



# acts

**of the general council**

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**year LXXVIII january-march 1997**

**N. 358**

official organ  
of animation  
and communication  
for the  
salesian congregation

Direzione Generale  
Opere don Bosco  
Roma





# acts

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

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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Editrice S.D.B.  
Edizione extra commerciale  
Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco  
Via della Pisana, 1111  
Casella Postale 18333  
00163 Roma

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Tipografia: Istituto Salesiano Pio XI - Via Umbertide, 11 - 00181 Roma - Tel. 78.27.819  
*Finito di stampare: Gennaio 1997*

## THE SALESIAN FAMILY IS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD

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Rome, 1 January 1997  
*Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God*

My dear confreres,

I am writing to you at the beginning of the year 1997, and I pray that it may be a happy and fruitful one in the presence of the Lord experienced in community life and in pastoral obligations.

I like to think of you as being intensely committed to the application of the GC24, which represents for all of us our programme of work for the next six years. This is the impression I get from the news reaching me from the Provinces.

We too in the General Council have tried to concentrate our attention on certain points which we consider the essential parts of the Chapter's guidelines<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> cf. *Programme of the Rector Major and his Council*, in "Guidelines and Policies", pag. 44

The first is the *new relationship* to be established, in an organic manner, *between Salesians and laity*, based on convictions we have made our own and translated into practice.

This reflection gave me the idea, which we discussed in Council, of taking up with you once again the theme of the *Salesian Family*. It is the environment in which the rapport between Salesians and laity acquires greater significance. From the depth of such rapport in fact the Family depends, in all its richness and multiplicity.

I am also prompted in the same direction by a singular anniversary: the project of the Salesian Family, in the form we know it today, is *twenty-five years old*. It was proposed, in fact, by the SGC20, of which the documents were consigned to the Congregation in January of 1972. We may therefore look back on it synthetically, see how it began, follow its development, observe its present state, and together discern its potentials which are still hidden, the new openings to be explored, the new expressions to be created.

I was also encouraged by the initiative of the FMA in their General Chapter to institute a role for the Salesian Family. This "new" presence of communal responsibility in the scenario of the Family will not only give to the latter a quantitative development but will also add that extra quality which they bring with them as women who are both salesian and consecrated.

This is precisely the time therefore for a pause for reflection and for a new beginning, with a broader perspective and more general involvement.

To this, on the other hand, we are prompted by the GC24 itself when it outlines a broader subject responsible for the salesian mission, which it is up to us to convoke, make aware and follow up.

And so by putting forward once again the topic of the Salesian Family I am not taking up a 'particular' theme of the GC24, but rather suggesting a perspective of synthesis which can be a key to its adequate understanding. The Salesian Family is going to



be our main theatre of operations just as, in times past, was the salesian community or the field of education.

## **A history open to the future**

The idea and fact of the Salesian Family go back to Don Bosco himself and form part of his charism. For this reason it will be of help to look at his spirituality, which has in the mission its source and most expressive manifestation.

It is striking to read over again the description of the life of the Oratory in its first years. Don Bosco is alone with a mass of youngsters. His collaborators, scared by the amount of work involved and still more by the kind of lad who was the object of his pastoral charity, abandon him. But his will to gather around him youngsters and adults never diminishes. He sees the importance of gathering forces for the mission entrusted to him. Rather than give up in the face of difficulties he makes fresh efforts. In the work of the Oratories he involves other persons from different ways of life, moved by a common desire to meet the problems of young people at risk. They include men and women, professional persons and others of modest means, politicians and ecclesiastics, catechists and even those who could help with domestic chores.

With the foundation of three groups, Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and Cooperators – he gave substance to his original intuition in line with what the Church and civil society seemed to be calling for in those days.

The Congregation has carefully preserved Don Bosco's intuition and developed its realizations. One need do no more than recall the periodic 'renewal' and extension of the Cooperators, the consolidation and wider range of the Past-pupils Association, and the birth of the Institute of the Don Bosco Volunteers.

Around the initial nucleus there grew new expressions of the salesian spirit, and the rapport between the groups varied to

some extent without detriment to the single spiritual association.

And so we reached the era of Vatican II. Called upon to review its own origins in the light of the renewal asked for by the Church, the Salesian Congregation set about acquiring a new awareness that “present-day needs cause the problem of unity and communion to be posed in fresh terms among the groups which look to Don Bosco as their founder”<sup>2</sup>

I consider the statements of the SGC indispensable for an understanding of the history and continuation of the undertaking, and so I quote in its entirety the text to which I am referring, so as to offer some guidelines based on the principles mentioned and which now must be updated. We are dealing with an “act of refounding”, almost a constitutive decree listing and linking the facts at the foundation of the Salesian Family.

“The background to the activity of the Salesian Family today and of which its members should be aware, consists in this:

- the Salesian Family is an *ecclesial reality* which becomes a sign and witness of the vocation of its members through their special mission according to the spirit of Don Bosco;

- in line with the Church’s teaching about herself, the Salesian Family is an *expression of communion* consisting of different ways of serving the people of God and integrating various vocations, so as to show forth the richness of the Founder’s charism;

- the Salesian Family develops an *original spirituality*, charismatic by nature, which enriches the whole body of the Church and becomes a particular model of Christian pedagogy.

The ‘Salesian Family’ therefore, viewed within the mystery of the Church, must define its identity, its mission and its form, in the light of the essential dimensions of the Church. This requires that we speak of vocation, mission, witness, communion,

<sup>2</sup> cf. SGC 158

historicity and permanent renewal as being fundamental components of this family.

The extraordinary extent and complexity of *youth problems today* stimulate our zeal to accentuate the *redistribution* of the forces at work in this sector, and to improve their mutual *collaboration*. This is not simply a question of a 'strategy of action' at a human level, but of building the future together in the light of the Gospel, in the dynamism of Christian hope under the impulse of the action of God who is constructing his Kingdom in human history"<sup>3</sup>.

The adoption of such an attitude gave rise to a project, and the efforts to realize it have marked the story of recent decades. The groups have been surveyed; those already linked with us have been renewed, consolidated and extended, while other groups have made formal application for membership, and still others have come into being in the fruitful period which has followed the Council. The combination has begun to function with new forms of communication: more frequent, more organic, more substantial and concerted, more desired and sought after. And so the reality of the Salesian Family has entered the awareness of the Congregation and of the groups linked with it, and has acquired greater visibility. Evidence of this are a vast literature and many initiatives at provincial and world level.

Gradually too have been renewed other aspects of our life, with the Family emerging more clearly, and with greater responsibility and new possibilities. In this way the educative and pastoral project (GC21) took it for granted and called on it for a wider and more efficacious action for the evangelization of the young. And for the journey of faith of these same young people the GC23 considered it indispensable that the Salesians dedicate themselves to the animation of the Salesian Family together with the educative community.

Initially we may have felt almost uncomfortable when we

<sup>3</sup> SGC 159-160

speaking of the Salesian Family, but with the passing of the years, the deeper examination of the idea and positive experience have made it familiar to us, and today in fact we cannot do without it.

But we need to pass on from declarations of intent and rich doctrinal assertions to a practical commitment which is more open and creative. Fruitful questions have in fact emerged and unexpected perspectives have been opened up regarding the development of the Salesian Family. They arise from the lived experience of recent years, from accumulated reflection and particularly from the discussions in the last General Chapter.

### **The new ecclesial sensitivity**

The journey made by the Salesian Family is inserted in that of the Church itself and reflects it. To understand what we are asked for at the present day and what lies ahead of us in the near future, we must look at the great orientations which are emerging in the Church. I will recall only those most relevant to our theme and I do so rapidly just so that you may have them in mind.

John Paul II is leading the whole ecclesial community to the frontier of the *new evangelization*. A careful reading of his teaching reveals its content and more urgent aspects. The new evangelization implies a presence of believers, able to bear witness to certain indispensable values which are especially at risk in today's world: the spiritual dimension, ethics, life, love, the sense of God<sup>4</sup>; it is an integral commitment of the Christian community to the proclamation of Christ, to human advancement and to the inculturation of the Gospel.

The Bishops' Synods and the various Episcopal Conferences have emphasized the urgent need for a more responsible involvement of the laity in this project of evangelization and in

<sup>4</sup> cf. GC24 199



the animation of Christian communities; it is a need which in fact arose spontaneously in the Church's conscience, but has been given a more complete presentation in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici*. This takes us back to some concerns already present in our educative and pastoral project, which have become more pressing today precisely for the greater involvement of the laity in the salesian mission.

I refer, for example, to the exchange that must be fostered among the different vocations; to the urgent need for formation in face of cultural challenges; to the dialogue to be developed between those of different Christian denominations or different religions; to the role of women and their contribution to the work of education, to spirituality and to social life. The GC24 dealt at length with these things, and communities need only to go back and read carefully what it said.

A final reality that I want to bring to your attention is the genesis and spreading of *movements of spirituality*. This is a spontaneous development that cannot be overlooked and which makes us think of the power and ways of the Holy Spirit. Such movements respond to demands of sense, of interior conviction and spiritual life, which spring up powerfully in our secular and technological context. They correspond to the ways of the new evangelization and the emergency of the laity.

A number of these movements are linked with Institutes of consecrated life on whose spirituality they are nourished, or from which they take their origin as an expression of radicality and service, a point recognized by the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*: "The laity are therefore invited to share more intensely in the spirituality and mission of these Institutes. We may say that in the light of certain historical experiences, such as those of the Secular or Third Orders, a new chapter rich in hope has begun in the history of relations between consecrated persons and the laity"<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> VC 54

These and other tendencies should be examined and integrated into our personal and community experience, not as merely casual and separated facts but as a unified sign of a process the Church is inviting us to make.

### **Starting again from the Constitutions**

And so we meet once again within the ecclesial life, so rich in models and incentives, as the Family of Don Bosco to endorse some key points and exploit certain gifts which are an integral part of our vocation.

We feel glad that we inserted in our Constitutions some articles of which the observance has placed us on the crest of the Church's wave, so to speak. They preserve the freshness of such harmony and convince us of the urgent need to realize certain projects so as to respond to the new requirements of the young all over the world.

The Constitutions provide an internal linkage between mission and Family. About our mission they say that:

- we intend "to be in the Church signs and bearers of the love of God for young people, especially those who are poor"<sup>6</sup>;
- "the salesian vocation places us at the heart of the Church and puts us entirely at the service of her mission"<sup>7</sup>;
- "open to the cultural values of the lands in which we work, we try to understand them and make them our own, so as to incarnate in them the message of the Gospel"<sup>8</sup>.

The breadth of the perspective of the mission is quite striking, as also is the depth of its meaning. To it corresponds another original idea of Don Bosco: the combination of forces to be gathered together to realize such a mission in all its exten-

<sup>6</sup> C 2

<sup>7</sup> C 6

<sup>8</sup> C 7

sion and in a characteristic spirit. This is expressed in art.5 of the Constitutions, which is one of those texts which, once we have meditated on it, should remain permanently engraved in our memory.

“Don Bosco inspired the start of a vast movement of persons who in different ways work for the salvation of the young.

He himself founded not only the Society of St Francis de Sales but also the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Association of Salesian Cooperators. These live in communion with each other, share the same spirit and, with specifically distinct vocations, continue the mission he began. Together with these groups and with others born later we make up the Salesian Family.

Within this family, by the will of the Founder, we have particular responsibilities: to preserve unity of spirit and to foster dialogue and fraternal collaboration for our mutual enrichment and greater apostolic effectiveness.

Our past pupils are also members by reason of the education they have received, and the bonds are closer when they commit themselves to take an active part in the salesian mission in the world”<sup>9</sup>.

Having taken part in the research on the Salesian Family which preceded the drafting of the text we now have in our hands, I remember this inspiration which emerged in the SGC as a gift from God for the renewal of the Congregation. It was expressed by the Rector Major, Fr Luigi Ricceri, in presenting the Acts of that Chapter:

“And here we face another great signpost on the road to renewal in the years immediately ahead.

It is a matter of urgency to give back to our communities the sense of their being a nucleus powerful enough to animate and invigorate other spiritual and apostolic forces, and these in

their turn will enrich us with great spiritual and apostolic advantages. This was one of the characteristics of the pastoral charity of Don Bosco”<sup>10</sup>

On these foundations reflection developed in the years following the Special Chapter and was accompanied by progress in practice. The circular letters of Fr Egidio Viganò on the Salesian Family as a whole and on its different Groups gave it support and backing. They constitute a patrimony on which one can draw and a point of reference for further developments.

### **The Salesian Family: constitutive principles**

In my meetings with confreres and communities I am often asked questions about the nature of the Salesian Family: *what is it, what does it include, what are the criteria for broadening or restricting it?* The past twenty-five years have provided us with clarifications and certainty in this regard.

But new questions continually arise as the Congregation meets new situations in its work to extend Don Bosco’s charism to new fields of activity and to new territories. We must reply to them in response to the principle of creative fidelity.

By now the conviction exists that Don Bosco, led by the Holy Spirit, intended to give rise not only to certain Congregations but also to a spiritual Family, in which new members and relationships could be expected in the future. His ecclesial figure is that of the Founder of a vast spiritual and apostolic movement.

The Family which aims to follow him has an identity, and hence criteria or principles which determine its constitution. Let me recall them briefly.

<sup>10</sup> SGC p. XIX



### 1. *It is a single entity*

By the Salesian Family we mean the *sum-total* of the ecclesial groups founded by Don Bosco and those subsequently recognized by the Rector Major as bearers with them of Don Bosco's charism.

This does not imply a higher 'organization' with powers and duties superior to those of the components themselves. What it denotes is that among the latter there is a bond, a relationship, a convergence, a desire for free collaboration; in other words *an ample space for communion* which includes all the groups concerned.

But it is not a matter of indifference to define it as a *single entity* and insist on the significance of the term.

On the one hand the statement recognizes in Don Bosco a fertility which goes beyond the Salesian Congregation. We are not the only ones to approach Don Bosco as our Father. In doing so we are joined by others with whom we must consider ourselves mutually as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, all of us together.

On the other hand, as far as individuals are concerned the expression means that by realizing Don Bosco's charism as part of a group, one becomes a living part of the whole Family. When, as a Salesian, I make my religious profession I become incorporated in the Congregation and, at one and the same time, in force of this membership I become embodied also in Don Bosco's Salesian Family. And what is valid for us Salesians holds good also for all the other groups.

### 2. *An ensemble of groups*

Another consequence of its title is that the Salesian Family is an *ensemble of groups*. The affirmation expresses a condition of an institutional type, but first (and more substantially) it presents a charismatic characteristic which has original mani-

festations in the experience of life and work of the Salesians.

It is in fact a typically salesian method to work on a 'group' basis as regards environments and communities, and not only with individuals or in developing interpersonal relationships. It is a style linked with the family spirit, with our way of 'living the Church' and with the social dimension of the mission.

The Constitutions, in describing the content of our "educative and pastoral service", strongly endorse this charismatic option, which applies not only to our work with the young but to all our interventions: "We introduce the young to the experience of ecclesial life by bringing them into a faith community and helping them to take part in it. To this end we promote and encourage groups and movements to form the members to social and apostolic action. In these the young people grow in the awareness of their own responsibilities and learn to give their irreplaceable contribution to the transformation of the world and to the life of the Church, and so become themselves the first apostles of the young, in direct contact with them"<sup>11</sup>.

As applied to the Salesian Family this means that we must work to form committed groups and not merely to have available persons who are individually involved. We need to verify to what extent there is in us the will to "gather people together" which led Don Bosco to start up so many associations of both young people and adults: the Happy Society, the Sodalities, the Society for mutual help, the Clients of Mary Help of Christians, and various other groups in addition to the better known ones.

Each group operates with autonomy. It becomes the natural environment for the growth of its individual members; it more easily ensures continuity of style and in the projects to be realized. Through the group passes the formative and apostolic content which characterizes us.

From an institutional standpoint, the statement "the Sale-

<sup>11</sup> Cost 35

sian Family of Don Bosco is made up of groups" means that entry into the Family is necessarily linked with membership of a group. The immediate insertion of individuals is not possible. The Salesian Family is not just a matter of friendship, of admiration, of affinity of ideas, of occasional collaboration between individuals. The personal option, the will to share something with others, the desire for membership must mature through lived experiences of spiritual and operative shared responsibility.

Here we find a reply to a whole series of questions that can arise between confreres and lay people: "Why do our collaborators not form part of the Salesian Family?" Or again, "Why do teachers not automatically belong to the Salesian Family?" And finally: "Why are the parents of our youngsters not considered part of the Salesian Family?"

The reply is always the same: "Let them begin to form groups. Let them form associations which guarantee continuity. Let them verify that at the basis of their identity and aggregation there is the salesian 'vocation' (of teacher, collaborator, parent-educator), as we shall say later".

It is not difficult to see that all this, rather than imposing limitations, is a condition for development and a stimulus for a "new associative period" to be made to flourish among us.

### 3. *A necessary element: ecclesiality*

For the purpose of the clarification we are trying to make there is another element we must explain.

I said earlier: By the Salesian Family we mean the sum-total of the ecclesial groups founded by Don Bosco and those subsequently recognized by the Rector Major as bearers of Don Bosco's charism; and I have commented on the *need for being together* and of the *group*.

But it is not sufficient that there be just any kind of group. For membership of Don Bosco's Family *ecclesial recognition* is

needed, i.e. the group must enjoy citizenship in the Church in which it lives and works, and offer to it something congenial to the spirit of Don Bosco in terms of communion and apostolic work.

That could sound like a somewhat discriminatory statement, reductive of the potency of the Salesian Family. But it is a necessary declaration of identity to overcome confusion and avoid current misunderstandings. Certainly it means a limitation of the field of work, the values to be cultivated, and the requirements to be maintained. It must be kept in mind therefore in connection with those who have a tendency to broaden the work indiscriminately, or groups of non-Catholics when the latter ask for full membership of Don Bosco's Family.

But this must be linked up with other considerations, equally important, for the realization of a proper balance.

Firstly: membership is real even when it is still in its early stages. There are groups which are passing through a phase of numerical consolidation, of identity and of organization with a view to ecclesial recognition. They are in this condition with regard to the Salesian Family which accompanies them with interest and supports them.

Secondly: membership does indeed depend on recognition by the Rector Major, but it is also a reality lived by the groups before any formal declaration takes place. The two conditions – lived reality and public recognition – are necessary to avoid membership degenerating into a mere formal fact without even any private desire.

And there is also a third consideration: within the groups and associations recognized by the Church there can be, and in fact there does exist, the presence of persons of different denominations and religions, with consequently a certain ecumenical exchange, with inter-religious collaboration and meetings. This is the case with the association of the past-pupils, and it could arise in other similar aggregations.



#### 4. *A requirement: formally constituted groups.*

The experience of Salesians from a variety of contexts, the reflections of General Chapters, the indications of Rector Majors, which have always filled a role of orientation and definition in the Salesian Family, have supported the requirement that the groups be formally 'instituted', i.e. recognized by the Rector Major by an appropriate declaration.

The Common Identity Card of Don Bosco's Salesian Family declares in art.9: "The Rector Major is the successor of Don Bosco; an unbroken bond links him to the Founder's person and so renders him the fit and proper person to represent him in a living manner at the present day.

He is the centre of unity of the whole family. He provides, in fact, the example and teaching which ensure fidelity to the spirit and elicits participation in the salesian charism. His function is one of animation and advancement which forges unity in the variety of the specific vocations, fidelity to the spirit and the coordination of initiatives. His is not a task of government, but rather one of vital service of animation.

The Rector Major is the father of all who collaborate in Don Bosco's mission. He extends the compass of his fatherliness which is for him, as it was for Don Bosco, an essential characteristic. Fatherliness demands kindness, a sense of responsibility with regard to the growth of each one, guidance in fidelity to the charism, and commitment to the growth of the salesian vocation in all its expressions. 'Your Rector will take care of you and of your eternal salvation', wrote Don Bosco"<sup>12</sup>.

It is not my intention to delay here on a presentation of the practical consequences of these statements. Further indications can be given in future issues of the Acts of the General Council, to enable us to take up and put forward once again the criteria for recognition of membership of the

<sup>12</sup> *Common Identity Card of the Salesian Family*, 9

Salesian Family on the part of groups who may request it.

I feel that the task of helping the Salesian Family to grow in numbers and quality is one entrusted to me by Don Bosco. I am fully convinced (my salesian faith!) of the relevance and fruitfulness of the educative and spiritual experience of our Father and Founder, and of the indispensable function in it of the congruence of talents and forces represented by the Family.

The explicit recognition of the groups, of which I am speaking, helps to the recognition of a Family which is conscious of being one and united, with the same characteristics all over the world. There cannot be different Families of Don Bosco set up according to the criteria of individuals. There will be, and I would say fortunately, many groups which will belong to it. All will declare their assuming of a bond, with the relative consequences, which will ensure unity, convergence, shared responsibility, and missionary commitment in Don Bosco's style.

### **The life of the Salesian Family**

In the first place the Salesian Family must not be considered as a juridical fact. It has its organizational dimension which cannot be disregarded, but it is a *spiritual reality* and must be lived as such. Reflection on this aspect is complementary to the preceding one. It gives to the Family its characteristic features, and it serves also to reply in a comprehensive manner to the questions which the community feel in the work of animation.

How this spiritual dimension is to be configured can be understood from a consideration of some of its particular traits.

#### **1. Vocational participation in Don Bosco's charism**

Those belonging to Don Bosco's Family feel and realize a *vocation*, which is precisely the *salesian vocation*.

In some cases the expression may give rise to perplexity and doubts, to the idea perhaps that it is no more than an association of simply Christian vocations.

It should be made clear therefore that the salesian vocation is not superimposed on and does not take the place of the Christian vocation: quite the contrary. It gives to it a particular tone and intensity. We are salesian to the extent that we are Christian. Our Constitutions say: "We, the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB), form a community of the baptized. Submissive to the bidding of the Spirit we are resolved to carry out the Founder's apostolic plan..."<sup>13</sup>.

We could perhaps give more ardour to the expression if we paraphrased it: "We, the Salesian Family of Don Bosco, form a community of the baptized, gathered together in distinct groups and linked by a common response to the bidding of the Spirit to live in the Church an original spirituality and realize an apostolic plan for the salvation of young people at risk".

The Special General Chapter had introduced us to similar reflections. I quote the relevant text, even though it be difficult to read today, because it ties in with the line of thinking of the GC24 and serves as a bridge over the intervening 25 years and highlights the homogeneous development experienced by the Salesian Family: "In the mind and heart of Don Bosco the Salesian Family is *one!* The original unity of this Family has its root in the existence of a common spirit and mission of total service to the young and to working-class people. Thus it shows itself to be at the higher level a real community in which all the members are integrated according to their proper qualities and specific functions and in the different forms of life possible in the Church. This means, and we must acknowledge it with all clarity, that the salesian vocation is 'salesian' before it is 'religious'. It also means that the salesian charism extends beyond the confines of our Congregation...

This is the reality that can bring about renewal, and we have to think seriously about it if we are to have any hope for a really true and stimulating rebirth..."<sup>14</sup>.

How are we to interpret that word "before", so evident in the above text, in connection with the foundation of the Salesian Family?

It seems to imply in the first place that from a historical standpoint the salesian vocation was manifested in an ensemble of persons before the "Salesian Congregation" was instituted.

It brings to mind also that at the present day salesian experiences are of great variety: consecrated life, the lay state, secular consecration, the male and female condition; but at the base of it all there is a common element. The salesian vocation therefore is more extensive than any one of its individual specifications.

Finally it can indicate for us Salesians an orientation of our service: to dedicate our attention to the Family and work for its growth, and not limit ourselves to looking at the possibilities of the Congregation alone.

How much work there still remains to be done to make salesian communities aware of a perspective so interesting and demanding! How much work of formation must be undertaken to ensure that the different groups, which already form part of the Salesian Family or will do so tomorrow, live an authentically salesian vocation!

The solicitude required today of the salesian community as an animating nucleus consists in helping those who are close to us to discover their own vocation, including their salesian vocation. This means overcoming a certain diffidence in suggesting to our lay collaborators the commitment to spend their lives with Don Bosco.

Here finds a place the reminder frequently expressed in

<sup>14</sup> SGC 739

various documents and meetings, and repeated also in the GC24<sup>15</sup>, of common action for the promoting of salesian vocations. Each individual, after the necessary discernment, will choose his place in the Church of God and how to live out his baptism. But we cannot exclude a priori that under the inspiration of the Spirit he or she may opt for one of the expressions of the salesian vocation: to become an SDB or FMA, make the Cooperator's promise, choose a secular consecrated life, or some other kind of existence in the groups of the Family.

No group, on the other hand, can consider as lost to itself a member who, after due discernment, asks to join an association different from the one in which he has matured through frequent association with it or through education.

## 2. *Diversified sharing in the salesian spirit and spirituality*

The vocation as a personal fact always refers back to a spirit and a spirituality which shape existence. The salesian vocation must refer back to the salesian spirit and spirituality.

I am not going to enter into a theoretical discussion about the difference between spirit and spirituality. We are all aware of the difficulties met with in trying to define it in a precise manner and delimit the two areas.

The Special General Chapter chose to use both terms indifferently. Its commentary on the chapter of the Constitutions dealing with "Salesian spirit" opens with a declaration that for our own practical purposes the two terms are interchangeable.<sup>16</sup>

It endorsed the efforts we are still making. "It must be made clear", it said, "that this document does not intend to give an absolute and definitive presentation of the salesian spirit. It is only an attempt to reply to the request made by all

<sup>15</sup> cf. GC24 143

<sup>16</sup> cf. SGC 85-87

our Congregation. Experience and study will help us to complete our work”<sup>17</sup>.

The spirit, of its nature, is shared in different ways by groups and individuals, because each one perceives it and embraces it in line with his or her own specific vocation. Moreover personal history must be considered: how each one brings to fruition the gifts he has received and what he is acquiring by his own efforts. This applies already to the Christian vocation which is one and only, but is lived in different ways by those who remain celibate and those who marry, by those who become ordained ministers and those who are consecrated in the religious life, and so on.

When referring to the salesian vocation as shared in by all those who belong to the Salesian Family, one can refer to SDBs as Salesians, to FMAs as Salesians, to Cooperators as Salesians, to the Don Bosco Volunteers and all the other possible realizations as Salesians. This is how the diversity of the groups in the same Salesian Family is configured: it is a diversity which gives rise to no privileges but at the same time it exclude the kind of levelling down which would consider equal and uniform everything done under the name salesian.

But through the diversities we share the same salesian spirit. An expression of the Special General Chapter reminds us: “The special character of the ‘salesian spirit’, while it is the foundation of unity, is also the soul of post-conciliar renewal, and not only that of Salesians but of all the members of the ‘Salesian Family’”<sup>18</sup>

The Constitutions or Statutes of the Groups of the Salesian Family present a convergence on the salesian spirit which is striking for its clarity and depth. Evidence of this is the reference to the preventive system. Reason, religion and loving kindness are given as many original touches as are the groups which express them.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* 87

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.* 87

Recognition of this fact is essential, because it transforms affinity into mutual willing acceptance, into shared research, into the desire for exchange, into gifts and offerings. Don Bosco's spirit and salesian spirituality thus become the element which cements communion in the Family. They are at the beginning, the end and at every intermediate stage of its organization.

The most important task of animation which we can carry out as Salesians of Don Bosco is precisely that of communicating his spirit and deepening the spirituality which derives from St Francis de Sales.

The GC24 placed much insistence on the lay dimension of salesian spirituality, considering it a fundamental aspect in the relationship of shared responsibility between ourselves and lay people, in particular those of our Family. We need to give special attention to the treatment of the matter in the Chapter document<sup>19</sup>, and try to put it into daily practice through the methods indicated.

In connection with spirituality particular importance has been given to the motto *Da mihi animas*. To understand its significance and implications is essential for avoiding ambiguities with respect to insistent references to spirituality. All Rector Majors who have dedicated synthetic but stimulating comments to the matter have considered it the centre of enlightenment and the driving force of the salesian spirit. It keeps our spiritual research in a proper equilibrium and locates it in the space where it can be expressed, i.e. the educative and pastoral area.

Fr Egidio Viganò has left us this comment: "It is a matter of a spiritual depth which contemplates God as in love with man: the Father of mercies, the Son who became incarnate to save humanity, the Sanctifying Spirit living among us for the transformation of history.

No sooner does the prayer and contemplation of a salesian

<sup>19</sup> cf. GC24, 89ff.

heart focus on the Mystery, than the heart itself is moved from within its union with God to become fully available for apostolic activity. A similar fixed glance on God's countenance raises in the one who prays an insatiable movement towards pastoral charity.

This is true for consecrated persons, but it holds good too for the other members of the Family, and particularly for the Laity, who should understand and assimilate ever more deeply the originality and richness of such interior convictions. (...)

Hence the need for dedication to spiritual depth, greater sensitivity to the Mystery and more intense attention to pastoral charity"<sup>20</sup>

### 3. *Cultivation of a love of predilection for the young*

Another trait which distinguishes and characterizes the life of Don Bosco's Salesian Family is participation in the mission to the young and the poor.

The formula which indicates the need to work for the integral salvation of the young, and in particular of those who are at risk, contains two references: predilection for the young, and participation in the mission to the young and the poor.

All the groups cultivate a predilection for the young, even though each group, by virtue of its own particular identity, aims at specific categories and has explicit ways of evangelization.

What this predilection is and what it implies we can illustrate with some essential indications without pretending to be exhaustive.

– The first is *to work with an 'oratorian heart'* wherever we are called to realize our own educative and pastoral task. An oratorian heart means being interested in whatever concerns the young; it means attention to those youngsters we come across in our own field of work or in life; it means seeking to

<sup>20</sup> Commentary on the Strenna of 1987: *Together towards 1988 as a vast movement of 'missionary of the young'*.



make contact with them and welcome them so as to help them and communicate the faith to them; it means being concerned for the promotion and safeguarding of their human rights; it means working with others who aim at their growth for a different and better world; it means inserting ourselves at those points where the destiny of children and young people is decided, in small things or great.

Vast and numerous are the opportunities for the expression of an 'oratorian heart'. The youth problem at the present day calls for intervention in the fields of education, social and political life, at both secular and ecclesial level, for prevention, for orientation and for extrication and rescue.

– And then every group and every individual are called to *work explicitly* in one of the typical environments of the salesian mission: *human advancement, education, and evangelization*. We Salesians of Don Bosco express this in certain articles of the Constitutions: art.32 (personal development), art.33 (social and collective development), and art.34 (evangelization and catechesis). The other groups say the same thing in their own words. As animators we are called upon to make clear the collocation and the orientation for the young and the poor of the Salesian Family.

Many possibilities for intervention open up before us if we are all attentive to these perspectives of apostolic commitment. Today we become ever more aware of the impossibility of working efficaciously even in restricted environments unless we foresee a work done in unity and shared responsibility. The Salesian Family therefore must give greater importance to meeting the urgent needs and challenges put in ever increasing forms by the world of youth to adults and educators.

All the groups take up the saying of Don Bosco found in the Companion of Youth from its first edition:<sup>21</sup> "That you are young is enough to make me love you very much".

<sup>21</sup> cf. 1847 edtn. p. 7

The passage from words to reality requires the union of forces.

#### 4. *Titles to membership of the Salesian Family.*

The various indications we have recalled (vocational participation in Don Bosco's charism – diversified sharing of the salesian spirit and spirituality – love of predilection for the young) create the sense of belonging and determine the conditions for it to become public and formal.

It cannot consist in purely interior elements, as for instance empathy, friendship or the desire to be recognized within this Family. It is indispensable to have recourse to other factors, as in fact the General Chapters have done.

Fr Egidio Viganò himself intervened several times on this very point as can be deduced from his circular letters dealing with the Salesian Family, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Cooperators, the Don Bosco Volunteers and the Past-pupils.

The Common Identity Card synthesizes the common feeling of the groups concerning the need and diversity of the titles to membership and the reasons for them>.

"The term *family*", we read, "is continually used in salesian tradition to indicate in a generic manner the bonds existing between the various groups, and is applied in different ways according to the nature of the relationship. This bond or relationship cannot be reduced to mere friendly rapport. It is rather the external expression of an internal and charismatic communion. It helps therefore to understand the different titles to membership of the Salesian Family.

Membership is fostered by a *common spirit*, which leads to a vast and complementary mission to the young and the common people; and by certain *specific and original characteristics* which justify official recognition, which is given through a specific title.

A first title is that of the Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and Cooperators: they are the first three central groups of which Don Bosco is the *founder* in a quite special manner. They were constituted by him as the direct heirs of his work; they are the foundation and point of reference for all the other groups in whatever concerns the spirit, the mission, and the method of pedagogical and pastoral activity.

Another title to membership is that of the various groups of consecrated life which came into existence at a later date through the creative force of the charism. They enrich the common patrimony of the Family with particular charismatic expressions.

Finally there is a third level of membership which comes under the heading *particular titles to membership*. This category is of wider extension than those of the groups previously mentioned, but is equally bound in an objective manner to the vitality and riches of the spiritual legacy of Don Bosco. The unifying energy of his charism is indispensable also at this wider level.

The juridical title to membership is indicated in the letter of the Rector Major granting official recognition in response to requests made by the various groups"<sup>22</sup>.

This is the point to which our reflections have led us. The panorama presented is clear but is also very open.

Various expressions are used for the titles to membership: membership in the strict sense or in the wide sense; membership in virtue of having been founded by Don Bosco himself or by other Founders drawing their inspiration from him; membership as a response to the salesian vocation as a group and also as individuals through a specific consecration; membership through other titles.

To render this letter of mine very practical, as we consider

<sup>22</sup> *The Common Identity Card of Don Bosco's Salesian Family*, 5

the various titles of membership, I want to emphasize some important points which the salesian community must examine with care.

– The Salesians of Don Bosco with the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Cooperators constitute the *central nucleus* of the Family. This what they are frequently called. It is not a privilege. First and foremost it is a task of communion. They must mutually study each other so as to unite their various gifts in a complementary whole and make themselves available for the spreading of the salesian spirit.

This was taken for granted for the SDBs and FMAs. Today the Cooperators too are recognizing in an ever more evident manner their own role in the formation of the laity who share the salesian mission.

– The communion and mission have need of structures for support and stimulus, and at the present day they must be simple and versatile.

For *communion* among all the groups of the Family I invite you to make the effort, as has already been done in many Provinces, to arrange encounters for promoting fraternity and understanding and for planning purposes. Let the Provincials be the first to manifest this will for communion by bringing together, at suitable times and with the agenda agreed in advance, representatives and those responsible for the various groups. Communion is born and develops when you find an environment and initiatives which foster it. We too at the level of the General Council will consider how we can institutionalize the annual meeting of the representatives of the Family which has taken place in recent years.

– *The mission* can derive great advantages from an understanding between all the groups, and particularly among the central groups of the Family.

At the present day education of the young needs figures of different kinds and assorted interventions. Only an ensemble

can respond efficaciously to the expectations. The good of the young demands of us a further effort to plan together.

Results achieved in recent years bear witness to the fact that it is possible to work in a convergent manner. Youth pastoral work, the salesian family, social communication, the missionary commitment, concern for formation, and the financial sector, all have areas which can be shared in a responsible manner.

### **Service to the Salesian Family**

I think that by now we have all accepted the fact that as regards the Salesian Family we have particular responsibilities, as is clearly stated in art.5 of our Constitutions.

To preserve the concrete aspect which the present letter aims at adopting, I would like to give a rapid glance at the General Regulations of the Congregation<sup>23</sup>. They specify in practical terms the indications given in the Constitutions. Consequently they recall certain commitments to which we must give renewed attention at the present time. In their realization Provincials and Rectors have a decisive role to play. There are some things they must keep in mind.

#### *1. Animation is a community commitment.*

The Special General Chapter spoke of the change of mentality needed to face up with new perspectives to the work of the Salesian Family. The first and indispensable change is that the community feel itself involved in the animation of and collaboration with the various groups of the Family operating in the same neighbourhood. This is a work that cannot be delegated in its entirety to a single individual. Significant charismatic values are involved.

<sup>23</sup> cf. R 37-40

The community can intervene in many ways:

- by direct and explicit interest concerning the life and activities of each Group;
- by esteem and empathy, expressed especially at moments of particular events or anniversaries;
- by the fraternal welcome given to members of other groups who come to the community for various reasons, e.g. meetings or encounters arranged by different groups;
- by moral and as far as possible material support in cases of difficulty, showing in this way that we consider them as true brothers and sisters;
- by assistance and spiritual direction, as at typical moments of formation to the salesian life;
- by the offering of opportunities for forms of collaboration with shared responsibility in the educative and pastoral project the community has in hand;
- by the vocational accompaniment of all individuals so that they may be led to accept and welcome God's will.

But especially the community can integrate the care of the Salesian Family into its own communal project. It is indispensable to bring the apostolic concerns of all Salesians to the centre of the community life and to a single plan of activities. Our strength lies in living and working together. The effect of our presence is linked with the community character of our interventions. What must be avoided is a kind of delegation which implies that following up the groups is only something marginal in which the community as a whole is not greatly interested.

The active participation of the community is indispensable especially in the light of new qualities required and the new forms of collaboration. It enriches our service, corrects improvised changes in orientation, organization and life-style of the group, when a delegate finishes his period of service and another takes his place.

It therefore contributes to the history of the group and prevents accumulated riches being dispersed.

## *2. The work of confreres who are qualified and willing*

We shall reap the harvest that awaits us from the groups of the Salesian Family, and in particular from the Cooperators, Past-pupils and DBV, in proportion to the quality and time made available by those confreres who have the duty of accompanying them.

The first concern therefore of the Provincial and his Council is the selection of the confreres who will provide this typically salesian service. Quality and competence guarantee the efficacy of their presence and facilitate relationships within the groups. There are criteria therefore which must guide the discernment of the Provincial and Council in choosing them. I will draw attention to the main ones.

- The service should be entrusted to confreres who have a great love for Don Bosco and salesian spirituality, and who want therefore to communicate such spirituality and are willing to seek new ways for the realization of the charism. They will be able to share with their own community the work they are doing.

- They should be prepared for their task. Improvisation does not produce good results. Today ecclesial associations require spiritual assistance of high quality, and ours are no exception. The delegates will have to keep in close touch with and follow up authoritatively the progress of the various salesian realities.

The availability they are asked for implies the study of the characteristics of the group concerned, an understanding of the spiritual and pastoral objectives proper to its identity, and salesian orientation in face of the new ideas which continually emerge in daily life and activities. The result of a presence of

this kind is of concern not only to the particular group concerned but to the entire Salesian Family. Encouragement should therefore be given to meetings for the formation of the delegates, who should be prepared especially for their role of spiritual animators.

– Their tasks too should be suitably clarified. They are listed in art.5 of the Constitutions: to keep alive the efforts of individuals and groups to grow in the salesian spirit; to preserve unity, encourage dialogue, foster fraternal collaboration; to stimulate mutual enrichment and apostolic creativity. These things should not be left to individual interpretations; the delegates should not get lost in secondary matters nor take on directly functions which should be provided for by the group itself.

The groups of the Salesian Family are autonomous. They have their own structures, their own internal arrangements and relationships with externals to be managed in their own manner. Our presence should not lead to interference in such things. There will be times when we need to lend a hand, especially in the case of a group beginning life in a new area. But even in these cases we must act as salesian ‘assistants’, placing ourselves alongside them and prompting the development of the riches which lie hidden in individual hearts and in the group as a whole.

### 3. *A competent service from a salesian standpoint.*

In the work of animation which is entrusted to us, pride of place goes to *formation*.

The diversity of the groups will suggest the contents, and the level of the members will indicate the process for an adequate Christian formation.

But *salesian formation* is the key point of our own task. It is not a question of one topic amongst others, but something concerning the form and style of growth. It does have specific contents, but becomes rather the form of the whole process.



Salesian educative and pastoral tradition must be communicated, which is the principal part of our spiritual patrimony and winning strategy in relationships with the young. Don Bosco used to tell his first missionaries that he would have liked to preach a Retreat for them on the preventive system.

One must take up and analyze more deeply, in line with the different experiences, the features of the salesian spirit. This is an effective school of salesian daily life for both confreres and lay people. There are many perspectives, all of them enriching. Each group is called to express, as happens in the annual Week of Spirituality, how it feels and lives salesian spirituality.

Attention must be given also to *apostolic formation*. This is an internal dimension of salesian spirituality which presupposes enthusiasm, but also practical competence. We have original ideas in this field which we must not lose. They go back to some intuitions of St Francis de Sales, which Don Bosco took up, reformulated and lived in his circumstances as an educator of the young, and specifically of poor youngsters.

The groups of the Salesian Family (and we are naturally included) must be able to open themselves to the new apostolic frontiers of the Church. There are new 'areopagi' to be evangelized, innumerable youthful questions to be taken on board, and new missionary frontiers to be attended to. It is of no help to concentrate resources in certain places if there are other places which desire and need the salesian presence but are deprived of it. Some rethinking is needed about integral collaboration over the whole area, and with new needs in mind.

To succeed in this programme it is indispensable that the groups become sufficiently capable of assuming the primary responsibility for their own animation and their own apostolic initiatives. This is a maturing process that we Salesians should urge on with might and main.

In all of this there is a specific service I want to recall: our *priestly* service! I consider it important and that it should be offered in a more emphatic fashion. It has been improving and

many confreres could tell us of their experience of the results obtained. But there is the risk of it becoming reduced to pure 'chaplaincy' work in celebrations at fixed times or fixed days and nothing more. In Don Bosco's mind and practice it is of decisive importance. He is the Father and shepherd of his Family.

All that Vatican II had to say about priestly service, the many reflections made in the Congregation on this theme, the requests we receive from the Church at the present time, all these things should find our priests attentively aware of the richness of the priestly charisma.

We have to ask ourselves, dear confreres, whether we carry out the service of the word with generosity, with interior joy, competently and in a manner adapted to times and persons. Do we dedicate ourselves to the ministry of sanctification, putting forward a spiritual process and following it up by the use of all that the Church puts at our disposal? Do we try to build up and bring to life that communion which has its origin in the vocation, its energy in the Spirit, its root in Christ, or do we sometimes remain at the level of convivial socialization?

The priestly service is one in which we can put to good use all the grace and preparation we have received.

## **New perspectives emerging from the GC24**

### **1. *THE FRIENDS OF DON BOSCO***

The theme we have dealt with in the preceding pages meets with another reality on which I think it may be useful to add a brief comment: the "Friends of Don Bosco".

It looks as though this reality is going to grow, and in consequence will need some further reflection to reach an agreed orientation. For the time being I will limit myself to some elements of necessary clarification.

The expression has been in use among us SDBs in a general

kind of way since the Congregation's beginnings. Don Bosco made a lot of friends, and many there were who rejoiced to be able to call themselves friends of Don Bosco.

The Past-pupils have begun to use the term in a more direct way in their Confederal Statute. They write in fact: "The Association offers itself as a basis of reference and or meeting for all those who 'under various titles' feel themselves associated with the salesian apostolate, share its objectives and make up the vast movement of sympathizers and of FRIENDS OF DON BOSCO, who for a long time have been active in society"<sup>24</sup>.

The GC24 made a first more organic reflection when dealing with the relations between SDBs and laity.

It pointed to an *accepted fact*: "Don Bosco always had many friends, scattered all over the world and in the most varied environments. Their number has not decreased with the passing of time, nor has the bond become weaker between them and our Father and Founder"<sup>25</sup>. The Pope too, in his message for the beginning of the Chapter, recognized that "the Salesians can count on a great number of friends of Don Bosco scattered all over the world, with different denominations but all linked with the Saint of the young"<sup>26</sup>.

The same GC24 indicated a *typology* for them, emphasizing their variety, with terms like "sympathizers, admirers, benefactors, collaborators, advisers, believers and non-believers, and non-Christians"<sup>27</sup>.

But it brought all the types together under a common *identity* which it expressed as follows: "With different shades of meaning they present the following identity: they reveal an attitude of empathy for the figure of Don Bosco, his spirit and mission; they express a personal attachment to Don Bosco;

<sup>24</sup> *Confederal Statute*, art. 9c

<sup>25</sup> GC24 85

<sup>26</sup> GC24 197

<sup>27</sup> GC24 50

they intend to collaborate in various ways in initiatives of good, sharing in this way in the salesian mission”<sup>28</sup>.

And it concluded with a definition of their reference to the Salesian Family: “It is recognized that the Friends of Don Bosco are inserted in a wider movement than the present reality of the Salesian Family. Their insertion in the spirit and mission of Don Bosco is diversified, with a variety of degrees and attitudes, after the fashion of concentric circles: for some it is a matter of direct involvement, for others of indirect participation”<sup>29</sup>.

These texts can provide us with some practical indications.

– We should become aware, in the first place, and exploit the fact that there are friends of Don Bosco everywhere; they are in the CEP and in salesian initiatives of various kinds, but they are also widespread in society and sometimes a long way from any physical linkage with a community of Don Bosco. They are to be found in all geographic, religious and cultural contexts. There are even *groups* called “Friends of Don Bosco”. Even though they are not very numerous, they nevertheless represent a difference between members and non-associates.

– We consider it important therefore to include in our programme the cultivation of rapport with them. We entrust this commitment in particular to the Confederation of the Past-pupils, in line with what we said in the message addressed to them by the GC24: “At local and provincial level your Association should promote convocation and collaboration, expanding the salesian charism in this way into a vast movement, and creating a network of friendship and empathy with so many ‘friends’ of the salesian work and of Don Bosco”<sup>30</sup>.

But in this case too there is no question of everything being left to a delegate alone. Every Salesian, every community, every group should extend friendship. This is a character-

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> GC24 286

ristic of salesian spirituality, pedagogy and pastoral activity.

– Moreover, since they form part of the salesian movement they have the right to be nourished by salesian spirituality. And so it is our duty to find ways to offer them this spirituality by creating opportunities for contacts and channels of communication.

– Finally, the special nature of the friends of Don Bosco and the fact that they are to be found everywhere, provides us Salesians with the possibility of making Don Bosco and his educative concerns known in neighbourhoods and areas where we are not present.

The whole scenario constitutes a reality which cannot leave us indifferent. Daily experience shows us that many initiatives are possible precisely because of the presence of these friends. They contribute to the material support of salesian work, they provide us with openings in political and institutional environments, they offer a significant contribution in education, they spread the name and spirit of Don Bosco in all sorts of different contexts. Many of them, men and women, support us by prayer and invincible solidarity.

There are possibilities here from which we must draw profit, and so we are open to new developments and realizations. We keep awake, as did Don Bosco, to the signs of the times, and we learn from experience how to make further progress. In the General Council we shall continue our reflections to shed further light on the question and put forward criteria for action.

## 2. *THE SALESIAN MOVEMENT*

This was given considerable attention by the GC24<sup>31</sup>, which took note of a situation already existing in which work had already begun.

<sup>31</sup> cf. GC24, Analytical Index, under the heading Salesian Movement, p. 340

In fact art.5 of the Constitutions, without any break of continuity, links the Movement to the Family as an environment without restrictions. General Chapters and Rector Majors have indicated its nature and the criteria for its development.

In the field of youth pastoral work, through a patient process of proposals, clarifications and realizations, was born and has been consolidated the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM). The GC23 took note of it, recognized its educative value, and proposed it to the whole Congregation. It appears in some contexts with a good ability for internal communication, with a strength of involvement, and with consolidated formative processes. Within it groups and animators have multiplied. Salesian Youth Spirituality (SYS) is already a factor in bringing in new groups, even though there is still much to be done to bring about its full assimilation.

This is the reason for dealing with the Salesian Movement, albeit briefly, in the present context. There will be other circumstances when we can reflect more organically and completely on everything concerning the Movement and its young components.

The GC23 declared that the SYM is "an original gift of the Spirit to the community of believers, and one of the riches of the Church and youth"<sup>32</sup>.

Some experiences and some comments, not always well weighed, may have created a certain diffidence towards movements, and for some confreres this has happened unconsciously in the case of the Salesian Movement, and especially the youth sector which is more organized with positive initiatives.

One must begin from the conviction that the movements represent a manifestation of the presence and action of the Spirit in the Church and in the world. This is noted in *Christi-fideles Laici* when it emphasizes the existence of a "new period of group endeavours" as a specific response to spiritual needs

<sup>32</sup> GC23 275

felt at the present day, and as a resource for the new evangelization.

Here we must emphasize the variegated nature of the Salesian Movement. All those form part of it who work for the good of youth, whether within or outside salesian structures, in the Church and in civil institutions, and who consciously express some feature of the salesian spirit and educative style. No membership cards are needed. It should be clearly recognized that this multiple and differentiated reality finds its unity and strength for development in the reference to Don Bosco and in the sharing of his spirituality and pedagogy in line with the contexts and the possibilities of each one.

The Movement lives therefore on the basis of certain key-ideas which guide in a convergent manner those who belong to it, either directly or indirectly. "This circulation of messages and values", says the GC23 about the youth component of the Movement, "has no need of a rigid and centralized organization. It is based on free communication between the groups, and needs only a minimum structure for the coordination of common initiatives"<sup>33</sup>.

It should be emphasized that the urgency of the Movement derives from the mission to the young and the poor. The salesian community is well aware that the commitment to be "missionaries of the young" cannot be realized without a vast movement of persons working together with shared responsibility. From this requirement stems the need for the educative and pastoral community in all salesian works. From the same requirement follows the effort to gather together in the neighbourhood a network of collaborators, friends and sympathizers willing to carry out "good works". Working alone carries with it the risk not only of isolation but also of inefficacy.

We conclude therefore with the *necessity of extending and giving competence to the salesian Movement*, and for this an an-

<sup>33</sup> GC23 277

imation is indispensable that is suited to its nature. From this standpoint the youth component is already organized. As regards adults, the animation belongs to all the Salesian Family and in particular to the central groups.

"The commitment to broaden the involvement", writes the GC24, "is of all those who, in fact, at different levels and under various headings are already sharing the spirit and mission of Don Bosco. An entirely special responsibility attaches to the SDBs, because of their identity and the task given them by the Founder of being animators of the Movement which from him took its origins"<sup>34</sup>.

The FMA provide a substantial and competent contribution to the salesian Movement. In every environment where one of their communities is at work, numerous persons gather together disposed to collaborate in initiatives and open to the spirit of Don Bosco and of Mother Mazzarello.

To the Salesian Cooperators too, because of their particular situation within the Family, the GC24 gave an indication on which we should involve local Centres and the entire Association: "They must be recognized as full sharers in the responsibility for the salesian mission and points of reference for lay people in the broad salesian movement. This was the sense in which their new Regulations for Apostolic Life were approved in 1986"<sup>35</sup>.

We need to remember also that the salesian Movement is extending like a galaxy. Contributing to the extension are the present possibilities of social communication which can provoke adherence and collaboration without limitation of space. Moreover each of our works has broadened the network of its linkages, shared responsibility, and the number of those taking part. But above all, around the various groups of the Family are gathering circles, clubs and other aggregations with the solidarity with which they are organized.

<sup>34</sup> GC24 109

<sup>35</sup> GC24 77



Perhaps at some future date it may be possible to arrange a communication process between all these constellations”.

The salesian Movement represents therefore for Don Bosco's charism a field of work with an interesting future, but one that is as yet largely unexplored. Its animation has not as yet been planned in any adequate form. We need to be inventive and try something out!

We know that efficacy depends on certain conditions: animators with the necessary vision and competence, willing to pass on the salesian spirit to others; communication channels, forms and initiatives, and if possible, spiritual and working encounters; and essential shared references which create unity.

The salesian Movement is a fertile terrain for vocations to the different expressions of the charism. We may imagine it like this around every work, and transversely across a broader area like the space where Cooperators, Past-pupils and adherents to the other branches of the Salesian Family are found and multiply.

### **Let us return to the young**

And so in this way we have made a rapid survey of our real and potential resources. The Spirit can bring them to life through our mediation. But now let us get back to the nitty-gritty of our present field of work.

Don Bosco's mission to the young and the poor is the *raison d'être* of the Salesian Family and the motive that brings together its members and those of the salesian Movement. It puts young people at the centre of our educative and popular concerns. For its realization salesian pastoral work for the young came into being and developed, carried on especially by the SDBs, FMAs and Institutes of consecrated life dedicated to education.

In recent times some lay groups of the Salesian Family have organized their youth sections with an eye to vocational and practical objectives.

Local Churches too are getting themselves equipped with offices for youth pastoral work. In this in fact the convergence and articulation of proposals together with the coordination of sectors and workers becomes imperative, under pain of fragmentation and dispersal.

It is therefore opportune that we too should give some thought to a pastoral work for youth which is coordinated, at least in its criteria. Teams in both the sector of youth pastoral work and that of the Salesian Family must continue their work for convergence until it produces real results.

In the meantime let us hold on to some fixed and safe key-points.

- The whole Salesian Family shares responsibility for service to the young. This includes the need for involving in a project, to an ever greater extent, persons and groups who work in the same area with their own relative autonomy.

- The SYM is an eminently 'oratorian' manifestation of the mission to youth carried out by the Salesian Family. We are all called to animate it in line with the characteristics of the Movement itself, which are those of an 'educative' movement, centred on education to faith. The presence of Cooperators and Past-pupils as animators is desirable alongside those of the SDB and FMA. The same is true as regards the CEP.

- In both the SYM and the CEP all the salesian vocations are made known; the young people are helped to follow a process of maturing and discernment, encouraging them towards vocational forms which are more demanding. When the youngster has reached the point at which he is ready to make a choice, he or she is welcomed into the respective group for the immediate specific preparation for the commitment associated with the option made.

- In the present period of new evangelization the missionary spirit should be recommended. It should drive us to

places and situations where no attention is yet given to youthful needs, demands or problems, rather than concentrate on youngsters who are already sufficiently cared for from an educative and religious standpoint. It was precisely this spirit that led to the birth and growth of the Salesian Family.

## Conclusion

We have reached 1997: and we begin our journey towards the Jubilee of the year 2000, which reminds us that we are now living an auspicious period for the presence of "Jesus, the one Saviour of the world, yesterday, today and for ever". You feel it in the vibrations of the world and in the pulse of the Congregation.

Today, the first day of the year, we celebrate the divine motherhood of Mary. She willingly embraced the Son of God, and contributed substantially to giving him those human traits which bring him close to us and make him recognizable.

From Jesus her motherhood extends to the Church and to every individual in whom Christ gives origin to the new man, who is the Son of God. Our education of the young tends precisely to this and we cannot think of it as anything but a participation in the motherly work of Mary.

May she bless us during this year of grace and be with us as we fulfil the mission with which we have been entrusted, together with all our brothers and sisters of the Salesian Family.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Juan Triechi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'J' that extends downwards and to the left, forming a large loop.

# **LONG-TERM PLANNING OF THE RECTOR MAJOR AND HIS COUNCIL FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND ANIMATION OF THE CONGREGATION DURING THE PERIOD 1996-2002**

Fr Juan E. VECCHI

*Rector Major*

### **1. Introduction**

Often during GC24 in a number of different contexts a request was made, that matters of urgency and priorities should be identified and that these should be concentrated on in the process of government.

It is an indication that everywhere the complexity of our activities and the consequent danger of fragmentation is being realized.

This appeal was addressed in a particular way to the Rector Major and the Council, who have to attend to six areas of activity and apply the guidelines in seven Regions, with the very real danger that the subject matter, proposals and interventions become compartmentalized.

In my final address I took up this appeal myself: "In connection with the action of government at various levels, there is need of a further commitment to ...give unity to proposals, seeking a greater convergence of objectives and messages, fostering adherence to motivated options, ordering in importance services and interventions, and avoiding sectorialism, adapting everything to the rhythms of assimilation and to practical capacity, to personal and communal situations." (GC24, 257)

To respond to this request, the Rector Major and his Council have already devoted a considerable amount of time during the working session May-July 1996:

- to studying the state of the Congregation as it emerged from the report presented to GC24 by the Vicar General (Fr Juan E. Vecchi); a study which was subsequently updated following the first visits made by the Councillors to their regions during the months of August and September 1996.
- to clarifying the responsibility of the General Council itself, and the various roles of individual members, with particular reference to their specific areas of responsibility, of relationships with the Rector Major, among the Councillors themselves, and with other bodies of government in the Congregation.
- to undertake further study of the document of GC24 in its entirety, but concentrating on the planning that needed to be done in view of the emerging situations, and in accordance with the specific role of the Rector Major and his Council;
- to re-read the final address of the Rector Major to the General Chapter as the primary indication regarding future choices for the next six years.

In the course of the same session, a first draft of the plan was drawn up and studied by the Council.

During a week of meetings which the Rector Major held with Councillors in charge of Departments during the month of October, this was subsequently subjected to careful analysis, and clarifications and adjustments were made.

Finally, during the session from November to January, it was further refined in the General Council and completed with the addition of the planning arrangements for the Regions.

## 2. The thinking which guided the planning process.

I could tell you about the benefits which this 'exercise' brought to us, above all in clarifying our vision and perspectives. But I would prefer to explain to you the reasons and thinking which are the foundation of the planning process and which can be useful in your own work at provincial and local level.

- The first reason for, and advantage of the process, applies particularly to the idea of *government*, which involves making choices, the appropriate use of the available resources, and the effort to create new ones. Planning means focusing energies according to priorities determined by what needs urgent attention, but also directing them into areas where they can generate fresh resources, and, therefore, balancing the many requests and prioritising the initiatives which are possible.
- The second reason refers to the *sense of shared responsibility* that such a process gives rise to in those who are involved from the beginning and those who become involved later. For those who formulate the plan, much prayer and reflection is called for. For those who later become involved there is the added advantage that they know where it is leading and at what pace, and they are able to make their own contributions to it with this understanding.
- The third reason and advantage regards *animation*. This is a combination of things: of offering suggestions, and making contacts, of establishing links at various levels, of 'interventions' aimed at achieving the aims that we have at heart and which we are all pursuing together with personal responsibility and with complementary roles. In this situation, the communication of what we are trying to do seems decisive. The long-term planning process is an attempt to facilitate and make widespread this communication.
- Finally, a clear plan which indicates the vision and choices,

will permit an assessment of the adequacy of the 'interventions' and of the resources made available to achieve the declared aims and objectives.

So you can see, the work of planning is anything but an 'exercise in minutiae'. A lot of mental effort has been put at the service of great ideas and charismatic projects.

### 3. The form of the plan.

The plan, which is the result of the discernment and the work shared by the Rector Major and the Council according to the method indicated, contains three parts or chapters.

- The first part contains the *priority items for the attention and the 'work' of everyone*: these are the key issues of GC24, reflecting the situation in the Congregation, and are seen as agents regenerating resources for the apostolate. This is the *general part* which becomes the unifying point of reference for the planning of all the Departments and Regions.
- The second part contains the '*sectional*' *planning of the six Departments*. These have applied the basic points identified in the first part to their own areas of operation, particularising them in the subject matter and interventions. In order to do this they have compared notes, identifying common areas, and the approaches which coincide. They have also added some issues which are more directly connected with their particular sector.
- The third part contains the planning of the Rector Major and the Council for the *animation of the Regions*. The Regional Councillors have tried to 'localise' the proposals of the Departments with regard to the main points contained in the first part. They have also added what is specific to their Region on account of its structure, composition and the religious and cultural situations to be found there.

After drawing up the three parts, the General Council further examined three inter-related themes, with the help of some appropriately prepared basic documents, and considered ways of following them up.

- The policy regarding formation and culture in view of the preparation of personnel;
- The management of financial resources according to current needs;
- The finding and deployment of personnel who depend on the Rector Major.

The Rector Major then explained a number of criteria for the involvement and movement of Councillors.

It should be noted once again, that the process of formulation was not deductive, but 'circular'. The first part was checked again after the work of applying it in the Departments had been done, and these had looked at their own plans once more in the light of the 'localising' by the Regional Councillors.

By Christmas the whole thing was approved. The Rector Major, in personal dialogue with each of the Councillors followed, guided and assessed the process.

It is also worth noting that the 'localisation' does not interfere with or eliminate what the Provincial Conferences or regional bodies are able to do.

It is concerned with those new fundamental points that all have to adopt, and applies to the interventions that the Rector Major and his Council intend to implement.

With regard to **the form in which the planning is presented**, it should be said that it underwent a process of evolution within the Council.

Finally a uniform scheme was chosen which took care to avoid too much diversity and made it more easy to communicate.



### Regarding its layout

- a) In the first place, *areas for intervention/attention* are identified. These are the topics on which it is believed appropriate to concentrate our forces. They are described in broad terms, which allows for later consideration within them of both what is specifically planned for the Rector Major and the Council, and what corresponds to the planning at middle and local level.
- b) *General objectives* are indicated: these specify and identify more clearly those topics on which work will be done in the defined area, and the aims or objectives which it will be possible to assess.
- c) *Strategies or courses of action* are set out; these point to the ways, means or criteria for action which appear to be best suited to achieve the desired objectives already indicated.
- d) The strategies become more concrete in the '*interventions*' through which are made more specific the target group, the desired aims, the subject matter which is to be communicated or simply clarified and other similar items.
- e) Finally, *particular points* are mentioned which are connected with the topic and which need to be taken into account in order to achieve the objectives and the interventions, so that the required adjustments can be made and foreseen difficulties avoided.

The advantage of this arrangement is that there is not an ever increasing number of topics but rather a progressive concentration on those already identified at the beginning.

## 4. THE SCHEME OF THE GENERAL PLAN

I preface these remarks by saying that the plan in its entirety will be published in a special issue of the Acts of the General Council.

Here I offer you only the *general part*, which contains the priorities for animation and government during the next six years. Four main areas for attention and intervention can be identified.

**New relationships between SDBs and the Laity,  
The significance of salesian presences ;  
The community as the animating nucleus;  
The quality of Formation.**

For each of these areas, objectives, strategies and procedures are indicated.

#### **4.1 Relationships between SDBs and Lay people**

*(The first main area for attention).*

The style that the relationships between SDB and Laity ought to have is clearly indicated by GC24, which asks for renewal. Such a renewal ought to involve individuals, local communities, Provinces and the Congregation. The novelty in the relationships is to be found in the quality, the frequency, the breadth and the objectives.

■ On their part the Rector Major and the Council, intend to work on three aspects (**objectives**)

- a) *A Mentality*: this refers to the salesians and lay people involved and sharing responsibilities in our works, and allows for a conscious and permanent change of attitude.

Theological, spiritual, pastoral and salesian issues are involved.

- b) *The Structures*: to be so organized that the Provinces bring about the new relationships *in all the works* and involve *all those with responsibilities* so as to avoid any lack of continuity and to prevent different approaches.

Another aspect of organized structures consists in matching pastoral practice with the skills acquired during the period of formation.

- c) *Procedures*: going ahead by trying out and multiplying the actual situations in which responsibility is shared, so that things do not remain on a theoretical level.

■ The objectives indicated can be achieved using the following **strategies**:

- a) Reshaping the PEP in such a way as to combine the plans of the educative community, the Salesian Family and the Salesian Movement. It seems fundamental that these three be considered in a single structured project.
- b) Setting up the CEP in the various communities and giving it responsibility for the organisation of the PEPS. This is the natural setting for meeting with lay people where relationships can be experienced and can grow.
- c) Fostering the exchange of educative, pastoral and spiritual experiences between SDBs and Laity.

■ The preceding suggestions for courses of action or strategies lead on to the following **four procedures**:

- a) *Providing* the SDB community and the lay people with responsible positions in our works, with a *carefully developed and systematic presentation of GC24*, and following up its implementation.
- b) Helping to *build up and develop the CEP*, clarifying the roles and functions of members and assisting them to recognise the gifts and charisms that the different vocations and individuals bring to it
- c) Ensuring a familiarity with the *Preventive System* in theory and practice, so as to preserve the salesian identity of the members of the CEP and of the work
- d) Encouraging the *SDB and the laity to examine together* the needs and the requirements of a situation prior to making a decision to set up a salesian project, so as to provide a more effective educational and pastoral response.

## 4.2 The Effectiveness of the salesian presence.

*(The second main area for attention)*

This area aims at concentrating on the witness provided by community life and educative activity so that they correspond to the needs of young people

■ The work in this area is focused on three general objectives:

- a) The first concerns all our works. It aims at *establishing them in a given locality* ever more visibly and effectively.
- b) The second points to a re-dimensioning and development: to increase the commitment of the Congregation to
  - *those most in need.*
  - *the foreign missions.*
- c) The third is concerned with the spiritual quality: “To encourage a renewed capacity to inspire and support vocations to salesian consecrated life.

■ These goals can be reached using the following tactics.

- a) Assisting the SDB communities and the CEP to communicate with their immediate surroundings, offering *messages* (style of presence, witness, involvement, participation) which are effective in the area of human development and evangelization.
- b) Fostering *harmonious relationships* with other bodies, institutions, agencies or educative and pastoral activities in the same locality or elsewhere, so as to join forces and work together.
- c) Giving special attention (through interventions, new foundations, reorganizations) to *the least appreciated* from the social, cultural and religious standpoint.
- d) Appreciating the qualities, the gifts, the particular vocations of all the lay collaborators in the light of the charism.

- e) Involving the whole educative community and the groups of the Salesian Family in *working for vocations to the consecrated life*.

■ The tactics become more specific in procedures.

- a) To become aware of *new forms of poverty and marginalisation*, especially in urban areas, and to provide suitable preparation for SDBs and Laity to work there.
- b) To build up and improve the *missionary foundations* recently established and work to set up new missions.
- c) To spread knowledge of and support the *new style of educators* who respond to the challenges and requirements of today, and work within the CEP with professionalism and in Don Bosco's spirit.
- d) To concentrate on the *Salesian Youth Movement* and the *Salesian Family* so that they are places where the vocational development of young people can occur.

### 4.3 The SDB community, the animating nucleus

(*The third area for attention*).

This is the key to the whole issue of educative and pastoral activity which is being proposed, to the new spiritual dimension, and to the 'communion' in which we are everywhere invited to engage.

■ The **aims or concrete objectives** that we set ourselves in response to the situation of the Congregation as we identify it are:

- a) To make the SDB communities aware that their *primary task* is to be and to operate as the animating nucleus.
- b) To make them aware that they ought to carry out this task *in a spirit of community*, that is with the participation of everyone.

■ We move towards the attainment of these objectives by means of the following tactics:

- a) ensuring the numerical and qualitative consistency of each community (GC24, 173-174)
- b) promoting the renewed signs of community witness to consecration and communion in the community.(GC24, 167)
- c) focusing on the educative effectiveness of the works by means of a carefully prepared planning process for which the salesians take responsibility.
- d) fostering the abilities and the self confidence of the community in the process of involving and sharing with lay people in the spirit and the life of the community.(GC24 108-114, 160-161)
- e) developing a greater understanding of the identity and the role implied in being the animating nucleus in the CEP in the context of joint activity and co-responsibility (GC24 155-160, 236)

■ The tactics lead to specific procedures which are directed to:

- a) creating a new way of operating within the CEP, helping the community to take on a new mentality and to redefine roles and organization so as to facilitate the involvement of lay people, and to give the salesians their own role of animation (GC24, 159-161)
- b) enable rectors and councils, as those with the primary responsibility within the CEP and in its animating nucleus, to carry out their role, providing them with the skills and the necessary means.
- c) recognizing the activities and the works managed by lay people, collaborating in a particular way with those examples of this type which form part of the provincial pastoral plan (GC24, 181)

- d) making evident, and giving due importance to the valuable educative contribution made by religious consecration. (GC24 151-153)

#### 4.4 The quality of Formation

*(The fourth main area for attention)*

The fourth place given to this area indicates a special connection with the three preceding ones and places this area as the most important, as *the condition and guarantee* for the realization of the others.

■ To bring about the desired changes in this area we concentrate on the following **general objectives**..

- a) To adapt the ongoing and initial formation of SDBs
  - to the requirements of culture and education;
  - to the challenges of evangelization;
  - to the requirements of their new roles of animation.
- b) To train salesians for *communion* and for *sharing* with lay people.
- c) To take on the formation of those SDBs and Lay people with roles of responsibility at different levels as the principal means of animation and government. We will exercise the office of government forming the teams of leaders and those responsible for sectors.

■ To achieve these objectives the following **tactics** will be employed:

- a) Developing the *cultural and pastoral gifts of SDBs* through a renewed commitment to culture and scholarship (VC 98) and to professionalism.
- b) Promoting the joint formation of SDBs and Lay people (GC24 138-146)
- c) Deepening *salesian spirituality* in order to live it, and to be in

- the position to propose it and share it. (GC24 239-241, 257)
- d) Restoring to SDBs the sense of the *priority of formation* in carrying out their role of animators. (GC23 223, GC24 248, 199)
  - e) Concentrating on the principal occasions of community life (prayer, planning, culture communion with youngsters and lay people) *to make ordinary daily life a means of ongoing formation*.

■ The tactics indicated above will lead to **procedures**:

- a) *to work towards a revision of the Ratio*: adapting initial formation to new situations and circumstances.
- b) *to prepare the SDB and lay teams of leaders* by means of appropriate formation initiatives (provincials and councillors, provincial delegates, rectors, animators)
- c) *to increase the number of qualified confreres* in the various areas typical of our educational and pastoral mission,
- d) to encourage and coordinate the *study centres, and teams for reflection and for ongoing formation* in view of their contribution to the task of formation (GC24 145)
- e) to support the provinces in the *formulation of their joint formation programmes* for SDB and laity, following the indications of GC24 (n.145).

At the conclusion of this communication, I feel the need to thank each of the Councillors for the contributions they have made to the planning process, and even more for their generous attitude in the search for consensus.

In my name and in theirs, I offer you these guidelines and invoke the Lord's blessing. on them.

Rome 24 December 1996.

Fr Juan E. Vecchi  
*Rector Major.*



## 4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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### 4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

#### 1. *Visit to Bolivia.*

On 16 October 1996 the Rector Major arrived in Bolivia for the centenary celebrations of the salesian work in that country. During his brief stay he carried out a dense programme of meetings with confreres, civil and ecclesial authorities, the Salesian Family and young people. At Santa Cruz he was welcomed by the Bishop Mgr.Jesús Juárez, the Provincial Fr José Ramón Iriarte, and representatives of the FMA, the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts, and men and women Co-operators. He visited the Don Bosco College where he was received by some 2,500 students, and celebrated Mass in the parish church dedicated to Mary Help of Christians. He then went on to the salesian house dedicated to Michael Magone in the Cuchilla district, where a work is taking shape for the benefit of very poor youngsters.

Early in the afternoon he left for Cochabamba. There in the house of the FMA dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima were gath-

ered young animators for a three-day reflection on youth spirituality. The participants put on a presentation entitled: "*Because of a dream...*", based on the dream of young John Bosco at the age of nine and the missionary dream of 1883. The Rector Major spoke to the assembly at the end. After a visit to the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts he took part in the evening in an event in the Coronilla, a gymnastic stadium, where the Mayor of Cochabamba bestowed on him the regalia of a Guest of Honour. The Rector Major expressed gratitude to the Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians who had toiled to make salesian work in Bolivia what it is today.

On 17 October, after a meeting with the rectors, he visited the house of the Salesian Oblate Sisters and in the afternoon celebrated Mass in the Coronilla stadium with Mgr.Jesús Juárez (Bishop of El Alto), Mgr.Tito Solari (Auxiliary Bishop of Santa Cruz), Mgr.Armando Artale

(Bishop of Huánuco in Peru) and many salesian priests and in the presence of some 5,000 young people. In the evening he visited the parish of Las Villas, where he blessed a statue of Don Bosco with Dominic Savio.

## 2. Visit to Paraguay

On 18 October the Rector Major left for Asunción. He was received at the airport by the Provincial, Fr Cristóbal López, by the Vicar Apostolic of Chaco, Mgr. Zacarias Ortiz Rolón, by Fr Helvecio Baruffi (who accompanied him throughout the visit), by the FMA, numerous Salesians, Cooperators and young people of the "Pay Pérez" group.

He then went to the Lasagna College, the first salesian work in Paraguay, which was celebrating its own centenary. In the afternoon he visited the Mayor of the city of Asunción and then the President of the Republic, who before Fr Vecchi left wished to recite with him an *Ave Maria* before a statue of Our Lady.

On 19 October he was at Ypacaria for a half-day's retreat with all the confreres of the Province, and replied to their questions during a period of informal dialogue. In the afternoon

he went on to the *Salesianito* for a meeting with the Salesian Family. On this occasion too, after a brief introduction, the Rector Major replied to questions asked by those present on points concerning the Congregation at the present day: the relationships between Salesians and the laity and between SDBs and FMAs, the mentality of today, and the social commitment the Salesian Family must accept and develop in the world.

On Sunday 20 October, after visiting the house of "Mary Help of Christians", the first of the FMA foundations in Paraguay, Fr Vecchi went to *Don Bosco Roga* of Lambaré, which is home to some one hundred street-lads. He had a meeting with the youngsters in the gymnasium, and between concert items some interesting questions were put to him concerning: the world of the young, the true values of life, the significance of being a young person at the present day, the problem of relationships with the Salesians and the FMA, friendship between boys and girls, drug problems, solidarity and many other points.

The Rector Major summed up for the youngsters the topics he was dealing with everywhere in these days. He gave them four

key ideas to which they must hold fast: *life* in its fullest meaning as a commitment to holiness, *meeting with Christ* which alone can give to life its full sense, the *Church* where this meeting takes place, and *commitment to their own formation* to grace, to love, and to the ability to choose wisely between so many possibilities. He concluded with a reminder about solidarity in the various situations of poverty and need. The meeting ended with the celebration of the Eucharist and a meal at which Salesians and youngsters ate together.

In the afternoon he had a meeting with the provincial council at the provincial house, and the day ended with a visit to the Post-novitiate house of Asunción. On 21 October he left Paraguay and after a brief stop at Buenos Aires returned to Rome on the 22nd.

3. In the evening of the 23rd the Rector Major greeted the members of the European Bishops Conference gathered at our own headquarters for a three-day seminar. On the following day he went to the Generalate of the FMA, where their General Chapter was in session, and was present at the *election of the Mother General: Sr. Antonia Colombo*. Fr

Vecchi offered her the congratulations and good wishes of the Salesians.

On 1 November he celebrated the Eucharist in the FMA novitiate at Monte Mario in Rome, and on 3 November was at the Salesian Pontifical University for the conclusion of the Seminar of Spirituality.

On 5 November the meetings of the plenary session of the General Council began; and on the following day Fr Vecchi returned again to the UPS for a meeting with the Academic Senate to speak of the practical overall project of the University for the year 2000.

#### 4. *Visit to Lombardy*

On 8 November the Rector Major began a series of rapid visits to some of the works in the Milan Province. He began at Chiari (Brescia) where he inaugurated the Scientific Liceo, in the presence of civil, scholastic, political and religious authorities: the Salesian Provincial (Fr Francesco Cereda), the Rector of the Institute (Fr Antonio Ferrari), the Superintendent of Studies (Prof. Nino Santilli), the Mayor of Chiari (Mino Facchetti), the Hon. Mariolina Moioli, and pupils of the

school. The same evening he visited the studentate of Nave and gave a conference to the clerics on the theme: *The need for formation of the Salesian at the present day.*

9 November found Fr Vecchi at Sesto San Giovanni (Milan) where he blessed and inaugurated a new block with fifteen classrooms and laboratories destined for a new branch of studies: a Scientific and Technological Liceo – a new scholastic opening offered by the Salesians to the young. He celebrated Mass for all the young people of the Institute with many Salesians from neighbouring Houses. Immediately afterwards in the theatre there was a discussion on the conditions needed for a new integrated scholastic system. It began with an opening address by the Rector, Fr Ennio Ronchi, and among those present and taking part were the Auxiliary Bishop of Milan, Mgr. Giuseppe Merisi, responsible for the Catholic schools of the Milan Archdiocese and for the Justice and Peace Commission, the Mayor of Sesto San Giovanni (Filippo Penati) and the Mayor of Cinisello Balsamo (Daniela Gasparini), the President of the Italian Popular Party (the Hon. Giovanni Bianchi), the President of the Milan Province (Livio Tamberi), the

Hon. Antonio Pizzinato (Senator of the Republic and Under-Secretary of State for Work), the deputy police commissioner and other civil and military authorities. At the end the Rector Major himself spoke on the same theme.

In the afternoon of the same day Fr Vecchi went to Sondrio to inaugurate a Sports Centre dedicated to Fr Egidio Viganò. Present at the ceremony were the Mayor (Dr Alcide Molteni), the Councillor responsible for Sport (Dalio Cesaroni), the Councillor for Social Services (Prof. Anna Vesnaver) the Chief Constable (Dr. Vincenzo Putomatti), the members of the District Council, with other authorities and committed lay people. The Rector Major gave a brief address recalling the social commitment required of the laity at the present day. He unveiled a memorial plaque and was present at an entertainment offered by the youngsters. The evening concluded with a thought about the Oratory.

On 10 November Fr Vecchi returned to Chiari and in the Marchettiana Hall, in the presence of the whole Civic Council with the President and the Mayor, he received honorary citizenship in recognition of the work of education of the Salesians. In the

Cathedral at 11.00 there was a solemn concelebration in honour of Blessed Philip Rinaldi, founder of the work at Chiari. Salesian and diocesan priests concelebrated and the Cathedral was packed to the doors. The Provost (Mgr. Angelo Zanetti) gave an address of welcome to the Rector Major, thanking him for the work carried out by the Salesians, and Fr Vecchi replied presenting the gift of a relic of Blessed Philip Rinaldi.

In the afternoon, in the Church of San Bernardino, the Rector Major had a meeting with the boys of the Oratory and the members of the Youth Centre. Later he went on to bless the *Auxilium* Reception Centre for the emarginated, especially Albanians and Ethiopians: a recent foundation which continues to develop with increasing initiatives.

Returning then to the Church of San Bernardino for the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the work, Fr Vecchi took up once again the theme of solidarity towards the very poor as a new formative element to put to the young. At the end he left for Milan to meet the four communities of the city: those of Don Bosco, St Ambrose, the Provincial House, and the University Cen-

tre. In the evening he returned to Rome.

## 5. *Conclusion of the FMA General Chapter*

On 14 November the Rector Major went with all the members of the Council to the Generalate of the FMA for the concluding concelebration of their General Chapter, after which they had supper and a fraternal evening with the Chapter members.

## 6. *Visit to the Crocetta*

On 18 November the Rector Major visited the Institute of the Crocetta at Turin.

In the morning, in the recently renewed Aula Magna, he presented the medal of the University to six Professors of the Faculty: Fr Giuseppe Usseglio, Fr Luigi Priami, Fr Umberto Olivero, Fr Vittorio Gorlero, Fr Carlo Kruse and Fr Ferdinando Dell'Oro. He met with the teachers and formation team and, accompanied by the Rector Magnificus of the UPS (Fr Raffaele Farina) and Fr Paolo Ripa, paid a visit to the Archbishop of Turin, Cardinal Giovanni Saldarini.

In the afternoon he blessed the restructured Aula Magna of the

Institute, in the presence of the whole community, professors, formation team and students, with the Provincial (Fr Luigi Testa), members of the Salesian Family from neighbouring houses and benefactors of the work, representatives of the Banca San Paolo, the parish priest and the Vicar General of the Diocese (Mgr. Peradotto). The restored Alma Magna is dedicated to Fr Philip Rinaldi in memory of his concern for the salesian formation of future priests. In his intervention Fr Vecchi set out the main lines to be followed by the Salesian Family in the approach to the year 2000 and in the context of the new evangelization and the dimensions which call for priority. Afterwards he gave interviews to journalists from the newspapers "Popolo" and "Nostro tempo"

In the evening after the celebration of the Eucharist the Rector Major returned to Rome.

7. From 17 to 27 November Fr Vecchi followed the course for Provincials which took place at the Generalate, and in the evening of the 27th went to Ariccia for a three-day meeting of the Union of Superiors General (USG).

On 5 December, memorial of

Blessed Philip Rinaldi, he celebrated the Eucharist in the "Madre Santa" House of the FMA and on 8 December, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, at the FMA Novitiate at Castel Gandolfo.

On 9 December he had a meeting with the students of the Pontifical Salesian University.

## **4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors**

### **The Vicar General**

On 3 June Fr Van Looy took part in a European Meeting organized by the Animation Centre at Benediktbeuern (Germany). He spoke to a group of SDB, FMA and lay participants from about 20 European countries on the subject of *'The European Idea from the Salesian Point of View'*. The intention was to share experiences and to strengthen European links in the educative and pastoral field.

Afterwards he continued his work in Rome until the end of July. He spent the last week of July with his family in Belgium. During this period, he made a short visit to Holland where he met several members of the Provincial

Council. From Belgium he went to the United States to preach a retreat to about sixty SDBs and FMAs. While he was in the USA he was able to preside at the temporary profession ceremony of an FMA, and to concelebrate with the Bishop at the perpetual professions. He returned to Rome on 12 August.

On 3 September he left for Korea, where he took part in the Congress of Past Pupils from Asia-Oceania, presenting the theme: *'The Identity of the Past Pupil on the threshold of the year 2000'*. After the Congress, Fr Van Looy carried out the consultation for the new Superior of the Korean Vice Province, visiting all the communities and speaking with all the confreres. He was thus able to see for himself the new work that the Korean Delegation was opening in the Jilin Province in North-East China. In the course of the visit, the laying of the foundation stone took place of the structure which is being built with close cooperation between the city of Yang Ji and the Salesian School at Kwangju in South Korea. At Peking he met several officials in connection with the project in the North East.

On 21 September he continued his journey via Hong Kong. He

went there to visit the activities in southern China directed by the Hong Kong Salesians. The Salesians do not live there, but from Hong Kong they provide valuable support for works caring for lepers and providing education for their children. He naturally took the opportunity to visit the salesian communities in Hong Kong and Macau.

From China, Fr Van Looy travelled to Hyderabad in India, with a short stop at Bombay, in order to pay his respects at the tomb of Fr Aurelio Maschio, a great missionary of the poor, who had died recently. At Hyderabad he presided at a three-day gathering of all the members of the Provincial Councils of the seven Indian Provinces on the topic of the 24th General Chapter document. At the end of the meeting a common policy for the whole of India was agreed regarding the implementation of the Chapter.

Between 30 September and 8 October, he joined the Rector Major and the members of the General Council to study several themes and to make some progress regarding the forward planning of the work of the General Council for the next six years.

On 11 October at Antwerp in Belgium he spoke to all the per-

sonnel of the Salesian works in Flanders on the theme: "*Salesians and Laity in the steps of Don Bosco in our times.*"

With an attendance of 2,500 people, a very full study-day was spent commemorating the centenary of the arrival of the first Salesians in Flanders. The first house was opened at Hechtel in 1896.

On 12 October he took part in the celebrations to mark the setting up of the Dutch Province fifty years ago. Then on 19-21 October he led a three day meeting of salesian rectors at Bollington in Great Britain. The emphasis was on the role of the salesian community as the animating nucleus of the educative and pastoral community. Prior to this, he met with representatives, SDB-FMA and young people, from the British Province to consider the situation of the Salesian Youth Movement there.

It should also be mentioned, that during the European Bishops' Symposium on the theme: '*Religion, a private matter and a public reality*' held at our Generalate 23-26 October, he had the opportunity to meet a number of the Bishops from Europe.

On 29 October Fr Van Looy spoke on Vatican Radio, in the

French language service, on the topic of '*The World Union of Catholic Teachers*', of which he is the ecclesiastical assistant.

Finally, on 11 November, he attended the Provincial feastday of the North Belgium Province held at Halle to celebrate the centenary of the arrival of the Salesians. From 15-17 November he was in Paris for a meeting of the executive committee of the World Union of Catholic Teachers.

### **The Councillor for Formation.**

In Fr Giuseppe Nicolussi's programme for the months of August-October 1996 mention must be made above all of the meetings with the provincial delegates for formation, and of his participation in interprovincial meetings which provided the opportunity for a first presentation of the GC24 guidelines for formation.

At the beginning of August, taking part in a conference on formation for the Interamerican Region (Guatemala, 1-7 August), the Councillor was able to meet the delegates for formation from almost all the Provinces in the Region. In the month of October he met the delegates from the Latin American Provincial Conference - 'South Cone' (Buenos Aires), and



the delegates of the Brazilian Provincial Conference (San Paulo).

The conference held at Guatemala had as its theme: "*Guidelines and planning criteria for initial formation*": it brought to a conclusion five regional meetings previously held concerning the separate stages of formation.

Noteworthy and significant was the presence of Brothers, as was the attention given to their formation. A special indication of this attention was the meeting of the "Curatorium" for the period following practical training for Brothers, held at San Salvador (8-9 August), which provided a clarification of the experience offered to the Brothers of all the Provinces in America.

While in Latin America, the Councillor took part (at Lima 24-25 October) in the first meeting of the Provinces of the Interamerican Region, which spent more than two whole days considering the situation regarding formation in the Region, and the priorities in this area for the next six years.

In the Provinces where the meetings took place, the Councillor was able to visit and hold discussions with the teachers, the young confreres and with other groups.

From the 31st October until 2nd November he attended a conference organized by the Institute of Spirituality of the Theology Faculty at the UPS, on: '*The main themes of salesian spirituality: a proposed synthesis*'. This conference which dealt with one of the priorities indicated by GC24 could provide a starting point for further development of the Institute, and for a more decisive relationship with the Congregation and the Salesian Family.

It should be mentioned finally that during the month of September the Councillor for Formation spent four weeks in England, and between September 30th and October 8th he took part in a meeting of a sub-committee of the Council.

### **The Councillor for Youth Ministry.**

During the months of August and October, the General Councillor for Youth Ministry made contact with several Provinces in the Latin American Region ("South Cone") and in the European Region, in order to have some direct experience of their pastoral situation and to pass on some of the ideas of GC24 regarding youth ministry.

From July 16 to 20th he was in Buenos Aires to take part in a meeting of those responsible for schools in the Provinces of Argentina who were examining the application of the conclusions of the Latin American meeting at Cumbaya (Ecuador) held in May 1994. At the same time, he met the youth ministry team of the Buenos Aires Province and some young members of the Salesian Youth Movement.

On 22 July, with Fr Helvecio Baruffi, he gave a presentation on the GC24 to the confreres of the Paraguay Province gathered together to celebrate the centenary of the salesian presence in Paraguay.

From 23 to 26 July at Ypacarai, Paraguay, he took part in the 3rd meeting of Salesian Youth Leaders. There were 300 young people present from the SDB and FMA Provinces of Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Paraguay. The theme of the meeting was "*Young Salesians at the heart of the Latin American Church*." It was also an opportunity to meet the provincial delegates of the Provincial Conference of the "South Cone" - La Plata and Chile.

27-31 July he was in Santiago, Chile, where he met the Provincial Council, the provincial dele-

gate for youth ministry and his team, and some young leaders of the Salesian Youth Movement.

After a short visit to Lima, from the 4th to the 11th of August in San Paulo, he attended the annual meeting of the provincial delegates for youth ministry of the SDB and FMA Provinces in Brazil.

After a few days rest with his family, Fr Domenech returned to Rome where he concentrated on an initial study of English, and then on the preparation of the programme for the Department. At the end of September (27-29) there was a meeting at the Pisana in Rome of the youth pastoral commission in order to reflect, deepen and enrich the plans of the Department and to prepare a project for the coordination of salesian youth pastoral activities in Europe for the next six years.

In order to get to know the situation in the European Provinces, he took part in celebrations of the Milan Province (14-15 September), in the course of which he proposed to the Salesians and the young people a pastoral plan for 1997. He subsequently met the Italian national committee. From 28 October to 3 November he made a quick visit to the Czech, Slovak and Austri-

an Provinces, meeting the provincial delegates and visiting some special youth initiatives.

On 1-2 November he attended the 5th European meeting of the FMA schools held at Vienna, developing the theme: "*The educational skills of the Salesian Teacher*".

Finally, 9-10 November he attended a meeting on salesian spirituality for the five German-speaking Provinces (SDB and FMA) at Furstenrieds (Munich) with the theme: "*The Formation of Leaders*"

### **The Councillor for the Salesian Family and Social Communication.**

#### **SALESIAN FAMILY SECTION:**

Between July and November, the most significant events of the Salesian Family department have been the following:

#### **1. MEETING OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF THE SALE- SIAN COOPERATORS.**

23-30 July 1996 at the Gener-  
alate, the World Councillors of the  
Association of the Salesian Coop-  
erators met together.

There were two main items on  
the agenda:

- formation in the Association;
- the economic aspect of the management of the Association, at the different levels: local, provincial, world.

They were days of intense activity, but also of deep fraternity. The fruits are now being gathered of the efforts that the association has made in recent years following the regional congresses.

The *Manual for the Formation of Cooperators* has been published: allowing for the necessary freedom to adapt it to different local situations, broad guidelines have been presented for a commitment which involves the whole Association.

Good work was also done on the second item on the agenda: the finances and the management of the material goods of the Association. A small handbook of good practice for all the centres has been produced

#### **2. THE WORLD COUNCIL OF THE PAST PUPILS' ASSOCI- ATION AND THE REGION- AL CONGRESS FOR ASIA- AUSTRALIA.**

1-11 September two important events for the confederation took place in Korea.

The first: the meeting of the

World Council. On the agenda were the following points:

- formation in the Confederation, at adult and young past-pupil level;
- the implementation of GC24, in the areas which refer to the Confederation;
- the organization of meetings of past-pupils which go beyond those at Provincial level, in order to make them more effective for the life of the Association itself.

The second event: the Asia-Australia Regional Congress.

The main theme was: *'The new identity of the Past-pupil on the threshold of the year 2000'*.

One must congratulate the Korean federation on the commitment which led to the success of the meeting.

The organization was excellent. The conclusions reached could be very important for the development of the federation in Asia and Australia, as they dealt very directly with the local situation. The Vicar General also attended all the events.

Thailand was suggested as the host nation for the next Regional Congress of the past pupils.

### 3. THE ITALIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PAST-PUPILS.

The National Congress of Past-Pupils took place at Rimini 10-13 October 1996.

The chosen theme was: *'Renew oneself in order to renew others'*. A considerable number of past-pupils from all over Italy took part.

A number of stimulating presentations and events to assist reflection had been very carefully prepared beforehand, and the contribution of the Rector Major, Fr Juan Vecchi, pointed the way ahead for the Italian federation.

### 4. RETREAT FOR THE DON BOSCO SECULAR INSTITUTE

Organized by the Central Assistant for the DBV and the delegate for the DBSI, a retreat was held at the Pisana during the first week of September.

The occasion also provided an opportunity to consider the immediate future of the group of the DBSI, with regard to its internal organization, and also the possibility of some form of recognition by the Church.

### 5. OTHER ACTIVITIES.

The central delegates, those responsible for the different sections of the Department, have been in-

involved in the animation of their own groups in the Salesian Family. Cooperators, Past Pupils and Volunteers have often been accompanied in their reunions, meetings, retreats and moments of reflection.

The ordinary administration of the Department has seen the various members involved in working on the planning for the next six years, and in the preparation of various aids for the animation of the whole Salesian Family and for the different groups.

### ***SOCIAL COMMUNICATION SECTION.***

The main activity during this recent period has been the production of the plan for the next six years: both with regard to the reorganization of the working group at the Centre, and to the principal objectives to be achieved at the Centre and in the Provinces. Thanks must be expressed to the Provincial of Madras for the valued presence in this sector of the confrere Fr Sagayaraj Devadoss.

The most important meetings of the Councillor have been:

#### **1. IN SLOVENIA.**

The first steps are being taken to establish a publishing house which will contribute to the

progress being made in the pastoral activity of the Church. The Councillor met with those working in this field during a rapid visit on 9 August 1996.

There are good prospects opening up after a difficult period. The buildings are ready, and the plans seem right. There only remains the problem of qualified personnel.

#### **2. IN KOREA.**

During the visit for the Past-pupils' Congress, there was the opportunity to see the provincial centre for social communications, Don Bosco Social Communications in Seoul. The decision to set up a community able to engage in communications has borne fruit. The programme which has so far been achieved is very interesting, both regarding community animation: the preparation of pastoral workers capable of entering this world of communications, and with regard to the specialized preparation of those responsible for the community and for the groups. The first steps have been taken towards the establishing of a publishing house, with the publication of salesian texts including the GC24 document.

#### **3. IN JAPAN.**

The Councillor for Communica-

tions had several meetings with the Provincial Council and with those responsible for social communications in the Province, which brought to light both problems and possibilities, and some possible solutions.

The first fundamental question regards personnel, adequately prepared for work in communications. They have to be prepared in good time, and chosen from among local confreres if a more appropriate response to the needs is to be provided.

The second concerns the programmes to be developed. Many are being used at present, and organized so as not to put a heavy financial burden on the Province. However, it will be necessary to produce a structured plan in conjunction with other sectors in the life of the Province.

The third point which emerged concerned the need to set up a group to work in this area, and not to leave the responsibility for social communications with individuals in a situation which requires special attention and combined efforts.

#### 4. OTHER INITIATIVES.

The Press Agency has continued its normal activities, producing useful material for the diffu-

sion of information on the GC24 and on the GC20 of the FMA.

The work it did on the occasion of the conferring of the Nobel Peace Prize on our Salesian Bishop Carlos Felipe Belo was much appreciated. It contributed considerably to the informing of international public opinion.

Contacts with the Provinces have been numerous to consult with those working in this field on the progress that is being made, especially in the area of social communications businesses.

In the context of "Project Fusagasuga" the agreement between EDEBE and various scholastic publishers in Latin America has been renewed.

A separate issue has been the search for personnel in the reorganization of the central team of the Department.

#### **The Councillor for the Missions.**

The General Councillor for the Missions, Fr Luciano Odorico, after taking part in the meetings of the summer session of the General Council, went to Africa to visit the two new salesian works at Harare (*Zimbabwe*) and Lilongwe (*Malawi*). In these two countries new to *Project Africa*, he was able

to inspect two promising projects:

- in Zimbabwe a huge pastoral area on the edge of the capital has been entrusted to the Congregation, with the opportunity to develop a variety of projects for needy young people;
- in Malawi, the Bishop has entrusted to the sons of Don Bosco a suburb of the capital, in which the Salesians have begun a parish, a big youth centre, and very shortly will open a technical school. These two foundations belong to the special Circumscription of Zambia.

In the middle of August, the Councillor returned to Rome, after spending a few days at the Catechetics Centre in Makalala, Tanzania.

During the second half of the month, after a short stay in Austria to improve his knowledge of the language, he joined the missionaries of the 126th missionary expedition in their course of preparation in Rome and in Turin. The increased number of participants this year is worth noting, as well as the variety of their places of origin, and the quality of their cultural and theological preparation.

At the beginning of October, Fr Luciano Odorico, after taking

part in several meetings of the General Council devoted to joint planning for the next six years, made a visit (3-17 October) to the communities of the Indonesian delegation, and represented the Rector Major at the celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Salesians in Timor.

On 11 October he concelebrated at the Mass at which Mgr Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo SDB presided in Dili, the capital, with the participation of a large number of the Salesian Family. During the Eucharist, news arrived of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Belo. It was certainly a surprise and a gift of the Lord on such a special occasion.

On the return journey to Rome, the Councillor spent two days in Singapore studying, with the Provincial of Manila Fr Luciano Capelli, concrete proposals for a salesian presence there.

After spending a few days in Rome, Fr Odorico went to Madrid to preside at a meeting of the procurators of the large Mission Offices. He was accompanied by Fr Christian Bigault who is responsible for this area of the Department.

He finished his travels with a short fact-finding visit to the Mis-

sion Office at Bonn, Germany, and the opportunity to encourage the staff there.

### **The Economer General.**

At the end of the first session of the General Council, Fr Giovanni Mazzali interrupted his stay in Rome, where he was engaged in ordinary administration, with a series of pastoral engagements.

From 14-20 July he preached a retreat for the Salesian Family in the special Piedmontese Circumscription, at the spirituality centre of Muzzano Biellese. From 27 July until 4 August at Ariccia in the spirituality centre "Divine Master", he led the retreat of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians from the Roman Province of St Agnes, and subsequently at Irpinia, in the Franciscan centre at Montecalvo Irpinia, the retreat for the salesian confreres of the Naples Province. From 27 August until 3 September at the Alpine Hostel of Col di Nava (IM) he led a summer camp for boys and young people from the Holy Martyrs parish in Sangano (TO).

After a short stay with his family, he returned to Rome, and then with the new Director of the SEI, Domenico Lodato, went to Manila in the Philippines, for a business

meeting at "*Salesiana Publishers*" in the North Philippine Province. During this visit, at a meeting of rectors and economers he gave an interesting report on some of the problems connected with economic and financial issues in our work for young people in the Philippines. Between the working sessions at "*Salesiana Publishers*" in Makati, Manila, he visited the parish and the Don Bosco school in Makati and the works at Mandaluyong, Tondo, Pampanga, Canlubang and the studentate at Paranaque.

Following his return to Rome, on 1 October he took part in a meeting of the economers of the Roman Province, and on 4 October of all the Provincial Economers of the Italian Provinces.

On Sunday 13 October, he presided at the Mass for the beginning of the year at the Cardinal Cagliero Salesian Institute at Ivrea, in the presence of the salesian community, the students and their parents.

In Turin at the headquarters of the Società Editrice Internazionale, he took part in a meeting of the executive committee of the Society.



## **The Councillor for the Africa-Madagascar Region**

The main activity during the months of August-October 1996, of the Councillor for Africa and Madagascar was the study of English, which is an indispensable means of communication in many countries in the Region. At the same time, he attended to some important issues connected with some of the works in Africa. The three most important were the following:

### **1. *Ethiopia-Eritrea: one Delegate for the two Provinces ILE and MOR.***

This is an arrangement which has been suggested a number of times by members of the General Council on their visits there. Now after holding consultations with the rectors, and with their agreement, the confreres have been consulted regarding the appointment of the Delegate and the members of his Council (including four confreres, two from ILE and two from MOR). After the consultation, the Provincials made their recommendations to the Rector Major who, with the agreement of his Council, approved the appointment of Fr Alfred Roca as the Delegate. The process leading

to the setting up of Ethiopia-Eritrea as an independent Circumscription will take two years (until September 1998).

### **2. *The "Tropical Equatorial African" Delegation.***

On 30 September, the Regional was in Paris for a meeting of the Provincials and Economers of the Provinces: BEN, FPA, ILT, IVO, SMA together with the Delegate of Tropical Equatorial Africa (ATE). One of the issues considered was the possible procedure, with a suggested timetable of the process, with a view to setting up a juridically independent Circumscription made up of the communities in Camerun, Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and later of those in the Central African Republic and in Chad.

The Provincials expressed their favourable opinion, both regarding the stages of the process and of the proposed timing. It is expected that the process can be completed by the Feast of Don Bosco in 1998.

### **3. *The "West African" Delegation***

In the month of September the Regional sent a letter to the Regional Councillor for Western Europe indicating the stages and some dates of a possible proce-

ture to be followed in the formation of a juridically independent circumscription in this region. He asked him to bring it to the attention of the Provincials of the Spanish Provincial Conference at their meeting at the end of October 1996. The Provincials expressed their agreement.

The process proposed is the same as that for the Tropical Equatorial African Delegation, and also in this case it is hoped the formation of the circumscription can be achieved by the Feast of Don Bosco 1998.

During the next few months it is intended to inform the Councils of the Delegations, and on the part of the Rector Major to begin the consultation of the confreres regarding the suitability of setting up juridical circumscriptions in AFA and ATE.

### **The Regional Councillor for Latin America ('South Cone')**

After spending some time in Montevideo studying Spanish, the Regional Councillor for Latin America ("South Cone") Fr Helvecio Baruffi took part in the celebrations to mark the centenary of the salesian presence in Paraguay. Together with the Rector Major, he was present for both

the opening and the closing festivities. For the Salesians, the celebrations provided a formative rather than a festive occasion. It was possible to observe how much during this period of a hundred years the Salesians had made their mark on the Paraguayan people in the field of education and of social welfare with oratories and houses for street boys, in the formation of political leaders and in building up the Church. The press was generous in giving recognition to the vast amount of work the Salesians had done.

After this, the Regional arranged for the carrying out of consultations for new Provincials, in the Belo Horizonte Province of Brazil and in Bahia Blanca (Argentina). It had been possible, in the various parts of these two provinces, to meet the Salesians in groups, to reflect on the situation in the provinces, and to hold community discernment meetings to choose the names to present to the Rector Major and his Council.

Other important occasions were the meetings of the Provincial Conferences in the Region.

1. First of all, the *Provincial Conference of Brazil* met at San Paulo.

Each Provincial gave an ac-

count of the progress made in the presentations to the confreres and the study of GC24. Great creativity had been shown in making use of all the meetings of Salesians and lay people to ensure that the Chapter was known and accepted. It has been decided to print the text of GC24 in a simplified form and in sufficient quantity to put it in the hands of lay people. For this year, the task has been taken up of developing the volunteer movement, of increasing the presence of lay people (and of attending to their formation) in our works, and of studying the specific role of lay people and of Salesians in our works in order to clarify it.

Worth mentioning also is the information service provided on the Internet by the Campo Grande Province: a daily news bulletin with information on the Church, the Congregation, and various aspects of the salesian mission.

In the course of the conferences, the four main objectives of the Congregation in the next six years were presented to the Provincials

Subsequently the meetings of JIAR and of CISUR were held, and the Regional took part in the two which took place in Argentina.

The meeting of JIAR (*"Junta Inspectorial Argentina"* = Provin-

*cial Conference of Argentina*) dealt with particular issues such as the evaluation of the inter-provincial novitiate, the choice of a new novice master and the choice of national directors for the scout movement.

Later there was the meeting of CISUR (the new name for the former Provincial Conference of La Plata, which now contains the Provinces of Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay).

Some time was given to reporting on the efforts being made to present GC24 to the confreres and to lay people. An evaluation was also made regarding the process of ongoing formation and youth ministry activities.

In addition, the Regional took part in the 3rd meeting of Young Salesian Leaders, which was held 23-26 July at Ypacarai, where young people from all the provinces of CISUR came together to reflect on the progress of the Church in Latin America. There is a well established Youth Movement looking for formation and a spirituality!

Besides taking part in the Provincial Conferences, the Regional visited the Provinces of Argentina, Uruguay and Chile to have a first contact with the Region. Although the time was lim-

ited, he was able to meet the Provincial Councils, and the various animation teams and to visit the formation houses. On all these occasions he presented the four main objectives of the plan for the next six years.

Other useful and helpful experiences worth mentioning in getting to know the confreres were two meetings: at La Plata, a Provincial assembly, with a report on *'The community according to GC24'* and in Uruguay the 1st meeting of the Salesian Family with the presence of over 600 members of the Salesian Family, especially young people, with the theme: *'Vocation as the following of Christ'*

In all these visits, the Regional was able to see that the countries of the "South Cone" are suffering from a policy which aims at stabilizing inflation, but which is producing unemployment and greater poverty. He met concerned Salesians committed to their mission. The field of youth continues to be vast and full of promise with many healthy young people, searching for a spirituality and formation who are striving for 'solidarity'.

The Salesians are surpassing themselves in the face of great challenges and are creative in searching for solutions to the ur-

gent needs which cannot wait. A large number of lay people are engaged in the mission and are asking for formation, and the animating presence of SDBs.

### **The Regional Councillor for Interamerica.**

During the period July-October the Councillor for the Interamerican Region, Fr Pascual Chavez, made a quick visit to the whole of the new Region, which includes 12 Provinces and 2 Vice-Provinces. He set in motion the consultation for the appointment of Provincials for ANT, SUE and SUO and held a meeting of all the Provincials of the Region. He also devoted three weeks to the study of English at Berkeley (USA) and presented his doctoral thesis at Salamanca University (Spain).

The *visit to the Provinces and Vice-Provinces* had a twofold purpose: first, to get to know a little better the confreres, the communities, their structures and situations; and secondly to help them to get in touch with and appreciate the current spiritual and pastoral climate that the Congregation is living through as indicated by GC24.

The object of the *meeting of Provincials* was threefold: to de-

termine more precisely the internal structure of the Region, setting out a programme for the next six years; to examine the situation regarding initial and ongoing formation in the Region, on the basis of the conference which took place in Guatemala at the beginning of August; and thirdly to provide information and make some decisions on specific issues: the centres for ongoing formation at Quito and Berkeley, African presences (Guinea Conakry and Sierra Leone) and CCS books.

With regard to the visits to the Provinces and Vice-Provinces, although the greatest attention was given to the meetings with Provincial Councils, Rectors, formation commissions and youth pastoral teams, contacts with communities and confreres were not lacking. Knowing each of the Provinces helps in deciding the best form of involvement in the work of animation and coordination: some need more in the form of support; others are experiencing serious economic problems, others need an injection of enthusiasm, others again need a more specific intervention. In spite of the difficulties and the limitations, the cultural, social, political and economic differences, the overall picture of the Region is

very encouraging. There is a lively and cheerful spirit. The mission is well focused. The works are varied and diverse: (local and ethnic-based parishes, local schools, agricultural schools, technical and professional schools, colleges, universities, oratories, youth centres, training and formation centres, works for street children, foreign missions, volunteers, centres for ongoing formation, a house of prayer, Missions Office etc.) Collaboration with the FMA and with other branches of the Salesian Family takes place in a variety of ways, and – a most important point – there are vocations.

With regard to the meeting of the Provincials which took place at Chosica (Peru), it should be said that it was very productive, in the first place for bringing all the Provincials together, in spite of the language problems, which were overcome thanks to the attitude of everyone concerned and the help of a translator; secondly on account of the great amount of serious work which was done.

In drawing up the programme for the Region, the Regional was asked to try to strike the right balance between the time spent in visiting the various Provinces and in providing support for the Region. Regarding formation, the

discussion was assisted by the presence of Fr Nicolussi, Councilor for Formation, whose contributions were very helpful and much appreciated. The reports on the two centres for ongoing formation, that at Berkeley and that at Quito, provided a picture of the alternative services they offer to confreres.

Some of the more important decisions taken were:

1. To make the ordinary life of the Province a means of formation, which implies concentrating on the daily life of the communities, assisting in improving the animating role of the rectors; studying, assimilating and putting into practice the GC24 with a genuine opening up to lay people, making the CEP a place of formation, making progress in fostering a planning mentality, and developing methods of co-responsibility; taking special care of initial formation.

2. To divide the Region into three groups of Provinces: *North American* (CAN-SUE-SUO), *Central American and Caribbean* (MEG-MEM-CAM-ANT-HAI-VEN) and *Andean* (COB-COM-ECU-PER-BOL) both for greater collaboration between Provinces in the different areas of salesian

life and mission, and to assist with the work of the Regional.

3. In particular, the need was expressed to redefine and develop the scope of the centre at Quito, with more appropriate courses ("Campello style") in addition to the services so far offered, in order to respond more effectively to the requirements of the new approaches in formation.

4. With regard to CRESCO, the formation centre for Brothers after practical training, its value was re-affirmed, and it was agreed that it should be in operation whenever there were at least eight confreres.

5. It was agreed to draw up a contract with the publishers CCS of Madrid to purchase the printing rights of their books for the Provinces of the Region, according to the terms which would be set out in the contract itself.

Finally a commitment was made by all the Provinces and Vice-Provinces to make known, to study and to put into practice the GC24, the document of which had been presented by the Provincials and Delegates in all the communities, in meetings of rectors or of various commissions, in assemblies of the confreres, to the Salesian Family and, in many places,

to the members of the CEP, either in the form of a conference or as a subject of study or as the theme of retreats.

After this first visit, it seems to the Regional that the most important areas for consideration are the following:

- the growing poverty of many Latin American countries as a result of the neo-liberalism which has become a challenge for the salesian mission today;
- the urgent need for a spirituality for salesian communities ever more exposed to the harmful influence of secularism, of modernism and of post-modernism;
- finally, the salesian presence in the world of economics, in the professional sector and how to evangelize it.

### **The Councillor for the Australia-Asia Region.**

The Regional Councillor, Fr Joachim D'Souza, began his first visit to the Australia-Asian Region, 16 July at Mumbai (Bombay) with the installation of the new Provincial, Fr Tony D'Souza. He left immediately afterwards for Tokyo, where he presided at a two day meeting of the Provincials of East Asia and Australia.

In this meeting an attempt was made to compose a *Vision Statement* to establish the future direction of the Australia-Asia-Pacific group of Provinces, and to set in motion the process to form a Provincial Conference. In this regard, it was pointed out that it was important to create a flexible structure that would respect the different cultures and the different social and political situations in the Region. Several initiatives for coordination and animation for the next three years were also undertaken. At the end of the meeting, the Regional was able to visit several of the works in the Japanese Province. He met the formation team in the house of formation at Chofu, the missionaries at Oita and the Provincial Council. At this meeting he also set in motion the consultation process for the appointment of the new Provincial.

Going on to Korea, he visited several places in the Vice-Province. At Seoul he met a group of past pupils involved just then in the preparations for their Asia-Australian Regional Congress, which was later held at Seoul 7-11 September. The visit to Korea concluded with a meeting of the Provincial Council.

At Manila in the North Philip-



pine Province, besides the usual visits to houses and the meeting with the Provincial Council, a day had been planned for the transmission of the Acts of GC24 to those in charge of the Salesian Family. This was repeated in Cebu, in the Southern Philippine Province. Returning to Manila, the Councillor tried to get to Papua New Guinea, the Philippine Delegation, but he was unable to do so because of technical problems regarding the flight. Instead he went to Sydney and Melbourne in Australia, where he celebrated the feast of the Assumption, and suitably began his visit to the salesian works in that great continent.

From Australia, Fr Joachim D'Souza left for Jakarta and East Timor, visiting all the houses and works, and concluding with a visit to Mgr Carlos Felipe Belo, the Bishop of Dili.

From there he went to Bangkok where among the different works he was able to visit the apostolic school at Hua Hin, the aspirantate at Banpong and the postnovitiate at Sampran, finishing with a meeting with the Provincial Council. From Bangkok he went to Yangon and Anisakan, near Mandalay in Myanmar (Burma). The Councillor met all the

confreres of this Delegation belonging to the Calcutta Province (India). While he was in Anisakan, the Burmese confrere Fr Paul Tim Maung died.

From Myanmar, the Councillor went to Hong Kong and Macau in the Chinese Province. Not having been able to obtain a visa to visit Vietnam, he was unfortunately unable to make a first contact with that Vice-Province. As a result, he had some extra time to go to mainland China and see the work being done with the lepers and orphan children, and also visit Taiwan. There he received the news of the death of Fr Aurelio Maschio which had taken place at Mumbai on 9 September. He therefore cut short his visit to Taiwan and went to Mumbai for the funeral which took place on 12 September.

After Fr Maschio's funeral, the Councillor continued his visits in India, beginning with Calcutta and then going to Guwahati and Dimapur. In each of the three Provinces he met the Provincial Council, the rectors and the formation teams from the houses of formation. After a brief stop at New Delhi, the headquarters of the Delegation attached to Calcutta, he reached Hyderabad and took part in a three days' meeting



of the Indian Provincials, their Councils and the national delegates for the different sectors, on the theme of the application of the GC24 in the Indian context. The Vicar General, Fr Luc Van Looy, presided at the meeting and gave the opening address.

Going on then to the Provinces of Bangalore and Madras, the Councillor made a special point of visiting the houses of formation, meeting the students, the formation teams and the Provincial Councils, and looking into the formation programmes, the contents and the structures. From Madras, he went on to Sri Lanka, a Delegation of the Madras Province, visiting all the houses. Returning to India, to Thiruvananthapuram, he visited the houses of the Province of Bangalore which are in the state of Kerala. Finally he reached Mumbai once more and then at Goa met the rectors of the Province.

So he completed his first visit to the Region, and returned to headquarters on 29 October.

### **The Councillor for the North Europe Region.**

Fr Albert Van Hecke, Councillor for the North Europe Region had the following programme in

the period 1 June to 31 October.

18-21 June he went to Germany to the Munich Province where he took part in the inauguration of a new building at Waldwinkel (a technical training centre for physically impaired youngsters). While there, he met the rectors of the houses in the South German Province (GEM) and gave a report on the GC24. Afterwards he took part in the perpetual profession of three young confreres at Benediktbeuern. At the end of his stay in the Province, he also visited the *Don Bosco Jugendheim* in Munich.

After spending a few days with his family, on 27 June he took part in a Provincial Day for the Province of North Belgium in Boortmeerbeek. Then, from 29 June until 23 August he was in London, in the Sacred Heart community, attending an English language course. Between the 25th and the 29th August he visited the following houses in the British Province: Stockport, Bolton, Bootle, Huyton, Bollington and London, observing the development of the works in the Province and encouraging the salesian communities.

On 1 September he returned to Rome where he stayed until the 6th. Then on the 7th he went to

Poland to visit the salesian communities, see the way salesian work is developing in the country and to meet the Salesian Family. He went to all four Provinces.

In the Province of Pila, 7-14 September, he visited the main parishes, schools, youth centres and houses of formation. He took part in a meeting of rectors and parish priests at Lad, and met the Provincial Council, and the staff and young confreres from the house of formation. He also met the youth pastoral team and a group of youngsters from school.

In the Warsaw Province, 14-20 September, he visited all the houses of formation, the schools and the main parishes, giving conferences on the theme of GC24 and speaking with the confreres. At Czerwinski he spoke to the confreres and novices. At Lodz he met those in initial formation and the staff. At Warsaw he took part in a meeting of rectors and parish priests, and in a Provincial Council meeting. He also met the young people from the Salesian Institute of Christian Education and presided at the celebration for four confreres celebrating 50 years of priesthood.

In the Breslau Province too, 20-26 September, he visited most of the houses. He met the rectors

and the parish priests and gave an account of the GC24. At Kopiec he met the novices. At Twardogora he took part in a pilgrimage with about 5,000 people, and then met the Cooperators. At Lublin he was present for the opening of the new academic year at the Liceo.

Finally, in the Krakow Province, 26 September to 2 October, he had a meeting with the young people and the confreres at the school in Oswiecim. He then met the teachers and the young confreres in our house of formation at Krakow where he also presided at the opening of the new academic year. He then met the rectors and parish priests, and the confreres from the national centre for youth ministry. At the school in Swietochlowice he greeted the pupils and their parents. On 22 September at Bobrek he took part in the funeral of the mother of Fr Augustine Dziedziel, the former Delegate of the Rector Major for Poland. Returning to the Generalate, he took part in a meeting of the General Council 4-6 October.

On 7 October he left again for Germany, for the Cologne Province, for an intensive German language course. While in Germany he visited the houses at Helenenburg and Junkerath where he met the novices.

On 11 October with the Vicar General, Fr Luc Van Looy, he took part in the celebrations to mark the opening of the centenary of the arrival of the Salesians in the north of Belgium. On 12 November, again with the Vicar General, he took part in the celebrations to mark the first 50 years of the Dutch Province.

Having returned to Rome on 26 October, the next day 27, he went to Vienna to preside at the first meeting of the group of Provinces in the North Europe Region (27-30 October). The meeting had as its main objectives: to confirm the willingness to form a "region"; to become aware of the multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-faith situation; to share the salesian riches of the different Provinces in the Region; to make time to meet each other as brothers; to work together on some of the organizational and planning matters of the Region.

He returned to Rome again on 30 October.

### **The Councillor for the West Europe Region.**

The re-structuring of the Regions according to the wishes of the GC24 and the novelty of the duties required of the Regional,

elected for the first time by the same GC24, suggested that a preliminary visit was advisable in order to become familiar with the situation, and to make personal contact with the people, the communities and the works.

The visit began in the Province of Bilbao. Accompanied by the Provincial and members of the Provincial Council, during 15-19 July, Fr Filiberto Rodriguez visited all the communities of the Province, with the exception of those in Africa. Summer activities were about to begin: courses of INEM, and various summer camps.

On 20 July he was present when the new Provincial of Madrid took office, and on the 21st he visited the communities in Madrid which depend on the Spanish Provincial Conference.

From 22 to 26 he visited some of the communities in the Province of Leon. There too summer activities were under way, summer camps and youth groups, and courses of formation. He met a large number of confreres gathered together for a course of on-going formation.

On 26 July he began a visit to the Portuguese Province, and on the 27th at Porto he received the perpetual profession of six confr-

eres. In the evening he met the large number of confreres who had taken part in the celebrations. He then visited all the communities in the peninsula, appreciating the different forms of the salesian mission in which the confreres were engaged. At Lisbon he worked with the Provincial Council for one morning.

1-10 August he visited the Provinces of Seville and Cordoba. Many of the confreres were away spending some days with their families, but he was able to appreciate the quality of the work being done in the various summer camps and in the training sessions for Youth Leaders. On 5 August at Seville, he presided at the Mass for the celebration of the perpetual professions of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

After spending a few days (11-15 August) with his family in Val-salabroso (Spain), and making another visit to Madrid (15-17 August), on the 17th Fr Filiberto Rodriguez travelled to Paris where he remained until 13 September improving his French.

Then from 14 until 26 September he visited most of the communities in the Paris Province. From 26 September until 4 October he visited the Lyons Province,

and between the 4th and the 13th of October all the communities in the South Belgium Province.

On the 27th he took part in the inauguration of a new block of classrooms at Marseilles, in the house founded by Don Bosco. On the 30th in Paris he took part in a meeting of representatives of those Provinces concerned with the process leading to the independence of the salesian foundations in the new African Region.

In these three Provinces he followed the same programme: meetings with communities, with the different commissions, with the members of the Salesian Family; with the Provincial Councils and with the rectors. In spite of the shortage of personnel, the amount of work carried out by the confreres is enormous, and the works themselves admirable, of different types, making a real social impact and with a clear Salesian identity.

He passed 14-16 October in Madrid dealing with some issues affecting the Region. He met those with responsibilities for the parishes at national level, and visited the national centre for youth ministry, the theological centre and the theological student communities. During the weekend of 17-20 October he took part in a

meeting at Orense of the parents' association of the pupils of the SDB/FMA schools in the Leon Province.

21 October he met the Provincial Council of the Madrid Province. On the agenda were the outlines of the programme of the General Council for the next six years; the role and duties of a Provincial Council; and the priorities for animation of the Madrid Province itself.

22-27 October he visited the communities of the Barcelona Province. He was present at the inauguration of the academic year at the study centre of Marti Codolar, and met the staff and students. He also met the Provincial Council and various representatives of the different Provincial delegations and commissions. He admired the sensitivity in social matters in the Province and in the various activities planned in response to the challenges posed by young people at risk in our cities.

On the 27th at Madrid he was present at the end of a meeting of SDB/FMA national representatives of those with responsibilities for schools. On the 28th he visited the initial formation communities in the Madrid Province.

Finally, 29-31 October he took

part in a meeting of the Provincial Conference of Spain and Portugal, and on 1-2 November in a meeting of those involved in working for the marginalized in both FMA and SDB settings.

In general, the Councillor has been greatly impressed by the enormous amount of work that is being done in true salesian style throughout the Region, and shares the concerns of the confreres and all the Salesian Family for the *promotion of the vocation of the salesian charism in all its forms, and its special significance at this time in the Church and in a world which is so secularized.*

### **The Regional Councillor for Italy and the Middle East.**

The Regional for Italy and the Middle East, Fr Giovanni Fedrigotti, was in the salesian community of London/Battersea from 13 July until 12 August, learning English.

19-20 August he was in Pierabec (Udine) visiting the second session of the ongoing formation course of the "quinquennio" for perpetually professed salesian Brothers.

24-30 August at Civitanova Marche (Macerata) he preached the retreat to the novices from

Lanuvio in preparation for their first profession.

1-6 September at Sacrofano he preached a retreat to the Italian confreres preparing for their perpetual profession.

On 7 September he was at Verona for the changeover of Provincial, Fr Giontonio Bonato completing his term of office, and Fr Adriano Bregolin taking over, and also for the perpetual profession of the young confreres of the Province.

On 10 September at Pio XI in Rome he spoke to the teaching staff about the educational aspects of the educative pastoral plan and the laity, based on the reflections of the GC24.

13-14 September, he was at Zafferana (Catania) to take part in the "launching" of the new school year with the teachers (salesian and lay) and developed the theme *'The GC24 and the new preventive system in Don Bosco's school'*.

18th with other members of the General Council he took part in the opening of the FMA General Chapter.

On the 19th he began the extraordinary visitation of the Roman Province.

1 October at 'Domus Mariae', Rome, he took part in the national meeting of CISM/USMI on the subject of the problems of the

Catholic school in Italy.

10 October, he left for Manila in the Philippines invited by the Provincial Fr Capelli. He preached a retreat to the confreres in the studentate of theology, and met the rectors of the Philippine Provinces, for three days of ongoing formation. He made a quick visit also to the salesian houses in and around Manila, which show the vitality, so full of promise, of the salesian presence in that country. He was able to observe personally the great impact made in East Asia by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Mgr Belo and how much appreciated it was.

From 24 October until 1 November, he visited the Chinese Province. He passed through Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. He went to several leper colonies in southern China. He spent time with the confreres in the Province socially, in a retreat and in prayer. The celebrations on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of John Paul II's ordination, in Taiwan and Hong Kong, expressed the special affection in which the successor of Peter is held in that country.

The announcement of the appointment of Joseph Zen, former Provincial, as the Coadjutor Bish-

op of Hong Kong, and the appearance of the Chinese translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, coordinated by our salesian confrere Fr Hon Tai Fai, enriched those days with signs of the special esteem in which the sons of Don Bosco are rightly held, as a result of their generous and faithful service to the Church and to young people.

The 3 November, he represented the Rector Major at the beginning of the celebrations to mark the centenary of the house at Legnano (Verona), founded by Blessed Michael Rua, in fulfilment of a promise made by Don Bosco.

On 6 October at Collevalenza, at the invitation of the national CISM, he spoke on the theme: *'Building religious life in the third millennium: expectations, proposals, tasks. The attitudes of communities and of superiors'*.

10 October at Mestre (Venezia) he presented the theme *'Salesian life on the threshold of the third millennium'*. to the rectors of the Province

23-24 November he was at Messina for a meeting with the teachers of the salesian schools in

the city on the topic: *'The new preventive system'*. In the same city he took part in a course of ongoing formation on spiritual direction, speaking on the theme: *'Spiritual direction: A ministry for today: a precious heritage of the Salesian Family'*.

25 November in our novitiate at Lanuvio he spent the day with 165 novices taking part in the 10th meeting of the novitiates in the diocese of Albano with the theme: *'Outlines of an apostolic spirituality'*.

28-29 November he took part, at the Generalate, in a meeting of the committee of the members of General Curias.

30 November and 1 December he attended the national meeting of the committees of the Italian past-pupils' federation held at the 'Domus Pacis', saying Mass and giving the 'good night'.

11-13 November; 2-4 December; 10-12 December he was present for the three updating courses for the rectors of the Region, organized by CISI, on the theme of the GC24 with special reference to the laity, formation and the Salesian Family.

### 5.1 Intervention of the Rector Major at the opening of the GC20 of the FMA

*The following is the text of the Rector Major's address at the opening of the recent General Chapter of the FMA on 18 September 1996. It is of interest to and involves also salesian confreres.*

My Lord Cardinals,  
Reverend Mother General,  
Brothers and Sisters  
of the Salesian Family,  
and Dear Members of the Chapter,

1. I bring you the fraternal greetings of the Salesians. With you we were born and grew together into the same Family, in which the common spiritual heritage and single mission gives rise to the desire for collaboration and communication, and becomes translated into empathy and affection. Everywhere among my confreres I have observed a great interest in this event of your Chapter which we consider to be also our event too.

To my own good wishes I add those of the entire Salesian Fam-

ily. I read in your Constitutions: "Our Institute is a living part of the Salesian Family which throughout history relives in different ways the spirit and mission of Don Bosco, thus expressing its perennial adaptability. The Rector Major of the Society of St Francis de Sales is the Institute's animator and centre of unity. In the Salesian Family we share the spiritual heritage of the Founder and, as in Mornese, we offer the support of our specific contribution".

The feeling uppermost in me at the present moment is one of joy and thanksgiving. We are glad that in the Salesian Family there is your Institute with its charismatic originality, its numerical consistency, its apostolic vitality and spiritual solidity, the clarity of its orientation and the courage to face the future which is evident in this GC20 with no fewer than 190 participants. We consider as a singular grace, an indication of God's love, the fact that the Fam-



ily has been able to receive your contribution of salesian women who are consecrated and educators, and can count on this in the future. We feel its beneficial influence, starting from the holiness of Mother Mazzarello and the practice of the preventive system at Mornese. And we are convinced that this General Chapter of yours represents a visit of the Holy Spirit not only for you but for all who share in some way in the salesian mission.

2. This feeling gives rise to the expectations I will now manifest to you, as to sisters and daughters in the Lord. This I have been kindly requested to do, and I am encouraged by the present cordial environment of eager attention. I am heartened too by the fact that it has fallen to my lot to represent Don Bosco.

The first expectation concerns your part in *salesian communion*. It is indispensable and decisive, and it has never been lacking. We have experienced it in terms of availability, harmony, active exchange and participation. And I express our gratitude for it in the name of the Salesian Family.

But the period through which the Family is living and your own growth open up new possibilities

and call for new responses. It is a case, I think, of giving greater practical importance to the three points made in the article of the Constitutions which I quoted earlier: to be a living part of the Family, to share its spiritual heritage, to provide an original contribution.

We have followed with satisfaction in recent years your Institute's process of giving a greater spiritual and cultural preparation to the Sisters. We have seen emerging and spreading the awareness of your originality within the salesian vocation. We have appreciated your commitment to the re-reading of the origins to provide new and richer perspectives, and to translate at the present day the inspirations to which they give rise, in conformity with the guidelines of the Church, the developments in the condition of women, and educational needs. We have seen the strengthening of your apostolic initiatives in complex and demanding sectors of youth ministry and towards the missions. Your working document proposes a unified experience of consecration and mission lived in communities that have become inculturated in their environment.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* expresses a new con-

cept with regard to communities of religious men and women, when it entrusts to them the mission of expanding and consolidating communion in the universal Church, the particular Church, and in social life. They are "experts in communion" (cf. n. 46), carry out a pastoral work of communion, and follow a spirituality of communion. There is an insistence on involving the laity whom the Spirit calls to associate themselves with the charism or participate in the mission of the Institute concerned. It is a sign to be given and a possibility to be exploited, after the Church has deepened the correlation between the three conditions in which Christians are called to live their vocation: lay, ministerial and consecrated.

For some time we too have been trying to give life, orientation and organic form to a vast aggregation of consecrated and lay persons who express by their different characteristics all the richness of the salesian spirit, who are constituted as a broad educative subject and so take part in the new evangelization: the Salesian Family and the Salesian Movement. Its seed is found in our origins themselves. Progressive growth has accompanied all our history,

but its full manifestation has come about in our own time of renewal.

Today the Salesian Family is numerous, with further possibilities as yet unstated. The Salesian Movement is growing and finding new reasons for its existence and activities. It is not centered on the SDBs and is not their possession, but on the mission and by virtue of the salesian spirituality. Both are always in need of the leaven of animation, of the underpinning of formation and of support for expansion. In the nature of things, services of this kind are expected primarily, though not exclusively, from those who have the gift of consecration and have been able to mould their own salesian identity under the direct guidance of the Founders.

You therefore, like ourselves, are asked to go beyond the simple sense of belonging, and take on responsibility for the whole charismatic ensemble. It is primarily a matter of acquiring a mentality and outlook from which to consider the charism, to assess a reality now taking place and its potentialities, to exploit a dimension of the community and of pastoral work which is already contained in your working document under the heading: a community

of women, in mutual relationship with each other, with young people, and with all others. It is among these latter that are to be found the ones who can receive from you the gift of the salesian spirit and frame of mind.

3. Linked with this there is another expectation. The main aspect of animation consists today in the communication of *salesian spirituality*. This is implicit in the words of the Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* when it says, referring to the movements which grow up around specific charisms: "In whatever activity or ministry they are involved, consecrated persons should remember that before all else they must be expert guides in the spiritual life, and in this perspective they should cultivate the most precious gift: the spirit" (n.55)

In today's Church, more than ever in the past, the need for spirituality is strongly felt. A rapid glance at messages and meetings shows that this has become an emergency everywhere. The world itself senses its urgency. The present style of life satisfies immediate desires, but leaves more fundamental demands unanswered. Today spirituality alone can give value to a proposal of sense, life to

ethical research, and consistency to solidarity. Consecrated persons are asked to meet this demand as a fundamental aspect of their mission: "Because of the very nature of their choice, all who embrace the consecrated life, men and women alike, become privileged partners in the search for God which has always stirred the human heart and has led to the different forms of asceticism and spirituality" (n.103).

The salesian spirit is unique. In it resides our unity as a Family, but this is expressed in different realizations which mutually enrich each other in communion and joint exchange.

Recent years have seen a work of deeper analysis, an effort at formulation and a will for the greater diffusion of our spiritual experience. And so the latter has reached the young as a characteristic trait and the summit of the journey of faith. The need is felt for fostering personal and community life, suggestions regarding the future, and the special accompaniment of young adults committed with us in the same field.

The course we have followed so far and the attempts we have made together give us confidence to wager on this line of animation of the Family. And in this regard

your own contribution of reflection and lived experience will be valuable.

4. A final expectation concerns our common heritage which is very dear to us: *education*. It is our life and our specific manner of evangelizing. Led by educative sensitivity and competence, we work in such broad fields as youth ministry, emargination, social communication and the promoting of culture.

In education our spirituality has its characteristic manifestations. This was indicated by John Paul II in his letter *Iuvenum Patris*: "I like to consider in Don Bosco the fact that he realized his personal holiness through an educative commitment lived with zeal and an apostolic heart... An interchange between education and holiness is indeed the characteristic aspect of his personality" (IP n.5).

And so spirituality is revealed and lived in the preventive system, which makes saints of the educators and proposes holiness to the young.

Spirituality, education, preventive system: you have so much to learn about them from Mornese, so much to discover in your praxis, so much to offer through further qualification.

Our Institutes make themselves responsible for young men and women who are today in continual contact with each other. The Salesian Family and Movement constitute a subject, an environment, and a significant point of reference for the Christian growth of young people.

On the other hand education, understood in this way in a broad form, has to face up to new situations, decipher new styles of life, attend to new forms of poverty, discern values and set out fresh horizons.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* proposes education as one of the areopagi in which the creativity of men and women religious is awaited, and recognizes in their pedagogical patrimony one of the Church's riches.

Your capital of knowledge, experience and educative resources is known and recognized. Between us there is a fruitful convergence in reflection and collaboration in local areas.

I am sure that this Chapter will provide a thrust towards a further qualification of our educative charisma and towards a greater unity of intentions.

5. Anyone who has followed the preparation of your Chapter can

have no doubts about its results. God can take it beyond even the generous goals you have set for it. This is the wish I make once again for you in my own name, in that of the salesian confreres, and of the whole Salesian Family.

**5.2 Mgr. Carlos Felipe  
Ximenes Belo SDB, recipient  
of the Nobel Peace Prize.**

The 1996 Nobel Peace Prize for 1996 has been conferred on Mgr. Carlos Belo, Salesian Bishop of Dili (East Timor). The news, spread far and wide by international press agencies and by our own salesian press office, filled the Congregation and the Salesian Family with joy. It is a great recognition of this Bishop of ours who for the past decade has been intensely committed to the task of bringing peace to his people through dialogue and argument inspired by the Gospel. It is also a recognition for the Church of Timor and for the Congregation of Don Bosco, on whose method (the preventive system) Mgr. Belo bases his activity. He is the first Catholic Bishop to be awarded this outstanding honour!

The solemn conferring ceremony took place at Oslo on 10 De-

cember 1996 at Oslo in the presence, as is customary, of the King of Norway, the members of the Nobel Committee and many international authorities. Among the Salesians present were the Vicar General (Fr Luc Van Looy), representing the Rector Major, the Procurator General (Fr José Pacheco), the Provincial of Portugal with confreres and members of the Portuguese Salesian Family, and Fr Carlos Garulo, director of ANS.

In his speech on the occasion Mgr. Belo laid emphasis on the significance he gave to the recognition. Among other things, he said: "As member of a people I have to assume the destiny of that people, in the full knowledge of the risks inherent in that attitude. To be committed to the defence of the rights of all peoples is not the privilege only of those who guide the destinies of nations, or those who occupy prominent positions in society, but is the duty of every individual, whatever be his class or condition. As a member of the Church, I make my own the mission of throwing light on and denouncing all human situations which are not in accord with the Christian vision and contrary to the Church's teaching with regard to

the whole of humanity. (...) And so the Nobel Peace Prize bestowed on a Catholic Bishop is not a homage to a single person, but is fundamentally an indication of gratitude to the Catholic Church for the contribution it has made through the centuries in the defence and promotion of the rights of all human beings.

After the conferring ceremony, Mgr. Belo fulfilled important engagements in certain European countries. On 17 December he treached Rome where he spent several days. During his stay there he had a personal meeting with the Holy Father, with the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (Card. Jozef Tomko), and other ecclesiastical authorities.

In particular it was a great joy for Mgr. Belo to have a family encounter with the Rector Major and his Council together with many salesian confreres who gathered to offer their greetings and best wishes. Of great significance was December 18 when the Congregation and Salesian Family gathered around the Bishop in prayer and celebration. In the morning of that day Mgr. Belo had presided at a Eucharistic celebration at the Salesian Pontifical University, with the Rector Major

(who is the Grand Chancellor of the University), the Rector Magnificus and academic authorities, the Superiors of the UPS Vice-Province, teachers and students of the University. On the same occasion the Rector Magnificus (Fr Raffaele Farina) announced that the Academic Senate had conferred on the Bishop the Doctorate in Theology "ad honorem".

Then in the afternoon there took place at the Generalate a celebration of prayer for peace, followed by a fraternal family supper. Among those present, in addition to the Rector Major, the General Council and the confreres of the Generalate, were the Salesian Cardinals in Rome (Rosario Castillo Lara, Antonio Javierre and Alfons Stickler), salesian Bishops (Tarcisio Bertone, Vincenzo Savio and Genaro Prata) the Bishop of the Diocese (Antonio Buoncristiani), the Mother General of the FMA (Sr. Antonia Colombo) with Mother Marinella Castagno and other Councillors, some Provincials, the salesian Rectors of Rome with many confreres, the Coordinator General of the Cooperators and numerous representatives of groups of the Salesian Family.

The following are some expression from the speech of the Rec-

tor Major which well sum up the motivations for the cordial encounter.

"In the name of all of us I express to you our genial congratulations for the honour you have received, which crowns preceding awards, such as the "John Humphrey" Prize for freedom and the promotion of human rights, and the "Oscar Romero" Prize.

We are happy that your disinterested and humble commitment to giving voice to your people, sustaining rights and defending the dignity of every individual has been given due recognition and highlighted in the eyes of the world. We feel flattered by your references to Don Bosco in what you have said.

Our family gathering began in Church with a moment of prayer because we want it to be in the first place an act of thanksgiving to God for the work for peace you have undertaken and a request for help that you may be able to continue successfully the work you have already done in the past.

We want also to emphasize the pastoral significance of your mediation and of the recognition you have been given. To work for peace is the task of the Christian community. Every pastor must become in Christ's name a sign of

reconciliation and concord. We have felt this frequently endorsed in your addresses and declarations, and for this too we rejoice for you, for the Church and for Jesus Christ".

### **5.3 Canonical erection of the Province "Jesus the Good Shepherd" of New Delhi, India**

*We publish the decree of canonical erection of the new Province "Jesus the Good Shepherd" with headquarters at New Delhi, India, approved during the session of the General Council of December 1996.*

Prot. n.325/96

### **D E C R E E OF CANONICAL ERECTION OF THE SALESIAN PROVINCE "JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD" OF NEW DELHI (INDIA)**

The undersigned,

Fr Juan E. VECCHI,  
*Rector Major of the Salesian Society of St John Bosco,*

- after considering the development of the salesian mission and the great territorial extent of the Salesian Province "St John

- Bosco" of Calcutta (India);
- having taken note of the fact that for purposes of more efficacious animation, the Provincial Delegation "Hindi Belt" was constituted in 1992 with headquarters at New Delhi;
  - having examined the results of a consultation carried out in the Province;
  - having obtained the favourable opinion of the Provincial and his Council;
  - with the consent of the General Council given in its meeting of 17 December 1996, in conformity with Const.132 §1,1 and Const.156;
  - on the basis of art.156 of the Constitutions,

DETACHES from the salesian Province "St John Bosco" of Calcutta the following houses:

1. JABALPUR "St John Bosco" (Madhya Pradesh)
2. JOKBAHLA "Mary Help of Christians" (Madhya Pradesh)
3. KUARMUNDA "St John Bosco" (Orissa)
4. NEW DELHI-Alaknanda "St John Bosco" (New Delhi)
5. NEW DELHI-Okhla "St John Bosco" (New Delhi)
6. RANCHI-Hatia "St John Bosco" (Bihar)

#### 7. RANCHI-Kokar "St John Bosco" (Bihar)

and in addition the salesian works in:

- JHARSUGUDA (Orissa)
- JUMAIKELA (Madhya Pradesh)
- KAULI "St John Bosco" (Punjab)
- KERENG (Bihar)
- KULLU "Our Lady of the Snows" (Himachal Pradesh)
- LUCKNOW "St John Bosco" (Uttar Pradesh)
- NEW DELHI-Najafgarh "Sts. Peter and Paul" (New Delhi)

and by means of this present Decree, **CANONICALLY ERECTS**, with the above-mentioned Houses and salesian works, the new Salesian Province with headquarters at **NEW DELHI - St John Bosco (Alaknanda)**, with the title of **"JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD"**.

Territorially the Province includes the following States of India: Delhi, Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar (except for Purnea and Khatihar, which remain in the Province of Calcutta), Orissa, Madhya Pradesh (except for the diocese of Bhopal, Indore and Nagpur, which form part of the Province of Bombay).



The following decisions have been made:

1. Members of the Province are all those confreres, who at the date of the canonical erection live and work in the Houses and salesian works listed above.
2. The membership of confreres in formation is determined by the two Provincials of Calcutta and New Delhi, in the light of the opinions of the confreres concerned.
3. The division of goods and financial relationships will be regulated by an Agreement between the Province of Calcutta and the new Province of New Delhi, approved by the Rector Major.

The present Decree will come into force on **24 January 1997**.

Rome, 24 December 1996.

Fr Juan E. VECCHI  
*Rector Major*

Fr Francesco MARACCANI  
*Secretary General*

#### 5.4 New Salesian Bishops

*The following are biographical details of three new Salesian Bishops, appointed in the period October-December 1996.*

##### 1. *Mgr. Joseph ZEN, Coadjutor Bishop of HONG KONG.*

On 21 October 1996 the Osservatore Romano published the appointment of our confrere Fr Joseph ZEN as Coadjutor Bishop of Hong Kong.

He was born at Shanghai, China, 13 January 1932 and frequented he aspirantate in his native city where his salesian vocation matured. He made his novitiate at Shaukiwan, Hong Kong, at the end of which he made his first profession on 16 August 1949. After philosophical studies and practical training he was sent to Turin to study theology at the Salesian Atheneum. There he obtained the Licentiate in Theology to add to the Doctorate in Philosophy which he had already and was ordained priest 11 February 1961.

Returning to Hong Kong he became a teacher in the Salesian House of Studies, of which he became Rector in 1972 and a member of the Provincial Council in the same year. After six years as Rector he was appointed Provincial in 1978. At the end of his mandate he was again at the Studentate and then Rector at Hong Kong-Abberdeen before returning once more to the Salesian House of Studies in 1989. In recent years, in addition

to his work with the students, he was given by the Superiors the task of keeping in touch with the confreres and Churches in mainland China. Of particular importance was his work as a teacher of philosophy and theology in the Seminary of Shanghai and in other diocesan seminaries of China.

Now he has been called by the Holy Father to the side of the Bishop of Hong Kong in the delicate period of the passage of Hong Kong – from a civil standpoint – to the authority of China.

2. *Mgr Décio ZANDONADE,*  
*Auxiliary Bishop*  
*of BELO HORIZONTE.*

The *Osservatore Romano* published on 12 December 1996 the news of the appointment of Fr Decio Zandonade SDB as titular Bishop of Gemelle di Bizacena and Auxiliary Bishop of Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Born at Venda Nova (Espírito Santo, Brazil) 2 December 1942, he was a pupil at the salesian school of Jasciguá (now Vargem Alta) and went on to the novitiate at Barbacena, where he made his first profession on 31 January 1961.

After philosophical studies and practical training he frequented the course of theology in the sale-

sian studentate of Córdoba, Argentina, and was ordained priest in his native town of Venda Nova on 16 December 1972. He concluded his studies with Licentiate in Theology and Pedagogy.

He was soon called to posts of responsibility. He became Rector at Jaciguá in 1977, and two years later was appointed Vice-provincial, a post he held for six years. At the same time he was Rector of the College of Belo Horizonte for a year, and then of the formation community of the students of theology. In 1984 the Superiors entrusted him with the guidance of the Province as Provincial.

At the end of his six-year mandate he was sent to direct the community running the Salesian Centre for Videocommunications, a work of considerable significance at salesian, ecclesial and social level. Here he received the news of his appointment as Bishop.

3. *Mgr. Oscar Julian VIAN,*  
*Vicar Apostolic of El Petén,*  
*Guatemala.*

The 21 December edition of the *Osservatore Romano* carried the news of the appointment of Fr Oscar Julio Vian SDB as Titular Bishop of Pupiana and Vicar Apostolic of El Petén, in Guatemala. At the

same time the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples informed the Rector Major that, with the appointment of the Salesian Bishop, the Vicariate of El Petén was being entrusted to the responsibility of the Salesian Society.

Oscar Julio Via was born in the city of Guatemala on 18 October 1947. In the same town he got to know the Salesians by attending the salesian school and his vocation matured. He made his novitiate at Ayagualo and there also his first profession on 8 December 1966.

After studies in philosophy and pedagogy and after completing his practical training, he followed the course in theology in the salesian studentate of Guatemala, and was

ordained priest there on 15 August 1976. He completed his civil studies with the gaining of a Teacher's Diploma, and subsequently obtained the Licentiate in Liturgy from the Anselmianum in Rome.

In 1987 the Superiors appointed him Rector of the House of 'San Miguel' at Tegucigalpa (Nicaragua), and three years later of that of San Salvador - Don Rua. In 1987 he became a provincial councillor and in 1990 Rector at Managua (Nicaragua). Since 1994 he had been Rector of the College of Don Bosco in the city of Guatemala, where the news of his appointment as Bishop reached him.

### 5.6 Our dead confreres (1996 - 2nd list)

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

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P ACCOMAZZI Gervasio	Ciudad de Guatemala	10.10.96	77	CAM
P ALTOÉ BARONI Domingos	Vitória	31.08.96	66	BBH
L APARICIO VILLACORTA Eudaldo	Bilbao	19.09.96	79	SBI
P ARIZAGA Luis	Lima	23.12.96	62	PER
P ASTOLFO Natalio	San Isidro	14.11.96	79	ABA
P BALZSAY András	Székesfehérvár	22.12.96	87	UNG
P BARRETT James	London	18.10.96	76	GBR
P BAVARESCO Antonio	La Plata	15.12.96	72	ALP
L BEALESSIO Stefano	Castelnuovo Don Bosco	20.12.96	86	ICP
P BELAN Guy	Grentheville	04.11.96	86	FLY
L BELLÍ Pio	Pancalieri	14.10.96	89	ICP
P BRUNAZZO Achille	Pordenone	12.11.96	72	IVE
P CALZAVARA Giovanni	Padova	16.01.96	70	IVE
P CORAZZA Giuseppe	Campo Grande	19.12.96	80	BCG
P CROYMANS Herman	Boortmeerbeek	27.11.96	72	BEN
P CZARNOTA Ignacy	Konin	27.09.96	74	PLN
P DAILOFF Héctor Vicente	General Roca	24.04.96	65	ABB
P DI NARO Antonino	Pedara (Catania)	29.12.96	84	ISI
P DONGHI Giovanni	Torino	17.12.96	82	ICP
P DUNGUNG Taddheus	Ranchi (Bihar)	09.12.96	37	INC
P ELSAKKERS Yohannes	Santafé de Bogotá	23.10.96	86	COB
L FABRIS Renato	Udine	07.06.96	79	IVE
P FALCO Giovanni	Campo Grande	18.12.96	73	BCG
P FĘCKI Wincenty	Oświęcim	14.12.96	89	PLS
P FIGURA Anton	Pétionville	16.12.96	87	HAI
L FIJALKOWSKI Bruno	Bytom	25.11.96	87	PLS
P FORLAZZINI Giuseppe	Pathanakar	07.10.96	85	THA
P FRÖSCHL Josef	Bamberg	13.12.96	89	GEM
P GARCIA ORTIZ José Antonio	Madrid	18.09.96	86	SMA
P GIACOMIN Antonio	Negrar (Verona)	06.11.96	72	IVO
P GOMEZ Ildemar Eulogio	Rodeo del Medio (Mendoza)	04.11.96	72	ACO
P KOSSMAN Enrique Mario	Bahía Blanca	31.10.96	80	ABB
P KOTYRBA Zdzisław	Środa Śląska	06.10.96	69	PLO
L JERIČ CIRIL	Ljubljana	14.07.96	71	SLO
P LEHNEN René	Dudelange	23.11.96	78	BES

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P LOPEZ ESPITIA Vidal Antonio	Santafé de Bogotá	17.10.96	51	COB
P MALIEKEL Joseph	Mysore	02.12.96	71	INK
P MIHIM Julius	Bonn	18.10.96	83	GEK
P MÜNCH George	Puerto Natales	01.12.96	93	CIL
P NARETTO Francesco	Torino	17.12.96	84	ICP
P NOSKO Anton	Wien	20.10.96	88	AUS
L ORSINI Vittorio	Catania	17.12.96	81	ISI
P PERNIGOTTI Giovanni Battista	Lombriasco	14.10.96	75	ICP
P POMPERMAIER Atilio Francisco	Bahía Blanca	24.02.96	83	ABB
L REBESCO Vincenzo	Treviso	25.11.96	85	IVE
P RIJKEN Martin	Wilrijk	01.12.96	74	BEN
L RIOS Gabriel Edgardo	Magdalena (Bs. As.)	01.12.96	29	ALP
P RODRIGUEZ José Miguel	Orense	28.09.96	75	SLE
P ROIG ROIG Juan	Valencia	16.11.96	82	SVA
P ROMERO Osvaldo	Quebrada Honda (Cusco)	28.10.96	65	PER
P ROSA CARDINALE Cesare	Caselette	12.10.96	71	ICP
L ROSSO Giuseppe	Cumiana	16.12.96	79	ICP
P ROZMUS Bolesław	Poprad (Slovacchia)	10.11.96	35	PLS
P RUHINYURA Engelbert	Kan Kan (Guinea)	02.12.96	34	MEG
P SANDMANN Hermann	Köln	12.11.96	58	GEK
L SANTACOLOMA Jorge	Santafé de Bogotá	23.09.96	75	COB
P SECCO Giuseppe	Mogliano Veneto	20.07.96	86	IVE
P SHÄFFNER Albert	Benediktbeuern	25.10.96	93	GEM
P SOVINSKI Estanislao	Montevideo	04.11.96	71	URU
P STÁMEC Jozef	Sebechleby	31.12.96	74	SLK
L STEFANELLI Guido	Genova-Sampierdarena	13.10.96	75	ILT
L SUBBRERO Giovanni	Genova-Sampierdarena	02.12.96	84	ILT
P TESSAROLO Ernesto	Campo Grande	27.12.96	79	BCG
L Van der BELT Jan	Hoog Soeren (Assel)	14.10.96	87	OLA
P VINKLAREK Oldrich	Bratřejov (Vizovice)	04.11.96	75	CEP
P ZAVATTARO Felice	Varazze	23.10.96	82	BCG
P ZUCCA Virgilio	Ciriè	06.10.96	67	ICP

