

# 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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## 1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

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### EDUCATING TO THE FAITH IN THE SCHOOL

- Introduction. - The "oratorian root" of our School. - The scholastic commitment of the Congregation at the present day. - The problem of the relationship between "school" and "education". - Crisis of cultural transition. - Times for research. - Complexity of the scholastic institution at the present day. - The Catholic school renewed. - Commitment to teaching in the new evangelization. - The salesian style Masters of youth spirituality.

Rome, Solemnity of St Joseph,  
19 March 1993

My dear confreres,

I send you my affectionate greetings, in the name also of the members of the General Council. We brought our last plenary session to an end on 5 February last, and immediately the members began to leave for visits of animation. A few days later I presided over the Team Visit to the Italian provinces, and later was able to make contact with various communities, especially in the two Mexican provinces, where I preached a special retreat to the rectors at the end of the celebrations marking the

centenary of the arrival in Mexico of the first five Salesians.

Everywhere there is evident a diligent commitment for the application of the deliberations of the GC23. God is blessing the Congregation too in delicate situations, not only in the vast missionary frontiers, but also in new foundations in Albania, Siberia and various countries of the former Soviet Union.

It is true that our personnel is strained to the limit in certain areas where vocations are scarce, but by living the evangelical counsels in an authentic manner and by avoiding the dangers of a soft and easy life, Don Bosco urges us not to stop and helps us to go ahead, leaving aside if necessary elements that no longer have salesian significance.

Among the themes being submitted to competent study in congresses and meetings for revision and planning, I have noted that of the education of young people to the faith *in our schools and scholastic institutions*. This is a topic that is rich and challenging; it is neither simple nor free from controversy, but it is certainly vital for the renewal of the Congregation.

For this reason I think it opportune to invite you to reflect on the subject of the school, and consider it in some of its most demanding aspects. It is impossible, in fact, to speak of the salesian work and mission without this topic cropping up, and on the other hand it constitutes in one way or another, positively or negatively, an important educative experience that must be examined and assessed.

## **The “oratorian root” of our school.**

I saw in Mexico – in the north in various towns along the frontier with the United States, and in the south in the Yucatán peninsula – a promising relaunching of the salesian oratory in the more densely populated suburbs where young people are at risk. In this unique kind of experience you immediately notice that the oratorian presence, with all its rich dynamism, becomes almost necessarily the creative nucleus for other initiatives, aimed precisely at meeting the practical needs of those youngsters. The salesian oratory is not an institution as yet completely defined; still less is it a kind of alternative in contrast with other structures, but rather something that leads to the search for a kind of education more useful to needy youth; and among such kinds of education there emerge almost at once scholastic initiatives for the world of work or for social and civic formation. You could say that the oratory (i.e. presence amongst the most needy youngsters) becomes also a source of scholastic structures, with a particular style and spirit.

We have seen this already in Don Bosco. From the first years of his activity at Valdocco, he inserted the scholastic component into his apostolate in a creative manner, preserving its objective, atmosphere and oratorian criteria. And when he was offered the opportunity he also took on schools that were already functioning or which he opened himself in some cases, guided always by his initial oratorian intent and his characteristic method of educating poor boys to a social and ecclesial life.

I think we must give due attention to this “oratorian root” and working-class characteristic of our

schools. Rightly the renewed Constitutions remind us that the experience of Don Bosco's oratory at Valdocco "is still the lasting criterion for discernment and renewal in all our activities and works".<sup>1</sup> It is a criterion that starts from the reality of the young and the working-class, and seeks the most suitable means for an integral education, especially of those in greatest need. 1 C 40

As the Congregation has expanded throughout the world it has become inserted into the movement which has spread Catholic schools among working-class peoples, taking the current models and improving or transforming them with its own specific identity and pedagogical intuitions. In this it has been guided by the conviction, corroborated by practice, that the school constitutes a privileged means for the education of the young, a valid element in the advancement of peoples and an evangelizing environment of particular efficacy.

Rather, therefore, than school and oratory being mutually opposed as two well defined and separate institutions, for us they recall and enlighten each other; they interchange criteria and methods, reciprocally enriching each other in their educative and evangelizing purposes, while both are characterized by their primary concern for poor and needy youngsters.

### **The scholastic commitment of the Congregation at the present day.**

After more than a hundred years of life, according to the data of the last General Chapter, we are now working in many hundreds of scholastic insti-

tutions, including primary schools (501), middle schools (498), senior schools (296), technical schools (79), university faculties (34), parish schools (677), and remedial centres (95).<sup>2</sup> To these must be added the professional schools (252) and agricultural schools (53).<sup>3</sup> The Salesians involved full-time in these schools number about 4,300 with a further 1,800 engaged part-time; working with us also there are more than 35,000 lay collaborators in the education of some 800,000 youngsters. And if to these we add the substantial scholastic commitment of the FMA, the numbers are doubled.

Our Family then appears as a movement of educators solidly represented also on the scholastic front, as emerges also very clearly from a study of religious statistics.

But it is not merely a matter of quantity. The Congregation has always taken special care to see that our schools are competent and qualified. In times when their validity was never called in question efforts were made to perfect their organization, to install in them a discipline based on reason, to make them fully efficient from a didactic point of view, and to foster their educative effect and cultural level. In times of contestation we made every effort to identify the cause of the crisis, to respond to new educational and pastoral requirements, and to reassert the advantages of the scholastic institution, without losing sight of its limitations. We managed especially to redefine the identity of the salesian school animated with the oratorian spirit of the preventive system.

In this uninterrupted process of reflection and orientation, various and complementary perspectives were reached which together constitute a valid synthesis: the educative project, the educating

<sup>2</sup> *La Società di san Francesco di Sales. Dati statistici*. Rome 1990. pp 56-57

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 64-67

community, the cultural dimension of the school, its evangelizing purpose, pastoral animation, and relationship with the local neighbourhood.

The GC21, which drew up its guidelines in the light of *Evangelii nuntiandi* and under its influence, having in mind specifically the evangelization of the young, reasserted the validity of salesian presence in the school, and summed up its merits as follows: "The school offers countless opportunities to meet young people and establish a personal rapport with them; it makes for a community whose cultural traits are enlightened and permeated by faith-values. Our pastoral efforts extend to parents and lay co-workers, thus particularizing the gospel message in a single programme of personal development. It asserts the right to alternative education in a society whose cultural leaders and monolithic school system preclude this right of parents in the education of their children".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> GC21 130

### **The problem of the relationship between "school" and "education".**

The GC23, concerned about the education of young people to the faith, suggested a balance in the relationship which exists between "education" and "school"; it did not conceal the difficulties that exist, and the fact that to overcome them there is need for a complex and decisive renewal. "In the educational system of our complex societies", it declared, "one notices a prevalence of instruction and scientific data over educational intentions and the overall formation of the individual. This is something which creates a separation between educational



system and life, between teaching and the integral formation of the person, and makes difficult the development of a personal culture".<sup>5</sup>

In this way there has been created, and sometimes even among ourselves, a real separation between the scholastic programme and the concerns of life and of the sense of an evolutionary age itself.

On the other hand, the simultaneous presence of numerous educative agencies, visible and concealed, as though in competition with one another, diminishes the influence and real value of the school as regards truly educative strategies.

Nonetheless the GC23 recognizes that the school is still the environment in which education to the faith can be inserted in a "vision of life and the world that the youngster builds up through learning the various matters associated with the planning of his own future".<sup>6</sup>

The advantages offered by the scholastic environment, however, are not to be taken for granted. They are to be deliberately pursued and attained in a situation without precedent in which many factors are interwoven. Hence the invitation to do some rethinking with a view to education to the faith, the content and application of various disciplines, the underlying cultural perspective, the structure and style of the community, explicit programmes of religious teaching, and the experience of christian commitment.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand intentions and plans for renewal along these lines have not been lacking in the preceding period.

Evidence of this, in addition to the General Chapters in the years following Vatican II, are the "*Elementi e Linee del Progetto educativo per le scuole salesiane*", offered to the Provinces by the

<sup>5</sup> GC23 56

<sup>6</sup> GC23 267

<sup>7</sup> GC23 270-273

Department concerned, the theoretical and practical development of the educative community and of the formation of collaborators, and the theme of evangelization in the school which has given rise to notable transformations of criteria and methods, though not without some serious difficulties as regards grasp and comprehension.

There have been occasions when these aspects have been examined more deeply in various regional congresses (e.g. in Italy,<sup>8</sup> Spain, and the Pacific zone of Latin America). And with respect to the formation of workers the Youth Pastoral Department, in conjunction with our Faculty of Educational Sciences, has offered a course in each of the recent six-year periods. If to all this is added the recommended presence in every pastoral team of a person in charge of the educative dimension, and all the material produced by the confreres in study days, you can see that we have always advanced with fidelity to Don Bosco.

The result has been the didactic and cultural affirmation and achievement of many of our schools, even in demanding environments, with an esteem and constant request for such schools on the part of families.

If it is true that the reality of the youth situation has prompted the opening of new fields of intervention, thus reducing the proportion of scholastic commitment in the global activity of the Congregation, it would be a mistake to interpret this as the beginning of the abandoning of schools or disengagement from them. In this regard, incentives and guidelines from the magisterium of the Church and headquarters of the Congregation have never been lacking; what may have been missing, for understandable reasons, is the reaction at local level

<sup>8</sup> cf. *Scuola salesiana in Italia. Atti della Conferenza delle Ispettorie salesiane d'Italia sulla scuola*. Rome 1984. *Il progetto educativo della scuola e della formazione professionale* (1992), jointly produced by the SDB and FMA.

where the directives have to find practical application.

In the scholastic field we are neither out of line nor lagging behind, but nevertheless we feel the need to come to grips with a movement which was and is in existence under many different aspects. This is evident from the growing complexity in this sector, the increase in the number of lay collaborators, the new teaching requirements, a relationship of new evangelization as regards the possibility of education to the faith, the linkage with the local society and neighbourhood, and the need for requalification on the part of the confreres.

Among the more authoritative aides from which we may draw inspiration, we can recall: the Declaration *Gravissimum educationis* of Vatican II, the letter *The Catholic School* of the Congregation for Catholic Education (March 1977) and *Lay Catholics in Schools: witnesses to faith* (1982) of the same Congregation, *La Scuola cattolica, oggi, in Italia* published by the Italian Bishops Conference (1983) with the supplement *Fare pastorale della scuola oggi* (1990), *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school* of the Congregation for Catholic Education (1988), various weighty statements of the Holy Father, various other interventions of local Churches, and the document of the GC21 *The School: a setting for evangelization*.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> GC21 128-134

### **Crisis of cultural transition**

Human reality is truly on the move, and in an accelerated form; in the cultural climate of our time we are registering radical changes which

make us think of the beginnings of a new historical epoch at planetary level. Some people are speaking of a kind of cultural revolution of the world.

Many "res novae" are emerging in society. Where the acceleration is greatest, there is already talk of transition from the modern era to the 'post-modern';<sup>10</sup> or in other words from a type of culture resting on a conviction of indefinite progress and centred on the capacity of human reason without recourse to anything transcendent (and hence creating agnosticism and totalizing ideologies), to another kind of culture that is radically sceptical, open to some kind of possible transcendence but in relativistic form (like the religion put forward by New Age), characterized more by the fall of false certainties than by the contribution of real arguments for hope.

Without entering into the merits of opinions concerning what is 'modern' and 'post-modern', it is clear that there is a climate of subjectivism, of relativism, of pluralism, of new styles which add the idea of 'post' to many concepts, even going as far as to consider the faith itself as being out-of-date and to speak of a 'post-christianity' in which the Church's mission would appear to be obsolete.

But from another point of view, such an evolution offers some interesting possibilities. The fall of ideologies, in fact, and of political and social myths raised to the rank of secular religions, makes us realize in a gradual but ever increasing way that the christian faith is after all the one point of reference that is stable and gives promise; it alone enlightens, defends and promotes perspectives of true humanism, rich in significance and in objectives which give sense to life and history and move hearts towards hope. The recent publication of the *Catech-*

<sup>10</sup> cf. CIVILTA' CATTOLICA n. 3418: *La fede cristiana nell'epoca post-moderna*, 21 November 1992

*ism of the Catholic Church* may come to be considered as an historic sign which points to the true point of reference for the future. One may think that the hour has struck for a new commitment to the inculturation of the Gospel in what John Paul II has called "this great moment of human history".<sup>11</sup>

Cultural conditions are right for the launching out with pedagogical intelligence into the new evangelization, with the possibility of finally healing the pernicious divorce between the Gospel and culture; the crisis carries with it, in fact, the request to tackle and treat the very roots of the emerging culture.

The Holy Father frequently comes back on this theme which is so much in harmony with his general line of thought: "Even though the Gospel is not to be identified with any particular culture, it must inspire them so that in this way they can be transformed from within, enriching them with the christian values derived from faith. Indeed, the evangelization of culture is one of the most profound and universal ways of evangelizing a society".<sup>12</sup>

"The absence of basic christian values from modern culture has not only obscured the transcendent dimension (...), but is at the same time a major cause of the social disenchantment in which this crisis of culture has developed. (...) One of the goals of evangelization is to intensify the dialogue between science and faith in order to create a true christian humanism".<sup>13</sup>

All this leads us to reflect in a new way on the nature and mission of our schools. Many Catholic schools have perhaps remained dazzled by the new cultural innovations without immediately finding a way to suggest an adequate response to their pressing challenge.

<sup>11</sup> CL 3

<sup>12</sup> Opening address at San Domingo, n. 20

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.* 21

Their insertion in a culture marked by so much agitation and pluralism puts before young people, without any assessment of their values, a whole variety of ideas concerning the sense of life and its ethical and religious planning. And so while objective and commonly held solutions are offered them for practical problems, as regards really vital problems the situation remains very much marked by subjectivity.

This has particular repercussions on religious education, understood in its elementary sense of responses to questions about existence, and still more on christian education in its multiple aspects of knowledge of revelation, of experience of a committed life and of a global vision of reality.

Many factors join forces to aggravate this phenomenon. One is the lack of proportion between religious instruction and the totality of the information and messages that youngsters receive, as a result of which their knowledge of the faith remains vague, imprecise, incomplete and confused. Another is the interruption – in christian countries – of the catechetical process in the period of adolescence when problems are emerging concerning feelings, ethics, culture and society. In fact the last systematic programme of christian formation offered them is their preparation for the sacrament of confirmation.

But a still greater influence is exerted by what the GC23 identifies as the growing irrelevance of the faith to culture and life, as the individual grows in the knowledge and dimensions of his existence. "In the welfare state, and correspondingly in other contexts, religious values have been moved to the margin of the components of the new society and of the aspects considered essential for social life.

For the young, and especially for those living in this kind of atmosphere, questions about God are of no importance, and religious terminology (salvation, sin, faith, future life) has lost all its significance. (...) Religious concepts can no longer be expressed in an intelligible way in the field of culture. This is a dramatic aspect of the otherwise lawful process of secularization".<sup>14</sup> All this is immediately clear to the attentive observer; but it is only one sector of the problematic aspects.

Fortunately, however, there are emerging positive tendencies as well, though perhaps still in embryo: they are the values and demands regarding the individual, considered as the determining subject in all educative and social processes. Such values and requirements suggest the pursuance of lines of research leading to the discovery of the mystery of the human life within each individual. They also suggest that priority be given to the formation of the person of the individual, activating in particular those dynamic elements which foster the desire and ability for a continuous growth throughout the course of life. Positive and stimulating also is the new scenario of the common worldwide background, expressed in solidarity with everyone both near and far, in respect of the natural and civil rights of each one.

Of all this we have already spoken in the circular on the new education.<sup>15</sup> Our GC23 takes note of the point: Many young people, it says, "are appealing to new values, able to regenerate personal relationships, and which offer a richer social structure. Some emphatic points are emerging from the world of youth: the centrality of the individual as the beginning, subject and end of all social instructions; the rediscovery of the values of equal dignity

<sup>14</sup> GC23 83

<sup>15</sup> cf. AGC 337

and reciprocal relationship between man and woman; a new way of building rapport based on freedom and justice; a collection of values linked with diversity (e.g. tolerance, ecumenism, respect for what is different) and solidarity (the new vision of peace and development, the totality and universality of growth); renewed cultural attention to cultural and religious realities, beyond purely technical aspects; a marked sensitivity to the great problems of the world...; a significant rediscovery of the environment and the need to safeguard it".<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> GC23 49

Not all the values proclaimed and desired by young people, however, succeed in bringing about transformations in convictions, attitudes and behaviour of a permanent nature, capable of giving rise to durable decisions and life options. There is in fact a certain disjunction between shared declarations and lived culture, between accepted norms and criteria and subjective aspirations, between social objectives and personal projects.

This situation of disorientation (caused by so many innovations) has in fact caused a lack of credibility also in the case of some Catholic schools.

### **Times for research.**

The epoch-making changes, therefore, through which we are living, mean that we must prepare cultural objectives. The Second Vatican Council has been an immense grace of the Holy Spirit to guide the Church at a time which is so complex but at the same time so fruitful.

The defects and inadequacies of scholastic activity before the Council have provoked among those



working in this field a justifiable concern to find new modes of apostolic presence which have, in fact, frequently led to the educative role of a renewed Catholic school being reduced or neglected.

There have been pastors who were completely insensitive in this connection, despite the explicit guidelines of the Magisterium; some Institutes of consecrated life have even gone as far as to abandon their scholastic works, as though were a residue from times past and now out of date.

But with the passage of time there is emerging with ever greater clarity an explicit criticism of such attitudes. We saw it in the 4th Conference of the Latin-American Bishops at Santo Domingo<sup>17</sup> and also in declarations of other Episcopal Conferences: e.g. the secretary of the Italian Bishops Conference, Mgr Dionigi Tettamanzi, in a meeting with the Provincials of Italy (November 1992) frankly stated: "It is to the credit of Religious (or at least many of them!) that they have kept faith with the Catholic schools, even when ecclesial attention was lacking on a growing scale, and sometimes indeed there was a complete lack of understanding of this specific service to education".<sup>18</sup> A full fifteen years earlier in the Letter of the Congregation for Catholic Education there was an exhortation to Religious to "not allow themselves to be diverted from this work of education by attractive invitations to undertake other, often seemingly more effective, apostolates".<sup>19</sup>

We know that the new evangelization is of its nature inseparable from human advancement and christian culture;<sup>20</sup> the two aspects, in fact, of *advancement* and *culture* constitute its most important dimension. To evangelize young people, who are in an evolving state, one must be able to act

<sup>17</sup> cf. AGC 343, pp 16-18

<sup>18</sup> CISM Jan-Feb 1993

<sup>19</sup> *Scuola cattolica* 89

<sup>20</sup> cf. AGC 343, pp 6-10

from within their human growth and cultural maturing process. The Latin-American Bishops at Santo Domingo rightly considered Catholic education as a «methodological mediation for the evangelizing of culture».<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Doc. S. Domingo 271

Now although it is true that education is a much vaster concept than that of the school, the latter – if it wishes to truly fulfil its function – must be considered as one of the most influential institutions in the sector of integral education. Of its nature it is called to mature the individual by developing from within his evolutionary process the horizons of the sense of life, avoiding its devolvement into a reductive programme of simple scientific and technical instruction; it must be a place of humanization with a valid concept of human existence, with a scale of values and a global vision of man, of his history and of the world. Only an abstract rationalism can conceive of a so-called “neutral” or aseptic school, not at the service of a culture but of isolated information for the teaching of a vague agnostic relativism.

Now every culture refers back to a humanism, and in the present pluralism of society christian humanism – as we have already implied – presents a deep originality and a growing revival of its social validity in the search for the common good.

The Catholic school does not represent a kind of supplementary work; it is an original and valuable contribution to the life of civil society, and indeed a right of the people. The freedom which should characterize every democratic State demands that culture be determined by the citizens themselves according to their competence and convictions, and not by public authority whose function is to promote and protect but never to monopolize. The func-

tion of the State is subsidiary, and "if it claims for itself a scholastic monopoly, it goes beyond its rights and offends against justice".<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Libertatis conscientia 94

### **Complexity of the scholastic institution at the present day.**

The school belongs, as we have said, to the realm of culture and partakes of its autonomy, in line with the requirements of that "lay nature" which is inserted in the temporal order and in its consistency and purpose, as was wished by Christ himself as the Word and creator.

This institutional "lay nature" is proper to every school as such; it is not in contrast with the christian inspiration which characterizes the set-up of the Catholic school; the faith, in fact, imposes no limitations or conditions on the nature and mission of the temporal order and hence of the school, but even purifies and stimulates its purpose by defending it from attempts at ideological manipulation of various kinds. In so far as it is a school, it is directed to human advancement with the perspective of educating the individual for the good of civil society.

The demands stemming from the nature and cultural mission of the school are multiple at the present day, and are on the increase in every society.

And so the school has become involved in a moving complexity, manifested in the first place in the order of teaching in which scientific information calls for an ongoing restructuring of programmes and disciplines, with a new articulation and

corresponding new methods and new teaching instruments.

Then there are the requirements of the various components of the school-entity, the didactic and disciplinary responsibilities, the functioning of the various councils, the insertion of parents, relationships with auxiliary personnel, the maintenance of buildings and their adaptation to new legal norms, and – a particularly important point – their financial upkeep.

The complexity extends also to the effort to provide a true education, which requires convergence of vision to give form to an activity which is coordinated and capable of expressing a common cultural commitment.

One can list all these aspects very rapidly, but their pedagogical functioning implies patient programming, methodical realization, laborious striving for convergence and continual balanced reassessment. If this effort at coordination is lacking, the scholastic institution runs the risk of not being a true school of life; it appears rather to be an obligatory loading-up period for taking data on board and acquiring a certain functional competence; it breeds antipathy in the pupils, and leads them to use their “free time” elsewhere.

But it must be added that if there is an effort at effective organization the complexity can be valuable, because it brings about a convergence among the indispensable plurality of roles, the didactic requirements and the educative aspects in an harmonious integration; the latter does not suppress the natural tensions between different poles but directs their energies towards a more efficacious capacity for cultural growth.

The complexity inherent in present-day histori-

cal evolution leads us to reflect on the serious nature and urgency attaching to the new requirements in today's school; they imply the ability to acquire and develop an authentic professional approach, not only general but specialized too. In fact the management of the overall structure, the didactic level, the animation of the educative community, cultural planning, and dialogue between scientific and technical information and the significance of values, demand a basis of systematic knowledge and a pedagogical praxis that is continually updated.

The educational sciences have developed in many directions and now require specialized profiles. There is an urgent need to overcome the tendency to consider the aspect of teaching as something purely technical with a functional rather than an educative purpose. A deeper reflection on the educative aspect of teaching, on the other hand, reveals and recovers the values intrinsic to the process of learning, in so far as it educates the mind to ask proper questions, to elaborate data correctly, to apply and exercise the intelligence, and not only to elucidate the relationship between empirical facts but also to discover the sense of the totality.

But if teaching and learning as an exercise already contain educative values, the cultural heritage with which the school brings pupils into contact offers still further elements of growth. In this sense emphasis is given to the horizons which the various areas of knowledge open on human reality and matter, and the attitudes of mind and soul they create.

If the complexus of content and methods is properly imposed, it should mature in young people a humanistic mentality, which leads the indivi-

dual to rise above material things: i.e. an ethical and cultural dimension which makes a measurement against conscience and objective values something habitual; a solid culture which understands progress as a sharing of good things by all, and does not proclaim individual affirmation as the first thing to aim at; a culture of sense, open to the transcendent, able to accept questions regarding existence and seek appropriate responses.

All this becomes possible only when the first and fundamental reflection, from which come educational objectives, has been brought to bear precisely on the culture which the school communicates through all its elements and particularly its teaching. The central problem of the school is therefore its cultural set-up, which means its integral reflection on man, in view of his formation for peace, for solidarity, for human rights, for the ecology, and for the betterment of society and of the world.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> N.B. It would be well to read the document *The Catholic School*, nn. 26-37

### **The Catholic school renewed.**

What characteristics should be given to a renewed school at the present day by the qualification of being "Catholic"?

We can say that in the decades that have followed the Council the Catholic school has been submitted to some fundamental rethinking. The new evangelization of culture indicates the tone of the christian humanism which should mark it out, and which the school translates into its own educative plan.

The plan demands that in the first place it

should be authentically a *school*; i.e. that it should concentrate on education through communication and the elaboration of knowledge; and this it does with a proper "lay" approach, without any concessions to secularist interpretations or ideological exploitation. It truly recognizes, respects and promotes the transmission of culture as a priceless service to civil society.

If it is not a true school, it cannot be genuinely *Catholic* either.

But if it is a true school, and often it is so to a greater extent than many others, it is well to point out at once that it has the right to social parity (or equality) with other schools, especially in what pertains to financial aspects: "The State cannot, without committing an injustice be content merely to tolerate so-called private schools. These provide a public service, and consequently have the right to receive financial help".<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Libertatis conscientia* 94

This is a genuinely democratic consideration which one must try to bring out everywhere in the social and political field. Catholics are citizens like all others; together they constitute the Church of Christ, which is neither an alternative nor a "part" separated from any civil society, but is rather in the latter as a leaven for advancement and liberation, to purify and strengthen its human values.

At the present time there are evidently various defects to be put right, some limitations to be overcome and backlogs dealt with, by accepting and bearing clear witness to the ecclesiological turn-about made by Vatican II. This Church, the servant of humanity, considers the Catholic school to be one of the means most appropriate and consistent with its action in the world as the «sacrament of salvation»; it is a means to be promoted with the

greatest zeal, an unparalleled service to be fostered "like the pupil of the eye".<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> cf. JOHN PAUL II, 28  
June 1984

It constitutes a most profitable environment for the new evangelization, precisely because it is closely linked with culture.

The Second Vatican Council has declared explicitly: «Catholic schools are no less zealous than other schools in the promotion of culture and in the human formation of young people. It is, however, the special function of the Catholic school to develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel. It enables young people, while developing their own personality, to grow at the same time in that new life which has been given them in baptism. Finally it so orients the whole of human culture to the message of salvation that the knowledge which the pupils acquire of the world, of life and of men is illumined by faith".<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> GE 8

The Catholic school, therefore, emphasizes in the scholastic setting the educative aspect in strict relationship with culture, especially at a critical time like the present, so as to overcome both the anthropocentric reductionism of the modern mentality and the subjectivism and relativism of weak thinking.

In its institutional complexity the Catholic school constantly seeks the organic arrangement of its various components and a basic communal dimension. The insistence of Vatican II on the ecclesiology of communion implies a decisive turnabout in the structuring of the school, which must become ever more transformed into an "educative community" and function as such. It aims at being the servant of civil society, precisely because it is a subject both communal and ecclesial.



As such it projects a significance and spreads a message even when inserted in a largely non-christian environment, and when its pupils are of another religion.

But in the context of Catholic tradition it is also called to become a kind of "basic christian community", in which is set out a valid synthesis between Gospel and culture through the witness of an integration between faith and life, especially on the part of the educators as a whole.

This leads to the Catholic school being inserted into the living texture of the local Church. It is not therefore a kind of isolated castle, but a privileged place for sharing and collaborating in the wider field of a more organic pastoral work for the young: a "centre of communion and sharing", as our GC23 put it. One might say that the Catholic school should help to bring civil society to greater democracy and the christian community to greater ecclesiality.

In this way the Catholic school perfects its nature as a true school by the christian inspiration of the individuals and the educative community as a whole; it is concerned with the cultural transmission of knowledge in the light of Christ's revelation, and considers itself institutionally obliged to contribute to the good of both civil society and the Church in its role of service to men.

As a competent expression of the new evangelization the Catholic school tries to communicate evangelical principles from within cultural values, bringing together in harmony the truths flowing from the mystery of creation and from that of redemption: i.e. from Christ the author of the world in his "secular" aspect, and from him as the liberator and recapitulator of everything in the eschatological fullness of the Paschal mystery.

Another characteristic aspect of the Catholic school is that it involves the lay faithful in its various educative activities. The relaunching of the vocation and mission of the lay faithful in the Church has by now acquired a particularly incisive effect in renewal. It is not easy to form an "educative community" that works well together and in harmony; the goal is to make of it an "ecclesial subject" through the continual creation and follow-up of new initiatives.

A fundamental problem in christian education is that of the authenticity of the behaviour of the educating subjects, both as individuals and especially as a community. The synthesis between culture and Gospel is mediated by that between faith and life in the educators, and by a climate of transcendence of faith in the vision of the world, history and behaviour in the neighbourhood. The choices of significance of existence, the plans of christian life, the evangelical animation of the educational environment keeping in mind the present cultural conditioning, the awareness of identity in the situation of pluralism, united with the ability to dialogue, are all aspects inherent in the educative community in the school, so that it may truly be and work as an ecclesial subject called to build up and live a climate of attractive pedagogical spirituality, which at one and the same time will be in living harmony with the roles of both the ecclesial community and the civil subject.

It belongs to the educators to fill with educational values the didactic project of the school, incorporating it in a wider and complementary ensemble of activities. The coordination of the various educational contributions is a task for a community seeking a global quality of christian

education in the whole of its activities.

From this reflection there emerges the need for an intense renewal of the community dimension, centred totally on the educative mission. The educators in the school must become a strong educating subject, able to interpret and transmit the cultural riches of every people through the enlightened vision of the christian faith, drawing on the source of paschal energy.

At the present day the Catholic school appears more as a task to be realized, than as an institution already built and awaiting testing; since it is not just an alternative to a state school, it appears as the perfecting of scholastic commitment as such in a promising but difficult moment in history.

In addition to this characteristic commitment to a christian style of communion, it must also undertake a profound rethinking of its own scholastic teaching programme.

### **Commitment to teaching in the new evangelization.**

It will be worth our while to dwell a little on the delicate aspect of the teaching obligation in the Catholic school. To understand the perspective we must refer back to the consideration of culture as a concrete human fact, situated in time and space. Every culture, after the manner of man who creates it, is immersed in the development of history and is permeated constitutionally by facts, progress, deviations and recoveries which have an objective influence on his own nature.

If one does not take this "historical" aspect into account (i.e. what persons and events are inscribing in man's "nature"), one limits the search for

the objectivity which should help to read reality with integrity, betraying the purpose of science itself.

The so-called "pure nature" of man is something that has never existed; it has always been subjected to so many conditionings. Hence, for instance, the loss at the present day of the sense of sin, which continues to exert an influence on all human life (and therefore also on culture); the leaving aside of the Christ-event which puts human existence and its cultures in an eschatological situation (i.e. in a necessary state of reference to the one and only "New Man"); these are factors which deprive scientific research and scholastic teaching of the knowledge of indispensable objective facts required for integral education. Human reasoning in general, and also the specific line of reasoning of the individual disciplines, receive a light of greater objectivity from the eschatological transcendence of Christ.

It is not a matter of indifference for cultural reality and for scholastic education whether we take account or not of these aspects of existence in time. The historical dimension in its various contributions is objectively inherent in the whole of cultural reality, and has a strongly incisive effect.

The road to know and to follow is not that of man abstract and anonymous, but that of the concrete man in his place in history. On the other hand *culture* is not to be identified with nature, even though there is a fundamental relationship between the two. History has much to say about human reality.

Here history is to be understood, not so much as one scholastic discipline among others, but as a criterion of objectivity in the consideration of

all disciplines, so that they be not developed and taught as a kind of ingenuity belonging to an earthly paradise. It is not enough to make a deep examination of man's nature and project its values in utopian fashion; you have also to consider his path through the centuries and his personal itineraries. And the christian faith, though it regards reality from a standpoint which is not specifically scientific but, at a particular and higher level, is fully concerned with the history of man in an attentive and global form, with full and harmonious trust in human reasoning. And so from both a scientific standpoint and that of the faith, one must recognize that the objectivity of human reality, as also of the whole of creation, still has within it much yet to be discovered.

Now if we take up once again the topic of the manner of teaching in a Catholic school, we must say as a first observation that the teaching commitment refers not so much to the scientific field of search for progress in the individual sciences, as more especially to the educative commitment to bring about the maturing of the individual through the most complete knowledge possible of reality.

The teacher must therefore use his professional scientific approach and his christian faith in a pedagogical perspective, harmonizing reason and faith within the discipline concerned. This is where one already takes a characteristic step forward in the evangelization of culture.

It is the task and art of the educator who teaches, to think from an integrally educative standpoint about the content of what he is teaching, so as to put it at the service of the growth of the person. He is not there just to provide instruction in knowledge but to foster education through his own particular discipline.

And so it is that, especially in the case of the humanistic disciplines (philosophy, literature, history, psychology, sociology, etc.), the qualification "scholastic" is not aseptic and disjoined from the knowledge of the faith, it does not mean only the place and level of transmission of the discipline concerned, but implies a specific dimension different from the secularist teaching that is falsely considered neutral; it is an original quality that is not in contrast with the serious approach and scientific competence which it evidently assumes, but favours an integral objectivity which is to be passed on.

From this point of view also one can see why the Catholic school does not have the simple function of supplying a lack, but has specific traits which characterize it and compel it at the present day to undertake demanding tasks required by the new evangelization, in the conviction of having points of view that are indispensably needed for cultural maturing.

Here we ought to add the capital importance attaching to the teaching of religion in the Catholic school; this is a vital theme that must be harmonized with the other disciplines, and fostered with particular care and competence.<sup>27</sup>

After these remarks on the renewed Catholic school, we must recognize that while we go ahead in reflections of this kind, there arises spontaneously in us a critical judgement on the concrete state of "Catholicity" in our present schools. Such a judgement extends to the evangelical witness given by the educative community, the specifically christian background against which must be rethought the transmission of the individual disciplines, with their perspectives of sense and openness to the

<sup>27</sup> cf. Document of Cong. for Cath. Ed.: *The religious dimension of education in the school*, 1988

transcendent through appropriate methods and arrangements, and also to initiatives in the area of ecclesial communion which must complete the overall physiognomy.

And the conclusion is: Roll up your sleeves!

### **The salesian style.**

It is within this global model of the Catholic school, of which we have given a concise description, that we now come to deal with the salesian features of our own presence in schools. In the first place the GC23 tells us that the community of the confreres is called upon to make itself an animating nucleus, capable of involving the more knowledgeable collaborators in its task and of orienting the whole of the educative community towards the chosen objectives. It is a matter of promoting a growth in communion, which implies a new mentality with a way of doing things that is solidly accepted by all. As well as this community dimension we must remember, in particular, the "oratorian criterion"<sup>28</sup> which, as we have seen, is also the historical root of the existence of our schools, with their particular type of pupil, their location in poor areas, a particular family spirit, a clear concern for a maturing of faith, with educative creativity and initiatives that are not limited to school hours.

As regards nature, purpose, methods and results expected from salesian animation, we may appropriately emphasize that in the scholastic environment our work of animation aims at maintaining the clear identity and specific objectives of the school, through the plan to bring together the

<sup>28</sup> cf. C 40

educative community, made up of collaborators, parents, pupils and supporters, and to express a characteristic style of education.

All this brings to the fore the formative task as the heart of animation. It is a matter of making the educative community become an authentic ecclesial subject, within which all become involved in processes of growth; in this way is realized the motherly educational function of the Church and profit is drawn from all its patrimony of pedagogy and grace.

Formation develops in four dimensions:

- the *cultural* dimension, which helps to put a correct value on the events and currents of thought which have greater influence on men at the present day;
- the *professional* dimension, which strengthens the ability to face up together to specific problems of young people in the school and elsewhere;
- the *christian* dimension, which leads to a greater awareness of the significance and demands of being believers, and an ever deeper and more complete knowledge of the mystery of the new Man and an authentic experience of faith;
- the *salesian* dimension, which continually puts forward and deepens the theoretical and practical understanding of the frame of reference of the preventive system.

Animation constitutes the real qualitative leap in the present scholastic renewal. It shifts the emphasis to the service that our apostolic consecration can provide. From it is expected not only work of a kind appropriate to the temporal order but also and more especially a force of calling and aggregation in faith; the school is expected to be a specifically



christian sign and reminder. In this sense the consecrated personnel are called not only to be more faithful administrators or teachers with a proper cultural vision, but to translate their radical option for Christ into an educative presence and impact.

Moreover animation implies a shift of accent in the management of our works. In them the religious community, even though reduced in number, must concentrate on fundamental aspects, ensuring above all that in the orientation of the work its educative and christian quality is preserved.

In this light the importance of the salesian figure of the *Rector* appears more clearly. We know that according to the Constitutions<sup>29</sup> he is not only the guide of the religious community, but also the first in order of responsibility for its mission, i.e. the one who gives direction to the educative and pastoral commitments of the confreres and educative community, the one who in the last analysis is in charge of its organization and functioning.

In the frequent discussions which to some extent have been taking place everywhere, the possibility has been raised of separating the religious direction of the community from the pastoral and educative direction of the work, but each time the discussion has ended by coming back to the traditional position. The GC21 preferred to indicate priorities among the duties assigned to the Rector<sup>30</sup> and the acquiring of new abilities, rather than sanction a division between religious, educational and pastoral responsibilities – and this for a fundamental reason: our salesian religious experience points to the achievement of the mission as its inspiration and integration. In this our consecrated life has its effect in a pedagogical form and, vice versa, our pedagogical experience enriches our spirituality: it

<sup>29</sup> cf. C 176

<sup>30</sup> cf. GC21 52-53

is the dynamics of our "grace of unity". This principle and its relative applications were highlighted by recent General Chapters and therefore form the criteria for giving organic unity to the community and to its scholastic work.

In recent times, however, a local situation has arisen and is growing, in which local governments consider pedagogical and organizational matters to be primarily the responsibility of the school itself. To this is added the complexity of the components to which we have referred already, with the result that the Rector cannot take part in and follow up some of the more specifically scholastic aspects. Sometimes his professional qualifications do not meet the present scholastic demands. And so, intentionally or not, the figure of the headmaster has been taking over the role of the final point of reference, not only as regards the organizational and didactic sectors, but also with respect to the objectives, the guidance of the educative community, the organizational structure and balancing of roles, and relationships with the various component bodies. This is a set-up that must be corrected by constant dialogue in the community.

In any case the practical consequence has been that sometimes preference has been given to the appointment as Rector of a confrere who could animate the religious community without bearing the principle responsibility for the scholastic work. If the circumstances do not admit of other solutions, or if this solution be considered best in a particular case, it can be tried out. But if by such an exception the intention were to be to change the normal salesian practice, the method should be submitted to serious discernment.

It is the Rector in fact who makes evident the

pastoral purpose of the salesian school, on account of which all the technical functions are directed towards education and the latter is directed towards growth and maturing in faith. He also renders visible the family structure of the community, in which the ultimate reference is to the one who expresses fatherliness and affection. In this sense the GC23 urges him to cultivate a personal relationship with the pupils, which will enable him to deal with the problems of life they feel most intensely and in this way promote vocational commitment.

What we have said about the Rector, however, and about the community dimension in general, requires that the various roles and relative influences be coordinated, leaving to each one the necessary autonomy within a space for dialogue to assure union and convergence. Such space should be found in the salesian community which, specifically under the guidance of the Rector,<sup>31</sup> assumes responsibility for the mission and discerns situations and challenges so that it may remain faithful to its objectives and particular spirit.

Each of the roles has its own particular educative incidence, which becomes positive under two conditions: that it be thought of as complementary with other roles, and that in the exercise of its functions it draws inspiration from the educative purpose and pastoral plan. No one can exempt himself from these conditions. They are above any role and belong to our mission. Hence any oppositions or separation, whether in theory or practice, between administrative, educative or pastoral sectors, are dangerous and must be corrected. Concern for education to the faith guides and determines the programming, structure, organization and exercise of functions, and all the interventions of any indivi-

<sup>31</sup> cf. C 44

dual: "We are all called to be educators to the faith at every opportunity".<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> C 34

### **Masters of youth spirituality.**

In conclusion I would like to recall what the Holy Father wrote in the letter *Iuvenum patris*: "In the Church and in the world the integral educative vision that we see incarnated in John Bosco is a realistic pedagogy of holiness. We need to get back to the true concept of "holiness" as a component of the life of every believer. The originality and boldness of the plan for a "youthful holiness" is intrinsic to the educational art of this great Saint, who can be rightly called the "master of youth spirituality". His secret lay in the fact that he did not disappoint the deep aspirations of the young (the need for life, love, expansiveness, joy, freedom, future prospects) but at the same time led them gradually and realistically to discover for themselves that only in the 'life of grace', i.e. in friendship with Christ, does one fully attain the most authentic ideals".<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> IP 16

Yes, dear confreres, the new evangelization demands for everyone a climate of "new enthusiasm", or in other words a life of faith translated into a spirituality to transmit and bear witness to.

The GC23 dealt at length<sup>34</sup> with the theme of our salesian spirituality which, precisely because it is a youth spirituality, becomes an *educative spirituality*: "To promote the growth of the young to the fullness of life after the measure of Christ the perfect man, is the goal of salesian work".<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> GC23 158-180

Certainly among the many youngsters in our

<sup>35</sup> GC23 160

schools there is a great variety in the level of their religious experience, but the atmosphere of the school should be built on the true spirituality of the salesian animating nucleus and that of the educative community. The witness of faith of the educators influences the environment and tends to bring out the more mature youngsters, who then become the joyful daily leaven for a growth in youth spirituality among their companions.

Let us ask Mary Help of Christians to obtain for us an ever more lively fidelity to Don Bosco, so as to assimilate our work in schools and special "basic christian communities"; in them the eschatological project-man of Christ the Lord will be newer and more definitive.

May the coming Easter celebrations bring us the joy of meeting with the greatest "new event" in history, the risen Christ, to whom we offer our determination to commit ourselves to the renewal of the salesian school.

May Don Bosco intercede for us!

With cordial greetings and fraternal good wishes.

Affectionately in the Lord,

Don F. Viganò

## 2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

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### **2.1 PAST PUPILS OF DON BOSCO REVIVAL, CONSOLIDATION, DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATION RECEIVED**

Fr Antonio MARTINELLI

*Councillor for the Salesian Family and Social Communication*

#### **The Provincial Chapters of '92**

As was foreseeable, and as was verified in the provincial chapters of 1992, the commitment of the provinces and communities in respect of the Past-Pupils seems to have become stagnant. The analysis made in the General Council after examining the reflections and deliberations of the provincial chapters, the reports of the Regional Councillors and the information gathered during the visits of the Councillors for various Departments, have led the Congregation to make a careful study of the theme of the Past-Pupils.

We have to admit that art. 5 of the Constitutions and the associated directives of the General Regulations have not yet achieved the results that were hoped for. What remains to be done in this connection is not entirely attributable to the delegates, nor to the salesian communities, nor to the Past-Pupils themselves: a convergence of difficulties, practical rather than theoretical in nature, has prevented us from gathering the fruits corresponding to the efforts that have been made, and have put a damper on the remaining enthusiasm.

What then are we to do? What indications can be given to the communities as a minimum indispensable commitment for remaining faithful, not only to tradition, but to the inheritance with which we have been entrusted? Is there some way in which we can revive, consolidate and develop the 'education received' by our young people?

## Awareness of the problem and endorsement of the points of reference

In the first place the General Council asks the salesian communities, to whom these notes are primarily addressed, to read again the Rector Major's letter of 19 March 1987: *The Past-Pupils of Don Bosco*, AGC 321 (1987).

This further reading should lead to:

- the recognition of the importance of work with the Past-Pupils, even when immediate results are not encouraging;
- a re-examination of the education we are offering to our youngsters in the different settings of salesian activity (not simply in schools), so as to assess its effective quality;
- the assuming by the salesian communities of the responsibility to provide "the animation that will ensure the fidelity of the members to the purposes of the Association and to the genuine inspiration of Don Bosco" (AGC 321, p. 27).

Moreover we think it indispensable that we become aware of the dimensions of the problem, as lived in practical salesian life.

Some questions can serve to highlight various aspects of a situation that require immediate intervention. Provinces and local communities will find them a help for defining more clearly where the problems lie.

1. What must we accept as the *minimum objective and commitment in work with the Past-Pupils*?

The communities and local delegates for the Unions frequently feel dissatisfied, because when they take stock of the situation they find that their efforts far outweigh the results achieved.

And yet they seem to have done everything possible! And Past-Pupils of quality are not lacking, ready to manifest their love for Don Bosco and their attachment to the Salesians!

It is the Association itself that seems not to be functioning: the organization of the Federation, the group as a whole, not the individuals.

2. At the present period in the Congregation's history what can we suggest for *exploiting the 'movement', the 'association', and the 'animating nucleus'* of those responsible for local Unions, provincial and national federations, and for the world Confederation?

Communities and Delegates must not forget that the Past-Pupils Association constitutes a reality that is not homogeneous in character. This is why we speak of the movement of the Past-Pupils, of the Association and Union of the Past-Pupils, and of those responsible at different levels.

Consequently the vitality of the 'education received' will not be homogeneous either, and this not only at the time it is received but in its subsequent expressions. All past-pupils are Past-Pupils, but not with the same degree of choice! This situation has reflections in the organization. To forget this when tackling problems could lead to inadequate solutions.

### **The minimum objective for salesian communities**

#### *1. From the organizational standpoint*

1.1 The primary thing to be fostered is the local Union. If this is alive and functioning, the Federations will have sense and meaning and will be practical in their work.

1.2 Hence every salesian community (and we are not speaking only of schools!) must ordinarily give life to the local Past-Pupils Union, even if the latter can count on only a few constant and committed members, i.e. on an animating nucleus.

A province that failed to give due consideration to this element in its pastoral plan would not be responding faithfully to the salesian charism.

Communities without an organization of Past-Pupils should be considered exceptional, and insufficient reasons for tending towards such a situation should not be easily accepted.



## 2. *From the standpoint of animation*

2.1 First of all, the lack of homogeneity in the Association must be kept in mind. This means in practice that the three concentric circles of 'movement', 'association', and 'animating nucleus' must be treated in different ways.

### 2.2 *The past pupils movement.*

Members of the 'Past-Pupils movement' are the vast number of persons who preserve at least a friendly feeling for the 'education received', and have never positively excluded it. With Past-Pupils of this kind, some channel of communication should be preserved which will allow for occasional contact, albeit sporadic. Such channels might include:

2.2.1 An annual meeting, when the Unions celebrate their membership of the Confederation and of the Salesian Family.

2.2.2 Possible linkages, in person or by letter, on the occasion of particular personal or family anniversaries, or in moments of joy or of difficulty.

2.2.3 Meetings of groups with something particular in common, e.g. those of the same profession, or for other reasons that could bring members together.

2.2.4 The organization of special interventions in local areas which call for the union of all salesian forces to provide a response to a particular problem.

One cannot foresee everything, and the creativity of the delegates will surely enable them to find other kinds of linkage.

The Past-Pupils movement should not be considered as something insignificant, even if it does not find expression in insertion in an association or membership of a committed nucleus. Nor, from this point of view, should be undervalued the 'affective component' which many Past-Pupils feel with respect to the salesian community.

### *2.3 The past-pupils association.*

The 'Union' constitutes the centre for organization and animation.

The members, in addition to benefiting from the initiatives already mentioned in connection with the 'movement', take on a kind of group life which stimulates and supports the 'education received' so that in fact it becomes 'education accepted and shared'.

To this end there should be organized:

2.3.1 A programme of ongoing formation to meet the requirements of the process of maturing in harmony with the values of salesian education and the typically christian vocation at the present day.

2.3.2 A plan for insertion into local social and political life, with criteria for ensuring an integral christian and human response to problems, especially those involving young people.

2.3.3 Encouragement and follow-up in the choice of voluntary work in the civil and missionary fields, especially on the part of young Past-Pupils.

2.3.4 The offer of membership of the Salesian Family, as recalled in art.5 of the Constitutions, which could be expressed also as a Cooperator.

### *2.4 The animating nucleus of the past-pupils*

The 'animating nucleus' of the Union is the most important group to be sustained and animated. The best efforts of the community and its delegate should be extended to those Past-Pupils who are members of their local council.

To promote the growth of the 'nucleus' is the way to ensure the numerical and qualitative development of the Union.

2.4.1 For this reason the delegate will keep in personal contact with each of them individually and continually, so that in fact he becomes their spiritual adviser.

2.4.2 The community and delegate cannot consider them as merely among those to whom our educative and evangelizing work

is directed. They are in fact our valuable collaborators and share with us the responsibility for salesian work in a given area.

2.4.3 For this reason, in the drawing up of the community's annual programme their presence cannot be ignored. They must be made sharers in our plan and their contribution considered as of particular importance.

The members who are committed in a christian and salesian manner are looked on in a different manner from the other Past-Pupils.

This is also the only way to exploit the gifts of all and cause them to converge for the good of the young, who remain the fundamental responsibility of all Don Bosco's Family, and hence also of the Past-Pupils.

### **The horizons of life and of development of the Salesian Past-Pupils**

Reflection on the Past-Pupils and the commitments in their regard incumbent on the salesian community does not end with the two aspects of organization and animation; we have also to consider the larger picture which serves as the 'natural environment' within which the particular gifts of each one are expressed. In the General Council two essential points of reference were emphasized for the vitality of the Past-Pupils.

#### *1. Linkage in and with the Salesian Family.*

Salesian communities and those responsible for the Association should keep in mind, in the first place, what is stated in the new Statute of the Confederation of the Past-Pupils of Don Bosco in art. 11: "The World Confederation acknowledges and requests commitment of the Salesian Congregation in the role of animator of the Past-Pupils, with the task of maintaining unity of spirit, stimulating dialogue, encouraging fraternal collaboration and fostering permanent spiritual formation".

The mediation of the salesian community is a necessary requirement for the growth of the Past-Pupils Association.

When the community promotes initiatives and commitments with all Don Bosco's Family in its different groups, the Past-Pupils can find their role also. This is the concern simultaneously of local Unions, delegates and communities.

Isolation never produces life. On the other hand, getting together to tackle the problems of the young in a given area offers everyone the possibility of contributing their own specific and original kind of help. Working together in this way gives rise also to friendly interest and involvement of other Past-Pupils, thus increasing the common strength and starting up further activities.

Then the pupils too, who always keep an eye on what adults are doing, begin to think it something positive and attractive to continue the testimony of their predecessors in the organization of the Past-Pupils.

Vitality produces life.

Still few in number are the communities which have set about organizing a council or consulting-group of the Salesian Family. Within such an organism the Past-Pupils will find it easier to dialogue and offer their collaboration.

All this corresponds to the expectations of the Past-Pupils Confederation. In the Statute we read once again: "The Association builds up an active communion with the other branches of the Salesian Family participating in the creation and functioning of structures helpful to mutual acceptance, dialogue, work-sharing, and interaction among the various bodies".

There is still a long way to go!

If the Salesians do not consider the contribution of the Past-Pupils and insert it into their pastoral plan, many efforts will be made in vain. Their insertion in the local educative community, their sharing in the search for solutions to pastoral problems concerning local youth, will create new relationships between all the pastoral sectors of a work, with immediate and tangible advantages also for the Past-Pupils themselves.

## 2. *The lay project.*

There is a second aspect which is fundamental for revitalizing the organization of the Past-Pupils: to keep them practically and positively in mind while promoting the 'lay project', a duty laid on the salesian community by the GC23.

In an earlier communication (*Outlines for a lay project; Notes for the communities, AGC 340*), I recalled the following points which find an opportune setting in the context of the Past-Pupils:

- "The plan is born of the sharing of some elements that can be found in every province in the world. They are values and riches of spirit and spirituality, which Don Bosco lived and organized in his experience of the Salesian Family, and left as a legacy to all those who take their inspiration from him".

Much of the formation of lay people is linked to the ability of the Salesians to organize it, and to offer it with a certain continuity, adapting it to different situations.

In other words, the lay project obliges us to make every effort to insert deeply in the Church and society Don Bosco's spirit. Often our past-pupils represent the cutting edge of our presence.

- "The fact that there are lay people working with us in the missions, and we with them, is not just a quantitative summation of strength, and still less is it something forced upon us by our losses and dearth of personnel. It is a matter of a mutually enriching communion between distinct but complementary vocations in the Church". Many examples could be quoted of experiences in which past-pupils, who have grown up and been *formed* in the spirit of Don Bosco, have been able to make their presence felt in a significant fashion, even autonomously.

Very often it is a matter of offering them an atmosphere of support and encouragement; of pointing out possible ways of intervention more suited to the laity in the sectors of social advancement and the social dimension of charity; of ensuring that behind them they have our spiritual and formative support; of placing them in channels for reflection and planning: the education received when they were young will certainly come to fruition in an education that is both renewed and extended.

## 4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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### 4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

In the first week of January, while the work of the plenary session of the General Council was still in progress, the Rector Major found time to present his commentary on the Strenna-93 in various houses in Rome.

On January 6, feast of the Epiphany, he went to Ortona, Abruzzi, to spend some time with the young people being helped by our community there for the treatment of drug-addicts. He conversed with the youngsters and inaugurated a new Centre for meetings of the three groups who are received there.

On the following day he opened the work of the study-seminar on salesian history, organized at the Generalate by the Salesian Historical Institute.

On the 15th he was present for a discussion with those taking part in a meeting to study salesianity arranged by the Formation Department.

On the 29th he gave the concluding address at the Week of Spirituality of the Salesian Family, at which he had been present at various sessions.

January 30 found him at Ivrea for the celebrations to mark the cen-

tenary of that well-deserving house, the early training-ground of many missionaries for different continents. He then went on to Valdocco, Turin, for the feast of Don Bosco which was marked this year by a more numerous and emotionally moving crowd of participants than usual.

After the conclusion of the Council's plenary session on 5 February, he presided over the "Team Visit" to the Italian Provinces. This important encounter took place at the Generalate from 7 to 11 February.

On the 18th of the same month he left for Mexico where, amongst other things, he preached a retreat to all the rectors of the two Mexican provinces as part of the programme of celebrations to mark the centenary of the salesian presence in that country.

### 4.2 Chronicle of the General Council

The winter session of the General Council began on 1 December 1992 and continued until 5 February 1993, with 32 full sittings in addition to work in groups and committees.

The agenda included, as always,

numerous items of ordinary government, e.g. the appointment of provincial councillors and the approval of rectors and directors of novices; the opening and canonical erection of some houses; items concerning individual confreres, and others of an economic and administrative character. But the greater part of the time and work was dedicated to points concerning either certain provinces or of a general character relating to the animation and government of the Society.

The following is a summary of the major arguments dealt with by the Council.

### 1. *Appointment of Provincials.*

The Council examined the results of the consultations for a good number of new provincials, and made the subsequent discernment in each case. The following new Superiors (in alphabetical order) were appointed during the session: Frs Benno Benes for the Province of Prague; Alain Beylot for that of Paris, France; Juan Cantini for Rosario, Argentina; Luciano Capelli for North Philippines; Luis Alfredo Cardenas for Bogota, Colombia; Heriberto Herrera for Central America; John Horan for Dublin, Ireland; Jose Ramon for Bolivia; Ernest Macak for Bratislava; Giuseppe Troina for Sicily; Mario Valente for Central Africa. In addition Fr Luigi Zuppini was appointed as the first Superior of the new circumscrip-

tion of Madagascar. Some further information about each of the new provincials can be found at n.5.2 of the present issue of the AGC.

### 2. *Extraordinary visitations.*

Careful attention was given to the reports on the extraordinary visitation of various provinces that had taken place in the period from August to December 1992, presented by the Visitors concerned. The provinces involved (in alphabetical order) were: Argentina-Rosario, Australia, Brazil-Manaus, Colombia-Bogota, France-Lyons, India-Bombay, Spain-Seville. Also examined were the reports on a visit made to the Delegation of Uganda and Zambia in Africa.

### 3. *Provincial Chapters.*

This particular session was noteworthy for the number of provincial chapters (no fewer than 61) that had taken place in the previous months. Their results were examined and their deliberations approved in accordance with art. 170 of the Constitutions. The following chapters were concerned (once again in alphabetical order of provinces): Africa-Central, Africa-Southern, Antilles, Argentina-Bahia Blanca, Argentina-Buenos Aires, Argentina-Cordoba, Argentina-La Plata, Australia, Belgium-South, Brazil-Belo Horizonte, Brazil-Campo Grande, Brazil-Manaus, Brazil-Porto Alegre, Brazil-Recife, Central America,

Chile, Colombia-Bogota, Colombia-Medellin, Croatia, Ecuador, France-Paris, Germany-Munich, Haiti, Holland, Hungary, India-Bangalore, India-Bombay, India-Dimapur, India-Madras, Ireland, Italy-Central, Italy-Genoa, Italy-Milan, Italy-Novara, Italy-Rome, Italy-Sardinia, Italy-Sicily, Italy-Sardinia, Italy-Subalpine, Italy-East Venice, Italy-West Venice, Japan, Middle East, Mexico-Guadalajara, Mexico-Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines-North, Philippines-South, Poland-Cracow, Poland-Pila, Poland-Warsaw, Poland-Wroclaw, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain-Cordoba, Uruguay, UPS (Salesian Pontifical University), USA-East, USA-West, Venezuela.

#### 4. Reports of Councillors.

An important item for the knowledge and sharing of events and problems was also the reports made by the Vicar General and Department Heads. These provided the opportunity for reflection on certain specific aspects of animation and pastoral commitment.

#### 5. Themes for special study.

As in earlier sessions, certain topics which had emerged during preceding sessions were studied at greater depth, because of the need to provide guidelines for action. Among the main themes studied in this way were the following:

5.1 *Past-Pupils: christian endeavour, means of intervention, organization.* After reviewing the situation of the Past-Pupils Association and the difficulties it is meeting, the Council considered what concrete commitment could be requested of the Association and its animating nucleus, in the light also of the wider Past-Pupils' "movement"; and especially how the salesian communities and delegates could revive our relationship with the Past-Pupils and our obligations in their regard. At n.2.1 of the present issue of the AGC the Councillor for the Salesian Family presents a summary of the Council's guidelines.

5.2 *Shared responsibility with lay people as regards the salesian identity of our works.* On the basis of two important indications of our General Chapters – on the one hand the insistence on the salesian community being the "animating nucleus" of the educative and pastoral community, and on the other the importance of involving lay people and sharing responsibility with them – a study was made of the criteria needed to ensure that the community is indeed the "animating nucleus" and hence the guarantor of the salesian charism, and also of the conditions needed for adequately prepared and formed lay persons to assume full responsibility in a salesian work. Consideration was also given to cases in which the lay



people themselves, especially when members of the Salesian Family, could be entrusted with a work of which they become animators in harmony with the Salesian Province.

5.3 *Salesian missions: missionary practice, financial support, plans for expansion.* A document prepared by the Councillor for the Missions provided a basis for the study of some important aspects of our present missionary practice, with particular reference to evangelization in various contexts, to inculturation and to the missionary community. Also studied was the relationship between development plans, financial support and missionary practice.

6. *Other themes concerning animation and government* developed during the session included the following:

6.1 *Coordination of Project Africa.* Following the lines of coordination already indicated in preceding sessions (cf. AGC 340, n.4.3), the Council gave further consideration to some concrete steps that can be made in the near future. In particular it was decided to gather the salesian works of Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea into a "Delegation" of the Provincials concerned. The proposal to proceed, when the time is ripe, to a union of Uganda with the Vice-Province of

East Africa met with a positive response, and a concrete study was launched in view of the setting up of a single circumscription for Zambia and Malawi.

6.2 *Restructuring of some Italian Provinces.* The study begun in previous sessions was continued. In particular the Council made some further decisions concerning the configuration of the future "special circumscription for Piedmont".

6.3 *Collaboration and coordination in finding personnel.* It is a question of personnel for the service of the Congregation in general, both at the Generalate and other services in Rome, the Pontifical Salesian University, and international formation communities. The Council examined once again criteria and means for involving all the Provinces in these obligations, and also examined some urgent practical needs.

6.4 *Director of the Salesian Historical Institute.* As already announced in AGC n.343, the Rector Major, after consulting his Council, appointed Fr Francesco Motto Director of the Salesian Historical Institute. The new Director presented a report to the Council with the conclusions of the study seminar on salesian history held at the Generalate from 7 to 9 January 1993.

During the plenary session, in ad-

dition to the meetings for work there were also some important moments for fraternal relaxation and prayer. Among these were two days of spirituality: 17 December '92, a day of retreat animated by Fr Enrico Dal Covolo, and 21 January '93, a day of spiritual pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of "Divino Amore" near Rome. Enjoyable too were the fraternal suppers with the formation communities of Gerini, Lanuvio and Testaccio, and with the community of Pio XI, in the run-up to Christmas.

Special mention must be made of the half-day (14 January) spent by the two General Councils (SDB and FMA) at the FMA Generalate. It was a meeting for information and

an exchange of views on some important themes concerning the two Congregations and our young people, particularly in connection with what we are all trying to do to realize the decisions of our recent General Chapters. The day concluded with the celebration of Vespers in common and with a supper that proved to be a special occasion for the expression of the family spirit and salesian joy. As was evident from the interventions of the Rector Major and Mother General and from the contributions of Councilors from both Institutes, the occasion was one of communion that will certainly be fruitful for the Salesian Family.

## 5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

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### 5.1 XVI Week of Spirituality of the Salesian Family

The 16th Week of Spirituality of the Salesian Family, promoted by the Rector Major and his Council, was organized this year by the Department for Youth Pastoral Work. It took place at the "Salesianum", Rome, from 25 to 29 January 1993. The theme – "*Education to love*" – had direct reference to the Strenna of the Rector Major for the present year: "Self-donation and commitment: with love as life's root and foundation". There were 130 participants from various countries of Europe, representing the different groups of the Salesian Family.

The treatment of the theme followed the line of the spirituality of love which is a gift of God incarnate in history and calling for adherence and response, and the line of love as a human experience to be lived to the full as a gift and commitment. In other words the theme was treated from both an educational and spiritual standpoint.

The whole topic was given foundation and strength by the charism of Don Bosco and by salesian tradition right down to its most mature expression by the recent General

Chapters; it was also constantly enriched by the Bible and theology, and by the testimony of current examples of life committed to education and to the experience of love. Of particular significance was the presentation of the Strenna by the Rector Major, which provided an excellent way of approach to the theme and its interpretation for all the participants in the Week.

It may be useful to take a glance at the development of the week's work. It began with an analysis of the present situation, with an exchange of experiences on the reality and the process suggested for education to love. Three contributions on the first day presented, as a line for discussion, the situation of the present day:

- a group of young people from Rome, led by Fr Silvano Missori, expressed in "*the voice of youth*" the reality of education to love in both positive and negative forms, according to their own experiences and analysis (including means, instruments, methods at family level, school, mass media, advertisements, work, commerce, free time, entertainments, etc.);

- a parish priest, Fr Tonino Lasconi, developed the theme: "*Education to love: what it means*". This contribution presented especially the content and methodology for the education of young people to love;
- a married couple, Nino and Maria Pia Sammartano, spoke on "*Education to love in the family*". They described how they perceive at the present day the education of young children to love, from the point of view of the couple: how the love they want to give to their children is discovered, how it is received, how it is experienced by parents and passed on; difficulties, problems, negative influences in the education of the children to love and how they can be overcome (with references to dialogue, trust and confidence, responsibility, friendships, group experiences, mass media, school, spare time, etc.).

On the second day three speakers took up the theme from a pedagogical and salesian point of view;

- Fr Lorenzo Macario dealt with the theme: "*Education to love: psychological and pedagogical aspects*".
- Fr Juan Edmundo Vecchi presented a paper on: "*Education to love according to salesian teaching after Vatican II*". He presented an analysis of how sensitivity for education to love had evolved and matured in the documents of Salesian General Chapters in the period following the Vatican Council.
- Mother Antonia Colombo presented the theme: "*Education to love as coeducation*". She developed at some length the topic of education to love in a discourse dealing with coeducation and reciprocity with particular emphasis on the education of women, with references to Chapter documents of the FMA in the period following the Council.

The second day ended with a "Good Night" by the FMA Mother General, Mother Marinella Castagno, in which she described the present state of affairs as regards education to love, with particular reference to young people most in need.

The third day centred particularly on aspects of spirituality. There were three contributions:

- one biblical in character: "*Education to love in the Bible*", given by Fr Michael Winstanley;
- one a theological reflection: "*Planning education to love so that it may be 'good news'*", by Fr Riccardo Tonelli;
- and a third, on the moral aspect: "*A reading and a moral and spi-*

*ritual interpretation of recorded experiences*", by Fr Guido Gatti.

Significant on this third day was the round-table on the topic: "Different expressions in different contexts". Contributions were made by the Danesi-De Nicola couples from Italy, Mr Michal Martinek from the Czech Republic, and Mr Emilio Ramirez from Spain.

On the last day there was also a contribution presented by Can. Andre de Wolf on: "*Learning to love: relational and sexual education in the school*". It dealt with an original experience of education to love of the Belgian National Secretariat for Catholic Education, with specific reference to the book "*Liefde Leren*".

As always the Week was enriched by moments of prayer and fraternal relaxation, which made the feeling of family communion more intensely felt. Some of the conclusions gathered from the work of the groups, and the stimulating words of the Rector Major on the Strenna '93 already referred to, are valuable indications that can be followed in our commitment to "education to love" following the educational method of Don Bosco.

## 5.2 New Provincials

*We give below some biographical details of the new Provincials appointed by the Rector Major with his Council during the winter plenary session of 1992-93.*

1. *Fr Benno BENES, in the Province of PRAGUE, Czech Republic.*

To succeed Fr Ladislav Vik in guiding the Bohemia-Moravia Province, with headquarters at Prague, has been appointed Fr Benno BENES. He was born at Teplice 19 April 1938, and became a Salesian during the difficult years of the communist regime. He made his first profession on 4 June 1967 and his perpetual profession in 1970. Two years later, on 9 September 1972, he was ordained priest.

He has a degree in chemistry and speaks several languages. From 1983 he had worked with competence and dedication as Vice-Provincial.

2. *Fr Alain BEYLOT, in the Province of PARIS, France.*

The new Provincial of Northern France will be Fr Alain BEYLOT, who will succeed Fr Gerard Balbo at the end of the latter's term of office.

He was born at Beziers, in the province of Herault, 23 May 1945,

and after frequenting the salesian work at Melles made his novitiate at Dormans followed by first profession at Epron on 6 September 1970. Philosophical studies and practical training were followed by the study of theology and ordination at Paris on 15 April 1976. He obtained the licentiate in chemical sciences and in psychology, and subsequently also the licentiate in theology.

In 1982 he was appointed rector of the house of Giel, and in the following year a member of the provincial council. In 1987 he became Vice-Provincial and in 1988 also rector of the work at Caen-Lemonnier. In 1991 he became rector at Binson.

3. *Fr Juan Cantini, in the Province of ROSARIO, Argentina.*

Fr Juan Cantini, who is approaching the end of his six-year mandate as Provincial of Buenos Aires, has now been called to guide the Province of Rosario, Argentina. He succeeds Fr Alejandro Buccolini, who has become a Bishop.

Born at Rosario in the province of Santa Fe, Argentina, on 12 March 1928, Juan Cantini entered the aspirantate of Rosario in 1939, and later made his novitiate at Los Condores, making his first religious profession on 6 February 1947. After practical training, theological studies and priestly ordination (at Cordoba, 7 August 1955), he was sent to Italy for the study of canon law.

After obtaining his doctorate he remained in Italy as professor at the Salesian Atheneum, first at Turin and later at Rome.

On his return to Argentina he was appointed in 1968 rector of the house of Manucho in the province of Bahia Blanca and went on in 1970 to be rector at Viedma. In 1972 he was appointed Provincial of the Province of Bahia Blanca.

At the end of his term of office he became Director of Novices at the interprovincial novitiate of La Plata, and from 1984 was a member of the provincial council. He played an active part in the 20th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd General Chapters.

4. *Fr Luciano Capelli, in the Province of MANILA, Philippines.*

Fr Luciano Capelli will succeed Fr Francesco Panfilo at the end of his six years as Provincial of the Northern Philippines Province, with headquarters at Manila.

Of Italian origin he was born at Tirano, in the province of Sondrio, on 19 October 1947. He made his novitiate at Missaglia in the Milan Province, and his first profession on 16 August 1965. In response to a missionary vocation, he left soon afterwards for the Philippines, where he gained his first apostolic experiences. He returned to Italy for the study of theology at Turin, and was ordained priest in his native Cologna di Tirano on 28 June 1975. He

then went on to obtain the licentiate in educational sciences.

Returning once again to the Philippines he soon found himself in positions of responsibility: rector at Tarlac from 1981 to 1984, then for six years rector of the big work at Mandaluyong, Manila (1985-1991), and most recently rector at Quezon City. He was also the member of the provincial council responsible for formation.

5. *Fr Luis Alfredo CARDENAS, in the Province of BOGOTA, Colombia.*

Fr Luis Alfredo Cardenas Caro is the new Provincial of the Province of "St Peter Claver" of Bogota; he succeeds Fr Carlo Julio Aponte at the conclusion of his term of office.

Born at Viracacha in the province of Boyaca, Colombia, on 12 March 1939, he became a pupil of the Salesians at Tunja, and then went on to the novitiate at La Ceja where he made his first religious profession on 29 January 1959.

After the study of philosophy and practical training he followed the theology course at Bogota, and was ordained by Pope Paul VI on 22 June 1968. Subsequently he obtained the licentiate in theology and in sacred scripture (Biblical Institute, Rome), and for several years was engaged in teaching and formation.

In 1982 he became Vice-Provincial, a post he held until 1990,

after which he remained a member of the provincial council. From 1988 to 1990 he was also rector of the provincial house, and from November 1990 was rector of the students of theology at Bogota (El Porvenir).

6. *Fr Heriberto HERRARA, in the Province of SAN SALVADOR, Central America.*

Fr Heriberto Herrera Quesada succeeds Fr Luis Ricardo Chinchilla as Provincial of Central America with headquarters at San Salvador.

Heriberto Herrera was born at Palmitos, Naranjo, in Costa Rica on 27 February 1941. He attended the Salesian College of San Jose, and then went on to the novitiate at Santa Tecla, where he made his first profession on 8 December 1959. He followed the normal course of philosophy and practical training, and then studied theology at the studentate of Guatemala where he was ordained priest on 29 June 1969. Later he completed his studies at the Alphonsianum in Rome, where he obtained the licentiate in moral theology.

Various teaching and pastoral tasks followed. From 1975 to 1978 he was rector at Campur in Guatemala, and from 1984 till the time of his appointment as Provincial he had been rector and parish priest in the mission of San Pedro Carcha.

7. *Fr John HORAN, in the Province of DUBLIN, Ireland.*

The new Provincial of the Province of Dublin, which includes Ireland and Malta, is to be Fr John Horan who follows Fr Joseph Harrington after the latter's twelve years of office.

John Horan was born at Abbeyfeale, in the province of Limerick, Ireland, on 18 September 1946. He frequented the salesian school of Ballinakill, made his novitiate at Drumree and made his first profession on 15 August 1966. After the study of philosophy and practical training, he studied theology at Maynooth and was ordained priest on 19 June 1977.

After service in the formation community of Maynooth, he became a provincial councillor in 1981, and from 1987 to 1992 was rector of the house of Ballinakill. In 1990 he was appointed Vice-Provincial; in recent years he was also the provincial coordinator of youth pastoral work.

8. *Fr Jose Ramon IRIARTE, in the Province of BOLIVIA.*

Fr Carlo Longo will be succeeded as Provincial of Bolivia by Fr Jose Ramon Iriarte Aguirrezabal.

He was born on 18 March 1942 at Pamplona, Navarra, in Spain. After being in close contact with the Salesians of Tibidabo, Barcelona, he left

for Bolivia. There he made his novitiate at Magdalena del Mar and his first profession on 31 January 1960. In Bolivia too he studied philosophy and did his practical training, returning subsequently for theology at Seville, Spain, where he was ordained priest on 12 April 1969.

On his return to Bolivia he obtained his teacher's qualification and was engaged in educative and pastoral work, and in December 1974 became rector for three years at Don Bosco, La Paz; later he was again rector of the same important work from 1983 to 1990. In 1985 he was appointed a provincial councillor, and since 1990 had been rector at Don Bosco, Santa Cruz.

9. *Fr Ernest MACAK, in the Province of Bratislava, Slovakia.*

Fr Ernest Macak succeeds Fr Josef Kaiser as Provincial of the Slovak Province of "Mary Help of Christians", with headquarters at Bratislava. He was born at Vistuk, Slovakia, on 7 January 1920.

He was a pupil at the salesian school at Sastin, and made his novitiate at the house of Svaty Benadik, where he also made his first profession on 1 August 1936. In Slovakia too he studied philosophy, did his practical training and followed the theological course during the difficult period of the war. He was ordained priest on 29 June 1946.

The following years were difficult



ones for Fr Macak, because of the occupation of the country and the suppression of religious institutes. He managed to leave Slovakia and get to Italy to join the Slovak community in Rome, of which he was rector from 1976 to 1985. In 1988 he was sent to Basle in Switzerland to found a salesian work for the Slovaks, depending on the Novara Province.

In 1991, when frontiers were reopened, he was able to return to his own country and was appointed rector of the house at Sastin, which was taking up once again its previous activity.

10. *Fr Giuseppe TROINA, in the Province of Sicily.*

Fr Giuseppe Troina has been appointed to succeed Fr Vittorio Costanzo at the end of the latter's term of office.

Born at Agira in the province of Enna on 21 December 1944, he became a pupil at the salesian school of Pedara, went on to the novitiate of San Gregorio, and there made his first profession on 24 December 1960.

After philosophy and practical training, he studied theology in Rome at the Salesian Pontifical University, and obtained the licentiate in theology. In Rome too he was ordained priest on 3 April 1971.

Returning to Sicily he was engaged in educational and pastoral

work. In 1979 he was entrusted with the direction of the house of "Don Bosco" at Caltanissetta, but two years later was sent as rector to Palermo - "Gesù Adolescente". Since 1987 he had been rector at Catania-Barriera and a member of the Provincial Council.

11. *Fr Mario VALENTE, in the Province of CENTRAL AFRICA.*

Fr Mario Valente is the new Provincial of the Central African Province (Burundi, Rwanda, Zaire). He succeeds Fr Jean-Pierre Tafunga who has become a Bishop.

Fr Valente was born in Italy at Gaeta, where his salesian vocation developed; he was sent to Varazze for his novitiate and made his first profession on 1 October 1954. He remained in the Roman Province for philosophy and practical training and studied theology at the Salesian Atheneum of Turin, where he obtained the licentiate in theology and was ordained priest on 11 February 1966.

Accepting a call to the missions, he left for Zaire where he immediately became involved in the field of formation, as a teacher of theology, and in the apostolate. Subsequently he held various posts of responsibility in the Province: provincial councillor from 1975, rector of the big "Cite des Jeunes" at Lubumbashi in 1979, and since 1981 Vice-Provincial. He was also at various

times delegate for formation and delegate for the Salesian Family.

12. *Fr Luigi ZUPPINI, superior of the special circumscription of MADAGASCAR.*

The first Superior of the new circumscription "Mary Immaculate" of Madagascar has been appointed in the person of Fr Luigi Zuppini, who was already the Delegate of the Rector Major for Madagascar.

He was born at San Michele, Verona, on 9 November 1943, and was an aspirant at Castello di Godego, from where he went on to the novitiate at Albar; there he made his first profession on 16 August 1960.

After philosophy and practical training he studied theology at the Salesian Atheneum in Rome and obtained the licentiate in theology. He was ordained in his native parish of San Michele on 18 April 1971.

After various educational and apostolic assignments, he was from 1978 to 1982 rector at Venice-Castello and in 1981 became a provincial councillor. In 1982 he was appointed Provincial of the East Venice Province of St Mark.

At the end of his six years as Provincial he accepted the invitation to go to Madagascar, where he was appointed to be Delegate of the Rector Major for the purpose of coordinating the various salesian foundations in that country. The Rector

Major with his Council has now designated him the superior of the new circumscription which has a special statute.

### 5.3 New Salesian Bishop

*Mgr. Pedro Luis RONCHINO, Bishop of Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina.*

On 31 January 1993, the Solemnity of Don Bosco, the Osservatore Romano published the news of the appointment of Fr Pedro Luis Ronchino SDB as Bishop of the Diocese of Comodoro Rivadavia, in Argentina.

He was born at Rosario, in the province of Santa Fe, Argentina on 18 June 1928, and after frequenting the salesian school at Rosario, made his novitiate at Los Condores, where he also made his first profession on 31 January 1945.

After the practical training experience he followed the theology course in the studentate of Cordoba, and was ordained priest there on 1 August 1954. He then went to Turin to complete his studies at the Salesian Atheneum, and obtained the Doctorate in Philosophy (1958).

Returning to Argentina, he filled various posts: rector of the house of Vignaud from 1959 to 1965; then professor and rector in the salesian

theological studentate of Cordoba-Villada (1966-68); then for three years (1968-71) rector of the "St Thomas Aquinas" community in the Pontifical Salesian University at Rome. In 1971 he was appointed Vice-Provincial of the Cordoba Province, and at the same time director of the Salesian Catechetical Institute and delegate for the Cooperators.

He next moved to Comodoro Rivadavia, and in 1975 was appointed Vicar General of the Diocese. On the death of the Bishop, Mgr Argimiro Moure SDB on 8 September 1992, Mgr Ronchino was elected Diocesan Administrator of the same diocese.

**5.4 Statistics of salesian personnel at 31 December 1992.**

Isp.	Tot. 1991	Professi temporanei				Professi perpetui				Tot. Professi	Novizi	Tot. 1992
	L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P				
AFC	240	14	39	0	0	25	5	0	141	224	11	235
AFE	82	1	12	0	0	13	14	0	46	86	2	88
AFM	64	1	3	0	0	5	2	0	50	61	0	61
ANT	191	3	23	0	0	15	8	0	92	141	15	156
ABA	207	3	19	0	0	15	6	0	162	205	0	205
ABB	151	0	9	0	1	18	6	0	116	150	1	151
ACO	180	5	25	0	1	11	15	0	115	172	5	177
ALP	112	2	5	0	0	10	9	0	74	100	3	103
ARO	146	2	16	0	0	18	16	0	91	143	9	152
AUL	128	4	14	0	0	21	3	0	84	126	0	126
AUS	143	3	10	0	0	11	2	1	111	138	2	140
BEN	218	0	10	0	0	23	3	0	180	216	3	219
BES	111	4	5	0	0	8	1	0	86	104	1	105
BOL	145	6	34	0	0	14	7	0	74	135	14	149
BBH	173	5	14	0	0	20	8	0	122	169	14	183
BCG	158	4	24	0	0	23	2	0	103	156	0	156
BMA	135	7	22	0	0	21	10	0	66	126	7	133
BPA	116	1	13	0	0	11	1	0	87	113	7	120
BRE	93	1	11	0	0	16	4	0	56	88	10	98
BSP	211	4	20	0	1	33	7	0	144	209	6	215
CAE	37	0	1	0	0	5	2	0	27	35	1	36
CAM	260	14	55	0	0	23	9	0	148	249	15	264
CEB	192	6	47	0	0	12	1	0	131	197	20	217
CEP	218	3	38	0	12	11	9	1	133	207	17	224
CIL	259	8	46	0	0	22	14	0	162	252	8	260
CIN	142	1	7	0	0	36	4	0	95	143	1	144
COB	208	1	34	0	0	38	9	0	112	194	4	198
COM	170	1	36	0	0	18	5	0	100	160	9	169
CRO	94	0	9	0	0	6	5	0	68	88	3	91
ECU	256	6	25	0	0	27	10	0	174	242	8	250
FIN	367	10	43	0	0	20	15	0	112	200	8	208
FIS	0	20	54	0	0	11	9	1	57	152	19	171
FLY	169	0	3	0	0	34	4	0	124	165	0	165
FPA	243	4	10	0	0	31	3	0	182	230	4	234
GBR	153	2	10	0	0	17	5	0	117	151	2	153
GEK	183	6	16	0	0	38	3	0	117	180	1	181
GEM	309	10	14	0	0	69	8	0	192	293	4	297
GIA	140	3	21	0	0	19	1	0	92	136	7	143
HAI	0	1	11	0	0	1	3	0	26	42	2	44
INB	273	7	85	0	0	18	22	0	124	256	16	272
INC	304	4	46	0	0	37	28	0	181	296	20	316
IND	194	4	52	0	0	5	15	0	105	181	8	189
ING	299	4	81	0	0	27	19	0	162	293	10	303
INH	0	1	37	0	0	3	10	0	52	103	7	110
INK	346	3	63	0	0	8	35	0	113	222	11	233
INM	403	6	136	0	0	27	32	0	190	391	24	415
IRL	131	2	12	0	0	10	2	0	102	128	3	131
IAD	165	1	4	0	0	30	1	0	123	159	2	161
ICE	349	7	10	0	0	125	6	1	186	335	1	336
ILE	414	6	28	0	0	66	8	0	302	410	11	421
ILT	221	1	10	0	0	40	1	1	164	217	2	219
IME	335	1	26	0	0	47	7	0	245	326	4	330

Isp.	Tot. 1991	Professi temporanei				Professi perpetui				Tot. Professi	Novizi	Tot. 1992
		L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P			
INE	207	2	7	0	0	42	8	0	144	203	1	204
IRO	307	0	21	0	0	54	3	3	212	293	7	300
ISA	90	1	6	0	0	9	1	0	70	87	0	87
ISI	363	4	21	0	0	33	7	0	282	347	0	347
ISU	463	7	22	0	0	95	4	0	318	446	5	451
IVE	306	2	25	0	0	56	7	1	205	296	3	299
IVO	243	5	12	0	0	47	3	0	170	237	1	238
KOR	70	8	20	0	0	9	8	0	21	66	7	73
MEG	211	14	41	0	1	9	14	0	122	201	12	213
MEM	226	14	68	0	0	14	8	0	105	209	10	219
MOR	158	4	23	0	1	26	3	0	92	149	6	155
OLA	86	0	1	0	0	25	0	1	57	84	0	84
PAR	102	0	25	0	0	8	5	0	61	99	4	103
PER	165	3	25	0	0	13	12	0	98	151	8	159
PLE	398	9	96	0	1	20	35	0	215	376	30	406
PLN	342	4	97	0	0	12	24	0	191	328	10	338
PLO	259	1	47	0	0	2	25	0	170	245	6	251
PLS	282	0	74	0	0	12	27	0	138	251	11	262
POR	197	2	17	0	0	53	8	1	112	193	7	200
SLO	150	0	16	0	0	16	7	0	101	140	2	142
SBA	262	0	18	0	0	41	10	0	186	255	2	257
SBI	259	8	27	0	0	56	17	0	145	253	7	260
SCO	151	3	18	0	0	8	5	2	104	140	3	143
SLE	273	10	16	0	1	68	15	0	153	263	2	265
SMA	422	10	29	0	0	99	17	0	249	404	7	411
SSE	198	2	22	0	0	31	3	0	130	188	3	191
SVA	208	6	19	0	0	32	7	0	142	206	3	209
SUE	241	1	7	0	0	51	6	0	170	235	5	240
SUO	123	1	5	0	0	28	3	0	81	118	3	121
THA	106	4	14	0	0	12	5	0	68	103	5	108
UNG	64	0	5	0	3	3	0	0	54	65	6	71
URU	148	1	17	0	0	10	6	0	112	146	3	149
VEN	240	5	28	0	0	21	11	1	165	231	10	241
VIE	98	2	15	0	0	12	43	0	19	91	7	98
UPS	124	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	113	126	0	126
RMG	89	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	70	90	0	90
EST	20	0	6	0	0	0	2	0	25	33	10	43
Tot.	17.489	346	2.308	0	22	2.272	793	14	11.088	16.843	568	17.411
Vesc.	86									86		86
Tot	17.575	346	2.308	0	22	2.272	793	14	11.088	16.929	568	17.497

NB. Nel 1992 sono iniziate le nuove circoscrizioni: FIS, HAI, INH, separate rispettivamente da FIN, ANT, INK. Con EST si indicano i paesi dell'Est Europa: sono però inclusi solo confratelli e novizi non conteggiati in altre Ispettorie

### 5.5 Our dead confreres (1993 – 1st list)

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

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
<b>L ALTENEDER Alfons</b>	Bamberg	14.02.93	85	GEM
<b>P BELL Thomas</b>	Bolton	10.02.93	85	GBR
<b>P BELTRAN CORTES Santiago</b>	Medellín	06.12.92	63	COM
<b>P BERTOLDI Natale</b>	Porto Alegre	07.03.93	66	BPA
<b>L BUJWID Franciszek</b>	Lutomiersk	11.03.92	89	PLE
<b>P CHADWICK William</b>	London	09.03.93	86	GBR
<b>L CIOCCI Giuseppe</b>	Roma	24.01.93	74	IRO
<b>P D'AGOSTINI Leone</b>	Caracas	14.12.92	87	VEN
<b>P DEBUSSCHER Jozef</b>	Gent	14.01.93	71	BEN
<b>L ELLENA Gradino</b>	Maroggia (Svizzera)	03.03.93	83	INE
<b>P FERRARI Jandir Luiz</b>	Curitiba	09.01.93	45	BPA
<b>P GAMBIRASIO Giacomo</b>	Sesto San Giovanni	26.02.93	82	ILE
<b>L GAVELLO Giovanni</b>	Torino	23.12.92	79	ISU
<b>P GIOI Giovanni</b>	Nuoro	11.01.93	57	MOR
<b>P GUZMAN CORONA Jesús</b>	México	13.02.93	88	MEM
<b>P HNILA Frantisek</b>	Rajnochovice	27.02.93	76	CEP
<b>P HUYNEN Joseph</b>	Liège	24.01.93	74	BES
<b>P JACUZZI Leonardo</b> <i>Fu Ispettore per 3 anni</i>	Araçatuba	01.03.93	84	BCG
<b>P JANNINI José Geraldo</b>	Ponte Nova	03.02.93	61	BBH
<b>P KUPPENS Henri</b>	Lubumbashi	19.12.92	83	AFC
<b>P MARCHAJ Stanisław</b>	Kopiec	31.12.92	77	PLO
<b>P MAROCCO Giuseppe</b>	Carmagnola	28.01.93	79	ISU
<b>P MARTIGNON Gaetano</b>	Lima	20.12.92	76	PER
<b>P MIRANDA Gleiton</b>	Santa Barbara	18.01.92	63	BSP
<b>P MOOK Wilhelmus</b>	Leiden	03.02.92	78	OLA
<b>P MURAD Julio</b>	Buenos Aires	25.12.92	67	ABA
<b>L NARCISO Armando</b>	Monteortone	27.02.93	79	IVO
<b>P NIÑO MOLINOS Ramón</b>	México	03.03.93	72	MEM
<b>P ODZIEMCZYK Stanisław</b>	Wola Miastkowska	01.10.92	68	PLN
<b>L OLMOS LOPEZ Gabriel</b>	Ibagué	30.03.92	74	COM
<b>P PALMISANO Nicola</b>	Roma	20.01.93	52	IME
<b>P PASSOS Efigenio</b>	Barbacena	11.12.92	68	BBH
<b>P PASTORE Romeo</b>	Buenos Aires	16.01.93	76	ABA
<b>P PIOVESAN Gellindo</b>	Caracas	17.01.93	56	VEN

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P PIRES Osorio Antonio	Curitiba	17.01.93	77	BPA
P POLET Antoon	Groot-Bijgaarden	11.03.93	80	BEN
P PUNGERCAR Joze	Jesenice	08.11.92	72	SLO
L QUILEZ GARCIA Fabián	Urnieta	06.03.93	92	SBI
P QUIROZ LARA Guillermo	Santiago de Chile	17.02.93	85	CIL
P RINALDI Pietro	Torino	28.02.93	82	SUE
P SANCHEZ SALCEDO Cayetano	Pereira	23.04.92	84	COM
P SANSOÈ Giovanni	Perugia	14.12.92	67	IAD
L SCHIAVONI Nicolás	Mar del Plata	21.10.92	78	ALP
P SCHMITZ Tobias	Curitiba	09.01.93	64	BPA
P SCHROOTEN Jean	Bonheiden (Belgio)	29.01.93	83	AFC
L SINDLER Jaroslav	Moravec	26.02.93	74	CEP
P SZEWCZYK Kazimierz	Lubin	19.02.93	74	PLO
P TRIMELONI Ludovico	Negrar	26.02.93	71	ISU
P TURRA Ernesto	Verona	05.03.93	90	IVO
P VILLORDO ROMERO Javier	Monterrey	31.01.93	41	MEG
P WALOSZEK Ludwik	Campo Grande	29.01.93	84	BCG
P WILCZEK Carlos Eduardo	Curitiba	09.01.93	33	BPA
P WILK Józef	Debno Lubuskie	29.09.92	57	PLN
P WROBEL Józef	Miechow Kolonia	21.01.93	83	PLN
P ZAMBONI Agostino	Nave	05.02.93	82	ILE
P ZIPSER Josef	Timelkam	07.02.93	80	AUS
P ZMRZLÍK Alois	Moravec	09.12.92	80	CEP

Nota: In questa lista sono compresi anche i confratelli defunti del 1992 non segnalati in precedenti numeri degli ACG.

