



acts

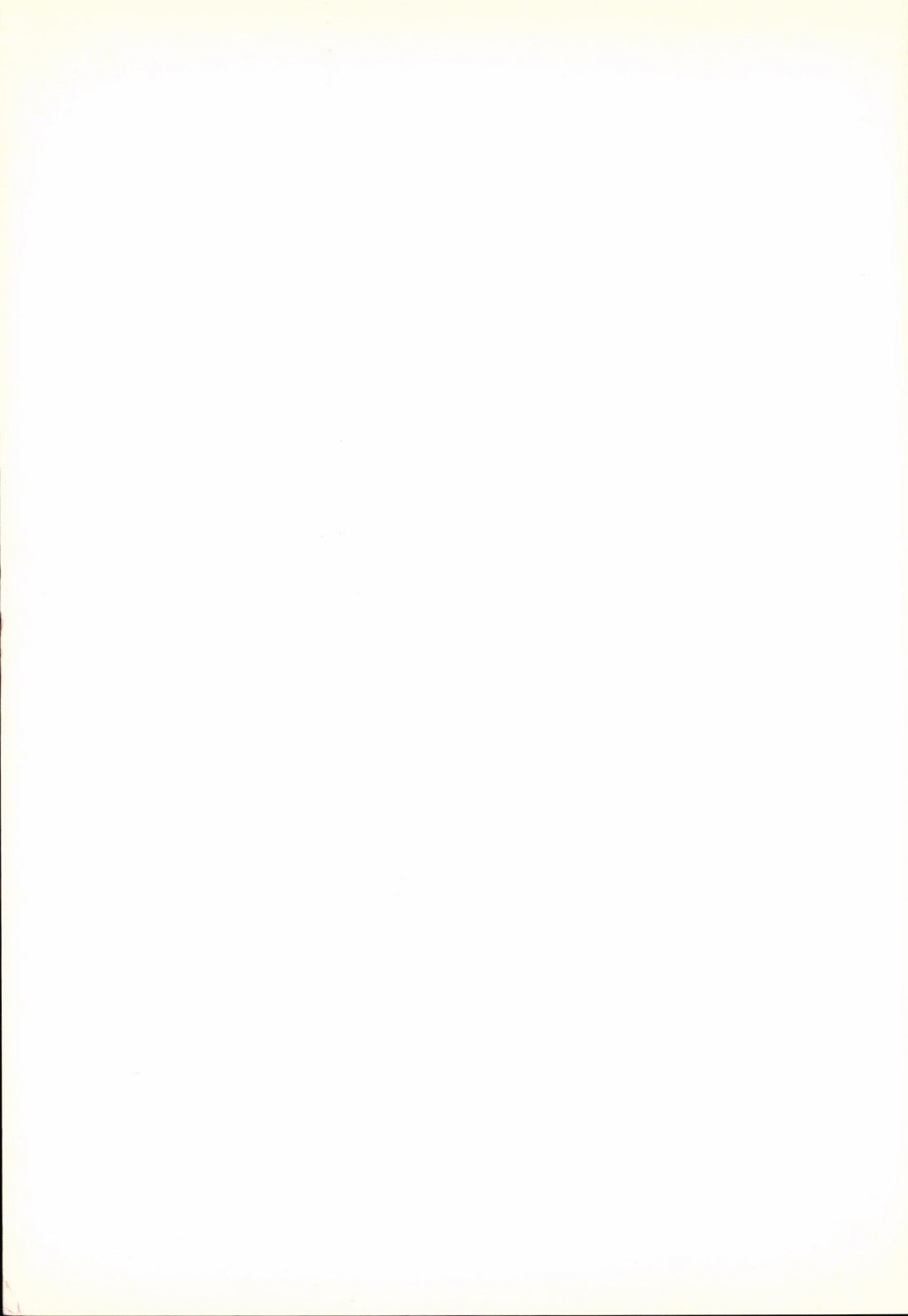
of the general council

year LXXV april-june 1994

N. 348

official organ
of animation
and communication
for the
salesian congregation

Roma
Direzione Generale
Opere Don Bosco



acts

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

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

N. 348

Year LXXV

april-june 1994

1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR	1.1 Fr Egidio VIGANÒ "Be on the watch with your robes hitched up and your lamps alight"	3
2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES	2.1 Fr Luciano ODORICO Ongoing formation for salesian missionaries 2.1 Fr Omero PARON "Asking for permissions"	39 45
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	49 50
5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS	5.1 17th Week of Spirituality for the Salesian Family 5.2 New Provincials 5.3 Salesian statistics 5.3 Deceased confreres	55 58 63 65

Édition extra commerciale
Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco
Via della Pisana, 1111
Casella Postale 18333
00163 Roma

ESSE GI ESSE - Istituto Salesiano Pio XI - Roma - Tel.: 78.27.819

Finito di stampare: Aprile 1994

1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

"BE ON THE WATCH, WITH YOUR ROBES HITCHED UP AND YOUR LAMPS ALIGHT!"

- "Religious life and discipline" - Aversion to the concept of "discipline" - Spiritual significance of the "Rule of life" - The reasons behind the Eucharist - Formation to "consecrated freedom" - Authority a service of animation and government - Themes for an examination of conscience - Joseph and Mary.

Rome, Solemnity of St Joseph
19 March 1994

My dear confreres,

I have just returned from Ethiopia where I saw with joy a part of our vast Project-Africa that is very much alive and full of hope. It is very impressive with the novices and young Ethiopian confreres who ensure the future of Don Bosco's charism in that great country. We must be grateful to God and to the generous missionaries who are working there with fidelity and enthusiasm.

The motives for hope engendered by my experience will be increased in the coming months by two events that will be strong incentives to growth: the Special Synod of the African Bishops and the

beatification of the Daughter of Mary Help of Christians Sr Maddalena Caterina Morano.

— *The African Synod* will take place in Rome in the month of April. In its working document are presented the great lines of future pastoral work for the entire continent (inculturation, ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, justice and peace, the dignity of the individual and the advancement of women, and the means of social communication). One of the points to be emphasized in this document is the concern for more adequate youth pastoral work, since more than 40% of the present population of Africa and Madagascar are below the age of eighteen years. We await with particular attention the guidelines that will come in this connection. Fr Luciano Odorico, our Councillor General for the Missions, has been chosen as one of the consultants at the service of the Synod.

— *Sister Maddalena Morano* will be the first FMA to be beatified after the canonization of Mother Mazzarello. The ceremony will take place at Catania on 30 April next, during the visit of the Pope to that historic Sicilian city. Sr Maddalena is an eminent model of authentic salesian life, begun by personal contact with Don Bosco and bearing in itself a particular interior apostolic conviction in both the style of union with God and in the spirit of initiative and hard work accompanied by broadness of vision. It is an event that takes us back to the sources of our charism and incites us to renew our fervour and enthusiasm; it is as though we were invited to make of the coming Synod on Consecrated Life in October a kind of launching pad for living the legacy of our Founder with greater fidelity and courage.

1. A topical theme

The recent Vatican document on *Fraternal Life in Community*, which is both practical and right up to date, in speaking of the process of liberation which leads religious to fraternal community, emphasizes the need also of renunciation and of fidelity to the demands of one's own religious profession: neglect in this field is harmful. "Many have noted", says the document, "that this has constituted one of the weak points of the recent period of renewal. There has been an increase of knowledge, and various aspects of communal life have been studied. Much less attention has been paid, however, to the ascetic commitment which is necessary and irreplaceable for any liberation capable of transforming a group of people into a Christian fraternity. Communion is a gift offered which also requires a response, a patient learning experience and struggle, in order to overcome the excesses of spontaneity and the fickleness of desires".¹

Starting from this invitation I propose to recall attention to the vital theme of our asceticism, under the aspect of "religious discipline" and to explore its contents.

The title I have given to this circular recalls some meaningful expressions of Paul² and Luke³ which sound like an opportune warning at the present day to contest with an evangelical conscience the permissive cultural climate that surrounds us. It will certainly be useful, and even urgent, to consider together the importance of asceticism for living the precious gift of apostolic consecration in an authentic manner.

¹ *Fraternal Life in community*, Congregation for Institutes of consecrated life and Societies of Apostolic life, n. 23

² cf. *1 Cor* 16, 13

³ *Lk* 12, 35

2. "Religious life and discipline"

Article 134 of the Constitutions, in describing the particular role of the Vicar General, does not assign to him a special sector as in the case of the other Councillors, but entrusts to him the care of a global aspect of particular importance in our life. This aspect is expressed by two terms which are mutually related and hence cannot be disjoined: "consecrated life" and "religious discipline". They must not be separated because they are expressions of the same charismatic reality: when in fact the article of the Rule refers to consecrated life it does so from the standpoint of religious discipline; and when it refers to religious discipline it does so from the standpoint of consecrated life. And so, on the one hand, a typical aspect of our life as consecrated persons is made concrete – that of a way of life according to a specific Rule; and, on the other, the sense to be given to the term "discipline" becomes positively enlarged because it refers to the authentic nature of religious life itself.

Rather than being confused with the formative task specifically assigned to the Councillor for Formation, the duty entrusted to the Vicar General strengthens and integrates the overall concern that belongs to the Rector Major (whose Vicar he is) to "promote, in communion with the general council, the constant fidelity of the members to the salesian charism".⁴

⁴ C 126

It was precisely considerations based on Art. 134 of the Constitutions that led the Council during the last plenary session (which ended on 7 January last), to study among various other themes that of "Religious life and discipline", and to ask the Rector Major to bring the conclusions together in a circular letter.

In the plenary sessions of the General Council, in fact, it is the custom among other obligations to examine more deeply some themes which may serve to throw more light on the animation of the confreres. The Councillors first form small committees for a first analysis of the theme which will then be brought into a plenary sitting to reach common practical conclusions. The themes chosen for study are taken from those whose priority has emerged in contacts with the Provinces and in the analysis of visits.

Now, although experience is that, in general, the state of health of the Congregation in the field of "religious life and discipline" is sufficiently positive (even though there are unfortunately individuals who are off the track and situations that leave something to be desired), it seemed that this theme is particularly relevant at the present day.

The motives which prompt us to reflect together, rather than being directly found within the Congregation, are to be sought in a certain climate of cultural pollution: of permissiveness, of a loosening of ethical principles, of a weakening of charismatic pulling power, which have grown up in present-day society and which open the door to a secularism which is very dangerous, even for Institutes of consecrated life.

In this connection, one author writes: "I am referring to the relaxation evident in the fields of poverty, chastity and obedience: vows which are interpreted by many at the present day with strongly psychological and sociological criteria modified by lay cultural trends. I am referring also to the emargination which values like personal prayer, meditation, asceticism, spiritual direction, humility and service, are undergoing at the hands of a

too human desire for self-realization, for careerism, for self-management, for protagonism".⁵

It is a climate that surrounds us, based on relativism and horizons which are no more than anthropological, which bring out the fact that for Religious the theme of ascesis called for by their particular charism is both vital and urgent.

⁵ VALENTINO BOSCO,
*Per una vita consacrata
in difficoltà: strategia di
governo*, LDC Turin
1992, p. 104

3. Aversion to the concept of "discipline"

Among the rapid changes that have taken place in recent decades there is also one that has rendered unacceptable (or even offensive) certain terms currently in use among Religious, as for example: "mortification", "observance", "discipline".

According to some people the term "mortification" would seem to imply a dualistic anthropology, now rejected, to the detriment of the body.

The term "observance" smacks of legalism, giving priority of consideration not to values but to the law. Our Commentary on the text of the Constitutions, assessing what truth there is in this reductive approach, states: "It is not the purpose of our Constitutions to lead us into a convent, there to live as observant religious; they call upon us to 'stand at Don Bosco's side' to be 'missionaries of the young'";⁶ which is something needing an even more demanding ascesis.

And the term "discipline", which although deriving from *discere* (to learn) and conjuring up the idea of a "disciple" who should model his life on a teaching and on the corresponding practice,⁷ has in fact seen its true meaning restricted and impoverished through the centuries, to the extent that it has come to indicate only rules and regulations,

⁶ *Project of Life of the Salesians of Don Bosco*, Rome 1986, p. 30

⁷ cf. ACG 293, 1979, circular on religious discipline

and even refer to corporal punishment, or the instrument used for ascetical flagellation (e.g. to administer or receive so many strokes of the discipline!).

It is evidently not to such restricted meanings that we refer. We are not speaking of military discipline, nor simply of pedagogical discipline, nor of that which belongs to sport. We are referring to the biblical setting of the disciple who listens to and follows Christ the Teacher, to learn from him how to behave and to conform the style of his own life to the great demands of his mystery.

Let us recall some telling declarations concerning the asceticism of the disciple: the one quoted by Luke: "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple";⁸ the one of Matthew: "Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven";⁹ the exhortation of St Peter: "Gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully on the grace of Jesus Christ";¹⁰ of St John: "By this we may be sure that we know him, if we keep his commandments";¹¹ of St Paul: "Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong!"¹²

We could multiply quotations, but these are already sufficient to indicate the general significance we are giving to the theme.

We are referring to a concrete asceticism, a spiritual vigilance, a Rule of life, a concrete manner of being a disciple.

4. Spiritual significance of the "Rule of life"

When we speak of "religious consecration" we are taking a place far above any simply legal or ju-

⁸ Lk 14, 27

⁹ Mt 5, 19

¹⁰ 1 Pet 1, 13

¹¹ 1 Jn 2, 3

¹² 1 Cor 16, 13

ridical orbit; we are entering into the biblical concept of the Covenant, personal and communal, between ourselves and the Lord. He saturates us with the power and riches of his Spirit, and we give ourselves radically to him. But what we promise exceeds our unassisted capacity for fidelity, and so we commit ourselves to follow a manner or Rule of life, leaning on the power of the Spirit for the help to put it into practice. In this way we link the great values of the consecration also to particular normative mediations which serve as support, defence, and daily verification of the realization of our specific plan of evangelical life.

In the interesting "Introduction" to the Commentary on the Constitutions, it is stated precisely that we intend by the Rule of life "not only the description of the particular gospel inspiration but also the practical norms of religious conduct, i.e. a concrete manner of following Christ with a spiritual discipline and a particular apostolic method which provides a guide for the daily personal and community behaviour of the members".¹³

¹³ o.c. p. 27

To prescind from such mediations would be to render meaningless what we promise. How, for instance, could we live obedience, poverty and chastity in a radical manner, and at the same time neglect certain specific norms of our style of life?

Rather than look at the letter of such norms one looks at the vital demands of the "grace of consecration", which prompt and permeate the effort to be consistent: true "*religious* observance" proceeds from a level which is much higher and more convinced than that of a simple "*legal* observance".

Rightly then have the Vatican Council and the subsequent magisterium of the Popes insisted on the importance of this theme.

In the introduction to the decree *Perfectae caritatis* we read: "Now this Council proposes to deal with the life and discipline of those Institutes whose members make profession of chastity, poverty and obedience, and to make provision for their needs, as our times recommend".¹⁴ In the text that follows, religious discipline is referred to as the faithful observance of the Rule of life.

Pope Paul in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelica testificatio*, speaking of the dangers that must be overcome in today's environment, says to Religious: "Everyone can see how much the fraternal setting of an ordered existence with freely undertaken discipline of life helps you to attain union with God. This discipline is increasingly necessary for anyone who 'returns to the heart' in the biblical sense of the term".¹⁵

And further on, he says: "This is the meaning of the observances which mark the rhythm of your daily life. An alert conscience, far from looking upon them solely as obligations imposed by a rule, judges them from the benefits that they bring, inasmuch as they ensure a greater spiritual fullness. It must be affirmed that religious observances demand, far more than intellectual training of the will, a true initiation with the purpose of deeply *Christianizing* the individual in the spirit of the evangelical beatitudes".¹⁶

We look upon religious discipline precisely as an indispensable mediation for "Christianizing" our being.

For a better understanding of the mediations we may look at the two great poles of reference: the Eucharist and Religious Profession.

¹⁴ PC 1

¹⁵ ET 34

¹⁶ *ibid.* 36

5 The reasons behind the Eucharist

The Eucharist is certainly the most proficient moment for the Christianization of our being. It is there that each day we become "disciples", developing in ourselves the sentiments of Christ himself. We know that the first followers of Jesus did not seem initially to be observing a special ascetic discipline: "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"¹⁷ They no longer belonged to the Old Testament, when penance and fasting were substantially an appeal for the coming of the Messiah; they had no need of it because "the Bridegroom was with them". But after the paschal events, in discovering the reality of a "time in the Church" which is a period of waiting and preparation for the definitive second coming of the Lord, "The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast".¹⁸

¹⁷ Mk 2, 18

¹⁸ Mk 2, 20

In this time, characterized by the eschatological dimension, ascetical discipline will not be abolished but will acquire a *new sense and modality* as a witness to living and feeling with Christ, who from the Eucharist continues to pour out the grace for being true "disciples" to face up to the challenges of the times and overcome the initiatives of sin.

As compared with the ascetical practices of Judaism and other religions, the Christian manifests his ascetic commitment with a *new spirit*, even though practices may appear outwardly the same. It is important therefore to perceive in what the novelty of this new spirit consists.

In the Eucharist, which assimilates us to Christ to constitute together his Mystical Body in history, we can easily identify the deep reasons of the new

spirit. Let us look at two of them: the “divine sonship” and the “human solidarity”.

— *THE DIVINE SONSHIP*. On the one hand, Jesus is the only-begotten Son of the Father; he lives in the highest communion with him, if we may put it that way, as man in perfect obedience, i.e. in that filial love which was the total gift of himself in the sacrifice of Calvary.

The human heart of Jesus is that of one obedient even until death, but this because of the intensity of his sonship and not for legal requirements: he is the Son who is intimately pleased to carry out his Father's will: “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt”.¹⁹

¹⁹ Mt 26, 39

— *HUMAN SOLIDARITY*. On the other hand, Jesus is the Second Adam, solidly the brother of all men, their representative and chief before God, the Redeemer who fights against the Evil One, the one who fully shares the responsibility for the sins of his brethren. The sin of man is grave indeed if the infinite mercy of God pardons it only through the cross. Through his radical solidarity, the heart of Jesus – albeit that of an innocent Lamb – considers it his personal mission and a duty inherent in his true and radical brotherhood to expiate the evil in man's history.

These two fundamental motivations represent the novelty of the mystery of the Incarnation, and hence the originality of the new Covenant, in which becoming a “disciple” to “Christianize one's own being” implies a new spirit in the whole of the ascetic and penitential field. In the Eucharist everything is ordered to becoming a “disciple” so as to foster in the heart the same sentiments of Christ in

his divine sonship ("sons in the Son"), and also in his human solidarity so that we can share responsibility with him in the Redemption.

The attitude of the true "disciple" (his "discipline"!) is entirely set within the framework of a love which is the gift of itself in filial obedience to the Father and in the solidarity that brings redemption from sins, especially of those to whom he has been sent and of his brothers.

Religious discipline, seen in careful comparison with the eucharistic mystery is a concrete mediation for "Christianizing" our life: it leaves no room for an asceticism of other kinds, for individualism, for arbitrary independent decisions, for paltry compensations contrary to the radical nature of the evangelical counsels, to a superficial worldly style that has nothing of the spirit of the beatitudes (Jesus never dreamt of saying: "I will live discipline in my own way!").

6. Demands of religious Profession

Another great point of reference for understanding the value of religious discipline is for us that of Profession: "The Constitutions are binding on every member in virtue of the obligation he has freely assumed before the Church by religious profession".²⁰

²⁰ C 193

We have already referred to this above and we have also spoken of it in two circulars: one of 1986 in preparation for the celebrations of the first centenary of the death of Don Bosco,²¹ and the other in 1987, when presenting the Commentary on the Constitutions.²²

²¹ ACG 319

²² ACG 320

In connection with Profession we can consider two aspects of particular significance: that of consecration as a "Covenant agreement", and that of a specific manner of life which represents our Identity Card in the Church.

— The special consecration that takes place in religious Profession unites *in an act of mutual Covenant* the initiative of God (who ensures the assistance and power of the Holy Spirit), and the gift of himself to God on the part of the one making the Profession: it is a pact defined by a specific mission, by a particular community dimension and by the radical practice of the evangelical counsels.²³

²³ cf. C 3

On the part of God the Covenant implies a fidelity that cannot fail; on our part it implies the commitment to devote to him all our efforts,²⁴ following the plan of evangelical life of the Founder (the "patriarch" of our Covenant).

²⁴ cf. C 24

It is a matter of a pact which is completely free, in which the commitments which are taken on are not in themselves obligatory for all the faithful, but become so precisely in virtue of their Profession for those who are consecrated. This is something that demands loyalty because it is the concrete expression of a friendship intended to be indissoluble. The religious makes his Covenant grow by the daily practice of his own "consecrated freedom"; the consecration, in fact, develops and intensifies freedom through a particular evangelical discipline. We shall say more later about the relationship between freedom and discipline; here it is sufficient to emphasize that the religious Profession as a pact of mutual friendship implies on our part a true "fidelity to the commitment made" as "a response which we continually renew to the special Covenant that the Lord has made with us".²⁵

²⁵ C 195

In this way the lack of observance of religious discipline becomes, in fact, an attack against the Profession and disloyalty to the friendship on which we have publicly embarked with the Lord.

— *The “Identity Card”* presented to those making the Profession is customarily called the “Rule of life”: it defines both the “spiritual riches” of the charism of our Founder in the Church and all “the apostolic project of our Society”,²⁶ with concrete indications concerning the manner of living together, communal norms, formation, and the sharing of responsibility in the exercise of the various roles.

²⁶ C 192

The very formula by which the Profession is made contains an explicit declaration of a practical commitment: “according to the way of the Gospel set out in the salesian Constitutions”.²⁷ These Constitutions represent “our basic code”, completed by the “General Regulations, the deliberations of the General Chapter, the general and provincial directories, and by other decisions made by competent authorities”.²⁸

²⁷ C 24

²⁸ C 191

In this way the Rule sets out a concrete religious discipline which effectively guides “the life and activities of communities and confreres”²⁹ in a living practice which is “much more than simple (legal) observance; it calls for fidelity supported by personal witness, by communion of life in the house, by a pastoral creativity to meet the challenges of the times, by an awareness of the local and universal Church, by a predilection for today’s needy youngsters, and by a tireless spirit of self-sacrifice every day of the year”.³⁰

²⁹ C 191

³⁰ *Project of Life SDB*,
Rome 1986, p. 29

Why do we make of the Rule our “Identity Card in the Church”? Because it is the authoritative description, approved by the Apostolic See and pro-

fessed by the confreres, of the specific characteristics of the salesian charism of Don Bosco.

We know that the Church is the universal "sacrament" of salvation in the world, i.e. a visible sign which communicates its mystery through specific and perceivable existential means. In the People of God there are innumerable ways through which the ecclesial mission of salvation is signified, in the multiform exercise of one and the same holiness; to Religious, in particular, it belongs to testify to the fact that the world cannot be saved without the spirit of the beatitudes.

Now the charisms of religious life are many, each with its particular way of life by which it manifests to others the identity of its own vocation and mission. The practice of the indications and dispositions of the Rule of life enter globally in this way into the circle of that "sacramental" characteristic of the Church through which she presents to the world the mystery of Christ – "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".³¹

With the practice of the Rule of life we present visibly to the world a well defined aspect of the sacramental nature of the Church, as the universal "sign" of salvation.

Evidently in the Rule of life, following the indications in art.191 of our Constitutions, there are different levels of reference to religious discipline, to such an extent that in special circumstances a temporary dispensation by major superiors is possible "from individual disciplinary articles".³² Here

³¹ LG 46

³² C 193

the adjective "disciplinary" is used in its restricted juridical sense to indicate some concrete norm and a regulatory disposition which does not necessarily touch on the project itself of our Identity Card.³³

But these possible exceptions do not diminish the overall importance of religious discipline; indeed they confirm its validity and its deep theological and ecclesial significance. They clearly remind us, with a conviction that has been passed down in the family from one generation to the next, of the opening words of the text of the Constitutions: "For us Salesians our Rule Book is Don Bosco's living testament. 'If you have loved me in the past', he tells us, 'continue to love me in the future by the exact observance of our Constitutions'".³⁴

"To stay with Don Bosco" means to make of our Profession the source of our holiness: "The confreres who are living or have lived to the full the gospel project of the Constitutions are for us a stimulus and help on the path to holiness. The witness of such holiness, achieved within the salesian mission, reveals the unique worth of the beatitudes and is the most precious gift we can offer to the young".³⁵

And so religious discipline is for us a characteristic part of that indispensable Christian asceticism that is proper to the "disciple" who wishes to participate in a vital fashion, like Don Bosco, in the mystery of his Master.

7. Formation to consecrated freedom

Our freedom of disciples is "consecrated", i.e. purified, strengthened by the Holy Spirit and raised

³³ It would be well to read the entire commentary on art. 193 in the *Project of Life SDB*, pp. 1019-1022

³⁴ C Foreword

³⁵ C 25

to a greater human authenticity. It may be useful to reflect briefly on the relationships between freedom and discipline, because at first sight they may appear to some people like two contrasting concepts: they might say: the more freedom the less discipline, and the more discipline the less freedom.

Many consider as "free" a person who has the power always to make autonomous decisions in line with his own tastes and desires, who can choose and change as he pleases, who can make his own arrangements without dependence on others. But this is evidently a caricature which does not respect reality, even though there may be some aspects to it which are true.

It is true that freedom is a fundamental human value; it merits special attention because it constitutes man in his deepest being. The individual perfects himself through initiatives of freedom, but with a correct conscience enlightened by objective truth and with true freedom to act, and not the slave of passions, of ideologies, injustice, conditioning, or of sickness or lack of maturity.

"Freedom", says the Holy Father in his Letter to Families, "cannot be understood as a license to do *absolutely anything*: it means a *gift of self*. Even more: it means an *interior discipline of the gift*. The idea of gift contains not only the free initiative of the subject, but also the aspect of duty. All this is made real in the 'communion of persons'. (...) Individualism presupposes a use of freedom in which the subject does what he wants, in which he himself is the one to 'establish the truth' of whatever he finds pleasing or useful. He does not tolerate the fact that someone else 'wants' or demands something from him in the name of an objective truth.

He does not want to 'give' to another on the basis of truth; he does not want to become a 'sincere gift'. Individualism thus remains egocentric and selfish".³⁶

³⁶ JOHN PAUL II, *Letter to families*, n. 14

In fact human freedom has numerous limits both of its own nature and because of the dramatic nature of its very existence. In some way it always appears to be "its own prisoner" and its full development requires a whole effort at liberation.

Sin, on the one hand, constitutes a real tragedy for freedom; and on the other, the desire to reach a goal and realize a mission demands that freedom be ensured specific elements that go beyond certain natural inclinations. And so there is a *freedom from* whatever acts as a brake and oppression by sin, and a *freedom for* the attainment of an objective, which together require a whole process of liberation and reinforcement to be earnestly sought after.

In this way there enters into relationship with freedom a kind of discipline which helps to bring about a concrete process of liberation "from" and of liberation "for".

The initial opposition between freedom and discipline is overcome through the mediation of conscience, which interiorizes the suitability and necessity of discipline so as to give it effect in freedom, as one's own will and not as something imposed from without. For this reason the conscience must be properly formed concerning the significance and implications of discipline; there is an urgent need to develop a concrete formation to assent, the kind linked existentially with the eucharistic mystery and the consecration in religious Profession. If we think of our discipline from the standpoint of the Eucharist and Profession, we perceive at once how reasonable it is, its necessity and its originality.

Today there is a danger of superficiality in the formation of consciences through not giving proper importance to asceticism. It is not a question of binding oneself for ascetical reasons to a mentality or practices of former times; nor do we pretend to form to a kind of servility that borders on hypocrisy. It is a matter of rendering concrete and practical the total gift of oneself in consecrated love.

Certainly discipline without freedom is unacceptable, but freedom without discipline is both arbitrary and perverse. Only conscience is able to promote a discipline sustained by freedom in such a way that it be neither rigid conformism nor a kind of pharisaic legalism. A balanced harmony must be constructed between freedom and discipline (not, therefore, freedom *or* discipline) so as to overcome forcefully the suggestion that there is irreconcilable opposition between the two.

One author writes: "Jesus stands before God as a free and obedient being. As an obedient son he fulfils the will of the Father, blindly following the law imposed on him; as a free being he adheres to the Father's will through intimate conviction, in full awareness and with a joyful heart; he re-creates it, so to speak, in himself. Obedience without freedom is slavery, freedom without obedience is caprice. Obedience follows blindly, freedom opens the eyes. Obedience acts without asking questions, freedom wants to know the significance of what one is doing".³⁷

The "disciple" looks to Christ ("the way, the truth and the life!") as a model of perfect harmony between obedience and freedom, and concentrates the formation of his own conscience on this aspect which is at the root of all Christian asceticism; and, because he is a Salesian, he makes the daily effort to

³⁷ D. BONHOEFFER,
Etica, Bompiani Milan
1969, pp. 211-212

compose the apparent contradiction between discipline and freedom, so as to live in fidelity to the evangelical project of his religious Profession.

The personal struggle against evil, against passions and inclinations, against the invasive worldly mentality (= freedom "from") and, on the other hand, the demands of communion with confreres for the practical realization of the salesian mission (= freedom "for"), have need of a constant ascesis and an adequate discipline – a kind of daily training period – carried out with courage and a joyful heart, so as to avoid on the one hand infidelity, individualism, superficiality, permissiveness etc., and on the other to promote together the particular Covenant with God and the common mission in the Church.

In this way the formation of the conscience of a "disciple" will enrich the confreres with lights and incentives which enlighten and guide his freedom as a "consecrated" person, making his own the ascetical demands of a discipline assumed and practised through conviction and personal will in the harmony of community life.

8. Authority a service of animation and government

The evangelical manner in which we have spoken of religious discipline supposes and requires mutual communion among the confreres, the fruit of renewal in both the exercise of authority and of shared responsibility in the practice of obedience. Assimilation of the postconciliar lines of renewal is not achieved by simple orders from above, but rather through an intelligent and constant work of

animation which helps to form renewed convictions. The relationship between animation and ongoing formation is the highway at the present day for education to being true "disciples". More than speaking of "superiors" and "subjects", we need to insist on the shared responsibility of confreres in mutual communion and with complementary functions: "Our common vocation requires the responsible and effective participation of all the members in the life and action of the community".³⁸

³⁸ C 123

This does not do away with either the action of government nor the attitude of obedience, but it transforms the exercise of them in a way which is more active and shared with others.

Evidently the person of each one needs to be formed for the concrete role he will play in harmony with the roles of others, in particular as regards the superior. One notes at times a difficulty that arises because of a certain prejudice and distancing with regard to those who fulfil the service of authority. For the fulfilment of this role what is needed is not an "officer", but a pastor who is a brother, father and friend.

Unfortunately one discerns here and there in some people a certain confusion as regards the exercise of the role of authority: a certain resistance in accepting obligations, or even recoiling from the demands of responsibility, as a result of which one fails to "foster charity, coordinate the efforts of all, animating, orientating, making decisions, giving corrections".³⁹ Sometimes too there is indifference about ensuring the proper functioning of organisms of participation and shared responsibility (councils, assemblies etc.), or letting pass without comment the facility with which some confrere tends to disregard his duty to fulfil certain

³⁹ C 121

specified obligations (consultations, processes to be followed for appointments, etc.).

Certainly the lack of a proper exercise of authority has a negative influence on religious discipline. A superior who would interpret his role with a neurotic mentality, with a superficial and exaggerated vision of democracy, would reduce a religious community to a group with a disorganized manner of life and the loss of proper direction in pastoral planning and organic vitality in communion; he would have no influence on the avoidance of individualism.

Every member should be interested in the roles of others, and in particular he should have at heart the coordinating function of those who exercise the service of authority. This is a mutually indispensable help to be fostered in an atmosphere of sincere brotherhood. A common effort on the part of all to cultivate coordination of this kind has become a priority of that spiritual methodology which makes of communities a nucleus of friends and brothers harmoniously dedicated to the same mission.

Making community means more than just being together; it also means appreciating and rendering complementary each others' roles and giving a special position to the exercise of authority.

9. Themes for an examination of conscience

The topic of religious discipline is not something vague and abstract. It refers to aspects that are very practical, specified by salesian tradition and by our Rule of life. It is worth our while therefore, to make from time to time a personal examen in this regard and a community scrutiny.

I will indicate here some themes for starting up an examination of conscience in what concerns our religious discipline; They are: (a) the ascetical vigilance of the individual; (b) the practice of the evangelical counsels; (c) the demands of the common life; (d) shared responsibility; (e) the educative and pastoral plan.

a. *Ascetical vigilance of the individual.* There are always two complementary aspects to our spiritual life: they are not identical, but neither are they ever separated; they are constantly found together throughout the whole of existence. They are the mystical aspect and the ascetic aspect. The first is the living participation in the joyous mystery of the love of God and of the risen Christ; the second focuses on the redemptive effort of collaboration with Christ in the struggle against sin, and is indispensable if the first aspect is to be realized in our human condition.

A concern to ensure the consistency of this second aspect, which implies the commitment of one's will, does not in any way constitute a kind of giving in to pelagianism, but a continuation in ourselves of concrete historical demands of the redemptive incarnation lived by Christ.

In consecrated life special importance has always been given to ascetical practices, especially among monks (the "monastery" was also called the "asceterium"). Certainly there are various kinds of asceticism, not only in accordance with different charisms, but also in consideration of anthropological concepts of different periods and cultures.

We Salesians have a special charism of apostolic life, and we are living it at a time in which, according to the anthropological sciences, one can speak

of a new cultural typology. The ascesis of our spirituality has therefore a specific modality to foster and intensify at the present day; and this begins with the person of each individual; from his convictions, from his reflections on the salesian spirit, from his sincere self-assessment against the Rule of life.

Don Bosco, our model,⁴⁰ throws out flashes of light in this regard.

cf. C 21

In the famous dream of the Personage with the ten diamonds⁴¹ he refers to our “mystique” in the diamonds on the breast, centered on “*da mihi animas*”, i.e. on pastoral charity accompanied by a strong vitality of the other two theological virtues; and he dwells attentively on our ascesis in the diamonds on the back and especially on the two placed on the shoulders which support the entire mantle. These two diamonds act as hinges between the mystical and ascetical aspects, translating them together into daily life; they are “work and temperance”.

⁴¹ cf. ASC 300 (1981)

This is not the moment to develop all the rich content of the dream, but we must indicate its spiritual importance: it is a theme which for us is truly fruitful. Art.18 of the Constitutions provides us with a summary on which we can base our examen in this regard. Here we see at once that we are dealing with a *spiritual* discipline, not measured simply by the observance of a determined norm; we are not dealing here, in fact, with an article that is simply disciplinary – as we said earlier – from which we can be dispensed, even though only by exception, but with a dimension of salesian holiness.

The scrutiny to be made, therefore, involves primarily a fundamental evangelical attitude, into which concrete norms can also be inserted (even

small ones), but which constitutes the concrete tenor of daily life.

b. *The practice of the evangelical counsels.* An important generating theme for special ascetical vigilance is that of the practice of the three evangelical counsels expressed by vow in religious Profession: obedience, poverty and chastity. They express the radical manner in which we want to be "disciples" of the Lord.

Here the great religious discipline is rendered practical in permanent attitudes which are clearly set out in the Rule of life: "We follow Jesus Christ and share more closely in his self-emptying and in his life in the Spirit".⁴²

— *OBEDIENCE.* In the dream of the personage with the ten diamonds Don Bosco puts obedience at the centre of the quadrilateral on the rear of the garment; for us religious of apostolic life, with a charism totally characterized by the mission, obedience has a priority which guides the whole of consecrated life. It is worth our while to examine ourselves attentively against the articles of the Rule that deal with this vow; with it we relive, freely and responsibly, Christ's own obedience by carrying out the mission entrusted to us;⁴³ we place our abilities and talents "at the service of the common mission";⁴⁴ "substitute acts of penance," Don Bosco tells us, "with acts of obedience";⁴⁵ and with this outlook we foster a fraternal colloquy with the superior⁴⁶ to check up existentially on our fidelity to Profession and our manner of realizing the common mission. And the superior, in a family environment,⁴⁷ will be "at the centre of the community, a brother among brothers, who recognize his responsibility and authority".⁴⁸

⁴² C 60

⁴³ C 64

⁴⁴ C 69

⁴⁵ C 71

⁴⁶ cf. C 70

⁴⁷ cf. C 16

⁴⁸ C 55

In the present cultural context which surrounds the human will and freedom with a climate of self-realization, self-management and individual protagonism, the disciple of the obedient Christ must convince himself that he must perfect his freedom *as a consecrated person*; he must do it personally but never individualistically.

From this follows the importance of an obedience which is deeply convinced, pledging the "powers of intellect and will, and gifts of nature and grace".⁴⁹

⁴⁹ C 67

— *POVERTY*. The poverty of the Salesian, as a disciple of Christ, has a very practical realism and also a unique mode of realization. We have reflected on this in a recent circular,⁵⁰ examining more deeply the evangelical project of our Rule of life. We also made suggestions for a "scrutinium paupertatis" (made specific by an appeal from the Economer General in a precise article); thanks be to God, several communities have already made some fruitful verifications in this regard.

⁵⁰ AGC 345 (1993)

Here too there is a whole great religious discipline, accompanied also by detailed norms, which ensure the radical nature of our following of Christ.

Ours is a poverty rich in enterprise and detachment of heart, which enshrines the use of goods in a generous form according to our particular mission at the service of the poor. "Remember well", Don Bosco tells us, "that what we have is not ours; it belongs to the poor; woe to us if we do not use it well".⁵¹

⁵¹ C 79

Let us not forget what our Father has left written in his spiritual Testament: "When the desire for ease and comfort grows up amongst us, our pious Society will have run its course".⁵²

⁵² *Constitutions and Regulations*, p. 269

— *CHASTITY*. Chastity is for us “the virtue to be cultivated above all others” (Don Bosco). “Our tradition has always considered chastity a resplendent virtue, bearing a special message for the education of youth”.⁵³

⁵³ C 81

It implies a personal and communal discipline of no small degree. The practice of chastity, in fact, “touches some of the deepest drives of human nature”;⁵⁴ it “frees and enables us to become all things to all men. It develops in us a Christian sense of personal relationships, and helps to make the community a family”.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ C 82

⁵⁵ C 83

We know that the vows we profess constitute three complementary aspects of a single basic attitude: the total gift of oneself to God in view of the mission. In fact, the setting in which one can experience in a more concrete manner the reality and totality of this gift is in the sincerity and joy with which we live our celibacy for the Kingdom: “The evangelical counsels, by fostering purification of the heart and spiritual freedom, render our pastoral charity more concerned and productive”.⁵⁶ All the more is this the case when we recall that an attitude that goes naturally with the preventive system is that of “making ourselves loved” as signs and bearers of the love of God for those for whom we work. A careful and continued examination of conscience in this connection ensures the radical nature not only of chastity, but also of poverty and obedience.

⁵⁶ C 61

The discipline of the custody of the heart is a fundamental ascetical aspect which defends and fosters the Covenant of consecration; it is a religious aspect which requires an indispensable daily attention because “chastity is not a conquest made once for all time. It has its moments of peace and moments of trial”.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ C 84

Hence the need to cultivate specific attitudes and to have recourse to practical and suitable means in a hedonistic society characterized by the pseudo-freedom of sex. There is need for the greatest sincerity with oneself regarding effects, and also the courage to cut off from the outset certain perverse compensations.

The Constitutions themselves provide us with a framework for an examination of conscience:

- living in the midst of work and temperance;
- the practice of mortification and custody of the senses;
- discreet and prudent use of the means of social communication;
- attention to the natural means for fostering physical and mental health;
- intensification of the love of God in prayer;
- nourishing the love of Christ at the table of the Word and the Eucharist;
- the frequent and sincere use of the sacrament of Reconciliation;
- openness with a spiritual guide;
- constant reference back to the example of Don Bosco;
- filial and trusting recourse to Mary the Immaculate Help of Christians.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ cf. C 84

c. *The demands of the common life.* The community option is an essential element of our religious consecration. The community is not something ready made, but a task to be realized day by day. Rightly does the recent Vatican document devote a chapter to the “religious community *as the place for becoming brothers*”. Our salesian community has a unique nature and a particular style,

which we must be able to preserve and develop. And the Rule of life offers us various important elements for its specific disposition.

The GC23 indicated also the "community day" which can facilitate from time to time a careful examination of conscience on this vital point. The bonds for living and working together in fraternal communion are "brotherly love, our apostolic mission and the practice of the evangelical counsels",⁵⁹ i.e. the components of our consecration⁶⁰ which must be assumed and fostered personally, as we have already said, without individualism.

The family spirit is the hallmark of our apostolic community and "inspires every moment of its life: work and prayer, meals and recreation, meetings and other encounters. In an atmosphere of brotherly friendship we share our joys and sorrows, and we are partners in our apostolic plans and experiences".⁶¹

In particular we need to review and ensure the community dimension of prayer, so fundamental and vital for the building of a community whose bonds do not proceed from either flesh or blood.

For building the community there is certainly need of a methodology which trains to kindness, forgiveness, friendship in the house, the social virtues of living together, communication and the practice of the evangelical counsels with reference to the community itself; and also one which can measure its index of brotherhood by growth in communion with the local Church, the Salesian Family, and especially with the laity who are closest to us.

d. *Shared responsibility.* The communal dimension of our religious discipline must be able to

⁵⁹ C 50

⁶⁰ cf. C 3

⁶¹ C 51

bring about a daily growth in shared responsibility. The first subject of the salesian mission is the provincial and local community;⁶² we must therefore reflect together and review the activity and efficacy of our presence in the neighbourhood.

⁶² cf. C 44

We need to make an examination of conscience concerning the exercise of authority and on the community's apostolic project. Every confrere should feel himself a "member" with functions complementary to those of others, in true harmony with the superior, who is himself a "member who shares responsibility for the apostolic mission".⁶³

⁶³ C 175

Shared responsibility is expressed in active and serious participation at the various levels covered by the community dimension: the life and activities of the house, participation in specific provincial commitments and initiatives, and also sincere collaboration in special activities of the Rector Major with his Council (e.g. the consultation for the choice of those responsible for government, C 123).

It will be convenient to make a level by level examination to promote and purify the discipline of shared responsibility.

e. *The educative and pastoral project.* It might seem at first sight that the consideration of a project of work finds no place in an examination of conscience on our religious discipline. But in fact it does become involved, both because in the project is largely concentrated our will for renewal and because discipline itself as a spiritual attitude refers not only to putting norms into practice but also to awakening creativity, the spirit of initiative and shared responsibility in specific areas of our mission.

As we have seen, we are called to educate and evangelize in a communal manner; the GC23 has

⁶⁴ GC23 n. 215 ff.

reminded us in a very practical form of the operative commitments of the community,⁶⁴ which must be seen as a “sign of faith”, a “school of faith”, and a “centre of communion and participation”, which certainly requires of the confreres several attitudes of spiritual discipline, made concrete in suitable programmes of ongoing formation.

⁶⁵ R 5

On the other hand the manner of putting into practice art. 31 of the Constitutions – to collaborate in the Church in the new Evangelization – is guided by the indications given in the second chapter of the General Regulations, arts. 4-10, which provide a demanding panorama of revision. How does one bring it about, for instance, that the community be in truth the “animating nucleus”⁶⁵ of the wider educative and pastoral community?

The very drawing up of the “project” requires presence and shared responsibility, which is then prolonged in a sincere and constant commitment of realization and revision. Putting the project into practice, in fact, demands the discipline of collaboration, i.e. that each one plays his own part with dedication and competence, and that he gives an account of what he has done to those who must ask for it; that he do not take on independently of the community (of the superior) commitments which prevent or hinder him in the realization of the project.

In this way, preparing to carry out an updated scrutiny on our religious discipline brings us into the living centre of postconciliar renewal where, with a deeper analysis of the particular characteristics of our charism, we find wider meanings opening before so many terms and concepts which we are accustomed to use in a reductive way: terms like “consecration”, “mission”, “commu-

nity", "vows", "brotherhood", "authority", "formation" etc.; among these there is also the concept of "discipline" raised to the spiritual level of acting as a convinced and faithful disciple, committed to living the charism of the Founder and fostering its growth.

In what then does the danger of *indiscipline* consist at the present day, for a confrere, for a community, for a Province, for the Congregation?

As well as non-observance of precise norms of the Rule of life, e.g. regarding the practice of the evangelical counsels, there is need to emphasize laziness or negligence in assuming the new conciliar orbits into which recent General Chapters have launched us. The rationalizations put forward as an excuse for delay in following the concrete lines of such renewal conceal the lack of the attitude of a "disciple", because distracted by other curiosities, or because one has become fixed in old habits, or because weakened in the world communion of one's charism.

Those who have assimilated the great lines of renewal, now approved by the revised Rule of life, bear witness to the personal and communal convictions which become translated into operative discipline.

10. Joseph and Mary

Let us conclude these reflections on the value of religious discipline by recalling the example of Joseph (on whose feast I conclude this circular) and of Mary, and also the witness of the Apostles.

Without any doubt Jesus rejected and overturned the observance of the Law as interpreted by

the Pharisees, but he did not suppress it; he brought it to fulfilment: "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven".⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Mt 5, 17. 19-20

It is not therefore a question of non-observance, nor of an observance with a false legalistic mentality. Jesus severely condemns the latter in the Pharisees and teachers of the Law: "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!, for you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith".⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Mt 23, 23

The true significance of the observance of the Law we can admire in Joseph and Mary who betake themselves to the temple for the purification and the presentation of their firstborn.⁶⁸ The first reason given by the sacred writer for this gesture is the prescription of the Law. But this becomes transformed, in fact, into a providential mediation which gives us a glimpse of the unfathomable reality of the New Covenant. The observance of the Law turns out to be at the service of higher values which reveal to Joseph and Mary a panorama of grace: the mystery of the temple and the beginning of a new liturgy; the prophetic joy of Simeon and Anna, grateful to God for his fidelity to the Promise, who become the proclaimers of his realization in a new Covenant; the mysterious sacrificial per-

⁶⁸ cf. Lk 2, 22-24

spective of the future life of Jesus, inherent in the offering of this firstborn son (the firstborn was considered a memorial of the liberation from slavery) who will bring to fulfilment the history of salvation: a further special manifestation from on high to give a very special sense to the existence of Mary and Joseph who were chosen to care with solicitous affection for Him who will be the light of the nations and the long yearned for objective of all the tormented vicissitudes of mankind.

Meditation on this event of observance of the law can serve to throw light on the new perspectives of all Christian discipline. We have already recalled the amazement of some contemporary observers of Jesus who, on seeing that John's disciples and those of the Pharisees fasted while those of Jesus did not, asked him the reason why. And in his reply he referred to the presence of the Bridegroom;⁶⁹ it was the moment of passage from the old to the new Covenant, and "new wine is not put into old wineskins".⁷⁰

⁶⁹ cf. *Mk* 2, 18 ff

⁷⁰ *Mt* 9, 17

In the new Covenant there is another kind of obedience to God and of ascetical practice that is much more radical and involving. Jesus himself taught it and practised it even to the shedding of his blood.

In the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple everything is expressed in a sacrificial context: the oblation of himself to God in a filial demeanour. This necessarily implies a permanent attitude of asceticism against all selfishness, which surpasses the legal norms but includes them and sanctifies them, involving also the disciplinary dispositions proper to a genuine project of discipleship. The sacrificial context of the Christian life means that each one should take up his cross to truly follow Jesus.

The Apostles understood perfectly what it meant in practice to be a disciple, and they carried their witness to the point of martyrdom.

Saint Paul penetrated deeply into the need for this ascetical attitude also because of the presence in each one of the old Adam: we want to do what is good but we do not succeed in doing it; nevertheless "there is no necessity for us to obey our unspiritual selves or to live unspiritual lives, but to live according to the Spirit"⁷¹

⁷¹ cf. *Rom* 8, 12

And so the Apostle exhorts the faithful to commit themselves as do athletes taking part in a race: "You know that all the fighters at the stadium go into strict training; they do this just to win a wreath that will wither away, but we do it for a wreath that will never wither. That is how I run, intent on winning; that is how I fight, not beating the air. I treat my body hard and make it obey me for, having been an announcer myself, I should not want to be disqualified".⁷²

⁷² cf. *1 Cor* 9, 25-27

In the life of the Church this attitude has always been very much alive. In particular, in the centuries of experience of religious life ascetical practices, expressly confirmed by a Rule of life suited to the individual charisms, has been a constituent aspect of the following of Christ. The validity and importance of observance is not calculated in terms of degrees of sin but by comparison with the consistency of the loving disciple. The renewed Constitutions no longer finish, as they did at one time, with an article declaring (with a doubtful legal preoccupation) that "these rules do not of themselves oblige under pain of sin", but rather emphasizes the concrete Covenant of profession and its demands of fidelity. The Covenant implies on God's side the gift of the grace of consecration: it gives the strength

which renders possible the practice of the entire Rule of life. And on the part of the consecrated individual it involves the total offering of himself, not simply by the making of the vows but by the global assumption of the Founder's entire evangelical project. Rightly the text of the Rule now ends as follows: "We meditate on them (the Constitutions) with faith and pledge ourselves to put them into practice; they are for us, the Lord's disciples, a way that leads to Love".⁷³

73 C 196

It is a way tested and endorsed by a great many holy confreres and authenticated by the specific authority of the Apostolic See.

May the Holy Spirit help us to understand all the renewal brought about by the Second Vatican Council regarding the religious life at the present day; it is a renewal that will certainly be examined more deeply and relaunched by the coming Ordinary Synod of October next.

May the invitation made with this circular to reflect on religious discipline lead us to greater seriousness in commitment, to more consciously shared responsibility and to more joyful communion of life.

May Mary Help of Christians, with her motherly solicitude, obtain for us an intensification of the special Covenant we have made with the Lord, and make us more consistent and generous also in the practice of our salesian asceticism.

A sincere greeting to all in the union of prayer.

Cordially in Don Bosco,

Don F. Vigano

2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

2.1 ONGOING FORMATION FOR SALESIAN MISSIONARIES

Fr Luciano ODORICO

Councillor General for Salesian Missions

I am glad to be able to offer the Congregation a brief account of some initiatives in *ongoing formation* promoted by the Department for the Salesian Missions, that have taken place in the different Continents over the past three years.

An effort has been made to bolster the concept of ongoing formation as a particularly effective moment for reflection on missionary praxis in the light of recent documents of the universal Church relating to missiology, with a view to achieving a real renewal in salesian missionary activity.

I will limit myself to essential points concerning the origin, method, main contents and conclusions of this experience of ongoing formation.

1. Origin

In drawing up the Department's *programme* for the six-year period 1990-96, the *sector of doctrinal deepening* was chosen for particular attention. *Two objectives* were involved:

- a deeper study of the relationship between evangelization and inculturation;
- a deeper study of the relationship between the implanting of the salesian charism and inculturation.

Indications were also given of the world and continental levels in which meetings for reflection on these areas would take place.

In the same six-year programme, emphasis was also laid on the *area of initial and ongoing formation of the missionaries*. This was to involve especially the objectives of:

- improving the quality of the ongoing formation of candidates for the missions;
- coupling initial and ongoing formation with the process of inculturation.

Means were indicated, with reference especially to meetings in various parts of the world, continental seminars, and the sending out of material on missiology and missionary activity.

For the practical realization of these initiatives a policy of decentralization was decided on, and in consequence seven seminars were programmed at continental level:

— Four in Latin America:

- *Evangelización y cultura el contexto de Pastoral Mapuche*, Ruca Choroí (Argentina), 18-22 March 1993.
- *Evangelización y cultura el contexto de Pastoral Andina*, Cumbayá (Ecuador), 29 March – 2 April 1993.
- *Evangelización y cultura el contexto de Pastoral Amazónica*, Cumbayá (Ecuador), 20-25 September 1993.
- *Evangelización y cultura el contexto de Pastoral Mesoamericana*, Ayutla (Mexico), 17-20 January 1994.

— Two in Asia:

- *Seminar on Evangelization & Inter-religious dialogue*, Hyderabad (India), 7-11 March 1994.
- *Seminar on Evangelization in context of other religions and secularization in the Far East*, Batulao, Batangas (Philippines), 12-18 March 1994.

— One for the Middle East:

- *Pastorale Salesiana in contesto Islamico*, Cairo (Egypt), 4-9 March 1993.

All these meetings took place with the exception of the one for the Middle East, which could not be held because of dangers stemming from the political situation.

Various meetings also took place in Africa, especially in the light of preliminary documents issued in connection with the Special Synod of Bishops for Africa. Of these meetings I have already given an account in AGC 341.

Foreseen also for 1995 is an academic semester of Missiology at the UPS, offered to SDBs and FMAs working in missionary territories.

2. Method

The calling, preparation and realization of these meetings has been carried out jointly by the SDB and FMA Departments for the Missions. This has facilitated the organization at both local and continental levels. In them have taken part about 500 Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in a positive atmosphere of mutual fraternity and sharing in the same salesian missionary charism.

Publication of the Acts of the various encounters is in hand (four have been already completed), for the purpose not only of preserving the memory of the contents of the dossier in each case, with its information, conferences, analysis and conclusions, but also of reaching a significantly greater number of salesian workers in the missionary field.

3. Main contents

The contents have been dictated by the main objectives in the *area of deeper doctrinal analysis* already indicated in the six-year programme.

For the different contexts of Latin America the central theme was: evangelization and culture in the light of present salesian missionary praxis, of the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* and of the document of the Holy See on *Dialogue and Proclamation*.

I have already mentioned that the meetings in Africa had as their central theme: *evangelization* in the light of the “Lineamenta” and “Instrumentum Laboris”, the two preparatory documents for the Special Bishops Synod for Africa.

What were the salient points raised during the common reflections? Here are some of them, set out schematically:

3.1 *Evangelization and culture*

- An authentic inculturated evangelization implies a double descending and ascending process, like the immersion of the christian message in a specific culture, and its transformation into options and values of christian faith.
- Gradual development, a sense of sequence, an attitude of patience in the experience of an inculturated evangelization.
- A sense of local and universal ecclesial communion in inculturation initiatives.
- Particular characteristics of salesian spirituality and pedagogy (fidelity to the Magisterium, acceptance of and sharing in the local culture, attitudes of kindness and simplicity) in the inculturation of the salesian charism.

3.2 *Evangelization and inter-religious dialogue*

- Emphasis on the worth and urgency of evangelization towards non-christians.
- Affirmation of the distinction between evangelization and inter-religious dialogue, and their reciprocal relationship.
- Need to harmonize enthusiasm for the first proclamation of the

kerygma and the theological and pastoral acceptance of inter-religious dialogue.

- Need for an updated understanding of the missiology of Vatican II and post-Vatican II in this area.
- Emphasis on the particular nature of the figure of Don Bosco and his educational method as the methodological key for a positive relationship between christian education and education in the context of other religions.

3.3 Limitations

In these various meetings and encounters serious limitations were also met with in the renewal of salesian missionary praxis. They included the following:

- Lack of theological and pastoral updating.
- Cultural and psychological resistance to the changes called for by the new missiology.
- Exaggerated activism, sometimes superficial, with little sense of pastoral planning.
- Lack of a deep salesian missionary spirituality.

4. Conclusions

All these meetings concluded with a special session dedicated to *Conclusions and practical guidelines*. They are naturally conclusions of a seminar, and hence to be understood as conclusions following on common reflection and suggestions for a renewed missionary praxis.

For a complete idea of this important part of the work I refer the reader to the final pages of the texts already published or in process of publication.

I want nevertheless to emphasize *certain constant items*,

present in nearly all the meetings, as indications for the future. They are the following main urgent needs:

- A new thrust of first evangelization, especially in Asia and Africa.
- A new quality (as regards content and method) of re-evangelization among the ethnic groups of Latin America.
- The intelligent and joyful acceptance of the different cultures for a deep inculturation of the Gospel.
- An adequate preparation for a competent participation in inter-religious dialogue, with both the great historic religions (especially in Asia), and with the traditional oral religions (particularly in Africa).
- A discernment and attentive follow-up of native vocations and of recently evangelized candidates.
- The importance of a missionary pastoral plan for the same area of activity.
- A better quality of salesian pedagogy and spirit as the method and inspiration of our missionary style.

Several times also suggestions were made for more frequent meetings at continental, national and provincial level.

I would like to conclude this brief contribution by emphasizing that these encounters have demonstrated that the salesian Missions in the world are in a good state of health, that there is an almost total adoption of an updated missiology by the SDBs and FMAs (albeit with different levels of preparation), and the evident joy with which each one lives the personal missionary experience.

May Mary Help of Christians, the guide and patroness of our Missions, ensure that these initiatives of ongoing formation produce a pastoral and spiritual renewal for our missionaries.

2.2 "ASKING FOR PERMISSIONS"

Fr Omero PARON
Economer General

The topic I propose to deal with briefly is one of the aspects of our poverty (cf. the Letter "And Mary laid him in a manger" in AGC 345), and is linked with the circular of the Rector Major on "religious life and discipline" in the present number of the AGC.

This time I shall not try to convince anyone, as I tried to do with my note on "rendering an account", that to *ask for permissions* is a salutary thing in itself. Asking for permission is something that annoys everyone to some extent. It makes it seem that we are not trusted, or that common sense is the prerogative only of those authorized to grant permissions. Maybe this is exaggeration in our own case, since "in salesian tradition obedience and authority are practised in a family spirit of love which inspires relationships of mutual esteem and trust" (C 65).

I will not delay to consider all the occasions when it is necessary to *ask for permission*; nor even the occasions which touch the economic sector. We risk getting bogged down in casuistry from which we should never emerge. This contribution of mine will be limited to some remarks about permissions *concerning real estate*.

First some general considerations. The Catholic Church has the inherent right, independently of any secular power, to acquire, retain, administer and alienate temporal goods, in pursuit of its proper objectives (can.1254 §1). And we know what are included in this category:

- the regulation of divine worship;
- the provision of fitting support for the clergy and other ministers;

— the carrying out of works of the sacred apostolate and of charity, especially for the needy (can. 1254 §2).

Under the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiff, ownership of goods belongs to that juridical person which has lawfully acquired them (can. 1256).

We, the Salesian Society, are constituted as a public juridical person established by competent ecclesiastical authority (cf. can. 116 §1), and hence we find ourselves within this reality of “church” (can. 1258), and consequently we are able to acquire, possess, administer and alienate temporal goods in accordance with canon law (can. 1255). In other words we have the right to acquire etc. to the extent that we share in the Church’s mission, are subject to its laws, and act in its spirit in communion with and under the control of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. It is natural, therefore, that in our activities we find ourselves facing certain laws that regulate the proper use of the goods we use; norms which impose limitations, beyond which we are obliged to *ask for permissions*.

This need not cause us undue concern, because the Constitutions come to our aid and limit the number of occasions when we have to ask for permission to a few operations, which are important nonetheless. Of the five introduced with such solemnity by Const. 188: “The authorization of the Rector Major with his Council is needed for:” we are concerned at the moment with only three, i.e.:

1. acquiring, alienating, exchanging, mortgaging, or renting real estate;
3. accepting inheritances, bequests or donations to which obligations are attached;
5. constructing new buildings, demolishing existing ones or making major alterations.

If the value of the operation exceeds the figure established for each individual Province (cf. C 189), permission must be sought from the Rector Major and his Council; if the figure is not exceeded the Provincial is competent, and permission is to be sought from the Provincial and his Council.

Const. 188 says that all requests must be accompanied by "adequate documentation". In practice this means that the following should be submitted:

1. The request of the Provincial or Rector (as the case may be) with explanations of the motives, suitability and other information relating to the operation for which permission is requested;
2. An extract from the minutes of the Provincial (or local) council, relating to the request and expressing the voting of the council in the matter concerned;

In particular the following are needed too:

- a. if the request relates to the construction of buildings:
 - a detailed plan should be attached with the relevant technical details;
 - a statement of the estimated cost and how it will be met;
- b. if it is a matter of buying real estate, it is necessary to:
 - attach a properly prepared plan;
 - specify the cost foreseen and indicate how it will be paid, and by whom;
- c. if it is a matter of selling or disposing of something by gift, there is needed:
 - a statement of what is being sold or given;
 - an indication of the price expected, and the purpose to which the money will be put;
- d. if permission is sought to lease real estate, it should be clear:
 - what parts are being leased and what use the lessee is to make of them;
 - the length of time covered by the contract and the amount of the rent.

Is that all? Yes, that is all there is to it. I too am sometimes surprised at the difficulty some people seem to find in *asking for*

permissions, and thus upset canonical visitors who sometimes find to their great astonishment works up and running for which no permission seemed to have been sought. All right – so things can be set right by a “sanatio” with the maxim “better late than never”, but... but...it is far better to do things properly beforehand.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

1. Chronicle of the Rector Major

On 15 December 1993 the Rector Major took part with the members of the General Council in an afternoon of study and dialogue with the FMA Mother General and her Council.

On the 31st, in accordance with tradition, he went to the FMA Generalate to present and comment on the Strenna for 1994. Later in the evening he did the same at our own Generalate.

From 24-28 January he was present at the Week of Spirituality for the Salesian Family at the Salesianum, Rome. Immediately afterwards he left for a series of encounters: on 29 and 30 with the Past-pupils of Parma and Montechiarugolo, who had organized manifestations of great devotion to Don Bosco; at Parma a new gymnasium was inaugurated in memory of the unforgettable Dr. Vero Pellegrini; and on the 31st the Rector Major was at Turin-Valdocco for the feast of our Father and Founder.

On 2 February, the day dedicated

to the consecrated life, he concelebrated with the Holy Father in St Peter's Basilica.

He then left for Ethiopia where, between 8 and 19 February, he visited all the salesian foundations in that country: 7 of the SDB and 4 of the FMA. They clearly manifest the apostolic efficacy and vocational growth of the work of our well deserving confreres and sisters. Accompanying him were the Provincials of the two Provinces involved, MOR and ILE, to study together the criteria for future coordination.

Returning to Rome, he presided on 21 February at the Generalate at the funeral of Fr Joseph Aubry.

On 26 and 27 February he accompanied his two brothers to Sondrio to commemorate the anniversary of the death of their mother.

On 19 and 20 March he was at Codigoro in Emilia, where he took part in the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the salesian work there.

2. Chronicle of the General Council

The winter plenary session (the eighth since the beginning of the present six-year period) lasted from 2 November 1993 to 7 January 1994, with a total of 30 full sittings, in addition to meetings of working groups and committees.

Introducing the session the Rector Major, while recalling the work of verification now in progress through the "team visits" (of which five took place in 1993), looked ahead to the Synod on consecrated life of 1994 and, for us, to the next General Chapter which is already on the horizon.

As always, a considerable amount of time was given to the "ordinary" practices: appointment of provincial councillors, approval of the appointment of rectors, the opening and canonical erection of houses, financial and administrative matters, and the solving of particular problems of confreres.

But most attention was given to the task of the animation of the Provinces, especially in connection with the extraordinary visitations that had been made and the appointment of Provincials, and also to some points of a universal character concerning the Congregation.

The following is an ordered list of the more important matters dealt with in the Council:

1. *Appointment of Provincials.* After examining the results of the consultations made in the provinces concerned and careful discernment accompanied by prayer, the General Council proceeded to the designation of nine Provincials or Superiors of Vice-provinces, for the coming six years. They are in alphabetic order: Alieri Antonio Carlos for the province of São Paulo (Brazil); Authier Richard for the vice-province of Canada East (reconfirmed for a second period); Bolkovac Stjepan for the province of Croatia; Boryczka Piotr for the new circumscription of Zambia; Breda Valerio for the province of Recife (Brazil); Chemmalakuzhy Stephen for the vice-province of Africa East; D'Souza Joaquim for the province of Bombay (India); Hocevar Stanislav for the province of Slovenia (reconfirmed for a second period); Jacquemoud Marcel for the province of Lyons (France); At n.5.2 of this issue of the AGC will be found some biographical data of those appointed.

2. *Reports on extraordinary visitations.* Six such visitations had been made in the period August-October 1993, and the visitors concerned made their reports; this enabled the Council to reflect on the realities of the situation in the various provinces and provide indications for an ever more effective animation. The following provinces or vice-provinces were visited; Antilles; Brazil - Belo Hori-

zonte; India -Calcutta; Mexico - Mexico; South Belgium; Southern Africa.

3. *Reports of the Departments.* As in every plenary session the Councilors in charge of the various sectors reported on the activities carried out by them and by their Departments, indicating any problems that had arisen and future prospects. These reports provide an opportunity for the sharing of knowledge at Council level of some important aspects of salesian reality and of the services rendered by the various Departments.

4. *The 24th General Chapter.* Although the next General Chapter is more than two years away, the General Council has begun to consider the requirements of our General Regulations for an adequate preparation for the Chapter itself. In particular the Council has already begun to consider possible themes for the Chapter, starting from a verification of the realization of the GC23 and an examination of urgent needs in the Congregation, and with due attention to promptings coming from the ecclesial community; some areas have been singled out which the Council will study more deeply in the next plenary session. In the meantime the Regionals can make an informal sounding of the opinions of Provincials and their Councils.

5. *A new Circumscription for Eastern Europe.* Among the acts of

government enacted by the Council during the session, particular importance attached to the decision to unite the salesian foundations in the countries of the former Soviet Union into a single circumscription in view of a greater coordination and more efficacious animation. It will be a "Circumscription with a Special Statute", in which possible future "Delegations" can be set up to respond to the realities of individual countries. Before the erection of the new Circumscription a consultation was carried out among the confreres involved.

6. *Particular items of study.* As in previous sessions the General Council examined more deeply some other topics that had emerged from the verifications made into the life and mission of the Congregation. The main themes developed were the following:

6.1 *Religious life and discipline.*

For some time now and from many sources a reflection had been asked for on this aspect of our religious life. The Council approached the topic with the purpose of highlighting the significance and value of our life and mission, and also for the indication of some practical criteria in the light of the reality of the situation in our communities. On the basis of some ecclesial documents and references to our salesian tradition, the general significance of discipline and its contents were singled out, in parti-

cular for our own religious life. But the Council dwelt especially on the problems occurring at the present day in the field of religious life and discipline, so as to draw some practical conclusions for animation and government at various levels.

6.2 Upgrading of the quality of retreats and of salesian ongoing formation. In the context of the principal commitments indicated by the GC23 for the present six-year period, i.e. the formation and qualification of the confreres, the Council has carried out a verification on the experience of the spiritual retreats of the Salesians at the present day. Some more important aspects of the situation were given particular attention (the expectations of the confreres, the specific objective of retreats in salesian experience and the various ways of conducting them), and some practical suggestions and proposals were made for the purpose of giving a greater quality to the experience and for the stimulation and qualification of preachers and animators.

6.3 The "new education": a check-up. At a distance of two years from the letter of the Rector Major on the "new education", the Council decided to check on what is happening in this connection in our salesian works: it is a topic clearly linked with the reflection on our educative and pastoral project, prompted also by the GC23. After examin-

ing some situations which "call for attention", the Council centred its reflections on the following questions: How can we educate ourselves and others to the new education, to the integration of education with evangelization? How do we set about the task of forming valid educative and pastoral communities, following the indications of the Constitutions and Regulations (C 45, R 5)? How do we pass from theory to practice in every province and in the various works, i.e. from the planning of the new education to getting it off the ground? It was recognized once again that this matter of education is one of the essential points in the very identity of the Congregation.

6.4 The lay project: a check-up and incentive. Also on this important task indicated by the GC23 the Council did some stocktaking. Starting from the stimulus given by the Council itself through the document: "Outlines for a lay project" (cf. AGC 340, pp. 43-53), a survey was made of how far the lay project had progressed in the provinces, so as to emphasize some elements to be encouraged and supported for a more expeditious continuation of the process already begun. Among these, special stress was laid on: 1) the commitment to launch in the provinces themselves a verification of the decisions made in the provincial chapters; 2) the obligation of ensuring that all communities accept two indispensable priorities:

that of drawing up a programme for the formation of Salesians and lay people, and that of making the educative community function properly in all pastoral settings; 3) Finally it was proposed to examine the possibility of meetings or congresses of lay people to obtain their point of view on collaboration and shared responsibility in the salesian mission in various structures, in view of the education of young people to the faith.

6.5 *The Role of the Regional*, especially in the Regions which have interprovincial activities and centres. This is a typical theme belonging to the area of "animation and government", which the Council wanted to examine more deeply so as to render more efficacious the action of the Regional Councillors in the provinces and within the General Council itself. On the basis of the texts of the Constitutions and Regulations, some specific areas of the activities of the Regionals were considered (Regionals and Visitations, Regionals and movement of personnel, Departments and Regionals), and some proposals were made for implementation immediately or at some opportune time in the future.

In addition to the above, other themes relating to government were: the examination and approval of the budget of the Generalate for 1994 in accordance with the General Regulations, and the examina-

tion of a first report, presented by the Councillor for Social Communication, on the *Salesian Information Agency*, which was launched during 1993.

During the session the Council also found time for two days of retreat together on 10 November and 21 December, in addition to the normal moments of communal prayer. There was an interruption in the plenary session from 22-27 November so that the Rector Major and some of the Councillors could take part in the Congress organized by the Union of Superiors General on "Consecrated Life Today", in preparation for the Synod of 1994.

Of particular importance was a *combined meeting of the SDB and FMA General Councils*, which took place at our own Generalate in the afternoon of 15 December '93. The theme, chosen by common agreement, concerned one of the priorities of our educational activity which we have much at heart: "*our ability to incite vocations*". The presentation of an outline by the two Councillors for youth pastoral work was followed by reflection first in groups and then in the full assembly, and suggestions were made for responding to the following questions: how can we communicate our spirituality more effectively, and bring it about that young people may see in the profile of Religious a convincing image and so be attracted to a religious vocation?

How can we foster the option of a religious vocation, particularly among committed youngsters? How can we develop the presence of lay collaborators and involve them in the responsibility for foster-

ing vocations? The discussions on the pastoral topic were accompanied by communal prayer in an atmosphere of fraternal joy generated by the approaching feast of Christmas.

5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

5.1 17th Week of Spirituality of the Salesian Family

The 17th Week of Spirituality of the Salesian Family took place at the Salesianum, Rome, from 24 to 29 January 1994. It was promoted by the Rector Major and animated by the Department for the Salesian Family in collaboration with the Institute of Spirituality of the Salesian Pontifical University.

The theme of the Week was the Strenna of the Rector Major for 1994: *"By your joy and hope-filled commitment, make known the unfathomable riches of Christ"*. The theme was examined in depth from both a biblical and ecclesial standpoint, but with specific reference to salesian spirituality, so as to prompt an awareness of what the charism they have received requires today of the members of the Family as witnesses to hope, and also to draw from it incentives for our educational activity.

The 121 participants, representing 12 different groups of the Family, actively contributed to the animation of the various moments of prayer and fraternal life, and especially in the group-work to

which particular importance had been given in the programming of the Week. This was guided by the Councillor General for the Salesian Family, Fr Antonio Martinelli. The Moderator of the meetings was Fr Giovanni Battista Bosco, and among those taking part were the Rector Major, Fr Egidio Viganò, and the FMA Vicar General, Mother Rosalba Perotti.

The Week began in the evening of 24 January, Feast of St Francis de Sales, with a short address of greetings and welcome by the Rector Major, and a brief outline of the programme by Fr Antonio Martinelli. This was followed by the keynote address given by Fr Juan Picca, a lecturer at the UPS, on the theme: *"Christian hope: a biblical and theological perspective"*. He set the theme in its framework, specifying the nature and foundation of christian hope starting especially from the revealed Word of God, and pointing out the essential dimensions and implications in a reflection carried out in the light of faith on the life of the Church and today's challenges.

The second day was dedicated to a study of the principal *texts on "hope and optimism in salesian*

tradition". After an introduction by Fr Francesco Motto, Director of the Salesian Historical Institute, who indicated some criteria for the reading of salesian historical sources, there followed a detailed presentation of certain texts on hope and optimism in our tradition: in *St Francis de Sales* (Fr Valentin Viguera SDB), in *Don Bosco* (Fr Francesco Motto SDB), in *Mother Mazzarello* (Sr. Maria Cristina Villegas FMA), and in *Don Rinaldi* (Fr. Pasquale Liberatore SDB and Danile Boccaci DBV).

On the third day there was the *meeting with the Holy Father* at the General Audience, during which the Pope had a special word of greeting and encouragement for those taking part in the Week. The rest of the day was given over in large part to group work on the topics already presented. Many interesting reflections emerged from the groups and were subsequently gathered together in the assembly, with reference to some specific points: what are hope and optimism and on what are they based? how are they manifested? what place do they occupy in the spirituality of our Saints and in our spirituality itself? Valid indications were put forward emphasizing the relevance of hope, and suggesting means for preserving and increasing hope among young people of today.

The fourth day was programmed

as a time for reflection and verification on living experiences of hope. It was led off by a lengthy address by Prof. Mario Pollo, of our Salesian University, on: *Today's signs of hope and of lack of it, for a perceptive reading of present-day reality*. It was followed by an interesting round table which provided a panorama of christian hope in various geographical, social and religious contexts. Three speakers gave some efficacious illustrations from different contexts: Asia, presented by Dr Oscar Villadolid, Ambassador of the Philippines to the Holy See; Latin America, presented by Prof. Guzman Carriquirri, Under-Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity; and Africa, presented by Fr Gino Pastore (of the Combonian Fathers), a missionary in Africa. Subsequently the groups made further reflections on the topic, in an effort to identify the more forceful stimulating factors for the Salesian Family in the different geographical areas.

28 January began with a forthright paper by Fr Riccardo Tonelli, Professor at the UPS, on the theme: *"Becoming men and women of hope in the style of salesian spirituality"*. In it he brought together the reasons for hope, and suggested some possible hopeful gestures for use in practical daily life, all based on elements of our spirituality. After the paper the previous group

discussions continued, but whereas on the previous day various geographical areas were considered, today the emphasis was on different environments of life: the daily experience of a young person (Mr Marco Belfiori); the family (Mrs Guarna Verga Caterina); and the ecclesial celebration (Fr Achille Triacca SDB). The same work continued in the afternoon, with the examination of other environments: apostolic and educational activity (Miss Ortesia Barbarino); political activity (Mr Antonio Raimondi); and the religious community (Sr Luigina Belomo).

Later the same day, after the conversation on the suggestions that had been made, the Rector Major presented his *comments on the Strenna*. It was the concluding reflection on the numerous incentives that had emerged during the Week. Starting from a deep understanding of the "unfathomable riches of Christ" and hence of the authentic significance of Christian hope, with fundamental attitudes to be cultivated, especially in the education of the young. The Rector Major gave a clear explanation of the two elements emphasized in the *Strenna*: the "joy" and the "commitments" of hope, pointing out that the practical way of "making known" is that of being "witnesses": "called to render Jesus Christ contemporary!". "In the commitment to the educa-

tion of young people to the faith," concluded the Rector Major, "we are convinced, not least by the experience of recent years, of the extraordinary importance attaching for this purpose to a concrete youth spirituality. It is evident that within youth spirituality a privileged position must be given to the spirituality of hopes."

In the morning of 29 January the practical conclusions of the Week were gathered together from the work of the various groups. Among the indications that emerged the following may be noted in particular:

- *criteria for building hope, for being men and women of hope*: see young people in a positive manner (bridging the gap that exists between their language and ours); being where the young people and our other fellow beings are to be found; spread communion and foster collaboration; live the dynamism of consecration; develop a unified pastoral approach (also as the Salesian Family);
- *daily gestures of hope*: voluntary work, solidarity, prayer, forgiveness;
- *educational processes for the founding of hope*: the path of optimism: maintain expectations as regards children and young people; the path of patience: follow up individuals in their process of

growth; the path of responsibility: help them to assume responsibilities in life (formation for the future); the path of openness to a religious sense of life: discover and help others to discover that God is alive and lives in hearts.

These are some of the indications of the rich contribution which this year's Week of Spirituality has made once again to the pilgrimage of the Salesian Family.

5.2 New Provincials

The following are brief biographical notes on the Provincials and Superiors of other Circumscriptions appointed during the plenary session of the General Council, November-December 1993.

1. *Fr Antonio Carlos ALTIERI, in the Province of SAO PAULO (Brazil).*

To succeed Fr Luiz Gonzaga Piccoli in the guidance of the Sao Paulo Province of Brazil has been appointed Fr *Antonio Carlos Altieri*.

He was born on 18 October 1951 at Sao Paulo, and made his first profession on 31 January 1971 at Pindamonhangaba where he had made his novitiate.

After studying philosophy and pedagogy, followed by practical training, he frequented the theological

course at the salesian studentate of Sao Paulo and was ordained there on 17 December 1978. He then completed his studies and obtained the Licentiate in Philosophy and Pedagogy, and also in Science.

The following years were spent as a teacher and educator. In 1982 he became a member of the Provincial Council, and from 1984 to 1992 was Rector in formation houses, first at Lorena (St Joseph) and then at the Lapa studentate of Sao Paulo. In 1992, at the end of his mandate at Lapa, he came to Rome for a specialized course at the Salesian Pontifical University, where the news reached him of his appointment as Provincial.

2. *Fr Richard AUTHIER, Superior of the Vice-province of EASTERN CANADA.*

Fr Richard Authier has been confirmed in office for a further six years as Superior of the Vice-province of Eastern Canada.

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

The following years were a period

of educational and pastoral experience, further enriched by the year's course in ongoing formation at Berkeley in which he took part.

As a consequence of the salesian experience he had gained, in 1984 he was appointed director of novices, and shortly afterwards Rector of the house of novitiate at Sherbrooke. Three years later, in 1987, he was appointed Superior of the newly erected Vice-province, an office in which the Rector Major with his Council has now confirmed him for a second six-year period.

3. *Fr Stjepan BOLKOVAC, in the Province of CROATIA.*

Fr Stjepan Bolkovac has been appointed to succeed Fr Mirko Barbaric in the animation and guidance of the Province of Croatia.

He was born at Suhopolje, in the diocese of Zagreb (Croatia), on 8 April 1948, and later made his novitiate at Krisevci, where he also made his first profession on 16 August 1966.

After philosophical studies and practical training he was able to go to Italy where he followed the course in theology at the studentate of Castellammare di Stabia and gained the STB. On 29 June 1974 he was ordained priest in his native Zagreb.

Ordination was followed by some years of apostolic and pastoral work. In the year 1977-78 he was

provincial secretary, and then spent three years at Zagreb-Knezija, followed by an experience at Nürnberg in Germany from 1981 to 1988 in the animation of emigrants. In 1988 he was appointed Vice-provincial and Rector of the provincial house at Zagreb, and was at the same time in charge of youth pastoral work in the province.

4. *Fr Piotr BORYCZKA, Superior of the Circumscription of ZAMBIA.*

The first Superior of the "Circumscription with a Special Statute" of Zambia is *Fr Piotr Boryczka*.

Born at Smęgorzow, in the province of Cracow (Poland) on 13 June 1953, Piotr Boryczka made his novitiate at Kutno-Wozniakow, where he also made his first religious profession on 8 September 1971.

Despite the difficulties of the years during which religious life faced so many problems, he was able to study philosophy, pass through the period of practical training, and frequent the course of theology in the salesian studentate of Lad, where he was ordained priest on 10 June 1980.

Soon afterwards, when the Polish Provinces became involved in Project Africa, Fr Boryczka responded to a missionary calling and left for Zambia. There he became involved at once in apostolic work and in 1983 was entrusted with the direc-

tion of the house of Kazembe, an office he held for six years. At the end of his mandate as rector, he was appointed in 1990 Provincial Delegate for the Delegation of Zambia, which then depended on the provinces of Poland. Three years later he has now been called to guide the new Special Circumscription.

5. *Fr Valerio BREDÁ, for the Province of RECIFE (Brazil)*

Fr Orsini Linard Nuvens has been succeeded as Provincial of Recife by *Fr Valerio Breda*.

Valerio Breda was born at San Fior di Sotto, in the province of Treviso (Italy) on 24 January 1945. He frequented the salesian aspirantate of Trento and later sought admission to the novitiate at Albaré, where he also made his first profession on 16 August 1962 in the Verona Province.

In the same province he completed his studies of philosophy and practical training, before studying theology at the Pontifical Salesian Atheneum in Rome, where he gained the Licentiate in theology.

He was ordained priest on 29 June 1973 in his native San Fior di Sotto, and immediately became involved in the fields of education and pastoral work. When the Province of Verona launched its project of collaboration with the Province of Recife, with which it became "twinned", Fr Valerio made himself avail-

able and left Italy for North-Eastern Brazil. There he was one of the pioneers of the salesian work at Matriz de Camaragibe, in the diocese of Maceió, Alagoas, where he became parish priest and from 1987 also rector. In recent years he strove to become ever more inserted into the reality of the Province and the country. Now he has been appointed Provincial.

6. *Fr Stephen CHEMMALAKUZHÝ, Superior of the Vice-province of EAST-AFRICA.*

Fr Stephen Chemmalakuzhy succeeds Fr Thomas Thayil in the animation and guidance of the Vice-province of East Africa, with headquarters at Nairobi.

He was born at Nezhloor, Kerala (India) on 11 May 1952 and made his novitiate at Shillong in Northern India. In the typically missionary province of Guwahati he made his first profession on 24 May 1970 and his first salesian experiences. He studied theology in the salesian studentate of Shillong-Mawlai, and was ordained priest at Kottayam on 27 December 1979.

When a group of Indian Salesians left for Eastern Africa, in pursuance of the commitment of the Indian Provinces to Project Africa, Fr Stephen was among them. He became engaged in educational and pastoral work (1986-1991) at Iringa in Tanzania where he subsequently

became Rector. In 1988 he became a Councillor of the Vice-province.

From 1992 he had been in Rome at the UPS, specializing in the study of educational sciences. It was there that the news of his new appointment reached him.

7. *Fr Joaquim D'SOUZA, for the Province of BOMBAY (India)*

Fr Joaquim D'Souza is to be the new Provincial of Bombay, and will succeed *Fr Loddy Pires* at the end of the latter's term of office.

He was born at Parel, Bombay, on 22 March 1945, and after early studies made his novitiate at Yercaud, followed by his first profession at the same place on 24 May 1963.

After the postnovitiate and first salesian experience he went to Italy for philosophical and theological studies in Rome at the then Pontifical Salesian Atheneum, concluding his studies at Poona in India. On 19 June 1975 he was ordained priest at Matunga, Bombay.

He was soon entrusted with responsibilities for the formation of young confreres. In 1980 he was appointed Rector at Poona, Koregaon Park, and in 1984 Rector of the studentate of philosophy at Nashik. A provincial councillor since 1982, in 1988 he became Vice-Provincial and Rector of the Provincial House, carrying out both tasks with com-

petence until his appointment as Provincial. In 1990 he was a delegate to the GC23.

8. *Fr Stanislav HOCEVAR, for the Province of SLOVENIA*

Fr Stanislav Hocevar has been confirmed for a second six-year period in the guidance of the Province of Slovenia.

He was born at Jelendol in Slovenia on 12 November 1945, and first came in contact with the Salesians at the house of Skocjan. He entered the novitiate at Rijeka and there made his first religious profession on 16 August 1963.

After studying theology at Ljubljana, he was ordained priest in June 1973.

He gained his Licentiate in Theology and was before long appointed Rector of the Novitiate at Zeljmlje (1979). At the same time he became a member of the provincial council.

In 1982 he became Vice-Provincial and took part in the GC22 in 1984. Subsequently he was appointed Rector of the house at Klagenfurt in Austria, which is managed by Slovene confreres for pastoral work among their fellow countrymen. While there he was appointed Provincial of Slovenia, and the Rector Major with his Council has now confirmed him in the same office for a further six years.

9. *Fr Marcel JACQUEMOUD, for the Province of LYONS (France).*

Fr Marcel Jacquemoud has been appointed to succeed Fr Morand Wirth as Provincial of Lyons in Southern France.

He was born on 6 August 1935 at Tunis in Algeria, when that country was linked with France. He got to know the Salesians in the house of Chateau d'Aix and, as his vocation matured, made his novitiate at La Navarre, where he also made his first religious profession on 9 March 1959.

After the study of philosophy and

practical training, he followed the course of theology in the salesian studentate of Lyons, where he was ordained priest on 23 April 1966.

The years following ordination were a period of intense educational and apostolic activity. In 1975 he became Rector of the house of Lyons, Bon-Secours, a task which continued until 1983 when he was entrusted with the direction of the house of Lyons-Minimes. In 1986 he became a provincial councillor and in 1989 Vice-Provincial. From 1990 he was also Rector of the important work at Nice - Don Bosco.

5.3 S.D.B. Statistics at 31 December 1993.

Summarized figures

Isp.	Tot. 1992	Professi temporanei				Professi perpetui				Tot. Professi	Novizi	Tot. 1993
		L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P			
AFC	235	14	33	0	0	25	7	0	138	217	18	235
AFE	88	1	14	0	0	13	12	0	48	88	1	89
AFM	61	1	3	0	0	6	2	0	50	62	0	62
ANT	156	4	31	0	1	14	10	0	91	151	8	159
ABA	205	3	16	0	0	14	8	0	157	198	4	202
ABB	151	0	9	0	1	17	6	0	114	147	1	148
ACO	177	4	23	0	0	13	13	0	111	164	5	169
ALP	103	5	4	0	0	10	7	0	74	100	5	105
ARO	152	3	22	0	0	17	15	0	90	147	3	150
AUL	126	2	12	0	0	23	2	0	84	123	2	125
AUS	140	2	10	0	0	12	2	1	106	133	3	136
BEN	219	1	10	0	0	23	4	0	177	215	2	217
BES	105	4	4	0	0	9	2	0	85	104	1	105
BOL	149	10	38	0	0	15	10	0	71	144	14	158
BBH	183	2	10	0	0	23	7	0	116	158	4	162
BCG	156	2	22	0	0	24	4	0	102	154	6	160
BMA	133	6	24	0	0	18	10	0	68	126	6	132
BPA	120	1	14	0	0	10	1	0	79	105	5	110
BRE	98	1	17	0	0	14	3	0	56	91	3	94
BSP	215	1	21	0	1	33	8	0	147	211	6	217
CAE	36	0	1	0	0	5	1	0	25	32	0	32
CAM	264	12	36	0	0	26	21	0	150	245	13	258
CEP	224	5	41	0	6	8	12	1	134	207	9	216
CIL	260	4	43	0	0	21	18	0	156	242	17	259
CIN	144	1	6	0	0	36	4	0	96	143	0	143
COB	198	2	28	0	0	36	10	0	115	191	8	199
COM	169	1	30	0	0	18	12	0	97	158	8	166
CRO	91	0	7	0	0	6	4	0	68	85	5	90
ECU	250	3	25	0	0	26	10	0	168	232	11	243
FIN	208	8	43	0	0	22	13	0	117	203	12	215
FIS	171	17	65	0	0	13	6	1	62	164	21	185
FLY	165	0	5	0	0	32	3	0	121	161	0	161
FPA	234	5	11	0	0	32	3	0	181	232	1	233
GBR	153	1	9	0	0	16	3	0	115	144	0	144
GEK	181	4	15	0	0	39	3	0	113	174	1	175
GEM	297	8	15	0	0	65	9	0	186	283	2	285
GIA	143	3	25	0	0	19	2	0	93	142	8	150
HAI	44	1	13	0	0	1	2	0	27	44	9	53
INB	272	7	86	0	0	18	22	0	131	264	15	279
INC	316	3	58	0	0	37	25	0	180	303	31	334
IND	189	5	50	0	0	5	20	0	105	185	8	193
ING	303	2	78	0	0	27	21	0	163	291	15	306
INH	110	3	37	0	0	3	15	0	58	116	13	129
INK	233	3	65	0	0	7	32	0	116	223	14	237
INM	415	5	127	0	0	29	49	0	196	406	23	429
IRL	131	4	10	0	0	10	2	0	104	130	4	134
IAD	161	1	7	0	0	31	1	0	123	163	3	166
ICP	991	14	40	0	0	230	15	1	584	884	13	897
ILE	421	4	38	0	0	64	5	0	325	436	16	452
ILT	219	1	10	0	0	38	2	1	156	208	2	210
IME	330	1	24	0	0	47	5	0	243	320	6	326

Isp.	Tot. 1992	Professi temporanei				Professi perpetui				Tot. Professi	Novizi	Tot. 1993
		L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P			
IRO	300	1	17	0	0	73	3	2	230	326	1	327
ISA	87	1	4	0	0	8	2	0	66	81	0	81
ISI	347	4	14	0	0	30	6	0	271	325	2	327
IVE	299	2	23	0	0	54	7	1	195	282	7	289
IVO	238	3	13	0	0	48	4	0	169	237	0	237
KOR	73	9	24	0	0	9	5	0	25	72	7	79
MDG	0	0	14	0	0	8	4	0	26	52	4	56
MEG	213	11	47	0	0	9	8	0	130	205	16	221
MEM	219	15	63	0	0	13	10	0	106	207	14	221
MOR	155	4	30	0	1	27	2	0	99	163	8	171
OLA	84	0	1	0	0	25	0	1	56	83	0	83
PAR	103	0	22	0	0	8	6	0	62	98	4	102
PER	159	7	26	0	0	13	8	0	104	158	12	170
PLE	406	7	105	0	1	22	28	0	224	387	20	407
PLN	338	2	82	0	0	13	24	0	193	314	26	340
PLO	251	2	36	0	0	2	26	0	173	239	6	245
PLS	262	0	66	0	0	11	26	0	148	251	5	256
POR	200	5	16	0	0	51	7	1	115	195	5	200
SLK	217	5	60	0	0	12	3	0	132	212	19	231
SLO	142	1	13	0	0	16	8	0	100	138	2	140
SBA	257	0	17	0	0	40	10	0	185	252	4	256
SBI	260	5	25	0	0	58	22	0	147	257	6	263
SCO	143	3	16	0	0	9	5	2	104	139	6	145
SLE	265	8	12	0	1	68	15	0	160	264	4	268
SMA	411	10	34	0	0	101	15	0	249	409	6	415
SSE	191	2	23	0	0	31	1	0	128	185	3	188
SVA	209	6	17	0	0	32	9	0	141	205	6	211
SUE	240	1	9	0	0	50	2	0	169	231	5	236
SUO	121	3	6	0	0	27	3	0	80	119	4	123
THA	108	4	16	0	0	13	2	0	71	106	0	106
UNG	71	1	8	0	2	3	0	0	57	71	9	80
URU	149	1	21	0	0	9	3	0	109	143	3	146
VEN	241	7	29	0	0	19	10	1	166	232	16	248
VIE	98	7	20	0	0	13	36	0	30	106	8	114
UPS	126	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	114	128	0	128
RMG	90	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	70	88	0	88
EST	43	0	19	0	0	1	3	0	50	73	14	87
Tot.	17411	332	2333	0	14	2258	806	13	11126	16882	637	17519
Vesc.	86									91		91
Tot	17.497	332	2.333	0	14	2.258	806	13	11.126	16.973	637	17.610

NB - Nel 1993 hanno avuto inizio due nuove circoscrizioni: ICP, nata dalla fusione di ICE-INE-ISU, e MDG, nata col contributo delle Ispettorie IME-IRO-ISA-ISI-IVE. Questo fatto ha comportato variazioni nelle ispettorie d'Italia.

- In EST sono stati inseriti i confratelli che lavorano nei paesi dell'ex-URSS (anche se al 31-12-93 non è ancora circoscrizione autonoma): la variazione rispetto al 1992 è dovuta ai trasferimenti di confratelli

5.4 Our dead confreres (1994 – 1st list)

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

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P ACOSTA Gabriel M.	Medellín	15.03.94	86	COM
P ARNAU PRAT Sebastián	Alcoy	03.02.94	75	SVA
P AUBRY Joseph	Roma	17.02.94	78	RMG
L BAGAROTTI Edoardo	Seregno	20.12.93	89	ILE
L BARDINI Gabriele	Mogliano Veneto	05.02.94	82	IVE
P BENINTENDE Vito	Pedara	11.02.94	55	ISI
P BERGIA Battista	Torino	27.02.94	79	ICP
L BOCCOTTI Francesco	Tampa	07.03.94	83	SUE
P BOSIO Giuseppe	Campo Grande	26.01.94	74	BCG
P BRASESCO José Maria	Buenos Aires	08.02.94	91	ABA
L BROTTTO Giuseppe	Arese	14.04.93	57	ILE
P CALDAROLA Carlo	Faenza	16.02.94	85	IAD
P CAMPOS Asterio	Natal	21.01.94	77	BBH
P CASALEGNO Corrado	Torino	24.02.94	85	ICP
P CEGLAR Stanley	Hamilton	20.01.94	78	CAE
L CERIOTTI Aldo	Buenos Aires	21.02.94	71	ABA
L CHIESA José Luis	S. Juan	05.03.94	89	ACO
P CONTI Aldo	Roma	06.03.94	84	IRO
P CORTESI Mario	Sesto S. Giovanni	18.03.94	88	IAD
P CYRON Franciszek	Olesnica	06.02.94	77	PLO
P DAVERIO Luis	Bahía Blanca	07.01.94	86	ABB
P DEL FABRO Vittorio	Salta	03.02.94	75	ACO
L DEL MAZO Francisco	Caracas	15.12.93	88	VEN
L DEPLANO Giovanni	Lanusei	10.01.94	84	ISA
L DIEZ RODRIGUEZ Francisco	Santander	25.02.94	57	SBI
P DZIEKAN Piotr	Pila	04.03.94	30	PLN
P FALÇÃO SILVA Luiz	Recife	28.02.94	68	BRE
P FALKA József	Mogyoród	06.02.94	76	UNG
P FEDERICI Roberto	Civitanova Marche	24.02.94	88	IAD
L FERRARIS Ernesto	Shillong	30.12.93	95	ING
P FIORI Giuseppe	Cagliari	23.12.93	86	ISA
P GAIDA Leo	Helenenberg	16.01.94	87	GEK
L GAMEZ Jacinto	Bucaramanga	24.09.93	89	COB
P GANCEDO IBARRONDO Eduardo	Bejar	13.01.94	84	SMA
P GHISOLFI Alessandro	Lombriasco	20.02.94	78	ICP
P GIAROLA Ottavio	Torino	27.02.94	88	ICP
P GROCHALSKI Leon	Łódź	19.02.94	61	PLN

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P GUERRIERO Antonio	Quito	23.12.93	80	ECU
P KOLLER Franz Xaver	Beromünster (Svizzera)	01.03.94	95	GEM
P KREYENBÜHL Vincenzo	Zurigo (Svizzera)	23.12.93	86	ILE
P LAGORIO Edoardo	Manaus	10.02.94	82	BMA
L MALDONADO David	San José	09.11.93	64	URU
P MARINELLI Marino	Civitanova Marche	13.03.94	81	IAD
P MARKIEL Karol	Wryy	26.11.93	84	PLS
P MASSARO Pasquale	Roma	07.01.94	60	IME
P MAZZOLENI Renato	Torino	08.01.94	70	ICP
P MIKLIĆ Jozef	Bologna	22.03.94	78	ILE
P NAVARRO SELVA Manuel	Córdoba	03.02.94	77	ACO
L NOVANSKY Ladislao	Roma	19.02.94	85	IRO
P OBERTI German	Montevideo	16.02.94	60	URU
P PALACIOS DAVILA Fabián	Quito	20.02.94	33	ECU
P PANDOLFI Antonio	Roma	22.02.94	88	IRO
P PAPWORTH Adrian	Heathcote NSW	19.03.94	74	AUL
P PECIÑA IRIARTE José Maria	Barcelona	10.03.94	62	SBA
P POMATI Pietro	Hong Kong	27.03.94	87	CIN
L PORRO Angelo	Nazareth	23.02.94	87	MOR
L RONCO Giorgio	Torino	26.02.94	81	ICP
L SABOGAL Eduardo	Santafé de Bogotá	20.02.93	82	COB
P SARTORI Ottorino	Torino	18.03.94	80	ICP
P SCARONI Orfeo	Bologna	09.02.94	74	ILE
P SIMONETTO Vincenzo	Roma	25.02.94	89	IRO
P SOBCZYNSKI Władysław	Elbląg	30.11.93	59	PLE
P SPILLARE Antonio	Santiago de Chile	07.12.93	89	CIL
P TIMMERMANNS Johann	Hong Kong	14.03.94	77	CIN
P TONEGUZZO Ruggero	Negrar (VR)	06.03.94	78	IVO
P TÓTH Jozef Zoltán	Roznava	11.02.94	79	SLK
P TRICERRI Mario	Torino	15.01.94	82	ICP
P TRISOTTO Nelo	São Paulo	08.03.94	83	BSP
L VALLEJOS Maximiliano	Santafé de Bogotá	27.01.94	77	COB
P Van ALPHEN Petrus Arnoldus	Nijmegen	20.02.94	81	OLA
P Van GISBERGEN Piet	Vremde	17.02.94	77	BEN
P VANGANSEWINKEL Jacques	Bonheiden (Belgio)	06.03.94	79	AFC
P VILASECA UBACH Joaquim	Barcelona	13.01.94	51	SBA
P WAHL Adan	Mérida	19.12.93	88	VEN
P WONG Yung Francis	Hong Kong	19.03.94	83	CIN
L ZAGNI Gino	Genova	26.02.94	64	ILT
P ZEITLHOFFER Franz	Wien	27.01.94	79	AUS

