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of the Salesian Society
of St John Bosco

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SAINT JOHN BOSCO: "IUVENTUTIS PATER ET MAGISTER"

The Letter "Centesimo Exeunte". - A title needing deeper thought and interior assimilation. - The designation "Father". - The adjunct "Teacher". - The living connection with "Youth". A spur to a "New Evangelization". - Ecclesial endorsement of the preventive system.

Rome, 24 February, 1989

My dear confreres,

The celebrations of the first centenary year of the death of our Father and Founder Don Bosco have come to an end. News comes in from all over the world of quite extraordinary events that gave rise to admiration, led to thoughtful reflection and opened up perspectives of fresh commitments. We have discovered that the personality of our Saint has an outstanding place in history and is of concern to wide sectors of cultural and social life. We have enjoyed it all, not because of an ingenuous satisfaction of corporate self-esteem, but because we have been able to contemplate more clearly in him the wonders of the Holy Spirit.

We have experienced a great joy of faith, which has increased in us the appreciation of our vocation and our dedication to our mission. And for all this let us be grateful to God.

The Pope's letter "Centesimo exeunte"

It was precisely during the concluding days of the centenary – 24 January last, feast of our Patron St Francis de Sales and the day we commemorate Mary Help of Christians – that the Sovereign Pontiff John Paul II gave us a wonderful gift, all the more esteemed because it was so unforeseen: the official title for Don Bosco of "Father and Teacher of Youth".

It is a gift which, while filling us with joy, must lead us to deeper reflection and a greater awareness of our responsibility, linked with heartfelt gratitude to the Vicar of Christ.

It is a title which we might say has always been used spontaneously in the familiar language of salesian houses. Evidence of this is something Card. Cagliero said in 1922 during the diamond jubilee celebrations of the ordination of his old companion Don Francesia, with whom he had been ordained in 1862. Speaking of himself and his friend he said: "If we have attained an honoured place in society, if we have been able to do some good (and I can tell you that we have always striven to do as much good as possible), we owe it under God to one person alone: not to our fathers, whom both of us lost at an early age, not to our mothers – holy and pious they were, but not able to help us – but to Don Bosco whom we called *father* from the time we were youngsters, whom we have continued to call *father* and *teacher* right down to this very day, and whom we hope to be able to venerate as a *saint* even here on earth before we go to thank him in Paradise."¹

To call Don Bosco "father and teacher" is therefore for us a familiar way of expressing our admira-

¹ E. CERIA, *Annali*, IV, p. 106 - SEI, Turin 1951

tion and affection; I think the same idea is probably applicable also to other outstanding founders and educators.

What is absolutely new about the Letter "Centesimo Exeunte" is the fact that the supreme authority of the Church has declared in solemn and official terms that Don Bosco is not an ordinary father and teacher of the young, but the "Father and Teacher of Youth" *par excellence*, at the level of the universal Church: i.e. the title extends to all young people of all continents, both today and in the future. In fact Peter's Successor has declared and proclaimed *by virtue of his Apostolic Power* that Don Bosco is the "Father and Teacher of Youth", and has ordained that "under this title he be honoured and invoked throughout the whole Church, not only by the great Salesian Family but by all who have at heart the cause of youth and intend to foster their education so as to contribute to the building of a new humanity."²

This precise statement obviously extends to the whole of his rich personality and his unique mission, but it exalts especially his pedagogical holiness and the brilliance of his method as a "landmark in Church history", as the Pope said. Don Bosco in fact, and still in the words of the Holy Father, "has left behind him a concept, a teaching, a method, which have become part of our heritage. He invites us not just to dedicate ourselves to youth in a general way, but to 'educate by means of a specific plan';" or in other words by his comprehensive system which, "while detracting nothing from the enriching contributions made by other past and present educators, provides a solid basis for a successful attempt to combine the complex elements involved in the overall development of the child or young person".³

² Address to SDB Gen. Council, 4 Feb. 1989; "Oss. Romano" 5.2.89

³ *ibid.*

A title needing deeper thought and interior assimilation

In the first place therefore the Congregation must undertake a deeper analysis of the significance of this title which characterizes Don Bosco so well.

Our cultural centres and our scholars will be able to continue a work which has already been seriously begun in some of their best works, and most recently in such high level initiatives as: the seminar on "The pedagogical experience of Don Bosco", held at the Cini Foundation on St George's island at Venice;⁴ the first international Congress of "Studies on St John Bosco" which took place at our University in Rome;⁵ and the symposium on "Don Bosco the Founder" held at the Generalate, Via della Pisana, Rome.⁶

⁴ 3-5 October 1988

⁵ 16-20 January 1989

⁶ 22-26 January 1989

These were significant moments of reflection, not with direct reference to this title (which had not as yet been proclaimed) but to its essential content and the stimulating perspectives to which it gives rise. Every confrere is called upon to examine himself daily to see how he measures up to the content of the title, looking to Don Bosco as his supreme model of salesian fatherliness and christian pedagogy.

Although the title is formulated in terms which were already to be found in the liturgical texts for his feast and in some of the formulas we use in praying to him, now that the happy expression has been declared an ecclesial title officially conferred on him it behoves us to be able to explain it so as to pass on to others all its rich significance.

A circular of the Rector Major is hardly the place to attempt even a brief study in this connec-

tion, but rather to suggest some spiritual motives for assimilating its significance and feeling it a stimulating enrichment to our mentality.

In this title in fact we can see condensed, unified and set out, as I said earlier, the main values of the living heritage left us by Don Bosco:

- his kind of holiness: practical love;
- his choice of a field of apostolic activity: youth;
- his strategy of approach: the preventive system;
- his programme of action: education;
- the secret of his success: his intuitive knowledge of the juvenile heart.

Here I simply invite you to meditate on some of the contents of the title, referring to the mystery of the triune God as their source; to the love of the Father rich in mercy; to the solidarity of the Son made for us “the way, the truth and the life”;⁷ to the creativity of the Holy Spirit, who is the gift of transforming rejuvenation for the world throughout the centuries.

This would not seem to be a far-fetched notion: the Blessed Trinity is the true supreme and central mystery of our faith, and must be so in our life and reflections. As a theologian of the East has written: “the Saint is an icon of the trinitarian God”. Don Bosco was a saint imbued by this mystery of God. The particular holiness of his “*da mihi animas*” essentially reflects the pastoral and pedagogical richness of trinitarian charity, meriting for him so noble and uniquely distinctive a title.

The designation “Father”

Among his boys Don Bosco was a prophet of kindness; rightly the Holy Father has several times called him a “genius of the heart”. In him kindness

⁷ Jn 14,6

was a constant personal attitude; it was expressed each day in a contemplation of the continuous manifestations of God's love and a consequent methodology of loving kindness which marked all his apostolic activities.

Part of this interior attitude was his ecclesial role of Founder, as a fruitful father who left a gospel heritage to so many sons and daughters who continue his mission among youth.

The apostle Paul assures us that all fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its title from the first Principle of all love.⁸ This means not only that every Family that goes back to a Founder finds in him the fatherhood of God, but also that he is a witness to it and passes on in practical terms his internal feelings and expressions of affection.

God the Father, the all-powerful creator, manifests his divinity especially in the unfathomable riches of his mercy: "he so loved the world that he gave up his only-begotten Son".⁹

Don Bosco has borne witness to the mystery of this merciful fatherliness by giving himself entirely to the young: "for you I study, for you I work, for you I live, for you I am ready even to give my life".¹⁰

And this complete self-donation Don Bosco expressed through a constant and familiar attitude of loving kindness: he taught not only how to love, but also – and in a daily and sincere manner – how to "make oneself loved". The ascetical aspect of his holiness led him to give priority to the social virtues which inspire trust and confidence, which open the heart to a family kind of life, which foster dialogue and understanding, and are expressed in the style of relationships which – as the Apostle writes – is "patient and kind; is not jealous or boastful; it is

⁸ cf. Eph 3,15

⁹ Jn 3,16

¹⁰ *Chronicle of the Oratory*, RUFFINO, ASC 110

not arrogant or rude; it does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right; it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things".¹¹

¹¹ 1 Cor 14,4-7

Don Bosco's apostolic activity in fact "is entirely based on the words of St Paul" who proclaims the mystery of charity.¹²

¹² cf. G. BOSCO, *Scritti ped. e spirit.* - LAS, Rome 1987, p. 194

And pursuing the matter at still greater depth, it must be added that for Don Bosco the term "father" means not only "kind and loving *like* a father", nor only "*father-founder* of a spiritual Family, but comes to indicate more vitally *the apostolic action of generating new life*, the evangelical awareness and the carrying out of a responsibility which cares for and educates young people and brings about their growth to christian maturity as adopted children. He is the "father of youth" because he felt himself called by God "to be a real father" to so many needy youngsters and generate them to a life of grace as sons of God, in the deep sense of the apostle Paul: "for though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel";¹³ "my little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you".¹⁴

¹³ 1 Cor 4,15

¹⁴ Gal 4,19; cf. also 1 Thess 2,11; Philem 10

These brief remarks on the fatherliness of Don Bosco, manifested in his "pedagogy of love" and "loving kindness", are no more than a rapid though stimulating indication of a theme which is central to our salesian spirit. This has been authoritatively stated by his third successor, Fr Philip Rinaldi: "The whole life of Don Bosco is a complete treatise on the fatherhood that comes from the heavenly Father (Eph 3,15) and which he practised here be-

low in a very high and almost unique degree towards the young and towards all, in the thousand and one events of life, in relief of all temporal and spiritual distress, with total dedication and self-sacrifice, in the greatness of a heart boundless as the shores of the sea, making himself all things to all so as to win over young souls and lead them to the Lord".¹⁵

We may add that the principal daily source of the fruitfulness of his spiritual fatherhood was the exercise of his priestly ministry in the sacrament of Penance.

It is important therefore that we regain and deepen the sense of this characteristically "oratorian" fatherhood in the multiple human and divine aspects that belong to it. This is an inescapable task of every disciple of Don Bosco. Because, if it is true that Provincials and Rectors have the duty of bringing this fatherliness to life in particular and specialized ways,¹⁶ others also – priests, brothers and clerics – since they are educators of young people who want to be loved and helped through the various stages of their development, must know how to behave as real fathers, each according to his own role: responsible, patient, generous and encouraging.

At the end of the Novices' Retreat at Villa Moglia in 1930, Fr Rinaldi did not hesitate to tell them (novices!): "You too must be fathers to the youngsters entrusted to you; you must love and help them as would a real father".¹⁷

¹⁵ *Acts. Sup. Chap.*,
26.4.31, p. 939 ff.

¹⁶ cf. respective manuals

¹⁷ Testimony of a novice
of the time.

The adjunct "Teacher"

The term "teacher" is closely linked with that of "father". Here again it is not enough to say that Don Bosco was a genial educator who taught an efficacious method of formation: he was not just a competent exponent of a good method.

He was a "teacher" because among his fatherly tasks he gave priority to the inculcating of a true sense of life, of communicating the power and vigour of christian values, the practice of the baptismal virtues, making known above all in a way specifically adapted to the young the genuine way of love, through a pedagogy of holiness.

You need only think of the sense in which he was the spiritual guide of Dominic Savio, of Michael Magone, of Francis Besucco, and of the Oratory boys in general. In these cases too the most convincing part of his teaching was the penetrating exchanges in the confessional.

In him the two characteristics of "father and teacher" were intimately interwoven, lived and applied in an inseparable fashion.

The term "Teacher" refers therefore to the wisdom of heart with which Don Bosco was able to bear witness to and transmit fundamental criteria and his efficacious way of tackling the complex tasks of education.

In his Letter "Juvenum Patris", John Paul II had already presented St John Bosco as an outstanding "Master in education", because he had been able to produce a vital synthesis between educational practice and pastoral wisdom, between human advancement and evangelization. "Today more than ever before", said the Pope, there is need of an educational method which can take the contributions of the human educational sciences and raise them

to the life-giving level of pastoral charity. There is a real hunger for a pastoral wisdom which is not satisfied with "deciphering" or "interpreting" man, but is concerned to bring about his efficacious transformation in the light of those final ends and the strength of the dynamic forces inserted by God himself in the heart of the Church and humanity".¹⁸

¹⁸ As note 2 earlier.

In this sense Don Bosco goes back to Christ, the "inventor" of pastoral work and the supreme Master of paschal salvation. God the Father sent his only Son into the world as the Word of saving truth: "In many and various ways", says the letter to the Hebrews, "God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son".¹⁹ Jesus, in fact, "came into the world to bear witness to the truth";²⁰ his truth alone "will make us free".²¹

¹⁹ Heb 1,1-2

²⁰ Jn 18,37

²¹ cf. 1 Jn 8,32

The application to Don Bosco of the title of "Teacher" means to recognize in him a particular reading of the event of Christ and a pedagogical ability to communicate his Gospel. This he did by means of an educational system which operates, as the Holy Father has said, within human growth itself by methodological criteria which are in harmony with the lively desires and expectations of youth and the poorer classes.

The idea of "prevention" which is characteristic of his system was described in the recent Letter "Centesimo Exeunte" as "centred on the need to protect the young from negative experiences; to provide a positive education through valid suggestions and examples; to build on the interior freedom with which they have been endowed; to establish with them relationships of genuine friendship; to stimulate their innate abilities by means of reason, religion and loving kindness".²²

²² *Centesimo Exeunte*

Our Congregation has spread the knowledge of the exceptional validity of the singular experience lived by the Founder and passed on by him to be faithfully preserved, studied intelligently at greater depth, constantly reapplied and courageously developed in the many new cultural situations that the future would bring. His first disciples used to say of him what the beloved Apostle said of the Saviour: "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands. We are his witnesses, and this is what we proclaim to you".²³

²³ cf. 1 Jn 1,1-2

"The substance of his teaching remains intact; the unique nature of his spirit, his intuitions, his style, his charisma are unchanged, because they draw their inspiration from the transcendent pedagogy of God. He continues to be our teacher in the present difficult times, and suggests a 'new education' which is at once both creative and faithful".²⁴

²⁴ *Juvenum Patris* 13

The living connection with "Youth"

The connection of the terms "Father and Teacher" with "Youth" is an explicit indication of Don Bosco's choice of his field of pastoral charity: it is that of young people, and preferably those who are in need or of the poorer classes.

With him his sons and daughters too are called to be, in the words of John Paul II, "always and everywhere *missionaries of the young*".²⁵

²⁵ As note 2 earlier.

And his choice of youth is not only a specification of those to whom his work would be directed but implies a whole gospel climate of life, a sensitivity about the future, a valuable standpoint for the discernment of reality starting from the "the poor and the little ones"; it is a standpoint which be-

comes in fact a kind of daily injection of youthfulness and a good beginning from which he and his educators can begin in reinterpreting society.

We need only reflect on what is said in the recent Apostolic Exhortation "Christifideles laici": "The Church sees her path towards the future in youth, beholding in them a reflection of herself and her call to that blessed youthfulness which she constantly enjoys as a result of Christ's Spirit".²⁶

²⁶ *Christifideles laici* 46

In the famous Message of the Vatican Council II to youth, the Bishops recalled that four years work had been dedicated to rejuvenating the Church's countenance, so that it might better correspond to the design of the Risen Christ who is eternally young: his Spouse "possesses what constitutes the strength and the charm of youth: the ability to rejoice with what is beginning, to give oneself unreservedly, to renew oneself and to set out again for new conquests. Look upon the Church and you will find in her the face of Christ, the genuine, humble and wise hero, the prophet of truth and love, the companion and friend of youth".²⁷

²⁷ 8 December 1965

This nostalgia for the springtime of our life makes us think, as we return to the Mystery of God, of the renewing force of the Holy Spirit who is the power behind novelty and sanctification in history. He is the soul of the Church, the inexhaustible source of its youth, the author of that special reserve of creative power that transforms the world. It is through the work of the Spirit, in fact, that the whole of nature groans in a common travail.²⁸

²⁸ cf. Rom 8,22

The Spirit therefore brings ever new strength and energy. He brings to fulfilment all the exciting communication of God to man, injecting into history the new things that are needed to give it life

²⁹ Gal 6,8

and lead it to its objective: "he who sows in the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life".²⁹

This new and eternal life resides in the hearts of all believers: in the young, enriching them with a life of faith which makes them in very truth the hope of the Church and Society (we had a happy taste of this at Turin in the "Appraisal DB88"); in adult educators: endowing them with the freshness of the Gospel, a right understanding of the values of renewal, empathy for the era which is beginning, a welcome acceptance of the challenges of youth, a friendly presence to help young people to discern their plan of life, and a shared perception of the values emerging from justice, non-violence, peace, solidarity and ecology.

³⁰ Mk 10,21

The whole Church, says the Pope, is asked to see itself in a special way in youth; it is called to relive the love of predilection which Christ showed to the young man of the Gospel: "Jesus, looking upon him, loved him".³⁰

This is one of the more urgent aspects of the Gift of the Spirit for all the People of God, and particularly for us.

A spur to a "new evangelization"

We must consider the title also as a strong appeal and an insistent stimulus for the present tasks of the "new evangelization": we are at a stirring and dramatic point in history.

The preparation of the coming GC23 already has us all occupied in discerning and planning what we have to do in this regard. The Pope too referred with satisfaction to this "task and challenge" we want to address in the General Chapter for the edu-

cation of youth to the faith, linking it with the proclamation of the title. It is a theme, the Pope told us, "which touches deeply the entire Church. It has implications which do not depend only on particular characteristics of the prevailing youth condition, but stem from a cultural situation which is passing through a period of great changes as the third millennium of christianity draws near. It is a time of great ecclesial responsibility and of a captivating commitment in the process of evangelization".³¹

³¹ As note 2 earlier.

Don Bosco's option for the young calls for a courageous revision and creativity on our part. "Starting from the lowest", as the saying goes nowadays, provides an approach for interventions which is particularly enlightening. The Italian Bishops have declared that these 'lowest' "are a dramatic sign of the crisis of the present day".³² "In the first place we shall do away with the idols we have built up: money, power, consumerism, waste, and the tendency to live beyond our means and possibilities. Then we shall rediscover the values inherent in the common good".³³ "The country will not grow unless we all grow together".³⁴

³² "Enchiridion CEI", 3, 1980-93, Ed. Dehoniane, Bologna.

³³ *ibid.* 6

³⁴ *ibid.* 8

This line of approach leads to a deep cultural appraisal for an exciting change of mentality in the way we perceive the strategic points of evangelization. Don Bosco launched a pastoral work of renewal precisely because he started from this perceptive standpoint: starting from the lowest enables you to better understand the problems of everyone.

But he concentrated on the young, not only because they were abandoned and in need, not only because they were poor and on the fringe of society, not only because they were at the end of the line and victims of inadequate structures, but also

and intensely – and this is evident in all his methods – because he perceived at their true value their rich qualities of heart which promised new hope for the future.

This is why in living with them he was led to build an environment of joy, based on his conviction that the possibilities of a successful outcome were already there. He was never a prophet of doom or a bitter critic, wallowing in pessimism and stirring up gloom and dejection. He showed himself a joyful disciple of the Lord, the herald of the message of his paschal victory, with confidence in the youthful energies not yet tainted by wrinkles and old age, the guide of new generations looking for the truths of salvation, attracted by great ideals and animated by generous aspirations.

The Archbishop of Turin, Card. Anastasio Ballestrero, in his homily during the concelebration concluding the centenary year, said on 31 January last: “Today people are too sad; we have human beings who are too serious, always tormented by problems, by nightmares, by dark and gloomy doubts; but the joy of Christ, which Don Bosco proclaimed and fostered so much, must find us still faithful: this is an example he gives us, something he has left us, and it is also a hope which takes new life in all of us”.

This too is an important aspect which cannot fail to enter into the interpretation of his title of “Father and Teacher of Youth”.

Ecclesial endorsement of the preventive system

If we think of how much Pope John Paul II has said and written during the centenary year, from

the Letter "Iuvenum Patris" to the homilies and addresses he gave during his pilgrimage to Turin and district, to the document "Centesimo Exeunte" and to his words during the special audience asked for by the Rector Major and his Council to fulfil their obligation to thank him, we cannot fail to conclude that the title sums up in a brief and well-chosen expression the most authoritative statement of the vocation and mission of Don Bosco, and of his charisma among the People of God. We may say that it constitutes an ecclesial endorsement of the preventive system.

The Pope has meditated a great deal on Don Bosco, and on his own personal initiative at the end and culmination, as it were, of the celebrations has conferred on him this title, because he was "fully convinced that Don Bosco attained his personal holiness through an educative commitment lived with zeal and an apostolic heart, and that his life, spirituality, writings and work provide great evangelical lights and valid methodological criteria for the formation of the 'New Man'".³⁵

³⁵ As note 2 earlier.

For the whole Church, and especially for our Family, it is a powerful encouragement to give ever greater value to Don Bosco's pedagogical and pastoral criteria, and to truly live and act as "missionaries of the young".

And then for us Salesians in a most particular way, this title must represent the *motto and slogan of the centenary*, which urges us to gather the greatest possible fruit from the very many gifts we have received in our efforts to give to the priceless charisma of the Founder the maximum relevance to the present day. Let us be its signs and bearers everywhere!

The title's contents should become a living part

of our attitudes, our convictions and our apostolic creativity.

Let us by all means intensify the seriousness of studies on our mission and on the Founder's spirit, but as well and above all let us grow in that natural kindred relationship with the Holy Spirit who makes us witnesses and communicators of the extraordinary gift God has bestowed on Don Bosco for youth.

This will be the most fruitful task in our work of renewal: for our own apostolic mentality and outlook, for creativity in our pastoral work, for the oratorian criterion we want to relaunch, for our system of kindness, for a lively and relevant youth spirituality, for a growing involvement of the laity, for a generous missionary development, for a more efficacious campaign for vocations, for effective competence in the new evangelization, so as to make greater progress with the young on the difficult road that leads to holiness.

Let us turn with trust to our dear Founder and ask him to intercede for us and help us to be faithful; let us say to him:

"O Father and Teacher of Youth,
Saint John Bosco,
teach us to become every day
signs and bearers of God's love for the
young;
and grant that with Mary as our guide
we may follow joyfully with them
the way that leads to Love!"

Before concluding, dear confreres, I want to ask you a favour: that in every house you will express heartfelt gratitude to Pope John Paul II with a eucharistic concelebration offered for his in-

tentions. Some communities have already taken the initiative in doing this, but it is fitting that it be done in every community.

May Don Bosco always intercede efficaciously for Peter's Successor, who guides the Church of Christ in these years which are at once so difficult but promising.

My cordial greetings and best wishes to you all.
Affectionately in Christ,

Don F. Viganò

1.2 LETTER "CENTESIMO EXEUNTE" OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

*Dilecto Filio
AEGIDIO VIGANÓ
Societatis Sancti Francisci Salesii
Rectori Maiori*

Centesimo exeunte anno post mortem Sancti Ioannis Bosco, istius Societatis Legiferi patris, multa Nostra repetit memoria, quae, praecipua tempora celebrationum recogitans, solacium invenit.

Frequenter cum iuvenibus alumnis Salesianorum Institutionum ex omni mundi parte convenientibus congressi sumus; sed meminimus praesertim illius peregrinationis, qua loca vestro Conditori cara obiimus pastoralis consilio atque grata in Deum voluntate, quod Ecclesiae tam eximium dederit educatorem. Iam hoc ineunte anno iubilari Tibi epistulam misimus, ut munus illustraremus et charisma Sancti Ioannis Bosco proprium eiusque spiritualium Filiorum, ad iuvenes formandos attinens, omnesque hortati sumus, qui inter iuvenes operantur, ut fideliter ipsius vias insistant, eas ad necessitates et proprietates aetatis nostrae accomodantes.

Res enim iuventutem nostrorum temporum contingentes confirmant in praesentia adhuc valere principia methodi paedagogicae, quam Sanctus Ioannes Bosco concepit et posuit in momento cavendi ne iuvenes prava experirentur; in «positivo», qui dicitur, educandi modo, aptis consiliis et exemplis utendo, interiorem, qua praediti sumus, libertatem stimulando, verae familiaritatis necessitudines instituendo, innatas facultates excitando, adhibi-

tis ratione, religione, benevolentia (cfr. Epistula die 31 mensis Ianuarii data, anno 1988, nn. 8, 10-12).

Exoptamus huius anni, memoriae causa celebrati, fructus diu manere tum in ista Salesiana Familia tum in Ecclesia universa, quae Sanctum Ioannem Bosco agnovit et agnoscit apostoli iuventutis exemplar insigne. Qua re, vota explentes plurium in Episcopatu Fratrum, Salesianorum sodalium et Filiarum Mariae Auxiliatricis, eorum qui quondam vestri alumni fuerunt et cooperariorum, vi Apostolicae Nostrae Potestatis, Sanctum Ioannem Bosco Iuventutis Patrem et Magistrum declaramus, renuntiamus, statuentes ut hoc titulo colatur et invocetur, praesertim a quotquot sunt eius Filii spirituales.

Fisi Nostrum hoc consultum ad magis magisque hius dilecti Sancti cultum provehendum esse collaturum multosque excitaturum imitatores eius educatoris studii, Tibi, Fratribus tuis sodalibus et cunctae Salesianae Familiae propitiatricem Apostolicam benedictionem impetimus.

Ex Aedibus Vaticanis, die XXIV mensis Ianuarii, Sancti Francisci Salesii memoriae sacro, anno MCMLXXXIX, Pontificatus Nostri undecimo.

Ioannes Paulus Pp. II

English translation

To my beloved son
EGIDIO VIGANÒ
Rector Major
of the Society of St Francis de Sales

The centenary year of the death of St John Bosco, Founder of the Society, is coming to an end, and my mind goes back to so many memories from which I draw strength and consolation as I recall the highlights of the celebrations which have punctuated it.

Many have been the meetings with young salesian pupils coming from every part of the world; but especially prominent and vivid in my memory is the pilgrimage I made to the places associated with your Founder for the pastoral purpose of expressing my feelings of gratitude to God for having given to the Church so outstanding an educator. Already at the outset of the jubilee year I wrote you a Letter drawing attention to the particular mission and charisma of Don Bosco and his spiritual sons and daughters in the art of the formation of youth, and I also recommended to all who work amongst the young that they should follow faithfully the ways he had marked out, adapting them to the needs and characteristics of the present day.

Today's problems in the field of youth confirm, in fact, the enduring relevance of the pedagogical method devised by St John Bosco and centred on the need to protect the young from negative experiences; to provide a positive education through valid suggestions and examples; to build on the interior freedom with which they have been endowed; to establish with them relationships of genuine friendship; to stimulate their innate abilities by means of reason, religion and loving kindness (cf. *Letter of 31 January 1988*, nn. 8,10-12).

It is my earnest wish that the fruits of this commemorative year should long endure in the Salesian Family, as also in the universal Church which has recognized in Don Bosco and continues to see in him a shining model as an apostle of the young. And so, acceding also to the desire of many of my fellow Bishops, of the Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, of the Cooperators and Past-Pupils, and of large numbers of the faithful, in virtue of my Apostolic Power I declare and proclaim St John Bosco to be the "*Father and Teacher of Youth*" ("*Iuventutis Pater et Magister*"), decreeing that he be honoured and invoked under this title, especially by those who see themselves as his spiritual children.

In the sure hope that this decision may contribute to an ever greater cultivation of devotion to this dear Saint and prompt many people to imitate his zeal as an educator, I impart to you, to your confreres and to the entire Salesian Family my propitious Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 24 January 1989, the memorial of St Francis de Sales, in the 11th year of my Pontificate,

Joannes Paulus Pp. II

1.3 ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER IN THE AUDIENCE GRANTED TO THE RECTOR MAJOR AND HIS COUNCIL (4 FEBRUARY 1989)

1. It gives me particular pleasure to meet the Rector Major and the General Council of the Salesian Society, at the end of the solemn celebrations of the Centenary of the death of St John Bosco. As I wrote only a few days ago at the close of the centenary year, "my mind goes back to so many memories from which I draw strength and consolation as I recall the highlights of the celebrations which have punctuated it" (Letter 'Centesimo exeunte', 24 January 1989). As is evident from the multiplicity of meetings, especially of young people, of pilgrimages to the salesian historic places, of study congresses, including the international Congress of historical and pedagogical studies which took place in Rome, there is no doubt that his dynamic love continues to bear fruit in every country of the world. In various ways, and especially through my pilgrimage to the places associated with your Founder, I too wanted to draw attention to the particular charism and mission of so outstanding an Educator, a real gift of God to the Church. "His stature as a Saint", I wrote in the Letter 'Juvenum Patris' of 31 January 1988), "gives him a unique place among the great Founders of religious Institutes in the Church. He is outstanding from many points of view: he initiated a true school of a new and apostolic spirituality; he promoted a special devotion to Mary, Help of Christians and Mother of the Church; he displayed a loyal and courageous ecclesial sense manifested in the delicate mediation work he carried out between Church and State at a time when the relations between the two were difficult; as an apostle he was both realistic and practical, always open to the implications of new discoveries; he was a zealous organizer of foreign mis-

sions with truly Catholic sensitivity; he was an eminent example of a preferential love for the young, and especially for the most needy among them, for the good of the Church and society; he was the exponent of an efficacious and attractive pedagogical method which he has left as a precious legacy to be safeguarded and developed" (n. 5 AAS 70 [1988], p. 973).

Fully convinced that Don Bosco attained his personal holiness "through an educative commitment lived with zeal and an apostolic heart" (*ibid*), and that his life, spirituality, writings and work provide great evangelical lights and valid methodological criteria for the formation of the 'New Man', I decided to proclaim him the Father and Teacher of Youth and ordain that under this title he be honoured and invoked throughout the whole Church, not only by the great Salesian Family but by all who have at heart the cause of youth and intend to foster their education so as to contribute to the building of a new humanity (cf. 'Centesimo exeunte').

Don Bosco is a landmark in Church history: in fact he has left behind him a concept, a teaching, an experience and method which have become part of our heritage; and in the words of my venerated Predecessor Paul VI, he was "a marvellous synthesis of human talents and supernatural gifts, a genius recognized by modern pedagogy and catechesis but, above all, a genius of holiness, of that holiness that is one of the characteristics of the Church which is at once holy and also sanctifying" (AAS 70 [1978], p. 177; GC21 469).

2. The context of educational activity is closely linked with the Church's mission of salvation, for it is the field in which each individual grows to maturity in the light of God's Word. Don Bosco is a "sign" of predilection for the young, and especially the most needy among them.

In the present phase of great developments in the educational sciences which are gradually finding their proper

place in the overall field of philosophy, a process to which scholars of the Salesian Family are making their contribution, Don Bosco invites us not just to dedicate ourselves to youth in a general way, but to "educate by means of a specific plan". Our Saint made an active synthesis of pedagogical theory with educational practice and offers us a system which, while detracting nothing from the enriching contributions made by other past and present educators, provides a solid basis for a successful attempt to combine the complex elements involved in the overall development of the child or young person.

Finally there is the apparently essential need for linking together education and evangelization; Don Bosco's "concern for the evangelization of his boys was not limited to catechesis alone, nor to liturgy alone, nor to those religious practices which call for an explicit exercise of faith and lead to it, but covered the whole vast sector of the youth condition" (Letter 'Iuvenum Patris', n. 15; AAS 80 [1988], p. 981).

Dear Brothers, I have learned that you have chosen for your next General Chapter the theme: "Educating young people to the faith: a task and challenge for today's salesian community". It is a theme which touches deeply the entire Church. It has implications which do not depend only on particular characteristics of the prevailing youth condition, but stem from a cultural situation which is passing through a period of great changes as the third millennium of christianity draws near. It is a time of great ecclesial responsibility and of a captivating commitment in the process of evangelization.

3. For this reason I say to you and to all members of the Salesian Family: be always and everywhere "missionaries of the young"! Educate with your gaze fixed on Christ, the divine Educator of the People of God, as did Don Bosco. Today more than ever before there is need of an educational method which can take the contributions of

the human educational sciences and raise them to the life-giving level of pastoral charity. There is a real hunger for a pastoral wisdom which is not satisfied with "deciphering" or "interpreting" man, but is concerned to bring about his efficacious transformation in the light of those final ends and the strength of the dynamic forces inserted by God himself in the heart of the Church and humanity. In this field Don Bosco is indeed a Witness, a Father and Teacher, who can bring light to educational tasks of the present day to enable them to respond to the serious challenges of the modern world.

May his powerful intercession give strength to the agonizing appeal for help prompted by the thousand and one problems of today's families and educators.

My prayer and Blessing go with you.

(From the 'Osservatore Romano', Sunday 5 February 1989)

2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

2.1 SALESIANS: COMMUNICATIONS AND EDUCATION

Fr Sergio CUEVAS LEON
Councillor for Social Communication

When speaking in the Congregation at the present day of the connection between *Communication* and *Education* one must begin from the Constitutions and Regulations. Among the apostolic priorities of the salesian mission they place "social communications" as a significant field of our activity:

- it is described as a true and efficacious "means of mass education", of whose value Don Bosco had an instinctive grasp, and one which "creates culture and spreads patterns of life" (C 43);
- like Don Bosco, the salesian, as he plays his part in the community's educative and pastoral plan, must be an educator of the faith for the young and the working classes, particularly by means of social communication (cf. C 6,43);
- Salesians must be able to use Communication, which puts into our hands authentic gifts of God and expressions of his plan of salvation, in their role of *educators* and *evangelizers of the young* (cf. C 43).

All this will be adequately fulfilled by the pastoral presence of Salesians in the means of social communication (R 31), by their concern "to educate their charges to an understanding of the language of the social communication field, and to a critical aesthetic and moral sense" (R 32), and by their continual attention at a professional level to the creation of messages and the flow of information for the purpose of creating communion within the Salesian Family, the Church and society in general (R 33).

Hence the Constitutions present communication as a *dimension* of the salesian vocation and mission in the Church and society. This statement follows from two intuitions of Don Bosco as pastor and educator:

- a. To educate and save the young it is not sufficient to act on each of them individually, even though individual dialogue with them as between father and son is indispensable. Action is needed on the environment in which the young people live. The young and the poorer classes are in fact extremely sensitive to the environment and easily influenced by it: a "good" environment helps them to be good themselves, while a "bad" environment easily corrupts them, or at least depresses and dehumanizes them. It is easy to understand Don Bosco's concern for the printing and dissemination of good books and wholesome reading matter, which created the environment which influenced his boys! The Constitutions therefore, in fidelity to the Founder's charisma, accept the challenge of the means of Social Communication which should create a positive educational environment.
- b. In addition, just as Don Bosco had known instinctively and confirmed by all his life that youngsters must not only be loved but know that they are loved, so he also knew intuitively that to save the young it is not enough merely to work for them but the good that is done should be made known (BM 13, 96). It should have substance, be spread through the environment and create a positive impression which will be sure to give rise to further good like a chain reaction. This is the providential result of the means of social communication: books, circulars, newspapers and reviews, music and the theatre etc., and at the present day: the cinema, radio and television. "In these things Don Bosco wanted to be always in the vanguard of progress"!

1. Influence of the mass media on cultures

We must accept as a fact that in the mass media society there exists an authentic "culture of the visible image" and of "consumerism", which becomes ever more dominant and replaces so many indigenous cultures, which are irretrievably pushed out and destroyed. We may note in the first place some characteristics of this culture which are of more immediate concern to our educative and pastoral work among youth, without prejudice to other valid and positive analytical approaches which seem better known and have been here taken for granted.

1.1. The mass media have a direct influence not only on individuals, but also on *cultures*, the sum total of *knowledge, norms, tradi-*

tions, and values of society. They offer those who receive them a collection of "images", ideas and value judgements from which they can choose so as to form guiding principles for the rhythm and manner of their life and behaviour.

1.2. The mass media are able to give "*importance*" to what they decide to communicate and spread, and to take away attention from what they do not speak of, sometimes as a matter of deliberate policy. The result is that the value of people, things, events and behaviour comes very easily to be based on what "*appears*" about them and "*what is said of them*", and this in turn means that *what is said comes to have more value than the true facts*. In this sense the mass media create culture and have a direct influence on indigenous or national cultures as agents of change and transformation, and enable "*dominant cultures*" to take root, even at supranational levels. It is the total refutation of what the Pope has said: "Culture consists in enabling man to become more man, to 'be' more than just to 'have' more and consequently, through everything he 'has', everything he 'possesses', to 'be' man more fully." (John Paul II, Address to UNESCO, 2 June 1980).

1.3. The mass media with their powerful means are responsible for the creation of *public opinion* which is often the result of a real manipulation of consciences, in so far as it pretends to express the opinion of the so-called "silent majority", thus allowing a real but unreasonable pressure to be exerted on individuals, on families and on groups. Furthermore the majority of individuals, to avoid being left isolated as the sole upholders of certain attitudes and beliefs, fall in with the majority opinion. The consequences of this process are evident. The media tend to iron out into uniformity ideas, opinions, tastes and attitudes. They foster the domination of stereotypes and create empty and superficial personalities. The danger is increased if the mass media are structured for economic or political reasons as monopolies, and if individuals leave themselves open only to the opinions which fit in with and strengthen their own point of view.

1.4. Finally the mass media often make out that they are like so many empty, objective, and even neutral "*containers*": containers which in a climate of badly understood pluralism unload on receivers every kind and quantity of information and messages. But they never put forward criteria for choice and discernment, never put some order among the items of information, comparing and evaluating them on the basis of objective elements or at least of conscientious and well motivated judgements. Still less are people offered perspectives for respon-

sible intervention and for creative processes which can have a mature and efficacious influence on realities.

2. Relationship between Communication and Education

In line with the above considerations we now take up the theme of the mutual relationship between COMMUNICATION and EDUCATION, with emphasis on some important educational problems.

2.1. An *educational plan* is needed which will refer comprehensively to the young person in the unity and complementary aspects of sense and intellect, of reason and affections, of bodily and spiritual possibilities, as regards expression and communication. Social communication must necessarily be open to all languages in so far as they are signs able to express and communicate human ideas, feelings and interior riches. Culture multiplies codes and sub-codes, relationships and possibilities of meeting and comparison, openings and researches which demand the totality of the person who is involved as an individual and as a member of social groups. This educational project must be readily adaptable to changes which have become ever more rapid and significant; above all it must be capable of expression and practical application in authentic *educational processes* as regards groups, age, environments and the various concrete situations in which young people are immersed.

2.2. For the educational plan to be efficacious, it must foster the coordination of the so-called *educational agencies* which devote their attention to youth in society. The family in the first place, the school, groups for spare-time activities, group environments (religious, cultural, recreational, and for free-time use), and the mass media themselves, must all enter into an attempt at educational reflection and programming realized by the various educators who must always by comparison and coordination improve their own efficacy. A monopoly in education is no longer possible at the present day, because there no longer exists a monopoly of information and communication. All of us, in fact, are ever more immersed in a veritable jungle of simultaneous and contradictory messages, which patient educators have to decipher and help to decipher through a multiplicity of critical means and with the greatest collaboration of the pupils themselves.

2.3. A strong critical sense must be systematically inculcated and progressively matured, so as to enable people in the first place to read

and understand texts and various languages (of the written and spoken word, gestures, images of every kind, music etc.), and then to discern and appraise the many systems of values, beliefs, opinions and attitudes, which are not always founded on rational and motivated elements but are frequently passed on simply through emotions and suggestions.

2.4. In the same way every effort must be made to form mature and autonomous personalities, able to make free and responsible decisions in the face of the modes and stereotypes which tend to reduce us all to the same faceless level. It is indispensable to cultivate in young people the just desire to rise above the anonymous common level cunningly imposed on them without concern for the originality and richness of every individual. We need leaders, especially among the young, in both expression and communication, accompanied by that necessary professional updating which incessant technical progress makes obligatory.

2.5. As educators we must be fully aware that whatever is said to young people is said in a cultural framework which makes relative all its content and injects it with elements of *lack of importance, doubt, transience, and insignificance*. Whatever parents and educators are concerned to pass on is received by many young people as "background noise" which causes interference in reception, changes and criticizes it, and sometimes wipes it out entirely. And on the other hand the young people themselves find that they are indecisive and all the more insecure the more what they want to say is important. It is indispensable that a reply be given to the question (which is in fact a challenge): *in a society where everything is changing, what can you say to young people that will be valid, unquestionably true, and established once for all time?*

2.6. Finally it is necessary to educate the young to be able to create and demand *authentic alternative communications* to the dominant communications system in our society and culture, which is fundamentally steadfast, authoritarian and demanding of conformity. Together with the young people themselves the educators must show creativity, accept the risks involved, and follow the way of a true alternative communication as regards content and the use of language and codes, and also as regards the communication processes that are used and created and the methodology of communication; all of these must always respect the free and responsible options and the democratic requirements which dispose individuals and groups to sharing and communion.

3. Communication and the preventive system

These notes are offered as the beginning of a wider and deeper study which it is hoped can be realized in coming years, maybe with the contribution of other items and perspectives. It will be a study which is not only reasonable but also necessary and enriching. It seems evident in fact that studies on communication will throw ever greater light on the educational wisdom of the preventive system, and in turn the study and practice of the preventive system will make clear how essential in its practice is the presence of communication processes in the laborious but enriching process of every educational experience.

3.1. Communication, as an anthropological and theological dimension of the person, makes a constitutional contribution to the overall development of every human being, which is the objective of every educational process.

3.1.1. In the first place communication reveals in every individual the wealth of his powers of analysis, of logical interpretation, and of perception and expression of the significance of items he comes in contact with in different fields of reality. This an interesting point because it shows the importance of Don Bosco's conviction: in educating young people one must appeal more to the resources of intelligence and reason than to unmotivated and authoritarian impositions.

3.1.2. If the young are to become true individuals one must be able to penetrate, dominate and inculcate a practical aim for the wealth of affections, emotions and cravings that lie deep in the human heart. Don Bosco declares: "Education is a matter of the heart"; and he invites all educators to rediscover in the heart of young people efficacious paths which lead to docility to the Spirit, who calls every human being to dialogue, to a welcome understanding, to communion and the joy of being together with others.

3.1.3. Each one feels that his own capacity for perceiving the sense of events and realities, as also of the possibilities of expression and communication which must be developed if he wants to grow and mature, are by nature open to unlimited and even infinite horizons. We have Don Bosco's word for it that it is not possible to educate without this constant opening to the Transcendent, and he teaches us to visualize this Transcendent as expressed in the merciful attitude of Christ the Good Shepherd and perfect Communicator.

3.2. In Don Bosco's educational praxis it is evident that communication was an indispensable element in his style and success as an educator. He liked to live in physical contact with his boys so as to know them and be able to talk with them at the most spontaneous, sincere and articulate moments of their lives: games and moments of carefree joy, when psychological and social inhibitions are weakest; moments of family intimacy which facilitated mutual confidence and understanding, like eating together and the "good night"; the family structures and environment which encouraged all to feel they had a part to play by the active contribution of their particular talents and possibilities. Don Bosco's system steers the youngster free from a defensive closing in on himself which would isolate him and prove an obstacle to his harmonious overall development; it does so by taking the initiative in promoting unfeigned conversation, joyful and heart-warming adherence, sincere confidence and the reassuring conviction of being listened to and understood, instead of being prejudged and subjugated.

3.3. By the preventive system Don Bosco has also shown us how to use prevention in the face of the enormous quantity of information, suggestions and messages which arrive through the mass media; for him it was largely through evil printed matter — for us it includes television, the cinema, the press, publicity, gramophone records, sound cassettes etc. Indispensable in meeting such things is the possession of critical instruments; the exercise of responsible freedom in leaving oneself open to the plethora of messages and in evaluating them; the ability to react in a creative and original fashion, the fruit of convictions and ideals that have become firmly established; the responsible alternative presence in the same media with the conviction of having many useful and pleasing messages to insert in the system of communications and culture, without any sense of inferiority; the positive desire to be able to take up the challenges in communication and technology which progress offers today to the good and bad alike, to enable them to express themselves and communicate.

For all these reasons it will not be possible to live the preventive system in all its fullness, as Don Bosco lived it:

3.3.1. unless one educates to a critical sense, to discernment and to the ability to arbitrate among the intricate and contradictory jungle of messages;

3.3.2. unless young people are led to develop deep moral convictions and truly christian values, which will provide them with powerful

points of reference to light up the twisted path of life, and make of goals and ideals shining beacons for them to steer by:

3.3.3. unless they are educated to be courageous in sharing responsibly in processes of culture and communication, through professional ability to use the languages, codes, processes, techniques and instruments of cultural communication of their time;

3.3.4. unless as educators, fathers and teachers, we remain at their side on the various pathways of communication and culture, sharing in their efforts, attempts, successes and failures in the movement towards shared ideals.

4. Formation in communication

Today, in the Congregation and the Church, Communicators are becoming ever more convinced that it is precisely the *educational perspective* that enable us to reflect on communication in a more pertinent and efficacious manner, and so understand the importance and essential nature of this dimension of educational and pastoral work.

Because of this:

- We must speak of “formation in communication” not as though it were an isolated science with reference only to information and the mass media, but having in mind a science which allows every individual to channel his own development in an active and responsible manner by developing his abilities for creativity and sharing.
- If there is talk of opening up new structures in the service of communication, this should be done for the purpose of fostering the development of those attitudes which are typical of those who know how to express, disseminate and receive meaningful messages so as to promote communion between individuals and communities.
- If the intention is to form educators who are also communicators, or pastors who are also communicators, or simply group-animators (cultural, sporting, musical, spiritual, for volunteers, for service, for the apostolate, for spiritual development, etc.), it is important to form those abilities which permit the analysis of life situations, flow of communications and processes of expression, and respect for them. All this means the formation of critical abilities which allow of comparisons with systems and processes that are alienating or wanting everything standardized.

- Similarly, to speak of communication means primarily:
 - to fix one's attention on the languages of the present day (words, gestures, images, sounds, dances, audiovisuals, mime, etc.) which admit of dialogue and mutual understanding;
 - to be ever more strongly aware that human processes of communication develop at various levels (personal, group, social and mass) with specific problems and different relationship structures which condition knowledge and way of acting;
 - to notice that the means of social communication condition the way in which we open ourselves to reality in reproducing it, and they forge a new culture in conditioning our relationship with the world which we transform and by which we are in turn transformed.
- Finally formation to communication and with communication implies the learning of appropriate techniques and the ever better use of the means of communication.

5. Some guidelines for “educating by communicating”

Today, profiting by the experiences of many communicators and of studies that continue to increase in number and depth, we can indicate some guidelines to enable us to *educate by communicating and communicate by educating*.

5.1. We must acquire *professional competence* as educators and communicators. This means specialization through study, guided and evaluated experiences, and the humble exchange of experiences in a constructive critical and self-critical atmosphere.

5.2. We must *foresee* the future (technological, psychological, sociological, cultural and spiritual developments), and *make plans* to salvage the experiences of the past and present, and intelligently anticipate the future.

5.3. We must be open to *total language*, i.e. to the ability to express ourselves in all possible forms, the different languages and cultural codes found in our communication society. Communication has already become decisively “multimedial”.

5.4. We must democratize the communication processes present in educational work by continually fostering *participation* as a real and possible path for creating a *communion* of free and responsible individuals.

5.5. Finally we must use and get others to use valid *critical methods of structural observation*, of *appraisal* and of *selection* from the thousands of messages we receive and which are sometimes forced on us.

6. Operative priorities

In other documents, at the level of both the Congregation and the Department, indications with motivations are given of various urgent needs that must be faced in connection with the salesian commitment in the field of social communication.

Allow me to remind you of the need for an efficacious formation of young confreres both as receivers and as educators of receivers, to be realized at all levels of the first formation and also at that of ongoing formation.

Emphasis must also be laid on the effort to adapt the specific structures and works which the Congregation already possesses in the field of communication to the new needs of situations and to progress in technique and method, following also in this the teachings and examples of Don Bosco himself.

So also the need must be stressed for research in the different sectors of communication, especially with reference to education and pastoral work, a need to which without doubt will respond also the new HIGHER INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNICATION, established at the UPS in the centenary year of the death of Don Bosco, and recently approved 'ad experimentum' by the Congregation for Catholic Education.

And now, with the desire to specify some priorities which seem possible for all provinces, albeit in different ways, we give the following indications:

6.1. It is possible to take stock of the experiences (great or small) that have already been made in the formation communities so as to arrive at a formation plan that will be more organic, unified and efficacious. It is not a question of codifying so as to eliminate creativity and impose prefabricated models; today we have to look at what we are doing and evaluate it by comparison with other models that have been found satisfactory and adequate for meeting the challenges of society and youth.

6.2. I think the time has come when we cannot fail any longer to give priority in all our educational structures (schools in particular, but

also in oratories, youth groups, parishes etc.) to authentic *processes for education to the language of images and the mass media*, with openness to all languages of expression. Such processes should be thought out with the help of experts and the wealth of already existing studies and documentation; they must be patiently and perseveringly tried out, and then their results must be assessed with a view to deeper study and further improvement. In this sense it will be the concern of the Provincial, with the competent collaboration of his Delegate for Communication, to verify and foster the including of the communication dimension in the provincial educational plan and in that of each community in the different needs and perspectives of their educational work. Indications should be given of the objectives, essential content, stages of realization and the animators (salesian and lay) responsible for the above-mentioned educational process.

6.3. Finally it must be an obligation of all provinces in the Provincial Chapters due to take place about this time to analyze more deeply the theme of the *education of young people to the faith* in the light of the challenges of modern communication processes, and above all, of the immersion of youth in the mass media civilization. These young people are more fragile and more easily influenced, but with all adults of the present day they are "generally inserted into a society dominated by the *civilization of images* (cinema, television, magazines) and by the rapid dissemination of news, ideas, values, cultural and scientific data, transmitted with simple and incisive language. For the most part, in this context, *God is not spoken about*. Religion is considered a private matter, when it is not presented in a critical or negative light; further, the models of life and interpretations of reality are multiple and contradictory" (John Paul II, Address to the sixth Plenary Session of the International Council for Catechesis, Osservatore Romano, Eng.edtn., 12 December 1988). This is why a real critical and liberating education to meet the world of communication and the messages with which it assails and invades us is absolutely urgent and cannot be delayed.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

During December 1988, January and the first part of February 1989, the Rector Major was engaged in the meetings of the General Council, and he left Rome only to take part in some of the centenary celebrations.

For this reason he was in Malta between 6 and 9 January, and later at Turin and Castelnovo Don Bosco (14-15 January) where he received the title of honorary citizenship. He was at Palermo (24-25 January) for a memorable civic commemoration in the Normanni Palace in the presence of the Regional Council.

On Sunday 22 January he was at the Vatican with the Chinese Catholics of Rome, to preside at a Eucharist which was transmitted throughout China.

In the meantime he went through a period of great concern because of the serious heart attack suffered by the Vicar General, Fr Gaetano Scrivo, who is now making a good recovery, thanks be to God.

Of particular interest was the Rector Major's participation in the week of study on Don Bosco organized by our University, and in the Symposium on "Don Bosco the

Founder" which took place in the Generalate. On 18 January he received the news of his appointment as a member of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

On 25 January he solemnly blessed the foundation stone of the new library which is to be built at the UPS, and on the 29th (also at the UPS) he laid the foundation stone of the parish church of "Our Lady of Hope".

31 January, with the civic commemoration in the Capitol and the imposing liturgy in the Church of Don Bosco at Cinecittà, provided a solemn ending to the Centenary, which was crowned on 4 February by the audience granted by the Pope to the Rector Major and his Council. Fr Viganò took advantage of the occasion to thank the Holy Father for all he had done in the "Year of grace" and, in particular, for his letter proclaiming the title of "Father and Teacher of Youth" which he had conferred on Don Bosco.

Worthy of note too are the Rector Major's participation in the FIDAE Assembly (28.12.88), his conference to the diocesan community of Leghorn on "Don Bosco and emargination" (9.2.89), and finally the encounter at Ponte Buggianese in Tus-

cany (12.2.89) for the commemoration of the Saint of youth.

After this there followed immediately the Retreat at Pacognano (12-18 February) which he made with the General Council and the Provincials of Italy and the Middle East. There he managed to make several visits to the well beloved Fr Luigi Ricceri (now residing at Castellammare di Stabia) before returning to Rome where he was able to stay rather less than a week. On 25 February he left for Venezuela to preach a retreat to the Rectors, and then went on from Caracas to Cuba for a visit of animation to the confreres and members of the Salesian Family of that island country.

4.2 Chronicle of the General Council

The winter plenary session of the General Council began on 6 December 1988, a few days after the Councillors returned from their journeys of animation to communities and confreres in the different regions of the world.

As is always the case, the session of the Council was a very busy one. This time, to the usual work of verification and programming, and the examination of requests and problems concerning different provinces, were added particular commitments concerning the conclusion of the centenary.

The following is a brief list of the principal matters dealt with in the Council, in addition to the numerous ordinary administrative matters (the appointment of provincial councillors, approval of rectors, canonical erections, administrative practices, and personal matters concerning individual confreres):

1. *Appointment of Provincials:* after a careful examination of the provincial consultation in each case, the Council gave its consent for the appointment of the Provincial of Guadalajara (Mexico) and the Superior of the new Vice-province of Southern Africa. The Council also approved for special reasons the prolongation by a year of the period of office of the Provincial of Valencia (Spain).

2. *Reports on Extraordinary Visitations:* a serious task was that of examining the reports on extraordinary visitations carried out in the period August to November. The provinces visited were (in alphabetical order) those of Argentina (La Plata), Austria, Bolivia, India (Calcutta), Italy (Genoa), Yugoslavia (Ljubljana), Paraguay, Spain (Leon), and Uruguay. After examining the reports, the Council framed guidelines for an ever more efficacious animation of the various provincial communities.

3. *Team visit:* a report was made on the last of the "Team visits", that

to the provinces of Poland which took place at Warsaw from 4 to 11 October 1988.

4. *Activities of the Departments*: a period of time was dedicated to the examination and programming of the activities of the various Departments. The Councillor in charge of each sector gave a detailed report on the activities carried out in the period August-November with the problems that had arisen and the future work envisaged. The Council considered the various reports in view of the necessary coordination between the different sectors.

5. *Representation of Salesian Africa at the GC23*: a particular item studied by the Council was that of an adequate participation in the GC23 by confreres working in Africa. After studying various aspects of the problem from juridical and salesian standpoints, the Council concluded on the one hand that the salesian communities of Africa should be suitably grouped together for the holding of special "assemblies" that would send contributions to the GC23, and on the other hand asked the Rector Major to invite some confreres from Africa to be present in the GC23 as observers.

6. *Recognition of membership of the Salesian Family*: during the session the General Council, on the basis of criteria already laid down in the past, studied requests that had

been made for membership and expressed a favourable opinion in respect of the *Institute of the Sisters of Jesus Adolescent* (Campo Grande, Brazil), and of the *Association of the 'Damas Salesianas'* (cf. Documents and News Items, nn. 5.5, 5.6).

7. *Study of 'Christifideles laici'*: after the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation 'Christifideles laici' the Council made a special study of the document for the purpose of indicating the aspects which affect more closely our commitment as educators of animators. The study was led by the Councillors in charge of the different Departments, each of whom offered a summary from the standpoint of his own sector: the new evangelization, youth pastoral work, missionary commitment, formation of lay people, social communication.

As already stated, in the second half of January the Councillors took an active part in the tasks and celebrations associated with the centenary. In particular they were present (at least at the more important moments) at the Study Congress on Don Bosco, organized by the UPS, at the Symposium of the Salesian Family on Don Bosco the Founder, and at the concluding manifestations of the centenary at the Capitol and the Church of Don Bosco in Rome.

The session ended with the Retreat at Pacognano (Naples) from 12-18 February, with the Provincials of Italy and the Middle East, and the Superior of the UPS Vice-province. Cardinal Rosalio Castillo Lara also took part in a family spirit. Preached by Fr Antonio Fanuli,

a Naples professor of Scripture, the Exercises were not only days of interior reflection but also of great salesian brotherhood and an occasion for giving special thanks to God for all he had done during the centenary of our Founder.

5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

5.1 Letter of the Rector Major to the Holy Father at the conclusion of the centenary celebrations

We print the letter written by the Rector Major to the Holy Father to express the thanks of the Salesian Family at the end of the celebrations of the Centenary. The contents of the letter were also expressed by word of mouth during the Audience of 4 February.

Prot. 89/0134

Rome, 4 February 1989

His Holiness Pope John Paul II
Vatican City

Most Holy Father,

I am writing to fulfil a duty of gratitude in the name of the whole Salesian Family.

We are most grateful to Your Holiness for the proclamation of the title "Father and Teacher of Youth", under which you have decreed by your Apostolic Power that St John Bosco be honoured and invoked.

It is a declaration which highlights the initiative of the Holy Spirit in moulding so outstanding a model of an Educator.

We consider this highly esteemed and appreciated gesture of Your

Holiness as a special invitation and stimulus for us Salesians.

We intend to express our joy and gratitude by a deeper study and understanding of the charisma we have inherited, and of renewed ecclesial commitment as we move towards the Third Millennium of the faith.

I want also to express to Your Holiness our profound sense of admiration and appreciation for all that you have done during this Year of Grace: from your letter of guidance "Iuvenum Patris" to the unforgettable pilgrimage to the places particularly associated with Don Bosco, to the various addresses in which you penetrated so deeply his personality, to the beatification of young Laura Vicuña, your many expressions of kindness and esteem, and your predilection and guidance of youth of the present day which gives us an example we must follow.

Holy Father, we thank you most sincerely!

Be assured of our daily prayer, our sincere adherence to the providential ministry of Peter, our humble and energetic sense of Church and our dedication to poor youth.

As a small sign of great gratitude allow me to include a significantly

"centenary" offering.

May the Virgin Mary, always so ready and willing as Help of Christians and Mother of the Church, be ever at the side of Your Holiness in your work as a courageous Prophet of truth, a tireless Renovator of the social obligations of charity, and a loyal and watchful friend of the young.

Offering Your Holiness the respectful good wishes of the whole Salesian Family, I remain,
Yours in Christ,

Fr Egidio Viganò

5.2 First international congress of studies on St John Bosco

The first international congress of studies on Don Bosco, promoted by the Salesian University in collaboration with the Salesian Historical Institute and the "Auxilium" Faculty of Educational Sciences, took place at the University from 16 to 20 January. It had been organized with two objectives in view: to take stock of the present state of affairs as regards the study and knowledge of our Saint, and to begin if possible a new phase, "emphasizing at the same time the reasons why his message is relevant to the Church and the world of the present day". The congress was open to the international academic world, and in

particular to teachers and experts in the historical, theological and pedagogical sciences; it was followed attentively by more than 300 participants, coming from over a dozen countries, some of them outside Europe.

On the first day the keynote paper was given by Fr P. Stella on the theme: *An assessment of the forms of knowledge and of studies on Don Bosco*. On the second day the relationship between *Don Bosco and civil society* was taken up, with contributions provided by Frs B. Bellerate and J. M. Prellezo, and by Profs. G. Bracco and S. Tramontin. The third day was given over to the study of the relationship between *Don Bosco and the ecclesial community*, with the principal papers given by Prof. E. Poulat ("Don Bosco and the Church in the world of his time") and Prof. J. M. Laboa ("The experience and sense of the Church in Don Bosco's work"). On Thursday, 19 January, interest was concentrated on *Don Bosco's option for youth and his educational plan*, a topic on which a lengthy paper was given by Prof. L. Pazzaglia. The final day was given over to a consideration of *Don Bosco educator of the common people*, led by Prof. F. Traniello ("Don Bosco in the history of popular culture"). By way of conclusion Fr Peter Braidò, director of the Salesian Historical Institute, spoke on *Research perspectives and initiatives*. It goes

without saying that the main papers were enriched by many other communications made both in the full assembly and in the three language groups that had been organized.

On 17 January, within the context of the Congress, the Grand Chancellor of the University, Fr Egidio Viganò, conferred the Doctorate in Educational Sciences 'honoris causa' on His Eminence Cardinal *Carlo Maria Martini*, Archbishop of Milan.

In the final session of the congress on 20 January, the Rector Major congratulated all present on the results that had been achieved, and urged them to continue to study at still greater depth a person so significant for the Church and the world as was Don Bosco.

5.3 Symposium of the Salesian Family on "Don Bosco, the Founder"

From 22 to 26 January there took place at the "Salesianum", Via della Pisana, Rome, a symposium organized by the Department for the Salesian Family with the collaboration of its various component Groups for an in-depth study of "Don Bosco, the Founder". Its purpose was to fulfil a duty incumbent on those responsible in the Salesian Family to reflect on the person of their holy Founder, so as to identify valid ele-

ments for the application of his charisma at the present day. Because of its special character the meeting was intended particularly for the General Councils of the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, those responsible at a high level for the Cooperators, Don Bosco Volunteers and Past Pupils, and the Superiors and representatives of the various religious institutes belonging to the Family. Present too throughout all the work was the Archbishop of Shillong-Gauhati, Mgr Hubert D'Rosario, himself the founder of an Institute in Assam.

After a presentation of the work of the symposium by the Councillor General for the Salesian Family, Fr Sergio Cuevas, papers prepared in advance were given on the different days, interspersed with communications and discussions among the participants, all of which helped to delineate with greater clarity different aspects of the Founder's figure deduced from both contemporary historical events and from a deeper understanding of his charisma.

Here we give only a list of the papers that were presented. The first day was given over to a general consideration of the theme of "Founder" with papers by Fr Mario Midali (*An analysis and evaluation of the ways of approach to the figure of Don Bosco the Founder in the light of contemporary thinking*), and by Fr Francis Desramaut (*Don Bosco the Founder*). On the

second day a deeper analysis was made of the specific theme of the foundation of the Salesian Society: Fr Ramon Alberdi spoke of *Don Bosco, Founder of the Salesians*, and Fr Joseph Tuninetti dealt with *Relations between Don Bosco and the Archbishops of Turin concerning the foundation of the Salesian Family*. The papers were supplemented by communications from Fr F. Motto and Fr C. Semeraro. Wednesday 25 January was dedicated to a study of the Foundation of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, with papers on *Don Bosco, Founder of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians* (Sr Ester Posada), and *Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello in the foundation of the FMA* (Sr Anita Deleidi). The final day was reserved for the study of *Don Bosco, Founder of the Cooperators* (Fr Francis Desramaut), and *The connection of Don Bosco with the other groups of the Salesian Family* (Fr Joseph Aubry).

In addition to the intense atmosphere of study and reflection, the symposium was characterized by prayer and salesian spirit which produced a family environment. During the symposium there took place on Wednesday 25 January the blessing of the foundation stone of the future library of the Salesian Pontifical University.

There follows below the concluding address of the Rector Major,

which provides a synthesis of various points that had emerged during the symposium and an indication for a vibrant and relevant reference to the Founder in the situation of the present day.

The ecclesial and social significance of Don Bosco, the Founder, in the Church and society of the present day

I would like to put some thoughts before you which may prove a stimulus to further study and research.

This is in no way a scientific study, but a collection of considerations that I have put together in my role of service to the Salesian Family as its centre of unity.

1. Reflections on a momentous event

The theme of the Symposium is crucial for us.

Want of reference to the Founder would lead in our Family to a weakening of its identity and be detrimental to our communion.

The Holy Father John Paul II recognized in the letter he wrote to us on 31 January 1988 that Don Bosco must be counted "amongst the great Founders" in the Church (IP 5).

This statement makes us think of some of the famous figures of "outstanding men and women" (LG 45) who "founded religious Families" (PC 1) and whose "spirit and aims" ensure the "particular character and mission" of their followers (cf. PC 2); we may recall, for example, St Benedict, St Francis of Assisi, St Dominic Guzman, St Ignatius of Loyola, St John Baptist de La Salle, St Angela Merici, St Teresa, etc.

The appearance of a Founder in the Church's history is literally a "vital event". In his person and work of foundation is seen a special intervention on the part of God. And so a consideration of the task of the Founder cannot be reduced to a simple analysis of historical events of the past, indispensable though that certainly is, because it is a question of a spiritual experience still alive at the present day in individuals and groups. It calls for an intrinsic reflection of faith (albeit with the assistance of many sciences) to identify "God's wonders" manifested in his life and which persist in the genuine tradition that goes back to him.

And so I do not think it out of place to ask the question: what is the ecclesial and social significance of Don Bosco the Founder *at the present day*?

Certainly the reply is not a simple one. If we look only at our own spiritual Family, we see that each group has its own chronicle of the events of its origins and its own particular point of view from which to interpret their implications.

2. A glance at the history of religious Families

If we consider the "outstanding man (or woman)" whom the various spiritual Families refer back to as their initial "Founder", we shall find a great variety of experiences.

So, for example, while St Pacomius strongly institutionalized the hermitical kind of life (in its rigid or mitigated form, which incidentally will always be present in the East) in a coenobitical form (and the same is true of St Basil), St Anthony the Abbot had no intention of founding an organized institution. St Benedict himself did no more than give a Rule to a local community, which strictly speaking was not the beginning of subsequent development; it was the monks who came later who referred back to him as a model and to his Rule as a guide. Similarly quite a number of Institutes look back to St Augustine and his Rule, though he himself had no intention of organizing them.

In the centuries before St Francis of Assisi in the West, the Rules of St Benedict and St Augustine were declared untouchable because of their authority and authenticity; from them, as guides and models, the various other Institutes that came into being had to draw their inspiration.

It was only from the beginning of the 13th century (after the 4th Lateran Council) that the way was opened to a more or less well defined concept of "Founder" of a religious Family (cf.

"Guide to the Constitutions", Rome 1986, p.18), and even then the word was not always used in the same sense, and there was a whole variety of modes of foundation (and a corresponding variety of cases of "co-foundation"). There is therefore an indispensable need in every religious Family for the making of an objective historical consideration, to be applied analogically to every group that belongs to it. In this way the requirements to be looked for in a Founder become, in fact, differentiated at different levels: they range from a kind of common denominator requiring as a minimum the figure of an "outstanding man (or woman)" (who will frequently be a canonized saint), who provided an original and genial way of interpreting the "following of Christ" and who gives rise to an especially intense and attractive inspiration (as a point of reference for a particular kind of spirit which makes of him a model to look to because he left behind him a certain way for living it), to other cases of Founders who not only lived a particular experience of the Holy Spirit, but also devised a way of transmitting with more or less detailed specification and organization a specific patrimony as a heritage to be preserved and developed.

3. The figure of Don Bosco, the "Founder"

When we speak of Don Bosco as our "Founder" we are using practical terms with explicit reference in the first place to the first three Groups of our Salesian Family: the Society of St Francis de Sales (SDB), the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) and the Association of Salesian Cooperators.

Application to the other groups of our Family has a broader meaning, to be examined case by case, considering the common elements that refer back to him in so far as he has inspired the successive "founders" and thus exerted an influence in various ways on the traditions of the life of each group. For this reason their membership of our Family must be based on certain conditions to be authoritatively verified, even though their internal life has always reflected this spiritual patrimony. In these cases it is always necessary to examine closely the spiritual relationship existing between their immediate founder and Don Bosco.

A particular consideration is due to the figure of St Mary Domenica Mazzarello as "Co-foundress" of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. I have already dealt briefly with this in the Letter I wrote to the FMA on the occasion of the centenary of her death (cf. "Rediscovering the Spirit of Mornese", 24 Feb.1981). Mary Mazzarello shines with a particular

brilliance in the constellation of the origins of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians because of the living tradition in the Institute of the salesian heritage.

Don Bosco developed little by little within himself a clear and unmistakable awareness of his mission as a Founder to which he was called from on high so as to pass on his evangelical experience through organized methods and normative indications.

In his role as Founder we apply to him what Paul VI said in the Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelica testificatio", in which he insists on the importance for religious of being "faithful to the spirit of their founders, to their evangelical intentions and to the example of their sanctity". The spiritual heritage of the founders, "far from being an impulse born of flesh and blood (Jn 1,13), or one derived from a mentality which conforms itself to the modern world (Rom 12,2), is the fruit of the Holy Spirit who is always at work within the Church (ET 11; 21 June 1971).

In this sense Paul VI speaks of the "charism of Founders", which later (14 May 1978) the document "Mutuae Relationes" describes as "an experience of the Spirit, transmitted to their followers, to be lived by them, to be preserved, deepened and continually developed in harmony with the Body of Christ continually in a process of growth" (MR 11).

4. Gradual convergence in the work of foundation

As a Founder Don Bosco did not set out with a clear and prefabricated plan, but moved forward gradually, feeling his way as he went, making moves suggested or imposed by concrete circumstances (which he saw as signs of God's providence), and with the collaboration of people of all kinds among whom the first and foremost was undoubtedly Pope Pius IX, to whom Don Bosco addressed a letter in Latin (1 March 1873) to thank him for his interventions and advice in the laborious work of foundation, direction and consolidation.¹

The difficult task of inserting his new foundation in the ecclesiastical structures and in civil society reveals the gradual and versatile approach to his seeking of God's will. Don Bosco was not given to building castles in the air, but adapted himself intelligently to reality. His plan also underwent modifications in accordance with events, which he did not just accept passively but faced up to with unfailing creativity. Only in the early years of his priesthood (especially between 1848 and 1850) and gradually, under the in-

¹ GC21 500-512: "opere et consilio fundasti, direxisti, consolidasti". In addition, anyone reading the dedication inscribed on the pedestal supporting the statue of Pius IX in the Sacred Heart Basilica in Rome, will find the expression "alteri Salesianorum parenti" applied to him!

fluence of enlightenment from above and urgent needs below, (it was only at Turin in fact that he met the boys of his dreams!), in contact with St Joseph Cafasso, his spiritual guide, can it be said that he saw clearly his goal: a specific mission, a particular spirit, a unique method, and the involvement of the greatest possible number of collaborators.

This we can deduce from his own explicit statement: "The Blessed Virgin had revealed to me in a vision my field of work. I had therefore a complete course of action thoroughly planned in advance. I could not and absolutely would not alter it. The success of the undertaking depended entirely on me. I clearly saw the path I was to follow and the means I was to use to attain my purpose. Consequently I could not risk jeopardizing such a plan by submitting it to the judgement and will of others. Nevertheless, in that same year of 1847 I again searched carefully for a religious congregation in which I could be certain of carrying out my mandate, but before long I realized none existed. However commendable their spirit and their goal, none filled my need. This is what deterred me from becoming a religious" (BM 3,171).

But everything was still in an embryonic state; the seed had not yet germinated. The path was not clear before him, he could not foresee the dynamic and unpredictable developments of his plan, nor when it would be fulfilled. It would in any case be a

provisional fulfilment because it would be open to indefinite development with the passage of time.

He was capable and docile enough to see the plan he had undertaken as something alive and evolving, subject to improvements and also to temporary setbacks. He was not tied in advance to a particular scheme, but always on the lookout for a practical way to attain the objective he had been shown from on high.

And here it may be useful to add a marginal note. To understand Don Bosco the Founder we must follow his whole path of research into the concrete circumstances of his time, but we must also attain with him the concrete goal. In men imbued by the Holy Spirit maturity of existence is of decisive importance. Even taking into account the ailments of his last years, we cannot have recourse to simple explanations of possible psychosomatic upsets; we must also keep in mind the laws relating to growth in spiritual maturity. Specialists tell us, in fact, that the closer a spiritual man draws near to his mortal end, so much the more does the mystical element increase in him, rather like the increasing acceleration of a body that falls to the earth under the attraction of gravity.

Don Bosco, with exceptional perseverance and no recriminations, allowed himself to be impelled by divine Providence, without closing wider horizons to his followers.

The Second Vatican Council, before

ever speaking of the role of Founders, recalls the indispensable need for a proper discernment of their work, authenticated by the Church's authority. Chapter VI of "Lumen gentium" speaks in the first place of this responsibility for discerning, interpreting and regulating the practice of the evangelical counsels as the specific tasks of pastors under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (cf. LG 43; v. also LG 12, and CIC can.576).

Always therefore in the genuine ecclesial mentality of Founders there is a convergence of at least two complementary dynamic elements, even though the manner may have been different at different points of time through the centuries: the impulses given by the Holy Spirit to "outstanding men and women" (LG 45), and the discernment and endorsement by the Church's authority. Rightly is it said: "The organic communion of the Church is not exclusively spiritual, i.e. so born of the Holy Spirit that this spiritual birth is of its very nature prior to and responsible for all the functions of the Church; but at the same time the Church is hierarchic since, by a vital synthesis, it is derived from Christ the Head. The very gifts that are dispensed by the Spirit are precisely willed by Christ; by their nature they are directed towards the fastening together of the Body by vivifying its functions and activities. Rightly therefore, and most appropriately, did the Apostle Paul use the words 'in Christ' and 'in the Spirit' to indicate an intimate and vital con-

vergence" (MR 5).

There must be therefore at least two converging dynamic elements, both of them indispensable, with different functions but an objective influence on the legacy to be bequeathed.

The extent to which Don Bosco was influenced by the discernment and support of Bishops, and particularly of the Pope, and what importance attached to the approval of the Apostolic See (in line with the ecclesiastical norms of the period - cf. "Commentary on the Salesian Constitutions, pp.19-21), is an argument of particular importance and delicacy, but it lies outside the scope of this address.

Here we are concerned with Don Bosco's spiritual heritage *as we live it today*, as the fruit of that double convergence which is both the impulse of the Holy Spirit in Don Bosco and the competent approval of the sacred Hierarchy, both then and after Vatican II. In this way his heritage has become and is now "a special benefit for the whole People of God" (cf. C 192).

5. His ecclesial significance

To reflect on the ecclesial significance of Don Bosco the Founder for the People of God *at the present day*, I think it will be useful to begin from some requisites which make of him the initiator and model of the kind of evangelical life characteristic of his Salesian Family.

As requisites to be analyzed we may consider the following: inspiration from above, the original experience of a type of holiness, the physiognomy of the particular spirit, his fruitfulness as founder of a school of spirituality, his singular mission, pastoral criteria, and pluriformity of participation.

Here it is obviously impossible to go deeply into the content of all these. I think it will suffice to list briefly their significance.

5.1 Inspiration from above

This is a "prophetic" feature seen in every Founder, raised up and guided by the Holy Spirit to start up and give direction to a charismatic innovation in the Church. Don Bosco sought initially to channel the inspirations he received towards the concrete choice of membership of one of the ecclesial institutions already existing (e.g. the Rosminians, cf. BM 3,174), but he was compelled to acknowledge eventually that God's designs lay in a different direction. Through the mediation of visions, dreams and interiorly felt messages; through the advice at times of other persons (ranging from St Joseph Cafasso to the anticlerical Minister Rattazzi), in discernment and the importance he gave to the Church's authority, and in the ever more vivid and involved perception of the social and ecclesial juncture at which the young and the poor had arrived, there gradually matured in Don Bosco with ever greater clarity his specific responsibil-

ity as a Founder. He himself was to say later: "How it all happened I can hardly say. All I know is that God wanted it done" (BM 12,59). That is why "I have always gone ahead; all I have done so far has had no other aim. This is the reason why I never let myself be cowed in the face of opposition, harassment and frightening difficulties. The Lord was always with us" (BM 7,398).

It is difficult to find a Founder who was more clearly aware than Don Bosco of his special role.

Hence a first ecclesial significance of Don Bosco the Founder is his aspect of a "word pronounced by God" for the whole Church (cf. my cyclostyled conference on "The charism of Don Bosco" to the GC16 of the FMA, 20 April 1975).

5.2 The original experience of a new kind of holiness

Don Bosco as a Founder bears witness to and transmits a particular way of following Christ as a plan of life to be left to a very large number of disciples. Essentially the plan consists in a "new organic synthesis" of the constituent elements of baptismal growth. We must see his experience of the Holy Spirit as a point of special reference: "a particular style of sanctification and apostolate which creates a definite tradition so that its objective elements can be easily recognized" (MR 11).

It is a question of a singular experi-

ence; and here the word "experience" goes beyond the meanings it assumes in present-day culture, and indicates a form of vital perception and characteristic mode of relating to the mystery of God in the individual's life; it should not be confused with the "experimental" methods of science laboratories.

In the words of one research scholar on this theme: "The study of Founders is no easy matter, even though we have at our disposal several scientific methods of investigation, because Founders do not lend themselves easily to any explanation which is uniquely historical, sociological and psychological. When we approach them we find ourselves up against something that eludes our grasp; and even when we think we know them well, every time we study them we discover something new. How can we explain this mystery, this inexhaustible source of riches? Simply by the fact that when we come in contact with a Founder we come in contact also with the mystery of God: in the Founder and through him it is God who is working" (Thadee Grzeszczyk, "The Charisma of Founders", in the series "Sanctitas in caritate", Rome 1974, p.11).

This aspect implies the transformation of the Founder into a "Model" to whom reference can be made for the following of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 11,1), and the reason is precisely the transcendent nature of his specific spiritual experience which provides a concrete manifestation of a particular inspiration and initiative on the part of God.

Rightly are Founders called "men of the Spirit" (cf. the study of Fabia Ciardi OMI, "Founders, men of the Spirit - a theology of the Founder's charisma, Città Nuova, Rome 1982).

And so, through the Founders, the Church is enriched by an abundance of different gifts so that she "appears like a bride adorned for her husband, and manifests in herself the multiform wisdom of God" (PC 1).

5.3 The physiognomy of the particular spirit

The spirit of Founders is an original manner of living the Gospel which shows the many and rich possibilities of profoundly interpreting the mystery of Christ.

It is not the same thing as what we are accustomed to call "spirituality". There is a certain affinity between the terms "spirit" and "spirituality", and they are often used indifferently to indicate the same reality. But on this occasion we need to distinguish one from the other.

By the "*spirit of Founders*" we mean that overall synthetic and lived interpretation of the Gospel that constitutes a style of "life in the Holy Spirit", or in other words a style of contemplation, behaviour and action, which constitutes the core of the identity of an original manner of following Christ. It is not exactly a mini-treatise of reflex doctrine concerning the elements proper to a state of life, a ministry or a service. It is a question rather

of a style of living witness, applicable to different states and ministries, especially in those not over-concerned about a theoretical analysis of real life. It is an existential attitude which gives a particular physiognomy to their way of living and acting which specifies the individual Institutes or Families and distinguishes between them in the Church.

By "*spirituality*", on the other hand, we mean the result of the deeper study and doctrinal analysis which seeks to identify the spiritual components of a specific state of life, a ministry, a service or a function. It is an effort to identify by reflection the spiritual "essence" of the facts underlying such realities, e.g. the married state or that of consecrated life, or the priestly ministry or various services and functions (cf. E. Viganò: "The ecclesial character of religious apostolic spirituality", special edition of the UISG Bulletin, n. 62, pp. 37-39, Rome 1983).

Here we are speaking of the "spirit of Don Bosco" as an existential synthesis and an evangelical physiognomy of life lived in relationship with God and our neighbour. It is a vital energy of the pastoral charity which binds together in harmony not only widely differing temperaments and personal talents and endowments, but also the spiritual content of different commitments, such as: consecration in the religious life or in the lay state, the married or celibate condition, or that of particular ecclesial and social functions. In the Salesian Family, in fact,

the same "spirit" is lived in many different conditions of life (cf. "Don Bosco's Salesian Family", ed. Joseph Aubry, LDC Turin 1986, pp. 65-66).

It must be said that Don Bosco, in his role as Founder, was explicitly concerned about inculcating in his followers (men and women religious, or lay people) a "characteristic spirit" which forms the core of the heritage he was passing on.

To classify correctly its meaning and identify its characteristic aspects, there have been in the years following Vatican II important General Chapters and world assemblies which have specified the component elements of its identity, subsequently authenticated by the approval of the Apostolic See.

The "salesian spirit", thus described especially in a fine chapter of the SDB Constitutions (C 10-21), has indeed a particular ecclesial significance because it displays an original gospel reading of present-day realities in happy harmony with the renewed vision launched by the Second Vatican Council.²

The identity of this "spirit" is, I think, based on two complementary foundations:

² It would be an enterprise well worth the trouble involved – and one could hope that although not an easy task it would be a fruitful one for the various groups that draw their inspiration from Don Bosco – to gather together the various elements in his physiognomy in some articles common to all, together with some other aspects, especially concerning his mission; it would be a kind of "spiritual identity card" of his whole Salesian Family.

- a manner of intimate union with God, seen as the inexhaustible source of merciful kindness (Father), redemptive initiative (Son), and power which transforms hearts (Holy Spirit). It is a manner which is to be captured in the simple ways in which Don Bosco, as we know from his life, was able to weave the texture of his habitual linkage with the Blessed Trinity - an original style therefore of union with God which made of him, in his role of Founder, a kind of "patriarch" of a special covenant with God. He witnesses, in fact, and communicates to his followers a particular way of practising the "virtues of the covenant" or, in other words, the faith, hope and charity absorbed from the trinitarian mystery seen from the standpoint of its insertion in human history;
- and secondly, a harmonious complex of attitudes permeated by an "industrious pastoral charity" which prompts us to a life of apostolic creativity, impregnated by a vibrant sense of the Church, of missionary zeal, of adherence to daily events, of flexibility and concern for the urgent needs of the time.

5.4 Fruitfulness as Founder of a school of spirituality

One of the characteristics of the spirit of Don Bosco the Founder is the dynamic generation of spiritual posterity. He was endowed with special gifts which made him a fruitful centre of at-

traction and radiation. His spiritual experience was brought about and guided from above to be passed on and developed by large numbers of disciples in the Church.

His spiritual attractiveness as a Founder made him a standard-bearer for the future, the founder of a particular form of sanctification and apostolate; it gave him a "spiritual fatherhood" which came from God (cf. Eph 3,15) and made of him a tested and approved guide for his followers. By staying with him and following him they were certain of drawing nearer to God. Of him can be repeated the Apostle's words: "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11,1).

It is not a question of a dangerous personality cult, in the ideological sense of that expression. Rather must we speak of a providential mediation willed by the Holy Spirit in view of the special needs of the new times: for many people it simplified the process of their own sanctification and helped to provide a timely response to newly emerging problems.

This spiritual fatherhood enable us to discover in him a strong christian personality whose form of holiness was instilled by the Holy Spirit to be shared with many others; it was not a holiness closed in on itself, but that of a true founder of a new school. Not that his holiness was in itself something new, but there was in him an organic convergence of elements, of provisional facts, of indications and suggestions from others, of revisions

and constant contributions from lived experience, which in his balanced and docile practical mentality gradually gave rise to a "particular character", witnessed to with a humble and perceptive constancy, which eventually built up into a living heritage. All this presupposed in him the presence of a special mystical creativity, which made him the spiritual father of a host of followers.

One can apply to him quite literally what was written by De Montmorand: "The true mystics are practical people, people of action and not of theory and a great deal of reasoning. They have the sense of organization, the ability to command, and they reveal an excellent business sense. The works they found are vibrant and enduring; in conceiving and directing their undertakings they give proof of zeal and prudence, and a right appraisal of possibilities which is the hallmark of common sense. Common sense, in fact, seems to be their dominant trait: a mentality undisturbed by either morbid elation or disordered imagination, and linked with a rare faculty of discernment".³ In this respect too the example of St Teresa, the outstanding Carmelite reformer, provides an example.

Proof of this spiritual fatherhood is found in the "School of sanctity" which he bequeathed to his Family

and which already has a lengthy list of Servants of God, of beatified and canonized exemplary religious, priests, missionaries and lay people (cf. AGC 319, Oct.-Dec. 1986, circular letter of the Rector Major, pp. 9-13).

His experience of the Holy Spirit, we may say, consisted of a double element: a strictly "personal" part that was not to be passed on, and a "permanent" part destined to be transmitted to his followers. As an individual, Don Bosco had many gifts which were not communicable; they were for his personal mission and were special qualities. It is not always easy to distinguish the two aspects. I am convinced that our Father kept many secrets to himself in a penitential life that was austere and heroic, in imitation of Cafasso, things that remained hidden and were not communicated to his followers.

In any case it is clear that the personal holiness of Don Bosco would not have been enough to make him our Founder. What is important to emphasize here is that his unique spiritual experience he passed on accurately to his disciples in a kind of "new evangelical school". St Benedict Labre was a saint but not a founder; he has no disciples. Neither was Cafasso a founder, even though he was the teacher and guide of our own Founder.

Don Bosco's first disciples were boys and girls formed in this school of his. And to understand fully his function as Founder one must look also at his first and most significant "sons and daugh-

³ Quoted by E. Ceria in "Don Bosco con Dio", edtn. SDB, Rome 1988, pp. 299-300. The whole of chapter 18 ("The gift of prayer") is worth reading again.

ters" who, with other wise people of note, form a kind of constellation of collaborators in the foundation. Among these are to be found, at different levels, Pope Pius IX (as we have said already), the first group of his youngsters to be consecrated (Michael Rua, John Cagliero and others), Mary Domenica Mazzarello, Don Pestarino, etc. (cf. E. Viganò, "Rediscovering the spirit of Mornese, ASC 301, July-September 1981). And this not only while Don Bosco was still alive, but also in the early years of faithful transmission and development.

We may think of what Paul VI said of his vicar and first successor, Don Rua, in his homily at the latter's beatification: he "made of Don Bosco's example a school, of his work an institution that can be said to have spread all over the earth, of his life a history, of his rule a spirit, of his sanctity a type and model; he made the spring-like source into a stream and then a river" (Osservatore Romano, Eng.edtn., 9 Nov. 1972).

5.5 The singular mission

The characteristic sanctity of a Founder of a congregation of active life becomes translated in practice into a specific mission, as a living participation in the evangelizing task of the Church.

Don Bosco received supernatural guidance in the realization of a singular pastoral work among the young and the poor. It was a work which had

a place in the cultural area as an educational task. The pastoral charity of his heart was characterized by a preferential option for needy youth combined with concern for the evangelization of the poorer classes. He addressed his work by preference to particular groups, though he is not characterized by this alone but also by the particular way in which he worked, the unique organization of its content and objectives, and the style of his presence marked by kindness, dialogue and friendship (cf. GC21 80).

It should be noticed that it was his mission that gave the tone to the whole of Don Bosco's spiritual heritage, and had a powerful influence on its ecclesial significance. The realization of a mission requires a sensitivity to cultures, to historical contexts, to social situations and concrete tasks of the local Church; in other words it is strictly linked with historical development. It gives rise therefore to a continuous challenge as regards relevance and creativity which renders necessary continual revision, replanning and adaptation, while at the same time giving fresh youth and relevance to the spiritual patrimony he left behind him.

Today, in a Church which is committed to a rethinking of all its pastoral work, this is one of the most demanding elements of the ecclesial significance and future perspectives of the sanctity of a Founder.

Rightly does Pope John Paul II, speaking of Don Bosco in the Letter

"Iuvenum Patris", remind all priests that "in the care of souls the education of youth must be given pride of place; let priests direct their first concern to young people. On youth depends the future of the Church and of society!" (IP 20).

5.6 Pedagogical and pastoral criteria

Don Bosco is a true Teacher and Model in embodying pastoral charity in efficacious educational activity. In the letter I have just quoted, the Pope declares that it is enlightening to consider especially in him "that he realized his personal holiness through an educative commitment lived with zeal and an apostolic heart, and that at the same time he knew how to propose holiness as the practical objective of his pedagogy. An interchange between "education" and "holiness" is indeed the characteristic aspect of his personality" (IP 5).

In other words, "Don Bosco is not simply a Saint who engaged in education; he is a saint because he is the Founder of a school of holiness *through* education. His spirituality, his untiring work and his method bear witness to a style of education that is original and unique" (E. Viganò in "Don Bosco, attualità di un magistero pedagogico", LAS, Rome 1987, p. 12).

This consideration leads us to a particular aspect of the ecclesial significance of Don Bosco the Founder, that of having bequeathed to his followers a set of pedagogical and pastoral crite-

ria, called by him the "Preventive System", which reveals him to all as a great "Master in Education".

The Letter "Iuvenum Patris" provides an authoritative comment on such a title; it discloses its "prophetic message", analyzing its famous trinomial "reason, religion and loving kindness" in terms of its application to the situation of the present day.

These pedagogical and pastoral criteria "are not things of the past. Certainly Don Bosco's educational message needs to be studied at still greater depth, to be adapted and renewed with intelligence and courage, precisely because of changed social, cultural, ecclesial and pastoral contexts. Nevertheless the substance of his teaching remains intact: the unique nature of his spirit, his intuitions, his style, his charisma are unchanged, because they draw their inspiration from the transcendent pedagogy of God" (IP 13).

And there you have the reason why his criteria respond in prophetic fashion to the urgent challenges involved in christian education at the present day

5.7 Pluriformity of participation

What we have just said about the "spirit" underlies the wonderful pluriformity of ways in which the evangelical heritage of Don Bosco the Founder is shared in his Family. We are well aware of these different forms of sharing (and in fact they are represented

here among us), and we can think of still other possibilities. In my circular letter on the "Salesian Family" (ASC 304, April-June 1982) I tried to analyze its doctrinal aspect, emphasizing in the pastoral charity of the slogan "da mihi animas" the unifying power of this pluriformity.

It is not just a case of practical sharing in a single mission, but of a true internal spiritual communion which makes us live the Gospel in that special way to which Don Bosco gave witness. It implies therefore a special harmony of life in the Holy Spirit, as a style of thought, attitudes, apostolic preferences and priority of commitments. This creates a certain charismatic family relationship which makes all of us kin with one another among the People of God.

The ecclesial significance of this pluriformity is manifested in certain related forms of religious life rich, each in its own way, with a particular original aspect which highlights some less explicit elements of the common heritage; in entirely new ways also, like that of the consecrated secular state; and in the importance given in the ecclesiology of Vatican II to the involvement of the lay faithful, though at different levels (Cooperators, Past-pupils, Collaborators).

It is a pluriformity which ensures that the Family remains fully relevant to the present day, precisely by the application of the deepening and constant development of the charisma "in harmony with the Body of Christ con-

tinually in a process of growth" (MR 11). And so each group bears witness, in different but converging ways, to what the Church's documents (of Vatican II and later) call "the spirit of the Founder", the "original inspiration", the "particular objective", the "characteristic nature", and the "special style of sanctification and of apostolate".

6. Its social significance

After this rapid glance at the "ecclesial significance", let us now pass on to the "social" significance.

Here we can concentrate our attention on some characteristic aspects of the legacy left by Don Bosco to his followers as special sensitivities to the developing process in human realities: sensitivity to the signs of the times, attention to the historical dimension, the educational option, concern for the culture of the poorer classes, intuition concerning the laity, the politics of the Our Father, international and universal horizons.

6.1 *Sensitivity to the signs of the times*

It is quite usual to find in Founders a special sensitivity as regards the situation prevailing in their time.

In Don Bosco this was certainly present most intensely at a period when epoch-making changes were in the offing. He had the ability to plan creatively how in practice he would meet the social problems facing him. Al-

though imbued with the model of formation he had learned in the seminary, his pastoral charity took him beyond those limits, receptive and malleable as he was in seeing the challenges in the situations around him. He followed no preconceived formula but adapted himself to circumstances, firmly anchored to the great evangelical principles. He developed his pastoral initiatives with an eye on the prevailing social situation in an effort to respond to its needs.

This is a point of particular social significance. Again John Paul II, in the letter "Juvenum Patris", says that Don Bosco is relevant to the present day for this very reason: because "he teaches us to integrate the permanent values of tradition with new solutions so as to meet in creative fashion the newly emerging requests and problems; he continues to be our teacher in the present difficult times, and suggests a 'new education' which is at once both creative and faithful" (IP 13).

When Don Bosco wrote the first text (1858) of the Constitutions for his followers, he explicitly stated in the Introduction that "from the good or bad education of the young depends a happy or sad future for social customs" (F. Motto, *Testo critico delle Costituzioni della Società di S. Francesco di Sales*, LAS, Rome 1982, p. 58).

He worked for the renewal of society in the conviction that the ambiguity, which always accompanies the signs of the times, cannot lead society

in a positive way towards greater human dignity without the leavening presence of Christ's Gospel. History shows that the conquests of "reason" need the ferment of "faith".

He has bequeathed to his followers this important attitude which should make them always valiant leaders in tackling the problems of youth in society.

6.2 *Attention to the historical dimension*

One of the characteristics of modern times is an increased awareness of the historical dimension which likes to keep reality in the forefront in studies and analysis, and in the drawing up of practical guidelines.

Well, despite the essentialist kind of formative atmosphere in which he grew up, Don Bosco always had a personal liking for the historical. He read a great deal and wrote various works (for the young and the poor) on civil and bible history, ecclesiastical history and lives of the saints. He felt that christianity, more than being a "religion" which begins from man's initiative, is a "salvation history" which implies the initiative of God, who manifests himself in creation and made himself present in history by becoming man, realizing facts and events and sending the Holy Spirit in so many "*kairoi*" of the time. And so it is in persons and secular events that one should look for God's interventions. Don Bosco did not take kindly to ideo-

logies, and today as we witness their decline we appreciate all the more the realism of his faith. In his mystical dimension there is a historical element.

In appraising ecclesial events and analyzing practical situations, he allowed himself to be guided by the light he received from his ecclesial ministry and his daily dialogue with God. He did not make judgements on the basis of illuminism with preconceived schemes, even when this method was in vogue, but always pastorally in line with the facts. In the events of history he could always perceive the presence and action of Providence and was convinced of the unfailing motherly help of Mary in his life in a particular way.

And so for this reason his plans to meet the needs of poor youth were always open to modification, and this enabled him to develop them boldly to an extent which outran the resources he had immediately available.

He was not a professional historian, but rather had a mental structure we could call biblical (like that of Mary in the "Magnificat"), because he always sought God in history, looked at the evolution of peoples and the Church, and tackled and appraised factual situations with a keen intelligence guided by the higher light of faith.

This is a quality of particular significance at the present day, when many people deliberately prescind from faith in analyzing facts, paying no attention to the Holy Spirit and his power, and even replacing him, tacitly or explicitly, by cultural elements.

6.3 *The educational option*

As I have said more than once, Don Bosco's pastoral commitment to the work of the Oratories (which was at the origin of all his labours as a Founder) constitutes also a clear option for the benefit of society. This activity inserted him fairly and squarely, through a vast educational enterprise, into that fundamental area of human culture which is concerned with the care of the young and their personal and social development. And so he wanted his followers too to make themselves competent to intervene validly in this specific field of human advancement.

He sought out the young who were poor and of the lower classes, those whom contemporary society tended to forget in their concern for progress, apart from a few praiseworthy initiatives and a lot of good intentions. He sought them out with a pedagogical method of presence, kindness and friendship which characterized him by an anticipation rich, as John Paul II said, in "deep intuitions, precise options and methodological criteria: examples are the art of positive education by putting forward what is good through appropriate experiences which call for the involvement of the pupil and are attractive because of their splendour and lofty nature; the art of producing growth in the young persons "from within" by appealing to their inner freedom to oppose external conditioning and formalism; the art of

winning the hearts of young people so as to inculcate in them a joyful and satisfied attraction to what is good, correcting deviations and preparing them for the future by means of a solid character formation" (IP 8).

He was concerned about making them "upright citizens" and launching them into the world of work; he followed them up as far as was possible, even after the years of their early training, in both military service and their particular social commitments. He managed to get many and good past-pupils established in various sectors of society. Even from a simply human point of view, as a citizen of his time he was in fact one of the men of the Risorgimento who had a more positive influence on a society in rapid development. It has been said that while politicians were trying to plan a new country, Don Bosco was efficaciously educating a crowd of citizens for it.

His educational option for the benefit of the young gives to the figure of Don Bosco the Founder its concrete tone, and specifies his cultural contribution.

6.4 Concern for the culture of the poorer classes

One aspect of the social significance of Don Bosco the Founder is his creative, courageous and noble dedication in all simplicity to raising the cultural level of the "low classes", as they used to be called, giving priority to the religious facets which constitute the ani-

imating leaven of his culture.

Because of his own lowly peasant origins and the central thrust of his ministry, his own concept of the "people" was not political and still less was it ideological (as it is sometimes made out to have been at the present day) but based on a congenial empathy ("rich in the qualities of his people" - cf. C 21) in approaching the many groups of so many simple and hard-working individuals with common sense and solidarity, deeply involved in the difficulties of keeping body and soul together, and consequently giving little attention to the signs of the times and an easy prey to manipulation by others. His youngsters came from these groups and ran the risk of losing the more important values of a popular culture that had matured through the centuries. He entered this field in a variety of ways, especially through the means of social communication then available, particularly the press, theatre, music, etc. In the interesting address he gave at Turin University, John Paul II emphasized this aspect: "Despite Don Bosco's incredibly vast activity, he was able to cultivate in himself a solid cultural preparation, joined to his felicitous gifts of literary expression which enabled him to carry out a noteworthy apostolate. He strongly felt the urge to elaborate a culture which was not the privilege of a few, or something removed from the evolving social reality. Therefore he was the promoter of a solid popular culture, which forms the civil and professional consciences

of citizens involved in society" (Osservatore Romano, Eng.edtn. 10 Oct. 1988).

His mission therefore, and that of his spiritual Family, is inserted in the living fabric of civil society through a vast and varied work of cultural promotion.

6.5 Intuition concerning the laity

Don Bosco's option for a field of work among needy youth and poor people brought him into close contact with the need to insert the communication of the Gospel in a concrete process of human development. "He was able to establish a synthesis between evangelizing activity and educational work. It forms an integral part of the process of human formation, not losing sight of defects but at the same time optimistic about progressive maturing" (IP 15).

And his attention to the promotion of human values led or drove him to appreciate their importance without weakening his concern to protect them from becoming undervalued or tainted by evil. In a genuine christian view of the world, we are told by Vatican II, the objective reality of the constituent elements of men and things was willed by God the Creator with a particular kindness and purpose (cf. AA 5;7). And the redeeming action of Christ and the transforming presence of the Spirit are vitally inserted in creation and history.

Without making of it a forerunner of Vatican II we may say that this vision

of faith offers to the intelligence the ability to discover and evaluate the true "lay aspect" of the temporal order, without the manipulations of ideologies and without the distortions of secularism.

The theme of a genuine "lay status" is not something extraneous to the christian mystery, but is rather the right road to follow in the conviction of the intrinsic continuity that exists between creation and redemption. This is a theme much discussed at the present day, and one can say already that without the intelligence of the Gospel the lay status itself becomes too easily deformed.

Now if there is a sector of humanity that needs to see the true "lay" aspect of things and created values studied and promoted, it is precisely that of youth, and especially those who are poor and in need. How can the fullness of Christ be made to grow in them if they do not know what the world is and what are man's obligations in it? Pope John Paul II (especially in the encyclical "Redemptor hominis") constantly comes back to the statement of Vatican II that the incarnate Word came to reveal to man man's total mystery.

Don Bosco, therefore, was prompted by the reality of having a keen sense of creatural and human values; in this way he learned to dialogue also with those who looked at the youth situation only from a secularist standpoint; he took a practical interest in

the discoveries of human progress, and saw many technical inventions as very useful for the realization of his own educational objectives.

And he has bequeathed this attitude and intelligent view of the world to his followers.

6.6 *The politics of the "Our Father"*

The intense dedication to the educational aspect of his work, and practical openness to the temporal order in view of eternity, led Don Bosco to strengthen an attitude of keen discernment and educational balance in face of the pressing problems in the political field, so enticing at the period of the *Risorgimento*.

He was convinced on the one hand of the need to ensure his mission among youth, and on the other hand that among the more insistent of practical problems is that of educating to the principle of giving to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.

We have learned to distinguish better between the social requirements for the promoting of the temporal order (or "policy" of the common good), and historical plans for intervention in favour of a type of government for the State (or party "politics"). In Don Bosco's time the word "*politica*", in a restored atmosphere of alliance between throne and altar and of a theology which justified it, caused no practical problems until 1848. But afterwards it certainly did so, because

the term came to mean primarily the action and programmes of the government, of the forces seeking power and the unification of Italy, and of groups promoting contingent plans for changing the existing structures; behind all this there lay patriotic ideals, but in practice there were also explicit or concealed anticlerical prejudices.

But Don Bosco considered the social significance of his educational work not from the restricted standpoint of a contingent political situation, but rather from the specific angle of the mission itself, i.e. that of a ministerial and religious concern (in union with Peter's Successor), even though it might well lead in practice to the development of a laity committed to the reform of society.

A hundred years later this theme has seen a great deal of development, and the legacy left us by Don Bosco the Founder in this respect needs a similar development and appropriate adaptation to the Church's magisterium: shared responsibility, solidarity, justice, peace, etc., in line with the Church's social teaching. (cf. E. Viganò: *La vocazione SDB e l'impegno per la giustizia nel mondo*, cyclostyled, Genoa, April 1974).

But fundamentally the idea remains alive and relevant that his educational activity is not a party political task, even if it has a social dimension to it. He has testified that the renewal of society does not need only party politics; at an earlier stage in the process there must be a strong cultural foundation.

Man is a "political animal", as the saying goes, but not everything in him is political; indeed the political element must be rooted in other basic values, expressed in a genuine and integral human culture. In this way one can render indispensable services to society without getting involved in politics; it is even necessary for a full and efficacious dedication to such services to eschew the taking of sides in politics. "What good will it do us to get involved in politics?", asked Don Bosco one day in 1883. "Even with all our efforts what could we obtain? Nothing else but make it impossible to carry on with our work of charity" (MB 16,291). And in fact if he had taken a political stance, what would have happened to his mission?

"Christ did not bequeath to the Church a mission in the political, economic or social order", declared Vatican II; "the purpose he assigned to it was a religious one. But this religious mission can be the source of commitment, direction and vigour to establish and consolidate the community of men according to the law of God" (GS 42).

Don Bosco used to say, good-naturedly but none the less penetratingly that his were the "politics of the 'Our Father'", or in other words the building of God's Kingdom in history (BM 8, 260). "There must also be those involved in political matters", he said, "but it is not a job for us" (MB 16,291).

The present article 33 of the renewed SDB Constitutions well expresses the social significance, adapted

to the present times, of this important attitude bequeathed to us by Don Bosco the Founder.

6.7 International and universal horizons

The social significance of the education of youth and the poorer classes fostered by Don Bosco the Founder extends beyond the geographic and political limits of his diocese and country. He felt that he had been invested from above with a task in favour of the young and the poor to be extended to every nation and every culture, because of the indispensable nature of the presence of Christ's Gospel in the life of every man for his advancement in both his person and his social condition. So, for example, Don Bosco's great missionary dreams (which should be read again with a critical sense of faith) indicate the horizons he had in mind in his laborious work as a Founder. Today anyone travelling the five continents and visiting in them the impressive presence of the Salesian Family, will surely be led to repeat with admiration that "the true Don Bosco is indeed greater than his historical counterpart".

The number and geographical extension of his followers, which at first sight might seem to be a merely quantitative element, is in fact a concrete manifestation of a characteristic quality of his legacy which had begun with an initial awareness of its international and universal aspects.

It was his intention that his Family should transcend "any kind of parochialism. When because of its growing size it became necessary to divide the Congregation into provinces, we find his successor Don Rua, who had a comprehensive understanding of the Founder's desires, urging that the province should not be thought of as an 'ens a se' nor the world communion as a federation of autonomous provinces. But parochialism or 'provincialism' includes also such things as nationalism, exclusiveness, narrow-mindedness and short-sighted outlooks, ideological partiality, infatuation with fleeting fashions, class-consciousness, and social and cultural complexes which damage brotherhood and communion" (E. Viganò, "Relazione sulla 'Società di S. Francesco di Sales' nel sessennio 1978-1983, GC22, Editrice SDB, Rome 1983).

The international dimension does not suppress a living attachment to one's own culture and country but places it in relationship with other realities in the mind and heart, enabling one to know and appreciate the social condition of other peoples so as to foster communion with them.

Universality, finally, is a deep ecclesial dimension intimately linked with the mystery of Christ, who ensures the unity and identity of the Church's vital and constituent elements, even in the pluriformity of ways in which these are expressed in particular communities. The consciousness of the universality of his work, which extended

beyond his own diocese, was the cause of no little opposition and conflict for Don Bosco (read, for instance, in BM 11, chapter 3 on the Work of Mary Help of Christians for late vocations).

Looking at his patrimony in the light of this universal dimension, Don Bosco laid the foundations for that unity in decentralization which has been opportunely relaunched by the ecclesiology of Vatican II – but decentralization is not the same thing as independence, and it must be unfailingly linked to Peter's Successor and in communion with him, and also strongly bound to the centre of unity of the Salesian Family. Harmony with the Holy Spirit leads the saints into the living mystery of the Church, leaving aside all doctrinal positions that may be under discussion, as though anticipating the perception of aspects of truth that may indeed be more clearly formulated in times yet to come. The universality of Don Bosco's spirit is founded always on the identity of a single spirit and a single mission.

The social significance of these two complementary qualities, the international and universal dimensions, is at the origin of that rapid and astonishing expansion of the Work of Don Bosco, which Paul VI unhesitatingly described as the "salesian phenomenon" in this past century of the Church's history.

And so, if we consider the various aspects of both the ecclesial and social significance of Don Bosco the Founder in the present-day Salesian Family, we

discover more clearly in him a living element that transcends his own person and personality: a greatness and a fruitfulness which comes from on high and was invested in him because he was destined to be its prophetic sign and bearer for many others. Rightly can we say: "with a feeling of humble gratitude we believe" that Don Bosco's Salesian Family "came into being not as a merely human venture but by the initiative of God". In fact "through the motherly intervention of Mary, the Holy Spirit raised up St John Bosco and formed within him the heart of a father and teacher, and to ensure the continuation of his mission inspired him to initiate various apostolic projects. The Church has acknowledged God's hand in this" (C 1).

7. The forces underlying faithful development

After this attempt to present the ecclesial and social significance of Don Bosco the Founder, it would seem appropriate to add a rapid indication of what we hold to be the forces which give vitality to his spiritual heritage at the present day.

We do this from within his own experience, as we feel ourselves at a particular significant moment for qualitative renewal.

I turn in the first place to the study of the Founder made by his sons and daughters over the last twenty years through study, discussions, General

Chapters and World Assemblies, and which has been substantially endorsed by the approval on the part of the Apostolic See of the fundamental texts which define his identity.

All these have constituted a rethinking of the spiritual heritage of the Founder from within its homogeneous development "in harmony with the Body of Christ continually in a process of growth". It has been said that Vatican II took off the brakes and also a great deal of dust that had tended to conceal the true countenance of Don Bosco, giving back to him a greater dynamism to relaunch him towards the third millennium.

I think that this is the best attitude to take in trying to grasp the identity of his living reality. It is indispensable of course to be aware of the historical data, to go back to the documents and the cultural and ecclesial environment of the period; but when you are dealing with a living reality you cannot stop today at a simple autopsy operation, nor will you be able to do so tomorrow.

Here we shall try to do no more than indicate in synthetic fashion a few aspects which emphasize at the same time both the originality and present relevance of Don Bosco the Founder. When we speak of "originality" in this context we are not referring to the structure of our works (as though he had invented them in the form they are today), or to the cultural mentality (as though he had been an exception

above his own environment), but we are thinking of some of the forces inherent in the characteristic nature of his particular style of sanctification and apostolate.

Let us look at the principal ones, without any pretence at a complete list.

7.1 *The grace of unity implied in "da mihi animas"*

The secret of Don Bosco as a Founder is to be found essentially in the singular nature of his holiness; he was completely available to the designs of God who wanted to mould him as a witness to a particular form of pastoral charity. The motto "*da mihi animas*" is a synthetic expression of the content of such holiness.

A careful analysis of salesian pastoral charity reveals the original source from which springs the Founder's patrimony. If we scrutinize his heart we find it to be the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit who infuses in him a powerful "grace of unity", the rich source of a mystical experience, of spiritual intuitions, of ecclesial nobility of spirit, and of creative dynamism.

In this "grace of unity" lives the germ of Don Bosco's spirit at its source. It is a germ from which everything else takes its rise; it contains the divine energy which keeps inseparably united the two objectives of his love: God and his neighbour. A salesian contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity leads always to man's needs; and

attention to his neighbour leads continually back to God, because he is always permeated by his love.

And so the contemplative dimension is essentially something interior and apostolic. Prayer, action and affliction are together referred in vital fashion to the two poles: never God without man; never man without God.

This single movement of pastoral charity, lived in Don Bosco's style and manner, forms the core of the "salesian spirit", as a vital synthesis of sharing in the original experience of the Founder. For the passing on of this spirit, as we have said already, a special covenant was established between God and Don Bosco which made of him the "patriarch" of our by now very numerous Family a conscious alliance which is renewed day by day. In fact the "grace of unity" between interior contemplation and external activity comes from above, presupposes constant union with God, is modelled on Christ the Good Shepherd, and arises only from an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit; it is constantly nourished by a conscious life of faith, hope and charity in dialogue with the vibrant reality of the world.⁴

⁴ Two studies worth mentioning for a deeper treatment of the salesian mind of our Founder are: "Don Bosco con Dio" of E. Ceria, reprinted with an introduction by G. Gozzelino, edtn. SDB, Rome 1988; and "Don Bosco profondamente uomo - profondamente santo" of P. Brocardo, LAS, Rome 1985, of which a new and enlarged edition will shortly be published with the title: "Don Bosco profondamente uomo e santo: noi l'abbiamo conosciuto".

7.2 *Complete trust in Mary and the Church*

The contemplative dimension taught us by Don Bosco does not go in for abstract ideas, but concentrates on concrete facts about people and events, which constitute salvation history. In this he manifested one of the characteristic aspects of his originality.

Devotion to God's Virgin Mother was strong and deep in his environment; veneration of her as the "Help of Christians" had already been practised in earlier centuries. As an enthusiast of all Marian titles, he took pains to perceive and communicate the active presence of the person of Mary in history. She shares fully with Christ in the new life of the Resurrection and extends her motherly care throughout the centuries, especially in periods of difficulty. For this reason Don Bosco has left us a devotion of relationship to Our Lady as Help of Christians, not so much to emphasize a title as to deepen our understanding of the doctrine of the reality of her efficacious universal motherhood.

He laid particular emphasis on two points.

The first was the part played by the Madonna in prompting and guiding his vocation of Founder in the Church. Several dreams, beginning from the first one at the age of nine, assured him of her motherly initiative. Fr Brocardo rightly speaks of his work of foundation as a "task for two" (cf. P.Brocardo, "Don Bosco, profondamente

uomo, profondamente santo", LAS Rome 1985, pp. 117-124). At Trofarello in 1868 he declared that Mary "can be called the Foundress and Mother of all spiritual Families from the Cenacle down to our own times", but he was convinced that in our own case "She had done everything".

The second was Mary's solicitude throughout the centuries for the Church, of which she is the prophetic model. Vatican II went deeply into this aspect. Don Bosco had already inseparably linked his Marian devotion with the sense of Church, with Peter's ministry, the simple faith of the People of God, and the urgent needs of the young.

Don Bosco's views and attitudes in Mary's regard were vigorously ecclesial, centred on Christ working in the sacraments and on the animation of the Holy Spirit through the teaching of the Pope and the Bishops.

Entrustment to Mary Help of Christians is one of the strong reasons for our vitality.

7.3 *The mystical quality of his activity*

Vatican II has relaunched in depth the great values of the internal dimension of apostolic activity (cf. PC 8; AA 4; PO 13-14). Don Bosco cultivated an interior element of pastoral charity which continually sanctified his work and became almost second nature to him. He was a man of action because he felt himself imbued with the "mystique" of God the Saviour, imitating

Jesus who "began to do and to teach". "In a period when it was the custom to look on religious as idle, and useless for society's progress, he wanted his institute to be founded on the great law of work, and he used to say with a certain humour that the badge of his religious would be their rolled-up sleeves" (P. Brocardo, op. cit., p. 91).

Such was his union with Christ the Redeemer, the contemplation of Christ's love for man, the knowledge of the need for salvation on the part of those to whom his mission was directed, that he was continually prompted to come out of himself to dedicate himself to God in others. St Francis de Sales, in his Treatise on the Love of God, had distinguished three type of mystical ecstasy: intellectual, affective and operative. "The first is light, the second fervour, the third action; the first is expressed in admiration, the second in devotion, and the third in work" (quoted by Brocardo, op. cit., p. 139).

This "ecstasy of action" is the mystique lived in the Salesian Family; it leads to the continual going out from oneself to identify actively as far as possible with the saving work of the Good Shepherd. Even sufferings, afflictions, set-backs and the inactivity caused by sickness enter vitally into this mystical element which lifts them up to the level of mysterious apostolic mediation.

It is because of this interior apostolic dimension that the mission occupies so essential a position in all his spiritual patrimony.

7.4 Humility in "making oneself loved"

Another source of energy proper to the heritage of Don Bosco the Founder is the well-balanced attitude of kindness expressed in the daily method: "not by blows but by kindness". The criterion of presence, dialogue, sharing and kindness he sums up in the advice: "make yourself loved". This is not an easy matter, nor is it linked in any way with the indulgence of concupiscence; it demands indeed a kind of pedagogical humility that enables one to be an amiable intermediary between the beneficiaries of his mission and God. The method of salesian action is not simply that of loving (which is evidently indispensable), but the pedagogical ability to "make oneself loved", because the impelling cultural task of education must be a "work of the heart". The preventive system has within it the secret of winning the love of others. This methodological criterion "calls for a very demanding asceticism so that the emptying out of self should result in our own lives acquiring a transparency which may transform them into an 'existential sacrament' so that we can be in fact signs and bearers of the love of Christ. It is true that holiness is impossible without humility; but there is also a humility attainable through the practice of particular virtues, especially of a social kind, that make the existence of the disciple meaningful and attractive as embodying the mystery of Christ and communicating him

to others through the disciple's own life" (E. Viganò, letter "Strive to make yourselves loved", AGC 326, July-Sept. 1988, p. 14). The values of this kind of humility have today acquired an extraordinary pastoral relevance. They are an indispensable characteristic of anyone who embodies the kindness and humanity of the Good Shepherd, especially with the young.⁵

7.5 *The ascetical aspect of "work and temperance"*

The word "ascesis" derives from the Greek verb "askeo" which means to practise or to train oneself: a concrete life praxis, systematically observed and with the objective of creating a habit and constant availability for the fulfilment of such activities. In this sense it is a pre-christian practice which could equally refer to sport, military training, or a particular type of self-control.

Christianity gives a significance and particular slant to this practical exercise. We may say that in the new Covenant the first ascetic is Christ, and so by definition must also be every christian. This is not based on the dualism of the concepts of "body" and "spirit", but is (as has been said) a "god-linked study" for the practice of courageous virtues which renounce the carnal self-

ishness of which St Paul speaks, and give priority to what is good. It is a progressive effort and a constant cleansing process which has repercussions on practices for the purification of the heart. It is a matter of subordinating human interests to faith, which commits us in practice to translating the Gospel into life. In this way one must not think of a kind of "fakirism" but a spiritual method for a better service of God: they are practices not sought for their own sake, but are particularly useful and substantially indispensable.

In the radical following of Christ the "monastery", which brought together some generous members of the faithful, was also called an "asceterium", a place of austerity to ensure the internal development of the consecrated inhabitants.

The history of spirituality reveals many different forms of asceticism, designed to ensure the vitality of God's presence with the essential objective of growth in charity. All Founders have been masters in ascetics; in fact there is no holiness without a spiritual struggle which transforms the very conduct of the disciple.

Don Bosco the Founder is the model and master of an original kind of ascesis, in the common category of the practice of the following of Christ. He himself condensed the programme of salesian asceticism into the motto "*work and temperance*", to such an extent that he declared that "work and temperance" would make his Family

⁵ A study which gives a well documented, synthetic and mature view of this experience of method is the work of Peter Braido: "L'esperienza pedagogica di Don Bosco", especially chapters 11-14, LAS, Rome 1988.

flourish, while the seeking of a comfortable and easy life would be its death (cf. MB 17,272). It is not just a question of mortifications (which are indispensable), or of extraordinary penitential practices (on occasion), or to be "ready to suffer cold and heat, hunger and thirst, weariness and disdain, whenever God's glory and the salvation of souls require it" (cf. C 18); though all this undoubtedly forms part of salesian asceticism.

But the particular quality of this asceticism consists in the vital emphasis it puts on the mission, i.e. on the primacy of that pastoral charity which must inflame the educator's heart and put him generously at the service of the young and the poorer classes. In this sense practical asceticism, enlivened by the mystique of the grace of unity, is expressed in a daily practice of "work" and "temperance".

Work draws its energy for mutual compenetration from two sources: the love of charity which comes down from God, and from the raising to Christ of the needs of human advancement, so as to witness to the fact that activity is a manifestation of union with God. St Gregory of Nyssa, speaking of the mystery of Christ, has this fine expression: "it shows how natural is the supernatural, and how supernatural the natural".

And *temperance* is understood as an expression of the baptismal regality which is concerned with maintaining "custody of the heart" through the individual and social practice of many

virtues which ensure self-control, the control of passions, balance in judgments, attitudes of kindness and understanding, the sense of evangelical poverty, and a certain austerity born of simplicity and family spirit.

Constancy in work and temperance forms part of that bloodless martyrdom which Don Bosco called the "martyrdom of charity and sacrifice for the good of others": if anyone should lose his life while working for souls, he used to say, our Family will have gained a great triumph, and on it will descend copious blessings from heaven.

7.6 Care for our identity

In the realization of the salesian mission, Don Bosco tried to inculcate the same spirit in many apostolic endeavours; and so in planning his Family he wanted to involve in communion different groups of various kinds as we have already emphasized: some living religious life in community and others living a normal life in the world. His main point was that they should have an identical spirit.

This concern for the involvement of many forces represents today an aspect of relevance fully in line with the ecclesiology of Vatican II.

The identity of spirit means that all the groups see in Don Bosco a lofty model and charismatic leader who has launched an authentically evangelical project in a modern manner. This evidently required in him, and also demands in us, a knowledge of the con-

tent of this spirit, a constant effort at formation for its interior assimilation, the seeking of guidelines, studies in discernment, discussions, and an authoritative centre of reference.

7.7 Openness in faith to secular values

We spoke earlier of Don Bosco's intuitions concerning values inherent in the lay state. In his initiatives he was able to adapt himself to the newly emerging signs of the times. In his educational and pastoral heritage he left an opening to several secular values. This is an aspect which was to be developed, first slowly and then with ever greater speed, in the complex process of secularization we are witnessing at the present day.

To the religious groups in his Family he has left a manner of organization and form of existence which are new as compared with traditional ecclesiastical ways of conceiving religious life: streamlined structures, manner of ownership of goods, dress, versatility in adaptation, family style of life; his new and singular concept of the lay Salesian (cf. circular of the Rector Major on "The lay component of the salesian community", ASC 298, Oct.-Dec. 1980); he thought of the possibility of the existence of a secular consecration with his proposals about "external salesians" (today we have in the Family the DBV Secular Institute); he adopted

secular names for his institutions; he opened up to new social sectors; he took a special interest in the world of work, and in general adapted his evangelical style to the secular world.

Pope Pius IX said to him in 1877: "There is no doubt that it is God's hand that is guiding your Congregation. It is the first of a new kind of religious order, born in this age, whose style makes it possible for it to be both religious and secular, cloistered yet composed of free citizens. It has been raised up so that all may see that there is a way of giving to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's. It will flourish, it will spread miraculously, it will last through the ages" (BM 13,62).

The establishing of the Society of St Francis de Sales as a definite kind of religious congregation (even though new only in part) did not exclude the possibility, though Don Bosco's efforts in this direction did not receive approval at the time, of including among his aspirations other groups with the same spirit and mission, and all of this manifests his courageous openness to new ways of doing things.

Today various possibilities of this kind are recognized as valid by Vatican II ecclesiology, and we can look back to Don Bosco as a forerunner who instinctively felt that the opportune moment had arrived, and for this reason left behind him a spiritual heritage particularly suited to it.

8. Charism and communion

In the Final Report of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops held in 1985, twenty years after Vatican II, we read: "The understanding of the Church as communion is central and fundamental in the documents of the Council. ... One cannot therefore understand the Church as communion if one thinks only of organizational matters, or mere powers. Nevertheless the ecclesiology of communion is the foundation of order in the Church and especially is it vital for the correct relationship between unity and pluriformity" (RF II,C,1).

Today all true renewal must be planned and realized in communion. It is a matter of a deep and demanding perspective which implies a change of mentality.

We can consider communion either with reference to the Church, the Body of Christ and universal Sacrament of salvation, or in the mutual relationships of the various Groups which make up Don Bosco's Salesian Family.

8.1 *At the level of the Church*

The enduring charism of Don Bosco the Founder is destined to have a vital place in dioceses and parishes. It is not the private property of any of the salesian groups. This is a perspective which makes us rethink the Founder's legacy in line with the doctrinal synthesis and directive criteria of the

document "Mutuae relationes" (14 May 1978). Hence the importance of a deeper understanding of its "ecclesial nature" and the true implication of its "distinctive character" within the communal mission of the Church, in harmony with the coordinating actions of the Bishops and in mutual collaboration with other charismata.

8.2 *At the level of the Salesian Family*

It is important here that we avoid any danger of regression in mentality as regards the concept of the proper autonomy of each constituent group.

We have seen that the role of Don Bosco as Founder cannot be applied in the same way to the different Groups, each of which has its own historical beginnings and specific characteristics. All of them nevertheless look back to him as regards their spirit and mission. Together we live a spiritual communion and give each other mutual help in knowing and witnessing to its constituent elements. And from this derive among other things two consequences which we cannot take lightly.

The first is that of fostering our common fidelity to Don Bosco the Founder through our ability to look with particular interest at the three Groups he founded directly (SDB, FMA, Cooperators), as the primary witnesses to his inheritance, albeit in specifically different ways.

And then it is important for all to consider the Society of St Francis de Sales as bearing "particular responsibi-

lities by the will of the Founder: to preserve unity of spirit and to foster dialogue and fraternal collaboration for our mutual enrichment and greater apostolic effectiveness" (C 5).

That is why the "successor of Don Bosco" is called upon, through his ministry, to show himself as the "father and centre of unity of the Salesian Family" (C 126). It is not a task that relates to government but an indispensable service of animation, with due respect for the proper autonomy of each Group and concern for the mutual enrichment of all through the particular contribution of each.

The second consequence, which is a practical one binding on all, is that of cultivating and increasing our mutual rapport; think for instance of the many possibilities that exist in the field of studies, formation criteria, pastoral guidelines for the benefit of those for whom we work, missionary programming, convergence in apostolic initiatives, sincerity in patient fraternal understanding, etc.

This is a field in which we certainly can and should do more; the whole Family will gain by it and the entire Church will benefit in perceiving more clearly the valid contributions and the fruitfulness of the permanent charisma of the Founder.

9. Broadening the field of Don Bosco's fatherhood

Don Bosco is a Founder because he has left behind him a living and dyna-

mic heritage. We have tried to emphasize the ecclesial and social significance of this for the present day, and also to identify the principal sources of its vitality.

The Church's doctrine of communion challenges us to acquire a more concrete sense of Church and bring about greater union and mutual collaboration. Together we form a precious gift for the People of God, precisely because we are a Family.

This means that we shall be more faithful to our origins and do more and better work if we are able to grow together in communion. It may indeed be a good sign that we are gathered together in this symposium in the centenary year of Don Bosco's birthday in heaven for the purpose of paying him a particular homage and for deepening our understanding of his role as Founder.

In the SDB Special General Chapter of 1971 we came to understand better that the fullness of Don Bosco's enduring charisma had been entrusted from above not just to a single group but to a great Family. In the document which spells out the significance of this, we read: "Dynamic fidelity to Don Bosco through sharing and collaborating will extend the influence of his pastoral intuition and his fatherhood, which will shine all the more brightly because every increase in fraternity, unity and commitment on the part of those who consider themselves his 'children' adds to his stature. His fatherhood will take on ecclesial dimensions. Don Bosco

has in fact given rise to congregations of men and women religious, committed layfolk, and consecrated members of secular institutes, resulting directly from his work or the sanctity of his sons.

"Through shared responsibility and dialogue, the irrepressible natural qualities of individuals and the indispensable variety of ministries will help to avoid uniformity on the one hand, and will achieve and strengthen unity on the other.

"Those who exercise the service of authority have the duty of stimulating so useful a contribution to the building up of the Body of Christ" (SGC 174).

Let us give thanks together to God and to Mary Help of Christians for having given us Don Bosco as our Founder, and let us promise him our fidelity in communion!

5.4 Official confirmation of membership of the Past Pupils of Mary Help of Christians in the Salesian Family

The following letter was sent by the Rector Major to the Confederal President of the Past Pupils of Mary Help of Christians, confirming their membership of the Salesian Family. The confirmation was officially announced by the Rector Major during his opening address to the World Congress of Past Pupils.¹

Prot. 88/1309

Rome, 29 October 1988
Feast of B. Michael Rua

Sig.ra Rosadele Regge
Confederal President
Past Pupils of Mary Help of Christians
V. Ateneo Salesiano 81, Rome

Dear Madam President,

The centenary year of the death of Don Bosco has brought with it abundant graces to all Groups of the Salesian Family, and especially to the Past Pupils of Mary Help of Christians. There was a particular indication of this on 3 September last with the beatification at Colle Don Bosco of Laura Vicuna, and the joint celebration of the World Congress of Salesian Past Pupils.

In this atmosphere of gratitude and celebration of the Founder of the Salesian Family, you sent to the Rector Major on 4 January 1988 in the name of the World Confederation Council, a request for the official recognition of the Past Pupils of Mary Help of Christians as members of the Salesian Family.

The Rector Major with his Council has examined the request and the documents that accompanied it, and judged it eminently fitting that the recognition be given.

¹ From the Rector Major's opening address to the World Congress, reported in AGC 328, the passage in which he announced the confirmation of the membership in the Salesian Family of the FMA Past Pupils was inadvertently omitted.

You yourself said in your letter: "Our Past Pupils have always felt themselves a living part of this great Family in virtue of the education received from the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and their collaboration in apostolic work in fidelity to the preventive system."

When the Salesian Congregation in its Constitutions (art. 5) recognized that "our past pupils are also members (of the Salesian Family) by reason of the education they have received" and that this membership becomes "closer when they commit themselves to take an active part in the salesian mission in the world", the expression "past pupils" was meant to include also the past pupils of the FMA, beneficiaries of the same salesian education.

In consequence, the Rector Major with the consent of his Council has decided to endorse officially the membership in the Salesian Family of the Past Pupils of Mary Help of Christians.

This confirmation gives joy to our hearts, and ensures numerous and valid workers for the Salesian Family in its present efforts at renewal and effective growth. The Confederation will be led to an intensification of its relationship of communion and collaboration, first with the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians which fosters it, but also with the other Groups of the Family. It will feel it-

self particularly close to the numerous lay people who follow Don Bosco, and in a special way to their fellow SDB past pupils, the Salesian Cooperators and the members of the DBV Secular Institute.

The men and women Past Pupils, the Cooperators and the DBV, together represent the most numerous section of the Family and form a veritable mine of resources for doing good. Through their presence in its various sectors, they are called to be a leaven in society, deepening their own identity and collaborating with the other Groups to provide a greater impact and bring the beneficial influence of the salesian charism into the mentalities, behaviour and initiatives for the advancement of the human communities in which they work.

It is my hope and prayer that, with the motherly assistance of Mary Help of Christians and through the intercession of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, the Confederation may increase in the number of its committed members, in salesian fervour, and in fruitful apostolic work, for the greater good of the Past Pupils themselves and of so many needy young people.

To you personally, Madam President, I send my best wishes and assure you all of a remembrance in my prayers.

With gratitude and esteem,

Fr Egidio Viganò

5.5 Recognition as members of the Salesian Family of the Institute of the "Sisters of Jesus Adolescent"

The following two letters were addressed by the Rector Major to the Superior General of the Institute concerned, and to those responsible at the highest level for the other groups of the Salesian Family respectively, announcing the official recognition of membership in the Salesian Family of the "Sisters of Jesus Adolescent" of Campo Grande, Brazil.

Prot. 89/007

Rome, 1 January 1989

The V. Rev. Mother Lucia da Silva
Rua Antonio M^a. Coelho 1853 CP 334
- 79100 Campo Grande, Brazil

Reverend and dear Mother General,

On the happy occasion of the golden jubilee of your Institute, founded by the zealous salesian Bishop Vicente Priante on 8 December 1938, it gives me great pleasure to inform you and your Sisters that your request for official recognition as members of Don Bosco's Salesian Family has been favourably received.

The request was first presented by your Third General Chapter of 1982, renewed by the Fourth Chapter in 1988, and backed by the au-

thoritative testimony of two salesian bishops, Mgr Antonio Barbosa and Mgr Vittorio Pavanello, the former and present Archbishops of Campo Grande.

The "Sisters of Jesus Adolescent" thus become the ninth group to obtain such recognition. They are the first from Brazil and the third in Latin America, following the "Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary" of Colombia (recognized in 1981), and the "Daughters of the Divine Saviour" of El Salvador (in 1987). Your own Institute now joins the others, in this centenary year of the death of our Founder, in manifesting all the rich breadth of the salesian charism in the Church. The whole Salesian Family rejoices with you and offers you their congratulations.

In the session of our General Council on 23 December 1988, we examined the history and characteristics of your young Institute. It has had the double good fortune of being founded by a fervent Salesian and generously sustained for nearly thirty years by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians: "To this Congregation", testifies Mother General Marinella FMA, "we feel fraternally united through affinity of spirit and ideals".

In your salesian physiognomy there are some outstanding traits which we consider to be of great value:

- The clear option for poor youth and poorer environments, for their social, cultural and religious advancement;
- The preferential choice to help local Churches which are poor, in the sense that they lack clergy and other religious institutes;
- Your commitment to the practice of Don Bosco's preventive system;
- The eucharistic and Marian spirit;
- The significantly salesian date of foundation.

Continue along this same road and you will be able to enrich with your particular contribution our whole Family.

In your General Chapter planned for 1990 you will have to study suitable ways of inserting the above-mentioned characteristics into your Constitutions, and in particular to justify adequately the name of Sisters "of Jesus Adolescent" and express your bond with the Rector Major, "the father and centre of unity of the Family", and with the other groups of the Salesian Family with whom the law of mutual "giving and receiving" can be exercised, and especially with those of your region.

We shall pray that the good Lord, through the intercession of Mary Help of Christians, St John Bosco and Mgr Vicente Priante, will enable you to grow in number of vocations, in fervour and good works,

for his glory and for the benefit of many among the poor and little ones.

To you, Reverend Mother, to your Council and to all the Sisters, I send my best wishes for a blessed New Year of 1989, with a happy conclusion to the Don Bosco Centenary.

With deep affection in the Lord,

Fr Egidio Viganò

Rome, 12 January 1989

To Major Superiors or Presidents of Groups belonging to the Salesian Family

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that on 23 December 1988, after hearing the opinion of the General Council of the Society of St Francis de Sales, I have acceded to the request made by the General Chapter of the "Sisters of Jesus Adolescent" (an Institute of consecrated life) for membership of our Salesian Family.

The "Sisters of Jesus Adolescent", founded by the zealous Salesian Mgr Vicente Priante, Bishop of Cuneo, had between 1982 and the present day asked more than once through their General Chapters for a declaration of such membership, and the requests became more insistent during the past year which has marked the centenary of the de-

ath of Don Bosco and the golden jubilee of their own foundation.

The Sisters' request was accompanied by letters testifying to their salesian character and spirit from the Bishops of Mato Grosso and from the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, whose help had sustained them for thirty years during the difficult beginnings of their Institute. "To this Congregation", testifies Mother Marinella Castagno FMA, "we feel fraternally united through affinity of spirit and ideals".

In their salesian physiognomy there are some outstanding traits which we consider to be of great value:

- The clear option for poor youth and poorer environments, for their social, cultural and religious advancement;
- The preferential choice to help local Churches which are poor, in the sense that they lack clergy and other religious institutes;
- Your commitment to the practice of Don Bosco's preventive system;
- The eucharistic and Marian spirit;
- The significantly salesian date of foundation, 8 December 1938.

I invite you therefore to rejoice at this extension of salesian communion, and to welcome into our Family the "Sisters of Jesus Adolescent", so that we may deepen and bear witness together to our com-

mon spiritual heritage.

We wish the new Group an increase in vocations.

With affection in Don Bosco,

Fr Egidio Viganò

5.6 Recognition of membership in the Salesian Family of the Association "Damas Salesianas"

The following two letters were addressed by the Rector Major to the President of the Association concerned, and to those responsible at the highest level for the other groups of the Salesian Family respectively, announcing the official recognition of membership in the Salesian Family of the Association "Damas Salesianas" of Caracas.

Prot. 89/023

Rome, 6 January 1989

Signora Leonor G. de Mendoza
President
Association "Damas Salesianas"
Apdo 68.035
Altamira Caracas 1062 A

Dear Madam President,

On the happy occasion of the 20th anniversary of the foundation of your Association and at the conclusion of the centenary year of the death of Don Bosco, it gives me great pleasure to inform you, the

members of the 'Directorio Internacional', and all your members, that your request for official recognition of your Association as members of our spiritual Family has been favourably received.

The request had been presented on 29 February 1988 by the 106 members of your First International General Assembly at Caracas, accompanied by the documents of your "Ideario", the recent "Manual de Dirigentes" and the Decree of canonical erection at diocesan level by the Archbishop of Caracas, Cardinal Jose Ali Lebrun (29 September 1988). All these were carefully examined by the Salesian General Council at its meeting of 29 December last.

Your Association follows these other Groups in being officially recognized as members: The "Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary" of Colombia (1981), the "Salesian Oblates of the Sacred Heart" of Italy (1983), the Sister "Apostles of the Holy Family" also of Italy (1984), the "Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki" (1986), the "Sister Missionaries of Mary Help of Christians" of Shillong (1986), the "Daughters of the Divine Saviour" of El Salvador (1987), the "Sister Handmaids of the Immaculate Heart of Mary" of Thailand (1987), and the "Sisters of Jesus Adolescent" of Campo Grande (1988). (N.B. It should be noted that the

"Don Bosco Volunteers" and the Past Pupils are already included as members in official documents).

It should be noted that while the Groups listed above are Institutes of Consecrated Life, your own is an Association whose members are strictly lay in character. This is a circumstance which manifests all the rich breadth of the salesian charism in the Church, and enriches our whole Family in a singular manner. We rejoice with you and offer you our congratulations.

Your Group came into being during the period 1963-1969 in association with the new "Templo Nacional de San Juan Bosco" at Caracas, through the awareness that the religious building needed to be completed by social works for the benefit of those in need, and especially the young. The priest in charge, Fr Miguel Gonzalez SDB, found in many generous women a providential instrument for launching such a project. From that time you have developed in Venezuela and in other countries of Central and South America and in the Antilles, to such an extent that you have now more than a thousand active members working in 45 well organized centres.

Your Association is animated by a fervent salesian spirit: under the protection of Mary Help of Christians it has a clear and constant linkage with Don Bosco and his mis-

sion. But in our Family it is distinguished by several characteristic traits which it is well to point out:

- You are a female lay association – of women who are married, unmarried or widows – who intend not only to continue the tradition of Don Bosco's great benefactresses but also to strongly foster the insertion of the christian lay-woman in the world, thus contributing to a harmonious solution to the problem of the advancement of women by manifesting the apostolic capacities of women in the light of the Gospel and the salesian spirit.
- You came into being as a social and apostolic movement for human advancement and evangelization, with the intention of "giving to voluntary social work a christian and apostolic dimension" ('Ideario', nn. 14, 38), and with priority of attention to the poor, the suffering, and young people of the working classes.
- To render your service practical and efficacious you organize specific welfare works with appropriate structures.
- You work in groups, without detriment to the witness you give and the personal service you offer when necessary.
- You play an active part in the pastoral and social work of the local Churches.
- You foster a fraternal spirit

among yourselves and with other salesian Groups, as a sign of the family spirit typical of Don Bosco.

With a view to the harmonious development of the Association, I would like to make you some suggestions:

- Give priority to the sound salesian formation of your members, taking Mamma Margaret as an example with her simplicity of life, and the kind of conduct Don Bosco used to suggest to his benefactors.
- Be forthright in expressing your ideals, but avoid anything smacking of triumphalism or polemics, and intensify your communion with the other Groups of our Family.
- In particular, keep in mind that Don Bosco himself founded the Pious Union of Salesian Cooperators (1876), who follow a Rule of life officially approved by the Apostolic See (1986). In a special way the women salesian cooperators are your sisters. Do not fail to develop a fraternal rapport with them and with the other lay salesian Groups of your area, and to work together whenever there is question of doing greater good for the young and the poor.
- Take care that the sense of organization does not obscure the evangelical aspect of your work: dynamic apostolic activity always

takes its rise from a living faith nourished at the pure sources of meditation on the Word of God, the sacraments, personal prayer, and a deep knowledge of Don Bosco.

- Foster in fraternal fashion your mutual relationships with the Salesians of Don Bosco, so as to have the possibility of better developing the values of your identity.

I am convinced that your entry into the Salesian Family will be a benefit and stimulus for all its members, and particularly for the lay Groups.

I shall pray that the good Lord, through the intercession of Mary Help of Christians, will enable you to grow in number, in fervour and in good works, for his glory and for the benefit of many among the poor and little ones.

May Don Bosco intercede for you!

To you, Madam President, to the International Council and to all the members, I send my best wishes for a blessed New Year of 1989, with a happy conclusion to the Don Bosco Centenary.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr Egidio Viganò

Rome, 12 January 1989

To Major Superiors or Presidents of Groups belonging to the Salesian Family

I am happy to inform you that on 29 December 1988, after careful study in the General Council, the Rector Major acceded to the request made for membership of our Family made by the Association "Damas Salesianas" founded at Caracas, Venezuela, by the salesian priest Fr Miguel Gonzalez.

The Association is a private one of Catholic women (married, unmarried or widowed) whose members draw their inspiration from the mission and spirit of St John Bosco. It was canonically erected in the Archdiocese of Caracas on 29 September 1988.

The majority of the female Groups officially recognized as members of the Salesian Family in the past have been Institutes of consecrated life. This one on the other hand is entirely lay in character.

Because of its singular nature and the fact that it is not yet well known, I think it opportune to give you some information about it.

It came into being during the period 1963-1969 at Caracas-Altamira when the new "Templo Nacional de San Juan Bosco" was under construction, through the conviction that the religious building needed to be completed by a social work for the benefit of those in need, and especially the young. The

matter was taken in hand by a group of resolute and generous women. For a time the work remained local in character but in recent years has extended in a wonderful way to other parts of Caracas, further cities in Venezuela, and to another eleven countries (three in South America, five in Central America, and three in the Antilles). The Association is well structured and organized, and at present has more than a thousand active members working in 45 Centres.

Among its characteristics the following are of more than ordinary interest:

- It is an exclusively female association, accepting women of every social class. They intend not only to continue the tradition of Don Bosco's great benefactors, but also to strongly promote the fearless apostolate of the christian laywoman in the world. Experience of the salesian mission and spirit provides them with a stimulus for a simple and generous style of life, and one of practical evangelical sensitivity.
- Their mission is social and apostolic in character, combining human advancement with evangelization; it aims at giving to voluntary social work a christian dimension. They work for the poor, the needy and suffering of the working classes, with priority for the young, providing services in

the fields of health, culture and spirituality. Their motto is: "Do good without discrimination of persons, with Don Bosco and with the times".

- To render their service practical and efficacious they organize specific welfare works with appropriate structures: medical care, scholastic or professional help, catechetics, bookshops.
- They insist on working in groups.
- Official entry to the Association is made through the making of a "Promise".
- Alongside the active members there are also honorary members; the latter are women who were formerly active but can no longer carry out such work. There are also "benefactresses" who provide economic help without belonging actively to the Association.
- The members base their activity on a serious spiritual life, which aims at providing christian witness. The "Ideario" is their official identity card.

The official declaration of their membership in our Family obliges us to get to know them, accompany them by our prayers and, if possible, establish with them relationships of mutual collaboration, so that we may "advance together".

The Association has its headquarters at Altamira, La Castellana, Apdo 68.035, Caracas 1062 A., Ve-

nezuela, and the present President is Signora Leonor G. de Mendoza.

We thank divine Providence for raising them up, and we ask Mary Help of Christians to assist this new Group in their generous work and their spiritual growth.

Let us all look to Don Bosco as our Teacher and Guide.

With sincere good wishes in Christ,

Fr Egidio Viganò

5.7 Liturgical texts for the memorial of Blessed Laura Vicuña

The Latin text can be found in the Italian edition of the present number of the ACTS. The following is the approved English translation exactly as provided by the Congregation for Divine Worship.

OFFICE OF READINGS

SECOND READING

From the Life of Blessed Laura Vicuña, virgin. (*Positio super Causae Introductione. Summarium.*) Rome 1969, pp. 227-228; 252-254)

The Will of God - The best way to pray

"From the time she first entered our school," says her Superior, "Laura was noted for a maturity which was far superior to her age and a true

inclination to piety. Her innocent heart found no peace or rest other than in the things of God. Although still a child, her devotion was serious. There was no affectation or exaggeration in her. She was always natural and simple. When she was praying, it was obvious that she had her mind fixed on what she was doing. She hardly ever gave the impression that she was aware of what was happening around her and many times she had to be told that she had been called, or that it was time to leave the church.

She fulfilled all her other duties with the same attention. She well understood and applied to herself the phrase: "If a thing's worth doing, it's worth doing well", and with liberty of spirit, joyfully and contentedly, she passed from church to classroom, from classroom to work-room or to any other work or activity.

She often said: "For me, to pray and to work are the same thing; it's the same thing to pray, to play or to sleep. In doing what I'm told, I'm doing what God wants and this is what I want; this for me is the best way to pray."

"After she learned what piety was", writes her Superior, "she seemed to be given a special gift of prayer. She loved to pray; so much so that even when she played, she was absorbed in God."

"It seems to me", she said, "that God himself is keeping alive in me the remembrance of his Divine Presence. Whenever I am in class or in the playground, this thought accompanies me. It helps me and encourages me." Yet, objected the priest (confessor), you might be so preoccupied by this thought that you would neglect your duties. "Ah! no Father," she replied, "I know that this thought helps me to do everything better and it doesn't bother me in any way, because it's not that I'm continually thinking of it, but without realizing I'm enjoying the remembrance."

RESPONSORY

R/. How beautiful you are, virgin of Christ;

— the Lord has given you the gift of perpetual virginity.

V/. Nothing can rob you of your reward or separate you from the love of the Son of God.

R/. the Lord has given you the gift of perpetual virginity.

COLLECT

O God, in the adolescent Laura Vicuña, virgin, you have united strength of soul and innocent candour in a marvellous way; grant that through her intercession, we also may overcome with strength the arduous trials of life, in order to be

able to enjoy and spread around us, that happiness promised to the pure of heart.

Through Our Lord.

5.8 Institute of the Sciences of Social Communication at the UPS

The following is a translation of the letter of the Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, giving experimental approval for the new Institute for Social Communication at the UPS, desired by the General Council and the University as an enterprise of the Congregation to mark the centenary of Don Bosco.

Prot. N. 1159/88/8

Rome, 17 December 1988

Very Rev. Fr Egidio Viganò
Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical Salesian University

Very Reverend Grand Chancellor,

We have received your gracious letter N. 12/88 of 29 June last, by which you made to this Congregation the request for the erection of the "Institute of Sciences of Social Communication" of the Salesian Pontifical University, together with the relative documentation.

We wish to express to you in the first place our pleasure at this im-

portant initiative, promoted jointly by the Society of St John Bosco and the Salesian University.

This Congregation has given particular attention to the problem of formation to social communications, and has issued the document "Guidelines for the formation of future priests concerning the means of social communication".

We are therefore very pleased to give our approval in general terms to the initiative, a significant result of the centenary year of the death of St John Bosco. The decision can be made public at once and put into effect for a four-year experimental period beginning with the academic year 1988-89.

We enclose with this letter some observations for the consideration of the competent Authorities, with a view to the issuing in due course of the Decree of erection of the ISCOS and the approval of its Statute.

While we await the Statute, revised in the light of the above-mentioned observations, and other indications which the competent Authorities may think it well to put forward, it is our hope that the Institute may have a happy beginning for the progress of the Church's mission of evangelization, especially in the world of youth.

We take the opportunity to offer you our respects, and remain
Sincerely in the Lord

William Card. Baum
Prefect

✠ Jose Saraiva Martins
Secretary

5.9 Appointment of Fr Egidio Viganò as a member of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

On 3 January 1989 our Rector Major was appointed a member of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples ("De Propaganda Fide"). The following is a transcription of the document issued by the Secretariat of State.

*Summus Pontifex
IOANNES PAULUS II*

Membris Congregationis pro Gentium Evangelizatione seu de Propaganda Fide ad quinquennium ascripsit Reverendum Dominum

*AEGIDIUM VIGANÒ
Supremum Moderatorem
Societatis
Sancti Francisci Salesii*

*Id in notitiam ipsius Reverendi Domini Viganò perfertur, ut ea de re opportune certior fiat ad eiusdemque normam se gerat.
Ex Aedibus Vaticanis, die III
mensis Ianuarii anno
MCMLXXXIX*

A. Card. Casaroli

5.10 New Provincials

1. *Fr Pascual CHAVEZ, Provincial of GUADALAJARA (Mexico)*

Fr Pascual CHAVEZ has been appointed to lead the Province of Guadalajara, Mexico, in succession to the late lamented Fr Humberto Meneses, called by the Lord to Paradise.

Fr Pascual was born on 14 December 1947 at Catorce in the Province of San Luis Potosi, Mexico. He entered the salesian college of Saltillo at the age of 11 years and subsequently went on to the Novitiate at Coacalco, where he made his first profession on 16 August 1964.

After his period of practical training and theological studies at Guadalajara he was ordained priest on 8 December 1973.

He was sent to Rome for further studies and obtained the Licentiate in Sacred Scripture. On returning to his native land he was entrusted with the teaching of Scripture in the theological studentate of Tlaquepaque, where in 1980 he became also Rector. For two years he had been also a member of the Provincial Council.

2. *Fr Patrick LONERGAN, Superior of the Vice-province of SOUTHERN AFRICA*

Fr Patrick LONERGAN has been appointed to guide the new Vice-

province of Southern Africa, with headquarters in Johannesburg.

He was born at Emly, Co.Tipperary, Ireland, on 6 February 1941. After frequenting the salesian school at Pallaskenry, he did his Novitiate at Burwash and made his religious profession on 12 September 1958.

During his practical training he gained missionary experience in Ecuador, and then returned to Europe for theological studies at Cremsan in Palestine; he was ordained priest on 28 June 1969.

After two years of educational and pastoral work at Blaisdon in England, he left in 1970 for South Africa where he has worked ever since, except for a period at the Catechetical Centre of Dundalk in Ireland. In 1978 he was appointed Rector of the house of Lansdowne. When called to lead the new Vice-province he was also a Councillor of the Provincial Delegation of Southern Africa.

5.11 Brotherly Solidarity

(52nd report)

a) *Provinces that have contributed to the solidarity fund*

AFRICA

Prov. Middle East Makallé	L. 1,000,000
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ASIA

Prov. India Bombay	L. 950,000
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Prov. India Calcutta	L. 3,000,000	Burundi: for the needs of the mis- sion	L. 476,000
Prov. India Guwahati	L. 2,000,000	ASIA	
Prov. India Guwahati (P. Bianchi)	L. 50,000	Prov. India-Calcutta Burma-Anisakan: for the aspirantate	L. 20,000,000
Prov. India Madras	L. 3,000,000	Burma: for the De- legation	L. 15,000,000
Prov. Thailand	L. 1,500,000	Burma: for needs of the confreres	L. 13,300,000
EUROPE		Vice-prov. Vietnam: For the needs of the Vice-province	L. 51,000,000
Prov. Belgium Brussels	L. 17,175,000	EUROPA	
Prov. France Paris	L. 10,000,000	Prov. France Paris: refund - Istan- bul	L. 42,000
Prov. Germany Cologne	L. 6,710,914	Prov. Italy-Genoa: for a sick confrere (Varazze)	L. 4,214,000
Prov. Great Britain	L. 476,000	LATIN AMERICA	
Prov. Italy Rome (Slovaks)	L. 2,000,000	Prov. Antilles Cuba: for the needs of the mission	L. 19,322,420
Prov. Italy Subalpine	L. 2,254,920	Cuba: for Sig. V. Cayado	L. 1,714,100
Prov. Italy East Venice (Udine)	L. 5,350,000	Prov. Brazil-Manaus: for building of a no- vitiare	L. 12,000,000
Prov. Spain Cordoba	L. 10,000,000	Prov. Brazil-S. Paulo: Angola: for a vehi- cule	L. 20,000,000
Italy (Sig. Novelli)	L. 300,000	Prov. Central America: Tegucigalpa (P. Sab- badin)	L. 12,000,000
Italy (Anon.)	L. 20,000	Prov. Messico-Guada- lajara: Guinea-Conakry (P. Beraud)	L. 4,260,000
Italy (refund)	L. 300,000		
LATIN AMERICA			
Prov. Brazil Belo Horizonte	L. 1,208,600		
NORTH AMERICA			
Prov. USA San Francisco	L. 32,531,250		
b) <i>Distribution of monies received through the solidarity fund</i>			
AFRICA			
Prov. Zaire			

5.12 S.D.B. Statistics at 31-12-88

Summarized figures

Isp.	Tot. 1987	Professi temporanei				Professi perpetui				Tot. professi	Novizi	Tot. 1988
		L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P			
AFC	229	13	27	0	0	24	2	0	151	217	13	230
AFE	0	2	9	0	0	9	16	0	29	65	0	65
ANT	189	2	34	0	0	15	5	0	122	178	10	188
ABA	210	3	15	0	0	16	14	0	164	212	3	215
ABB	188	3	6	0	0	17	6	0	127	159	2	161
ACO	187	10	27	0	0	9	18	0	105	169	11	180
ALP	126	2	17	0	0	15	8	0	81	123	5	128
ARO	151	4	17	0	0	18	9	0	94	142	4	146
AUL	124	3	10	0	0	21	4	0	84	122	3	125
AUS	160	6	12	0	1	10	3	1	124	157	4	161
BEN	231	2	16	0	0	23	4	0	181	226	4	230
BES	116	1	3	0	0	9	2	0	97	112	1	113
BOL	128	4	32	0	0	15	5	0	68	124	6	130
BBH	174	7	19	0	0	21	4	0	123	174	2	176
BCG	183	5	21	0	0	27	4	0	111	168	5	173
BMA	134	5	24	0	0	19	3	0	74	125	10	135
BPA	128	1	17	0	0	11	4	0	87	120	4	124
BRE	93	2	11	0	0	16	4	0	60	93	0	93
BSP	238	8	33	0	0	31	11	0	147	230	2	232
CAE	0	0	1	0	0	5	1	0	28	35	0	35
CAM	268	10	71	0	0	24	4	0	142	251	17	268
CIL	252	1	40	0	0	23	19	0	159	242	16	258
CIN	151	1	10	0	0	38	6	0	90	145	0	145
COB	208	3	33	0	0	44	5	0	119	204	9	213
COM	172	2	37	0	0	24	6	0	93	162	9	171
ECU	274	8	38	0	0	28	13	0	176	263	7	270
FIL	336	32	97	0	0	23	31	1	135	319	31	350
FLY	177	0	5	0	0	34	3	0	131	173	0	173
FPA	247	2	9	0	0	34	1	0	195	241	7	248
GBR	168	1	8	0	0	21	3	0	129	162	2	164
GEK	198	6	17	0	0	41	5	0	116	185	5	190
GEM	308	7	25	0	0	68	9	0	192	301	5	306
GIA	130	0	11	0	0	21	5	0	92	129	6	135
INB	311	13	84	0	0	17	19	0	110	243	9	252
INC	321	7	84	0	0	33	29	0	154	307	12	319
IND	181	2	59	0	0	5	19	0	101	186	12	198
ING	286	4	61	0	0	29	20	0	149	263	23	286
INK	308	4	106	0	0	13	48	0	118	289	21	310
INM	362	12	121	0	0	21	40	0	157	351	22	373
IRL	209	2	15	0	0	19	12	0	150	198	4	202
IAD	170	2	10	0	0	32	1	0	124	169	0	169
ICE	367	7	20	0	0	133	1	1	198	360	3	363

Isp.	Tot. 1987	Professi temporanei				Professi perpetui				Tot. professi	Novizi	Tot. 1988
		L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P			
ILE	431	6	25	0	0	73	6	0	315	424	4	428
ILT	223	0	8	0	0	42	3	1	172	226	4	230
IME	349	3	25	0	1	53	4	1	253	340	3	343
INE	225	1	11	0	0	44	6	0	159	221	1	222
IRO	321	2	18	0	0	54	4	3	234	315	7	322
ISA	87	0	5	0	0	9	3	0	70	87	1	88
ISI	391	3	24	0	0	36	8	0	308	379	4	383
ISU	493	6	24	0	0	101	5	0	347	483	4	487
IVE	309	5	21	0	0	58	8	1	211	304	3	307
IVO	242	2	12	0	0	51	2	0	176	243	4	247
JUL	151	0	18	0	0	21	11	0	96	146	5	151
JUZ	107	0	16	0	0	8	7	0	71	102	4	106
KOR	46	5	11	0	0	6	1	0	17	40	11	51
MEG	166	5	36	0	0	13	12	0	106	172	16	188
MEM	209	12	57	0	0	14	9	0	101	193	19	212
MOR	157	0	15	0	0	31	3	0	102	151	3	154
OLA	91	0	0	0	0	26	0	1	63	90	0	90
PAR	100	2	14	0	0	9	4	0	63	92	2	94
PER	180	9	35	0	0	10	11	0	102	167	15	182
PLE	404	15	138	0	0	23	8	0	197	381	28	409
PLN	318	6	95	0	0	11	10	0	182	304	24	328
PLO	265	2	56	0	0	1	11	0	175	245	17	262
PLS	295	0	97	0	0	19	12	0	125	253	31	284
POR	190	3	17	0	0	49	6	1	113	189	9	198
SBA	270	3	19	0	0	43	6	0	190	261	8	269
SBI	265	9	34	0	0	57	23	0	137	260	7	267
SCO	165	7	19	0	0	7	3	2	116	154	1	155
SLE	285	12	25	0	0	71	8	0	159	275	6	281
SMA	438	21	37	0	0	101	18	0	252	429	11	440
SSE	202	1	17	0	0	36	6	0	138	198	5	203
SVA	214	1	17	0	0	36	4	1	148	207	5	212
SUE	303	3	21	0	0	55	6	0	179	264	2	266
SUO	132	3	1	0	0	28	4	0	90	126	1	127
THA	110	7	13	0	0	10	7	0	69	106	4	110
URU	150	1	14	0	0	11	2	0	117	145	3	148
VEN	243	4	28	0	0	20	5	1	180	238	7	245
UPS	124	0	0	0	1	16	0	0	107	124	0	124
RMG	92	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	70	90	0	90
Tot.	17104	388	2335	0	3	2329	671	15	10797	16518	598	17106
Vesc. + Prel.	80									84		84
Non catal.	460									450	10	460
Tot.	17644	368	2335	0	3	2329	671	15	10797	17052	598	17650

1 I dati dei «non catalogati» sono approssimativi e si riferiscono ai paesi dove la Congregazione non vive in libertà.

2 Durante il 1988 hanno avuto inizio due nuove Visitatorie: AFE e CAE (confratelli provenienti da INB e SUE).

5.13 Our dead confreres (1989 – 1ST)

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

NAME	PLACE DATE	AGE	PROV.
L BACKS Rudolf	Marienhausen	25-12-88	79 GEK
P BEJARANO Pablo	Bogotá	17-01-89	58 COM
P BLEHO Ernest	Trnava	22-11-88	72 CEB
P BRASSIL Michael	Johannesburg	04-01-89	73 AFM
P BRODER Daniel	Bollington	13-02-89	87 GBR
P BURCKARDT Albert	St. Die	22-02-89	75 FLY
L CALIARI Antonio	Albano Laziale	25-10-88	52 IRO
P CAMPO Alejandro	Santander	13-12-88	74 SBI
P CAROLLO Luigi	Macas	30-01-89	65 ECU
P CHARBEL Antonio	São Paulo	07-01-88	76 BSP
L CUEVAS GUERRA Absalón	Albacete	23-01-89	83 SVA
P D'ANTONA Giuseppe	Caltanissetta	01-01-89	78 ISI
P DI FIORE Luigi	Brunswick	12-02-89	67 AUL
<i>Fu Ispettore per 7 anni</i>			
P FERIN Giovanni	Venezia	18-01-89	59 IVE
P FONTANA Mario	Buenos Aires	07-06-88	74 ABA
L GENESIO Ugo	Roma	09-03-89	86 IRO
P GERBALDO Francesco	Bra	18-12-88	68 ISU
P GERMANO Orazio	Civitanova Marche	04-11-88	72 IAD
L GUERRA Giovanni	Torino	21-12-88	77 ISU
P HILBER Blasius	Amstetten	18-11-88	81 AUS
L HODIAMONT Joseph	Kicukiro	09-01-89	76 AFC
P KLEIN Jan	Utrecht	15-02-89	71 OLA
P KOZA Aloiz	Pezinok	30-12-88	85 CEB
P KRASEK Pawel	Swobnica	18-12-88	87 PLN
P LEPARIK Josef	Nová Horka	09-12-88	87 CEP
P LÓPEZ Feliciano	Bahía Blanca	03-01-89	86 ABB
P MAGUIRE John	London	22-02-89	72 GBR
L MAKOS Ján	Bratislava	26-11-88	82 CEB
P MAZZON Severino	Belluno	25-12-88	51 IVO
P MENAPACE Leo	Bologna	31-01-89	73 ILE
P MOSKO Pablo	Jarabacoa	31-12-88	85 ANT
P NOBOA Pedro	Quito	28-01-89	90 ECU
P PAGANELLI Osvaldo	Nave	12-02-89	68 ILE

NAME	PLACE DATE	AGE	PROV.
P PINI Martino	Barra do Garças	16-12-88	74 BCG
P PLÜCKTHUN Hans	Tachov (Cecoslovacchia)	13-01-89	56 GEK
P PORRINO Eutisio	Torino	16-02-89	71 ISU
P PROVERA Silvio	Bangkok	04-03-89	78 THA
L PUSTOVRH Lojze	Trstenik	04-12-88	81 JUL
P QUIROGA Luis Johannis	Buenos Aires	12-12-88	45 ARO
P RAKOVICKY Cyril	Trnava	22-10-88	69 CEB
P RODRÍGUEZ CORRAL Pedro	Vigo	21-01-89	87 SLE
P RUSINIAK Tadeusz	Trzcinna	25-11-88	59 PLN
L SCARRONE Dante	Alessandria	11-01-89	60 ISI
L SCHUSTER Franz Xaver	Helenenberg	02-01-89	87 GEK
P SOLA Egidio	Madras	08-02-89	82 INM
P STABILE Giacinto	Centenario	13-01-89	68 ABB
P STRADA Lucjan	Kopiec	21-02-89	80 PLO
P UGUET Mariano	Calcutta	18-02-89	91 INC
<i>Fu Ispettore per 9 anni</i>			
P VAS Jozsef	Pomár	07-01-89	78 UNG
P VASCHETTO Costanzo	Torino	30-01-89	67 ISU
L VEGA HERNÁNDEZ Luis	Puebla	24-12-88	80 MEM
P VIGNATO Rodolfo	Arese	11-02-89	84 ILE
P WISEMAN John Joseph	Estcourt Natal	02-02-89	83 AFM
P WROTKOWSKI Stanisław	Kraków	10-01-89	75 PLS

