, oratories and youth centres, and in the salesian group movements and educational structures in general.

2.2 Communication is an established reality, a fundamental fact on which life is built. No one in fact achieves self-realization except through rapport with others, and all human relationships are founded on communication. If you don't communicate, you don't live. We live to the extent that we communicate. In our present-day "information society", development in all its forms (cultural, intellectual, moral, economic, religious, etc.) depends on the capacity and strength of communication, with its various means and methods. And the most formidable challenge to be faced will be that of instructing, forming and educating today's youngsters to work in the society of communications.

The Salesian Congregation too must have the courage to enter this future, with its risks but also its fascination; and everything is going to depend on the efforts the salesians make to prepare themselves in the first place, and then educate, form and steer in the right direction the youngsters entrusted to them.

2.3 Social communication is an *aspect and dimension of salesian educational activity*, not only by the production and circulation in a professional and businesslike way of books, periodicals, multi-media material, radio and television programmes. Communication in fact can be understood as an attitude, ability and availability for "educating by evangelizing", and as the capacity for bringing about man's growth in his rapport with the world, with his history and his faith, so that he can develop freedom and responsibility; and this with particular attention to the social sphere so as to create an environment, to influence public opinion, to be able to make a critical assessment of the messages put out by the media for prepar-



ing pastoral and educational projects applicable to the social sector.

It would therefore seem necessary to make a deep analysis of the influence of social communications as a factor in the formation of mentality, giving due weight to the risks inherent in a kind of communication left to itself, especially if it is electronic, without accompanying educational interventions. Such risks might be those of passivity, systematic indifference, the desire to be up to date but for no particular purpose, relativism with respect to morality, illiteracy as regards feedback because of the lack of direct experience, injury to personal dignity, etc. And on the other hand one must not forget the tremendous advantages that come from a truly humanizing awareness of the modern communication processes: a detailed knowledge of realities and happenings diffused rapidly throughout the world; availability for the spreading of the christian message and the work of the Church; fruitful methods for a deeper analysis of problems, especially at a practical level but at a theoretical level as well; the possibility of bringing a timely message to bear on any environment, but particularly on those which involve youth; a more equal division of opportunities for communication for classes, groups and even disadvantaged peoples, so that they can be makers of their own history on the world scene.

2.4 As well as being educational, social communication (as used by salesians) should have a pastoral purpose with young people very much in mind.

In this connection a very appropriate observation emerged from the Congress of the Clergy of Rome held in 1986. It was this: The primary task of the Church is evangelization, and there is no evangelization without communication between two subjects: in this case between the Church and the young generations. In the present era of cultural change the hypothesis may be put forward that for many youngsters evangelizing is a communication without a message, because it is unidirectional from each side. In one direction, in fact, many "signs" mean nothing to the young generations because they cannot interpret them; and on the other hand many young-

sters who do accept the message use their own symbolic codes of behaviour in translating the faith experience into a plan of life, and this makes it wellnigh impossible for those responsible for ecclesial communities to make any realistic assessment of their response.

The pastoral thrust of communication is linked with our manner of being religious educators through witness and service; this adds quality to our relations with youth and gives intelligible expression to our dealings with them; in respect of the apostolic work they could be doing it enables them to measure themselves against strong and credible models who live lives inspired by the Gospel, etc.

### **3. Situation of social communication in the Congregation**

3.1 The vast nature of the weight exerted by the mass media require that in the formation process of every salesian there be a radical shake-up as regards the recognition of cultural changes they have brought about, and consequently in the action needed in the face of the new needs of society.

From the time of his first formation, the need should be instilled in every salesian of a high degree of competence in the art of communication and of an ever deeper knowledge of the new communication languages, in themselves and as regards catechesis and pastoral activity. He also needs to carry out a systematic research into the relations between evangelization and culture.

For the formation of salesians serious pedagogical research will be indispensable; the same is true of the living incarnation of well thought out programmes of study and action, in the knowledge that social communication is a powerful factor in the formation of the mentality of the salesian educator and pastor.

3.2 From this commitment to awareness, acceptance of responsibility and dedication to study, derives an effort which in conformity with salesian tradition must follow two lines which converge towards a single objective: the education of youth. The first



line is that of *animation*; The second is the *realization of specific projects* of work and of collaboration within the Church in the social communication sector. Animation involves several points: the sensitizing of the salesians to work in social communications, considered as a cultural and educational factor; general and specific formation and a sensitivity to the overall problems of social communication; the promoting and coordination of centres and structures, keeping educational objectives always in mind (as well as cultural and pastoral purposes); and information at every level, with the specific intention of spreading and strengthening the image of the Congregation.

The second line in turn, that of realization, is primarily the concern of the provinces as such, which represent and realize our educational life and mission in a particular territory.

3.3 It will not be out of place to recall the importance of the contribution of the mass media in the life and mission of the Congregation. The social communication sector has always been an area of special salesian activity, in which Don Bosco (and also the salesians, following his example) have worked with serious dedication, making good use of the means available, for the evangelization and human advancement of those to whom they are sent (youth, the working classes, and peoples in missionary areas). But still greater dedication will be needed in the future; a “new presence” will be needed, a new incidence of the mass media in a world in continual growth.

#### **4. Social communication in the last General Chapter**

4.1 The best commentary – and it was an official one – made by the Congregation on social communication came from the GC22 in 1984. After a lengthy discussion it expressed its conclusions in a number of new and precise articles.

The tenor of the discussion, its animating spirit, the historical value of the articles, are well illustrated in a concluding document



of the Rector Major on the “challenge” which the salesians, from that time onwards, would have to accept and meet, following the practical guidelines of the GC22. The essential points in the document are the following:

- “Greater commitment in the field of social communication, especially for the benefit of the humbler members of society”.
- “Our task of the evangelization of the culture of the working classes”, carried out “particularly through social communication”.
- “The GC22 “has reaffirmed that social communication must be one of the vital and essential traits of our apostolic activity”.
- “It is the task of all our Family to communicate the Gospel, ... as a vast network for the diffusion of basic values and sound principles”.
- “It will be always indispensable to have very clearly in mind the message to be proclaimed”.
- “Don Bosco’s words must be taken seriously: ‘I implore you, not to neglect this very important part of our mission’”.
- “If today the cleavage between the Gospel and culture has been made more marked by a superficial kind of communication, badly informed from a religious point of view and often a prey to ideologies of various kinds, it is very necessary for us to collaborate in a different kind of communication, one which will be an educative force which ‘moulds minds and creates culture’ by means of an ‘authentic alternative educational process’”.

## **5. Practical guidelines for the provinces**

5.1 The nature of the salesian communicator has undergone great changes in every field: cultural, pastoral and educational. For the salesian of the present day it has become a primary need to develop the mentality of the communicator according to a new model, with new norms and according to a fixed plan born of a new social structure.

5.2 The objectives remain always the same; youth and working-class people. But they must not be approached in a careless manner: an inborn talent or a flair for such work is no longer sufficient. Study is essential, so as to attain the necessary competence, professionalism and wisdom in the matter of communicating. And when it comes to the “means” of social communication a good head for business is needed as well.

5.3 Social communication, like every other objective of the Congregation, finds its motivation not only in the articles of the Constitutions which specifically refer to it, but in all the others which indicate characteristics of the salesian:

- The salesian must be a communicator because “our vocation calls us to be deeply united with the world and its history” (C 7).
- His communication must be attentive, intelligent, understandable and educational: he is called, in fact, “to be a realist and to be attentive to the signs of the times” (C 19).
- “The Lord made clear to Don Bosco that he was to direct his mission first and foremost to the young, especially to those who are poorer” (C 26).
- “The advancement to which we dedicate ourselves in the spirit of the Gospel makes tangible the love of Christ which makes men free, and is a sign that the Kingdom of God is among us” (C 33).
- “We educate and evangelize according to a plan for the total wellbeing of man directed to Christ, the perfect Man” (C 31).
- “Our apostolic activity is carried out in a variety of ways, which depend in the first place upon the actual needs of those for whom we are working” (C 41).

5.4 Every country, every province, every community must draw up its own programme of activity, according to the needs which arise in its own territory. In the field of social communication, as in all others, the primary responsibility at provincial level belongs to the provincial himself; he will appoint a DELEGATE for



social communication, or someone to be directly responsible under him for this sector, who will work in this specific area in close contact and collaboration with the other areas of the organization of the province.

The delegate for social communication will direct his activities:

- to the salesians and their formation in social communication, by making suggestions and promoting initiatives for:
  - basic formation in the novitiate, postnovitiate and formation communities (Cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, Guidelines for the formation of future priests as regards the mass media, Rome 1986);
  - ongoing formation by means of courses, other encounters etc.
- to the Salesian Family, by encouraging commitments, assessments, etc.
- to youth and the working classes, by promoting associations, activities, and organizations of various kinds.
- to the various services of salesian information, at central level (AGC, ANS, various publications, films, video-cassettes etc.) and at provincial level (the Bulletin, newsletters, periodicals, video-cassettes).
- to specific works of social communication (publishing houses, and bookshops; production centres for audio-visual and multi-media material; radio and television transmitters).

5.5 We believe that a practical step forward in the line of animation could be the setting up of a *Provincial Centre for Social Communication* in which, in the light of the directives of the GC22 and the Constitutions, there would be a communication programme with the involvement and mediation of all aspects of the province's work: pastoral, cultural and educational. The programme should draw up short and long-term development plans in two directions: one for formation and the other for practical realizations, in line with the needs and possibilities of each province.

A provincial centre of this kind would need to be made-

to-measure for the individual province in order to be really valid. We therefore suggest some elements around which such a centre could be constructed. As a practical animating nucleus its development would need the indispensable collaboration of the members of the salesian Congregation and Family, both religious and lay.

A first objective will be to develop a policy for the making of discerning choices (Cf. "Policy Guidelines for Salesian Social Communication", p. 5) which will train young people, educators and those living in working-class environments in general to a critical reading of the messages emanating from the mass media, and to a creative and educational use of them.

A parallel objective, linked in a certain fashion with the first one, will be to:

- provide the communities of the province with promotional services, such as formation courses, study seminars, programmes for cultural groups (for the spheres of the theatre, cinema, radio and television, publishing etc.) and the preparation of aids;
- set up a provincial press office with salesian informational services;
- establish and foster closely knit connections with ecclesial structures, and with all organizations which consider social communication as indispensable for evangelization and human advancement.

## Conclusions

From what we have said we may draw the following conclusions:

a. The promoting of a process of a *change of mentality* is an urgent need. Educational and pastoral operations experience the powerful influence and conditioning force of the mass media in the formation of the young and of educative communities. Hence the need to define the objectives to be reached through the mass media.



b. Equally urgent is the *formation and professional training of salesians* in this sector, a work which has been already pointed out in earlier documents of the Congregation, and the promotion of *ongoing research* into the influence exerted by the mass media on the social maturing and growth in faith of those we educate, in the various cultures and territories where we work.

c. It is useful to emphasize, especially for salesians working in the field of the mass media, *the need to offer aids and help of a high quality*, as distinct from the products and messages of other "cultural agencies" which put forward non-christian models of life and culture. In this sense the salesian educator should have a deep knowledge of the educational, cultural and pastoral requirements of the young, so as to meet them adequately.

Let us not forget that in face of the circumstances of the youngsters of his day Don Bosco, guided by God and Mary Help of Christians, set to work with a bold and pastoral creativity to provide an overall response to their needs, and involved in his plan people, environments and structures.

## 4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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### 4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

In the period since the last Acts, while the plenary session of the General Council has been in progress, the Rector Major made two visits to Turin, the first on 24 January for a press conference with a large number of journalists representing the leading Italian daily newspapers and other publications. In company with Cardinal Ballastrero he presented the *Apostolic Brief* concerning the special Jubilee and various initiatives in preparation for the centenary celebrations of 1988. He returned to Turin a second time for the feast of our Father Don Bosco, 31 January.

He spent 7 and 8 February at Nice in France, for the local celebration of the feast of Don Bosco, who is greatly venerated in that city. In a eucharistic celebration with members of the Salesian Family he had the joy of receiving the Promise made by 16 Cooperators, all of them deeply involved in the service of youth.

On February 13 he gave another press conference, this time in Rome in the company of the Vicar General (Fr Gaetano Scivo) on the same topics as were previously presented

at Turin. Immediately afterwards he was received in audience by the Pope, first for a private conversation and then together with the members of the General Council, the Secretary General (Fr Maracani) and the Procurator General (Fr Fiora), to offer the Holy Father their combined gratitude for what he has already done in connection with the coming centenary. This audience also marked the conclusion of the plenary session of the Council.

Between 16 and 22 February the Rector Major, accompanied by members of the general Council in charge of the various Departments, went to Leusden (Holland) and then to Vienna (Austria), for two "Team Visits", the first to the two Dutch-speaking provinces and the second to the three German-speaking provinces.

After his return to Rome, among various commitments for purposes of animation we may note the address given in his capacity as Grand Chancellor to the teaching staff of the "Auxilium" Pontifical Faculty of Pedagogy (of the FMA) on the occasion of the approval of the renewed Statutes.

On 6 March he left Rome again,



this time for Madrid, where he blessed the new premises of the Missions Office. On 26 March he departed once again, this time for Asuncion in Paraguay, for the Team Visit to the provinces of Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina; following this he went on to Brasilia for a similar meeting with the Brazilian provinces.

#### **4.2 Chronicle of the General Council**

On 2 December all the Councilors were back in Rome after their visits to the provinces and other animation commitments, and gathered together at the Generalate to begin their winter plenary session (the sixth such session in the present six-year period) which subsequently concluded on 13 February 1987.

As in every plenary session there were numerous matters to be dealt with, and the rhythm of work was intense. In addition to the many administrative practices to be dealt with in respect of the various provinces (the appointment of provincial councillors, approval of the nomination of rectors, the opening and canonical erection of houses, economic and financial matters, personal problems of confreres, etc.), important topics were considered which concerned the good of provinces and communities, following the priorities laid down for the present six-year period.

The following is a concise summary of the principal matters examined by the council with a view to making decisions.

1. *Appointment of provincials:* in this session too a considerable amount of time was dedicated to the discernment process which precedes the appointment of new provincials: a careful examination of the relevant consultations in the provinces concerned; exchange of views in the Council and personal discernment was followed by the appointment of provincials for seven provinces: some details of those called to undertake this task will be found in item 5.6 of the present edition of the Acts.

2. *Reports on Extraordinary Visitations:* this point too engaged the Council in a deep study of the visitations made to various provinces in the period from August to November and the state of the provinces themselves, in the light of the reports presented by the Regional Councillors. The purpose in each case was to identify the points considered most urgent for an ever more complete response to the demands of our vocation and mission in the prevailing circumstances of the provinces concerned.

Reports were made and examined on the following provinces: Rosario (Argentina), Australia, Manaus (Brazil), Paris (France), Bombay (India), Rome (Italy), Hol-



land, Valencia (Spain). Reports were also studied on similar visits made to the Vice-province of Sardinia (Italy) and to the Provincial Delegation of Zambia, in Africa, which depends on the Province of Warsaw.

3. *Informative reports on Team Visits*: two team visits took place in November; the first was at New Delhi for the Indian provinces, and the second at Bangkok for the provinces of the Far East. A brief chronicle of the two visits will be found in AGC 320, n. 4.1.

Following a presentation by the Regional Councillor the Council took note of the work done and of the results achieved. The examination proved useful also for the preparation of future team visits.

4. *Approval of the appointment of Rectors and of the deliberations of Provincial Chapters*. This was a matter which occupied a good deal of time during the plenary session: many such Chapters had taken place in the second half of 1986 or in the early part of January 1987; the council studied all of them carefully, comparing the deliberations of the individual Chapters with our Rule of life and with the indications that had been given about points which should receive priority. For information, the Acts of the Provincial Chapters of the following provinces were examined (in alphabetical order): Antilles, Australia, Austria, Belgium-North, Belgium-South,

Brazil-Manaus, Brazil-Porto Alegre, Chile, Colombia-Bogota, Ecuador, Holland, India-Dimapur, India-Gauhati, Italy-Adriatic, Italy-Central, Italy-Genoa, Italy-Milan, Italy-Novara, Italy-Rome, Italy-Sardinia, (Vice-province), Italy-Sicily, Italy-South, Italy-Subalpine, Italy-Venice, Italy-Verona, Japan, Korea (Vice-province), Middle East, Mexico-Guadalajara, Mexico-Mexico, Paraguay, Poland-East, Poland-West, Portugal, Spain-Cordoba, Spain-Leon, Spain-Madrid, Spain-Seville, Spain-Valencia, Uruguay, USA-East, USA-West.

5. *Recognition of membership of the Salesian Family*: after verifying the criteria that have been laid down, the General Council on 5.2.87 and 6.2.87 respectively gave its consent to the recognition of two Institutes as members of the Salesian Family. The first is that of the "*Daughters of the Divine Saviour*" (founded by Bishop Pedro Aparicio SDB in El Salvador), and that of the "*Sister Handmaids of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*" (founded by Mgr Gaetano Pasotti in Thailand). In this edition of the Acts at n. 5.3 will be found letters of the Rector Major in this connection.

6. *Preparation of aids*: the council took stock of the situation in the preparation of the "Provincial's Manual", the "Guide for Salesian prayer", and the liturgical texts proper to the Congregation. Those

responsible distributed the latest drafts to the Councillors, so that they can make appropriate comments with a view to the drawing up of a definitive text.

7. *Report on preparations for the DB '88 centenary*: the Vicar General and those in charge of various initiatives submitted progress reports which were examined by the full Council; the latter took the necessary time to make decisions on some of the more important points at world level which still needed clarification.

During the plenary session, the work was interspersed with some moments of prayer and relaxation. We may note the following in particular:

- family celebrations of the feasts of the Immaculate Conception and Christmas;

- the Council's yearly retreat, concluding with the annual feast of the Rector Major. This time the Vice-Province of Sardinia was the venue for both;

- the encounter of the Council with the novices at Lanuvio and with the students of theology in the Gerini formation community;

- the fraternal meeting with the General Council of the FMA in the House of St Rose at Castelgandolfo, a very nice moment of family joy!

Finally, on the final day of the session (13 February) as already stated, the Council had the memorable experience of meeting the Holy Father. After a private audience for the Rector Major, the Pope brought in all the other members, and spoke familiarly with them for several minutes, encouraging them by his apostolic blessing to continue their mission in the name of Don Bosco.



## 5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

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### **5.1 APOSTOLIC BRIEF of the Holy Father for the year of grace 1988.**

*The following is an English translation of the Apostolic Brief with which the Holy Father has proclaimed a special "years of grace" on the occasion of the centenary of the death of Don Bosco. The Brief was presented officially at Turin on 24 January 1987 by the Archbishop (Cardinal Anastasio Ballestrero) and our Rector Major, Fr Egidio Viganò.*

*The English translation is made from the Italian version, itself made from the original Latin.*

### **JOHN PAUL II in perpetual remembrance.**

All the members of the Catholic Church, says Lumen Gentium, "whether they belong to the hierarchy or are cared for by it, are called to holiness" (LG 39). For this reason the People of God in their pilgrimage on this earth celebrate "with great devotion their brethren who are in heavenly glory" (LG 51), so that their "intimate union in the Spirit may be strengthened by the practice of fraternal charity" (LG 50), and that by their fellowship in this communion they may obtain from the Saints "example in their

way of life and help through their intercession" (LG 51).

It is desirable therefore that the People of God seriously and actively undertake as a community to gain the wonderful fruits which derive from devotion to the Saints, especially in the celebrations of particular anniversaries, when the events of their earthly pilgrimage seem to come to life once again, rich in the charismatic gifts with which God has favoured these his friends.

And so without any doubt, on the occasion of the centenary of the death of St John Bosco, or rather of his birth into heaven, ecclesial life will derive a new impetus from the devout and timely initiative suggested by Our Venerable Brother Cardinal Anastasio Alberto Ballastrero, Archbishop of Turin, and by the well loved priest Fr Egidio Viganò, Rector Major of the Salesian Congregation. Through this initiative special functions of thanksgiving will be celebrated by the faithful throughout the world, but especially by those of the Archdiocese of Turin and by members of the Salesian Society and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, as well as by the huge throng of those entrusted to their apostolic activity.

With the desire to give ever greater extension to the Kingdom of God, they will foster further research in the catechetical and pedagogical sciences so that the art of educating the young, so much desired and promoted by the Founder, may be better known and produce greater fruit. Justly was our Our Predecessor Pius XI, of happy memory, able to say in his homily during the solemn canonization ceremony that Don Bosco had stolen the hearts of the young.

We, therefore, wishing to enhance such celebrations which we trust will redound to the advantage of the universal Church, and in witness of Our great devotion to St John Bosco, have decided to enrich them with the gift of Indulgences, drawn evidently from the inexhaustible treasury of the Church to which contribute, in addition to the infinite merits of Christ and the supreme virtue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mediatrix of all grace and Help of Christians, also the merits of the Saints.

And so, by Our Apostolic Authority and in regard to the places set out hereafter, in the period *from 31 January 1988, the day which marks the one hundredth anniversary of the death of the Saint, to 31 January 1989*, to all the faithful who devoutly visit one of the churches indicated below *we grant*

*a plenary indulgence* which may be gained on the usual conditions of Sacramental Confession and Eucharistic Communion, with the addition of a prayer for Our intentions. And this specifically:

1. on the days in which the solemn celebrations in honour of St John Bosco begin and end, to those who devoutly take part in the sacred function;
2. on a day freely chosen by each individual, adding the recital of the Our Father and the Creed;
3. every time a group of pilgrims enters one of the churches and the members recite with religious devotion the Our Father and the Creed.

The churches appointed for the purpose are the following:

#### *In the Archdiocese of Turin*

- 1) the Cathedral of Turin: John Bosco was in fact incardinated in the diocese of Turin, and it was particularly at Turin that he carried out his apostolic mission;
- 2) the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin, which was built at Don Bosco's wish, and where his sacred remains are preserved; this is in a certain sense the spiritual centre of the whole Salesian Congregation;
- 3) the church of St Francis of Assisi in Turin; it was here that Don



Bosco began his mission of educating youngsters to the christian life;

4) the Temple of St John Bosco at Castelnuovo Don Bosco, on the hill which bears his name;

5) the collegiate church of "Beata Maria della Scala" in Chieri, where John Bosco came to know that he had been called by God to the priesthood, and decided to follow the divine call;

*In the city of Rome:*

6) the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Rome at Castro Pretorio, which was built by John Bosco at the cost of great sacrifice, in obedience to the wishes of the supreme Pontiff Leo XIII; here the Salesians had their first domicile close to the See of Peter, at the centre of the Catholic Church;

*In Central America and Panama:*

7) the church of St John Bosco in the city of Panama, where gather quite extraordinary numbers of people with a particular devotion to St John Bosco.

Given in Rome, at St Peter's under the Seal of the Ring of the Fisherman, on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on the 8th day of December 1986, in the ninth year of Our Pontificate.

John Paul II

## **5.2 DECREE of the Congregation for the causes of Saints on the heroicity of the virtues of Don Philip Rinaldi**

*The following is an English version of the Italian translation of the Decree by which Pope John Paul II officially recognized and proclaimed that the Servant of God Don Philip Rinaldi, third Successor of Don Bosco, practised the christian virtues to a heroic degree, and in this way conferred on him the title "Venerable".*

*"Dedit (illi) Deus sapientiam et prudentiam multam nimis et latitudinem cordis quasi arena quae est in litore maris" (1 Kings 5.9).* These words may be very appropriately applied to the venerable Philip Rinaldi, to whom God granted in superabundance the taste and living experience of supernatural realities, a singular prudence in the long exercise of authority, and an inexhaustible kindness towards all, a participation in and sign of the fatherhood of God (Eph 3,15).

Philip Rinaldi was born at Lu Monferrato, in the diocese of Casale on 28 May 1856 into a peasant family with a strong christian tradition, and in a region which was outstanding in the last century for the ecclesiastical and religious vocations which flourished in it.

In 1866 he spent a year in the Junior Seminary of Mirabello,

where he had the good fortune to make his confession to Don Bosco. The Saint, through his experience as an educator and supernatural intuition, perceived the existence in him of sure aptitudes for the priestly and religious life. Philip however after a year at the College returned to his family and worked in the fields, leading an intensely religious life in those conditions.

In the meantime Don Bosco continued to keep in touch with him by his advice and repeatedly renewed an invitation to become a priest, with the result that in 1877, when he was over twenty years of age, Philip put all uncertainty of conscience aside and decided to become a salesian. In three years at the College of Sampierdarena (Genoa) he brilliantly completed his grammar school studies, and 1899 made his novitiate at San Benigno Canavese, crowning it by his religious profession which he made in the hands of Don Bosco himself on 13 August 1880. Under the fatherly guidance of the saint, who followed personally his progress through an accelerated course of studies of philosophy and theology, he prepared for priestly ordination which he received in 1882.

Little more than a year afterwards, the holy Founder made him the director, first at Mathi and later at St John the Evangelist in Turin, of the so-called adult vocations. There

he passed some years in an intense spiritual life and successful educational experience among young people, while being able through living in Turin to have frequent confidential encounters with Don Bosco, to have him as his confessor and deeply absorb his spirit.

In 1889 Blessed Michael Rua sent him to Spain as rector of the house of Sarrià at a time when there was a delicate situation there. The prudence of Don Rinaldi enabled him to overcome every difficulty; he gained universal esteem and was able to multiply the number of salesian foundations in that country, to such an extent that in 1892 he was appointed provincial of the promising houses in the Iberian peninsula. For ten years he laboured there with such success that the works and confreres increased considerably in number, and he can be called the true founder of the Salesian Congregation in Spain.

In 1902 Don Michael Rua recalled him to Turin as Vicar General, with responsibility for religious discipline and general administration in the Congregation. There followed twenty years of heavy and difficult work which kept him at his desk for long hours every day in dealing with the business of the Congregation. But he did not allow himself to become closed up in material and bureaucratic affairs, and he used every possible opportunity for exercis-



ing his priestly ministry. Every day he heard confessions in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians and became much sought after as a spiritual director, especially with regard to religious vocations; he preached willingly, in a simple but efficacious manner; he acted as director of the Mary Help of Christians girls' festive oratory at Valdocco, to such good purpose that through personal commitment and numerous initiatives of a religious, social, cultural and recreational kind, it became one of the liveliest religious centres of Piedmont.

Some of the initiatives to which he gave rise in this period were truly original in character: for the apostolate of the press he set up and maintained the Società Editrice Internazionale (International Publishing Society), now one of the biggest Catholic publishers in Italy; he organized the Salesian Past Pupils and those of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians at world level, preceding every other Religious Institute in this regard; he promoted the Association of Cooperators and gave them the characteristics of a true Salesian Third Order; he created a lay association of women (now known as the Don Bosco Volunteers, with over a thousand members) which was a forerunner of the Secular Institutes which later came into being; he promoted an organization for Catholic teachers

and professors; through the pedagogical conferences which he gave for many years at the Salesian Theological Studentate he was truly a master of all things salesian, and gathered together, in systematic if not completely scientific form, the teachings of Don Bosco; in the lessons he gave at the teachers Training College at Nizza he dealt sensitively and in a modern way with women's problems; and while promoting and animating so much forward-looking activity, he always promoted responsibility in lay people and respected their competence.

In 1922 he was elected Rector Major, and in this final period of his life spent at the summit of the Congregation, he revealed in a more striking way to the eyes of all the riches of his spiritual and apostolic life. His primary concern was the formation of the confreres, to whom he specially recommended sanctified work and the interior life, after the example of Don Bosco and to practise the Rule. During his time as Rector Major the number of members rose from 4798 to 8836.

Another of his preferential fields of interest was the missions, for which he created specific houses of formation, and to which he had the apostolic courage and daring to send quite young confreres, so that they could get inserted into the local environment and gradually absorb its language and culture. The



missionary endeavour made under his leadership led to a wonderful flourishing of vocations and works which gave to the Congregation ecclesial and world dimensions.

The beatification of Don Bosco in 1929 was the high point of his period of government, and he made use of it as an opportunity and stimulus for reminding the confreres of the genuine characteristics of the Founder's charisma.

In his last years he was compelled by failing health to reduce the intense tempo of his life, but he remained always calm and unruffled, and it was during this period that the moral prestige he enjoyed became more efficacious than ever, both among the confreres and beyond the Congregation. He died on 5 December 1932 in the odour of sanctity, which the passage of time has only served to strengthen right down to the present day, when his glorification on the part of the Church is earnestly hoped for.

The Venerable Philip Rinaldi was a man who distinguished himself in life for his intense habitual union with God, for his tranquillity and peace of mind that was proof against all earthly turmoil, for a spirit of humble fatherliness which conquered hearts and made of him the "living image" of Don Bosco; but he was also a man of action, a tireless animator of youthful and apostolic activities, open to all the

needs of his time, and even a man before his time with new forms of christian apostolate. In this harmony between a steadfast interior life and burning apostolic activity is to be found the characteristic holiness of Don Philip Rinaldi.

The Servant of God's reputation for sanctity in no way decreased after his death; in fact it continued to increase with the passage of time, and it seemed that God was confirming the fact by heavenly signs. And so his cause for beatification was introduced and after the diocesan process in the episcopal Curia of Turin (in the years 1947-1952) and, by delegation of the Curia of Turin, also in the Curia of Barcelona (1949-1950), the Cause was introduced before the Apostolic See by a decree of 11 June 1977.

After the Apostolic Processes had been carried out in the Archdiocesan Curia of Turin, the theological and cardinal virtues of the Servant of God were discussed: first, on 14 October 1986, in a particular Congress of the theological Consultors, under the presidency of the Very Reverend Mgr Antonio Petti, Promoter General of the Faith; and subsequently, on 23 December 1986, in the Ordinary Congregation of the Cardinals and Bishops, with His Eminence Cardinal Alfonso Stickler as presenter. In both meetings the response to the question: is there certainty about the heroicity



of the virtues, was positive with a unanimous vote.

The undersigned Cardinal Prefect them made a complete report on all the foregoing to the Supreme Pontiff, John Paul II. His Holiness, accepting willingly the voting of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, ordered that the Decree should be prepared on the heroicity of the virtues of the Servant of God.

After everything had been done in the manner laid down, the undersigned Cardinal Prefect, the Cardinal Presenter, the Bishop Secretary of the Congregation, and others whom it is customary to call to such meetings, gathered in the presence of the Holy Father, who solemnly declared: It is certain that the Servant of God Philip Rinaldi practised the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity both towards God and towards his neighbour, and the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance and the virtues associated with them, in a heroic degree, *'in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur'*.

He then ordained that the present decree be promulgated in accordance with the customary norms, and inserted in the Acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Given at Rome on 3 January, A.D. 1987

✱ Peter Cardinal Palazzini,  
Prefect

✱ Traiano Crisan, Tit. Abp. of Drivasto  
Secretary

### 5.3 Membership in the Salesian Family of two Institutes: "Daughters of the Divine Saviour" and "Handmaids of the Immaculate Heart of Mary"

*The following letters of the Rector Major were addressed to the Superiors General of the two Institutes concerned and to all the Groups of the Family, concerning the recognition of the two Institutes as new members.*

Reverend Mother  
Rosa Candelaria CACERES  
Daughters of the Divine Saviour»  
SANTO DOMINGO - Dep. de S. Vicente

*Dear Mother General.*

With great pleasure I am able to inform you and all your Sisters that your request for official recognition as members of the Salesian Family of the "Daughters of the Divine Saviour" has been favourably received.

This is the sixth time that I have been able to give good news of this kind.

In 1981 it was with respect to the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts, of Bogotá; in 1983, the Salesian Oblates of the Sacred Heart; in 1984, the Sister Apostles of the Holy Family, of Messina; last year it was the Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki, of Japan, and the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians of Shillong, India; and now today it is your turn. Today your Institute plays its part in



manifesting the breadth and plurality of Don Bosco's radiant spirit in the Church.

After examining the history of your foundation and your Institute's official texts, the Rector Major with his Council have accepted and approved in a meeting held on 5 February 1987 the request sent to us by you and your general Council on 8 September 1985.

Your Institute came into being through the initiative of the zealous salesian bishop, Mgr Pedro Arnaldo APARICIO, to provide a special method of following Christ and to meet an urgent need of your country: the formation of valid Catholic women teachers and catechists, a purpose eminently salesian in nature. The foundation was applauded by the whole of the Salvadoran episcopacy.

During your early years you received meritorious help from the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, who guided you in the assimilation of the values of the salesian charisma: the apostolic spirituality of the "da mini animas", the method of approach and of education inspired by the preventive system, the love of daily work and temperance imbued with pastoral charity and Eucharistic and Marian piety, the constant reference to the spirit of Don Bosco. In this way your Institute developed consistency and began to expand, even into neighbouring countries.

Certain traits of the specific identity of your Institute deserve to be emphasized:

- the attitude of spiritual childhood, born of simplicity and undisturbed joy, linked with the fact that the Institute was born on a Christmas Day and that you have a special devotion to the Infant Jesus and to the Holy Family;
- your witness of poverty, which stands out in the lives of your young first Sisters and in the purpose of the service they gave to the children of the working classes and especially to the poorer ones among them;
- your project of serving the particular Church and the parishes through activity of an educational and pastoral kind, giving priority to the urgent need to form good catechists.

The Salesian Family is enriched by these values that you bring to it, and my confreres will feel that they share responsibility with you for the spiritual and educational animation of your Institute.

On your side you feel involved in the initiatives of the entire Salesian Family of Don Bosco and you intend to make reference to this in your renewed Constitutions.

We pray that the good Lord, through the intercession of Mary Help of Christians and of St John Bosco, may continue to give you



growth in number and holiness, in fervour and in good works.

May this official recognition serve you also as a stimulus and encouragement in your religious and pastoral efforts in your dear country of El Salvador, and in other countries of Central America, which have been so sorely tried in recent years.

May the Lord illumine the faith, strengthen the hope and inflame the charity of all the faithful in their laborious work of building a civilization of love.

My cordial greetings to you and to all your Sisters. Let us increase our mutual communion in prayer.

With sentiments of joy and esteem in the Lord,

Rome, 24 February 1987.

Fr Egidio VIGANÒ

The Reverend Mother,  
Sr Agatha LADDA SATVINIT  
Thidamepra School, - 317 Taladmai Road  
SURAT THANI - Thailand

*Reverend Mother Superior,*

On the auspicious occasion of the golden jubilee of your Institute, founded in 1937 by the zealous missionary Bishop, Mgr Gaetano PASOTTI, it gives me great joy to inform you and your Sisters that your request for membership of your Institute in the Salesian Family of Don Bosco has been approved.

Yours is the seventh official recognition of membership that has been made in the past six years. You join the Daughters of the Sacred Heart, of Bogota (Colombia); the Salesian Oblates of the Sacred Heart, of Bova Marina (Italy); the Sister Apostles of the Holy Family, of Messina (Italy); the Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki (Japan); the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians, of Shillong (India); and the Daughters of the Divine Saviour, of El Salvador (Central America). All this is an evident sign of the fertility of the charism of Don Bosco as a gift to the Church, extended to every continent.

In its meeting of 6 February 1987, the Rector Major examined in association with his Council the history and constitutional texts of your Institute, and after noting in them evidence of fidelity to the salesian spirit and its educational and pastoral method, accepted and approved the request made by you and your Sisters on 6 August 1985.

The first name of your Institute was "Sister Helpers", and you in turn were helped by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in the formation, government and expansion of the Institute in its early years, especially through one Sister who was novice-mistress of your young Congregation for fifteen years, and another who for twenty-five years guided the Institute as Superior General.



Subsequently you changed your name to "Handmaids", thereby showing your desire to take Mary as a model of humility and obedience, attentive to the voice of the Spirit, so that like her you might carry out in your words and works only what is conformable to the divine will.

In addition to its Marian aspect, a second characteristic trait of your charism is a lively sense of the local Church. Your first apostolate, in fact, which was inculcated by the Founder and encouraged by the Bishops in the dioceses to which you expanded, has always been help given to mission centres, through carefully prepared catechesis in a country in great need of the first evangelization, of the education of women and girls, and of animation for parish groups.

A third element is the contribution you make to the development of the local people, by teaching in schools of various levels, using the methods of kindness, reason and religion, which are fundamental values of Don Bosco's educational principles.

If the originality of your charism can be transmitted to the new generations, the entire Salesian Family will benefit because, with the support of the spiritual assistance of the Salesians, you will be, together with us and the other Groups of the Family, "signs and bearers of God's love for the young", in the spirit of

your Founder and of Don Bosco himself.

May Mary, the Immaculate Help of Christians, help you to grow in numbers and quality, in generosity and service; may the humble "Handmaid of the Lord" obtain for each of you the "great things" performed by the Almighty in her.

You have our prayers and our brotherly solidarity.

With sentiments of esteem and gratitude and a special blessing,

Rome, 28 February 1987.

Fr Egidio VIGANÒ

*To the Superiors and  
those responsible  
for the various Groups  
of the Salesian Family*

The Salesian Family continues to grow. New Groups are receiving official recognition as members, and our joy increases as we see the charism of our Founder extending ever further among people.

Last year the Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki (Japan), founded by Fr Antonio CAVOLI with the Servant of God Mgr Vincenzo CIMATTI as cofounder, were the fifth group given recognition. A lively missionary thrust has taken them now as far as Latin America, Papua New Guinea and Europe.

This year on February 4 and 6,

the Rector Major with his Council examined the history and constitutional documents of two more Institutes, and have been able to verify that their plan of life and action is in harmony in origin with Don Bosco's charism in the Church. The two Institutes are:

1 - The "Daughters of the Divine Saviour", founded by Mgr Pedro Arnaldo APARICIO, retired salesian Bishop of S. Vicente (EL Salvador), for the purpose of forming Catholic teachers and catechists who are much appreciated in various dioceses. Their educational and pastoral methods take their inspiration from Don Bosco, whose spirituality frequently appears in their renewed Constitutions.

Among the noteworthy characteristics of their particular charism are simplicity and a tranquil joy—they call it spiritual infancy because the Institute was born on a Christmas Day, together with service of the local parish and diocese, the poverty practised by the young early members, and docility in the assimilation of salesian values passed on to them by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, who accompanied them in their early stages.

2 - The "Handmaids of the Immaculate Heart of Mary", of Bag-Nok-Khuek, were founded by the zealous salesian missionary bishop, Mgr Gaetano PASOTTI, in 1937. The recognition of their member-

ship of the Salesian Family, first applied for on 6 August 1985, comes as a fine gift for the golden jubilee of the foundation of the Institute..

They were originally known as "Sister Helpers", which was later changed to "Handmaids", but always they had as their model Mary, the Immaculate Help of Christians, in whom the Lord did "great things". The Institute is very grateful to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, who at their beginnings lent them a Sister as novice-mistress for fifteen years, and another as Superior General for no less than twenty-five years.

The particular features of their charism can be summed up as follows:

- the Marian dimension;
- a lively sense of the local Church, with generous help to mission centres;
- contribution to cultural development in Thailand, by teaching in schools at various levels, and activity in the field of the first evangelization process.

I invite all the groups of our Family to accompany by their prayers, and when possible by their fraternal collaboration, these Sisters who enrich us with the specific qualities of their respective foundational values.

The Don Bosco Centenary, now very near, is a significant moment which will stimulate us to go forward together on the path to sancti-



ty he opened before us, a sanctity to which we are all called and which we must pursue in all generosity.

Let the individual members and Groups of the Salesian Family implore the gifts of the Spirit and the help of Mary for these new saplings in the salesian "wood" (= "bosco") and realize with us the hope expressed in the Psalm: "He is like a tree that is planted beside the flowing waters, that yields its fruit in due season and whose leaves shall never fade; and all that he does shall prosper".

Together towards '88!

Cordially in Don Bosco.

Rome, 28 February 1987.

Fr Egidio VIGANÒ

#### **5.4 World Consulting Body of Salesian Cooperators. Appointment of Coordinator General.**

*We publish the communication by which the Rector Major informed those responsible for the different Groups in the Salesian Family of the members of the new World Consulting Body of the Salesian Cooperators.*

*Rome, Christmas 1986.*

*To: The Mother General FMA  
The Vicar General FMA  
Members of SDB General Council  
Provincial Councillors of the Cooperators  
SDB and FMA Provincials  
Those responsible for the Groups of the  
Salesian Family*

A happy new Year to you all!

The year of grace 1986 brought us the promising gift of the approval by the Apostolic See and the promulgation by the Rector Major of the REGULATIONS of APOSTOLIC LIFE of the Salesian Cooperators.

The purpose of this present letter is to inform you of the composition of the WORLD CONSULTING BODY, in part elected during the Congress of 1985, and in part nominated by me in accordance with art. 48,1 of the Regulations of apostolic life:

Region: America - Atlantic:

*Prof. Sergio Monello (Brazil)*

*Miss M. Teresa Martelli (Argentina)*

Region: America - Pacific:

*Prof. Pedro Monsalve (Venezuela)*

Region: Asia:

*Mr Joseph Lazaro (India)*

Region: English Speaking:

*Mr Kenneth Greaney (GB)*

Region: Europe - Africa:

*Miss Ilinka Irsic (Yugoslavia)*

*Mr Katalaie Kabeya (Zaire)*

Region: Spain - Portugal:

*Mr Jordi Tarradell Segu (Spain)*



Region: Italy - Middle East:

*Dr. Paolo Santoni (Italy)*

*Prof. Pierangelo Fabrini (Italy)*

Delegate general SDB:

*Fr Mario Cogliandro SDB*

Delegate general FMA:

*Sr. Michelina Secco FMA*

The first meeting of the Consulting Body will take place in Rome, Via della Pisana 1111, from 16 to 20 January 1987, with an appropriate agenda.

While I congratulate the newly elected members, I invite all to give their mutual collaboration and so render the service of the Consultant Body competent and fruitful.

I send you my fraternal greetings and assure you of my prayers

Cordially in Don Bosco

sac. Egidio VIGANÒ

*Rector Major*

*After the first meeting of the World Consulting Body, held in Rome from 16 to 20 January 1987, the Rector Major proceeded to the nomination of the COORDINATOR GENERAL of the Association of the Cooperators, by means of the following Decree.*

#### DECREE

Fr Egidio VIGANÒ, Rector Major of the Salesian Society of St Francis de Sales and Superior of the Association of Salesian Coopera-

tors, in accordance with art. 48,1 of the Association's Regulations of apostolic life, hereby APPOINTS from among the members of the World Consulting Body.

Mr Paolo Santoni

*As Coordinator General of the Association of Salesian Cooperators* for seven years, in accordance with art. 48,4 of the same Regulations, beginning from 19 March 1987.

We wish him every success throughout the period of his mandate.

May the centenary events of 1988 be a stimulus for the growth of the Association.

Given at Rome, 4 March 1987.

Fr Egidio VIGANÒ

#### 5.5 Salesian Family: 13th Week of Spirituality

The 13th Week of Spirituality the Salesian Family was held at the "Salesianum" in Rome from 22 to 28 January 1987. More than 150 persons took part, representing Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Two themes of reflection provided the basis for the addresses and work: the general theme of the meeting "Let us reap with the young the harvest of Vatican II", and the Strenna of the Rector Major

"Heading together for '88 as a vast movement of missionaries of the young".

The main speakers developed complementary aspects of these themes. They were as follows:

- The ecclesial pedagogy of Don Bosco (Fr Pietro Braidò);
- The Council and Youth: a difficult but promising dialogue (Bishop Alberto Ablondi);
- The Council and the challenge of the contemporary culture (Fr Riccardo Tonelli);
- The main problems of youth with regard to the Word of God (Fr Cesare Bissoli);
- The main problems of youth with regard to the Church's liturgy (Sister Antonia Meneghetti);
- The main problems of youth with regard to the Church's sacraments (Fr Jacques Shepens);
- The main problems of youth with regard to mission in the world (Prof. Pierangelo Fabbrini);
- The Salesians with youth in the orbit of Vatican II (Fr Egidio Viganò).

With these reflections as a foundation, the assembly split up into groups to consider the arguments put forward, enriching them by witness and the exchange of personal experiences.

The Week was presided over by the Councillor General for the Salesian Family, whose Department had

been responsible for the organization and preparation. It was carried out in a family atmosphere and concluded with a 'round table' with the participation of representatives of the various Groups of the Family, and with a closing address by the Rector Major who commented on the Strenna and offered some Guidelines for its realization in practice.

## 5.6 New Provincials

*In the plenary session of the General Council, between 2 December 1986 and 13 February 1987, seven provincials were appointed. Some brief biographical notes follow on each of them.*

1. *Fr Carlo LONGO*,  
Provincial of BOLIVIA.

He was born 29 November 1938 at Trebaseleghe in the Diocese of Padua, Italy. He entered the Missionary institute of Ivrea as an aspirant and went on to Villa Moglia at Chieri for his novitiate, at the end of which he made his first profession in August 1956. After obtaining his teacher's certificate and the period of practical training he went to the Bollengo Studentate of Theology, Italy. After his priestly ordination at Turin on 18 March 1967 he asked and received permission to go to the missions and was sent to Bolivia.



There in 1974 he became rector of the St Dominic Savio vocational centre at La Paz, and was subsequently rector at Cochabamba-Fatima and later at Sucre. At the time of his appointment as provincial he was rector of the agricultural and social centre of Muyurina and member of the provincial council.

2. *Fr Luis CHINCHILLA*,

Provincial of CENTRAL AMERICA.

Fr Luis Chinchilla succeeds as provincial of the Province of San Salvador Fr Jose Di Pietro, who recently became the first Bishop of the new Diocese of Sonsonate (El Salvador).

Fr CHINCHILLA was born in San Jose, Costa Rica, on 5 December 1937. He made his novitiate at Ayagualo (El Salvador), where he also made his first profession on 24 December 1956. After his practical training and curriculum of studies he was ordained priest in 1966 by Bishop Arturo Rivera SDB.

After some years experience of priestly ministry, in 1970 he was appointed director of novices in Guatemala; in 1974 he became rector of the studentate of philosophy, and one year later was appointed Provincial of Central America.

At the end of his term of office he was called to Rome as rector of the Don Rua community at the UPS and was at the same time elected as a member of the council of the De-

legation. For the past three years he has been at Panama as rector and parish priest at the Temple of Don Bosco in Panama City.

3. *Fr Carlos Julio APONTE*,

Provincial of COLOMBIA - BOGOTÀ.

He is a native of Boyacà (Colombia) where he was born on 6 August 1930. At the age of 14 he became a pupil at the salesian school at Mosquera. He made his novitiate at Usaquen, where he also made his first profession on 14 January 1950. After his first period of salesian experience he studied theology at Bogotá and was ordained priest on 28 October 1959. Subsequently he obtained the Licentiate in Pedagogy, and followed this by courses in administration. His ability in this latter field led to his appointment as provincial economer, an office he held for 13 years until his appointment as provincial.

4. *Fr Francesco PANFILO*,

Provincial of the PHILIPPINES.

He was born at Vilminore di Scalve, in the Diocese of Bergamo (Italy), on 23 November 1942, and entered the aspirantate of Chiari in 1958. He made his novitiate at Misaglia (Como) and his first profession on 16 August 1964.

He left for the Philippines while still a cleric and there gained his first experience of the salesian apos-



tolate. He came back to Italy for the study of theology at Turin-Crocetta, and was ordained priest in his native parish on 27 April 1974.

Soon after his return to the Philippines he was called to posts of responsibility, becoming rector of the house of Mandaluyong and then in 1980 member of the provincial council. Since 1985 he was also director of novices in the novitiate at Canlubang. He was a delegate at the GC22.

5. *Fr Gérard BALBO,*

Provincial of NORTHERN FRANCE.

Born at Paris on 24 April 1931, he studied at the salesian school at Giel up to pre-university level. In 1948 he was admitted to the novitiate at La Guerche and made his first religious profession there on 13 September 1949. After his philosophy studies and practical training, which like all his companions of the time he had to interrupt to do his national service, he frequented the course of theology at Lyon-Fontanières and was ordained priest at Paris on 25 March 1961.

After gaining a degree in classics at the University of Caen, he taught in the houses of Coat-an-doc'h and Landser. He then took a further degree of Doctor in Educational Sciences, and was given charge of the formation of the young student confreres at Paris between 1973 and 1976. For four years he was also a

member of the general secretariate for Catholic teaching in France. He went on to become rector of the salesian house at Vèsinet.

In 1979 he became a member of the provincial council, and in the following year vice-provincial. From 1983 onwards he has been director of the Commission of the French Conference of Major Religious Superiors for the formation of religious.

6. *Fr Joseph HARRINGTON,*

Provincial of IRELAND  
and SOUTHERN AFRICA.

After six years at the helm of the Dublin Province, Fr Joseph Harrington was confirmed in office on 27 December 1986 for a further six year period.

Fr Harrington was born on 8 January 1933 at Bere Island, Co. Cork (Ireland); he has been a salesian since 1954 and was ordained priest on 29 June 1968.

He holds high qualifications in agricultural sciences, and before his appointment as provincial filled several posts of responsibility: he was rector of the agricultural and secondary schools at Pallaskenry from 1973 to 1979, and at the same time a member of the provincial council; in 1979 he became provincial economist, and in the following year was appointed provincial.



7. *Fr Federico HERNANDO CONDE*,  
Provincial of BILBAO (Spain).

On 16 December 1986 Fr Federico Hernando Conde was called to lead the province of Bilbao, in succession to Fr Hilario Santos de Dios, who had died in the preceding July, after hardly one year of service as provincial.

Fr Hernando was born at Burgos, Spain, on 18 July 1929. After frequenting the salesian college at Astudillo, he made his novitiate at Mohernando and his first profession there on 16 August 1948.

While still a young cleric he asked to go to Brazil to work on the missions and spent some years in the province of Manaus. In Brazil too (at Sao Paolo) he did his theological studies and was ordained priest on 8 December 1957.

Returning some years later to his native country, he was appointed rector, first at the house of Nueva Montana, then at Pamplona, and subsequently at Baracaldo. From 1980 he had been vice-provincial.

Barbosa, Archbishop of Campo Grande, offered because he had reached the age limit, had been accepted by the Holy Father, and that he had been succeeded by Mgr Vitorio PAVANELLO, who had been Coadjutor in the same metropolitan see.

Mgr Pavanello was born at Presidente Getulio, in the State of Santa Catarina (Brazil), in 1936; he has been a salesian since 1957 and was ordained priest at Sao Paolo in 1966. He became rector of the Sacred Heart High School in Sao Paolo, then of the novitiate at Pindamonhangaba, and in 1978 he became rector and director of novices in the new novitiate of Sao Carlos. It was here that he received in 1981 his appointment as Bishop of Corumbà. His episcopal ordination took place at Sao Carlos on the feast of Don Bosco 1982, and after two years work in the Diocese of Corumbà he was promoted in 1984 to be Coadjutor Archbishop of Campo Grande.

2) *Mgr Tito SOLARI*,  
Auxiliary Bishop of Santa Cruz  
de la Sierra.

## 5.7 Pontifical appointments.

1) *Mgr Vitorio PAVANELLO*,  
Archbishop of Campo Grande.

On 13 December 1986 the Osservatore Romano carried the news that the resignation of Mgr Antonio

On 16 December 1986 the Holy See officially announced the appointment of Fr Tito Solari, Provincial of Bolivia, as Titular Bishop of Acque Nuove della Numidia and Auxiliary of the Archbishop of Santa Cruz della Sierra (Bolivia).

Mgr Solari was born near Prato Carnico, in the Diocese of Udine (Italy) on 2 September 1939. At the age of 11 he entered the salesian college of Tolmezzo and in 1955 went on to the novitiate at Albarè (Verona), where he made his first profession on 16 August 1956. he studied theology at Turin-Crocetta and subsequently at the new site of the Salesian Atheneum in Rome, where he gained the licentiate in theology. He was ordained priest in his native parish on 23 December 1966.

Subsequently he taught at the salesian college at Castello di Godego, and took courses in sociology at the University of Trent. In 1974 he sought and obtained permission to go and work in Bolivia in the missionary foundation at San Carlos de Yapacani, made by the East-Venice province in collaboration with the Province of Bolivia. In due course he became rector of the house, until in 1981 he was appointed Provincial of the Bolivian Province.

3) *Mgr Jose Ramon GURRUCHAGA*,  
Bishop of Huaraz.

On 8 January 1987 the Holy Father appointed Fr Jose Ramon Gurruchaga Ezama SDB, Bishop of the Diocese in Peru.

Mgr Gurruchaga is of Spanish origin, being born at Baracaldo (Spain) in 1931. A salesian since

1949, he was sent after completing his philosophy studies to Peru for his practical training. For theology he returned to Italy (Turin-Crocetta) and was ordained priest in 1961.

Back once again in Spain he frequented courses in pastoral theology at Salamanca. After obtaining the licentiate in philosophy and theology he returned once again to Peru, where he was soon called upon to be rector of the studentate of philosophy at Chosica, and in 1971 was appointed vice-provincial. Between 1973 and 1975 he was rector and parish priest at Magdalena del Mar, and at the same time Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Work in the Archdiocese of Lima. In 1975 he was appointed Provincial of Mexico (Mexico) and five years later returned to Perú to guide the Peruvian province.

## 5.8 BROTHERLY SOLIDARITY (49th Report)

### a) *provinces that have contributed to the solidarity fund*

#### LATIN AMERICA

Argentina (Cordoba province)	L. 2.740.000
Brazil (Belo Horizonte province)	L. 1.360.000
Chile	L. 3.910.000



## NORTH AMERICA

New Rochelle province (Canadian Delegation)	L. 4.775.000
San Francisco province	L. 16.625.000

## AUSTRALIA

Oakleigh province	L. 5.000.000
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## ASIA

Philippines province	L. 550.000
Japan province	L. 25.000.000
India (Madras province)	L. 4.000.000
Thailand province (Fatima Sanctuary)	L. 268.000

## EUROPE

Italy (Milan province)	L. 5.000.000
Italy (Venice province-Udine)	L. 3.000.000
Germany (Cologne province)	L. 10.000.000
Spain (Leon province)	L. 1.530.000
Spain (Valencia province)	L. 5.000.000
Mr Giuseppe Gilli	L. 10.000.000

b) *Distribution of monies received  
through the solidarity fund*

## AFRICA

Central Africa (Rwanda): For the youth centre	L. 10.000.000
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## LATIN AMERICA

Mexico-Guadalajara for the new foundation in Guinea	L. 20.000.000
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## NORTH AMERICA

San Francisco for the new foundation in Sierra Leone	L. 20.000.000
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## ASIA

India (Bombay) for the maintenance of confreres in Sudan	L. 10.000.000
Philippines for the new foundation at Jakarta, (Indonesia) and for the maintenance of the confreres there	L. 19.000.000

### 5.9. S.D.B. Statistics at 31/12/86

#### Summarized figures

Isp.	IN	Professi temporanei				Professi perpetui				Tp	Novizi				TOT
		L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P		L	S	P	Tn	
AFC	223	11	20	—	—	23	10	—	151	215	2	7	—	9	224
ANT	184	1	26	—	1	16	6	—	124	174	1	10	—	11	185
ABA	221	3	15	—	—	15	13	—	159	205	—	2	—	2	207
ABB	179	4	10	—	—	17	6	—	133	170	1	1	—	2	172
ACO	198	12	38	—	—	10	14	—	114	188	1	5	—	6	194
ALP	139	1	28	—	—	14	5	—	84	132	—	4	—	4	136
ARO	148	4	17	—	—	17	4	—	100	142	—	8	—	8	150
AUL	130	5	11	—	—	21	5	—	81	123	—	1	—	1	124
AUS	159	6	9	—	1	13	3	1	121	154	—	4	—	4	158
BEN	233	2	19	—	—	22	4	—	185	232	2	1	—	3	235
BES	119	1	5	—	—	8	2	—	98	114	—	1	—	1	115
BOL	118	4	27	—	—	14	2	—	68	115	—	—	—	—	115
BBH	178	3	18	—	—	21	6	—	125	173	2	5	—	7	180
BCG	183	3	18	—	—	31	4	—	116	172	1	9	—	10	182
BMA	138	6	28	—	—	20	3	—	74	131	—	9	—	9	140
BPA	139	—	22	—	—	10	6	—	87	125	—	4	—	4	129
BRE	101	5	9	—	—	16	3	—	62	95	—	2	—	2	97
BSP	240	6	39	—	—	30	8	—	138	221	—	10	—	10	231
CAM	249	4	52	—	—	24	12	—	139	231	1	25	—	26	257
CIL	241	4	41	—	—	24	11	—	157	237	1	9	—	10	247
CIN	151	—	14	—	—	39	2	—	95	150	—	3	—	3	153
COB	205	4	27	—	—	44	6	—	122	203	—	9	—	9	212
COM	164	3	37	—	—	24	10	—	87	161	—	7	—	7	168
ECU	269	6	32	—	—	29	13	—	176	256	—	12	—	12	268
FIL	329	31	111	—	—	21	14	1	133	311	4	24	—	28	339
FLY	181	—	4	—	—	35	2	—	136	177	—	—	—	—	177
FPA	246	2	6	—	—	33	2	—	202	245	1	—	—	1	246
GBR	180	1	14	—	—	21	1	—	135	172	—	2	—	2	174
GEK	205	12	18	—	—	43	5	—	116	194	—	4	—	4	198
GEM	287	11	29	—	—	68	6	—	165	279	1	5	—	6	285
GIA	122	—	9	—	—	21	3	—	90	123	—	2	—	2	125
INB	287	10	86	—	—	25	26	—	129	276	5	12	—	17	293
INC	323	10	91	—	—	28	22	—	151	302	1	8	—	9	311
IND	180	5	50	—	—	2	25	—	79	161	—	—	—	—	161
ING	267	6	59	—	—	28	19	—	144	256	2	28	—	30	286
INK	295	3	132	—	—	13	25	—	110	283	—	18	—	18	301
INM	346	11	120	—	—	22	30	—	146	329	—	26	—	26	355
IRL	220	8	26	—	—	18	12	—	148	212	—	4	—	4	216
IAD	168	1	4	—	—	33	—	—	133	171	—	2	—	2	173
ICE	385	11	14	—	—	142	3	1	200	371	—	2	—	2	373



Isp.	IN	Professi temporanei				Professi perpetui				Tp	Novizi				TOT
		L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P		L	S	P	Tn	
ILE	430	4	18	—	—	76	3	—	322	423	2	3	—	5	428
ILT	237	1	7	—	—	44	3	—	174	229	—	3	—	3	232
IME	358	2	24	—	—	55	8	2	255	346	1	3	—	4	350
INE	235	2	10	—	—	48	3	—	165	228	—	—	—	—	228
IRO	322	2	11	—	1	57	5	2	243	321	1	2	—	3	324
ISA	86	—	1	—	—	9	6	—	70	86	—	3	—	3	89
ISI	401	2	17	—	—	42	13	—	314	388	2	7	—	9	397
ISU	502	4	18	—	—	110	6	—	359	497	—	6	—	6	503
IVE	317	3	20	—	—	65	4	1	221	314	—	4	—	4	318
IVO	250	2	9	—	—	52	—	—	181	244	—	1	—	1	245
JUL	172	1	26	—	—	21	11	—	107	166	—	—	—	—	166
JUZ	116	—	18	—	—	8	6	—	79	111	—	5	—	5	116
KOR	42	4	9	—	—	6	1	—	16	36	1	4	—	5	41
MEG	152	3	25	—	—	11	8	—	99	146	—	9	—	9	155
MEM	188	7	51	—	—	15	6	—	95	174	4	12	—	16	190
MOR	145	—	6	—	—	32	2	—	105	145	—	4	—	4	149
OLA	93	—	—	—	—	27	—	1	65	93	—	—	—	—	93
PAR	109	4	18	—	—	8	3	—	64	97	—	6	—	6	103
PER	172	8	34	—	—	11	7	—	108	168	1	6	—	7	175
PLE	402	10	140	—	—	22	10	—	187	369	2	29	—	31	400
PLN	324	3	95	—	—	14	11	—	179	302	3	25	—	28	330
PLO	258	1	55	—	—	1	12	—	181	250	1	13	—	14	264
PLS	276	1	103	—	—	19	4	—	126	253	—	26	—	26	279
POR	187	4	16	—	—	48	5	1	110	184	—	5	—	5	189
SBA	286	4	21	—	—	44	8	—	196	273	—	3	—	3	276
SBI	271	9	34	—	—	57	31	—	123	254	—	10	—	10	264
SCO	158	5	20	—	—	9	4	2	113	153	1	6	—	7	160
SLE	298	15	29	—	—	68	12	—	160	284	2	3	—	5	289
SMA	472	24	40	—	—	103	21	—	265	453	4	3	—	7	460
SSE	204	1	11	—	—	36	6	—	141	195	—	8	—	8	203
SVA	223	2	17	—	—	35	9	—	150	213	1	3	—	4	217
SUE	303	3	16	—	—	60	6	—	208	293	1	7	—	8	301
SUO	134	2	4	—	—	28	4	—	92	130	1	1	—	2	132
THA	110	6	21	—	—	10	3	—	68	108	2	6	—	8	116
URU	154	—	17	—	—	11	5	—	115	148	—	1	—	1	149
VEN	254	1	27	—	1	23	5	1	179	237	—	10	—	10	247
UPS	120	—	—	—	—	17	—	1	107	125	—	—	1	1	126
RMG	87	—	—	—	—	20	—	—	72	92	—	—	—	—	92
T.	17178	360	2323	—	4	2377	604	14	10827	16509	56	522	1	579	17088
Vescovi e Prelati	77	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	80	—	—	—	—	80
Non catal.( <sup>1</sup> )	464	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	450	—	—	—	—	450
Totale	17719	360	2323	—	4	2377	604	14	10827	17039	56	522	1	579	17618

(<sup>1</sup>) These figures ("non catal.") refer to countries where the life of the Congregation meets with difficulties. The figures are approximate and based on the latest information received.



**5.10 Our dead confreres (1987 – 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 90).

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
<b>L AMANN Ludwig</b>	Sunbury	22-02-87	79	AUL
<b>P AZPELETA PRIETO Félix</b>	Madrid	15-01-87	79	SMA
<b>L BAGNATI Angelo</b>	Vigliano Biellese	29-12-86	83	INE
<b>P BALLESTEROS Rafael</b>	Bata (Guinea Eq.)	02-01-87	31	SMA
<b>P BALOGH László</b>	Szikszó	29-12-86	67	UNG
<b>P BARAUT OBIOLS Tomás</b>	Barcelona	29-01-87	84	SBA
<i>Fu Ispettore per 11 a.</i>				
<b>P BAUER Johannes</b>	München	30-12-86	76	GEM
<b>P CAMMARATA Santo</b>	Catania	30-12-86	77	ISI
<b>L CARRARO Erminio</b>	Castello di Godego	25-01-87	74	IVE
<b>L CARRERA Vittorio</b>	Monteortone	26-02-87	64	IVO
<b>P CASTAGNA Mario</b>	Porto Velho	17-01-87	71	BMA
<b>P CHYLIK Zdenek</b>	Brno	07-01-87	54	CEP
<b>P COLLI Carlo</b>	Roma	07-02-87	61	RMG
<b>P CONTI Alberto</b>	Tolmezzo	24-02-87	76	IVE
<b>P CREEMERS Jozef</b>	Asse	14-02-87	71	BEN
<b>L DE AGOSTINI Artigas</b>	Montevideo	10-03-86	65	URU
<b>P DEL GIUDICE Siderio</b>	Buenos Aires	03-03-87	74	ABA
<b>P DOVERI Piero</b>	Varazze	15-02-87	66	ILT
<b>P FAVARATO Giuseppe</b>	Mogliano Veneto	05-03-87	54	MOR
<b>P FERGUSON Robert</b>	Bellflower	02-02-87	79	SUO
<b>P FERRANTE Félix Juan</b>	Buenos Aires	07-01-87	73	ABA
<b>L FERRERO Enrico</b>	Torino	23-01-87	69	ISU
<b>P GAMBARO Arealdo</b>	Varazze	02-01-85	64	ILT
<b>L GARBERO Antonio</b>	Torino	12-03-87	88	ISU
<b>P GIRALDO Oreste</b>	Roma	17-03-87	75	RGM
<b>P GUADAGNI Enzo</b>	Pietrasanta	16-02-87	71	ILT
<b>P JACEK Edmund</b>	Slupsk	31-10-86	54	PLN
<b>P JORDAN Francisco</b>	Caleta Olivia	13-12-86	72	ABA
<b>L KIENER Peter</b>	Wien	03-02-87	74	AUS
<b>P KOGAN Esteban</b>	Asunción	16-03-87	56	PAR
<b>P LALLI Antonio</b>	Roma	12-03-87	70	IRO

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV-
<b>P LA VECCHIA Francesco</b>	Civitanova Marche	19-02-87	83	IAD
<b>S LANDY Peter</b>	Edinburgh	27-01-87	24	GBR
<b>P LASZEWSKI Marian</b>	Marszałki	31-01-87	82	PLO
<b>P LEPARIK Frantisek</b>	Brno	11-01-87	79	CEP
<b>P MACCARONE Giuseppe</b>	Catania	02-03-87	81	ISI
<b>P MADDEN John Jocelyn</b>	Perth (Australia)	19-02-87	52	INC
<i>Fu Prefetto Apost. del Lashio per 10 a.</i>				
<b>L MAGNI Riccardo</b>	Roma	25-03-87	82	IRO
<b>P MANÉ Natale</b>	Bangkok	22-02-87	76	THA
<b>L MERLINO Alfonso</b>	Varazze	03-02-86	85	ILT
<b>P MORALES Jesús</b>	Sevilla	31-01-87	72	SSE
<b>P MUÑOZ DEL VAL Aurelio</b>	Caleta Olivia	12-02-87	74	ABA
<b>P MUTHIG Walter</b>	Bad Lippspringe	21-02-87	72	GEK
<b>L NORVERTO Angel Mario</b>	Buenos Aires	20-12-86	65	ABA
<b>L PAGIN Agostino</b>	Piove di Sacco (PD)	07-01-87	83	INE
<b>P PANIKULANGARA Louis</b>	Cochin	12-01-87	55	INK
<b>P PUERTO BARÉS Miguel</b>	Córdoba	06-01-87	62	SCO
<b>P RICAILLE Robert</b>	Andenne	28-12-86	76	BES
<b>P RIOS SERRANO Vicente</b>	Madrid	07-03-87	81	SMA
<b>P RODRIGUES José Bernardino</b>	Manique-Estoril	20-11-86	97	POR
<b>P SANCHEZ RODRIGUEZ Francisco</b>	México	20-07-86	81	MEM
<b>P SANDANAM Joseph</b>	Madras	05-01-87	86	INM
<b>P SANDINO Filadelfo</b>	Quezaltenango (Guatemala)	27-12-86	78	CAM
<b>P SCHAAF Alfons</b>	Mindelheim	20-01-87	74	GEM
<b>P SILVA Alcionilio</b>	Taracua	12-03-87	84	BMA
<b>L SILVA Antonio Bruno</b>	Recife	09-01-87	82	BRE
<b>P STADLER Georg</b>	Murnau (Baviera)	12-12-86	69	ING
<b>P STOLARZ Pedro</b>	Valera	04-03-87	88	VEN
<b>L STRAHOVNIK Vinko</b>	Trstenik	22-11-86	84	JUL
<b>P THOBURN Francis</b>	London	17-01-87	83	GBR
<b>P TIPS Henri</b>	Gent	04-01-87	74	BEN
<b>P TORRICELLI Ilio</b>	Pietrasanta	18-03-86	72	ILT
<b>P VIZCARRA Juan</b>	Resistencia	26-12-86	77	ARO
<b>P VOLPATO Antonio</b>	Borgo S. Martino	25-01-87	72	INE
<b>P WEINSCHENK Reinhold</b>	Bad Worishofen	13-02-87	56	GEM
<b>P WIKTOROWICZ Antoni</b>	Oświęcim	15-12-86	78	PLS









