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Direzione Generale
Opere don Bosco
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of the Salesian Society
of St John Bosco

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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SANCTITY AND MARTYRDOM AT THE DAWN OF THE THIRD MILLENIUM

Almost a surprise beatification - Holiness and martyrdom in the Holy Year - The martyrology of the 20th Century - Holiness and martyrdom in the Salesian Family - A martyrology of the Salesian Family.

Fr Joseph Kowalski: A 'salesian' process of growth - Pastoral charity even to the sacrifice of life - An unmistakable Marian touch - An outstanding witness.

A 'youthful' salesian group - Imprisonment and martyrdom - Conclusion

Rome, 29 June 1999
Solemnity of SS. Peter and Paul

Almost a surprise beatification

I am writing to you on my return from Poland. On June 13 at Warsaw I was able to take part in the Beatification of 108 martyrs, among whom were our confrere Fr Joseph Kowalski and five young men of our Oratory and Youth Centre at Poznan: a grace and source of joy for our Family which took us almost by surprise.

The process in fact was begun hardly seven years ago and it has been possible to reach Beatification in this year preceding the great Jubilee. The names of the candidates did not figure in the list of our Causes for beatification and they were unknown outside their own country.

The progress of the cause was marked by a curious background and a providential development. On 14 June 1987 Mgr. Michael Kozal, Bishop of Wladislavia, was beatified at Warsaw; he had been killed at Dachau in 1943. The beatification reawakened enthusiasm for the many martyrs of the same period who had been put to death, *in odium fidei*, in the same concentration camps. And since the diocese which had suffered the greatest losses (50%

of its priests) was precisely that of the newly beatified Michael Kozal, the Polish Episcopal Conference entrusted to the Bishop of Wloclawek the task of beginning the process for all the Polish martyrs who died in the death camps of Dachau and Auschwitz.

People of various categories became included in the process: bishops, diocesan priests, religious, and lay people, until the total reached about one hundred and ninety, belonging to seventeen dioceses. In a first phase of the preparation of the process some sixty were excluded through lack of sufficient documentation, and a further twenty at a later date.

The number of candidates for beatification was thus reduced to 108: 3 Bishops, 52 diocesan priests, 26 religious priests, 3 clerics, 7 religious brothers, 8 religious sisters, and 9 lay persons. The official title of the group carries four names representative of the four categories (bishops, priests, religious, laity): Antonio Giuliano Nowowiejski, Archbishop; Enrico Kaczorowski, priest; Aniceto Koplinski, religious; Maria Anna Biernacka, Laywoman; and 104 companions.

Among the religious were representatives of many Institutes of both men and women: Dominicans, Franciscans OFM, Franciscan Conventuals, Capuchins, Carmelites ODC, Marianists, Poor Clares, Michelites, Oblates, Conceptionists, Sons of Divine Providence, Pallottines, Brothers of the Sacred Heart, Handmaids of Mary Immaculate, Notre Dame Sisters, Ursulines, Sisters of the Redemption, Society of the Divine Word and we Salesians. It is not surprising that the beatification brought together a very large group of participants, given this wide panorama of dioceses and religious Institutes.

The speedy progress of the Cause – the decree of martyrdom was read only on 26 May last¹ – has not left much time for preparations, but the news was given in good time in the preceding number of the AGC and in the Italian Salesian Bulletin.²

¹ cf. text of decree in n.5.1 of this issue of AGC.

² cf. AGC 367; Bollettino Salesiano, June 1999

Initiatives are now being multiplied, all aimed at making known our new “Beati”, so as to provide incentives for our spirituality and a stimulus for our mission.

In this movement I myself wish to take part. In pursuit of my intention to write to you from time to time about our family affairs, I would like to outline the spiritual figures of the new “Beati” and point to the significance of their glorification in the history of our Congregation.

Holiness and martyrdom in the Holy Year

The reference to holiness is already contained in the name given to the Jubilee, which is called a “Holy” Year. It is the celebration of the holiness of God, as the merciful Lord of human events, which through his presence and revelation thus become the sacred history of salvation.

In consequence the Jubilee implies a careful examination of the holiness of the Church. “The thanksgiving of Christians”, says the Pope, “will embrace the fruits of holiness which have matured in the life of all those many men and women who in every generation and every period of history have fully welcomed the gift of Redemption”.³

In the light of this invitation he adds a fact which has been noted even by secular newspapers and gives an explanation of it: “In recent years the number of canonizations and beatifications has increased. These show the vitality of the local Churches, which are much more numerous today than in the first centuries and in the first millennium”.⁴

The light of the Risen Christ is reflected today with greater intensity by the numerous testimonies spread over a wide area and in different settings. They become the focus of a search for

³ TMA 32

⁴ TMA 37

the meaning of human existence and what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

The Church, moreover, considers holiness the trump card for the new evangelization of the world which appears with the year 2000. This is an indication which we can by no means take for granted when thinking of our renewal, our witness and our future. "The greatest homage which all the Churches can give to Christ on the threshold of the third millennium will be to manifest the Redeemer's all-powerful presence through the fruits of faith, hope and charity present in men and women of many different tongues and races who have followed Christ in the various forms of the Christian vocation".⁵

In this context of thanksgiving and of witness to holiness, unusual emphasis is laid on the memory of the martyrs. It is characteristic of this Jubilee and it is important to understand why this is so. It is enumerated among the great signs in the phases of preparation and celebration together with prayer of thanksgiving,⁶ with reconciliation and penance,⁷ with asking for forgiveness for our responsibility in the evils of the present century,⁸ with the promotion of unity among Christians,⁹ and with the celebration of the continental Synods.¹⁰

In the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee, charity to the poor and marginalized¹¹ and the culture of solidarity¹² are included in another series of requirements involving the purification of past memories and the request for forgiveness.¹³

The memory of the martyrs is not therefore something reserved to historians or just a celebration inserted in the

⁵ TMA 37

⁶ cf. TMA 32

⁷ cf. TMA 32

⁸ cf. TMA 33-34

⁹ cf. TMA 34

¹⁰ cf. TMA 38

¹¹ cf. *Incarnationis Misterium*, Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee, 11

¹² cf. TMA 12

¹³ cf. TMA 11

Liturgy, but almost an aspect of membership of the Church.

In fact in the experience of faith and Church history martyrdom appears as a sign of vitality. This is how it was at the birth and early spread of Christianity. And it looks as though the same will be said of the 20th century in which the Christian community "has become once again the church of the martyrs".

Martyrdom is the participation in a real and living way in the sacrifice of Christ, almost a Eucharist. It expresses in an extreme manner an innate and necessary dimension of the Christian life which we must all understand, accept and take up: the offering of life itself.

And so the Christian life is permanently open to the possibility of martyrdom,¹⁴ which appears however as a grace we meet with, rather than as a goal to be desired, achieved or sought after. Furthermore it represents the most direct prophetic encounter between the Spirit, grace, and the aims and style of life proposed by Christ and that which belongs to the world, understood as the ensemble of the powers of evil.

The martyrology of the 20th Century

A first characteristic of the 20th century is the number of those who have been called to bear witness by the shedding of their blood. "The persecutions of believers has caused a great sowing of martyrdom in different parts of the world", says the TMA,¹⁵ and adds that their number is so great that many of them remain nameless, "unknown soldiers as it were of God's great cause".¹⁶

But no less impressive is the variety of the martyrs, in respect of their condition: among them, in fact, are bishops and

¹⁴ cf. *Incarnationis Mysterium* 13

¹⁵ cf. TMA 37

¹⁶ TMA 37

priests, religious and lay persons, men and women, young and old, intellectuals and simple people, artists and members of the professions.

Highly expressive of the Jubilee we are preparing to celebrate is the union of the different Christian denominations in bearing witness to God and to human dignity: Catholics of different rites, Orthodox, Protestants of various affiliations. "Perhaps the most convincing form of ecumenism is the ecumenism of the saints and of the martyrs. The *communio sanctorum* speaks louder than the things which divide us".¹⁷

The witness of the martyrs of the 20th century is further imbued with a deep human significance for the individual and for civilization, because of the time and circumstances of their martyrdom: the context of the great wars, the totalitarian systems, the atheistic ideologies with their pretexts and promises of freedom and development, the religious fundamentalisms, the closed-in and secular types of humanism. "From a psychological standpoint martyrdom is the most eloquent proof of the truth of faith; it can give a human aspect to the most violent of deaths and manifest its beauty in the most atrocious persecutions".¹⁸

When we remember the martyrs we go back once again over this century, characterized by great collective aspirations which seemed to justify every holocaust, from the struggle without quarter for the domination of the world to the deviations with scientific pretensions.

"This witness must not be forgotten".¹⁹ "The Church in every part of the world must remain anchored in their testimony and jealously defend their memory".²⁰ They recall, in fact, the absolute sense of Christ in human history – "a sign of that greater love which sums up all other values".²¹

¹⁷ TMA 37

¹⁸ IM 13

¹⁹ TMA 37

²⁰ IM 13

²¹ cf. IM 13

To preserve the memory of the martyrs the intention has been repeatedly stated of writing the martyrology of the 20th century, on the basis of the affectionate care shown by the early Church in preserving the acts and memory of those who gave their life for Christ: The Church of the first centuries, although facing considerable organizational difficulties, took care to write down in special martyrologies the witness of the martyrs. These martyrologies have been constantly updated through the centuries, and the register of the saints and the blessed bears the names not only of those who have shed their blood for Christ but also of teachers of the faith, missionaries, confessors, bishops, priests, virgins, married couples, widows and children".²²

The emphasis on this point and the importance of martyrdom in evangelization has been particularly noted in the Synods.

I have been able not only to listen personally to the words, but to perceive the deeply expressed feelings, fervour and veneration, with which the American Synod and especially that of Asia spoke of the great witnesses of the faith.

In the former were recalled those who gave their lives in the first evangelization and those who were killed in social conflicts or under dictatorships. The whole has been summed up in the following passage from the document "The Church in America". "Among the Saints it has produced, the history of the evangelization of America numbers many martyrs, men and women, bishops and priests, consecrated religious and lay people ... Their example of boundless dedication to the cause of the Gospel must not only be saved from oblivion, but must become better and more widely known among the faithful of the continent".²³

With regard to the Asian Synod, I would like to recall an as-

²² TMA 37

²³ cf., Eccl. in America 15

pect concerning China which touches us more closely. The Pope's desire to canonize all the present Blessed Martyrs of China – they number 120 – is well known. He expressed such a wish in his homily at the canonization of the martyr Jean Gabriel Perboyre on 2 June 1996: "To the memory of Jean Gabriel Perboyre we want to unite that of all those who bore witness to the name of Jesus Christ in China in past centuries. I am thinking particularly of the Blessed martyrs whose common canonization, so long desired by many of the faithful, could one day be a sign of hope to the Church now present among these people to whom I am always close in heart and prayer".²⁴

Strengthened by such a declaration, the Synodal Fathers asked that this step be taken. The intervention of Mgr. Joseph Ti-Kang, Archbishop of Taipeh (Taiwan), caught my attention and that of many others.

The Bishops of China, he said, have for a long time manifested a keen desire that these heroes of the Christian faith, the martyrs, be declared Saints.

As long ago as February 1996 the President of our Episcopal Conference had petitioned His Holiness in this regard, and he had made known his intention of proceeding. Thereupon the Congregation for the Causes of Saints had entrusted to the Postulator of the Cause of the Group of Blessed Chinese Martyrs the drawing up of dossiers to prove the existence of a "*fama signorum*", instead of a physical miracle because of the impossibility of carrying out the required canonical investigation in China.

Nevertheless we Chinese Bishops have declared that we are convinced that "the perseverance of Chinese Christians in the faith, lived for nearly half a century under a long and brutal persecution – as well as the increase in the number of the Christians themselves – constitutes in itself a great miracle

²⁴ Oss.Rom. 6/7 June 1997

granted by God through the intercession of the Blessed Chinese Martyrs, to whom the faithful have recourse in prayer". This official declaration of our Episcopal Conference accompanies the dossiers prepared by the Postulators.

We therefore make bold to ask His Holiness to kindly proceed in the near future to the solemn canonization of the Blessed Chinese Martyrs.²⁵

Among the martyrs of all times and every continent, many belong to the consecrated life. For them too it is hoped that there will be an updating of the Martyrology. Without any doubt a charism is shown with particular clarity in martyrdom and gives to the latter a particular character. "In this century, as in other periods of history, consecrated men and women have borne witness to Christ the Lord with the gift of their own lives. Thousands of them have been forced into the catacombs by the persecution of totalitarian regimes or of violent groups, or have been harassed while engaged in missionary activity, in action on behalf of the poor, in assisting the sick and the marginalized; yet they lived and continue to live their consecration in prolonged and heroic suffering, and often with the shedding of their blood, being perfectly configured to the Crucified Lord. The Church has already officially recognized the holiness of some of these men and women, honouring them as martyrs for Christ. They enlighten us by their example, they intercede that we may be faithful, and they await us in glory.

There is a widespread desire that the memory of so many witnesses to the faith will remain in the consciousness of the Church as an invitation to celebrate and imitate them. The Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life can contribute to this endeavour by gathering the names of all those consecrated persons who deserve to be inscribed in the Martyrology of the twentieth century".²⁶

²⁵ cf. Oss.Rom., 25 April 1998

²⁶ VC 86

Holiness and martyrdom in the Salesian Family

The new Polish "Beati" become part of the already numerous constellation of saints and candidates for the altars of the Salesian Family. Our Congregation is at present promoting no fewer than 39 causes of beatification and canonization. They involve 139 spiritual sons and daughters of Don Bosco. If to them we add others linked in different ways with the Salesian Family, even though their cause may be being promoted by their respective diocese or by other religious Institutes (e.g. Piergiorgio Frassati, Alberto Marvelli, Giuseppe Guarino), the number reaches about 150. To the present three who are canonized and twelve beatified must be added 12 others whose heroicity of virtues has already been declared, while in the case of others the process is going ahead with the hearing of witnesses, the drawing up of the *Positio* or the examination of the latter by experts.

The panorama of our saints is representative of the different branches of the Salesian Family: 116, including the martyrs, are members of the Salesian Congregation and 10 of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (including two Spanish martyrs). The young people, with the new Polish martyrs, become 8 in all and cover the range of adolescence and youth from 13 to 24 years of age. Their holiness matured in boarding establishments and schools, but also in the oratory and in youth groups. The Cooperators are well represented by four women: Margaret Occhiena, a peasant mother; Donna Dorotea di Chopitea, a woman of the nobility and a benefactress; the mystic, Alexandrina da Costa, a poor and suffering soul; and Matilde Salem, comfortably placed in life. To these can be added Attilio Giordani. And there are also past-pupils such as Alberto Marvelli, Piergiorgio Frassati and Salvo d'Acquisto.

The geography too of salesian holiness appears universal if we consider their places of origin and the regions where the candidates carried out their mission for many years before

their death: Europe is represented by Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic; America is represented by Argentina, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Colombia; and Asia by Palestine, Syria, Japan, China and India.

No less remarkable is the diversity of conditions of life and work. They include Rector Majors (3), Bishops (6), founders of institutes of consecrated life (7), men and women provincials, great missionaries of both sexes, coadjutors, men and women educators, and teachers of theology at university level. And then for some a general description of their situation is not enough, because their biography is marked by special expressions of sanctity: Fr Elia Comini, who died in a wartime massacre; Fr Komorek, already venerated in his lifetime by humble people as a saint; Sister Eusebia Palomino, a typical figure of evangelical simplicity and wisdom.

The experiences therefore through which holiness has been mainly revealed are: the animation of confreres and sisters in the apostolate and in the guidance of the community, charity towards the sick and the poor (Zatti, Srugi, Variara), personal suffering borne with a visible sense of participation in the passion of Christ (Beltrami, Czartoryski, Alessandrina da Costa), missionary work and particular forms of pastoral charity.

Underlying such a diversity of origin, state of life, role and level of education, and geographical origin, there is a single inspiration: salesian spirituality. In it the candidates for the honours of the altar are like the tip of an iceberg below which lies a broad platform made up of many confreres and sisters, consecrated by the special grace of consecration which makes them God's dwelling made holy by the commitment to make clear to the young God's presence in the style of Don Bosco. Together they form a complete treatise on our spirituality. This can indeed be presented in doctrinal form; but there is an advantage in recounting it through biographies which bring its characteristics much closer to the circumstances of daily life.

A martyrology of the Salesian Family

In our array of 'saints' there are also names for a list of martyrs: we have 103 registered martyrs. Others, caught up in war reprisals or situations of social conflict, remain anonymous. The 103 are made up of three groups. The first in the order of their martyrdom and beatification includes those of China: Mgr Luigi Versiglia and Fr Callistus Caravario. Their cause is in progress as is that of all the martyrs of China.

Then come the Spanish martyrs, 95 in all. Those of Valencia and Barcelona, headed by Fr José Calasanz Marques, total 32; those of Madrid, led by Fr Enriquez Saiz Aparicio, are 42, and those of Seville, with Fr Luis Torrero at their head, 21.

In the group of 95 we find 39 priests, 25 coadjutor brothers, 22 clerical students, 2 Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, 3 Cooperators (of whom one was a woman), 2 postulants, a workman and an employee.

The cause of martyrdom of the group of Valencia and Barcelona was examined by the commission of theological consultants on 22 February 1999 with positive results. It is probable that their beatification can take place during the Holy Year, on the date set aside for the beatification of all the martyrs whose process of martyrdom has been concluded.

The rapid progress made in the process of this group is due to the collaboration between seven religious families concerned: Jesuits, Franciscan Friars Minor, Capuchins, Dominicans, Sacred Heart Fathers (SCJ), Capuchins of the Holy Family, and us Salesians.

The third geographical area where the historical events of the 20th century submitted the Church, and in it our Congregation, to the trial of martyrdom is Eastern Europe: a martyrdom carried out in public and therefore well known, but in many cases nevertheless only partially known or not at all: prisons, interrogations, sufferings, civil persecutions, clandestine suppression. The passion began in the year 1917 for some coun-

tries and was to continue until the fall of the Berlin wall (1989), with periods of particular difficulty during and immediately after the war. Our communities were suppressed, or restricted in their life, resources and activities. Very many of our confreres were confined temporarily in concentration camps, where they were kept under close supervision and interrogated. Of all of them we want to "jealously preserve the memory" as a rich element in our history of fidelity.

The salesian martyrology, so varied in its scenarios, circumstances, immediate causes of martyrdom, and for the confreres concerned, prompts many reflections.

The joyful outlook of the Salesian, his profession of kindness and desire to collaborate with others in his work, makes the idea of martyrdom a rather distant concept. And yet pastoral service to the people and dedication to the education of the young cannot be realized without the inward dispositions for martyrdom, i.e. the offering of one's life and the consequent taking up of the cross. Our mission is in fact the giving of ourselves to the Father for the salvation of the young in the manner that he himself prescribes. The same may be said of fidelity to our consecration, which has long been likened to a bloodless martyrdom because of its character of total and unconditioned self-giving.

We live the spirit of martyrdom in the daily pastoral charity, of which Don Bosco said: "When it happens that a Salesian yields up his life whilst working for souls, the Congregation has registered a great triumph".²⁷ And it is interesting to note that in the context of this daily offering we must be open to the possibility of a cruel martyrdom: "If the Lord in his Providence disposes that some of us should suffer martyrdom, should we be afraid on that account?"²⁸

²⁷ cf. Don Bosco's spiritual testament, in Appendix to Constitutions

²⁸ MB XII, 13

Fr Joseph Kowalski.

Our attention is drawn to the group from Eastern Europe, headed and represented by Fr Joseph Kowalski, because of the recent beatification.

He was born at Siedliska, a rural village near Cracow on 13 March 1911, the son of Wojciech and Sofia Borowiek, into a deeply practising family. He was baptized on 19 March, the feast of St Joseph, in the parish church of Lubenia, some 4 km. from his birthplace which at that time had no church. Today, on a piece of land donated by the Kowalski family, there stands a modern church in which there is a commemorative plaque with a photograph of Fr Joseph in the prisoner's uniform of the concentration camp, and showing his number: 17350.

At the end of his elementary schooling at the age of 11, he was sent by his parents to the Don Bosco College at Auschwitz, where he remained for five years.

Of these five years the records show that "he was noteworthy for outstanding devotion", that he was clever, diligent, cheerful and available; he was liked by all and was one of the best students. He was a member of the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception, president of the missionary group, and an animator of religious and cultural activities among his companions. A witness in the process says that he and others like him were called the "the holy brigade".²⁹

It was not surprising therefore that the desire grew in him to follow in the footsteps of his educators, and that they saw in him signs of the grace of a true vocation.

He asked to become a Salesian and in 1927 entered the novitiate of Czerwinsk. The years of study and philosophy followed at Cracow (1928-31), then the period of practical training which concluded in 1934 with perpetual profession, and the normal course of theology culminating in priestly ordination in 1938.

²⁹ Witness XX, p.1676, § 5893

The Provincial, Fr Adam Cieslar, immediately called him to be his secretary and he retained the role for the next three years until the day of his arrest. He is described as a confrere "with outstanding self-control and exceptional esteem for each of his brothers". He was kind and obliging, always unruffled and especially very hard-working. To the extent that his duties allowed, he took up the study of languages (Italian, French and German), read with interest the life of the Founder, and prepared his homilies with great care.

His duties as provincial secretary did not prevent him from taking up pastoral work. He was always available for preaching and giving conferences, especially to young people, and for hearing confessions. He had a gift for music and a fine voice, and so was able to form a youth choir in the parish to add solemnity to liturgical celebrations.

It was precisely this zealous priestly activity among the young that attracted the attention of the authorities, and led to his arrest by the Nazis on 23 May 1941 together with a further eleven Salesians.

He was first imprisoned at Cracow in the Montelupi prison, but was transferred after a month with the others to the concentration camp at Auschwitz. Here he saw four confreres killed, among them his rector Fr Joseph Świerc and his confessor Fr Ignatius Dobiasz. As n.17350 he spent a year of forced labour and abuse in the so-called "hard labour gang" which few managed to survive.

It had been decided to transfer him to Dachau, but at the last moment this was stopped in circumstances well described by witnesses in the process³⁰ and also referred to in the process of beatification of Fr Maximilian Kolbe.³¹ He remained in the "hard labour gang" at Auschwitz.

Thanks to a plentiful documentation in his regard and also

³⁰ cf. Witnesses XIV, Summ., LXXX, p.1671, § 5876;

³¹ C.P. p.65

to certain particular features in connection with the manner of his death, our Blessed Martyr is an outstanding figure among his martyred companions.

His memory has remained fresh in Poland throughout the years. The acts of the process document a true "*fama sanctitatis*". It is referred to by eye-witnesses of the martyrdom. "When I consider the life of the Servant of God Fr Joseph Kowalski", says one of the witnesses, "and especially his conduct in the last moments of his life just before his death, I believe that he is a true martyr of the faith and that he fully deserves to be raised to the glory of the altars".³² This conviction prompted our Polish communities immediately after his death to gather together the documentation associated with his life and activities, with the precise intention of introducing the Cause for beatification. This was in harmony with the conviction of the ordinary people. The faithful of his native Siedliska, considering him a true martyr and in agreement with Bishop Tokarczuk, built at his birthplace – as we have said – a church dedicated to St Joseph, in which since 1981 they have been praying for the beatification of their fellow-villager.³³

Fr Francis Baran, parish priest of Krolic Polski, in 1968, was able to declare in his deposition: "The martyrdom of Fr Joseph, in my opinion, has become in our parish of Lubenia a providential seed of very many vocations for the Church. It is sufficient to recall that 27 zealous diocesan and religious priests have come from this parish since the last war".³⁴

Interesting publications about him have appeared, especially locally, though mainly in Polish. In 1972 the Italian Salesian Bulletin published an interesting profile which spread knowledge about him, and recently a short biography has been published and translated into various languages.

³² Prof. Zygmunt Kolankowski, Summ., Doc.VI

³³ cf. *Positio*, LXXXV, p.10

³⁴ Deposition of Fr Francis Baran

I too want to make a contribution by presenting some aspects of his life-story which concluded with martyrdom, as I have gathered them from a careful reading of the available documents. Among the latter I have also been able to consult the Process of St Maximilian Kolbe, with whom our confrere shared part of his imprisonment and made contact. Albeit indirectly, his name appears in some of the testimonies in that process.

A 'salesian' process of growth

It has been rightly said that "martyrdom is not something that takes place on the spur of the moment".³⁵ It is not brought about by the executioner but is a grace worked by the Spirit. It is not in fact the externally inflicted torments and agony that make a martyr, but the internal act of offering. It is therefore a gift so great that it cannot happen by chance, even if we suppose that anything at all can happen without an intervention of grace. Martyrdom is a vocation and is prepared for in mysterious fashion by the whole of life.

Just as death is unique for each individual, so to martyrdom each martyr gives his own individual touch. In addition to his self-oblation, there is the particular style with which each martyr faces the supreme moment of trial.

Whoever looks into the short earthly existence of this our new Beatus will have no difficulty in detecting the signs of a strong and vigorous holiness, externally perceptible as such and with specifically salesian characteristics.

The educative environment and the principles of Christian formation of his youth which we have referred to above are all characteristic elements of the preventive system: a youthful setting, trusting relationship with educators, committed

³⁵ Pius XII, AAS 32, 1950, p. 958

groups, increasing acceptance of responsibility, devotion to Mary Help of Christians, use of the sacraments.

That in this setting Joseph pursued his personal path to holiness as an “emulator of Dominic Savio”, is revealed also by some pages of his “personal notebooks”.

“Let me rather die than offend you even by the smallest sin”. “O my good Jesus, give me a fixed strong and steadfast will, that I may persevere in my holy resolutions and attain my ideal, the holiness I have set for myself. I can, I must become holy”.³⁶

The same notebooks indicate his personal relationship with Jesus Christ, which matured as the years went by, especially after profession: “Jesus, I want to be truly faithful and serve you unswervingly (...). I dedicate myself completely to you (...). Grant that I may never depart from you, that I may be faithful to you until death and be faithful to my oath ‘to rather die than offend you by the least sin’ (...). I must become a holy Salesian, as my Father Don Bosco was holy”.³⁷

As a young student of philosophy in 1930 he had drawn a small cross on a page in his diary and had written beneath it in blood: “To suffer and be despised for you, O Lord (...). With a firm will and ready to accept all the consequences I embrace the gentle cross of Christ’s calling, and I want to carry it to the end, to death itself”.³⁸

Pastoral charity even to the sacrifice of life

His love for the imitation of Christ and his adherence to his Father Don Bosco reflect his spiritual efforts in generous apostolic activities. We have already recalled his work of animation among his companions and his dedication to the oratory during

³⁶ Witness XX, p.1676, § 5893

³⁷ Summ., LXXXV, p.1678, §5897; p.1680, §§5904, 5908

³⁸ Summ., LXXXV, p.1680. §5902

the brief years of his priesthood. His approach to young people grew in kindness as time passed.

The testimony of Fr Francis Baran, a priest of the diocese of Przemyśl, is interesting: "I met Fr Joseph Kowalski for the first time in June 1938. I no longer remember the exact date of this happy encounter. I was a pupil of the second class of the elementary school, and I was on my way home from school. I met Fr Joseph who was coming back after Mass in the parish church, some 4 km. from his home. He spoke to me kindly for a while, asked my name and gave me some of his ordination cards. Then he embraced me and told me that I too would become a priest. I no longer remember his exact words".³⁹

The prison camp became for him his field of pastoral work. With his suffering he combined constant attention to his companions especially strengthening their hope and confirming their faith. "The SK officers", we read among the testimonies, "knowing that he was a priest, tormented him whenever possible, used every excuse to beat him, and gave him the heaviest work to do".⁴⁰

Yet he never ceased to offer his companions every possible priestly service: "Despite it being severely forbidden, he gave absolution to the dying; he strengthened those who were discouraged, uplifted spiritually the poor souls awaiting the death sentence, brought them communion secretly, and even managed to organize holy Mass in the huts, as well as leading prayers and helping the needy".⁴¹ "In that death camp in which, according to the guards, there was no God, he was able to bring God to his fellow prisoners".⁴²

His internal and external attitude during all this Calvary can be seen in a letter to his parents: "Do not worry about me, I am in God's hands (...). I want to assure you that I feel his

³⁹ Deposition of Fr Francis Baran, 30 Aug., 1971

⁴⁰ Witness XIX, Summ., LXXXV, p.1676, §5892

⁴¹ cf. Witness XIV, Summ., p.1671, §5875

⁴² Witness XVII, Summ., p.1675, §5887

help at every step. Despite the present situation I am happy and completely at peace; I am convinced that wherever I may be and whatever happens to me, everything comes from the fatherly Providence of God who perfectly directs the destinies of all nations and all men”.

Two facts speak eloquently of his heroic pastoral zeal. The first is the organization of daily prayer in the camp. The following evocative description comes from one of the witnesses: “In the morning as soon as we were free to move about and while it was still dark (about 4.30 a.m.), we used to gather together as a group of from 5 to 8 persons, in one of the blocks but in a less noticeable place (the discovery of such a group could have cost us our life), to say together prayers which we repeated after Fr Joseph. The group gradually grew bigger, even though that brought greater risk”.⁴³

Much more tragic were the events of his last day of life, preserved for history by eyewitnesses, who later succeeded in emerging from that inferno and were able to give sworn evidence during the Process.

The day was 3 July 1942. Every word and deed of the final 24 hours take on a particularly significant importance, and it is fitting that we relive the culminating moment of the passion of our confrere, even in its details.

“When we finished work”, said one of the witnesses, “our companions brought Fr Kowalski back to the block; he had been ill-treated by the guards. After his return I spent the final moments with him. We became aware that after the killing of our companions in the group (three of the five had been already killed) it was now our turn. In that situation Fr Kowalski recollected himself in prayer: ‘Kneel down’, he said, ‘and pray with me for all these who are being killed’. We prayed together until late evening, waiting for them to call more of us.

⁴³ Letter of Prof. Joseph Kret, eyewitness

After a while Mitas came along and called Fr Kowalski. The priest left his camp-bed with his mind at peace because he was ready for this call and for the death which would follow it. He gave me the piece of bread he had been given for supper, saying: 'You eat it, I don't need it any more'. And with these words he went knowingly to his death".⁴⁴

But before we come to the epilogue, which took place in the early morning of 4 July, on the 3rd a sacred action had been played out, which revealed all the heroic dignity of a true witness to the faith. It has been reported by eyewitnesses with a wealth of details. Listen to what they say:

"That day, linked with the memory of Fr Kowalski, remains imprinted on my mind. It was the last day of my stay in the camp. It was early in July 1942 and the day was very hot. The guards were going mad in their mania for killing people and they were amusing themselves with acts of cruelty. On that day they did not stop even during the interval for the midday meal, and went on with their sadistic entertainment of the morning. At times they would drown some in the nearby cesspool, others they would hurl down into the muddy waters of a deep canal they were digging. Those whose groans showed that they were not yet dead were pushed into a huge empty barrel, lying on its side, which served as a refuge for the dogs kept by the SS. There they were compelled to imitate the dogs by barking, and then lick up from the ground soup that had been thrown down there to feed them. The leader of the thugs, a German, shouted in a raucous voice: 'Where is that Catholic priest? Let him bless them for their journey into eternity'. Meanwhile other torturers were throwing Fr Kowalski (it was him the leader was looking for) into the mud for their entertainment. Now, hardly recognizable any longer as a man, they dragged him to the barrel. Pulled out naked from the cesspool with only tattered trousers clinging to him, dripping from head

⁴⁴ Summ., LXXXV, p.1685, §§ 5920f.

to foot in that horrible sticky mess of mud and filth and driven forward by furious beatings, he came to the barrel, where some were dying and others already dead. The thugs continued to strike Fr Kowalski, sneering at him as a priest, and made him get up on the barrel and give to the dying 'the final blessing for their journey to paradise, according to the Catholic rite'.

Fr Kowalski knelt on the barrel and after making the sign of the cross, in a loud voice, as though inspired, began to recite slowly the Pater noster and Ave Maria, the Sub tuum praesidium and the Salve Regina. The words of eternal truth contained in the divine phrases of the Lord's Prayer made a vivid impression on the prisoners who from day to day and hour to hour were awaiting a terrifying death, similar to that now being endured by their companions in their departure from this vale of tears, disfigured to such an extent that they no longer seemed to be men at all. Crouching together as best we could in the grass, not daring to raise our heads so as to keep out of sight of the torturers, we tasted the words of Fr Kowalski as material food for the peace we longed for. That ground, sodden with prisoners' blood, was now bedewed with the tears we shed as we witnessed the sublime mystery celebrated by Fr Kowalski against that macabre backdrop. Nestling close to me in the grass, a young student of Jaslo (Taddeo Kokosz) whispered in my ear: 'A prayer like that the world has never heard... perhaps they did not pray like that even in the catacombs'" ⁴⁵

From a careful reconstruction it is clear that he was killed during the night between 3 and 4 July 1942. He was drowned in the camp cesspool. This is attested to under oath by his fellow-prisoner Stefano Boratynski who afterwards saw his corpse covered in dirt and abandoned alongside the so-called punishment block.

⁴⁵ Joseph Kret

An unmistakable Marian touch

The devotion of the people of Poland to the Madonna, with its expression and centre in the sanctuary of Czestochowa, is well known. It is sown in the soul of everyone at baptism, and it surfaces in a powerful way at crucial moments in the history of the Church and the nation as a source of inspiration and energy, of wisdom and hope.

This characteristic, common to many Christian regions, makes a special point of contact between popular faith and devotion and salesian Marian spirituality.

In the notes made by Blessed Joseph, even when he was a pupil at Auschwitz, we find deep sentiments of his devotion to Mary: "O Mother I must become holy because that is my destiny. Let me never say that I have made enough progress; no, I shall never say enough. Grant, Mother, that the idea of holiness which shines in the eyes of my soul may never grow dim, but rather that it may grow, be strengthened, and shine like the sun".⁴⁶

His *via crucis* is marked by Marian stations. It was on 23 May 1941, vigil of the Feast of Mary Help of Christians that the foreseeable though unexpected arrest took place. He himself recalled the comfort he felt when he saw the tower of the Church of Mary Help of Christians, near the concentration camp, which the Salesians inherited from the Dominicans and transformed into a Marian sanctuary.

But this trait emerged especially at the moment of the supreme sacrifice. His rosary was always with him in his days of imprisonment. He recited it both by himself and with his companions. With it is linked his assignment to the 'hard labour gang' and the final heroic act of his existence. We read the following in his Acts of martyrdom.

"Among the 60 priests and brothers ready for transport to

⁴⁶ Witness XX, p.1676, §5893

Dachau there was Fr Joseph Kowalski. We were standing naked in the camp bath-house. In came the officer Plalitzsch – one of the major criminals of the Auschwitz camp, note the Acts – in charge of the move. ‘Attention!’, he commanded.

He paced up and down among the prisoners and noticed that Fr Kowalski was holding something tightly in his hand. ‘What are you holding?’ he asked. Fr Kowalski remained silent, and the commandant struck him a heavy blow on the hand. The rosary fell to the ground.

‘Stamp on it’, shouted the enraged official. But Fr Kowalski would not do so and the commandant, angry at the unflinching attitude of Fr Kowalski, took him out of the group. The fact made a deep impression on us. We understood that because of the rosary severe punishment lay ahead of him”.⁴⁷

An outstanding witness.

His Holiness John Paul II knew Blessed Joseph personally because he had lived during the Nazi persecution in our parish of St Stanislaus Kosta at Cracow. Speaking as Cardinal in this same Church on 30 January 1972, he spoke as follows of the Salesians who had been killed:

“I remember those times also for personal reasons. I am convinced that my own priestly vocation, in those times and precisely in this parish where I was a boy, owes much to the prayers and sacrifices of my brothers and sisters and of the pastors of the time, who paid with the blood of martyrdom for the Christian life of every parishioner, and especially the young ones”.

It is not surprising therefore to read in a letter of Fr Rokita of 29 November 1971: “The Archbishop of Cracow, Cardinal Wojtyla, who knew Fr Kowalski well, insisted that this cause be

⁴⁷ Witness XIV, Summ., LXXX, p.1671, §5876

speeded up". Now he has experienced its culmination in declaring him Blessed.

The grateful and humble testimony of the Pope, we have just quoted, speaks in the plural of the "pastors of the time", and it leads us to broaden our gaze and embrace all the confreres and members of the Salesian Family who stand behind the figure of Blessed Joseph Kowalski. We want to see him today not only as a single figure but as representing all those who like him, and for the same reasons, in the same country and in the same period of history sacrificed their own lives.

We think in the first place of the confreres who were arrested with him at Cracow. Some of them died in the death camp of Auschwitz between 1941 and 1942. They included Kowalski's rector and confessor as we said earlier. But if we include all those who were killed in Poland during the last war, the list rises to eighty. Of these an impressive little booklet was published by Fr Tirone in 1954, with a biographical profile of each of them: "Portraits of 88 Polish confreres who perished in the war". They included 55 priests, 27 coadjutor brothers, and 7 clerics.

But if we extend the range still further so as to include all the countries of Eastern Europe, the figure goes up to 183: from Poland to the Czech Republic, from Slovakia to Slovenia, from Croatia to Hungary. My thoughts went to all these confreres during the Beatification of Fr Joseph Kowalski; they are all personified in him and, like him, they are shining witnesses to the martyrdom dimension of the Congregation.

We remember them with veneration and deep interior gratitude, knowing well what spiritual fruitfulness they have merited for our religious family by their martyrdom. If we think of the vocational development which has marked the difficult years of the postwar period and the recent rapid extension of our works in the same geographical areas, we cannot fail to see the relationship between the mystery of growth and the mystery of the shedding of blood.

A 'youthful' salesian group

In the group of beatified martyrs there are five young men of Poznan. They are: Edward Klinik (aged 23); Francis Kesy (22); Jarogniew Wojciechowski (20); Czesław Józwiak (22) and Edward Kaźmierski (23).

They have certain characteristics in common: all five were oratorians; all five were consciously committed to their own human and Christian growth; all were involved in the animation of their companions, linked together by personal and social interests and projects, targeted almost simultaneously and imprisoned in different places but over a very short period of time. Subsequently they shared the same prison experience and suffered martyrdom on the same day and in the same manner. Their oratorian friendship remained alive to the last moment.

The presence of these young men with Fr Kowalski in the same beatification ceremony is significant: they were young men we had evangelized; they had been involved in our apostolate, and they followed their educators to martyrdom and to the honours of the altar.

Though they came together in prison and death, each of them had his own particular biography which became intertwined with that of the others in a common salesian setting.

Edward Klinik was the second of three children. His father was a mechanic. He finished his schooling in our house of Auschwitz, and later passed the maturity-exam at Poznan. During the occupation he worked in a construction company. His sister Mary, an Ursuline Sister, testified: "when Edward went to the oratory his religious life became much deeper. He began to take part in the Mass as an altar-server, and he also involved his younger brother in this oratorian life. He had always been quiet and rather self-conscious, but he became much livelier after joining the oratory. He was a conscientious and systematic student".⁴⁸

⁴⁸ *Positio*, p.758

In the group of five he stood out because of his deep commitment to every form of activity and gave the impression of being more serious and thoughtful. Under the guidance of his salesian educators his spiritual life became ever more firm and centred on the Eucharist, a most tender Marian devotion and enthusiasm for the ideals of St John Bosco.

Francis Kesy, on the other hand, was born in Berlin where his parents had gone for reasons of employment. His father was a carpenter, but when they moved back to Poznan he worked in an electrical centre in the town

It had been Francis' intention to become a candidate for the salesian novitiate, but since he was prevented by the occupation from continuing his studies, he found employment in an industrial establishment. His spare time he spent at the oratory where, sharing the ideals of the other four, he animated youth groups and associations. He was the third of five children in a poor family.

He is remembered as being sensitive and frail, and of poor health; but at the same time he was cheerful, good-natured, a lover of animals, and always ready to help others. Every morning found him heading towards the church, where he was an almost daily communicant; and every evening he recited the rosary.

Jarogniew Wojciechowski was a native of Poznan, where his father had a shop selling cosmetics. The family life was marked by a long series of traumatic situations because the father was an alcoholic and ended up by abandoning the family. Jarogniew had to change from one school to another and remained under the care of his older sister. In this situation he found support in the salesian oratory, where he joined in the activities with enthusiasm.

Of him witnesses recall that he became an alter-server with the Salesians, took part in camps and outings, played religious tunes on the piano, joined in the religious life of the family and

was a daily communicant. Like his other companions of the group he was well known for friendliness, good humour and the commitment he gave to activities, his duties and good example. He was outstanding among the others because he seemed rather meditative and had a tendency to see into things more closely; he tried to understand what lay behind events, but without becoming gloomy about them. He was a leader in the best sense of the word.⁴⁹

Czesław Józwiak was linked with the salesian oratory of Poznan from his childhood. He was only ten when he first set foot in it. His father was a police officer. He attended the St John Kanty School and at the same time acted as animator of a youth group at the oratory. When war broke out and it was impossible to continue at school he took employment in a chemist's shop.

It is said of him that he was irascible by nature, spontaneous and full of energy but without ever losing his self-control, consistent and ready for sacrifice.⁵⁰ Under the guidance of the rector, Fr Augustine Piechura, he could be seen to be striving after Christian perfection and to be making progress in that direction. There was no doubt about the hold he had on younger children.

According to one of his follow-prisoners: "He was good natured and a character with a soul as clear as crystal... When he spoke openly to me I could see that his heart was free from any stain of sin or evil... He shared with me one of his particular concerns, that he should never fall into impurity".⁵¹

Finally **Edward Kaźmierski** was born at Poznan into a poor family. His father was a shoe-repairer. As soon as he finished elementary school he was obliged to find work in a shop

49 cf. *Positio*, p.766f.

50 cf. *Positio*, p.730

51 *Positio*, p.731

and later in a machine shop. He soon became a member of the salesian oratory and in that environment was able to develop special musical talents.

It is said of him that the keen religious sense he had acquired in his family soon led him to Christian maturity under the guidance of the Salesians. All his spare time after work he spent at the oratory and grew in Eucharistic and Marian devotion. At the age of 15 he took part in a pilgrimage to Czestochowa, travelling more than 500 km. on foot. He was president of the St John Bosco Circle and was full of enthusiasm for salesian ideals.

Lively, faithful to his decisions he liked to sing in the church choir, or as a soloist. At the age of 15 he wrote some of his own musical compositions. Among his characteristics were balanced good sense and kindness. In prison he showed a great love for his companions. He willingly helped the older ones and was completely free of any feeling of hatred towards his persecutors.⁵²

Both individually and as a group, these young men manifest the shaping power of the oratory experience when the latter can count on a proper environment, a responsible youth community, a project for the individual, and one or more confreres able to accompany the young in their pilgrimage of faith and grace. The five came from Christian families, and with this foundation the life and program of the oratory encouraged their generosity towards God, their human maturity, prayer and apostolic commitment.

The group was crucial as a place of growth and commitment. They were always called the "group of five". It is impressive to read of each one: "He was one of the group of the oratory-leaders, closely linked with the other four in friendship and aspirations after high Christian ideals".⁵³

⁵² cf. *Positio*, p.742

⁵³ *Positio*, p.741

The oratory experience produced in them a youthful comradeship based on ideals and projects, manifested in sincere sharing, mutual support in time of trial, and in spontaneity and joy.

Their friendship led them to continue their meetings when the occupational forces requisitioned the oratory, and transformed the whole building and the church into military store-rooms, leaving the Salesians with only two rooms.

In one of the rooms with a piano which the Brothers of the Sacred Heart had placed at their disposal, they continued their choral activities and friendly meetings. Later, when even this became impossible, they met in the city parks, the fields near the river and the nearby woods. It was not strange that the police identified or confused them with clandestine associations. Their friendship became a mutual support during their passage through various prisons to their death.

Imprisonment and martyrdom

All five were arrested in September 1940. Edward Kazmier-ski was taken directly from his place of work without the possibility of taking leave of his dear ones. It was on a Sunday. On Monday 23rd it was the turn of Francis, in the evening after curfew when he had just returned home. The other three were taken from their families usually at dead of night.

They met again in Fortress VII of Poznań, from where they were moved on first to the Neukoln Prison near Berlin, then to that of Zwickau in Saxony; they were interrogated, tortured and then condemned to hard labour.

On 1 August 1942 sentence was pronounced: death for treason against the State. They stood to hear the sentence. It was followed by a long silence, interrupted only by the exclamation of one of them: "Thy will be done".

We must not be deceived by the official political motivation.

The witnesses and subsequently the *Positio* dwell on the documentation of the material fact of martyrdom, i.e. that death was inflicted by the persecutors. Their imprisonment was marked by torture and interrogations, by forced hard labour, hunger until they dropped from exhaustion, inhuman treatment, and association with common criminals which added new sufferings to those resulting from their condemnation.

But the same documents also make clear the anti-religious mentality and intention of the persecutors who sought the human destruction of the prisoners. Certainly these young men were aiming lawfully, like every other citizen, at the rebirth of their country's culture, values and social justice. But no criminality was found in their actions. They were taken and condemned without being able to defend themselves because of their membership of Catholic organizations, which it was suspected might give rise to resistance. Among the witnesses, statements like the following are frequently found: "The reason for their condemnation to death was certainly not that published by the authorities..."⁵⁴ "The Nazis knew it, and even though they did not say so directly, they carried on a persecution for motives of faith, they were upset by signs of Christianity, by prayers said aloud, by religious hymns..."⁵⁵ "It was from faith that they got the strength to remain faithful to God and their homeland".⁵⁶

Finally must be added what was inflicted on them, directly connected with the open practice of their faith and their devotion, by those of an anti-Christian and atheistic regime who kept them in custody. They were persecuted "because of their religious and patriotic behaviour".⁵⁷ "After occupying Poznan the Nazis made it a crime to celebrate Holy Mass in church, and to gather young people in the oratory".⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Witness I, *Summ.* p.1695

⁵⁵ *Positio*, p.734

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Witness IV, *Summ.*, p.1700

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

Abundant also is the documentation concerning formal martyrdom on the part of the victims: i.e. the awareness that they were offering their lives as a confession of faith, the filial acceptance of the will of God, the absence of any rancour or resentment towards their persecutors, and even the Christian love they had for them.

And so was made clear the *fama martyrii*, i.e. the conviction on the part of those who had known them and had witnessed their sufferings and the martyr-like character of their death, manifested by their request for intercession and graces. Among these were young companions of their own age, but also direct testimony from the prisoners. A representative expressed the opinion of all: "Whoever knew these five young men saw them as martyrs for the love of God and their country".⁵⁹ "Personally I am convinced that their sufferings in prison and especially their death, which they faced as a test of faith, provided the conditions necessary for their recognition as martyrs. The annual meetings [...] of the past-pupils of the oratory tell us that the 'five' are models not only of love of their country, but of the faith".⁶⁰

Three weeks later they were brought into the prison yard at Dresda where a guillotine had been erected and were beheaded. It was 24 August while our communities were celebrating the monthly commemoration of Mary Help of Christians.

Before they died they were given the opportunity of writing a final note to their parents. When we read those last sentiments we can only stand in silence as before those of great stature. They constitute remarkable documents of the spiritual life, which in due course can be given wider circulation. That of Józwiak Czesław can serve as an example: "I have to leave this world, but I want you to know that going in this way to the next world gives me greater joy than if I were to be set

⁵⁹ *Positio*, p.738

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

free. I know that Mary Help of Christians whom I have honoured all my life will win me pardon from Jesus [...] A priest will bless me during the execution. We have the great joy of being together before we die. We are all five of us together in the same cell. It is now 19.45. At 20.30 I shall be leaving this world. I beg you not to weep; do not give way to despair; do not be worried. This is God's will..."⁶¹

As with Fr Kowalski, so with these five young men, there is a moving aspect linked with the rosary. When they were arrested all their belongings were taken from them. Their rosaries were thrown into the trashcan, but when their captors' backs were turned they courageously recovered those beads which were to be their precious companion in the moments of greatest difficulty.

To our three young people: St Dominic Savio, Blessed Laura Vicuña and the Venerable Zeferino Namuncurá, we now add these five young martyrs as if to complete the saintly categories with the one adornment that was missing: martyrdom. It is now up to us to draw out the full meaning of this event for the area of youth. In them we want to recognize a model for so many young people who are suffering in different parts of the world for their Christian faith. We point to them as intercessors as well as being patterns of the highest ideals.

Conclusion

In the afternoon of 13 June, after the solemn celebration in the Piazza Józef Pilsuski, we gathered with the young people who had come for the beatification from different parts of Poland, Slovakia and Russia. Accompanying them were Salesians and animators, with novices, young confreres in formation and postulants of the FMA.

⁶¹ *Summ.*, p.1707

It was a truly "oratorian" manifestation, which took place in our Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Warsaw. The joy of being together under the guiding inspiration of Don Bosco could be seen in every face and felt in the atmosphere. Signs of the 'oratorian' process of growth found lively and complete expression: music, prayer, group projects, and just being together.

In this mosaic the image of Fr Joseph Kowalski and the five young men, outlined in a calm and expressive presentation, seemed to be back in their natural setting. It was in the oratory, in fact, that their holiness took root and blossomed, and was later proved by martyrdom. The preventive system makes the educator holy, it proposes sanctity to all and helps the young to become holy: its place of birth and rebirth is the oratory.

In an era like our present one, in which we turn to the young with new hope, may the Lord and his Mother help us to discover its possibilities and live its spirit.

With my greetings and blessing to you all.

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

2.1 SALESIAN YOUTH PASTORAL WORK AND THE WORLD OF WORK

Fr Antonio DOMENECH

Councillor General for Youth Pastoral Work

The world of work is an area of the life of the young that calls for particular attention on the part of salesian pastoral work.

In it are involved other important aspects, such as technical and professional formation, the immediate preparation for employment, insertion in the working world, unemployment (especially youth unemployment), the pedagogy of work, etc. But in particular this theme has a strong connection with the reality of marginalization: many families depend for their living on work which is casual and precarious, and are often driven to marginal activities for their survival; many youngsters and adolescents have to interrupt their education and look for work to earn a living. It is important that we grasp from the outset the close linkage existing between our attention to the world of work and our preference for young people who are very poor and in emergency situations.

Some time ago the results were published of a joint research project of the Youth Pastoral Department and the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the UPS on salesian professional formation.¹ In his presentation of the work, the Rector Major expressed the hope that "a work so well qualified would be of

¹ Luc Van Looy and Guglielmo Malizia, *Formazione Professionale Salesiana. Indagine sul campo.*, LAS – Rome, 1997

Luc Van Looy and Guglielmo Malizia, *Formazione Professionale Salesiana. Prosposte in una prospettiva multidisciplinare*, LAS – Rome, 1998

help to workers in the field of salesian technical and professional formation and increase their capacity to help youngsters about to enter employment, and working-class adults”.

The purpose of the present reflection is to reawaken the interest of all confreres and communities in this argument, and prompt local verifications that the provincial PEPS does in fact give due attention to young workers and those just beginning employment.

1. Young people starting work and young workers are among the specific groups to whom our mission is directed.

Don Bosco, in choosing his educative and pastoral work for young people in need, was greatly concerned about the world of work. He began at Valdocco by gathering together young immigrants from rural areas and others who were looking for work; he sought employment for them, tried to provide them with workshops for learning a trade, and in which at the same time they could be given suitable religious and moral formation. From the very beginning the commitment for young workers has been an essential aspect of the salesian mission, and is expressed particularly in the large number of trade schools which characterize our work in many countries.

This constant trend of the Congregation is enshrined in art.27 of the Constitutions: “Working-class boys who are about to enter the labour market, and young workers in general, often encounter difficulties and easily become victims of injustice. Making the concern of Don Bosco our own, we go to them to prepare them to take their place with dignity in society and in the Church and to alert them to the role they must play in the Christian transformation of social life”

It is of interest to note the reason for this special dedication, i.e. the difficulties in finding a place in the world of work, and the associated dangers. In this connection, it seems to me

that the situation today is much more serious than it was in Don Bosco's time.

The purpose of our educative intervention is not only to prepare young people for work, but to render them capable of fulfilling their vocation with dignity and so of collaborating in the Christian transformation of society. This objective is binding on all communities and all works, especially amid the present deep social, technical and cultural changes.

Art.2 of the Regulations presents some practical consequences of the article of the Constitutions: "The provinces should encourage a commitment to the education of young workers... They should try to be well informed about the world of work and the conditions in which young people are working. They should see that centres of professional training pay heed to pastoral, pedagogical and technical aspects, and adequate programs should be drawn up to educate the youngsters to the spiritual aspects of work". These are important and urgent commitments and demand of everyone a serious corroboration, especially because the world of work is undergoing a rapid change, in which the young are the ones placed at the greatest disadvantage.

Two other aspects indicate the central place of work in our vocation and mission: the figure of the salesian brother, and our very spirituality which is a spirituality of the daily round and of work (cf. GC24, 97).

In the essential form of the salesian community there is the figure of a Salesian strongly characterized by professional preparation in the area of work, the Salesian Brother. "The salesian brother", says art.45 of the Constitutions, "brings to every field of education and pastoral activity the specific qualities of his lay status, which make him in a particular way a witness to God's kingdom in the world, close as he is to the young and to the realities of the workplace". The GC24 makes this even more explicit when it says: "The Salesian Brother... offers

to all a particular sensitivity for the world of work, attention to the local environment, and the demands of the professional approach associated with his educative and pastoral activity" GC25, 154).

Work, together with temperance, is one of the characteristics of our salesian spirit which animates all our spirituality and our life. "The Salesian gives himself to his mission with tireless energy, taking care to do everything with simplicity and moderation. He knows that by his work he is participating in the creative action of God and cooperating with Christ in building the Kingdom" (C 18). In this way he makes an admirable synthesis of professional approach and a sense of faith.

Our history and guidelines are clear and precise; they are a challenge to all of us and must be a guide for the renewal of the effectiveness of every community and work, in face of the present world of work which is everywhere undergoing a great transformation.

2. The challenges presented to us by the new world and culture of work.

The transformations being produced in industrial and post-industrial society are producing deep changes in labour markets, and consequently a new mentality and culture of work is developing. As educators of the young we must know of this situation so as to understand its challenges and needs. I recall some only of the elements of this transformation, and invite the communities to analyze and reflect on the situation in which their own young people are found.

The growing *introduction of advanced technology* in industry and public services has ever greater need of personnel capable of innovation and research, with a good professional preparation which is constantly updated. At the same time many countries, especially those of the third and fourth world,

are witnessing the development of informal labour markets made up for the most part of small enterprises characterized by a family management, based on the use of apprentices, low wages, the availability of little capital, and without legal recognition.

The phenomenon of *unemployment* is increasing everywhere and is reaching dramatic proportions. It afflicts especially the young and the poor; about 30% of the workforce is unemployed in open or hidden fashion: 190 million children between the ages of 10 and 14 are working in dreadful conditions, with paltry wages and no possibility of formation and education.

The phenomenon is not limited to developing countries, but affects even those which are industrialized, where it is characterized not so much by the complete absence of work as by informal and casual working experiences, with a mentality founded on prolonged uncertainty supported by the need to find temporary jobs. And when it comes to workers who are very young and poorly instructed, girls, weak segments of the system, such uncertainty leads to a permanent condition of structural disadvantage, which sometimes develops into a spiral of marginalization difficult to overcome without an indefinite period of time.

It seems that in the world of youth *a transformation is taking place in the meaning and concept of work*: While the market demands efficiency, productivity, dedication, competitiveness, flexibility etc., for the new generations work is not everything; self-realization includes also such realities as friendship and affective relationships, consumerism linked with spare time, group associations, etc. The young will take up forms of part-time work, which is uncertain, occasional, or for fixed periods, with an attitude of experimenting or trying things out, seeking in work for self-realization and satisfactory interpersonal relationships.

To us who are educators this reality we have just described presents **challenges** before which we cannot remain indifferent.

The educational system finds it difficult to pick up and follow economic and social changes, thus fostering a growing lack of interest in many youngsters and leading to failures and dropping out which puts them at a disadvantage as far as future employment prospects are concerned; worse still, for many of them it becomes very difficult or almost impossible to get into another school or educative program; on the other hand, the distinction between the time of preparation for active life and the moment of application becomes ever less distinct: learning becomes a continuous process.

We have to aim at an education which is based on quality and is open to everyone, able to cope with the phenomenon of dropouts by helping those at a disadvantage to overcome their deficiencies; an education which develops not only intellectual potentialities but also manual skills, creativity, the ability to work in groups, professional and technical elements, working experience, etc., overcoming the lack of social prestige that professional and technical formation may have with adolescents and their families; an education centred on the primacy of the human person in social and economic life, enabling him at the same time to learn to live with others, to *know*, to *do* and to *be*; an education integrated with the world of work which sees professional competence as an element in the educational process.

The new social, economic and cultural context, characterized by the evolution in technology and financial globalization, requires of us that we also *rethink deeply our own presence and pastoral activity*, to ensure that it is in line with this significant and prophetic context.

This is not easily done; a personal intuition or general social sensitivity is not enough. What is needed is a systematic penetrating of the new phenomena and the current evolutionary trends in the world of work, so that as educators we

can foresee them and prepare adequate educative projects for coming to grips with them. This requires careful formation and preparation on our part.

From another standpoint, we must ensure the presence of some indispensable values and certain lines of priority which are threatened by the globalization process now taking place, such as the centrality of the person with respect to economy, preferential attention to those who are weakest in seeking the good of the community, the safeguarding of the dimension of gratuity in face of the excessive power of profit, and the promoting of models of more equal development to hinder the further extension of the double-edged forces of inequality already present in the system.

Are we aware of these challenges, and do we make them the object of community reflection and of our personal study?

3. Some practical requirements which must be translated by the communities into practical guidelines.

3.1 *With reference to the Educative and Pastoral Project as a whole*

Art.2 of the Regulations, already quoted, asks the provinces to foster an educative commitment towards young workers. It is not only a matter of promoting certain works for them, such as Centres of Professional Training, but that concern for these young workers and those about to enter employment be an important item in the Provincial PEPS, so that the different works and services, according to their nature and possibilities, may collaborate in their education.

In this connection I emphasize certain requirements which I think are important

- *A greater knowledge of the world of work* and of its principal trends and phenomena on the part of the Salesians and communities through a consistent effort of information, discern-

ment and critical assessment as regards all that happens in the world of work, overcoming a certain systematic ignorance and superficial judgement. The *Ratio* asks that every Salesian should develop a “sensitivity to the world of work, especially to the mass of workers and of needy youth, at a time when emphasis on technology has so affected the organization and development of this ‘world’ that religious values are practically excluded” (FSDB, 78).

- The development in the various educational processes of *a deep and systematic social formation*, to ensure a more solid mentality, and a greater ability for an efficacious self-commitment for justice. The GC23, in face of the enormous challenge of poverty, pointed to formation to the social dimension of charity as a fundamental task for giving a concrete element and credibility to education to the faith (cf. GC23, 204). Here are some of the essential elements that must be present:
 - accompany the young in gaining an adequate knowledge of the complex social and political reality, beginning with local and immediate levels;
 - ensure the provision of a complete and systematic presentation of the Church’s social teaching, as the key to the understanding of this reality and as an indication of the ideals to be sought;
 - introduce the young to situations which call for solidarity and help, especially in the world of work;
 - promote with them precise and practical projects of solidarity, e.g. with respect to the drama of youth unemployment, exploitation, etc.
- Develop in our educational scheme the *pedagogy of work* as an important element in integral human formation, overcoming a pedagogy that is too intellectual and selective. Many youngsters are exposed to, or have already lived through some experience of scholastic failure and/or prob-

lems of personal, family and social integration. For them a positive working experience, programmed and followed up with educative criteria, can be an excellent possibility for personal retrieval; the youngster can regain self-esteem, re-discover his own talents and abilities, and be motivated toward his own formation. This means that in our scheme of education we offer plenty of space for some work experiences, services to the community, work in non-profit organizations etc., evaluating in them especially self-realization and service to the community's common good. It requires also the setting up of qualified and significant contacts with persons, institutions and settings of the world of work, fostering a dialogue, comparison, mutual knowledge and formative collaboration.

- A *special attention to young or unemployed workers* in our works, especially in oratories and youth centres, parishes, boarding establishments, groups, etc. facilitates in them a welcoming reception and protagonism, a method which favours their integration into the environment and fosters initiatives which respond to the needs they have most at heart. Sometimes we find difficulty in making real contact with these youngsters of 16 upwards, because many of our activities are directed to young students or university undergraduates of a certain culture and intellectual capacity. In some places initiatives have been begun of professional formation, or of help in self-employment, or of work scholarships etc., all signs of the interest and concern felt by many confreres and collaborators.
- Qualify the *journeys of education to the faith* and the formative processes in the various groups of the SYM with a special attention to the numerous adolescents who have abandoned secondary studies. Some of our contents and methods need to be much better adapted to their sensitivities and ways of thinking and feeling, less intellectual, more in line

with daily life, more practical, etc. For this reason it is very important to have the greatest possible number of young workers among the animators.

The team for youth pastoral work, with the help and cooperation of many lay collaborators, especially those who are members of the Salesian Family, could promote in the salesian and educative communities of the various works a reflection on these aspects, so as to seek together how we can improve our educative service to young workers or those just entering employment.

3.2 *With regard to Schools and Centres of Professional Training*

Another very important aspect is the development and qualification of Professional and Technical Schools and of Centres of Professional Training, both formal and informal; they constitute one of the most characteristic signs of our educative service to the world of work. Recent years have seen the publication in the Congregation of an important study on this argument: A greater knowledge and deeper reading of it can help provinces and communities to renew and qualify their presence in this world of Professional Formation. Here are some indications, by way of example:

- Strengthen among the educative tasks of technical and professional schools, the *processes of personalization*. Today a good technical and professional preparation is not sufficient; there is a constant demand for more persons who are intellectually inquisitive and endowed with a critical sense; persons who can establish positive, stable and efficacious relationships and promote collaboration in common projects, who can handle and resolve conflicts, who can face changes with imagination and creativity. This is a need deeply felt also by the young people themselves, who would like their educators to give greater attention to their life. For this

reason it is important to organize moments and methods of communication and personal relationship between educators and pupils, with the families and social environment; to develop a respectful educative approach which is at the same time positive and productive; to draw up a program of moral formation and an education to values which is really personalistic, communal and solid.

- Strengthen a *closer relationship between the school and society and the working world*. Technical and professional formation must not only give the youngster an integral education, but must also prepare him for the world of work and accompany him as he enters it. All this supposes the development of close collaboration with the world of industry and enterprise, fostering cooperation in programs and practical exercises offered to the pupils and in updating courses for teachers, seeking consultation in the process of renewal and modernization, preparing together for enterprises and industries programs of ongoing formation especially for the young who are already working, thinking up initiatives for following up young workers during their first steps in the working world.

From this standpoint the Past-pupils can be very important and provide real help; they can be an excellent bridge between the school and the working world in which they are now inserted; they can collaborate in the educative task of the school through their professional work or by voluntary services; many of them, moreover, can be of assistance to the young who are just completing their studies and accompany them in their insertion into the working world.

- Organize a series of *programs for youngsters on the margin of the scholastic and working worlds*, to help them to become reintegrated in a process of socialization and formation. In this sense much importance attaches to Courses or Centres of Professional Training in which, through working experi-

ences, the young are offered a new opportunity of formation, and a new possibility of giving shape to their lives. Collaboration and dialogue between the various schools and educative and social institutions is fundamental for the efficacy of these programs.

- Provide a *process of evangelization which is radically inserted in the educative and working dynamic*. All our activity for the benefit of young workers has evangelization as its objective, but it must be an evangelization truly integrated into their world. Such a project must give particular attention to the following aspects:
 - offer the pupils a humanistic and evangelical vision of the social and economic reality and of the world of work through religion and moral formation classes, and study of the social doctrine of the Church;
 - propose spiritual experiences and of openness to God in both the ordinary and particularly significant moments of life; in all such experiences attend particularly to their quality with a gradual process of initiation to prayer and celebration;
 - provide also experience of gratuitous service and solidarity towards the poor, beginning with those of the locality;
 - suggest the possibility of personal follow-up by some Christian educator who will help the youngsters to enlighten their lives with evangelical principles and follow a process of education to the faith;
 - link up with pastoral initiatives of the Church in the world of work and make it easy for the youngsters to take part in them.

I conclude by recalling the suggestions with which Fr Egidio Viganò ended his letter *The Salesian Mission and the Workers' World*, in November 1982, and which I think are still valid and important:

- The specific training of more salesian personnel for the workers' world;
- A revision of the works and activities which each Province has today among workers and of prospects for the future in line with an organic development project;
- Renewed vocational pastoral activity in favour of the Salesian Brother who, though not limited to the world of work, finds therein his natural bent and expression. (cf. AGC 307, pp. 33-36).

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

1 April. The Rector Major presided at the solemn concelebration of Holy Thursday at the Generalate and then left for Chile for the Team Visit to the provinces of the Southern Cone Region.

3 April. At Santiago, before beginning the team visit, he visited the communities of the FMA at 'Villa Mornese' (the elderly Sisters) and at 'Villa Laura Vicuña', where he met the novices, postulants and aspirants.

On the same day he visited our own aging confreres in the 'Blessed Philip Rinaldi' community, among whom was the gravely ill Card. Raul Silva Henriquez. To all of them Fr Vecchi administered the sacrament of the anointing of the sick.

He also visited the neighbouring novitiate and then had supper at the Don Bosco College where he met the Bishop of San Bernardo.

The evening concluded with the celebration of the Easter Vigil in the parish church of St John Bosco, after which Fr Vecchi returned to the provincial house.

4 April, Easter Sunday. Accompanied by the Provincial, the

Rector Major flew to Punta Arenas, where he was met by the Bishop Mgr. Thomas Gonzalez SDB, the Salesians and the FMA of the city and of Puerto Natales.

In Punta Arenas the Rector Major blessed the monument to Don Bosco, celebrated a solemn Eucharist with the boys of the Don Bosco Institute, visited the salesian communities and those of the FMA, made a brief visit also to the Cathedral and the "Mayorino Borgatello" Museum, and had a meeting with the Salesian Family and with the civil, military and religious authorities.

6 April, Tuesday. After returning to Santiago he went to La Serena. There he visited the salesian house where he inaugurated the new premises, had a meeting with the Salesian Family gathered in the Cathedral for a Marian celebration, and paid a visit to the Bishop.

Returning to Santiago, he made a further visit to Cardinal Silva whose condition had worsened, and then went on to Lo Cañas, where the team visit was to take place and where the confreres

from Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and the five Argentinian provinces were awaiting him.

8 April, Thursday. During a pause in the work, The Rector Major was accompanied to the "Blas Cañas" Catholic University for the inauguration of the 1999 academic year.

9 April, Friday. In the afternoon came the news that Cardinal Silva had died at 1.45 p.m., and at 6.15 p.m. all went to the Marian Sanctuary "La Gracitudo Nacional" for a concelebrated Eucharist in suffrage for the Cardinal, at which Fr Vecchi presided. Among those present were relatives of the Cardinal, the President of the Republic (Dr Eduardo Frei) with other civil and military authorities. Assisting at the celebration were the Archbishop of Santiago, his Auxiliary, and the Salesian Bishop of Punta Arenas, Bishop Thomas Gonzalez.

11 April, Sunday. The team visit ended and in the afternoon Fr Vecchi went to the nearby post-novitiate where the pre-novices, novices, post-novices and students of theology were awaiting him for a festive evening.

12 April, Monday. The Rector Major took part in the solemn ceremonies for the funeral of Cardinal Silva, which were spread

over three stages: in the Cathedral, in the Piazza della Costituzione - La Moneda, and before the crypt of the Cathedral for the final blessing of the coffin.

In the afternoon Fr Vecchi had a meeting with the rectors and confreres, and in the evening, in the sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians at "La Gracitudo Nacional", presided at a Mass for the Salesian Family of Santiago.

13 April, Tuesday. The Rector Major left for Campo Grande in Brazil, for the team visit to the Brazilian Provinces. Awaiting him at the airport were a good number of members of the Salesian Family, led by the Provincial, Fr José Winkler. With him were the Salesian Bishops Vittorio Pavanello (Archbishop of Campo Grande), Candido Da Rosa Onofre (just retiring from the Diocese of Jardim by reason of age) and Bruno Pedron, his successor. After the customary greetings, Fr Vecchi was accompanied to the house of São Vicente, where the team visit was to take place.

During pauses in the work, he visited the FMA at their Provincial House and went on to the Don Bosco Catholic University where he inaugurated the imposing library and gave a conference to a group representing the teach-

ers and pupils of the Department of Pedagogy and philosophy on the significance and importance of a Salesian Catholic University.

During his stay at Campo Grande, Fr Vecchi also celebrated Mass with the young people of the Parish of Mary Help of Christians. He was able to speak to the confreres in formation, greet the members of the Salesian Family gathered in the Don Bosco College, have a meeting with the rectors and visit the important missionary museum which flanks the provincial house.

He was also able to visit the 'Ampare' Social work, where he blessed and inaugurated new premises, and the leper colony of São Julião which is some 15 km. from Campo Grande and covers a space of 250 hectares.

21 April, Wednesday. On his way back to Rome Fr Vecchi called at the provincial house of São Paulo, and celebrated Mass at which were present the pre-novices, novices and post-novices with their formators.

29 April, Thursday. After a few days spent at the Generalate in Rome, the Rector Major left once again, this time for **Salamanca**, to take part in one of the events celebrating the centenary of salesian work in that city.

Reaching Salamanca in the company of the Provincial, who had met him at the airport of Madrid, Fr Vecchi went to the College of Mary Help of Christians where, after the celebration of Vespers he gave a good-night, speaking of the team visits in Latin America and the funeral of Cardinal Silva.

30 April, Friday. The Rector Major went to the 'St. Joseph' College in the Pizarrales quarter, where the Rector first showed him the gold medal conferred by the municipality of Salamanca on the Congregation to mark the centenary of salesian work. This was followed by a visit to the various classes, and at the end Fr Vecchi gave a press conference.

The morning concluded with the celebration of Mass in the Church of the Clarecía, now linked with the Pontifical University which rises beside it. Assisting at the Mass were some 2,000 youngsters, ranging in age from elementary school to pre-university level, with members of the Salesian Family and friends.

After the liturgical celebration, the Rector Major with some other Salesians went to the Town Hall where they were received as honoured guests with the appropriate ceremonial.

After lunch Fr Vecchi went to the house and workshop of Mr. Severino Grande, the sculptor who is producing the grandiose monument to Don Bosco, which has been commissioned by the city to mark the centenary. It is a majestic piece of work: 13 metres in height and 10,000 kg. of granite!

In the afternoon he went to the Pontifical University which is housed in the former Jesuit Institute alongside the Church of the Clarecía. Here, after greeting the academic authorities, the Bishop, the Salesians and others who had gathered there, he gave a conference with the title: *El perfil del seguidor de Cristo para el tercer milenio del Cristianismo*.

The evening concluded, again in the Church of the Clarecía, with a concert given by the "Tomas Luis de Victoria" choral group who sang religious and folkloristic pieces, and with supper in the College of Mary Help of Christians to which all Salesians were invited.

1 May, Saturday. On his way back to Madrid the Rector Major stopped at the salesian house of Arévalo. Here he went to see the aged confreres, to whom he addressed words of greeting and gratitude for the work they had done for the Congregation, and asked for their prayers.

At Madrid he met at the airport with a group of aspirants and novices who had come to see him off on his departure for Rome.

11 May, Tuesday. Fr Vecchi went to the Sacred Heart Basilica in Rome for the 'Month's Mind' Mass in suffrage for the soul of Cardinal Raul Silva. He was accompanied by the Vicar General and the Councillor for the Salesian Family. The president of the celebration was Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State, and among the concelebrants were Cardinals Opilio Rossi, Jorge Arturo Medina Estevez, Dario Castrillon Hoyos, Antonio Javierre Ortas SDB and Achilles Silvestrini. Among the various Bishops present were the Salesians Tarcisio Bertone and Alois Kothgasser, Bishop of Innsbruck. Many salesian priests and those of other Institutes took part in the Mass. The celebration was animated by the inter-university choir of the Vicariate of Rome. Assisting also at the rite were many men and women religious and members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See or to the State of Italy.

At the end of the celebration Fr Vecchi expressed his thanks for their presence to the Cardinals, the members of the diplomatic

corps, the men and women religious and all others who were present.

13 May, Thursday. The Rector Major left for Berlin for the Team Visit to the German-speaking Provinces: GEK, GEM, and AUS.

15 May, Saturday. During a pause in the work, the participants were able to make a brief visit to the city of Berlin and the surrounding district. In particular they visited Potsdam, the castle of Sanssouci and that of Cecilienhof, well known as the place of the famous conference of July-August 1945 of the victors of the second world war. At Berlin they admired the Brandenburg Gate, the Cathedral dedicated to St Hedwig, the well known "Berlin Wall", and the Reichstag, the future seat of the German Parliament.

The final engagement of the day was at the *Philharmonie Berlin* Theatre, where they assisted at a performance of "Moese – Ein biblisches Oratorium" for Soprano, Tenor, Baritone and Chorus (the Rundfunkchor of Berlin).

17 May, Monday. The work of the team visit came to an end with the intervention of the Rector Major, and in the afternoon Fr Vecchi returned to Rome.

22 May, Saturday. The Rec-

tor Major left Rome once again, his time for Venice-Mestre for the celebration of the centenary of salesian work at Chioggia. After supper in the provincial house of Mestre, he went to Conegliano to the Institute of the FMA, for a meeting with young people on the eve of Pentecost. He returned to Mestre for the night.

23 May, Sunday. Accompanied by the Provincial Fr Vecchi went to **Chioggia** for the main centenary celebrations.

In the morning he first met with the Bishop of Chioggia, and then went to the Cathedral for the celebration of Holy Mass with some ten concelebrants. During the Mass a confrere from Chioggia, Raffaele Penzo, made his perpetual profession. Present at the celebration was the Mayor, Dr. Fortunato Guarnieri, with the city's banner. The Bishop too was present.

After the Mass the Rector Major and other Salesians were accompanied to the Town Hall for an official meeting with the civic authorities. With the Mayor were present the President of the Communal Council and other authorities who made speeches. Mgr. Dino De Antoni, Vicar General of the Diocese, gave a brief but interesting account of the his-

tory of salesian work at Chioggia, with reference to the situation of the people and the problems that arose from time to time. The series of speeches was concluded by that of Fr Vecchi.

At the end of the ceremony there was an exchange of gifts. The Rector Major gave to the Mayor the medal of the Congregation, and received books and pictures in return. Then they went back to the oratory where everything was ready for the *Cerchio Mariano*, which concluded with a speech by the Rector Major and the recital of the *Ave Maria*.

After lunch Fr Vecchi was present in the theatre for several presentations about Don Bosco and replied to questions asked by some very small members of the audience.

At the conclusion of the event he was taken by car to Turin for the feast of Mary Help of Christians.

24 May, Monday. In the morning the Rector Major presided in the Basilica at the Eucharistic celebration at which were present pupils of the SDB and FMA schools of the district. After the Mass he visited Don Bosco's Rooms and learned details of the reconstruction explained to him by Fr Genesio

Tarasco, Provincial Economist of the ICP.

Accompanied by Fr Piero Ponzo he then went to the "Andrew Beltrami" community to visit the sick confreres and those in need of constant nursing. He wished all of them a happy feast-day and asked them to offer their sufferings for the Congregation and for vocations. He greeted and thanked the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts, the Congregation founded by Fr Luigi Variara, who provide their valuable service for the sick Salesians. He then returned to Valdocco and went to visit the sick in the infirmary of the house of Mary Help of Christians.

To lunch had been invited Cardinal Giovanni Saldarini, Archbishop of Turin, Mgr. Pier Giorgio Micchiardi (the Auxiliary Bishop), Mgr. Francesco Peradotto, Pro-Vicar General of the Turin Archdiocese and the Rector of the Basilica of the Consolata.

In the afternoon Fr Vecchi was able to visit the Marian Museum and at 6.30 p.m. he celebrated Holy Mass for the Salesian Family.

In the evening the customary solemn procession took place with the participation of numerous groups of people from Turin and the surrounding area. Numerous priests and sisters were present,

with among them Cardinal Saldarini who at the end urged everyone to cultivate devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and gave his blessing to the participants.

25 May, Tuesday. The Rector Major returned to Rome.

29 May, Saturday. Fr Vecchi went to Bologna to take part in the centenary celebrations of salesian work. After greeting the confreres and others on his arrival, he gave a press conference at noon. As well as the journalists present, there were also Salesians, FMA, and friends to hear a discussion on some wide-ranging points.

In the afternoon in the Sanctuary of the Sacred Heart the Rector Major presided at a concelebrated Eucharist at which some twenty priests and members of the Salesian Family took part. After the Mass he went with the Rector and the Provincial to pay a visit to Cardinal Giacomo Biffi.

Returning to the Institute he went after supper to the "Europe Hall" for the official commemoration of the centenary and accompanying festivities. Cardinal Biffi and the civil authorities were present. The orchestra and choir of the State Conservatory of

Bologna provided musical items. After the first of these Professor Alessandro Albertazzi of the University of Bologna gave the official commemorative address, and after the second, Fr Vecchi developed the theme: *Don Bosco and his educative charism.*

30 May, Sunday. In the morning the Rector Major said Mass in the Bologna Cathedral, at which were present a large crowd of young people, including Scouts and past-pupils, as well as many adults. In the afternoon he went to the Colle della Guardia, above Bologna to visit the Sanctuary of the Madonna di San Luca. He then returned to the Salesian Institute where singing, dancing and other festivities were still in full swing, took his leave of the revellers with a brief address, and left to return to Rome..

1 June, Tuesday. The work of the Summer Plenary Session of the General Council began.

During the first weekend, on Friday 4th and Sunday 6th Fr Vecchi visited the meeting of the Salesian Family Council that was taking place in Rome, via XX settembre. The meeting concluded on Sunday 6th, with a Holy Mass at which he presided.

4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors

The Vicar General

29-31 January. For the Feast of Don Bosco, Fr Van Looy had to do some rapid moving about.

29 January: he celebrated the feast with the educative community at Treviglio (ILE).

30 January: in the morning he was present at the opening of the new premises of the Don Bosco Bookshop in Via Marsala, Rome, and the same evening celebrated the Feast with the Salesian Family of Rome in the Don Bosco Temple.

31 January: he spent the whole day at Turin-Valdocco

1 February. He had a meeting with the rectors of the Circumscription of Piedmont (ICP) on the theme of the Local Council, and to launch the consultation before the appointment of the new Provincial.

5 February. He went to Romania for the official opening of the first work in that country at Costanza.

15 February to 6 March. He carried out the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Netherlands Province* (OLA).

8 March. A meeting at La

Spezia the young priests of the Genoa Province (ILT).

14-20 March. Fr Van Looy directed the retreat at Turin, for the Provincial Council and Rectors of the Naples Province.

22-31 March. He took part at Rome in the intermediate session of the General Council, and in the period 27-29 April was at a meeting in Rome with the Rector Major and some other Councillors with the Provincial and some councillors from Holland.

10-11 April. The Vicar General had a meeting with the young people and the Salesian Family of the FMA of Conegliano Veneto.

14-20 April. He directed a retreat for the confreres of Thailand at Hua Hin; and profited by the occasion to meet the rectors and past-pupils of Thailand..

20 April. On his return to Rome, Fr Van Looy began the canonical visitation of the Generalate, which continued until 20 May.

24-25 April. He was at Vienna to preside over the days of salesian spirituality of the Salesian Family.

1-2 May. He took part in the National Congress of the Cooperators of Italy, which was held at Rome.

13-17 May. He was at Berlin for the team visit to the German-speaking provinces.

20-23 May. He presided at the first meeting of the new provincial council of the united single French province, and a combined meeting of three provincial councils, the two previous ones and the new one. On the 23rd he took part in the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the salesian college of Saint Dizier.

24 May. After celebrating Mass in Paris, by lunchtime he had reached Farnborough in England where he went to direct a retreat for the provincial council and rectors of the Province of Great Britain. He returned to Rome for the beginning of the summer session of the General Council.

The Councillor for Formation

The greater part of the period from January to May 1999 was dedicated by Fr Nicolussi to the *Extraordinary Visitation of the UPS Vice-province*.

As is well known, this particular Circumscription was set up for the purpose of carrying out the mission of the Congregation through the Salesian Pontifical University. The Vice-province is made up of six communities, three of them of confreres at-

tached in a stable manner to the UPS and the other three for student confreres.

At the time of the Visitation the confreres permanently attached to the UPS numbered 132, and the student confreres were about 110. The total number of students on the roll at the UPS is 2,440, which includes students at the affiliated centres (20), aggregated centres (4), and sponsored places (3). Those studying at Rome number 1,707 and come from 89 countries; they include 837 lay students, 181 Diocesans, 208 women religious and 481 male religious, of whom 246 are SDBs. The figures do not include students who frequent the single-semester course for formators or the similar updating course for missionaries.

From 7 to 14 February Fr Nicolussi was at Lubumbashi (AFC) for the annual meeting of the *Curatorium* of the Studentate of Theology and for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of its foundation. This interprovincial Centre of salesian priestly formation for confreres of the French and Portuguese-speaking areas of Africa began with 8 students in the year 1988-89; in recent years it has had an average of 45 students, of whom 10 are members

of other congregations. The studentate of Lubumbashi is the only Centre of salesian theological studies in Africa and has therefore a particular importance in the field of formation, in the setting of inculturation and in the maturing of a broad salesian communion among confreres from different nations and cultures.

After taking part in the intermediate session of the General Council in the second part of March, the Councillor was also present for the team visits at Santiago (Chile) and Campo Grande (Brazil) from 6 to 17 April.

In the Department meanwhile work has continued on the classification of the numerous contributions sent in by the provinces for the revision of the *Ratio*, and suggestions have also been requested for the revision of the booklet "*Criteria and norms for salesian vocation discernment*".

Among the new or ongoing initiatives was the organization of a course for teachers of "salesianity", prepare by the Department in conjunction with the Provincial Conference of India. It was held at Hyderabad from 7 April to 28 May, with the active participation of 20 confreres, the majority of them from India with one or two from other English-speaking provinces.

The Councillor for Youth Pastoral Work

From 9 to 12 February Fr Domenech took part in the Team Visit to the English-speaking provinces of Africa at Nairobi, and stayed on afterwards from the 14th to 17th to animate a meeting on pastoral formation for the delegates and youth pastoral teams of the same provinces.

On Sunday 21 February, he began a similar course at León (Spain) for the delegates and teams of the provinces of Spain and Portugal.

During March, he participated with another member of the Department in three further courses for various groups of provinces:

- those of Poland, at Cracow from 1-6 March;
- those of Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia, at Péligfoldszentkereszt (Hungary) from 8-13 March;
- those of Great Britain, Holland, Ireland and North Belgium, at Kendal (England), from 15-20 March.

In the following week he took part in the intermediate meeting of the General Council, and on 5 April left for Santiago (Chile) for the team visit from 6-10 April, fol-

lowed by that at Campo Grande from 13-18 April.

He animated a course of youth pastoral work for the provincial teams of the SEPSUR at Manucho (Argentina) from 19-24 April, and ended his activities in the American continent with a meeting with the directors and coordinators of pastoral work of the Peruvian province at Chosica from 26-29 April.

On his return to Rome, Fr Domenech presented the Manual for Youth Pastoral Work to the Provincials of the North European Region meeting in Malta on 1 May, and then left for Germany to take part in a pastoral course for delegates and members of the provincial teams of the three German-speaking provinces at Waldwinkel from 3-8 May.

At the end of May he was invited by the Rector Major to take part in the 55th meeting of the Union of Superiors General from 26-29 May on the theme: *Vocations to the consecrated life in the context of modern and post-modern society*.

Meanwhile other members of the Department took part in the meeting of the European Consulting Groups for Schools and Professional Training Centres at Paris with the FMA from 9-11

April. And in the same period there was the final meeting at Colle Don Bosco of the Central Committee for "Confronto '99" for the preparations for the event of the coming August.

The Councillor of the Salesian Family and for Social Communication

A. SALESIAN FAMILY

The period from January to June was rich in meetings at both regional and provincial level. In the first place there was the participation in the two team visits in Latin America. In the context of the animating nucleus of the community, the salesian commitment with groups of the Salesian Family was considered. At the two levels, provincial and local, it was clear how much is entrusted by the Constitutions and Regulations of the Congregation to the animation of the community and confreres who are directly involved in work with the groups.

The *regional meetings* continued with the provincial delegates for the Cooperators and Past-pupils, and with the Assistants of the DBV on the three themes: *togetherness, spirituality, organization*.

They included:

- A first meeting with the German-speaking provinces at Benediktbeuern from 8-10 February.
- A second with the provinces of Eastern Europe at Preschel from 19-21 February.

The urgent need was seen for delegates who are competent in spirituality and attentive to the institutional commitments of the different groups of the Salesian Family.

Another event at regional level was the Far Eastern *Congress of Cooperators*, at Hong Kong from 29 April to 2 May.

The Association has deepened in a more direct manner its involvement in Don Bosco's mission. This is a first response to the indications given by the World Council of the Association, which prescribed a growing process of autonomy, with a rethinking also of the missionary commitment.

A particular moment of *animation* was a visit to Cuba from 9 - 18 March. The Salesian Family is a living reality in the island, with Cooperators very much committed at both ecclesial and civil levels, and with Past-pupils who still live in accordance with Don Bosco's teachings.

Under the heading of *ordinary administration* come meetings of animation in the following provinces:

- Argentina, Buenos Aires, 22 February - 2 March. There were meetings with the Salesian Family as a whole, the Cooperators and the Past-pupils. The need was pointed out of a formative meeting with salesian delegates and provincial coordinators for a relaunching, not only of communion but also of the sharing of associative and apostolic perspectives.
- Chile, Santiago, 10-11 April. Attention was concentrated on the Federation of Past-pupils and on the forthcoming *Congrelat*, following a series of difficulties met with by the two Federations of the Past-pupils of Don Bosco and of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in organizing the Latin-American Congress.
- France, Grasse, 12-15 May. The Confederal Council studied the content and organization of the coming *Eurobosco* Congress of the Past-pupils, to be held at the end of October and beginning of November at Grasse in the Holiday Village managed by the Past-pupils themselves.

B. SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

The *programming* by the Rector Major and his Council had already set the stage for meetings in the salesian regions.

The following meetings have taken place:

- at *Warsaw*, in Poland, 4-6 February. All the Polish provinces took part. To the themes common to all the visits by the Department to the regions (the situation of social communication in the region, the support of the provincial program, the contribution made by the provincial delegate for social communication) two other elements were added. The first once again concerned the realization in the country of the Salesian Bulletin. The second introduced a new theme: the possibility of setting up a salesian scholastic publishing house in the country. This latter point was entrusted to later meetings of the Provincials, with a view to the clarification of objectives and organization, personnel and operative structures. The question will be followed up by the Department in support of the provinces.
- at *Benediktbeuern*, in Germany, 11-12 February, with the participation of the German-speaking

provinces. The occasion provided an opportunity for a deeper examination of the situation also between the Centre and the provinces. Communication would be increased by the solving of some problems linked mainly with language difficulties. Efforts should be continued to strengthen the position and efficacy of the provincial delegate for social communication within the local communities.

- at *Ljubljana*, in Slovenia, 7-9 May, with the participation of the provinces of Eastern Europe. A note was made of the many initiatives now in progress in the various countries, and some practical possibilities of linkage were considered, at least for specific initiatives between particular countries.

Another meeting worthy of note took place at *Quito* from 17-19 May. It brought together those responsible for the *Salesian Universities* and the *Higher Schools of Social Communication* in Latin America. Five salesian university institutions took part.

This was the first meeting of its kind, and served to point out:

- the present situation, with the numbers of students, the content of the courses and associat-

- ed activities, scientific organization and discipline, years of existence, etc., and whatever could prove useful for a more detailed knowledge of the individual institutes. From this point of view the meeting was very successful;
- a mutual exchange of views on the possible utilization of materials, resources and personnel available through each university or school. The difficulties were pointed out which can arise between institutes, even those which have Spanish as a common language. The good will, expressed by all will help in finding subsequent ways of linkage and collaboration;
 - the need for common growth through organized reflection on the theme of social communication, with the eventual preparation of a handbook dealing with the theory of communication, with particular attention to the salesian educative and pastoral project.

In the *ordinary administration* of the Department, the reflection on an aid for salesian communities has been concluded, and guidelines have been prepared for a new sector – that of public relations. As soon as it can be organized it will join up with the rest of the Department's activities.

The Councillor for the Missions

Following the program for Missionary Animation at provincial level, Fr Odorico had a meeting at Pacognano, 17-18 January 1999, with the Provincial, members of the provincial council and rectors.

After the close of the Council's winter session (22 January), his activities were as follows.

He took part in the celebrations for the Feast of Don Bosco at Prenestino in Rome. Then from 8-12 February he was at Nairobi, Kenya, for the team visit to the English-speaking provinces of Africa. Before the meeting began he was able to journey to Moshi, Tanzania, for a meeting with the young people in formation.

On 20 February he animated a day of spiritual retreat for the Don Bosco community of the UPS.

On 28 February he went to India to preside at Calcutta, with his counterpart in the General Council of the FMA, at a missionary seminar on the Praxis of Primary Evangelization, for SDB and FMA missionaries of North-East India (1-6 March). The meeting was considered very positive because of the choice of the themes dealt with, the methodology and the sharing of experiences between SDB and FMA missionaries.

On 11 and 12 March Fr Odorico was at the Madrid Missions Office for a meeting of Missionary Animation addressed to the Provincials and provincial councils of Spain and Portugal. He was also able to inspect the advanced phase of the work on the new wing of the premises.

From 22-30 March he took part in the intermediate session of the General Council which studied matters concerning Holland, Asia-Australia and the two regions of America.

From 1-5 April he was at Belo Horizonte, Brazil, for the meeting on *Afro-American Pastoral Praxis*. This was the first SDB-FMA meeting to examine the Afro-American cultural identity, its pastoral and liturgical dimensions, and its vocational aspect.

Leaving Belo Horizonte Fr Odorico went north to New Rochelle in the USA for a brief visit to the Missions Office and to meet the personnel, especially the new Procurator, Fr Patrick Diver. From April 17-23 he made a missionary visit to Guinée-Conakry, Dabadougou and Siguiri, where he conversed with the confreres and communities and met the respective Bishops. Our work in this area is becoming ever clearer and more consolidated.

On 24 April he took part in the festivities of the Province of Verona at Bolzano. At the invitation of the Provincial he gave a conference on the world dimension of the Church and the Congregation.

On 25 April he was invited to take part in the celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the NGO *Friends of the People* at Treviglio. This is a missionary reality which has worked especially in the area of the African Great Lakes and continues to do so.

From 1-5 May the Councillor was with the SDB and FMA at Yaoundé, Cameroon, for a meeting on *Missionary Praxis in French-speaking Africa*. These were days of reflection on the urgent need for evangelization and methods to be used in the catechumenate.

Between 6 and 12 May he made a missionary visit to Togo. He gave a conference to the novices and post-novices at Lomé, made a detailed visit to the missionary work at Cinkassé, where he noted the emphasis given to the first proclamation, to the foundation and formation of the ecclesial community, and to the formation of the catechists. On his way back he visited the work at Kara and had a meeting with the communi-

ty to review the pastoral mission.

On his return to Rome, he accompanied the Rector Major and other Councillors to Berlin where the team visit to the German-speaking provinces took place from 14-17 May. The missionary dimension figured prominently in this visit. From Berlin he went on to Bonn for a brief visit to the Missions Office.

From 28-30 May he presided at Madrid for the meeting of Procurators for the sharing of the financing of various projects.

From 1 June he was back in Rome for the summer session of the General Council.

The Economer General

30-31 January. Fr Mazzali took part in the festivities for the Feast of Don Bosco at the salesian foundation of Sampierdarena, and then went on to Turin for meetings with the SEI and to launch the interventions at Colle Don Bosco. He also went to Como to see the progress being made on the first mosaic for the Temple.

6 February. He presided at the Eucharist for former oratorians of the Generalate House of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

9-12 February. He was at Nairobi for the first team visit to the English-speaking provinces of Africa.

14-20 February. He preached a retreat to the Rectors of the two Mexican provinces at Amatitan, near Guadalajara. This was followed by a rapid visit to Guadalupe and Teotihuacan before returning to Rome.

27-28 February. Fr Mazzali was at Turin once again for further meetings at the SEI and in the studios of the architect Trucco.

4 March. With Fr Mario Sala he took part in a meeting of the Higher Council of Administration of the UPS, and remained at the UPS for some days afterwards to converse with those responsible for various aspects of the economy in connection with the coming extraordinary visitation.

6 March. With some other members of his Department, he took part in the winter meeting of Economers General of Italian and Spanish-speaking Institutes.

13-14 March. He was present at the meetings of the management committee and general assembly respectively of AGIDAE.

15-19 March. Fr Mazzali made a visit to Slovenia, where he was accompanied by the Provincial and Provincial Economer. They

visited the houses of Ljubljana, Cerknica, Maribor, Sentrupert, Trstenik, Radenci, Zelimlje and Opicina. The visit was an intense one, marked by the cordiality of meetings with the confreres and attention to the problems of the communities and province.

Returning from Slovenia, he remained at the Generalate for several days for discussions with Fr Alexandre Damians on some problems of administration and administrative management.

22 March. He had a meeting with the Executive Committee of the SEI, followed by other meetings concerned with the project for the Temple at Colle Don Bosco.

22-29 March. He took part in the intermediate session of the General Council and then went to his native parish of Sangano, Turin for the Easter Triduum.

13 April. Fr Mazzali spoke to the Provincial Economers of the Combonian Sisters gathered at their Generalate at Rome.

24-25 April. He took part in the Feast of the Provincial Community of Rome and discussed with the rectors the Rector Major's letter on poverty.

13-17 May. He was at the team visit to the German-speaking provinces at Berlin, in addition to the usual meetings at Turin and Rome.

19-21 May. The final engagement for the period was a meeting with the provincial economers of Spain and Portugal at Seville.

The Regional Councillor for Africa and Madagascar

27 January. Fr Antonio Rodriguez Tallón left Rome for Nairobi, to coordinate the immediate preparation for the Team Visit to the English-speaking provinces of the Region. In the few days preceding the Visit he was able to take part in celebrations in various houses.

29 January. A meeting with the Rectors of the houses of Kenya and Uganda to launch the consultation before the appointment of the new Provincial.

30 January. Celebration of the Feast of Don Bosco with the youngsters of the Nairobi "Boys Town". In the evening of the same day, the perpetual profession of three Zambian Salesians studying in Nairobi.

31 January. Liturgical celebration of Don Bosco in the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians at Nairobi-Upper Hill. After a fraternal lunch with confreres of the city, a conversation about the consultation for the new Provincial and its method.

1-2 February. Moshi, Tanzania. Conversation with the young confreres, especially from the ZMB Vice-province and AFW Delegation with respect to their extraordinary visitations.

3 February. Meeting of the Rectors of the houses of Tanzania and Sudan to explain the procedure for the consultation. Also a meeting of the *Curatorium*.

4 February. Return to Nairobi. Meeting of the *Curatorium* for the students of theology.

5-7 February. A quick trip to Madagascar to meet the Rectors and launch the consultation for the appointment of the new Superior. Meeting also of the provincial council.

8-12 February. Team Visit at Nairobi with the Rector Major and other Councillors General. Present were the Superiors and Councils of AET, AFC, AFM, AFW and ZMB.

13 February. Nairobi. Meeting on youth pastoral work organized by the corresponding Department. It went on for a fortnight and was attended by confreres working in the area of animation of youth pastoral work in the above Circumscriptions.

17 February. Journey to Lagos to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the houses of Nigeria*, be-

ginning with Ondo (pre-novitiate, novitiate, professional training centre and parish), going on to Onitsha (Training centre, aspirantate and oratory) and ending at Akure (parish, youth centre, training centre).

27 February. A historic day for Nigeria, with presidential elections and the return to civil rule after the social tension of military government.

7 March. Journey from Nigeria to Liberia, which took much longer than was foreseen. The Regional finally arrived at Monrovia in the late evening to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Liberian foundations*.

9 March. Special meeting of representatives of all activities for the benefit of street-children animated by the confreres in five different towns. The work involves numerous lay people who for some years now have shown their pedagogical ability and professional approach.

12 March. Fr Rodriguez had to travel via Guinea-Conakry to reach Sierra Leone, because flights from Liberia to Freetown had been suspended. He took the opportunity to greet the confreres working in Conakry who had organized some community festivities at short notice.

13 March. He reached Lungi, the airport of Freetown and visited the confreres who have lived through recent months of uncertainty and nightmare. They were never in actual danger, thank God, and on the contrary were able to help many missionaries who had been obliged to abandon their mission stations in the interior of the country. Vicinity to the airport gave the confreres a measure of security. In fact we have the only parish which has continued its normal activities in all of the Makeni Diocese. Although some of the activities in the villages have had to be suspended, the work goes on; the school has begun to function again and has been able to help the children of displaced persons who cannot find a place in the overflowing city schools.

19 March. From Lungi the Regional went back to Conakry and two days later went to Accra (Ghana), the fourth country of the English-speaking West African Delegation (AFW) he was due to visit. He continued to Sunyani to begin the visitation of the work which includes a parish and professional training centre.

28 March. He went down to Ashaiman where a professional training centre is being built.

30 March. A meeting with the AFW Delegation Council to share views about the visitation.

31 March. With two confreres of the house of Ashaiman, he went to the nearby city of Lomé to visit the confreres, who include novices and post-novices of the AFO and ATE Vice-provinces.

Holy Week was spent in various places. On Holy Thursday in one of the quarters of Ashaiman; Good Friday in our parish of Koumassi-Abidjan, where he had to land on his journey to Lusaka. The Mass of Easter Sunday he celebrated at Lusaka-Bauleni with a big festive crowd of the faithful of our parish.

7 April. A meeting with the Rectors of the ZMB Circumscription to launch the consultation for the new Superior to be appointed in the next session of the General Council in June-July. The same day Fr Rodriguez left for Johannesburg, spent the night with the confreres of the house of Rynfield, and the following morning flew on to Angola to begin the *extraordinary visitation*.

The visitation of Angola kept the Regional busy until 20 May, as he passed with the necessary tranquility through the various works to get to know the sad situation the confreres are sharing with the

local people after the civil war broke out again some months ago. The towns are full of displaced persons who have fled from rural areas to avoid being attacked by UNITA forces. In these days all men reaching the age of 21 were being called up for the army. The people find it difficult to understand the reasons behind this war which has gone on for far too many years and serves only the interests of the great oligarchies; all the ordinary people can do is suffer and give up their sons. Some seminarians and some of our own aspirants and pre-novices have been affected by the call-up.

22 April. Fr Rodriguez had a meeting with the Rector at Dondo to examine the situation in the country and the urgent needs it presents. He shared with the Rectors their points of view on the future of the Delegation: whether they thought the moment to be propitious for becoming an autonomous circumscription, or should wait a little longer.

19 May. He had a meeting with the Delegation Council to share the impressions formed during the visitation.

He returned to Rome a week earlier than planned after being unable to obtain a visa to enable him to take part in the meeting on First

Evangelization organized by the SDB and FMA Missions Departments at Yaoundé from 2-5 May.

And so he reached Rome on 21 May, which gave him the opportunity to celebrate the Feast of Mary Help of Christians at Turin and pray for peace in Angola and in the other suffering countries of Africa.

The Regional Councillor for Latin America - South Cone

After the winter session of the Council, Fr Baruffi left for Corumbá, Brazil, to take part on 31 January in the episcopal ordination of Mgr. Friedrich Heimler as Coadjutor Bishop of Umuarama, Brazil, and to have a meeting with the provincial council of Campo Grande.

Then, after a few days spent with his family, he began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina*. The first phase of the visitation took him to the works in Patagonia to see the progress made in the last six years. This is a region where the salesian work is unique and continues to be more than necessary. The confreres today are working in parishes, oratories and schools.

The visitation was interrupted to enable the Regional to take part in the intermediate session of the General Council from 21-31 March at the Generalate, which had as its particular theme the Regions Australia-Asia, the Southern Cone and Interamerica, with a view to obtaining a better knowledge of the reality of these zones and deciding on guidelines and initiatives for the development of the mission.

From 2-5 April the Regional accompanied the Rector Major in his visit to Santiago, Chile, and from 6-11 April took part in the team visit to the CISUR region, which includes the provinces of Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. There were 64 participants in all. At the same time Fr Baruffi took the opportunity to have a meeting of the CISUR and the JIAR to deal with problems concerning the life of the Region.

From 13-18 April the same group of Councillors was present at Campo Grande for the team visit to the six provinces of Brazil, this time with 49 participants. On 11 April he had a meeting of the combined CISBRASIL and CIB (SDB and FMA Provincials) to assess their combined plan and consider other points relating to salesian life in Brazil.

On 19 April he returned to Argentina to continue the visitation of the Buenos Aires Province, and also to launch the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial.

On 8-9 May he visited the novitiate at Córdoba and had a meeting in the theologate with all the Salesians of the province in initial formation.

The visitation ended on 22 May with a series of meetings with the Provincial and his council, with the Rectors and the confreres of the province, for the presentation of the final report and to seek practical ways of giving effect to indications left in the course of the visitation.

Subsequently, from 14-19 May, Fr Baruffi set in motion in the La Plata Province the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial. This took place in the course of two retreats which enabled the Regional to meet with practically all the confreres.

On 27 May he returned to the Generalate.

The Councillor for the Inter-american Region

On 23 January Fr Chavez left for Madrid where he had several

meetings: with a confrere from the Madrid Province who had asked to go to work in Cuba, and with the Provincial to decide on the agreement to be made; a meeting also with the Director of the *Central Catequítica Salesiana* (CCS), concerning some points relating to the Salesian Book Fair at Quito, during which a contract was signed and ratified between the CCS and the Region regarding the publication of books of the CCS.

On 25 January he reached Mexico to spend some days with his family and celebrate the 25th anniversary of his priestly ordination. During this period he received the news of the assassination at Moca in the Dominican Republic of Fr Cyprian Santibañez, a Spanish salesian priest of the Antilles Province.

In Mexico Fr Sanchez celebrated the feast of Don Bosco with the FMA, presiding at the Eucharist at which some Sisters made their perpetual profession.

On 2 February he began a visit of animation to various provinces of the Region. He was in Bolivia from 2-5 February to be with the new Provincial at the start of his ministry; he visited some of the communities and works in Santa Cruz and the houses of formation in Cochabamba; he also had a

meeting with the provincial council; he then went on to Peru (5-7 February) for a meeting with the Peruvian provincial council and visited the community of the prenovices; he was also able to meet with provincial formation commission and representatives of the Salesian Family.

From 8-11 February the Regional presided at a *meeting of the Provincials of the American Andes Zone* in Bogotá, at which were present also some members of the Projects Office. During this meeting a review was made of the Provincial Chapters, and a check was made and comments submitted on the Provincial Plan of Qualification. A verification was also made of various meetings that had been held in the Region or at the level of the Congregation, such as the course of ongoing formation organized by the CSR, the meeting with the directors of the Salesian Bulletin, the Meeting in Rome on marginalization and street-children, and the Salesian Book Fair. In addition an assessment was made of the process being promoted by the Provincials for the study and application of the Manual for Youth Pastoral Work. Some time was given to a reflection on the growing phenomenon of marginaliza-

tion in most of the countries of the Region and the impact this has at the level of sensitivity and practical action in the provinces. The results were analyzed of the survey on the theme of the Team Visits, and an attempt was made to interpret the data. Finally the various initiatives for the celebration of the Jubilee were reviewed.

From 12-16 February Fr Chavez took part in a meeting of the Salesian North American Conference (SNAC) at Santa Cruz in California. The meeting first concentrated on the theme of racial and cultural segregation and on the manifestations it can have in community life when there is a growing number of confreres of Asian or Latin origin, and in pastoral work.. During the same period there was a meeting of the Curatorium of the SUE, SUO and CAN provinces for the novitiate and post-novitiate. On 15 February Sister Mary Greenan presented the letter written by the Rector Major and Mother General urging collaboration, and the provincial councillors met by regions to examine possible areas of collaboration. On the 16th the group divided into two committees: one to draw up a presentation of the agreements that had been reached in the course on

youth work at Montreal and Santiago; and the second dedicated to a review of the SDB and FMA Regions and the proposals to be made as a result of this meeting of the SNAC. The meeting ended with the approval of the conclusions, evening prayer and festivities to celebrate Shrovetide.

After the SNAC meeting the Regional spent two days (17-18) with the community of Berkeley, where a change of orientation of the Institute of Spirituality is in progress. The concern is how to give stability to the personnel, how to consolidate the new phase of the ISS (also at the level of a project of collaboration), and how to involve the English-speaking provinces of both the SDB and FMA. On the 18th Fr Chavez also visited the post-novices who are at Richmond.

From 20-23 February the Regional presided at a *meeting of the Provinces of the Mid-American and Caribbean Zone* in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The agenda was the same as that for the Andes zone referred to earlier. During this same period he was able to visit the various communities of Port-au-Prince: Pétionville, ENAM and Fleuriot. After the meeting in Haiti he made a rapid visit to the Province of Mexico (MEM).

On 1 March Fr Chavez began the Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of León, Spain (SLE), in the course of which a highspot was the pilgrimage of the Salesian Family to Santiago, in connection with the Holy Year of Compostela.

The visitation was interrupted only for the *intermediate session of the General Council in Rome* from 22-31 March, and for a *meeting on Afro-American Pastoral Praxis* in Belo Horizonte. The intermediate Council session was concerned mainly with the three Regions: America-Southern Cone, Interamerica and Australia-Asia, and was followed by a letter of the Rector Major to each of the three Regions.

31 May. Fr Chavez returned to the Rome for the summer session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the Australia-Asia Region

After the winter session of the Council Fr D'Souza went to Chennai (Madras) to launch the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincials for Madras (INM) and Tiruchy (INT), in consequence of the Council's decision to divide the Province of Madras

and erect the new Province of Tiruchy. To settle some details of an agreement previously made between the two circumscriptions, the Regional had a meeting on 3 February with the provincial council of Madras and the council of the Tiruchy delegation.

From Madras Fr D'Souza went on to Melbourne to begin another consultation, this time for the new Provincial of Australia. In addition he presided at a meeting of the Provincials of the Pacific group in preparation for the team visit scheduled for 22-26 February of the year 2000 at Hong Kong. He also took part in the inaugural ceremony of the Brothers Congress of the Pacific provinces (15-19 February).

From Melbourne he travelled to Guwahati in North-East India to preside at the plenary assembly of the Indian Provincial Conference (SPCI) from 18-20 February. With the Provincials he was present to welcome the Rector Major for his visit to Shillong (20-28 February). He also took part in the Retreat preached by the Rector Major to the Provincials of the Indian Conference and members of their councils, and in the festive celebration of gratitude to the Rector Major at Shillong on 27 February.

After the Rector Major's return to Rome, Fr D'Souza travelled to Ho Chi Minh City to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Vice-province of Vietnam* (2-19 March). He then returned to Rome for the intermediate session of the General Council, during which he presented a report on the situation, problems and challenges of the Australia-Asia Region.

After the Easter celebrations in Rome the Councillor went to Hong Kong for another Extraordinary Visitation, this time to China (9 April-24 May). In the course of this period he was able to participate in the Third Regional Congress of Salesian Cooperators held at Hong Kong from 29 April-2 May), and presided at a further meeting of Provincials of the Pacific zone of his Region.

After the visitation at Hong Kong, Fr D'Souza returned to Rome (26 May) for the summer session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the West Europe Region

On 23 January Fr Filiberto Rodriguez left Rome for Las Palmas. Accompanied by the Provincial of Córdoba he began a visit of animation to the various communi-

ties of the province, making use of the possibilities offered by the novena and preparations for the feast of Don Bosco. The province is short of personnel and the average age of the confreres is high, but they are not lacking in enthusiasm and pastoral zeal. The laity and especially the Salesian Family carry out an interesting work which is eminently salesian in character, and the celebration of the feast of Don Bosco in the post-novitiate house of Granada was for everyone a day of hope and joy.

On the same day, 31 January, the Councillor reached Barcelona, where on the following morning he had a meeting with the provincial council to begin the *extraordinary visitation of the province*. It went on until 8 May when it concluded with the provincial feast-day.

The visitation followed the usual program arranged beforehand: a personal conversation with each of the confreres, a meeting with the communities and with each group of the Salesian Family, a "Good Morning" to the pupils in their various school-groups, a greeting and message to teachers, parents, collaborators, parish councillors, management groups for oratories and youth centres, animators of social programs, etc.

All these, together with the study sessions with each of the provincial commissions and especially the daily living with the confreres, enabled the Regional to esteem the good organization of the province, the high level of the knowledge of and reflection on the directives of the Congregation, the determination to be creatively faithful to the salesian charism, the great social sensitivity and the concern to provide a salesian response to society's outcasts, and the effort to find adequate and efficacious methods for evangelization.

With the provincial feast-day and the celebration of 50 years of work in the house of Martí-Codolar, the Visitation ended. It was a historic day in which were quoted various confreres from the Provinces of Valencia and Bilbao who during the years of their theological studies had been able to savour at the same time the depth of the wisdom of the Word of God and the peace and serenity one breathes in the "Cigarral de la Santa".

In the course of the Visitation some events must be recorded which involved the Regional at a deeper level. On 10-11 March at El Plantio (Madrid) he took part in the 44th session of the *Iberian Provincial Conference*, which re-

viewed the functioning of various national delegations and made preparations for the Team Visit to the whole Region, which is scheduled for next August in Santiago de Compostela.

From 21 March to 2 April the Councillor took part in the intermediate session of the General Council in Rome, which analyzed the situation of various Regions and decided some other questions of ordinary administration.

On 10 April Fr Rodriguez celebrated the Eucharist at the end of the Salesian International Games, which took place in various sporting installations in the city of Valencia and in territories of the University of Chest. All were very satisfied with the organization. Emphasis must be placed on the presence of various groups from Eastern Europe and especially on the great generosity shown by the organizers, animators and the young people of the youth centres of Valencia. The games were an interesting opportunity for noting once again the great richness we have in youthful animators and the power of sport in general, the people who organize it, the underlying resources etc. We must dedicate ourselves to making of sport a true educative and pastoral process. There is no doubt that

we are losing many possibilities in this area.

From 10 to 14 May the Regional took part in some sessions of a meeting of provincial secretaries of the Region at León with Fr Maraccani, Secretary General. At the conclusion of the meeting he accompanied Fr Maraccani to Santiago to gain the indulgence of the Holy Year of Compostela.

On 19-20 May he accompanied the provincial economists of Spain and Portugal at a meeting with the Economist General and some of his collaborators at Sanlúcar. They studied the letter of the Rector Major on poverty (AGC 367), and some other themes relevant to the financial sector.

21 May saw the Regional at Paris for the first meeting of the new Provincial of France with his council, and afterwards with the two outgoing provincial councils of Lyons and Paris, and with the new single Council which takes over in August. All these meetings were presided over by Fr Luc Van Looy, Vicar General. There was an evident atmosphere of serenity and optimism and the determination to work creatively to make the salesian charism visible and significant among the young people of France.

On 23 May the Councillor re-

turned from Paris and in the evening presided at the procession of Mary Help of Christians which wound through the streets of Salamanca as one of the concluding events of the celebration of the centenary of salesian work in that city. The following day he accompanied Cardinal Javierre at the closing Eucharist of the centenary. These were two days rich in emotion, which revealed how deeply rooted is devotion to Mary Help of Christians in this cultured and artistic city.

On 26 May the Regional made a rapid journey to La Coruña to coordinate a work on "*Poverty in the West-European Region*" to be presented at the Colloquy on Salesianity to be celebrated at Benediktbeuern in August.

Finally, on 28 May he presided at the ordinary session of the governing body of the Missions Office at Madrid. At the end of the meeting the new extensions were blessed and inaugurated. They are to be used for fund-raising and the formation of volunteer missionaries. Both services and structures are designed to serve the needs of persons and their evangelization.

Fr Filiberto Rodriguez returned to Rome on 31 May for the summer session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the North Europe Region

From 23-26 January Fr Albert Van Hecke was in Malta for a visit of animation to the confreres and works of that island. He found a vitality and enthusiasm for Don Bosco among the 28 confreres working in this haven of culture and history.

From 28 January to 2 February the Regional was in Hungary where, in a meeting with the provincial council, he dealt with some key points for the development of the salesian charism in the province.

On 3 February he left for Warsaw, where in the following days he took part with the Polish Provincials and the Superior of the Eastern Circumscription in a three-day study organized by the Department of Social Communication. On 6 February he began the Extraordinary Visitation of the Warsaw Province with a meeting with the provincial council.

Subsequently, from 8-9 February, he presided over a meeting of the consulting group of the Polish provinces. Among the items dealt with was an examination of the Letter of the Rector Major to the provinces of Poland, the preparations for the coming team visit,

the Federation of Salesian Schools in the country, the Salesian Missionary Centre at Warsaw and the sporting organization *Salos*. After the meeting the visitation continued.

The period from 26-29 March Fr Van Hecke spent in Rome for the first part of the intermediate session of the General Council, and then returned once again to the visitation.

Later on 30 April at Warsaw he presided over a further meeting of the consulting group of the Polish provinces, this time to consider the question of a secretary and secretariat for the group, the Salesian Bulletin, and the team visit.

On 1 May he went to Dingli, Malta, to preside at the annual meeting of the Provincials of the Region of Northern Europe. The main purpose of the meeting was to take note of the initiatives in the field of ongoing formation at provincial and local level; to acquire a deeper knowledge of the document: *Salesian Youth Pastoral Work. Fundamental frame of reference*, Rome 1998, presented by Fr Antonio Domenech, Councillor General for Youth Pastoral Work; and to communicate significant experiences of the life of the provinces

After the meeting in Malta the Regional once again returned to the Warsaw visitation. It had to be interrupted once more to allow him to participate in the *Team Visit to the German-speaking provinces*. Since this took place in Berlin, he took the opportunity to visit the confreres of the Polish mission there who belong to the Warsaw province.

On 23 May, solemnity of Pentecost, he was at Czerwinsk at the novitiate, to join in the festivities for the 75th anniversary of salesian work in that area. On the following day, 24 May, Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians, he was at our theological studentate of Łódź for the priestly ordination of ten young confreres of the Province of Warsaw. The ordaining prelate was Bishop Adam Smigielski, the salesian bishop of Sosnowiec.

At Warsaw on 26 May the Councillor met with the provincial council, and on the following day with the rectors and parish priests, to present his impressions at the conclusion of the Visitation.

On 28 May he returned to Rome, but left again the same day for Austria where, on the 30th, he took part in a meeting of the Salesian Family at Puchheim at which Mgr. Alois Kothgasser SDB, Bishop of Innsbruck, presided.

31 May. Fr Van Hecke returned finally to Rome for the summer session of the General Council.

The Regional Councillor for Italy and the Middle East

9-11 January. Fr Fedrigotti presided at a meeting of the CISI, which approved the guidelines for the *press office of the CISI presidency and of the CNOS*. It also outlined a national educative project of solidarity with young Albanian refugees, in the care of VIS-SCS, in collaboration with salesian provinces and other entities. After careful analysis approval was given for a course of formation for school directors, who number about 800 between SDB, FMA and lay people. A careful verification was proposed of the summer courses in ongoing formation, earlier proposed by the formation sector of the CISI.

10 January. The Councillor was present at the CISI-CII meeting in Rome. In the light of the SYM national assembly at the beginning of January 1999, the SDB and FMA Provincials indicated some lines to be followed in the future. They also drew some conclusions of a vocational nature from the SDB and FMA national

congress on youth pastoral work. They gave further study to dialogue with COSPES, appreciating its service and making it more specific, with a view to its continuation and the establishment of an eventual headquarters in Rome. Finally they approved a plan for the national formation of directive personnel, in collaboration with *Job selex* and the Lombardy region.

26 January. Fr Fedrigotti took part in the preparatory meeting of the group for coordinating SDBs and FMAs working in ecclesial and salesian organisms.

29-31 January. He was in the Verona area for celebrations of the feast of Don Bosco.

1 February. At the Sacred Heart, Rome, he took part in a group reflecting on the updating of the Regulations of the CISI.

6 February. At the same place he met with those in charge of VIS-Missionary Animation for a check-up on the process of animation and service.

7-13 February. He preached a retreat at Brescia for the confreres of the studentate of Nave.

15 February. He was at Ancona to launch the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial.

22 February. He began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Sicil-*

ian Province (ISI), which continued until 31 May, interrupted only by the retreat spent with the CISI presidency at Sant'Agnello (Sorrento, 21-27 March) and the meeting of the CISI presidency in May.

7 May. He took part in the morning in the conclusion of the SCS seminar on juveniles at risk.

7-10 May. The pre-announced CISI assembly. It analyzed for the first time, with the provincial economists, the *consolidated economic plan for the commercial activities of salesian Italy*; it examined the content and costs of the proposed course of formation for directive personnel in schools and approved a scheme for its realization at least in part through teleconferences; it approved the charges to be made by the formation houses; and it asked the economic sector for more details about the juridical situation of COSPES, and about the financial relationships between the Congregation and parish entities.

Conclusions were reached about the assembly of the Youth Pastoral sector, with particular attention to the delegate of the Provincial and his team, to group activity, and to the SYM (with special reference to the *Confronto '99* and the *Forum 2000*); the functionality of the relationship between Missionary

Animation and the VIS was examined, as also the process of intervention in favour of unaccompanied Albanian youngsters; the intention was confirmed to continue with the feasibility study on the possibility of a CNOS Press Office, and the early publication was requested of the calendar of appointments at national level for the period 1999-2000.

The Secretary General

In pursuance of the items fixed for the present six-year period, Fr Maraccani, in agreement with the Rector Major and the respective Regional Councillors, held three meetings with groups of Provincial Secretaries:

- at Hua Hin, Thailand, for the Secretaries of the Region *Australia-Asia* (1-5 March);
- at Rome (Sacred Heart) for those of *Italy and the Middle East* (26-30 April);
- at León, Spain, for those of the West-European Region (France, Spain and Portugal).

As was indicated in the letter of convocation the meetings were for

the purpose of updating and mutual exchange of views. The agenda consisted of all items which are the concern of the Secretary General and provincial secretaries, with regard to documentation, statistics, juridical aspects, and archives. Particular attention was given to the management of archives and to juridical practices.

The active participation of the secretaries and the fraternal atmosphere of the meeting helped towards the mutual acquiring of knowledge of various realities. Thanks are also due to the host province for its eminently salesian arrangements.

For the Secretary General in particular, the meetings in Thailand and in Spain, provided a valuable opportunity for visiting, in addition to the provincial offices concerned, some of the other communities, and for getting to know at first hand the reality of the salesian mission in the different places. In the León Province in the company of the Regional, Fr Filiberto Rodriguez, he had the joy of being able to go to Santiago to gain the jubilee indulgence for the Holy Year of Compostella.

5.1 Decree on the Martyrdom of the Polish Martyrs

We give below an English translation of the Decree on the Martyrdom of the 108 Martyrs of Poland, beatified by Pope John Paul II on 13 June 1999, among whom are our salesian confrere Fr Józef Kowalski and the five members of the Salesian Oratory of Poznan. We have not given the names of all the 108 Martyrs, but only of those first on the list, and those linked with our Family.

The original Latin text of the Decree can be found in the Italian version of the present issue of the AGC.

* * *

"In our own century the martyrs have returned, many of them nameless, 'unknown soldiers' as it were of God's great cause. As far as possible, their witness should not be lost to the Church" (JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente*, 37).

Among those who shed their blood for the faith in this century, which is now coming to an end, must be included many martyrs of a national socialism which, being truly atheistic was the enemy of God and of men. Hostile to the

Catholic Church and to its members, it tried in many ways to reduce its activities and, sometimes in insidious ways and sometimes openly, to deny and put a limit to human and Christian values. In Poland in particular, militarily occupied by the Nazis in the period 1939-1945, it attempted to eradicate the presence of Christianity by assailing ecclesial institutions, bishops, priests and lay people held to be opposed to national socialism.

In this land, darkened by the atrocious deeds perpetrated by the Nazis, but illumined by the testimony of hearing and of faith of many disciples of Christ, among those who suffered martyrdom were the one hundred and eight members of the Catholic Church whom we now commemorate with veneration. As faithful followers of the divine Master, they did not conceal their dignity as Christians, they did not deny the faith, they did not flee from the danger, they were not frightened by threats, nor were they attracted by promises of things against their conscience. They preferred to follow the way of the cross to save their souls and commit themselves for the glory of God and the extension of Christ's Kingdom. They forgave their per-

secutors and fostered the hope of obtaining the eternal reward of the divine mercy.

Among these intrepid witnesses to the faith there were three bishops, fifty-two diocesan priests, thirty-four priests or brothers belonging to Institutes of consecrated life, eight women religious, two seminarians, and nine lay persons. They were not all treated in the same manner: some of them suffered an immediate and violent death by beheading or hanging, by a firing squad, by torture or suffocation in gas chambers; others died gradually in less violent ways, e.g. through inhuman imprisonment, torments, hunger and similar causes. Nor was the place of martyrdom the same for all. Some gave their supreme testimony of charity in death camps, others in prisons or elsewhere.

Here are the names of the 108 Servants of God:

1. ANTONI JULIAN NOWOWIEJSKI, Archbishop-Bishop of Plock
2. LEON WETMANSKI, Auxiliary Bishop of the diocese of Plock
3. WLADYSLAW GORAL, Auxiliary Bishop of Lublin
4. HENRYK KACZOROWSKI, priest of the diocese of Wladislavia
5. ANICET KOPLINSKI, professed priest of the Order of Capuchin Friars Minor

6. MARIA ANNA BIERNACKA, laywoman of the diocese of Lomza

...

77. JÓZEF KOWALSKI, priest and professed member of the Society of St Francis de Sales; arrested in the year 1941, died under torture in the death camp of *Auschwitz* on 4 July of the following year;

...

104. CZESLAW JÓZWIAK, member of the Salesian oratory of Poznan; arrested in the year 1940, and beheaded by guillotine in the prison of Dresda, 24 August 1942;
105. EDWARD KAZMIERSKI, member of the Salesian oratory of Poznan; arrested in the year 1940, and beheaded by guillotine in the prison of Dresda, 24 August 1942;
106. FRANCISZEK KESY, member of the Salesian oratory of Poznan; arrested in the year 1940, and beheaded by guillotine in the prison of Dresda, 24 August 1942;
107. EDWARD KLINIK, member of the Salesian oratory of Poznan; arrested in the year 1940, and beheaded by guillotine in the prison of Dresda, 24 August 1942;
108. JAROGNIEW WOJCIEKOWSKI, member of the Salesian ora-

tory of Poznan; arrested in the year 1940, and beheaded by guillotine in the prison of Dresda, 24 August 1942.

These Servants of God, who form only a small part of the many Christians killed in Poland during the second world war, have always been considered as true martyrs. The cause for their Beatification or declaration of Martyrdom was introduced in the year 1992 by the Bishop of Wladislavia who, in agreement with the Bishops Conference of Poland, proceeded to the celebration of the diocesan Process, as also the additional Process, to which were added the rogatory Processes set up by the Curias of the Polish dioceses. The authority and value of these Processes were approved by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. When the *Positio* had been prepared, an investigation was made – in accordance with the norms – as to whether the 108 above-named Servants of God were to be considered martyrs of the faith. For this purpose there was a meeting of the appropriate Congress of Consultors on 20 November 1998, with positive results. Subsequently the Cardinals and Bishops, in their ordi-

nary session of 16 February 1999 with Cardinal Edmund Casimir Szoka as Presenter of the Cause, recognized that these Servants of God had shed their blood in fidelity to Christ and were killed in *odium fidei*.

When the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II had been informed of all this by means of a report made by the undersigned Prefect, he accepted and approved the vote of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and disposed that the decree on the martyrdom of the Servants of God be prepared.

Once this had been done, in the presence of the undersigned Prefect, the Cardinal Presenter of the Cause, of me the Bishop Secretary of the Congregation, and of others whom it is customary to call together, the Holy Father solemnly declared that: *There is certainty of the martyrdom and the cause of the Servants of God Antoni Julian Nowowiejski, Archbishop-Bishop of Plock, Henryk Kaczorowski and Anicet Koplinski, Priests, Maria Anna Biernacka, laywoman, and 104 Companions, killed in the years 1939-1945, "in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur"*.

The Holy Father further disposed that the present decree

should be published and kept among the Acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Given at Rome, 26 March 1999.

✠ JOSÉ SARAIVA MARTINS
Arciv. Tit. di Tuburnica
Prefect

✠ EDWARD NOWAK
Arciv. Tit. di Luni
Secretary

5.2 Decree of canonical erection of the Province “Our Lady of Good Health of Vailankanni” of Tiruchirapalli (Tiruchy), Southern Tamil Nadu, India.

The following is the Decree by which the Rector Major, with the consent of his Council, has canonically erected the new Province of Southern Tamil Nadu, by division of the territory of the existing Province of “St Thomas the Apostle” of Madras.

Prot. n° 092/99

The undersigned,

Fr Juan E. Vecchi

Rector Major of the Salesian Society of St John Bosco

- after considering the development of the salesian mission and the great territorial extent of the Salesian Province “St Thomas

- the Apostle” of Madras (India);
- having taken note of the fact that for purposes of more efficacious animation, the Provincial Delegation “Southern Tamil Nadu” was constituted in 1992 with headquarters at Tiruchirapalli (Tiruchy);
- having examined the results of a consultation carried out in the Province;
- having obtained the favourable opinion of the Provincial and his Council;
- with the consent of the General Council given in its meeting of 25 March 1999, in conformity with Const.132 §1,1 and Const.156;
- on the basis of art.156 of the Constitutions,

DETACHES from the salesian Province “St Thomas the Apostle” of Madras the following houses:

- 1° COIMBATORE – Vellakinar, “St. John Bosco”
- 2° LALGUDI, “St. John Bosco”
- 3° MADURAI, “Our Lady of Lourdes”
- 4° THANJAVUR – Don Bosco, “St. John Bosco”
- 5° TIRUCHIRAPALLI – AM-SAM, “St. John Bosco”
- 6° TIRUCHIRAPALLI – Kristo-

dayam, "St. John Bosco"

7° VARADARAJANPET, "Mary Help of Christians"

8° YERCAUD, "Sacred Heart of Jesus"

and in addition the **salesian works** in:

- COIMBATORE - DBAI, "St. John Bosco"
- MADURAI - Don Bosco, "St. John Bosco"
- PALLITHAMMAM - Bosco Maiyam
- SALEM, "St. John Bosco"
- SIVAKASI, "St. John Bosco"
- THANJAVUR - Madhakottai, "Mary Help of Christians"
- THIRUMANATHURAI, St. Pius X Church
- VALLAVILAI, "Mary Help of Christians"
- VEDASANTHUR, "St. John Bosco"
- VILATHIKULAM, "St. Anthony"

and by means of this present Decree, **CANONICALLY ERECTS**, with the above-mentioned Houses and salesian works, the new **Salesian Province with headquarters at TIRUCHIRAPALLI (TIRUCHY)**, initially in the house "**St John Bosco**" ["**Kris-todayam**"], with title "**OUR LADY OF GOOD HEALTH OF VAILANKANNI**".

Territorially the Province includes the following Dioceses of **Southern Tamil Nadu**: Coimbatore, Kottar, Kumbakonam, Madurai, Palayamkottai, Salem, Sivagangai, Thanjavur, Tiruchirapalli, Tuticorin.

The following decisions have been made:

1. Members of the Province are all those confreres, who at the date of the canonical erection live and work in the Houses and salesian works listed above. An eventual change of province - after three years - can be made by agreement with the two Provincials.
2. The membership of confreres in initial formation and of those studying or working outside the Province is determined starting from the option made by the confreres themselves.
3. The determination of the Centres of initial formation, of the Centres of animation, and financial relationships will be regulated by an Agreement between the Council of the Province of Madras and the Council of the Delegation of Tiruchy, dated 3 February 1999.

The present Decree will come into force on **5 August 1999**

Rome, 25 March 1999.

Fr Juan E. VECCHI
Rector Major

Fr Francesco MARACCANI
Secretary General

5.3 New Provincials

The following are the biographical notes of the new Provincial of Bratislava, Slovakia, appointed in the plenary session of the General Council of Dec.1988 - Jan. 1999, who was omitted by accident from the list published in AGC 367.

FEKETE Vladimir, Province of Bratislava, Slovakia.

Predecessor: Fr Ernest Macák.

b. 11 August 1955, at a time when salesian work in Slovakia was of a clandestine nature because of the communist regime. Maturity examination 1973. Studied mathematics and geology at the State University of Bratislava. After Novitiate, in clandestine form, 1st profession 15 February 1975. Salesian experience in whatever form was possible in the prevailing conditions. Private study of theology. Ordained priest at Berlin in 1983.

After ordination, he took part in the organization of salesian life in the difficult conditions of persecution and launched a periodical for young people (the review *SVETLO - The Light*). Thanks to his efforts the salesian work has been enriched with new vocations.

After the return of freedom, Fr Fekete completed his studies of theology at the University of Vienna. 1990-1993 he was Rector of the students of theology. 1993 he became Vice-Provincial.

5.4 Third volume of Don Bosco's collected letters.

We announce the publication of the 3rd volume of the COLLECTED LETTERS OF DON BOSCO, edited in the new critical edition by the Salesian Historical Institute, following the program earlier approved by the Rector Major with his Council and inserted in the Statutes of the Institute for the study and publication of salesian Sources.

The following is a brief description of the contents of this 3rd volume, which will certainly prove very useful to anyone wanting a deeper knowledge of our Founder, in his authentic personal traits

and in his work, as manifested in his letters.

GIOVANNI BOSCO, *Epistolario*. Vol.3 (1869-1872). Letters 1264-1714. Introduction, Critical Text and notes edited by Francesco Motto, Rome (Istituto Storico Salesiano, Fonti, serie prima, 10). LAS 1999, 596 p.

The four years from 1869 to 1872, during which were written the 451 letters of the third volume of Don Bosco's Collected Letters (a third of them not previously published), was a fundamental period of his life. At Florence and at Rome his involvement in the processes connected with the appointment of bishops to the vacant sees of Italy made him known not only as a zealous priest, but also as a person with considerable influence in government circles and with the Holy See. At Rome the First Vatican Council provided an opportunity for developing relationships with many of the world's bishops, and the financial situation in Italy was such that many local administrations could not support the schools imposed on them by law, and had recourse to him. And so

his range of activities became extended, not only in Piedmont but also in Liguria, thanks to the public and private donations which never failed him, the positive reputation enjoyed by the Salesian Society in many environments, ecclesiastical and lay, and the sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians which was becoming widely known as a centre of devotion.

The new religious Congregation seemed to have a rosy future, even though the Constitutions had yet to be approved, the formation of the members left something to be desired because of the lack of suitably trained personnel, and the first signs of disagreement with the Archbishop of Turin were beginning to appear. He was always in debt financially and the political climate in Italy was unfavourable to anyone taking the side of the Pope.

This is a volume of the collected letters which is rich in fresh facts, wide in its embrace and interesting in its content: a volume indispensable for anyone wanting to acquire a serious knowledge of the "father and teacher of youth" in the very difficult years of Porta Pia.

5.5 Our dead confreres (1999 - 2nd list)

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

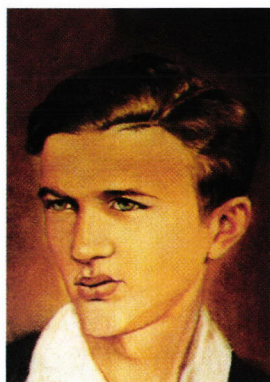
NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P ANTONINI Alfonso	Roma	03-03-99	77	IRO
P ANZELMO Giuseppe	Andria (BA)	28-06-99	82	IME
L BAGNATO Agostino	Vico Equense	16-06-99	87	IME
P BARRERA Ramón	Salto	30-06-99	77	URU
P BERNARDI Antonio	Krishnagar	15-04-99	88	INC
P BERTOLUSSO Stefano	La Paz	07-05-99	65	BOL
P BINOTTO Silvio	Schio (VI)	28-05-98	74	IVO
L BRUNY Robert	Toulon	12-06-99	81	FLY
P BUCCELLA Pasquale	Castellammare di Stabia	21-05-99	87	IME
P CARRANO Gioacchino	Roma	19-04-99	86	IRO
P CARRETTA Raffaele	Torino	13-06-99	70	ICP
P ČEGLAR Carol	Ljubljana (Slovenia)	13-06-99	86	CAN
P CHETTUPUZH George	Ernakulam (Kerala)	25-04-99	60	INK
P COLLOMB-GROS Julien	La Crau	19-03-99	77	FLY
P COLOMBARA Epifanio	Varazze	14-05-99	88	ILT
P CVETKO Anton	Klagenfurt	07-04-99	83	AUS
P DE FRANCESCO Valerio	Negrar (Verona)	02-05-99	81	IVO
P do NASCIMENTO F. Santiago	Belém	29-05-99	88	BMA
P DOLINAR Egidij	Golnik (Trstenik)	16-04-99	74	SLO
P FERNANDEZ Isidro Mayo	Aibonito (Puerto Rico)	25-05-99	83	ANT
L FIOR Cesare	Este (PD)	23-06-99	80	IVO
P GORDON Maurice	Moston, Manchester	15-05-99	74	GBR
L GOTTARDELLO Mario	Castelfranco Veneto (TV)	28-04-99	67	IRO
L GURIA Athanasius	Shillong	26-06-99	63	ING
P KAINDL Karl	München (Baviera)	11-06-99	66	GEM
P KURUVACHIRA George	Ernakulam (Kerala)	15-05-99	55	INK
P LANNEER Gustaaf	Hoboken	16-06-99	66	BEN
P LEBER Lipót	Üllő	19-04-99	73	UNG
P LOZANO GARRIDO Manuel	Córdoba	04-06-99	67	SCO
P MAFFI Francesco	Torino	18-06-99	84	ICP
P MAJEWSKI Mieczysław	Anielin (Polonia)	24-06-99	71	PLS
L McALISTER James	Daleside Don Bosco	08-05-99	79	AFM
P MINGHELLI Vincenzo	Novara	11-05-99	92	ICP
P MIRANDA ESCAMILLA Julio	Santa Ana (El Salvador)	08-04-99	75	CAM
P MONETTI Eugenio	Mérida	03-06-99	83	VEN
P MONSUTTI Giuseppe	Tolmezzo	14-06-99	88	IVE
P MOSANER Giuseppe	Trento	01-07-99	78	IVO
P NACHER Alfonso	Fatumaca (Timor)	10-05-99	94	ITM

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P PASINI Umberto	Brescia	12-05-99	61	ILE
P PESCUMA Arnaldo	Bari	16-05-99	68	IME
P PIGNATARO Giuseppe	Napoli	25-06-99	83	IME
P QUARANTA Rodolfo	Torino	12-06-99	76	ICP
P RECALDE Ricardo	Barcelona	03-04-99	77	SBA
L REITER Albert	Buxheim (Baviera)	20-05-99	83	GEM
L REMEDIOS Antonio	Bombay	28-04-99	80	INB
E RESTO Tarcisius Phanrang	Madras	05-05-99	69	—
<i>Fu per 5 anni Vescovo Ausiliare e per 4 anni Arcivescovo di Shillong (Meghalaya, India)</i>				
P SALTO Giacomo	Buenos Aires	09-06-99	74	ABA
L SCHIVALOCCHI Giuseppe	Betlemme	13-05-99	95	MOR
P SEGOVIA Saturnino	Montevideo	03-05-99	82	URU
P SERRA Giuseppe	Torino	11-06-99	92	ICP
E SILVA HENRIQUEZ Raúl	Santiago de Chile	09-04-99	91	—
<i>Eletto Vescovo nel 1958, fu per due anni nella sede di Valparaíso (Cile), poi per 22 anni Arcivescovo di Santiago del Cile. Dal 1962, per 37 anni, fu Cardinale di Santa Romana Chiesa</i>				
L SILVA Leonel	Campinas	09-05-99	84	BSP
P VEGH Bartolomeus	Jarabacoa, R.D.	02-06-99	86	ANT
L VIARD Jean	Toulon	06-06-99	90	FLY
P ŻAK Stanisław	Odessa (Ucraina)	13-04-99	50	EST
P ŽERJAV Mirko	Ljubljana	27-04-99	79	SLO





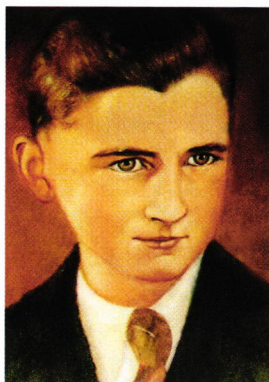
Jarogniew Wojciekowski



Edward Kaźmierski



Don Giuseppe Kowalski



Cesaław Jóźwiak



Franciszek Kęsy



Edward Klinik



Il Rettor Maggiore partecipa alla celebrazione della Beatificazione a Varsavia.