



acts

of the general council

year LXXVIII october-december 1997

N. 361

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

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

YEAR LXXVIII
october-december 1997

N. 361

1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR	1.1 Fr Juan E. VECCHI "For you I study..." (C 14) Satisfactory preparation of the confreres and the quality of our educative work	3
2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES	2.1 Fr Antonio MARTINELLI The Salesian Bulletin: an eloquent salesian presence	50
	2.2 Fr Giovanni MAZZALI Poor but with solidarity	60
3. RULINGS AND DIRECTIVES	The Provincial Chapter 1998	65
4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL	4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major	72
	4.2 Chronicle of the General Council	76
5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS	5.1 Decree on the heroicity of the virtues of the Servant of God Artemides Zatti	82
	5.2 Approval of new Regulations for ADMA	85
	5.3 New Provincials	87
	5.4 New Salesian Bishop	89
	5.5 Deceased confreres	90

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

“FOR YOU I STUDY...” (C 14)
SATISFACTORY PREPARATION OF THE CONFRERES
AND THE QUALITY OF OUR EDUCATIVE WORK.

1. A theme which crops up repeatedly. - 2. “For you I study”: an indispensable element of the mission to the young. - 3. Why a new insistence at the present day. *An inculturated and prophetic consecrated life; The new evangelization; The effectiveness of the educative mission; The role of Salesians in educative and pastoral communities; The increased requirement for qualified personnel.* - 4. Priority for the qualification of confreres. - 5. The principal investment at the present day. - 6. Some options for investing in quality. - 7. Persons. *A word to individual confreres: “Attende tibi”; An assignment for communities: foster the quality of life and work; An indication for Provinces: make a plan for the qualification of confreres; The starting point: the cultural dimension of initial formation.* - 8. Structures. *The Salesian Pontifical University; Other Salesian Universities: Centres for study and reflection.* - 9. Conclusion.

Rome, 15 September 1997
Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows

My dear Confreres,

Last August we experienced together the XII World Youth Day which took place at Paris with an impressive participation of young people. We were struck by the thirst for the Gospel shown by these youngsters, the attention they gave to the Holy Father and to all those who in communicating the Word of God offered them a sense and orientation for their life. Their desire to hear testimonies of faith and their enthusiasm with regard to the person of Jesus, realistically presented as the “Way, truth, and life”, certainly made us think.

This image is contrasted in my mind's eye with the one I have brought back from Cuba, where I recently visited our con-

freres. I have seen a Church "without the possibilities now commonly available for communicating with the people, poor in the number of priests but rich in experiences of love, service, patience, humility and perseverance"¹. In it our confreres and Sisters are working as they look forward peacefully to coming developments which seem rich in possible opportunities.

The two images have prompted me to present to you at some length a theme on which the General Council has already reflected and included in the six-year program: that of our preparation for the tasks opening up before us everywhere in the new evangelization of the young.

1. A theme which crops up repeatedly.

Every time *we consider ourselves with respect to our mission*, we are reaffirmed in our conviction about its validity, and at the same time comes the awareness that we must make ourselves more competent to fulfil it in all its possibilities. The frontiers become ever more numerous, requests multiply, urgent needs become ever more pressing; we would like to be better prepared, to be able to offer them in their widely different circumstances the guidance and support they need.

This has been my *experience* too in the first year and a half of my service as Rector Major. Contact with Provincials in different parts of the world has enabled me to see at first hand the vast extent of the youth area, the accumulation of expectations, the prompt response young people give to our efforts, the relevance of our charism for society and the Church.

I have admired the tireless work of communities, often with less than adequate numbers of personnel, in frontier contexts of an advanced social, educative and pastoral nature, intent on

¹ Homily of Card. Jaime Ortega Alamino of Havana, Feast of SS. Peter and Paul (from Ms).

expressing the mission in courageous projects and the animation of numerous collaborators.

The harvest is great! More than by the quantitative disproportion between the work and the workers, we are struck by the *challenges* presented by the present situation: the putting forward of a sense of life, education of conscience, accompanying the young on a pilgrimage of faith, building up a broader solidarity, the efficacious embracing of poverty, effective expression of the Gospel, seeing to it that the Word of God is applied to the questions and possibilities of daily life.

We become aware that to have greater influence it is not sufficient to be more numerous or have more powerful means at our disposal; what is necessary above all is that we be disciples of Christ to a greater extent, entering more deeply into the Gospel, qualifying community life, centering our projects and interventions on a more pastoral aspect. It is, if we may use a word which may seem rather 'secular' a problem of quality; in gospel language it means the genuine nature and transforming force of leaven.

Quality emerges as a necessary requirement in every sector of life, culture and activity. It is spoken of in terms of an 'excellence' to be sought, a 'competence' to be fostered, an overall 'quality' to be attained.

Good will and generous availability are indispensable but insufficient unless they are accompanied by the knowledge and techniques proper to a field of activity, the understanding of cultural phenomena which are a mark of present-day life and, for us, the ability to confront such phenomena with an ever deeper understanding of the mystery of Christ.

The problem is not only for Salesians. It is the common situation of all who want to live, without going astray, through the present cultural transformation, in which to be educators, pastors or simple Christians implies discernment and choice.

Some expressions which have long become common, such as pluralism, an ethically neutral society, secularization, the

right to be different, freedom of thought and expression, multimedia culture, subjectivism, remind us of this with the rapid bombardment of advertising.

It is the same challenge which underlies the new evangelization: the ability to live consciously the Christian faith, to bear witness to it with joy, and also to speak up in the modern areopagi and proclaim Jesus Christ in all his richness.

This was felt almost as a constant prodding in our GC24. It was clear from an analysis of the situation of the Congregation, that living the salesian project of consecrated life at the present day with a serene maturity and facing up adequately to the tasks of our mission, require of every confrere a greater spiritual strength², a *qualitative leap* with regard to general preparation, specifically that of a pastor and educator³, and new cultural, professional and pastoral skills⁴.

I made this trend of the Chapter my own, and in my final address I emphasized the priority of a formation particularly attentive to the cultural dimension as an essential part of educative ability and of the spirituality of the pastor.

In our six-year program we have made this a central point on which all sectors must converge. It seemed important to us to keep alive in every confrere an intention and tendency towards the growth of his own vocation, to arouse the communities to the creation of an environment which fosters the maturing of individuals, and to ask Provincials to invest in the preparation of personnel and on the quality of educative and pastoral projects.

I now return to what was recommended with regard to complete ongoing formation; but I want to focus in particular on the need to recover the love for cultural commitment and the consequent capacity for study.

² cf. GC24, 239

³ cf. GC24, 242

⁴ cf. GC24, 242-243; VC 98

It is clear that for us, as was affirmed by the GC23, spiritual renewal, pastoral tendency, cultural preparation and educative competence cannot be separated one from another, if the Salesian is to be inserted in the youth context with the ability to dialogue and make effective suggestions⁵. Together they depict the physiognomy of our holiness and the way we approach it. This means that the urgency of a lawful and obligatory qualification must not be confused with an exaggerated search for efficiency⁶. Our hope lies always in the grace which the Father pours abundantly into hearts, in the Cross which is the sign of life and salvation, and in the Word which enlightens us. But as individuals and as a Congregation, a part of the generous response to our vocation is not to leave the talents we have received lying idle.

2. "For you I study": an indispensable element of the mission to the young.

A renewed love for cultural commitment and dedication to study are recommended by the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* to all religious, as an integral part of the experience of life in the Spirit and the condition for apostolic efficacy. It is a question of applying the whole of one's being to welcoming God's mystery, and of reading intelligently and objectively in the light of faith its traces in nature and its presence in human history.

The text has been frequently quoted, but it will do no harm to hear it again: "In addition to the service of others, within the consecrated life itself there is need for a *renewed and loving commitment to the intellectual life*, for dedication to study as a means of integral formation and as a path of asceticism which is extraordinarily timely, in the face of present-day

⁵ cf. GC23, 225

⁶ cf. VC 38

cultural diversity. A lessened commitment to study can have grave consequences for the apostolate, by giving rise to a sense of marginalization and inferiority, or encouraging superficiality and rash initiatives”⁷

The recommendation does no more than endorse a tradition of Institutes of consecrated life, whose communities are always constituted as designs of spiritual life, full of meaning from a human point of view, and also as places of education and culture in line with the particular charisms. The experience of God has always been thought of also as a wisdom which sheds light on individuals and on humanity as a whole, not only by moral example, but also with regard to the world, thought and word, even though in a simple fashion.

Some may think that this is a theme difficult to associate with the tireless activity and ready initiative characteristic of our spirit; a theme somewhat new as regards a certain image of the Salesian and of our communities as always available, and constantly at grips with new projects. It is in fact a trait characteristic of the figure of Don Bosco who, moved by *Da mihi animas*, offered his life in the service of the young, of the Church and of society; but we also see him attentive to the youth situation and the social and ecclesial circumstances of his time, open to ever broader horizons, and able to grasp the implications of phenomena which have an influence on individual and collective life (the press, emigration, new laws, the spreading of culture, the Italian unification and Risorgimento, etc.).

In the chapter of the Constitutions dealing with the salesian spirit there is an article which characterizes our kind of pastoral charity. “Our vocation – it says – is graced by a special gift of God: predilection for the young. (...) For their welfare we give generously of our time, talents and health”⁸. And the assertion is immediately illustrated by Don Bosco’s expression:

⁷ cf. VC 98

⁸ C 14

*"For you I study, for you I work, for you I live, for you I am ready even to give my life"*⁹

The growing emphasis of words and actions emphasizes the totality of the life put at the disposition of the young. But it is evident that it is not by mere chance that 'study' has found a place in the list of expressions. A series of elements in the biography of our Father leads us to give it a specific value: the importance that love of study had in the crowning formation of the three years at the Ecclesiastical Institute after priestly ordination for an updated knowledge of moral theology and for the direction of souls; the space given to study in his educative program, in the synthetic formulations of which it is always mentioned ("health, study, piety"); his idea of the educator and the priest which always combine loving kindness with the ability to enlighten, teach and guide; the frequent references to wisdom in his maxims and also the enlightening role attributed to faith and reason.

Expressed in a context of cordiality and affection for his boys, in an "exchange of gifts", the expression recalls some of his preferences and attitudes which converge without detriment on the central experience of his life: to be completely for the young. Study, not to be reduced to just 'studies', is therefore for Don Bosco an indispensable part of our donation to the young, of our fatherly concern to understand them and communicate to them faith, knowledge and the experience of life.

A few facts reveal the real content this expression had in his life. Recall his ability to look at reality, that of the young in the first place, but also the vicissitudes of the Church and the situation of the Country, without getting lost or becoming conditioned, careful to evaluate the whole picture from the educative and pastoral standpoint proper to his own vocation. Recall his readiness for finding adequate responses to problems; providing easily understood messages, using every means at his

⁹ *ibid.*

disposal; committing himself to the diffusion of sacred history, of the history of Italy, of Christian truth and a form of popular literature, all of which involved him in a great deal of personal work in compiling and editing.

"For you I study" recalls the patient effort of elaborating an "original educative system" from pre-existing material, his own intuitions, the contributions of contemporaries and original syntheses. It reminds us also of the launching of a work-project in line with the times. He followed up its functioning and drew up intelligent and practical norms and guidelines with attention to the style in which he wanted them to be expressed and the attainment of his objectives. He was able to share his ideas, to make comparisons, to dialogue with people of widely differing experiences and competence, with leaders in the fields of thought, politics and social life.

Also the well thought out formulation of an experience of life in the Spirit, with spiritual processes for young people and adults, presented in words and writing, implied the mental application expressed in the phrase "*for you I study*". It meant learning from life, reflecting on educative experience, an openness to verification, without being satisfied with what had been done before or falling into repetition. It was the desire and patient acquisition of "wisdom" ("*Sapientiam dedit illi...*"), indicated in his first dream as a characteristic of his life, which he learned at the school of the Good Shepherd and Mary the Teacher, in availability to the Spirit, in harmony with the Church; and it was expressed in the discernment of events, in the worth in God's eyes of spiritual experiences, in the understanding of situations and in the service of the orientation and guidance of others.

"*For you I study*": it makes us think also of a Don Bosco who could seek times and places which foster active solitude, recollection and planning. They were his times for prayer, the annual spiritual retreat, certain pauses which allowed him greater concentration, but also his desk-work which gave rise

to voluminous correspondence, ideas for new projects and the production of a quantity of writings far from negligible.

Charity and competence, study and work, activity and reflection were blended together by the grace of unity for the good of the young¹⁰. It is an integration not easily brought about, frequently threatened by schizophrenia in the activity or in the mentality to which are exposed those who live a style of life and work where "there is no time" for reflection or comparison; there is the risk that the latter will become disjoined from the pastoral objectives and will end up in line with the principle that a well ordered activity of study and thought does not benefit a Salesian.

And yet I would say that, just as without prayer our activity risks contributing nothing to the mission ("work and prayer"), so without "study", without wisdom and competence, it will be difficult for our works to reach the goal prefigured for our educative and pastoral service.

"Study and piety will make you a true Salesian", wrote Don Bosco to a confrere. This phrase was put at the beginning of the *Motu Proprio Magisterium Vitae*, with which Pope Paul VI in 1973 conferred on the Salesian Pontifical Athenaeum the title of Pontifical University¹¹, as though to repeat at the highest possible level: "Culture and spirituality will make of you an authentic educator and pastor of the young". Both in fact are necessary for the translation of salesian pastoral charity into a life experience and mission projects. It is not therefore a matter of something marginal which touches only certain moments of our lives or is of concern to those committed on only certain frontiers of the mission. It can take on various forms and expressions according to personal aptitudes and gifts, but will always be one of the conditions for the embodiment of that love of the young which gives significance to our whole existence.

¹⁰ cf. C 14

¹¹ cf. ASC 272, pp. 67-73

3. Why a new insistence at the present day.

The question arises almost spontaneously as to the reasons for returning to this insistence after all the efforts of the preceding years, and after a generally positive evaluation of our formative processes.

The verification made by the GC24 led to the following fact: "The participation of the laity in the salesian spirit and mission constitutes for the SDB community a challenge which must be met by an adequate *formation* to the new requirements"¹². As a motivation for this conclusion with reference to the present day, it is stated: "The formation aims at rendering the individuals capable of living at the present day the experience of their own life with maturity and joy, of fulfilling the educative mission with professional competence, of becoming educators and pastors, and of being solidly animators of numerous apostolic forces"¹³.

It is evident therefore that the new level of formation is not motivated by lack or limitation, but by the very significance of our presence as consecrated persons in a society for which we are delineating the educative and pastoral mission, and by the tasks we receive in the educative communities.

Let us comment briefly on each of these motives.

An inculturated and prophetic consecrated life

In the responses received during the preparation of the Synod many said that "consecrated life is appreciated for its activity, but is frequently not understood in its essence; it is often praised for its commitment in the world but, as often happens through the mass media, its image is distorted to the extent of rendering it a senseless reality in the eyes of people in general"¹⁴

¹² GC24, 138

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *Instrumentum laboris*, 15

In places where secularization has penetrated into public and private life, what is in question is not so much its utility, especially in certain fields of service (we are appreciated as educators!), as its significance, the legibility of its testimony to God, its capacity for communicating the message which it purposes to give.

On the other hand, says the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, "the Gospel way of life is an important source for proposing a new cultural model. A great many founders and foundresses perceiving certain needs of their time, with all the limitations which they themselves recognized, have given these needs an answer which has become an innovative cultural proposal... The manner of thinking and acting of those who follow Christ more closely gives rise, in fact, to a true and proper point of reference for culture"¹⁵.

To be aware of and bear witness to the value and sense of God's presence in life, in a cultural context which does not go beyond temporal horizons and gives priority to functionality and immediate use, implies a deep understanding of one's own consecrated identity and its educative value, as a renewed capacity for insertion in the environment as prophecy and leaven.

But for this very reason we must render ourselves aware, individually and as communities, through discernment, creativity and coherence as to when and where certain criteria must be applied which lead to an efficacious expression of the option we have made: to take up from the environment whatever is lawful, insert in it what is new that comes from Christ, give or restore meaning to what is still ambiguous, and oppose what is harmful to the person.

Consecrated life cannot be whittled down to meet the current mentality. It needs vigilance, of mind and spirit in the first place, and the ability to interact and react, to make proposals and to challenge.

¹⁵ VC 80

The new evangelization

The “new evangelization” is the great task we are called upon to fulfil and the demand in which we are involved in these final years of the old millennium. At a time of epoch-making transformation in which new concepts of life are being elaborated, often without any reference to God or the Gospel, the Church wishes to renew the Gospel and culture, reawakening the sense of faith in existence and expressing the value of the Christian presence in the social reality.

Anyone wishing to commit himself to the new evangelization must make himself capable of an open intelligent and positive confrontation with the new phenomena, understand cultural tendencies, try to make a proclamation in the heart of life, interpret new languages and codes of meaning.

The perspective of the new evangelization includes a radical challenge to being a Christian, an interrogation on the identity of believers, and leads to a convinced dialogue with others in an atmosphere of freedom. On the other hand, our faith itself and the reasons for our hope need to be re-understood and lived with transparency and solidity. *Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and always* is a confession of faith, not just a slogan; it has to do with the salvation of each individual that he may have life in abundance, and with the salvation of the world which is being built so that its projects may not lead it to self-destruction.

The effort to draw near to and understand such a world copies the way of the incarnation and takes its inspiration from the same love which guided the actions of Christ.

The effectiveness of the educative mission

We feel the pressing need for better formative levels in the preferred area of our mission: *education*. We must in fact face up to the complexity and multiplicity of the situations in which young people are immersed and to the problems posed by the

environment to human growth and to the faith; and at the same time we must be able to draw fruit from their innumerable possibilities.

For this reason our situation as educators calls for a *reflective approach to culture* which allows for the updating of contents and methods to meet the demands of the meaning of life for the young¹⁶.

On the other hand, adequate and recognized qualifications are demanded at the present day also by the diversification and complexity of educative interventions, which call for more complete knowledge and more consolidated practice¹⁷. Weak professional quality means an impoverishment of the educative project; it diminishes the impact of our work and, as it gets worse, could lead to our exclusion from the field of education altogether. We notice this risk particularly in some settings in which new items appear more evident like social communication, the university world, and areas of "disadvantaged youth".

Then too in the new contexts in which we are becoming inserted with a missionary spirit and criteria, and which could seem simpler from an educative standpoint, there is an urgently felt need to create programs adequate to the situation and inculturate our pedagogical methods, overcoming the simple transposition of contents and methods designed for other areas. Inculturation and quality call for commitment by the local educative communities, provincial organisms, and Centres of study and reflection. Increased qualification seems indispensable on all fronts¹⁸.

We are well aware that sometimes we have to be realistic in meeting urgent needs, and we are always willing to do so, but it must be clearly stated that our future possibilities in the field of education are closely linked with quality¹⁹. For this reason,

¹⁶ cf. *Report to the GC24 on the state of the Congregation*, 263.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.*

if it is true that "the best can be the enemy of the good" ("better a little than nothing at all"), it is also true that we cannot expose ourselves to a generalized form of pastoral and educative work which risks disqualifying ourselves from attaining the purpose of our service²⁰.

This is equally true in the *more strictly pastoral sector*. This requires greater competence in specific matters, acquired to a sufficient degree and then followed up by revision and continual extension, and a more professional implementation of ministerial tasks. Direction of consciences, the Christian animation of communities, the presentation of the Word of God in its true meaning and application to current human situations, the shedding of light on ethical questions, presentation of the Gospel, formation to prayer and celebration, and orientation to the experience of God – all these are things which require heart and fervour, but also wisdom acquired through reflection and study.

Add to these the *new dimensions* of pastoral work which have become practically universal: ecumenism, inter-religious dialogue and with non-believers, the use of social communication which becomes a pulpit at everyone's disposal, and participation in public discussions on many questions.

Pastoral work means more than organization and immediate action; it includes also the options to be made as a Christian community and the orientations to be suggested to individuals in the complex situations of life, and hence an ability for discernment, enlightenment and exposition.

A solid cultural and professional formation therefore seems indispensable as a component of spirituality. On this point the Synod strongly insisted with regard to priestly formation, in addition to what we have already quoted about consecrated life²¹. We will do well to listen again to some expressions from *Pastores dabo vobis*, which give us the assurance of being on the Church's

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *cf. Report to GC24, 292; VC 98; CL 58*

wavelength. “If we expect every Christian – the Synod Fathers write – to be prepared to make a defence of the faith and to account for the hope that is in us (cf. 1 Pet 3,15), then all the more should candidates for the priesthood and priests have diligent care of the quality of their intellectual formation in their educational and pastoral activity. For the salvation of their brothers and sisters they should seek an ever deeper knowledge of the divine mysteries’. The present situation is heavily marked by religious indifference, by a widespread mistrust regarding the real capacity of reason to reach objective and universal truth, and by fresh problems and questions brought up by scientific and technological discoveries. It strongly demands a high level of intellectual formation, such as will enable priests to proclaim, in a context like this, the changeless Gospel of Christ and to make it credible to the legitimate demands of human reason”²²

The role of Salesians in educative and pastoral communities

The GC24 has officially sanctioned the change in the way the Salesians work: from the exclusive responsibility of the religious community to that of an ecclesial community sharing responsibility, in which consecrated and secular persons, priests and laity, Catholics and members of other religions, conscious believers and others on the way, Christians and others take part. If previously such a model could be thought of as optional or alternative, today it is clear that it is our normal form of presence and action. We must learn to make it function in the terms which have been stated or perhaps dreamed.

The demands for qualifications arise therefore from the roles the Salesians are destined to play in this new model for work: those of pastoral guides, first in responsibility for the salesian identity of initiatives and works, animators of other educators (“the towing nucleus”), formators of adults who

²² PDV 51, which takes up *Propositio* 26 of the Synodal Fathers

share responsibility in the work of education: in a word, Salesians who are able to carry on a mission together with competent lay people.

It seems that there will be an increase in responsibility on the part of all. And it is not difficult to foresee that the incidence of this work of animation will depend in large part on spiritual formation, on the cultural vision and professional preparation of the Salesians.

Not only will they need a better theoretical and practical knowledge of the problems of the young and of education, but they will also have to develop the ability to interact with adults, beyond simple friendship, on problems of life and faith, of communication and guidance, of the authoritative proposal of educational objectives and processes. This will also require a more convinced living of the salesian spirit, a reflex and organic knowledge of the preventive system and a greater awareness of their own identity ²³.

To become and remain capable of animating a broad educative environment, of accompanying with other educators processes of maturing and growth, of guiding individuals, of interacting in the social context, imply that qualifications must be kept always up to date and that time be set aside for rethinking proposals and methods.

Application by confreres and communities to this form of authentic service of the Word is becoming more extensive, but has not yet been taken up by everyone. To some extent it implies the risk that we may get too entangled in organizing structures and arranging means, neglecting the communal rethinking and deeper consideration of the message, and of translating it into forms adequate to the understanding of those for whom we are working ²⁴. In some cases an evident division arises between equipment and cultural projection, between in-

²³ cf. *Report to GC24*, 293

²⁴ cf. *Report to GC24*, 266

struments and evangelizing effects, between buildings and educational objectives; it seems that priority is not given to concern for the cultural and profession preparation of religious and lay personnel²⁵ and the overall goal becomes lost under the weight of the means to achieve it. And it may be that lack of competence in the work of animation and guidance is the cause of the breakdown.

The increased requirement for qualified personnel

While the so-called traditional fields of work (oratories, schools, parishes, etc.) need the ability to think and reflect, in addition to intelligent enterprise, because of the cultural change and complexity of the questions which each member and community has to face, we see that the growth of certain kinds of work increases precisely the demand for properly prepared personnel. When we compare the requests with those available we find the latter are always too few, even in simple numbers and leaving aside considerations of age, health and commitments which cannot be abandoned.

We think of the centres for theological studies in which every undue cutback is going to have its repercussions in the future, or post-novitiate study centres with identical demands. And we may add to these the formation communities, which always have need of experts in vocational processes and in salesian formation and spirituality.

And I complete the list with the rapid addition of the already numerous institutions of university level, the publishing centres where it is not enough to administer structures if you do not have people capable of developing cultural initiatives, the various Institutes created in recent years as a response to requests and needs of the Congregation, the competent contributions we are asked for on various occasions because of the

²⁵ cf. *Report to GC24*, 259, 261, 269

experience we have and our recognized ability for being in touch with the ordinary people.

4. Priority for the qualification of Confreres

In the Report on the State of the Congregation I ended the part dedicated to the "Preparation of the confreres" with the following statement: "The state of our resources, the implications of our commitments and the general growth in the world ask everywhere of our confreres and communities further progress in cultural preparation and spiritual strength. The perspective therefore is to consolidate..., dedicating a special period to the re-qualification of our personnel, and in particular those in directive positions, sending the greatest possible number of confreres for specialist training, and improving initial formation on the basis of the experience we have already gained"²⁶

It was an evaluation I thought to be imperative, open to interpretations not always well understood, but matured in prayer and suffering. It seemed, indeed, like a guideline with fundamental consequences in the six years ahead.

Today I am convinced that we must wager on this priority investment and translate it into some concrete commitments, accepting the consequent limitations which it seems must follow. **A conscious choice is being imposed on the Congregation and Provinces**, which will make possible a qualitative leap in the way of life of every confrere, in the mentality and practice of communities and consequently in the form in which provincial objectives are set out. It is not a question of a light retouching but of something more radical, though not completely new because in many parts the process has been already begun.

I know that it is not easy to live at a personal level and

²⁶ *Report to GC24*, 294

translate into an action of government the salesian balance between "for you I study" and "for you I always work", between love and the search for pedagogical and pastoral quality. The urgent needs of the mission, scarcity of personnel, the new opportunities we are offered, the multiplication of projects, constant elements in salesian experience and a positive result of "Da mihi animas", urge us to be enterprising. And that must continue. But care must be taken that activity does not lead to weariness, repetition, cultural stagnation, mental distractions, and improvisation.

It is not the *first time in the history of our Congregation* that attention is being given to decisive choices for a change of practice, in the light of perceived demands and to prepare for new and flourishing developments which appear possible but only on certain conditions. They follow phases of growth which were necessarily rapid, and by forestalling exhaustion they prepare for others equally flourishing.

I would like to recall three interventions, made at different moments in history but which together emphasize the same concern we have today. All three establish a criterion and a line of action for guaranteeing the preparation of confreres and quality in fulfilling the educative mission.

In the years 1905-1906 **Don Rua** wanted to organize and ensure regularity in the studies of the young confreres. There were many frontiers of work, personnel was on the increase but still insufficient, the criteria for involvement in the works were those of the Founder, but the expansion of the Congregation and the needs of the Church made evident the need for a change. There was in fact the risk of sacrificing formation to the urgent needs of the works and cutting down the course of philosophy and theology.

"We must give greater regularity every day", wrote Don Rua, "to our own affairs, and to this effect we place before even the most noble of other aspirations, the moral and intellectual formation of our clerics". "In practice", he went on,

fully aware of the difficulties that would be caused by the decision he was about to announce, "we propose two items:

1. Do not propose to the Superior Chapter, for a period of at least five years, the opening of new houses or foundations, nor the enlargement of those now existing. We cannot do it, and that is all there is to it.
2. Consider carefully your houses one by one, and when you have seen which ones you can suppress for the better arrangement of the rest of the Province, put the proposal to the Superior Chapter. It is not their number we must have at heart, but their proper and regular functioning"²⁷.

And in a letter of 1906 he returned decisively to the same points.

In 1928 there was an intervention of **Don Rinaldi**. Vocations were increasing in a consoling manner (there were about 1,000 novices); salesian works, and especially the missions, were developing at an impressive rate and new requests were being constantly received; Provincials did not have the personnel for so many works and not infrequently studies were sacrificed, and with them the formation of the young confreres.

Faced by such a situation, and aware that the mission could not be fulfilled without the necessary preparation, Don Rinaldi wrote in the Acts of the Superior Chapter of September 1928: "I have therefore decided, with the full approval of the Superior Chapter, that during the four years from 1929 to 1932 no new foundations will be accepted, neither of houses or of missions. This pause, well understood by Provincials and Rectors, will be a benefit for the Provinces; it will bring tranquility to the houses and relief to all the confreres; rather than a harmful break, it will mark a true progress for our Society, because it will serve for a better cultivation of vocations and prepare the Congregation for a more solid development in the future"²⁸.

²⁷ *Circular Letters of Don Rua to the Salesians*, pp.400-402: letter of 22.11.1905 on "The intellectual and moral formation of clerics"

²⁸ ACS, September 1928, p.693

And I complete this reference to our history by recalling some expressions written by **Fr Ricceri** in 1966, in the official presentation of the documents of the GC19. The context is not difficult to understand. Vatican II had recently finished, and we were on the verge of discovering new horizons and pastoral needs, made decisive by the encouraging vision of the Church, its mission and its relationship with the world. "Connected with this need for formation", wrote Fr Ricceri, "there is the other not less important one of qualification of the individual confrere for the various tasks to which obedience calls him. Today society will not accept into its structures utility men, men without cultural, technical or professional training... People, and the Church first of all, consider us authentic specialists in pedagogy and the apostolate. We must, to the limit of our capacity, live up to this reputation... A bit of practice is no longer sufficient... From now on every manifestation of our activity calls for qualified personnel... It is not a question of collecting degrees or specializing for its own sake, and much less of encouraging selfish or ambitious desires to study for one's own satisfaction but with sterile application to the apostolate; what is required is simply an adequate preparation to work fruitfully in one of the innumerable fields of action to which Providence has called us. It can be seen at once what and how many consequences for superiors and confreres follow from these changes"²⁹. And some months later he wrote in the Acts of the Council: "If we want to respond to the inescapable demands of our mission, more must be done to give to all the activities of Salesians that qualification which is not a luxury but an ever more evident necessity"³⁰.

The period immediately preceding our own on the other hand, under the guidance of **Fr Egidio Viganò**, emphasized the same emergency and took efficacious steps to resolve it,

²⁹ ASC 244, Jan.1966, pp.4-5

³⁰ ASC 246, Sept.1966, p.13

with the reorganization of the formative processes reformulated in the Ratio, with the updating of study programs in line with the evolution in nearly all the branches of theology and knowledge, with the beginning and extending of ongoing formation and the foundation of new Institutes corresponding to qualifications for the present day (pastoral work, social communication).

5. The principal investment at the present day.

The moments of history to which I have referred are different from our own and differ among themselves. I have not recalled them to put the brake on missionary thrust or on apostolic creativity, and still less for the purpose of re-imposing materially the measures indicated at those periods. Our own times call more for renewal and reorganization of life than for pauses and stoppages.

But the various interventions highlight *the need to make definite options, to establish priorities*, looking to the future as we face the permanent tensions between what is urgent and the demands of the mission, between generosity and quality of service. Moreover they show us that the growth of the Congregation is something continuous in which at certain times expansion prevails, while at other times we must look to consistency and consolidation which may cause suffering but can also provoke enthusiasm. Finally they teach us that we must not only administer well the resources we have inherited, but that we must also be careful to produce them, multiply them and develop them for the future.

The situations in the Congregation vary greatly even from the perspective we are now considering. Some areas are expanding and others reshaping, in some the average age of the confreres is below 40 years and in others it is over 60; in some zones pastoral work is complex and in others more simple; there are educative contexts very much institutional-

ized and dictated from outside, and others in which we can work with greater freedom for initiatives; there are provinces with formation communities and qualified teams of confreres, and others taking only the first steps in some of these sectors. For all of them the maximum exploitation of human resources is an obligation!

The salesian mission, as we have already noted, is everywhere entering new geographical and cultural frontiers, and this movement will continue in the immediate future. Indeed the worldwide dimension, urgent pastoral needs, the possibility of an influential presence on a broad scale will still determine our way of working. A wise overall vision enables provision to be made for local requirements, while at the same time giving consideration to the contribution to be given to initiatives which extend beyond provincial horizons and express the salesian mission at regional, national and international level.

For all these reasons the qualification of people, the consolidation of centres and teams, the fostering of a certain cultural sensitivity in the Province, cannot be the result of brief periods, restricted by the deadline of the end of a six-year period or by limited calculations. *Continued governmental action and long-term vision* are indispensable. A province that launches a plan for the qualification of its personnel knows already that it will reap the benefits in due time. But it would be sad to lose the "capital" of qualifications thus acquired with sacrifice through failing to exploit the investment previously made or to let it lapse.

While the program for the present six-year period was being drawn up, the General Council wondered how to set up an action at Congregational level so that it would be a real priority investment in formation; how to shape a process for recovering the value of our religious consecration in the educative mission and make us bearers of a lived and communicated spirituality; how to enable ourselves to offer an educative proposal reflecting the style and content of the preventive system for pre-

sent-day culture; how to give emphasis to the process of education to the faith and foster a kind of communication which renders efficacious what we proclaim in the climate of the new evangelization.

The **fundamental criterion** which emerged was to **strengthen the “quality” of the Salesian, of the community and of the mission**. It is a task which will have to be taken up in convergent form by the different levels of government. On it depend to a great extent the relationships between SDBs and lay people, the effectiveness of religious experience, the incidence of the SDB community as an animating nucleus. We have condensed this commitment into the expression “*governare formando*”, governing by formation. We are aware that governance includes other specific aspects which cannot be neglected, but we consider that the effort to form and qualify the confreres, and in particular those responsible for the various sectors of activity, is *the best formula for orientation and animation* because it multiplies results and creates unity.

6. Some options for investing in quality.

In my closing address to the GC24 I specified what preferential investment in formation meant in practical terms. “Investing means laying down and maintaining priorities, ensuring conditions, working according to a program which gives pride of place to persons, communities and mission. Investing in time, personnel, initiatives and financial resources for formation is a task which is of importance to all of us”³¹.

I now propose some commitments which should be given preference, and I refer successively to the area of **persons** and to that of **structures** (works), starting from some facts which are already common knowledge and accepted.

³¹ GC24, 248

The first is that the main resource of the Congregation is the confreres, and hence their preparation is an indispensable condition for the effectiveness of the mission. "In our life some aspects are more exposed to wear and tear or to sclerosis and need particular attention. Culture evolves rapidly, knowledge becomes more extensive, new information is continually fed in, while the mentality on the values and concepts of life presents ever new questions. The cultural dimension is one that calls for patient and unceasing effort"³².

A second fact: exceptional initiatives will serve little purpose unless at the same time we attend to the quality of daily life and the continuity of our efforts. Opportunities offered to individuals would have little effect if we did not foster the style of community life and the way we carry out apostolic work.

Consequently we must look at both individuals and structures; the invitation to become responsible for quality is addressed simultaneously to every confrere, to every community and to every Province.

7. Persons.

A word to individual confreres: "Attende tibi"³³

The *mystique of work* appears as one of our characteristics: everywhere to some extent our availability and enterprise are admired. We must thank the Lord for this capacity of total dedication that the Spirit formed in Don Bosco and which we see every day in so many confreres. It is not an impediment to growth but is in fact one of the fruitful traits of our spirituality. But it needs those adaptations which today apply to work, in which manual dexterity and physical force are only a minor as-

³² GC24, 242

³³ cf. 1 Tim 4,16

pect. Sometimes the lifestyle we adopt and our rhythm of activity can wear down our spiritual experience, confuse our image in the minds of the young and adults, and undermine our capacity for influencing because of dispersion and multiplicity of work.

In our Founder we admire his constant balance between dedication and depth, between the multiplicity of initiatives and unity of life. Don Bosco was physically drained but he cultivated that wise vision, that understanding of things in the light of the Spirit, that union with God, which gave an original profile – we call it *salesian holiness* – to his personal experience.

As I think of the diversity of the situations and conditions of life of each one and recalling some statements of *Vita Consagrada* with regard to the significance and value of our vocation, I venture to put to each one some questions for reflection: *Do we give ourselves time to consider at ever greater depth our life in the Spirit?* Do we nourish the taste for a broader knowledge of what concerns the Christian mystery and the questions which refer to man? With regard to cultural enrichment, in the sense given to it in these pages, what is our program with regard to areas, objectives and time? How do we express in ourselves the ‘*for you I study*’ of Don Bosco?

There can be the risk of forming a certain habit according to which work and reflection seem to be in competition, especially when a ruthless rhythm prods us in the direction of what is urgent and seems to leave no time for anything else. The conviction can even gain ground that personal culture, such as reflection on reality in the light of faith, can have little to do with charitable work for the benefit of poor youngsters.

When the GC23 said that interior apostolic conviction is a blend of pastoral charity with pedagogical ability, it was an invitation to us to combine creativity with competence, action with reflection, since both are necessary to the salesian life.

Our Rule of Life strings together in rapid succession a series of suggestions from which we have to arrive at a single ob-

jective. It speaks of the Salesian as one who "responds to the ever new demands arising from the situation of the young and the poor"³⁴; he seeks opportunities for "learning to carry out his work with greater competence"³⁵; he cultivates "the ability to learn from life's experiences" especially in relationship to the young and popular environments and exploits the formative efficacy of various situations and possibilities³⁶. "Through personal and community initiatives" he nurtures his salesian spiritual life, provides for his own theological updating and maintains his professional competence and pastoral creativity³⁷. Each confrere, say the Regulations, "should develop his capacity for communication and dialogue; he should form in himself an open and discerning mentality and a spirit of initiative, and in this way conveniently renew his own plan of life. Each one should cultivate the habit of reading and the study of those branches of knowledge proper to his mission"³⁸. He should "study with his superiors his field of further qualification..., preserve the availability which is characteristic of our spirit, and be ready for periodic requalification"³⁹. And all this adds up to telling us that there is a gift we have to cultivate with patience so as to keep it full and fresh. And in it the ascetical program: *work and temperance* functions always, which means giving limited attention to what is less important and even useless and distracting, and giving oneself with enthusiasm to what is essential.

In recent years *initiatives* have multiplied for qualification, re-qualification and updating. In several Provinces there are well planned and structured examples. It is up to each one to draw from them the maximum profit.

³⁴ C 118

³⁵ C 119

³⁶ cf. *ibid.*

³⁷ cf. C 118

³⁸ R 99

³⁹ R 100

But a *daily personal commitment* is also needed. The common mentality, newspapers, examples from advertising could well constitute a school which communicates a culture foreign to us, one which is frequently contrary to our own "culture of reference". Unless we frequent an alternative school (meditation, revision of life, reading, information, study, sharing, discernment, etc.), we shall be insensibly oriented towards a vision of life and a plan of existence which no longer tallies with the one we have professed. We must always ask ourselves by what channels our thoughts and sensitivity are fed; how we construct and illustrate in ourselves the relationship between faith and culture, between pastoral sense and emerging questions.

We must give ourselves time for *cultivating our plan of life*, for savouring the experience of being consecrated persons, for verifying our process of growth, for preventing wear and tear and for controlling anxiety, for bearing witness to and sharing the deep source of all our activity.

We must give ourselves time also for *enabling ourselves to carry out our work with greater competence*, be it work of educators, animators or pastors. Accompanying individuals and giving direction to communities is a demanding task which is far from easy. There are certain environments which in the present cultural and religious context evince particular difficulties and importance, as for example: the ethical and moral field, problems of life, spiritual and sacramental pedagogy, themes connected with the relationship between faith and culture, the social dimension and solidarity.

This need to find time for ourselves will constitute a *message for the laity* and a stimulus for young people who feel themselves called to the salesian life. Today to the image of the religious as a worker and person of enterprise, socially useful, must be added the prophetic aspect of one who makes a personal experience the source of meaning, guided by the wisdom of the Gospel.

An assignment for communities: foster the quality of life and work

"Cultural and pastoral quality" finds a stimulus, a setting and almost a school in the *style of life of the community*. Experience shows that after some time in a community of a certain type we have grown in the vision of the youth field and of youth problems, in the relationship with the laity, in the ability for sharing, and in discernment; while in other communities we are more tempted to waste time, we seem to live in a perpetual hurry, from one emergency to another; we become accustomed to an excessively individual way of life, we give way to routine and become mentally isolated.

The pattern of life and work of the local community is therefore a determining factor, as also that of the provincial community since we live today against a background of ample communication⁴⁰. In both cases the level of interest, the quality of information, communication of experiences, type of relationship with the young, the laity and the local context, are not a matter of indifference.

Our communities have undergone changes in their composition and in their life. Modifications have been introduced in the relationship with educative work and the tasks in it assigned to the confreres, linkage with the external social and ecclesial environment, and the working model for the accomplishment of our mission. On the other hand, the insistence of recent years has led to positive results in respect of the assumption of new demands; there has been a big increase in moments of exchange of views and processes which foster reflection, sharing, prayer and working as a team.

It seems clear today that if we want to avoid stress, activism and superficiality, we must necessarily impose *a daily and weekly rhythm*, which fosters recovery of strengths and a re-

⁴⁰ cf. GC24, 242

launching of the quality of life, also from a cultural standpoint, by establishing conditions for offering the confreres an updated content for reflection⁴¹. The quality of life and work find support and nourishment in the *annual program* which can provide particular opportunities for the qualification of individuals and communities.

This is the line of thought which led to the establishment of the day of the community, a valid means for communal growth, the meetings of Councils and teams, the participation of the community in formative experiences with lay collaborators and other groups of persons (ecclesial and educative environments and those of the religious life), the elaboration and verification of the PEPS to be assessed from the formative standpoint.

The Rector, opportunely prepared and supported by his Council and community, is called upon to cultivate an environment and a form of internal and external relationships which "qualify" the confreres. His is the duty in the first place to circulate and exploit some particular incentives, such as the guidelines of the Bishops and especially of the Pope, the documents of General Chapters and letters of the Rector Major; and he can profit by the intelligent use of other simpler occasions like "good nights", spiritual reading, and salesian and ecclesial information.

An indispensable location for every local community is the *library* and the corresponding reading room. Their care and the material available in them are indicative: they have a real utility and, as in the case of the chapel, also a symbolic value in the overall physiognomy of the house.

The use made of it by the community has changed. Personal sources of information have multiplied (Books, reviews, CD, internet). But it has a function which is still relevant and necessary for providing, not least for lay collaborators and externs, our specific heritage of history, pedagogy and spirituality,

⁴¹ cf. GC24, 242, 237

as also the fundamental thought of the Church and the classics of Christian reflection. It should never be lacking, in due proportion, even in missionary residences, in which one should be able to count on sufficient support for pastoral updating and the collecting together of what serves for a good knowledge of local culture.

The initiative should also be encouraged of having in the Province one or more libraries which are as complete as possible with respect to the charism and salesian work at Provincial and local level, and writings which can provide an idea of the social and political context in which the works of the Province began and have developed⁴².

An indication for Provinces: make a plan for the qualification of confreres

In this period the qualification of personnel must constitute a priority governmental commitment: we seek to govern by forming those who animate and direct, we orientate by giving a better preparation to those working in the different sectors.

An indication in this regard is provided by all organizations. Qualification of top management, of those responsible at intermediate level, and of the workers at shop-floor level has always been given attention by directors. In our case, an *action at provincial level which is programmed and constant* must therefore be added to the personal and communal responsibility already spoken of.

In this connection we have already taken certain steps. I quote, for example, the preparation and follow-up of Rectors. Some Provinces have set up meetings of provincial teams for formative purposes with a program laid down at the beginning of each year by the Provincial Council; they organize a week of

⁴² I do not delay on other cultural benefits, on which recent instructions have been issued by the Pontifical Commission for the cultural goods of the Church.

spiritual and pastoral reflection, open to all confreres and with a program covering several years. Others have prepared a plan of qualification for directive personnel, and have committed themselves despite difficulties of finance and personnel to offer to some confreres each year the possibility of specialization. There are also those who make the sacrifice of providing qualified personnel for study centres, and still others who have recognized the fact that they cannot do everything on their own and so have established agreements for inter-provincial collaboration by contributing qualified confreres.

This is just a sample, but it serves to show that the urgent need has been accepted and in part is being met. The panorama of the Congregation is very rich and varied, and consequently there are also some dark spots. It is therefore proper to propose for all a more decisive and organic action at provincial level.

To translate such action into practice implies, among other things:

- Making a *complete list of the qualifications, even partial ones*, of all the confreres for their better evaluation. It often happens that competence acquired in years of study is not exploited in continued or communal form; the same must be done at the level of the Congregation, recalling that the SGC asked us to draw up a program for the exchange of personnel between study centres⁴³.

- *Identifying the areas in which cultural and professional competence seem more urgently needed* according to the particular contexts, the state of personnel, and the pastoral and educative situation of the Congregation in present and future perspectives.

- *Qualifying the greatest possible number of confreres* for the various fields and dimensions of the salesian mission, especially for those considered more significant at the present day⁴⁴. This is recommended to all Provinces but particularly to those

⁴³ cf. SGC, 704

⁴⁴ cf. GC24, 243

which have a consistent number of vocations. They should qualify confreres not only in view of immediate needs and particular projects of the Province, but also in line with the criterion of developing to the maximum the available human resources so as to make them available for the needs and commitments of the entire Congregation.

To the examples already given of initiatives of an inter-provincial kind, others can be added in virtue of the worldwide and transversal nature of activity in every field. Every day we are driven to looking for confreres prepared for formation communities in emerging areas, for projects of great importance that the Church wants to entrust to us in zones of first evangelization, for our University, for a competent service of reflection and planning at the Generalate. It would be a serious matter to fail to develop evident talents merely because it could not be foreseen that there would be scope for their application in their own restricted setting.

– *Assigning qualified confreres to specific tasks* within the project of the Province and the Congregation. The best preparation of which we are speaking tends to be aimed at improving our work and is directed to that end. It sometimes happens that confreres qualified in a particular field find no outlet for their talents except by opening a new and specific field of work or becoming inserted in projects outside the Congregation.

– *Insisting that qualified confreres stay in the sector of their particular competence.* Especially in study centres there must be *consistence and continuity in the teaching staff and teams*, so as to create a tradition of formative reflection and pedagogy.

All this presupposes the elaboration and realization of a provincial plan for the qualification of personnel, verified year by year, and a wise administration of resources. The GC23 asked for this when it stated: “Every province will draw up an organic plan for the ongoing formation of the confreres with a view to their spiritual renewal, their pastoral qualification, and

their educational and professional ability”⁴⁵. This too is what the program for the present six-year period wanted to make concrete by deciding to: “Ask the provinces for a program for the qualification of personnel, verifying it periodically and fostering its realization”⁴⁶.

Dear Provincials, on you lies the responsibility and the hope expressed in this guideline. I know the difficulties many of you are grappling with each year as you try to fill the posts of work and, with you, I feel the reduced number of new vocations. We must, however, not only solve the crises but sow for the future. The request for a program of qualification will prompt a moment of fraternal communication to become aware of the very many resources we have still to exploit, and to help us to develop all the gifts the Lord sends to our beloved Congregation. Choose with wise care the personnel to be prepared and be magnanimous in ensuring for the Province the conditions for a future which will certainly offer other models of work for which we want to be prepared.

In the plan careful thought should also be given to the task of ensuring *the memory of salesian history*, as the communication of a considered experience expressing in concrete terms our identity as lived in different contexts and cultures, in ordinary times and in exceptional situations.

The Congregation willed the foundation of the Salesian Historical Institute. It is the manifestation of a concern which must be reflected in every Province. Neglect of memories of the past means the loss of roots. Today we are facing the expansion which has taken place over 150 years and reached every continent, and its history has still to be written. We cannot lose a patrimony which is so valuable. Think of the value for us and for the confreres of tomorrow of the story of the implanting and growth of the Congregation in different

⁴⁵ GC23, 223

⁴⁶ AGC 358 Supplement, p.23

contexts and in certain countries which have recently recovered their freedom. It is evidently not sufficient to have created a structure or founded an Institute if there were not the men who worked there with love and enthusiasm.

Let every Province feel the responsibility for preserving, studying and communicating its own history in line with criteria that can be suitably indicated. To do this specialized research is indispensable, but equally important is the daily attention shown in keeping the chronicle, in the custody of archives, in the preservation of significant documentation.

The starting point: the cultural dimension of initial formation

The formation of the Salesian is not limited to studies nor measured only by intellectual ability, and so I would not want the insistence on cultural commitment to be interpreted as a selective criterion on the basis of intelligence quotients. We know that all capacities, and in particular those of the heart and self-donation, can find a place in the salesian community and mission. Unusual, however, is the importance given by our *Ratio* to the urgent need for a serious cultural preparation, taking its inspiration from the history of the Congregation and amply sustained by the most recent guidelines of the Church.

For the Salesian – and it applies not only to the young confreres – it is indispensable to have an understanding of the life which leads to a solidly motivated vocational option, and helps to an evermore mature and conscious living, without any complexes or cutting down, his own identity and its human significance. Not unreal is the risk of going astray in the face of currents of thought, or of taking refuge in models of behaviour and forms of expression that belong to the past. In such a case our vocation, isolated from life and culture, would not become leaven and challenge but would rather be relegated to the level of a subjective choice.

The *qualification* we are speaking of is determined by “for

you I study"; i.e. it receives its original characterization from the mission⁴⁷. For this reason some particular aspects acquire priority – in the first place a special knowledge of the world of youth and the capacity for an educative and pastoral insertion in it. We know from experience that this demands constant attention and reflection. It also requires the practical ability to translate the educative mission into meaningful projects in the present context marked, as it is, by complexity, freedom, pluralism and worldwide extension. An understanding as complete as possible of the pastoral field and the possession of pedagogical competence are a great help, as also is a spiritual frame of reference which, with the “grace of unity” accompanying salesian apostolic consecration helps to translate the exertions of knowledge and action into an experience of life in the Spirit. We have often said that spirituality, pastoral work and pedagogy must be united in the mind and in life: the road to sanctity, pastoral commitment, and the education of the young and of people in general.

Today the urgency of this synthesis has not grown any less. Indeed the tendency to fragmentation, to what is immediately understandable and practicable leaves us exposed to dangerous gaps and lack of completeness.

The need for a solid basic culture is strongly emphasized in ecclesial documents and in recent years in our reflections on formation. “It is necessary”, declares the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*, “to oppose firmly the tendency to play down the seriousness of studies and the commitment to them. This tendency is showing itself in certain spheres of the Church, also as a consequence of the insufficient and defective basic education of students beginning the philosophical and theological curriculum. The very situation of the Church today demands increasingly that teachers be truly able to face the complexity of the times and that they be in a position to face competently, with clarity

⁴⁷ cf. R 82

and deep reasoning, the questions about meaning which are put by the people of today, questions which can only receive full and definitive reply in the Gospel of Jesus Christ⁴⁸. "On many sides", declared the *Instrumentum Laboris* of the Synod on Consecrated Life, "is emphasized the need for an intellectual, philosophical and cultural formation which is more solid and intense, also in view of an adequate study of theology and of preparation for the new evangelization"⁴⁹.

We must therefore *re-emphasize the importance of intellectual formation and where necessary restore it to levels which correspond to the present day*. In fact, "without an updated cultural preparation which enables the vocation to be lived in a conscious manner, which leads to an adequate vision of reality, creates habits of reflection and provides opportunities for further study"⁵⁰, we cannot even hope to achieve the internal objectives of the Congregation as, for instance, those laid down by the GC24.

Guided by evaluations of this kind, we have expressed in the program of the General Council for this period some guidelines tending to "qualify intellectual preparation during the initial formation phase"⁵¹. I will refer to three of them which I entrust in a special way to the young confreres and those responsible for their formation.

The first is aimed at "*making the young confreres aware of the necessity of a solid cultural and professional qualification, and of commitment to reflection and study*"⁵². The accent is on awareness. The initial phases of formation, in addition to leaving a synthetic and systematic doctrinal foundation, which can be enlarged and modified, should inculcate also a taste for reflection, a method of study, a plan for further formation and the con-

⁴⁸ PDV 56

⁴⁹ *Instrumentum Laboris*, 90

⁵⁰ GC24, 247

⁵¹ AGC 358, Supplement, p.23

⁵² *ibid.*

viction that a Good Shepherd for the practice of the Word must also be always a good "doctor", with a sound knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom and of human life.

And then we want to "*verify and adapt* intellectual formation (set-up, programs, methods etc.) to the needs of our vocation and mission"⁵³. This includes contents and competences which regard religious and Christian experience, problems which more greatly afflict the human conscience, and conditions and processes of growth of young people according to the differences in the way their life is presented.

Finally, we are concerned in intellectual formation to "emphasize the *salesian perspective*, the study of 'salesianity' and the implementation of the indications of the GC24"⁵⁴. Salesian sensitivity, which is part of the charism and a gift of the Spirit, is the standpoint for original syntheses. We must not fall into genericism. Practice suggests the method for organizing thought and viceversa. On the other hand, explicit salesian material has become abundant: there is history which must not be forgotten, spirituality to be understood, our general pedagogical patrimony and the particular lines of practical pedagogy; and there is the evolution of thought to which salesian literature bears witness.

In this context I also add another indication which I consider important. The awareness of the universality of the Congregation, the composition of the Regions and groups of Provinces, and the tendencies of the world suggest a commitment for the overcoming of linguistic barriers and creating possibilities of greater communication and collaboration. It is therefore opportune to include in one's personal cultural equipment the learning to a useful level of one or more languages in addition to one's own.

To the young confreres, who during initial formation devote a great deal of time to study and reflection, I would like to re-

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

peat what I said some time ago to the community of our theological studentate of Turin-Crocetta: "I am convinced that a strong and complete intellectual formation is more urgently necessary today than ever before. In certain environments immediate practical ability and contact is not enough. After the first step there is the need for enlightening individuals, groups and large communities; of intervening at times in areas of life and thought which require in the one speaking a deep knowledge of the mystery of God, the vocation of man, and the present conditions in which life is lived. Thoughtlessness, if we may so call it, in intellectual formation pays no dividends in any context, and rushed solutions in pastoral work, if they are immediately successful, soon fail, even in the short term".

8. Structures.

The need for cultural quality involves not only individuals, but refers also to projects and works through which the mission is incarnated.. The process of elaboration of the PEPS has as its first objective the effectiveness of our interventions from the perspectives of evangelization, education and influence on collective mentality. This is not obtained merely by listing fundamental objectives. It is indispensable to make an updated and deeper analysis of the contents and methods which lead to ways for achieving the objectives, of using resources well, and of verifying results.

Given the complexity of certain works with regard to structure and management, clear ideas are necessary for the set-up and adequate capacity for its orientation in order to be faithful to the salesian ethos of the project. The risk is not just imaginary of remaining entangled in organizational aspects and thus weakening the cultural projection and pastoral finality, especially when our collaboration is accepted or requested, but without any openness to our cultural proposals.

Apostolic zeal, attention to cultural orientation and professional competence are necessary in all salesian works; but some seem to have need of them with particular urgency. I refer to those works which for various reasons can give a wider impact, that can communicate a message of particular validity or relevance, that can enter into a wider cultural or pastoral dialogue, that have the possibility of involving other social or ecclesial subjects.

I will dwell on some of these by way of paradigms, but the application extends to all the others.

The Salesian Pontifical University

The Salesian Pontifical University is preparing to celebrate 25 years of life as a University, in addition to the 30 no less important years as a Pontifical Athenaeum. The path that has been followed in these years manifests a development that can be assessed in various ways. The number of students has increased from 600 in 1973 to about 1,400 today. The number of requests for admission have never fallen off; indeed at present it has to be contained and regulated, in line with the possibilities of structures and personnel. In addition to the Salesians there are 390 religious, 150 diocesan students, and 590 lay people from every continent.

It has established a unique physiognomy among the Roman Universities for its educative and pastoral orientation and for the family style of the university community. Recently it has given life to interesting pastoral initiatives for the service of the students. In addition to the work of teaching, research, cultural development and services to the Church, it assists widely varying sectors of the salesian mission at regional and world level, of which formation is one of the first.

We must affirm once again its irreplaceable function "in the service of the Congregation and as a qualified expression of its mission in the Church, with its specific cultural and formative

potential”⁵⁵. It expresses at the highest level the dialogue between salesian charism and cultural applications, and in this sense fulfils a frontier mission. For this reason among the documents of the GC24 we read: “The present development of the Congregation and its worldwide expansion, the challenge of the mission and the demand for quality in its pedagogical and pastoral expression, the perspective of the new evangelization and of inculturation, the fostering of communion and attention to the different expressions of our charism render the function of the UPS of great and relevant importance in the framework of the salesian reality”⁵⁶.

In respect of the nature, criteria of functioning and levels of involvement of a university institution which is pontifical, ecclesiastical and salesian, the identity of our University must be maintained as also the quality of its contribution in the cultural, ecclesial and salesian environment.

Its development must be ensured in line with an organic project, periodically verified, to which corresponds the numerical and qualitative consistency of the academic body. Participation of the laity is already provided for, but it would be a weakness to do this only because the number of Salesians prepared for work at this level is insufficient.

Attention to the effectiveness, salesian characterization, capacity for cultural and religious dialogue, unity and organic nature of the project, and the promotion of a style of academic community are all aspects which must be kept in mind in the highest centre of studies of the Congregation.

The Rector Major with his Council and the University itself are committed to the verification of the situation and to the formulation of an organic operational project which lays down the lines of development for future years.

All this presupposes a decisive investment on the part of the

⁵⁵ GC21, 346

⁵⁶ *Report to the GC24*, 229

Congregation as regards personnel. Today's geography of the Congregation requires a University which is ever more international in character. It should be considered normal for requests to be made to the Provinces for persons already qualified or to be qualified for service in the UPS, and the availability of confreres to be co-opted and transferred to Rome. Such a criterion, on the other hand, is already taking place in the Congregation. This is clear from the generosity with which confreres and Provinces have responded to recent appeals.

The service of the UPS for the qualification of salesian personnel needs to be further exploited⁵⁷. Here salesian competence and perspectives are offered in a unique synthesis derived from experience combined with the choice and organization of the courses. For us therefore it is not "just the same" as other Universities. After verifying once more the results observable in the Congregation, I repeat the evaluation made by the GC24: "With some small exceptions, often repeated excessively and which we are willing to keep in mind, the net result of the frequenting of such Centres by students is highly positive for individuals, Provinces and the whole Congregation. We do not see any other arrangement that would be more advantageous"⁵⁸.

Other "Salesian" Universities: a significant presence.

The number of Salesian Institutions of University level has increased in recent years. They differ, one from another; their juridical structure varies, the involvement of the Provinces in them is different, as also is the consistency of the salesian teams which run them. Some are looked after by a solid group of confreres with the well-defined roles of a university institution and also the educative, pastoral and popular objectives of our charism. Others go ahead with a variable number of confr-

⁵⁷ cf. GC24, 255

⁵⁸ GC24, 255

eres according to the qualified personnel the Province manages occasionally to free for the purpose.

It must be recognized that in this field it is not easy to ensure the conditions for significant salesian presence at a scientific, educative and pastoral level. In a few cases at the outset attention was directed especially to organizing a service to create the opportunity of a higher education amid the middle and poorer classes and fill the cultural gaps that existed. Nowadays one can no longer think that without specific preparation and an adequate staff one can express the "oratorian criterion" at this level by integrating preoccupation for organization and attention to cultural level, administrative management and pastoral effect. "Once the first organizing effort required by such initiatives has been accomplished, the moment comes to confront decisively and at community level the cultural and pastoral qualification beginning with the preparation of confreres and lay personnel"⁵⁹.

In the first place it is indispensable to define clearly the identity and orientation of these centres. While recognizing that they have a general set-up that takes its inspiration from the Christian mentality and passes on a humanistic and religious vision, there is always the risk of levelling down to the prevailing mentality rather than entering into dialogue for the sustaining of alternative proposals.

Numerous documents remind us of this effort for a clear structure and organization. The Church is going ahead, in the context of the new evangelization, with a cultural pastoral work aimed at bringing about changes in the economic and social area, in attitudes to life, in the elaboration of ethics, in the creation of new relationships, in proposing a sense which throws light on nature, history and present tensions. The light for all this comes from the mystery of God the Creator, the Saviour of mankind, the strength and goal of his story in the Spirit.

⁵⁹ *Report to the GC24*, 261

Our Universities must define their orientation in line with their Catholic character and their educative philosophy in harmony with salesian criteria, making themselves centres for the formation of persons and the elaboration of culture of Christian inspiration.

This is a missionary frontier which is relatively new and hence needs to be followed up, coordinated and clarified. It will be necessary to draw up an authoritative line of approach (a *Project for Salesian Universities*, almost a platform for proclaiming their fundamental inspiration), to foster dialogue and exchange of ideas between these institutions and follow up the progress of the Provinces in this new experience. The attainment of salesian objectives must be ensured, even at the level of the statutes.

But in addition to cultural orientation, an efficacious pastoral animation of the university environment must be provided. To the academic structures must be added, in this case, the many activities we carry out among university students, such as residential hostels, groups, religious care and similar matters.

They cannot be without an EPC, and in the first place the animating salesian nucleus. This means the preparation and dedication of salesian personnel, intense collaboration with lay people who have been selected and made aware of the character and purpose of our Universities, an attitude of openness and relationship with other cultural bodies, and the appropriate application of the preventive system and of the spirituality on which it is based. In a word: a *requirement for salesian competence and for cultural and professional quality*.

Just as in Houses of Spirituality we frequently find ourselves managing the structures without having available persons and teams capable of spiritual animation, it can also happen that in our university centres and hostels we may be providing structures and organization but not plans for life and the accompaniment of growth.

From the General Council we want to follow with particular

attention the evolution of salesian work in this sector, which presents considerable challenges from an institutional aspect, and from the standpoint of those to whom the work is addressed, the collaborators, financial aspects and especially of the project itself, but which can be exceptionally fruitful for the evangelization of culture and for a particular presence in the world of education. There should be a corresponding commitment on the part of Provincials and their Councils.

Salesian Centres for study and reflection

The Congregation is committed also in other Centres, which in some cases have a direct incidence on the formation of confreres, and in others collaborate in creating a mentality, accompany young people and adults in a spiritual pilgrimage, diffuse the message of the Gospel by modern methods and communicate the salesian spirit: studentates, publishing houses, pastoral and pedagogical centres, houses of spirituality.

Our Regulations encourage Provinces which are able to do so to have "their own study centre for the formation of the confreres and to provide qualified services of animation" to the Provinces themselves and to the local Church⁶⁰. There are in fact quite a number of Provinces that can count on such centres. They constitute a commitment which is by no means light, but makes a valid contribution to the life of the Province and to its mission. They should therefore be sustained and strengthened, and reshaped if necessary, at regional level, rather than be multiplied without previous understandings.

The search for cultural and formative quality leads to a verification of the consistency, incidence and capacity for renewal of these Centres and especially to an ensuring of the conditions for their adequate response to the demands made on them.

In particular, as far as salesian study centres are concerned,

⁶⁰ R 84

it is necessary to ensure the composition and commitment of the teaching staff, which cannot be limited to a mere guaranteeing of the timetable of lessons; to foster collaboration and shared interprovincial responsibility when the centre provides services for more than one Province; the regular functioning of the "curatorium", affiliation or aggregation to our own Pontifical University, and the careful selection of non-salesian collaborators.

In this context, we must also consider our participation in study centres managed jointly with other institutions (Congregations, diocese, etc.), and also give attention to the formative orientation of the studies of confreres in initial formation who frequent centres in the direction of which we do not share responsibility. The influence of teachers on the development of personality is often more decisive than that of other formation guides; one cannot therefore simply "delegate" the intellectual formation of young Salesians.

Similar remarks, in respect of personnel and projects, apply to other Centres which produce and diffuse culture (publishing houses, radio stations, etc.) if we want to ensure their maximum efficiency and an adequate service to the Gospel and to the people⁶¹.

Conclusion

The pursuit of wisdom permeates the whole life of Don Bosco: love and knowledge at the service of the young. It is the gift and task entrusted to him at the moment of his calling, in response to his question as to how he was to succeed in carrying out such a mission. To reach it he was given a Teacher.

It is certainly a matter of that wisdom which is the 'knowledge of God's mystery'⁶², the "knowledge of Christ" which St

⁶¹ *Report to the GC24*, 269

⁶² cf. 1 Cor 2,6 ff.

Paul requested for the faithful⁶³, which in Christ includes the totality of human life and the development of history. It comes to us as a gift with faith and, for us Salesians, as a particular orientation with the charisma of predilection for the young.

May Mary most Holy, who was Don Bosco's Teacher, be the same also for us.

This is the wish I send to each of you and to your communities, together with my fraternal greetings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Don Bosco". The signature is written in a cursive style, with a large, stylized initial "D" that loops around the first part of the name.

⁶³ cf. Eph 3,18-19

2.1 AN ELOQUENT SALESIAN PRESENCE: THE SALESIAN BULLETIN (SB).

Fr Antonio MARTINELLI

*Councillor for the Salesian Family
and Social Communication*

Introduction

The program of the Rector Major and his Council for the six-year period 1996-2002 (cf. AGC 358, Supplement, p.30) includes a precise objective: *"Launch a renewal of the SB, as a unique institution of the Congregation (R 41), within the broad system of communication aimed at"*.

With an eye to the programmed renewal and relaunching, I have read over again the work done by Don Bosco in the Bulletin's early days, and some of the things he said. I did this with the desire to find once again his criteria and incentives, in view of the implementation of the program.

I was surprised to read Fr Piero Stella's note in *Don Bosco nella storia della religiosità cattolica*, vol.1, p.247: "At his death the Bulletin in Italian, French and Spanish, would have reached more than one hundred thousand copies".

Equally surprising was what I found on reading once again what Fr Eugene Ceria had written in *Annali della Società salesiana*, Vol 1, all of Chap. XXIII dedicated to the Salesian Bulletin. He presents the rapid increase in the circulation of the Bulletin as a unique *phenomenon!* On the other hand the early Salesians used it as an efficacious 'instrument' for spreading knowledge of Don Bosco and adherence to his spirit. For this

reason they gave a great deal of attention to organizing the work of the Bulletin.

We find ourselves facing a reality which from the very beginning had occupied much space in the words, deeds and pre-occupations of Don Bosco and the Congregation. What are we to make of all that?

I will try to provide some guidelines which can be of help in what we are doing today.

The Salesian Bulletin is of greater value than one of our works

The expression is meant to accentuate the importance that can attach to work with the SB.

When it was a question of entrusting the direct responsibility to a confrere, Don Bosco chose Fr Bonetti. "He could not have made a better choice", wrote Fr Ceria. Don Bosco relieved Fr Bonetti of his task as Rector of the College of Borgo San Martino, and called him to the Oratory to head the new work which was just beginning.

Although it may seem a repetition of things known to all Salesians, to recall that Don Bosco himself was concerned with the SB in at least three General Chapters can prompt some practical attention on our part.

1.1 A General Chapter has pointed to a process shared between the SB and the Association of Salesian Cooperators (cf. BM XIII, passim).

In the first General Chapter of the Congregation (1877), at which our Father presided, Don Bosco established the very close relationship between the Cooperators' Association and the Bulletin. He said:

"The great effort I have made for the Cooperators, something which I studied for many years and for this reason alone I think

I have succeeded, has been how to keep all the members united with the head and how the head could get his thoughts across to all the members. At this point, not even we ourselves can form an idea of how far this work will extend, and of the moral influence it will exert when it has reached large areas. When the copies run into thousands, and I firmly believe that it will not be long before we reach at least 5,000, then we shall begin to see surprising effects”.

These words were spoken in 1877. Nine years later the Bulletin was printing 40,000 copies (cf. *Annali*, o.c., pp.242-243).

On p.242 there is a note: “In the last years of his life he offered the Diploma of Salesian Cooperators to all the Bishops of Italy, together with a complete collection of the issues of the Bulletin as a source of information”.

As an indication of the close linkage between Cooperators and Salesians, in the same General Chapter Don Bosco incorporated in the Code of our Society also the basic Statute of the Pious Association of Salesian Cooperators, made up of eight articles. Thus the Cooperators became an adjunct of the Congregation itself.

In the fourth article he assigned to the SB the task it was to perform regarding the Association. Don Bosco wrote: “*The bond of union between the Cooperators is the SB. When some member renders himself unworthy of being a Cooperator, the Bulletin will no longer be sent to him, without further formality*”.

This very simple statement turned out to be, in fact, the highest praise Don Bosco could bestow with regard to the Bulletin. To deprive someone of the periodical is an example of the salesian style of the preventive system, which combines clarity with kindness, respect for the individual with the demands of the organization.

The Cooperators must frequently recall the words Don Bosco wrote to them shortly before he died: “*If you have helped me with such kindness and perseverance, I beg you now to help my successor after my death. The works I have begun with your*

help no longer have need of me, but they will still have need of you and of all who, like you, sincerely want to do good on this earth. And so I entrust and recommend the works to all of you".

The emphasis given to the Cooperators in no way excludes the direct responsibility of the confreres, of the salesian communities, and of the salesian provincial organization.

Here, on the other hand, must be considered also the contribution that can be made by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Those responsible for the Bulletin at provincial level must be able to incorporate the help and originality of the FMA for a more complete and efficacious presentation of Don Bosco's charisma in today's world.

1.2 A General Chapter has reflected on the communicative, unifying and promotional force of the SB (cf. BM XVI, pp.326-335, particularly pp.327-328).

We are now in 1883. Don Bosco is heavily involved in the consolidation of his work. In the 3rd General Chapter of the Congregation he said: *"If the Governments do not cause problems, the Bulletin will become a powerful instrument, not just in itself but because of the people it brings together"*.

I seem to see condensed in Don Bosco's words many intuitions which guided him in his life and which in some way he wanted to leave as a legacy to us his sons. They form part of that vast collection of dreams and desires, of utopian ideas and practical realizations which have accompanied the story of our Father and Founder.

The first intuition: *communication, through available instruments, is a strong and efficacious force.*

In Don Bosco's hands the use of the means of communication was always directed to the good of his work and of the young. Books and periodicals, pamphlets and single editions, long or short contributions, newspapers or reviews: everything

could be made use of for education and evangelization. Rightly is Don Bosco called a 'master', not least for the use he made of the means of communication of his time. Fr Ceria observes again: "Among all Don Bosco's publications, the SB is perhaps the one which has produced most fruit, both by warming hearts in favour of the missions and so many other works of faith, and by prompting numerous ecclesiastical, religious and missionary vocations" (ibid. p.244).

The second intuition: *the importance of publicity in spreading what is good and in bringing good people together.*

This might seem a reflection somewhat remote from the time and thought of Don Bosco, but it is in full accordance with his spirit. He never made any mystery, for instance, about Pope Leo XIII's membership of the Cooperators' Association. The history of the Oratory gives us the date he became a member: 16 March 1878. Don Bosco did not let the grass grow under his feet, because in April of the same year the SB announced, commented on and gave full importance to the event. For Don Bosco, for the Association and for the Bulletin itself it was an item of the greatest importance and relevance!

Civil society was undergoing a profound change at the time. Communication served as a sounding board for projects of renewal, and Don Bosco knew how to involve himself skillfully and successfully in this new situation.

The third intuition: *the need for a spiritual bond as a support and help for the organization of good.*

Don Bosco was dominated by the idea of unity and of linkage with the whole Church, and through these means in a unique way with God. Unity is attainable when and where there is unity of mental intent and spirit. This the line in which the work of the Bulletin is to be explained and understood. Don Bosco said as much himself in the conferences of St Francis de Sales of 1877: *the SB will have the function of gathering together entire populations and uniting them in the salesian spirit.*

The service of the Church was the dominant factor in Don Bosco's desire for aggregation. It applied to the Cooperators' Association as well as to the avid use of the various means of communication.

1.3 A General Chapter has defined the SB as the organ of the Pious Salesian Society (cf. MB XVIII, 185 ff.).

The Fourth General Chapter of 1886, the last in which Don Bosco took part, took up once again the theme of the Bulletin and made decisions about the *responsibility* for its publication.

It recalled, in the first place, the responsibility of *Don Bosco* and of the *Superior Chapter* (as the General Council was known in those days): "The Bulletin is to be edited and printed under the immediate supervision of the Superior Chapter..."

The Provincials were given the task of responding to some regional and national requirements; for this reason they were to prepare a few pages as a supplement concerning local events. They were also to nominate in the Provinces persons whom we now call "correspondents" for different areas. They were to be suitable people with time available for gathering news and information to be sent to Turin to the director of the Bulletin.

The *directors* of the Bulletin were to have the time and skill to do their work of information about salesian and church matters effectively.

Two interventions of Don Bosco are worth recalling. The first is that of 10 August 1877, when the very first issue of the SB was fresh from the printers, and in a conversation with Fr Giulio Barberis Don Bosco said: "*The Bulletin's aim is as much as possible to publicize our activities and show them as they really are. By winning popular good will for our works we shall obtain people's help. In skilfully presenting our needs we can also suggest varied ways of supporting our undertakings. This magazine will be the mainstay of all our enterprises; if it fails, they fail with it. We have to work to get as many readers as pos-*

sible by spreading it far and wide and free of charge, convinced that our main benefit does not lie in the three lire subscription. So let us not insist on the price. One benefactor's alms will sometimes make up for everyone else" (BM XIII, 191-192).

It is interesting to note that in Don Bosco's thinking there are always overall visions, global concerns, wider interests than what lies immediately ahead. Above all there is always the concern for the development and consolidation of the Congregation in the good will of the people.

The second intervention is of 17 September 1885, when the Bulletin had been in existence for some years. While its merits were recognized and also the advantages that accompanied it, questions and difficulties had arisen. Don Bosco intervened in the Superior Chapter, and the Minutes report him as saying: *"I support the need for a single Bulletin. My reasons for keeping control of this most powerful means for attaining my purposes, and the fact that the Bulletin may sometimes be exposed to deviations from the purpose I laid down for it, make me remain firm in my opinion"*.

In vol. XVIII of the MB at p.668, the author adds: "It is a most powerful instrument, and must always be under the control of the Rector Major".

From history to life.

Today we are called upon to measure ourselves against the experience of Don Bosco to understand how and which of the original criteria we can and must revive, and which on the other hand we should modify and adapt.

I start from the standpoint of the directors of the SB and point to some questions which have arisen through experience.

First question: *Is the SB a salesian look at the world, or a vision of the salesian experience for the world?*

Fr Egidio Viganò once replied to a question expressed in these terms during a meeting with those in charge of the SB: "The first expression is a euphemism for producing a review according to one's own ideas, prescinding from the guidelines given by Don Bosco and from the linkage with the Salesian Family, in such a way that everything is talked about but without any reference to the Salesian Family. The salesian outlook on the world must be all of a piece with the internal concept of the BS. In other words, in the SB which makes known the salesian experience of the little world of the country concerned, the director is able to select points and also add salesian views on the wider world, but always from within the salesian phenomenon. Otherwise the Bulletin becomes a review according to the director and will be made according to his own image and likeness. And what is a salesian view of the world? It is that of a Salesian who lives out his own vocation, the typical educative mission to the young".

Directors of the SB need to be particularly vigilant about purely celebrative aspects of salesian life. The SB includes such events, but does not emphasize them nor make of them the only contents of the Bulletin. Items must not be overlooked which present educative and pastoral concerns; nor should educational and pastoral problems be excluded. The proportion between the various topics is an indication of the wisdom of the one responsible.

Second question: *How can the objectives of the SB as an organ of information be presented?*

Information coming through the SB has three fundamental purposes:

- to foster a sense of belonging: all of us scattered throughout the world, in different situations of life and work, feel ourselves to be Salesians; we recognize a common orientation and the same animating spirit;
- to create motivations for living in unity: as Don Bosco's Sale-

- sian Family we are all aware of bonds of communion and fellowship;
- to sustain the joy of the salesian vocation in its various expressions; we feel a certain pride in knowing that we are children of a Father like Don Bosco.

Constant dialogue between the Salesian Family and ecclesial life, between the salesian vocation and the world, between secular experiences and the salesian mission, will prove to be an indispensable instrument for the attainment of the above-mentioned purposes.

It is a question of a demanding work which calls for persons wholly dedicated to this salesian service, which has become more necessary today than ever before.

Third question: *Is the idea, so frequently expressed by Don Bosco, of the unity of the SB still realistic today?*

First let us read again art.41 of the General Regulations:

"The Salesian Bulletin, founded by Don Bosco, spreads knowledge of salesian spirit and activity, especially in its missionary and educational aspects.

It is concerned with the problems of youth, encourages collaboration and tries to foster vocations.

It is as well an instrument for formation and a bond of union between the different branches of the Salesian Family.

It is edited in accordance with the directives of the Rector Major and his Council in various editions and languages".

The article of the Regulations leads us to consider two aspects which seem to be opposed: unity or convergence, and difference or autonomy. The intention of the article, as also of the program of the Rector Major and his Council, with regard to the necessary and convenient autonomy, suggests a degree of common identity greater than seems to exist at present. Coordination is a real possibility, and so has become an objective of the renewal and relaunching of the Salesian Bulletin.

Prospects for the future

At this point discussion will naturally centre on the persons and groups responsible at different levels for the “phenomenon and work” of the SB.

Those immediately and directly concerned are The Rector Major with his Council, the Councillor General and the whole department for social communication (now enriched by a new member, the *central director* of the SB in the person of Fr Orlando Vito), Provincials and Provincial Conferences, directors of the SB, Salesian Cooperators and all the friends of Don Bosco.

As each one works with the responsibilities attached to his specific role, he will render an important and eloquent service to Don Bosco's spirit.

In the Provinces the Salesians should place on the agenda for reflection the theme of the Salesian Bulletin.

The Groups of the Salesian Family should consider the very real contribution they can make to the extension of this unique instrument for manifesting the “living Don Bosco” of the present day. Where convenient, groups of friends of the SB could be started up to provide collaboration, shared responsibility and greater interest.

The renewal of the SB in the world finds a very positive and efficacious place in the framework of GC24, n.82.

2.2 POOR BUT WITH SOLIDARITY

Fr Giovanni MAZZALI
Economer General

One of the objectives of the program of the Rector Major and his Council in the sector of the Economer General is to "foster the witness of poverty in the Congregation, especially in what refers to the use and administration of goods" (AGC 385 – Supplement, p.35).

In this setting particular relevance attaches to the initiatives now multiplying with great rapidity and to the fuller consideration being given to the wide-ranging and universal theme of solidarity. It is a well known fact that in widely differing contexts and in many different ways, solidarity initiatives are on the increase, and it is interesting to note that alongside the well-tried and traditional forms there are new examples, e.g. (to quote only those better known): ethical banks and investments, solidarity banks, food banks, and all sorts of commercial schemes of a similar nature. On many sides, and significantly also in the case of credit banks, proposals have been made for an "ethical system", understood as a means for guaranteeing ethical considerations in the use, management and investment of money, and also suggestions are being made with ever greater urgency for the setting up of a financial market operating with a social conscience.

If, on the one hand, these and other initiatives have the appearance of novelty and may quite reasonably give rise to a certain perplexity about their efficacy and the various reasons for their adoption by the agencies concerned, on the other they represent attempts to find new ways of managing and utilizing goods according to new criteria and principles and with an innovative outlook.

In this context I would like to quote the economist Keynes who, in an address given in Spain in 1930 with the significant title of "*Financial prospects for our grandchildren*", foresaw a world regulated by freedom and morality as indispensable conditions to achieve gratuitousness and solidarity, a world in which men would have become "free... to turn to some of the more secure principles of religion and the traditional values: avarice is a vice, usury is a crime, and love of money is deplorable; those who really follow the paths of virtue and of healthy wisdom are the ones who give least thought to tomorrow" (*Concilium* 2/1997, p.31).

These are "prophetic" challenges – in Keynes' view, in fact, we would still be living today in the tunnel of financial need – which, when considered and wisely evaluated, recall the Church's teaching which in solidarity finds the alternative way to a more just society.

Solidarity "is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all... In this way the solidarity we propose is the path to peace and at the same time to development... Today one could say... *opus solidaritatis pax*, peace as the fruit of solidarity" (*Sollicitudo rei socialis*, nn. 38-39).

Art.76 of our Constitutions emphasizes and points more directly to poverty as the way to fraternal communion and stresses the profound linkage between evangelical poverty and Christian charity. This is realized on the one hand by an authentic family spirit through the sharing of goods within the community, and on the other by an attitude of solidarity as regards the Province, the Congregation, the Church and the world itself.

It is worth our while to dwell for a moment on this particular aspect of our poverty, to verify whether in our ordinary

and extraordinary situations the principles and practice of solidarity are effective blueprints for our choices and our course of action.

I think that on the basis of these authoritative suggestions it is possible to identify certain guidelines for bearing a more clear-cut witness to this element which characterizes our salesian consecration and identity.

Solidarity must be understood in the first place as a proper relationship between equality and diversity, with regard to the person and fundamental rights of every human being, and also to undeniable individual differences, but also as an attempt to come together to achieve a genuine community of persons and reach shared objectives through the responsible cooperation of everyone. Solidarity in this sense means the harmonizing of individuality with individual responsibility (sometimes strongly accentuated in the context of religious life) through the criterion of interpersonality. More specifically, in the financial sector such a criterion aims at effective organization of solidarity within the various Provinces with an opportune harmonization of the spirit of collaboration which tends to centralize means and resources, with the autonomy confirmed by our Constitutions.

As far as can be seen, the Congregation is already moving effectively in this direction, and many Provinces have already organized with criteria of efficiency and rationalism a solidarity movement which begins from the individual communities but is managed and administered by the Province, both for the benefit of the communities themselves by avoiding waste and unpleasant distinctions, and in face of the needs of the Congregation at world level.

It is important in the first place that the Provincial with his Council study and decide on a *provincial plan of solidarity*, specifying the stages, process and gradual realization. Subsequently the Rectors and Economers of the communities will have to be sensitized with respect to the plan, and will thus acquire a good grasp of the underlying motives and especially of

practical proposals for its realization. Then, as the third stage, in a third intervention it will be opportune for the Provincial Chapter, with the authority proper to it, to take the reflection still further and formally sanction the setting up of the *provincial solidarity plan*.

As I think is already widely known, the Rector Major has established a *solidarity fund*, open both to contributions and needs of the whole Congregation. I take advantage of this article in the Acts to express sincere thanks for the generous contributions already received, and especially for those coming from situations of poverty and need.

With a view to an innovative and efficient management of the available resources, solidarity should aim at the development of each and every person. In this perspective it means for our communities a *practical commitment*, in forms depending on the different contexts in which we live and work, *against distress, under-development, social discrimination, and exploitation*. The strategies adopted will represent, and indeed are already representing, a contribution to the effort to render more moral the financial field, often oriented to the making of profit as an end in itself, the origin of so much evil and social privation.

A first task, accessible to all, is the fight against waste and against the exaggerations and exacerbation of consumerism. And then practical awareness of the many ethical initiatives now in progress concur in rendering our profession of poverty more credible, especially in the management of the money we have available and in the consequent quality of our life style. As I have already pointed out, it is a question among others of being aware of the ethical initiatives being offered by various agencies in different contexts. In this way provincial and local economists can render a valuable service by seeking and providing information which can gradually encourage choices by the individual communities or by the Province itself through the appropriate mechanisms.

As regards the *gratuitous aspect*, which represents the most lofty realization of solidarity, we feel particularly involved for the building of the *civilization of love*. As well as being ourselves exponents of free giving, both individually and as communities, we commit ourselves to take full account of the different forms of voluntary work, to collaborate in the creation of human structures more worthy of man, and hence to stimulate political involvement on the part of those who wish to commit themselves in giving to society, to the global village of which we are a part, a "bit more soul". "God created us and we have created poverty. The problem will be resolved when we renounce our own greediness" (Mother Teresa).

It is not difficult to see how much our own radical option for God, our charism centered on the mission to the young and on the poorest and most abandoned of them, influences the authenticity of our daily effort at solidarity and our commitment in the community, society and the Church. The drive of our Founder and the contemporary witness of Mother Teresa, rooted in each case in their deep radical spirituality, are an example and encouragement to us for revising and renewing our style of life as individuals and communities, so as to be credible witnesses to solidarity.

THE PROVINCIAL CHAPTERS 1998

Fr Luc VAN LOOY
The Vicar General

In accordance with the timing indicated in the Constitutions (cf. C 172), at a distance of two years from the GC24 the Provinces are invited to celebrate the Provincial Chapter of 1998.

It is a matter of the representative assembly of the confreres of the local communities to take stock of the situation of the Province, study the application in it of the GC24, examine some themes of particular importance and, if necessary, verify the Provincial Directory.

1. The members of the Chapter are:

1.1 Members by right (C 173)

- the Provincial and members of the Provincial Council,
- the Superiors of Provincial Delegations if any exist,
- the Moderator of the Provincial Chapter, appointed by the Provincial with the consent of his Council (R 168),
- the Rector of each canonically erected house (if seriously impeded he may be substituted by the Vice-rector if the Provincial agrees),
- the Director of Novices.

1.2 Elected Members:

Two elections are envisaged:

- a) in every house or in a group of united communities (R 161-163);

b) at provincial level, from a list of those eligible, one for every 25 or fraction of 25 confreres (R 165).

All confreres (in perpetual or temporary vows) have active voice in the elections (C 174). Only the perpetually professed have passive voice (C 173,7). It is important to keep in mind the complementary representation of brothers and clerics in the election.

2. The themes for discussion

There are two main items:

- the themes proposed by the Provincial for the good of the Province;
- the application of the GC24 in the Province.

In case of necessity, because of particular problems, revisions can also be made of the Provincial Directory.

2.1 The Provincial with his Council lays down the specific themes of the 1998 Provincial Chapter within the limitations of articles 170 and 171 of the Constitutions. It is a matter of studying themes of particular importance in the context and circumstances of the present day. In his opening address the Provincial will highlight the more important aspects of the life of the province: religious life, mission, co-involvement of the laity and of the Salesian Family, etc.

2.2 Application of the deliberations of the General Chapter in the Province (C 171,3). By considering together the GC24 and the steps already taken in the province, processes and forms of involvement will be verified, together with shared responsibility and formation which the Province intends to develop to share with the laity the salesian mission and spirit.

The following is a brief summary of the principal duties indicated by the GC24:

2.2.1. *To pass from a simple acceptance of the laity to an effective exploitation of their particular contribution in education and pastoral work (GC24, 108).* This implies in particular in the provinces that: “The Provincial with his Council should:

- a) stimulate a knowledge of and contact with lay people who live and work with Don Bosco's spirit outside our structures;
- b) program with them some times for exchange of ideas, encouraging their commitment of service in favour of the young;
- c) study, in association with the relative organisms of the FMA and the Cooperators, the possibilities and means most likely to favour the involvement of the laity in the common mission” (GC24, 116).

2.2.2. *“To promote experiences, attitudes, practical processes and structures of shared responsibility which foster communion and sharing in the spirit and mission of Don Bosco” (GC24, 118),* by indicating particular attention at provincial level: “The Provincial with his Council should:

- arrange meetings and encounters with Salesians and laity responsible for the various sectors of activity, to program and evaluate together the process of educative and pastoral action;
- set up the general framework of norms and criteria for the smooth functioning of activities, relationships between SDBs and laity, and initiatives promoted by them;
- study, and if necessary promote, the realization of projects together with groups of the Salesian Family or other lay groups. For this purpose they should foster the constitution and efficient functioning of the local council of the Salesian Family, in which will be studied together the needs of young people of the area, and common projects will be drawn up;
- try out, where possible and convenient, different forms of management, e.g. entrusting some salesian works to lay administration, always in a manner which safeguards their salesian significance”. (GC24, 125).

“With regard to the volunteer movement, they should:

- help confreres and communities to recognize its importance for the salesian mission;

- draw up and give effect to a provincial plan which, in line with the guidelines of the document "The Salesian Volunteer Movement", will include detailed proposals for insertion in the educative and pastoral project, for the preparation of volunteers, for following them up during their period of service, and for welcoming them and using their experience on their return;
- keep in mind the problems following the ending of their service, and in particular the return home of those who have been working abroad:
 - foster periodic meetings between them and other young persons or adults, for spreading the culture of the volunteer movement;
 - help them to make a critical assessment of their experience, and replan their life in the light of the new elements they find in themselves and in the new environment which welcomes them;
 - promote contacts with the communities in which the volunteers have given their service, so as to ensure the continuity of the experience" (GC24, 126).

2.2.3. *To exploit communication in all its forms and expressions: communication at interpersonal and group level, the production of messages, critical and educative use of the means of social communication (GC24, 129), indicating that at provincial level:*

"a) The Provincial with his Council should foster and verify the quality of communication within the province and outside it, between confreres, with groups of the Salesian Family, with ecclesial communities and civil and social institutions, between groups of provinces and with the General Council.

b) Without detriment to what is laid down by the GC23 259, the provincial delegate for social communication, in agreement with the Provincial, will collect together a team of SDBs and qualified lay people, for the purpose of exploiting social communication for the education and evangelization of the young and the poor. The team will draw up a provincial plan for animation, formation and consultation in the area of social com-

munications, foreseeing suitable structures and instruments” (GC24, 136).

2.2.4. *“To plan processes of qualified formation so as to realize the common educative and pastoral mission” (GC24, 139), by indicating that:*

“Using the service of a group formed of lay persons and SDBs, who are committed and experts in information, youth pastoral work, the Salesian Family and social communication, each province shall review and revise the Lay Project called for by the GC23, and complete it with a program for formation of SDBs and laity together, not later than the next Provincial Chapter. Such a program should provide:

- contents, experiences and periods dedicated to formation;
- definitions of roles, relationships and manner of collaboration between SDBs and laity;
- coordination between the various sectors and structures of animation;
- the role and interventions of the Provincial and members of the provincial council in formation activities;
- the availability of centres, groups and structures of provincial animation.

The SDBs must retain their specific commitment, which is also a priority and a privilege, of responding positively to the demand for and the right to formation and animation which reach them from the lay members of the Salesian Family, so that such members may become in due course animators and formative agents, in their families, in their environments and places of work, in the ecclesial community and in society” (GC24, 145).

“During the next six years, each Province should:

- invite the members of the Salesian Family to make a responsible commitment to a unified pastoral work for vocations, with special attention to vocational guidance and the putting forward of the various forms of Christian vocation (lay, ordained ministry, consecrated life), and specifically those of the Salesian Family;

- continue its efforts for the setting up of centres of the Cooperators and Past-pupils. For this purpose careful preparation and formation should be given to the Delegates and Assistants of the various groups of the Salesian Family;
- offer provincial and local programs of formation, together with opportune accompaniment, also to past-pupils and other lay people who, outside our own environments, want to live and work according to the spirit of Don Bosco” (GC24, 146).

2.2.5. *The implementation of the EPC in salesian works: cf. GC24, 169-174.*

2.3 In addition it could be useful to examine *in what way the Province is keeping in step with the program of the Rector Major and his Council* as regards the application of the four priorities of animation:

- 1) relationships between SDBs and Laity
- 2) the effectiveness of our works
- 3) the SDB community as animating nucleus
- 4) the quality of formation (cf. AGC 358, supplement, pp.14-17).

3. Approval of the Provincial Chapters

The *deliberations of the provincial chapter*, made and voted on at the conclusion of the Provincial Chapter, will have binding force after the approval of the Rector Major with the consent of his Council (C 170). For such deliberations the approval of the Rector Major must therefore be requested.

Immediate effect may be given in the Province to whatever falls within the ordinary competence of the Provincial with his Council.

It is requested that the following be sent to the Vicar General:

- 1) The *acts* of the Provincial Chapter: one complete copy in the original language.

- 2) A translation into Italian of the *deliberations* which require the approval of the Rector Major.

Finally it should be remembered that the Constitutions and General Regulations provide clear norms for the procedure to be used in elections, and in participation and voting in the Chapter (cf. C 173-174, and R 161-166. 168). The Moderator of the Provincial Chapter is recommended to be exact and rigorous in following these norms.

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

From 3 June to 25 July the principal commitment of the Rector Major was that of presiding over the meetings of the plenary session of the General Council, of which the chronicle will be found at n. 4.2 of the present number of the Acts. The following are some further significant items.

On 7 July, accompanied by Fr Pasquale Liberatore, Postulator General, he was present in the Sala Clementina at the Vatican for the reading of the decree on the heroicity of the virtues of our Brother, Ven. Artemides Zatti, in the presence of the Holy Father (v. Text of the decree at 5.1).

On 12 July he went with Fr Nicolussi to the UPS for the installation of the new Rector Magnus, Fr Michele Pellerey.

On 22 July, with Fr Liberatore, he joined the Salesian Oblate Sisters at their Generalate at Tivoli, for the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the death of their founder, Mgr. Joseph Cognata. With them he celebrated Mass, visited the house and the souvenirs of Bishop Cognata, and

took part in a commemorative presentation of the activities of the Congregation.

After the plenary session of the Council, Fr Vecchi went to Santa Fosca in Cadore for a period of rest. During the same period he was able to have a meeting with the Provincial, Rectors and various confreres of the Verona Province. On 5 August he went to Valdocco, where in the afternoon he was able to celebrate the Eucharist with the young Spaniards of the Don Bosco Youth Camp. The following day, the feast of the Transfiguration, found him at Contra di Missaglia for the profession of the FMA novices.

He returned to the Generalate for the Solemnity of the Assumption, and left Rome once more on 24 August to take part at Courmayeur in the Congress organized by the VIS (International association for Volunteer work for Development) on "Poverty and Development". He opened the proceedings with a paper on *Globalization and poverty*, and had occasion to give interviews to various

Radio and TV stations interested in the event.

On 27 August, in preparation for his coming visit to Cuba, he visited the Cuban Ambassador to the Holy See.

On 30 August he took part in the installation of the new Provincial of the Roman Province, Fr Mario Carnevale, at the Sacred Heart Institute, Rome.

On 31 August he celebrated the Eucharist and presided at the closing of the World Congress of FMA Past-pupils at the *Domus Pacis* in Rome.

On 3 September the Rector Major left Rome for Havana, for the long awaited visit to the confreres and salesian works of Cuba. During his stay on the island he was able to visit all five salesian communities.

In each of them he met the confreres, cooperators and past-pupils. He was informed of the stability of each group, of the difficulties they faced, and was able to make suggestions for the guidance of the Salesian Family in the particular work of each group. In particular, he spoke to the post-novices at Havana-Compostela on the importance of the period of formation in which they were engaged, and at Santiago di Cuba he spoke familiarly with the aspirants and pre-novices.

With some Salesians he paid a visit to the Archbishop of Havana, Card. Jaime Ortega, and discussed various topics with him: the political, social and religious situation in Cuba, the relationship between the Church and the Cuban State, the relationship with Religious, and the possibilities of apostolic work.

He was also able to meet the two Auxiliary Bishops of Havana, the Bishop of Santiago di Cuba and the Bishop of Camagüey.

At Havana he also visited Ms. Caridad Diego, the person in charge of religious affairs at national level, who showed willingness to meet the requests made by the Salesians for more entrance visas for non-Cuban confreres for the needs of our works, but did not conceal the cultural and ideological thinking of the party to which she belonged, and the orientation of the government in the matter.

On the last day of his visit, the Rector Major had a meeting with some members of the Provincial Council at Compostela to take stock of the situation. He then went on to the house of the FMA at Peñalver-Guanabacoa (Havana) for a final meeting with all the confreres of the island. Present also were the Provincial (Fr Angel Soto), who had accompa-

nied Fr Vecchi through almost his entire journey, the Provincial Delegate Fr Guillermo Garcia, Fr Enrico Mellano, Fr Pastor Ramirez and Bro. Leonel Cuesto, who had all come from Santo Domingo. He spoke of the impressions he had formed during his visit, and explained the general lines of animation of the General Council for the present six-year period.

The Rector Major repeated his impressions in a 'good-night' given to the confreres of the Generalate on his return to Rome. In all five foundations the Salesians live in dwellings which are poor but well cared for, and in an impoverished social context. They display evident enthusiasm for the work, generosity, availability and affability to all, and especially to the young who show them much cordiality and affection in return.

Their work is carried out for the most part in parishes, in which they are intensely committed and where results are good. Pastoral work for vocations is producing results, and the various formative phases exist: aspirantate and pre-novitiate at Santiago di Cuba, novitiate at Santo Domingo, and post-novitiate at Havana-Compostela. The Salesian Family is growing in numbers and collabo-

rates in pastoral activity everywhere: the group of Cooperators is flourishing, especially at Santa Clara; the Past-pupils are in process of getting organized.

Religious devotion is deeply felt by the people, who take part in religious functions in great numbers. The Feast of Our Lady de la Caridad, Patroness of Cuba, is celebrated on 8 September; it brings thousands of people to the churches to hear Mass, to honour Our Lady with prayer, flowers and candles, and to frequent the Sacraments. On this feast the Rector Major celebrated the Eucharist in the parish church of Camagüey, thronged with worshippers.

The young people show themselves willing for listening and dialogue; those who frequent salesian environments are evidently interested in evangelization and catechesis. Oratorian activity takes place, even though the space for it in the parish houses is very restricted. The Salesians are progressively extending their work with the young, exploiting whatever space and possibilities the situation offers.

The Church in Cuba is united around the Bishops and this permits an evangelization process which is secure, even though slow through lack of means, and makes

the Church a point of reference for both the population and the authorities. Freedom of action is still limited, but there is a progressive though slow improvement, compared with the situation in the past.

In the evening of 10 September Fr Vecchi left Cuba to return to Rome.

In the month of September, prominent among the activities of the Rector Major was an intensive series of meetings of a reduced Council, from 12-19 September, to deal with some important matters. All the Councillors heading the various Departments were present together with the Regional Councillor for Italy and the Middle East.

In addition Fr Vecchi had an important engagement at Colle Don Bosco on Sunday 14 September for the inauguration of the "*Casa dei giovani - il ragazzo del Sogno*" situated in the so-called '*scaiotà*', at one time a farmhouse.

On his arrival with the Rector, Fr Enzo Baccini, and many confreres, with the novices of Lanuvio and Pinerolo-Monte Oliveto, and numerous FMAs, he was welcomed with wild enthusiasm by the youngsters frequenting the summer camps, all displaying multicolored neckerchiefs with

slogans proclaiming the festivity.

Replying to the greetings of the Rector, and speaking to the youngsters present, Fr Vecchi pointed out that they were witnessing the realization of a dream of the Salesian Family: *to build at Colle an environment in which it would be possible to organize powerful moments for the animation of young people who wanted to commit themselves deeply to their own spiritual growth, and be capable of leading their friends and companions in the same direction.* And so he blessed the various sectors, saying that it was a well equipped centre, airy and functional, which could welcome big numbers of young people, close to the places sacred to the Salesians, where young John Bosco grew up, matured in his life choice, and dreamed great dreams.

In the theatre to which they all went afterwards, Fr Vecchi replied to questions put to him by the youngsters, especially regarding youth problems and those concerned with the duties and characteristics of an animator.

In the afternoon, in the upper chapel of the Basilica, the Rector Major presided at a Holy Mass during which he received the perpetual profession of six confreres of the Piedmont Circumscription.

Afterwards he visited also the newly restored church dedicated to Mary Help of Christians and blessed those present. In the evening he returned to Rome.

4.2 Chronicle of the General Council

The third plenary session of the present six-year period began on 3 June 1997 and ended on 25 July, after 27 full meetings and intense work in groups and committees for the study of various topics. During the session there were also other commitments for the Councillors: in particular, the animation of the meeting of new Provincials which took place at the Generalate from 6 to 16 July, and the contribution made by the Councillors to other meetings for animation, especially those which took place at the Generalate (as, for instance, the course of ongoing formation for German-speaking confreres).

As always, the study of the more important themes and problems concerned with the animation of the Provinces and the guidance of the Congregation was accompanied by the fulfilment of ordinary tasks, such as the appointment of Provincial Council-

lors, the approval of new Rectors, the opening and canonical erection of new houses and/or other activities (during the session 7 were newly opened, 11 were canonically erected, and 7 were closed), matters concerning individual confreres, and financial and administrative items.

The following is a summary of the more important items on the agenda.

1. Appointment of Provincials.

Though the number was smaller than in the previous session, there was a careful process of discernment, with the examination of the consultations and the subsequent appointment of new Provincials for the Provinces where the Superior's mandate was ending.

The following Provincials, in alphabetical order, were appointed during the session: Mario Carnevale for the Rome Province of Italy; Walter Jara for Córdoba, Argentina; Giovanni Nguyen Van Ty for the Vice-province of Vietnam; and Esteban Ortiz for Quito, Ecuador.

At n. 5.2 of the present issue of the AGC will be found some biographical information concerning the new Provincials.

2. *Reports on Extraordinary Visitations.*

A task, which took a good deal of time and much study, was the careful examination of the reports on the extraordinary visitations carried out by Councillors in the period from January to May 1997. These were prepared by the Visitors concerned, with details of all aspects of the provinces involved, and were examined by the full Council. Indications were given for the life of the province, to be integrated with those already given by the Visitor, and suggestions were made for the further guidance to be given by the Rector Major in his concluding letter to the province concerned.

The provinces involved were: Argentina-Córdoba, Australia, Great Britain, Italy-Adriatic, Italy-Rome, Peru, Poland-Wrocław, Portugal (including Mozambique), Spain-Bilbao and Thailand.

3. *Information provided by individual Councillors.*

The Councillors in charge of the various Departments (formation, youth pastoral work, salesian family and social communication, missions and finance), and also the Rector Major and the Vicar General, reported on their activi-

ties involving visits to provinces and participation in meetings at various levels, and also on the work carried out in their various Departments and offices. The Regional Councillors also reported on other activities additional to the extraordinary visitations. Prominent among these was a report by the Regional for Africa and Madagascar which provided a panoramic view of the conditions of the Region.

The purpose of these reports, in addition to giving information to the Council in general, is to bring out possible topics needing deeper study by the Council after adequate preparation.

4. *Some governmental decisions.*

During the session the Council studied some particular themes concerning individual Provinces or groups, and also the Congregation as a whole, from the standpoint of requests which had been made or of aspects of the six-year program approved in the preceding session. The study led to some governmental decisions which can be summarized as follows.

4.1 *Consent to the setting-up of two new Vice-provinces in Africa.*

In line with what is laid down in the program, and after a careful

examination of the results of the consultation made among the communities concerned, the Council consented to the constitution of *two new Vice-provinces in Africa*, involving works which had been begun in two areas and depended until now on various other provinces. The two Vice-provinces will be known as: *French-speaking West Africa* (AFO) and *Tropical Equatorial Africa* (ATE).

The consultation has begun among the confreres concerned for the appointment of the respective Superiors.

The formal canonical erection, with the necessary Agreements, will take place in the next plenary session.

4.2 *Approval of a new Provincial Delegation.*

The General Council, in response to a request from the Provincial of Madras with his Council and in the light of the results of a consultation which had been made, approved the constitution of the *Provincial Delegation for South Tamil Nadu*, with headquarters at Tiruchirapally (Tiruchy). In the spirit of art.159 of the Constitutions, the Delegation has the purpose of fostering a closer and more continuous ani-

mation of the relevant confreres and communities, while the responsibility for government remains with the Provincial and his Council. The appointment of Fr James Theophilus as the Provincial Delegate was also approved.

4.3 *Salesian foundations in further African countries.*

On the basis of a dossier prepared by the Councillor for the Missions containing various proposals for the development of our work in Africa, particularly in countries where we are not yet present, the Council expressed a positive opinion for the launching, at a time to be decided, of a new foundation in *Namibia*, where our presence has been requested for some time. Other possible foundations are still being studied.

4.4 *The Don Bosco Comide International at Brussels.*

In connection with the program for the present six-year period, which emphasized the need for linkage with ecclesial and social organisms, and with specific reference to salesian work in Europe, the Rector Major and his Council have decided to follow up and support (also through liaison by some Council members) the as-

sociation *Don Bosco Comide International (DBCI)*, with headquarters at Brussels. The association was founded in 1994 at a meeting of seven European Provincials, and its statutes were approved by the Belgian Government in 1995.

The intended objectives are the following:

- To link ourselves with organisms at European and world level to make ourselves known, particularly for the purpose of promoting the rights of education for the young and for spreading knowledge of the preventive system. To create an operational network among the Provinces of Europe and the already existing Centres of coordination (e.g. CNOS-Italy, PJ-Spain, Benediktbeuern-Germany, UPS-Rome, etc.).
- To provide information for the Provinces and Centres about points of interest for linkage with European and world organisms, keeping the Provinces informed in this way of interesting projects useful for the realization of our mission.
- To help in the formulation of projects and in their presentation for the realization of objectives adopted by the Provinces and houses, so as to be able to

make use of the funds of the European community and other sources.

4.5 *Financial and administrative report.*

In accordance with the General Regulations the General Council examined the financial statement for the operations of 1996 and the budget for 1997, presented by the Economist General.

5. *Other themes studied.*

Among the other topics studied by the General Council during the session, the following may be noted in particular:

5.1 *The programming of the Provincial Chapters 1998 and the Team Visits.*

Within the six-year program, the Council gave further study to two important series of events:

a) The *Provincial Chapters* which, as required by the Constitutions, will take place in 1998: in view of these the Rector Major with his Council has given some indications which have been sent to the Provinces (cf. *Rulings and Directives*, at n.3 in this edition of the AGC).

b) The *Team Visits*: the meetings for communion and verifica-

tion of those responsible for provinces in groups with the Rector Major and some Councillors. The Council examined the validity and efficacy of such visits and fixed dates and themes for the next series, with indications for the mode of procedure. They will be communicated by the Regional Councillors.

5.2 Functioning of the structures of government.

Following on the first indications given in the preceding plenary session (cf. AGC 359, p.55), and in the 'intermediate' meetings of the Council in March 1997, the study of this theme has continued in conformity with the request of the GC24, n.191. In particular two concrete steps have been decided on: a study of the charismatic identity of our structures of government, as they appear especially after the Chapters of renewal, and the study of the method for carrying out a 'technical' verification of the structures themselves, with the assistance of experts.

5.3 Our commitment for the year 2000.

In view of the great Jubilee of the year 2000, the Council has studied the possibility of organiz-

ing some meetings at international level, in addition to the obvious commitment of every Province to participation in the initiatives of particular Churches. It considered as significant certain meetings, especially in the field of youth pastoral activity (and in connection with the world youth day convoked for Rome) and also of the Salesian Family. The initiatives will be specified at a later date.

5.4 Study of the Letters of the Rector Major.

In line with the method of co-involvement desired by the Rector Major, the Council devoted some meetings to a deeper study of two circular letters of the Rector Major:

a) The letter "He had compassion on them", on the new forms of poverty, mission and salesian effectiveness, published in March 1997 (cf. AGC 359). The Council studied how to increase its collegial awareness, sharing motives and lines of action to be recommended to the Provinces for the effective realization of the guidelines given in the letter itself.

b) The new letter "For you I study", on the preparation of the confreres and the quality of our educative work, published in the

present number of the Acts. At the request of the Rector Major, the Council has contributed reflections on motivating themes and on areas and lines of commitment set out in a first draft.

5.5 *Salesian pastoral work for youth: fundamental frame of reference.*

The General Council examined and made its own contribution to a document prepared by the Councillor for the Youth Apostolate with his Department, in which there are gathered in a "basic frame of reference" the main lines of our youth pastoral work, on the basis of what has been accomplished in past years in the light of General Chapters and reflection on practical experiences. It is a kind of practical handbook, adopted authoritatively by the Rector Major with his Council and offered in the first place to delegates for pastoral work and their teams.

5.6 *Renewal and relaunching of the Salesian Bulletin.*

On the proposal of the Councillor for the Salesian Family and for Social Communication, in fulfil-

ment of one of the points on the six-year program, lines of action were studied of a project for the renewal and relaunching of the Salesian Bulletin in the world in its many editions. To direct this process of renewal a "Central Director" has been appointed in the person of Fr Vito Orlando.

Before concluding these items of information, a reference must be made to the Council's spiritual retreat at Poggio di Rojo (near Aquila) from 29 June to 5 July. It was a period of grace guided by Fr Juan José Bartolomé of the Province of Madrid, who through the 'lectio' helped each and all to penetrate the word of God and apply it to our lives.

And finally, as a moment of communion and sharing, there was a joint meeting of the SDB and FMA General Councils on June 27 at the FMA house of Castelgandolfo - "Santa Rosa". Starting from a common point of the programs of the two Councils, a combined reflection was made - first in working groups and then in full assembly - on the theme: *The quality of our presence and works*. This turned out to be very useful.

5.1 Decree on the heroicity of the virtues of the Servant of God Artemides Zatti.

The following is an unofficial English translation of the decree on the heroicity of the virtues of the Servant of God Artemides Zatti SDB, promulgated on 7 July 1997. In virtue of this decree Artemides Zatti is declared Venerable. The original Latin Text can be found in the Italian edition of the AGC.

“All those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them” (Lk 4,40).

Following the example of the Divine Shepherd, “who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil” (Acts 10,38), Artemides Zatti had a great love and solicitude for the sick and the poor, and willingly spent his life in their service.

The Servant of God was born on 12 October 1880 at *Boretto* in the diocese of Guastalla (Italy) to Luigi Zatti and Albina Vecchi, who gave him a Christian education. In 1887 he received the sacrament of Confirmation, and after the years of childhood pur-

suits (1886-89) worked as a farm-boy for a wealthy agricultural family. Neither the poverty nor the hard work that he experienced as a boy impaired his lively, open and generous temperament.

At the beginning of 1897 his family emigrated to Argentina and took up residence in the city of Bahia Blanca, where moral and religious conditions were at a wretched level. The Zatti family remained nevertheless faithful to Christian principles and continued to attend church, as they had been accustomed to do in Italy. Artemides first worked in a hotel and later in a brick-making factory. Meanwhile he had become friendly with the local Salesians and in particular with the parish priest, Fr Carlo Cavalli, who became his confessor and spiritual director. In his free time from work he accompanied the priest in visiting the sick, served him at Mass and funerals, and freely took on the task of watchman of the church.

He joyfully accepted a suggestion that he should think about becoming a priest, and in 1900 entered the salesian aspirantate at Bernal, near Buenos Aires. He immediately showed signs of good intelligence, strong will, spirit of sacrifice, religious fer-

vour, and docile obedience to superiors. The new way of life, the climate, the lack of sufficient food, the toil he cheerfully faced, and most of all the assiduous care he gave to a young priest suffering from tuberculosis, affected his health. In 1902 he himself contracted the same disease, which at that time was considered incurable. For treatment he was sent to the salesian community of *Viedma*, where he promised Mary Help of Christians that if he became cured he would dedicate himself to the service of the sick. After some years under the care of the priest Evaristo Garrone, the director of the local "St Joseph" hospital and adjoining dispensary, he was perfectly cured and in accordance with his promise spent the rest of his life caring for the sick. In 1908 he made his temporary profession as a lay religious, and in 1911 his perpetual profession.

In the meantime he had begun to look after the hospital and dispensary, of which he was to be the administrator for more than thirty years. He carried out his tasks with intelligence, competence and outstanding charity, seeking always the glory of God and the good of his neighbour and imitating the generosity of

the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10,33-35). He improved the hospital arrangements, provided for the professional training of the doctors, and did his utmost to alleviate the physical and moral sufferings of the sick, trying to restore to them health of body and soul and thus making of his work a continual apostolate.

Daily he went about the city streets on his bicycle to assist the sick in their homes. He was also infirmarian at the "St. Francis de Sales" College of the Salesians and at that of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, as well as in the prison; he was the spiritual promoter of the Circle of Catholic Workers; he took part in the life of the parish and the diocese and, despite his many commitments was regularly present at the community activities of his religious family. His complete dedication to God and his neighbour was brilliant for its simple and solid faith and for its immense and joyful charity to which he bore witness by word and example in all life's circumstances, and which he nourished by the sacraments, prayer, meditation, and fervent devotion to the Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary. For the love of God he diligently observed laws, and

his religious vows and rule; with cheerful readiness he put up with many difficulties, faced up to heavy work and laboured efficaciously to build the Kingdom of Christ by the wise use of the talents he had been given from above. He had a great trust in divine Providence; he was detached from earthly things and spread around him joy, peace and hope. He was an upright man, temperate, prudent and strong in fidelity to his consecration and to the work entrusted to him by the superiors.

In 1941 he witnessed with great sorrow the demolition of the hospital which for so many years had been the field of his apostolate, to provide space for the building of the Bishop's residence and the offices of the diocesan curia. He arranged for the sick to be transferred to the agricultural school of Sant'Isidoro and despite financial difficulties was able to continue with his work. From 1947 he was no longer administrator of the hospital.

In July 1950 he fell while going up some steps and was ordered to rest, which he did in a spirit of obedience. But he did not regain his strength and in the following November signs of cancer began to appear. He endured a great

deal of suffering with serenity, patience and fortitude, and died a holy death in the Lord on 15 March 1951, already resplendent for his widespread reputation for holiness which was manifested in an extraordinary manner at his funeral at which large crowds were present together with numerous religious and civil authorities.

His fame grew and became more consolidated as the years went by, and so the Bishop of Viedma, with the permission of the Holy See in accordance with the *Motu Proprio Sanctitatis Clarior*, introduced the Cause of beatification and canonization and celebrated in the years 1980-82 the cognitive process, which was approved by the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints by a decree promulgated on 14 December 1984. After the preparation of the *Positio*, the question was examined as to whether the Servant of God had practised the virtues in a heroic manner. On 25 October 1996, the Congress of the Theological Consultors took place, with positive results. This was followed on 8 April 1997 by the Ordinary Congregation, with Cardinal Giovanni Canestri as Presenter, in which the Cardinals and Bishops gave formal recogni-

tion to the fact that Artemides Zatti had practised to a heroic degree the theological and cardinal virtues and others connected with them.

Finally, when all that had taken place had been reported to the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II by the undersigned Pro-Prefect, his Holiness, accepting and ratifying the voting of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, disposed that the decree be prepared on the heroicity of the virtues of the Servant of God.

When this had been done the Holy Father called together the undersigned Pro-Prefect, the Cardinal Presenter of the Cause, the Bishop Secretary of the Congregation, and others whom it is customary to convoke on such occasions, and declared solemnly: *There is certainty that the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, as also the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance, and others connected with them, were practised in a heroic degree by the Servant of God Artemides Zatti, professed brother of the Society of St Francis de Sales, "in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur"* (i.e. in view of eventual canonization).

He further disposed that the Decree to this effect be published

and preserved among the Acts of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints.

Given at Rome on 7 July in the year of our Lord 1997.

✠ ALBERTUS BOVONE,
Tit. Abp. of Cesarea di Numidia
Pro-Prefect

✠ EDOARDO NOWAK
Tit. Abp. of Luni
Secretary

5.2 Approval of ADMA's new Regulations.

The following is a translation of the letter of the Rector Major, communicating to the President of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) in Turin the approval of the ADMA Regulations, renewed with the contribution of the groups of the Association itself.

97/1454
Rome, 22 August 1997

Mr. Claudio Priante
President of the ADMA Association
Turin

Dear Mr. Priante,

I am writing directly to you, in your capacity as President, to give explicit recognition to the

fact that the Association is lay in character and hence entrusted to the responsibility of its own members, and because the new Regulations assign a particular role to the Turin branch in view of its history and the place in which it lives and works.

I offer my congratulations to the entire Association on the excellent work done in Seville in revising the Regulations. I have involved also the General Council to help me to render the text more expressive and complete. This explains the few changes made to the text submitted for examination. I now return the definitive version to you, so that it may uphold the life of the members in their devotion to Mary, Don Bosco's Helper.

I will not repeat the indications already offered you by Fr Egidio Viganò, which it was your wish to have attached to the new Regulations. Preserve the teachings you have already received. Help simple and ordinary people to live an authentic devotion to Mary, as Don Bosco always asked of those who shared with him his educative and catechetical tasks at Valdocco.

For my own part I add only a single guideline: to be and to work in Don Bosco's Salesian

Family implies the seeking of a certain practical convergence which has great significance for salesian experience. Reference to the young, and particularly to young people living through the difficulties of adolescence and the following years (for many reasons linked with their internal development or external influences), is an important point for all. That ADMA may give its attention to needy youngsters of the areas in which the Association lives and works is certainly a positive fact.

But this care shown by ADMA does not necessarily call for expression in youth organizations of a kind parallel to that already existing in groups of Salesians or of Daughters of Mary Help of Christians already working in committed projects of youth ministry.

Indeed, ADMA should feel happy in helping young people of all kinds to follow the path of human growth and education to the faith, and in collaborating in giving life to the Salesian Youth Movement.

From the information that reaches me I have noted that the Association is growing greatly in numbers and quality. While giving grateful thanks to the Lord for this, I entrust to the

Primary Turin Group the task of helping the Association to accept responsibility for its own management. Its animator is asked to provide the necessary stimulus for its growth in salesian spirituality and the spirit of Don Bosco. For this the new Regulations offer many points which are simple in themselves but at the same time indicators for a Christian response to the Lord's gift.

Go ahead therefore with confidence, entrusting yourselves to Mary, and you will know what miracles are, as Don Bosco used to say. I repeat to you again this expression of our Father. Miracles which concern human hearts are not a thing of the past, and nowadays we all need to renew our hearts.

I ask Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco to grant her special help to each of you, and I extend my greetings and the assurance of my prayers to all who share with you the responsibility for the Association.

Fr Juan E. Vecchi

5.3 New Provincials

The following are brief biographies of the new Provincials ap-

pointed by the Rector Major with his Council during the plenary session June-July 1997.

1. Fr Mario CARNEVALE, for the Roman Province of Italy.

Fr Carnevale succeeds Fr Gian Luigi Pussino. He was born at Pico in the province of Frosinone on 20 February 1936 and made his first profession at the end of the novitiate at Lanuvio on 16 August 1955. Perpetual profession followed in 1961, and after theological studies at Messina he was ordained priest in his native parish on 21 December 1968. He later completed his civil studies with a doctorate in Physics and a teaching diploma.

For several years he was then engaged in pastoral and educative commitments, especially in schools. In 1981 he was appointed Rector at Cagliari-Don Bosco and also a member of the Provincial Council. In 1984 he became the Vice-superior of the Sardinian Vice-province.

In 1987 he was called to Rome as General Secretary of FIDAE (Federation of Institutes depending on Ecclesiastical Authority), an office he held for three years. He was then assigned to the Pius XI community

in Rome and in the following year became its Rector. There he received the news of his appointment as Provincial.

2. *Fr Walter JARA, for Córdoba, Argentina.*

Fr Jara succeeds Fr Victor Bocalón. Born on 23 August 1956 at San Rafael (Argentina), he made his first profession on 31 January 1976 and his perpetual profession in 1982. After studying theology in the salesian studentate of Córdoba he was ordained priest in his native parish on 30 December 1984. He has a teaching diploma.

He was assigned to the aspirantate at Córdoba and in 1987 became its Rector. In 1989 he was appointed a Provincial Councillor and two years later Vice-provincial. Now he has been chosen for the task of Provincial.

3. *Fr John NGUYEN VAN TY, as Superior of the Vice-province of Vietnam.*

Fr Ty succeeds Fr Peter Nguyen Van De. He was born on 23 October 1944 at Ha Dong in the diocese of Hanoi; he made his first profession at Thu Duc on 22 August 1961, and after his per-

petual profession in 1967 was sent to Rome for theology at the UPS. He was ordained priest in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Turin on 3 April 1971.

On his return to Vietnam, he was appointed in 1974 Rector of the house of Saigon-Go Vap and soon afterwards Vicar of the Delegation of the Rector Major. In that year Vietnam became a Delegation directly under the Rector Major. In 1975 the Rector Major appointed him Delegate, and subsequently he became the Superior of the Vice-province into which the Delegation was erected. Those were the years when Vietnam was almost totally cut off.

In 1991 at the end of his period as Superior he became Director of Novices at Ba Thon, where he was also Rector for three years. Now the Rector Major has called him once again to lead the Vice-province.

4. *Fr Esteban ORTIZ, for the Province of Ecuador.*

Fr Esteban Ortiz Gonzalez succeeds Fr Luis Sanchez Armijos. He was born at Guayaquil, Ecuador, on 6 January 1946, and made his first profession on 16

August 1964 at Cayambe. After early training he studied theology at Quito and was ordained priest on 7 June 1975. He completed his studies with the Licentiate in Pedagogy.

He was Rector at Machala from 1982-87, and from 1984-92 was a member of the Provincial Council. From 1991-92 he was in charge of youth pastoral work, and from 1991-95 in charge of the Salesian Bulletin of Ecuador. From 1992 he was also the Rector at Guayaquil. "Dominic Savio"

5.4 New Salesian Bishop

Mgr. Valerio BREDÁ, Bishop of Penedo, Brazil.

On 31 July 1997, the Osservatore Romano published the news that the Holy Father had appointed *Fr Valerio Breda SDB*, Provincial of the Recife Province, as Bishop of the Diocese of Penedo, Brazil.

He was born at San Fior di Sotto, in the province of Treviso, Italy, on 24 January 1945, en-

tered the salesian aspirantate of Trento, made his novitiate at Albarè, and his first profession on 16 August 1962 in the Province of Verona. Philosophy and practical training were in the same Province and he then followed the course of theology at the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum in Rome, where he obtained the Licentiate in Theology.

He was ordained priest on 29 June 1973 in his native parish, and became immediately committed in educative and pastoral work. When the Verona Province set up a collaboration project with that of Recife in Brazil – a "twinning" arrangement – Fr Breda declared himself available and left for the North-East of Brazil. There he was one of the group who began the salesian work at Matriz de Camaragibe in the diocese of Maceiò, Alagoas, where he became parish priest and from 1987 also Rector.

In 1993 the Rector Major with his Council appointed him Provincial of Recife. Now, after three years, he has been designated a Bishop.

5.5 Our dead confreres (1997 - 3rd list)

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

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
L ALBERTIN Gino	Bolzano	29.06.97	80	IVO
E AMOROSO Domenico	Trapani	18.08.97	69	—
<i>Fu per 7 anni Vescovo Ausiliare di Messina e per 9 anni Vescovo di Trapani</i>				
P ANDERLINI Roberto	Civitanova Marche	22.07.97	79	IAD
P ANTELO Adolfo	Montevideo	30.08.97	48	URU
P BAGGIO Paolo	Pordenone	11.08.97	79	IVE
L BERNINI Giovanni	Roma	06.08.97	82	IRO
P BLACKBURN Michael	Farnborough	11.07.97	66	GBR
P BUOSO Amelio	Venezia	11.07.97	80	IVE
P CAIS Demetrio	Siakago (Kenya)	31.08.97	63	AFE
P CALIMAN CARNIELLI Leandro	Goiânia	28.06.97	70	BBH
P CHACÓN José	Guatemala	07.09.97	67	CAM
P COOP Bernard	Bootle	03.10.97	72	GBR
P DEL MONACO José	Lorena	01.07.97	82	BSP
L DEL SASTRE Manuel	San Isidro	23.09.97	82	ABA
P DELBART Jacques	Wavre	07.08.97	62	BES
P DUFAUD Pierre	Toulon	02.08.97	77	FLY
P DUGAILLEZ Alphonse	Lovanio (Belgio)	28.09.97	73	AFC
P FRANCHINI Adolfo	Chiari (BS)	26.07.97	83	ILE
P GARCIA ROSAS Andrés	Sevilla	03.08.97	76	SSE
P GIRAUDO Giovanni	San Salvador	09.08.97	74	CAM
P GNIEDZIEJKO Jan	Łódź	02.09.97	64	PLE
P GRADZIK Roman	Wrocław	23.08.97	54	PLO
P HALLIDAY Denis John	Melbourne	26.07.97	51	AUL
P JALONGO Pasquale	Torino	06.10.97	72	BMA
L KALLUKALAM Mathew	Yellagiri Hills	23.08.97	74	INM
L KEEGAN Thomas	Los Angeles	01.07.97	78	SUO
P KOTTUPPALLIL George	Shillong	07.07.97	50	ING
P KRAJCOVIC Stefan	Ravenna	04.01.97	85	IAD
P LANSHEER Henk	Leidschendam	10.09.97	60	OLA
P LOVA Natale	Guayaquil	21.07.97	86	ECU
P MAK Aloysius Shuet-Kwong	Hong Kong	15.09.97	72	CIN
L MANCINI Angelo	Scanno (AQ)	05.08.97	73	IRO
P MANGION Joseph	B'Kara (Malta)	26.07.97	76	IRL
P MARIN Egidio	Agordo (BL)	18.07.97	32	IVE

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P MAXIA Emilio	Cagliari	14.08.97	79	ISA
P MENESTRINA José	Bahía Blanca	24.06.97	87	ABB
L MILIS Louis	Haacht	05.07.97	78	BEN
P PERICOLOSI Silvino	Verona	14.07.97	76	IVO
L PIRES Francisco	Lisboa	24.07.97	79	POR
P POLATTI Giovanni	Montechiarugolo (PR)	31.08.97	79	ILE
P POLLONINI Carlo	Varese	05.09.97	75	ILE
P PUYOL MEMBRADO Manuel	Barcelona	29.08.97	64	SBA
P RAMOS MARTIN José	Sevilla	25.07.97	77	SSE
P REUMERS Jozef	Hoboken	12.08.97	83	BEN
P SAN MILLÁN Cipriano	Vigo	20.08.97	83	SLE
P SANITÀ Gabriele	Milano	28.08.97	72	ILE
P SICILIANO Giuseppe	Pedara (CT)	18.09.97	78	ISI
P SKULTÉTI Demjén	Budapest	01.09.97	79	UNG
P SOURNARAJ Lazar	Chennai (Madras)	18.09.97	81	INM
P STASIAK Józef	Lubin	28.07.97	54	PLO
P TÓTH János	Budapest	27.08.97	84	UNG
P VAN AGT Jacques	Pontoise	01.07.97	73	FPA
P VILLANI Domenico	Roma	29.08.97	83	IRO
P WAGNER Franc	Panamá	30.07.97	85	CAM

