



# acts

of the general council

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year LXIX october-december 1988

N. 327

official organ  
of animation  
and communication  
for the  
salesian congregation

Roma  
Direzione Generale  
Opere Don Bosco



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

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

## N. 327

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Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco  
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Tip. S.G.S. - Istituto Pio XI - P.zza S. M. Ausiliatrice, 54 - Roma - Tel. 7827819



## 1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

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### CONVOCAION OF THE 23rd GENERAL CHAPTER

Introduction. - Convocation in accordance with the Constitutions. - Particular character of the GC23. - The theme proposed: its choice and significance. - The tasks involved in education to the faith indicated by the Constitutions. - The challenges of our new times. - The "pastoral" commitment of the salesian community. - The work of the forthcoming provincial chapters. - Conclusion.

*Rome, Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord*  
*6 August 1988*

*My dear confreres,*

Among the many gifts we have received during this centenary year of grace we must include also the convocation of the coming General Chapter: it will be the 23rd.

Don Bosco attached particular importance to general chapters. He himself presided at the first four of them in 1887, 1880, 1883 and 1886; at that time they took place every three years, a practice that continued until 1904. In convoking the first General Chapter he reminded the confreres that "we are undertaking something of the greatest importance for our Congregation... our meetings have no other purpose than God's greater glory and the salvation of souls... We intend to place the Chapter under the special protection of Mary most holy".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.CERIA, *Annali*, vol.1, p. 313

The present Constitutions tell us that “the general chapter is the principal sign of the Congregation’s unity in diversity”;<sup>2</sup> by its means we meet as brothers on a worldwide scale to grow in fidelity to the Gospel, to Don Bosco and to present-day needs.<sup>3</sup> It is a community event of identity, unity, revision, planning, and of salesian dynamic presence among the pilgrim People of God, which in the midst of “temptations and tribulations” continually renews itself so as to be the light and salt of the earth.<sup>3</sup> Through it the whole Congregation makes itself docile to the Spirit of the Lord, seeking “to discern God’s will at a specific moment in history for the purpose of rendering the Church better service”.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> C 146<sup>3</sup> cf. C 146<sup>4</sup> cf. LG 9

It is therefore one of the most significant events in our community life. We must be fully aware of this; we must feel ourselves involved in a responsible commitment at worldwide level, and play an active part in its preparation based on the concrete situation in our own particular province. Because it is an event in harmony with the workings of the Holy Spirit, it should give rise in the first place to an atmosphere of intense prayer accompanied by pastoral zeal, study, verification, dialogue and the formulation of efficacious proposals for meeting the serious challenges we are facing at the present day.

### **Convocation in accordance with the constitutions**

The Constitutions state that “the general chapter is convoked by the Rector Major”,<sup>5</sup> and so it is my intention by this letter to officially convoke the GC23.

<sup>5</sup> C 146

In the recent plenary session of the General Council too I have appointed the Secretary General, *Fr Francesco Maraccani*, as Moderator of the Chapter.

I have also chosen the following as the Chapter's theme:

**"Educating young people to the faith:  
a task and challenge for today's salesian community"**

Finally I have appointed the "*technical commission*" which has worked with the Moderator to draw up a "*plan of preparation*" for the Chapter and to promote the "interest and active participation of the members".<sup>6</sup> The results of the commission's work are to be found elsewhere in this issue of the Acts.

In due course the "*precapitular commission*" will also be appointed; under the responsibility of the Moderator and in agreement with the Rector Major, it will draw up the reports or schemata to be sent in good time to those taking part in the general chapter".<sup>7</sup>

"The convocation", say the Regulations, "will be made at least one year before it opens".<sup>8</sup> The various possibilities were carefully studied in the General Council, and as a result the Chapter will take place in Rome at the Generalate, Via della Piana 1111, from 4 March 1990 for a period — I hope — of not more than two months. It will begin with a retreat for the chapter members to enable them to open themselves to "the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord".<sup>10</sup>

The "*principal purpose of the chapter*"<sup>11</sup> is not only to make an adequate study of the theme proposed, but also to exercise according to law the "supreme authority" which is one of its character-

<sup>6</sup> C 150

<sup>7</sup> R 112

<sup>8</sup> R 113

<sup>9</sup> R 111

<sup>10</sup> C 146

<sup>11</sup> R 111

istics. In fact it belongs to the General Chapter "to elect the Rector Major and the members of the general council".<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> C 147

This is a grave responsibility affecting the life of the Congregation and its future; it is a question in fact of designating those who for a period of six years will be responsible for the ministry of unity, animation and guidance of the Congregation in the Church and in the world. One need only read over again the articles of the Constitutions which refer to the various roles to be played at world level among us in the service of authority to understand the need there is for immediate prayer, and to begin to discern and dispose our minds to overcome motivations or feelings inappropriate in the face of so vital a choice.

### **The particular character of the GC23**

The GC23 should restore the celebration of the general chapters at world level to their "ordinary" rhythm, as regards both duration and work content.

The GC22 and the approval by the Apostolic See of the revised text of the Constitutions, and the completing of our Rule of life by the last provincial chapters, marked the end of a laborious and fruitful postconciliar period dedicated to the vast work of clarifying the salesian identity in the Church and its consequent legislative expression at both general and provincial level.

The Chapter now in preparation can be called "ordinary" by comparison with the previous general chapters that followed Vatican II. The intention is in fact to concentrate the attention of the

confreres on a specific argument of a practical nature, considered to be of particular urgency for the Congregation but to a certain extent sectorial in nature, in the sense that it does not refer to the whole of salesian life.

To rethink our identity in an adequate manner and to avoid the insidious danger of being merely superficial, the last three general chapters have enriched us with documents of great doctrinal depth which have enlightened and guided us in responding to the new challenges of the present day. In the light of this wealth of guidelines officially available to us, we are now asked to verify that we have assimilated them and put them into practice.

The scope of the GC23 is therefore limited to a more immediately practical objective: to verify the efficacy of salesian education with regard to the life of faith of the youth with whom we work, so as to revise with greater incisiveness the educational and pastoral projects of each province and of the individual houses. (What we are looking for from the coming Chapter is a concise collection of "*practical guidelines*").

### **The theme proposed: its choice and significance**

— *The choice of the theme* was a natural outcome of the experience of recent years, of the difficulties met with by both young people and the salesian community, but also of our thoughts on the occasion of the solemn promise of fidelity to Don Bosco which we renewed on 14 May last.

The education of youth to the faith has become a complex mission, not only in particular provinces or cultural areas but to some extent throughout all

the various Regions. It is quite true that the problem is not one of our own Congregation alone: it is one which deeply touches the whole Church. Nor do its ramifications stem exclusively from specific characteristics of the present-day youth condition; they are rather the consequence of a cultural situation associated with a "turning point" in history: "Ours is a new age of history", said the Council, "with critical and swift upheavals spreading gradually to all corners of the earth".<sup>13</sup> It is a moment of a new ecclesial beginning, a time of great responsibility and of fascinating historical commitment. It reminds us of the famous "leap forward" of which John XXIII spoke in prophetic fashion in his address at the opening of Vatican II: It will be our duty, he said "to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands of us, pursuing thus the path which the Church has followed for twenty centuries".<sup>14</sup>

13 S 4

14 11 October 1962

In the General Council the choice of this theme was reached after lengthy discernment. It began last January with the suggestion of various themes made by the Councillors themselves. Then the Regional Councillors made an informal sounding of the provincials and confreres in their eight regions, bringing back the results to the General Council in June. The various proposals were sorted, and after hearing the opinions of all and noting the priority accorded to the subject of christian education, the Rector Major made on 6 July the definitive choice.

The Council had already studied and discussed at length over the previous year some of the points involved, which had been seen as urgent problems to be taken up and analyzed to help the provinces.

Once the theme had been chosen there were further discussions for the purpose of expressing



it as clearly as possible, defining its content and studying the best way of presenting it to the confreres. In this way it was possible to provide the technical commission with material sufficiently precise to enable it to proceed with its specific work of service to the provinces.

— *The significance of the theme* is clear from its very statement. Education of the faith<sup>15</sup> and to the faith<sup>16</sup> is the specific line of approach to the analysis and deeper study of the whole question. To use any other approach would be to lack relevance. We shall have to be on our guard therefore against being led astray by side issues.

To develop the theme we must analyze from a pastoral point of view and make a salesian verification of the reality in which we are working. We shall therefore have to make practical reference to the young people we are educating in each of our local presences, so as to reflect on the problems about the faith which crop up in their own lives.

In this regard there is a *task* we have to carry out, and a *challenge* to which we must respond.

The “task” is clearly indicated in the Constitutions; the “challenge” will be defined by what is found by the individual local communities and in each province, according to the diversity of the works, social situations, culture and trends.

We must be able to distinguish between what we may call recurrent difficulties and the challenges that arise from cultural innovations, which call for a real rethinking of methods and of the content of education to the faith.

The theme does not exclude an educational commitment among non-christian youth. This indeed is expressly included, but from the specific aspect of a journey to the faith. In his letter “Iuve-

<sup>15</sup> C 6<sup>16</sup> C 34

num Patris” the Holy Father has reminded us that “the aspect of religious transcendence, the cornerstone of Don Bosco’s pedagogical method, is not only applicable to every culture but can also be profitably adapted even to non-christian religions”.<sup>17</sup>

17 IP 11

No type of person with whom we work therefore is excluded, but what is emphasized and has to be verified is the specific *pastoral* and *missionary* aspect of all our work with respect to the faith of young people: *always and everywhere we are “shepherds and missionaries of the young”!* We educate with our heart centred on Christ, gradually leading youth in his direction. If it were otherwise, the centre of our spirit would no longer be pastoral charity; nor would “da mihi animas” be the motto defining us.

### **The tasks involved in education to the faith indicated by the Constitutions**

Our Constitutions explicitly declare that “‘this Society had its beginning in a simple catechism lesson’. For us too evangelizing and catechizing are *the fundamental characteristics* of our mission. Like Don Bosco we are all called to be educators to the faith *at every opportunity*. Our highest knowledge therefore is to know Jesus Christ, and our greatest delight is to reveal to all people the unfathomable riches of his mystery”.<sup>18</sup> There you have the great task which defines us!

18 C 34

And the General Regulations, speaking of the educative and pastoral project, tell us that “a *central nucleus* of the plan should be an *explicit programme of education to the faith*, which will accompany the general development of the youngsters, and coordinate the different forms of catech-

<sup>19</sup> R 7

esis, celebrations and apostolic undertakings".<sup>19</sup>

These two articles give clear emphasis to the theme of the GC23.

The work to be done in pursuit of the great content and objectives of these "fundamental characteristics of our mission", and the educational process to be followed, we find described in the Constitutions themselves, especially in articles 31 to 37. The technical commission has clearly set out its various aspects. Here I would like to focus your attention, dear confreres, on some key points which should help us to understand the *unique style* of the salesian educational commitment.

I invite you to keep in mind the following points: the fostering of organic unity, the promoting of critical understanding, the development of love, and the discovery of the joy of living.

— *The fostering of organic unity* is an aspect which concerns both method and content. We have summed it up in the slogan "evangelizing by educating".<sup>20</sup> The Pope reminded us of this in his letter: the particular method of Don Bosco for the evangelization of youth "forms an *integral part of the process of human formation*, ... so that the faith must become the unifying and enlightening element of their personality".<sup>21</sup>

This is not an easy thing to do: it demands a deepening of the vision of Christ as the "perfect Man", the formation of a heart on fire with pastoral love, and the careful acquiring of an up-to-date educational competence concerning human values in the process of growth. This fostering of organic unity obliges us to resolve the tragic cleavage between the Gospel and culture at the grass roots of personal life.

<sup>20</sup> cf. *Circular letter*, AGC 290, July-Dec. 1978

<sup>21</sup> IP 15

The secret lies in never forgetting the *enlightening and unifying* function of the faith, and in making it accepted as a leaven for the maturing of the whole person.

The Council too emphasizes this unifying and organic function of the faith: "Let christians follow the example of Christ who worked as a craftsman; let them be proud of the opportunity to carry out their earthly activity in such a way as to integrate human, domestic, professional, scientific and technical enterprises with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are ordered to the glory of God".<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> GS 43

—*The promoting of critical understanding* in relation to personal freedom. There is an urgent need for education to an authentic sense of sin, i.e. personal sin which depends primarily on one's own will.

At the present day the awareness of such sin is dangerously declining. Critical understanding is usually fostered with reference to structures, society, particular economic or political systems, without any attention being given to the radical importance and responsibility of the individual and the education of his freedom.

Promoting critical understanding in relation to faith means accompanying the young person on his path of "conversion", educating him to the values of personal dignity, of overcoming selfish tendencies, of reconciliation, of the great christian significance of repentance, of learning to forgive as he himself feels forgiveness. Don Bosco attached great importance to this aspect, which he considered one of the columns of his educational system.

Giving new life to the sacrament of Reconcilia-

tion is an indispensable objective in education to the faith!

— *The development of love* must bring the young person to understand and share in the greatest act of self-donation in history: the redeeming sacrifice of Christ.<sup>23</sup> The christian faith is directly linked with the Eucharist. From the very outset many of Christ's disciples did not grasp this; his words seemed like wild exaggeration, But "Jesus said to the twelve, 'Will you also go away?' Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life'"<sup>24</sup>

It is not a question here of harking back to the observance of norms (even though the Church's precepts are important), but rather of educating the mind and heart of the young in such a way that they clearly perceive the supremely central nature of the Eucharist in the life of the individual and in the climate of an educational environment. This is the other column of Don Bosco's pedagogical method, so vividly present in his educational practice.

It must not become weakened by inconsistent attempts at rationalization. The much vaunted needs that have to be respected in the so-called pre-evangelization process are in fact the result of a secularist kind of lowering of the objectives to be reached in education to faith, with harmful consequences for the educators themselves. Certainly, as the Constitutions say, "imitating God's patience, we encounter the young at their present stage of freedom"; but they also go on to say: "We then accompany them so that they may develop solid convictions and gradually assume the responsibility for the delicate process of their growth as human beings and as men of faith".<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> cf. *Circular letter*, AGC 324, Jan.-March 1988

<sup>24</sup> Jn 6, 67-68

<sup>25</sup> C 38

If our education does not aim at developing love, we shall never form strong personalities. And education to true love passes necessarily through the Eucharist.

Finally, *the discovery of the joy of living* implies the ability to appreciate the sense of life as a "vocation".

Every young person represents a human project to be discovered and realized in the light of a personal awareness of being an "image of God". If the dignity of the individual is measured by his freedom and the perfection of freedom is the lived exercise of love, the vocation of every young person will consist in his ability to plan his life and conduct on the basis of love. The principal enemy of existence as a vocation is a selfish mentality.

The Constitutions tell us that "we educate the young to develop their own human and baptismal vocation by a daily life progressively lived and unified by the Gospel".<sup>26</sup> There is no need to dwell here on a presentation of the multiplicity of human and christian vocations, but I think it necessary to emphasize the urgent need there is at the present day to be able to single out and bring to maturity numerous vocations to male and female consecrated life, to the ministerial priesthood, and to a generously committed laity; and hence to insist on the pedagogical importance of this vocational aspect of education to the faith.

Let us never forget, either as individual conferees or as communities at the service of the young, that "this work of collaboration with God's design (is) the crown of all our educational and pastoral activity".<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> C 37

<sup>27</sup> C 37



## The challenges of our new times

I said earlier that the challenges involved in education to the faith will have to be singled out and evaluated in the individual communities and provinces, because of the variety of works, circumstances and cultures. But there are some big challenges deriving from the signs of the times which have already reached worldwide dimensions and which call for a new kind of evangelization, albeit with the preservation of the truth of faith. As Pope John XXIII said in the address already quoted: "The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. And it is the latter that must be taken into great consideration, with patience if necessary".<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> 11 October 1962

This need for "new evangelization", which in turn implies "new education", is something that touches us closely and challenges our very ability to render relevant our charisma in the Church at the present day. We salesians are, or should be, experts in educational methodology among the People of God!

Unfortunately we have witnessed in the Church, since the Council, deviations in the name of ultraconservative or ultraprogressive thinking which undermine the authenticity of the faith, either by resistance to Vatican II as in the sad case of Lefebvre, or through ideological pressures of a temporal or secular kind as in the interpretations of a dangerously ambiguous kind made by certain thinkers.

This fact should put us on our guard and prompt us to seek a new method of evangelization in the greatest fidelity to the revelation of Christ.

I think that the great universal challenges of innovation appear especially at two complementary levels: that of the *personal dimension* and that of the *social dimension*.

— The *personal dimension* has been greatly enriched in recent years by a variety of factors: the deeper analysis of the personality of the individual; a greater understanding of the values of freedom; progress in the human biological sciences and the significance and importance of sexuality; the advancement of women; the emphasis given to life and its defence; the lengthened period of adolescence and the inserting of the young person into society (the period is in fact about ten years longer than it was in Don Bosco's time).

This is why on the one hand the deeper analysis of the "process of personalization" has thrown up problems previously unpublished and not always taken sufficiently into account in traditional methods of education to the faith, and on the other hand progress in the human sciences has given rise to numerous questions and problems, especially as regards the christian view of moral conduct, thus provoking in practice a confusion in the attitude to life of the believer. One need only recall that among the faith-related sciences the one which has experienced the greatest crisis is moral theology.

And yet education to the faith tends of its nature to be equated to conduct of life, with the appraisal and development of all human values, a clear sense of sin, and a style of existence that becomes "witness".

And so a vast and complex field is opened up, rich in innovations and new ideas and in urgent need of evangelization.

— The *social dimension* presents an even wider horizon of innovations. Terms like “sharing”, “solidarity”, “communion”, “democracy” joined with the great “policy of the common good”, “peace”, “justice”, “social communication”, “ecological balance”, etc. all suggest themes with multiple aspects which need much deep rethinking with a strongly renewed mentality.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith recently confirmed that “christians working to bring about that ‘civilization of love’ ... are today faced with an unprecedented challenge. This task calls for renewed reflection on what constitutes *the relationship between the supreme commandment of love and the social order* considered in all its complexity”.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Libertatis conscientia*  
81

Hence in education to the faith at the present day we must be able to enter into this real constellation of new social values, reserving a specific and continually updated space for the Church’s social teaching.

Well known in this field from a negative point of view are certain deviations through manipulation and exploitation, and on the positive side the keen discernment and singular style based on the transcendent but committed attitude of Don Bosco. Article 33 of the Constitutions indicates clearly what this implies and demands of us: we share “in a manner appropriate to religious”, and in a salesian manner, in the preferential option for the poor and in commitments to social and collective advancement in the overall fundamental area of culture, but “without getting involved in ideologies or party politics” in our work of education.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> C 33

The new challenges of the present day certainly oblige us to clarify, update and renew our concrete activity of education to the faith.

## The “pastoral” commitment of the salesian community

“To live and work together”, say the Constitutions, “is for us salesians a fundamental requirement and a sure way of fulfilling our vocation”.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> C 49

The task of education to the faith is assumed and exercised in the first place by the provincial and local community, and shared by each of its members according to the different roles assigned to each one.<sup>32</sup> The GC23 intends to provoke a serious reflection on this communal responsibility. It is precisely in this that will be found the secret of the renewal we hope to find in the next Chapter, not so much in the reshaping of works (though that too has its own particular importance, *but in the re-thinking and renewal of our mission*, or in other words of the pastoral quality of our activity. This is the kind of “new presence” which we must primarily aim at in every work.

<sup>32</sup> cf. C 44, 45

This is the sense in which the salesian community is called upon to draw up and apply a renewed pastoral and educational plan!<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> cf. R 4

The theme deliberately puts the accent on the community, in so far as it is the latter which bears the prime responsibility for the education of young people to the faith. It is important that we be wary of being distracted from this argument by the red herring of the complexity of problems concerning the community itself. The one and only angle of approach for our considerations must always be education to the faith as a commitment which is thought out, programmed, verified and revised by a salesian community linked to a particular local area, with its own specific social, cultural and ecclesial aspects, and responsible for a work which

has its own educational and pastoral objectives.

Evidently in the evaluation of this fundamental task of the community, importance will be given to the *pastoral* role of the provincial, the rector, the animators and the individual confreres.

*It will be an examination of the pastoral dimension of our work*, and will centre on an assessment of the community's pastoral discernment.<sup>34</sup>

We shall be asked what contribution we all make in the work of education, in animation, in the use of the means of social communication, in the stimulation of initiatives, in overcoming difficulties, in the challenges which call for a response here and now.

After the return to the sources through the work and events of the centenary, we want to put all our efforts into relaunching the attitude of "*da mihi animas*", to which we shall bear witness with the pastoral and pedagogical originality of Don Bosco.

The fact of being situated in a specific locality with a particular kind of presence will steer the verification of the salesian community towards its relationship with the local Church and the surrounding human neighbourhood. In fact "the salesian community works in communion with the particular Church. It is open to the world's values and attentive to the cultural milieu in which it carries out its apostolic work".<sup>35</sup> For this reason one must keep in mind both the ecclesial plan of pastoral work in the neighbourhood concerned, and its social and cultural condition both now and how it is likely to develop in the future.

And then in all our works the salesian community is called to be the driving force in a wider "*educative community*": "The application of the plan", say the Regulations, "requires that in all our

<sup>34</sup> C 44

<sup>35</sup> C 57

works and settings we establish the educative and pastoral community, whose animating nucleus is the religious community".<sup>36</sup> And this leads us to some wider considerations, which are both very relevant and demanding; the clear reference is to the lay people who work with us and to the young people themselves; we have to reflect on their pedagogical, spiritual and apostolic formation, and on our ability to animate them. 36 R 5

And then if we recall that, in the noble vision of Don Bosco, education to the faith is realized not only within the educative community but even beyond it through its influence in the parish, the local district or zone, the diocese and even the country, it makes us think too of the importance of animating those Cooperators and Past-Pupils who are working for the faith in the neighbourhood where the salesian community is situated.

This attention given to the lay members of the faithful is of great importance in the present-day Church and is for us a constitutional call to renewal, with specific reference to the Salesian Cooperators and the Don Bosco Past Pupils.<sup>37</sup> But this aspect too must be considered in the light of the Chapter theme, It is not in fact a matter of entering into the question of the Salesian Family, but of verifying and stimulating its educational and pastoral initiatives in the neighbourhood concerned, its renewal and vitality being taken for granted. 37 cf. C 5; R 36, 38, 39

It is important to consider the influence of the whole charisma of Don Bosco on the parish, district, town or region, in accordance with the dynamic ecclesial and social vision of our Founder.

This awareness of shared responsibility and ecclesial harmony redefines and gives greater breadth to the physiognomy of our salesian activity in the



places where we work: and so take courage, dear provincials and rectors!

### **The work of the forthcoming provincial chapter**

According to the Constitutions the provincial chapter is the “representative assembly of all the confreres and local communities”.<sup>38</sup> Its nature and powers differ from those of the general chapter: it neither possesses nor exercises “supreme authority” in the province,<sup>39</sup> it is not a source of authority in the Congregation, and its sphere of competence is well limited by the Constitutions.<sup>40</sup>

Ordinarily it is called together by the provincial every three years.<sup>41</sup> Hence in the normal course of events every provincial will convoke two of them in the course of his six-year period of office: one “*in preparation for the general chapter*” and another intermediate one.

In the period immediately following Vatican II there was a tendency towards a more frequent convocation of provincial chapters (there were proposals to hold them every two years, and even every year). But then we came to see the reasons behind the three-yearly rhythm. The noteworthy commitment of the last twenty years, reflected in the provincial chapters which were called upon to undertake a quite intensive work in rewriting our Rule of life (even through the convoking of “special” provincial chapters), could have led to the risk of a certain saturation or indigestion. We must be able to react to such dangers.

In considering the very nature of the provincial chapter, and keeping in mind the work of revision of our Rule of life now completed, we need to be

<sup>38</sup> C 170

<sup>39</sup> N.B. cf. C 147

<sup>40</sup> cf. C 171

<sup>41</sup> C 172

very clear about the chapter's eminently community significance, the importance of its three-yearly rhythm, and the responsibility which in consequence devolves on every confrere and every community.

The fact that the coming GC23 reverts to what we may call the category of "ordinary" general chapters must have its repercussions on the manner of celebrating provincial chapters.

It seems convenient in fact to make a certain *practical distinction* between the provincial chapter convoked *to prepare a general chapter*, and the *intermediate* kind, called together precisely to reflect on the good functioning of the province.

*In the first one* attention is centred on the general chapter and the main work to be done is carried out with the preparation of the general chapter in view, even though the province's more urgent problems are not excluded.

*In the second* the work consists in examining how the province is going, and in making a deeper and more adequate analysis of its work.

This practical distinction may serve to overcome the dangerous sense of disaffection I have mentioned, ensure the serious celebration of the provincial chapters, and facilitate their work.

In any case one thing is very clear: the coming provincial chapters must concern themselves principally with the study of the theme of the education of young people to the faith. I therefore exhort all the confreres and every local community to consider the preparation and realization of the next provincial chapter as a particular event of shared responsibility at world level. The theme of the present-day education of the young to the faith must indeed become the subject of reflection, discussion,

research, verification and planning for every local community and every confrere. We are touching here the very soul of the salesian mission; we are taking the measure of our fidelity to the Founder and of our pastoral creativity; we are assessing the degree of ecclesial communion which defines us; we are verifying the truth of the love which makes us live for the young; we avoid the dangers arising from ideological thinking and the levelling down due to certain pseudoscientific claims. And so I invite you, dear confreres, to give great importance to the preparation of this chapter by prayer, in study and reflection, in verification, in discerning the challenges, and in planning for the future.

I want to insist especially on the ability *to perceive the positive signs of the cultural innovations* in which we are living, and the values of human growth proclaimed and witnessed to by today's youth. The signs of the times have at their root the impulse of the Holy Spirit. They do not drag us down but rather help us to rise up! If the weight of sin has become greater, so too has the genuine sense of the Gospel and its fruitful leavening effect for the growth of humanity. We can see this in the Church's life and in the renewal of the Congregation.

The *creation* by the Father, from which flows all good, is in constant growth; the *redemption* by the Son, which is the victory of faith, increases its beneficial effect of personal and social liberation; the *sanctification* by the Spirit, which is transforming power, works incessantly in hearts and communities. It is short-sighted pessimism to fail to see the love of God which surrounds men in the signs of the times, in Vatican II, in the renewal of the Church, in the reactivation of charismata (which

means for us in particular the charism of Don Bosco), in pastoral creativity, and in enthusiasm for the preparation of the launching of the third millennium of christian faith.

Certainly evil too is growing, and in sophisticated ways. But the Lord has called us to fight against it and has given us the energy and example to do so, assuring us that with the light of the resurrection "whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> 1 Jn 5, 4-5

### **In conclusion**

I would like to remind you, dear confreres, of the distinction between *mission* and *pastoral work*, put forward by the Special General Chapter.

The *mission* is identical and unchangeable in every culture and situation; *pastoral work* "is a practical realization of the mission under the guidance of the *pastors*. This presupposes a sensitivity to the signs of the times and a sense of adaptation to the situation at a particular time and place. A necessary consequence of this is the pluralism of pastoral work, or in other words of practical concrete choices by the Church (universal and local) in the threefold service of the community: prophetic, liturgical and directional. In this way are explained the different pastoral apostolates depending on age, sex, social and cultural context, the degree of faith, and the joint pastoral action in the area".<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> SGC 30

The renewal of our mission is intimately connected with the pluriformity of our pastoral activ-

ity, a pluriformity which is already an established fact among us; it is the starting point for the work of the coming chapters.

But the theme chosen does not refer to pluriformity of this kind; it takes it for granted and accepts it as a living reality on which we must concentrate our attention, but for the purpose of discerning another aspect — that of the *pastoral quality* of the particular commitments of each salesian community. In our pluriformity *what is of specific concern to us is this pastoral quality*.

For the moment therefore we are not addressing other aspects, even though they be important: not the question of those to whom we are sent, not the reshaping of our works, not the inculturation of our mission, not a review of the religious community, not the relaunching of the Salesian Family. not any other of the many interesting items, *but specifically and in depth the quality of our pastoral work in the education of youth to the faith*.

Fidelity to Don Bosco's mission demands that we reawaken in our minds and in every community ardent and genuine pastoral ability, under the influence of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The verification we must carry out, or the analysis of the reality of our work, must be considered from a pastoral standpoint without any ideological presuppositions which could surreptitiously exploit the conclusions to be reached. We are not therefore making an analysis of a reality on the basis of criteria alien to our mission, but *a pastoral vision of the reality*, which can be achieved only through a process of evaluation which is evangelical and ecclesial. It is a question of making a judgement about one of life's riches, that of the faith, which goes beyond the limits of science and social and po-

litical systems. Faith can be scrutinized and examined in its deep reality (in its beginnings and growth) only by believers themselves who have made of it the vertex which sheds light on their own judgements.

For this reason it will be well to go back in prayer and imitation to the Virgin Mary, defined in the Gospel as "*She who believed*", and who expressed in the Magnificat her evangelical way of appraising history.

We already entrusted ourselves solemnly to her at the beginning of the GC22. We are convinced that she "Is present among us and continues her 'mission as Mother of the Church and Help of Christians'. (Today, and for the GC23,) we entrust ourselves once again to her, the humble servant in whom the Lord has done great things, that we may become witnesses to the young of her Son's boundless love".<sup>44</sup>

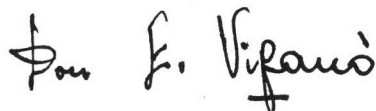
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May Don Bosco obtain for us from our Blessed Lady a living sense of Christ, the apostolic zeal to pass on to others the benefits of his great mystery, and the creative intelligence and pedagogical ability to educate young people to faith in Christ as a response to the pressing challenges of our times.

Let us set to work with enthusiasm!

The theme is a strategically vital one.

With cordial greetings and all best wishes in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Don F. Viganò". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The word "Don" is written in a smaller, more compact script, followed by a large, stylized "F.", and then "Viganò" in a larger, more prominent cursive script.



## 2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

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### 2.1 CALENDAR OF THE 23rd GENERAL CHAPTER

*July - August 1988*

The Rector Major convokes the GC23 in accordance with art.150 of the Constitutions and art.111 of the General Regulations. He appoints the Moderator of the Chapter (R 112) and indicates its principal purpose, place and opening date (R 111).

*September - October 1988*

In addition to the letter convoking the Chapter, a study outline on the chapter's theme and instructions for the carrying out of the provincial chapters is sent out to the provinces (AGC 327).

The Moderator also sends to provincials the forms for the minutes of provincial chapters and sample forms for the submission of contributions from the provincial chapters and confreres.

*November 1988 - June 1989*

In the provinces the work of preparing the provincial chapters and carrying them out goes on (C 171-172). The time of the chapter must be fixed in the light of the following dates.

*20 July 1989*

By this date, which can in no way be extended, the following documents must be received in Rome:

- The minutes of provincial chapters concerning the election of delegates to the GC23;
- The contributions of provincial chapters (analysis and proposals) concerning the theme of the general chapter;
- The contributions which individual confreres may wish to send to the Moderator of the GC23 concerning the chapter's specific theme.

\* Provincial chapters which may have studied themes concerning the particular province, and have made decisions requiring the approval of the Rector Major and his Council in accordance with C 170, must also send to Rome the decisions concerned.

It will be difficult for the precapitular commission to take into account any proposals which arrive later than 20 July 1989.

#### *August 1989*

The material arriving is classified and put into order by an ad hoc working group.

Meanwhile the Rector Major appoints the precapitular commission to prepare the dossier which will be sent to those taking part in the GC23 (cf. R 113).

#### *September 1989*

The precapitular commission carries out its work. The commission for the examination of the minutes of the election of provincial delegates to the general chapter is also appointed (cf. R 115).

#### *November 1989*

The schemes of work prepared by the precapitular commission are printed and sent out to provincials and delegates.

#### *January - February 1990*

The members of the GC23 study the working documents before coming to Rome.

#### *4 March 1990*

The GC23 begins.

#### *Ending of the Chapter*

The present intention is to lay down a duration for the GC23 of about two months, but the concluding date will in any case be fixed after the work of the precapitular commission.

## 2.2 STUDY OUTLINE

### The theme of the GC23

In his letter convoking the general chapter the Rector Major presents in a clear and complete way the theme assigned to the GC23, and in consequence to the provincial chapters which must prepare the general chapter itself.

The theme deals with the most characteristic point of the mission of our communities, challenged as they are by the urgent needs of young people of our time:

**Educating young people to the faith,  
a task and challenge for today's salesian community.**

As the Rector Major explains, the theme is to be approached from an explicitly *practical* point of view: what is intended in fact is a verification of salesian education in respect of the life of faith of the young, for the purpose of bringing to light challenges and questions, but also positive signs of hope, so as to lead to the detection of practical choices considered efficacious for the education of our young people to the faith.

For the development of the theme we have before us a double series of considerations:

— on the one hand we have the *framework of values* which define our identity as “missionaries of the young”, which are now set out in our Rule of life after the long work of study and experience which followed the Council: it is a matter of precise and practical objectives, which form part of the heritage received from Don Bosco and applied to today's youth in the light of Vatican II;

— And on the other hand *there is the daily practical reality: the reality of the young*, whom we meet inside and outside our establishments, with their problems, their questions and their expectations;

youngsters inserted in social and cultural environments which are a challenge for the faith; and there is also *the reality of our salesian communities*, inserted in a local Church and a specific neighbourhood, called to be “animators” of educative communities, committed in the young peoples’ pilgrimage of faith.

Between the “framework of values” and the daily reality there sometimes arises a cleavage for various reasons, and as a result it becomes difficult to translate into concrete practice the objectives of the mission.

The GC23 intends to *face up* to these realities, so as to help salesian communities and educative communities to provide a more efficacious response to the demands of the young by leading them to meet the Lord Jesus (cf. C 34).

### **The fundamental methods to be followed in the work of the chapters**

In line with what has been said, the Chapter will aim essentially at a revision and evaluation of the pedagogical and pastoral efficacy of our presences with regard to the life of faith of the young people to whom each community is sent. It is not a question of spending time on a deeper analysis of the objectives of the mission, which we find set out in our Rule of life and in the Church’s documents; nor is it a matter of discussing directly those to whom our mission is directed, with a view to a possible renewal of the works of the provinces. It is a question of *verifying in depth how we are educating to the faith the young people*, to whom each community is sent, the means that are used, the problems and difficulties that are met with, the degree of commitment in shared responsibility; and of laying down practical guidelines for a more expeditious and fruitful process of work.

The method to be used, first by the provincial chapters and then by the general chapter itself in this work, involves *three complementary phases*: a “pastoral” analysis of the reality itself, a comparison with principles and objectives, and practical guidelines for the future.

a. “*Analysis*” of the pedagogical and pastoral reality of our presences, examining the situations from the aspect of education to the faith. This will involve: the collecting of data regarding facts, difficul-

ties, results, new problems, and youth phenomena; the seeking of underlying causes; the noting of new germs of future promise; the examination of the competence of local communities and whether they keep up to date; an assessment of the quality and timeliness of animation and pastoral government at provincial level, etc.

b. "*Comparison*" with the doctrinal, pastoral and pedagogical principles which must guide present-day education to the faith, following the directives of the Church's magisterium and in fidelity to Don Bosco's charisma. It is a question of a renewed heritage which guides the ability to grow today in a true "new evangelization" and in an indispensable "new education". For us Salesians these principles and objectives are contained especially in the Constitutions and General Regulations.

c. "*Practical guidelines*" with a view to improving our pastoral impact for the formation in the young of the attitudes of faith which will prove to be lasting.

It will be a matter of conclusions regarding spiritual renewal and methods of the educators; of a greater awareness of specific principles and requirements; of criteria and concrete directives for action by the communities in the different situations in which they work; of possible deliberations, etc.

This method of working will be applied to the theme of the GC23 as a whole and to the development of each of its points.

### **Significance of this study outline**

As is indicated in the letter convoking the chapter, *the theme assigned to the GC23 is one and only* and reflects the fundamental standpoint from which the verification will be carried out and every problem will be considered: for this reason not only will there be a direct examination of the contents and programmes for the pilgrimage of faith of the young, but the salesian community itself and the educative community will be studied in connection with their commitment to education to the faith. Other aspects too which may emerge in the chapter's study must be seen in relationship to the fundamental theme.

Nevertheless, even though there is a single theme, for practical reasons and especially to facilitate the collection and classification of

contributions coming from the provincial chapters, it has been thought desirable to divide the theme into various *points for reflection*: these concern the main aspects of the theme itself and can help both the development of the verification and reflection of the provincial chapters and subsequently the work of the precapitular commission and the general chapter itself.

Keeping in mind the indications given by the Rector Major in his letter of convocation, the technical commission has thought it well to single out the following points for reflection:

1. Challenges to our commitment as “educators to the faith”
2. The process of education to the faith
  - 2.0 Total development
  - 2.1 Education to the faith and human growth of the young person
  - 2.2 The proclamation of Christ and his Gospel
  - 2.3 The experience of Church and of group-life
  - 2.4 Liturgical initiation and sacramental life
  - 2.5 Salesian youth spirituality
  - 2.6 Vocational guidance, the summit and measure of education to the faith.
3. The pastoral task of the community
  - 3.1 The salesian community responsible for education to the faith
  - 3.2 Shared responsibility
  - 3.3 The salesian community, animating nucleus of the educative community
  - 3.4 Lay collaborators and their formation
  - 3.5 Cooperators and past-pupils in the commitment of education to the faith.

Indications are offered for each point in the study outline: *in the first place a brief presentation is given of the aspect under consideration*, with a reminder of the principles and directives of the Constitutions and General Regulations; *then some questions follow*, which bring the point at issue into clearer focus and serve to stimulate the verification and communal reflection (at both local level and in the provincial chapters), in view of the contributions to be sent to the general chapter.

*The list of points is not exhaustive*, but covers in general the prin-

cial aspects indicated in the Rector Major's letter. The provincial chapters, in considering these points, will be led by them in the verification process, integrating them if necessary with specific aspects which refer to the particular local reality.

It should be noted too that the points put forward, with the questions for guiding reflection, are a help and a stimulus for the work to be carried out in the communities and provincial chapters. Since the communities and provincial chapters have as their general task the study of the theme ("educating young people to the faith..."), they will refer to the major aspects of the theme itself (today's challenges to our mission as educators to the faith, content and objectives of the pilgrimage of faith, the pastoral task of the communities). Within the various points the questions suggested in this outline can be used, with the possibility of choosing those aspects to be treated more deeply in line with the more urgent problems and requirements. In any case the method indicated must always be adhered to (pastoral analysis of the reality; comparison with principles; practical guidelines).

From a methodological point of view care should be taken that the observations and proposals sent to the general chapter make precise reference to the point indicated in this outline).

## 1. CHALLENGES TO OUR COMMITMENT AS "EDUCATORS TO THE FAITH"

In response to Vatican II the Salesian Congregation too, during the last three general chapters has entered into an intense dialogue with the "signs of the times", recognizing being open to them as a characteristic of the salesian spirit. In the text of the Constitutions it is explicitly stated that: "The salesian is called to be a realist and to be attentive to the *signs of the times*, convinced that the Lord manifests his will also through the *demands of time and place*... Timely response to these needs requires him to keep abreast of new trends and meet them with the well-balanced creativity of the Founder; periodically he *evaluates* his work" (C 19).

A time of particular importance for an evaluation at the level of the entire Congregation is provided by the general chapter: "It is the frater-

nal meeting in which salesians carry out a communal reflection to keep themselves faithful to the Gospel and to their Founder's charism, and sensitive to the *needs of time and place*" (C 146).

And so in pursuance of our wish to carry out in the GC23 a verification of our task as "educators to the faith" (C 34), we look at the signs of the times, and especially those stemming from the young people themselves, and allow ourselves to be questioned by what we discover in them which affects the communication of the Gospel.

Considering in particular art.41 of the Constitutions, which presents the "inspirational criteria for our activity and works" we can identify some *challenges* to our educative and pastoral ability.

### **1.1 The challenges of the young.**

Art.41 begins by declaring: "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".

The first challenge therefore arises from the *attention to the individual personality of today's young people*, with all the complexities of the personalization processes of which the Rector Major speaks in his letter. Through our educative and pastoral service we want to respond to youth's expectations and real needs - "to the ever new demands arising from the situation of the young and the poor" (C 118) - by fostering the positive values to which they give rise.

Our approach therefore to education to the faith must begin from the real requirements in which the young are living, meeting them at their present stage of freedom (C 38; cf. C 39). And the General Regulations insist that at provincial and local level an educational and pastoral plan will be drawn up "to respond to the youth situation and to the conditions in poor areas ... for the purpose of directing all initiatives to the task of evangelization" (R 4).

— *Have we succeeded in drawing up an educative pastoral plan, at provincial and local level, which reflects the present problems presented by the young in respect of the life of faith?*

— *What challenges exist (in the line of expectations, problems and hopeful signs) coming from the young as regards faith, which find no response in our educative and pastoral plan?*



## 1.2 Challenges arising from the local neighbourhood

Art.41 of the Constitutions goes on to say: “We give practical expression to the redeeming love of Christ by organizing activities and works of an educational and pastoral nature designed to meet the needs of the neighbourhood and of the Church. ... The education and evangelization of many young people, especially among the very poor, means that we have to go to them wherever they are to be found, and provide adequate forms of service in the context of their own life style” (C 41).

It is a question of the criterion of *insertion in the neighbourhood* (in its practical civil and ecclesial reality) *in which each community is working* with a precise educative and pastoral purpose. There is a reference to such a criterion also in art.1 of the General Regulations: “Keeping in mind its own social milieu, every province should study the situation and condition of youth and the common people”.

In this context it is also well to recall the attention the Constitutions demand in respect of cultural values: “Open to the cultural values of the lands in which we work, we try to understand them and make them our own, so as to incarnate in them the message of the Gospel” (C 7; cf. C 30). “The salesian community ... is open to the world’s values and attentive to the cultural milieu in which it carries out its apostolic work” (C 57).

- *Do we know the priorities of the commitment to evangelization in our neighbourhood? How do we try to respond to them?*
- *What cultural values can present particular possibilities for evangelization? Which values on the other hand can be obstacles to such work?*

## 1.3 Challenges at world level.

Art.41 of the Constitutions gives us a third criterion which represents a challenge: that of *dynamic fidelity* to the Founder’s charism. It states in fact: “Sensitive to the signs of the times and with initiative and continual flexibility we evaluate these activities, renew them and create new ones”.

In this context we may recall the insistence of the SGC on the need

to transform our activities and works into "new presences": "that new presence which a changing world demands" (SGC 393; cf. SGC 259, 268ff).

The perspective of dynamic fidelity refers not only to particular situations in individual provinces, but concerns the entire Congregation as a world community: art.59 of the Constitutions speaks of "the communion of spirit, witness and service ... (and) solidarity in apostolic initiatives" in the world community. And art.100 declares: The principle of unity in the Congregation is the charism of our Founder, which of its richness gives rise to different ways of living the one salesian vocation.

The general chapter is a particularly propitious time for the Congregation "to discern God's will at a specific moment in history for the purpose of rendering the Church better service" (C 146), or in other words to cross-question the awareness of the salesian identity in the world salesian mission at the present day, so as to strengthen the sense of unity in a right and proper pluriformity.

We may ask ourselves:

- *What aspects of 'new presence' have been promoted in the province in the last twelve years, with a view to the evangelization of the young?*
- *What in your opinion are the more significant challenges and signs of hope, of universal application and interest for our Congregation?*
- *What practical guidelines do you consider most opportune at the level of the Congregation as a whole?*

## 2. THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION TO THE FAITH

What now follows is a presentation of the *process of education to the faith*<sup>1</sup> as proposed by our Constitutions (C 31-37): it is a matter of

<sup>1</sup> The expression "pilgrimage of faith" is meant to include the sum total of proposals and aspects which accompany the growth of faith in the young: it is clearly not a question of progressive phases which follow one another in a necessary order, but of contents (often present simultaneously) which the educator must be able to detect, follow up and develop.

general indications regarding content and objectives, which imply various obligations in the educative and pastoral activity of our communities.

After a preamble concerning the integral nature of the salesian educational plan ("total development", the various aspects of the process followed or to be followed with the young people are successively examined, to help them in their growth in the faith.

In the first place we offer two questions of a general kind to give shape to the verification which follows:

- *What points in the pilgrimage of faith of the young do we find to be lacking in our educative and pastoral communities?*
- *Which points in the process seem most urgent for the education of youth to the faith at the present day?*

## 2.0 Total development

Art. 31 of the Constitutions on total development provides an overall perspective of the process of education to the faith.

After recalling that the salesian mission is a participation in that of the Church with the realization of God's salvific design in mind, it declares that we must bring to men "the message of the Gospel, which is closely tied in with the development of the temporal order".

And so we Salesians are called to educate and evangelize "according to a plan for the total well-being of man directed to Christ, the perfect Man".

This unified vision of personal development emphasizes that all educational activity should contribute to the evangelization of the young person, and not only those acts which are explicitly religious. His whole life should be enlightened by the Gospel, in such a way that every interest or requirement can become an educative path for directing and leading him to Christ.

Further, the Constitutions clearly indicate the social implications and cultural importance of this mode of education. Working for the formation of a "fully educated man" (John Paul II, Address to UNESCO 1980) is a praiseworthy social act of public dignity and constitutes a task of cultural development of primary and fundamental

importance. Working in lower class milieus and for poor youth, we pledge ourselves to educate them to their social and ecclesial responsibilities, making our contribution in this way to the development of the entire environment in which they live (cf. C 33). There is no true education to the faith without this openness to its social dimension.

In his letter the Rector Major emphasizes the contribution of cultural innovation which is given at the present day both by a deepening understanding of human values at a personal level (with the vast progress that has been made in the anthropological sciences), and by the growing importance of the social dimension, which has a powerful influence - with new perspectives - on the kind of life of faith that must be formed in the young.

- *In all our educational activity and interventions, do we have this unified and total vision of salesian education? What degree of concern do we show for the education of youth to the faith?*
- *By what means do we know and try to meet the present requirements of the social dimension in education to the faith?*

**2.1 Education to the faith and human growth of the young person:**  
***Opening the youngster to the questions posed by, and the values of, existence with a view to a response of faith.***

In a comprehensive view of the young person (including his social dimension) an important aspect is the human substratum in which the call to the faith is sown. In addition the Gospel challenges the young person as an individual so as to open to him its horizons, to inculcate a “convinced appreciation of true values” and stimulate their transcendence (cf. C 32).

Don Bosco teaches us to educate to the faith in a manner which is characteristic: the evangelization of his boys “forms an integral part of the process of human formation” so as to ensure that “faith must become the unifying and enlightening element of their personality” (IP 15).

- *Are we attentive to those elements around which young people of today tend to organize their human growth, and to the values of the emerging culture which are of greater interest to them?*

- *How do we insert the expectations and demands of the young in the educative process, and so make of them a path to the faith?*

## **2.2 The proclamation of Christ and his Gospel**

In our educative and pastoral project “evangelization and catechizing are the fundamental characteristics of our mission. Like Don Bosco we are all called to be educators to the faith at every opportunity” (C 34), using different methods and paths to lead the young to Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, and thus help them grow into new men (ibid).

This process can take many forms: silent witness which gives rise to questions, the proclamation of the Gospel as the saving word, christian initiation, organic and systematic catechesis, scholastic religious teaching, etc.

- *Are our activities organized in such a way as to facilitate the path to faith and its subsequent maturing?*
- *What different forms of proclamation of the Gospel, of evangelization and of catechesis are used in our environments? What do we do to ensure that our efforts at evangelization and catechesis are really of high quality?*

## **2.3 The experience of Church and of group-life**

The salesian plan aims at the realization of an authentic christian community. To this end “we introduce the young to the experience of ecclesial life” (C 35) by gradually bringing them into a faith community in such a way as to make themselves feel they are sharing its life.

As a way leading to such an experience of Church we Salesians promote the membership of groups and associations, and of the salesian youth movement, and make such membership open to the greatest possible number of young people. The purpose of these groups, in addition to personal formation, is the stimulation of apostolic and social action. The ultimate objective is to foster the responsibility of the young so as to render them “the first apostles of other youngsters, in direct contact with them” (C 35).

- *In our communities how is the experience of Church put across through groups, associations and the salesian youth movement? What difficulties are met with and how can we overcome them?*
- *What experiences do we suggest, or can we suggest, to the young so that they may be “apostles” among their peers?*

## **2.4 Liturgical initiation and sacramental life**

An important aspect of education to the faith is the initiation of the young to liturgical life, “the summit to which the activity of the Church is directed and from which all her power flows” (SC 10). The liturgy is a whole world of spiritual realities expressed in sacred “signs”, which must be understood in their proper language. It is not just a matter of carrying out rites or institutionalized practices, but of leading the young into the mystery hidden behind the signs and expressed in celebrations. To “initiate” means to show, to explain, to introduce as active agents, to teach how to celebrate and take part as members of a celebrating community. For Don Bosco all this must be enlightened by catechesis and lived in a festive context, realized in spontaneous expressions of cult in the youth community.

The sacraments are the heart of liturgical life. Art.36 of the Constitutions expresses all the salesian significance of this, especially as regards the Eucharist and Reconciliation. These are to be considered not only as eminent elements in the mystery of salvation but also as “means of exceptional value for education”: they strengthen christian freedom, bring about conversion of heart, and foster a spirit of sharing and service (cf. C 36). In this way is emphasized the intimate connection between the work of grace and the service of education.

- *Through what educative experiences do we promote the liturgical initiation of the young?*
- *How do we link religious celebrations with other educational activity?*
- *What place in our educative plan is given to prayer and to the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation? (cf. Letter of Rector Major in AGC 324).*

## 2.5 Salesian youth spirituality

Salesian educative activity, which aims at the total human and christian development of the young, is expressed in a concrete plan of youth spirituality. This is meant to indicate a model of christian life of a kind that can be lived by young people at the present day: it is a model which draws its inspiration from Don Bosco's intuitions, and expresses his life and experience in the Spirit (cf. C 40, 86). It is the ideal of sanctity proposed to the young, which is rendered concrete in a commitment of simple and daily spiritual life, the common denominator of the youth movement which takes its origin from Don Bosco's spirit.

In this youth spirituality the Virgin Mary, Mother and Help of Christians, occupies a unique place. In fact the youthful sanctity which flourished in the first Oratory always saw Jesus and Mary as vitally linked together. And Mary is present in the same way today in the pilgrimage of faith of the young: in the first place she is a call to growth in grace, then she is a motherly presence expressing attention and solidarity, and finally she adumbrates a model of life offered to God to which each one's own existence can be conformed. (cf. C 34).

- *In what way do we propose to the young people of our environment the fundamental nuclei of youth spirituality which draws its inspiration from Don Bosco?*
- *In what way does the figure of Mary fit into our plan of youth spirituality?*

## 2.6 Vocational guidance, the summit and measure of education to the faith

The Constitutions assert that vocational guidance, a "work of collaboration with God's grace", is "the crown of all our educational and pastoral service" (C 37).

Education to the faith in fact aims at leading the young person to see the whole of his existence as a call, a vocation: "We educate the young to develop their own human and baptismal vocation" (C 37). The guiding principle for the attainment of this objective is "a daily life progressively inspired and unified by the Gospel" (ibid). All the educative experiences that we offer serve to guide and make suggestions to

the young and to accompany them in the choice of their vocation.

Our task is to “help them to discover, accept and develop the gift of a lay, consecrated or priestly vocation” (C 28). It is a question of helping each young person to formulate his own life-plan, in response to the personal call which God gives him, and in particular to play his part in the Church’s apostolic mission.

The most efficacious means for doing this, says art.37, is by creating an environment where there is a family atmosphere of welcome and of faith, manifested by “the witness of a community which gives of itself with joy”.

- *In what way do we guide and make suggestions to young people, and be at their side as they make decisions about their vocational choice in life?*
- *Through the experience of recent years, what conditions have we found to be necessary for promoting the growth of apostolic vocations in our communities? What obstacles to such growth have we become aware of?*
- *What have been our most fruitful and efficacious experiences in this field?*

### **3. THE PASTORAL TASK OF THE COMMUNITY**

The education of the young to the faith is an undertaking which unites to the initiative of grace the response of the young person himself and the mediation of the community in which he grows in his personality.

It is therefore of great importance to consider the role of the community in the process of education to the faith, since it represents the environment and context necessary for the process to take place.

We shall first consider the specific responsibility of the salesian community and then that of the educative and pastoral community, which is closely linked with the salesian community itself.



### 3.1 The salesian community responsible for education to the faith

“The apostolic mandate which the Church entrusts to us is taken up and put into effect in the first place by the provincial and local communities” (C 44).

The primary responsibility for education to the faith belongs therefore to the salesian community, to both the provincial community which renders the Congregation present in a particular part of the Church, and to the local community situated in a specific neighbourhood with its own social, cultural and ecclesial characteristics.

This responsibility refers in the first place to the mission which the Church entrusts to the Congregation (cf. C 1, §4; C 3, §3). Through his own salesian vocation and religious consecration each member of the community shares in this mission, translating it into practical pastoral work.

This is done in the name of Christ the Redeemer, who desires that all men shall be saved. Sent as we are in a particular way to young people, our task is to lead them to a life of faith, the way and means of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The awareness of this fundamental dimension of our pastoral work must be kept alive and efficacious in every salesian, to allow him to realize his own vocation (C 23, §3), and in every community so that it may fulfil the mandate it has certainly been given.

- *Are we convinced of this fundamental dimension of our salesian religious life? Is it the object of regular community discernment, in accordance with art.44 of the Constitutions?*
- *What proposals are we making to deepen this awareness?*

### 3.2 Shared responsibility

Each one shares in the common educative and pastoral responsibility in accordance with his own role and function, and his own personal gifts (cf. C 45). Nevertheless the Provincial and the Rector, within their communities, have a particular function as regards pastoral animation (cf. C 44, §2; C 55; GC21, 46-57).

But the Provincial and Rector, though finally responsible for education to the faith, can function effectively only in a climate of shared

responsibility in which each one plays his own part in the work.

It is frequently necessary within the community to give some kind of organization to this sharing of responsibility, by establishing different roles and promoting means of participation.

- *Is the task of being the “pastoral guide of the salesian mission”, entrusted by the Constitutions to the Provincial and Rector, efficacious in the life and activity of the community? How is it exercised in practice?*
- *What suggestions can be made for an ever more valid fulfilment of this task of pastoral animation?*
- *How can the sharing of responsibility be ensured in our communities at both local and provincial level?*

### **3.3 The salesian community, animating nucleus of the educative community<sup>2</sup>**

Art.47 of the Constitutions declares: “We bring about in our works the educative and pastoral community”. And art.5 of the General Regulations says that this community is indispensable for the carrying out of the educative and pastoral project.

It involves, continues C 47, “young people and adults, parents and educators, in a family atmosphere, so that it can become a living experience of Church and a revelation of God’s plan for us”.

In the educative community a specific responsibility attaches to the salesian community, which must be its animating nucleus (cf. R 5). This role, analyzed in depth by the GC21 (cf. GC21 62-79) refers primarily to the pastoral dimension of the mission which the community is called upon to carry out in Don Bosco’s spirit: “educate by evangelizing and evangelize by educating”. The justification for our works is in fact the educative and pastoral service which they provide (cf. C 41).

<sup>2</sup> The term “educative community” does not refer only to the scholastic educative community, but to the expressions of participation and communally shared responsibility which should be present in all our works (schools, oratories and youth centres, parishes, etc.), even though they may sometimes be called by different names.

- *How does the educative and pastoral community function in our works? What is our experience in its regard?*
- *In what way and with what spirit does the salesian community fulfil its role of animation of the educative community, especially as regards the pastoral dimension?*

### 3.4 Lay collaborators and their formation

In the educative community, proper to all our works, those taking part are not only the Salesians and pupils but also parents, teachers and other collaborators, whose role is fundamental for the realization of the primary task of a community which accompanies the young people in their pilgrimage of faith.

Speaking of lay collaborators, art.47 of the Constitutions says that being associated with our work “they make a contribution all their own, because of their experience and pattern of life. We welcome and encourage their collaboration, and we give them the opportunity to get a deeper knowledge of the salesian spirit and the practice of the preventive system”.

We may recall that Vatican II and the Bishops’ Synod of ’87 on the laity have pointed out to us the importance of lay people as members of the People of God and participants in the one and the same mission of the Church in the world.

- *How does the shared responsibility of lay people enter into the structure of our educative and pastoral communities, especially as regards the education of young people to the faith? What proposals of a general kind are possible to make this sharing of responsibility ever more real, in line with the views of Vatican II and the ’87 Synod on the laity?*
- *Knowing the importance of the human qualities and christian standing of these collaborators in the educative community, what initiatives have we taken or can we take to form them by helping them to grow, from a salesian, spiritual and professional point of view?*

### **3.5 Cooperators and past-pupils in the commitment of education to the faith.**

Among the lay people who work with us in carrying out Don Bosco's mission, some as a living part of the educative community and others in the same locality but in different contexts, there are certain ones who are more closely linked with our Family: they are the ones who have taken on the personal obligation of living as "Salesians in the world" as members of the Association of Salesian Cooperators, and others who wish to keep alive the education they received at the school of Don Bosco and special bonds of affection as Past-pupils, and so wish to commit themselves in the same salesian mission (cf. C 5).

The salesian community is enriched by these lay members of the Family, with their various degrees of membership; on the other hand they, more than others, should feel that they are participants in the salesian mission by promoting in various ways its fundamental dimension, which is precisely the education of youth to the faith (cf. C 47; R 38-39).

And so by means of these committed lay people in our Family, it is possible for the community to broaden its field of activity and bring it about that the salesian spirit and mission be not enclosed within our own works but able to penetrate more deeply into the living situations of the local Church and neighbourhood. We know Don Bosco's mind in this regard: these committed lay people, and especially the Cooperators, can because of their secular condition penetrate in various ways into areas which the Salesians and FMA cannot reach, taking the christian spirit with them.

We may ask:

- *What initiatives have been launched, at provincial and local level, to promote among committed lay people a closer sharing in our task of education to the faith, by inviting them to become members of the Association of Salesian Cooperators (R 38).*
- *To what extent do Cooperators and Past-pupils in educative communities share responsibility in the mission of educators of the faith?*
- *Are our communities assiduous in following up by opportune means the spiritual and salesian development of these lay members of our Family, so as to make of them educators to the faith?*

- *What attention do we give to these Associations, so that they can bring to bear in the neighbourhood the influence of lay people formed at Don Bosco's school for the education of youth to the faith?*

## Appendix: Some indications concerning documentation

The GC23 wants a *comparison* between the objectives of our mission as “educators to the faith” and the living reality of our communities. For this reason it will be well to keep in mind those documents which, based on the indications of Vatican II, have led to a deeper knowledge of our identity in the Church, in fidelity to the Founder’s charism and the signs of our modern times.

Among the ecclesial documents, in addition to the texts of Vatican II, the following have particular reference to the Chapter’s theme: the Apostolic Exhortation “*Evangelii nuntiandi*” of Paul VI, “*Catechesi tradendae*” of John Paul II, and more recently the document of the Congregation for Catholic Education “*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*”. To these must be added other possible documents of local Bishops’ Conferences.

For us Salesians the fundamental reference texts are obviously the *Constitutions* and the *General Regulations*, which represent our Rule of life, approved by the general chapters as a faithful response to the demands of our mission at the present day. Of the Constitutions, in particular, it is said that they “define the apostolic project of our Society” and that “the Church, in approving them, assures us of the authenticity of life traced out by our Founder” (C 192). *For this reason constant reference is made in this study outline to our Rule of life as the objective we want efficaciously to realize.*

Together with the above we must also keep in mind other documents of our salesian magisterium (both of general chapters and of the Rector Major with his council) which can throw light on the evaluation and comparison. The following brief list may be of help in drawing up the frame of reference as regards the theme of the GC23:

- SGC, document 2, *Don Bosco at the Oratory*, (SGC 192-273)
- SGC, document 3, *Evangelization and catechesis* (SGC 274-341)
- SGC, document 4, *Pastoral renewal of salesian action among youth* (SGC 342-399)
- GC21, *Salesians, evangelizers of the young*; cf. in particular
  - \* The animating community (role of the rector, educative community) (GC21 46-79)

- \* The salesian educational and pastoral plan (GC21 80-105)
- \* Vocational fruitfulness of our pastoral activity (GC21 106-119)
- *The crucial problem – vocations* (Letter of Fr Ricceri, ASC 273; January - March 1974)
- *We are missionaries of the young* (Letter of Fr Ricceri, ASC 279; July - September 1975)
- *The salesian educative project* (Letter of Fr Viganò, ASC 290; July - December 1978. Re-translated and published in Ireland, 1980)
- *Youth groups and movements* (Letter of Fr Viganò, ASC 294; October - December 1979)
- *In the ever-growing splendour of the Gospel* (Letter of Fr Viganò, ASC 296; April - June 1980)
- *Letter of John Paul II to youth of the world* (Letter-commentary of Fr Viganò, AGC 314; July - September 1985)
- *The lay person in the Salesian Family* (Letter of Fr Viganò, AGC 317; April - June 1986)
- *The Eucharist in the apostolic spirit of Don Bosco* (Letter of Fr Viganò, AGC 324; January - March 1988)
- Letter "*Iuvenum Patris*" of John Paul II (cf. AGC 325; April - June 1988)
- Some of the aids published by the Department of Youth Pastoral Work, which have reference to the theme, may also be consulted with profit:
  - \* The educative and pastoral project
  - \* Outlines for a provincial plan for pastoral work for vocations
  - \* The salesian plan for group activity
  - \* The salesian animator of the youth group
- Cf. also the manual "*The salesian rector*" (Rome 1986, 2nd edtn), especially the sections dealing with pastoral animation.

## 2.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION AND CARRYING OUT OF THE PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

### Tasks of the Provincial Chapter

“The provincial chapter”, declares art.170 of the Constitutions, “is the fraternal gathering in which the local communities strengthen their sense of belonging to the provincial community, through their common concern for its general problems. It is also the representative assembly of all the confreres and local communities”.

The tasks of the provincial chapter are indicated in art.170 of the Constitutions and art.169 of the General Regulations.

As the Rector Major points out in his letter convoking the GC23, we must keep in mind the practical distinction between the provincial chapter convoked “*in preparation for the general chapter*” and the so-called “*intermediate*” chapter (which takes place during the interval between one general chapter and the next).

In the present case the provincial chapter is convoked primarily and specifically for the preparation of the GC23. In consequence its tasks (in both its preparation and realization) will be the following:

1. *primarily and principally to study the theme of the GC23*, i.e. “educating young people to the faith, a task and challenge for today’s salesian community”, making the verification that is asked for and drawing up proposals and suggestions to be sent to the GC23;
2. *to elect the delegate (or delegates) to the general chapter and their substitutes* (C 171,5).

In addition to fulfilling these primary requirements, the chapter can deal with other matters of more immediate concern to the province and considered of particular importance, as provided for by C 171, 1-2. It should be remembered that any deliberations of the provincial chapter have binding force in the province only after the approval of the Rector Major with his Council (C 170).

## The preparation of the Provincial Chapter

After receiving the Rector Major's letter convoking the GC23, it is desirable that the provincial call his council together

- ★ to analyze more deeply the nature and purpose of the GC23, and to clarify the significance and purpose of the provincial chapter which is to prepare it;

- ★ to take notice of the study outline on the theme assigned to the GC23 and study the norms governing the preparation and realization of the provincial chapter and their application;

- ★ to study means and motives for fostering the involvement of confreres and communities;

- ★ to appoint the *moderator of the provincial chapter* (R 168) and invite possible experts and observers to the chapter (R 168).

If it is considered opportune, the provincial with his council may appoint a *preparatory commission*,<sup>1</sup> to help the moderator in preparing the provincial chapter.

The provincial chapter should be convoked by a letter from the provincial encouraging the confreres to reflect on the theme and to participate in the chapter's work. In it he will announce:

- ★ the name of the moderator and of the members of the preparatory commission (if there is one);

- ★ the date and place of the chapter, which could be spread over two sessions;

- ★ the manner of grouping of communities which have less than six confreres, for the purpose of electing the delegate to the provincial chapter and his substitute (cf. R 163).

After the election of the delegates of the local communities, the provincial in a second letter will

- ★ communicate to the confreres the names of those elected,

- ★ and present the list of perpetually professed confreres eligible for election to the chapter as delegates of the confreres of the province (cf. R 165, 1-2).

<sup>1</sup> A provincial preparatory commission is not prescribed by the General Regulations. It has nevertheless proved useful in many provinces for the preparation of the provincial chapter. It is for the provincial and his council to decide how it should be made up.



## The Moderator of the Provincial Chapter

\* will decide and inform the communities of the dates by which must take place the election of:

- the delegates of the communities and their substitutes;
- the delegates of the confreres (from the provincial list);
- eventual new substitutes for community delegates if a substitute is subsequently elected from the provincial list as a delegate of the confreres;

★ will send to the communities the norms governing the election of the delegates of local communities and the forms for recording the minutes of their elections; he will also announce the method to be used for the election of delegates of the confreres of the province.

It will be the task of the **provincial preparatory commission** (if there is one) to study, suggest to the provincial, and foster all the initiatives it may consider useful for:

- a. sensitizing the confreres to chapter perspectives (by conferences, study days, group and community meetings, etc.)
- b. helping the confreres to dispose themselves spiritually for the work and obligations associated with the chapter (through retreats, days of prayer, celebrations, etc.)
- c. clarifying the chapter theme and helping the confreres in their study of it: every confrere could well be given a *copy of the study outline* found elsewhere in this edition of the Acts (cf. n. 2.2, p. 29).

The preparatory commission could also at opportune moments interest members of the Salesian Family and friends of our works (FMA, DBV, Cooperators, Past-pupils, the more mature among our pupils, competent members of the clergy and other religious congregations, etc.) requesting their collaboration in the form and areas allowed by our norms and local situations.

The moderator, with the preparatory commission, will also

★ send out forms, based on samples supplied by the Moderator of the GC23, for collecting the contributions and reflections of the confreres and/or communities;

★ lay down a date by which the forms must be returned to the moderator of the provincial chapter;

★ study the contributions and proposals sent in by the confreres, and arrange them in a manner which will facilitate their use for the provincial chapter's reflection and decisions.

### **The carrying out of the Provincial Chapter itself**

Every effort should be made to ensure that the provincial chapter is celebrated in a fraternal atmosphere of reflection and prayer, and that it is seeking God's will as we try to bring an ever better response to the expectations of the Church and of youth at the present day. This will be helped by an appropriate preparation of the liturgy as regards content, method, aids, etc.

For the carrying out of its work, every provincial chapter will have its own brief collection of *regulations*, containing norms for work, discussions, and the organization of the capitulars into study groups or commissions. For these regulations the norms indicated by the Constitutions and General Regulations should be kept in mind (C 152 concerning the validity of acts, C 153 concerning the modality of elections, R 161, 164, 169) together with any indications found in the provincial directory.

For the *communication* of proposals and contributions to the GC23, the indications given by the Moderator of the GC23 must be scrupulously observed.

In particular, proposals and contributions must be written on the appropriate forms, indicating clearly the point of the study outline to which they refer. Proposals from provincial chapters should carry the details of the voting.

### **Participation of the communities and confreres**

It will be convenient at the end of these suggestions to list some duties of the communities and individual confreres.

#### *The communities*

★ Accompany the whole of the capitular process by their daily prayer.

★ Elect their delegate to the provincial chapter and his substitute. They compile the minutes of the election, following the model supplied by the moderator.

★ Receive and study (in common if possible) the motives and material sent by the moderator for their sensitization.

★ Deepen their knowledge of the provincial chapter theme, with a view to the GC23, and submit contributions and proposals.

### *The individual confreres*

★ Vote in the election of the delegate of their own community and his substitute.

★ Take part in the election of the delegates of the confreres of the province.

★ Make a personal study of the theme, availing themselves of aids and of the exchange of ideas in their own community,

★ Submit personal contributions and proposals to the provincial chapter and collaborate in the drawing up and discussion of proposals and contributions from their own community.

★ Send, if they so wish, personal proposals and contributions directly to the Moderator of the GC23.

★ Follow, through information and prayer, the preparation, realization and conclusions of their own provincial chapter.

## 2.4 NORMS FOR THE ELECTIONS

### Introduction: lawfulness and validity of acts

The provincial chapter is a community act, of great value not only for the province but for the whole Congregation.

The provincial chapter in fact elects delegates for the general chapter in communal form in the name of the province. In addition it can make decisions which, after the approval of the Rector Major with his council (cf. C 170), have binding force for all the confreres of the province.

Its realization therefore is governed by norms which guarantee that its acts are valid and lawful. These norms are listed in the universal law and in our own proper law (Constitutions and General Regulations), from which the provincial chapter derives its authority.

The observance of the laws concerning validity and lawfulness and precision in compiling official documents ensure clarity and expedition at successive stages of the work and eliminate delays, reference back, explanations and sanations.

As a service to provincials and moderators of provincial chapters the following list of norms and juridical indications is provided.

These norms refer to:

- *Canonical erection of houses*
- *Appointments*
- *Calculation of number of confreres and the various lists needed*
- *Minutes of the elections of delegates and substitutes*
- *Special cases*
- *Formal indications*

### Canonical erection of houses

The canonical erection of the house is indispensable (cf. can. 608, §1) before the confreres can meet in an assembly which has the power

of validly electing the delegate to the provincial chapter, and before the president of such an assembly of the confreres (the rector: C 186) can take part by right in the chapter (C 173, 5). The document of erection should be in the house archives.<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary therefore:

- a) to verify in good time the canonical erection of each house or community;
- b) to put in hand as soon as possible the necessary procedure for the canonical erection of those houses and communities not yet erected, and to which it is intended to give canonical erection;<sup>2</sup>
- c) that the provincial give an official, clear and explicit assignment to the groups of confreres belonging to those "presences" which for various reasons have not yet been canonically erected, or who belong to houses canonically erected but with less than six confreres: the norms for such assignments are to be found in art.163 of the General Regulations.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For houses which existed before 1926 as communities in their own right (and not "filiali", i.e. dependent on another community), it is sufficient that there be evidence of its existence before that date, in which houses were canonically erected without individual documentation. A similar erection was made for the houses of Poland in 1930.

<sup>2</sup> For the canonical erection of a house, it must have at least three confreres (cf. can.115,\$2) and the provincial, after consulting his council and obtaining the written consent of the Local Ordinary, must make formal application to the Rector Major (cf. can.608-610).

<sup>3</sup> In the case of "presences" not canonically erected, the provincial will assign the group of confreres concerned to a house already canonically erected, in which they can fulfil their duties and exercise their rights as electors together with the confreres of that house. It should be remembered that the "one in charge" of such a presence does not take part in the provincial chapter by right. In the case of canonically erected houses with less than six confreres, the norms of R 163 apply: if possible the provincial should arrange that they meet together so as to form the number of at least six members, under the presidency of the rector who is senior by first profession. Thus united they will elect the delegate for the provincial chapter and his substitute. If however because of special circumstances the members of a house with less than six professed members cannot join with another in like condition, the provincial will join the community with less than six professed members to a larger one (with six or more professed), and together the members of the two communities, with equal rights (both active and passive) will proceed to the election of the delegate and his substitute for the provincial chapter. It should be remembered too that the rector, even of a community with less than six professed members (provided it be canonically erected), takes part in the provincial chapter by right.

## Appointments

A verification must be made to see that the appointments of those who take part by right in the provincial chapter are in order and have not lapsed. This is especially important in places where the provincial chapter takes place at a time when there is normally a change of personnel and new assignments.

An appointment is in order when:

- a) it was made in accordance with the Constitutions;
- b) the person appointed has taken possession of his office in the manner prescribed (for provincials, superiors of vice-provinces, and rectors the profession of faith is required: cf. can. 830, 8);
- c) the term of office has not expired.

What has been said above is to be applied, case by case:

- to provincials and superiors of vice-provinces (cf. C 162, 168);
- to members of provincial councils (cf. C 167);
- to superiors of provincial delegations (cf. C 159);
- to rectors (cf. C 177);
- to directors of novices (cf. C 112).

For a vice-rector, given that with the approval of the provincial he can take the place of the rector if the latter is seriously impeded (cf. C 173, 5), there must be a formal document regarding his appointment as vice-rector. Sufficient for this purpose is the letter of obedience given to the confrere. There must also be a formal document indicating that the provincial has recognized the serious impediment preventing the participation of the rector in the provincial chapter and his substitution by the vice-rector.

<sup>4</sup> *The Superior Council, on 23.6.1978, made the following decisions concerning entry into office and its cessation:*

- *the appointment of confreres to various offices, at either local or provincial level, becomes effective from the moment that the confrere formally takes over the office;*
- *such confreres remain in office until their successors formally take over the same office; this must happen not more than three months after the expiry of their mandate.*

## Calculation of number of confreres and the various lists needed

The calculation of the number of confreres who belong to a province (or a vice-province) for purposes of the provincial chapter is very important. It determines:

- a) the number of delegates of the province (or vice-province) who take part in the provincial chapter (cf. C 173, 7; R 161-166);
- b) the number of delegates which the province (or vice-province) sends to the general chapter (cf. C 151, 8; R 114-115, 118).

In view of the provincial chapter therefore a list of the confreres of the province will be made in advance, which we shall call the *general list of confreres belonging to the province for purposes of the provincial chapter*.

As well as this general list, there are other lists which will be useful for the realization of the chapter and should be compiled. They are:

- a list of those who take part in the chapter “by right”;
- a list of confreres having “active voice”;
- a list of confreres having “passive voice”.

The norms governing the compiling of each of these lists are as follows:

1. *General list of confreres belonging to the province (or vice-province) for purposes of the provincial chapter.*<sup>5</sup>

The following are to be considered as belonging to the province (or vice-province) for this purpose:

- A) confreres who made their first profession in the province (or vice-province) and are still resident in it at the time the list is compiled (C 160);
- B) confreres who came from another province (or vice-province) as a result of a *definitive transfer* and who still reside in the province at

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that this list of confreres belonging to the province “for purposes of the provincial chapter” does not coincide with the list that is asked for each year for statistical purposes; the latter includes also confreres in “irregular” situations.

the time the list is compiled (cf. R 151);<sup>6</sup>

C) confreres who at the time the list is compiled reside in the province (or vice-province), though coming from another province (or vice-province) on *temporary transfer*, in accordance with the norm of art.151 of the Regulations;<sup>7</sup>

D) confreres who belong to the province (or vice-province) by one of the above-mentioned titles (A, B, C), but who are *temporarily absent for lawful reasons*.

In accordance with R 166 the following are to be considered as "lawfully absent" (and hence to be included in the list):

- a. confreres of the province (or vice-province) who at the time the list is made are living temporarily and by express mandate of their own provincial of origin in a salesian house of another province (or vice-province) for specific reasons of *study, health or work received from their own provincial*;<sup>8</sup>
- b. confreres who have received from their own provincial permission for "absentia a domo" (cf. can. 665) or who have received

<sup>6</sup> The making of *definitive transfers* belongs to the Rector Major (cf. R 151).

Definitive transfer is considered to have taken place also in the following cases:

- confreres who in the act of erection of a new province or vice-province are assigned to it (cf. ASC 284, p. 68, 3.2);
- missionaries who return definitively to their home country and are assigned by the Rector Major to the province he considers most suitable for their condition.

<sup>7</sup> *Temporary transfer* is brought about:

- either by a mandate of obedience (e.g. when a confrere is sent by obedience to exercise an office (rector, director of novices, teacher, etc. in another province), as long as the mandate lasts;
- or by agreement between two provincials, when a confrere is sent to help in another province (cf. R 151).

*The confreres who have been transferred, even if only temporarily, are to be included – and vote – only in the province where they are actually working.*

<sup>8</sup> The confreres referred to here (those temporarily absent for reasons of study, health, or for work given them by their own provincial) are not "transferred", even temporarily, to another province.

- They vote in the house where they are resident (outside their own province) for the election of the delegate of the community;
- but for the election of the delegate of the provincial community they are included in the provincial list of their own province.

It should be noted that *the work given them by their own provincial*, which is referred to here, must be effectively a work for their own province of origin. This is evidently not the case of a confrere who resides and works in an interprovincial house: e.g. in a formation community or an interprovincial study centre the formation or teaching personnel (but not the students) belong in all respects to the province of the territory in which the house is situated, and are counted only in that province. (Here it is a matter of "temporary transfer" as long as their assignment lasts.)



from the Rector Major (or from the Apostolic See) the indult of "exclaustration".<sup>9</sup>

To be still more precise the following, although still belonging to the province (or vice-province) *must not be counted for purposes of the provincial chapter* (and must therefore not be included in the above-mentioned general list:

- E) confreres who have made a formal request for dispensation from priestly or diaconal celibacy; or who have made a formal request for secularization or for dispensation from perpetual or temporary vows;<sup>10</sup>
- F) confreres who are *unlawfully* outside community for any reason (i.e. confreres in "irregular" situations).

It will be opportune to keep in mind the following norm, given by the Rector Major on the occasion of the SGC and to be considered still valid:

\* Transfers from one province to another which took place without the prescribed formalities, and for which there are no clear facts or documents, are to be considered definitive (and hence with the loss of all effects of the former membership) after ten consecutive years of residence in the new province.

The "general list" of the confreres of the province is the one to be used for calculating both the number of delegates of the provincial community to the provincial chapter (1 for every 25 or fraction of 25 members: R 165, 3), and the number of delegates to the general chapter (1 if the total number of confreres is less than 250, 2 if the number is 250 or more: R 114).

<sup>9</sup> Confreres who are "exclaustrated" (can.686) or "absentes a domo" (can.665), and whose permission to be absent has not expired, are salesian religious and therefore to be included in the general list. Nevertheless:

– those exclaustrated in accordance with common law (can.687) are deprived of the right of active and passive voice;

– those "absentes a domo" can be deprived of the right of active and passive voice in the judgement of the provincial (especially when leave of absence is granted for vocational reasons), at the time the concession is granted; cf. the letter of the Vicar General of 20.01.1985.

<sup>10</sup> The practice is that for the purposes of the provincial chapter, confreres who have made a formal request to leave the Congregation are not counted, even though the request is still under consideration and has not reached a definitive conclusion.

As soon as this general list has been compiled, a copy is to be sent to the Moderator of the GC23, whose duty it is to verify the calculations of the individual provinces (or vice-provinces), so as to ensure the validity of the election of delegates to the general chapter.

2. *List of those who take part in the provincial chapter "by right".*

This is a list which the provincial (or the moderator of the provincial chapter) will communicate to the confreres, so that they know which members attend the chapter by right, in view of the elections at provincial level.

In accordance with C 173 the following are members "by right" of the provincial chapter:

- the provincial (or superior of a vice-province) who presides over the chapter;
- the provincial councillors;
- the delegates of the individual provincial delegations;
- the moderator of the provincial chapter;
- the rectors of canonically erected houses;<sup>11</sup>
- the director of novices.

3. *Lists of confreres having "active voice" (electors).*

These give the names of those who have the right to take part in the election of delegates within the individual communities and the province as a whole. They are of two kinds:

3.1 *List for the election of the delegates of each community.* This list is compiled in each community and includes *all perpetually and temporally professed confreres who reside in the community concerned*, including those of other provinces (or vice-provinces) who are there temporarily for reasons of study, health, or for a mandate received from their own provincial of origin (cf. R 165,2).

3.2 *Provincial list* for the election of delegates of the provincial community to the provincial chapter.

<sup>11</sup> As already indicated in note (3) rectors of houses with less than six confreres, if they are canonically erected, are members by right of the provincial chapter.

To this list, which is important for the election at provincial level, belong *all the confreres, both perpetually and temporarily professed, included in the "general list 1", except those who are deprived of active and passive voice.*

Those deprived of active and passive voice, even though they be included in the general list of the confreres of the province, are:

- a. confreres who have an indult of exlaustration, in accordance with canon law (cf. can. 687);
- b. confreres who have received permission for "absentia a domo", and who in receiving such permission renounced their right to active and passive voice.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. *Lists of confreres with passive voice* (eligible for election).

These are lists of confreres who can be elected as delegates of the local communities or as delegates of the provincial community. They are of three kinds:

##### 4.1 *List of confreres eligible for election to the provincial chapter as "delegates of a community".*

*This is a list compiled in each individual community: it includes all the perpetually professed members of the community* (including those of other provinces residing there only for reasons of study and health), *except for those who are already members by right of the provincial chapter (v. list 2) and those deprived of active and passive voice.*

##### 4.2 *List of confreres eligible for election to the provincial chapter as "delegates of the provincial community".*

This list is drawn up at provincial level and includes all the perpetually professed members on the "general list" of the province (list 1), with the exception of:

- those who are already members of the provincial chapter by right (list 2),
- the delegates already validly elected by the communities,

<sup>12</sup> In the case of the "absentia a domo", their renunciation of active and passive voice must be clear from the document by which the provincial (with the consent of his council) grants permission for absence; cf. the letter of the Vicar General of 20.01.1985.

- confreres deprived of active and passive voice (those exclaustated and the “absentes a domo” who have renounced their right to active and passive voice.

4.3 For the election within the provincial chapter of the delegate or delegates of the province to the general chapter, it should be kept in mind that *all the perpetually professed on the “general list” (list 1) are eligible for election, except:*

- the provincial, who is a member of the general chapter by right;
- Rector Majors emeriti, present in the province, who are also members by right of the general chapter;
- confreres deprived of active and passive voice.

### **Minutes of the elections**

— The rules for voting and scrutinies in the local communities are set out in arts.161-163 of the General Regulations (cf. also C 153).

The corresponding minutes of the election of delegates of the local communities and their respective substitutes must be drawn up on the appropriate forms and be examined by the relevant provincial commission.<sup>13</sup>

— The rules for voting and scrutinies in the voting for delegates of the provincial communities are set out in art.165 of the Regulations.

The corresponding minutes of the election of the delegates of the provincial community must carry the details of the scrutinies with the results themselves and the names of the scrutineers, and show that the required procedure has been observed. The minutes, drawn up on the appropriate forms, must be endorsed by the signatures of the one presiding over the scrutiny and the scrutineers themselves.

— The minutes relating to the election of delegates to the general chapter and their substitutes must be drawn up only on the forms provided specially for the purpose and in accordance with the instructions they carry.

<sup>13</sup> This provincial commission for the examination of the minutes of the election of the delegates of the communities will be appointed by the provincial in agreement with the moderator.

*These minutes must be sent without delay to the Moderator of the GC23, who will pass them to the appropriate juridical commission appointed by the Rector Major for the prescribed examination (cf. R 115).*

### **Special cases**

— Salesian Bishops, even though retired from office and resident in a province, have neither active nor passive voice, and if they are invited to the provincial chapter they do not vote. The same norm applies to Bishops reinserted in salesian communities (cf. AAS 1986, p.1324).

— Rector Majors emeriti have both active and passive voice in the local community in which they are inserted and in the election of delegates of the provincial community; but if they are elected as delegates to the provincial chapter (either of the local community or the provincial community) they have active voice in the provincial chapter but not passive voice, since they are already members by right of the general chapter.

### **Formal indications for compiling the lists of confreres**

- 1) Names of the confreres are to be *numbered* progressively.
- 2) Names are to be given *in alphabetical order* and *spelled as in the Elenco of 1988*.
- 3) *Use capital letters* for the PATERNAL SURNAME and lower case for the christian name.
- 4) *Indicate* by appropriate *signs* whether the confrere is a priest (P), deacon (D), lay salesian (L), or “clerical” student (S).
- 5) *Indicate* by the letter ‘t’ if the confrere is in *temporary vows*.

## **2.5 WORK OF THE PREPARATORY TECHNICAL COMMISSION**

On 14 July 1988 the Rector Major, in accordance with art.112 of the Regulations, appointed the preparatory technical commission for the GC23, to be presided over by Fr Francesco Maraccani who been already appointed Moderator of the GC23 on 6.07.88.

The members of the commission were: Fr Giovanni Battista Bosco, Fr Edmond Klenck, Fr Valentin de Pablo, Fr Joseph Pulickal, Fr José Reinoso, Bro. Renato Romaldi, Fr Adriaan Van Luyn, Fr Francisco Castellanos (Secretary).

The commission members were given a dossier containing suggestions for a calendar and indications for the theme, which had been already studied by the Rector Major with the General Council during its plenary session.

The technical commission met in Rome from 27-29 July 1988, and in its various sessions studied and drew up the following contributions:

1. A calendar for the preparation of the GC23, based on the data laid down by the General Council;
2. A study outline on the theme of the GC23, as an aid for the provincial chapters and confreres.
3. Suggestions for the preparation and carrying out of the provincial chapters.
4. Juridical norms useful for the provincial chapters, especially regarding the elections.

The contributions drawn up by the technical commission were passed to the Rector Major through the Moderator. The material concerned is contained in the present issue of the Acts in sections 2.1 to 2.4.

## 4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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### 4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

In June and July the Rector Major was engaged almost full time in the work of the General Council, which was meeting in plenary session.

He was able nevertheless to make a number of generally short journeys to be present among the confreres and youth in various places. Among them were in particular:

- a journey to Reggio Emilia (18-19 June) to commemorate Don Bosco and open a new oratory in the town;
- repeated journeys to Turin: on 27 June to take part in the 38th National Week of Pastoral Updating, at which he gave an address on “The Church and the young”; on 9-10 July for the 1st International Congress of Mary Help of Christians; and on 15-16 July at Colle, where he presided at a Mass for 4,500 Salesian Cooperators who had come on pilgrimage from Spain.

From 24 to 27 July he was in Spain itself. At Burgos he took part in the 41st National Week of Missiology and gave a conference; in the same city he received the first profession of 16 confreres from the three Spanish provinces who are

about to begin their postnovitiate in a new studentate there. He went on to Madrid to bless a new section of the Missions Office..

August found the Rector Major at the “Auxilium” Faculty of the FMA taking part in the International Conference on the woman, and later at the Meeting of Salesian Biblical Scholars and at the Appraisal DB '88; some time too was specially dedicated to the preparation of the GC23.

A particular and delicate work was that of putting the finishing touches to some aspects of the preparation for the great days at Turin with the Pope.

### 4.2 Chronicle of the General Council

The plenary summer session (the ninth of the present six-year period) lasted from 1 June to 22 July, with a total of 34 sittings.

As always the session included a great deal of work on ordinary matters from the provinces: the appointment of provincial councillors, approval of the appointment of rectors, the opening and canonical erection of houses (15 new houses were erected), economic and admin-

istrative practices, and the solving of problems of individual confreres.

All this notwithstanding, the greater part of both time and attention was dedicated to reflection on the animation of the provinces following the extraordinary visitations that had been made and the consultations preceding the appointment of new provincials, and also on aspects of a universal character concerning the Congregation.

The following are the points of greater importance that were the object of deeper study on the part of the Council"

1. *Appointment of provincials.* After detailed examination of the consultations and discernment accompanied by prayer, the General Council proceeded to the designation of new provincials for eight provinces: India-Dimapur, Italy-Subalpine, Italy-East Venice, Paraguay, Poland-Cracow, Spain-Barcelona, Spain-Leon and Spain-Seville. Superiors were also appointed for two recently constituted vice-provinces, those of Eastern Canada and East-Africa.

2. *Reports on Extraordinary Visitations.* These were examined in the case of the seven provinces where the visitations had taken place in the period February-May 1988: Brazil-Campo Grande, North Belgium, Germany-Munich, Hong Kong, Spain-Madrid, United States East,

and Thailand. The examination of concluding reports on extraordinary visitations provides a particularly favourable opportunity for reflecting on the realities in the provinces concerned and for making suggestions for an ever more efficacious animation of the salesian mission.

3. *Reports on Team Visits.* The reports were considered, with the conclusions reached, on two Team Visits that had taken place since the previous Council session: those to Africa (at Lusaka from 8-13 April), and to the UPS (at Rome, 11-12 June)

4. *Information from the Departments.* The General Councillors in charge of special sectors reported on the activities carried out in their various Departments, and gave an indication of perspectives for the future and problems lying ahead. This provided an opportune occasion for reflecting on the service offered by the Congregation through its central Departments and on ways for making such service more efficacious.

5. *Reflection on "the christian formation of the young in our environments".* In the preceding session, in the course of a verification of the objectives to be reached during the present six-year period, it had been decided to devote some sittings of the Council to an apprai-



sal of a central theme of our mission as evangelizers of the young, which in many places gives rise to difficulties, often linked with the challenges put to us at the present day by youth and society.

To respond to our commitment, the Council first addressed itself to a verification of the reality existing in our communities, to the problems encountered and the answers that are given. The principal aspects touched on were:

- young people as subjects and protagonists in education;
- the person of the salesian as educator of the faith;
- the salesian community, animator of the educative community;
- the content of the message and how it could be put across.

The verification led to a deeper reflection on two points:

*a.* the salesian, moulder of young christians (personal qualification and community planning);

*b.* the content of the message and the educative pastoral project.

From the verification and appraisal some conclusions emerged concerning the commitment to animation on the part of the General Council.

*6. The 23rd General Chapter.* Reflection on this important event, now not very far away, occupied the Council for some time. The matter had already been broached in

the previous session with some preliminary considerations on the question, and the Regional Councillors had been asked to sound out the provincials informally, especially as regards the Chapter's theme.

The results were discussed and developed by the Council in the course of this session, and gave rise to the following:

*a.* indications for the appointment of the Moderator, subsequently approved by the Rector Major;

*b.* general indications for the calendar and realization of the general chapter and its preparation;

*c.* the selection of a theme for the chapter, which is presented by the Rector Major in the present issue of the Acts.

*7. Celebration of the Don Bosco centenary.* Continuing its reflections on the various events of the centenary celebrations, the Council went on to discuss forthcoming events at world level (Appraisal '88 - the Pope's visit to Turin - perpetual professions made together with the FMA at Valdocco), and also glanced briefly at the concluding events of this year which has been so rich in grace.

*8. New Vice-Province of Southern Africa.* Finally it must be mentioned that among the deliberations made during the plenary session was the giving of the Council's consent to the erection of the present provin-

cial delegation of Southern Africa into a new vice-province. The formal erection will take place during the Council's next session.

As always, the work of the ses-

sion was accompanied by prayer and fraternal gatherings. Of particular note was the day's retreat on Saturday, 2 July, with Fr Agostino Favale who led a reflection on the figure of Don Bosco the priest.

## 5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

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### 5.1 New Provincials

*As was stated in the Chronicle (cf. 4.2), eight provincials and two superiors of vice-provinces were appointed during the plenary session of the General Council. Some biographical notes on them are here given.*

1. *Fr Richard AUTHIER, Superior of the Vice-Province of EASTERN CANADA*

Richard Authier, born at Montreal 21 January 1948, was a pupil at the salesian school at Sherbrooke, where his salesian vocation matured. He entered the novitiate at Newton (USA) and made his first religious profession on 16 August 1966. After practical training at Montreal and theological studies at Columbus (USA), he was ordained priest at Sherbrooke 5 June 1976.

The years following ordination were for Fr Authier a period of educational and pastoral experience, further enriched by the year's course in ongoing formation at Berkeley in which he took part.

As a consequence of the salesian experience he had gained, in 1984 he was appointed director of novices, and shortly afterwards rector

of the house of novitiate at Sherbrooke, both of which offices he was still holding at the time of his appointment as superior of the new vice-province.

2. *Fr Luigi BASSET, Provincial of the SUBALPINE Province, Turin.*

Appointed to succeed Fr Luigi Testa as guide of the subalpine province, with headquarters at Turin-Valdocco, was the rector of the Institute of Turin-Valsalice, Fr Luigi Basset.

Fr Basset was born at Visnà in the Province of Treviso on 13 March 1941. After elementary school he entered the College of Valsalice where he matured in his desire to stay with Don Bosco. He made his novitiate at Pinerolo and also his first profession there on 16 August 1960. The following years were spent first at the studentate of Beckford in England where he learned English and then, after practical training, at Turin-Crocetta for the study of theology. He was ordained priest on 3 April 1971.

After obtaining the Licentiate in Theology and qualification as a teacher of English, he became engaged in educational and pastoral

work. In 1976 he was sent as rector to the house of Peveragno, and five years later to the agricultural technical institute at Lombriasco in the same capacity. In 1984 he became rector at Valsalice and a member of the provincial council.

3. *Fr Piotr BIEGUS, Provincial of SOUTHERN POLAND (Cracow).*

Fr Piotr Biegus, the new provincial of Cracow, was born at Ruda Slaska in the Province of Katowice on 11 August 1944. After frequenting the school at Kopiec and obtaining the licentiate in classics, he entered the novitiate and made his first profession at Kopiec on 15 August 1969. This was followed by the study of philosophy and practical training, and then by the study of theology in the studentate of Cracow, where he was ordained priest on 22 May 1976.

He then began his pastoral experience in the parishes of Lubin, teaching at the same time in the local salesian school. Subsequently he frequented the Catholic University of Lubin and obtained the licentiate in canon law.

In 1986 he was appointed vice-provincial of the Breslau province (with specific responsibility for vocational animation), an office he still held when he was appointed provincial.

4. *Fr Miguel CARABIAS FLORES, Provincial of BARCELONA (Spain).*

Fr Miguel Carabias, born at Pelayos (Salamanca) 24 September 1939, frequented the salesian aspirantate at Astudillo and went on in due course to the novitiate at Mohernando, where he made his first profession on 16 August 1957.

For his philosophy studies he was sent to the Antilles, from where he went to Venezuela for practical training. He returned to his home country for theology at the Barcelona studentate, and was ordained priest there on 5 March 1967.

He then spent three years at the University of Work at Seville before returning to Barcelona to complete his civil studies and obtain the licentiate in pedagogy.

In 1972 he was appointed rector of the house of Sant Vicenc dels Horts, and in 1978 went on to direct the professional and high school of Barcelona-Mundet. Since 1982 he was vice-provincial and rector of the provincial house in Barcelona.

5. *Fr Giovanni FILIPPIN, Provincial of EAST VENICE (Mogliano Veneto).*

Fr Giovanni Filippin, the new provincial of the San Marco Province of Mogliano Veneto, was born at Riese Pio X (Treviso) 4 October 1949. At the age of eleven he en-

tered the aspirantate at Castello di Godego, and was subsequently admitted to the novitiate, which he made at Albare (Verona) and concluded with his first profession on 16 August 1967.

After his philosophical studies and practical training he was able to follow a theology course which offered good opportunities for pastoral practice at the same time, and he was ordained priest at Udine on 16 April 1977.

Following ordination he took a two-year course of studies in liturgy and pastoral work, and soon after was given responsibility for the pastoral and vocational animation of the province and became a member of the provincial council at Mogliano Veneto. For a year before his appointment as provincial he was the rector of the house of Castello di Godego, the province's centre for vocational guidance.

6. *Fr Scaria NEDUMALA, Provincial of DIMAPUR (India).*

Born at Vayala, Kottayam (India), Fr Nedumala was 15 when he entered the aspirantate at Tirupattur. In 1960 he was admitted to the novitiate at Yercaud, where he also made his first profession on 24 May 1961.

After studies of philosophy at Yercaud and practical training at Madras, he did his theology at the 'Kristu Jyoti' studentate at Banga-

lore, and was ordained priest at Cochin on 19 December 1970. In the meantime he had gained a civil degree in technical studies.

After a first profitable educational and pastoral experience he was first put in charge and subsequently became rector of the salesian house of Mao-Punnamamai in Manipur. In 1981 he was transferred to the house of Imphal as rector and parish priest. In the following year he became rector of the provincial house and first vice-provincial of the new province of Dimapur.

7. *Fr Filiberto RODRIGUEZ MARTIN, Provincial of LEON (Spain).*

Fr Filiberto Rodriguez, the new Provincial of Leon, was born at Val-salabrosa (Salamanca) on 8 December 1942, the last of numerous brothers and sisters. His eldest sister is a Daughter of Charity, another is a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, and three of his brothers became salesian priests, of whom one has already died.

He studied at the salesian aspirantate of Astudillo, and was admitted to the novitiate which he made at the same place, making his first profession on 16 August 1960.

After philosophical studies and practical training, he followed the course of theology at Salamanca and was ordained priest on 22 February 1970.

He then spent some years in teaching and spiritual animation in the houses of Oviedo and Oriense. Meanwhile he completed his civil studies and obtained the licentiate in chemical sciences from the University of Oviedo.

In 1976 he became rector of the aspirantate of Leon-La Fontana, but only a year later was appointed provincial economer, an office he performed with great competence until his appointment as provincial.

8. *Fr Thomas THAYIL, Superior of the Vice-Province of EAST AFRICA (Nairobi).*

Fr Thomas Thayil was born at Pilai, Kerala, 11 April 1928. He entered the aspirantate of Tirupattur, made his novitiate at Kotagiri and his first profession on 24 May 1950. After studying philosophy at Sonada and practical training at Tirupattur, he was sent to Turin-Crocetta for theological studies, and was ordained priest there on 11 February 1961. After obtaining the licentiate in theology he went on to study at the Gregorian University in Rome, where he gained his doctorate in church history.

After teaching for some years at the studentate of Bangalore, in 1971 he became rector of the novitiate at Yercaud. In 1977 he was appointed vice-provincial of the Madras province, and two years later was called to guide the newly erected

province of Bangalore. At the end of his six-year mandate he was sent to Nairobi as provincial delegate for East Africa.

9. *Fr Francisco VAZQUEZ ADORNA, Provincial of SEVILLE (Spain).*

Born at Seville on 28 September 1939, he was a pupil at the salesian school in that city, where his vocation to stay with Don Bosco matured. He entered the novitiate of San Jose del Valle, and made his first profession on 16 August 1958. After his practical training he studied theology at Seville, where he was ordained priest on 20 April 1968.

After ordination he spent some years as a teacher at the University of Work at Seville, and then was given charge of the centre for youth pastoral work at Huelva. In 1976 he was given the task of animating youth pastoral work at provincial level, and a year later became vice-provincial, an office he held for six years. He was then sent as rector to the college at Cadiz, where he remained until his appointment as provincial.

10. *Fr Ascensio ZABALA, Provincial of PARAGUAY.*

After the departure of the previous provincial, Fr Zacarias Ortiz, recently named Vicar Apostolic of Chaco Paraguayo, Fr Ascensio Za-

bala has been appointed to succeed him. The new provincial was born at Azcoitia (Spain) on 17 May 1928, and made his first profession on 16 August 1945 after his novitiate at San Vicenc del Horts. After philosophical studies and practical training, he followed the theological course at Barcelona and was ordained there on 27 June 1954.

He next spent several years in teaching and pastoral work in the houses of his province of origin (where he distinguished himself also for competence as an economer), in 1970 he was sent to Paraguay where he worked for some years as local economer. In 1975 he became rector of the college of 'San Luigi' in Asuncion, and later of the college of 'Sacro Cuore'. Since 1981 he was a member of the provincial council of Asuncion, with the task of animating youth pastoral work in the scholastic sector. In 1986 he became vice-provincial of Paraguay.

## 5.2 New Salesian Bishops

1. *Mgr. Michael PRAPHON, Bishop of Surat Thani (Thailand).*

On 14 July 1988, the Holy Father appointed as successor of Mgr. Pietro Carretto as Bishop of Surat Thani (Thailand) our confrere Fr *Michael Praphon*, who at the time

was Vicar General of the same diocese.

Mgr. Praphon was born on 7 May 1930 at Hua Phai, Thailand. At the age of eleven he entered the salesian school of Bang Nok Khuek, and in due course made his novitiate at Hua Hin, making his first religious profession on 24 February 1949. After philosophy studies and practical training he was sent to our Atheneum in Turin, where he followed the theological course, gained the Licentiate in Theology, and was ordained priest on 11 February 1960.

On his return to Thailand he spent some years in teaching and pastoral work in various houses of the province and was then appointed rector at Hua Hin. In 1968 he moved to Bangkok to be rector of the provincial house, and in 1974 was appointed provincial, an office he held until 1980. In 1982 he became rector of the novitiate house at Sampran, and in 1984 rector of the house at Bandon and at the same time Vicar General of the Diocese of Surat Thani.

2. *Mgr. Hilario MOSER, Auxiliary Bishop of Olinda and Recife (Brazil).*

On 18 August 1988 the "Osservatore Romano" carried the announcement that the Holy Father had appointed Fr *Hilario Moser* as Titular Bishop of Case Calane and

Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Olinda and Recife.

Mgr. Moser was born on 2 December 1931 at Arrozeira, Timbo, in the state of Santa Caterina. He was a pupil at the salesian school at his birthplace and subsequently entered the novitiate at Pindamonhangaba, where he made his first profession on 31 January 1949. He studied theology at Sao Paolo, where he was ordained priest on 15 August 1958.

He went on to study at the PAS, Turin, and obtained the doctorate in theology in 1961. He also took a

course in biblical theology in Jerusalem.

He was a professor of theology and subsequently director of studies in the theological studentate of Sao Paolo. In 1971 he was appointed rector of the same studentate and a year later provincial councillor.

After taking part in the GC21, he was called in 1980 to be provincial of the Sao Paolo province, and at the end of his six-year mandate became rector of the international community of theology students at Rome-Gerini.



#### 5.4 Our dead confreres (1987 – 33rd list)

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

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
<b>P BARBATO Antonio</b>	La Paz	12-07-88	72	BOL
<b>L BASSI Davide</b>	Udine	18-06-88	78	RMG
<b>P BENNA Luigi</b>	Torino	08-07-88	63	ISU
<b>P BERTETTO Domenico</b>	Loreto	18-08-88	73	UPS
<b>L BERTONI Bruno</b>	Udine	10-06-88	75	IVE
<b>P BLANC MALUGANI Pedro</b>	Montevideo	20-07-88	86	URU
<b>P BOBENSTETTER Georg</b>	Rosenheim	27-06-88	76	GEM
<b>L BOCCO Giacinto</b>	Punta Arenas	10-06-88	87	CIL
<b>P BOSIO Ernesto</b>	Torino	07-07-88	76	ISU
<b>P BRUSCAGIN Ernesto</b>	Venezia	05-07-88	63	IVE
<b>L CARRARO Giovanni</b>	Bologna	18-06-88	74	ILE
<b>P CASTRO CHARRY Jesús</b>	Cartagena	14-06-88	69	COM
<b>P CHARDIN Marcel</b>	Lyon	09-08-88	86	FLY
<b>L CID LOSADA Francisco</b>	Salamanca	15-07-88	56	SMA
<b>L CORSINI Jean-Louis</b>	Nice	12-07-88	81	FLY
<b>P DAORIZI Mario</b>	Carpina	26-06-88	78	BRE
<b>L DE ANTONI Angelo</b>	Pordenone	31-07-88	71	IVE
<b>P DIAZ CIVICO Antonio</b>	Montilla	19-07-88	55	SCO
<b>P DURY Carel</b>	Amsterdam	27-06-88	92	OLA
<b>P EBO Giovanni</b>	Treviso	31-07-88	74	IVO
<b>P FERREIRA ALVES Pedro</b>	Rio de Janeiro	02-07-88	65	BCG
<b>P GAMALERO Ettore</b>	Novara	15-08-88	79	INE
<b>S GARCÍA Salazar Drazin</b>	Santa Cruz	30-06-88	23	BOL
<b>P GIRAUDDO Filippo</b>	Shillong	14-07-88	60	ING
<b>P GRIESSER Johann</b>	Umhausen/Otztal	23-06-88	82	AUS
<b>L ISASMENDI Diego Toribio</b>	Córdoba	26-07-88	85	ACO
<b>n JERABECK Pavel</b>	Fflersch-Südtirol	15-02-88	31	AUS
<b>P LICHOTA Józef</b>	Kielce	14-06-88	82	PLS
<b>P LOPEZ Thomas</b>	Shillong	25-07-88	87	ING
<b>P LORENZI Mario</b>	Porto Recanati	04-08-88	78	IAD
<b>P MALAQUIN Maurice</b>	Angers	01-04-88	86	FPA
<b>L MEDAGLIA Giuseppe</b>	Milano	04-07-88	80	ILE

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
<b>P MENESES MUÑOZ Humberto</b>	Puebla	15-07-88	47	MEG
<i>Fu Ispettore per 2 anni</i>				
<b>P MENICHINELLI Amilcare</b>	La Spezia	01-06-88	74	ILT
<b>P MEYERS Pierre</b>	Bilzen	06-07-88	74	BES
<b>P MURA Vittorio</b>	Sucre	29-06-88	80	BOL
<b>L MUÑOZ LÓPEZ Benigno</b>	Córdoba	04-07-88	69	SCO
<b>P OPEZZO Giovanni</b>	Premosello	25-06-88	75	INE
<b>P ORSELLO Vincenzo</b>	Pinerolo	13-08-88	73	ICE
<b>P PACHO Agustín</b>	Alcalá de Guadaira	11-08-88	88	SSE
<b>P PEDERZINI Carlo</b>	Trento	26-07-88	90	IVO
<b>P PENZO Pio</b>	Venezia	18-07-88	62	IVE
<b>P PRESTA Ernesto</b>	Corigliano d'Otranto	14-07-88	77	IME
<b>L PRIETO JUSTEL Eulogio</b>	La Coruña	19-07-88	83	SLE
<b>P RAMOS Dámaso</b>	S. Miguel de Tucumán	06-08-88	74	ACO
<b>P ROVAN Janez</b>	Klagenfurt	22-04-88	76	AUS
<b>P SORIA Emilio</b>	Chosica	01-06-88	86	PER
<b>P SPADAVECCHIA Félix</b>	Salta	22-07-88	75	ACO
<b>L STRUIF Josef</b>	Berlin	11-06-88	90	GEK
<b>P TEJERA MARRERO Aniceto</b>	Montevideo	05-07-88	84	URU
<b>P TONARI Hideto Yoseph</b>	Beppu	06-07-88	68	GIA
<b>L VALLEJO JIMBO José</b>	Cumbayá	06-07-88	69	ECU
<b>P VARGA Bartholomew</b>	Ranchi	11-06-88	82	INC
<b>P VINCENTE GARROTE Alejandro</b>	Barcelona	17-07-88	84	SMA
<i>Fu Ispettore per 6 anni</i>				
<b>P VISENTIN Angelo</b>	Fortaleza	19-06-88	89	BRE
<b>P VRANJOS Francis</b>	New York	08-04-88	66	SUO
<b>P WILK Teofilo</b>	Huancayo	19-07-88	75	PER
<b>P WINIARZ Michał</b>	Gdansk	21-02-88	76	PLN
<b>L ZANCANARO Giov. Battista</b>	Montechiarugolo	09-08-88	80	ILE

