



acts

of the general council

year LXXVI january-march 1995

N. 351

**official organ
of animation
and communication
for the
salesian congregation**

**Roma
Direzione Generale
Opere Don Bosco**

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

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

The Synod on Consecrated Life

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Rome, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
- 1994

My dear confreres,

Fraternal greetings to you from myself and from the members of the General Council, especially from Fr Martin McPake who has unfortunately been in poor health for some time; he is recommending himself in a particular way to the intercession of Don Rua; let us accompany him in our own prayers.

As you know already, the services rendered by the General Council in these months include a number of Team Visits; on the one hand these reveal the enormous amount of good that has been promoted in the Congregation since the last General Chapter (the GC23), and on the other they disclose certain lacunas or unfinished matters which oblige us in our planning to keep in mind the indispensable urgency of the evangelization of the young. Fortunately the theme of the GC24 in no

way deflects us from the obligations of such a mission but rather stimulates us to involve numerous other complementary forces in the same sense.

We are already at the beginning of the new year of 1995, a year which will be characterized for us by the duties of preparation for the GC24; it will set the Congregation on the way to the grandiose and prophetic bimillenary commemoration of the incarnation of the Word and will carry Don Bosco's charism into the third millennium of the faith.

The recent Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente* enables us to understand the greatness of the vision of faith of John Paul II and the extraordinary commitment of the Church in the preparation of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000.

The Apostolic Letter speaks of two phases of preparation. The first, which we could call "pre-preparatory", lasts until 1996. The celebration of our GC24 is therefore included in this phase, and it is well to keep this point in mind as we plan for the future. The preparation of the Chapter ('95) and its realization ('96) will make us feel our position as leaders in the effort to incorporate among the fruits of the Great Jubilee Don Bosco's charism, authentically renewed and rendered contemporary in its ability to respond to the challenges of the times.

"The future of the world and the Church", writes the Pope, "belongs to the younger generation, to those who, born in this century, will reach maturity in the next, the first century of the new millennium. *Christ expects great things from young people*"!.¹ Our Founder's apostolic plan is directed entirely to the young and is intrinsically permeated by the virtue of hope. The General Chapters of the period following Vatican II have prompted us to be in an ever more practical sense "missionaries of the young".

¹ TMA 58

Let us ask our Blessed Lady, who is at the centre of the great event of the year 2000, to accompany us in the work of the coming Provincial Chapters and in the other initiatives in preparation for what will be the last General Chapter of the present century.

A Church and family event of particular significance for our efforts at renewal took place at Catania on 5 November last: the beatification by the Holy Father Pope John Paul II of Sister Maddalena Catarina Morano, one of our consecrated sisters who contributes as a member of our Family to making the genuine salesian spirit of Don Bosco shine out in the Church. If we turn to her to read her spiritual testimony, portrayed in a laborious existence of apostolic charity, it will help us to make practical and efficacious resolutions to improve our own salesian qualities.

In this great commitment of charismatic identification we are impelled in a particular manner by the recent Synod of Bishops (October '94), and for this reason I invite you, in this circular, to consider some of its stimulating aspects.

It is a Synod which certainly finds a place – if we look forward to the Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father which we expect to follow it in the near future – in the pre-preparatory phase of the Great Jubilee. Let us make good use of its content and guidelines to intensify and improve our own process of renewal.

The Synodal Assembly with most members

The recent Ordinary Synod, the ninth, broke the record for the number of participants: more than

250 "Synodal Fathers" (all Bishops with some priests who are religious Superiors, 74 "auditors" (including 53 women) invited by the Holy Father, 20 "experts" (collaborators of the Secretary General) and ten or so observers from non-Catholic Churches: nearly 350 members in all.

As is well known, the theme was "Consecrated life", which is wider than "Religious life"; the contributions made in the preparatory phase by all the Churches were contained in a valuable "Working Document" which frequently received much praise and provided a guide for the interventions in the assembly and the fruitful exploratory dialogue in the 14 language groups and the commission for the drawing up of the Synod's Message. 55 Institutes of men were represented and 53 of women.

Salesians among the "Synodal Fathers" included two Cardinals (Castillo and Javierre), eight Bishops (Charles Bo, Hector Lopez, Juan Mata, Basilio Mwe, Zacarias Ortiz, Oscar Rodriguez, Tito Solari, Ignazio Velasco), and also the Rector Major; among the auditors was the Provincial of Venezuela, Fr Jose Divasson; and among the experts were Fr Vittorio Gambino and Sister Enrica Rosanna FMA. Apart from the daily work, we were able to gather together for a family supper in our Vatican community, always so hospitable, and for a happy evening of songs and lively conversation that filled us with a feeling of joy and hope that still remains in our hearts: it was a kind of charismatic pause during the Synod itself!

In addition to the contributions made by each one in the language groups, all our confreres made interventions in the general assembly with particular reference to their countries of origin, and all reflecting the spirit of Don Bosco. The only one

unable to intervene was Mgr Charles Bo, whose arrival had been greatly delayed by difficulties in obtaining permission to make the journey.

The Holy Father was faithfully present each day at the assemblies, displaying interest and good humour.

A particularly striking and at the same time unobtrusive presence was that of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, always attentive and always in prayer; she read in the assembly a moving intervention which made everyone think of the knack of women in witnessing to the value of religious consecration for the Church and equally for the world.

John Paul II, leaning on a stick, was a centre of communion and also of happiness with his good humour; his affability and sense of dialogue led him to make contact with everyone, inviting to lunch or supper each day small groups of eight or ten persons, and bringing all together on the final day for a big lunch in common.

It must be said that the very celebration of the Synod, with its life in common, the cordial environment, the meetings, dialogue and discussions, the atmosphere of convergence in faith despite the variety of places of origin, constitutes an invaluable experience of communion in the Church and a positive manifestation of the wise pastoral preoccupations of the Pope and the Bishops. It is certainly a grace of God to have been able to take an active part in an event of communion which can be considered unique in the world.

The ecclesial aspect in the formulation of the theme

In the Congregation we have already made together some useful reflections² on the importance of this Synod and on the nature of its conclusions. On reading once again the circular of '92 I am struck by its closeness to what the Synod actually did.

As we said then, this Episcopal Assembly is not on a par with a General Chapter for each individual Institute; the Bishops did not start out from the standpoint of the specific nature of charisms but rather from the overall and vital significance that all of them together have in the Church. We wrote: "In a certain way we are invited to carry out a process which is the reverse of that of the recent General Chapters: there our concern was to start from the promptings of the Council and so define the charisma left us by the Founder, i.e. we moved from the common patrimony of the Council to the specific nature of our own characteristics; here, on the other hand, we shall have to start from the experience of our charismatic identity so as to bring light and deeper understanding to common values of an ecclesial nature, i.e. we have to pass from the specific nature of our own characteristics to the vital common patrimony".³

³ ACG 342 p. 10

For this reason it was not to be expected that the Synod, which is primarily an episcopal collegial event of a *specifically pastoral character for the whole Church*, would formulate a technical definition of consecrated life, a clear statement of its constitutive elements being sufficient, nor provide a solution to specific problems proper to the various Institutes, nor yet censure possible errors and deviations of groups of consecrated persons in the period

following the Council, but rather affirm in depth its ecclesial dimension, its linkage with holiness, its role of protagonism in the New Evangelization, its great value as a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church and the world with a view to the future: it would rather examine the great common values, but at the same time avoid the danger of a dull and pedestrian generalization.

"We could say", we wrote, "that we expect as a global fruit not so much a solution to specific problems of this or that group, but rather a strong relaunching of consecrated life in its essential and vital aspects. Consecrated life, in fact, through the fruitful action of the Holy Spirit in the Founders and Foundresses through the centuries, is called to manifest the richness of the mystery of Christ which makes to shine out in the Church (his Body in history) the multiform grace of Christ its Head".⁴

⁴ ACG 342 p. 40

It is interesting to read over again that circular today; it would give the impression of having been written *after* the celebration of the Synod; I can tell you in confidence that during the Synod's work, we Salesians felt ourselves in happy harmony with the direction taken by the assembly, and positively stimulated to continue along the path we had undertaken, with renewed energy and deep gratitude to the Holy Spirit who has guided us in our work of post-conciliar renewal.

The Synod has given us cause to rejoice and has made us feel that we are on the right path, even though it invites us at the same time to intensify our efforts at renewal so as to attain the various objectives that still remain open.

We are asked to hear in the Synod the voice of the Episcopacy, concerned to provide sound guidance for the People of God. After the synodal re-

flections on the Laity in the Church,⁵ and on the priestly ministry⁶, the Bishops with the Pope have now examined more deeply the nature and role of consecrated life. Their considerations highlight the ecclesial nature of charisms and the responsibility of service which they themselves have towards consecrated life, considered as a precious gift of the Holy Spirit to all the People of God.

The standpoint from which the Bishops consider consecrated life is, in a certain sense, anterior to that followed by each Institute in its own regard, giving it legitimacy and enrichment by ensuring a better overall, unitary and integral vision.

It gives us strength and encouragement to know that the Pastors consider it their duty to give privileged ministerial service to consecrated life: "de re nostra agitur" ("consecrated life concerns us directly") said Cardinal Hume, the General Rapporteur, in his first address at the beginning of the work, and he dedicated the entire first part of his report to an explanation of what he meant by this. He put forward a series of six verbs which he then went on to develop: "It is the duty of the Episcopate in communion with the Roman Pontiff, and of every Bishop in his respective diocese, to *recognize, appreciate, discern, protect, promote and harmonize*" consecrated life.

"The Bishop's role as regards consecrated life thus extends beyond pastoral planning. He is also the shepherd and guardian of consecrated persons and of the gift of consecrated life, in different ways, depending on whether the Institutes concerned are of pontifical or diocesan rite, or are exempt, but always *de re nostra agitur!*" And he insisted: "The gift of consecrated life given to the Church is entrusted therefore to our pastoral care and charity".⁷

⁵ Exhortation *Christifideles laici*

⁶ Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*

⁷ HUME, *Relatio ante disceptationem* 4

Hence, declared Card. Hume, the purpose and objectives of this Synod must be:

- to make the consecrated life understood, appreciated and welcomed by the whole Church;
- to promote it in its true theological, ecclesial, apostolic and missionary nature;
- to facilitate its qualitative and quantitative expansion.

Certainly interventions were heard in the assembly referring to some negative aspects experienced here and there in uneasy or agitated groups of consecrated persons. We may think, for example, of certain forms of "pastoral parallelism", of attitudes that prescind from the magisterium of the Pope and the Bishops, of the influence of fashionable ideologies, imprudence in the planning of formation, secular modes of life-style, abuse of freedom in the liturgy, cowardice in the exercise of authority, spiritual superficiality with an accompanying falling off in contemplation, asceticism and religious discipline. But it must be recognized that such interventions did not reflect the tone of the observations as a whole, which remained solidly linked to the three above-mentioned objectives to help consecrated life at a time of renewal.

The intimate nature of consecrated life

The Message of the Synod has emphasized very clearly that "an important distinction appeared in the discussions: that between consecrated life as such, in its theological dimension, and the institutional forms it has assumed across the centuries. Consecrated life as such is permanent; it will always grace the Church. Institutional forms can

be transitory, without guarantees of lasting indefinitely”.

This means that consecrated life must be considered not simply as a reality present *in* the Church but, of their nature, as a constituent element *of* the Church. This viewpoint links consecrated life constitutionally with the very mystery of Christ, with the lifestyle of Mary and of the Apostles. It is not therefore an ecclesial reality that began simply with monasticism; the latter is in fact an “institutional form” of consecrated life, even though it has been meritorious since the early centuries.

In this way we can better understand how consecration through the evangelical counsels (by vows or other ecclesial bonds) is vitally rooted in Baptism, the sacrament which incorporates directly in Christ; it has its source in him.

Hence arises a new vision of the manner in which we must direct in depth our renewal in fidelity to the first origins: we must refer back directly to the source which is the mystery of Christ. It was not the Founders who invented consecrated life: they received it from the living tradition of the Church; they then clothed it in a new and original plan for participating in the Lord’s mission.

Such a theological view of consecrated life takes us directly into the Gospel; it makes us think of our Founder, not so much in the guise of a modern monk but rather as a tireless collaborator with the successors of the Apostles, and shapes our search for models to contemplate and to follow to the very thresholds of Easter and Pentecost.

By our religious profession we undertake to reproduce the style of life to which Christ bore witness, obedient poor and chaste, in which Mary shared so splendidly, a style which was passed on

to the Apostles and flourished in the first Christian community ("one heart and one soul"). In our profession we become inserted in the very mystery of Christ and the intimate nature of the Church, and we feel impelled to avoid defrauding those who see us as "signs and bearers" of God's love.

From this derives the urgency of concentrating renewal in what brings us more closely to Christ, especially in making the Eucharist the daily centre of the interior life of individuals and community, recalling the words of the Gospel: "The disciples recognized Jesus the Lord in the breaking of bread".⁸

⁸ *Lc* 24, 35

Card. Baum emphasized that together with the Eucharist special care deserves to be given, as a commitment to contact with Christ, to the frequenting of the sacrament of reconciliation through which we see reflected in him our own poor countenance, not always clean because of so much dust that gathers during our daily life; this gives realism to the penitential dimension and the indispensability of asceticism and of living in accordance with religious discipline in line with the Rule that has been professed.

The Synodal Fathers discussed the precise significance of some frequently used terms, like "charism", "consecration", "sacramentality", "profession", but without arriving at any unanimity. The request was made⁹ that the clarification of such terms be entrusted to a commission of experts before the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation.

⁹ cf *Propositio* 3^a D

Amongst us in the Congregation the use of these very significant terms has long been accepted without any problems, as can be seen from the circular of '92.¹⁰

¹⁰ ACG 342

Importance of monasticism

The theological consideration of consecrated life in itself makes precise its authentic nature, and guides us in our search for its first historical model. Certainly the relationship which is customarily drawn between all forms of religious life and monasticism needs to be carefully reconsidered. It is not a question of depriving this classic form of "religious life" of its historical importance and objective influence. There is no doubt that monasticism offers a well tried example of what a concrete Rule of Life should be in its essentials.

In the Synod there was a discrete monastic representation which offered interventions of great worth; there were monks from East and West, and some Orthodox monks as well. We were able to appreciate the extraordinary nature of their witness of consecration and their efficacious evangelizing activity through the centuries, as well as admire the deep aspects of their life style.

Some of the Synodal Fathers belonging to forms of apostolic life had even feared that the weight of these monastic values might upset the Synod's overall significance. In reality the contribution of the monks turned out to be most enriching, making it clear that the Rules of Life of the various Institutes of Religious Life had, in fact, a particular linkage with the strong values and great traditions of monastic life. Thus, even in the Synod's Message a paragraph is dedicated to eastern monasticism: "The desert Fathers and the Eastern monks developed the monastic spirituality which then spread to the West. It is nourished by *lectio divina*, liturgy and unceasing prayer; and it is lived in the charity

¹¹ *Message* VII

of common life, in conversion of heart, flight from the world, silence, fasts and long vigils. Eremitical life still flourishes around monasteries. This spiritual treasury has forged the culture of nearby peoples and, at the same time, has been inspired by it".¹¹

Rightly is it stated in one of the *Propositiones* (n. 6) that those elements are to be held in high esteem which stem from the monasticism of the oriental Churches, i.e.: imitation of the kenosis of the Word, which constitutes the root of eastern monasticism; transformation to the image of God, or deification; renunciation; vigilance; compunction; tranquility; the total oblation of self and all that pertains to self in a perfect holocaust".

It is interesting to note that in the East and among the Orthodox the monastic life is the only form of religious life to have existed. There is found a secular practice of the radical nature of the following of Christ; there also is a special capacity for ecumenical dialogue between different monasteries; there too is a great possibility of influencing the whole local Church, not least because it was the custom to select the members of the hierarchy from among the best monks.

We, in our consecrated apostolic life, look in the first place to apostolic origins, but we cannot fail to learn from the monastic life the sense of contemplative listening, the concrete demands of kenosis, the practice of vigilance, the commitment to communal life, with the vital role of authority and the style of total self-oblation; we need to give new value to the ascetical dimension in individuals and communities: we must, as we recalled in an earlier circular, "be on the watch with robes hitched up and lamps alight"! ¹²

¹² cf ACG 348

The consecrated woman

Consecrated women are much more numerous in the Church than consecrated men; they make up some 72.5 per cent of the total. There are more than 3,000 female Institutes of pontifical or diocesan rite. And it must be noted among the signs of the times at the present day that the advancement of women has come much to the fore, even though marked in certain environments by deviant forms of feminism. It is significant, therefore, that the Synod spent a considerable time in reflecting on the dignity of the consecrated woman, emphasizing primarily the many ways in which she is able to manifest to people in general the motherly countenance of the Church, but also recognizing that she should have a more adequate role in ecclesial responsibilities.

Rightly the Synod's Message declares: "Consecrated women should participate more in the Church's consultations and decision-making, as situations require. Their active participation in the Synod has enriched our reflection on consecrated life and, in particular, on the dignity of consecrated women and their collaboration in the mission of the Church".

For the first time in a Synod it was possible for the "auditors", men and women (including some representatives of Protestant Churches) to speak for six minutes. The assembly heard some wonderful testimonies from women auditors, some of them expressing the hope that they might have more adequate responsibility, but the majority manifesting their special interior disposition of heart and heroic sensitivity in the service of the needy. Particularly moving was an intervention in

the form of an "audience" (the specialized exposition of a theme for the space of 15-20 minutes) granted to Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

In her intervention, Sister Stephanie-Marie Boullanger pointed out that "the sensitivity (of consecrated women) to the realities of creation, their innate sense of life, their sense of listening, their respect for the person, for dialogue, allow them to establish authentic human relations and to be an instrument of communion". The Bishop of Bordeaux recalled that consecrated women have the common charism of femininity directed towards Christ for the fertility of the Church; their consecration, he said, "sustains the consecration of all the members of the People of God".

Feminine evangelical witness, contemplative ability, intuition and delicacy, facility in dialogue and the courage to respond to the most demanding challenges, constitute one of the most significant and important aspects of the People of God. It is true, recalled Sister Boullanger, that female religious life down the centuries has generally relied heavily on men, although since the Second Vatican Council a certain number of doors have been opened.

In the Church too at the present day the signs of the times require a revision of the situation, acknowledging the dignity and feminine richness proper to consecrated women and giving them greater trust and space for responsibility. One of the fruits of the Synod will certainly be to open the Church to this new element of the times with more conviction and concrete application.

All this has made me think of our responsibilities and the manner of our animation in the Salesian Family. In the latter there are various groups of

consecrated women – we think particularly of the FMA. After Vatican II the importance of their proper autonomy has been more understood. This requires in them a growth in responsibility and in us an understanding of the conciliar ecclesiology and our conversion to it.

It is a question of a deep change of mentality, both for them and for us, something which it is not always easy to bring about with speed and truth.

The problem can be stated briefly as follows: an inadequate autonomy could obscure communion, which is the most important aspect. Autonomy, in fact, is not the final goal; it is an intermediate objective at which one aims so as to reach more securely the ultimate end, which is precisely *Communion: just and proper autonomy in view of a more authentic communion!* A communion which is not only the broad ecclesial communion but is centred for us in the common charism left to us by Don Bosco as a precious gift to the Church for the evangelization of the young, especially among the poor and the ordinary people.

The Synod should prompt us to take up with more intelligence and efficacy the attainment of this *Family communion*.

I would like to recall what I wrote to Mother Ersilia Canta on the occasion of the centenary of the death of Mother Mazzarello: “If we consider the profound significance in Revelation of the complementarity of man-woman, a spiritual family so composed will seem more perfect... (In fact), in the first of the great spiritual families, St Augustine’s (unnamed) sister and her companions were responsible for giving a feminine slant to the Augustinian Rule. Then there were St Benedict and St Scholastica, St Francis and St Clare, and others. Feminine

complementarity is a sign of the peculiar plenitude and importance of the charism, of long life and fruitfulness and of abundant contribution to the mission of the Church.

On this assumption it will mean that the feminine contribution of Mary Domenica Mazzarello and her spirit of Mornese to the salesian charism has only made a beginning in the past: the future must see its real growth".¹³

¹³ ACG 301, p. 70

The full dignity of Religious "Brothers"

In connection with male consecrated life, various interventions referred to the figure of the so-called religious "brother";¹⁴ in one of the "auditions", in fact, Bro. Pablo Basterrechea, ex-Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, presented specifically "the vocation of the Brother in lay, clerical or mixed Congregations".

¹⁴ N.B. This the term used by the Synod Fathers to avoid the ambiguous terminology of "lay" institutes and consecrated "lay" persons; cf. *Propositio* 8

The argument is one which served to throw light on the correct manner of understanding the proper nature of consecrated life. In many environments in fact (and even among the Pastors) there is frequently to be found a superficial concept of male consecrated life; it is identified with that of the monk or the religious-priest, and readily relegates the "brother" to a lower level, forgetting the source, dignity and vitality of consecrated life as such for everyone. Concentrating attention on the figure of the "Brother" meant taking seriously the fact that all consecrated life is rooted in baptism: the great dignity of all through sharing in a particular way in the priestly, prophetic and regal attributes of Christ. This is the surpassing result of Christian initiation (through Baptism and Confir-

mation) intensified by the new charismatic consecration through the profession of the evangelical counsels.

From here take their rise the specific spiritual endowments for the requirements of the mission of each one, including the ministerial mission of the priest further enriched by the graces of ordination. And so insistence was laid on the indispensability of a deep and integral formation for all in the dignity and responsibility common to all consecrated persons.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that no mention was made in the Synod of the delicate and complex problems associated with the *religious-priest*. Maybe the time is not yet ripe, and there is need for prior doctrinal research at a deeper level. But the fact that there exist properly so-called "clerical" Institutes (i.e. linked in a characteristic form with the ministerial priesthood, as the Jesuits for instance), in which this aspect is a constituent of their specific character and of the particular kind of mission they have to carry out, has led at least to the fact that one cannot lump together the Brothers of all Institutes for a possible revision.

Various Synodal Fathers, especially those of the Franciscan Institutes, insisted on the aspect of the so-called "juridical equality" of the Brothers as regards the exercise of authority. Some more precise statements were made however (and I myself sent in a written intervention in this connection) to clarify what exactly was being asked for as regards the future, in view of the specific nature of each charism.

Along this line, among the *Propositiones* to be presented to the Holy Father there is one (n. 10) which asks in the first place for the official recogni-

tion of some male Institutes that could be called "mixed" (of which nothing is said at present in can. 588 of the Code). In them should be clear the will of the Founder who did not see the difference between "priests" and "non-priests" as influencing the particular characteristics of the Institute; in such Institutes, through the deliberation of their own General Chapters, the exercise of authority could be open at all levels to every kind of member. (We now await the response, which we may believe will be positive, approved by the Holy Father).

What is important indeed in the whole of this problem is the full dignity, the integral formation, the indispensability and the corresponding role of responsibility of the figure of the Brother, in fidelity to the Founder and the specific characteristics of his charism.

From this standpoint the importance of these specific traits of every charism becomes clear. The type of mission according to the Founder's plan should be of concern to all members: each one enters the Institute to collaborate with all his strength – even though in different and complementary ways – in the realization of the specific mission common to all.

Our Constitutions give us an authoritative presentation of the specific work done in this regard in the great Chapters that have followed Vatican II. It is a matter of perceiving and understanding the unique nature and the excellence of a pastoral work for the young which gathers under the primacy of pastoral charity a kind of evangelization of youth which incorporates also human advancement and culture: always with a pastoral intent.

Insertion in the particular Church

In the Synodal Message the Bishops state: "Among several difficulties to which we have given our fraternal attention is the need for communities of consecrated life and their members to integrate themselves into their particular Churches".¹⁵

¹⁵ Message V

It is a fact that the ecclesiology of Vatican II has fostered the importance of the particular or local Church; it is also a fact that unfortunately "exempt" Institutions have not always taken up with generosity and in harmony with their particular charism their practical sharing of responsibility in local pastoral work. And the Bishops too have not always considered Institutes of consecrated life as true charisms for their local Church.

The document *Mutuae relationes* (n. 22) had already emphasized the renewal brought by the Council to the concept of "exemption".

It is in this effort at genuine insertion that is realized in a practical manner the "*sentire cum ecclesia*", in fidelity to the teaching of the Pope and the Bishops, in solidarity of commitment for the New Evangelization, in a working communion around the Bishop with the clergy, laity and other consecrated persons of the locality.

Apostolic attention to the geographical area in which their particular mission is carried out prompts both pastors and faithful to consider with greater interest the various charisms as valuable gifts for the Church.

The Synodal *Propositio* 29,2 emphasizes the importance for consecrated persons of a deeper knowledge of the theology of the particular Church so as to place their specific charism at its service,

and for the Bishops, clergy and laity, the urgent need to truly know and esteem groups of consecrated life so as to give them space in the pastoral projects and plans of action of the local Church.

In this context the efficient functioning of a "mixed commission" between Bishops and Major Superiors is recommended, and also the mutual exchange of delegates between Bishops Conferences and those of Religious Superiors.

In our own case the commitment to such insertion makes us think also of the greater practical communion which we ought to foster in an area where different groups of the Salesian Family may be present.

Commitment in the mission extends beyond individual works and prompts us not only to form lay collaborators, but also and especially to be able to create new initiatives with an enterprise particularly sensitive to the needs of the local Church.

A lived insertion of this kind will witness to the advantageous inclusion of the universal Church in the particular Church, as is said in the document *Mutuae relationes*: "The Bishops certainly acknowledge and greatly appreciate the specific help given to the particular Churches by these religious. They will see in their exemption an expression of the pastoral concern which unites them closely with the Supreme Pontiff for the universal care of all the people".¹⁶

¹⁶ MR 22

Challenges of the New Evangelization

In the Synod there was a marked emphasis on the "mission" in relationship with present-day chal-

lenges and the urgent need for new or renewed forms of apostolate.

In this sense consecrated persons are asked in the first place to analyze the challenges from a theological standpoint. It is not sufficient, though it is certainly useful, to describe from a sociological point of view the various situations of novelty, injustice or urgency.

The challenges are not simply a matter of statistics, but must be considered as interventions of God, who uses such signs to indicate particular needs to the various charisms. There is need for a *pedagogy of the signs of the times*, already suggested by the Council, which reveal in factual situations the voice of the Lord leading to fresh contemporary likenesses of the Areopagus.

It was the Holy Spirit himself who guided the Founders in such a sense, and with trust in the Spirit it will be well to cultivate a certain boldness in creativity.

The Synodal Fathers also proposed a certain criteriology as an opportune instrument for the discernment of challenges. It included the following main points:

- a clear awareness of the challenges posed by the Spirit to the Church's mission;
- a circumspect determination of priorities to be observed in meeting them;
- an adequate competence, in dynamic fidelity to the Founder's charism;
- sincere communion with other ecclesial workers in the same field;
- careful consideration of men of good will dedicated to the renewal of society.

In addition to the *pedagogy of signs*, the New Evangelization presupposes some other important

demands associated with a change of mentality.

In the first place it must be said that even in the so-called "first evangelization" there is need for a truly "new" mentality adapted, of course, to different cultures; even in the first evangelization, the concept of "new evangelization" applies today. Among the elements of this mentality emphasis was given in the Synod to some particularly relevant aspects.

First among them is the effort at *inculturation*, which seeks to perceive and promote the "seeds of the Word" in the different cultures and at the same time display the shrewdness and critical courage to single out and correct eventual deviations, some of them going back for centuries, which will surely arise.

Moreover "the Synod fervently desires that interest in both *ecumenical and interreligious dialogue* should grow, and asks consecrated persons in their different countries to develop this interest".¹⁷

And then there is the priority to be given to educative competence, which reaches to the heart of every culture, linking evangelization with human advancement. In one of the *Propositiones* the Synodal Father recommend the *apostolate of education*, recalling to this priority the Institutes which have this kind of charism and the need to prepare for it also a large number of lay people. The Synod recognizes the importance and relevance of the Catholic school, and of Catholic Faculties and Universities, without overlooking initiatives and commitments that extend beyond purely formal education.¹⁸

An area calling for ever greater competence is that of *social communication*¹⁹ in harmony and collaboration with the local Church, and with the

¹⁷ Message VIII

¹⁸ *Propositio* 41

¹⁹ *Propositio* 44

concern to prepare a greater number of competent workers in this field.

Special insistence was given to the *mission 'ad gentes'* which is the crowning point of all evangelization and which has seen, and continues to see, Institutes of consecrated life in the front rank with heroic generosity, not only those specifically dedicated to the missions but also all the others who realize with a missionary heart their life of prayer and work, as St Teresa of Lisieux has shown in so eminent a manner.

Urgent priority of life in the Spirit

In the circular of '92 to which we have already referred we spoke of the "great open horizons" and we placed in the forefront "life in the Spirit"; and to the question 'what can we expect from the Synod?' we replied that we hoped for renewed presence of the mystery of Christ in the world, by intensifying the commitment to vanquish that dangerous spiritual superficiality which does such harm to the vitality of the charism. The Synod has indeed proclaimed for all consecrated persons the urgent priority of this life in the Spirit.

Card. Hume, in his first address to the assembly, declared that "the first great challenge to consecrated life concerns *spirituality*, precisely because it is the heart of such life, indicates its primary contribution to the Church and is the source of apostolic vigour. It points to a personal relationship with Christ through discipleship, the primacy given to God through consecration and openness to the Spirit's action. It is expressed in contemplation, prayer, listening to the Word of God, union with

²⁰ *Relatio ante disceptationem* 19

God, integration of the various dimensions of personal and community life, the faithful and joyful observance of the vows".²⁰

Every consecrated life is rooted in spirituality and can never prescind from it; and the peculiar type of its own spirituality is important also for many others.

Everywhere to some extent, even in other religions and in widely differing ways of seeking after what is sacred, the theme of spirituality appears nowadays as one of the most important frontiers of the mission itself.

The fact that the Synod has emphasized the distinction between the theological nature of consecrated life and its institutional forms in the world, serves to accent ever more clearly the centrality of Christ's mystery and the sharing in its holiness.

The practice of the evangelical counsels needs to be related to a deep and daily personal and communal friendship with Christ so as to become truly signs and bearers of his love. The spirituality of every consecrated life, though differentiated by numerous charisms, consists in being able to bear witness to a lifestyle which makes visible, here and now, the style of life of the obedient, poor and chaste Christ; a style which is intimately linked with, or rather stems from, the deep dynamic elements of the *divine sonship* which fills the consecrated person with the absoluteness of God.

The *Propositiones* offered to the Pope refer at length to this vital theme which is considered the most significant element of consecration. They emphasize the importance of ensuring the primacy of this aspect in formation, adapting a deeper study of the individual evangelical counsels also to the innovations and cultural differences now in process of

evolution. They also make more specific some of the principal means to be followed in this regard; they are:

- the centrality of the celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours;
- frequent use of the sacrament of reconciliation and of the revision of life;
- return to the sources of the Gospel and the spirit of the Founder;
- the "lectio divina" in listening to the Word of God;
- the ability to communicate to the faithful the riches of the mystery of Christ.²¹

²¹ *Propositio* 15, B

The daily effort to intensify this exercise of "life in the Spirit" lead us to emphasize the pneumatological aspect of every spirituality. There is need to rediscover the mission of the Person-Gift of the Trinity which is the protagonist of consecration and is present to bring us to Christ, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and in Him to lead us to the Father. The Spirit is the soul of the renewal of every spirituality; his mysterious presence and action, begun in the event of consecration on the occasion of the profession of the evangelical counsels, leads to an intimate personal and community relationship with Christ, the Friend and Lord. The reciprocal nature of friendship with Christ matures the conversion of mentality and of life which makes us special witnesses to the sanctity of the Church in the apostolic sphere traced out by the Founder.

Intimacy with the Holy Spirit, who is Love, and docility to his inspirations, or in other words the spiritual heart-beating expressive of our whole life, leads us to the origins of both the mystery of the Incarnation and of the charism of the Founder; it reminds us that it was precisely in the Spirit that be-

gan Mary's role as mother and model of the Church; it reminds us that holiness in the Church is the work of the Holy Spirit; He it is, therefore, who permeates and guides consecrated persons in leavening the mission of all the People of God.²²

²² N.B. To read again the encyclical *Dominum et vivificantem* would be time well spent.

This primacy of life in the Spirit, which is so urgent at the present day, leads also to the making of consecrated life a dynamic centre for the diffusion of spirituality. In the address already quoted Card. Hume declared explicitly that "this is a field to be carefully cultivated, sometimes to be sowed with farsightedness. Would it not be advantageous to increase the number of spirituality schools, where not only doctrine is taught but priority is given to initiation and experience? The spirituality of an Institute could be better spread not only among its own members but also in the Church, which has always been enriched and renewed by the spirituality of the saints and religious families".²³

²³ *Relatio ante disceptationem* 19

²⁴ cf. ACG 342

In this way the Synod strengthens the process of our renewal, towards the first "open horizon"²⁴ for future growth: to ensure that Don Bosco's spirit may be alive in individuals and communities, and be spread with vigour and authenticity even beyond our own houses.

In such a sense the Salesian Youth Movement has as the soul of its vitality a youthful spirituality which takes its inspiration from Don Bosco; and the communion and involvement of numerous lay people (theme of the GC24) has as its priority the ensuring of the long-term spreading of salesian apostolic spirituality.

We must be grateful to the Synod for the authoritative impulse it has given us in showing us the central nucleus from which will explode future vitality.

Strength of fraternal life in community

The dimension of communion in fraternal life – the Synod insisted – is a necessary commitment in all Institutes of consecrated life, even when the members do not live in community, as is the case in secular Institutes. But for religious congregations this communion is lived in community: it is one of their proper and distinctive characteristics. Every religious Institute, in fact, is always structured (albeit in different ways) on a concrete fraternal life in community. The Synod has made this explicit, recommending also the study of the recent Vatican document *Fraternal life in community*.

Card. Hume, in the same address already quoted, considers this as the “second great challenge of consecrated life”;²⁵ it includes also the consideration and right exercise of the indispensable service of authority.

²⁵ *Relatio ante disceptationem* 20

The strength of fraternal life in community is manifested especially by the witness of living together in communion, which is one of the aspects for which families and society at the present day feel most nostalgia.

The interdependence was emphasized between fraternal life and fidelity in the practice of the evangelical counsels. Its validity and efficacy were appreciated especially in the situations of oppression and totalitarianism which confreres and Sisters have been able to experience in a positive manner notwithstanding grave difficulties.

Its strength is felt, in particular, in greater efficacy and creativity in evangelization; the community appears as the true subject of the mission which multiplies its apostolic energies in a common project.

A community which practises ongoing formation, aware also of the limitations of each of its members, of the need for patience and forgiveness, is aware that the community is always in a phase of construction, because perfection will only be eschatological in the communion of saints. It is a community which lives and expresses itself in the first place in the celebration of the Eucharist, and which is able to manifest its "spirituality of communion" in the mutual exchange of gifts within the local Church, with availability for collaboration, with sincerity in dialogue, with the search for harmony and unity, and with mutual relationships with the other members of the Church.²⁶

²⁶ cf. *Propositiones* 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34

The joy of community witness brings with it also a vocational fruitfulness for ensuring the future of the particular charism in the Church.

Conclusion

The Synod dealt with many other important aspects; we have limited our reflections to some of those which are more significant for us.

In the meantime it is wonderfully encouraging to see confirmed and deepened the main lines of our own process of renewal: we have not worked in vain, we have indeed followed the correct path.

Of the celebration of this Synod we have to say that it has been truly an event of the Church for the future, a real moment of grace, or in the words of the Holy Father: "an experience of Pentecost. We sensed the action of the Spirit present with his incessant work which gives the Church so many charisms of consecrated life. As we took part, we were led progressively towards what is most intimate in

the life of the Church: the call to holiness".²⁷

What it all comes to, dear confreres, is that we are now well enlightened on what constitutes our identity in the Church, and that our efforts and commitments must now be totally directed to moving towards those "open horizons" which still remain unattained in the perspective of our renewal.

Both the education of young people to the faith (GC23) and the involvement of many lay people in the spirit and mission of Don Bosco (GC24) require that we concentrate our efforts of ongoing formation on the intensification of *life in the Spirit* and on prior attention to *fraternal life in community*. This is the road to the third millennium, and now is the time to set out on it in an authentic manner.

Let us entrust these intentions to our Blessed Lady: she is at the origin of our charism and motherly involved with us for its renewal. The Synod has shown us her fullness of consecrated life as "The first of the disciples and Mother of all disciples, model of strength and perseverance in following Christ to the Cross. The Virgin Mary is the prototype of consecrated life because she is the Mother who welcomes, listens to, beseeches and contemplates her Lord in heartfelt praise".²⁸

Let us think of her intimacy with God in obedience ("be it done to me according to your Word"), in poverty ("She laid him in a manger"), in virginity ("Full of grace", and without stain); the incessant contemplation in her heart of the events of Christ; her permanent union with God, as in the ample vision of the times displayed in the Magnificat.

It is wonderful to think of Mary assumed into heaven: though surrounded by the angels and saints, she shows not the least sign of vainglory. We can imagine her in the joy of the truest humility

²⁷ 29 October, words of the Pope at the closing lunch

²⁸ Message IX

proclaiming in the presence of them all her canticle which is a hymn to the goodness of God in history. "They will call me blessed": there you have the joy of humility which teaches us how to praise God from within the gifts of our own consecration and holiness.

May the Virgin Mother help us to bring to fruition in ourselves with joyful awareness the many gifts of this Synod and dispose us to receive with practical proposals for our lives the desired Apostolic Exhortation with which Peter's Successor will offer us authoritatively the pentecostal conclusions of this event of grace.

I take the opportunity to send to all of you my best wishes for the new year just beginning: may Don Bosco be our guide and stimulation.

With cordial greetings and affectionately in the Lord,

Don F. Viganò

3. RULINGS AND DIRECTIVES

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION AND ARCHIVES

The Secretary General

1. A rich documentation

Visitors to our SDB and FMA Generalates, and also to the houses which date back to our early days, are often *amazed at the quantity and value of the documentation* referring to the origins and early development of the individual houses and works, and of the Congregation itself and the Salesian Family. We are thinking in particular of the central historical archives, both SDB and FMA, but also of certain other archives to be found in houses of more ancient and glorious tradition in places where the Founder began his early works, and especially in the places of the first salesian missions.

Such a richness of documentation convinces us at once of the *strong commitment of our first confreres and sisters* to the collecting and preservation of everything that could serve for passing on the story of our origins; they dedicated themselves tirelessly to the documentation of the more important and interesting events by means of written accounts, drawings, photographs and other means. One is always impressed, for example, by the great quantity of documentation written and collected by the early missionaries who, in the midst of their great problems and numerous commitments, could nevertheless find time to write chronicles or send letters.

All this is truly precious material which bears witness to *the gifts of the Spirit* passed on to us by the Founder and by us preserved and cultivated.

2. The witness of our tradition

It is possible to speak of a "*salesian tradition*" in connection with the care of historical documentation, both as regards its timely and well ordered collection and its appropriate preservation. The Rector Major says so himself: "It is a very old salesian tradition", he writes, "that we take particular care to preserve documents belonging to the Congregation's patrimony" (cf. Letter to the Secretary General, AGC 314, pp, 52-53). This tradition, as we have said, has its roots in the commitment of the early Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. But rightly we see the tradition stemming from the spirit and thought of Don Bosco himself, who was not only the centre of the life of the Oratory and the infant Congregation but at the bidding of the Popes was concerned to pass on to his sons and daughters the memory of all that the Lord had inspired him.

It may be useful to read over again in this connection what Don Bosco wrote as he set about complying with the suggestion of Pope Pius IX, i.e. to put in writing for his followers the memoirs of the first Oratory. "Now there has been added the command of a person of supreme authority," he wrote, "I am putting into writing those confidential details that may somehow serve as a light or be of use to the work which Divine Providence has entrusted to the Society of St Francis de Sales... *Now, what purpose can this chronicle serve?* It will be a record to help people overcome problems that may arise in the future by learning from the past. It will serve to make known how God himself has always been our guide. It will give my sons some entertainment to be able to read about their father's adventures. Doubtless they will read much more avidly when I have been called by God to render my account, when I am no longer amongst them" (Memoirs of the Oratory, Eng. edtn., p. 3).

It is clear what Don Bosco had in mind in writing the "Memoirs", and in general in taking care of documentation for the history of the Congregation.

Interest in historical documentation is shown particularly in

the *care of the archives*. In the Biographical Memoirs we can find evidence both of the existence of the archives themselves and of the enthusiasm, which gradually became more and more consolidated at the Oratory, for the preservation of documents relating to Don Bosco and salesian history.

For example, in Vol. VIII of the Biographical Memoirs (p. 17) the biographer speaks of the "documents of our archives", and gives details of some of them. In the same volume at p. 378 the author says that: "Our archives hold more than a thousand cherished notes in [Don Bosco's] own hand", and at p. 396 he says that in writing the Memoirs "our own notes and our archive documents are the sources of the events so far described".

All this testifies not only to the existence of the archives, but especially to the care shown by the early Salesians in preserving in them the memory of their Father and the vicissitudes of the beginning of the Society and of the Salesian Family.

Very characteristic are the words of Don Rua quoted in Vol. XII of the Biographical Memoirs (p. 273), which reflect the care taken to preserve all the documents of Don Bosco, for the history of the Congregation and for the usefulness of all. To Don Vespignani who had asked for permission to keep as a souvenir a sheet handwritten by Don Bosco, Don Rua replied: "What are you asking? Don't you know that *every scrap of Don Bosco's writings is carefully kept in the Congregation's archives*? That is especially true of this document which is the rule of salesian life".

To this spirit which grew up at the Oratory of Valdocco and to the personal interest of many of the early Salesians is owed all the material that was collected, and the possibility of producing the wonderful historical and spiritual compendium which are the Biographical Memoirs, and the possibility for historians at the present day to make deeper researches into the story of our beginnings.

Further evidence of the mentality growing in the Congregation is found in what Don Ceria wrote in presenting one of the arguments of the conferences of Rectors ("Conferences of St Francis de Sales") concerning our present theme. We read in the Biographical Memoirs: "Having taken its place in the world, the Congregation

now felt that it had entered into history, a history that had to be not only made but also written. Don Bosco, who had kept even his childhood scribbles and never destroyed even the least document, eminently recognized the importance of history. We are not surprised therefore to see in the agenda a proposal that the Congregation appoint a historian to gather documentation and organize material to be used in the course of time" (BM XII, 42).

Worthy of particular mention is the interest shown for the chronicle of the houses (of which we have already spoken in a previous issue of the Acts: cf AGC 324, p. 53-59). On various occasions Don Bosco spoke of the care each Rector should have to collect and write, or get written by someone else, the "chronicle" of his own house.

It is interesting to hear again what Don Bosco said to the Rectors in the conferences of 1876, already mentioned, and which Don Barberis noted down in his own little chronicle. He wrote that *the Founder not only emphasized the duty of compiling the chronicle but also gave practical norms about the matters it should contain*. At the same time he spoke of the importance of sending the chronicles to Turin for the information of the Superiors and the history of the Congregation. Here are some of Don Bosco's words as reported by Don Barberis; they are still relevant: "Here and now, what is most urgent is that each director write a summary history of his own school, from its opening to the present day, and then go on to chronicle all important happenings. (...) Each year, too, the director should have this report clearly transcribed into a large ledger, which is to remain in the school archives, while the original or another copy should be sent to Turin as soon as each book is completed. In this way the Superiors will be thoroughly acquainted with the functioning of every school and have a good idea of our Congregation's history" (BM XII p. 51-52).

The same argument appears once again in the conferences of 1877 (cf. BM XIII p. 49), and more explicitly in the 1st General Chapter of the same year.

All this reveals the thought of Don Bosco and the commitment that was lived at the Oratory, and which was in due course passed

on to the other houses and works of both the Society of St Francis de Sales and the Institute of the FMA.

3 The Central Salesian Archives

One of the most valuable results of the commitment of the early Salesians in the matter of historical documentation, deriving from Don Bosco and passed on to his successors, is certainly the *central salesian archives*. They represent a rich element for the Congregation and the whole Salesian Family, and form the primary sources for studies and research in the history of our origins. Analogous remarks apply to the central archives of the Institute of the FMA.

The salesian central archives contain the most important documents of our salesian history; in the first place the history of the Congregation as a whole, starting from its origins, and then the story of its development, and hence – at least in part – the more important references to the salesian presence and foundations in different countries, Provinces and Houses, where the Congregation has become established.

The salesian historical archives are divided and catalogued, in the first instance, according to the periods of office of the Rectors Major who have guided the Society and the Salesian Family: on the basis of this division we refer to the “Don Bosco section”, “Don Rua section”, etc.

Of particular importance for us is the Don Bosco section (*Italian: “FONDO DON BOSCO”*), the first which received attention and study, and certainly the most valuable of all of them. It embraces everything that refers to our Father Don Bosco and the beginnings of the Congregation and the Salesian Family. In all it includes some 30,000 documents, from the most modest to the most significant, all of which have been microfilmed for more certain preservation.

In order to make better use of the archives, provision has been made in recent years for a more adequate structuring of the locali-

ties involved, while work is proceeding on a new catalogue based on a new system of indexing by computer. But it should be remembered especially that the Rector Major has approved a new set of regulations for the archives which give concrete norms for their organization, for the personnel involved, for the collecting and preservation of documents, and also for regulating access to the archives for researchers and students who wish to consult them (cf. AGC 314 p. 54-60).

4. A commitment to be kept alive

The commitment of the first Salesians now passes on to us: we are called upon to continue the work they began, to deepen it, extend it and enrich it for today and tomorrow. In our hands rests especially the preservation of our historical patrimony; but to us is entrusted also the task of making sure that the memory of our Congregation of the present day be documented and so passed on to history.

The care of our historical documentation, to which our tradition bears witness, is a "*commitment to be kept alive*"! The motives which prompted Don Bosco and his first followers are still valid at the present day.

And the obligation becomes ever more widely extended as the Congregation expands from central to lower levels, i.e. from the central archives to *provincial archives and to local archives*.

Unfortunately it cannot be said that such a commitment is present and alive everywhere, at least as regards some local situations. There is need for a *growth in the historical mentality*, overcoming the difficulties which are often expressed pleading too much other work which stands in the way of reflecting and writing. Today's need for giving greater attention to the history of the Congregation in various settings is another factor which emphasizes the importance of provincial archives.

The *General Regulations*, in line with our traditions give some precise indications concerning what must be done as regards the

care of documentation at various levels. We need only recall the articles which refer to the matter.

Art. 144 of the Constitutions mentions the “central archives of the Society”.

Art. 159 of the Regulations speaks explicitly of the “provincial archives” when referring to the duties of the provincial secretary. But there is a reference also in art. 62, which speaks of the “special importance” attaching to the preservation of the archives, together with libraries and other documentary material, “because of their cultural and community value”.

Finally, art. 178 deals with local archives, and the same article speaks also of the importance of the “house chronicle”, which is obviously linked with the documentation in the archives.

One should remember too art.190 of the Regulations which gives indications for the keeping of “administrative archives” at both provincial and local level.

From the standpoint of legislation, it is opportune to recall that to the archives – at their respective levels – can be applied, at least analogically, the norms of the Code of Canon Law concerning the archives of the diocesan Curia (can. 486-491) and parish archives (can. 535 §4).

While still on this theme of the archives it may be opportune also to recall the circular written by Fr Peter Ricaldone, 4th successor of Don Bosco, in October 1943 (cf. ASC 120). Here I quote only some expressions that may help us to understand better the importance of the archives: “I think it opportune”, writes Fr. Ricaldone, “to draw your attention once more to the importance of the archives in our own Society. We need only remember that, since the Salesians are now to be found in nearly all countries of the world, it is possible through our well organized archives to gather material for many projects of extraordinary value, so as to use them subsequently for the benefit of the whole Congregation and of the souls entrusted to our zeal.

Above all our archives will provide, if they are well organized and kept up to date, valuable and even fundamental data and ele-

ments for the chronicle of our Society. Through the documentation our members will not only have before their minds a magnificent panorama of salesian activities of many kinds to stimulate new and zealous initiatives, but will almost be led by the hand to the pure sources of the spirit and industrious activity of the Salesian Family" (ASC 84, p. 279).

6. Those responsible at different levels

It is clear that to fulfil a task that calls for a considerable expenditure of time and often implies tiring work, there must be some specific person who takes on responsibility, even though the mentality we have described should be common to all.

This is why Don Bosco very soon gave thought to the appointment of persons responsible for various sectors (librarian, historian) and then, in the Regulations, entrusted to some of them precise tasks in connection with the archives.

In the present Regulations, at a general level, a specific task is entrusted to the *Secretary General* with respect to the central archives (cf. C 144). In the Regulations of the central archives themselves are specified the duties of the director of the archives and of the other archivists who collaborate with the Secretary.

The same task is given to the *Provincial Secretary* in what concerns the provincial archives (cf. R 159). He acts in agreement with the Provincial, who bears the primary responsibility also for the norms of the archives (by analogy with the diocesan archives for which the Bishop is primarily responsible). But the Secretary needs a spirit of initiative, and must be awake to whatever may serve to enrich the provincial documentation with a view to history, and with a view also to the transmission to the Centre of news and documents so that they can become the patrimony of all.

There may be circumstances, especially where historical archives are of vast proportions, in which there may be an archivist distinct from the Provincial Secretary, but this does not dispense the Secretary from a specific and careful attention to the documen-

tation of the Province.

At local level, the Rector, who bears the primary responsibility, has to choose (if necessary) persons to take care of the chronicle, the archives (cf. R 178), the library etc. But certainly the Provincial Secretary has a role to fulfil even at local level, at least in the sense of *stimulating* the collection and preservation of documentation and also, in a suitable manner and in line with the norms laid down by the Provincial, to exercise a certain *control* over local documentation.

7. Organization of the archives

All that we have said brings us to understand the value of the archives and the responsibilities of those to whom they are entrusted.

But if the archives (at any level: general, provincial or local) are to fully serve their purpose, i.e. to provide a complete and accessible documentation for the service of an institution (its life and service) it is of fundamental importance that *the greatest care be given to their adequate organization*. This is a duty of those who have responsibility for the archives in line with the Regulations already quoted.

We may wonder, however, what precisely is implied in practice by the organization of archives. There is evidently much to say on this point and it is dealt with extensively in courses for the training of archivists. Here we can do no more than indicate a few fundamental elements that must be kept in mind.

a. Location of the archives

The first requirement is that of a suitable setting, where the material can be well preserved, with due attention to conditions of temperature and humidity, and to the possibility of easy access for eventual researches.

This is necessary in the first place for provincial archives or

other archives of larger dimensions; but even in the case of local archives Rectors must take care that the setting be appropriate and well maintained.

Here it may be useful to quote a piece of advice given by Fr Ricaldone in his own days: "Material destined for the archives", he wrote, "as time goes by and individual Institutes develop, will increase constantly in quantity; It is well therefore to look ahead and not be parsimonious about space" (ASC 120, p. 287).

As far as collocation is concerned, it should be kept in mind that some documents are reserved (those in what the Code refers to as the "secret archives") which must be kept under lock and key, under the responsibility of the Provincial (at provincial level) or of the Rector (in individual houses).

b. *Criteria for the filing of documents in the archives*

Another requirement for the good organization of the archives is to have a clear idea about what documents should be filed and kept.

The general norm or criterion can be expressed for us as follows: one must file *all documents which concern the life and mission of the institution* (Congregation, Province, Houses), *and which can be useful for both a present knowledge of the institution itself and for its history.*

On the basis of a general norm or criterion of this kind the selection is made of the documents to be kept in the archives. This is a delicate task: a mistaken evaluation of the usefulness of a document could, in fact, at some future date prove harmful for the full story of certain facts.

As a guide for archivists and as a criterion for reference, even though not exhaustive, the manual "Elementi giuridici e prassi amministrativa nel governo dell'Ispettorìa" carries a list of the main contents of salesian archives at both provincial and local levels (cf. op. cit. nn. 185-186, p. 155-157).

c. *Arrangement of the archives*

A third point of the greatest importance for an efficient organization of the archives is their *orderly arrangement*, i.e. the arrangement of material in such a way that a desired item can be quickly found and utilized, in connection also with other material of a similar nature.

The orderly arrangement, or the need for proper order in archives is indicated in Canon Law itself, v. can. 486 §2, and has the purpose of facilitating the finding and use of documents. In line with archive science, the arrangement will be based on a "*TITOLARIO*", i.e. referred to a list of "headings" linked with the various aspects or sectors of the life and mission of the institution.

This kind of well ordered arrangement is one of the most delicate tasks of those having responsibility for the archives

In this case also the manual *Elementi giuridici* carries an *example or model of such a list of headings* for our provincial archives, a model that was thought out (evidently only by analogy) on the basis of the list in use in the salesian central archives. In the recent meetings of the Secretary General with Provincial Secretaries this 'titolario' has been discussed and brought up to date.

d. *Catalogues and instruments for searching*

Finally, as well as the arrangement of the archives under appropriate headings, thought should be given to the use of *suitable instruments* for searching for items stored in the archives themselves; the methods should be as safe and as rapid in use as is possible.

The Code of Canon Law itself indicates such a requirement in can. 486 §3, where it is said: "An inventory or catalogue is to be made of the documents kept in the archives, with a short synopsis of each". This highlights the need for an ordered *index* of the documents ("*inventory or catalogue*"), with the essential indication of the content of each document. In archives terminology such an index is usually referred to as a *register* of the documents.

The preparation of an accurate register of documents in the ar-

chives, and the sorting of the individual records according to a specific criterion, was done until recently by the traditional use of index cards, but nowadays electronic means (*computers*) are more conveniently used; they involve less toil and permit of searches which are faster and more complete. Clearly, however, the use of a computer does not dispense from the need for having printed copies of catalogues on paper.

8. Conclusion

There, then, are some reflections on the importance of our archives, together with a reminder of some practical norms for their better organization and more efficacious use.

In conclusion I would like to emphasize once more as a fundamental element the need for the development among us of the '*historical mentality*' so as to continue the 'salesian tradition' of care for historical documentation of which the Rector Major has spoken.

The growth of such a mentality will lead to a greater and more constant *commitment to the safekeeping of the archives* at every level.

And with reference to our central archives, let me say once again how important it is that Provinces and Houses send to the Centre news items and documentation of matters of greater importance, so that what Don Bosco hoped for so much may continue to be fulfilled: "that the Superiors will be thoroughly acquainted with the functioning of every school and have a good idea of our Congregation's history".

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

From 12 to 15 September the Rector Major was in the Flaminia Hospital, Rome, for a minor operation. He then resumed work at the less intense level required by convalescence and on 17 September had a meeting with young Don Bosco Male Volunteers and took part in the profession ceremony of some of them.

During the week 19-24 September he had several discussions with our Bishops Godayol, Artale and Guruchaga, and on 23 September had a meeting with the Past-pupils.

On 29 September he presided at a meeting of the USG (Union of Superiors General) in preparation for the Synod of Bishops.

In the month of October he moved to our community at the Vatican, to be involved full-time in the work of the Synod on Consecrated Life (of which he speaks in his Letter in this issue of the Acts). He was the only non-Bishop to be a member of the Commission which had the task of drawing up the final Message, and in addition contributed two personal interventions, one spoken and one written.

Although still convalescing, November found him giving numerous conferences on the theme of the Synod, both to groups of confreres (e.g. on the 17th to the Rectors of the Milan Province gathered at Loreto) and to communities of the FMA.

From 1 December he presided at the plenary session of the General Council, which began on that date.

On 8 December, following a custom going back for some years now, he celebrated the Eucharist in the FMA Generalate.

From 9 to 11 of the same month he was in Portugal for the celebration of the centenary of the arrival of the Salesians in that country and for the annual feast-day of the Rector Major which was celebrated on the same occasion; he was also present at the closing session of the "Eurobosco".

On 23 December he went to Treviglio to speak to the members of several salesian communities gathered there to hear him.

Finally he was at the FMA Generalate once again in the afternoon of the 31st, for the customary presentation of the Strenna for 1995.

4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors

The Vicar General

In the early part of August Fr Juan E. Vecchi was present at the General Chapter of the Ursuline Sisters of Somasca, at the request of their Superiors. On the 13th of the same month he left for Canada where he preached a retreat to the Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians of their respective Canadian Vice-Provinces at Niagara Falls. Afterwards he made a rapid visit to the houses of Hamilton, Montreal and Sherbrooke.

From Canada he moved on to Colombia, where he preached a retreat to the rectors of our two Provinces in the retreat-house of Copacabana. At Bogotá he took part in the feast of the provincial community, and visited the houses of formation and some other works of particular significance, like the parish of the Holy Infant and the new foundation "St John Bosco" on the outskirts of the city.

In September he provided animation at two meetings on the spiritual exercises as part of the religious maturing process for Salesians held at Campos do Jordao and at Montevideo for the provinces respectively of Brazil and of the Plata Conference (Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay). Taking part were the provin-

cials and/or vice-provincials, those in charge of ongoing formation, preachers and animators of retreats, with an overall total of 80 persons.

At the beginning of October (3-10) he presided at Breslau over the Team Visit to the provinces of Poland and the Eastern Circumscription, taking the place of the Rector Major who was involved in the Synod. Similarly, between 28 October and 1 November he substituted for the Rector Major at Annecy for the Team Visit to the European French-speaking provinces.

November found Fr Vecchi in Asia. At Hyderabad he blessed the new Provincial House, and then presided at the Team Visit to the seven provinces of India. Between 13 and 18 November he was at still another Team Visit at Yamanaka, Japan, for the visit to the seven circumscriptions of the Far East (Japan, Korea, China, Thailand, Vietnam, North Philippines and South Philippines), with the provincial delegates for Indonesia and Papua New Guinea also present. After the meetings he was able to visit, with other members of the General Council, the modern school being built at Yokohama and the social work at Kodaira which has been renovated in line with modern pedagogical criteria.

After taking part at Chofu in festivities jointly organized by groups of

the Salesian Family (SDB, FMA, Cooperators, Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki) and in celebrations for the golden jubilee of the ordination of the first Japanese Salesian (Fr Martino Akimoto) Fr Vecchi returned to Rome on 21 November. There he attended to the duties of ordinary administration which involve him, and to the matters confided to him by the Rector Major. Finally he prepared the material for the plenary session of the General Council which began on 1 December.

The Councillor for Formation

During the months of August and September Fr Nicolussi made the extraordinary visitation of the Province of Uruguay.

In October and November he took part in the Team Visits to the French-speaking provinces of Europe, and those of Poland and Eastern Europe, of India, and of the Far East.

At the end of November he took part in the meeting on the Salesian Brother organized by the Iberian Region.

The Councillor for Youth Pastoral Work

From 29 July to 5 August Fr Van Looy preached the retreat at Mor-

nese to the FMA of the "Auxilium" Centre in Rome, on the theme of the vocation of the people of God. From 7 to 9 August he took part in a meeting at Vienna with 150 young people from various parts of Europe on the theme: "*Believing and helping to believe*". Later in the same month (19-20) he directed a two-day period of pastoral reflection for the General Council and Provincial superiors of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence in Rome.

From 21-26 August he was in India at Kochi-Pallaruthy, for a national meeting on the topic of "*Street children*", to examine the experiences of recent years. On the same occasion he took part in the celebration of 20 years of work for street-children at "Sneha Bhavan" and was able to note the great esteem shown for this work by the civil authorities of the State of Kerala and the City of Kochi. He then went on immediately to the house of Kochi-Vaduthala, for the annual meeting on youth pastoral work at national level. The purpose of this meeting was to study the situation concerning vocations and pastoral work for vocations. The FMA were also present at this national meeting for the first time. The need was noted to broaden vocational initiatives beyond the aspirantates, offering the possibility of vocational involvement to committed older youngsters.

From 1 to 15 September Fr Van Looy was in Madagascar, where he preached a retreat to the SDBs and FMAs on the theme "*Evangelizing by educating in the mission*", and then presided at a meeting of the Malagasy Youth Movement: 150 young people coming from all our works studied with a great deal of enthusiasm and salesian sense the two themes: the "*family*", and the Salesian Youth Movement.

On 17 and 18 September he took part in the opening of the pastoral year for the SDB Province of Verona and the FMA Province of Padua. On 24 and 25 September he was present also in Portugal for the opening of the pastoral year of the SDB and FMA provinces of that country also.

From 26 September to 2 October he made the extraordinary visitation of the community of Mary Help of Christians (the "Mother House") at Valdocco, and immediately afterwards went on to Breslau in Poland for the Team Visit referred to under the Vicar General above. From 12 to 15 October he was in Rome for the meeting of heads of Departments at the Generalate and on the 17th presided at the opening of the SDB and FMA pastoral year at Arborea in Sardinia.

From 17 to 27 October he made the extraordinary visitation of the work at Colle Don Bosco, interrup-

ted for a rapid journey to Brussels to represent the Congregation at an international convention on childhood, at which he spoke of education as a way to human advancement.

On 28 October he went with other Councillors to Annecy for the Team Visit, and on 1 November continued on to Vremde in Belgium for a European meeting of the National Centres of Youth Pastoral Work, with the provincial delegates (SDB and FMA), on the theme: "*Educating by evangelizing and evangelizing by educating*". The meeting emphasized in particular the need to form all collaborators in the salesian mission to be true evangelizers and educators at the same time in the realization of the preventive system.

On 5 November he went to India for the Team Visit, followed by that in Japan, at the end of which he stayed on to preach a retreat at Fukuoka to the confreres and FMAs of that country on the theme "*The Word of God for all peoples*". On the way back from Japan to Rome he stopped for three days in Korea for a brief visit to all the salesian houses.

He returned to Rome on 29 November.

The Councillor for the Salesian Family and for Social Communication

1. Team Visits

Fr Martinelli took part in the Team Visits:

– in Poland, 3-8 October 1994, with an intervention on the theme of the Salesian Family;

– in India, 7-11 November, and in the Far East, 13-18 November; in the discussions there was a reflection on the theme of the Cooperators and the Salesian Family.

2. Commitments with the Salesian Family

** Salesian Cooperators*

a. Regional Congress in Mozambique, 29 July to 3 August 1994;

b. Meeting of World Council with outgoing and incoming members, Castellammare di Stabia, 28 August – 2 September 1994;

c. Meeting for animation of young Cooperators and youth spirituality, Lebanon, 5-10 September 1994;

d. Meeting of provincial and local delegates and with national Conference of Polish Cooperators, Poland: 2 October and 9 October 1994;

e. Provincial animation of Salesian Family in Slovenia, 21-25 October 1994;

f. 1st National Congress of Cooperators in Madagascar, 29 October

– 4 November 1994;

g. Verification of World Council, Rome 19 November 1994.

** Past-Pupils*

a. Annual congress in Cuorgnè: 18 September 1994;

b. Meeting of Confederation World Presidency: Rome, 19-23 September 1994;

c. Meeting of Confederal Council: revision of world presidency, and preparation of "Eurobosco": Rome 20 November 1994;

d. Eurobosco: Lisbon, 7-11 December 1994.

** Don Bosco Volunteers*

a. Three days of ongoing formation to the Rome group: Fiuggi, 6-8 August 1994;

b. Participation in the regional assembly in preparation for the General Assembly of '95: Catania 24-25 September 1994; Turin 15-16 October 1994; Madrid 3-4 December 1994.

** Male Don Bosco Volunteers*

Meeting of study and work for drafting the text of the Constitutions: Rome 11-17 September 1994.

** Salesians – Preaching service:*

a. Retreat for the Province of Barcelona, Spain, 21-28 August, on

the theme: "Interior apostolic conviction";

b. Retreat for the Province of Lima, Peru, on the theme: "Animation of the animators".

Also the work in preparation for the *Week of Spirituality of the Salesian Family*: a first meeting with representatives of the various groups of the Family to study the Strenna of the Rector Major and organize the Week; and a second meeting to settle the details.

3. Commitments in connection with social communication

a. At the Centre attention has been given to the following aspects:

- restructuring of services and roles within the Department;
- preparation of the manual for the formation of young confreres as regards communication.

b. Concerning Communication Agencies:

The Team Visits served also for relaunching the correspondents prepared in the previous year.

The Councillor has had:

- contacts in *Poland* with the Provincials to define more specifically the agency service. They have destined a confrere for this work, even though he has other commitments of the same kind;

- contacts in *India* with the Provincials to establish sufficient el-

bow-room for the local correspondent. He will be able to start afresh with renewed enthusiasm;

- contacts in the *Far East* with the provinces of *China*, *North Philippines*, *Thailand* and the Vice-province of *Korea* - always with a view to a better definition of the figure of the correspondents to contribute to their more efficient functioning. In *Korea* the correspondents can be the members of the social communications community set up by the Vice-province;

- contacts with *Vietnam*; more stable contacts can be made, with the necessary caution.

c. Italian Salesian Bulletin and the "Cooperators' Edition"

In the course of meetings with those concerned, the service provided by the Cooperators' Edition of the Italian Salesian Bulletin was restructured to improve the graphical presentation and improve the contents.

d. Verification with certain communication centres:

- the catechetical centre of *Ljubljana*;
- the future centre at *Ivato*, *Madagascar*;
- the communications centre of *Buenos Aires*;
- the scholastic publishing centre of *La Plata*;
- the Video centre of *Lima*.

4. *Preparation of the 24th General Chapter*

Fr Antonio Martinelli, as Moderator of the Chapter, has taken the following steps:

a. All the necessary *documentation* necessary for the work of the Provincial Chapters has been prepared and sent out. All provinces have now received the material.

b. Material has been prepared to ensure the contribution of the *laity* to the Chapter in connection with the following:

- collaboration with the Cooperators;
- collaboration with the Past-pupils;
- collaboration with youth pastoral work.

c. Together with the UPS a study has been begun for the preparation of a questionnaire "Salesians and Lay People", to be completed before the Chapter as a useful aide for the Chapter members.

d. A check-up that everything is in order for *E-mail* transmissions between the Centre and the Provinces.

The Councillor for the Missions

The principal activities of Fr Odo-rico in the second half of 1994 consisted especially in missionary and spiritual animation, participation in Team Visits, visits to the missions, meetings concerning Project Africa,

and the study of possible new missionary frontiers. The following is a chronological list of the main items:

- From 18 August to 3 November he preached two Retreats, one for the Delegation of French-speaking West Africa (at Bamako, Mali), and the other for the Delegation of Tropical Equatorial Africa (at Yaounde, Cameroon). They were two occasions for sharing and for salesian missionary spirituality in a fraternal setting.

- After a brief period in Rome he spent the period from 13 to 17 September in the Province of Porto Alegre, Brazil, for various meetings of missionary animation, especially with young confreres in formation. From 17 to 21 he went on to visit the missions of the Valle Sagrado of Peru, where he was able to meet the communities in their various mission stations and also preside at a meeting with the Provincial, Provincial Council, and all the missionaries for an overall assessment of the missionary project of the whole Province. At Lima he received the good news that the first Achuar catechumens had been baptized by Fr Luis Bolla.

- Returning to Italy, the Councillor went to Turin for the preparation and presentation of the crucifix to the departing missionaries (25 September). Among them were some destined for three new foundations in Africa: CHAD (from Verona), the CENTRAL AFRICAN RE-

PUBLIC (from North Belgium), and ZIMBABWE (from Zambia).

– From 27 to 30 September, he made a brief visit of missionary animation to the Provinces of Great Britain and Ireland with various meetings and visits to missionary works, including the School of Languages for missionaries at Maynooth.

– From 2 to 8 October he was in Poland for the Team Visit.

– From 9 to 18 October he went to Argentina and Chile for activities of missionary animation in the Provinces of La Plata, Córdoba, Rosario and Santiago. He had various meetings with those in formation, with groups of missionaries, and with young Salesians about to depart for missions 'ad gentes'. At Valparaiso it seemed to him that Don Bosco's missionary dream that saw a beginning in Chile was already heading for fulfilment in the Chinese capital of Beijing.

– On 21 and 22 October Fr Odorico presided over a meeting at Yaounde (Cameroon) of the two Councils of the Delegations of French-speaking West Africa and of Tropical Equatorial Africa, in preparation for the Team Visit of February 1995. He was able to note the quantitative and qualitative growth of these new structures of coordination in Africa.

– From 28 October to 1 November he took part in the Team Visit at Annecy, and then left immediately

for Asia, where in the first place he visited Pakistan from 2 to 5 November and made contact with various Bishops and ecclesial and religious institutions at Karachi, Hyderabad, Quetta, Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Lahore. The Bishops are very interested in the variety of realizations of the salesian charism for the benefit of Pakistan youth. It is hoped that we may be able to meet their requests at some future date.

– From 7 to 11 November he took part in the Team Visit to India, and from 14 to 19 in that to the Far East in Japan.

– On the way back to Italy after a brief stop in Bangkok, Fr Odorico was in Myanmar (formerly Burma) from 22 to 28 November. There he inaugurated the new house of formation in the capital Yangon (formerly Rangoon), and was able to visit the house of formation at Anisakan and go on to the diocese of Lashio. Here he called at all the mission stations and met with all the confreres, with the Bishop (Mgr Charles Bo SDB), with the local clergy and religious and especially the Christian communities. In his visit he was accompanied by the Provincial of Calcutta and the Provincial Delegate for Myanmar. The salesian presence in this country is growing and opening up a new stage of development for the salesian charism.

– On 29 November the Councilor returned to Rome.

The Economist General

Fr Omero Paron was present on 29 August at the annual assembly of the Venice Province for the change-over from the outgoing to the incoming Provincial.

At Bratislava (Slovakia) from 18 to 20 September he held a meeting with the Provincial Economers of Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia. The main point dealt with was the financial report to be made to Salesian Headquarters, after the forty-year suspension due to the political situation. Other matters discussed concerned real estate, its recovery and utilization, witness to poverty and the relevant 'scrutinium', solidarity, and the preparation of local economers.

After this meeting, Fr Paron visited the Province of Prague from 21 to 25 September to see the property restored by the civil authorities, and the plans and work in progress in many other houses.

He then went on to Lithuania (26-27 September) to inspect the work of construction at Vilnius and Kaunas-Palemonas; he went also into Bielorussia (28-29 September)

On 8 October he took part in the civil manifestations at Forlì for the transfer of the remains of Fr Pietro Garbin to the Church of St Blase, which he had rebuilt after its destruction during the war. On 16 Oc-

tober he was at the Congress of Past-Pupils at the Oratory of Trieste for the festivities linked with diamond jubilees of ordination and profession.

At Catania and Ali Terme on 5 and 6 November he shared the joy of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians at the Beatification of Mother Maddalena Morano.

The Councillor for the Atlantic Region of Latin America

On 31 July Fr Carlos Techera left Rome to begin the extraordinary visitation of Paraguay. The province is preparing to celebrate in 1996 the centenary of the arrival of the Salesians, preceded by the centenary of the death of Mgr. Luigi Lasagna next year. Although not very numerous in personnel, the Province plays a significant role in the Church of Paraguay, in settings that vary from towns like Asunción to missionary areas like the Vicariate Apostolic of Chaco Paraguayo entrusted to the Salesians.

On 7 September the Regional presided at a meeting of the Curatorium of the Novitiate at Ramos Mejia (Buenos Aires), and on the following two days at a meeting of the Plata Provincial Conference at Rosario, Argentina. Some of the points dealt with in this meeting were the application of the conclusions of the Team Visit, and what each province

was doing about the theme of "significance"; a reflection was also begun into the causes of the abandonment of salesian life in the period of temporary vows – a theme that will be taken up again in the next meeting; an assessment was also made of the obligations assumed at Cabana concerning social communication, and themes were indicated for the interprovincial consultation about youth pastoral work, etc.

In the evening of Saturday 10 September and the following Sunday, Fr Techera took part in the meeting of those responsible for the various branches of the Salesian Family present in the Plata area.

On 15 and 16 September at Recife, he presided at a meeting of the Brazilian Provincial Conference which dealt with various points including: the verification of the application of the conclusions of the Team Visit; results, challenges and problems relating to initial formation; an assessment of the obligations undertaken concerning social communication; the planning of a meeting for next year on the salesian parish; an examination of the report presented by the interprovincial commission for youth pastoral work, and of the similar report of the commission for formation, etc. On Saturday 17 September there was also a joint meeting of the SDB and FMA Provincials of Brazil.

On 28 September Fr Techera visited those taking part in the course of ongoing formation organized by the Plata Conference, and on the following day began the extraordinary visitation of the La Plata Province itself. During the visitation he met the students of theology from this province who are at Buenos Aires together with those of Bahia Blanca, and also the novices who are at Ramos Mejia with those of the other Argentine provinces and of Paraguay. Among the many positive elements of this province worthy of mention is the commitment that has been made (after the meeting of the Provincials in Fusagasuga) to set up a publishing house for the production of scholastic texts in association with the Spanish Province of Barcelona.

The Regional returned to Rome on 24 November for the plenary session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the Pacific-Caribbean Region of Latin America

Fr Guillermo Garcia began his journeys in the second half of 1994 at Los Angeles (USA), to get to know the salesian works in that area and to study in what ways help could be given to the Western Province of the USA in helping the Spanish-speaking immigrants in the southern part of the province. Accompanied by the Provincial and

the Delegate for the Salesian Family he visited all the houses. Attention to the Spanish-speakers of North America is one of the five points in the solidarity-project of the Pacific-Caribbean Region during the present six-year period, and includes help with Spanish-speaking personnel. After his visit, Fr Angel Bressan arrived from the Province of Venezuela to work in the parish of St Louis the King in Laredo, Texas.

Entering Mexico across its northern frontier Fr Garcia was able to visit almost all the communities of Guadalajara, to launch the consultation process for the appointment of the new Provincial who will take office in January 1995, and to see to what extent are being implemented the recommendations of the Rector Major after the extraordinary visitation of 1992. He found that they had been fully integrated into the provincial programme and were being satisfactorily implemented.

After a brief stopover in Mexico City, the Regional went on to Chile, stopping two days in Medellin to dialogue with the new Provincial and to greet a sick confrere at the point of death. He spent a day also in Santafe di Bogotá and was present at a meeting of the General Council of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts who are celebrating the centenary of the death of their Founder, Fr Luigi Variara. In this meeting some questions concerning

their houses in Mexico were addressed.

From Colombia he passed on to Quito to meet the Provincial and the one in charge of the Regional Centre for Ongoing Formation. He went also through Bolivia to discuss certain matters with the Provincial and visit the Apostolic Nuncio.

On 1 September he reached Santiago in Chile, and after a meeting with the Provincial Council to review the results of the last visitation in 1989 he went on to Punto Arenas in Chilean Patagonia to begin the extraordinary visitation.

From 16 to 23 October he held a meeting in Santiago with all the provincials of the Region except Fr Jacques Mesidor, Superior of the Vice-Province of Haiti, who felt compelled to stay with his confreres because of the particular situation through which the country was passing at the time. They reflected on the "secular dimension" in the Church and the Congregation, which is challenging local communities to a permanent conversion so as to be truly the animating nucleus of the educative pastoral community and the Salesian Family, and to strengthen with the laity the evangelization of the young and vocational pastoral work. The meeting adopted some concrete and practical guidelines at the level of participation with the local Church. Some practical questions were also discus-

sed relating to the run-up to the GC24.

Two important events took place during the extraordinary visitation: the first was the beatification of Fr Albert Hurtado SJ, who in his brief sixteen years of apostolic life was an eminent educator, a great guide of youth, a zealous evangelizer and a tireless shepherd of the poor and lowly. The second great event was the conferring of the Cardinalatial dignity on the Archbishop of Santiago. Both these events highlighted the unity of the Chilean people, their social sensitivity and their deep religious Christianity.

The visitation ended with a meeting of the Rectors in which Fr Garcia, after communicating his observations on the state of the province and giving his final recommendations, made it known that the Provincial, Fr Alfred Videla, had asked the Rector Major to relieve him of his office for reasons of health. His request had been granted, and it was therefore necessary to launch the consultation for the appointment of his successor. Fr Garcia thanked Fr Videla for his generous and self-sacrificing service over the previous four years, and for his example of strong and deep faith and of great love for the province and his confreres.

The Councillor for the English-speaking Region

Fr Martin McPake spent the whole of this period, from August to November '94, in a state of convalescence, undergoing therapy for his full restoration to health. He spent the first period in Rome (with a brief period at Castel Gandolfo), and then in his native Scotland and his province of origin, Great Britain.

Although convalescing he has continued to deal with problems and animation of the English-speaking Region through the means of communication.

In early November he returned to Rome for further treatment and to take part in the session of the Council.

The Regional Councillor for the Asian Region

Fr Thomas Panakezham left Rome on 30 July, and after a brief stop in Bombay went on to Bangalore to begin the extraordinary visitation of that province, which began on 5 August and went on until 24 October. The province was erected in 1979 by division of the Madras Province, and in 1992 Bangalore was itself divided to give rise to the new Province of Hyderabad. At present Bangalore includes the two States of Karnataka and Kerala and has 25 foundations with 232 confreres.

res. It is a young and enthusiastic province, eager to work for the very poor and to evangelize, especially in zones where the Good News has not yet become a serious message.

After finishing the visitation of Bangalore, Fr Panakezham took part in the Team Visit to the seven provinces of India and the two provincial delegations (that of Delhi, depending on Calcutta, and that of Sri Lanka, depending on Madras). Unfortunately the Delegation of Myanmar, depending on Calcutta, could not be represented because of the political situation. The main themes dealt with were ongoing formation, the laity, and formation in the Indian context. The Team Visit concluded with the prospect of a more decisive approach by the provinces concerned.

The Regional then went on to Japan for the Team Visit to the provinces of the Far East (cf. under the Vicar General above). A significant element was the presence for the first time of two confreres from Vietnam (the Superior of the Vice-province and a deacon). The themes dealt with were: ongoing formation in the Far East, inculturation with special reference to formation and youth pastoral work, and lay collaborators. The Provincials concerned were well satisfied with the results of the Visit and the perspectives of new life to which it gave rise.

On 21 November Fr Panakezham returned to Rome.

The Regional Councillor for Northern and Central Europe and for Central Africa

After a brief visit to the confreres of Istanbul (August '94), Fr Dominic Britschu went to Hungary to carry out the extraordinary visitation of that province. At the end of September and in the two following months he also made contact with all the confreres of Austria.

The Hungarian visitation had to be interrupted three times to enable the Councillor to take part in the meeting of the German-speaking Provincial Conference (in Holland from 8 to 13 October), in the Team Visit to the French-speaking Provinces (at Annecy from 28 October to 2 November), and finally for a visit to Slovenia at the end of November.

On his return to Rome he presented to the Rector Major the results of the consultation for the new Dutch Provincial.

The Regional Councillor for Spain and Portugal

On 3 August Fr Antonio Rodriguez took part at Colle Don Bosco in the day of penance organized at "Camp Bosco", a meeting of 500 animators from all over the Iberian Region who had gathered at the place of salesian origins to strengthen their option to work for the young and for the animation of groups within the settings of our

own salesian foundations.

On 5 and 6 August he was at Leon for the course for new rectors, organized by the Iberian Conference and attended by 44 rectors from 8 provinces. On the 8th he had a meeting at the Bosco Electronic Centre of Zaragoza to settle the final details concerning the communications programme linking the provincial secretariats of the Region.

He then spent a short period of rest with his own family, interrupting it on the 16th for the first professions in the novitiate of Sanlúcar la Mayor, Seville.

The Councillor travelled on 25 August to Africa where he remained for nearly two months visiting the confreres in the six countries of West Africa. At Bamako (Mali Republic) he joined in the concluding days of the Retreat organized by the Salesian Delegation of West Africa and preached by Fr Luciano Odorico. He was also present at the subsequent two-day assembly of the Delegation and a meeting of the Delegation Council the following day. In the assembly the main item was an examination of the Directory of the Delegation and the primary objectives for the coming year; the Council continued with the further consideration of matters begun in previous meetings, and drafted a provisional programme for future meetings, and especially for the

Team Visit due to take place in the period 5-11 February at Abidjan.

On 29 August Fr Rodriguez visited the work at Bamako and had a meeting with the Archbishop. On the following day he left for Sikasso where he was able to visit the new Professional School, built of steel and prefabricated materials in the space of only two months, thanks to the collaboration of a group of lay Italians of the diocese of Brescia, members of an association called the "Friends of Mali".

From 31 August to 3 September he visited for the first time the new salesian foundation of Bobo-Dioulasso in Burkina Faso. Here he had two meetings with the Bishop and endeavoured to make first-hand contact with the social and ecclesial reality of the new area. The three confreres from the Madrid Province are already realizing concrete plans for inserting themselves among the young in view of the scholastic or educational year just beginning, and are at the same time learning 'djula', the local language.

On the 4th he visited the work at Cinkasse, in the Togo Republic, and spent the next two days at Kara, sharing the life of the youngsters in the Don Bosco Centre and inspecting the new creative innovations in the work.

On the 8th the Councillor received the first profession of 14 novices of the two Delegations of West Af-

rica and Tropical Equatorial Africa. 16 new novices began their novitiate the same evening, but will very soon move to the new novitiate at Gbodjome, 18 km. from Lome, which is fast nearing completion.

From 9 to 14 September Fr Rodriguez remained at Lome, visiting the two foundations and sharing the plans and preoccupations of the confreres. On the 13th he made a journey to Accra (Ghana) and back for the purpose of meeting the Nuncio to the three neighbouring countries of Ghana, Togo and Benin.

From 15 to 23 September he was in the Republic of Benin to visit the four salesian foundations and discuss plans and problems with the confreres; he also called on the Bishop of Porto Novo.

From the 24th to the end of the month he was in Ivory Coast. Here he visited the three salesian foundations, admiring in particular the way in which that at Abidjan, in the Koumassi quarter, is growing in strength thanks to the providential collaboration of certain people. The salesian presence is being consolidated, land has been found for a foundation of the FMA, and means have been found for financing the work. This very needy area can soon have a substantial salesian set-up.

The Councillor spent the period from 1 to 14 October in Senegal, visiting the three salesian communities, and giving them more time be-

cause it was the first time he had seen them. Our work, especially in the field of technical training, is well known and offered to all without distinction of religion in a very Moslem area.

He then went on to the Canary Islands to visit our three foundations between 15 and 20 October; and then towards the end of the month went to Andalusia where he visited the houses of the novitiate, post-novitiate and theologate, and called also to see Fr Celestino Rivera, National Delegate for the Past-Pupils, who was gravely ill.

The first few days of November were spent in Madrid; on the 5th Fr Rodriguez went to Bilbao to meet the Provincial and take part in a meeting of rectors at which he launched the consultation for the appointment of the new provincial; afterwards he went on to the postnovitiate of Burgos and the novitiate of Astudillo.

On the 17th he attended the funeral of one of the confreres of Senegal, whom he had recently visited and who had died unexpectedly.

On 20 and 21 November he paid a visit to the confreres taking part in the course of ongoing formation at Campello, where more than 20 members are dedicating four months to their own formation.

On the 23rd he held a meeting with the Spanish Provincials to discuss certain matters, among them

the Salesian Catechetical Centre and the personnel for the inter-provincial houses.

On the 24th and 25th the meeting of the Iberian Conference took place. The morning of the first day was given over to a joint meeting with the corresponding Conference of the FMA on the theme: *The building of the Salesian Family, and the specific contribution of the SDBs and FMAs*. A jointly previously prepared document formed the basis of reflection, and some aspects of pastoral collaboration between the two branches were clarified.

The same meeting of the Iberian Conference took up again a question considered on two previous occasions concerning interprovincial solidarity; progress was made, even though certain aspects remain to be defined. Also were presented the work realized and the projects planned by the national delegations for youth pastoral work and for the past-pupils; the latter had recently lost their Councillor and National Delegate who had died; Don Bosco will have certainly rewarded him for his dedication to this task.

On the 26 and 27 November, with Fr Giuseppe Nicolussi also present, the *regional meeting on the Salesian Brother* took place, to fulfil one of the recommendations of the Team Visit. Each province was represented by five Salesians (among

them the Provincial and Delegate for Formation). It was a further occasion for sensitization, verification and commitment to the realization of adequate vocational pastoral work and a solid formation for salesian brothers.

On the 29th November Fr Rodriguez returned to Rome for the plenary session of the General Council.

The Regional Councillor for Italy and the Middle East

After spending the month of August at a language school in London to learn English, Fr Fedrigotti returned to Italy and on 6 September visited the course at San Tarcisio, Rome, for those preparing for their perpetual profession. Two days later he was present at the Church of Mary Help of Christians, Rome, for the professions of the novices of Lannuvio. On the 9th, together with those responsible for the UPS and the CISI Secretary, he had a meeting with Mgr. Tettamanzi, Secretary of the Italian Bishops Conference, to discuss the possibility of a "School Centre" at the UPS with the collaboration of the CISI.

From 10 to 20 September the Councillor was in Cameroon to conclude the extraordinary visitation of the Ligurian Province by making contact with the missionary foundations of Yaounde and Ebolowa. The planned visit to Nigeria, which

should have followed, had to be put off until later for political reasons.

On 21 September he animated the retreat beginning the scholastic year at the postnovitiate of Nave, and on the following day began the extraordinary visitation of the Circumscription of Piedmont, with a meeting of the Provincial Council.

On 25 September together with Fr Odorico he presided in the Rector Major's name at the departure ceremony of the missionaries in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians. On the following day he took part in a meeting of the "Missionary Consulting Body", which has the purpose of unifying at national level the activities of various entities with missionary projects of different kinds.

On 5 and 6 November Fr Fedrigotti was at Catania and Ali Terme, with other members of the General Council, to represent the Rector Major at the beatification ceremonies of Mother Maddalena Morano.

From 7 to 9 November he presided at a meeting of the CISI, held at the Sacred Heart, Rome. The meeting examined the situation of the Provincial Chapters being held in preparation for the GC24. Multiple and satisfactory efforts had been made to contact lay people, a significant use was being made of the outlines that had been issued, and there was urgent need for a rethinking of the territorial arrangement of

provinces belonging to the CISI.

A commitment was made to provide a more qualified representation in the AGIDAE, in agreement with the FMA and their own candidature. Fr Gianni Mazzali was subsequently elected as the CISI representative.

Concerning schools and professional training, it was found that the quality of the formative process for directive personnel as planned at national level was proving satisfactory. The mutual advantage was emphasized of a mature collaboration with the FMA, especially in view of the drafting and assessment of a National Educational Plan for Salesian Schools. It was hoped that a "national conscience" among workers in salesian schools would be fostered by the early setting up of a new schools-sector in the CNOS. The decision was endorsed to support the 'first level' of professional formation by specializing our service to 'poor' children in various ways.

The Rector Major's Delegate for Poland and Eastern Europe

Fr Augustyn Dziedziel went on 2 August to Auschwitz in the Province of Cracow for the change of Provincial, and on the same day had a meeting with the provincials of Poland and the Eastern Circumscription. Subsequently he left with Fr

Zdzisław Weder for Kaunas, Lithuania, to meet Mother Marinella, FMA Superior General, who was making a first visit to Lithuania and Russia. He was also present at the professions of the FMA at Kaunas and Moscow.

While in Kaunas he held a meeting with the Lithuanian confreres to introduce to them Fr Weder as the first Superior of the Eastern Circumscription, and to study the present situation of the Congregation in the country. The two then moved on to Bielorrussia and later to Moscow to visit Abp. Francesco Colasuonno, Apostolic Nuncio in Russia, and the Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

On 15 August in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Moscow, which has been entrusted to the Salesians, Fr Dziedziel presided at the ceremony for the official inauguration of the Eastern Circumscription with headquarters in Moscow and Fr Weder as its first Superior. He then took part in the first meeting of the Council of the new Circumscription and helped in a study of the Council's duties and in the planning of its work. He was also able to review the work of repair and adaptation being carried out on the building at Oktiabrskij, near Moscow, destined for the Novitiate.

In the following days Fr Dziedziel went back to Bielorrussia to bring

the new Superior up to date with regard to the development of salesian work there. The two then returned to Poland where Fr Dziedziel received the first professions in the Novitiate of Kopiec and Fr Weder received those of the thirteen novices of the Eastern Circumscription in the Novitiate of Czerwinsk.

Next they went to Ukraine to get to know the situation of salesian work there, and to meet the confreres of both the Latin and the Greek-Catholic Byzantine-Ukrainian rite. They then continued visits to the foundations in Russia.

From 26 to 30 September Fr Dziedziel accompanied the Economist General on his visit to the foundations in Lithuania and Bielorrussia, where they also had a meeting with Fr Oerder, head of the Salesian Procure of Bonn.

From 3 to 10 October he took part in the Team Visit to Poland and the Eastern Circumscription (cf. earlier reports above). The theme of the meetings was "*Qualification and significance*". Present, in addition to the Superiors, were the Provincials, Provincial Councils, and the National Delegates for various sectors of activity.

On 22 November at Lad Fr Dziedziel presided at a meeting of the Provincial Conference of Poland on the theme of vocational aimation in the Salesian Family, and on the following day at a meeting of the Pres-

idency of the same Conference on some present problems of the Congregation in the same country.

The rest of his time was employed in visits of animation to nine formation communities, and on 29 November he returned to Rome.

The Secretary General

Continuing his task of animation of Provincial Secretaries, begun in the first part of the year (cf. AGC 349, p.71), Fr Maraccani organized during October two further meetings with the Secretaries of America.

The first was at Los Teques in Venezuela from 3 to 7 October, with the Provincial Secretaries of the Pacific-Caribbean Region plus those of the two Provinces of the USA.

The second, from 10 to 14 October, was at Brasilia in the Province of Belo Horizonte, for the Secretaries of the Atlantic Region (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay).

As was the case with earlier meetings, these two proved to be valuable updating occasions for the Secretaries' work in the service of the Provinces and the Congregation, and at the same time for getting to know each other and for the exchange of experiences. Here once again, together with a review of the fundamental elements of our particular law, were considered the more important aspects of the organization

of the Provincial Office, with particular reference to the documentation of the life and mission of the communities and provinces, and to its preservation in the archives.

The Secretary General also availed himself of the opportunity to visit some other provinces and communities of Latin America. On his way to Venezuela he made brief stops in the two Mexican Provinces: Mexico (24-25 September) and Guadalajara (26-27 September), and subsequently in Santo Domingo in the Antilles Province (29 September - 1 October).

After the meetings with the Secretaries he made brief visits to Campo Grande and Recife, two Brazilian provinces which are this year celebrating the centenary of the arrival of the Salesians in their respective territories (Mato Grosso and the North-East of Brazil).

In all the provinces through which he passed Fr Maraccani was able to observe at first hand something of the rich salesian reality, and especially to meet with the novices in various novitiates and with the young confreres in formation communities.

After returning to Rome, he was able to take part at Catania and Ali Terme, with members of the General Council, in the joyful celebrations for the beatification of Mother Maddalena Morano.

5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

5.1 Interventions of the Rector Major at the Synod of Bishops

The following is the text of the two interventions made by the Rector Major – one in the assembly and the other submitted in writing – at the Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life.

5.1.1 Communion between consecrated and lay persons

Intervention in the assembly, 4 October 1994

Holy Father, zealous Pastors – Cardinals and Bishops –, Brothers and Sisters:

It has fallen to my lot to be the first to speak in the name of the Union of Superiors General.

I am interpreting my own feelings, the will of my colleagues, and of all men and women Religious and of consecrated persons, in thanking the Holy Father for having chosen the theme of Consecrated Life for the synodal work of this highly competent assembly.

We are most grateful, your Holiness.

It will be for us a solemn commitment of benefit to all the People of God and in that sense we ask also for the continued and generous

intercession of the holy Founder Francis, whom we commemorate today.

My purpose is to focus attention on the importance of communion between Consecrated and Lay persons in sharing the spirit and mission of Founders and Foundresses.

I offer three elements for reflection.

1. *Distinction and proximity between the “secular dimension” of the Church and the “secular character” of the lay faithful.*

In n. 15 of the Apostolic Exhortation “Christifideles laici” there is a reference to a fruitful distinction, and at the same time a vital proximity, between the “secular dimension” of the Church and the “secular character” of the lay faithful. All the People of God have a secular dimension; it indicates the insertion of the Church’s mission in the complex secularity of the world.

Such a dimension is realized, as was well recognized by Paul VI, “in different forms through her members”. Every Institute of Consecrated Life achieves this in accordance with its own particular charism. The lay faithful achieve it with the “secular character” which is “prop-

erly and particularly theirs"; for them the 'world' becomes, from within, the setting and project of their own Christian vocation.

Among the Institutes of Consecrated Life some are more distinguished than others by a secular dimension which is particularly accentuated and applied to specific sectors of human development.

The relationship between this secular dimension and the secular characteristic of those lay people committed particularly in the social and cultural sectors is not to be considered as a fortuitous juxtaposition, but should rather be seen as a vocational invitation for a specific evangelical and practical involvement, so that the "spirit of the beatitudes" which constitutes the witness of consecrated persons (cf. LG 31) may become also the spiritual setting of the life and activity of those same lay faithful.

The evangelical spirit of Founders and Foundresses was a gift to the Church, so that in the various sectors of secularity the Church would be able to realize its specific mission with a spirituality particularly well suited and incisive.

From this standpoint we see opening before us a horizon of greater evangelical vitality and apostolic expansion.

The Synod should exhort to a more intense flourishing of this kind of common involvement, exhorting

consecrated persons to intensify their spirituality and to be open to a more courageous formative capacity.

2. *'Mission' and 'Works' in Institutes of Apostolic Life.*

We must recognize that the "mission" of an Institute of Apostolic Life is more extensive than its "works"; mission and works are not the same thing. The spirit of a Founder or Foundress may be present and active in the Church beyond the bounds of the works of an Institute; if this were always realized it would lead, in fact, to apostolic advantages.

And so there emerges for consecrated persons the apostolic perspective of groups of the lay faithful who, with the same spirit, would foster evangelically a specific sector of secularity.

In this connection it will be necessary that these groups of lay people be animated and duly supported by those consecrated, who have the prime responsibility for the charism of the Founder or Foundress.

In this way the local Church will obtain in a more abundant way the fruits of the charism of the Spirit through the presence of communities of consecrated persons who become the "animating nuclei" of a greater number of committed laity.

The involvement of lay people in the spirit and mission of Institutes

of Consecrated Life will cause to shine out more clearly the relevance and usefulness of foundational charisms for the new evangelization.

3. *The ecclesiology of the exchange of gifts.*

The involvement of the faithful will be a source of mutual enrichment to both lay and consecrated persons through the fertility stemming from a mutual interchange of gifts.

In fact consecrated and lay persons – in mutual complementarity – would appear as two poles in a living and flourishing interrelationship: on the part of the consecrated there would be the gift of the 'source of the charism' with its eschatological force, and on the part of the laity the gift of the 'challenge of the world in daily life' from the standpoint of the baptismal commitment.

The first pole provides a horizon of spiritual transcendence with the richness of the beatitudes as regards specific secular commitments.

The second pole offers a particular competence which promotes the mission from within the same secular sectors.

From this interchange there arises almost spontaneously both evangelical authenticity and practical creativity, so much required nowadays by the new evangelization: it enlivens a new Christian

awareness of complementary commitment to previously untried experiences, opening up new ways to a more efficacious mission of the Church; the challenges of the present world, in fact, are significantly different from those of the recent past.

In an ecclesiology of exchange of gifts, the charism of a large number of Founders and Foundresses becomes an apostolic gift on a larger scale; instead of being enclosed in the Institutes of Consecrated Life, such charisms become more widely open and thus give rise to bigger "spiritual Families" for the Church.

For these and other reasons I consider that we should promote a true ecclesial involvement of charismatic communion between consecrated and lay persons; among the People of God may grow profuse "spiritual Families" modelled on the great Founders and Foundresses raised up by the Spirit of the Lord for the evangelization of the world.

5.1.2 Concerning "Brothers" and the service of authority in Consecrated Life

Written intervention submitted on 12 October

In the interventions of the Synodal Fathers and in one of the "auditions" very positive statements were made concerning the figure and advancement of the "Brother" in con-

secrated life at the present day.

Some have insisted also that they should have access to the service of authority in all male Institutes. Now in many Institutes this is no problem. But when dealing explicitly with so-called "clerical" Institutes, there appeared in some interventions arguments that were somewhat confused and generic, and had a sociological leaning. It would seem necessary, therefore, to clarify the problem so that the charismatic identity of the members of such Institutes may be respected.

It will be convenient to acquire an objective and clearer vision of the following aspects:

- the real meaning of Consecrated Life in the Church;
- the variety of charisms, each with different requirements;
- the specific role of the "mission" in every charism, which specifies its identity;
- a more careful and deeper consideration of the special figure of the priest-religious;
- authority as a service to the members in line with the will of the Founder;
- the impropriety of extending to all Institutes a question which is a problem for only some of them;
- the need for opportune research in certain sectors to find a more suitable terminology.

I offer a brief explanation of each of these points.

1. *The real meaning of consecrated life*

The Council declares: "This form of life (of those who profess the evangelical counsels) has its own place in relation to the divine and hierarchical structure of the Church; not, however, as though it were a kind of middle way between the clerical and lay conditions of life. Rather it should be seen as a form of life to which some Christians, both clerical and lay, are called by God so that they may enjoy a special gift of grace in the life of the Church and may contribute, each in his own way, to the saving mission of the Church" (LG 43).

Hence it is not objective to affirm that consecrated life is of "lay" origin, nor is it valid to support such an affirmation with quantitative statistics.

Consecrated life proceeds from the very essence of the Church's holiness.

2. *The variety of charisms, each with different requirements*

Every charism has its specific requirements; they determine its particular character and are expressed also in original structures, ordained to manifest, defend and promote the authenticity of the particular character.

Thus one can think of so-called "lay" Institutes with priests among

their members, but the priests cannot become Superiors; or on the other hand co-called "clerical" Institutes are conceivable with among their members "brothers" who, however, are not called to become superiors.

It is not a matter of a lack of juridical equality, but of a charismatic manner of membership. It goes without saying that this implies equality of formation, responsibility and collaboration for all members.

3. *The specific role of the "mission" in every charism, which specifies its identity*

The mission is a constitutive dimension of the consecration and specifies its expression in the Church. Now if consecrated life can proceed equally from the "lay" condition and the "clerical" condition, every Institute can have a mission with particular requirements and hence also with specifically priestly demands.

Here special weight attaches to the will of the Founder. And so in such Institutes the structures of service must harmonize with the authenticity of the particular charism for the greater good of all the members.

4. *A more careful and deeper consideration of the special figure of the priest-religious*

Even a charism of the so-called

"clerical" type has its roots in baptismal initiation. This fundamental sacrament of birth in Christ does not in itself make us "lay persons" but "Christ's faithful" who, by later choice can become "Christ's lay faithful", "Christ's ordained faithful", or "Christ's consecrated faithful". The baptismal root enriches each one for enlivening the subsequent option.

In this way the religious-priest receives from his baptismal root a continuous spiritual influx which enables him to realize his ministerial commitments in a more dynamic way.

Rightly does St Augustine distinguish between "being a bishop for you" and "being a Christian with you": the one is a particular responsibility of service, the other is a grace of vitality and authenticity in the following of Christ.

Hence baptismal radicality is not to be identified with the lay state, because it is proper to every kind of consecrated life.

5. *Authority as a service in line with the mind of the Founder*

Religious authority is not the power of an employer or landlord or a dignity of higher class, but a service especially of animation and spiritual direction (personal and communal – cf. MR 13) to advance the Founder's charism. In the clerical congregations it attends, as the

dynamic centre of everything, to the pastoral charity of the community and its members; it has a special relationship therefore with the sacrament of Order, of which pastoral charity is precisely the specific grace.

The "brothers" in these Institutes have many important offices to fill, including those of administration and direction, which they must be able to realize, however, in a common and harmonious atmosphere of pastoral concern.

To make access to the service of authority depend on a generic concept of "juridical equality" would be to prescind from the particular characteristic of each charism.

6. *The impropriety of extending to all Institutes a question which is a problem for only some of them*

There are some Institutes which have become "clerical" in the course of time but which were not so at their origins, and which unfortunately as regards "brothers" have in a certain way fostered a kind of rigid class distinction. In them the promoting of the formation and role of the "brothers" is a positive factor and the possibility of the exercise of authority by them is defended.

Every Institute must restudy the foundations of its own charism and make its decision in fidelity to its own Founder and its own sound traditions. To want to extend to all

whatever may be a better expression of the proper characteristics of one or even several Institutes, would be to seek to generalize a particular characteristic.

The Synod is called upon to confront general and universal aspects of consecrated life and not to solve eventual problems of individual Institutes.

7. *The need for opportune research in certain sectors to find a more suitable terminology*

– A first case is that of the term "lay". In LG 31, and later in the Apostolic Exhortation "Christifideles laici", the term emphasizes the secular characteristic which is proper to such members of the People of God; in this sense it cannot be applied to consecrated "brothers".

But the use of "lay" to indicate particular members and Institutes of consecrated life is still common; it will be necessary in this case to make it clear that it refers only to consecrated members who have not received the sacrament of Order. Certainly the simultaneous use of two meanings can lead to ambiguity and also to divisions. It would be desirable to avoid using the term in its second meaning and to find one more appropriate.

– A second case is that of the term "clerical". This word, as commonly used, has a negative implication which makes it better to avoid

it. Juridically it has a well defined technical significance, but outside specialized contexts it provokes distance and at the same time the very opposite of the positive aspects it should indicate. Instead of speaking of "clerical" Institutes it would seem better to use some other terminology which would indicate the dedication of the Institute to an explicitly pastoral mission with specific priestly characteristics.

— A third case could be that of the term "*consecrated*". When one recalls the fundamental "consecration" in Baptism, and others in Confirmation, in Order and also in Matrimony, it would seem inopportune to reserve the term in practice solely for those who make profession of the evangelical counsels. It will certainly be necessary to explain the meaning of this term after the Council, and on the other hand it is not easy to find a substitute term which would avoid the inconveniences.

5.2 The beatification of Mother Maddalena Morano

On Saturday 5 November 1994, in the town of Catania in the course of his pastoral visit, Pope John Paul II solemnly beatified our Salesian Sister and Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, Mother Maddalena Catarina Morano, who was at the origins of the implanting of the Daugh-

ters of Mary Help of Christians in Sicily. It was a great event, not only for the Institute of the FMA but for the entire Salesian Family, who in Mother Morano have a new and shining example of holiness. Present at the festivities around the Holy Father and the Church of Catania were several members of the General Council, representing the Rector Major who unfortunately could not be present, the FMA Mother General with her Council, many Salesians of Sicily, and numerous representatives of the different groups of the Salesian Family.

During his homily the Holy Father emphasized some aspects which had characterized the new Beata. "Sister Maddalena", he recalled, addressing himself particularly to the faithful of Sicily, "carried out on this Island an intense and fruitful spiritual and educational activity for the benefit of your people. For long years she made herself one of you, becoming the model of faithful service to God and to her brothers and sisters". Calling her a "born teacher", the Pope indicated her as example of an educator in the way of the love of God and her neighbour, after the example of St John Bosco and St Mary Domenica Mazzarello. "Her exhortations enlighten, comfort and encourage: 'Think as Jesus would have thought; pray as Jesus would have prayed; act as Jesus would have ac-

ted.' This is what Mother Maddalena used to say and this is how she lived".

The Rector Major, in a letter to Mother General which she read at the festive luncheon after the beatification, after offering to her and to the Institute his warmest congratulations on the great event, wrote: "In the recent Synod on the consecrated life there emerged as the first and most pressing challenge that of a massive relaunching of the spirituality proper to each charism; in fact consecrated life belongs intimately to the life and holiness of the Church. Blessed Maddalena Morano proclaims dynamically to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and to all the members of the Salesian Family what is the genuine style of apostolic spirituality cultivated at the school of Don Bosco. It is my earnest hope and prayer that this spiritual event may move individuals and communities to an ever more convinced and practical testimony to 'da mihi animas'".

On the following day, Sunday 6

November, at Ali Terme, the place so dear to Mother Maddalena Morano and where her body is preserved, Salesians joined Daughters of Mary Help of Christians to pray and celebrate in festive fashion. Fr Giovanni Fedrigotti, Regional Councillor for Italy and the Middle East, presided at the Eucharist and traced out in his homily the salient points of salesian apostolic sanctity which Mother Morano passes on to the entire Family of Don Bosco.

In the week following the beatification the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, with the participation as always of the Salesian Family, organized a three-day series of celebrations at Rome (9-11 November). Worthy of particular note were the academic function organized with the collaboration of the "Auxilium" Faculty with the title: "The prophetic paths of Maddalena Morano", and the solemn celebration in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians at the Tuscolano, with His Eminence Cardinal Pio Laghi presiding.

5.3 Our dead confreres (1994 – 4th 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 AGUIRRE ARIAS José	Cumbayá	05.06.94	87	ECU
P ALFONSO Domingo	Puerto San Julián	10.09.94	77	ABA
L ANTELO Manuel	Montevideo	30.11.94	78	URU
P ARDUSSO Francesco	Madras	11.11.94	83	INM
P BAJIC Mirko	Rijeka	14.10.94	72	CRO
P BARON Marco Antonio	Medellín	09.09.94	54	COM
<i>Fu Ispettore per 4 anni</i>				
P BARTEN Jan	Remouchamps	30.11.94	78	BES
P BASSANO Angelo	Genova	12.11.94	72	ILT
L BATTEZZATI Natale	Campo Grande	29.10.94	94	BCG
P BATTEZZATI Pietro	Roma	16.12.94	94	IRO
P BERTOLDI João	Silvânia	01.12.94	87	BBH
P BEZZEG József	Budapest	15.10.94	80	UNG
L BIASIN Emilio	Albarè (VR)	11.12.94	72	IVO
P BRIZIO Miguel	Córdoba	05.11.94	87	ACO
P BRIZZOLA Mario	Bahía Blanca	01.12.94	87	ABB
P BROCCARDO Alfredo	Los Angeles	28.09.94	90	SUO
P CALLEJAS CALDERON Francisco	Madrid	16.11.94	76	SMA
E CARRETTO Pietro	Banpong	16.11.94	82	—
<i>Fu Ispettore per 3 anni, Vicario Apostolico di Ratchaburi per 14 anni, Vescovo nella stessa sede per 4 anni e Vescovo di Surat Thani per 19 anni</i>				
P CASTELLINO Cesare Bartolomeo	Roma	30.11.94	84	IRO
P CIBIN Pietro	Este	03.11.94	71	IVO
L COLLI Giuseppe	Cuneo	09.10.94	86	ICP
P COLUSSI Antonio	Cuiabá	27.08.94	82	BCG
L CONTE Andrea	Castellammare di Stabia	17.09.94	81	IME
P COSTA João Batista	Recife	28.10.94	74	BRE
P DA ROS Giuseppe	Guatemala	17.10.94	89	CAM
P DERMOTA Bruno Walter	Trstenik	28.09.94	79	SLO
P DZIERSON Engelbert	Bendorf	01.11.94	84	GEK
P EVINIC Jozef	Myjava	04.09.94	81	SLK
P FANZOLATO Juan Luis	San Juan	08.11.94	89	ACO
L FARRONATO Virginio	Torino	02.11.94	75	ICP
L FERNANDES Castellino	Shillong	29.08.94	65	ING
P FILIPPELLI Umberto	Castellammare di Stabia	04.12.94	78	IME
P GHIRARDELLI Tommaso	Campo Grande	30.11.94	81	BCG
P GIORDANO Salvatore	San Cataldo	09.12.94	78	ISI
P GONDEK Franciszek	Dabrowa Tarnowska	23.10.94	82	PLE
P GRACEFFA Giuseppe	Caltanissetta	01.10.94	84	ISI

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
L KRESE Alojzij	Celje	29.09.94	63	SLO
P L'HOSTIS Pierre	Toulon	26.08.94	83	FPA
P LOPEZ JIMENEZ Manuel	Sevilla	17.09.94	65	SSE
P LUCETTI Giovanni Battista	Borgo San Martino	26.10.94	77	ICP
<i>Fu Ispettore per 6 anni</i>				
P MAIO Salvatore	Catania	15.11.94	75	ISI
P MARTON Béla	Budapest	12.10.94	84	UNG
P MASCHIO Luca	Makuyu (Kenya)	19.09.94	31	AFE
P MASSA Michele	Roma	16.11.94	79	IRO
P McVEIGH Joseph	Sunbury	20.11.94	78	GBR
L MESA Eusebio	Montevideo	12.10.94	60	URU
P MOLINA MAS Vicente	Elche	06.11.94	91	SVA
P MONTERO GUTIERREZ Fco. Javier	El Bodón-Salamanca	13.09.94	99	SSE
P NATALI Remo	Trelew	31.10.94	71	ABA
P NIHOJARN Marcel	Caen	25.10.94	64	FPA
P OCAÑA PEÑA Julián	Madrid	26.11.94	80	SMA
P OTTOLINI Lorenzo	Sondrio	23.09.94	66	ILE
P PEA Giovanni Battista	Bologna	15.11.94	75	ILE
P PETRIČIĆ Raúl	Buenos Aires	06.09.94	78	ABA
P PIXA Hieronim	Oświęcim	26.09.94	83	PLE
P PLANELLO Gonzalo	San Justo	14.09.94	54	ABA
P POLAK Karel	Olomouc	26.10.94	81	CEP
P REUMERS Henri	Boortmeerbeek (Belgio)	17.11.94	77	AFC
<i>Fu Ispettore per 6 anni</i>				
P RIPOLL Carlos	Buenos Aires	17.11.94	85	ABA
P RIVAS FLORES Adrián	San Salvador	22.10.94	70	CAM
P RIVERA AROCA Celestino	Sevilla	06.11.94	64	SSE
<i>Fu Ispettore per 6 anni</i>				
E RIVERA DAMAS Arturo	San Salvador	26.11.94	71	—
<i>Fu Vescovo Ausiliare di San Salvador per 17 anni, Vescovo di Santiago de Maria per 6 anni e Arcivescovo di San Salvador per 11 anni</i>				
P ROCCARO Gino	Cochabamba	04.12.94	52	BOL
L ROSSI Mario	Calamba-Laguna	08.09.94	81	FIN
P SILVA Quintiliano	São Paulo	21.11.94	87	BSP
L SPIRI Enzo	Torino	12.11.94	70	ICP
L TOGNINI Mario	Varazze	02.10.94	81	ILT
P VACHAN Luis	Vila Do Conde	22.10.94	85	POR
P VALKENBORGH Jozef	Leuven	25.11.94	83	BEN
P VILA RODICIO Vitorino	Tambacounda (Senegal)	14.11.94	58	SLE
P VISALLI Mariano	Messina	24.09.94	84	ISI
P WAREING Peter	Bexhill	17.11.94	74	GBR
L WESSELING Henny	Leusden	11.12.94	66	OLA
L WOLFE Anthony	Suffern-New York	01.10.94	81	SUE
L ZAFFARONI Pietro	Torino	10.10.94	82	ICP
L ZAZURIAN Paolo	Civitanova Marche	28.08.94	83	IAD
P ŻOŁYNIAK Edward	Kraków	28.11.94	78	PLS
P ZURBRIGGEN Carlos	Mendoza	30.10.94	80	ACO



