



acts

of the general council

year LXXXI

july-september 2000

N. 372

official organ
of animation
and communication
for the
salesian congregation

Direzione Generale
Opere don Bosco
Roma

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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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TOWARDS THE 25th GENERAL CHAPTER

1. CONVOCACTION. – The hour of the GC25. – Our journey. – **2. THEME OF THE GC25.** – The salesian community. – “Today”. – Main points of reference. – Fraternal life. – Evangelical witness. – Animating presence among the young. – The grace of unity. – **3. SOME CONDITIONS FOR THE ANIMATION OF THE SALESIAN COMMUNITY TODAY.** – Ministry of the Rector. – Ongoing formation in daily life. – **4. INVITATION TO THE PROVINCES.**

Rome, 11 June 2000
Solemnity of Pentecost

My dear Confreres,

We are pursuing with profit the jubilee process we had set before us. I receive confirmation of this from numerous confreres and communities, and I see it reflected in our young people. Reconciliation, the Eucharist, the plan for youthful spirituality, the orientation of the Salesian Family towards communion for the mission, the coming extraordinary missionary expedition, have all revived the fundamental features of our charism at a historic moment of many challenges and not without a few difficulties.

At the heart of the jubilee events we reach a deadline foreseen by our Project of life, our Constitutions, to help us to grow as individuals and communities in union with the Church and to respond to the signs which the Lord is giving us: the convocation of the General Chapter.

We all know that this is not merely the fulfilment of a law. “The general chapter is the principal sign of the Congregation’s unity in diversity”.¹ It engages the Congregation and the individual provinces for a lengthy period of time in an effort at verification, a new understanding of the demands of the

¹ C 146

charism, and adaptation to the circumstances in which they must be expressed. It marks therefore a key moment in our process of constant renewal, as we know from the experience of these last thirty years.

We shall come together all over the world and from all over the world as brothers, to rethink our fidelity to the Gospel, to Don Bosco and to the times. The Congregation will adopt an attitude of complete docility to the Holy Spirit, in an effort "to discern God's will at a specific moment in history for the purpose of rendering the Church better service".²

The General Chapter, in the sense of a community commitment, always touches on the vital points of identity, unity, and effectiveness of the salesian presence, no matter what central theme is chosen.

Through signs and events the Lord addresses to us as a Congregation the invitation of the Book of Revelation: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches".³ This is an encouragement pregnant with hope, but one which implies a pressing call to simple and genuine fidelity in the new situations which challenge us at the present day.

It is right that we should be aware of such implications of the General Chapter, that we should feel ourselves to be sharing the responsibility for its results as we take part in common prayer and become actively involved in the reflection of our own province.

1. CONVOCATION.

In accordance with art.150 of our Constitutions, **I intend by this letter to convoke the GC25.** It will take place at the Generalate in Rome, Via della Pisana 1111, and will begin on 24 February of the year 2002. The Moderator will be Fr An-

² *ibid.*

³ Rev 2,7

tonio Domenech, General Councillor for Youth Pastoral Work.

The specific purpose⁴ of the GC25, within the general scope of animation, orientation and government proper to every General Chapter, is to study more deeply and reach common criteria on an essential aspect of our life, with regard to which the Congregation has shown itself particularly alert and concerned.

We have defined and specified this aspect with the expression: **“The salesian community today: its fraternal life, its evangelical witness, its animating presence among the young”**.

The theme is the result of ample reflection by the General Council on the current guidelines of the Church, on aspects of culture, on the lines of renewal of consecrated life and on the process being followed by our Congregation in recent years.

In a first study in January 2000, the General Council singled out some thematic areas which, on the basis of extraordinary visitations, team visits and other meetings, appear to be those most keenly felt, promising and needing consideration. Such areas were:

- The salesian community in its new pastoral model.⁵
- Our ability to propose the salesian vocation today: “Come and see”.⁶
- An effective presence among the young: “Here in your midst I feel completely at home”.⁷
- The “grace of unity” in our life today.⁸

The result of this evaluation of the life of the Congregation was sent to the Provincials so that, with their Councils, they could indicate a priority among the points identified, or add

⁴ cf. R 111

⁵ cf. C 49. 51

⁶ cf. C 16. 37

⁷ cf. C 14. 39

⁸ cf. C 3. 24

others. By a large majority they chose the first theme, considering it to be directly connected with the practical guidelines of the GC23 and GC24.

To this, the first and principal objective, has to be added the fulfilment of a practical guideline of the GC24 which asked the Rector Major and his Council to study "the manner of making a deeper verification of the structures of the central government, involving the Provincial Chapters, with a view to the GC25".⁹

Another purpose of the GC25 is also to elect the Rector Major and the members of the General Council for the period 2002-2008. This is the responsibility of looking ahead to the service of unity and guidance which they are called upon to provide.

All the confreres can and must take part with shared responsibility in the election to be made by the Chapter members, through intense and constant prayer that God may give to the Congregation the guidance needed at the present time for the Church, the world and the young.

The "Technical Commission", appointed in accordance with Reg.112, has already worked with the Moderator to prepare the procedures so that the reflections of the Provinces may be made in good time and in the proper form, and their contributions be submitted to the Moderator of the Chapter in the technical form required. It has drawn up an aid which specifies the implications of the theme and clarifies its aspects. This aid, included in the present number of the Acts together with some indispensable juridical norms,¹⁰ is intended to be a means for sensitizing the Provinces and guiding them in the carrying out of their Chapters.

"The hour" of the GC25

This will be the first General Chapter of the third millennium. During the present Jubilee, which celebrates the

⁹ GC24, 191

¹⁰ cf. R 112

passing of 2,000 years since the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Pope has invited the Church and humanity to concentrate their gaze on the person of Christ, to renew their Christian mentality and life, to become more aware of their vocation to holiness, to become committed with zeal to a new evangelization, to take up the new dimensions of communion and to make this more evident as the first evangelical sign.

The preparation and realization of the GC25 will be a time of grace for us, an extraordinary opportunity for profiting from the gifts and results of the Jubilee.

The continental Synods and those of the universal Church, celebrated in the broad context of the Jubilee, have made a pressing appeal to consecrated life to continue its self-renewal process, and make itself eloquent and significant for people of today.

In the evangelization of every context this is far from secondary in importance. Its members, therefore, are invited to live their personal and communal adherence to Christ the Saviour with greater intensity; to accept the commitment to a holiness capable of speaking to people of today; to produce through their communities an effective witness to fraternal life, to become involved in an evangelization capable of dialogue with society and culture, being in them leaven, prophecy and challenge.

The greatest and most specific expression of this invitation is the Synod on the consecrated life and the corresponding Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*. But significant references are also found in the continental Synods and in the respective Exhortations,¹¹ and also in those concerning the laity and bishops.

In the light of these proposals there is taking place in religious Institutes a wide-ranging reflection and lively search for renewal. One sign of this is the deeper study carried out in re-

11 cf. *Ecclesia in America*, 43; *Ecclesia in Africa*, 94; *Ecclesia in Asia*, 44

cent years by the Union of Superiors General (USG) on the theme of the refounding of religious life, its re-location in ecclesial communion and in social contexts, and its inculturation in the different geographical areas.

Immersed as they are in a world which is pluralist from every point of view, often agitated and distracted, and sometimes oppressed with multiple and pressing tasks, religious must return to the sources of their vocation, calmly examine the gospel quality of their lives, and endorse the commitment of their particular consecration, so as to bear witness with joy to the absolute character of God, i.e. that God is Love, capable of filling the heart of every human being, and the indispensable aim and objective, if human life is to be what it is meant to be.

The critical situation of some religious Institutes, linked to a great extent with the imbalance between management obligations, quality of life and vocational capacity, requires at the present day a reorientation towards experiences of faith and the sources of the charism, so as to be visible and transparent witnesses of God who is manifested in Christ Jesus.

On the other hand, the new forms of consecrated life, which the Spirit is raising up in the Church, clearly show that the radical nature of the Gospel still speaks eloquently to man.

The pressing and dramatic situations of poverty and oppression in which millions of people are living, the new plagues that have arisen as a consequence of globalization, challenge consecrated life to be creative in renewing charisms so as to be a prophetic and efficacious sign of freedom and self-donation.

Consecrated life can continue to exist effectively in these times only if, like the house built on a rock, it is firmly fixed in unconditional adherence to Jesus Christ, firmly anchored in the evangelical options which lead it to assume the joys, hopes, sorrows and anguish of men and women of our time, placing itself in the forefront of the Church's mission.

In such a process of ecclesial, cultural and social development, a decisive point is the quality of fraternal life, with the

community following a significant and prophetic model, of which we feel an urgent need, even though we may not yet see clearly all its implications. The experience of communion between consecrated persons comes to be considered not as an individual grace, but as a charism giving dynamism to ecclesial communion within the Christian communities themselves, and also in line with ecumenical meetings, interreligious dialogue, and further reconciliation and acceptance between persons and groups.

In our own Congregation too this strong movement is perceptible towards a renewal which will express our vocation in a more lively fashion. Many Provinces have recently sought practical ways for helping communities to live more clearly and faithfully the salesian family spirit, the characteristics of our spirituality and a renewed presence among young people. There are positive and promising experiences, but also some concerns, because situations have changed and some means and supports which helped us to live the various aspects of our consecrated life in unity and tranquility, have waned.

This creates among the confreres a widespread unease which gives rise to the desire for greater human authenticity, greater spiritual depth and more radical vocational coherence. The response of the Provinces which have given priority to the theme of the salesian community as being the most important and necessary at the present time is a reflection of this desire.

It is an authoritative request which we must examine together. At the beginning of the new millennium we are called upon to live more effectively the transparent joy of our fellowship in Christ, not least as a response to the deep aspirations of our heart,¹² so as to be truly signs of the love of God among the young, centres of spiritual animation of the EPC and of the Salesian Family.

Society and culture display characteristics of great significance which challenge our religious life in respect of the human model we present and the educative and evangelizing commit-

12 cf. C 49

ment we carry out. Globalization, already well established in the economic field, becomes ever more extended to other aspects of social life: problems assume worldwide dimensions and become interdependent.

The development of pluriethnic, pluricultural and plurireligious societies and, at the same time, the rise of exclusive nationalism and the assertion of religious integralism challenge our ability to live together and engage in dialogue.

Mass communication about everything, and information technology, are producing a new mentality; they call for new kinds of relationships and create new demands in education and formation. Dialogue, in fact, becomes ever more complex and difficult, almost chaotic; rapport can become impersonal. Paradoxically therefore a sense of loneliness and isolation begins to spread, and there is a search for contacts and sharing, of which the manifestations in youthful, social and ecclesial areas are well known, and have been the subject of our frequent comments.

In such a context our fraternity can constitute a stimulus and a prophetic sign.

Our journey.

Recent General Chapters have formulated guidelines and structured proposals for the education of young people to the faith¹³ and for the participation of the laity in the salesian mission.¹⁴

To realize such proposals, the Provinces have taken care to give life to educative and pastoral communities, and to direct particular attention to the present youth situation, especially as regards hardship and marginalization, to formulate together pastoral and educative projects, to organize and improve the

¹³ cf. GC23

¹⁴ cf. GC24

quality of provincial animation of youth pastoral work, to think up formation procedures for collaborators and animators, and to give effect to various experiences of shared responsibility with the laity in the management of our works.

Recent years have also seen many new kinds of work, and numerous foundations have become more complex, while many communities have been reduced in the number of confreres with an increase of those more elderly. Pastoral and management tasks have increased and become more burdensome. The active presence of lay people, now in the majority, the new role of animation attributed to the salesian religious community in the EPC and in the formulation of the PEPS create in the salesian religious communities uncertainties and questions, in particular with regard to their own spiritual experience and reasonable conditions for their own work.

In the Team Visits consideration was given to the pastoral model the salesian component has to provide as a group animator. It was clear that the quality of life of such a group is the determining factor and active force behind everything; that is where it all starts and that is where it always returns; it is where in daily life all the expectations for effectiveness, animation and apostolic impact are concentrated.

It is the salesian community, in fact, which is the subject to which is entrusted the implementation of the important deliberations of the last two General Chapters. The journey of faith, to be proposed to the young and to be made with them, requires the witness of a community in continual renewal¹⁵ and the insertion of such a community in the youthful world and context with a new pastoral quality.¹⁶

At the same time, the animation of the educative community and of the Salesian Family¹⁷ presupposes a salesian nu-

¹⁵ cf. GC23, 219-224

¹⁶ cf. GC23, 225-231

¹⁷ cf. GC23, 232-238

cleus which lives a life of brotherhood, works in solidarity and constantly adapts its criteria of involvement.

Commenting on the Synod of the Consecrated Life, Fr Viganò wrote: "Both the education of young people to the faith (GC23) and the involvement of many lay people in the spirit and mission of Don Bosco (GC24) require that we concentrate our efforts of ongoing formation on the intensification of *life in the Spirit* and on prior attention to fraternal *life in community*. This is the road to the third millennium, and now is the time to set out on it in an authentic manner".¹⁸

Similar reasons were put forward by the Provinces for the choice of the theme for the coming Chapter, as also the issues they pointed to as being the more disturbing and challenging.

From many places, in fact, it was said that today's culture challenges our community life in respect of both style and evangelical significance. In this context emphasis is laid on solicitude for salesian communities in precarious situations, through the reduced number of confreres, their advancing age, or their dispersal over many fields of work.

The importance of the animation of the community, and especially of the role of the Rector and Council, is emphasized. Insistence too is laid on the need for formation of both young and adult Salesians (initial and ongoing formation) in order to come to grips with the crux of daily relationships based on the following of Christ, and for a positive presence in communities where there are the above-mentioned tensions. A reflection is asked for also on possible new forms of community in line with our charism.

¹⁸ AGC 351, p.32

2. THE THEME OF THE GC25

The Salesian Community

The theme of the GC25 centres reflection on the subject of the educative and pastoral mission. It is meant to assess the conditions of life and action that can foster a joyful and encouraging experience of vocation, a way of life that can be both witness and prophecy, an environment that becomes vocationally attractive, a school of spirituality, a factor of communion and animation for all who share with us the spirit and mission of Don Bosco.

It is not therefore a matter, as some could have thought after a rapid and superficial reading of the theme, of looking at ourselves in isolation from the young and the laity. We are in fact focusing much more keenly from a practical standpoint on what recent General Chapters have said with regard to the mission among young and lay people.

Our life of community is the first gift to be offered to young people, the more immediate and specific gospel sign which precedes and accompanies all our pastoral activity.¹⁹

The objective of the GC25 is not so much what the community and confreres must still do for the young, but what – at the present day – they must be for them as they live with them. Before all else we must keep in mind what we are and how we live, so as to act more effectively from an evangelical point of view for the benefit of those to whom our mission is directed.

It is a question of carrying out an evaluation of our community life with the *spirit and method of evangelical discernment*, so as to discover ways of salesian fellowship able to respond to the demands of the following of Christ and of the mission, as these have been presented in the latest ecclesial documents and by General Chapters, and how they appear after the

¹⁹ cf. C 50. 57, *Fraternal life in community*, 54

educative and pastoral changes which we have tried in recent years.

“Today”.

This word, which has been deliberately inserted in the theme, emphasizes the presupposition and the awareness that we are living in a new context, with all the associated risks, demands and possibilities, which we need to understand.

“Today” implies a reference to the present situation of the Church, committed to the new evangelization in which consecrated life must play a role of witness and proclamation, which is specific and irreplaceable.

‘Today’ recalls the situation of the world, and especially the world of the young, which needs people who are credible and significant role models for a new way of living, and relationships in societies which are interethnic, intercultural, interreligious, pluralist, free and fragmented. ‘Today’ brings to mind the situation of our Congregation and of the individual Provinces in different parts, living in different conditions because of their obligations and the personnel they have available.

In the face of these pressing requirements we feel the urgent need to deepen the roots of our vocation, to renew the dynamism and effectiveness of our form of life, and to make the religious life in educative and pastoral activity among young people and the poor clearer and more challenging.

I have referred to discernment. It is not a matter of repeating and stating once again the doctrine on the religious community; this is already abundant at the level of both the Congregation²⁰ and the Church.²¹

The theological criteria and charismatic inspirations must certainly be recalled and made the subject of meditation so that

²⁰ cf. SGC, 483-555; GC21, 33-61

²¹ cf. *Fraternal life in community*, 1994; *Vita consecrata*, 1996

we do not lose sight of our aim. The GC25 will be an opportunity for deepening and making our own what the Church is saying to us with regard to the effective and evangelizing strength of Christian communities, among which consecrated communities are a sign, incentive and example.

But the main and ultimate goal is to find effective ways of giving a new motivation to the communities to manifest in a simple and clear manner the religious elements of the new situations; to identify the essential conditions or criteria which allow, or rather encourage, a joyful and humanly significant way of living the fraternity we have professed as followers of Christ.

What is proposed, therefore, is not an intellectual process (repeating and reorganizing the doctrinal content of documents) which is essentially deductive (deducing practical consequences on the basis of the doctrine alone). We want rather to begin from what the confreres and communities think of their present experience, and reflect on what they feel called to be and to express in their various situations: i.e. to read the reality in a way which will bring to light resources and positive aspects, so as to strengthen and deepen them; as also to reflect on the apprehensions and conflicts to examine them in the light of the Word, of the gospel demands, and of the rich elements of our charism.

The Chapter would want to focus on the life of the fraternal community of the present day, and suggest a practical way for its realization. Efforts at present being made can be highlighted, together with experiments that have been tried and that can throw light on and encourage other forms of salesian community life to meet prevailing needs and demands.

Main points of reference.

In the statement of the theme four fundamental aspects are specified, on which I invite you to concentrate your attention: *fraternal life, evangelical witness, animating presence*

among the young, and the grace of unity.

They correspond to the challenges presented to our life as consecrated persons by today's culture and religious experience. They should not be considered as opposed one to another, but as inseparable and characteristic elements of our religious community life.²²

The indispensable contribution of fraternity to our maturing as consecrated persons, to our assuming with joy and internal conviction our own personal vocation and the continual rebuilding of our unity of life, is a permanent element in the history of the Church. Today, indeed, it is felt as a pressing need because today's world leads to dispersion and fragmentation.

Young people, on the other hand, need *witnesses*, persons and environments that can show by example the possibility of living a life according to the Gospel in our society. This evangelical witness which is at one and the same time a communion between brothers, a radical following of Christ and an active presence which stimulates and brings life to the young, constitutes the first educative service we offer them, the first word of the proclamation of the Gospel. From a vocational point of view they feel attracted to join communities with a purpose, rather than merely engage in a particular kind of work.

I will dwell briefly on each of the four points already indicated.

Fraternal life.

Among the vast movement of persons and groups that he brought into being around himself, Don Bosco, under the Lord's inspiration, deliberately wished to create and in fact succeeded in shaping a community of religious. They were his most faithful and closest followers; they had an animating role in fostering the common spirit and a task of leadership in the mission. Don Bosco dedicated a great part of his time and en-

²² cf. C 3

ergies to passing on to them his own spiritual style and pedagogical practice.

Such a group is characterized by the *habitare in unum* as brothers: living physically in the same house, i.e. in a common life; *in unum spiritum*, i.e. with shared mentality and values, growing in the charity manifested in a joyous mutual affection able to create a family; *in unum agendi finem*, i.e. firmly committed to a common mission.²³

Salesian fraternal life corresponds to proposals of Christian perfection and of effective educational work, and at the same time meets deep aspirations of the person such as the desire for authentic relationships, the sharing of experiences, of communication, of friendship and affection. This, on the other hand, is a preparation and training for the educational rapport presupposed by the preventive system and for the youthful environment which the same system sets out to create.

Interpersonal relationships, in fact, are linked with the human and spiritual maturity of the individual. Their quality, the way in which they are practised and handled, are an indication of how far love, the first Christian commandment and source of the greatest educative energy, has developed in us and to what extent we have learned to express it.²⁴

In the SGC the confreres were already asking that in the communities an effort should be made to create an environment of more human warmth, and precisely that of a family; a climate of friendship founded on respect and mutual esteem.²⁵ Since then the desire has grown for relationships which go beyond habit and formality, because they are continually renewed in contacts, deepened around the Eucharist and rebuilt through the daily practice of reconciliation.

Our communities feel the need today to emphasize the human dimensions of fraternal life to help the individual to

²³ cf. SGC, 498; BM 9, 266

²⁴ cf. AGC 363, p.30

²⁵ cf. SGC, 483

mature, and to support him in all life's vicissitudes.²⁶

And so we want these rapports to be not merely working relationships but such as to lead to true friendships in the following of Christ and in solidarity for the mission, and especially that they be inspired by sacrifice and self-donation, and not centred only on the individual or on his own affairs.

We must grow in the ability to establish such relationships through ongoing formation. We need to educate ourselves and educate each other to accept and love each other as brothers. The GC24 speaks of our relational spirituality: a spirituality which not only loves with an interior charity but, as Don Bosco had already taught through his dealings with his boys, is able to build adult relationships consistent with the vocation and prevailing sensitivities.

In salesian fraternal experience it is very important to learn how to overcome in a positive way the tensions which are part and parcel of life, to integrate freedom and personal autonomy with the demands of a real communion. For this reason we must go back to the supernatural motives which are at the foundation of our brotherhood; we must cultivate the elements of an ascetical process both in individuals and in the community.²⁷ In fact, we are living in times of privatization and of individualism, but in which are also manifested a strong dependence on the affection and thought of others. True freedom, combined with an efficacious desire for communion, will enable us to educate young people to these values.

Together with the ability to form relationships, there is also need for communication. Nowadays in communities people want this to be not limited to organization but to extend to personal experience; that we exchange not only news items or work details, but evaluations, requirements, intuitions concerning our life in Christ and the way we understand the

²⁶ cf. SGC, 485 -486

²⁷ cf. *Fraternal life in community*, 23. 25. 28. 37

charism. This is the aim of the practice of the revision of life, the verification of the community, interchange in prayer, discernment with respect to situations, projects and events.

Communication is necessary also because of the positive pluralism of views and gifts that exists in the community. The different kinds of involvement of the confreres justify the importance given by the Constitutions to community assemblies. Reducing the possibility of dialogue and mutual exchange in the religious community would lead to a lack of development and a failure to accompany the growth processes of the individuals.²⁸

Communication requires learning, practice and also animation; by learning I mean of a spiritual rather than a technical kind. With communication at some levels a certain reserve which holds us back from saying what we think has to be overcome; and there is also need for confidence in the other person which has to be fostered. Experience shows that not everyone has the courage to do this. We have to learn how to do it, with opportunity for conversation and the ability to listen.²⁹

The GC24 encouraged the individual communities to foster the sharing of the educative and pastoral experiences of the confreres by means of the 'community day' and other meetings as an opportunity for growth through interpersonal communication.³⁰

Quality in relationships and communication requires the humble acceptance of the vocation to communion as a gift rather than as a burden: "God calls us to live in community and entrusts us with brothers to love".³¹ From this it follows that each one must apply himself to the daily building of fraternity, which leads to the overcoming of selfish tendencies, to accept fraternal corrections, and to participate diligently in the common life and work.

²⁸ cf. AGC 370, p.10

²⁹ cf. AGC 363, pp. 32-34

³⁰ cf. GC24, 133

³¹ C 50

We find the strength to follow out a process of this kind especially in common prayer and in our personal relationship with Christ. The community is not born of human will but is the fruit of the Lord's Paschal mystery. "In praying, the salesian community (...) deepens its awareness of its intimate and living relationship with God"³² and of its fraternal communion.

Especially in the celebration of the Eucharist the community allows itself to be built by Christ as fraternal and apostolic. This is why the times of common prayer and celebration are so important.

Don Bosco – as is recalled in art.16 of the Constitutions – wanted everyone to feel "at home" in his establishments, so that the salesian house becomes a family. This kind of witness arouses in the young and in lay people the desire to know and follow the salesian vocation and mission.³³

In a world which is divided and torn apart, in an impersonal society that treats persons as numbers, the testimony of apostolic fraternity provided by our communities will be all the more effective.

In particular, the GC23 asks that the salesian community be the centre of communion and the animating driving force of the educative and pastoral community and of the Salesian Family.³⁴ The dynamism of our community life makes us able to bring together and involve many other people in Don Bosco's spirit and mission.

As charismatics, we are called to be a presence which raises questions, provides reasons for hope, gathers people together, prompts collaboration and gives effect to an ever more fruitful communion to achieve a project of life and work according to the Gospel.

This evidently needs an improvement in our way of working together, so that the community becomes the place

³² C 85

³³ cf. C 16

³⁴ cf. GC23, 232 ff.

where the change takes place from *I* to *we*, from *my* work or sector to *our* mission, from the pursuit of my means and objectives to focusing on animation and the good of the young.³⁵

The Constitutions and Regulations provide many and varied opportunities for mutual understanding, coordination and agreement. Community councils and assemblies can present a common response to situations in the light of the Gospel and of our vocation, to plan together the major aspects of pastoral work; for this reason participation in them is important, as also is the quality of the meetings themselves.

Nowadays many young people and lay persons want to “see” and “take part” in our work with us. And so we must arrange this in such a way that it is possible to pray with the youngsters, share moments of fellowship and planning with our lay collaborators, and even welcome some of them to share with us an experience of community life.

This means that we must be alert to the quantitative and qualitative nature of our communities, as the GC24 asked, so that they may be able to live in the way they are called upon, and as is expected of them.³⁶

Evangelical witness.

The second point in the statement of the theme regards the quality and expression of our religious and spiritual experience. The salesian community is called to live and be seen as consecrated, as a group of people who are following Christ, powerfully attracted by him, by his person and his Word, by his mystery operating in the world; a group that makes of all this a common experience, which is felt and enjoyed, witnessed to with total dedication to the mission to the young, to fraternal life and to the living out of gospel values.³⁷

³⁵ AGC 363, p.34

³⁶ cf. GC24, 173-174

³⁷ cf. C 3

The soul of this witness is spirituality, the desire to shape one's life according to the Spirit. The mission is its mature fruit and the place for its expression and growth. We know by experience that the simple satisfaction gained from success will not take us very far forward in our apostolic commitment. It needs much more than that.

The mission is before all else the work of the Spirit within us. He makes us "signs and bearers of the love of God for young people, especially those who are poor".³⁸ Without the experience of the Spirit there is no mission, either on our part or on that of the laity. The contemplation of God, who loves and saves man, and the desire to be involved, give rise to and maintain our commitment to the young and the people of God.

The salesian community therefore cannot base its missionary dynamism and its effective force on anything other than an intense spiritual experience.

The GC23 and GC24 went deeply into the specific characteristics of salesian spirituality, and promoted in the Congregation the knowledge and esteem of its cardinal points. But there is need to be still more aware of it, to draw up a pedagogy to develop this particular style of holiness, overcoming the risk of superficiality, activism and mere habit.

The Constitutions declare that holiness is the most precious gift we can offer to the young,³⁹ the principal contribution of salesian religious to human education and advancement. Holiness has a temporal value not only through works of charity for the benefit of the poor, but for the vision, meaning and dignity it gives to human coexistence. "In a world beguiled by atheism and the idolatry of pleasure, possession and power, our way of life bears witness, especially to the young, that God exists, and that his love can fill a life completely".⁴⁰

³⁸ C 2

³⁹ cf. C 25

⁴⁰ C 62

When spirituality is taken up and lived, it becomes the secret for achieving what was proposed by the GC23 and GC24. It is the soul of the EPC, the core of the journeys of faith we have to make with the young, in a climate of the exchange of gifts. To become an animating nucleus we have to live our spirituality consciously and with conviction, and express it in a spirit of community with joy and spontaneity.

It sometimes happens that the salesian spiritual experience is lived only occasionally or in part by the community and confreres, rather than as a pattern, the constant aim and plan of life. Often it is reduced to certain 'moments', or else it is taken up by individuals while its communal expression is weak and of little relevance.

The spiritual experience cannot exist without an attitude and assiduous practice of *prayer*. The community is called upon to be a place and school of prayer. Only if it has an esteem for and a personal attachment to prayer will it be able to safeguard itself from having its prayer-time invaded by other concerns and be able to live its communal moments of prayer with care and calm, free from haste and distractions.

Finally the community must learn to live the *communication of faith*, the sharing of spiritual experiences, the placing in common of vocational motivations, the practice of community discernment, and of discussion of pastoral projects. It is here that the exchange of talents takes place between confreres, that the riches of each one are offered and welcomed by all.

Briefly, it is a matter of following within our communities authentic processes of growing in fidelity to the Word and the presence of Christ, and of manifesting and communicating this kind of faith; only on this condition can our communities be "signs, environments and schools of faith".

In evangelical witness, a privileged place belongs to the Evangelical Counsels. They reproduce and make present in today's world Christ's way of living; they indicate what is definitive in the face of what is conditional; they have a critical

and therapeutic function with respect to freedom, richness and love, that is lived solely in terms of self-realization and not of self-giving; they present a successful way of fully realizing human existence. The following of the obedient, poor and chaste Christ, as well as being the expression of a personal love for Jesus, has a pedagogical aspect of motivation and the proposal of a blueprint for a new humanity.⁴¹

Nowadays there is much insistence on the anthropological significance of the evangelical counsels. "The decision to follow the counsels, far from involving an impoverishment of truly human values, leads instead to their transformation. (...) Thus, while those who follow the evangelical counsels seek holiness for themselves, they propose, so to speak, a spiritual 'therapy' for humanity, because they reject the idolatry of anything created and in a certain way they make visible the living God".⁴² This requires an effort on our part to live them not only with consistency and truth, but also in deep dialogue with present-day culture, so that their humanizing value is clearly seen.

Some ambiguities and unconscious compromises find their way, in fact, into our style of life and make it lose its evangelical effectiveness.

The Counsels complete and *characterize fraternal life and make possible the dedication of our whole being to the mission*,⁴³ making clear its gratuitous nature, the unconditional life-offering, the measureless and unreserved love for the very poor.

Not infrequently the salesian community fails to make all this clear and intelligible, and so the testimony is not understood. We must find ways to give expression to an evangelical life-style of this kind, because only prophetic and radical options will make our communities attractive and capable of drawing in others.

⁴¹ cf. GC24, 152

⁴² VC 87

⁴³ cf. C 61

Animating presence among the young.

One of Don Bosco's characteristic traits which contributed to his spirituality was that he was always among the youngsters, to such an extent as to transform **assistance** into an educational system and a spiritual experience. "Familiarity with the young especially in recreation... The teacher who is seen only in the classroom is a teacher and nothing more, but if he joins in the pupils' recreation he becomes their brother".⁴⁴ He himself deplored and criticized certain tendencies which impaired this kind of presence: you cannot share the life of the youngsters if you are concerned about your own affairs, if you live apart from them, or if you assist without any real attention to individuals but just to fulfill a duty; or if you fail to show a love and real interest for each youngster.

The first community of Valdocco, the constant criterion for discernment and pastoral renewal,⁴⁵ was a community not only *for* the young but *with* the young: it shared their life and adapted itself to their needs. The participation of the youngsters determined the timetable, the kind of work, the manner of praying. Staying with Don Bosco meant staying with the young.

Today conditions have changed. Many of our works have become complex with many organizational demands. In present day society many relationships are formed, but they are often of a fleeting nature with little human depth. Those between different generations are less immediate than they were formerly, not least because of changing styles and tastes. This increases in everyone, but especially in young people, the desire for communication and for relationships.

On the occasion of the GC24 the young asked the Salesians to be with them more and share their life, particularly in informal moments; to help and accompany them in their formation, and to provide them with opportunities for an effective in-

⁴⁴ Letter from Rome, Appendix to Constitutions, p.259

⁴⁵ cf. C 40

vovement in educational work and evangelization.⁴⁶

What requests do we receive today in this connection from the young people around us, the young animators who share the salesian mission with us, and the laity themselves?

We are asked for a **physical presence** among the young, which leads us to love what they love, to understand and share the many positive values and aspects of their world; a **friendly presence** that is selfless and interested in individuals and not just institutional and concerned mainly with the organization of activities; an **active presence**, able to make suggestions, offer motives inspired by reason and faith, reawaken creativity and shared responsibility in the young, and at the same time accompany them in life's pilgrimage; a **presence of witness** which is a living reflection of the values proclaimed. And all this not only as individuals but especially as communities.

This salesian presence among the young becomes **spiritual animation**. The GC23 asked every community to be a "school of faith" for the young and the laity.⁴⁷ It is not, in fact, only a question of involving lay people in the many sectors of educational and pastoral service, but of making them participants in a spiritual adventure, and of us living so intensive a life of salesian spirituality as to give rise in them to a desire to share it, so as to build together an educative environment spiritually highly charged, a climate of shared holiness as the GC24 recalled, quoting the example of Valdocco.⁴⁸

In the letter *Experts, witnesses and craftsmen of communion* I wrote: "We are not a welfare society or an educational organization which has as its final objective specific material or cultural realizations; we are charismatics. That means giving life to a work which raises questions, gives motives for hope, brings people together, prompts collaboration, and gives rise to

⁴⁶ cf. GC24, 284

⁴⁷ cf. GC23, 217

⁴⁸ cf. GC24, 104

an ever more fruitful communion for the realization together of a plan of life and action in line with the Gospel".⁴⁹ It is important to examine to what extent this is true of the individual communities, and how we can make it possible and apply it.

This presence becomes proclamation and prophecy, proposed in an alternative life style according to the Gospel. To be prophetic, consecrated life must be able to shake up the world which is drifting away from the Gospel. What are important are not only material achievements but the questions and challenges to which they give rise. We have to ask ourselves what to include in education today and how to characterize our presence among the young so as to produce the innovative impact in expressing love that Don Bosco had in his own times.

In the face of a world marked by poverty and rejection, especially of young people, our presence must be a clear proof of solidarity and freely given service; in the face of a plurality of cultures, in which there is frequently discrimination against what is different, our presence must promote dialogue and sharing; in the face of a society which encourages superficial attitudes and consumer exploitation of things and of nature, our style of life and work must be a synthesis between reflection and action, between the use of material goods and respect for nature. We shall ask ourselves how our style of living and working communicates these values to our youngsters and lay people, or to what extent we let ourselves be led by the overpowering criteria of present-day society.

In this way our presence can become a **vocational call**. Today vocational promotion is expressed through the logic of "come and see", i.e. by providing an image which will give rise in the young to an attraction and the desire to share a mission and life. We achieve this especially by the witness of our joy in living the salesian religious vocation without fear or reserve, concerned only to develop in every youngster an openness to

⁴⁹ AGC 363, p.22

God's call, i.e. a willingness to consider life as a gift and service; and also by the ability to communicate and share salesian spirituality and our style of education, and to provide motives for inspiration and encouragement, notwithstanding difficulties and personal or institutional limitations; and by dedicating our time and energy primarily to fostering and accompanying individuals, so helping them to discern and accept God's plan in their regard.

The grace of unity.

These dynamic elements of our personal and community life must be lived according to what we call the **"grace of unity"**, i.e. in a synthesis which stems from pastoral charity. This, declared the Pope in his address to the GC23, "is the fruit of the power of the Holy Spirit which ensures the vital inseparability between union with God and dedication to one's neighbour, between depth of interior evangelical meditation and apostolic activity, between a praying heart and busy hands".⁵⁰

Today our life seems exposed to all sorts of tensions, due to the cultural models of life and the multiplicity of commitments. It risks becoming fragmented, of opposing the practice of the evangelical counsels to models of human realization, of failing to find enough space and time for its integral expression and of emptying the mission of its evangelical content.

We must recover the synthesis in mentality and in life which helps us to live positively in this situation. What is essential for this is a new focus and relationship with Christ the Good Shepherd, who becomes the inspiration of our life and the key to the combination of prayer, study, pastoral educative work, and fraternal life.

We also need to reconsider how we can give unity nowadays to our personal life by combining the primacy of God with

⁵⁰ GC23, 332

dedication to the mission and mature fraternal rapport. This must be rethought and realized in fraternal and welcoming communities which are seeking to follow Christ, feel themselves sent by him to the young, and are trying to act according to the heart of Don Bosco. It means being able to single out and give effect today to a new personal and community balance between the different aspects of our life.

The community is the place of the **vocational growth of each member**; it helps the confrere to live his salesian vocation with transparent joy; it becomes the environment in which he matures.

It is important that it be the ordinary place for the ongoing formation of the confreres; the GC23 had already insisted on this option, linked with the fact that it is the quality of daily life within the community that ensures a process of continual growth. It is fostered by the animation of the community on the part of the Rector and the 'community day' each week.

In addition to stimulating personal responsibility for growth, the community guarantees the forms of personal accompaniment. The revival of the colloquy with the Rector, frequent confession and the use by each confrere of a spiritual guide will help personal growth within the community.

3. SOME CONDITIONS FOR THE ANIMATION OF THE SALESIAN COMMUNITY TODAY

The ministry of the Rector.

The animation of the salesian community is entrusted to the shared responsibility of its members; but the successful exercise of such responsibility has its main point of reference in the Rector. Hence the quality of direction is felt by the Provinces to be a strategic element in the life of the communities in every way.

The GC21 has given us a hierarchy of the duties and responsibilities of the salesian Rector. It gives first priority to his service to salesian unity and identity. Then comes pastoral guidance in the salesian mission and direction of the educational commitments. And finally the Rector has the primary responsibility for the overall management of the work.⁵¹

In the manual of the salesian Rector it is stated that his first task is to stir up in the individual members the awareness of who they are: to bring their abilities and charisms to the fore; to help them to keep the spirit of the theological values, etc; in a word to create an environment and the conditions which will enable every Salesian, in submission to grace, to mature in his vocational identity.⁵²

In this responsibility the Rector is helped by his Council⁵³, and particularly by the Vice-rector.⁵⁴ Together they foster the spiritual and pastoral animation and coordinate the administration of the community and the work.

In recent years the implementation of this ministry has become more complex and difficult, with the risk that less important functions are crowding out those more central from a religious and pastoral standpoint.

For this reason many Provinces are asking for a practical reflection to suggest concrete ways for helping salesian Rectors to give priority to the fundamental roles of their ministry.

From what I have seen for myself, I think I can state that in recent years – precisely because of the new situation in consecrated and community life, and in the new conditions in the world of education – an urgent need is felt for a further three-fold emphasis in the Rector's role, one that requires sensitivity, perception and the ability to make decisions.

There is a **charismatic focus**, which responds to the pre-

⁵¹ cf. GC21, 52

⁵² cf. *The Salesian Rector*, Rome 1986, n.105

⁵³ cf. C 178

⁵⁴ cf. C 183

sent state of consecrated life. The Rector, as the religious superior, must be able to explain, illumine, guide and animate salesian consecrated life, to help in the living out of the human and Christian dimension of its commitments, and in the understanding of what it means to follow Jesus Christ in Don Bosco's way.

Today a need is felt for charismatic animators, who keep alive in the confreres and communities the awareness and enthusiasm for their vocational choice. Charismatic focus is concerned with the fostering and deeper study of the salesian spirit and its characteristics.

There is also a **pastoral focus**: the Rector with his council and community guides all the work towards the objectives of evangelization, even the more specific ones.

Educational and management tasks and roles, taken on by different persons, must have the same aims regarding the style of formation to the faith of each youngster, and on the creation of an environment in which human and religious values are immediately obvious.

One must never be satisfied with the minimum. Special care must be taken of those who respond to the invitation of faith and who show signs of a vocation. All this requires the Rector to encourage, guide, specify, revise, and continually emphasize the requirements for the mission to be fulfilled.

And the third form is **fraternal focus**, i.e. dedication to the fostering of relationships, dialogue and co-responsibility: an aspect very much felt at the present day. From the vocational point of view it is evident that young people are attracted by fellowship. They show no great enthusiasm for forming part of communities which are no more than groups for intensive work – that does not attract them. They want to know how and with whom they are going to live. Fraternity is therefore becoming a determining factor, and the animation of the different forms it takes is entrusted to the care of the Rector.

To realize all this, the Rector brings into play his **priestly charism**.

The Constitutions say that the Rector must be a priest.⁵⁵ That does not mean simply that he must have the juridical requirement of priestly ordination, but that he must exercise the priesthood in and for the religious and educative community, i.e. it is there that he must provide the gift and ministry of the word. He must render fruitful the gift and role of sanctification through friendship and spiritual animation, including the use of the sacraments. He must direct and guide the community towards Christ, making it one in Him.

There is no need for a Rector to wait for the weekend to be able to do priestly work in the parish. He does such work in the educative community. This is his parish and his church. It is here that he must offer the Word of God in its many forms: by advice, in meetings, good-mornings, good-nights, in the school, and so many other circumstances.

We must not so separate the religious and the profane as to think that there should be no connection between our homily and what we say to a boy in the playground. When we welcome a youngster at the school gate or help him in the playground with a word in his ear, for him this can be the word of God, because it uplifts and encourages him, shows him a mark of esteem, and predisposes him to respond to grace.

The priest operates *in persona Christi*. This is not just a function of the priesthood, but of its essence. The same applies to the gift of sanctification and to the role of support.

Ongoing formation in daily life.

The effectiveness of our community life and of our pastoral work is guaranteed not so much by the structure and exercise of authority, but before all else by the presence and action of confreres who live with competence and enthusiasm the values of the salesian spirituality, pedagogy and vocation, and are able

⁵⁵ cf. C 121

to pass them on with clarity and conviction.

For this reason the continuing formation of persons is today a priority. It presupposes a new mentality ready to respond to questions and launch the challenges of the Gospel, an inner conviction about the values which make us able to overcome resistance and fears in the face of changes, to acquire a more mature and well founded awareness of the values and criteria of salesian pedagogy, and develop a renewed capacity for learning from daily life.⁵⁶

True formation, the kind that transforms persons and groups, is born of life and of the life of every day; and so the living of a life of fellowship, of evangelical witness, and of animating presence among the young and laity, means taking on a form and rhythm of life which fosters and in a certain way predisposes to animation. When this happens, daily life not only does not wear down the confreres, but helps them to feel well and grow from a cultural, psychological, social and – above all – spiritual point of view.

It is fundamental therefore to give back to Salesians a sense of the priority of formation; we are called to be animators of other people's maturing, and hence we must ourselves develop a dynamism of constant and integral growth.

4. INVITATION TO THE PROVINCES.

The General Chapter encompasses not only the Assembly of the Provincials and Delegates that takes place in Rome, but the whole process from its convocation to its application. It is fully realized in the reflection, study and work of all the Provinces. It will therefore be a lengthy period of renewal of community life in the individual Provinces. The Capitular Assembly will be a fraternal sharing of efforts to identify those el-

⁵⁶ cf. GC23

ements which experience in various contexts has brought out as fundamental and more able to generate community life and dynamism in the present situations.

Let this period therefore be a time of grace for the Provinces, in examining our fidelity to our religious and communal vocation, as we search for a more meaningful way of living in community as a “sign of faith”, a “school of faith” and “centre of communion” as the GC23 already urged us to do.⁵⁷

In this verification it will be useful also to listen to the expectations of those to whom our mission is directed: how they see us, and what they expect from our communities. Dialogue with them can help us to understand what God is asking of us at this time in order to bear witness – in a language intelligible especially to the young – to the values of the Gospel by our own lives.

It is also a providential moment for meditating together once again on the abundant doctrine on the salesian religious community which we already have in salesian and ecclesial documents. This will help to enlighten us and guide us in our choices for living in unity the different aspects of our vocation in the complex settings of daily life.

In our reflection and chapter work two dangers need to be avoided: that of simply repeating former objectives and proposals, and that of becoming discouraged in face of the ideal presented by the Constitutions as though it were simply not realizable in practice at the present time.

For this reason I invite you to seek the circumstances that will make it possible for us to approach this ideal in the awareness that the first gift and service we can offer to the young is our being disciples of Christ, involved in an alternative form of life which can fill the deepest expectations of the human heart. To this end it is important to share the positive experiences now taking place in the Provinces and to launch new ones.

The preparation for the next General Chapter will compel

⁵⁷ cf. GC24

us, dear confreres, to intensify two aspects of our consecrated life: spirituality and formation. For us they are decisive aspects and they also closely affect those for whom we work.

That all this may be accomplished successfully I ask for a special remembrance in community prayers. The renewal of our consecrated life is a work of the Spirit which must revitalize in each of us and in our communities pastoral charity and the gift of predilection for the young. It is a grace we must ask for with faith and trust, opening ourselves to it through our effort of reflection and sharing in community and with the young and the laity.

We invoke Mary, Mother of the Church and Mother of our Family, around whom Don Bosco wanted to build up his communities as true families.

With every best wish for the success of your chapter preparations, I send you my cordial greetings and blessing.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Juan Tucki". 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. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

2.1 CALENDAR OF PREPARATION FOR THE 25th GENERAL CHAPTER

June 2000

The Rector Major convokes the GC25 in accordance with art.150 of the Constitutions and art.111 of the General Regulations. He appoints the Moderator of the Chapter (R.112) and specifies its principal purpose, place and opening date (R.111).

August – September 2000

The letter of convocation is sent to the provinces, together with the theme of the Chapter, the outline for reflection for the local and provincial communities, and the instructions for the carrying out of the provincial chapters (AGC 372).

In addition the Moderator sends to the provinces the forms for the minutes and model sheets for contributions of the provincial chapter and confreres: on printed sheets and diskettes for computers.

October 2000 – July 2001

The work of preparation is carried on in the provinces and the provincial chapter takes place (C 171-172). The date of the provincial chapter is to be fixed so as to meet the following deadlines.

15 July 2001

Not later than this date the following documents must be received in Rome:

1. the minutes of the provincial chapters;
2. the minutes of the election of the delegates and their substitutes;
3. the contributions of the provincial chapters;

4. the contributions of the individual confreres.

Proposals which arrive later than 15 July 2001 cannot be considered by the precapitular commission in its work.

Provincial chapters which study themes concerning their own province only and make deliberations which need the approval of the Rector Major and his Council in accordance with Const.170, must send to Rome also the deliberations concerned.

August 2001

The material received will be put in order and classified by a working group.

Meanwhile the Rector Major appoints the precapitular commission for the preparation of the dossier to be sent to those taking part in the GC25 (cf. R 113).

September - October 2001

The precapitular commission is at work.

Also appointed is the commission for the checking of the minutes of the election of the provincial delegates to the GC24 (cf. R 115).

The schemes of work prepared by the precapitular commission are printed and sent to the provincials and delegates.

December 2001 - February 2002

The members of the GC24 study the working documents in their own communities.

24 February 2002

The GC25 begins.

Ending of the Chapter

A duration of about two months is foreseen, which makes 20 April 2002 the last day of the GC25.

2.2 OUTLINE FOR REFLECTION

I. GUIDELINES FOR REFLECTION ON THE THEME "THE SALESIAN COMMUNITY TODAY"

The fundamental thrust of the theme

In his letter of convocation of the GC25 the Rector Major has presented the layout and main contents of the chapter theme. He has also looked at the challenges arising from the present circumstances and pointed out some concerns which have arisen in the consultation with the provinces.

The coming GC25 is a particular occasion for deepening and renewing the life and testimony of the salesian community. The Constitutions and preceding General Chapters have defined the identity and the characteristics of the salesian religious community; it is now a matter of verifying their realization and planning the steps to be taken to make further progress in the direction proposed.

With the style of discernment

It is suggested that the reflection takes place in accordance with the method of community discernment indicated in art.66 of the Constitutions.

Each confrere allows himself to be challenged by the reality of his life, adopting a fundamental attitude of faith and listening, so as to discover in daily life the indications and steps which the Lord is inviting him to make in the process of personal and communal renewal.

In patient and fraternal dialogue and with a lively sense of

shared responsibility, the community makes its own the reflections of all, and defines the new possibilities and requirements of life to be more effective as a salesian religious community among young people.

What is necessary before all else in this discernment is purification of the heart, openness to prayer, willingness to listen to what life is saying, and dialogue with others.

Also needed is an adequate knowledge of the reality and of some significant experiences of community life. In this sense the opinion of confreres, young people, lay collaborators and members of the Salesian Family who are involved with us, should be sought out and collected: how they perceive and interpret our community life, what they expect from us as a salesian community, what aspects of our way of life, of working, of being present among them, they think we should improve. To facilitate the gathering of this information, each community could study some suitable initiative, or have a fraternal discussion with some of them, or make a survey or something similar.

But it is particularly necessary to interpret all this reality and expectations in the light of the Gospel and the guidelines of the Church and the Congregation (Constitutions, Chapters, Letters of the Rector Major, etc.) so as to accept it as a "call" God is making to us at the present day.

From this kind of positive reading in faith is born the personal and community response which can identify practical ways and strategies for suitable action.

The phases of the process

The *theme* of the Chapter, as presented by the Rector Major in his letter, refers to *three principal and complementary aspects*: fraternal life, gospel witness, and animating presence among the young. The provinces are asked to reflect on each of these.

In strict correlation with them there are other factors of particular importance in the animation of the salesian community: the role of the Rector and his Council, ongoing formation, the constitution of the community, the criteria for the siting of works and initiatives, and other possible items.

Later in this document are offered some specifications of these different aspects for greater study, and an indication of the documents of the Congregation and the Church which can enlighten and guide the reflections of the provinces and local communities. The commentary on the theme made by the Rector Major in his letter of convocation is also an important element for deeper personal and communal study during the discernment.

The suggested process foresees three successive phases for each aspect of the Chapter theme. The proposal is to begin by sharing not only problems but our vision of the future, what we want to live in our community life, or – to put it in another way – what God is calling us to live through the different signs we can perceive in today's reality. This positive vision should facilitate communion and give us encouragement for the future. Here in concrete terms are the three phases:

– Describe in a brief, realistic and captivating way, *what we want the life of our salesian community to be today*, so as to respond to what God is asking of us through the challenges of the situation in which we are living, the expectations of the confreres, young people and laity, enlightened by the guidelines of the Congregation and the Church.

– In the light of this concrete vision of the salesian community which we want to live, look at the *practical situation of our present communities*, emphasizing what is positive and what needs improvement; in this regard it will be very interesting to share and go more deeply into some positive experiences and community projects now existing in the provinces or in other religious families.

– Finally concentrate on *lines of action*, on processes which need strengthening or problematic aspects which must be corrected or overcome.

This process must be realized in the first place by each local community, thinking of its own renewal; on the basis of the contributions coming from the individual communities, the Provincial Chapter will follow the same process and offer its input to the General Chapter.

The “outline for reflection” which follows provides questions with respect to the various aspects to facilitate the above-mentioned process.

OUTLINE FOR REFLECTION

1. Fraternal life

1.1 In the light of the orientations of the Congregation, the challenges emerging, the expectations of the confreres, the laity and young people, and in the light also of our vocational identity, what are the practical characteristics (attitudes, qualities, ways, behaviour, etc.) that God is asking of our communities today?

1.2 Looking at the characteristics we have identified, and seeing the point at which we are at present, what are the main positive aspects of our communities and which ones need improvement?

1.3 What do you think should be the more significant lines of action to obtain the desired result?

2. Gospel witness

2.1 In the light of the orientations of the Congregation, the challenges emerging, the expectations of the confreres, the laity and young people, and in the light also of our vocational identity, what are the practical characteristics (attitudes, qualities, ways, behaviour, etc.) that God is asking of our communities today?

2.2 Looking at the characteristics we have identified, and seeing the point at which we are at present, what are the main positive aspects of our communities and which ones need improvement?

2.3 What do you think should be the more significant lines of action to obtain the desired result?

3. Animating presence among young people

3.1 In the light of the orientations of the Congregation, the challenges emerging, the expectations of the confreres, the laity and young people, and in the light also of our vocational identity, what are the practical characteristics (attitudes, qualities, ways, behaviour, etc.) that God is asking of our communities today?

3.2 Looking at the characteristics we have identified, and seeing the point at which we are at present, what are the main positive aspects of our communities and which ones need improvement?

3.3 What do you think should be the more significant lines of action to obtain the desired result?

4. Community animation - Service of the Rector

4.1 In the light of the orientations of the Congregation, the challenges emerging, the expectations of the confreres, the laity and young people, and in the light also of our vocational identity, what are the practical characteristics (attitudes, qualities, ways, behaviour, etc.) that God is asking of our communities today?

4.2 Looking at the characteristics we have identified, and seeing the point at which we are at present, what are the main positive aspects of our communities and which ones need improvement?

4.3 What do you think should be the more significant lines of action to obtain the desired result?

5. Community animation (ongoing formation, constitution of the community, etc.)

5.1 In the light of the orientations of the Congregation, the challenges emerging, the expectations of the confreres, the laity and young people, and in the light also of our vocational identity, what are the practical characteristics (attitudes, qualities, ways, behaviour, etc.) that God is asking of our communities today?

5.2 Looking at the characteristics we have identified, and seeing the point at which we are at present, what are the main positive aspects of our communities and which ones need improvement?

5.3 What do you think should be the more significant lines of action to obtain the desired result?

Elements for shedding light on the reflection

For each aspect of the Chapter theme we offer some specifications, suggested in large part by the provinces themselves in the consultation preceding the choice of the theme. Also added are some indications from the doctrinal guidelines of the Church and the Congregation developed in recent years. This material can serve as help and guidance for the reflection by the communities, provinces and provincial chapters.

In harmony with the more urgent demands and problems arising from experience, each province will dwell on those aspects which correspond to a greater extent with its needs and the process it is following.

1. Community: fraternal life

a) *Community life and the maturing of each member as a person and as a Salesian*

- Human and salesian quality of personal and communal rapport in family style;
- Sense of belonging to the community;
- Ability to handle conflicts positively;
- Ability for forgiveness and fraternal correction;
- Rhythm of life and work of the confreres and of the community to permit the cultivation of vocational quality.

For reflection:

C 51-52; R 42-43

General Chapters: SGC 483 (requests of the confreres), 485-487 (human values of community)

Church documents: "Fraternal Life in Community": 23-28, 35, 37, 54-57

b) *Communication and sharing of life, faith and apostolic projects*

- Quality of information in the community;
- Depth of dialogue and sharing;
- Ability for planning together.

For reflection:

R 4

General Chapters: SGC 488; GC24 42, 47, 119

AGC: "Experts, witnesses and craftsmen of communion"

AGC 363, pp. 28 ff

Church documents: "Fraternal Life in Community": 29-34

c) *Testimony and effectiveness of salesian community life*

- Image of community offered to the young and laity who share with us our mission;

- The community collaboration and solidarity we live and promote.

For reflection:

C 16, 57

General Chapters: GC24, 91-93, 153

Church documents: "Fraternal Life in Community": 54-57

d) *Ability to stir up communion in the EPC, Salesian Family, local neighbourhood and with the local Church*

- Animating task of salesian community in the EPC;
- Responsibility for animation and promotion of the Salesian Family;
- Cordial and generous presence and collaboration with the local Church.

For reflection:

General Chapters: GC23, 218, 232-237

GC24, 39-41, 44-46, 48-51, 159, 162, 236

e) *Attention to the central elements of salesian vocational experience in certain particular situations:*

- Aging communities;
- Communities where the SDB cannot be true nuclear animators of the EPC;
- Small or dispersed communities, or those with too many kinds of work;
- Communities without coadjutor brothers (the originality of the salesian community is the internal rapport between salesian brother and salesian priest);
- New forms of community life.

For reflection:

General Chapters: GC24, 154, 173-174

AGC: AGC 365, pp.39-43

2. Community: Gospel witness

a) *Spiritual experience of the community*

- Witnesses of God and shared commitment to sanctification;
- Community experience and knowledge of salesian spirituality;
- Care of the quality and systematic rhythm of personal and community prayer;
- Quality of spiritual communication in the community.

For reflection:

General Chapters: SGC 523, 525, 534-536;

GC21 42, 44-45, 237;

GC23 215-217;

GC24 205, 239-241

AGC: AGC 363, pp.23-28

Church documents: "Fraternal Life in Community":

12, 13, 15, 20;

"Vita Consecrata": 92-93

b) *Testimony before the young and the laity of our practice of the evangelical counsels*

- A significant and prophetic style of authority and evangelical obedience in present-day culture;
- Effectiveness of the way we live evangelical poverty;
- Educative and shining value of our religious chastity.

For reflection:

C 60-63

General Chapters: GC24 151-153

AGC: AGC 365 pp.35-38

AGC 366 (chastity);

AGC 367 (poverty).

Church documents: "Vita Consecrata": 84 ff.

c) *The “grace of unity”*

- Elements which help to overcome the fragmentation between prayer, work, study, fraternity and interior recollection;
- How to help ourselves to live the integration of the different dimensions of our life: consecration, communion and mission;
- Renewed rapport with Christ the Good Shepherd so as not to empty the mission of its evangelical content.

For reflection:

C 3, 21

General Chapters: SGC 127; GC23 332; GC24 205;

AGC: AGC 330, pp. 27-32;

AGC 354, pp. 38-42;

AGC 365, pp. 29-34;

Church documents: “Fraternal Life in Community”: 12-20

d) *The community as the place for maturing and vocational growth*

- The community as an environment which helps the confreres to live with joy and clarity their salesian vocation;
- and to share responsibility for the vocational fidelity of the confreres in the community;
- Personal accompaniment in the community.

For reflection:

C 52, 119

Church documents: “Vita Consecrata”: 64; 69-70

3. Community: animating presence among young people

a) *Communities that are open and welcoming*

- Willingness for sharing personal and community life with young people.

- Style of community life which fosters the closeness of all members with the young and the laity.

For reflection:

C 39;

General Chapters: SGC 507; GC23 225-230; GC24 284;
AGC: AGC 363, pp.16-18

b) *An animating presence*

- Attitudes and requirements for living an animating presence among the young according to the style of Don Bosco's preventive system;
- Zeal for education and evangelization;
- Community, school of faith: setting for "catching" salesian spirituality.

For reflection:

General Chapters: GC24 159, 237

AGC: AGC 363, pp.24-28; 37-40

c) *A community open to the challenges of the world of youth*

- The salesian community in face of situations of poverty, injustice and non-solid globalization;
- The salesian community in pluriethnic and plurireligious contexts.

For reflection:

AGC: AGC 365, pp.35-39

d) *A presence that becomes a vocational suggestion*

- Ability to propose and animate vocational programs for the young;
- Availability for accompanying them.

For reflection:

General Chapters: GC23 155, 247-253; GC24 252-253;

AGC: AGC 364, pp.41-55;

Church documents: "Fraternal Life in Community", 57.

4. Community animation

a) *The Rector*

- Elements which can help him to give effective priority to the animation of the salesian community;
- and to accompany each confrere in living with an “oratorian heart”;
- Elements of ongoing formation offered to the Rector in the community and in the province;
- Sharing with his council the responsibility for animation.

For reflection:

C 55, 178

General Chapters: GC21 49-57; GC24 172;

AGC: AGC 306 (animation of the salesian Rector);

AGC 365, pp.46-48.

Conclusions of the last Team Visit in the individual Regions.

b) *Elements and requirements for guaranteeing in the daily life of the community, a dynamism and process of ongoing formation*

- Elements for formation to the new form of salesian community life;
- The ‘community day’.

For reflection:

General Chapters: GC23 222, 247-253; GC24 248, 252-253;

AGC: AGC 363, pp.40-43.

Conclusions of the last Team Visit in the individual Regions.

c) *Constitution of the community with respect to its works*

- Minimum conditions for making possible a fraternal life of evangelical transparency and animating presence;
- Location of foundations and works so as not to suffocate a community life of quality.

For reflection:

General Chapters: GC24 173-174; 236-238;
 Conclusions on the theme: "The community as animating
 nucleus" in the last Team Visit.

II. GUIDELINES AND USEFUL MATERIAL FOR THE VERIFICATION OF THE STRUCTURES OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The mandate of the GC24

The 24th General Chapter approved the following practical guideline:

The GC24 requests the Rector Major with his Council to make in the course of the next six years a careful study, with the help of experts, on the functioning of the General Council (in its arrangement of Councillors for Departments and Regions), giving effect to opportune interventions for a more efficacious organization, giving greater strength to study organisms and practical offices, and with a well-arranged programme.

The Rector Major and his Council should study also the manner of making a deeper verification of the structures of the central government, involving the Provincial Chapters, with a view to the GC25. (GC24, 191)

Sense of the verification

The GC24 asked for a verification of the central government, both with regard to its functioning and in respect also of the organization and integration of its structures.

The first aspect it entrusted to the Rector Major with his Council during the following six-year period, through study and experiences (later a brief summary is given of the steps taken

by the General Council). For the second aspect, the Rector Major with his Council were asked to study the way of making a verification of the structures of central government, involving the provincial chapters with a view to the GC25.

At the moment it is not a question of doing an overall study on the structures of government of the Congregation, but of tackling those aspects of the central government which, in the experience of the provinces, now call for some change so as to better respond to the present needs of the mission.

The intention, therefore, is to centre the consultation:

- on the *verification* of the incidence and usefulness of the interventions of the central government in the provinces (first question);
- on the *hopes of animation and government* from the central government for which the provinces feel the most urgent need, in accordance with the principles which inspire the nature, organization and real possibilities (second question).

It is always open to the provincial Chapters to make *other suggestions and proposals* for the improvement of the structures or central government of the Congregation (third question).

In all this reflection we must proceed with a congregational mentality, i.e. even though we begin from our own experience and reality, we must make the effort to be open to the overall needs and expectations of the Congregation.

Questions for the provinces to reflect on in verifying the structures of central government

1. **Verification** of the repercussions in the province of the service of animation of the central government.

In the light of the experience of recent years, what incidence and usefulness have the interventions of the Rector Major and General Councillors had, both the Councillors in charge of Departments and the Regional Councillors?

2. **Expectations** of the provinces in respect of the structures of central government:

- 2.1 What does the province expect from a Department?

- 2.2 What Departments must certainly be under the direct responsibility of a General Councillor, in order to better correspond to the needs of organic unity of the salesian mission at the present day?

- 2.3 What does the province expect from the *Regional Councillor*?

- 2.4 What does the province expect from the *Extraordinary Visitation*?

3. **Other possible suggestions** for the structure of the central government of the Congregation.

Elements for shedding light on the reflection

1. **Some permanent principles confirmed by the last General Chapters**

- *The principle of unity and communion*

An element always present in the structures of government

is that of *unity around the Superior*, considered always as the centre of unity and animator of communion in the community at all levels.

That this is part of the charism is emphasized by the SGC in the following words: "The structures and organization Don Bosco gave his Congregation and especially the insistent demand for unity were not simply a product of the centralizing tendencies of his times. They were an intrinsic necessity arising from the concrete set-up that he wanted to give to his Congregation" (SGC 718).

The "rapport of unity", which had as its vital term of reference the person of Don Bosco, after his death is referred to the Rector Major, the Successor of Don Bosco (cf. SGC 719). All this is well expressed in art.122 of the Constitutions. Hence for us Salesians the personal authority of the Superior is not only a fact of canon law, but a need founded on the Congregation's charism.

• ***A family style in the exercise of a true authority***

The Special General Chapter emphasized another characteristic, typical of our salesian spirit, both in the exercise of authority and in obedience: a *family style*, linked with the concern for a well organized structure united around the Superior (cf. SGC 714).

It is precisely this family style in the practice of the Congregation that allows for a certain flexibility in the structures of government which leaves to the Superior the possibility of listening to and dialoguing with confreres and collaborators, of involving them in tasks and projects, of assessing their talents and abilities, and making them full partakers in the common mission. In this sense can also be read the articles of the Constitutions referring to participation and shared responsibility (cf. C 123).

This style can be seen also in the fact that although the main tasks of those responsible for government are clearly

stated (with reference also to the requirements of the Code of Canon Law), a certain discretion – more evident in the early texts of the Constitutions – is always left so that the Superior can entrust to his immediate collaborators in government specific tasks which he considers necessary or useful for the Society's mission.

• ***Structures and mission of the Society***

The first indication given by the SGC in dealing with the matter of structures concerns the bond between structures and the Society's mission at various levels. "Structures of government serve only as a means to achieve certain ends in a Society" (SGC 713). "Our structures have the concrete purpose of sustaining the life and activity of the Congregation" (SGC 706).

Obedient to this principle, in the structures of central government – which means in practice the General Council – alongside the Superior, who is the centre of unity, are present collaborators with roles that correspond to dimensions considered fundamental in the life and mission of the Congregation.

One of the main points of the SGC and of the succeeding GC21 and GC22 was to give better definition (also in view of the renewed text of the Constitutions) to what were to be considered the *priority sectors for animation*, with reference to the life and mission of the Society, to correspond to the sectors of the General Council. In the Constitutions approved by the GC22 they are:

- the formation of personnel (novices and confreres);
- youth pastoral work (extended to all salesian pastoral activity);
- the Salesian Family;
- social communication;
- the Missions
- finances.

Clearly there remains also the figure of the Vicar General

who is "the first collaborator of the Rector Major in the government of the Society. (...) To him is entrusted particularly the care of religious life and discipline" (C 134).

• ***Decentralization and subsidiarity***

An element we may consider constant in the structures of the Congregation – though obviously with different emphases at successive points of development – is the responsibility given to local and intermediate structures and authorities. This is highlighted at the present day through the principles of "*subsidiarity*" and "*decentralization*", which Vatican II and (for us) the Special General Chapter relaunched in renewed form alongside the indispensable principle of unity. We read in the document of the SGC: "Decentralization makes provision for the necessary distribution of power. Thus we have a more rapid and less complicated solution of problems, increased efficiency and a more comprehensive valuation of personnel. The concrete realization of this decentralization is more evident in the structures at regional, provincial and local level: this is where decentralized powers find their expression" (SGC 720).

In GC19 and then in the SGC – in the perspective of a more practical realization of decentralization, without losing the indispensable value of unity – was introduced the figure of the *Regional Councillor*. His role responds specifically, on the one hand, to the need to follow local movements (within the autonomy of provincial or regional initiatives) and bring them to the Centre, and on the other to make known to the provinces or groups of provinces the requirements coming from the Centre with respect to unity in the charism and mission. From these standpoints the Regional is typically a figure of "linkage" and of "coordination"; "vertical" linkage (in so far as he makes present to the General Council the situations and requirements of the provinces and vice versa, and promotes constant dialogue: cf. SGC 724), and "horizontal" linkage by encouraging meetings, encounters, reflections, etc. on matters of common interest.

2. Steps realized by the Council in recent years, and points considered accepted and to be maintained at the present moment.

In response to the mandate received, the Rector Major and his Council *have examined and studied the deliberation of the GC24* in various ways:

- By drawing up a common program for the six-year period and a Vademecum of the General Council, in which were collected and set out in order the roles and function of each Councillor; these elements have facilitated a functioning that is more coordinated and unified.
- By studying the historical aspects and motivations which have led to the present structures.
- By verifying the functioning of the present government through:
 - the consultation of experts (*Coopers & Lybrand*) who have examined the present structures and the kinds of problems they present in fulfilling the mission of the Congregation;
 - the consultation of other Congregations and Religious Institutes on their structures and experience;
 - a study on the part of a group of confreres of the Generalate on the organization and functioning of the Salesian Headquarters;
 - the suggestions of a group of Provincials called together by the Rector Major.

On the basis of these studies and the experience of recent years, the Council has indicated some aspects which it considers *important to reaffirm and maintain* at the present moment:

- the nature of the General Council which assists the Rector Major and collaborates with him in the function of government and animation of the Congregation;

- the organization of the Councillors in charge of Departments and Regional Councillors is considered positive for the animation and government of the Congregation;
- residence of the Regional Councillors at Rome is necessary for guaranteeing the unity of orientation and action;
- it is desirable that Extraordinary Visitations be made by a member of the Council;
- the Departments can be, and perhaps should be, divided in a different manner;
- certain areas of the mission can be entrusted to central secretariats (cf. R 108).

It has also indicated some *areas of difficulty*, as for instance:

- an excessive number of Councillors can make burdensome the dynamics of central government;
- the multiplicity and growing complexity of sectors to be animated, as also the existence of transverse realities which concern more than one Department;
- communication between Centre and provinces: disproportion between proposals made and their assimilation and realization; difficulties in the following up of processes; coordination of interventions of sectors in provinces, etc.;
- harmonization of the two roles of the Regional: the extraordinary visitation of the provinces and the accompaniment and following up of processes and of coordination in the region.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BE SENT TO THE MODERATOR

Three blocks of contributions are to be sent to the Moderator of the General Chapter:

- the *responses* to the questions *on the main theme* of the Chapter: “The salesian community today”, following the different

parts indicated in the outline;

- some *significant experiences of salesian community life*, especially in particular situations, e.g. aging communities, communities with many different kinds of work, small communities, etc., showing how they live the basic elements of our salesian religious life, what difficulties they meet with and how they approach them, and the enrichment they have at both personal level and that of the mission;
- the responses to the various questions *on the verification of the structures of government*.

To facilitate the making of these replies, the Moderator will send to the provinces in due time by e-mail appropriate forms with precise indications.

2.3 THE PROVINCIAL CHAPTERS

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION AND CARRYING-OUT OF THE PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

2.3.1 Tasks of the Provincial Chapter

“The provincial chapter”, declares art.170 of the Constitutions, “is the fraternal gathering in which the local communities strengthen their sense of belonging to the provincial community, through their common concern for its general problems. It is also the representative assembly of all the confreres and local communities”.

The tasks of the provincial chapter are indicated in art.170 of the Constitutions and art.169 of the General Regulations.

We must keep in mind the practical distinction between the provincial chapter convoked “*in preparation for the General Chapter*” and the so called “*intermediate*” chapter (which takes place during the interval between one General Chapter and the next).

In the present case the provincial chapter is convoked primarily and specifically for the preparation of the GC25. In consequence:

1. *Primarily and principally it will study the theme of the GC25: “The salesian community today”.* Furthermore it will respond to the questions on the verification of the structures of government (cf. n. 2.2, Outline for reflection, part II in this number of the AGC).
2. It will elect the Delegate (or Delegates) to the General Chapter and their substitutes (C 171, 5).

In addition to fulfilling these primary requirements,

the chapter *can deal with other matters of more immediate concern to the province* and considered of particular importance, as provided for by C 171, 1-2.

2.3.2 The preparation of the Provincial Chapter

After receiving the Rector Major's letter convoking the GC25, it is desirable that the provincial call his council together:

- to analyze more deeply the nature and purpose of the GC25, and to clarify the significance and purpose of the provincial chapter which is to prepare it;
- to take notice of the study outline on the theme assigned to the GC25 and study the norms governing the preparation and realization of the provincial chapter and their application;
- to study means and motives for fostering the involvement of confreres and communities;
- to appoint the *Moderator of the Provincial Chapter* (R 168) and invite possible experts and observers to the chapter (R 168).

If it is considered opportune, the provincial with his council may appoint a *preparatory commission*, to help the Moderator in preparing the provincial chapter.

A *provincial preparatory commission* is not prescribed by the General Regulations. It has nevertheless proved useful in many provinces for the preparation of the provincial chapter. It is for the provincial and his council to decide how it should be made up.

The provincial chapter should be convoked by a letter from the provincial encouraging the confreres to reflect on the theme and to participate in the chapter's work. In it he will announce:

- the name of the Moderator of the provincial chapter;
- the members of the preparatory commission (if there is one);
- the date and place of the chapter, which could be spread over more than one session;
- the manner of grouping of communities which have less than six confreres, for the purpose of electing the delegate to the provincial chapter and his substitute (cf. R 163).

After the election of the delegates of the local communities, the provincial in a second letter will

- communicate to the confreres the names of those elected,
- and present the list of perpetually professed confreres eligible for election to the chapter as delegates of the confreres of the province (cf. R 165, 1-2).

2.3.3 The Moderator of the Provincial Chapter

- will decide and inform the communities of the dates by which must take place the election of:
 - the delegates of the communities and their substitutes;
 - the delegates of the confreres (from the provincial list);
 - eventual new substitutes for community delegates if a substitute is subsequently elected from the provincial list as a delegate of the confreres;
- will send to the communities the norms governing the election of the delegates of local communities and the forms for recording the minutes of their elections; he will also announce the method to be used for the election of delegates of the confreres of the province.

2.3.4. It will be the task of the provincial preparatory commission (if there is one) to study, suggest to the provincial, and foster all the initiatives it may consider useful for:

- a. sensitizing the confreres to chapter perspectives (by conferences, study days, group and community meetings, etc.)
- b. helping the confreres to dispose themselves spiritually for the work and obligations associated with the chapter (through retreats, days of prayer, celebrations, etc.)
- c. clarifying the chapter theme and helping the confreres in their study of it: every confrere could well be given a copy of the study outline found elsewhere in this edition of the Acts (cf. p. 38-59).

The preparatory commission can also at opportune moments interest members of the Salesian Family and friends of our works (FMA, DBV, Cooperators, Past-pupils, the more mature among our pupils, competent members of the clergy - including our Bishops and Prelates etc.) requesting their collaboration in the form and areas allowed by our norms and local situations.

The Moderator, with the preparatory commission, will also

- send out forms, based on samples supplied by the Moderator of the GC25, for collecting the contributions and reflections of the confreres and/or communities;
- lay down a date by which the forms must be returned to the Moderator of the provincial chapter;
- study the contributions and proposals sent in by the confreres, and arrange them in a manner which will facilitate their use for the provincial chapter's reflection and decisions.

2.3.5 The carrying out of the Provincial Chapter itself

Every effort should be made to ensure that the provincial chapter is celebrated in a fraternal atmosphere of reflection and prayer, and that it is seeking God's will as we try to bring an ever better response to the expectations of the Church and of youth at the present day. This will be helped by an appropriate preparation of the liturgy as regards content, method, aids, etc.

For the carrying out of its work, every provincial chapter will have its own brief *collection of regulations*, containing norms for work, discussions, and the organization of the capitulars into study groups or commissions. For these regulations the norms indicated by the Constitutions and General Regulations should be kept in mind (C 153 concerning the modality of elections, R 161, 164, 169) together with any indications found in the provincial directory.

For the *communication* of proposals and contributions to the GC25, the indications given by the Moderator of the GC25 must be scrupulously observed.

In particular, proposals and contributions must be written on the appropriate forms, indicating clearly the point of the study outline to which they refer. Proposals from provincial chapters will carry the details of the voting.

2.3.6 Participation of the communities and confreres

It will be convenient at the end of these suggestions to list some duties of the communities and individual confreres.

2.3.7. *The communities*

- Accompany the whole of the capitular process by their daily prayer.

- Elect their delegate to the provincial chapter and his substitute. They compile the minutes of the election, following the model supplied by the Moderator.
- Receive and study (in common if possible) the motives and material sent by the Moderator for their sensitization.
- Deepen their knowledge of the provincial chapter theme, with a view to the GC25, and submit contributions and proposals.

2.3.8. *The individual confreres*

- Vote in the election of the delegate of their own community and his substitute.
- Take part in the election of the delegates of the confreres of the province.
- Make a personal study of the theme, availing themselves of aids and of the exchange of ideas in their own community,
- Submit personal contributions and proposals to the provincial chapter and collaborate in the drawing up and discussion of proposals and contributions from their own community.
- Send, if they so wish, personal proposals and contributions directly to the Moderator of the GC25.
- Follow, through information and prayer, the preparation, realization and conclusions of their own provincial chapter.

2.4 NORMS FOR THE ELECTIONS

2.4.0 Introduction: lawfulness and validity of acts

The provincial chapter is a community act, whose value and consequences transcend the provincial community and the time at which it takes place.

The provincial chapter in fact elects delegates for the General Chapter and draws up proposals for the latter. In addition it can make decisions which, after the approval of the Rector Major with the consent of his council (cf. C 170), have binding force for all the confreres of the province, including those who have not taken a direct part in the decision-making.

Its realization therefore is governed by norms which guarantee that its acts are valid and lawful. These norms are listed in the universal law and in our own proper law (Constitutions and General Regulations), from which the provincial chapter derives its authority.

The observance of the laws concerning validity and lawfulness, and precision in compiling official documents, ensure clarity and expedition at successive stages of the work and eliminate delays, reference back, explanations and sanctions.

As a service to provincials and moderators of provincial chapters the following list of norms and juridical indications is provided.

These norms refer to:

- *Canonical erection of houses*
- *Appointments*
- *Calculation of number of confreres and the various lists needed*
- *Minutes of the elections of delegates and substitutes*

- *Special cases*
- *Formal indications*

2.4.1 Canonical erection of houses

The canonical erection of the house is indispensable (cf. can. 608,§1) before the confreres can meet in an assembly which has the power of validly electing the delegate to the provincial chapter, and before the president of such an assembly of the confreres (the Rector: C 186) can take part by right in the chapter (C 173, 5).

The document of erection should be in the house archives.

For houses which existed before 1926 as communities in their own right (and not "filiali" i.e. dependent on another community) it is sufficient that there be evidence of its existence before that date in which houses were canonically erected without individual documentation. A similar erection was made for the houses of Poland in 1930.

It is necessary therefore:

- a) to verify in good time the canonical erection of each house or community;
- b) to put in hand the necessary procedure for the canonical erection of those houses and communities not yet erected, before the election of the delegates.

For the canonical erection of a house it must have at least three confreres (cf. can.115 §2), and the provincial after consulting his council and obtaining the written consent of the Local Ordinary must make formal application to the Rector Major (cf. can.608-610).

- c) that the provincial give an official, clear and explicit assignment to the groups of confreres belonging to those "presences" which for various reasons have not yet been canonically erected, or who belong to houses

canonically erected but with less than six confreres: the norms for such assignments are to be found in art. 163 of the General Regulations.

In the case of "presences" *not canonically erected* the provincial will assign the group of confreres concerned to a house already canonically erected in which they can fulfil their duties and exercise their rights as electors together with the confreres of that house. It should be remembered that the "one in charge" of such a "presence" does not take part in the provincial chapter by right.

In the case of *canonically erected* houses with *less than six confreres* the norms of R 163 apply: if possible the provincial should arrange that they meet together so as to form the number of at least six members under the presidency of the rector who is senior by first profession. Thus united they will elect the delegate for the provincial chapter and his substitute. If however because of special circumstances the members of a house with less than six professed members cannot join with another in like condition the provincial will join the community with less than six professed members to a larger one (with six or more professed) and together the members of the two communities with equal rights (both active and passive) will proceed to the election of the delegate and his substitute for the provincial chapter. It should be remembered too that the rector even of a community with less than six professed members (provided it be canonically erected) takes part in the provincial chapter by right.

2.4.2 Appointments

A verification must be made to see that the appointments of those who take part by right in the provincial chapter are in order and have not lapsed. This is especially important in places where the provincial chapter takes place at a time when there is normally a change of personnel and new assignments.

An appointment is in order when:

- a) it was made in accordance with the Constitutions;
- b) the person appointed has taken possession of his office in the manner prescribed;
- c) his term of office has not expired.

The Superior Council, on 23.6.1978, made the following decisions concerning entry into office and its cessation:

- the appointment of confreres to various offices, at either local or provincial level, becomes effective from the moment that the confrere formally takes over the office;
- such confreres remain in office until their successors formally take over the same office; this must happen not more than three months after the expiry of their mandate.

What has been said above is to be applied, case by case:

- to provincials and superiors of vice-provinces or special circumscriptions (cf. C 162, 168);
- to members of provincial councils (cf. C 167);
- to superiors of provincial delegations (cf. C 159);
- to rectors (cf. C 177);
- to directors of novices (cf. C 112).

For a vice-rector, given that with the approval of the provincial he can take the place of the rector if the latter is seriously impeded (cf. C 173, 5), there must be a formal document regarding his appointment as vice-rector. Sufficient for this purpose is the letter of obedience given to the confrere. There must also be a formal document indicating that the provincial has recognized the serious impediment preventing the participation of the rector in the provincial chapter and his substitution by the vice-rector.

2.4.3 Calculation of number of confreres and the various lists needed

The calculation of the number of confreres who belong to a province (or a vice-province) for purposes of the

provincial chapter is very important. It determines:

- a) the number of delegates of the province (or vice-province) who take part in the provincial chapter (cf. C 173, 7; R 161-166);
- b) the number of delegates which the province (or vice-province) sends to the General Chapter (cf. C 151, 8; R 114-115, 118)

For *circumscriptions with a special statute* both the composition of the provincial chapter and the number of delegates to the General Chapter are laid down in the decree of erection of the circumscription concerned.

A general list of confreres belonging to the province will be made for purposes of the provincial chapter.

As well as this general list, there are other lists which will be useful for the realization of the chapter and should be compiled. They are:

- a list of those who take part in the chapter “by right”;
- a list of confreres having “active voice”;
- a list of confreres having “passive voice”.

The norms governing the compiling of each of these lists are as follows:

2.4.4 1. *A general list of confreres belonging to the province (or vice-province) for purposes of the provincial chapter.*

It should be noted that this list of confreres belonging to the province “for purposes of the provincial chapter” does not coincide with the list that is asked for each year for statistical purposes; the latter includes also confreres in “irregular” situations.

The following are to be considered as belonging to the province (or vice-province) for this purpose:

- A. confreres who made their first profession in the

province (or vice-province) and are still resident in it at the time the list is compiled (C 160);

- B) confreres who came from another province (or vice-province) as a result of a *definitive transfer* and who still reside in the province at the time the list is compiled (cf. R 151);

The *making of definitive transfers* belongs to the Rector Major (cf. R 151). Definitive transfer is considered to have taken place also in the following cases:

- confreres who in the act of erection of a new province or vice-province are assigned to it (cf. ASC 284, p. 68, 3.2);
- missionaries who return definitively to their home country and are assigned by the Rector Major to the province he considers most suitable for their condition
- all those for whom the Rector Major (or the Vicar General) has issued a decree of definitive transfer.

- C) confreres who at the time the list is compiled reside in the province (or vice-province), though coming from another province (or vice-province) on *temporary transfer*, in accordance with the norm of art.151 of the Regulations;

Temporary transfer is brought about:

- either by a mandate of obedience (e.g. when a confrere is sent by obedience to exercise an office (rector, director of novices, teacher, etc. in another province), as long as the mandate lasts;
- or by agreement between two provincials, when a confrere is sent to help in another province (cf. R 151).

The confreres who have been transferred, even if only temporarily, are to be included and vote only in the province where they are actually working.

- D) confreres who belong to the province (or vice-province) by one of the above-mentioned titles: (A, B, C), but who are *temporarily absent for lawful reasons*.

In accordance with R 166 the following are to be considered as "*lawfully absent*" (and hence to be included in the list):

a). confreres of the province (or vice-province) who at the time the list is made are living temporarily and by express mandate of their own provincial of origin in a salesian house of another province (or vice-province) for specific reasons of *study, health or work received from their own provincial*;

The confreres referred to here (those temporarily absent for reasons of study, health, or for work given them by their own provincial) are not “transferred”, even temporarily, to another province. They

- vote in the house where they are resident (outside their own province) for the election of the delegate of the community;

- but for the election of the delegate of the provincial community they are included in the provincial list of their own province.

It should be noted that the work given them by their own provincial, which is referred to here must be effectively a work for their own province of origin. This is evidently not the case of a confrere who resides and works in an interprovincial house: in a formation community or an interprovincial study centre, for instance, the formation or teaching personnel (but not the students) belong in all respects to the province of the territory in which the house is situated, and are counted only in that province. (Here it is a matter of “temporary transfer” as long as their assignment lasts.)

b). confreres who have received from their own provincial permission for “*absentia a domo*” (cf. can.665, §1) or who have received from the Rector Major (or from the Apostolic See) the indult of “*exclaustration*” (cf. can.686). Confreres who are “exclaustrated” (can.686) or “*absentes a domo*” (can.665), and whose permission to be absent has not expired, are salesian religious and therefore to be included in the general list. Nevertheless:

- those exclaustrated in accordance with common law (can.687) are deprived of the right of active and passive voice;

- those “*absentes a domo*” can be deprived of the right of active and passive voice in the judgement of the provincial (especially when leave of absence is granted for vocational reasons), at the time the concession is granted; cf. the letter of the Vicar General of 20.01.1985.

2.4.5 To be still more precise the following, although still belonging to the province (or vice-province), *must not be counted for purposes of the provincial chapter* (and must therefore not be included in the above-mentioned general list):

- A) confreres who have made a formal request for dispensation from priestly or diaconal celibacy; or who have made a formal request for secularization or for dispensation from perpetual or temporary vows;

The practice is that for the purposes of the provincial chapter, confreres who have made a formal request to leave the Congregation are not counted, even though the request is still under consideration and has not reached a definitive conclusion

- B) confreres who are *unlawfully outside community for any reason (i.e. confreres in "irregular" situations)*.

2.4.6. It will be opportune to keep in mind the following norm, given by the Rector Major on the occasion of the SGC and to be considered still valid:

Transfers from one province to another which took place without the prescribed formalities, and for which there are no clear facts or documents, are to be considered definitive (and hence with the loss of all effects of the former membership) after ten consecutive years of residence in the new province.

2.4.7. The "general list" of the confreres of the province is the one to be used for calculating both the number of delegates of the provincial community to the provincial chapter (one for every 25 or fraction of 25 members: R 165, 3), and the number of delegates to the General Chapter (one if the total number of confreres is less than 250, two if the number is 250 or more: R 114).

As soon as this general list has been compiled, a copy is to be sent to the Moderator of the GC25, whose duty it is to verify the calculations of the individual provinces (or vice-provinces), so as to ensure the validity of the election of delegates to the General Chapter.

2.4.8. 2. List of those who take part in the provincial chapter “by right”.

This is a list which the provincial (or the moderator of the provincial chapter) will communicate to the confreres, so that they know which members attend the chapter by right, in view of the elections at provincial level.

In accordance with C 173 the following are members “by right” of the provincial chapter:

- the provincial (or superior of a vice-province) who presides over the chapter;
- the provincial councillors;
- the delegates of the individual provincial delegations;
- the moderator of the provincial chapter;
- the rectors of canonically erected houses, even if the number of confreres is less than six;
- the director of novices.

As was said earlier, the composition of the chapter of the circumscriptions with a special statute is laid down in the respective decree of erection.

2.4.8. 3. Lists of confreres having “active voice” (electors).

They are of two kinds:

3.1 List for the election of the delegates of each community.

This list is compiled in each community and includes all *perpetually and temporarily professed confreres who reside in the community concerned*, including those of

other provinces (or vice-provinces) who are there temporarily for reasons of study, health, or for a mandate received from their own provincial of origin (cf. R 165,2).

3.2 *Provincial list for the election of delegates of the provincial community to the provincial chapter.*

To this list, which is important for the election at provincial level, belong *all the confreres, both perpetually and temporarily professed, included in the "general list", except those who are deprived of active and passive voice.*

Those deprived of active and passive voice, even though they be included in the general list of the confreres of the province, are:

- a. confreres who have an indult of excommunication, in accordance with can. 687;
- b. confreres who have received permission for "absentia a domo", and who in receiving such permission renounced their right to active and passive voice.

In the case of the "absentia a domo", their renunciation of active and passive voice must be clear from the document by which the provincial (with the consent of his council) grants permission for absence; cf. the letter of the Vicar General of 20.01.1985.

2.4.10. 4. *Lists of confreres with passive voice (eligible for election).*

These are lists of confreres who can be elected as delegates of the local communities, or as delegates of the province for the provincial chapter, or as delegates for the GC25.

They are of three kinds:

- 4.1. *List of confreres eligible for election to the provincial chapter as "delegates of a community".*

It includes *all the perpetually professed members of the community* (including those of other provinces residing there only for reasons of study and health),

- except for those who are already members by right of the provincial chapter (v. list 2)
- and those deprived of active and passive voice.

2.4.11. 4.2 *List of confreres eligible for election to the provincial chapter as “delegates of the provincial community”.*

This list includes all the perpetually professed members on the “general list” of the province (list 1), with the exception of:

- those who are already members of the provincial chapter by right (list 2),
- the delegates already validly elected by the communities,
- confreres deprived of active and passive voice (those exclaustrated and “absentes a domo” who have renounced their right to active and passive voice).

2.4.12. 4.3 For the election within the provincial chapter of the delegate or delegates of the province to the General Chapter, it should be kept in mind that *all the perpetually professed on the “general list” (list 1) are eligible for election, except:*

- the provincial, who is a member of the General Chapter by right;
- Rector Majors emeriti, present in the province, who are also members by right of the General Chapter;
- confreres deprived of active and passive voice.

2.4.13. Minutes of the elections

- The rules for voting and scrutinies in the local com-

munities are set out in arts.161-163 of the General Regulations (cf. also C 153).

The corresponding minutes of the election of delegates of the local communities and their respective substitutes must be drawn up on the appropriate forms and be examined by the relevant provincial commission.

This provincial commission for the examination of the minutes of the election of the delegates of the communities will be appointed by the provincial in accordance with the Regulations for the provincial chapter.

- The rules for voting and scrutinies in the voting for delegates of the provincial communities are set out in art.165 of the Regulations.

The corresponding minutes of the election of the delegates of the provincial community must carry the following details:

- the date of the scrutiny,
- the names of the scrutineers,
- an indication that the required procedure has been observed,
- the results.

The minutes drawn up on the appropriate forms, must be endorsed by the signatures of the one presiding over the scrutiny and the scrutineers themselves.

- The minutes relating to the election of delegates to the GC25 and their substitutes must be drawn up only on the special forms provided for the purpose and in accordance with the instructions they carry.

These minutes must be sent without delay to the Moderator of the GC25, who will pass them to the appropriate juridical commission appointed by the Rector Major for the prescribed examination (cf. R 115).

2.4.14 Special cases

– Salesian Bishops, even though retired from office and resident in a province, have neither active nor passive voice, and if they are invited to the provincial chapter they do not vote. The same norm applies to Bishops reinserted in salesian communities (cf. AAS 1986, p.1324).

– Rector Majors emeriti have both active and passive voice in the local community in which they are inserted and in the election of delegates of the provincial community; but if they are elected as delegates to the provincial chapter (either of the local community or the provincial community) they have active voice in the provincial chapter but not passive voice, since they are already members by right of the General Chapter.

2.4.15 Formal indications for compiling the lists of confreres

1. Names of the confreres are to be *numbered* progressively.
2. *Names are to be given in alphabetical order and spelled as in the Elenco Generale of 2000.*
3. Use capital letters for the PATERNAL SURNAME and lower case for the Christian name.
4. Indicate by the appropriate *sign* whether the confrere is a priest (P), deacon (D), lay salesian (L), or “clerical” student (S).
5. Indicate by the letter ‘t’ if the confrere is in temporary vows.
6. If a member of the provincial chapter, indicate the title to participation:
 - a) by right
 - b) delegate of local community
 - c) delegate of provincial community.

2.5 WORK OF THE PREPARATORY TECHNICAL COMMISSION

On 17 April 2000 the Rector Major, in accordance with art.112 of the Regulations, appointed the preparatory technical commission for the GC25, made up of the following confreres: Fr Stjepan Bolkovac, Fr Francesco Cereda, Fr James Gallagher, Fr Corrado Pastore, Fr Chrys Saldanha, Fr José Antonio San Martín.

It was presided over by Fr Antonio Domenech, already appointed Moderator of the GC25 on 13 April 2000.

The technical commission met in Rome from 19-21 May 2000, and in its various sessions studied and drew up the following contributions:

1. A calendar for the preparation of the GC25, based on the date of opening laid down by the General Council;
2. A study outline on the theme of the GC25, as an aid for the provincial chapters and confreres.
3. An outline for reflection for the verification of the structures of central government, according to the deliberation of the GC24, n.119.
4. Suggestions for the preparation and carrying out of the provincial chapters.
5. Juridical norms useful for the provincial chapters.

The contributions drawn up by the technical commission were passed to the Rector Major through the Moderator, and form part of the present n.372 of the Acts of the General Council.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

24 March. After returning from Venezuela (cf. AGC 371, n.4.1), accompanied by the director of the Italian Salesian Bulletin, Fr Giancarlo Manieri, the Rector Major went to the University of Sociology, Rome, where he presided at a press conference for the presentation of his recent book or collection of interviews: *I guardiani dei sogni col ditto sul mouse*. About a hundred students were present.

Among the speakers were Profs. Michele Sorice, teacher of sociology of communication; Aldo Fontanarosa, teacher of the theory and technique of language; Alberto Marinelli, teacher of the theory and technique of the new media; Luciano Russi, teacher of the sociology of communication, and Dr. Carlo Di Cicco, journalist and head of the ASCA agency, who was the interviewer responsible for the text.

26 March - 1 April. Fr Vecchi preached a retreat at the Generalate to the Rectors of the two Venice Provinces.

10 - 19 April. Intermediate session of the General Coun-

cil, with all members present, to define the theme of the GC25 and deal with other matters concerning the Chapter, and finish the reflections on the Departments and Regions. New provincials were appointed for Valencia (Spain) and Guwahati (India).

19 April. Fr Vecchi had a meeting with those responsible for the UPS; Fr Cereda, Fr Pellerey, Fr Malizia, and Fr Nanni.

30 April. After celebrating Easter with the Generalate community, the Rector Major left for Munich to visit some of the works of the South German province before proceeding to Leitershofen to preach a retreat to the Rectors of the two German Provinces and that of Austria, some seventy in all.

5 May. After his return to Rome he left for Kinshasa and Lubumbashi to visit the Central African Province.

6 May. On arrival at Kinshasa, Fr Vecchi was received by the Provincial and other Salesians, and taken to Boys Town where he met the confreres, youngsters and parishioners. He also had a meet-

ing with the recently appointed auxiliary Bishop of Kinshasa. Also present to greet him were Dr Pietro Ballero, Italian Ambassador, and others from the Embassy.

In the afternoon Cardinal Federico Etsou came to Boys Town to meet Fr Vecchi, and the two distributed the prizes to the winning teams of the football, basketball and volleyball championships which had just finished. Afterwards there was a concelebration in the parish church, dedicated to Don Bosco, with the Cardinal presiding and with two other bishops, the Rector Major, the Provincial and several other priests among the concelebrants.

7 May. The Rector Major left for Lubumbashi where, in the course of the following days, he was able to visit all the salesian foundations: schools and colleges, Boys Town, reception centres, hostel for university students, the Safina meeting-house, the theologate, novitiate, parishes and Polyclinic. Everywhere he was shown round the premises and had meetings with young people, parishioners and confreres.

He also visited several houses of the FMA: the provincial headquarters, novitiate, and House of Laura Vicuña, and was everywhere received with cordiality,

affection and veneration.

Other high spots during the visit were: a meeting with the confreres in the studentate of theology; the blessing of the new novitiate premises with a meeting with the novices and postnovices; the visit to Boys Town to distribute prizes to the winners of the salesian games in which thousands of youngsters from the city and surrounding area had taken part; the visit to the Archbishop of Lubumbashi, Mgr Floriberto Songa Songa, and then to the Governor, His Excellency Katumba Mwamke Augustin, a salesian past-pupil; a meeting with the Rectors in the provincial house and with the Salesian Family in the Imara College. Fr Vecchi also met the individual groups of the Family separately: the Salesians at the theologate, the FMA at their novitiate, the Past-pupils at the Imara College, the Cooperators at Safina, when 28 new Cooperators made the promise; and the DBV in the house of the lady-doctor Tortore alongside the Don Bosco Polyclinic.

15 May. The Rector Major returned to **Kinshasa** where he visited the house of the FMA dedicated to St John Bosco, and then the reception house with the surrounding parish; in the reception house he blessed a niche dedicated

to Our Lady of Lourdes, in the presence of several hundred people who had gathered for the occasion.

16 May. He left to return to Rome via Brussels.

17 May. Fr Vecchi left Rome once again, this time for Spain and the Province of Cordoba. He made a brief stop at **Las Palmas** in the Canary Islands to greet the confreres before going on to **Tenerife** where he visited the salesian works at Orotava, Cuesta and the FMA school at Santa Cruz and had meetings with the Salesians, the FMA, Past-pupils and Cooperators. He also made a visit to Alcalde di Orotava, where he met Mr Isaac Valencia (a past-pupil) and the Bishop, Mgr Felipe Garcia.

19 May. The Rector Major traveled back to Cordoba.

20-21 May. He went on to **Montilla**, a town where the centenary of salesian work was being celebrated together with the 50th anniversary of the picture of Mary Help of Christians; they were also celebrating the annual feastday of the province, timed to coincide with Fr Vecchi's visit.

Fr Vecchi met the confreres, some of the FMA, the past-pupils and the Cooperators. He visited some of the significant places in the town, such as the Church of

St John of Avila and St Francis Solano. In the Town Hall he was received by the Mayor and was presented with the key of the town.

21 May. Going back to Cordoba he made a call on the Bishop, Mgr Francisco Javier Martinez, and then had a meeting in the provincial house with the provincial council of the Salesian Family, some 60 persons.

In the evening he went with the provincial to the College of St Francis de Sales to say Mass during the novena in honour of Mary Help of Christians in the Church dedicated to her.

22 May. In the morning the Rector Major visited the salesian work at Ubeda, where he met the confreres, pupils, teaching staff and leaders of the Salesian Family; later he visited also the postnovitiate house at Granada, dedicated to Our Lady of the Snow. At lunch were invited also the FMA Provincial of Seville, and the Superior of the FMA house at Granada.

In the afternoon Fr Vecchi met also the novices and postnovices who had come from Sanlucar of Seville for the occasion. He then went on to the Don Bosco College where he said Mass in the evening as part of the preparations for the

feast of Mary Help of Christians.

23 May. The Rector Major left Granada to travel to Turin, to take part in the Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians.

24 May. He presided at the 8.30 Mass in the Basilica and then went to visit the sick confreres in the Don Beltrami House. In the afternoon he returned to Rome.

1 - 5 June. At the Generalate Fr Vecchi presided at the meeting of the General Councils of the Salesian Family, which he had himself convoked for the Jubilee Year. On 1 June he gave an opening address: *The Salesian Family yesterday and today*. He took part in all the moments of work, prayer and fraternity, and gave a concluding conference on Monday, 5 June. Very significant was the celebration by the participants of the Jubilee with the Eucharist in the Basilica of St John Lateran, at which Fr Vecchi presided.

6 June. The plenary summer session of the General Council began. In the first weekend from the afternoon of Friday 9 June to Monday 12 June, the Rector Major and some of the Councillors were at the UPS for the Team Visit.

4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors

The Vicar General

In early February Fr Luc Van Looy took part in the Team Visit to the Provinces of Italy, in the course of which he was present also at the Jubilee of Consecrated Life on 2 February in St Peter's Square.

12-13 February. He was at Taranto and Andria in the Southern Province of Italy, to present the Strenna of the Rector Major to the Salesian Family.

20-26 February. He preached a retreat to the Rectors of the Circumscription of Piedmont and the Valley of Aosta.

12-18 March. He preached another retreat, this time to the SDB and FMA local superiors of Rome and Sardinia. Immediately afterwards he left for Spain, to preach a retreat to the Rectors of the Valencia Province.

29-31 March. He held a meeting with a group of seven provincials on the theme of the structures of government of the Congregation. This meeting was decided on by the General Council, and was part of the preparations for the GC25.

Twice between March and April he took part in days of formation for young past-pupils (GEX) of Italy.

10-19 April. He was present at the intermediate session of the General Council, and on the 15th at the meeting of the *Curatorium* of the UPS.

25 April. He took part in the Salesian Family Day of the Genoa Province, and took the opportunity to visit some of the works of that Province.

27 April. He was at Turin, to preside at the celebration of the perpetual profession of some confreres of the international community of Gerini, Rome.

30 April. He took part in the Salesian Family Day of Sardinia at Arborea, and visited some of the other houses.

5-9 May. Fr Van Looy was in the New Rochelle Province of the USA, where he had been invited for two celebrations: the "Youth-Day" to close the events of the Province's centenary, and the Jubilee Celebration of the Salesian Family in the National Sanctuary in Washington. Between the two celebrations he was able to participate in a day of youthful commitment in the school of New Rochelle and visit some of the houses.

12-14 May. He was at Barcelona, Spain, for a meeting of the World Council of the World Union of Catholic Educators (UMEC).

24 May. He presided at the celebration of the feast of Mary Help of Christians at the UPS.

27 May. He presided at a similar celebration for the pupils of the professional schools of the Roman Province in the Sanctuary of Divine Love. In the evening he moved to Corigliano Calabro.

28 May. At Corigliano Calabro he took part in the celebrations for the anniversary of the work there. He also visited the new work at Lamezia Terme in the Southern Province.

1-5 June. He took part at the Generalate in the meeting of General Councils of the Salesian Family.

The Councillor for Formation

The greater part of this period was dedicated by Fr Nicolussi to completing, with the members of his Department, the revision of the *Ratio* and the *Criteria and Norms for the discernment of salesian vocations*, and to participation in Team Visits (those to the provinces of Italy, of French-speaking Africa,

and two visits to the Australia-Asia Region). He followed, in particular, the preparations for the Team Visit to the UPS Vice-province (9-12 June) which had as its specific theme: "*Formation of the confreres of the Vice-province in its various phases*".

During this period the Councillor also made contact with some of the international communities of salesian students in Rome. He took part in the meeting of provincial delegates for formation of the provinces of Italy, and in part in that of the formation guides of the same provinces who had met to examine the animation of this sector (19-21 May).

Among the aspects highlighted during the intermediate session of the General Council should be mentioned: an examination of the consistency of the communities for initial formation, and the importance of encouraging collaboration and interprovincial sharing of responsibility, and also of avoiding fragmentation and the consequent frailty of formation environments; greater attention to pastoral work for vocations and the formation of the salesian brother; following up provincial plans for the qualification of confreres; the significance and validity for the Congregation of the

salesian international formation communities of Rome for the training and qualification of confreres, and the service they offer for some provinces in particular.

The Councillor for Youth Pastoral Work

1-5 February. Immediately after the celebration of the feast of St John Bosco at Valdocco with the Rector Major, Fr Domenech took part in the Team Visit to the Provinces of Italy, held in Rome.

13-17 February. He was at Abidjan (Ivory Coast) to animate the course in youth ministry for the French and Portuguese-speaking provinces of Africa.

22-26 February. Hong Kong: Team Visit to provinces of East Asia.

29 Feb.- 4 March. Bombay: Team Visit to provinces of India.

7-11 March. With some members of his Department he took part in a National Indian Meeting at Bangalore on *marginalization and social exclusion*, organized by the SDB and FMA National Centres.

12 March. He was at Manila, for a meeting with the team preparing the course in youth pastoral work for the provinces of East Asia.

20 March. Returning to Rome, he held a meeting with young priests of the Genoa Province at La Spezia.

31 March - 2 April. A meeting with the Central Commission for the Forum of the Salesian Youth Movement to coordinate preparations for the youth event of next August.

10-19 April. Fr Domenech took part in the intermediate session of the General Council.

25-28 April. He took part in a brief course in youth pastoral work held at the Salesian Centre of Marti-Codolar.

2-6 May. A visit to the Oratories of Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana in the Province of Mexico-Guadalajara.

7-14 May. The Councillor took part at Tlaquepaque in the first youth theological congress of the SYM of Mexico.

18-21 May. As Moderator of the GC25, Fr Domenech presided at a meeting of the technical commission appointed by the Rector Major for the preparation of working material for the provinces.

In the meantime, Fr Raoul Rojas, a collaborator of the Department, took part in the 6th meeting of the European Consulting

Body on salesian schools and professional formation, held at Lisbon 9-10 April, and from 18-21 May at Benediktbeuern in the Seminar for those responsible for the Salesian Volunteer Movement in Europe.

The Councillor for the Salesian Family and for Social Communication

Work at the Generalate in the period February-May 2000.

For the SALESIAN FAMILY:

- installation of the new Central Assistant for the Don Bosco Volunteers, in the person of Fr Julio Olarte, who takes the place of Fr Corrado Bettiga;
- preparation and realization of the Assembly of the General Councils of the Groups of the Salesian Family, which took place at the Generalate from 31 May to 5 June. Some 170 General Councillors took part from the various Groups of the Family;
- new edition of the Mission Statement, submitted to the assembly of the General Councillors;
- preparations for the meeting in Santiago, Chile, from 14-19 August 2000, of the Presidents

- and provincial delegates of the Past-pupils;
- preparation of the Asia-Australia Regional Congress of the Past-pupils, to be held at Bangkok;
 - preparation of the Regional Congresses of Cooperators, foreseen in all the regions of the Association for the election of a member to the World Consulting Body;
 - printing of the book on the Salesian Family. Editions were printed in English, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish; they were well received in all the provinces;
 - meetings of the GEX Commission, together with representatives of the Confederation of the Past-pupils of the FMA;
 - preparation and realization of the meeting of the Presidency of the Past-pupils.
- months. In line with the six-year program, meetings have been organized with the directors of the Bulletins, and with the editors. The intention is to help in the professional preparation and ongoing formation of those working in the Bulletin sector;
- preparation and realization of the 'three-days' of social communication at Nairobi for English-speaking Africa;
 - work on the construction of the *web-page* which is of concern to the General Council and the Generalate, in their various expressions and services;
 - work on the preparation of the *Memorie Biografiche* in CD-Rom;
 - preparatory work for the meeting of provincial delegates for social communication to take place next December at the Generalate.

For **SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**:

- ordinary informational work done by the Department and collaborators: through ANS-Mag, ANS-News, ANS-Foto, ANS-Agenda, ANS-Service, in addition to all the personalized services for those requesting particular interventions;
- specific work for the Salesian Bulletin meetings in coming

Alongside this ordinary work, there have been various meetings, at the Generalate and in the provinces, on the part of:

- two teams of collaborators,
- the General Council.

Some of these meetings, visits and animation commitments can be summed up as follows:

- Participation in Team Visits: for Italy, at Rome 1-5 February; for East Asia, at Hong Kong 22-26 February; for India, at Bombay 29 February - 4 March.
- Visit of animation to the six Republics of Central America, 12-22 February, with meetings in the sectors of the Salesian Family and social communication.
- Retreat for SDB and FMA local superiors of the Southern Italian Province, Rome, 26 March - 2 April.
- Meeting on Social Communication and Salesian Family: Nairobi, 4-9 April.
- Meeting on the Salesian Family for Poland and the Eastern Circumscription, Breslau, 27-29 April.
- Days of spirituality of the Salesian Family, Quito (Ecuador), 5-7 May.
- Visit of animation to Haiti, 8-13 May.
- Visit of animation to Mozambique, 15-22 May.
- Assembly of the General Councils of the Salesian Family, Rome, 31 May - 5 June, with numerous participation of various Councils and intense and profitable work in the assembly and in groups.

The Councillor for the Missions

The winter session of the Council culminated at the end of January with a pilgrimage of the General Council to the salesian holy places of Turin and the Becchi, where the members prayed also for salesian missionary work throughout the world.

3 February. Fr Odorico left Rome for a missionary visit to Sierra Leone, calling first at the Dutch province for a meeting at Amsterdam with a community of Young Volunteer Missionaries, led by Fr Harry Canters. It was a positive experience of the sharing of projects of lay missionary work.

In Sierra Leone he visited the works at Lungi, and the recently started work for street-children in Freetown. The salesian work is flourishing in its educational, humanitarian and evangelizing aspects, but the civil war is a daily threat to society and the work of the Church.

From Freetown Fr Odorico traveled to Abidjan, Ivory Coast, to take part in the Team Visit to French and Portuguese-speaking Africa, during which he made an intervention on the inculturation of evangelization.

15-19 February. On returning to Rome, he presided over a meet-

ing of the Directors of Mission Offices. The meeting was concerned mainly with the present situation (as regards missionary animation and finances) of the International and National Offices and on the profile of the Director of a *Project Office*. A substantial convergence was reached on this last point.

22 February - 4 March. The Councillor took part in the Team Visits to East-Asia at Hong Kong, and to India at Bombay. His intervention referred especially to the urgent needs for first evangelization and for interreligious dialogue.

5-9 March. Fr Odorico went to Nepal, where for the first time he visited the salesian foundation at Dharan, Nepal, and the incipient work at the capital,

Katmandu. He noted that the country is truly open to the salesian charism.

After some days spent in Rome, he left once again for a visit to the Ariari missions of Colombia, and gave careful attention to the relocation of the salesian missions after the erection of the Vicariate of Granada to Diocesan status. He shared with the Bishop, the Provincial and the missionaries the sufferings and anxieties caused by the civil war. He remained two days at Medellin for a

visit of missionary animation to the communities of initial formation.

Travelling via the USA, he then went to the Samoan Islands and Fiji, where he noted the growth in missionary work, in local vocations, and the possibility of expansion to other islands of the Pacific. After a brief stop in Papua New Guinea, where he had a meeting with Fr Luciano Capelli, salesian superior in the Solomon Islands and some of the missionaries, he returned to Rome.

10-19 April. He took part in the session of the General Council convoked exceptionally by the Rector Major to discuss matters relating to the GC25.

21-25 April. Fr Odorico was able to get into Sudan where he had a meeting with the confreres of the school and the parishioners. The work in Sudan is growing, both as regards extension and vocations. The number of catechumens in the parish shows a continual increase.

After a few days spent in Rome, the Councillor was at Nairobi, Kenya (1-5 May) and at Luanda, Angola (7-12 May) to preside with Sr Ciriaca Hernandez FMA, at two meetings on missionary praxis in the English and Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa. In

both meetings the SDB and FMA took part in an effective manner as regards the number of participants and the quality of their involvement.

17-31 May. Fr Odorico visited all the missions of the Mendez Vicariate of Ecuador, and the missions "de Alturas". In two meetings with the missionaries he gave an overall view of the missions at world level, and made some concluding comments on the missionary reality in the Province of Ecuador, where the multiple and variegated missionary work has a powerful incidence on the culture and practices of those to whom the mission is directed.

1 June. The Councillor was back in Rome to take part in the Assembly of the General Councils of the Salesian Family, followed by the summer session of the General Council.

The Economist General

Immediately after the winter session of the General Council, Fr Mazzali preached a retreat to the clerics and staff of the International Institute of the Crocetta (Turin), who had come to Rome to celebrate the Jubilee Year.

8-12 February. He took part in

the Team Visit at Abidjan.

13-15 February. With Fr Mario Sala he animated a meeting of provincial economists of the French-speaking parts of Africa.

18-20 February. At the Generalate, together with some collaborators of his Department, he directed a similar meeting with English-speaking provincial economists.

23 February. He presided at a meeting of the Superior Council of Administration of the UPS for the approval of the budget.

28 February to 1 March. With Fr Personeni he took part in a meeting of provincial economists of Australia and the Far East at Hong Kong.

4 March - 10 May. Except for the period of the intermediate session of the Council (10-19 April), the Economist General carried out the *Extraordinary Visitation of the North Belgium Province*.

13-24 May. Fr Mazzali was in Southern Africa. He preached a retreat to a group of confreres at Cape Town, and then visited with the Provincial the works of the Vice-province, including those in Lesotho and Swaziland.

28-31 May. He went to Croatia for a meeting with the rectors parish-priests and economists of the Croatian Province. Accompanied by the Provincial and

Provincial Economist he went on to visit the works in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1 June. He returned to Rome.

The Regional Councillor for Africa and Madagascar

1 February. Fr Antonio Rodríguez Tallón left for Johannesburg, where on the following day he had a meeting with the provincial council and the rectors to launch the *consultation for the appointment of the new Superior of the Vice-province*.

3 February. He was at Luanda for the installation of the Superior of the new Vice-province, Fr Luiz Piccoli.

He then went on immediately to Abidjan to finalize the preparations for the Team Visit to the French and Portuguese-speaking circumscriptions of the Region.

8-12 February. The Team Visit took place at Abidjan, and was followed immediately by meetings of the teams for youth pastoral work and of economists of the circumscriptions which had taken part in the Team Visit.

14 February. The Councillor began at Koumassii (Abidjan) the *Extraordinary Visitation of the AFO Vice-province*, which he con-

tinued with visits to the other works in the Ivory Coast, Douékoué and Korogho.

From the Ivory Coast he went by road to Mali for the visitation of the work at Sikasso. From there, at the end of February, he went on to Bobo Dioulasso in Burkina Faso, before returning to Mali to complete the visitation of the other foundations in that country at Touba and Barnako.

12 March. He left the capital of Mali, again by road, to visit the works in Guinea Conakry: Siguiri, KanKan and Conakry.

22 March. He flew to Dakar for the visitation of the houses of Senegal, Tambacounda, San Luis and Thiès.

3 March. He returned to Abidjan and on the following day flew to Nairobi for the meeting on the Salesian Family and social communication, organized by the Departments concerned, and in which took part the English-speaking provinces of the Region. He remained at Nairobi until 7 April and had a meeting with the Provincials of that part of the Region: AET, AFE, AFM, ZMB, and the AFW Delegation.

9-19 April. The Regional was back in Rome for the special intermediate session of the General Council.

21 April. He left Rome for Cotonou to complete the visitation of those parts of the AFO countries not yet visited: Benin and Togo. First he visited the works in the south of Benin: Cotonou and Porto Novo. He then went on to southern Togo to visit the community and parish of Lomé.

1-2 May. He took part in the work of the *Curatorium* for the houses of formation: novitiate and postnovitiate.

3-4 May. He had a meeting with the AFO rectors, and discussed with them some of his first impressions on the extraordinary visitation which was still in progress.

5 May. A meeting with the provincial council to communicate his views on the houses he had visited.

6 May. He carried out the visitation of the houses of the novitiate and postnovitiate.

11 May. He went to the north of the country to visit the houses of Kara and Cinkassé. From here he passed to the northern part of the neighbouring country, Benin.

20-26 May. He visited the houses of Kandi and Parakou. In the latter town he had the opportunity of celebrating the feast of Mary Help of Christians in an authentically salesian environment;

there was the Eucharist, followed by sport, animated games, theatre and a festive meal.

27 May. He went to Cotonou for the external feast of Mary Help of Christians in the parish.

28 May. Fr Antonio Tallón returned to Rome for the Assembly of the General Councils of the Salesian Family, and the plenary summer session of the Council.

The Regional Councillor for Latin America - South Cone

After the plenary winter session of the Council Fr Baruffi left for Porto Alegre, Brazil, for a brief visit to his family.

19 February. He began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Campo Grande*.

24-26 February. The visitation was interrupted to allow the Regional to preside at a meeting of the CISUR (provincial conference of the South) and of the JIAR (provincial conference of Argentina).

10-19 March. A further interruption so that Fr Baruffi could be present at the special intermediate session of the General Council in Rome.

27 March - 4 April. Another brief interruption for the launch-

ing in Paraguay of the consultation preceding the appointment of the new Provincial, followed by a meeting of the combined CISBRASIL and CIB (SDB and FMA provincial conferences), to examine their joint plan of action and other themes of salesian life in Brazil.

14 May. The Visitation of Campo Grande concluded with a meeting with the Provincial and his Council, and with the local Rectors.

16-28 May. Fr Baruffi set in motion the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial in the Province of Chile. He was able to meet each of the confreres and take part in the process of communal discernment.

31 May. He returned to Rome.

The Councillor for the Interamerican Region

After the celebrations in Turin at the end of January, Fr Pascual Chavez left for Mexico to spend some days with his family and make a brief visit to the Theologate of Tlaquepaque, where he spoke with each of the students from both provinces of the USA (SUE and SUO), in view of an evaluation of their formative experience.

13-14 February. He made a

brief visit to Caracas to finalize preparations for the Extraordinary Visitation of August and November next, and took the opportunity to see some of the zones of the capital devastated by the floods of December 1999.

15-18 February. He went on to Medellin, Columbia, to launch the consultation for the new Provincial, and had meetings with the confreres in Cali, Cartagena, Pereira and Medellin.

19 February - 26 May. Fr Chavez was engaged in the *Extraordinary Visitation of the New Rochelle (SUE) Province* of the USA, during which he had a meeting with the FMA and Salesians of the northern part of the province (21 February), took part in the feast of the community (25 March), the youth celebration of 6 May, and the pilgrimage of the Salesian Family to the National Marian Sanctuary in Washington. Fr Luc Van Looy presided at the last two events.

10-19 April. The Visitation had to be interrupted while the Regional was at the meeting of the General Council in Rome.

31 May. Fr Chavez returned to the Generalate for the Assembly of the General Councils of the Salesian Family and for the summer session of the Council.

The Councillor for the Australia-Asia Region

4 February. Fr Joaquim D'Souza arrived in Guwahati, India, from Rome to begin the consultation for the appointment of a new Provincial, after the appointment of the previous one, Fr Dominic Jala, as the Archbishop of Shillong.

5 February. He went on to Hyderabad to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation* of that province.

19 February. The visitation had to be interrupted for the Team Visit to the Pacific zone of the Region at Cheung Chao, Hong Kong, from 21-26 February, at which the Rector Major and the other 52 confreres present studied the themes of the salesian community as the animating nucleus of the EPC, and inculturation in the salesian life and mission. The Team Visit was followed a few days later by another to the Provinces of India at Mumbai (29 February - 4 March). At this one there were 72 participants who studied two themes: the first one the same as that at Cheung Chao, and the second that of evangelization in South Asia.

5 March. Fr D'Souza took up once again the visitation of Hyderabad which concluded on 7

April, with only one more brief interruption, a trip to Shillong for the Episcopal ordination of Mgr Dominic Jala on 2 April.

8 April. The Regional returned to Rome for the special intermediate session of the General Council (11-19 April).

24 April. After the Easter celebrations, he left once again for North-East India, this time to launch the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial of Dimapur and to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Guwahati Province* with the installation of the new Provincial, Fr Philip Barjo, at Shillong on 30 April.

In this first phase of the visitation, which will be continued in the month of August, the Regional traveled nearly 2,500 km. by jeep in hilly country, visiting ten houses and foundations in the State of Mizoram and in the Karbi Anglong part of the State of Assam.

23 May. He was at Shillong for the ceremony of the renewal of temporary vows by 37 young Salesians.

24 May. On the Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians he received the first profession of twenty novices.

30 May. Fr D'Souza returned

to Rome to take part in the Assembly of the General Councils of the Groups of the Salesian Family, followed by the summer session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the West Europe Region

27 January. After the winter plenary session of the General Council, Fr Filiberto Rodriguez immediately accompanied the Rector Major to Madrid, where the Province was beginning the celebrations for the first centenary of salesian work in that city.

30-31 January. He returned to Italy and took part with the whole of the General Council in the launching of the Salesian Jubilee at Colle Don Bosco and Turin.

1 February. As he was preparing to begin the Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Madrid, he received the sad news of the death of the Provincial of Valencia, Fr David Churio, in a road accident.

3 February. With the Provincial of Madrid and other confreres, he went to Valencia for the funeral, at which Mgr. Miguel Asurmendi, Bishop of Vitoria and a former Provincial of Valencia, presided.

4 February-28 May. Fr Filiberto was engaged in the Extraordinary Visitation of the Madrid Province, with occasional brief intervals for meetings and similar events.

26-29 February. He presided over the ordinary session of the Iberian Provincial Conference, and immediately afterwards over the annual meeting of the West European Region. The keynote address was given by Fr. Renato Mion of the UPS, who spoke on the marginalization of the young and the possible responses that can be offered by the classical salesian structures, and those more adroit that a pastoral mentality can apply with salesian creativity.

3-4 March. He returned to Valencia to start up the consultation process for the appointment of a new Provincial, and once again on 1 May for the installation of Fr Angel Tomás who had been appointed to the post.

9-21 April. He took part in Rome in the special intermediate session of the General Council.

Among other events which took place during the Madrid visitation were: various meetings with the provincial council, and with the rectors; the Provincial Congress of the Cooperators; a

meeting with the youngsters of the Youth Centres; a meeting on professional formation organized by the FERE and the Madrid Province; a priestly and diaconal ordination, and the Madrid Provincial Feast-day.

The Councillor for the North Europe Region

Fr Albert Van Hecke was present with the Rector Major and other Councillors at the celebrations for the Feast of Don Bosco at Colle and Turin.

3 February. After a brief stay in Rome, he began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Cologne*, Germany.

Among the various meetings that took place during the visitation were the following: at the beginning and end, two meetings with the Provincial Council and rectors at Jünkerath; at Mainz, a meeting with the confreres of the various German missions; at Mainz, also a meeting with Bishop Lehman, president of the German Episcopal Conference.

19-22 March. Fr Van Hecke was in the Netherlands, where he had a meeting with the Provincial Council to discuss some key points for the development of the

salesian charism in that province.

24-27 March. He visited Great Britain to bless and inaugurate new premises at Farnborough, Bolton and Chertsey, mainly for aging confreres. At the same time he took the opportunity to visit some other houses of the same province.

31 March. After a brief stay in Rome from 28-30 March, he left for Sofia, Bulgaria, to get to know the five confreres and the situation of the salesian work at Kazanlak, Jambol and Stara Zagora, which depend on the Czech Province. The confreres there are involved in pastoral work in the Byzantine rite, and work in close collaboration with the Bishop of Sofia. The Regional met the Bishop and the Apostolic Nuncio, and was also able to meet the Mayor of Kazanlak.

3 April. He returned to Rome.

5-9 April. He was in Ireland for a brief visit of animation to the confreres.

10-20 April. The Regional took part in the intermediate session of the Council at the Generalate.

21 April. He left for Moscow for a visit of animation and for a consultation among the confreres for the appointment of the new Superior of the Circumscription of Eastern Europe. The visit also

enabled him to update his knowledge of the development of the salesian mission in European and Asian Russia, and in Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania. He was able to have long conversations with the aspirants and novices at Oktiabrskij and with the postnovices at St Petersburg. In Lithuania he had a meeting with the Archbishop of Vilnius.

13-16 May. From the Eastern Circumscription Fr Van Hecke went directly to Czestochowa, Poland, to preside at the annual meeting of the Provincials of his region. The theme of the meeting was: *The new preventive system... in what sense? Towards an updated understanding.* The main purpose of the meeting was to obtain a deeper knowledge of the preventive system, and share experiences regarding its efficacy and incisive effect in the territory in the face of the new challenges. Other points discussed were: the sharing of personal experiences in the role of Provincial; a common reflection on the North European Region; and the communication of experiences expressive of the life of the Provinces.

14 May. The Regional presided at a meeting of the Consulting Body of the Polish Provinces. Among the matters discussed was

especially the Polish Salesian Bulletin (which in June of this year moves with editorial staff to new premises at Poznan); the Polish Federation of Salesian Schools; and the Interprovincial Youth Centre at Cracow.

17-31 May. Fr Van Hecke was at the Generalate, where he followed the course in ongoing formation for German-speaking confreres, held from 27 May to 6 June.

1-5 June. He took part in the meeting of the General Councils of the Groups of the Salesian Family.

9-12 June. He was a member of the group making the Team Visit to the UPS.

The Regional Councillor for Italy and the Middle East

1-5 February. Fr Giovanni Fedrigotti was engaged in the Team Visit to the Italian Provinces at the Generalate, Rome.

9 February. He began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Venice Province of St Mark.*

23 March. He took part at Rome in a meeting of the National Council for the Catholic School.

1-8 April. He was present with

the Provincials of Italy at Fatima for a retreat preached by Fr Juan José Bartolomé.

10-19 April. He was with the other members of the General Council for the special intermediary session.

20-24 April. He visited the new foundation of the IVE Province in Romania.

30 April. He was at Nave for the annual "face to face" event with the prenovices of Northern Italy.

6-9 May. He presided at the Generalate over a meeting of the CISI. On this occasion, with the youth pastoral sector, the plan for the next three years was examined and approved.

8 May. He had a meeting with the CII (National Provincial Conference of the FMA), which made a common reflection on the problems arising from the reorganization of Italian schools at national level, and methods for collaboration. Also examined were the first proofs of the final document on "*Human, affective and sexual maturing, and religious formation*".

9-31 May. He went back to complete the Visitation of the Venice Province. Special attention was also given to the functioning of the CNOS community, and of the present and future

prospects of the national service with which it is entrusted.

1-5 June. Fr Fedrigotti was at Rome to participate in the meeting of the General Councils of the Groups of the Salesian Family.

11 June. He was at Aquileia, to take part in the Jubilee of the Udine past-pupils.

17 June. He was at Ortona with the community involved in the delicate work with drug-addicts.

26 June. He was present once again at a further meeting of the National Council for the Catholic School.

The Secretary General

2-5 May. Continuing with the program of meetings of the Secretary General with Provincial Secretaries drawn up for the six-year period, Fr Maraccani had a meeting with the provincial secretaries of the *Interamerican Region*. It was held at the provincial headquarters of Guadalajara, Mexico, and as in other meetings of the same kind, in addition to a verification of the duties connected with the provincial secretariat and archives it was a valuable experience for getting to know the realities of the provinces and for ex-

changing experiences. The participants were cordially received by the confreres of Guadalajara, and given an opportunity to see some of the foundations in the city and its surroundings, and especially the Theologate of Tlaquepaque.

After the meeting, Fr Maraccani was able to visit also the Novitiate of Chapala, and returned by way of the two provinces of the USA,

where he was able to visit some of the works and meet the confreres. In the *Western Province* he got to know something of salesian work in the Los Angeles area and later in that of San Francisco (Berkeley, Richmond). It was a useful contact with these particular salesian realities. In each place he gave special attention to the secretariat and the archives.

5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

5.1 New Provincials

During the intermediate session of the General Council of April 2000, the Rector Major with his Council appointed two new Provincials: Fr Philip Barjo for the Province of Guwahati, and Fr Angel Tomas Garcia for that of Valencia. We give some biographical details of the two new Provincials.

1. *BARJO, Philip, Province of Guwahati, India.*

Predecessor: Fr Dominic Jala, appointed Archbishop of Shillong.

b. Tezpur (Assam) 7 October 1953. Novitiate and 1st profession, Shillong, 24 May 1976. Perpetual profession 1982. Theology at Shillong-Mawlai. Ordained at Tezpur 27 January 1985.

After ordination, worked in various communities of the province. 1993 completed studies at Berkeley USA for Master in Theology.

On returning to India taught at Theologate of Shillong and became Rector there in 1998, and Provincial Councillor. 1999, Vice-Provincial and Rector of Provincial House.

2. *TOMÁS GARCÍA Angel, Province of Valencia, Spain.*

Predecessor: Fr David Churio

Baquedano, killed in a road accident.

b. Villena (Alicante) 1 October 1941. Novitiate and 1st profession, Arbós, 16 August 1958. Perpetual profession 1964. Theology at Marti Codolar. Ordained at Villena 28 April 1968. Completed civil studies with Licentiate in Pedagogy and Psychology. Licentiate in Educational Sciences, Rome (PAS).

1976, Rector at Valencia-Sagunto and Provincial Councillor. Spent many years in formation community of postnovices at Valencia-San Antonio. 1989 Provincial Councillor again. 1999, Rector at Valencia-San Antonio

5.2 New Salesian Bishops

1. *Mgr. dos SANTOS, Milton Antonio, Bishop of CORUMBÁ, Brazil.*

On 1 June 2000 the Osservatore Romano published the news that the Holy Father had appointed our confrere *Milton Antonio dos SANTOS as Bishop of the Diocese of Corumbá, MT, Brazil.*

He was born on 23 September 1946 at Campos de Jordão (SP), and made his first profession at

Pindamonhangaba on 31 January 1965. Perpetual profession followed on 31 January 1971, and after theological studies at Lapa (SP) he was ordained priest at Pindamonhangaba on 22 December 1974.

He was Rector at Sorocaba from 1979 to 1982, and in 1986 became Rector of the house of São Paulo "Campos Elisios". In 1992 he moved, still as Rector, to the novitiate at São Carlos, where in 1994 he became also Director of Novices. In 1996 he was transferred as Rector to São Paulo - Mooca, and in 1999 as Rector of the Colégio Santa Teresinha in São Paulo. From 1997 to 2000 he was also a Provincial Councillor.

2. *Mgr. MIZOBE, Osamu Francis Xavier, Bishop of SENDAI, Japan.*

On 12 June 2000 the Osservatore Romano published the news that the Holy Father had appointed the salesian priest *Fr Francis Xavier Osamu MIZOBE as Bishop of the Diocese of SENDAI in Japan.*

He was born on 5 March 1935 at Shingishu, in Korea, of Japanese parents, and soon afterwards returned to Japan with his fami-

ly. He got to know the Salesians in the school at Miyazaki, and entered the novitiate at Chofu, Tokyo, where he made his first profession on 25 March 1955.

After his early studies and salesian experience he was sent to Turin in Italy to study theology at the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum, where he obtained the Licentiate in Theology. He was ordained priest on 9 February 1964, and went on to study at the Gregorian University where he gained the Licentiate in Church History. He subsequently completed his studies at the Sophia University of Tokyo, obtaining the Doctorate in Japanese History.

He taught for some years and in 1979 became Rector of the house of Nakatsu Nagasoe. In 1984 he was transferred as Rector to Chofu, the novitiate and formation community of the young Japanese Salesians. In 1985 he became a Provincial Councillor and in 1989 Vice-provincial. He took part in the GC23 as a delegate and in 1990 was appointed Provincial of Japan. After his period of office he was involved in work in the service of the Archdiocese of Nagasaki.

3. *Mgr. SIRKAR Lucas, Coadjutor Archbishop of Calcutta, India.*

The Osservatore Romano of 21 April 2000, carried the news that the Holy Father had appointed as *Coadjutor Archbishop of Calcutta*, His Excellency *Mgr Lucas SIRKAR*, SDB, formerly Bishop of Krishnagar.

Abp. Sirkar was born in 1936, made his first profession on 24 May 1958, and was ordained priest on 20 April 1968. For the last 16 years he has guided the Diocese of Krishnagar of which he became Bishop in 1984. (cf. AGC 312, p.85).

5.3 Our dead confreres (2000 - 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).

NOME	LUOGO E DATA della morte	ETÀ	ISP
P ADIJ Antonio	La Plata	01-04-2000	84 ALP
P APRÀ Giulio	Cuneo	07-04-2000	77 ICP
P BARANELLO Giovanni	Brindisi	26-04-2000	94 IME
L BENJUMEA DUQUE Alberto	Duitama	26-03-2000	74 COB
L BERTELLO Andrea	Stony Point, NY	03-05-2000	78 SUE
P BÖSZE György	Budapest	28-03-2000	77 UNG
L CAFOURNEL François	Caen	12-05-2000	86 FRA
P CARRETERO BALLESTEROS Angel	Granada	03-04-2000	88 SCO
P CERRATO Cesare	Bra	25-05-2000	79 ICP
P CHINELLATO Aldo	San Antonio de los Altos	14-05-2000	79 VEN
P CLIFFORD Johan Pieter	Cebu City	06-04-2000	88 FIS
P COENRAETS Paul	Templeuve (Belgio)	02-05-2000	87 BES
P CORREA Irán	São Paulo	08-04-2000	95 BSP
P COSAERT Gerard	Hoboken	23-05-2000	85 BEN
P CYBULSKI Jan	Rumia	22-04-2000	89 PLN
P DA ROS Serafino	Castelfranco Veneto (TV)	03-04-2000	87 IVE
L de SOUSA José Ribeiro	Goiania	23-03-2000	76 BBH
P DIAZ COTÁN-PINTO José	Córdoba	07-04-2000	78 SCO
P DOROBIAŁA Wacław	Rumia	04-06-2000	89 PLN
P dos ANJOS Adolfo	Itajaí (SC)	08-04-2000	83 BPA
P DOTTORRE Antonino	Messina	16-05-2000	86 ISI
P DOUGLAS Herbert	Farnborough	16-06-2000	81 GBR
P FANTON Vittorio	Mogliano Veneto (TV)	04-04-2000	85 IVE
P FIORENZA Prospero	Pedara (CT)	21-05-2000	82 ISI
P FUENTES FUENTES José	Sevilla	26-02-2000	77 SSE
L GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ Faustino	Mohernando	19-06-2000	78 SMA
P GARNIER Angelmont	Caen	08-04-2000	87 FRA
P GEBICKI Tadeusz	Łódź	07-04-2000	71 PLE
P GONZALEZ MIGUEL Adolfo	Arévalo	18-06-2000	78 SMA
P GRZYWACZEWSKI Józef	Sokolów Podlaski	15-04-2000	85 PLE
P GUIMARÃES João Felipe	São Paulo	10-06-2000	70 BSP
P JUHÁSZ Ferenc	Szombathely	03-04-2000	82 UNG
P KIENINGER Helmut	Oberstaufen (Baviera)	28-06-2000	86 GEM
L KIM Francisco (Yang Do)	Seoul	23-05-2000	70 KOR
P KUIJKEN François	Liège	06-04-2000	86 BES
P LEANZA Carmelo	Pedara (CT)	21-06-2000	79 ISI
P LISTELLO Beniamino	Torino	11-06-2000	80 ICP

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P MARQUEZ Luciano Humberto	San Salvador	16-05-2000	90	CAM
L MARTINEC Martin	Zilina	07-06-2000	70	SLK
P MUÑOZ CASTRO Isidoro	Talca	26-05-2000	79	CIL
L NESPOLI Pedro	Niterói, RJ	02-06-2000	88	BBH
P OLIVERO Umberto	Torino	21-06-2000	87	ICP
P PAVIČIĆ Nikola	Zagreb	04-05-2000	91	CRO
Fu Ispettore per sei anni				
P PEREIRA Manuel	Vila do Conde	06-04-2000	77	POR
P PERONNO Yves	Saint-Brieuc	16-05-2000	79	FRA
L PERROT Michel	Libreville (Gabon)	01-05-2000	54	ATE
P RAITER Zygfryd	Łódź	27-06-2000	87	PLE
P RICCERI Carmelo	Pedara (CT)	09-05-2000	84	ISI
P ROGGIA Felice	Guayaquil	09-05-2000	76	ECU
P SCHNEIDER Marcos	La Plata	14-05-2000	85	ALP
P SIUDA Ludvík Marie	Moravec	13-06-2000	87	CEP
P TALIK Józef	Wolkowyja (Polonia)	29-03-2000	61	PLS
P VANHERCK Emiel	Hoboken	24-05-2000	80	BEN
P VENTURA Domingo Argentino	La Plata	06-04-2000	88	ALP
P WÓJCIK Roman	Dierzoniów	18-05-2000	72	PLO
L WONG Mark	Hong Kong	17-05-2000	89	CIN



