



# acts

**of the general council**

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**year LXXII january-march 1991**

**N. 335**

official organ  
of animation  
and communication  
for the  
salesian congregation

**Roma  
Direzione Generale  
Opere Don Bosco**





# acts

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

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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## N. 335

year LXXII

january-march 1991

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## 1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

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### **THE PRIEST OF THE YEAR 2000 A THEME WE HAVE VERY MUCH AT HEART**

- Introduction. - 150th anniversary of the priestly ordination of Don Bosco. - The Synod of 1990, on priestly formation at the present day. - The "courageous clarity" of the synodal fathers. - The absolute originality of the "priesthood" of the New Covenant. - Baptismal consecration and the ordained ministry. - The delicate theme of the priest who is also a religious. - Don Bosco: Priest and Founder for the young. - Urgent need for better salesian formation. - The GC23 and our pastoral growth. - Gratitude to the Priest and his entrustment to Mary.

Rome, Solemnity of the  
Immaculate Conception BVM,  
8 December 1990

My dear confreres,

May the new year be for all of us a time when we intensify the spirit of Don Bosco in our hearts. In this way we shall be able, day by day, to gradually bring to reality the pedagogical and pastoral perspectives of the GC23.

Importance should be given to the "community day".<sup>1</sup> It will be well to recite in the course of the community meeting, which is a vital setting for ongoing formation, the "prayer" expressed in n. 95 of the Chapter document: "We believe that God loves the young... We believe that Jesus wants to share his life with young people... We believe that the Spirit is present in them... We believe that God is awaiting us in the young to offer us the grace of

<sup>1</sup> GC23 222

meeting with him and to dispose us to serve him in them...". As we recite together the whole of this text, we shall grow in the characteristic experience which makes us see the field of education as the special place where we meet Christ.

I would like to exhort Provincials and Rectors to insist on *ongoing formation* so that "da mihi animas" may be not only the motto that characterizes us but also, and above all, the climate ensuring good health in our houses or, as Don Rinaldi used to say, the lungs through which we "sigh for souls".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cf. AGC 332, pp. 41-45

To foster an atmosphere of this kind I think it will be useful to invite you to reflect on the recent ecclesial event of the Bishops' Synod, centred on priestly formation: every truly ecclesial event is also of its very nature a family event. This is a theme which for various reasons is of interest to us as a Congregation.

### **The 150th anniversary of the priestly ordination of Don Bosco.**

In the first place a significant commemoration is coming which prompts us to think over again the historical origins of our charisma: on 5 June of this year there occurs the 150th anniversary of Don Bosco's priestly ordination: it was a date of decisive importance in the life of our Founder and one which he had long desired and prepared for. It helps us to a better understanding of his pastoral heart. It is through the particular features of the priest, as manifested in Don Bosco, that we must deepen our understanding of our mission to the young and the poor.



If we count up the young confreres who aspire to be priests and are preparing for the priestly ministry in the Congregation, we find that between post-novices, those in practical training, and students of theology we arrive at the considerable number of more than 3,000; and if we add also about 450 novices who aspire to the priesthood, we reach a total of 3,500. These are numbers that remind us forcibly of the great responsibility we bear before the Church, and make us think too of the very many expectations of friendship with Christ that crowd the hearts of the young, sometimes unconsciously. These figures also give rise in us to a deep sense of gratitude and humble joy when we see them as an unfailing sign of the kindness and will of God for the continuity and growth of the Founder's charism: "every call", the Constitutions tell us, "is an indication that the Lord loves the Congregation, wants to see it vibrant for the good of the Church and never ceases to enrich it with new apostolic energy".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> C 22

We owe our existence to the burning zeal in the heart of Don Bosco, the priest; we share with him a pastoral mission which takes upon itself the life of faith of the young and the poorer classes; we live and work together,<sup>4</sup> animated sustained and guided at world, provincial and local level, by a confrere who draws constant inspiration for his priestly zeal "through the grace of his priestly ministry and pastoral experience".<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> C 49

<sup>5</sup> C 121

Our Congregation has original features in which the priesthood (lived in complementary brotherhood between lay and priest confreres) is a constitutive element in its identity. We are a community "of clerics and laymen who complement each other as brothers in living out the same vocation".<sup>6</sup> And

<sup>6</sup> C 4

so the theme considered by the Synod is one that touches us closely.

But also, and above all, it plunges us, together with all believers, into the ineffable mystery of Christ, putting us more intensely at the centre of his love and mission. It takes us back to the events of his death and resurrection, and to the mediation in heaven of the Risen Christ who never ceases to intercede with us before the Father. The Church's liturgical activity is rooted in him, and each day, through the Eucharist, incorporates our enterprise and our life in his sublime act of sacrifice which continues definitively as the summit of human love in history.

This is a powerful incitement to us to see the Synod as a providential event which helps to improve the spiritual quality of the life of the conferes and communities. We want to debunk that cutting statement that we have "many priests but little priesthood": this is evidently absurd, but even the suspicion that it might contain a grain of truth is depressing and prompts us to take a serious look at the matter.

The recent Synod, even though here we can take only a preliminary look at it, points to a clear method by which we can rise to higher levels.

### **The Synod of 1990, on the formation of the Priest at the present day.**

We have followed this eighth ordinary Bishops' Synod through the newspapers, and that is not enough. We want to come closer to it to look at it from within. Let us begin with some facts that will give us a better observation point.

The 1990-Synod, which was preceded by a lengthy preparation with the contributions of episcopal conferences, took place at the Vatican from 30 September to 28 October. Taking part in it were 238 synodal fathers, 17 experts and 43 observers of various nationalities. They included four salesian prelates: Cardinal Rosalio Castillo, and Bishops Oscar Rodriguez, Basilio Mvé and Juan Abelardo Mata.

For the first time there was a complete participation by the bishops of Eastern Europe, with the result that to the usual language groups there was added another – the Slav group (made up of those from the Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, one each from Latvia and Byelorussia, and representatives from Yugoslavia and Poland). The reports given by some of these bishops on what had occurred in their local Churches was deeply moving and gave rise to prolonged applause. So, for example, Mgr Alexandru Todea, Metropolitan of Fagaras and Alba Julia in Rumania, described with penetrating realism the sufferings caused by persecution: a total of a thousand years of prison suffered by bishops, priests and faithful; the death in prison of seven bishops; and an atheistic organization of society under a dictatorial and oppressive regime.

The theme studied in the Synod was: “*the formation of priests in the circumstances of the present day*”. During the four intense weeks of work, 41 “Propositions” were formulated to be given to the Pope, with other contributions, for the drafting of the Apostolic Exhortation that would follow the Synod.

These were not just summarized proposals but well defined themes with indications for their further development. They provide a brief presentation of the cultural contexts in which believers

live at the present time, and a panorama of the thoughts of the Pastors on the evolution of society; they deal too with vocations and their discernment, the common priesthood of the People of God and the identity and mission of service proper to the priest, the means and content of their initial formation, the importance of ongoing formation, and various problems inherent in the lives of priests.

Worthy of particular note was the report of the Pro-Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, Mgr Pio Laghi, on the present situation in vocations: a slow and laborious upswing in Europe and North America, with a constant increase in Africa, Latin America and Asian areas, varying in extent from one place to another.

Clearly at the centre of everything – and this is the aspect of greatest interest to us – was the consideration of the priesthood of the New Covenant under its two aspects of baptismal consecration (i.e. the priesthood common to all the faithful) and of ordained ministry (i.e. that belonging specifically to priests and bishops).

Unfortunately the media in general failed to present the values and rich renewal elements of the Synod; it was something not easy to do for widely varying reasons. More than a few newspapers and reviews of a more or less lay leaning, seizing on their favourite points of interest, gave superficial and badly informed evaluations and judgements on the negative side.

Our direct contacts with the synodal fathers, on the other hand, provide a quite different evaluation: an unusual convergence of views among the participants and an untroubled future outlook. The secretary, Mgr John Schotte, in the final press conference, spoke of a “strong convergence”, in “effec-



tive and affective brotherly collegiality". And Cardinal Goffredo Daneels, Archbishop of Brussels and a veteran of several previous Synods, said he thought this had been the best of those in which he had taken part.

Two characteristic aspects of the synodal atmosphere can be emphasized. The first is the fact that almost two-thirds of the bishops were at their first Synod, and the majority (all except about twenty) had not taken part in Vatican II, so that Mgr Schotte was able to describe this one as the first "post-conciliar" Synod; and yet in it the strong fidelity to the content of Vatican II was quite striking.

The second aspect is the air of hope, based on confidence in the intervention of the Holy Spirit for vocations and the holiness of the clergy. The synodal fathers rose above the malevolent use of current statistics as propaganda suggesting a social weakening or backwardness, or even going as far as raising the spectre of old age. This was a Synod reflecting the youthfulness of the Church and in no way lacking faith in its progress towards the third millennium.

The Pope deliberately gave explicit emphasis to the spiritual fruits of the vocation to the ministerial priesthood by the beatification of two worthy priests, Giuseppe Allamano (a past-pupil of Valdocco) and Annibale Maria Di Francia.

It was a Synod, therefore, rich in hope, which based its trust on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit who renews priesthood in the Church.

**The “courageous clarity” of the synodal fathers.**

The secretary Mgr Schotte, expressing an overall evaluation of the Synod, spoke amongst other things of its “courageous clarity” in giving an appropriate response to the various theories and doubts that had arisen about the very nature of priestly ministry, and consequently on the formation of the priest himself. For years past, in fact, interpretations had been circulating that conceived renewal of “ministry” as starting from sociological principles to arrive at the conclusion that such renewal must be considered as a community “function” rather than a sacramental “consecration”. A similar functional interpretation would seek to render insignificant the traditional doctrine on the ministerial priesthood; it would see such ministry as a function stemming from the local community. And so the priesthood would not be linked with an indelible character or the law of celibacy; it would be open to all and would have a great variety of forms according to the cultural requirements of time and place. It should therefore be no longer a “sacred mediation” (as they say) overladen with a crust of “power and dignity” accumulated in the course of centuries, but a simple service which should be an up-to-date response to the present needs of human social life; this would include participation by the rank and file and would mean, in fact, a democratic sharing of responsibility by all the People of God.

The nature of ministry, therefore, would have to be sought more in the laws of human society than in sacramental reference to Christ; this would call into question the apostolic succession itself in

view of a Church structure that would be no longer hierarchic.

It is not surprising that theories of this kind, together with the great social and ecclesial changes that have taken place, should have led to a crisis of priestly identity, with the result that among the “present-day circumstances” to be considered a place has to be found also and especially for a redefining of priestly identity.

As well as the confusion generated by theories of this type, there have also been the adopting of positions concerning the method of formation; even though with a right intention, some of these would favour the practice of placing candidates in the front line among those to whom the mission is addressed, paying little attention to the need for a gradual approach, the spiritual requirements for ministerial incorporation into the priesthood of Christ and specific qualification for the pastoral mission.

This is why the synodal fathers had to consider among the “present-day circumstances” referred to in their theme also (and primarily) these fundamental difficulties.

From this point of view the Synod can be considered a timely prophetic statement in favour of the Priest of the Year 2000, a statement for which there was a crying need!

The theme was of its very nature a wide one, and limits were found necessary as regards what could be dealt with in the space of four weeks. And so discussion was confined almost entirely to the “diocesan” priest; and not very much was said about the challenges presented by today’s pastoral situations. But we have to admit that there is so

great a variety of priestly charismata and of social and cultural contexts that it would be quite impossible to address all of them in so short a space of time.

It will be to our purpose however to recall here the contribution of Cardinal Jean Jerome Hamer, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life. He stated: "In Clerical Religious Institutes the priesthood belongs to the very nature of these Institutes. For these religious priests the exercise of Sacred Orders is, therefore, not an external element added as an extra to an already complete religious life. This fact is of notable importance in different fields, but especially in that of formation. Every major superior has the responsibility to maintain perfect unity in the formation for priesthood and for religious life, according to the proper identity (charism) of the Institute".<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Oss. Rom. 12. 10. 90

These considerations can serve as a background against which we can develop some reflections concerning in particular the originality of our own Congregation. It is a good thing for us to look squarely at the characteristic aspects of our own charisma.

Among the Propositions of the Synod there is, in any case, one that deals with the relationship between secular and religious priests, insisting on the importance of the document "Mutuae Relationes"<sup>8</sup> and other Propositions concerning pastoral involvement, which derive in practice from the locality (particular Churches and Bishops' Conferences), and which carry directives binding also on religious; there are also references to the ecclesial significance of the "presbyterium" for all priests.

<sup>8</sup> Rome, 14. 5. 78

We hope that the Pope's Apostolic Exhortation will offer us some further guidelines in due course.



On the other hand, the question of "present-day circumstances" will also be considered, even though from a wider standpoint, in coming meetings of bishops: the special European Synod in 1991, the IVth Assembly of the Latin-American Bishops in 1992, and the special African Synod in 1993.

The Holy Father himself recognized the need to continue in this sense the reflections begun in this Synod. In his closing address of 27 October at the end of the final general assembly the Pope, after speaking of the "very great importance" of priestly formation, added: "The problems just mentioned involve the universal Church. Consideration must be continued and followed up, according to the guidelines set down by the Synodal Assembly, in view of their application to the various situations of the local Churches. This continuation of the work is part and parcel of the normal flow of Synodal activity. The Synod will yield all its results only through further work, inspired and guided by the Synod itself".<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Oss. Rom. 28. 10. 90

### **The absolute originality of the priesthood of the New Covenant.**

There is no doubt that the emergence of the signs of the times, the new relationship between the Church and the world and the demands of the renewal of the ordained ministry flowing from the obligations of the new evangelization, imply a deep and attentive reconsideration of the nature and practice of the christian priesthood, which the Council of Trent had not set out in all its details be-

cause of the prevailing circumstances. Clarity and certainty about one of the most vital and constitutive aspects of the Church is of surpassing interest to all the People of God. To have a faith vision of priestly identity means perceiving more deeply, as far as is possible, the mystery of Christ. On the basis of a clear identity it will be easier to be open to the search for new ways of exercising the ministry without running grave risks of deviation.

The point of reference to which the synodal fathers returned as a starting point for their considerations was the doctrine contained in the great documents of Vatican II. It will be useful to recall their main themes, which should be the daily nourishment of the contemplation of our faith.

The notion of christian priesthood in the New Covenant does not belong to the specific concept of religions; the latter confine the priesthood to the environment of rites and what is sacred. But in the New Covenant, on the other hand, it is a historical fact that stems directly from the man Jesus Christ and the saving events of his Passover. It is not therefore a religious expression of the sacred, but is based on an event of time and place which touches the whole of human reality, with a practical influence on the overall meaning of his existence and of his vocation as an individual in creation. Christianity lives more by *faith* than by *religion*; in it there is only one true "Priest", with a single efficacious "Sacrifice": i.e. Christ with his death and resurrection!

"He has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by the power of an indestructible life".<sup>10</sup> From the religious point of view of the Jewish tradition, Jesus

<sup>10</sup> Heb 7. 16

Christ would be, in our present-day terminology, a "layman": "For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests".<sup>11</sup> His *sacrifice* too is unique and is realized in the historical events of his passion, death and resurrection: "Christ was offered once for all",<sup>12</sup> and not in a temple or a sacred place but on the hill of Calvary and in a social context of condemnation through the scaffold of the cross: from there he passed once and for all time into the true sanctuary, where he is seated at the right hand of God to be our decisive mediator; "he makes use of a greater, a more complete tabernacle, which human hands never fashioned; it does not belong to this order of creation at all".<sup>13</sup> Christ's passion and death are an expression of the highest love a human being can ever display, and the resurrection bears this supreme sacrifice to the Father in a perennial and continuously active form.

There was never before, nor can there ever be in the future, a priesthood more original than this one. It touches, as we said, the very reality of man from within his nature and his destination in history. Christ is a priest because he is a man; and as the paschal man he is the "second Adam", i.e. the founder of the true "new man", whose mystery he reveals and whom he renews in line with the fullness of his capabilities as king of all creation; he restores to him, in fact, the dignity of the worshipper for the whole of creation which he had lost through the sin of the first Adam. Man indeed was called from the first moment of creation to be the interpreter of the world before God; the true liturgy was meant to be the "living man" with his knowledge, gratitude, fellowship and his entire history.

<sup>11</sup> Heb 7,14<sup>12</sup> Heb 9,28<sup>13</sup> Heb 9,11

What a disaster sin brought with it! Only Christ, with his unique and indefectible priesthood, was able to rehabilitate man in wondrous fashion ("mirabilis"!), and reestablish him in his dignity and vocation. And so his priesthood enters into the very framework of an objective and integral anthropology which should be of interest to every human being and to all cultures.

This priesthood of Christ, although unique, is not an isolated reality as though he were an isolated hero; on the contrary it is an expression of the deepest and universal solidarity, that of the first-born of many brethren, of the "head" of the body of all humanity: in him and through him exists the priesthood and sacrifice of man, of the whole human race.

### **Baptismal consecration and the ordained ministry.**

To attain this objective of the involvement of all, Christ instituted, as a visible means for those who believe in him, the sacramental nature of the New Covenant, i.e. the mediation of signs (persons and things) indicative of his Passover. Then he sent the Holy Spirit to incorporate, one by one, in the People of God by his gentle power all humanity, and bring them to act in history as personal signs of the "New Man".

It was the Lord's will that everyone should be endowed with a "common priesthood" to transform the personal life of each one into an acceptable sacrifice, and the whole of history into a liturgy of the living man. "The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated to be a spiritual house and a holy priest-



hood, that through all the works of christian men they may offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the perfection of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. Therefore all the disciples of Christ, persevering in prayer and praising God, should present themselves as a sacrifice, living, holy, and pleasing to God. They should everywhere on earth bear witness to Christ and give an answer to everyone who asks a reason for the hope of an eternal life which is theirs".<sup>14</sup>

A wonderful goal indeed!

To render this common priesthood visible and effective, the Lord made present his unique paschal sacrifice through the sacramental nature of the eucharistic celebration. The common priesthood brings every generation, with its own works of love, into the supreme act of the liturgy of the Cross.

Rightly did the Council proclaim that the liturgy (and more precisely the Eucharist) is "the summit to which the activity of the Church is directed, and is also the fount from which all her power flows".<sup>15</sup> The tasks of evangelization and apostolic labours are essentially ordered to this: sharing in the priesthood of Christ, fighting at his side for the defeat of evil, to love like him and to express in daily living what is experienced sacramentally through faith.

And so the common priesthood, which we must all live as disciples of the Lord and living members of his Body, is the highest expression of human dignity, the reintegration of his human mission in the world, the historical way which makes it possible to feel involved in redemption and salvation.

To bring about this universal participation in Christ's priesthood, he himself instituted the ordained ministry. This he did by choosing and con-

<sup>14</sup> LG 10

<sup>15</sup> SC 10

secrating the Twelve, who continue through the centuries by means of the apostolic succession. The sacrament of Order consecrates their successors (the bishops) and provides them with a special power of service which makes possible the exercise of the priesthood of the community: he himself calls them and qualifies them by the "anointing" of the Holy Spirit.

Priests, in turn, are ordained as collaborators of the Bishops, and receive in their consecration a sharing in the sacramental power of Order which qualifies them to serve the community through two complementary activities: that of acting "in the person of Christ the head" through the ministry of the word, through the sacramental reactualization of the one paschal sacrifice of the Eucharist, and through the administration of the sacraments of salvation; and in addition that of acting "in the person of the Church", representing her before God and dedicating themselves to her children with the love and solicitude of a faithful and resourceful spouse.

Power of this kind, which the priest derives from the sacrament of Order, is not of the sociological kind imposed on the faithful through superior dignity, but is an indispensable service, instituted by Christ, for the functioning of the common priesthood.

Rightly therefore was it said synthetically during the Synod that the ministerial priesthood belongs to the constitutive elements of the Church: it relates simultaneously to Christ and to the Church or, in other words, to Christ as the Chief Shepherd and Spouse of the Church. Ministry therefore is not only the fulfilment of an organic function in the Church, but is also a self-donation to the baptized

in view of their life and activity of faith in history.

All this makes us think, not only that the ministerial priesthood is constitutively ordered to the common priesthood,<sup>16</sup> but that in the priest's heart the spiritual characteristic of his specific ministry is that of having an awareness and internal feeling which bind him inseparably with all that portion of the People of God to whom he has been sent. If in fact there be a real harmful crust to be removed in an ordained ministry, it is that of a "clericalist" mode of action (of which examples are not lacking in history) which make the priest act like a boss among the People of God; such an attitude has nothing in common with Christ the Good Shepherd, who is the "Servant of Yahweh". A priest behaving in this way would show very clearly that he had not understood the priesthood of the New Covenant.

The one who makes possible the constitutive and spiritual authenticity of the priest or bishop as "minister of the community"<sup>17</sup> is the Holy Spirit, who makes efficacious the consecration of Order and infuses into his heart a particular pastoral charity accompanied by different charismata according to the needs of the People of God. This aspect of diversification in pastoral charity is very important with respect to the multiple needs of the people.

There is therefore in priests a common basic identity, differentiated however by pastoral gifts which imply a pluriformity of ways of pastoral service. If then to these charismatic differences be added the particular needs of those to whom specific groups of priests are sent, it will become immediately clear that their ministerial identity cannot be described in a univocal way, but must take into ac-

<sup>16</sup> LG 10

<sup>17</sup> LG 20

count the requirements stemming from the Spirit and also from the times and needs of those for whom they work.

Rightly then does the theme of the Synod refer to "present-day circumstances" which will always need to be studied; the kind of formation to be fostered, in fact, must be related also to the concrete type of ministry the priest will have to carry out in response to human needs.

After summarizing the priest's identity, the synodal fathers insist on the particular interior dispositions which must permeate his ministerial identity. It is true that between *ministry* and *person* there is a clear distinction, but nevertheless since the priestly ministry is not simply an intermittent *function* but implies a special *consecration* of the person through the permanent character of Order, there arises in the priest a strong connection between ministry and person, enlivened by pastoral charity which binds the person to the ministry in the depths of his heart, prompting in him the feelings of the Good Shepherd. The priest is not a functionary with fixed hours of work, but a full-time consecrated individual throughout all his existence: look at the Apostles if you want examples!

Insistence on this specific interior attitude is of exceptional importance, because it links the soul of the priest to the Father who is rich in mercy, to Christ the Eternal Priest, to the Holy Spirit fount of pastoral charity, to the ecclesial community whose servant he becomes, to the Pope and the Bishop whose collaborator he is, and to the other priests of the particular Church in which he works and with whom he forms a fraternal presbyterium.

But since his ministerial priesthood is at the ser-

vice of the People of God, his interior preparation necessarily includes formation to kindness, to pardon and service, to the discernment of hearts, to sensitivity as regards the needs of others, to missionary zeal, to responsibility for the building of the community, to the spirit of initiative, to courage and sacrifice, to the understanding and communication of the word of God, to discernment of the signs of the times, to the witness of the beatitudes, to the demands of solidarity and justice; in a nutshell, to the personal living out of a faith which tirelessly supports the faith of others – all these things constitute without any doubt the level that the evangelical life style of priests should reach.

This spiritual formation takes for granted a practical human and christian maturity, and adequate intellectual preparation and, above all, a conscious and increasing pastoral determination with regard to the prevailing situation.

### **The delicate theme of the priest who is also a religious**

The Synod concentrated its attention, as we said earlier, on the diocesan priest, but it is clear that it is on the foundation of an interior pastoral disposition common to all priests that can be based the possibility of further spiritual and pastoral traits that differ from one another, in line with the plurality of charisms with which the Holy Spirit enriches the exercise of the ministry. In this way there has arisen during the centuries a variegated and complementary convergence of different forms which render the practice of the ministry more attractive, more flexible, and more relevant; this in-

deed is characteristic of a Church that is not only "well prepared for the building up of the Body of Christ", but is also "adorned with manifold gifts" so as "to manifest in herself the multiform wisdom of God".<sup>18</sup> Here we may think of the priestly physiognomy proper to the members of those Institutes of consecrated life which are defined canonically by the technical term 'clerical'; in them, as Card. Hamer declared in the assembly, the exercise of the ministry belongs, in a manner proper to each one, to the very nature of their charisma. This is a fact of considerable importance both for the Church and above all for the life of the Institutes themselves.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. PC 1

This is a delicate matter which has not yet been given sufficient direct attention. The Synod has left it open, but has nevertheless recognized its importance and relevance in speaking of the mutual relations to be deepened between religious and secular priests; it can be said too that some of the initiatives for renewal in view of a better formation of the diocesan clergy draw their inspiration from some aspects of the practical formation already taking place in religious Institutes.

We in the Congregation have already made certain reflections on the topic of the priest-confrere, especially when we went more deeply into the pastoral quality of the salesian mission.

We know that the consecration proper to our religious profession is rooted in our baptismal dignity; it makes us grow in faith as disciples of Christ with a particular "salesian spirit" so as to be signs and bearers of God's love for the young.<sup>19</sup> Rightly we expressed this spiritual characterization by using the term "salesian" fundamentally as a noun; and so every confreres is either a "priest-salesian"

<sup>19</sup> Cf. C 2



or a "lay-salesian". We emphasized the impact of the mission to the young and the poor on the whole of our identity; it characterizes our religious life not only as an "apostolic consecration",<sup>20</sup> but also as determining the subject of the mission, which is the community rather than an individual,<sup>21</sup> and a community moreover which reflects the indispensable complementary relationship between priests and brothers, and is animated, served and guided by a confrere who is enriched by the gifts of Order.<sup>22</sup>

For the priest-salesian this means on the one hand that in him his priestly consecration is qualified and enlivened by the spirit and mission that is his by his salesian profession, and on the other it ensures, enriches and renders fruitful the pastoral identity of his own vocation and that of the whole community.

But this is not all. If we consider from a historical standpoint how our salesian charism was born and has developed, we see that it came into being through the work of the Holy Spirit and through the motherly intervention of Mary,<sup>23</sup> from the apostolic heart of a diocesan priest, Don Bosco, who in turn drew his inspiration from the zeal and pastoral kindness of a residential front-line bishop, St Francis de Sales. It is a charism therefore whose historical roots are actively based in the priestly zeal of the ordained ministry, intimately and explicitly linked with the exercise of the common priesthood of a large number of collaborators.

Every member of the Congregation is first and foremost a member of a salesian community which has the original feature of being made up of ecclesiastics and laymen, equal in dignity and complementing each other in their pedagogical and pastoral commitment.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Cf. C 3

<sup>21</sup> Cf. C 44

<sup>22</sup> Cf. C 121

<sup>23</sup> Cf. C 1

<sup>24</sup> Cf. ACS 298

From the awareness that every confrere must have that he is an active and responsible member of a community with this particular charismatic feature, there arises a conscious knowledge and mentality of this complementary dimension, through which every member realizes how indispensable is the mutual enriching support provided by the priestly and lay elements. Hence, as I wrote in the circular already referred to, "the Salesian who is a priest should feel a spontaneous bond of communion with the Brother in virtue of their common salesian vocation, and the lay Salesian should feel the same towards his priest-confrere. Our vocation is essentially a community vocation; hence there must be an effective communion that goes deeper than mere friendship between persons. More profoundly significant is the mutual relationship of the two basic elements, priestly and lay".<sup>25</sup> In the heart of every member, from the very fact that he is a Salesian, there is a vocational relationship with the other kind of confrere who makes up the community.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.* pp. 5-6

It is not a case of the priestly dimension being exclusive to the priest-confreres and the lay dimension exclusive to the Brothers; the salesian community is not a more or less artificial aggregation of two kinds of members who make the effort to live together. What we must insist on is that in the heart of every confrere are found both dimensions, emphasized in different ways by the two types of salesian vocation, but intimately connected with each other by their particular charismatic nature: as a good Salesian the priest cultivates also the lay dimension of the common mission and the Brother too, as a good Salesian, cultivates on his side the priestly dimension of the same common mission.

And so it can be seen why both dimensions are equally and simultaneously important for the drawing up and realization of the educative and pastoral plan. Without the lay dimension we should lose the positive aspect of a healthy secularity characteristic of our choice of educational methods, and without the priestly dimension we should run the risk of losing the pastoral quality of the whole plan. By upsetting the complementary balance we could fall on the one hand into a kind of pragmatic social activism, and on the other into a too generic kind of pastoral commitment that would no longer be the genuine mission of Don Bosco.

The Synod invites us to a clear rethinking of the overall significance of our mission, and to be clear about where lies the vital synthesis that ensures the identity of our apostolic consecration.

This is why the Synod's theme is of such concern to us. We too in the Congregation, in harmony with the bishops, want to get a clear mental picture of the Priest of the Year 2000. We want to collaborate, as genuine Salesians, in the growth of faith in the new historical era that is beginning. And looking forward with us in hope are all the members of the Salesian Family, and especially an increasing number of young people who feel attracted by the friendly heart of Don Bosco the priest.

And so without further delay we intend to draw light and indications from the Apostolic Exhortation the Pope is now preparing, so as to commit ourselves ever more seriously to promoting the growth of the common priesthood in the Congregation, and in particular to the formation of the priest-salesian, keeping clearly in mind the original nature and demands of our charisma. It is the Church herself that wants us to be genuinely faithful to our proper cha-

racteristics.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Cf. MR 11

I would like to conclude this important point by recalling that the intensity of pastoral charity, and hence the degree of holiness, do not of themselves depend either on the ordained ministry or on the various services provided in shared apostolic responsibility, but only on the interior vitality of the common priesthood that unites us to Christ (or in other words on the life of faith, hope and charity), with which every ministry and service is carried out.

The life of grace (i.e. of pastoral charity), says St Thomas Aquinas, has a value which is of itself greater than all created things. We shall be judged on the basis of love: in the heavenly Jerusalem there will be no further need for the Bible, for bishops and priests, for the magisterium, for the sacraments, for coordination, or for the great many mutual services which are indispensable in our history. And so already, in the ecclesial community, the order of institutional, hierarchical and operational realities take second place (if we may put it that way; remember where the chapter on the People of God is placed in "Lumen Gentium"! ) to the Mystery they serve and reveal to those who live the faith. Holiness is rooted in the degree of perception and communion with the life of the Trinity. We see the intensity of holiness reflected in Mary, and ministerial authenticity in Peter. Both were very holy people: but they show us very clearly that the degree of holiness is not to be identified with hierarchical and ministerial degree.

### **Don Bosco: Priest and Founder for the young.**

This year, as I said earlier, we commemorate the 150th anniversary of Don Bosco's priestly ordination. The consecration of Order was an event of grace not only for his personal life but also for his whole Salesian Family. The Holy Spirit sent him forth as a priest, under the spiritual guidance of St Joseph Cafasso, to interpret and carry out his ministry in harmony with the circumstances of the period then in evolution and the urgent social and cultural problems of the city of Turin. This he did with boldness and originality through a preferential option for the young, and especially those most in need.

While the Synod was in progress I thought several times of two judgements that had been made on Don Bosco's kind of priestly life, made by two writers not accustomed to the sort of reflection we are wont to make in our houses.

One we know already is the answer given by the famous Dominican scholar P.M.D.Chenu to a journalist, who had asked him who he thought would be the new saints for the period after the Council: "First of all", he said, "I would like to remind you of one who preceded the Council by a century: Don Bosco. He is already a new and prophetic model of sanctity through his work which marks a break with the way of thinking and believing of his contemporaries".<sup>27</sup>

The other I came across recently in a recent newspaper article on the Synod's work; it gave a judgement that was substantially negative: the Synod, under the influence of the Curia had defended the figure of the traditional priest of the Council of Trent, instead of presenting one in line with

<sup>27</sup> *Avvenire*, 22. 2. 84

the new social demands of the present day. But although the author showed no great sympathy for Don Bosco, he said of him that "he had already presented in Piedmont halfway through the nineteenth century a very different figure of a priest... The priests of his oratory lived in the midst of boys destined for the lowliest trades; he used to hitch up his cassock to play with them. And Don Bosco prepared his young aspirants to the priesthood to be men of the same kind as himself; because of this his bishop would not ordain them. It was in fact an unheard of innovation".<sup>28</sup> The writer stated this fact as a preliminary to going off on his own line of thought.

<sup>28</sup> SERGIO QUINZIO,  
*L'Espresso*, 21. 10. 90

It is to our purpose though to take up this idea of a peculiar concrete feature impressed by Don Bosco on the salesian priest; and we do it having in mind the pluriformity recognized by Vatican II as regards the manner of exercising the priestly ministry; the common ministerial task, in fact, of building up the Body of Christ calls for many kinds of duties and fresh adaptations, especially in our own times.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Cf. PO 8

Today we have our sights on the horizon of the third millennium; deep and rapid changes are taking place around us; we note the irrelevance of the faith in the emerging culture, and how harmful this is for youth and the poorer classes; we are concerned about the vast and complex field of education, because we see it being bombarded by a stream of innovations which give it dynamism but without the light of evangelization, and consequently upend it. A careful consideration of Don Bosco's pastoral style should guide us as we look for criteria with which to confront these challenges of our day.

In the first place the salesian priest (in union



with the lay salesian) is sent to fulfil a mission in the midst of the world of the young and the poor; this requires him to undertake certain tasks, in the areas of education and the culture of the world of work, aimed at people who may be far from the Church or belonging to other religions. He must also be convinced that in the community he is a collaborator with the lay salesian in communion of vocation, and one with him in drawing up and carrying out a single common plan. It is also up to him to take an active part in the animation of the various Groups of the Salesian Family, both consecrated and lay.

All this calls for adequate preparation, solicitous care and a particular manner of ministerial practice. And so it will be well for the priest to refer back continually to Don Bosco as his model;<sup>30</sup> as he looks at him he will have to rethink the great possibilities of pastoral charity as an inexhaustible source of apostolic creativity.

It was pastoral charity that led Don Bosco, through the special intervention of the Holy Spirit, to be a Founder, i.e. to pass on to many others, as a legacy to be developed, his specific mission to the young and the poor. Because of the particular charisma that was linked to his priestly zeal, he gave rise to a growing apostolic family embracing men and women, lay people and religious; and in this way he showed that this kind of pastoral charity could be the centre and synthesis of a salesian spirit shared by a vast movement for doing good.<sup>31</sup>

The consecrated life of religious Institutes founded by Don Bosco is not copied from the model of hermits in the desert or contemplatives in monasteries (who are customarily presented as the historical forerunners of religious life); rather does it

<sup>30</sup> Cf. C 21

<sup>31</sup> Cf. C 10

draw its inspiration from the apostolic life of the Twelve and the pastoral preoccupations of bishops (St Francis de Sales) and priests with the care of souls (Don Bosco); hence we have a type of religious consecration of a unique kind, closely linked with the pastoral charity of the ordained ministry.<sup>32</sup>

The true identity of the salesian priest is of great interest, not only to the other confreres in the Congregation but also to all members of the great Salesian Family; his ministerial zeal and the depth of his pastoral convictions ensure and nourish the spirituality of all of them. But the converse is also true: if he should be spiritually superficial and only weakly united with God; if his ministerial activity should be languid and without teeth, unfortunately but inevitably the very sources of Don Bosco's charisma would be damaged.

On this account we have been concerned in the Congregation for years about a better formation for our priests.

### **Urgent need for better salesian formation.**

A notable part of the Synod's work was dedicated to the problems of priestly formation. After probing the settings from which vocations are born, insistence was laid on the need for a preliminary year of preparation (a kind of novitiate), on formation communities or seminaries (and Major Seminaries in particular), on the decisive importance of studies arranged in the light of new progress in science and technology and modern pastoral needs, on the competence and ecclesial sense of the teachers, on the human, christian and spiritual atmosphere in the formation communities, and on

<sup>32</sup> Cf. EGIDIO VIGANÒ  
*Per una teologia della  
vita consecrata*, LDC  
1986, pp. 10-11, 33-34.

the indispensability of ongoing formation in harmony with the process of inculturation. The question was also discussed of seminarians coming from the various Movements, who had been formed with their own spiritual characteristics but must then enter into a sincere relationship with their own bishop and presbyterium, in fullness of communion and dedication.

For us the criteria for the formation of the salesian priest, with his particular vocational characteristics, are to be found in the "*Ratio*", promulgated on 8 December 1985;<sup>33</sup> the Synod prompts us to emphasize its relevance and importance. We can rejoice in the fact of its complete conformity in what refers to the foundations of the identity of the ordained ministry, and its clear perception of what is characteristic of our own charisma. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who collaborated in drawing it up, revising it and bringing it to perfection. In the Congregation we have a secure guideline to follow: let us set about deepening our knowledge of it and putting it into practice! Only if it is fully implemented can we home in on the indispensable key points of our spirit.

But if we look at the concrete state of affairs, we have to confess unfortunately that during these years of renewal we have noted with concern that here and there in some Provinces there have been some shortcomings: in the immediate formation for the priesthood, in the follow-up of young priests in the first five years after ordination, and in the intensity and adequacy of ongoing formation.

The reminder about *ongoing formation* figured largely in the concerns of the synodal fathers. It had been already referred to in various documents of the Magisterium, as well as in our own General

Chapters (especially the GC23), our Constitutions, the Ratio and Provincial Directories, but not everyone seems to have understood its true nature and purpose. In the profane sector it is considered quite simply as the principle or viewpoint which regulates the entire process of cultural formation seen in its overall and interdisciplinary dimension, no longer tied in with a particular segment of the person or attached to a particular period of his existence. It is a process that embraces every expression and educational process from the cradle to the grave. It covers the whole existence of every person, youngster or adult, with all the problems involved, according to specific methods and the new ways of educational transmission with its various implications, and others as well.

In the setting of our salesian life the concept of ongoing formation pervades the whole of the Ratio. Before continual updating in the various sectors of salesian activity and mission, which are indispensable, the Ratio sees in the Constitutions<sup>33</sup> our life as a "path to holiness" to be followed in "daily efforts to grow in the perfect love of God and men"; it sees it as "a response that we continually renew to the special covenant the Lord has made with us"; a life of docility to the Holy Spirit "in a constant effort of conversion and renewal".<sup>35</sup>

The consequence emerging from these brief quotations is this: the period of initial formation is characterized by specific growth processes, rich in relevant content, but also by the assimilation of criteria and methods which must form a dynamic accompaniment in appropriate ways to every phase of life, with priority given to the spiritual dimension, which is the first and last motive for everything. The logic of baptism and religious profes-

<sup>33</sup> FSDB, 2nd edtn, Rome 1985.

<sup>34</sup> C 118, 119, 96, 98, 25

<sup>35</sup> FSDB 488 ff.

sion, as incorporation into the divine life through the following of Christ, tends of its nature to growth and in fact demands it, as is frequently stated in the Letters of the Apostle Paul.

And here let me add that if it is true that through the studies in the phases of initial formation the aim is to develop a proper critical faculty and an indispensable pedagogical and pastoral competence (not always alert unfortunately with regard to theories put forward by certain researchers), there remains in some cases the danger of not giving sufficient care to competence and ministerial fervour in what regards the salesian spirit. The priest must be the man of Jesus Christ and of the Church, sent into the world to communicate the news of salvation, truth in its integrity, the mercy of the Father, the redemption of the Son, the interior power of the Spirit; for this he must be enthusiastic and tireless in bringing hope: a man who is a sacrament, a person who is also a sign.

The synodal Fathers were concerned to present priestly identity in its most genuine form, precisely so as to insist on the indispensability of an adequate spirituality, stemming from pastoral charity, which leads to an ardent constancy. Religious Institutes must add to this pastoral aspect, for their own priests, the particular characteristics of the spirit of their own charisma. This was emphasized by Card. Hamer in his intervention: "Whenever future priests receive all their institutional formation within the institute to which they belong, the task of superiors is relatively easy. But it is no longer the same when the superiors send their religious to centres of ecclesiastical studies outside their own institute. In this case the responsibility of superiors, far from diminishing, increases notably. Indeed,

participating in such a centre of studies postulates that the young people live in a religious house of their institute, in the heart of an educative and lively community, with the permanent presence of qualified educators, capable of assisting young men in integrating in their religious life the philosophical and theological teachings that they receive in the study centres. This implies great sacrifices for the institutes. But this is the high price that is paid to ensure the unity of the priesthood and religious life, and this unity is a great benefit for the Mystical Body".<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> OSS. Rom. 12. 10 90

Our reflection on the event of the Synod should indeed be an invitation and stimulus to think over carefully once again the content and important guidelines of our Ratio, and especially to revise in the Provincial Councils, "Curatoria" and individual formation communities, the practice being followed, so as to correct any defects in its application and boost its quality.

The Ratio forms part of the "particular law" of the Congregation and is, in consequence, a vital element in our Rule of life;<sup>37</sup> it was drawn up with the contributions of the whole Congregation in complete agreement with the renewed text of the Constitutions and the new Code of Canon Law. It is founded on the salesian vocational identity and presents a strongly unified plan of formation.<sup>38</sup> By putting into practice the principles and norms, I wrote in presenting the book, we shall be led to a clearer sense of vocation, a gift which is contemporary, original and fertile; the possibility of unifying one's existence through the integral development of the various aspects of formation (human maturation, intellectual and professional preparation, religious and apostolic life); the feeling of being socially use-

<sup>37</sup> Cf. C 191

<sup>38</sup> FSDB 25-27



ful and apostolically significant and fruitful; the development of a characteristic spirituality, the sense of belonging to the Congregation and that of ecclesial communion, a singular kind of service to the young and their condition".<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.* p. 19

Provincials, Rectors and formation personnel should consider as a priority their obligation to frequently reconsider the norms and principles of this important document and fulfil with solicitous diligence the tasks it indicates. Constant attention of this kind will result in "much good for the Provinces, for the Congregation and for their future. It will mean sowing with toil, but with the certainty of reaping the harvest with joy. These significant options, made and realized in the Congregation by all of us, are like so many elements of its renewal, of that "fair copy" of which Don Bosco used to speak when he left its preparation as a legacy to our responsibility as his disciples and continuers".<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.* p. 20

### **The GC23 and our pastoral growth.**

We recently celebrated the 23rd General Chapter; even though it did not deal explicitly with the specific vocation of the salesian priest, it described the horizons of the salesian mission in the circumstances of the present day: its particular and original nature, the pastoral reading of contemporary situations and events, and the educational methods for evangelization. All this touches closely the "Salesian" as such, whether he be priest or brother; and it implies a special relationship with the common priestly dimension.

In the light of the Synod therefore we can speak of the particular "priestly" quality – a wider term

than the canonical “clerical” – which we must enhance in the Congregation. I will point out three aspects that I believe to be fundamental and to involve all of us; they are: *pastoral quality*, *salesian spirituality*, and *shared responsibility by the community* as the subject of the mission. The consideration of these aspects from the standpoint of the priesthood (whether baptismal or ministerial) highlights some novel aspects of no little importance that will help us to get a clearer understanding of their values.

— The *pastoral quality* is a fundamental note that permeates the whole of the Chapter document. The proposals for the study of the reality of situations, analysis of contexts and making plans for carrying out the work that lies ahead, are all presented as “*a pastoral study*”.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> GC23 16

This quality derives from the strength of the “*da mihi animas*” (the inspiration of St Francis de Sales and of Don Bosco – both of them “pastors”!), it is concerned with education to the faith, it takes pains to analyze the reality of contexts, it makes use of the best human means available to know and discern them, and puts us on guard lest we become obsessed with other interests that are not genuinely ecclesial. We could call this a typically “priestly” attitude in the full sense of the term, to the extent that it involves us all in commitment to educational and pastoral services for the purpose of rendering our charges capable of celebrating their liturgy of life by incorporating it into Christ’s Eucharist. It is precisely for this reason that our pastoral solicitude does not stop at a knowledge and deeper analysis of the great doctrinal principles and of the Gospel itself (which it obviously appreciates, esteems and

studies at depth), but also dedicates itself with attention and constant flexibility to the perception of concrete circumstances, looking into their content and motivations, analyzing the questions they pose, and identifying the sort of challenges they present for evangelization.

In connection with the formation of the salesian priest, the pastoral aspect is without any doubt the element that constitutes and gives direction to all his apostolic activity.

— The second aspect to be considered is that of *salesian spirituality* as an interior force proceeding from pastoral charity.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Cf. C 10

We have already seen that our charisma comes forth from the heart of Don Bosco the priest. His is a spirituality that is radically priestly, taking its inspiration from Peter, Paul, the canonized bishops and their collaborators. It is a spirituality that calls to mind what St Augustine says in commenting on the passage in St John's Gospel<sup>43</sup> where the pastoral mandate is given to Peter; he feels himself challenged by "the words Christ repeated so insistently: 'Do you love me? Feed my sheep!', as though to say: if you love me, never mind taking care of yourself, but look after my sheep. And take care of them as mine, not as your own; seek my glory in them, not yours, my dominion not yours, my profit and reward not yours, if you do not want to be among those who belong to 'evil times', i.e. those who love themselves with all that derives from self-love, the source of every evil".<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Jn 21,17

<sup>44</sup> *Treatise on St John* 123,  
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As you can see, that is the salesian spirituality of "da mihi animas".

It bears within itself a double and simultaneous vital inclination: that of a continual growth in the

love that flows from the heart of Christ the Saviour, sharing and leading others to share in the priesthood of the New Covenant, whatever their state of life may be; and that of feeling oneself to be sent to feed the poor and lowly through generous self-donation. It is a spirituality nourished by pastoral charity in a specific way which cultivates the attitude "of the Good Shepherd who wins hearts by gentleness and self-giving".<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> C 11

The expressions "union with God", "thirst for souls", "work and temperance", "make yourself loved", "serve the Lord in holy joy", "no exertion is heavy when it is a question of something for the Church or the Pope", "that you are young is enough to make me love you very much", "family atmosphere", "spirit of initiative", "preventive system" etc., take every Salesian (and hence also confreres who are priests) back to the model of the priestly heart of Don Bosco, "deeply human, open to the realities of this earth, and filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit" to such an extent that he lived in the midst of daily reality as though "seeing him who is invisible".<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Cf. C 21

— Finally the theme of *shared responsibility in the community* as the subject of the mission, while bringing to mind the mutual relationship between priestly and lay dimensions, prompts all the confreres, under the guidance of the one who takes Don Bosco's place (a priest-confrere), to work towards a living synthesis that can constantly exploit the energy from two poles that are linked together: human advancement and growth in faith. This "grace of unity" is specific to the salesian vocation, which moves every confrere to have, like Don Bosco, *always and everywhere a priestly attitude*: the pasto-

ral zeal of the educator. Every Salesian in fact, whether he be priest or layman, models himself on Christ the Good Shepherd, of whom he is a personal sign of service to the young.

The GC23 insists on ongoing formation so that every community may be a "sign and school of faith". It is characteristic of the priesthood of the New Covenant to take on responsibility for the faith of others. The salesian community does this while immersed in the world of youth, which it finds a suitable place for carrying out its own ongoing formation: "Living in the midst of the young and in constant contact with working-class surroundings, the Salesian tries to discern the voice of the Spirit in the events of each day, and so acquires the *ability to learn* from life's experiences".<sup>47</sup> The salesian community regards life as its great textbook and as the true altar of sacrifice.

- From these reflections on the GC23, brief though they are, can be seen at once the exceptional importance that attaches in the Congregation to the initial and ongoing formation of the salesian priest for the physiognomy of our communities and for its many kinds of service both to the young and to the various branches of the Salesian Family. His growth in interior priestly qualities is of concern to all, e.g. special competence in contemplating and proclaiming the Word of God, in the vital and pedagogical exploitation of the liturgy, in the direction of souls through the sacrament of Reconciliation, in the ability to catechize and evangelize, and in general in the knack of incorporating the initiatives of human development into an organic synthesis of the christian faith.

The indications for the process of formation and the methods to be followed, which are authori-

<sup>47</sup> C 119

tatively set out in the "Ratio", are particularly relevant and valid at the present day in the light of the GC23.

### **Gratitude to the Priest and his entrustment to Mary.**

In conclusion, dear confreres, there are some stimulating thoughts in the last two Propositions drawn up by the synodal fathers.

In the first place there is a public proclamation of gratitude to the Priest: his ministry is necessary for the good of the Church; his virtue has the happy result of causing growth in spirituality in others; through his service, and especially through the administration of the sacraments,<sup>48</sup> he gives vitality and drive to the baptismal consecration that produces a priestly people for the liturgy of life.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. LG 11

The priest is a full-time servant of our christian dignity as true children of God. Hence there arises spontaneously from the heart a strong feeling of gratitude towards those who have followed the call of the Lord and given themselves generously to the work of the ministry. Believers have the priest very much at heart; he is a gift of God to be esteemed and loved, a person to be considered as a living part of their own existence.

During the beatification of the two priests, Giuseppe Allamano and Annibale Maria Di Francia, the Pope rightly said: "The greatest chastisement the Almighty inflicts on his people is to deprive them of his ministers, or rather of ministers after his own heart". Let us feel prompted to intensify our prayers for priestly vocations, for their best possible formation in the prevailing circumstances, and for



the perseverance and holiness of all priests. And let us try to increase in those people who have forgotten it an understanding of the need for the priest in society. In this way we shall show that we have really at heart the Priest of the Year 2000!

The other thought is contained in the final Proposition and refers to the Blessed Virgin Mary, "Mother of Christ and Mother of priests". In her womb Christ was consecrated priest of the New Covenant. Mary accompanied him to the foot of the Cross in the supreme act of the new and unique sacrifice. She waited with the Apostles in the cenacle in expectation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for the beginning of the ministry. Assumed into heaven, she accompanies Christ the Eternal Priest in his permanent mediation. As Mother and Image of the Church, she showers her solicitous care on the friends of her Son who, through the ordained ministry, share in a special manner in his priesthood for the benefit of others.

The formation of the priest refers back to her, both as the human being who best and most fully responded to God's call, and as the disciple who accepted in herself the Word of the Father and gave birth to him for all others. Mary, the Queen of the Apostles, appears as the shining incentive and help in ecclesial communion and gives constant light to the mission through her virginal motherhood.

We place our hope in her zealous intercession and entrust to her attentive care the pastoral work for vocations, their formation in the circumstances of the present day, the interior growth of priests of all the particular Churches, and especially of our Salesian Congregation, that their apostolic spirit and ministerial competence may increase accord-

ing to the wonderful example of the two ardent priestly hearts of St John Bosco and St Francis de Sales.

In this way all the Congregation, the entire Salesian Family, and ever more numerous ranks of youngsters and people in general, will understand and celebrate each day the baptismal priesthood which incorporates the acts of love of each one into Christ's own supreme act of love, than which nothing can be greater.

The priesthood of the New Covenant in very truth leads human history to become concentrated on the summit of love, gradually building through the centuries the Kingdom of God in which Love will be all in all.

May the 150th anniversary of the ordination of Don Bosco reawaken in the Congregation a deep esteem and living sense of the common priesthood, through a greater authenticity of the ministerial counterpart!

Cordial greetings in the Lord.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Don F. Viganò". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D' and 'V'.

## 2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

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### 2.1 THE LOCAL SALESIAN COMMUNITY

Fr Juan VECCHI  
*Vicar General*

The community has always been the object of particular attention in the life of the Congregation. It appears, in fact, as one of the elements that characterize our vocation, in close union with the practice of the evangelical counsels and the apostolic mission. At one time emphasis was laid on its ascetical and disciplinary demands in a certain view of the spiritual life that then prevailed. To-day, prompted by the renewal called for by the Council, stress is placed rather on the value of brotherly communion and pastoral responsibility, a view that finds endorsement in art. 44 of the Constitutions, where the practical consequences are implied: the animating role of authority, the communal practice of spiritual discernment, and the joint realization of the apostolic plan.

The GC23 has taken up these indications. Without repeating them, it has given them a more specific application to our task of educating young people to the faith. It has seen in the community, which intends to live the Gospel according to the salesian charisma, a *sign* of the faith it intends to proclaim, a *school* for accompanying young people in their christian growth, and an *environment* in which gospel values can be experienced.

Without ignoring what can be done by the provincial and world communities, the GC23 entrusts the application of its deliberations and practical guidelines by preference to the local community, as being in more direct and continuous contact with youth and people in general. Its life is more clearly seen, and hence so too is inevitably the positive or negative witness it gives. It is also the con-

text in which the vast majority of confreres live out their daily lives.

To realize this image of the community as sign, school and environment, the GC23 asks that it become the place of ongoing formation through the practice of shared pastoral responsibility and fraternal communication. And to define the content of ongoing formation it suggests to the local community that, with the support of the province, it should draw up an appropriate programme so that formation of this kind may not consist of spasmodic events but may rather become a style of life and activity.

In this way ongoing formation will find its best place in the local community, and its own slot in its daily life; the latter will be an appropriate blend of work and reflection, while in each individual grace will be building a unity between activity and contemplation, between interior recollection and apostolic creativity.

The "Formation of Salesians of Don Bosco" (FSDB) offers guidelines and indications for drawing up such programmes. At the right moment the corresponding Department will take up this matter, following the suggestions offered by the GC23. At present we are concerned, as a first step, with ensuring the appropriate conditions for the deliberations of the GC23 to be realized.

## **1. Consistency of the community**

The first condition is *consistency of the community*.

There is in the first place a certain *numerical* consistency below which the sign and community life as envisaged by the Constitutions seems impossible of realization. Art. 150 of the Regulations offers a criterion for evaluating this limit when it prescribes that "the number of confreres in a house shall normally be not less than six." And art.20 of the same Regulations provides a safeguard for emergency situations when it lays down that even in missionary presences the number should not fall below three confreres.

But linked with numerical there is also *qualitative* consistency. This makes it possible for the community to express the salesian

mission in all its richness. The mission in fact calls for many different services as regards evangelization, education, animation of a community of adults, and a meaningful presence in the locality -and all this in a family atmosphere embracing a vital synthesis between the different items and activities.

When a local community begins to fall off as regards its pastoral commitment, the first thing to suffer is the mission which loses its identity and impact. Setting up communities with sufficient strength will prevent the development of premature weariness in the confreres, and the impression of being overburdened with multiple tasks that have been lost sight of. More especially it will allow emphasis to be placed on the pastoral spirituality which the GC23 puts at the centre of any work that is being done.

There can, of course, be exceptions for personal reasons or unforeseen pastoral requirements. But it is also true that one cannot programme the development or restructuring of a province, while ignoring in practice the criteria laid down by the General Regulations. This must be kept in mind especially when personnel is dropping and at the same time new initiatives are called for to respond to pressing needs of the people or requests of Bishops. The dispersion of confreres then becomes a temptation and a risk which seem justified by the desire to collaborate. To preserve initiative, rather than think only of extending our works, the solution must be sought in choice of priorities.

This is a duty of the Provincial and his Council. They are responsible for the expansion and configuration of the province. They are therefore recommended to review the situations in which community consistency does not come up to the mark, and to adjust in suitable fashion the development of the works.

But the local community has also a certain responsibility. It has to organize its life and activities in such a way that all aspects of our charisma find a balanced expression. It must therefore tailor the development of initiatives to its practical possibilities, opting especially for high salesian quality.

## 2. The Rector and Council

The possibility of the local community becoming a place for daily religious, cultural and professional growth is linked with the exercise of authority, the practical objectives it establishes, and the manner of its expression.

The influence of authority on the life of a group is taken for granted in every sector of human activity. This has been further confirmed for us by our experience during these years of renewal. It is our duty therefore to thank, encourage, and support those who are willing to provide this service.

The response of the Congregation to this fact is given by the volume *"The Salesian Rector: a ministry for the animation and governing of the local community"*.

The GC23 takes up the point and brings it down to earth when it asks provinces to "make provision for special initiatives for the formation of Rectors in the field of both personal and community spiritual direction" (GC23 223). The particular reference here to spiritual direction does not in any way diminish other aspects of the Rector's responsibility: "He is first in order of responsibility for its religious life, its apostolic activities and the administration of its goods. With the collaboration of his council he animates and governs the community" (cf. C 176). But for all these tasks he needs to adopt a unifying perspective, the urgent need of which is felt particularly in the present six-year period in the light of our purpose to educate young people to the faith: the spiritual growth of the community and the individual confreres.

The Rector and his Council therefore are asked to become an organ of spiritual animation and pastoral guidance. They must raise questions about what kind of Gospel sign the community is giving and stimulate reflection to prevent the conscience of the community and of each individual from sinking into the torpor of routine. They must follow up on the development of each activity to ensure its correct operation and the attainment of its pastoral objectives. It is also entrusted with the responsibility for the annual check-up so

as to discover new outlets and more efficacious means of intervention, and to restructure the tasks of the Salesians to match the growth of the educative community.

In order therefore for the ongoing formation desired by the General Chapter to become a reality in the local community, the role and functioning of the Council presided over by the Rector must be rethought. As a scheme to be followed for this purpose, use could be made of nn. 6.1 and 6.3 of "The Salesian Rector" or the commentary on Chapter XIII of the Constitutions in "The Project of Life of the Salesians of Don Bosco" (pp. 969-986).

### **3. The life of the community**

With reference to ongoing formation, the GC23 turns to advantage the spread of qualities of the confreres with respect to their respective roles, the work they do, their native endowments and their acquired abilities. Sincere and level-headed communication fosters a deeper shared analysis of our experience of God, cultural challenges and our pastoral service. In this way the individual grows and the community matures.

The kind of life imposed on us by urgent pastoral needs does not leave us much time for reflection in common. It is a question therefore of exploiting to the full the moments already included in our rhythm of life: community assemblies for planning and evaluation, periods of common prayer, communication opportunities, and times of relaxation.

The importance of these items had already been emphasized from the very beginning of the renewal process that has brought us to where we are at the present day. The SGC 20 declared: "These meetings are consequently of the utmost importance, in religious communities as elsewhere, whether they be at fixed intervals or prompted by particular needs or situations. Each member can help to increase fraternal understanding by diligence in attending such community gatherings - whether for prayer, dialogue, work or life.



On the other hand each member through his absence would deprive himself of something valuable, show a certain lack in his relationship with others, and run the risk of ending up on the fringe of the community" (SGC 488).

We are now asked to do two things. The first is to try to bring about a greater convergence of the matters dealt with in these encounters, so that they do not appear spasmodic and fragmentary. A guiding principle may be provided by some of the fundamental dimensions of our life that can be used as the basis for an enriching comparison with the word of God, or some problems that we meet in our ministry as educators and pastors.

The second thing we must do is improve the quality of these community gatherings. Essential to their success are the level of involvement and participation of the confreres, together with their will and ability to communicate. This goes beyond mere technique; it is an aspect, and not the least profound of them, of fellowship, poverty and evangelical transparency.

#### **4. The community day (GC23, 222)**

The GC23 has added a suggestion: the community day. This is an experience already made by several provinces, and is now proposed to the whole Congregation. It is an effort to bring about a new balance between the different demands of our life. The piling up of commitments, in fact, does not always allow for a daily alternation of work and reflection, of times when we are scattered and moments when we are together. We need to recover this rhythmic integration at least on a weekly basis.

The first condition for fulfilling this deliberation of the Chapter is that every local community, backed up in this by the provincial community, makes provision in its own programme for a half-day each week or at least some hours when the confreres are free of other duties. What is important is that the idea gain acceptance and a start be made, even in a small way.

This weekly period can be used for the monthly retreat prescribed by Reg.72, for the community meeting for verification and revision, for an opportunity for deeper study of some topic of a theological, spiritual, pastoral or cultural nature, or for community relaxation.

Before all else there is a need to ensure the spirit and content of this day. It should be lived as an opportunity for discussion and synthesis, for getting together and fostering the fraternal dimension. The intention is to look at personal and social events from an evangelical standpoint, so that our activities may be enlightened by a reflection that will enrich them with new motivations and perspectives.

The idea of the 'community day' finds its inspiration in some fundamental indications of our Rule of life. The Regulations state in fact: "The local community should see to it that there is a balanced distribution of duties with opportune periods for rest and silence, and for suitable relaxation in common" (R 43).

## **5. A proposal for the present six-year period**

The GC23 has shown a strikingly practical sensitivity. It was concerned that its deliberations should find concrete expression in life, giving rise to a simple and transparent gospel style. In a few years time we shall have to look back over our efforts and assess what we have succeeded in doing: "In the next six years the Congregation will have as its primary obligation the continuing formation and qualification of the confreres. It will give particular attention to the internal apostolic conviction which is both pastoral charity and pedagogical ability" (GC23, 221).

## 2.2 THE PROPER MISSAL OF THE SALESIAN FAMILY

Fr Giuseppe NICOLUSSI  
*Councillor General for Formation*

I am glad to inform you that the long awaited official edition of the "Proper Missal of the Salesian Family" has been published in Italian.<sup>1</sup> The Latin edition will soon follow, and then the various translations. I think this is an appropriate occasion for making three brief reflections:

1. To present the work in its overall structure: the main innovations and contents, taken almost literally from the decree of promulgation and parts of the introduction.
2. To emphasize how this Missal can become a factor in the renewal of our charismatic identity, in line with the perspectives of the GC23 and of our holiness.
3. To invite you to study and get to know this publication so as to exploit it at personal and community level as an efficacious contribution to our ongoing formation.

### 1. The main innovations and contents of the Missal

The extending of the salesian calendar by the addition of new memorials and a more adequate treatment of others, called for a *complete revision* of the salesian "Proprium", so as to bring it into

<sup>1</sup> – *Messale Proprio della Famiglia Salesiana. Orazionale.*

Edizione Ufficiale, Società di San Francesco di Sales – Roma 1990 pp. 259

– *Messale Proprio della Famiglia Salesiana. Lezionario.*

Edizione Ufficiale, Società di San Francesco di Sales – Roma 1990 pp. 211 – We may recall also the publication of the *Ritual of Religious Profession*. Official Edition – Society of St Francis de Sales – Rome 1989 pp. 182. (The Ritual has been already published in English and Spanish editions).

line in content and form with the requirements of the conciliar renewal of the Salesian Family.

The text, promulgated by the Rector Major on 31 January 1990, contains some important innovations as compared with the preceding edition of the "Proper Masses of the Society of St Francis de Sales" of 1974. In the first place the title "Proper Masses of the Salesian Family" indicates the many different groups for whom the Missal is intended, and in this way is a sign of our ecclesial reality. The division into two volumes corresponds not only to a practical criterion but recalls also the presence of Christ in the Word and in the Bread of life. The complete formularies are endowed with a striking abundance of eucological texts and a wide choice of scripture readings. A notable feature too is the detailed Appendix.

Let us now take an ordered look at the structure and principal contents of the two volumes, beginning with the SACRAMENTARY (Italian: ORAZIONALE). It opens with the Rector Major's decree of promulgation and that of approval by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments; it is made up of six parts:

#### *First part: INTRODUCTION*

A rich introduction of fifteen pages presents successively the following points: holiness in the history of salvation, devotion to the Saints in the Church, the proper calendar of the Salesian Family, the various elements of the Mass, and the 'communion of Saints'. They are pages which deserve careful reading and, in some parts, also meditation. They will help to bring celebrations to life, educate to a liturgical sense, and suggest an intelligent evaluation of the texts.

#### *Second part: SACRAMENTARY*

This is the central part of the volume. It contains the complete formularies of the Masses of *Mary Help of Christians* 'Principal Patroness of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and of the Salesian Family' and of *six saints*: Francis de Sales

'Bishop and Doctor of the Church, titular and patron of the Salesian Family', called in the Constitutions the "zealous pastor and doctor of charity" (C 9); John Bosco, 'Father and teacher of youth, Founder of the Society of St Francis de Sales, of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and of the salesian Cooperators'; Dominic Savio 'youth', whom the Constitutions present to us as "a sign of the wonders that grace can achieve in adolescents" (C 9); Mary Domenica Mazzarello 'Virgin and Co-foundress of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians'; Leonard Murialdo and Joseph Cafasso 'priests'. Then follow the *seven beati* the 'adolescent' Laura Vicuna, the 'salesian protomartyrs' Louis Versiglia and Callistus Caravario, the 'priests' Louis Orione, Louis Guannella, Michael Rua and Philip Rinaldi 'Founder of the Secular Institute of the Don Bosco Volunteers'. This part also contains the liturgical formularies for the Mass of the commemoration of deceased salesian confreres and that for the anniversary of one's own Church.

The Mass formularies are complete. Even the Masses of the beati which have only the collect proper are completed by texts taken from the Roman Missal. Each formulary opens with a hagiographical and liturgical introduction which highlights the relevant coordinates of time and place, and of human and christian formation; it then gives a summary of the items in the eucological texts from which emerge the essential characteristics of the holiness proper to each figure. This introduction will be of use in preparing the preambles and homily, for adapting the universal prayer, and for choosing suitable hymns

Numerous and abundant are the new and renewed *eucological texts* taken from the common patrimony of the Roman Missal. Together with the Scripture readings, entrance and communion antiphons, they are meant to present a type of salesian holiness illustrated by each figure, of which the rich values are seen especially in the collects and the new embolisms of the prefaces.

The *collect* refers directly to the saint or beatus whose feast is being celebrated. It highlights his particular characteristics and those of his apostolic activity. Sometimes the presence of a *second*

*collect* "for the religious community" allows the celebration to be adapted more closely to the pilgrimage of faith and vocational condition of the assembly.

The *prayers over the offerings* and *after communion*, though referring directly to the eucharistic mystery, contain brief and timely references to the spiritual experience of the saint or beatus. The same may be said of the *prefaces*, especially those of solemnities and feasts, which summarize the wonders worked by the Spirit in our brothers and, through them, prompt us to the action of grace and the glorification of the Father.

In some circumstances the *solemn blessings* enhance and complete the thematic picture of the celebration.

### *Third part: THE RITE OF MASS*

The new Missal contains the complete rite with the text of the first four Eucharistic Prayers.

### *Fourth part: APPENDIX*

The Appendix contains three Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with children; Masses for certain circumstances in the salesian mission (for the catechetical year, the scholastic year, vocational meetings, meetings of animators and catechists, days of recollection and retreats with young people); and the votive Mass of Mary Help of Christians.

### *Fifth part: MELODIES FOR THE RITE OF MASS*

There are 31 pages of text and melodies for the various rites of celebration according to the individual formularies.

### *Sixth part: THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER*

The *universal prayer* or prayer of the faithful is one of the elements in the celebration which fosters a full and conscious participation. Both the Sacramentary and the Lectionary contain for each celebration the text of one or more complete formularies which can facilitate and stimulate the response of the assembly.

## THE LECTIONARY

For completeness and ease of use the Lectionary contains (like the Sacramentary) the Decrees, Introduction and Universal prayer: but the central part is naturally the 140 pages which contain scripture readings which are either *proper*, *not proper but appropriate*, or *available at choice*, according to the celebration concerned, with responsorial psalms and Gospel chants. Their abundance and variety emphasizes the importance of the Word of God in the celebration, provides the possibility for highlighting some particular aspect of the saints's spirituality or activity, and allows for a further possibility of adaptation to different kinds of assembly.

The last pages of the Lectionary contain a general index, and separate indexes for readings, psalms and canticles.

## 2. An occasion of renewal

The fact that we now have available this new liturgical volume in the Salesian Family has a significance that goes beyond its aspects of publication and ritual; it can in fact provide an occasion and stimulus for reflecting on some aspects of our charismatic identity and of our mission, and making them the objects of *verification*. It will be worth our while to point out rapidly here some possible lines of thought that can be followed.

### 2.1 *Expression and celebration of our charismatic identity*

"The new Missal," writes the Rector Major in the decree of promulgation, "provides a means of celebrating worthily the riches of the ecclesial charism we have received; for a better living of the Gospel with Don Bosco, the young and people in general; and for following in the footsteps of the "models" who reflect the particular kind of holiness that leads back continually to the Father, the One who is All-Holy. It is an instrument therefore which, in the celebration of the memorial of Christ's Passover, helps us to acquire a living memory of the holiness of our Family (cf. Rom 11,16: "If the



root is holy, so are the branches”) and continue our commitment to it in the liturgy of life.

The Proper Missal of the Salesian Family is in a certain sense *the liturgical expression of our identity*: of “that particular style of sanctification” (MR 11) which forms part of the nature of our charisma, of the holiness which is “achieved within the salesian mission” (C 25). In this way we celebrate in the Passover of Jesus Christ, Apostle of the Father, the salesian form of our participation in it, so significantly evident in the apostolic consecration of our saints.

The *biblical texts*, chosen with the sensitivity which in reading the Gospel and the whole of Scripture makes us more attentive to certain traits in the figure of Christ, to certain manifestations of the fatherliness of God and the active presence of the Spirit, bring before our mind the apostolic path which characterizes our consecration (cf. C 24). They are texts that can become the object of a ‘lectio divina salesiana’. To them can be applied in the first place what the Constitutions say of the Word of God listened to with faith: it is “a source of spiritual life, food for prayer, light to see God’s will in the events of life, and strength to live out our vocation faithfully” (C 87).

## 2.2 *In the perspective of the GC23*

A comparison with the *considerations and guidelines of the GC23* could lead us to the discovery and exploitation of some elements of particular salesian significance in the Missal.

The General Chapter, in the perspective of the new evangelization and more particularly of the education of young people to the faith, has emphasized among other things: the importance of the journey of faith lived and proposed pedagogically with apostolic and educational sensitivity, the particular nature of the original plan of christian life characterized by salesian spirituality, and the need on the part of anyone wanting to take up in a salesian manner the challenge of the new evangelization of youth of that interior apostolic conviction that is at one and the same time pastoral charity and pedagogical ability.

Those of our brothers and sisters whom we commemorate in the liturgy differ in age, personal vocation, and the manner in which they participated in our specific mission,, but they present us with the *experience* of a journey of faith that led them to a heroic degree of maturity, and the witness of educators and evangelizers who were able to put forward and share with others the Emmaus experience (cf. GC23, 93). In them shines forth the characteristic traits of the salesian spirituality which the GC23 has proposed to us in a youthful form, and of which Dominic Savio and Laura Vicuna are an outstanding expression recognized officially by the Church.

As we live and work each day with these salesian 'models' before our eyes, we are able to perceive the central position of that interior apostolic conviction, based on pastoral charity and pedagogical ability, which is the primary obligation placed on us by the Chapter (cf. GC23, 221).

From the Missal texts, therefore, we get the message about the witness that is the only kind of language that can convince young people to undertake a journey of faith (cf. GC23, 219).

### 2.3 *Cultivation and dissemination of other forms for celebrating salesian holiness*

The Missal encourages us to display and cultivate some *salesian attitudes* indicated by the Constitutions and Regulations, and to verify their effect on our personal experience, in the life of the community, and in our work of educators and pastors. Let us recall some of the statements.

We develop for *Mary*, our model (C 92) and our principal patroness (C 9), who is present among us especially as Mother of the Church and Help of Christians (C 8), a strong filial devotion, and we celebrate her feasts to encourage a more convinced and personal imitation (C 92).

As Salesians we have some signs of devotion to her in common: the Rosary, the monthly commemoration, the daily prayer after meditation, the use of the Blessing of Mary Help of Christians (R 74).

The Virgin Mary is present as a mother in the journey we make

with the young as educators for them to the faith; we make her known and loved (C 34; GC23 121, 157, 177). We feel the obligation of zealously spreading devotion to her and of fostering the Association of her clients (R 74).

As we commemorate *our saints* we are conscious of our fellowship with our brothers in the heavenly kingdom and feel the need of their help (C 9). The witness of such holiness achieved within the salesian mission, and particularly by those who have lived the gospel project of the Constitutions to the full, is for us a stimulus and help on the path to holiness (C 25), and an incentive to continue faithfully in our mission (C 94).

These indications, which must obviously be seen in a wider perspective and at greater depth, serve to remind us to check up on our spiritual experience and on our pedagogical practice, especially as regards our sensitivity to the young and the poorer classes. It is well known that the cult of the saints, which seemed to suffer a minor eclipse just after Vatican II, has now recovered its popularity. This is evident from the increased interest of scholars in christian hagiography, but is also called for by the renewed esteem for religious experience and popular devotion; the latter show, among other things, that in the face of the dangers and campaigns for de-christianization Our Lady and the Saints are seen as mediators of the christian identity and membership of the Church. In this too the example of Don Bosco as a pastor and educator is decisive for us; he felt a fascination for the Madonna and the Saints most familiar to him, and he passed on the same feeling to his youngsters.

### **3. Know and exploit the salesian Missal**

We now have, or soon will have, the new Missal of the Salesian Family.

Let us therefore profit by this occasion with the sensitivity for our formation and qualification which must characterize this present period (cf. GC23, 221).

It should not be a book we put immediately in the sacristy to be

consulted in haste just before a celebration. We must try to *get to know it*, to appreciate its value, so as to draw profit from the variety and riches it offers us. Let us prepare celebrations in a proper manner, so that they may be of high quality and not marked by improvisation and monotonous routine.<sup>2</sup>

The Missal texts can also serve as matter for personal meditation, for times of common prayer, for sharing of the Word ('lectio divina'), for preparing celebrations, as reference texts for days of recollection, or as a scriptural basis in times of retreat for thinking over past experiences.

The Missal can and should be made use of in the presentation of salesian spirituality, in the study of the theology of liturgical spirituality and of the religious life, and for personal reflection.

A *presentation and community discussion* during one of the formative encounters suggested by the GC23 (cf. n.222) may help to inculcate a knowledge of this liturgical book and provide a suitable setting for a reflection on the points already suggested, and on others as well. This is a task entrusted in the first place to the responsibility of the Rector for animation; it gives him an excellent opportunity for "community spiritual direction" (GC23, 223).

I conclude with a word of thanks to all those who, in various ways, have collaborated with intelligence and sacrifice in the preparation of our Missal, and I look forward to the early completion of the work on the Salesian Proper for the Liturgy of the Hours, which is at an advanced stage of preparation.

It is my hope and prayer that this book may prove to be for all a valuable aid to fidelity, and that the liturgical celebration of the life of our brethren may prompt us to do our utmost to make of our lives a 'spiritual worship' (Rom 12,1) and a witness which evangelizes (cf. GC23, 219).

<sup>2</sup> – For a deeper community examination of various aspects the following guidelines offered in recent years by the Formation Department may be of use:

– Fr Paolo Natali: *Our celebrations. Liturgical renewal, creativity and norms*, AGC 321 p. 44-56;

– Fr Paolo Natali: *An introduction to the Apostolic Letter 'Vicesimus quintus annus'*, AGC 330, pp. 59-65.

## 2.3 SOLID WITH DON BOSCO IN EASTERN EUROPE

Fr Omero PARON  
*Economer General*

“Brotherly solidarity” was a new name for something that had in fact always existed. It was always in the Congregation, for instance, even though it worked in a different way in earlier times when everything came down from above. Among the first salesian houses – Valdocco, Mirabello, Lanzo, Alassio etc. – there was a continual interchange of means and personnel.

It was left to Vatican II to emphasize in a new way (as it did in so many other cases) the idea of ‘solidarity’ in religious Institutes. The decree ‘*Perfectae caritatis*’ (n. 13) asked that provinces and houses of an Institute should share their resources with one another, those who have more helping those in need.

And we went on giving mutual help to each other without talking too much about it, so that ‘solidarity’ became something that was taken for granted. When we work, go to meals, pray or, more particularly, budget for our expenses, we do not forget our brethren.

The GC22 decided to constitutionalize a certain kind of ‘solidarity’ that we could call extraordinary, i.e. set aside for particular requirements to which each provincial with his council would be invited to contribute by the Rector Major at particular times and in specified ways. We had a very satisfactory demonstration of this so-called extraordinary solidarity during the Centenary of 1988. It only needed a hint, and the sons immediately rallied round their Father to do him honour.

Now we have once again a motive for drawing together in solidarity: it was emphasized by the Rector Major and the General Council in their recent plenary session. The Congregation is in process of *opening a new missionary frontier, towards the East – Eastern Europe.*

We are all aware of the recent historic events, in which our own confreres have been among those involved. There is talk of building a new "common house", and everyone aims at carving out a piece where he can set up his own ideals and principles. We must not be absent from this reconstruction, because we consider that salesian principles must have their place in the new picture. We have to bring to life again the activities of the Congregation which for forty years have been in a state of suspended animation. And not only that: we have to go further and occupy new positions in a world which is open and even favourable to new expansions.

And so the Rector Major and his Council are opening the gates of 'solidarity' in an easterly direction, and they invite all provincial communities to a new solidarity: to give "*solid support to Don Bosco in Eastern Europe*". While we are preparing missionary plans and looking for personnel, we are beginning by pleading for the simple things that are within reach of all, such as the material help needed for the immediate repairs that must be carried out to make habitable again the community residences and some other works that have been restored to us, but in a condition that can readily be imagined after years of semi-abandonment and neglect.

In this connection a fund has been established in the Economist General's Department known as "FONDO DON BOSCO EST" (the "DON BOSCO FUND FOR EASTERN EUROPE"), to be administered by the Rector Major himself. We are working against time, and it is important that we get a move on so that youth of Eastern Europe can meet Christ with the help of Don Bosco's sons.

In pleading for this new form of solidarity it is by no means our intention to kill off all the other kinds that have always coexisted in the Congregation and which it is impossible to enumerate precisely because so often the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing.

But we want to recall, lest it fall into disuse, that form of solidarity *which is founded on personal sacrifice of the confreres under the stimulation of their communities*, and is practised principally with the intention of making life a bit easier for communities in greater need.

We know how this kind of solidarity came into being. In response to the call of Vatican II Fr Ricceri, in his letter on poverty (ASC 253), urged the setting up of a concrete solidarity between the houses of each province, between the provinces themselves, and between the provinces and our headquarters. A 'concrete' call of this kind had already been made at a meeting of the Provincials of Latin America in May 1968. It was in fact not limited only to material goods but extended to help in other ways too, including personnel. There was a follow-up to Fr Ricceri's letter in ASC 256 where he specified that "the fruits of this solidarity must come from each one of us as persons and as communities"; in practice "from our own poverty lived more generously, from an administration that is more wise and attentive, from a prudent and intelligent economy and – why not? – from a certain renunciation of quite a lot of superfluous and maybe inopportune things."

The argument proved of such interest to the Congregation that it turns up again in later issues of the Acts of the General Council, where we find some expressions that help to complete the thought. Away with differences existing between brothers of the same family, is one of the recommendations. A rigid uniformity is not expected. There are "differences due to situations of a geographical, ethnical, or social kind or dependent on temperament, health, or particular circumstances". But at the same time "there is a limit to diversity"! (ASC 258).

And again: "The practice of solidarity in its various applications cannot be just a transient initiative but should become a permanent activity, for it is but one aspect of the practice of what should be a permanent and constant fraternal charity" (ASC 259).

In ASC 260 Fr Ricceri, after saying that charity cannot be just a garment worn on feastdays, but must be our everyday garb, went on to suggest: "Lent and Advent especially are occasions in each year when we are urged to show our charity towards our brethren."

In this way the campaign for 'brotherly solidarity' was born. The Acts of the Council published periodically the offerings received and the works to which they had been assigned.



Coming back to Eastern Europe, one confrere said confidentially: "We suffered persecution and every kind of physical and moral suffering. But whenever two or three of us spoke together about the Congregation we never felt we had our backs to the wall, because we knew we were not alone."

That is even more true at the present day, and we must all be aware of it!.

### 3. RULINGS AND DIRECTIVES

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#### 3.1 SPECIAL COORDINATING ROLE FOR PROJECT AFRICA

*In the plenary session of September-December 1990 the General Council made a careful study of the deliberation by which the GC23 entrusted to the Rector Major with his Council a special role of coordination with respect to Project Africa. At the end of their reflections the Rector Major and Council approved the dispositions set out below, deciding on the Councillor to be responsible for coordination and the areas of coordination themselves.*

*The approved text is as follows:*

##### 1. Deliberation of the GC23 (cf. GC23, 310)

“The GC23 entrusts to the Rector Major with his Council the task of exercising, in the ways considered most suitable, a special role of coordination, so as to help the confreres working in Africa to get to know African culture, and thus provide efficaciously for the growth of the salesian presence, pastoral activity and particularly the formation process”.

##### 2. For the realization of this deliberation the Rector Major with his Council decided as follows:

2.1 The special role of coordination will be undertaken by the *Councillor for the Salesian Missions*.

2.2 The objective of the coordination is mainly that of *promot-*

*ing a growing awareness of African culture in the salesian presences in Africa.*

2.3 The specific areas of coordination will be the following:

2.3.1 *The growth and consolidation of the presences in Project Africa, through:*

- previous consultation in view of the making of new foundations;
- the planning of such new foundations, in agreement with Provincials and Regionals;
- follow-up in the phase of realization;
- coordination in the preparation of possible new circumscriptions.

2.3.2 *Missionary pastoral work:*

The Councillor for the Missions will have the task of guiding and coordinating missionary practice in Africa, in agreement with the Councillor for Youth Pastoral Work and the respective Regional Councillors.

2.3.3 *The formation process:*

It will belong to the Councillor for the Missions to coordinate the creation and siting of structures for formation in Africa (with a logical overall distribution of structures following language considerations), in agreement with the Councillor for Salesian Formation.

## 4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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### 4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

In recent months the Rector Major has been involved in the plenary session of the General Council, but there were nevertheless some other important moments when he was called upon in his role as animator and centre of unity of the Congregation and the Salesian Family.

In particular, on 19 September he took part in the opening of the 19th General Chapter of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians at their Generalate in Rome. He was also present at some other significant moments in the same General Chapter, and took part with the members of the Salesian General Council in the concluding Eucharist in the evening of 16 November.

On 29 and 30 September he was at Tarazona in Spain for the episcopal ordination of Fr Miguel Asurmendi, the former provincial of Valencia.

27 October found him at Naples, where Cardinal Michael Giordano had invited him to address the pastoral workers of the Archdiocese on the ministry of the Pope, who was due to visit the city soon afterwards.

He was in Spain again from 1-4 November for the IXth national meeting of salesian parishes, and on 9-10 of the same month he was in Macerata for the celebrations of the centenary of salesian work in that town. 17 November saw him at Sesto San Giovanni for a meeting of salesian and lay teachers, to whom he spoke on the theme: "Culture and faith: the mutual relationship between the new education and the new evangelization". From there he went on to Sondrio for the commemoration of Blessed Philip Rinaldi which took place on the following day.

On 9 December, after the closing of the plenary session, he went to Monteortone to begin the annual retreat with the members of the General Council, after which he inaugurated on 15 December the new work of the St Mark Institute at Venice-Mestre in the morning, and in the afternoon, at the Don Bosco Institute of the FMA, received the homage of the Salesian Family, on the occasion of the annual festivities organized by the provinces for the successor of Don Bosco. The days of festive encounters in the two Venice provinces concluded on the 16th with a meeting with young

people of the Salesian Youth Movement at Mogliano Veneto.

This year, by way of exception, the Rector Major gave the 'Good Night of the Strenna' on 22 December to the FMA. After Christmas on 26 December he presented the Strenna at the Generalate, and two days later he left for Nairobi for a three-day visit to Kenya, after which he went on to Madagascar to preach the retreat to the Salesians and FMA of the various missions in that great island.

#### 4.2 Chronicle of the General Council

The General Council met in the Generalate on 18 September 1990 for the second 'plenary session' of the present six-year period. The Councillors came back after a first visit to the various provinces of the Congregation, after the conclusion of the first session in the previous May, to meet the confreres and communities and pass on some first indications after the GC23.

The session continued until mid-December with a series of regular and intense sittings and a full agenda, including (in addition to the usual administrative items) a specific reflection on the obligations imposed by the GC23 on the General Council.

The following is a brief account of

the main points dealt with during the session.

1. *Appointment of provincials.* As well as dealing with numerous items coming from the provinces (appointment of provincial councillors and approval of rectors, the opening and canonical erection of houses, authorizations for economic transactions, items concerning confreres, etc.), in this session too the General Council gave special attention to the discernment for the appointment of several provincials.

On the basis of a deep examination of the consultations in the provinces concerned and analysis of their individual circumstances, and after discussion, reflection and prayer, the Rector Major and Council appointed 13 Provincials and a Superior for a vice-province. They were: Marcos Baron for Medellin (Colombia), Helvecio Baruffi for Porto Alegre, Herbert Bihlmayer for Munich, Alejandro Buccolini (Rosario), Alfredo Carrara (Belo Horizonte), Marc Cuvelier (Vice-province of Korea), Jozsef Havasi (Hungary), Ruben Hipperdinger (Bahia Blanca), Juan Linares Munoz (Antilles), Zbigniew Malinowski (Warsaw), Francesco Mizobe (Japan), Thomas Myladoor (Bangalore), Thomas Polackal (Calcutta) and Alfredo Videla (Chile).

At 5.1 of this issue of the AGC will be found some details about the new provincials.

2. *Reports of the Councillors and a survey of some urgent matters.* As already mentioned the Councillors had returned from a first visit made to the provinces at the beginning of the new six-year period. They reported to the Council on their journeys, the impressions they had formed, and especially on the problems they had come across concerning various aspects of the salesian vocation and mission. This enabled the Council to single out some matters of greater urgency, to which they would return later at the planning stage.

3. *Objectives for the six years that lie ahead.* The central point on the agenda for the session was the consideration of the guidelines of the GC23 with a view to drawing up *specific programmes*.

To this end the Council devoted several sittings to a deeper analysis of the deliberations contained in the third part of the Chapter's document (especially nn.219-260), with special attention to what had been left by the GC23 to the Rector Major and his Council. The members sought ways for helping the provincial and local communities to put into practice what the GC23 had assigned to them as priority items for the mission of "educating young people to the faith".

At the end of their reflections the General Council was able to indicate its objectives, i.e. the order of

priority among the items the Council will offer to provincial and local communities by way of animation.

Starting from the basic priority to *renew in the confreres and the communities the ability to educate young people to the faith* in the light of the new evangelization, the following objectives were decided on:

1. To ensure the ongoing formation and qualification of the confreres in the local and provincial communities;
2. To give priority to raising in pastoral work the quality of the education of young people to the faith;
3. To involve and form the lay people in the educative community, Salesian Family, and the locality, so that they will share responsibility with us;
4. To give particular attention to work for vocations, as regards guidance, suggestion and follow-up.

4. *The special coordinating role for Africa.* One of the guidelines of the GC23 directly involving the Rector Major with his Council, concerned the special coordination of Project Africa that the General Chapter wanted to see realized for an ever more effective development of the Project itself (cf. GC23, 310).

The General Council examined more deeply the indications left by the GC23, and drew up conclusions

assigning to the Councillor for the Missions the precise task of guiding the coordination, and laying down the areas in which it would be carried out.

The present AGC at n. 3,1 carry the final text approved by the Council.

5. *Programmes of the individual Departments and of the Regionals.* With the general objectives decided, the General Council looked more precisely at the programme for the six years from the standpoint of the various sectors of animation set out by the Constitutions and assigned to various Councillors.

In this connection the Vicar General, the Councillors for the various Departments (Formation, Youth Pastoral Work, Missions, Salesian Family, Social Communication, Financial Matters), and the Secretary General, all presented programmes for their own sectors referring to both their constitutional role and the specific requirements that had emerged from the last General Chapter.

The Regional Councillors too presented the main lines of their programmes for the animation of the provinces, with a view especially to an effective realization of the decisions of the GC23.

From the reports of the Councillors and the full and detailed discussion that followed, there emerged the priorities to be observed in the

various sectors and also some problems that needed further study. At the end of all this work a list of 'items to be studied' was drawn up, from which the Rector Major will indicate some that need particular attention.

6. *Some guidelines for a 'lay project'.* Among the various topics that emerged during the session, it was the Rector Major's wish that a start be made immediately on an examination of the 'lay project' indicated in n.238 of the GC23. A small commission drew up and submitted to the Council a first draft entitled "Elements and outlines for a lay project". As was made clear in the Council itself, this is a list of points for more detailed treatment, and is intended primarily for the Councillors themselves to enable them to gather reactions and suggestions with a view to a subsequent more complete document.

To these main themes, which were a source of deep concern to the Council, were added others of more restricted scope concerning provinces and communities.

The session was enriched too, not only by moments of fellowship and prayer but also by encounters of a special kind. Outstanding among these were three meetings in groups of the Rectors of the communities of Italy and the Middle East, to whom the Rector Major and Councillors offered reflections on the



GC23, and the encounter with the new provincials appointed in the previous May, which took place from 26 November to 4 December.

The session ended with the retreat preached by Mgr Vittorio Piola, former Bishop of Biella, in the "Mamma Margarita" House as guests of the 'San Marco' salesian community of Monteortone.

The retreat was followed by the annual feast of the Rector Major, organized and animated by the two salesian provinces 'San Marco' and 'San Zeno' of the Venice area, together with the two FMA provinces of the same region. Within the context of the feast there took place the inauguration of the new 'San

Marco' Institute in Venice-Mestre, in the presence of Card. Marco Cè, Patriarch of Venice, representatives of the civic authorities, and many young people and friends of the salesian work. Highlights too of the festivities were the meeting with the Salesian Family at the 'Don Bosco Institute' of the FMA in Padua in the afternoon of Saturday 15 December, and with the members of the Salesian Youth Movement on the Sunday morning. The latter celebration took place at the Astori Institute of Mogliano-Veneto, and in the course of it three young Salesians made their perpetual profession.

## 5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

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### 5.1 New Provincials

*We give below some biographical details of the new Provincials appointed by the Rector Major with his Council during the plenary session of September-December 1990.*

1. *Fr Marcos BARON, in the Province of MEDELLIN (Colombia).*

Born at Alban, Cundinamarca, Colombia, on 17 April 1940, Marcus Baron entered the salesian college of La Ceja, where his vocation matured; he went on to the novitiate in the same house, and on 29 January 1959 made his first profession as a Salesian.

After philosophy and practical training he was sent to Rome for theological studies at the UPS; there he obtained the Licentiate in Theology and was ordained priest on 21 December 1968.

Returning to his own province he soon found himself in posts of responsibility. In 1972 he became a member of the Provincial Council and in the following year was appointed Rector at La Ceja. From 1976 - 1982 he was Vice-Provincial. In January 1981 he became Novice

Master at Rionegro, and continued in the same office (combined with that of Rector) when the novitiate was transferred to La Ceja "Sacro Cuore" in 1985.

In 1990 he worked in the house of Cali, and took part in the GC23 as delegate of his province.

2. *Fr Helvecio BARUFFI, in the Province of PORTO ALEGRE (Brazil).*

Helvecio Baruffi was born on 18 July 1944 at Luiz Alves, Santa Catarina, Brazil. Attracted to the salesian way of life, he made his novitiate at Taquarí followed by his first profession on 31 January 1964.

After successful progress through philosophy and practical training he studied theology at Sao Paulo and gained his Licentiate in Theology. On 30 December 1973 he was ordained priest at Nassaranduba, and went on in the years immediately following to take his Licentiate also in Philosophy and Letters. Subsequently he went to the UPS for the course in spirituality.

Back in his own province Fr Baruffi occupied some important posts. In 1977 he was appointed Rector at Ponta Grossa, and three

years later became Master of Novices at the novitiate of Curitiba, a position in which he remained until 1989 when he was sent as Rector to Viamo. From 1984 he was also a member of the Provincial Council.

3. *Fr Herbert BIHLMAYER, in the Province of MUNICH (Germany).*

The new Provincial of Southern Germany, Fr Herbert Bihlmayer, was born on 24 May 1935 at Immenstadt, Bavaria. He came in contact with the Salesians and after spending a period in the house of Bamberg went on to make his novitiate at Ens Dorf where he made his first profession on 15 August 1955.

After first pedagogical and pastoral experiences and the study of philosophy, he went for theology to the studentate at Benediktbeuern where he was ordained priest on 29 June 1964. He went on to gain civil qualifications in the field of education.

His experience as a salesian educator brought him at once into contact with young people: for some years he was director of the AZ Youth Centre at Benediktbeuern, and in the same house in 1985 became Rector of the community responsible for the study centre and the formation of young salesian students of philosophy, pedagogy and theology. In the same year of 1985 he became a Provincial Councillor.

4. *Fr Alejandro BUCCOLINI, in the Province of ROSARIO (Argentina).*

He was born on 18 January 1930 at Ferré, in the Province of Buenos Aires (Argentina). He got to know the Salesians through frequenting the salesian college at La Trinidad. Feeling attracted to the life, he made his novitiate at Los Condores and made his first profession on 31 January 1948.

After his first experiences as a Salesian he studied theology in the studentate at Cordoba and was ordained priest there on 24 November 1957.

After obtaining his teaching qualification and licentiate in classical literature, he carried out the ministry of a teacher and educator. In 1975 he became Rector of the aspirantate at Funes and at the same time a member of the Provincial Council, and only three years later was called upon to guide the Province of Rosario as Provincial. After his period of office he continued to work as an animator at provincial level and in 1985 was appointed Vice-Provincial, and in the following year Rector of the postnovitiate at Funes.

He was a member of the GC22.

5. *Fr Alfredo CARRARA, in the Province of BELO HORIZONTE (Brazil).*

Born at Sao Antonio de Amparo, Minas Gerais, Brazil, on 25 June 1932, Alfredo Carrara made his first religious profession on 31 January 1949 at the end of his novitiate made at Pindamonhangaba.

After practical training he studied theology at Sao Paulo, where he was ordained priest on 8 December 1958. He also acquired the Licentiate in Philosophy.

To his duties as a teacher and educator, Fr Carrara soon found other responsible tasks added. In 1965 he was appointed Rector of the house of Sao Joao del Rey, and in 1972 Provincial of Belo Horizonte. At the end of his term of office he became Master of Novices (and Rector) in the Novitiate of Barbacena, a post he filled until 1988 when he was entrusted with the direction of the Formation Centre, also at Barbacena. He was a Provincial Councillor from 1985.

He took part in three General Chapters (20, 21 and 22).

6. *Fr Jozsef HAVASI, in the Province of Hungary.*

As successor to Fr Janos Pasztor, who was called to his reward last October, Fr Jozsef Havasi has been appointed.

He was born on 14 March 1929 at

Rahosszentmuhali, in the Province of Pest in Hungary, and frequented the high school in a salesian house during the difficult war years. He made his novitiate in the house of Mezonyarad and his first profession on 16 August 1947.

After the practical training period and the study of philosophy and some theology, he went to Italy where he first spent some time with Hungarian refugees at Gallipoli before going to Monteortone, near Padua, to finish his theology. He was ordained priest on 11 February 1960 in Turin.

He then went to Austria where he was assigned to the 'Salesianum' in Vienna. In this hostel for students he carried out the duties of Vice-rector, administrator, and assistant to the students. At the same time he managed to maintain contact with the confreres in Hungary, strengthening them in various ways in their salesian vocation.

7. *Fr Ruben HIPPERDINGER, in the Province of BAHIA BLANCA (Argentina).*

Ruben Hipperdinger was born at Santa Maria, Coronel Suarez, in the diocese of Bahia Blanca, on 6 December 1941. He entered the salesian college of Fortin Mercedes, and there his salesian vocation matured. After his novitiate at Moron he made his first religious profession on 31 January 1966.

After practical training and the study of theology, he was ordained priest at General Roca on 14 August 1976.

His ministry as priest and educator was carried out in various houses of the Patagonian province with its long missionary tradition. In January 1981 he was appointed Rector of the house of Esquel, and three years later of Comodoro Rivadavia. From 1985 he had been a Provincial Councillor and in recent years was the provincial delegate for pastoral work for the young and for vocations.

8. *Fr Juan LINARES MUNOZ. in the Province of the ANTILLES.*

Juan Linares was born on 9 July 1943 at Guijo de Avila in the Province of Salamanca, Spain. After getting to know the Salesians, he made his novitiate at Mohernando and his first profession on 16 August 1964.

Embracing a missionary call, he left while still very young for the Antilles Province, where he gained his first experiences as a Salesian.

He returned to Spain for the study of theology at Salamanca, and was ordained priest on 22 April 1973. At Salamanca too he gained the licentiate in catechetics and the diploma in clinical psychology. He also followed courses in youth pastoral work.

Going back to the Antilles he was

given posts of responsibility. In 1978 he became a Provincial Councillor, and in the following year was appointed Rector of the house of 'Maria Auxiliadora' in Santo Domingo. He remained on in the same house after his mandate of Rector, to launch a work for the benefit of children in great need.

9. *Fr Zbigniew MALINOWSKI, in the Province of WARSAW (Poland).*

Zbigniew Malinowski, born at Radzymin in the diocese of Warsaw on 21 June 1935, felt the attraction of the salesian vocation, and entered the Novitiate of Czerwinsk, where he made his first profession on 2 August 1953.

After his practical training he studied theology in the salesian studentate of Lad, and was there ordained priest on 3 June 1962.

He completed his studies at the Catholic University of Lublin where he gained the Licentiate in Theology and the Doctorate in Music, he carried out his priestly ministry in various houses of the province. In 1978 he was appointed Rector of the Novitiate at Czerwinsk and two years later became a member of the Provincial Council. In 1984 he became also Vice-Provincial, an office he filled until his appointment as Provincial.

He took part in the GC23 as delegate of his Province.

10. *Fr Francesco Osamu MIZOBE, in the Province of JAPAN.*

Francesco Osamu Mizobe was born of Japanese parents at Shin-gishu, Korea, on 5 March 1935. Soon afterwards he returned to Japan with his family, and got to know the Salesians in the school at Myazaki and, following his vocation, entered the Novitiate at Chofu, Tokyo, where he made his first profession on 25 March 1955.

After his early studies and first salesian experience, he was sent to Italy for theological studies at the (then) Salesian Pontifical Athenaeum, where he obtained the Licentiate in Theology. He was ordained priest on 9 February 1964, and undertook further studies at the Gregorian University in Rome, gaining the further Licentiate in Church History. To this was later added the doctorate in Japanese history after studies at the Sophia University of Tokyo.

For several years he worked as a teacher and educator, and in 1979 was appointed Rector of the house of Nakatsu Nagasoe; in 1984 was transferred as Rector to the house of Chofu, seat of the novitiate and the formation community of the young Japanese Salesians.

In 1985 he became a Provincial Councillor, and in 1989 Vice-Provincial. In 1990 he took part in the GC23 as delegate of his province.

11. *Fr Thomas MYLADOOR, in the Province of BANGALORE (India).*

Born at Aruvithura in Kerala on 23 June 1933, Thomas Myladoor was a pupil at the salesian college in Tirupattur, where his salesian vocation matured. He went to the Novitiate at Kotagiri and made his first profession at Yercaud on 24 May 1954, after the transfer of the novitiate.

After the practical training experience he studied theology in the studentate of Shillong, where he was ordained priest on 1 May 1963.

Going back to his native province of Madras, he exercised the ministry of priest and educator in several houses, and subsequently went to Rome for a course in spirituality at the UPS. In 1971 he was appointed Provincial Economist, an office he held for six years, and in 1977 was appointed Rector of St Joseph's Technical School, Madras. Later, when the Province of Madras was divided to form the new Province of Bangalore, he was assigned to the latter. He was appointed Rector of the house of Alwaye in 1982, and in 1985 he became Vice-Provincial and a year later Rector of the Provincial House at Bangalore, both of which offices he held when appointed Provincial.

12. *Fr Thomas POLACKAL, in the province of CALCUTTA (India).*

Thomas Polackal was born at Changanacherry, in Kerala, on 25 December 1936. He was an aspirant at Tirupattur and went to Shillong for his novitiate, at the end of which he made his first profession on 10 April 1957.

His first salesian experiences were made in Northern India, and then he returned to the South for theological studies at Poonamallee, Madras, where he was ordained priest on 19 December 1966. After obtaining his civil teaching certificate, he went to the UPS in Rome where he gained the Licentiate in Spirituality.

He was soon called to posts of responsibility. In 1973 he became Rector of the house of Bandel and in the following year a Provincial Councillor. In 1979 he was transferred as Rector to the work at Calcutta-Tengra (school of printing and catechetical centre), from where he went on in 1982 to Kalyani, the newly opened house for the training of salesian Brothers.

From 1985 he had been Vice-Provincial and Rector of the Provincial House of Calcutta. He took part as a delegate in the GC23.

13. *Fr Alfredo VIDELA, in the Province of CHILE.*

As successor to Fr Riccardo Ez-

zati has been appointed Fr Alfredo Videla, born on 23 January 1930 at Santiago, Chile, and a Salesian since 2 February 1947 when he made his first profession at Santa Filomena where he had made his novitiate.

After the study of philosophy and practical training, he followed the course in theology in the studentate of Santiago and was ordained priest on 5 August 1956. He went on to take his doctorate in philosophy and pedagogy, and specialized in catechesis.

He was soon called by the Superiors to be an animator and guide. In 1965 he was sent as Rector to Quilpe, and two years later to 'La Gratiud Nacional' at Santiago in the same capacity; there he remained for six years. In 1972 he became a member of the Provincial Council and in 1978 Vice-Provincial, an office he held until 1984. In that year he became Rector of the work "Patrocinio San Jose" at Santiago.

He took part in the GC23 as delegate of the Province.

*In addition to the above-mentioned Provincials, the Rector Major with his Council appointed Fr Marc CUVELIER Superior of the Vice-Province of Korea, for a second period of six years; his biographical details can be found in AGC 312, p. 74).*

## 5.2 New Salesian Bishop

*Mgr Joao CORSO, Bishop of CAMPOS (Brazil).*

The Osservatore Romano in its edition of 13 October 1990 carried the news that the Holy Father had appointed our confrere *Fr Joao CORSO* to be Bishop of the residential see of Campos in Brazil.

He was born in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 2 March 1928 and was a pupil in the salesian college of Lvrinhas, where his salesian vocation matured; he went on to the Novitiate at Pindamonhangaba where he made his first religious profession on 5 March 1944.

After his first apostolic experiences and the study of theology at Sao Paulo, he was ordained priest on 30

August 1953.

He gained a Diploma in Sociology and the Doctorate in Canon Law, and was appointed Rector in several houses of the Province of Sao Paulo (Campinas, Americana, Campos do Jordao). At the same time he taught in the "Pius XI" Theological Institute of Sao Paulo and was a member of the ecclesiastical Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Sao Paulo.

In 1981 he was called to Rome as a professor in the Canon Law Faculty of the Salesian Pontifical University, and in 1984 was appointed Rector of the 'Gesù Maestro' community and a member of the Council of the UPS Vice-province.

In 1985 the Holy Father appointed him a Prelate Auditor of the Roman Rota, an office he held until his appointment as Bishop of Campos.



### 5.3 Our dead confreres (1990 – 2nd list)

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

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
<b>P AMBROSIO Alberto</b>	Cuneo	25-10-90	63	ISU
<b>L ARAUZ ESCOLANO Mariano</b>	Mohernando	13-12-90	91	SMA
<b>S ANH LE QUANG John</b>	Ben Cat	31-10-90	38	VIE
<b>P BAUSE Aloys</b>	Bonn	8-12-90	75	GEK
<b>L BERTOLDO Tullio</b>	Venezia	15-12-90	80	IVE
<b>P BIANCO Dario</b>	Torino	2-11-90	72	ISU
<b>P BOESSO Marcello</b>	Pinerolo	25-09-90	48	ICE
<b>P BREGLIA Emanuele</b>	Castellammare di Stabia	06-10-90	78	IME
<b>P BRISSIO Juan</b>	Rosario	10-11-90	78	ACO
<b>L CECCOMORI Marsilio</b>	Lima	22-10-90	83	PER
<b>P COLLADO CAMPOS Manuel</b>	Córdoba	12-11-90	64	SCO
<b>P CONTI Gabriele</b>	Perugia	29-09-90	78	IAD
<b>P CORNELIO Libero</b>	Torino	15-12-90	79	ISU
<b>P CORONEL Guido</b>	Minga Guazú	15-11-90	79	PAR
<b>P De la CHARLERIE Nicolas</b>	Waremmé	06-12-90	71	BES
<b>P DELACROIX Henri</b>	Bruxelles	02-11-90	77	BES
<b>P DIAZ GUTIERREZ Gustavo</b>	Caracas	27-11-90	61	VEN
<b>P DUARTE Rogelio</b>	Asunción	18-10-90	82	PAR
<b>P FACCHINI Giovanni</b>	Rovato	08-12-90	54	ILE
<b>L FANTINI Ottavio</b>	Hong Kong	23-11-90	98	CIN
<b>P FELS Saverio</b>	Roma	26-11-90	72	FIL
<b>P FERRARI Luigi</b>	Roma	23-11-90	82	IRO
<i>Fu Ispettore per 6 anni</i>				
<b>P FIORETTI Antonio</b>	Civitanova Marche	07-09-90	85	IAD
<b>P FRANGIOLINI Enzo</b>	Terni	20-10-90	66	IAD
<b>P GADDA Luigi</b>	Milano	29-12-90	83	ILE
<b>P GARSOU Henri</b>	Cap-Haïtien (Haïti)	25-11-90	73	ANT
<b>P GARZENA Giuseppe</b>	Torino	09-12-90	90	ISU
<b>P GASPARINI Angelo</b>	San Gabriel	21-12-90	69	ECU
<b>P GIACOMELLO Ivano</b>	Shillong	10-02-90	83	ING
<b>P GNOLFO Giovanni</b>	Catania	01-09-90	86	ISI
<b>P GOMEZ RUIZ Antonio</b>	Sevilla	20-07-90	61	SSE
<b>P GORKIĆ Giovanni</b>	Lanuvio	22-12-90	83	IRO
<b>L GORSKI Jan</b>	Lublin	23-11-90	91	PLS
<b>P GUTIERREZ DE LA PEÑA Ramón</b>	Córdoba	11-10-90	56	SCO

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
<b>P HECK Theobaldo</b>	Curitiba	01-09-90	52	BPA
<b>P IKEDA Sadao Joseph</b>	Beppu	10-10-90	65	GIA
<b>P ISGRO Salvatore</b> <i>Fu Ispettore per 6 anni</i>	West Havestraw	18-11-90	59	SUE
<b>P KARCZEWSKI Ludwik</b>	Wejherowo (Rumia)	13-11-90	68	PLN
<b>L LETTNER Mario</b>	Montevideo	22-10-90	67	URU
<b>L MAROZZI Francisco Benedicto</b>	Rosario	14-09-90	81	ARO
<b>P MONARI Silvio</b>	Bologna	27-11-90	81	ILE
<b>P MOSER Angelo</b>	Itajaí	12-08-90	77	BPA
<b>P OBIOLS FARRERES Pablo</b>	Barcelona	09-07-90	86	SBA
<b>P PACE Giulio</b>	Borgomanero	04-12-90	82	INE
<b>P PARCIAK Kazimierz</b>	Marszałki	24-11-90	65	PLO
<b>P PAVANI Igino</b>	Castello di Godego	28-10-90	65	IVE
<b>P PENINGER Adolf</b>	Wien	16-10-90	87	AUS
<b>P PFEFFERLE Karl</b>	Ravensburg	03-10-90	29	GEM
<b>L PIETRZYKOWSKI Pawel</b>	Łódź	09-10-90	25	PLE
<b>P PILATO Cataldo</b>	Catania	06-11-90	82	ISI
<b>L PIRES FERRER Paulo</b>	Campo Grande	12-11-90	71	BCG
<b>P PITRUN František</b>	Kroměříž	20-11-90	75	CEP
<b>P PÁSZTOR János</b> <i>Fu Ispettore per 8 anni</i>	Budapest	14-10-90	76	UNG
<b>P RAJTAR Peter</b>	Sfazany	05-11-90	78	CEB
<b>L RIBOLDAZZI Giancarlo</b>	Borgomanero	02-12-90	64	INE
<b>L RICCI Domingo</b>	Santa Tecla	11-10-90	83	CAM
<b>P RIGHETTI Giovanni</b>	Verona	27-10-90	75	IVO
<b>P RIZZO Tullio</b>	Messina	25-10-90	83	ISI
<b>L ROA Benigno</b>	Tuluá	23-09-90	73	COM
<b>P ROKICKI Feliks</b>	Ślupca (Łąd)	19-10-90	85	PLN
<b>L ROSSO Aldo</b>	Santa Cruz	14-10-90	73	BOL
<b>L RUSSO Giuseppe</b>	Castellammare di Stabia	16-10-90	81	IME
<b>P SANCHEZ HERNANDEZ Evaristo</b>	Ubeda	30-10-90	83	SCO
<b>P SCHROH EVARISTO</b>	San Rafael	07-10-90	69	ACO
<b>P ŠKURKA Emil</b>	Olomouc	18-12-90	79	CEP
<b>P SZALA Leon</b>	Warszawa	22-12-90	77	PLE
<b>P VICENZI Solano</b>	Ponta Grossa	07-09-90	68	BPA
<b>P WALAWSKI Józef</b>	Łódź	28-09-90	81	PLE
<b>P ZANICHELLI Fernando A.</b>	Colonia Vignaud	21-08-90	84	ARO
<b>L ZEBULONE Vittorio</b>	Torino	01-10-90	58	ISU
<b>P ZENI Víctor</b>	Carmen de Patagones	11-12-90	78	ABB
<b>P ZIEGLER Karl</b>	Berlin	16-10-90	76	GEK







