

acts

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of the Salesian Society
of St John Bosco**

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR	1.1 Fr Egidio VIGANÒ We are Educator-Prophets	3
2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES	2.1 Fr Antonio MARTINELLI The commitment of the province for the organization of the social communica- tion sector	40
3. RULINGS AND DIRECTIVES	None in this issue	
4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL	4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major 4.2 Chronicle of the General Council	52 53
5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS	5.1 Decree on heroicity of virtues of Ven. Simon Srugi 5.2 Decree on heroicity of virtues of Ven. Luigi Variara 5.3 Circumscription with Special Statute of Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta 5.4 Circumscription with Special Statute of Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe 5.5 New Procurator General 5.6 New Provincials 5.7 New Salesian Bishop 5.8 Deceased confreres	56 59 63 66 67 68 73 75

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WE ARE "EDUCATOR-PROPHETS"

- Introduction. - The prophetic dimension of consecrated life. - Leaven in the area of significance.
- The contemporary aspect of Christ. - The key for understanding Vatican II. - With Don Bosco, in line with our apostolic consecration: . in the Covenant, . in the Mission, . in Communion, . in a Radical perspective. - May Our Lady of the Rosary be our guide.

Rome, Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

7 October 1993

My dear confreres,

Today we are celebrating the memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary, an event which prompts us to give renewed importance to the personal and communal practice of this devotion which inserts us into the events of the great mystery of Christ. It is a simple and popular devotion, highly recommended by Pope John Paul II. It is a truly deep way within the reach of all for contemplating the persons and events of the central moment of salvation history. It brings us closer to Christ and intensifies our familiarity with him who is the one true Prophet of truth in the definitive Covenant in the Church's existence in time.

It occurred to me that this Marian commemoration, while inciting us to contemplate the mystery of Christ, can lead us to reflect on a theme linked in a particular manner with consecrated life in the Church: that of its prophetic dimension. In the years following Vatican II there have been several references to the prophetic role of consecrated persons, who are placed among the People of God for their enlightenment, inspiration and correction, and to provide a creative relaunching of the common vocation to holiness. Such persons need to be realerted to this service, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit for all.

The feeling that one has been called to be a "prophet" is a powerful stimulus to responsibility for one's own vocation. But prophecy, though absolutely indispensable, is not easy, and there is always the danger of spurious interpretations. There have always been "false prophets", who never represented genuine interventions of God in history. To evaluate the reality and authenticity of our own ecclesial service, we must start from meditation on the Christ-event.

The preparation for the 94-Synod on consecrated life impels us to examine more deeply this kind of service, in harmony with the other global aspects of the Institutes of Consecrated Life in the Church.

At the present time we are witnessing numerous initiatives promoted by Bishops Conferences and associations of religious in preparation for the Synod. Various studies and reflective contributions are appearing which create an atmosphere of interest and hope. Due to be published shortly is also a *Manual of the Theology of the Religious Life*,¹ prepared by a group of specialists at the urging of the Mixed Commission of Bishops and Major Superiors

¹ Turin-LDC

in Italy; it will certainly provide enlightenment for our minds.

It is true that the Synod will be primarily concerned with pastoral aspects and not directly with doctrine; but for this very reason there is urgent need for some clear principles, as the foundation for a greater updating of communion, of apostolic activity and of witness of life.

We earnestly hope that the coming Synod will serve to give greater consideration and esteem for charisms in the Church, and that Institutes of Consecrated Life will develop with greater organic awareness and an increased prophetic penetration their own vital membership of the People of God in the conciliar aspect of the "Sacrament of salvation" in these new times.

In these months preceding the Synod, I invite you to reflect on the "prophetic dimension" of our own vocation as consecrated persons.

The prophetic dimension of consecrated life

The prophet is a believer chosen by God to speak to men in his name. In fulfilling this function he lives in intimate relationship with God so as to hear, understand and faithfully transmit his message. What he communicates to others comes not from himself but from the heart of God himself – a God who is not merely a kind of great architect of the world but also the Lord of history, who has an immense love for man and remains unbelievably at his side in the events of his freedom.

Prophecy is one of the phenomena which more clearly reveal the transcendent nature of the history of salvation; it characterizes the religious realism of

Judaism and Christianity, and brings with it innovations and challenge on the part of God no less.

The mystery of Christ is at the pinnacle of such phenomena. Jesus did not bring to an end the era of prophecy, but elevated it and transformed its function. He is eminently "the great Prophet", the definitive and greatest, and has left to his Church a prophetic role of a new kind, under the powerful animation of the gift of his Spirit. Today, in the midst of new ideas which are continually appearing, and unfortunately with the spreading of various kinds of aberrations, a great need is felt for authentic prophets to carry out a truly new evangelization.

This vital need gives rise to a special interest for the prophetic function of the Church and, in it, of consecrated life.

Sometimes one hears attributed to consecrated life the specific characteristic of being by its particular vocation "the" prophetic dimension of the whole Church. Statements of this kind seem evidently exaggerated; but they have the merit of trying to stress a vital aspect not sufficiently emphasized. Consecrated life cannot appropriate to itself in exclusive form a quality common to all the People of God. The Council says of the lay faithful: "Christ is the great prophet who proclaimed the kingdom of the Father both by the testimony of his life and by the power of his word. Until the full manifestation of his glory, he fulfils this prophetic office, not only by the hierarchy who teach in his name and by his power, but also by the laity. He accordingly both establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the appreciation of the faith and the grace of the word, so that the power of the Gospel may shine out in daily family and social life".²

And the recent "Catechism of the Catholic Church" speaks of a whole prophetic People as the light and sacrament of humanity on its pilgrimage: "Jesus Christ is the one whom the Father has anointed with the Holy Spirit and has constituted as 'Priest, Prophet and King'. The entire People of God shares in these three functions of Christ and bears the responsibility for the mission and service which derive from them".³

³ Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 783

And so it seems neither right nor fitting to present consecrated life as a kind of "institutionalization" of the prophetic dimension of the Church. But in any case it is certainly right and even urgent to point out and intensify, in particular, the peculiar prophetic aspect of consecrated life. The Founders and Foundresses of the various Institutes have played a truly prophetic role in the Church and in the society of their time, and have left as a legacy to their followers a prophetic dynamism "to be lived by them, to be preserved, deepened and constantly developed in harmony with the Body of Christ continually in a process of growth".⁴

⁴ cf. MR 11

The charismatic aspect of consecrated life implies a continual presence and creativity of the Holy Spirit; it belongs to the prophetic dimension of the Church to proclaim to everyone that "the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes".⁵

⁵ LG 31

The fact that consecrated life, "while not entering into the hierarchical structure of the Church belongs undeniably to her life and holiness"⁶, bestows on it a special prophetic character for all the People of God. This is rightly declared by the Council when it says: "Let religious see well to it that the Church truly show forth Christ through them with ever-increasing clarity to believers and unbelievers

⁶ LG 44

alike – Christ in contemplation on the mountain, or proclaiming the kingdom of God to the multitudes, or healing the sick and maimed and converting sinners to a good life, or blessing children and doing good to all men, always in obedience to the will of the Father who sent him”.⁷

⁷ LG 46

The document “*Mutuae Relationes*” touches on the same aspect when it presents the signs which render a charism authentic: “a constant re-examination of their fidelity to the Lord, docility to his Spirit, prudent weighing of circumstances and careful reading of the signs of the times, the will to be integrated in the Church, awareness of obedience to the hierarchy, boldness in initiatives, perseverance in the gift of self, humility in the face of adversity”.⁸

⁸ MR 12

In line with these authoritative guidelines, the various religious Institutes are called upon to put into effect their common prophetic function, not in an identical and uniform manner, but in conformity with their own charismatic plan, indicated by the Spirit of Christ in their own Founder and identified in each Institute by those who have the delicate and responsible task of making the necessary discernment.

For us the problem consists not so much in defining the differences or complementary aspects of the prophetic function of consecrated life in respect of the various groups – lay or hierarchical – but rather in deepening and intensifying our own prophetic role in line with the charismatic scope of the Founder.

Meanwhile it must be recognized that the question of the prophetic dimension of consecrated life has not yet been treated in depth in any document of the universal Magisterium. It has been empha-

sized in some more sensitive regions (e.g. Latin America) and in various interventions of Conferences of religious. It is undoubtedly a theme relevant to the present day; it can help to speed up the slow process of renewal, to gauge its quality and encourage initiatives for change while avoiding deviant interpretations; it breeds among the members a perspective of hope that is no longer found in the present atmosphere.

In the last analysis the practice of prophecy serves to indicate a permanent choice of God to intervene personally in human affairs. The prophet is his ambassador, not living in a dimension outside of time but deeply committed among his contemporaries: he feels himself sent by God and destined to pass on God's message, not only by word but also through his actions and his life, with symbolic gestures – sometimes even paradoxical; he is a living transmitter of the saving light of God: he displays, corrects, stimulates, preaches, prepares, constructs, suffers and bears witness; "the Spirit of the Lord", says Isaiah, "is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted";⁹ the prophet is not a stranger but a watchman: "I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me".¹⁰

The God of the prophets enters through them into history for the work of salvation. In his name they point out objectives to be attained and criteria for achieving them, introduce positive innovations, indicate evils to be overcome, constantly insist on the sense of sin, present concrete ways of conversion, and challenge deviations and errors.

The present acceleration of social and cultural changes has a special need of the light of a God

⁹ Is 61,1

¹⁰ Ezek 33,7

who became incarnate precisely to lead humanity to salvation. The many innovations which follow on the heels of one another at breakneck speed can make us forget the prophetic function, or exploit it only for the social and cultural sector; in this sense we sometimes see emphasis placed on certain aspects of the prophets of the Old Testament without specific reference to Christ, and this can lead to arbitrary and dangerous interpretations. For this reason too an authentic consideration of the prophetic dimension has a leading place in the renewal of Institutes and in the search for efficacious commitments for the New Evangelization.

A People of God without prophecy would not be able to leaven the present course of the world; it would not be faithful to the extraordinary presence of the Spirit of Christ manifested in Vatican II and in the many ecclesial and social events that have followed it: "You are the light of the world", said the Lord, "let your light shine before men",¹¹ well knowing that "the true light that enlightens every man"¹² is Jesus Christ.

¹¹ Mt 5, 14-16

¹² Jn 1,9

Today the whole Church is urgently called to be a prophet of Christ; after the example of John the Baptist she must "bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him".¹³

¹³ Jn 1,7

Rightly did the apostle Paul proclaim: "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord".¹⁴

¹⁴ 2 Cor 4,5

If the whole Church is so strongly urged to do this, it means that in the Church consecrated life must concern itself about its particular prophetic function in a form which is both singular and intense; because of its effect "in bestowing greater freedom from the cares of earthly existence on those who follow it, it simultaneously reveals more

clearly to all believers the heavenly goods which are already present in this age, witnessing to the new and eternal life which we have acquired through the redemptive work of Christ and precluding our future resurrection and the glory of the heavenly kingdom. Furthermore the religious state constitutes a closer imitation as an abiding reenactment in the Church of the form of life which the Son of God made his own when he came into the world to do the will of the Father and which he propounded to the disciples who followed him. Finally this state manifests in a special way the transcendence of the kingdom of God and its requirements over all earthly things and the highest kind of bonds within it, bringing home to all men the immeasurable greatness of the power of Christ in his sovereignty and the infinite might of the Holy Spirit which works so marvelously in the Church".¹⁵

¹⁵ LG 44

Leaven in the area of significance.

In Jesus Christ the new and definitive Covenant is realized, no longer with a single people of a particular religious and social culture and organization (Israel), but with the whole of humanity in the multiplicity of its peoples and their cultures, giving a new and deep significance to God's intervention through prophecy, priesthood and kingship.

In the Old Testament the function of the prophet, personally raised up as he was by God himself, was distinct and separate from the institutionalized function of the priest and the king; he did not receive his authorization from them but

from a direct and strictly personal relationship with Yahweh, in whose name he spoke.

In Christ these three functions (prophet, priest and king) are inseparably united; and thus united he has left them as a patrimony to his mystical Body in history, to be exercised in multiple ways and ministries. Vatican II reminded us that in the Church "communion" has a central and characterizing value; it is manifested too in the mutual compenetration of the three functions: together they serve to build up the kingdom – not an earthly one – which is Christ's through the centuries to be consigned to the Father at the end of time.

At this present moment in history the exercise of the prophetic function is an urgent pastoral priority. Vatican II has expressly emphasized in the first place the service of the Word, of evangelizing activity, and of the formation of believers' consciences. Christians are called to be a People of prophets with creativity, intelligent boldness, and the ability to be witnesses even to the point of martyrdom, following the generous and trenchant example of the apostles.

If we examine the context in which the prophets of the Old Testament played their part, we meet an Israel in a serious social situation of infidelity to the Covenant, and so the work of the prophet usually consisted in denouncing in forthright terms a situation that was at once religious and social. In today's world an epoch-making change is taking place with regard to the future of all peoples and their religions and cultures, and it cannot take the right direction without the light of Christ.

The present context certainly manifests a host of evils to be corrected, but the prophecy of Christ is called to bring enlightenment and discernment to

the insistent new changes so as to adopt their good points and foresee or correct dangerous deviations, so that the complex anthropological turnabout will not end up in a fatal anthropocentrism.

For us Salesians in such a context the specific prophetic function is to be inserted in that "educative option" which gives its characteristic tone to the whole of our vocation: we are not called to become "agitators of youth", but to be a light for their conscience as "signs and bearers"¹⁶ of the love and kindness of Christ. The present-day youth context presents some exacting challenges; we have seen what they imply at world level in the GC23, and the provinces have spelled out specific aspects in local situations. One hears proclaimed in the squares and marketplaces of the world numerous substitutes for the light of the christian faith; the path of human knowledge is separated from that of Christ's Gospel, as though they were paths to irreconcilable objectives; valid signposts are lacking; it is a time of anxious searching for experts for the education of personalities.

We have tried in recent years to express globally our efforts at renewal by the use of the term "significance" (*Italian "significatività"*): in the sense of becoming once again true "signs" among youth of a "new evangelization", precisely with a "new education". We are making concrete progress, but we have to persevere, and deepen and intensify our efforts.

We must convince ourselves that the prophetic dimension of our commitment constitutes the central nucleus of our significance in this sense. The official Commentary on art. 2 of the Constitutions ("signs and bearers") clearly states that it is a matter of "a very demanding obligation, because it re-

¹⁶ C 2

quires the whole of each individual member, all his life and all the activity of the Salesians, detaching them from themselves so as to centre them at the same time on the two poles of the living Christ and of youth, and on the meeting of the two in love. It obliges the Salesians to a double service: to Christ who sends them and to the young to whom they are sent, to reveal to them the loving call of Christ and to stir up the loving response of youth. This, in the last analysis, is the meaning of all their 'spiritual and corporal works of charity'".¹⁷

It is precisely this that is the prophetic function of the Salesian: we are (and must strive to be in truth) "educator-prophets", prophets who are educators!

Significance, in the sense explained, is more extensive than prophecy, but to be an authentic prophet of Christ is its vital leaven, to such an extent that without it our very significance would be lost. But this prophetic role is situated "within" the present demands of the new education, in shared and harmonious intent: in his incarnation Christ chose an anthropological turnabout so that his light might vanquish anthropocentrism from within. For us at the present day, to be a prophet implies not so much social and cultural display, as being able to validly proclaim the supreme event of Christ as the yardstick for all innovations, showing clearly their dynamism for the future, proclaiming their divine origin, and irradiating them with the powerful beams of light that alone reveal what man really is.

It is a matter of bringing youngsters to feel the presence and force of the love of Christ in a clear fidelity to his initiatives. It is a prophetic activity which is not just personal fantasy, but an active and creative service to his ministry; it is not reducible to

¹⁷ *The Project of Life of the Salesians*, Rome 1986, p.99

simple religious observance, but is a communication of salvation energies; its primary aim is not some structural revolution, but concentrates on the formation of mentalities and the conversion of persons, but when necessary is able to challenge points in the cultural and social field, though not with methods of a horizontal and temporal basis.

Hence we are called upon to intensify a prophetic dimension that will give dynamism and intensity to our salesian significance.

The contemporary aspect of Christ

In the Old Testament the prophetic function belonged to a period of the history of salvation that was moving towards Christ as its objective; the interventions of Yahweh gradually developed in a process of preparation which became ever clearer, finally arriving at the testimony of John the Baptist who proclaimed that the Messiah had indeed arrived and was present.

In Christ, on the other hand, salvation history reached its fullness; henceforth there would be no further increase in God's revelation; in Christ the whole of his Word was made present for ever; in him lives definitive prophecy. He is the new Man, the Lord of history, the Centre and Source of all future prophetic function; Christ is the *eskaton*, the absolute vertex of God's intervention in becoming man.

Without any doubt the 'becoming human' continued to progress and grow, even after the Passover of Christ, but it was a progress and growth in the line of creation and not in that of revelation.

This implies something new in the nature of question and challenge, but not a truly new Word of God: "The christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord, Jesus Christ".¹⁸

¹⁸ DV 4

This definitive intervention in Christ, therefore, does not disown the dynamic effects of becoming human in the line of creation; indeed it takes them explicitly into account. For this he instituted the Church, his mystical Body through the centuries, with the mission of extending the paschal light of that definitive event to all times and ages.

On the other hand the very incarnation is radically linked with Christ, both because he himself is the initial "creator" ("all things were made through him, and without him was made nothing that was made"¹⁹), and insofar as he continues in every age to send the Holy Spirit who moves everything in the direction of the kingdom ("He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you"²⁰).

¹⁹ Jn 1,3

²⁰ Jn 16,15

There is still therefore a human growth, and at the present day the numerous signs of the times are making this very clear: cultures are changing, as also are the mentalities of peoples, social situations and structures, the perception of values, urgent challenges and the search for a guiding truth.

The Christ-event, in its aspect as something ultimate, is of its nature contemporaneous with every subsequent period of time; it requires in fact that the Church be able to bring about the discovery of this contemporary aspect. And this is where enters the prophetic role which must present as contemporary, i.e. as a revelation of God for the present

day and every new age, all the light of the Christ-event.

To be able to present Christ as the "great Prophet" of the present day; to make him appear as the modern and disturbing Teacher, as the Light which cannot be extinguished by any sign of the times, as the absolute New entity which measures, takes up and judges every emerging innovation – this is the task of the New Evangelization with its task of rendering the Gospel something riveting and captivating.

This is no easy task; it involves an indispensable and pressing prophetic function. The Church, and with it consecrated life, is called upon to get involved in it with "new ardour" and enthusiasm.

The key for understanding Vatican II

As we have already said, many Founders and Foundresses of religious Institutes have performed a special prophetic function in new forms with respect to what had been done before: some of them by witnessing to the solitary, cenobitical and contemplative life to indicate the absolute place of Christ in human existence; others by direct teaching to enlighten the intelligence, bring maturity to faith, and put a stop to heresy and error; others by testifying through works of charity to Christ's interest for every category of those in need; and still others in other forms of love.

Today the whole of consecrated life is called upon to relaunch this aspect, in line with the multiple charismata that make it up.

To bring about renewal in this connection we

must start from a secure standpoint, which will not do violence to our own particular charism.

Vatican II, in speaking of the renewal of religious Institutes, indicates an authoritative line of approach. The decree "Perfectae caritatis" states that in the first place we must consider "the following of Christ as it is put before us in the Gospel", and then that "the spirit and aims of each founder be faithfully accepted and retained, as indeed should each Institute's sound traditions".²¹

²¹ cf. PC 2

These two statements of the Council do not constitute two separate lines of approach, but rather a single manner of procedure, because the Founders were raised up by the Spirit of Christ to put into effect, according to the times, his saving mission. Those who have tried to proclaim his prophecy at a particular moment of time to those to whom they have been sent, can be considered living evidence of the contemporary aspect of Christ at the period concerned.

To give this contemporary perspective to the great prophecy of the New Covenant they have lived in the reality of their own time, docile to the Holy Spirit and in harmony with him, so as to understand where the urgent need of salvation is most to be found, what questions and challenges have to be met, and why black areas exist characterized by absence of the light of Christ, or by rejection or indifference to it. It is in fact from within that one must launch a discernment of what is meant by contemporary.

But it is important to note at this point that the prophetic function of the New Covenant is not only a response to the demands arising from human development. Christ's prophecy certainly offers a great and adequate response to many questions;

but the Gospel is not only a response of this kind – it is also an initiative on the part of God revealing and teaching: he suggests, questions, anticipates, teaches, and corrects, as well as responding.

Prophetic renewal, therefore, is not limited to concern for the pole of the emerging culture with its context of life, language and methods – indispensable though this be – but it first of all examines in depth once again and with the sensitivity of a cultural approach ‘from within’ the luminous pole of the Christ-event, so as to identify more clearly its vital nuclei that are more incisive and penetrating, and be able to communicate them as something relevant and right up to date.

The Holy Spirit has assigned to Don Bosco and to us, in the Church’s prophetic mission, a field of work characterized – as we said earlier – by the “educative option” in favour of needy youth, and with respect to the poorer classes.

He has called us to be “prophets who are educators”! The renewal of the prophetic function of our charism cannot be a kind of invitation to change our role, or in other words to make a different option; rather does it provide a stimulus, following the line we have indicated, to wake up, strengthen our courage of faith, and with greater daring set about looking for pedagogical ways for rendering the mystery of Christ contemporary to the young.

We bring our prophetic function into play through a new christian education, proportioned to the different categories of young people with whom we live and work, adopting educative and pastoral projects put together in direct reference to them, making good use of past and present experiences and creating new ones.

With Don Bosco, in line with our apostolic consecration

Following the line of approach already indicated, we can now point out, albeit briefly, the sense and manner in which our charism shares in the prophetic function of the Church in favour of the young and the poor in different cultures and geographical situations.

The GC23 has launched us on a process of serious discernment of both the readaptation of our activities to the local context²², and a re-reading of the contemporary nature of the mystery of Christ.²³

²² GC23, especially in 1st part

²³ GC23, especially in 2nd part

Here I would like to recall some of the more demanding points concerning our prophetic function from the standpoint of its "plan" of Christ, and link them with the constituent elements of our apostolic consecration, as indicated in art.3 of the Constitutions.

There are four main elements indicated in that article: the covenant (remaining with Christ), the mission (apostles of the young), communion (fraternal community), and the Gospel as the root foundation (practice of the evangelical counsels). For each of these let us choose some aspects of greater prophetic urgency so as to intensify the witness they provide. I indicate here those which seem to me more forceful in our present efforts at renewal.

In the covenant

The covenant of our religious profession requires a witness of special intimacy with Christ, in a vital and enduring form. In this is found the secret of all

prophecy: young people must perceive that we are "sacraments of Christ", signs and bearers of his love, that we live through him and in him for them.

In this connection we may recall the intensity of personal relationships between Yahweh and the prophets of the Old Testament; this is the fundamental condition: it is not the result of some psychological affinity or mere human empathy. It is a vocation: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations";²⁴ "you have deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived; there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot".²⁵

And in the New Testament the mystical enthusiasm of the apostle Paul openly declares: "for me to live is Christ";²⁶ "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me";²⁷ "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, the new has come".²⁸ The covenant of religious profession is a personal transforming friendship which makes us live in Christ, with Christ and through Christ.

Our prophetic dimension displays a well-marked Christocentric character. Daily intimacy and friendship with Christ enable us to live in his newness, to such an extent that we are able to depict adequately the contemporary nature of his mystery: "God has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth".²⁹ In this light one may perceive, from within cultural reality, the christian aspect of so many themes of modern interest: love, solidarity, liberation, justice and peace, truth and conscience,

²⁴ Jer 1,5

²⁵ Jer 20, 7 and 9

²⁶ Phil 1,21

²⁷ Gal 2,20

²⁸ 2 Cor 5,17

²⁹ Eph 1,10

sense of sin, kindness and pardon, voluntary work and self-donation, personality and sacrifice, the ways of the world, intercultural dialogue, the meaning of history, etc.

Above all I would recommend three aspects on which to concentrate our prophetic function starting from the standpoint of this covenant: the communication of the Word of Christ, his paschal newness in the Eucharist, and the experience of his infinite kindness in Reconciliation.

On these points we need to concentrate our pedagogical attention. They are central aspects of the preventive system, to be relaunched in prophetic manner with courage and intelligence, with decisive methods and rhythms, in line with the possibilities of individuals and groups.

— *The communication of God's word.* Let us ask ourselves a question: can we say that today we have an interior covenant with God to such a degree that it makes us updated catechists? Don Bosco's first oratory began with a simple catechism lesson,³⁰ and he always considered the communication of God's word as the primary objective of his works. The Special General Chapter (1971) has left us an important document on "Evangelization and catechesis" which is still valid at the present day. In its "practical directives" it says, with regard to our present point, that: 1° the Salesian Congregation is today in a state of evangelizing mission; 2° the Province is "a community at the service" of evangelization; 3° every community is an evangelizing community, i.e. a community of listeners, a probing community, an educative community and a community of action inserted in the local Church.

The same main subject was studied by the GC21

³⁰ cf. BM 9,35

(1978) in its first document ("Salesians, Evangelizers of the Young"). The relevance of its guidelines, which hoped for a "new salesian presence" in this field, concentrated on the educative and pastoral plan which is now familiar in the provinces and houses.

The GC22 (1984) drew up the definitive text of our Rule of Life. In art. 34 of the Constitutions we read: "evangelizing and catechizing are the fundamental characteristics of our mission. Like Don Bosco, we are all called to be educators to the faith at every opportunity. Our highest knowledge therefore is to know Jesus Christ, and our greatest delight is to reveal to all people the unfathomable riches of his mystery. We walk side by side with the young so as to lead them to the risen Lord, and so discover in him and in his Gospel the deepest meaning of their own existence, and thus grow into new men".³¹

³¹ C 34; cf. also: 6, 17, 20, 38, 43, etc.

Finally the GC23 (1990) was entirely dedicated to the education of young people to the faith, and is now guiding our renewal. Let me point out that this document is primarily directed to the salesian community as the first subject of pastoral activity. As I wrote in presenting the Chapter documents: "The community lives the following of Christ with joyful intensity, confesses his mystery with consecrated testimony, examines carefully and attunes itself to the situation in which it is working, discovers in it the seeds of the Gospel, interprets the desires of faith, deduces intuitively the steps to be taken on the journey, dedicates itself to following the route, continually verifying in the light of God's word the progress that has been made".³²

³² GC23, p. 13

It is symptomatic that the principal documents of these recent great and historic Chapters con-

centrate the effort of renewal in the capacity for hearing and communicating the Gospel of Christ. In this sense too, valid and important institutions have been set up in the Congregation for fostering the study, teaching, communication and diffusion of whatever refers to evangelization and catechesis. Work goes on and progress continues to be made.

All this was seen and developed starting especially from the aspect of mission. Here we look at it again from the aspect of the covenant, which emphasizes *in individual persons* the prophetic aspect of their personal and communal interior vitality. At the present day there is, in fact, an urgent need to intensify and enhance the aspect of "new ardour" which is the source and leaven of the prophetic dimension.

May this topic have priority in every community's programme for revision and planning!

— *The Paschal novelty in the Eucharist.* The vertex of Christ's mystery is his Passover. It constitutes the centre of the whole of salvation history, and is made perpetually present in time and space through the Eucharist. "In the most blessed Eucharist," says the Council, "is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church. It appears as the source and the summit of all preaching of the Gospel, and the faithful, who have already been consecrated in baptism and confirmation, are fully incorporated in the Body of Christ by its reception. Therefore the eucharistic celebration is the centre of the assembly of the faithful".³³

³³ PO 5

We already meditated some years ago on this central aspect: "The Eucharist in the apostolic spirit of Don Bosco".³⁴ Here our purpose is to review in practical terms from the standpoint of the covenant the convictions, testimony, and our prophetic

³⁴ AGC 324 (1988)

service in the various educative activities.

One cannot conceive the authenticity of the salesian covenant in separation from the central position of the eucharistic celebration as the goal already achieved and to be achieved still more. I think that there is a good deal to be revised on our part in this field of the education of young people to the faith. The GC23 recognized that in this connection we are traversing a period of stagnation³⁵ and exhorts us to remedy the matter.³⁶

One cannot be an educator and prophet with Don Bosco without an explicit, intelligent and enthusiastic revival of a pedagogical process centred on the Eucharist.

— *The personal experience of his pardon.* The loss of the sense of sin needs to be fought against with special concern at the present day. Education must lead to a restoring of the awareness of christian dignity of feeling repentance, and of experiencing the therapeutic values of the sacrament of Reconciliation. From this point of view, to evangelize means to tell the story of God's mercy. One could not imagine Don Bosco's life without a constant dedication to this task among his youngsters: it is "one of the main pillars of the educative edifice".³⁷ It is a matter of "a special moment of personal contact with the youngster"; and so, says the GC23, "the Provincial will foster the preparation of confreres for this ministry, which is so important in salesian pedagogy".³⁸

Here too, I repeat, we are speaking of the prophetic role of us Salesians, of our convictions, our initiatives and our practical programmes in our educational activities. Confreres who are priests need to make a serious examination of conscience on their personal practice and their availability for

³⁵ GC23 148

³⁶ GC23 175

³⁷ GC233 174

³⁸ GC23 289

the ministry of Reconciliation which nourishes spiritual fatherliness in the heart; confreres who are not priests need to examine their own personal practice in this connection and their collaboration in fostering an atmosphere in which the sacrament of Penance receives its proper value. Let us recall what St Paul wrote to Timothy: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; he wanted to display in me, as the foremost of them, his perfect patience".³⁹

³⁹ 1 Tim 1,15-16

Summing up therefore, from the standpoint of the covenant our prophetic role as regards duties of an integral education can in no way prescind from the communication of the Gospel, from the invoking of the Eucharist as the true vertex of the life of the new man, and from the personal contact with Christ as a therapeutic approach which educates the conscience to the sense of sin and transforms it into the awareness of personal friendship with Christ.

The prophetic fostering of these three aspects requires practical pedagogical programmes, which each community and each confrere will draw up with particular care so as to be, like Don Bosco, both prophet and educator.

What will be done in each house in this connection? What practical initiatives will be launched for improving our knowledge of the Word of God, for the preparation of and sharing in the supreme act of love of Christ's Passover, and for fighting the loss of the sense of sin in the light of the infinite and ineffable merciful kindness of Christ?

In the mission

The theme of the mission provides numerous

and fertile possibilities for prophetic options, to which in fact we should be already committed. Here I will emphasize only two of them which I think are particularly urgent: the generous application of the oratorian criterion in the choice of those for whom we work, and the grace of unity between evangelization and education.

— *Don Bosco's oratorian criterion* means we must have a love of predilection for the young and the poor. Of this our recent General Chapters have reminded us; we spoke about it in the last circular letter on poverty:⁴⁰ it forms a central aspect in the revision of the significance of our works.

⁴⁰ cf. AGC 345

The GC23, in presenting to us the process of education of young people to the faith, explicitly affirmed that "the salesian option of giving priority to the poor is a precondition for dialogue with all, including those who are less well informed about the christian 'event'".⁴¹

⁴¹ GC23 105

And it added: "Their poverty may appear in many forms: poverty of living conditions, of significance, of perspective, of possibilities, of awareness, of resources. Their life itself is lacking in many of its main resources. No religious experience can emerge until life is discovered in its true sense. And on the other hand, every experience of true life sets off a religious reaction".⁴² Prophetic sensitivity also includes the search for a response to the new forms of poverty, as an expression of Don Bosco's anxiety to meet the needs of those most in want in various periods and territories; the GC23 exhorts us to "start up some works which will be a 'sign' of our intention to go after those youngsters we have not yet reached".⁴³

⁴² GC23 120

⁴³ GC23 230

Dedication to those to whom we have been particularly sent is a vital part of fidelity to the Holy

Spirit who wanted this to be realized in Don Bosco. It is not a minor option; it has an incidence on the global sense of our prophetic role in the Church; it constitutes in fact a characterizing trait of our charismatic physiognomy. I have seen in various provinces that from this practical commitment arise flourishing initiatives and more ardent spiritual attitudes which renew the confreres and become greatly appreciated by the Bishops and local Churches; our foundations of this kind are a providential prophetic gift which has an efficacious incidence also on social renewal.

— *the grace of unity between evangelization and education* shows quite clearly that the style of our mission is a positive help towards overcoming the rift between Gospel and culture. The capacity of what is valid in culture and the signs of the times, examined in the light of Christ's mystery, should constitute an element for professional education in the service of our apostolic consecration. Christ himself urges us in this very direction. As we have already seen, he is the creator of all human reality and his Spirit is the animator of its dynamic qualities. The GC23 declares with keen perception and depth: "We believe that God loves the young..., that the Spirit is present in them and that through them he wants to build a more authentic and human christian community. He is already at work in individuals and groups. He has given them a prophetic task to carry out in the world which is also the world of all of us. We believe that God is awaiting us in the young... *In this way our work of education becomes the preeminent context in which to meet him*".⁴⁴

⁴⁴ GC23 95

To interchange these different values among themselves is an art of no little difficulty; in the pas-

toral charity of our charism we are offered a special grace of unity through which "we evangelize by educating and educate by evangelizing".

At the present day, unfortunately, it is quite common to separate cultural values from evangelical principles, not necessarily for the purpose of opposing them to each other but rather because the connection between them is ignored. It is the task of our mission to make known through our pedagogy that they are inseparable, and to do this through the witness of our lives by daily dialogue and by adequate instruction.⁴⁵ This task is a vital aspect not only of a true Catholic school but also of all educative activity.

⁴⁵ cf. AGC 344, *Educating to the faith in the school*

A sector calling for special attention in this field is that of the social dimension of life. The process of socialization, which is constantly developing, has brought and continues to bring great innovations to social life; on the other hand the influence of so much selfishness in political activity and the financial field has provoked terrible inequalities and social injustice, which call with urgency for a profound change of mentality and restructuring of systems in a world perspective.

The formation of christian political responsibility is badly needed, as also the incorporation of the Church's social doctrine in practical programmes of evangelization, and a continual rethinking of the fundamental evangelical precept of charity. In this way there can be an active participation in the prophetic work of the Church, so abundantly realized in recent decades by the Pope and the Bishops.

Revision in this field is a complex and delicate matter, and it must be permanent.

In communion

The GC23 has made strong reference to the community as the subject of our mission. What it has to prophesy through its daily witness and activities is Christ's message concerning "communion".

For us this prophecy of communion is to be applied particularly at two levels: that of the religious community and that of the apostolic involvement of many of the lay faithful.

— *Communion in the religious community.*
There is in the Congregation, thank God, a living communion at world, provincial and local levels. Here we refer in the first place to the great values of the mystery of Christ in the local communities; when these values circulate among the confreres each local community becomes transformed into a 'sign' and 'school' of faith – a living faith which, being necessarily rooted in each individual, develops its communion with others, thus amplifying its capacity for witness ('sign') and multiplying its fertile transmission ('school') in a community which is clearly significant as regards its prophetic role.

Communal practice is proper to the whole Church, with different modes of realization. The Acts of the Apostles say as much, speaking of the first Christians;⁴⁶ and so later does Vatican II, for which "the understanding of the Church as communion is a central and fundamental idea".⁴⁷

Everything now being done in our houses and all that will be done in the future to ensure that the community is a real nucleus of animation as a "sign and school of faith" is without any doubt a true prophetic commitment of certain efficacy in this era of new evangelization.

I recommend to each Province and every house

⁴⁶ cf. Acts 2,42-47; 4,32-35

⁴⁷ Extraord. Synod 20 years after Vat. II - Final Report II,C,1.

to exploit to the full the providential "day of the community" for a continued and constructive revision of the circulation (communion) among the confreres of the evangelical values of our vocation.

— *The apostolic involvement of the lay faithful* finds practical realization in that wider community of action that we call the "educative community". The duty of the confreres, as the animating nucleus, is to promote and stimulate in it a continual mutual exchange of the values of our educative project, so as to successfully constitute an authentic operational communion on the main principles and become a real ecclesial instrument for the human and christian maturing of the young.

For some time now we have been trying to realize this aim. The successful launching of such an educative community, intensifying in it the circulation of the great dynamic ideas of Don Bosco's pedagogy so as to launch a prophecy with powerful future perspectives, implies an indispensable ability for involving valid members of the lay faithful. It is a matter of taking seriously the ecclesiology of the Council; it will transform our evangelizing and educative presence, giving to our works a new vitality and more promising future.

In a radical perspective.

We have seen that the practice of the evangelical counsels is already in itself a prophetic presence in the Church and in society. The problem lies in knowing how to give it greater modern significance in respect of the mission and communion of our evangelizing plan. It is not just a question of living obedient, poor and chaste, but of manifesting that such radical conduct makes us visible "signs and

bearers" of Christ's love for the young.

The Constitutions declare: "The evangelical counsels, by fostering purification of the heart and spiritual freedom, render our pastoral charity more concerned and productive";⁴⁸ "the practice of the counsels, lived in the spirit of the beatitudes, makes our proclamation of the Gospel more convincing";⁴⁹ the evangelical counsels "make the salesian a sign of the power of the resurrection. They fashion his heart entirely for the Kingdom, and help him to discern and welcome God's action in history; in the simplicity and hard work of daily life they transform him into an educator who proclaims to the young 'new heavens and a new earth', awakening in them hope and the dedication and joy to which it gives rise".⁵⁰

⁴⁸ C 61

⁴⁹ C 62

⁵⁰ C 63

I invite you to bear witness to this radical prophecy at the present day by giving particular attention to two complementary aspects which are really urgent: the education of young people to love, and courageous opposition to certain fashionable idols.

— *The education of young people to love*⁵¹ is certainly one of the key points in education to the faith. If there is any single aspect where cultural changes have brought about a ruinous change in conduct and at the same time a need for rethinking, this is it. Because of a distorted idea of love, many youngsters are no longer capable of living Christ's grace, and this is a baleful obstacle to growth in the faith and the directing of life towards vocational objectives.

⁵¹ cf. GC23 192 ff.

In us, the "salesian" practice of the evangelical counsels which strengthens the covenant, the mission and communion, translates our daily living witness into a kindliness of manner, an educational

attitude of welcoming acceptance, a family spirit, sincere and stable personal relationships, the joy of being together, and the circulation of great ideals which produce an atmosphere very favourable for an authentic formation to love. The salesian style of an obedient, poor and chaste life, with the added witness of joyful and industrious work carried out in common, manifests the beauty and satisfaction of a vocation of love which is able, in Christ, to give itself for others, helping them to an existential experience of the reasons behind the demands and sacrifices inherent in the love of Christ.

The prophetic element in our practice lies in fidelity to Christ, without any subterfuges or compensations; it helps us to renew that family atmosphere of the Oratory which made of Don Bosco "the genius of the heart". In such a climate we dedicate ourselves to understanding and guiding the affective tendencies of the youngsters, to the importance of their vocational guidance, and to opening them to experiences of self-giving in service to others, and to growth in solidarity.

I think it is important to reflect on this aspect in community, meditating on the Constitutions and with practical examinations of conscience, giving particular attention to the theme of salesian purity; progress made in the anthropological sciences make necessary a revision of a certain mentality of the past, but at the same time demand a deepening of consecrated chastity which will be in truth a sign of Christ's mystery, which always remains the highest revelation of what love really is.

— *Opposition to fashionable idols* reminds us of the courageous prophetic style of the Old Testament; Jesus himself challenged more than once and in biting words certain mentalities and moral

abuses which distorted the prophetic concept of the Kingdom he was proclaiming.⁵²

⁵² cf. e.g. Mt 23,13ff; Mk 9,42ff; Lk 19,41-45

Today there are certain fashionable idols which must be disavowed; they are concerned in various ways with power, riches and pleasure. They are already opposed in practice by the observance of the evangelical counsels: "In a world beguiled by atheism and the idolatry of pleasure, possession and power, our way of life bears witness, especially to the young, that God exists, that his love can fill a life completely, and that the need to love and the urge to possess, and the freedom to control one's whole existence, find their fullest meaning in Christ the Saviour".⁵³

⁵³ C 62

But it can happen that in some house there may be a soft and easy way of life, or too free a manner of speaking or judging, or the presence of some imprudent confrere giving a negative witness, which instead of collaborating in opposing idols conceals, denies and in fact destroys the prophetic force of radical adherence to the Gospel, as though it had no further influence, or at least as though no further attention was given to it by the community as an efficacious sign against worldly deviations. Unfortunately secularism can find its way even into consecrated communities where it rapidly cools down any prophetic forces; it brings about the loss in our educative commitment of the evangelical thrust of our existence, concealing it behind the camouflage of non-evangelical innovations.

It is important to be able to oppose in a pedagogical manner certain invading idolatries by highlighting, in the first place, the motivations and joy of our salesian profession.

Every community should feel itself prompted to make a serious examination of conscience on the

prophetic aspect of its radical adherence to the Gospel in oppositions to the idolatries of individualism, the seeking of an easy life, and hedonism. We must be able to unmask, using the anthropological sciences if necessary, certain anti-gospel tendencies with regard to sex, marriage, advancement of personality, the dignity of women, the constitution of the family, the sacred nature of life, the use of goods, the indispensability of political activity, the harm done by selfishness, the irrational nature of many conflicts, the sense of sin, etc. Challenging in an educative manner is a delicate task, not within the ability of everyone; it calls for competence, study and reflection, and is an expression of a concrete prophetic service of which young people have special need.

— There you have some reflections on the prophetic dimension of our salesian life. “I appeal to you”, says St Paul, “to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith”.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ cf. Rom 12,1ff

It could seem at first sight that our attention is concentrated on too many things, and that in consequence our efforts will be too widely dispersed. But further examination reveals that each of the points indicated is already in process of realization, together with many other indications provided by recent General Chapters. In fact this circular letter is insisting on one single point, *our prophetic ardour and enthusiasm* in everything we are trying to realize: that we be aware of being prophets of

Christ and to know what to insist on so as to be genuine prophets without non-authentic manifestations.

Our own particular prophetic role in the Church is to live with new fervour the authenticity of Don Bosco's charism, so that all our work of evangelization may appear to be clothed with the christian innovations and newness desired by the present times. Fundamentally this implies a renewed witness of personal intimacy with Christ which prompts us to review, revalue, rethink, and replan; to emphasize certain aspects, to concentrate efforts, to reawaken pastoral creativity with Christ as the true point of departure! What it comes to in the last analysis is to manifest efficaciously the contemporary aspect of Christ to lead the new generations towards a better future.

St Paul would tell us: you must become Christ for the young!

To feel ourselves prophets is for us a great spiritual reawakening, which makes us take very seriously the line of approach to the declarations of the Council that we have adopted in these reflections: "The up-to-date renewal of the religious life", declares Vatican II, "comprises both a constant return to the sources of the whole of the christian life and to the primitive inspiration of the Institutes and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time. But even the best-contrived adaptations to the needs of our time will be of no avail unless they are animated by a spiritual renewal, which must always be assigned primary importance even in the active ministry".⁵⁵

May our Lady of the Rosary be our guide

⁵⁶ Lk 2,51

Speaking of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Luke the Evangelist says that she “kept all these things in her heart”.⁵⁶ And this not only with regard to the extraordinary events of the conception of Jesus and of his birth and infancy, but also of his entire life, of his ascension to the right hand of the Father and his wonderful interventions in history. Proof of this is the canticle of the Magnificat, the mirror of Mary’s heart, which can be considered the model of the interior life and of the global outlook that every true prophet of the new Covenant must cultivate within himself. Let us ask our Blessed Lady to help us to develop in our heart each day this specific aspect of christian hope.

Today’s Marian commemoration on 7 October is an invitation to discover in the recital of the Rosary a practical way of preserving jealously in our hearts the various aspects of the Christ-event: there are fifteen of them and we call them “mysteries”. It is on the basis of these facts that we can nourish our relationships of friendship with Christ and, while contemplating in them the ineffable richness of the incarnation and redemption in comparison with the grave problems that surround us in this era of epoch-making change, we can perceive day after day their contemporary aspects and pass them on to others. They are an abundant source of saving light; they remind us of the secret for the prophetic functioning of every disciple, who must be “like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old”.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Mt 13,52

We must indeed learn to bring out from the treasure of Christ the urgent gospel messages

which, through meditation on these fifteen mysteries, the Holy Spirit suggests to us. Prophetic concern can change our practice and esteem for this exercise of devotion and give back to it the character of a true and relevant source for the nourishment of the new evangelization.

We may also remember that Don Bosco set great store by the Rosary. To the Marquis Roberto d'Azeglio, who tried to dissuade him from having his boys recite it, he replied: "That practice means a lot to me. I would say that my whole undertaking is based on it. I would not mind giving up many other important things, but not this one".⁵⁸

⁵⁸ BM 3, 207

We are concerned here not so much with the praiseworthy observance of a devotional practice, as with the aspect of a Marian heart concentrated constantly and with prophetic affection on the various aspects of the Christ-event, the vital centre of the new evangelization. To meditate on Christ in this way is not simply to recall a visitation of God in the past, but to consider its permanent consequences of revelation and salvation and become familiar with its eschatological aspect, or in other words its newness for every era in which it is called to leaven current history.

It is a manner of fostering the experience of the divine lived by Christ. The prophet is given authority not to command but to communicate the light of a mystery he has personally experienced; it would be contrary to his vocation were he to fall into routine; he cannot appear as having "got used to" Christ but as one who understands Christ's current saving presence here and now, and as his wise and faithful messenger who can draw attention to his perennial "newness" and is endowed with the gift of frankness and courage to communicate it;

before taking sides in social options his concern is to proclaim Christ's Gospel, taking his stand totally on Christ's side; he invites to conversion rather than rebellion; he is not an expert in the course of future events, but provides a sense of guidance for the future; he brings the good news including the forgiveness of sins, and hence insists on conversion and openly denounces evil; he likes innovations, being himself the bearer of the greatest innovator of all time.

A prophet needs a burning enthusiasm, an ever-fresh vitality, a bold and lively imagination, and daily docility to the Holy Spirit; he needs enthusiasm and courage even to the extent of martyrdom. This is evident in the lives of the saints of every age, men and women who have made of Christ the motive for their life and actions.

May Mary obtain for every confrere and community an interior apostolic conviction that will make the fullness of Christ's light shine out in us prophetically for the benefit of the young.

My fraternal greetings to you all.

Cordially in Don Bosco,

Don F. Viganò

2.1 THE COMMITMENT OF THE PROVINCE FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SOCIAL COMMUNICATION SECTOR

Fr Antonio MARTINELLI

Councillor for the Salesian Family and Social Communication

Returning to a previous topic

The AGC 338, pp.56-65, contained a *first* set of guidelines for the setting up of an operational structure in the social communication sector. Its objective was indicated in the words of the GC23, 259: *The Provincial will appoint someone to be responsible for social communication in the province.* From the documents reaching my office it is clear that in nearly every province such a confrere has been appointed: a fact which will bear fruit in due time.

We can now return to the same theme to go more deeply into the obligations involved at provincial level. The purpose I have in mind is to press the Provincial and his Council to *produce a program for the salesian presence in this sector.* I will merely point out some indispensable steps that need to be taken; in some provinces many of these elements may already exist, while in others there may be need for more decisive intervention.

A negative attitude needs to be overcome: the organization of the social communication sector is sometimes thought to be not a concern for each and all of the provinces! And reasons are put forward to justify a lack of commitment in this sector. The customary arguments are:

- the Province is very small;
- it has no specialized publishing house;
- it has no starry-eyed ideas about radio or TV transmitters;
- no qualified personnel is available;
- etc.

But one must also recall the many situations and activities that call for coordinated interventions with reference to communication. With the technology now available, I could draw up a long list of statements that emphasize the utility, necessity and urgency of work in this field.

To quote a brief paragraph from the GC23: *“Communication often becomes a determining factor for survival and development. It touches on every area of social life and every dimension of the life of the individual. It not only passes on information, but communicates ideas, creates easy agreements and puts forward models of life and behaviour”* (GC23,254).

I recall the many active commitments (leaving aside the passive ones in which the province is on the receiving end) that every province has in respect of:

- the newsletter,
- the Salesian Bulletin,
- free-time activities: theatre, cinema, etc.
- formal and informal education,
- catechesis,
- spirituality,
- the many parochial bulletins,
- youth news-sheets,
- etc.

Can one still say that a salesian province can be exonerated from organizing the social communication sector?

A nucleus of persons capable of competent animation

The provincial delegate must work with a *team that is stable and officially constituted*, and which functions as a working group for deeper study, comparison purposes, programming and the preparation of guidelines. The involvement of many people is needed because of the urgent need to intervene in various fields which call for persons with different roles and functions. The provincial delegate alone cannot shoulder the entire commitment for the sector; he could never have the time to follow up competently all the aspects involved.

It is indispensable that the Provinces make this further decision to constitute a nucleus for work in this sector. Social communication includes the organization of a network of interpersonal and institutional relationships, of small and large groups, for the purpose of producing (especially among the young and ordinary people) a critical ability, solidarity, communion and cultural identification, beginning especially with messages emanating from the means of social communication.

The areas in which an animating presence must be ensured are the following:

1. information;
2. animation;
3. formation;
4. collaboration and public relations;
5. production within and outside the community;
6. follow-up of the 'communicative dimension' in the local and provincial communities, with reference to the various activities and works.

Fidelity to Don Bosco calls for specialized and competent interventions, if we SDB are to take our place in today's civil and ecclesial society with a presence that is significant and efficacious.

I am well aware of the effort I am asking for from Provincials in giving attention to this problem, in assigning personnel to this task, in following up the team so that it will meet expectations. The insistence on *a nucleus of persons capable of competent animation*

is meant to avoid a work of isolated persons and bring into the community (which bears the primary responsibility for the salesian mission) a work that is interesting but difficult.

Sound realism and the need for a pastoral quality in interventions suggest two aspects which must not be overlooked.

In the first place, in setting up the nucleus, the *including of lay people* will be considered. It is often said that social communication is a field tailor-made for the believing laity. The lay components of the Salesian Family have asserted in their fundamental texts their availability for the urgent work needed in this "new Areopagus of the contemporary world". The seeking in every province of qualified personnel and success in forming with them in a relatively short time a group for reflection and the making of proposals, will be a sufficient measure for the realization of the intentions for guidance contained in the present disposition.

Moreover, differentiated roles and functions do not demand the numerical multiplication of persons working in social communication; what they call for is that consideration be given to the real requirements that stem from an alternative communication which aims at getting inserted into the drawing up of criteria and life projects.

It is not a case of the material determination of the number of individuals needed to form the nucleus of animators. Flanking the provincial delegate with his function of coordination and animation, other persons will take care of one or two of the areas previously mentioned. What must not be lacking is the initial competence to bring about a growth that will be continuous and in a manner suited to the concrete situation.

I appeal to the Provincials to set up a nucleus as described above.

Intercommunication for a significant and organic salesian presence

Among other things the social communication sector shares with the overall pastoral organization of the province both workers

and those to whom the work is directed.

Those *for whom we work are:*

— *young people*, who at the present day are the consumers of many products of communication, and are always looking for new languages and modes of expression: “In the face of the bombardment of the mass-media they find themselves committed to resist the media’s power for standardizing and making everything fit into a pattern” (GC23, 255).

— *the common people in general*, who make use of the means of social communication sometimes out of personal lack of concern, sometimes as a randomly chosen amusement, sometimes out of mere curiosity. From them however they form their criteria of judgment, superficial values, frames of reference, and life models.

The *workers are:*

— *the Salesian Family*, in its various components, committed to the fulfilment of Don Bosco’s legacy and to respond to the challenge presented by communication to today’s society. Don Bosco “initiated apostolic undertakings to defend and sustain the faith of the people” (GC23, 256);

— *the educative community which*, in the pastoral organization of the salesian community, undertakes the synthesis of the results of the analysis of concrete situations and practical linkage of strengths and options in view of an intervention that will be both educative and evangelizing.

The reminder of those for whom we work and of the workers themselves highlights the immediate and essential importance of foreseeing an *intercommunication between the persons, projects and activities* which stem from the different sectors of pastoral work. The organization of social communication in the province must establish contacts, relationships, exchanges and collaboration with the Formation sector, that of Youth Pastoral Work, and with the Salesian Family.

I am pointing out a requirement; it is not my intention to indicate a method for linkage and coordination between the different

sectors. The manner of doing this will be coherent with the whole of the provincial organization of pastoral work. But there are some points that cannot be left unmentioned.

The *nucleus of persons capable of competent animation*, already referred to, will have as its primary task (primary as regards both time and mental effort) its linkage with the provincial formation team, so as to agree on content and method as regards the formation of young Salesians, the ongoing formation of the community, and the preparation of some specialists in communication.

It will seek, moreover, to establish a *linkage with pastoral youth work in the province*, for the animation of typical items of pastoral work, for the consistent organization of youth activities, and for the insertion of the communicative dimension into educative and pastoral interventions.

Finally it will *examine its linkage with the Salesian Family*, for possible collaboration with specialists in communication, for contacts with similar external institutions, and for sharing in projects of wider scope in the area.

Some notes for a provincial programme

Before taking up the topic of programming in the province, it will be worth our while to recall some general objectives of social communication.

“1. To attain a *new awareness and a renewed apostolic cultural* commitment of social communication in the Congregation, following our Rule of life, by interesting and animating those responsible at provincial and local level, the formation personnel and delegates who have charge of this sector.

2. To promote the *finding of animators and specialists* in social communication in agreement with the Provincials and ensure the preparation and updating of confreres as communicators with the common people, in the service of the mission.

3. To raise the *quality of the commitment of Centres, struc-*

tures and means which the Congregation manages and coordinates in the field of social communication" (Report of the Rector Major, Fr Egidio Viganò, to the GC23, 1990, p.181).

I will try to express in practical terms the objectives quoted, giving priority to the points of greatest urgency.

Project and programming

I do not intend to go into the matter of terminology; I think I can express more clearly in a different matter what I want to say.

I want to keep the term *project* for all that goes on inside the salesian work, organized around the mission to be carried out: and so we can speak of the educative and pastoral project of a salesian province.

On the other hand, I use the word *programming* so as to restrict the application of an intervention to a more limited and more specific sector: and so I refer to the *programming of social communication*. Hence the province is not living with two projects, one called pastoral and the other of social communication.

This leads to an understanding of a consequence following from the previous reflection on *intercommunication between* the sectors of activity.

To a large extent social communication is indebted for its content, criteria and methods of intervention, to the typical options made in the educative and pastoral project. Agreement between the two is therefore obligatory, and consistency in operative practice is a guarantee of success in a meaningful presence or work.

For the part that does not coincide, social communication has an urgent need to study its own particular organization in embracing the salesian perspective on the mission, spirit and preventive system.

The duty which devolves on the Provincial, the provincial delegate for social communication and the nucleus of persons who accompany him in this service, is to *re-read the educative and pastoral project of the province from the standpoint of the specific and particular requirements of communication*, so as to:

- bring about integration, in both the analysis of the cultural situation of the present day and the possibilities of approach not only to small groups but to people in general;
- propose new modes of intervention in educational and pastoral activity, making use in a competent and professional manner of all the instruments of communication;
- offer to the work of education and evangelization more adequate instruments that take into account the new language of youth and the common people;
- prepare formation kits for young people and adults in the field of social communication;
- introduce a new awareness of the significance of social communication today in the salesian community and the educative community, as the Rector Major asked of the 23rd General Chapter;
- etc.

The original contribution of social communication to the salesian presence in a locality

During the process of formation of the nucleus supporting the provincial delegate – and this not only materially by gathering together various persons but also with shared responsibility as regards perspectives and interests, spirituality and organization – two other aspects must be taken care of at the same time: internal and external information, and collaboration through public relations.

Information

The aspect of *internal information* is already being attended to in all the provinces (think, for instance, of the provincial newsletters). Many provinces also provide information for outsiders; the Salesian Bulletin fulfils this informative function too.

The provincial delegate and his team will see to it that the specific objectives of salesian information are achieved. I describe

them below, but I want to point out from the start that they will not be attained without previous explicit programming:

1. strengthen the sense of belonging to the province and the Congregation, reinforcing the bonds of communion and unity by the wise choice and proportion of the news submitted;
2. foster the unity of the Salesian Family by involving its component groups in its life and activities, in the rich originality of each group and the sharing of common salesian values;
3. make known the educative, pastoral, cultural and social experiences of the salesian life, so as to express and consolidate the spirit that animates them in the service of the mission to the young and the poor;
4. coordinate the flow, content, kind and quality of the items of information that the province regularly produces in its various communities and groups, in view of efficacy and professional appearance;
5. organize information in such a way that different items are destined for particular sections of the educative community, so as to offer perspectives suited to the various circumstances of the life of the province.

From reflections of this kind two logical conclusions would seem to follow.

In the first place, the setting up in the province of *a minimal structure for the publishing of salesian information*, not leaving this to a single individual with the onerous task of following up its every aspect: selection of content, graphical and technical layout, distribution, etc.

In addition, the strengthening of the attitude of the salesian community towards information in its two senses (receiving and giving), urging the giving of greater attention to the history we are living, so as to offer to Salesians who will come after us *an adequate documentation of the Congregation and the province for the years 2000*. The Secretary General frequently reminds Provincial Secretaries of their task of preserving documentation in archives.

The renewal of operational structures in the Communications Department, the importance given to the aspect of information in daily life, the preparation of some confreres for the specific sector of information in the special course of last July, will have positive effects on provinces all over the world, as regards quality and professional approach.

It is the Centre's intention to give help to the provinces in the growth and realization of the obligations linked with communication.

I leave to another time some possible notes on information for those outside the salesian community.

Collaboration through public relations

The second area in the province calling for organization in good time, and which does not involve the further expenditure of personnel and forces, is that of public relations and collaboration with other organisms.

This article of mine makes no pretence to be of a technical character; its purpose is solely one of animation for an initiative which salesian communities have always had at heart, and which is not easy to realize at the present day. But the practical advantages for the salesian mission are many and interesting, even though they do not all lend themselves to measurement.

The efforts of a salesian community to find external collaboration could be of many kinds. I will present one of them in particular.

Let the provincial delegate and his team make contact with workers in the communications field in both civil and ecclesial contexts who live in the same area. Let them strike up with them relationships of friendship and reflection. Let them celebrate together circumstances linked with particular and meaningful events. Let them declare their availability, if circumstances warrant it, for providing a pastoral contribution expressing sympathy, support, encouragement and fraternal help in a work which does not always receive attention from the christian community.

They could organize and take part in round-tables, study seminars, days for a deeper consideration of the service of information in the contemporary world, and courses of formation for young people and adults. They can provide first-hand documentation on facts and options of salesian life, on the commitment of the Congregation and the province to the education of the young and presence among young people in difficulty, on the vitality of the preventive system in all kinds of contexts, and on the salesian movement in the world.

It is easy to pass from friendship to collaboration, especially when we find among the workers in the communications field salesian cooperators and past pupils.

I would not want to stop only at the immediate advantages of relationships with specialists and qualified persons in the sector.

It should be remembered also that for the provincial delegate and his team all this can become a practical school of ongoing formation, to make their own service ever more competent.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I offer the following summary of the tasks I have set out for a province beginning the organization of the sector of social communication.

1. Appoint the provincial delegate.
2. Set up a nucleus of persons around the delegate.
3. The delegate and his team should be in contact with those responsible for Formation, Youth Pastoral Work and the Salesian Family in the province, to study the matter of intercommunication between the different sectors.
4. The delegate and his team should re-read the Educative and Pastoral Project of the province from the standpoint of social communication, to verify the obligations set out in the paragraph on project and programming.

5. The delegate and his team should verify the realization of the particular objectives of internal salesian information in provincial operations.
6. The delegate and his team should establish cordial and stable relations with other workers in the field of social communication living in the territory of the province.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

In June and July the Rector Major was involved in the plenary session of the General Council, but he was able nevertheless to make some other contacts and interventions. Amongst others, he had meetings at the Generalate with the Directors of Novices, with the group of new Provincials, and with the provincial delegates for the Salesian Family.

From 11 to 14 June he was in Croatia, where he inaugurated the new premises of our studentate of theology. He was also able to make a visit to part of Slovenia and see for himself the disastrous consequences of the war.

On June 27 he presided at Genzano, Rome, at the famous procession of the Blessed Sacrament on the streets carpeted with flowers.

On 8 July he took part with the members of the Council in an afternoon of reflection at Castel Gandolfo with the Mother General and members of the FMA General Council.

He next presided at the «Team Visit» to the Middle East Province (16-18 July), and preached the retreat to the combined novices of the

four FMA novitiates in Italy from 25-31 July.

On 30 July he gave the closing address at the combined SDB and FMA meeting at Villa Tuscolana on the subject of the school.

The Team Visit to the Provinces of Spain and Portugal took him to Barcelona from 2-9 August, after which he spent the rest of the month in office work in Rome and some days of rest.

On 1 September he presided at Turin-Valdocco at the inauguration of the new «Special Circumscription for Piedmont and the Valle d'Aosta», which brings together in a single unified structure the previous Subalpine, Novara and Central Provinces.

On September 4 he opened the Regional Congress of the Cooperators of Italy and the Middle East at Frascati (Villa Tuscolana), and on the 12th had a meeting with the FMA Novice Mistresses in the FMA Generalate in Rome.

On the Feast of Our Lady's Birthday he presided in the Church of the Sacred Heart, Rome, at the first profession of 15 novices, including some from various parts of Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

On 17 September the Rector Ma-

jor left Rome for the Antilles and Central America for a week's visit to Haiti, Tegucigalpa, San Salvador and San Jose di Costa Rica, and a further week for the Team Visit to the Provinces of the Pacific and Caribbean Region at Santo Domingo.

4.2 Chronicle of the General Council

The plenary summer session of the General Council opened on 1 June 1993 and kept the Councillors busy until 28 July with 31 full meetings as well as other meetings of smaller groups and committees.

As always, the work included many items of ordinary administration concerning the life and animation of the provinces (the appointment of provincial councillors and rectors, the opening and canonical erection of houses, personal problems of individual confreres, and other matters of a financial or administrative character). But the Council concentrated especially on some important points concerning the government and animation of the Congregation in general. The following is a summary of the main items dealt with.

1. *Appointment of Provincials.* The appointment of new Provincials, after the usual careful discern-

ment process starting with an examination of the results of the consultations in the provinces concerned, occupied the Council through many meetings. The following Provincials or Superiors of other circumscriptions were appointed during the session: Fr Francesco Cereda (Province of Milan, Italy), Fr Simao Pedro Cruz (Province of Lisbon, Portugal), Fr Francis Camillus Fernando (Province of Madras, India), Fr Emidio Laterza (Province of Naples, Italy), Fr John Francis Murphy (Province of Australia), Fr Santiago Negrotti (Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina), Fr Paolo Piras (Vice-Province of Sardinia, Italy), Fr Arnaldo Scaglioni (Province of Ancona, Italy), Fr Ludwig Schwarz (UPS Vice-Province), Fr Luigi Testa (Special Circumscription of Piedmont and the Valle d'Aosta), Fr Luis Miguel Timossi (Province of La Plata, Argentina). Some biographical details of the new Provincials and Superiors will be found at 5.6 of this issue.

2. *Reports on extraordinary visitations.* Another important item of the Council's work was the examination of the reports on the extraordinary visitations, made by the Visitors concerned. The discernment process led to some significant recommendations subsequently made by the Rector Major to the indivi-

dual provinces: Argentina-Buenos Aires, Ecuador, Germany-Munich, Ireland, Italy-Sardinia, Italy-Sicily, Japan, Middle East, Poland-Cracow, Spain-Leon, and UPS.

3. *Approval of Provincial Chapters.* Continuing the work of the preceding session, the Council concluded the examination and approval of the documents of further Provincial Chapters that had taken place in the period 1992-93, in accordance with Const.170. Those approved in this session were from: Argentina-Rosario, Brazil-Sao Paulo, Czech Republic, East Africa, India-Bangalore, India-Calcutta, India-Guwahati, India-Hyderabad, Korea, Middle East (Directory), Slovenia, and Thailand.

4. *Reports on visits made by heads of Departments.* As always, the Councillors heading Departments, in addition to the Rector Major and Vicar General, reported on the activities of their sectors in the period February-May 1993. These reports brought to light various topics to be examined more deeply by the Council.

5. *Other items concerning the government of the Congregation.* These included the following in particular:

a. The examination and approval of the *administrative report of 1992* for the operations of the Genera-

late, presented by the Economist General in accordance with the General Regulations.

b. The approval of a *Delegation*, dependent on the Provinces of Paris, Madrid and Genoa, for the countries of Tropical Equatorial Africa (Cameroun, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon) as part of the coordination process of Project Africa. Fr Miguel Angel Olaverri was appointed Delegate.

c. The canonical erection of a new *Circumscription with a Special Statute for Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe*, to come into existence on 31 January 1994 (cf. Decree of erection at 5.4 of this issue).

d. The appointment of the new *Procurator General* of the Congregation, Fr José da Silva Pacheco, in line with Const.145.

6. *Other items of study.* The Council made a deeper examination, also through committees when necessary, of some other topics concerning the animation of the Congregation and the Salesian Family; they included the following:

6.1 *The common identity card of the Salesian Family.* Following on the work begun in the previous session, the Council examined the new draft of the document resulting from the first meeting of representatives of the various groups of the Salesian Family. Further observations were made which were refer-

red back to the second meeting of group representatives, held in July 1993.

6.2 Vocations in the Congregation. On this point, which is of the greatest importance for the whole Congregation, the Council examined the present situation, the efforts made in recent years, and especially some concrete proposals for helping the Provinces in various situations. The work will continue through activity to be agreed on by all the Departments and realized in successive steps with particular attention to the different zones of the Congregation.

6.3 Elements of salesian voluntary service. The Council studied this question on the basis of a working document drawn up by the Departments of Youth Pastoral Work, the Missions and the Salesian Family in the light of present experience in the Congregation. The Council's reflections will be further developed in a seminar to be carried out with representatives of those already working in the field of voluntary service in salesian contexts.

6.4 Suggestions for coordinated activity between the different sectors of animation of the Provinces and consequently of the General Council. Study of this theme has aimed especially at improving coordination between the work of the various sectors of pastoral activity,

both within the Council itself and in the Provinces. Attention was directed particularly to certain precise areas of common action, which lend themselves to agreed convergent activity.

As a first practical step, study was directed to coordinated activity for some regions.

The Council's plenary session was characterized also by two days of spiritual retreat: 22 June and 22 July, and by moments of fraternal festivity (name-days and birthdays, with the Rector Major's birthday among them on 26 July).

Of special importance was a *joint meeting of the SDB and FMA General Councils*, held at the FMA House «Santa Rosa» at Castelgandolfo in the afternoon of 8 July. The theme studied, in the context of active collaboration, was expressed in two propositions:

1. Our mutual relationship and collaboration within the Salesian Family.
2. The first concrete steps needed to foster adequate relationships: at General Council level, and then at provincial level.

In a family atmosphere, first in groups and then in full assembly, a rich exchange of suggestions took place, useful for an ever more effective collaboration. The meeting concluded with Vespers and supper in common.

5.1 Decree on the herolcity of the virtues of Ven. Simon Srugi.

The following is an English translation of the Decree of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints declaring that the Servant of God Simon Srugi had practised the theological and cardinal virtues in a heroic degree.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Mt 5,16).

He who lives in communion with Christ and faithfully follows his teaching is like a burning lamp or a city placed on a mountain. So also was the Servant of God Simon Srugi who, in intimate union with his Lord, did the latter's will with diligent promptness and perseverance, and through the kindness of his actions and the greatness of his virtues spread the light of the Gospel among both Christians and Moslems, who saw in him a reflection of the holiness of God.

This true witness of Christ was born on 27 April 1877, the last of ten children, in the town of *Nazareth*, and a few days later received to-

gether, in accordance with eastern custom, the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. His parents, Azar Srugi and Dalleh Khawali, belonged to the Catholic Melchite rite and were outstanding for their faith and love of the Church. After their death Simon, still a baby, was lovingly cared for by his grandmother, and then spent four years in the Orphanage of the Holy Family, which had been founded at *Bethlehem* by the Italian Canon Antonio Belloni. There the Servant of God developed a deeper knowledge and love of Jesus, pursued his studies and learned the art of tailoring. In 1892 he was sent to the poor college situated at *Beitgemal* and run by the members of the Society of St Francis de Sales, a place about thirty miles from Jerusalem and exposed to many dangers and difficulties; it was surrounded by Moslem villages and tormented by a pestilential atmosphere, hunger, thirst and general distress. In this house, where no Salesian wanted to go, Simon lived until his death, without ever asking for a change of residence, and without ever showing impatience or weariness with the discomfort and privations he had to put up with.

Right from the beginning of his stay at *Beitgemal* the Servant of God was outstanding for the exactness with which he carried out his duties, both scholastic and professional, for his study of religions and for the readiness with which he helped others who were in some need. Meanwhile there developed in him the desire to become a salesian brother; and so, after a year's novitiate, he made temporary vows in 1896, followed by perpetual profession in 1900. From the moment of his consecration he lived a life of joy and fidelity, serving and loving God with all his strength, and committing himself to the full for the benefit of his community and the people of the local area. In a silent and hidden manner he became everything to everyone, carrying out various tasks including teacher and assistant to the orphans, baker, doorkeeper and master of ceremonies. But the works to which he dedicated himself by preference and which made him dear to the local people were those of miller and infirmarian. He rendered these humble but valuable services in a prudent but competent manner, with great justice and true charity. He received everyone with great kindness and affability, and to meet the needs of others he willingly and cheerfully endured grievous vexations and fatigue. In every individual, and especially in the poor and the sick, he

saw a brother and a child of God; and so he made no distinction between Catholics, Mohammedans and Schismatics, but served all of them with the same attention and kindness, consoling them like the Good Samaritan of which the Gospel speaks (cf. Lk 10,30-37). In this way, and in that area so much affected by poverty and upset by disturbances of various kinds, Simon Srugi manifested the love of Christ, and in a humble and simple way spread abroad the treasures of solidarity, kindness and peace. Nor was his care any less for the confreres and college pupils to whom he gave each day a splendid testimony of fidelity to vocation, of perfect obedience to the rule, to the religious vows and the superiors, and of the charity which is the mark of the Salesian Society of Don Bosco. So highly was he esteemed by his confreres that because of his prayer and holiness of life they considered him to be the guardian angel and protection of the house. And when the community was tried by internal or external difficulties – as mainly the world war and the struggle between Arabs and Jews – the Servant of God fostered peace of mind and sought all the more to offer his work of charity to friends and foes alike, promptly forgiving those who were the cause of sorrow and strife.

He acted in this way because his

was a living faith, and Christ was his model and living example, whom he loved and followed perseveringly to the end of his days. Taught by the words of the Gospel, he praised the heavenly Father and served him with all his being, putting his hope wholly in the Lord. He loved his neighbour, spent himself for others, practised the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, cultivated and bore witness to the beatitudes which the Divine Master reserved to the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the pure of heart and those who work for peace (cf. Mt 5,3-9). He nourished his spiritual life and his apostolate by cheerful obedience to God's will, assiduous prayer, meditation on the eternal truths, participation in the divine mysteries, fervent devotion to the Eucharist, the Passion of Christ and the Virgin Mary. Concerned for the salvation of souls, more by deeds than by words he fostered the spreading of the faith and the building of God's kingdom; he used to say: "Let all our work and all our prayer be acts of love for the saving of souls with Jesus and Mary". In the course of his service to the sick, he administered the sacrament of baptism to many Moslem babies who were at the point of death, always full of joy because in this way he had opened the gates of paradise for them.

In the year 1939 the Servant of

God was struck down by a high fever, and from that moment his health gradually deteriorated. With great difficulty he carried on his various works as long as it was possible, saying that there would be time enough for rest in heaven. He bore his illness in silence, happy to be able to share in the passion of Christ. Feeling that death was drawing near, he received with great devotion the Anointing of the Sick and Holy Viaticum; then he said: "Now I can die in peace". He entered into eternity on the night of 27 September 1943 with a solidly founded reputation for sanctity, which continued through the following years among both Christians and Moslems.

The Cause of his canonization began with the celebration of the ordinary informative process in the Patriarchal Curia of Jerusalem in the years 1964-66. In 1968 the decree on his writings was published and in 1978 that on the introduction of the Cause. In the same Jerusalem Curia in the years 1981-1983 took place the apostolic process, of which the validity and authority were approved on 15 December 1985. Then after the successful preparation of the "positio super virtutibus", on 24 November 1992 the congress took place of the theological consultants. Subsequently the Cardinals and Bishops in their Ordinary Congregation of 16 February 1993, with his

Eminence Cardinal Pio Laghi presenting the Cause, declared that the Servant of God Simon Srugi had practised in a heroic manner the theological and cardinal virtues and the other virtues connected with them.

An accurate report on the whole matter was then presented by the undersigned Cardinal Prefect to the Supreme Pontiff, John Paul II, who accepted and ratified the decision of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints, and ordered that the decree should be prepared on the heroicity of the virtues of the Servant of God.

When everything necessary had been done as required, in the presence of the undersigned Cardinal Prefect, the Cardinal presenting the Cause, the Bishop Secretary of the Congregation and the others customarily called together on such occasions, the Holy Father solemnly declared: *There is certainty that the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity to both God and his neighbour, as also the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance and related virtues, were practised in a heroic degree by the Servant of God Simon Srugi, a lay professed member of the Society of St Francis de Sales, 'in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur'.*

He also ordered that the present decree be promulgated and be inserted among the Acts of the Con-

gregation for the Causes of Saints.

Given at Rome, 2 April 1993.

Angelo Card. FELICI,
Prefect

* Edward Novak, Abp. Tit. Lunen.,
Secretary

5.2 Decree on the heroicity of the virtues of Ven. Luigi Variara.

The following is an English translation of the Decree of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints declaring that the Servant of God Luigi Variara had practised the theological and cardinal virtues in a heroic degree.

"May the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so that the Kingdom may be proclaimed and the Church established in the midst of the world" (Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 80).

As in the past, so now and in the future the Holy Spirit will ensure

that evangelizers will never cease to be strong in faith, fervent in proclaiming the Gospel, tireless in building the Kingdom of God and in apostolic service, and joyful in giving themselves for the good of souls.

So it was with the priest Luigi Variara, who willingly left family and native country, to bring the treasures and joy of the redemption to the lepers of Colombia, to whom he made it possible for them to experience the fatherliness of God and the motherly solicitude of the Church.

He was born in the town of *Vairigi*, in the diocese of Asti, Italy, on 15 January 1875 to Pietro Variara and Barbara Livia Bussa, who took care to have him baptized immediately since his life was in danger. In 1884 he received the sacrament of Confirmation and in the following year his first Communion. At the end of his elementary studies his father, noting the gentle kindness and devotion of the boy, sent him to Turin to the Oratory of *Valdocco*, run by the Society of St Francis de Sales, in the hope that he might become a Salesian and a priest. There it was an immediate stimulus to him to be able to see St John Bosco, who was then sick and near to death. Deeply moved by the look bestowed on him by the Saint, he decided to consecrate himself totally to God. In the novitiate, which he made at *Foglizzo*, he made evi-

dent progress in the formation of his character, in the love of piety and in the desire to become holy. He became more humble and affable to his companions, who at first had thought him somewhat proud. On 2 October 1892 he made his perpetual vows, and then became a student at the Seminary for the Foreign Missions at *Valsalice*, on the outskirts of Turin, where missionaries were prepared for salesian works throughout the world. There he conceived a strong and burning desire to serve Christ and souls in mission lands. The opportunity for realizing this desire was provided for him by the Salesian Michael Unia, who invited Luigi to follow him to the leper colony of *Agua de Dios*, a few miles from the city of *Tocalma*, in the Archdiocese of Bogotá. The Rector Major, Blessed Michael Rua, gave his consent, judging that the young Salesian, who was particularly gifted in music and singing, was certainly well suited to bring life and happiness to such a sad place as a leper colony. Arriving at his new place of work in August 1894, the Servant of God, in obedience to the directions of Fr Unia, soon began his apostolate among the children, lepers or children of lepers, teaching them singing and catechism, and providing them with suitable moments of recreation; he collected together and directed an orchestra, which got good

results and earned high praise. At the same time he gave constant and diligent attention to his own spiritual and theological formation, and on 24 April 1898 was ordained priest. From that time onward he added to his previous work also the offices proper to the priestly ministry: the celebration of the Eucharist, the administration of the sacraments and especially that of Penance, spiritual direction, and assiduous religious care of families and the sick. He propagated devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and promoted the Confraternity of St Joseph and the Sodality of St Aloysius. Not without difficulty he built a playroom for the leper children, which he dedicated to Fr Michael Unia, who by now had died. In 1905 with the permission of the religious superiors and the Ordinary of Bogota, he founded the Congregation of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which admitted young lepers or daughters of lepers who were refused admittance to other Institutes. This work, though blessed by God with the gift of many vocations, was opposed by obstinate adversaries who caused the Servant of God much suffering, which however he bore with strength and meekness, trying to reconcile obedience to Superiors with his task as Founder. He suffered repeatedly too from those who maintained that his work among the

lepers was not in harmony with the salesian charism. Among these was the Provincial of Colombia whose ideas and manner of governing proved a sore trial to the patience of the Servant of God, who had to accept several changes of residence: he had in fact to move to the new leper colony of Contratacion (1909), then return to *Agua de Dios* (where he remained from 1910 to 1916), and then to the oratory of Bavaria at Bogota (where he stayed during the years 1917-1918), and then once again back to *Agua de Dios* (1918) because he was thought to have contracted leprosy himself. Finally he was sent to the parish of Barranquilla, at Tariba in Venezuela (where he lived in the period 1921-1922), and then on to *Cucuta*, a town in Colombia, where, purified by sickness in soul and body he died a holy death on 1 February 1923.

His life was an uninterrupted act of love for God and for souls, for whose benefit he gave himself to the full. Sent to Colombia to bring joy to the lepers, he fulfilled his mandate; and even when he and his work had to bear the cross of trial and adversity, he continued to serve and console the poor and the sick, who well understood his great kindness and had a great affection for him. By his initiatives he not only fostered the human and social advancement of the lepers, but reawakened their faith, sustained their

hope and increased their adherence to the Gospel. He lived among them with simplicity and affability, ready to do anything for those with whom he shared joys and sorrows, poverty and loneliness, having become everything to everyone after the example of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve and to give his own life for the salvation of many (cf. Mt 20,28). Obedient to the will of God, he worked with prudence and suffered with fortitude for God's glory and kingdom; he denied himself, rejected any kind of sin and strove with all his strength towards sanctity by trying daily to be an ever more perfect instrument in God's hand. He nourished his interior life and his laborious apostolate by intimate union with Christ, the pious celebration of the divine mysteries, prayer, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to his Passion and towards the Virgin Mary, and the humble and assiduous observance of his religious vows. In mind and heart he followed the teachings of the Gospel and the Church's magisterium, and taught others to do likewise. He loved the cross of Christ, forgave those who caused him suffering, never complained of the injustices he endured and, like a true father and master of souls, led his spiritual daughters on the way of perfection, forming them to give themselves for the glory of the heavenly Father and

the redemption of the world.

Because of his eminent virtues and burning apostolate among the lepers, in life and after death he was resplendent for his holiness; and so in 1959 the Archbishop of Bogota launched the Cause for his canonization with the celebration of the ordinary informative process which was authoritatively approved by a decree promulgated on 21 April 1989. After the preparation of the "positio super virtutibus", on 22 December 1992 there took place with positive results the special congress of the theological consultors, presided over by the Very Rev. Fr Antonio Petti, Promoter General of the Faith. Then the Cardinals and Bishops in the Ordinary Congregation held on 16 February 1993, with his Eminence Cardinal Edward Martinez Somalo as Presenter of the Cause, declared that the Servant of God Luigi Variara had practised to a heroic degree the theological and cardinal virtues and others connected with them.

An accurate report on the whole matter was then presented by the undersigned Cardinal Prefect to the Supreme Pontiff, John Paul II, who accepted and ratified the decision of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints, and ordered that the decree should be prepared on the heroicity of the virtues of the Servant of God.

When everything necessary had been completed as required, in the

presence of the undersigned Cardinal Prefect, the Cardinal presenting the Cause, the Bishop Secretary of the Congregation and the others customarily called together on such occasions, the Holy Father solemnly declared: *There is certainty that the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity to both God and his neighbour, as also the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance and related virtues, were practised in a heroic degree by the Servant of God Luigi Variara, priest and professed member of the Society of St Francis de Sales, and Founder of the Congregation of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, 'in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur'.*

He also ordered that the present decree be promulgated and be inserted among the Acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Given at Rome, 2 April 1993.

Angelo Card. FELICI,
Prefect

* Edward Novak, Abp. Tit. Lunen.,
Secretary

5.3 Circumscription with Special Statute of Piedmont and the Valle d'Aosta

Prot. n. 198/93

THE RECTOR MAJOR of the Salesian Society of Saint John Bosco

- after careful consideration of the overall salesian work in Piedmont and the Valle d'Aosta, after a detailed study by an ad hoc committee, and with a view to an ever more significant presence in the Church and the territory concerned;
- after noting the favourable opinion expressed in the consultations carried out among the provincial councils and confreres of the Central Province ("Sacro Cuore"), the Novara Province ("Sacro Cuore"), and the Subalpine Province ("Maria Ausiliatrice");
- in accordance with art.156 of our Constitutions,

with the consent of the General Council in the meetings of 19 June 1992, 7 January 1993 and 5 February 1993, in accordance with articles 132 and 156 of the Constitutions,

D E C R E E S

1. The **CIRCUMSCRIPTION "MARIA AUSILIATRICE" WITH A SPE-**

- CIAL STATUTE** is erected, with headquarters in **TURIN, Valdocco, via Maria Ausiliatrice 32**, covering Piedmont and the Valle d'Aosta (with some missions in Africa), and including the following Houses resulting from the fusion of the three above-mentioned Central, Novara and Subalpine Provinces:
- ALESSANDRIA, "San Giuseppe"
 - ASTI, "San Giovanni Bosco"
 - AVIGLIANA, "Madonna dei Laghi"
 - BIELLA, "San Cassiano"
 - BORGOHANERO, "Maria Ausiliatrice"
 - BORGO SAN MARTINO, "San Carlo"
 - BRA, "San Domenico Savio"
 - CASALE MONFERRATO, "Sacro Cuore di Gesù"
 - CASELETTE, "Nostra Signora delle Grazie"
 - CASTELNUOVO DON BOSCO, "S. Andrea Apostolo"
 - CASTELNUOVO-COLLE DON BOSCO, "Maria Ausiliatrice"
 - CHATILLON, "San Giovanni Bosco"
 - CHERI, "San Luigi Gonzaga"
 - CUMIANA, "Maria Ausiliatrice"
 - CUNEO, "San Giovanni Bosco"
 - CUORGNE, "Maria Immacolata"
 - FOGLIZZO, "San Hichele"
 - FOSSANO, "Maria Ausiliatrice"
 - INTRA, "San Luigi Gonzaga"
 - IVREA, "Natività di Maria Santissima"
 - LANZO TORINESE, "San Filippo Neri"
 - LOMBRIASCO, "Sant'Isidoro"
 - SAN BENIGNO CANAVESE, "San Benigno"
 - MUZZANO, "San Giuseppe"
 - NIZZA MONFERRATO, "San Guido"
 - NOVARA, "San Lorenzo"
 - OULX, "Sacro Cuore di Gesù"
 - PINEROLO-Monteoliveto, "Sacro Cuore di Gesù"
 - RIVOLI-Cascine Vica, "San Giovanni Bosco"
 - TORINO-Agnelli, "Sant'Edoardo"
 - TORINO-Andrea Beltrami, "Maria Consolatrice"
 - TORINO-Crocetta, "San Giovanni Bosco"
 - TORINO-Leumann, "San Francesco di Sales"
 - TORINO-Hartinetto, "Sacro Cuore"
 - TORINO-Monterosa, "San Michele Arcangelo"
 - TORINO-Parrocchia "San Giovanni Bosco"
 - TORINO-Rebaudengo, "San Giovanni Bosco"
 - TORINO, "San Giovanni Evangelista"
 - TORINO, "San Giuseppe Lavoratore"
 - TORINO, "San Paolo"
 - TORINO-Valdocco-Ispettorato, "San Giovanni Bosco"
 - TORINO-Valdocco, "Maria Ausiliatrice"
 - TORINO-Valdocco, Oratorio

- “San Francesco di Sales”
 - TORINO-Valdocco, “San Domenico Savio”
 - TORINO-Valsalice, “Maria Immacolata”
 - TRINO VERCELLESE, “Sacro Cuore di Gesù”
 - VENARIA, “San Francesco d’Assisi”
 - VERCELLI, “Sacro Cuore di Gesù”
 - VIGLIANO BIELLESE, “San Giuseppe”
 - EMBU (Kenya), “Saint John Bosco”
 - HAKUYU (Kenya), “Saint John Bosco”
 - SIAKAGO (Kenya), “Saint John Bosco”
 - AKURE (Nigeria), “Mary Help of Christians”
 - ONDO (Nigeria), “Saint John Bosco”
2. The houses of the Central Province in Rome (“San Callisto”, “San Lorenzo”, “San Tarcisio”) and in Vatican City (“San Francesco di Sales”) are transferred to the Roman Province. The houses of the Novara Province in Switzerland (Lugano, Maroggia, Zurich) are transferred to the Milan Province.
 3. To this Circumscription “Maria Ausiliatrice” with its special Statute belong the confreres at present assigned to the Houses indicated in n.1 above, as well as the

confreres of the Provincial Offices of the respective Provinces, and the confreres in formation already belonging to the three Provinces: Central, Novara, Subalpine.

4. The Superior of the Circumscription has the faculties of a Major Superior (“Provincial”). He will be assisted in government and animation by a Council made up of the Vice-Provincial, Economist and seven other Councillors, appointed by the Rector Major with his Council, after opportune consultation and at the request of the Superior.
5. In accordance with art. 156 of the Constitutions and art. 114 of the General Regulations, in the next General Chapter will take part the Superior and five Delegates elected by the confreres meeting in the Chapter of the Circumscription.
The Chapter of the Circumscription is composed of the Superior, who presides, the members of the Council of the Circumscription, the Rectors and a delegate from each canonically erected house, as also the delegates of the confreres in the proportion of 1 for every 25 in the sense of Reg. 165.
6. The present Decree will come into force on 1 September 1993. Its dispositions will be verified dur-

ing the six-year period following the next General Chapter.

Rome, 24 July 1993.

Fr Egidio VIGANÒ
Rector Major

Fr Francesco MARACCANI
Secretary General

5.4 Circumscription with Special Statute of Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

Prot. n. 197/93

THE RECTOR MAJOR
of the Salesian Society
of Saint John Bosco

- after careful consideration of the salesian work in the Republic of Zambia, and with a view to its more adequate coordination and development;
- after noting the favourable opinion expressed in the consultations carried out in the Province of Warsaw and the other Provinces of Poland, as also among the confreres working in Zambia:
- in accordance with art.156 of our Constitutions,

with the consent of the General Council in its ordinary meeting of 2 July 1993, and in accordance with articles 132 and 156 of the Constitutions,

DECREES

1. The **CIRCUMSCRIPTION "MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS" WITH A SPECIAL STATUTE** is erected, with headquarters in **LUSAKA, Zambia**, and made up of the following houses detached from the Province of Warsaw, Poland:

- CHINGOLA, "Blessed Callistus Caravario"
- KAZEMBE, "Blessed Aloysius Versiglia"
- LUSAKA, "Our Lady of Rozanys-tok"
- LUSAKA - Bauleni, "Saint Joseph"
- LUWINGU, "Saint Maximilian Kolbe"

Future salesian foundations in **MALAWI** and **ZIMBABWE** will also belong to the Circumscription.

2. To this Circumscription "Mary Help of Christians" with its special Statute belong the confreres at present assigned to the Houses indicated above, as well as the confreres in formation already belonging to the Delegation of Zambia.
3. The Superior of the Circumscription has the faculties "ad instar" of a Major Superior. He will be assisted in government and animation by a Council made up of the Vice-Superior, Economer and three other Councillors, appointed by the Rector Major with

his Council, after opportune consultation and at the request of the Superior.

4. In accordance with art. 156 of the Constitutions and art. 114 of the General Regulations, in the next General Chapter will take part a Delegate elected by the confreres meeting in the Chapter of the Circumscription.

The Chapter of the Circumscription is composed of the Superior, who presides, the members of the Council of the Circumscription, the Rectors and a delegate from each canonically erected house, as also the delegates of the confreres in the proportion of 1 for every 25 in the sense of Reg. 165.

5. The relationships between the Circumscription and the Provinces of origin of the present foundations are defined in an agreement, approved by the Rector Major, between the Superior of the new Circumscription with his Council and the Provincials concerned.

6. The present Decree will come into force on 31 January 1994.

Rome, 24 July 1993.

Fr Egidio VIGANO
Rector Major

Fr Francesco MARACCANI
Secretary General

5.5 Procurator General of the Salesian Society

The following is the text of the Decree of the Rector Major (Prot. n. 93/2052) appointing the new Procurator General of the Salesian Society.

THE RECTOR MAJOR
of the Salesian Society
of Saint John Bosco

- in accordance with art. 145 of the Salesian Constitutions;
- and with the consent of the General Council of our Society;

a p p o i n t s

Fr José da Silva PACHECO
Procurator General
of the Society of St Francis de Sales

for the three-year period 1993-1996, with all the rights and duties indicated in the above-mentioned art. 145 of the Constitutions.

He wishes the new Procurator a successful period of work in the service of the Salesian Society, with the Lord's blessing.

Rome, 24 July 1993.

Fr Egidio VIGANO
Rector Major

Fr Francesco MARACCANI
Secretary General

Some biographical details of the new Procurator:

Jose da Silva Pacheco was born in the province of Porto (Portugal) at Baix, Lousada, on 25 February 1931. He was a pupils at the salesian school of Mogofores, where he also made his novitiate and subsequent first profession on 16 August 1949.

After the study of philosophy and practical training, he frequented the course of theology at Barcelona, Spain, and was ordained priest at Estoril on 5 July 1959. He completed his studies at the Salesian Atheneum, Rome, where he obtained the Licentiate in Canon Law, and then returned to the studentate of theology at Estoril as a teacher and animator.

In 1966 he became Rector at Estoril, and in 1969 Rector of the house of Manique. In the period 1972-75 he was a provincial councillor and subsequently Vice-Provincial, and then once again Rector at Estoril from 1975-81, when he was appointed Provincial of Portugal. At the end of his mandate as Provincial he became Rector at Mogofores.

5.6 New Provincials

We list some information about the new Provincials and Superiors of other Circumscriptions appoin-

ted by the Rector Major with his Council during the plenary session of June and July 1993.

1. *Fr Francesco CEREDA, in the Province of MILAN.*

Francesco Cereda was born at Veduggio, province of Milan, on 6 March 1951. After studying at the salesian houses of Vendrogno and Chiari he made his novitiate at Misaglia and his first profession on 16 August 1968.

After the postnovitiate and practical training he studied theology at the Seminary of Brescia and was ordained priest at Chiari on 24 May 1980.

He completed his academic studies with the doctorate in mathematics from the University of Parma and was then appointed to the interprovincial postnovitiate at Nave, where he worked as a member of the formation team until 1987, when he was called to direct the salesian community of Parma. From 1990 he was a provincial councillor and was appointed Provincial on completing his mandate as Rector at Parma.

2. *Fr Simao Pedro CRUZ, in the Province of Portugal.*

Fr Simao Pedro Cruz, who succeeds Fr David Duarte Bernardo as Provincial of Portugal, was born at Roios, Portugal, on 1 January 1939.

He was a pupil at the salesian school at Mogofores, and subsequently made his novitiate at Manique-Estoril, where he also made his first profession on 16 August 1957.

After the study of philosophy and practical training he followed the theology course in the salesian studentate of Sanlucar la Mayor, Spain, and was ordained priest at Porto, Portugal, on 30 March 1968. He then completed his studies at the UPS in Rome, gaining the Licentiate in Philosophy.

After working in various houses of the province, in 1973 he was appointed Rector of the house of Manique-Estoril, and in 1975 Rector of that of Evora. In 1979 he became a provincial councillor and in 1987 Vice-Provincial. In 1990, after experience as a delegate at the GC23, he was once again appointed Rector at Manique-Estoril, an office he continued to hold until becoming Provincial.

3. *Fr Francis Camillus FERNANDO, in the Province of Madras, India.*

Fr Francis Camillus Fernando succeeds Fr Vincent Durairaj as Provincial of Madras. He was born at Indindakarai, in the province of Madras, on 4 November 1949.

After frequenting the salesian college at Tirupattur, he made his novitiate at Yercaud where he also

made his first profession on 24 May 1969.

Postnovitiate and practical training followed, and he then studied theology at the salesian studentate of Bangalore and was ordained priest on 14 December 1979 at Pudur, Madurai.

Subsequently he worked as an educator and animator in houses of the Province until he was appointed in 1986 as Rector of the house of Thanjavur. Three years later he was sent to animate and guide the post-novitiate formation community at Yercaud, a task he was carrying out when he was appointed Provincial. He had been a member of the Provincial Council since 1990.

4. *Fr Emidio LATERZA, in the Province of NAPLES, Italy.*

In succession to Fr Luigi Testa, who has become Superior of the new Circumscription of Piedmont and the Valle d'Aosta, has been appointed Fr Emidio Laterza.

Born on 18 June 1945 at Taranto, Puglia, he became a pupil at the Don Bosco Institute of Taranto where his salesian vocation matured alongside his professional training. He was admitted to the novitiate of Vico Equense, and made his first religious profession on 19 September 1967.

Philosophical and pedagogical studies were followed by practical

training, and he then studied theology at the salesian studentate of Castellammare di Stabia. He was ordained priest at Taranto on 29 June 1978. In the meantime he had obtained the doctorate in electronics engineering.

Very soon, in addition to his work as a teacher and educator, he was entrusted with directive duties. In 1984 he was appointed Rector at Cisternino, but in the following year was transferred to be Rector of the Institute at Bari. In 1990 he became a member of the Provincial Council, and was entrusted at the same time with the guidance of the important Don Bosco Institute of Taranto, where the news reached him of his appointment as Provincial.

5. *Fr John Francis MURPHY (Mears), in the Province of AUSTRALIA.*

Fr John Francis Murphy, appointed to succeed Fr Julian Fox as Provincial of Australia, was born at Ormond, Victoria (Australia), on 25 June 1946.

He was a pupil at the salesian college of Chadstone, from where he went on to the novitiate at Oakleigh and made his first profession on 31 January 1967.

After the study of philosophy and pedagogy followed by practical training, he followed the theology course at Melbourne, where he was ordained priest on 24 May 1975.

A competent educator and animator, he was called in 1985 to undertake the delicate task of Director of Novices and Rector of the novitiate-house at Lysterfield, an office he still held when appointed Provincial. From 1987 he had been a member of the Provincial Council.

6. *Fr Santiago NEGROTTI, in the Province of BUENOS AIRES, Argentina.*

Fr Santiago Negrotti is the new Provincial of Buenos Aires, Argentina. He was born in that city on 14 March 1940, was a pupil at the salesian college of Ramos Mejia, and passed on to the novitiate of Moron where he made his first profession on 19 March 1956.

After the course in philosophy and practical training, he studied theology at the salesian studentate of Cordoba, Argentina, and was ordained priest on 14 August 1965. Subsequently he obtained the Licentiate in Theology and in Church History from the Catholic University of Buenos Aires.

He then worked as a teacher and in the field of formation. From 1974 to 1979 he was Rector of the post-novitiate formation community at Buenos Aires (San Antonio), and in 1981 was appointed Rector of the community of San Justo.

He was Vice-Provincial from 1982 to 1991, and took part in the GC23 in 1990 as Delegate of his province.

Subsequently he was appointed Rector of the house of Almagro, Buenos Aires.

7. *Fr Peter Paul PIRAS, in the Vice-Province of SARDINIA, Italy*

Fr Peter Paul Piras has been appointed to succeed Fr Giuseppe Casti in the animation of the Vice-Province of Sardinia.

He was born at Oristano on 21 May 1943, and entered the salesian aspirantate of Gaeta. He made his novitiate at Lanuvio, Rome, and his first profession on 16 August 1960.

After the study of philosophy and practical training he was sent to the Salesian Atheneum at Turin-Crocetta for the theology course, where he gained the Licentiate in Theology and was ordained priest in Sardinia on 3 April 1971.

He worked as a teacher and educator in houses of the province, and in 1978 was appointed Rector of the aspirantate of Arborea, where he remained until 1984. He was then appointed to the Don Bosco Institute at Cagliari, where he became Rector three years later. From 1987 to 1990 he was also a member of the Council of the Vice-Province.

8. *Fr Arnaldo SCAGLIONI, in the Province of ANCONA, Italy.*

Arnaldo Scaglione was born at Sabbioneta, Mantova, on 19 January 1939. At the age of 11 years he

entered the salesian school at Ferrara and later made his novitiate at Montodine and Missaglia where the novitiate was transferred. He made his first profession on 16 August 1956,

After practical training he studied theology at the PAS, first at Turin and then at Rome, where he was ordained priest on 22 December 1966.

He obtained the Licentiate in Theology and a state degree in pedagogy and taught for some years before being appointed Rector at Fiesco (Cremona) in 1976 and later Rector at Parma. From 1981 he was a member of the Provincial Council of Milan and became Provincial of that province in 1987.

Now at the end of his mandate in Milan he has been entrusted once again with the guidance of a province, this time that of Ancona.

9. *Fr Ludwig SCHWARZ, in the Vice-Province of the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS).*

Fr Ludwig Schwarz succeeds Fr Paolo Natali as Superior of the UPS Vice-Province.

He is of Austrian nationality, born at Bratislava (Slovakia) on 4 June 1940. A pupil of the Salesians at Vienna, he made his novitiate at Oberthalheim and his first profession on 16 August 1957.

After philosophical studies and

practical training, he went to Benediktbeuern for theology and was ordained priest there on 29 June 1964. Subsequently he graduated in Philology and Archaeology from the University of Vienna.

After working for some years in the pastoral and educational fields, he was appointed Vice-Provincial of the Vienna Province in 1972, and in 1974 also Rector of the house of Horn. In 1978 he became Provincial of the Province.

At the end of his period of office, he was called to the UPS at Rome as Vice-Superior of the Vice-Province and Rector of the «St John Bosco» community.

10. *Fr Luigi TESTA, in the Circumscription of Piedmont and the Valle d'Aosta.*

Fr Luigi Testa, Provincial of Naples, has been appointed Superior of the new Special Circumscription formed by the fusion of the Central, Novara and Subalpine Provinces.

He was born at Murazzo, Cuneo, on 24 May 1940, felt the call to the salesian life, and after a period in the house of Chieri made his novitiate at Pinerolo, where he made also his first profession on 16 August 1960.

He studied theology at Turin-Crocetta, and was ordained priest on 3 April 1971. He obtained the Licentiate in Theology and the teaching certificate for Middle schools.

He soon became entrusted with tasks of responsibility: in 1974 he was appointed Rector of the formation house of Chieri, and was transferred from there in 1978 to direct the technical agricultural institute of Lombriasco. In 1981 he was appointed Provincial of the Subalpine Province.

His mandate as Provincial continued till the end of the centenary year of the death of Don Bosco, when he was appointed Rector of the house of Valsalice, Turin. In 1990, after the GC23, he became Provincial of the Naples Province.

11. *Fr Luis Miguel TIMOSSI, for the Province of La Plata, Argentina.*

Fr Luis Miguel Timossi, who succeeds Fr Hugo Izurieta as Provincial of La Plata, was born at Bernal, Buenos Aires on 22 March 1945. After his aspirantate he made his novitiate at Bernal, and also his first profession on 31 January 1962.

After philosophy and practical training, he was sent to the PAS, Turin, for theology and there obtained the Licentiate in Theology. He was ordained priest in his native parish at Bernal on 8 December 1972.

Priestly ordination was followed by educational and pastoral work, and he was soon entrusted with work of animation at provincial level. In 1981 he became Vice-

Provincial, an office he held until his recent appointment as Provincial, with also responsibility for pastoral animation in the province. From 1981 to 1987 he was also Rector of the provincial house of La Plata, and from 1988 to 1990 Rector of the formation community of Avellaneda. In 1990 he took part in the GC23 as Delegate of his province.

5.7 New Bishops

The following are biographical details of new salesian bishops appointed in July 1993.

1. *Mgr Pietro GABRIELLI, Vicar Apostolic of Mendez, Ecuador.*

On 17 July 1993 the Osservatore Romano carried the news of the appointment of *Fr Pietro GABRIELLI SDB as Vicar Apostolic of Mendez*. He succeeds Mgr Teodoro Arroyo.

Pietro Gabrielli was born at Pove del Grappa, in the province of Vicenza, Italy, on 17 March 1931,

He was a salesian pupil at the Institute of Mogliano Veneto, made his novitiate at Albaré, Verona, and his first profession on 16 August 1952.

He studied philosophy and did

practical training in Italy, after which he responded to a missionary vocation by going to Latin America for theology studies in the studentate of Bogotá. There he was ordained priest on 29 June 1962.

He was assigned to the Ecuador Province and began his apostolic work in the missions; he was soon called to offices of responsibility. He was Rector at Mendez (Cristo Re) from 1965 to 1968, then at Sucua from 1968 to 1971, at Limon from 1971 to 1977, and at Macas from 1977 to 1983. In 1986 he was sent once again to be Rector at Santiago di Mendez and then at Yaupi, where he was working when appointed Vicar Apostolic.

2. *Mgr Marcello MELANI, Coadjutor Bishop of Viedma, Argentina.*

On 23 July 1993 the news was officially published that the Holy Father had appointed *Fr Marcello Melani SDB Coadjutor Bishop of the diocese of Viedma in Argentina*.

He was born at Florence, Italy, on 15 September 1939. After completing his civil studies with the doctorate in Jurisprudence he felt attracted to the salesian life and, after a period of experience in the community of Ivrea, made his novitiate at Chieri and his first profession on 16 August 1962, with perpetual profession following three years later.

He studied theology first at Bol-

lengo and then at the Crocetta, Turin, and obtained the Licentiate in Theology. On 21 March 1970 he was ordained priest at Turin.

After ordination he left Italy for Patagonia and in 1974 was appointed Rector at Esquel, and then at Bahia Blanca (La Piedad) from 1980 to 1988. In 1981 he became a member of the Provincial Council of Bahia Blanca, and from 1988 to 1991 was Rector at Junin de los Andes. In 1991 he was appointed Rector and parish-priest at Bariloche and was working there when the news of his episcopal appointment reached him.

3. *Mgr Giuseppe Pietro POZZI, Bishop of Alto Valle de Rio Negro in Argentina.*

On 23 July 1993 came the official news of the appointment of *Fr Giuseppe Pietro Pozzi SDB* as Bishop of the newly created diocese of *Alto Valle de Rio Negro* in Patagonia.

Born in Italy at Vimercate (Milan) on 12 July 1927, he emigrated with

his family to Argentina while still a boy. He became a pupil at the Leone XIII College in Buenos Aires and, desirous of embracing the salesian life, entered the novitiate at Moron and subsequently made his profession there on 31 January 1942.

After completing his philosophical and civil studies (with the qualification of a teacher of biological sciences), and with his practical training behind him, he studied theology at Cordoba and was ordained priest on 25 November 1951.

Subsequently he held many offices of salesian responsibility: Rector at Avellaneda from 1957 to 1963, and then Rector at La Plata (San Michele) from 1963 to 1967, Provincial Economer from 1967, and Provincial of La Plata from 1975.

At the end of his six years as Provincial he returned to Avellaneda as Rector in 1981. Finally in 1988 he became Rector at Santa Rosa and once again a member of the Provincial Council.

5.8 Our dead confreres (1993 – 3rd 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.
P AGAGLIATE Giovanni	Torino	04-08-93	89	ISU
L ALONSO CAYUELA Herminio	Madrid	08-09-93	58	SLE
P AMADOR IZQUIERDO Antonio	Quito	25-07-93	38	ECU
L AVILA TORRES Rodolfo	Quito	27-07-93	78	ECU
P AZCONA URRRA Pablo	Barcelona	05-09-93	75	SBA
L BAIGUINI Giovanni	Arese	14-09-93	82	ILE
P BESSEMANS Joseph	Guiratinga	20-06-93	93	BCG
P BETZ Maximilian	München	12-07-93	80	GEM
L BOLOGNA Leonardo	Civitanova Marche	10-09-93	80	IAD
P BONOMI Emilio	Torino	02-07-93	84	IVE
P BORDOLI Hugo	Montevideo	05-09-93	68	URU
L BORMANS Joseph	Liège	05-09-93	73	BES
P CALVILLO LOAIZA Carlos	Guatemala	12-07-93	55	CAM
P CARRASCO VIO Roberto	Santiago del Cile	12-08-93	75	CIL
P CIAN Luciano	Parigi (Francia)	17-07-93	54	ILT
P CURASÌ Lorenzo	Pedara	12-07-93	60	ISI
P DE LUGAN Natale	Negrar (Verona)	30-06-93	85	IVO
P DEHLERT Augusto	Cochabamba	19-07-93	80	BOL
P DIBITONTO Vittorio	Ananindeua	13-07-93	78	BMA
L DI VITO Vicente	Rosario	07-07-93	60	ARO
P FALCONE Pietro	Cusco (Perù)	11-08-93	70	BBH
P FERRERO GRAMAGLIA José	Vignaud	15-06-93	91	ARO
P FRANCESCHINI Beniamino	Vercelli	30-07-93	86	INE
P FRISO Giuseppe	Granada (Nicaragua)	23-07-93	72	CAM
P GALLO Enrico	Tolmezzo	20-07-93	79	IVE
P GATTI Omero	Arese	19-08-93	89	ILE
P GEOCHEGAN Patricio	Buenos Aires	18-07-93	80	ABA
L GIACOMELLO Augusto	Torino	18-08-93	84	ISU
P GNANAPRAGASAM Chinnappan	Madras	25-07-93	70	INM
P GONZALEZ PARRA Manuel	Utrera	15-07-93	31	SSE
P GREGHI Alberto	Bahía Blanca	17-07-93	80	ABB
P GRILL Felix	Burgkunstadt	11-07-93	82	GEM
P HANZELIĆ Anton	Trstenik	23-06-93	91	SLO
P HARRIS Christopher	Farnborough	07-07-93	79	GBR

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P HARTZ Franz	Bad Lippspringe	27-06-93	68	GEK
P KLOMBERG Henri	Butare (Rwanda)	29-03-93	75	AFC
P LIANG Francis Xavier	Hong Kong	25-07-93	74	CIN
P MANGINI Ambrosio Cristián	Corrientes	10-08-93	75	ARO
P MARTI LLORENS Jorge	San Juan (Puerto Rico)	31-08-93	63	ANT
P MASSARINO Tomás	Las Piedras	17-06-93	65	URU
P MIRANDA Ivo	Montevideo	16-06-93	56	URU
P MITOLO Franco	Torino	05-07-93	77	ISU
P MONCMAN Augustín	Pezinok	28-06-93	83	CEB
P MORAZZANI Guglielmo	Alessandria d'Egitto	31-07-93	78	MOR
<i>Fu Ispettore per 6 anni</i>				
P MOTTET Jean	Lyon	02-07-93	69	FLY
L NANETTI Giulio	Genova-Quarto	10-09-93	75	ILT
P OCHOA Carlos Jullo	Santafé de Bogotá	25-04-93	71	COB
P OTTONE Giovanni	Varazze	05-09-93	87	ICP
L PASIN Innocente	Chieri	04-07-93	84	ICE
L PEREIRA SILVA Antonio	Cruzeiro	20-08-93	79	BSP
L PERILLA Rubén Antonio	Santafé de Bogotá	27-05-93	68	COB
P PIECZENCZYK Czesław	Otwork	10-08-93	81	PLO
L REMIGI Savino	Macerata	19-06-93	81	IAD
P RENGIFO ROMERO Jaime	Ibagué	31-08-93	70	COM
S ROMERO MERINO Vinicio	Quito	26-07-93	24	ECU
P ROTH Leo	München	01-07-93	83	GEM
L ROUBAL Antonín	Praha	12-06-93	68	CEP
P SANCHEZ MARTIN Claudio	Utrera	10-08-93	90	SSE
<i>Fu Ispettore per 6 anni</i>				
P SEAGE Arsenio	Salta	11-07-93	91	ACO
L SEIN WIM Charles	Calcutta	01-04-93	68	INC
P SEMANKO Andrés	Santiago del Cile	03-06-93	89	CIL
L SERIOLI Luigi	Shillong	31-08-93	81	ING
S SHABANI Kamala Paulin	Kausebula	07-08-93	21	AFC
P SORMANI Giovanni Battista	Arese	12-04-93	86	ILE
P SPINELLO Giuseppe	Catania	04-07-93	85	ISI
P SWANZEY Thomas	London	01-04-93	80	GBR
P TARDIVO Michele	Guatemala	13-07-93	80	CAM
P TELCH Pompeo	Verona	13-03-93	80	IVO
P THUDIANPLACKAL Joseph	Mysore	08-08-93	41	INK
L TOCCIA Roger	La Crau-La Navarre	22-07-93	65	FLY
L TOMMASIN Angelo Giulio	Torino	20-08-93	87	RMG
P VARELA José Domingo	Río Gallegos	27-07-93	76	ABA
L WIRNHARTER Ludwig	Benediktbeuern	15-07-93	84	GEM
P ZERBO Vincenzo	Barcellona	08-09-93	86	ISI