



acts

of the general council

year LXXXII october-december 2002

N. 379

official organ
of animation
and communication
for the
salesian congregation

Direzione Generale
Opere don Bosco
Roma



acts

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

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

YEAR LXXXII
october-december 2002 **N. 379**

1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR	1.1 Fr Pascual CHAVEZ VILLANUEVA MY DEAR SALESIANS, BE SAINTS	3
2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES	2.1 Fr. Antonio DOMENECH) The 25th General Chapter, a task for every local salesian community	38
3. RULINGS AND DIRECTIVES	(None in this issue)	
4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL	4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major	45
	4.2 Chronicle of the General Council	64
5. DOCUMENTS	5.1 Strenna of the Rector Major for the year 2003	70
	5.2 Address of the Rector Major to Card. Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga on the occasion of the conferring of the Doctorate "Honoris Causa"	70
	5.3 Address of the Rector Major at the installation of the new Superior of the Vice Province of the U.P.S	71
	5.4 Prayers (collects) in honour of the three recent Beati	77
	5.5 The new General Council	78
	5.6 New Provincials	83
	5.7 New Salesian Bishops	92
	5.8 Our dead confreres (2001 4 th list and 2002 1 st list)	96

Editrice S.D.B.

Edizione extra commerciale

Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco

Via della Pisana, 1111

Casella Postale 18333

00163 Roma

Tip.: Istituto Salesiano Pio XI - Via Umbertide, 11 - 00181 Roma
Tel. 06.78.27.819 - Fax 06.78.48.333 - E-mail: tipolito@pcn.net

Finito di stampare: Ottobre 2002

1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

“MY DEAR SALESIANS, BE SAINTS!”¹

A series of happy coincidences. - 1. **Holiness, a permanent part of our family heritage** - 1.1. Following Don Bosco - 1.2. Our sanctification - 2. **We are educators to holiness** - 2.1. Holiness, the aim of salesian education - 2.2. An educative process in the light of salesian spirituality - 3. **Holiness flourishes in the Community** - 3.1. Re-echoing the GC25 - 3.2. Encouraged by our recent Beati - 4. **An invitation to a review** - Our names are written in heaven - 4.1. Recognizing the need to be practical - 4.2. A review that leads to prayer.

Rome, 14 August 2002

Vigil of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

My dear confreres,

Four months have gone by since the end of the GC25, which was a powerful spiritual and Salesian experience. In your hands you have the Chapter Documents *“The Salesian Community Today”* which – if I may judge from what the confreres who have written to me have said – have been well received by the provinces and are being studied and assimilated with a view to the renewal of our communities. I am now making contact with you through this my first circular letter.

Letter-writing was the form of apostolic practice adopted by St Paul to overcome physical distances and the impossibility of being present among his communities in order to accompany them in their daily lives. With the necessary distinctions, the Rector Major’s letters have the purpose of bringing him closer to the Provinces through communication, and the sharing of what is happening in the Congregation,

¹ JOHN PAUL II, *Address in the audience to the Capitulars*, cf GC25, 170

shedding light on the life and the educative and pastoral practice of the communities. I am writing on the vigil of Mary's Assumption and two days before the anniversary of the birthday of our Father Don Bosco. I confess that it would give me great pleasure to be with you and to share your present work and dreams for the future; I have particularly at heart the desire to pray for each one of you. May God fill you with his supreme gift, that of the Holy Spirit, to renew you and to sanctify you in the likeness of our Founder, who has been given to us as our model (cf. C 21). May Mary, well versed in matters of the Spirit, teach you how to welcome him and give him room to act, so as to make you fruitful in your apostolic mission and joyful believers in Christ, the Word of the Father.

It is precisely about holiness that I want to speak to you today, following up some of the things I said towards the end of the Chapter, and especially after the audience with the Holy Father and the beatification of Bro. Artemides Zatti, Sister Maria Romero and Fr Luigi Variara. My purpose is not so much to write a brief treatise on holiness, but rather to present it to you as a gift of God and a necessity in the apostolate, and to offer you some reasons and suggest some methods for making its practice easier.

A series of happy coincidences

The fact of being elected at a General Chapter which had as its theme the salesian community, the place for our daily sanctification, and which closed with the "gift of the beatification of three members of the Salesian Family"² – a salesian priest, a salesian brother and a Daughter of Mary Help of

² GC25, 137

Christians – compels me to take up the theme of holiness or, as I said in my closing address to the Chapter, the primacy of God: “God must be our first ‘concern’”.³ The Holy Father, with the call he made to the capitulars during the audience, confirmed by his supreme authority the aim of holiness. He had already reminded us in his message at the opening of the Chapter that “tending to holiness” is the “principal response to the challenges of the contemporary world”, and that “it is a matter not so much of taking up new activities and initiatives as of living and bearing witness to the Gospel without any compromises so as to encourage young people towards holiness”.⁴ And in the audience he summed up his whole message with the strong appeal: “Dear Salesians, be saints! As you well know, holiness is your principal task”.⁵

We have a series of coincidences, which I like to think are not just random events – for a Christian nothing takes place by chance – but part of God’s plan, and hence to be interpreted in a spirit of faith. Why therefore should holiness not become a part of our programme of life and government? This is precisely what I had in mind when I said in my closing address to the Chapter that “holiness is also what the Chapter is handing on when it concludes with the gift of three new *Beati*”.⁶

To be beginning my service in such a clear light is for me an invitation more eloquent than any words of encouragement. It is a reminder of the highest goal to be achieved. It is a message which is certainly demanding, because it points to the “loftiest of objectives” in the absolute sense, while at the same time offering hope and optimism by showing us our

³ GC25, 191

⁴ GC25, 143

⁵ GC25, 170

⁶ GC25, 196

many brothers and sisters who have scaled the hill of the Beatitudes. Of them, our blood relatives in the Spirit, we may paraphrase the liturgy and say: "Look not, O Father, on our sins but on the holiness of our family".

It is because of all these circumstances, so significantly convergent, that I decided to dedicate my first letter to this subject.

1. Holiness, a permanent part of our family heritage

We can never thank God sufficiently for the gift of Saints in our charismatic Family. Ours – the Pope told us – "is a history filled with saints, many of them young people".⁷ And in the audience he gave, he spoke to us once again of "the numerous Saints and Blesseds who make up the heavenly host of your protectors".⁸ This clearly shows that the salesian charism is not only capable of pointing the way to sanctity, but also of attaining the objective if fully lived out, as in fact has already been realized in more than a few of our brothers and sisters.

My predecessors liked to dwell frequently on a panorama of this kind.⁹ I too wish to reflect on this our "by no means small band of Saints and Blesseds",¹⁰ and in remembering them to share with you what I have most at heart.

⁷ GC25, 143

⁸ GC25, 171

⁹ Cf.: VECCHI JUAN E. *Experts, witnesses and craftsmen of communion*, GC25 363; *The Father consecrates us and sends us*, GC25, 365; *Sanctity and martyrdom at the dawn of the third millennium*, AGC 368; *Towards the 25th General Chapter*, AGC 372; *The beatification of Artemides Zatti*, AGC 376; VIGANÒ EGIDIO *Replanning sanctity together*, ASC 303; *Don Bosco the Saint*, ASC 310; *Don Rinaldi, witness and interpreter of the salesian charism*, AGC 332; RICCERI LUIGI *Don Rua recalls us to holiness*, ASC 263.

¹⁰ JOHN PAUL II, GC25, 171

1.1. *Following Don Bosco*

Our Saints are certainly the best qualified “witnesses” to our spirituality because they have not only *lived* it but lived it *heroically*. What I find particularly interesting is the fact that in each of them there is embodied a specific aspect of our charism. By emphasizing this they have made the charism more visible, more luminous and more explicit. It became so much a part of them and so profoundly, that they could be described as so many “in depth monographs” of the Founder.

A group of them have even given rise to new religious congregations in the Church, like so many branches of the same tree. In this way they have realized latent potentialities to be found in the same seed. Each of them is therefore outstanding for a particular message.

From the overall picture one can deduce a more authentic and complete view of our spiritual experience. They are different notes that combine to form a harmonious whole. They are notes of great variety: from those better recognized to those less emphasized and hardly noticed; from those, we might say, taken for granted to those considered less common, as though they were foreign to our spirituality. These fresh editions of Don Bosco, officially recognized by the Church, all have every right of citizenship among us. They present him to us for our attention alive and to be cherished. And we, his sons, heirs of such a rich legacy, rejoice in noting in them some particular characteristic which we recognize immediately as a trait of our Father’s.

By way of example I would like to list some original ways of reproducing salesian holiness, the common legacy of the Family:

– *A spirituality that is able to make a synthesis between work and temperance.* Our mind goes to Don Rua, a rare

model of self-denial, whose best eulogy was given by Paul VI when he said: "If it be true that Don Rua can be said to be the first one to continue the example and work of Don Bosco, we like to think of him always and venerate him from the ascetic aspect of humility and dependence".¹¹

– *A spirituality that stems from pastoral charity, that succeeds in making itself loved and manifests the fatherliness of God*.¹² That is how Don Rinaldi is remembered: "Those who approached him – we read in the Acts of the Process – felt that they were in the presence of a true father".¹³

– *A spirituality expressed through humility and hard work* and which becomes an unequivocal sign of the logic of God, so contrary to that of the world.¹⁴ Of this Mary Domenica Mazzarello was the shining example.

– *A spirituality of daily life and work*.¹⁵ This panorama includes the *lay dimension*, both consecrated and non-consecrated. In the first group we can think immediately of the two figures of the "Good Samaritan", Simon Srugi and Artemides Zatti. For the non-consecrated lay dimension our thoughts go to the first of the Cooperators – Mamma Margaret – whose figure, ever more attractive, is a fruitful source of devotion and special graces.

– *A spirituality that harmonizes contemplation with activity*.¹⁶ This brings to mind the figure of the recently beatified Sister Maria Romero Meneses, the animator of 36 Oratories and of a series of pastoral institutions which came into

¹¹ PAUL VI, Homily at the Beatification, 29.09.1972

¹² Cf. C 10, 11; GC24, 90

¹³ *Summarium*, n. 425

¹⁴ FIGLIE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE, *Working document for 21st General Chapter* (Rome 2002), p. 46

¹⁵ Cf. GC24, 97-98

¹⁶ GC23, 167-168

being with unexpected speed and achieved the status of landmarks; or Attilio Giordani, a splendid model of the Salesian Cooperator, a powerful source of initiatives among his oratory members.

– *A spirituality of relationships and of the family spirit, which invests everything with joy and happiness.*¹⁷ Here we may think of Don Cimatti: “At his approach – said one forthright witness – the very walls seemed to smile”.

– *A well balanced spirituality.* This takes our thoughts to Don Quadrio, an irresistible source of attraction for his clerics and a wonderful combination of gifts of nature and of grace.

– *A spirituality that takes on the dimension of sacrifice.* Here one need only read the biographies of Don Beltrami, Don Czartoryski, and Don Variara to see how they made of suffering the royal road of their sanctification, even – as in the case of Variara – a new Congregational charism. By contemplating the suffering Don Bosco, they were led to “desire” the cross and derive from it interior joy.

– And finally we cannot fail to emphasize the already numerous group of our *martyrs* – confreres, sisters and young people! – whose Beatification has marked the end and the beginning of the two centuries. Proud at having attained more than a hundred years of life, the Salesian Family is happy to have more than a hundred martyrs (today they number 111),¹⁸ and on this account feels a certain responsibility: *martyrdom*, the shedding of one’s blood, and also the gift of one’s life in daily sacrifice, *goes naturally with the salesian spirit*. Do we understand the significance of this gift? Are we able to

¹⁷ Cf. GC23, 165-166; GC24, 91-93

¹⁸ 95 in Spain, 14 in Poland, 2 in China

accept its consequences? In the homily on Sunday, 11 March 2001, when he beatified 233 Spanish martyrs, 32 of them Salesians, the Holy Father said: "At the beginning of the third millennium, the pilgrim Church in Spain is called to live a new springtime of Christianity".¹⁹ Why should not we also count on the incomparable help of our martyrs so as to fill with hope our apostolic initiatives and our pastoral efforts in the not always easy task of the new evangelization?"²⁰ For us Salesians too must be verified the saying: *Sanguis martyrum, semen christianorum*. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of new Christians!²¹ Let us not be discouraged therefore in the face of difficulties: we are facing the future in good company!

These are the petals of our holiness which – thankfully through them – provides a convincing stimulus in the broad array of ages, ways of life and of service, of times and messages, of ethnic and cultural differences. "Underlying such a diversity of origin, states of life, role and level of education, and geographical provenance there is a single inspiration: salesian spirituality. This can indeed be presented in doctrinal form, but there is an advantage in recounting it through biographies, which bring its characteristics much closer to the circumstances of daily life".²²

1.2. Our sanctification, a gift and a challenge

The brothers and sisters we have mentioned above represent a form of sanctity already attained and fixed for ever at the point of growth they have reached. Our holiness, on the

¹⁹ JOHN PAUL II, in *Oss. Rom.* 12-13 March 2002, p. 6-7

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ Tertulliano, *Apol* 50, 13: *CCL* 1, 171.

²² AGC 368, p. 13

other hand, is still in the process of development. They have followed a course and have reached the goal, By knowing something of their life and following the same path, we too learn how to correspond with God's grace and his gift of holiness. Each of them is an example of the different patterns of salesian life, and of their certain success. I wonder if – and to what extent – they influence our earthly pilgrimage.

The brothers and sisters who have reached the goal assure us that holiness is possible; but above all they show us different and fascinating ways of achieving it. Cannot we on our part find the way best suited to our own possibilities, the one best suited to our personal situation, the one in greatest harmony with our state of life? It is my hope that we may be able to fulfil what is stated in our Rule of Life: "The confreres who are living or have lived to the full the gospel project of the Constitutions are for us a stimulus and help on the path to holiness".²³

From the life of our Saints we learn three important truths, which we must make our own:

– Our sanctification is "*the essential task*" of our life, in the words of the Pope, If we attain this, we shall have attained everything; if we fail to do so, all is lost, as is said of charity (cf. *1 Cor* 13, 1-8), the very essence of holiness.

Against the tendency to spiritual mediocrity, we need to endorse anew each day the priority of this goal of our sanctification, which is nothing less than the "high standard of ordinary Christian living" indicated by John Paul II in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*.²⁴ "God must be our first concern" – he reminded the members at the beginning of the Chapter. "He

²³ C 25

²⁴ *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (NMI), 31

it is who sends us forth and entrusts young people to us... God is waiting for us in the young in order to give us the grace of an encounter with himself".²⁵ If our life is enlightened by this desire it has *everything*, despite its privations; but if this incentive grows weak, our pilgrimage becomes colourless, and the effort to follow it is useless, despite an apparent effectiveness.

– Sanctification is a *gift of God*. The initiative is and always remains his: the certainty that we can change our life is rooted in the certainty of being already transformed into him, on account of which holiness is – in the words of Card. Suenens – “an assumption before being an ascension”.²⁶

“There is a temptation which perennially besets every spiritual journey and pastoral work: that of thinking that the results depend on our ability to act and to plan. God of course asks us really to cooperate with his grace, and therefore invites us to invest all our resources of intelligence and energy in serving the cause of the Kingdom. But it is fatal to forget that ‘without Christ we can do nothing’ (cf. *Jn* 15:5)”.²⁷

In sanctity the primacy of God shines unchallenged: holiness is never a personal project to be planned and carried out in line with times, methods and options decided by ourselves; more than a generic desire of God, it is his will expressed for each of us (*1 Thess* 4,3); a pure grace, always a gift, that we cannot acquire by ourselves, but neither can we reject it without serious consequences. God has created us good, indeed even very good (cf. *Gen* 1,26-31), and has seen us as holy “before the world was created” (*Eph* 1,4); but it remains for us to do our part: we can help God to complete in us his creative

²⁵ GC25, 191

²⁶ *Lo Spirito Santo nostra speranza*, Ed. Paoline, p. 88

²⁷ NMI, n. 38

work if we allow him to realize his wonderful and highly original design in us. More than this is not asked of us; but neither is anything less.

– For us Salesians, holiness is built on the daily response, as the expression and fruit of the spirituality and asceticism of “*da mihi animas cetera tolle*”. God, the source of all holiness, cannot fail on his side. It is our response that needs continual stimulation because, as St Francis de Sales says: “Even though the source may be abundant, the water enters a garden not in proportion to its quantity but only according to the breadth, great or small, of the channel which allows it to enter”.²⁸

Hence the indispensable need for mortification, i.e. the death of everything that shuts off our being from the gift; everything in us that puts God in second place does not deserve our care or attention. Ours is a paschal existence; the path towards Easter – as we know very well – passes necessarily by way of Calvary (cf. *Mt* 16, 21-23): he who was raised to life had first been crucified. For the Christian, therefore, mortification is not an objective but a means; it is not the goal but the way to it; we do not need to look for it, but it cannot be avoided.

Our Saints are a living testimony to such a desire for holiness and to a journey of this kind towards life and resurrection. In this connection I recall some expressions of Blessed Maria Romero: “Take from me, O Lord, everything you have given me in the past and give me nothing more in the future, but grant me the grace to live each day united more intimately to you in an uninterrupted act of love, abandonment and trust without losing your presence for even an instant”.²⁹

²⁸ ST FRANCIS DE SALES, *Treatise on the love of God*, bk II, ch. 11.

²⁹ GRASSIANO Domenica, *Con Maria tutta a tutti come Don Bosco*, p. 228

“O God whom I adore, to love you, make you loved and see you loved by others is all I desire and yearn for, my ambition, my concern and obsession”.³⁰

2. We are educators to holiness

Since, as Salesians, we can never separate our identity as religious from that as educators, nor our religious consecration from the apostolic mission, anything we say about our sanctification necessarily implies a plan of holiness for our young people. For us too “the pastoral path is that of holiness”.³¹

The Pope wanted to remind us that “holiness is the best guarantee of an efficacious evangelization, because in it is to be found the most important testimony to offer to young people, the ones for whom you carry out your various activities”.³² The Holy Father’s words seem a paraphrase of what our Constitutions say in the article we quoted earlier: “The witness of such holiness, achieved within the salesian mission, reveals the unique worth of the beatitudes and is the most precious gift we can offer to the young”.³³

To sanctify ourselves, therefore, not least in view of the sanctification of our young people, and to grow in the Spirit in view of the same growth in them by becoming ever more and better educators to holiness, able to place sanctity as the explicit objective of our educative and pastoral programs, is for us a compelling duty. The Holy Father asked a similar question: “Can holiness ever be planned?” And he replied: “I

³⁰ o.c. p. 417

³¹ Cf. NMI, 30. “stressing holiness remains more than ever an urgent pastoral task”.

³² JOHN PAUL II, *Address in the audience to the Capitulars* cf. GC25, 170

³³ C 25

have no hesitation in saying that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness".³⁴ These are words that should appear particularly significant to our hearts as educators.

"Diligent educators and skilled spiritual guides as you are", the Pope tells us again, "you will know how to meet with young people who long to *see Jesus*. You will know how to lead them with gentle firmness along the demanding paths of Christian fidelity".³⁵ "Salesians for the third millennium! May you be enthusiastic teachers and guides, saints and formers of saints, as was Don Bosco".³⁶

Within such a program, the first conviction to take on board is that holiness is accessible to all and is the "most excellent way"³⁷ to follow. In fact for Paul the love-feast is first and foremost the indispensable element for the building of the Church, and its superiority derives from the fact that it will never end and that it makes us like to God who is Love.

2.1. Holiness, the aim of salesian education

We are all called to holiness. It is the vocation of all human life – as we are all aware – which in Baptism is made capable for such an objective. "All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love".³⁸ Paul VI once said that the proclamation of the vocation of all baptized persons to sanctity "is the most characteristic element of the entire teaching of the Council, and its ultimate purpose, so to speak".³⁹

³⁴ NMI, 30-31

³⁵ Message of the Pope at the beginning of the GC25, GC25, 141

³⁶ GC25, 143

³⁷ 1 Cor 12, 31b

³⁸ LG, 40

³⁹ PAUL VI, *Sanctitas clarior*, 19.1.1969

Later John Paul II was able to say to all the Church in *No-vo Millennio Ineunte*: "The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this *high standard* of ordinary Christian living".⁴⁰ It is a text which re-echoes St Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians⁴¹ and which the GC23 had taken as a guideline when speaking of the goal of the education of young people to the faith: "To promote the growth of the young to the fullness of life *after the measure of Christ the perfect man*, is the goal of salesian work".⁴²

Sometimes this may still appear somewhat extraordinary, either not in line with the present day or not appropriate for everyone, but it is very much appreciated by those who take their life seriously. To quote a writer whose opinion may well be shared by many confreres and lay people seriously committed to their Christian maturing: "I have passed an important spiritual milestone: I have come to consider holiness not as a luxury but as the sole possibility for our life on earth".⁴³

Our educative and pastoral project offers a plan of spirituality: "The journey of education to the faith reveals progressively to young people an *original plan of Christian life* and helps them to understand its implications. The youngster learns a new way of being a believer in the world and arranges his life around certain perceptions of faith, choices of values and gospel attitudes: he lives a spirituality".⁴⁴

Such a demanding project awakens unsuspected resources in the young. The desire and attraction of the human heart no longer turns to mediocrity but to the "high quality" of life, and the latter – before being an imperative from without – is

⁴⁰ NMI, 31

⁴¹ Cf. Eph 4, 13b

⁴² GC23, 160

⁴³ Henri d'Hellencourt, in *Diario di Bordo*

⁴⁴ GC23, 158

an internal demand of human nature which, though wounded by sin, still feels the echo of the primordial state preceding original sin. It is from this original and shared holiness that stem consuming desires and incessant nostalgia in man.

Those who walk more radically in this direction – the Saints – prompt a deep and mysterious nostalgia in us, because they send us back to the roots of our being and lead us to understand instinctively that we are all made for this path of surpassing excellence. To follow up such nostalgia is the source of true greatness and becomes the source of unsuspected energy.

This is true also and to a greater extent for young people. It is precisely at their age that they begin to feel the fascination of demanding and challenging values even though subsequently, and especially in today's circumstances, they discover their own frailty. It is up to us, "educators of young people to holiness",⁴⁵ to make use and help in the development of this craving that is in all of them. To us "is entrusted the task of being educators and evangelizers of the young people of the third millennium".⁴⁶ We cannot conceal from our youngsters the fact that aiming at holiness satisfies their deepest aspirations and responds to their desire for happiness. Let us follow the example of John Paul II, who at Toronto told them with evangelical courage: "Do not wait until you are older before venturing on the way of holiness! Holiness is always young, just as eternal is the youthfulness of God".⁴⁷ In this way we shall be following the example of Don Bosco himself, who was convinced that young people can become holy, and that few ideals can be put to them more at-

⁴⁵ GC25, 143

⁴⁶ GC25, 146

⁴⁷ GIOVANNI PAOLO II, Toronto. Oss. Rom. 29-30 July 2002, p. 5

tractive than that of becoming saints. "Be welcoming and fatherly", John Paul II exhorts us, "ready at every opportunity and in every situation to ask young people *through your way of living*: 'Do you want to become a saint?'" (*italics mine*).⁴⁸

Don Bosco, successful educator that he was, was never afraid to point to high ideals. Let us therefore "keep our eyes fixed on Don Bosco".⁴⁹

It can be said that the origin of the holiness of Dominic Savio began when he heard Don Bosco explain in a sermon that holiness was within the reach of everyone. Allow me to quote, even though it be rather lengthy, the relevant text from the *Biographical Memoirs*, because it reveals to us on the one hand the educative skill of Don Bosco who was able to suggest lofty ideals even to boys, and on the other hand the every-day nature of the model of sanctity, which made it feasible for all.

"One Sunday Don Bosco spoke about becoming a saint, stressing three points which made a deep impression on Savio's receptive soul: it is God's will that we become saints; it is quite easy to do so; there is a great reward in heaven for one who becomes a saint. Dominic later told Don Bosco: "I feel a deep yearning, an earnest need, to become a saint. I never knew it could be so easy, but now I see that one can be happy and holy too, I definitely want to become a saint".

Don Bosco praised his resolve and showed him that the first thing God wanted of him was a *constant moderate cheerfulness*. He advised him to *carry out his scholastic and religious duties diligently and always to join in the games of his companions at recreation*. At the same time he forbade austere penances or long prayers as unsuitable to a boy of his age.

⁴⁸ GC25, 143

⁴⁹ GC25, 144

Savio obeyed, but one day Don Bosco saw him very dejected. "I really do not know what to do!" the boy complained. "The Lord says that unless I do penance I cannot get to heaven, and you won't let me do any. What are my chances for heaven?"

"The penance Our Lord asks of you is obedience", Don Bosco replied. "Just obey, and you will be doing enough".⁵⁰

2.2. *An educative process in the light of salesian spirituality*

The text just quoted shows that sanctity is a process which develops within a spiritual experience. The latter provides the climate, the road, the nourishment. A spirituality is a particular and concrete way towards holiness. We have *our own youthful spirituality*. It is a spirituality that puts the young people at the center but is nevertheless for everyone, especially for the lowly and those in need. Today we enjoy a sufficiently systematic understanding of such a spirituality, thanks to the studies that have been done. We need think only of what has been said by the GC23, by the GC24, and by Fr Vecchi who made it the subject of a retreat and spoke of it also in various meetings of the Salesian Youth Movement.⁵¹

It may be useful, I think, to recall its essential elements:

– *A spirituality of daily life*. I like to emphasize the privileged setting occupied by humble daily life, because this was one of the ideas Don Bosco liked best. "All his life Don Bosco set young people on the road to a simple, serene and happy form of holiness, bringing together in a single vital experience the playground, serious study, and a constant sense of duty".⁵²

⁵⁰ MB V, p. 209

⁵¹ Cf. VECCHI Juan, "Andate oltre", Temi di spiritualità giovanile, Elledici. Torino, 2002

⁵² GC23, 166

He never had much sympathy with exceptional gestures, but always pointed out to his boys the royal road of each one doing his duty, convinced that if this be done with love and joy it contains all that is necessary for spiritual growth. We know that this personal approach he had derived from other specialists. Going back to St Francis de Sales – an apostle of the universal call to holiness for all ages and categories of persons – he liked to emphasize a preference for what God gives us, rather than what we choose for ourselves. His “ask for nothing and refuse nothing” contains a valid educative truth and valuable theological wisdom. His insistence on love, which is like the contents in respect of the container, was echoed with the same insistence by Don Bosco the educator, in contrast to us who are sometimes more concerned about the form of things to the detriment of the substance.

– *A delicate pedagogical wisdom.* As regards aiming at holiness, Don Bosco showed himself to be a true educator, a master. He spoke explicitly of holiness to Dominic Savio because the boy was already capable of understanding it since he had already used the word himself. To Michael Magone on the other hand, at the station of Carmagnola, he said: “Listen, come to the Oratory; there you can study and play, and you will find companions”.

This means that it is important for us educators to know that there is a happy path of holiness that can satisfy the expectations of a young heart, and so we must be able to suggest it to every member of our school, youth center or oratory with suitable words. There will be some groups of young oratorians where we can speak expressly of holiness or vocation, knowing that they will understand us. In other cases we shall have to begin from square one by breaking down a previous mentality, purifying it from false ideas about God, or

knocking down the previously created idols they are trying to reproduce in their lives.

The most important thing is that as educators we are conscious of the fact that God is calling everyone to holiness, i.e. to give him a joyful response which is a path that can be followed, in the knowledge that we must follow it with our youngsters, starting from their present situation: "the paths to holiness are personal".⁵³ And so they call for "a genuine training in holiness adapted to people's needs",⁵⁴ on which we must reflect as Salesians and try out various forms of support.⁵⁵ We may recall that Don Bosco's first step was to invite the boys to the oratory on Sundays to enjoy themselves with many companions. This was his first call to the "holiness of joy" and to a holy life.

From the early years of his priesthood Don Bosco recognized instinctively that it was possible to accompany the boys to the fullness of Christian life according to their age, through a kind of youthful spirituality organized around some key-ideas open to the faith, in line certainly with his times but prophetic as well and promoted with enthusiasm and educative skill. A decisive factor in this was, precisely, the ability to involve the youngsters themselves in the enterprise, and thus make them the first beneficiaries as well as being real protagonists. The youngsters themselves helped Don Bosco "to begin, in the context of everyday experience, a new style of holiness tailored to the typical requirements of a boy's development. In this way they were to some extent *both pupils and teachers at the same time*".⁵⁶ Ours is a holiness both *for* and *with the young*, because in the search for holiness "Salesians

⁵³ NMI, 31

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Cf. *ibid*

⁵⁶ GC23, 159

and youngsters walk side by side”:⁵⁷ either we sanctify ourselves with them, walking and learning with them in their company, or we shall not become saints at all.

The stages of this process have all been clearly defined. The GC23, in particular, has presented them to us in a synthetic and stimulating manner, inviting us to organize the life of the youngsters around them and insisting with them on the choice of evangelical values and attitudes. I mention this as a reminder and strongly invite you to take up the document itself and read its analysis more deeply:⁵⁸

- A basis of *practical realism centred on daily life*, which is the setting for recognizing God’s presence and discovering his tireless activity, as I said earlier. “In our salesian experience we have an intuition which is both joyful and fundamental, i.e. that *there is no need to detach oneself from normal life* in order to seek the Lord”.⁵⁹ This is why Don Bosco frequently spoke of the “religious sense of duty” at the different moments of the day;
- an *attitude of hope mingled with joy*. “I want to teach you”, he said in the opening words of the *Companion of Youth* – “a way of Christian life that can make you (...) happy and content”.⁶⁰ To offer young people the possibility of experiencing life as festivity and faith as happiness is certainly “a style of holiness that could prove surprising to some experts in spirituality and pedagogy, concerned that it could lead to a playing down of gospel demands and educational obligations. But for Don Bosco the source of joy

⁵⁷ Message of the Pope at the beginning of the GC25, GC25, 145

⁵⁸ GC23, 158-180

⁵⁹ GC23, 162

⁶⁰ Cf. MB III, p. 9

is the life of grace which obliges the youngster to undertake a difficult apprenticeship in ascesis and kindness;⁶¹

- a *strong and personal friendship with Christ the Risen Lord* (cf. C 34). “It is he who enables man to find his identity by the very measure of God”⁶². “Is not Christ the secret of true freedom and profound joy of heart? Is not Christ the supreme friend and the teacher of all genuine friendship? If Christ is presented to young people as he really is, they experience him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept his message, even when it is demanding and bears the mark of the Cross”.⁶³ “In contact with the Risen Lord youngsters acquire a more intense love for life”;⁶⁴ once arrived at a relationship of close friendship, which is more than simple admiration and unpractical empathy, they deepen their knowledge and adherence to the person of Christ and his cause; they open up to the radical demands of the Gospel and respond with commitment and generosity.

To reach this friendly relationship personal prayer is needed, that is centred on listening to the Word which helps to mature “the vision of faith, learning to look at reality and events through the eyes of God, to the point of having ‘the mind of Christ’ (1 Cor 2:16)”.⁶⁵ Don Bosco, in particular, thought up a “pedagogy of holiness” giving pride of place to “the educative influence of Reconciliation of Penance and the Eucharist”;⁶⁶ these, in fact, provide “means of ex-

⁶¹ GC23, 165

⁶² X Symposium of Bishops of Europe; final message 2,a

⁶³ NMI, 9

⁶⁴ GC23, 168

⁶⁵ *Starting afresh from Christ*, Instruction of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life, 19.05.2002, n. 24

⁶⁶ GC23, 173

ceptional value for education to Christian liberty, to conversion of heart and to a spirit of sharing and service in the ecclesial community" (C 36);

- an ever more responsible and courageous *sense of membership of the Church*, both local and universal. Supported by the relationship that grows up between persons who find in Christ a common friend and the one and only Saviour, "the young people in salesian environments feel a great need to be together",⁶⁷ to make community and become "an effective sign of the Church they want to build together".⁶⁸ "What does this mean in practice? (...) It indicates above all the heart's contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us. (...) It means also an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith (...) as "those who are a part of me". This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship";⁶⁹
- a *practical commitment to good works*, in line with one's own social responsibilities and the material and spiritual needs of others. The Pope asked us to help young people "to be in their turn apostles of their friends and those of their own age".⁷⁰ "The history of youth at the Oratory during Don Bosco's own lifetime is rich in this apprenticeship to the Christian life: to be always of service to others, and this even in an extraordinary manner at times".⁷¹ Service

⁶⁷ GC23, 169

⁶⁸ GC23, 170

⁶⁹ NMI, 43

⁷⁰ GC25, 145

⁷¹ GC23, 179

to one's neighbour is a measure of progress in personal holiness, and this in the face of so many needs awakens "a new 'creativity' in charity not only by ensuring that help is effective but also by "getting close" to those who suffer, so that the hand that helps is seen not as a humiliating hand-out but as a sharing between brothers and sisters".⁷²

- "Salesian youth spirituality reserves a special place for the person of Mary",⁷³ whose *motherly presence* redounds throughout the whole process and inspires all its phases. "She is the living representative of the laborious but happy journey of every individual and of all humanity towards its fulfillment. In her the path of everyone meets that of God. She is therefore the key for interpretation, a model, a type and a journey".⁷⁴ Our Lady has, in fact, an exceptional power in the education of the sons of God and the disciples of Christ Jesus: where there is the mother of Jesus the disciples become believers (*Jn* 2, 1-11) and succeed in being faithful (*Jn* 19, 25-27).

3. Holiness flourishes in the Community

We have just finished a General Chapter centred entirely on the theme of Community. Looking in a brief manner at what we had done in two months of work, I summed up the community process traced out in the five working guidelines:

"The capitular text concerning the community is directed to the salesian community as the principal subject. By taking it on, the latter is invited to give willing acceptance to the call

⁷² NMI, 50

⁷³ GC23, 177

⁷⁴ GC23, 157

of God that comes through historical and ecclesial events, the indications of the Word of God and of our Rule of life, the appeals of young people and the needs of the laity and of the Salesian Family. The community then examines more deeply its own situation and discovers its own availability and resistances, its resources and lack of them, its possibilities and limitations. It learns moreover to recognize fundamental challenges and face them with hope and courage; it can put to itself appropriate questions that demand a reply. Finally, the community considers the practical guidelines that have been given, and decides on the conditions needed for putting them into effect".⁷⁵

3.1. *Re-echoing the GC25*

The community is truly the cradle and crucible of our sanctification. I want to emphasize that individual and community holiness have an influence on each other. If it is right to expect a community to help and sustain its members in their unceasing search for God, it is also true that the individual members by their personal holiness enable such an objective to be attained.

Fr Vecchi spoke very well about this in his well known letter "*Experts, Witnesses and Craftsmen of Communion*", when he described that of Valdocco as our model of community: "It is a community highly charged spiritually, characterized by "Da mihi animas". Don Bosco shaped his first collaborators, with simplicity and tangibility, according to the program: work, prayer and temperance. He asked them to carry out a 'work of charity' for the benefit of their neighbour. Love of Jesus Christ and trust in his grace was what lay behind his

⁷⁵ Address at the closing of the GC25, GC25, 184

concern for the good of the boys, beginning with their human and spiritual needs. Even the most abandoned were helped to make contact with God and the Church, and those who showed particular dispositions were led explicitly towards holiness. The nearness of God and the presence of Mary most Holy were almost sensibly felt".⁷⁶

His educative and evangelizing mission for the benefit of the young led Don Bosco to create a school of spirituality, in which "holiness was built up together; it was shared and mutually communicated, in such a way that the holiness of some (the youngsters) cannot be explained without the holiness of others (the Salesians)".⁷⁷

And Fr Vecchi continues: "To build and enjoy this climate of *shared holiness* is something to which consecrated persons are committed. The religious community is the setting for an experience of God. Everything is thought out with this in mind and with a view to this end. 'The spiritual life must therefore have first place in the Families of consecrated life... Apostolic fruitfulness, generosity in love of the poor, and the ability to attract vocations among the younger generation depend on this priority and its growth in personal and communal commitment' (VC 93)".⁷⁸

The GC25 took up the same theme again and very specifically in the second scheme "Evangelical witness", emphasizing the primacy of God, the following of Christ and the grace of unity: "We live this option in the certainty that it contributes to the building of an *alternative model* for humanity and the human family, in the perspective of Christian hope. In this way we respond to God's gift with a *personal and community process of holiness* towards full maturity in Christ, by means of

⁷⁶ AGC 363, p. 17

⁷⁷ CG24, 104

⁷⁸ AGC 363, p. 24-25

which we become a sign and prophecy of the ultimate values of the Kingdom of God in the spirit of the Beatitudes".⁷⁹

Seen in this light, the expression "the community is the privileged setting for ongoing formation" could be better understood if reformulated as "the community is the privileged setting for growth in holiness", so as to make it more clearly understood what the community is for us and what is meant by ongoing formation.

3.2. *The stimulus of our recent Beati*

If we look again at our Saints, we are at once struck by the contribution they offered to the communities in which they had been placed by obedience. Many examples of this could be given, but I will limit myself to our last three Beati, to point out the distinguishing traits of each of them which converge on the aim of building the community: "they are three splendid models of the holiness we want to live in our communities and to offer to the young people of the present day".⁸⁰

Blessed Artemides Zatti

Although he had a task that could well have taken him away from community life, he has been described as one of those who took part in it most, beginning with his prompt presence at all community activities. I quote from the "*Positio*" prepared for the Cause of Beatification: "Often in a religious community, whoever takes care of externs has a tendency to be absent from one's confreres, but Zatti was closely integrated into his community. He was unfailingly present

⁷⁹ GC25, 25

⁸⁰ GC25, 168

at the practices of piety, at meals and at community meetings, As infirmarian he used to look after both confreres and young people, and was above all else a contributor to spiritual union and fraternity".⁸¹

He was a source of optimism and serene joy, among his confreres first of all and then among his sick patients. He was an excellent intermediary between the salesian institution and the various lay groups of doctors and nurses. In short he felt himself a member of the community, even at times when others could have felt themselves let down, as when the hospital had to be demolished. We read in fact in a letter he wrote to his sister Ildegard at Bahia Blanca: "With the demolition of the hospital at the centre, next to the church, to make way for the Bishop's residence, we have been transferred body and soul to the Agricultural School, *where we find ourselves in an earthly paradise*, and when the planned changes which are just beginning are completed there will not be either a hospital or a sanctuary better than ours! Let us give our heartfelt thanks to God".⁸²

Blessed Luigi Variara

He made out of difficulties a path to success, and infused the same spirit into his Sisters. His attitude in the face of contradictions was exemplary, to the extent that he called *Paradise* what the Provincial referred to as a *bit of hell*, and he said he was in very good health on the very day that his Rector wrote to the Provincial expressing concern in that connection, and while in addition there were clashes going on at the time in Agua de Dios between armed groups. Fr Variara wrote at the time: "The work is going ahead only slowly

⁸¹ *Positio*, p. 253

⁸² *Positio*, p. 182

because there are no workmen available. For two weeks there has been no progress, and now it is raining as well. The workmen who remain are so afraid that they clear off at the first sign of danger.. and so things go on... Here, nonetheless we are all fine and content so that it seems like Paradise. May the Lord help us with his blessings, because with all this work we do not get a moment's rest. *I have never felt so happy to be a Salesian as during this past year, and I bless the Lord for having sent me to this leper colony, where I have learned never to lose my happiness and peace of mind.* May the Sacred Heart bless me always and I will do my best to do whatever he wants of me".⁸³

Without any doubt his greatest trial came when he received an obedience to leave Agua de Dios; it was then that he showed how he could renounce himself to unite himself to the will of God. It was in that circumstance that he confided to a confrere: "Look, Joseph, it will kill me to leave Agua de Dios, but I shall obey".⁸⁴ And in fact he did obey the order of his superior.

Fr Variara was a Founder while continuing to be a Salesian: two roles that might seem incompatible, with the temptation to adopt attitudes of autonomy. But he always remained loyal to his Rector and Provincial, even though at times they greatly misunderstood him.

Blessed Maria Romero

Her huge number of activities never became an excuse for keeping her from the life of the community. Right from the novitiate she showed she had a gift which was to prove very useful within the community: a positive view of all the Sisters.

⁸³ *Positio*, p. 88

⁸⁴ *Positio*, p. 151

She used to say to Sister Anna Maria: "How happy I was in the novitiate. All the Sisters seemed to me to be so many saints, especially my novice-mistress. What a great deal I owe her! How pure a soul, so observant of poverty, so delicate and understanding. When I think about her, I see her as a true saint: her dignified bearing and her air of recollection reflected her constant union with God. The advice she gave was always consistent with her own actions. Her correct manner of speaking was impressive, as also was her self-control and piety. She always wore a loving smile but nevertheless she never let pass in us anything that was not as it should be. Her example was a lesson in itself".⁸⁵ With such a way of looking at things we can easily imagine what her relationship was with all the Sisters.

4. An invitation to revision

We started from the joyful certainty that we are all called to holiness. We have applied this to ourselves, because it is a challenge to our sense of responsibility. We have applied it to our young people because as educators we can point out to them this objective, arduous though it may be to attain it, in the conviction that we are offering a program of blessedness that can help them to make their choices and life-plans. And finally we have applied it to the community: the setting par excellence in which the process of our sanctification takes place, convinced as we are that "our future vitality depends on our ability to create communities that are significantly charismatic today", and that "the essential basis for this is a renewed commitment to holiness".⁸⁶

⁸⁵ GRASSIANO Domenica, *Con Maria tutta a tutti come Don Bosco*, p. 40-41

⁸⁶ PASCUAL CHÁVEZ, Presentation, "The salesian community today" AGC 378 (2002), p. 20

I repeat here what I said at the conclusion of the General Chapter: "Holiness is the demanding way that together we want to follow in our communities; it is 'the most precious gift we can offer to the young' (C 25); it is the highest goal that, with courage, we can set for all. Only in an atmosphere of holiness that is lived and experienced will the young people have the possibility of making courageous life choices, of discovering God's plan for their future, of appreciating and welcoming the gift of vocations of special consecration".⁸⁷

Our names are written in heaven

I invite you now to fix your gaze on the high-fliers. Above us the sky is studded with them. As we look at them we can all say with perfect truth that our names too are written in the book of life (cf. Acts 13,8; 17,8). By imitating them let us make ourselves effective educators, leading our young people along the lofty paths of holiness, prophetically directed in a particular way to those who seem the most unresponsive and indifferent.

4.1. Recognizing the need to be practical

It is useful from a pedagogical standpoint to insist on a touch of realism and submit ourselves to some practical self-examination with regard to daily life and ask some direct questions about our experience. This is precisely what we did in the last General Chapter; in fact in each of the schemes there are questions to be answered. This is a way to ensure that the community becomes aware of its own situation, rec-

⁸⁷ GC25, 196

ognizes the challenges and learns to find the appropriate solutions with courage and hope.

I would like the theme of holiness, and that of the letters that will follow, to prompt a revision of life and to foster its application in a more practical manner. This can be done individually or also as a community. If those involved wish to do so, and it would be desirable, this could be done in an open community discussion.

I will try to list some questions directly linked with what I have already said:

Holiness and the personal plan of life

- *Do I feel that I am called by God and by the young to become holy? If I have given up this plan of God, what have been the reasons? If I am still serious about it, what am I doing to bring it about?*
- *What is my attitude regarding the ranks of Saints in our Family? What relationship do I have with these Family models? Do I know them sufficiently? Do I draw inspiration from their lives?*

Holiness and common life

- *Am I convinced that “the first educative service that the young need from us is the witness of a fraternal life”,⁸⁸ that “it is the eloquence of holiness that makes our mission fruitful”,⁸⁹ and that, finally, holiness “is the most valuable gift we can offer to the young” (C 25)? What can we do to make holiness the primary objective in the common plan of life?*

⁸⁸ GC25, 7

⁸⁹ FMA, Working Document for 21st General Chapter, p. 48

- *In the community to which I belong are our Saints remembered? Do we make good pastoral use of their feasts? Are there any updating initiatives in this regard?*

Holiness and apostolic mission

- *What value do I give to these “burning words” in my educative and pastoral service? And in particular in my activities among the young?*
- *Do I believe that holiness, i.e. a high standard of Christian life, is the goal to which God is calling every youngster? Do I speak to young people appropriately and offer practical and adequate suggestions?*

4.2. A revision that becomes prayer

“Dear Salesians, be holy!”. “Be enthusiastic teachers and guides, saints and formers of saints, as was St John Bosco”. Let us accept the Pope’s summons, entrusting to these prophets of the future – who are the Saints – the period following the Chapter through which we are now living, and from which we hope to derive a powerful thrust for a better future, where the primacy of God will shine in us with greater clarity and we may share with him his great concern for the world.

“We cannot fail to believe deeply in a reality and accompany it with prayer and sacrifice without it gradually growing among us. This is how Don Bosco lived!”.⁹⁰ When we consider the many great things the Lord has already done, the wonders worked in the Salesian Family, we can easily imagine

⁹⁰ Card. Eduardo MARTÍNEZ SOMALO, GC25, 150

what he will still do in the future, if he finds us well disposed and with an open heart.

This loving design of God strongly invites us to prayer.

My Lord and my God! Thank you for calling us to share in your own divine life through the pouring of your love into our hearts. What wonders you have worked throughout the history of mankind and of the Church, by raising up men and women who have reached so exalted a level of maturity. You have caused them to flourish also in the salesian garden, beginning with Don Bosco and continuing with the ranks of holy men and women who have made of the salesian vocation a path for the perfecting in love, martyrs who have borne witness to Christ by cruel deaths, and young people who have found in salesian education a way of holiness.

I bless you, Lord, for the confreres and members of the Salesian Family who continue to believe in you, listen to your Word, and remain open to the action of your Spirit. They are a sign of your love for the young, and particularly those who have greater need to experience that you are close to them, that you are concerned about them, and that you want them to be happy. I praise you for the vocations you continue to sow in the field of the world, for the families that foster them and for the communities that make them grow.

I thank you, Father, for allowing us to live in this exciting and challenging period of history, and for asking us to put out into the deep and let down the nets. I want all those who listen to this appeal to feel a vivid sense of gratitude for your continuing to believe in us and count on us, and regain the faith, hope and courage to venture into the open sea of youth with a life that is lived in depth.

The recognition of the greatness of your gifts does not blind us to our limitations; and so I feel the need to ask for forgiveness.

We feel the weight not only of our personal shortcomings but also those of the institution when, as a Congregation, we become aware that we have not always been able to take seriously the recommendations left us by Don Bosco in his spiritual testament: "Be on your guard and see to it neither the love of the world, nor affection for relatives, nor the desire for a more comfortable life lead you to the great mistake of profaning your sacred vows and betraying the religious profession by which we are consecrated to the Lord... Let personal and financial sacrifices be made if necessary, but always practise the preventive system and we shall have vocations in abundance... When the desire for ease and comfort grows up among us, our pious society will have run its course... Never forget that we work for poor and abandoned children".⁹¹

There are times, however, when we allow ourselves to be deceived by a worldly spirit in the ideas and organization of our personal and community life. We have been wanting in pastoral zeal and have lived the mission only partially, reserving more time for our personal interests. We have not been sufficiently courageous in presenting Christ to young people as the highest value in their life and his Gospel as the way to achieve it in all its fullness. Sometimes, unfortunately, we have done harm to the youngsters who have been entrusted to us, and instead of imprinting your image in their hearts we have left there the mark of our selfishness.

I recognize that at times our communities have been

⁹¹ Appendix to SDB Constitutions, pp. 267-269

lacking in religious identity and that our works have not always been truly educative and pastoral, and for this with sorrow and humility I ask forgiveness. I ask pardon of all those we have disappointed by our attitudes: benefactors, collaborators, and those for whom we work. I ask forgiveness especially of the young people to whom we have done harm of any kind, precisely because they are the raison d'être of our salesian life, because they have been entrusted to us by you, because in Don Bosco you have called us to offer them a "home, playground, school and parish". I ask forgiveness finally for the good we could have done and failed to accomplish.

We trust in you, Lord, in the certainty of your presence and companionship throughout our history, as you have guided the Congregation and the Salesian Family to the present day.

We believe in you, we hope in you, our love is for you alone.

Mary, mother and teacher, you who are skilled in the ways of the Spirit; open us to his action so that he may work in us the miracles of grace he has already performed in our Saints. In this way we can be worthy of the vocation to which we have been called and of the fullness of life prepared for each one of us by the Father. Amen.

I send you my affectionate greetings and I wish you and your young people an educative and pastoral year rich in the fruits of holiness. May the Lord bless you and be with you always.

Gaspar Chéniz V.

THE 25th GENERAL CHAPTER, A TASK FOR EVERY LOCAL SALESIAN COMMUNITY

Fr. Antonio DOMENECH

General Councillor for Youth Pastoral Ministry

In these months all the communities and Provinces are engaged in studying and reflecting on the document of the 25th General Chapter.

Faithful to the proposals of the Rector Major when he convoked it, this recent Chapter did not want to repeat doctrine but to offer to the communities motives and suggestions for the renewal of their religious identity simply and clearly in the new circumstances, and 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”.¹

For this reason the Chapter has confided to the Congregation not so much a teaching manual as a working document, through the five sections or schemes of work that make it up. In them is set out a process of reflection and discernment which, starting from the Word of God (note the quotations from the *Acts of the Apostles* at the beginning of each section), invites us to discover in our own circumstances and in the situation of society and of the Church the call of God and the expectations of young people. Starting from this call, the community is invited to examine its own situation, identifying its strengths and its weaknesses, in order to arrive at the fundamental challenges to its renewal that with hope it needs to focus on courageously. The

¹ VECCHI Juan E. *Towards the 25th General Chapter*, AGC 372, p. 15

Chapter document provides some practical guidelines, and with each of them several suggestions to help the communities select those most appropriate.

It is up to each community, therefore, to consider the reflections and suggestions of the Chapter in order to put them into effect in their own particular circumstances. The Rector Major says:

«The capitular text is evidently directed primarily to the community itself, to which it offers five programs to be studied, examined more deeply and put into effect».²

A process to be followed in every Province

To help the communities follow this process of reflection and study, it would be well for the Provincial with his Council, in collaboration with the Provincial Formation Commission to decide on a plan or practical procedure for the distribution, study and application of the reflections of the Chapter in each community. Here are some points to be considered in this process:

1. *A significant handing over to each confrere of the chapter document*

The way in which a document is presented to the confreres and to the communities can greatly help them to recognize its importance, to be open to it and appreciate its key points, and so foster the desire to study and reflect on it. It is therefore important to carefully plan the occasion for the presentation of the chapter document, which can usefully contain the following elements:

² CHÁVEZ Pascual, *The Salesian Community today*. Chapter Documents, p. 18

- a short but significant introduction by the Provincial and Delegate at GC25 of what went on at the Chapter;
- an overall view of the contents of the GC25 Chapter Documents;
- the presentation of a plan for the study by the communities agreed by the Province for the coming year, with indications of the various stages and procedures;
- finally, in a setting of prayer and celebration, the distribution to each confrere of the text, if they have not already received it, or of the study plan.

Through this occasion the confreres will come to realize that the initial process of the GC25 for the renewal of Salesian community life is not finished, but that it is now the task of each community, in union with the other communities in the Province, to put it into effect in their own daily lives. To assist with this, I think that the words of the Rector Major Fr Vecchi, in his letter convoking the GC25 referring to its preparation will be relevant: “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”.³

2. *A process of reflection*

The Chapter Assembly discussing what sort of document it wanted to produce, chose the scheme that we now have so as to be consistent with the process of reflection that had take place in the Provinces in the preparatory phase, and

³ ACG 372, p. 34

also so as to facilitate the study and reflection of the topic which is to be carried out by the communities in the period after the chapter.

A text that was short and stimulating, capable of helping the communities to carry out themselves what had been the process followed in the Chapter. It is not a question therefore of simply reading the text as though it were a teaching manual. but of following the three stages of reflection suggested in the text:

- Above all, putting oneself in the frame of mind of listening to the Word of God and our Constitutions in order to identify those elements in which we recognize the practical call of God today for us; those aspects of our spiritual and pedagogical patrimony that we share together and which we want to inspire and guide our daily lives and activities.

The quotation from the Word of God which introduces each section and which reminds us of the model of the first apostolic community, and the many quotations from the Constitutions in the first part of each section, can be for each community a reference and a guide for its reflection at the time.

It is important that on this occasion the community is able to speak in its own words and can share experiences and convictions that motivate and guide its choices and its use of resources.

- In the light of this call, to be realized within the community in the context of today, the community examines its own circumstances, identifying its strengthes and its weaknesses, looks at the situation of young people and their world, and recognizes there the possibilities and the limitations that it offers.

The chapter document can be a guide to this examination, which each community should carry out in the concrete

circumstances it is living. It is important that at the end the community should arrive at discovering the fundamental challenges that need to be faced at the present moment, and which require from the community an urgent and decisive response.

In the chapter documents, the challenges have usually been expressed in the form of questions, since the intention was to invite the communities to respond to them.

– Having identified the challenges to which a response can be made, the community should decide on *the steps to be taken and the things to be done* in order to move towards the desired objectives.

The chapter document, in the working guidelines, provides some broad outlines of the process, and for each of these a number of concrete suggestions, so that the Provinces and individual communities can choose those which, in its judgement, best correspond with its circumstances and possibilities, while respecting the general recommendations common to all.

The whole of this process of reflection will certainly provide the community with ample material with which to prepare and revise its *Community Plan* which is one of the important means that the GC25 offers to the communities for their renewal.⁴

The drawing up of this plan in the individual communities can be the practical objective set for the process of study, and for the implementation of the reflections of the chapter.

⁴ Cf. GC25, nn. 72-74

3. *Guidance on the part of the Province*

The Province, through its means of animation and government – the Provincial with his Council, the various Provincial commissions, the Rectors – should support and guide the communities in the process already mentioned, providing advice with regard to the method to be followed, arranging opportunities for an exchange of ideas, and particularly guiding them in the formulation and the evaluation of the community plan of each community.

However, the most important assistance that the Provincial can possibly provide is that of ensuring the right conditions for each community to live salesian fraternal life deeply, with serenity, and in a way that has a positive influence on young people. These conditions need to be guaranteed in the “Organic Provincial Plan” which the Chapter proposes should be drawn up or evaluated in the next three years.⁵ Among the conditions to ensure this the following are important:

- the adequate quality and number of members of the salesian community, overcoming situations of disintegration, dispersal and insufficient numbers;
- the possibility of a fraternal religious life in the salesian style, perceptible and significant for the young and for lay collaborators;
- a presence among the young, especially the very poor and those most in need, through an intense living of the preventive system;
- the ability to combine with other forces and to give rise to ecclesiastical vocations and particularly for the Salesian Family.

⁵ Cf. GC25, n. 82

Renewal of salesian community life is a long process which the GC25 has set in motion for us. In the next few years the Provinces will need to direct their energies and focus especially on this, fully aware that we need to offer young people a home that is theirs and which we share with them; and at the same time, that this is the essential way ahead for the vocational support and growth of salesians and to enable them to become a credible and attractive option for the young.

Therefore, all the other aspects of our lives and activities – formation, concern for the poor, evangelization, presence among the young etc. need to be combined with this renewal, either as ways of promoting it or as its fruit and expression.

Conclusion

In his presentation of the Chapter document the Rector Major states: «Our future vitality depends on our ability to create communities that are significantly charismatic today. The essential basis for this is a renewed commitment to holiness.»⁶. And along the same lines, his first circular letter is an invitation to all Salesians to become saints, as the challenging way forward which we want to pursue together in our communities: an apostolic holiness, according to the style lived and handed on by Don Bosco. In his letter the Rector Major offers us plenty of suggestions to deepen this salesian style of holiness and to put it into practice in our communities.

⁶ GC25. *The Salesian community Today*, p. 20

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

April 2002

Immediately after his election as Rector Major on **3 April 2002**, Fr Pascual Chavez took over the Presidency of the 25th General Chapter, in accordance with the Regulations. He then guided the Chapter through its remaining stages.

There were some events in which he took part during the Chapter itself, first among them the Audience of the Capitulars with the Holy Father on 12 April, a culminating moment in the members' experience.

On the following day the Prayer Vigil for the Salesian Family took place in the Don Bosco Basilica at Cinecittà in preparation for the Beatification of Bro. Artemides Zatti. This was the first public appearance of the Rector Major with Mother Antonia Colombo FMA and Mother Rosa Inés Baldión, superior of the HHSSCC Institute.

On Sunday 14 April there was the solemn function of the **Beatification of the three new Beati of our Family**, presided over by Pope John Paul II, which gave us

the precious gift of these outstanding models of salesian holiness, In the afternoon of the same day the Paul VI Hall was the venue for an academic and cultural function in honour of the new Beati.

On the following morning – 15 April – the celebrations continued with a Mass in honour of the Beati in the Church of St Gregory VII, followed by an Audience of the Holy Father for pilgrims in the Paul VI Hall; it gave the Rector Major the opportunity to thank the Holy Father .

In the afternoon of the same day, the Rector Major went with the Capitulars to Cinecittà for the commemoration of the centenary of the erection of the Roman Province: a meeting of considerable significance with the presence of the civil authorities who expressed their gratitude for the work done by the Salesians in Rome in these one hundred years of history.

Saturday, 20 April. The GC25 came to an end with the closing address of the Rector Major, followed by a Eucharist of thanksgiving and the concluding lunch.

On the same Saturday evening Fr Chávez made his first visit to a Province outside Rome; in a welcoming supper at Milan he was able to greet many of the Rectors of the Province.

The following day, Sunday 21 April, he took part in the **official commemoration of Blessed Artemides Zatti at Boretto**, where Zatti was born. After a reception by the civil and religious authorities in the Town Hall there was a Eucharistic Concelebration, at which the Rector Major presided, followed by a fraternal lunch in the Boretto Oratory. The same afternoon there was a further homage to the new Beatus at the Salesian Oratory at Reggio Emilia, with the presence of the local civil and religious authorities.

Returning to Rome, the Rector Major presided at a **first plenary session of the General Council**, from 23 April to 3 May, for the main purpose of the appointment of Provincials, for whom the required consultations had been made before the General Chapter.

Throughout this period the Rector Major also received numerous visits from confreres – including several Provincials – and members of the Salesian Family. Among others there were also visits of the Mother General and

Council of the Salesian Oblate Sisters, of some representatives of the Council of the Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Krishnagar, India, and of Fr Viotti and the President of the ADMA, in preparation for their Fourth World Congress to be held at Turin in August 2003, on the occasion of the centenary of the crowning of the image of Mary Help of Christians.

On Wednesday 24 April Fr Pascual Chavez took part in the Eucharistic Concelebration of the Bishops of Europe, gathered at the “Salesianum” for a meeting on the theme: *“Young people of Europe in the time of change. A workshop of faith”*. After the concelebration the Rector Major greeted those taking part, who included 1 salesian archbishop and 3 salesian bishops, together with two other SDBs, two FMAs and two young representatives of Episcopal Conferences.

May 2002

At the end of the first plenary session of the Council the Rector Major left for **Mexico**, for an official visit. He arrived at Mexico City on 4 May and spent the first two days in the Province of Mexico (MEM), which had prepared a

warm welcome for him..

The first event was the celebration of the Eucharist in the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians in Mexico City, in the presence of many Salesians and members of the Salesian Family and very large numbers of the Salesian Youth Movement. In the afternoon Fr Chávez met with various groups of the Salesian Family, visited the communities of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in the capital and had a meeting with the Provincial Council.

Monday, 6 May. The Rector Major made a visit to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe, accompanied by the Provincial, Fr Louis Valerdi. Returning to the Provincial House, he celebrated the Eucharist with the pupils of all the schools of the Province, and afterwards replied to the questions they put to him. Before and after lunch Fr Chavez had a meeting first with the young confreres in initial formation and then with all the confreres of the Province. Before leaving for Guadalajara he was present at the signing of the Agreement between the Province and the Monte de Piedad, for the benefit of the work for street-children.

He reached **Guadalajara** in the late evening, and was welcomed at

the airport by the Provincial, Fr Hector Guerrero, and the Rectors of the houses of the Province.

The following day, 7 May, Fr Chavez visited the theologate at Tlaquepaque, where he had spent many years of his salesian life as a teacher and Rector, promoting the construction of the present buildings which include the premises of the community of the students and also the centre of studies.

After Mass with the confreres of the houses of formation he greeted the people of the adjacent town of Guadalajara, where he had worked during his early priesthood, and then went on to the "Benito Juárez" Hall, where he had a meeting with some five thousand young people from the colleges and salesian centres of the North Mexican Province.

In the early afternoon the Rector Major had another meeting, this time with all the Salesians of the Province and answered their questions. This was followed by a family supper and an interview with the mass media (*Televisa*, *CNN*) and a meeting with the Councils of the various groups of the Salesian Family.

8 May began with a "Good Morning" talk to the educative communities of the Anáhuac Chapalita and Anáhuac Garibaldi Colleges,

and then after breakfast with the three communities of Guadalajara. This was followed by a private meeting with Cardinal Juan Sandoval, who had been his formation director. In the afternoon he visited the Anáhuac Revolución College, where he had lunch. Later he met the Governor of the state of Jalisco, Lic. Javier Ramírez Acuña, and had a meeting also with the Provincial Council.

On Thursday 9 May Fr Chavez travelled to Monterrey, where he celebrated the Eucharist for the FMA communities in their provincial house of North Mexico, and visited also the two communities of the Salesians. In the early afternoon he went on to **Saltillo**.

Here, on the following day, the Rector Major visited the Mexican College where he had once been a pupil and from which he went to the aspirantate. After visiting the pupils, he said Mass for their mothers, inaugurated the new College buildings and had breakfast with the members of the Lopez family, whose father had built the Salesian college. He had lunch with the Bishop, Mgr. José Raúl Vera, the members of the EPC and their families. In the evening he met the salesian communities working in the north-east part of Mexico.

Sunday, 12 May. Fr Chavez presided at the Eucharistic celebration in the Cathedral of Saltillo. In the afternoon he left for Monterey and Mexico City on his way back to Rome, where he arrived on the Monday evening.

From 13 to 22 May the Rector Major remained at Headquarters, receiving numerous confreres and also various Bishops. A significant event during this period was the academic function in which Cardinal Oscar Rodríguez Maradiaga received the Doctorate *honoris causa* in Educational Sciences from the Pontifical Salesian University of Rome (UPS). Fr Chavez gave a brief address illustrating the Cardinal's pastoral and social work and his contributions in the fields of education, human advancement for the recovery of the dignity of the individual, especially the poorest and most excluded of them, and for the growth of social consciousness in the countries of Latin America (cf. n. 5.2 in this issue of the AGC). Among those present were a number of Bishops, Ambassadors of various countries of Latin America, the members of the Salesian General Council, and Mother Antonia Colombo, Superior General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

23 May. The Rector Major, accompanied by the Regional Councillor for Western Europe Fr Filiberto Rodriguez, left for Turin, for the celebration of the Feast of Mary Help of Christians..

On arrival at Valdocco as the ninth successor of Don Bosco, he was given an affectionate and welcoming reception to the Mother House of the Congregation by the Provincial, Fr Luigi Testa, and the boys of the schools in the theatre in the home of the first Salesians.

After lunch he visited the Basilica where he prayed for a long time before the picture of Mary Help of Christians and at the tomb of Don Bosco. He gave an interview to the Turin newspaper "La Stampa", and then went on to the theological studentate of Turin-Crocetta, where he was received by the Rector and confreres, and conversed with them, answering questions from the students.

In the evening he had a brief meeting with the leaders of the Salesian Cooperators and Past-pupils of Piedmont and the Valle d'Aosta, and immediately afterwards presided at a celebration during which 8 prenovices (4 from the Ukraine and 4 from the ICP Circumscription) gave to the Rector Major their formal request for admission to the novitiate. Later

he went back to the Basilica to take part in a private capacity in the vigil for the Feast with the crowds of the faithful who were present.

24 May. On the Solemnity itself Fr Chavez presided at the solemn Eucharistic Concelebration, after which he had a private meeting with the Superior General of the FMA, Mother Antonia Colombo. Later he visited the sick confreres in the infirmary of the Mary Help of Christians community.

In the afternoon, accompanied by Fr Testa, he went to the "Andrew Beltrami" House to visit the other sick confreres who are being taken care of there. He spoke with each one individually and enquired about their state of health. He also greeted and thanked the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts who take such good care of the sick Salesians. He then returned to Valdocco to greet the boys and past members of the Valdocco Oratory. In the evening he went to the provincial house of the FMA Piedmontese Province to take part in a meeting with the Mother General and some 200 Sisters, who had gathered at Turin for the celebration of the Feast. Fr Chavez spoke to them of the first moments following his election, of

the theme of the GC25 and of salesian holiness; he thanked the Mother General and all the Sisters for the sense of support they unfailingly show to Don Bosco's successor.

The final event in the evening was the solemn procession in which, as in every year, numerous groups of people from Turin and its neighbourhood take part. Among the many priests and Sisters was Cardinal Severino Poletto, Archbishop of Turin, who presided. Alongside him were the Rector Major, the Salesian Bishops Mgr. Tarcisio Bertone and Mgr. Bruno Pedron, and the Regional Councillor for Western Europe, Fr Filiberto Rodriguez.

On the following day, 25 May, Fr Chavez celebrated Mass in Don Bosco's rooms and then left for the airport of Milan with Fr Filiberto Rodriguez to fly to Madrid.

On arrival at **Madrid**, he was received by numerous Rectors and confreres who had come to meet him, and was then taken by the Provincial, Fr Jesús Guerra Ibañez, to the house of Arévalo – the former aspirantate – where, after greeting the confreres, he had lunch with the community.

He expressed his joy at being once more in the Madrid Province where he had received part of his

human, salesian and professional formation. Recalling the past history of the house, he encouraged the confreres to intensify their pastoral work for vocations. Later he visited the sick confreres who are cared for in the same house, and then left for **Salamanca**, where he was given a civic reception in the Town Hall and declared to be a “distinguished guest” of Salamanca by the Mayor, Julián Lanzarote. The Rector Major accepted the honour in the name of all the Salesians who have worked in the city, and in his words of thanks he recalled the humanistic tradition of Salamanca, its contribution to culture, and – as a Mexican – the role of the professors of Salamanca during the period of the discovery of America. He also recalled the time he spent in the city as a student at the Pontifical University. The Rector Major then offered his respects to the Mayor by presenting him with a bronze plaque bearing the image of St Peter.

This event, and the inauguration of the monument to Don Bosco, formed the conclusion of the celebration of one hundred years of salesian presence at Salamanca. The act of inauguration of the monument was presided over by the Rector Major and the May-

or of Salamanca, in the presence of the Bishop of the Diocese, members of the Town Council and some 4,000 other persons.

The monument itself – a obelisk of granite, 14.5 metres high and weighing 100 metric tons, the tallest sculpture in the city – was offered to the Congregation by the city, and is intended to be a mark of gratitude. The Rector Major, in thanking the Mayor and citizens for this gesture of esteem for salesian work and for the efforts of so many Salesians at Salamanca, declared amongst other things (and speaking especially to the young people) that “they could count on the Salesians in whatever situation they might find themselves”, and he encouraged them to be leaders in the building of Europe. In another part of his address Fr Chavez praised the skill of the sculptor of the monument in “expressing in stone the social and educational activity of the Salesians”.

In the program for the Salamanca visit the Rector Major had set Sunday morning aside for a visit to the birthplace of Sister Eusebia Palomino FMA, whose cause for beatification is in progress, and had a meeting there with the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

He then went to the College of St Joseph, which includes elementary and middle schools together with a professional training centre; there he had lunch with the two salesian communities of Salamanca. In the evening he said Mass in the parish church of Mary Help of Christians and was afterwards the guest of the FMA in their St John Bosco College in the city.

27 May. Fr Chavez had a very busy morning. He greeted the pupils of the St Joseph College, had a meeting with the Rector Magnificus of the Pontifical University and gave a press conference to the Salamanca mass media.

In the afternoon he was back at Madrid for a visit to the Dominic Savio Salesian College, and then took part in a manifestation in which the Province honoured the Salesian Brothers. For this nearly all the 90 Brothers of the Province were present with many other Salesians and members of the Salesian Family. The Rector Major presented a brief outline of the newly beatified Bro. Zatti and commented on the message of the GC25 about the figure of the Brother. He highlighted the difficulties there are nowadays in presenting the vocation of the lay religious, because of the prevailing

situation and the low profile of religious life; he encouraged a growth in fidelity and the recovery of the true meaning of consecration. Finally he gave to each of the Brothers present a medal of Bro. Zatti.

Following this event Fr Chavez presided at a Eucharist with all the Salesian Family.

May 28. The Rector Major gave an interview to the "VIDA NUEVA" review, and greeted members of the Don Bosco Centre for Higher Studies in Madrid, before visiting the salesian work at "Pan Bendito", a parish in a densely populated part of the capital. Later he presided at a Eucharist in the Theological Institute of Carabanchel, where he had once been resident for a year. During the celebration he conferred the ministries of Reader and Acolyte on some young Salesians.

The visit to the Province ended with a lunch at the Theological Studentate of Madrid, and afterwards Fr Chavez left with Fr Filiberto Rodriguez to return to Rome.

31 May. The Rector Major was present in the Basilica of St Mary Major in Rome for the Marian vigil with the Salesian Youth Movement of Lazio, and presided at the celebration which took place

in the chapel of the *Salus Populi Romani*. Many youth groups of the Lazio SYM took part, with Salesians, FMAs, the students of theology of Gerini, the SDB novices of Genzano and the FMA novices of Castel Gandolfo.

June 2002

1 June, Saturday. In the afternoon the Rector Major went to the international community of the theology students at Gerini, Rome, for a solemn Eucharistic Concelebration and the conferring of the ministries of Reader and Acolyte in the community chapel. Afterwards, accompanied by the Rector, Fr Giovanni Sirca, he visited the professional training centre and had supper with the two Gerini communities.

4 June. The **plenary summer session of the General Council** began; It would continue till 19 July.

5 June. Fr Chavez went to the FMA Generalate to give a conference. On the way he called at the Infirmary of the UPS, to meet the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts and speak with the sick confreres.

At the FMA Generalate he was received by the Mother General and the members of the General

Council, and accompanied to the main hall where were gathered all the Sisters of the Generalate and of the neighbouring house of the Sacred Heart. After words of welcome by the Superior of the house, Sr. Ileana Anzolla, who expressed their joy at having with them the ninth successor of Don Bosco, the Rector Major gave a conference on living the salesian interior life between fidelity to God and response to young people, from the Special General Chapter to the GC25. When he had finished the Mother General expressed their gratitude for the presence of Don Bosco's successor, for the predilection shown for the FMA, and for the vast progress made by the Congregation from Vatican II to the GC25. The evening concluded with supper and a final greeting.

7 June. Fr Chavez left for **Genoa** accompanied by the Economist General, to take part in the celebrations for **130 years of salesian work** in that city. He was met at the airport by the Provincial, Fr George Colajacomo, and by Fr Alberto Lorenzelli who will shortly succeed him. From the airport he was taken directly to the port for a boat journey. On the steamer were a group of Salesians, FMAs, Cooperators, and a journalist from the daily "19th Centu-

ry", to whom Fr Chávez gave an interview.

The whole group then moved to the Palazzo San Giorgio, for the presentation of the book "*The second Valdocco*" written by Antonio Miscio. Among those present was Cardinal Dionigi Tettamanzi, Archbishop of Genoa with the civil, academic and religious authorities of the city.

In the evening the Rector Major was a guest of the Oratory of Sampierdarena, where he had a meeting with the young animators of Liguria. To them he made an appeal to encourage them in their commitment, and then replied to their questions on various topics. There followed a period of prayer together in which the journey of young people through life was entrusted to Mary's protection. Fr Chávez then gave the "Good Night" on the theme proposed by the Pope for the World Day of Youth. The youngsters in turn presented the Rector Major with the model of a ship and a copy of the Educative and Pastoral Project of their Oratory.

8 June, Saturday. The Rector Major, accompanied by the Economist General and the two Provincials, visited the Mary Help of Christians Institute of the FMA in Corso Sardegna, to greet the

Sisters and the pupils of the middle and upper schools. Here too he replied to questions from the students and pointed out to them the principle elements of a plan of life.

Returning to the parish church of Sampierdarena, the Rector Major presided at a concelebrated Eucharist for the concluding of the scholastic year, in the presence of the pupils, teachers and parents. Fr Chávez gave the homily in which he spoke on the World Youth Day theme: "Salt of the earth and light of the world".

For lunch, at which diocesan priests from neighbouring parishes and delegates of the Cooperators were present, the Rector Major went to Genoa-Quarto, where the Salesians have a university residence and a centre for professional training. After an address of welcome by the Rector, Fr Giancarlo Botter, Fr Chávez visited the premises and met with the confreres and teachers.

In the afternoon he was once again back at the provincial house at Sampierdarena, for a meeting with the superiors of the SDB and FMA communities. He recalled the figure of his predecessor, Fr Juan Edmundo Vecchi, who from his sickbed gave such a great testimony of faith and love for the

Congregation. He then gave a brief presentation of the five practical schemes of the GC25 and replied to questions from the confreres and sisters.

A little later Fr Chávez had another meeting, this time in the "Il Tempietto" theatre, with the Salesian Family to whom he presented a brief overview of the worldwide situation of the Congregation.

In the evening he left for Varazze where, in addition to the Oratory and youth centre, the Congregation has a house for sick confreres. He had a meeting with the young people of the Oratory, gave an interview to the local television station, and visited the sick confreres and chatted with them.

Sunday, 9 June. The Rector Major presided at the concelebrated Eucharist for the Don Bosco Parish community. In the homily, after briefly presenting the work of the Salesians throughout the world, he expressed his emotion at the fact that all this great work had begun precisely from there, from Sampierdarena, with the first missionary expedition that set out from the port of Genoa, and is commemorated in a stained-glass window in the parish church.

After the Mass Fr Chávez gave a television interview to RAI-3, and

then went once again to the "Il Tempietto" theatre for a further meeting with the young people, cooperators, past-pupils and parishioners on the commitment of the Salesian Family for the benefit of needy youngsters. This is the means shown us by Don Bosco for building a new society, a true family, a future for all, by extending to the whole world education, solidarity and peace. It is a challenge, said Fr Chávez, that Don Bosco puts today to the whole of the Salesian Family and to all educators.

A festive lunch concluded the visit of the Rector Major to the Province and the commemoration of the 130 years of salesian work in that part of Italy. After the meal Fr Chávez thanked Card. Tettamanzi for his presence at the beginning of the visit and at this concluding moment, and for the love and esteem he had always shown for the Salesians. He also thanked the Province for their hospitality and for the invitation to visit the "second Valdocco". The Cardinal in his turn said how pleased he was to have this opportunity of meeting the ninth successor of Don Bosco and to wish him well for his new mission in guiding and directing the Salesian Family; he asked him to keep the

salesian spirit alive and open to everyone, because it is a gift of Don Bosco for the whole Church.

The Rector Major then returned to Rome to continue with the work of the General Council.

Thursday, 13 June. In the evening Fr Chávez went to the community of Testaccio. He was received by the Rector, Fr Carlos Techera, and the confreres, celebrated the Eucharist with them and stayed for supper. In a concluding "Good Night" he encouraged the student confreres to give great importance to this period in their lives, in which they were able to affirm their particular identity and fidelity to our charism, and to make it fruitful for the good of the salesian mission.

15 June. The Rector Major, accompanied by Fr Francesco Cereda, Councillor General for Formation, and Fr Giuseppe Nicolussi, Superior of the UPS Vice-province, went to the FMA house of St Rose of Lima at Castel Gandolfo, for a meeting with the Council of the Pontifical Salesian University. He expressed his thanks for the work done by the University, emphasized its importance as the main source of formation personnel for all the Provinces, and promised to in-

volve the General Council and the Provinces in sharing the responsibility for stirring up a greater interest and trust in the University throughout the Congregation.

Sunday, 16 June. Fr Chávez celebrated the Eucharist in the "Mother Ersilia Canta" community of the FMA, and afterwards breakfasted with the Sisters. Later at the Generalate he received a group of boys who make up the "Oratory without Salesians" of Oria. The specific purpose of the meeting was to ask the Salesians for a more direct presence of the Salesians in their oratory.

In the afternoon of June 17, the Rector Major visited the postnovitiate community of Rome-St Tarcisius. After a brief period of prayer before the tombs of the deceased Salesians in the Catacombs cemetery, where Frs Vecchi and Ricceri are buried, Fr Chávez was welcomed by the Rector and community with whom he had a spontaneous conversation. A Eucharistic concelebration followed at which the Provincial, Fr Mario Carnevale, was also present. At supper Fr Chávez thanked the Rector for having invited him and the community for their welcome and their family spirit.

19 June. In the afternoon the Rector Major had a meeting with

the community of the Generalate, and later went on to the UPS for the community celebration of Vespers and the official installation of Fr Giuseppe Nicolussi as the Superior of the UPS Vice-province (cf. n. 5.3 in this edition of the AGC).

In the following days a number of salesian bishops came to visit the Rector Major.

Wednesday, 26 June. Fr Chávez went to the *Auxilium Institute*, for a first meeting – as Grand Chancellor – with the Academic Authorities of the Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences. He was then joined by the members of the FMA General Council for Vespers and a festive supper with the Sisters of the *Auxilium* community which concluded with the "Good Night" of the Rector Major.

In the afternoon of 28 June Fr Chávez and the General Councilors went to Castel Gandolfo, where in the FMA house of St Rose of Lima there was a meeting of the **combined SDB and FMA General Councils**. After the customary words of welcome there was a personal presentation of the individual Council members. As well as providing an opportunity for making each other's acquaintance, the purpose was a sharing of their recent General

Chapter experiences on the part of the SDB Councillors.

June 29, Saturday. The Rector Major and Vicar General visited the salesian community of the Vatican and had supper with them. Cardinal Rosalio Castillo Lara was also present.

July 2002

3 and 4 July. The Rector Major, with Frs Van Looy and Van Hecke, had a meeting with the Provincial of Hungary, Fr. József Havasi, the Vice-Provincial and another member of the Provincial Council, to study the situation of salesian work in Hungary.

4 July. Fr Chávez presided at a concelebration with the confreres of the Generalate community on the occasion of the community's feast.

On the following day he had a meeting with the Italian Provincial Conference which was meeting at the Salesianum.

12 July. The Rector Major and members of the Council left for Turin to make a **pilgrimage to the salesian holy places**, at the beginning of the six-year period of office.

On the first day, in the Church of St Francis de Sales, Fr Chávez

presided at a Mass concelebrated with the Councillors and briefly defined the three objectives of the pilgrimage:

- to give thanks to God for Don Bosco, for the Salesian Family, and for the mission of our Congregation;
- to offer to Our Lady all the work of the coming six years and the programming of the Council's work;
- to draw from the salesian holy places inspiration and strength to enable them to fulfil the tasks they had received.

In his homily the Rector Major recalled the 150 years of the church of St Francis de Sales, the first church built by Don Bosco, its role as the centre and heart of the Oratory, the place where so many confreres and boys grew in holiness, and the church where so many Salesians celebrated their first Mass.

The group then visited the central offices of the SEI, of which the restructuring had been completed a few months previously. Fr Chávez met the directors and those responsible for the various sectors of the publishing house. Immediately afterwards the group visited the Piedmont Regional Headquarters.

Subsequently, with Fr Domenico Rosso as guide, they called at the Sanctuary of the Consolata, where are preserved the remains of St Joseph Cafasso, Don Bosco's spiritual director and benefactor, and visited the Church of St Francis of Assisi, where the famous meeting with Bartholomew Garelli on 8 December 1841 and the beginning of Don Bosco's work for the young took place.

Returning to Valdocco, the Rector Major and Councillors made a short visit to the offices of the 'Don Bosco Missions'.

The second day of the pilgrimage began with a visit to Don Bosco's Rooms, with the Vice-Provincial (Fr Venanzio Nazer) as guide. He explained the steps that had been taken in the process of restructuring in order to make a visit to the rooms both functional and inspiring. At the end of the visit the Rector Major and Councillors concelebrated the Eucharist with the Valdocco community in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

In the afternoon the group went to the "Andrew Beltrami" House, where sick confreres are looked after by the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts and by two Salesians. Fr Chávez thanked the confreres, expressed his condolences for two

confreres who had recently died, and encouraged the sick – despite their suffering and ailments – to persevere in the enthusiasm of "Da mihi animas" which is our spirituality for the salvation of the young.

Immediately afterwards the group went on to Valsalice to visit the community working in that historic salesian house. After visiting the various parts of the work and the museum of natural sciences they celebrated Vespers with the community in the chapel, which has so many memories of the first Salesians. The evening ended with supper and Fr Chávez's "Good Night".

Sunday, 14 July. The group moved to Castelnuovo Don Bosco, where *honorary citizenship* was conferred on the Rector Major. In his speech the Mayor not only welcomed the group and the illustrious visitors and citizens of Castelnuovo, but also recalled that it was from there that Don Bosco's great adventure began; there his dream slowly changed to reality; there the Christian credo became linked with the concrete reality of a project co-involving young people and the Catholic Church of the nineteenth century in a message of solidarity and formation which is still relevant at the present day,

and indeed is still developing. This was followed by the formal act of handing over the parchment conferring citizenship. After some of the other guests had spoken, Fr Chávez wound up the proceedings by thanking the people of Castelnuovo for having given Don Bosco to the Church, to Italian society, and to the whole world. He expressed the hope that the town would continue to be a living sign of concern for the education of the young and of the communication of genuine values.

With the civic ceremony completed, all moved to the parish church of St Andrew the Apostle, where Fr Chávez presided at a Eucharistic celebration, after which the group moved on to Colle Don Bosco for lunch with the community.

Another significant item in the day's events was the visit to the small "Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians". The Rector of Colle (Fr Enzo Baccini) asked the Rector Major to bless the Chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary, recently reopened after restoration.

After taking leave of the Colle community, the pilgrimage continued towards another significant objective - Chieri, where the group visited the Cathedral, the Church of St Philip, the Vergnano

house (Cafè Pianta) where Mr Pianta employed the young John as an errand boy, and finally the present youth centre.

The last day of the pilgrimage began with Mass in Don Bosco's rooms, with the Rector Major presiding. In his introduction he referred to the final stage - Viarigi and Mornese - which would complete the pilgrimage; he invited all to pray for the holiness of each member of the group, and for that of the entire Salesian Family.

On their arrival at Viarigi, the Rector Major and Council members were accompanied to the Church of St Agatha where the parish priest, the Mayor and some of the Town Council were waiting to welcome them. The parish priest recalled the time spent there by Fr Luigi Variara, and mentioned also the visit made by Don Bosco to their church. He expressed his gratitude for the great gift to the parish and the neighbourhood of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts. During a brief official ceremony in the Town Hall the Mayor too thanked the Rector Major for his visit and spoke of the great role played by the Sisters for the benefit of the local area. Further brief visits followed to the birthplace of Blessed Luigi Variara and to the community of the Sis-

ters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

The pilgrim group then went on to Mornese, where the address of welcome to the Rector Major was given by Mother Marinella Castagno. They had lunch at the "Mazzarelli" Centre of Spirituality and the place so full of significant memories for the FMA. After some group photographs and a further greeting to the Sisters, the group returned to Rome.

Tuesday, 16 July. After the morning meeting of the Council, Fr Chávez went with the Vicar General to the Vatican, where they were received in audience by Mgr. Leonardo Sandri, of the Department of General Affairs in the Secretariat of State.

After the plenary session of the Council, the Rector Major remained at the Generalate for several days, receiving and speaking with several confreres. On 22 July he went to Tivoli to the Salesian Oblates to commemorate with them the 30th anniversary of the death of Mgr. Joseph Cognata.

25 July. Fr Chávez left for **France**, where he remained until 10 August. This enabled him to visit the French communities and get to know something of the situation of salesian work in that country, and also to practise the

language. On his arrival in Paris he was received by the Rector of the Provincial House who had arranged a supper to which all the SDBs and FMAs of the area had been invited. In the concluding "Good Night" Fr Chávez expressed his gratitude for the fraternal reception and recalled the great esteem Don Bosco had always had for the French from the time of his first visit to that country.

On the day after his arrival he visited the St John Bosco Church in Paris, the social communication centre and the Provincial House of the FMA, and in the afternoon Notre Dame and the Sacred Heart Church at Monmartre.

On the Saturday morning he visited Montparnasse, with the Provincial and Provincial Economist as guides. In the afternoon he went on to Mulhouse, in Alsace, where he was met by the Vice-provincial who took him to the house of Landser.

Sunday, 28 July. Fr Chávez concelebrated the Eucharist and made a rapid visit to the school; in the afternoon he crossed into Switzerland for a short time and visited some Marian sanctuaries.

The following week he spent studying French with occasional visits to some interesting sites and

communities of the neighbourhood. Among the latter were that of the FMA and that of the Salesians at Strasbourg, where he met the salesian parish priest of Sainte Odile, the Auxiliary Bishop and a group of committed lay people. After lunch at the salesian house he visited the Cathedral, one of the showpieces of Alsace, and also the monastery of St. Odile on the way back to Landser.

August 2002

On Thursday, 1 August, the sad news reached Landser of the death in a road accident in Venezuela of the Mother General of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Fr Chávez joined in prayer with the Sisters, for whom it was a sad loss in the year of grace they were celebrating following the beatification of their Founder, Fr Luigi Variara.

After Mass and breakfast the Rector Major travelled to Furtwangen in Germany to greet the members of that community of the Munich Province. The Munich Provincial, two members of the Provincial Council and the Provincial of Austria had a meeting with him.

On the following day he visited the community of Mullhouse, which has care of the St John Bosco Parish.

After a week spent in Alsace, Fr Chávez returned to Paris, and on Saturday 3 August left for Caen in Normandy, where the French Provincial was awaiting him in the small "Lemonnier" community which joyfully celebrated the Rector Major's arrival. After supper Fr Chávez visited the Ouistreham community, which has the responsibility for the local parish.

Sunday, 4 August. Accompanied by the Provincial and local Rector, and by the Regional, Fr Chávez went to the parish of Trevières to join in a Eucharistic celebration with the salesian Bishop Pierre Pican on the occasion of the local patronal feast and also the twinning of the parish with a parish in Germany, which had sent its representatives for the feast. The Bishop invited the guests to lunch at his residence with some members of his family. In the afternoon the Bishop took the Rector Major to visit the Carmelite monastery of Lisieux, where Sr Teresa of the Child Jesus had lived, and where she died.

At supper in the Lemonnier Institute the confreres of the various communities of the Caen area had

gathered with Bishop Pican to celebrate the Rector Major's visit.

5 August. Fr Chávez toured the various sections of the Lemonnier Institute, which forms a very large scholastic centre with more than 1,600 pupils – 300 of them boarders – and enjoys great esteem in that part of France. He then went on to visit two communities which take care of 18 aging or sick confreres at Grentheville and Caen-Saint Francis de Salres. After lunch he took the opportunity to see the beaches where the Allies landed in the second world-war.

The Rector Major's next port of call, with the Provincial and Regional, was the community of Giel, where he was awaited by the members of that community and also by the confreres working in the neighbouring parishes entrusted to the Salesians.

After a fraternal supper, Fr Chávez said how grateful he was for the welcome he had received in all the communities of France, and for the effort made through the years by the French confreres to reflect and study more deeply and publish writings on Don Bosco's System of Education. He encouraged everyone to go ahead in finding pathways for the future in creativity and fidelity to the charism.

6 August. Fr Chávez presided at the Eucharist on the Feast of the Transfiguration. Later in the morning he toured the various sections of the school of Giel, which includes a pre-university course, a centre for professional training in industry and agriculture, and a boarding section. The school is situated in the countryside and has 720 pupils, of whom 530 are boarders. The Rector Major went on to visit the different local parishes for which the confreres have pastoral responsibility.

After lunch and on his way to Brittany Fr Chávez visited "Mont Saint Michel". He reached the school of Coat an Doc'h in time for supper, and was given a hearty welcome by the two communities: one consisting of the sick and elderly confreres, and the other of those engaged in pastoral work in the school and in neighbouring parishes. He thanked and encouraged them all, and asked them to pray especially for the Congregation and for an increase in vocations in Europe and in particular in France.

7 August. After lunch the Provincial, who was born in Brittany and knows the area well, took the Rector Major on a tour beginning with the Basilica of Guingan, where Don Rua once cel-

ebred Mass and had a meeting with the already numerous benefactors of the Salesians. They continued with a visit to the "enclos" or "calvaires", powerful reminders in stone of the mystery of the cross and the history of our salvation. Towards evening the Provincial invited the Rector Major to have supper with his brother's family.

8 August. Fr Chávez presided at the Mass and installed Fr René Aubry as the new Rector of the Don Bosco Community of Coat an Doc'h. Afterwards he gave an interview to three journalists of the area, before making a tour of the various places of culture animated by the Salesians, including the parish of Notre-Dame de Châteaudren, of which the Rector of the community is also parish priest.

After lunch, at which collaborators of the parish and school were present, and a brief visit to the chapel of "Notre Dame-du-Tertre", the Rector Major moved on to the salesian house of Pouillé, arriving in time for supper. After the meal he conversed for over an hour with the confreres. most of them elderly, who told him something of the story of their own lives and vocations. Fr Chávez recounted something of his own

story in return, and urged them to thank God for their salesian vocation, and to make it fruitful throughout their lives.

9 August. He visited the private High School and was shown round the great educative complex by the Headmaster, a layman. The school offers general education and also specialized courses in the technology of agriculture and horticulture. At the Mass in commemoration of St Edith Stein at which the Rector Major presided, were present various members of the Salesian Family, representatives of the school, the Episcopal Vicar for the area, the parish priest and many friends of Don Bosco.

Before returning to Paris the Rector Major made a stop at "Chateau d'Angers" and visited a confrere in hospital.

At Paris there was a farewell supper with the confreres of the community and several other Salesians who were in Paris for the purpose of learning French or perfecting their knowledge of the language. The Provincial thanked the Rector Major for his two-week stay with the French confreres. Fr Chávez in turn expressed his own thanks for the experience which, in addition to a study of the language, had given him the

opportunity to acquire a better knowledge of the rich history of the Salesians in France and the contribution they have made to the Congregation, and the extent and quality of their salesian educative work. He urged them all to remain united in prayer and in the love of Don Bosco, always ready to be of service to the young and the poor through communities which were always relevant.

Returning to Rome, the Rector Major took up his usual work once again.

14 August. He went to the FMA international novitiate at Castelfandolfo, to visit the Sisters engaged in the first month of their "second novitiate".

16 August. He visited the community of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary at the UPS to sympathize with them in the great loss they had suffered in the sudden and untimely death of their Superior General, Sr. Rosa Inés Baldión.

Sunday, 25 August. Fr Chávez was at the salesian novitiate of Genzano to meet the novices preparing for their first profession. He chatted with them, celebrated the Eucharist and had lunch with the community.

Friday, 30 August. He gave the

"Good Night" to the confreres of the Roman Province, gathered at the "Salesianum" for their provincial assembly.

31 August. He ended the month with two meetings: shortly before midday with a group of young Salesians preparing to make their perpetual profession, and in the evening with the international community of the FMA at the "Auxilium".

All this time the Rector Major had carried out his ordinary work at headquarters, receiving confreres, bishops and members of the Salesian Family.

4.2 Chronicle of the General Council

The first meeting of the General Council elected by the GC25

A first meeting of the new General Council elected by the GC25 took place on 9 April 2002, during the Chapter. The Rector Major, Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva greeted everyone and among other things expressed the hope that they would form not only an efficient working team but a real community, precisely according to the recommendations of the GC25.

In addition to attending to several ordinary business matters the meeting was dedicated to considering a proposal regarding a plan of work, both for the period immediately following the Chapter and for the full summer session, planned for the following June-July.

Plenary session immediately following the GC25

According to the programme proposed, between 23 April and 5 May a first plenary session of the General Council was held under the Presidency of the Rector Major, with ten meetings in all, in which, - in addition to the examination of several issues sent in from the Provinces, - the principal item was the **appointment of several Provincials**, the consultations for which had been carried out prior to the Chapter, on account of the proximate expiry of their term in office.

Following the usual procedure - which includes a careful examination of the results of the consultation, a discussion in the Council, a straw vote and the final vote - the following Provincials were appointed (indicated in alphabetical order): Castro Afonso, provincial of Campo Grande, Brazil; Codina i Gil Joan, provincial of Barcelona,

Spain; Fernández Marmol Francisco, provincial of Córdoba, Spain; Gianazza Gianmaria, provincial of the Middle East; Lorenzelli Alberto, provincial of the Ligure-Toscana province; Migliasso Pietro, provincial of the Circumscription of Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta; Moral Lamela Luis Manuel, provincial of Madrid, Spain; Reyes Johnny, provincial of Venezuela; Teixeira José Valmor César, provincial of Porto Alegre, Brazil. Fr Gianantonio Bonato was also appointed provincial of the Veneta Ovest province, for the year 2002-2003.

Among other business there was the setting up of the Provincial Conference for Africa-Madagascar.

The summer plenary session

The summer "plenary session" of the General Council took place between 4 June and 19 July 2002. This was a demanding session with 27 plenary meetings in addition to the time devoted to meetings of groups or commissions.

The Rector Major introducing the work, indicating its importance, since it was the session intended particularly to lay down the first outlines of the programming of the Rector Major and his Council for the six year period. Added to this the principal topic,

there were other demanding tasks of government including further appointments of provincials, other appointments and tasks regarding central government, together with the carrying out of the so-called "ordinary administration" with issues concerning provinces - the appointment of provincial councillors and rectors, the opening and canonical erection or the closure of houses and/or activities, procedures regarding confreres, and economic or administrative business.

There follows a short summary of the main issues dealt with.

1. *Appointment of provincials.*

As was mentioned above, an important task of the Council, also in this session, was the appointment of several provincials, in particular those called to take the place of the General Councillors elected in the GC25. Consultations for these took place in May. The procedure for the appointments was the same as that mentioned above. The provincials appointed during this session were the following (in alphabetical order): Berger John, provincial of Kolkata, India; Hwang Paul, provincial of Seoul, South Korea; Nicolussi Giuseppe, superior of the Vice Province of

the U.P.S.; Sánchez Francisco, provincial of Ecuador; Zancanella Ovidio, provincial of Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

2. *The nomination of the Secretary General and of the Procurator General.*

During this session, after careful consideration, the Rector Major with his Council, on 12 June 2002 appointed as the new *Secretary General* **Fr. Marian Stempel**, in conformity with art. 144 of the Constitutions.

The previous day 11 June 2002, he appointed **Fr. Francesco Maraccani** as *Procurator General*, who according to Const. 145 – will deal with matters involving the Apostolic See, in particular juridical issues, and when necessary he will also act as the *official spokesman* of the Rector Major.

The new Secretary General, Fr. Marian Stempel, began to take part in the meetings of the Council on 2 July, although Fr. Francesco Maraccani was also present until the end of the session.

3. *Drawing up the first outlines of the programming.*

The main important task that the Rector Major gave the Coun-

cillors during this session and which took up most of the time (with plenary meetings and group sessions) was that of drawing up the first basic outlines of the programming of the six year period. The work was carried out in two stages or at two levels (that follow from each other and have some things in common). The two stages were concerned with:

- 3.1. Aspects of programming in common, identifying priorities for animation.
- 3.2. Aspects of programming of the sectors and the regions.

We briefly mention some aspects of the two stages

3.1. *The priorities for animation.*

The first stage consisted in a period of work by the Councillors, first divided into study groups and then meeting together. Starting from the state of the Congregation (on the basis of the assessment of the previous six year period and as it was presented in the Report of the Vicar of the Rector Major at the GC25), and taking into account the suggestions of the 25th General Chapter (contained in the chapter document and in the closing address of the Rector Major), the Council was able to identify

four **general** priorities for the animation of the Congregation, that provided the main guidelines for the programming of the Rector Major and his Council. These should permeate the particular programming of each of the sectors and of each region. The four general priorities are the following:

1. Primacy of the spiritual life in the community.
2. Witness of communion and brotherhood in the community.
3. Giving fresh significance to the salesian presence among the young.
4. Formation: a personal and communitary commitment.

For each of the four priorities, general objectives, strategies and things to be done at the level of the General Council were identified.

3.2 *Aspects of the programming for the individual sectors and regions.*

For each sector of activity (formation, youth pastoral ministry, salesian family, social communication, missions, economy), and also for each of the "regions" set up by the General Chapter some lines of programming were identified. Starting from what is already

known and from the state of the sector or region, in general terms and in reference to the general priorities mentioned above, certain areas were identified: those considered priorities for the work of animation, the strategies to be employed and some things that are seen to be important and need to be done.

The study and the drawing up of these lines of programming for the sectors and for the regions were carried out in a coordinated manner, in such a way that the sectors might always be aware of the concrete situation of the regions, and in the same way the regions should take account of the different areas of animation.

The lines of the programming that were drawn up, especially those that regard the sectors and the regions, will continue to be the subject of discussion within the sectors and the regions themselves, so that in the next winter plenary session they may be definitively approved.

4. *Other topics regarding the government of the Congregation*

Among other topics regarding the government and animation of

the Congregation the following may be mentioned in particular:

4.1. *The consolidated account of the General Headquarters*, at 31 December 2001, which was examined and approved, as required by the General Regulations.

4.2. Consideration of the *IUS – (Istituzioni Universitarie Salesiane)*.

Starting from the work done during the previous six year period – with the contribution of the Delegate of the Rector Major – and from the results of the III World Congress of the IUS, the General Council examined two important documents regarding these institutions and our salesian responsibility for them:

1. The identity of the IUS.
2. The general situation and the policy of the Salesian Congregation regarding Institutions of Higher Education.

The documents, after having been examined and commented on by the General Council, and after further work on them by the Councillor for Youth Pastoral Ministry and the Delegate for the IUS, were forwarded to the various Salesian Institutes of Higher Education for them to express their

opinions so that they might be approved in the next plenary session of the Council.

4.3. The General Council also considered some requests for the restructuring of some provinces (in Europe and in Asia), and indicated the steps to be followed for a more detailed study and for any subsequent decisions to be taken in the matter.

5. *The pilgrimage to the places of our salesian origins.*

A particularly significant occasion during the session was the **pilgrimage to the places of our salesian origins**, that the Rector Major and the Council had

wished to make to obtain light and strength for the six year period from personal contact with the places where our charism was born and developed.

The itinerary and the course of the pilgrimage between 12 and 15 July which included Turin, Castelnovo and Colle Don Bosco, Viarigi and Mornese, can be read about in the chronicle of the Rector Major (n. 4.1).

Finally, mention should be made of *the meeting between the two General Councils SDB-FMA* which took place at Castegandolfo, in the FMA house of S. Rosa in the afternoon of 28 June. The particular topic for the meeting was a sharing of the experience of the recent GC25.

5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

5.1 Strenna of the Rector Major for the year 2003.

The following is the text of the Strenna of the Rector Major for the year 2003. It is clearly inspired by the theme of the 25th General Chapter and the programme proposed by the Holy Father in "Novo Millennio Ineunte" as the fruit of the jubilee and a task for the third millennium. The Strenna, which is offered to the Salesian Family, encourages every community and every family to build "the home and the school of communion".

The text of the Strenna runs as follows:

**LET US MAKE EVERY FAMILY
AND EVERY COMMUNITY
"THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL
OF COMMUNION"** (NMI, 43)

5.2 Address of the Rector Major to Card. Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga on the occasion of the conferring of the Doctorate "Honoris Causa".

The following is the text of the address that the Rector Major Fr. Pascual Chávez gave to Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga during the academic function at the U.P.S., on 16 May 2002, on the occasion of the conferring of

the Doctorate "Honoris Causa" in Educational Sciences.

I am pleased that my first duty at the UPS, in my position as Grand Chancellor of the University, coincides with the conferring of the Doctorate *Honoris Causa* on Card. Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, a friend for whom I have great esteem and admiration.

Listening to his *curriculum vitae* and to the *laudatio*, which warmly support the conferring of the doctorate, one can clearly recognize and appreciate his pastoral and social activities and his contributions in the field of education and human development for the recovery of human dignity, especially of the poorest and the excluded, and for the growth of social consciousness in the countries of Latin America.

Cardinal Oscar Rodríguez has always been outstanding for the breadth of his culture, for his notable human qualities, for his social sensitivity, for his salesian identity, for his love for the Church and for the poor, which have made him a good shepherd. He recalls to mind the exceptional figure of Cardinal Klemens August von Galen, "the Lion of Munster", whose pastoral motto was "*Nec laudibus nec timore*". In very different circumstances and conditions Card. Os-

car has not sought praise nor has he been afraid. The motto was a programme of life for a good shepherd, who is always tempted by the desire to succeed, to be acceptable to everyone, as the perfect diplomat, but not to speak the truth. In a word, looking for popularity and giving way to cowardice. Or else, paralyzed with fear, not daring to do anything, afraid of making mistakes, keeping quiet when an outspoken word was needed, so as not to compromise his image.

In the name of the Salesian Congregation and also and particularly in the name of the whole of Latin America, I feel the duty of acknowledging in Cardinal Oscar the work that the Church and the Salesian Congregation are continuing to carry out for the benefit of children and young people, as well as the poor people of Latin America, through education, evangelization and human development, trying to create a new culture inspired by Christian values.

5.3 Address of the Rector Major at the installation of the new Superior of the Vice Province of the U.P.S.

The following is the text of the talk given by the Rector Major at

the function on the occasion of the installation of Fr Giuseppe Nicolussi as the Superior of the Vice Province of the UPS "Mary Seat of Wisdom" on 19 June 2002. In his contribution the Rector Major emphasised on the one hand the service rendered by the University and by the Vice Province to the Congregation and to the Church, and on the other the service of authority for the handing on of the charism and for the life of the community, also in the light of the GC25.

We are gathered together in the Paul VI Hall of the University for the installation of Fr Giuseppe Nicolussi as the Superior of the Vice Province. Clearly it is an occasion to be lived in faith, not only because it takes place during evening prayer, but because it finds its rightful place in the context of a situation characteristic of the consecrated life; that is, it forms part of the faith journey of this religious community and of the alternation in the carrying out of the service of authority.

I now take this opportunity to thank, on my own behalf and on that of the General Council, Fr Francesco Cereda, who during the last three years has presided over this provincial community until the time of his election as the Gen-

eral Councillor for Formation; and I also thank the Economist of the Vice Province Fr Carlo Giacomuzzi, who concludes his mandate, for his praiseworthy and generous service. In addition I should like to offer best wishes and thanks to Fr Alexandre Damiens who assumes, in addition to the role of Economist of the University, the office of Economist of the Vice Province.

1. *Discernment for the appointment of the Superior*

With the appointment and the installation of the new Superior of the Vice Province, we conclude the discernment process which I inaugurated with the consultations. I thank all of you, permanent members and student confreres, for your participation and for the different contributions you have made to the process.

The consultation helped us to be aware of the positive and negative aspects of the progress of the Vice Province in these recent years, as you perceived them. You have also indicated some priorities for the future and some expectations regarding the Superior.

Reflection in the General Council led us to a decision that to us seemed the best. Sometimes it

happens that a choice does not correspond with everyone's expectations; this is understandable. Since we are dealing with a consultation, the ultimate responsibility for the decision rests with the Rector Major with his Council.

At this point, so important also for me at the beginning of my service to the Congregation, I want to tell you of my readiness to become familiar with situations, to become aware of the problems of the Vice Province and of the University, and at the same time I want to assure you that I am determined to commit myself seriously to the process of seeking solutions.

2. *Significance of the Vice Province of the UPS*

The Congregation, urged on by its commitment to culture that forms an integral part of the salesian vocation itself, has established and fostered this University to put it at the service of the charism, that is at the service of salesian spirituality and of the salesian mission. It is precisely from this that its identity as a University among other Pontifical Universities derives.

Knowledge is important and should be carefully cultivated, also as an expression of our compe-

tence, of our responsibility and of our professional approach; but in our case it is always directed towards serving the charism.

I feel it my duty to thank the confreres who as salesians are working in the University, for the precious service they render to the Congregation and to the Church, especially for the service that they give with regard to the charism, starting from their own daily lives, giving witness through it to what they teach in the lecture hall. I thank you for your work, so important for research and for the training of teachers and formation personnel.

I don't think that there is in the Congregation any "work" that can be identified as a provincial community other than the Vice Province of the UPS, "set up with the purpose of implementing the mission of the Congregation through the Salesian Pontifical University". The University gives greater significance to the Vice Province because «the UPS is formation, not only in the academic sense as one of the four characteristics of a University – research, teaching/learning, formation, service to society –, but rather as formation organized as an integral aspect, with the scope of preparing teams of formation personnel for Salesians».

Ever since the SGC, the Congregation has wanted to have a real "university". «This decision - Fr Viganò said – implies not only accepting willingly certain forms of structure proper to every university, but also entering into the responsibilities and living evolution of the university world, that is more dynamic and more demanding than any statute, with the profound need for change that is required in such a setting by the history of man, the life of the Church and the vocation of the Congregation».¹

And on another occasion he added: «The Congregation is looking at you and expects much from you. I would say more: *the Congregation needs you*., needs the University».² If this University did not exist in the Congregation it would be necessary to found it; if it had not been renewed it would be necessary to re-found it!

«You are, in some ways, indispensable: not individually, but as a community structure for study and for reflection, so that from within the Congregation you can throw light on so many needs of the salesian mission in the service

¹ VIGANÒ E., "Lettera a don Luigi Ricceri", in *"Don Egidio Viganò all'Università Salesiana"*, UPS-Roma 1996, pag. 25

² VIGANÒ E., "Conversazione con i Salesiani della Visitatoria dell'UPS", o.c. pag. 137

of the young and of the people. You have space and freedom of action; you have been given a precise task; it has been given you with confidence; you have received it as an obedience».³

«You are the ones most specialized among us in the salesian university mission; carry out your salesian vocation for a further improvement of the UPS».⁴

This is why the effort to create a real community, in harmony with the theme of the CG25 is so important. To you is entrusted the task of building the Salesian Community, so that it might become the animating force of the University Community. This is why the occasion we are celebrating is so important.

You are living a providential moment: the beginning of a new millennium, the profound processes of change especially in Europe, a General Chapter that has made very clear choices.

You know that carrying out your tasks well you can really become saints! Find inspiration in turning to the great saints of the intellect: growing in a deeper knowledge of the Truth will make you grow in love, will make you credible wit-

nesses of God, will make you real transmitters of the faith and educators of educators. The University asks from you the cultivation of a genuine spirituality.

Here is a cultural, ecclesial and charismatic challenge!

And you too, student confreres, you are following your path together in this Vice Province, you form part of our University, you are living this same challenge of a genuine spirituality. In this way you are preparing yourselves to take up responsibilities in your Provinces with the salesian competence and experience that you have acquired and integrated here.

3. Authority at the service of the "traditio"

The image of the Good Shepherd, the person of Don Bosco and the choices made by the GC25 help us to appreciate more deeply what we are celebrating.

In fact, while to the eyes of the world authority is a privilege, a sign of power and of promotion, to the extent of becoming a "form of being" as Ortega and Gasset would say -, in the Church, and within her in the Congregation, authority is a service, a ministry «for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the

³ Ibid, pag. 138

⁴ Ibid, pag. 138

faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ » (*Eph.* 4, 13).

This is the first task that is being given to Fr Giuseppe Nicolussi: that of helping each one of the confreres to grow and to mature in his spiritual life, in his choices in the religious life in his salesian identity. The principle challenge that the globalized and secularized world in which we live presents us with is precisely the loss of the relevance of the religious view, the clouding of a sense of God, as he is put on the margins of personal and social life. It is natural that in such a context we feel tempted to conform ourselves to the mentality of this world, rather than to Gospel criteria.

The Vice Province is a charismatic community, called to incarnate the salesian identity. It is the expression of the communion of the communities that make it up: it is a provincial community within the communion of the world Community. The Vice Province is – like every other Province – the experience of the Congregation in the local context. This is the reason why the Superior needs to be a man of communion, a builder of communion, a master of communion. Being the father of the family of Don Bosco in the Vice

Province of the UPS has a very high value not for what the Superior does but rather for what he represents: Christ himself among his brothers.

The installation of the Superior, in harmony with the thought of Don Bosco, speaks to us of a very important faith reality: the “*traditio*”. This implies the truth that needs to be proclaimed “in season and out of season/opportune et inopportune”, exhorting, putting straight, teaching.

Being men responsible for a “*traditio*”, which is not a dead or static thing, but something alive and dynamic, creative and prophetic as is “Don Bosco’s spirit” means communicating an experience. This is what needs to be transmitted: the experience of the incarnation of God in our life and the goodness of the salesian charism.

From this point of view, authority is a ministry at the service of the “*traditio*”, of the safekeeping and the communication of a spirit, of a Project of Life, as it is of the “truth” that makes us free.

Jesus came to the point of defining his life with the word “service” when he says: “The Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many: » (*Mk* 10, 45).

Service is a whole project of life which embraces the whole span of

life. It is not a stage in life, nor a function. It is to understand that life is not centred on personal success, on professional progress, but on the gift of oneself. "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord." » (Jn. 10, 18a), Jesus says in the Gospel speaking of the good shepherd.

Service is a school of life, it is something one has to learn. It leads us to appreciate others for what they are, for what they expect from us, not for what we want them to be. It is to welcome the rhythm and the story of those people to whom we are sent. It is simply making ours the attitude of the "good Samaritan" who sees the needs of the man who has fallen, been abandoned, trampled on at the edge of the road, feels compassion for him, approaches him, binds his wounds and takes care of him. (cf. *Lk* 10, 33-35).

To serve is to be responsible for others, overcoming the temptation and the sin of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (*Gen.* 4, 9b). It means not being unconcerned about what is happening to those who live beside us; it means feeling called to give the best of ourselves for them: "God calls us to live in community and entrusts us with brothers to love." (*Cost.* 50).

For this reason, serving means caring more about people, than

about things or structures. This in fact is the meaning of the word "ransom," something that one has to pay to free a member of one's family and restore his lost freedom.

Such a concept of authority is perfectly incarnated in the image of the Good Shepherd which rightly can be considered the best icon of who Jesus was, of what Don Bosco wanted to be for the young, of what every salesian and especially every superior ought to be for his brothers. It is my wish that this new stage in the history of the Vice Province of the UPS, under the guidance of Fr Nicolussi and with the esteem and co-responsibility of everyone, on the one hand may strengthen the community experience, and, on the other foster the spiritual, educational and professional renewal of all the confreres, so that they feel able to resist the influence of the current dominant culture. It is necessary to seek in Christ the true and perennial wisdom, not in ephemeral novelties, that are like "broken cisterns that can hold no water." (*Jer.* 2, 13).

4. The wish of the Congregation

The Congregation asks and expects from each of you an effort to harmonize on the one hand knowledge and life, and on the other the

illumination of the charism.

At this moment, we want to give to our religious life the priority it should have, and which should be translated – as the GC25 pointed out – into a renewed experience of community, which is distinguished by the quality of its fraternal life, by the clarity of its gospel witness, by the charismatic identity of its presence.

I wish Fr Nicolussi a fruitful period of service, animation and government as Superior of the Vice Province of the UPS, and for all the confreres an exciting salesian experience. Make the Vice Province “a house and a school of communion”, make the University a workshop of the salesian charism.

We confide these our desires and our commitments to the Holy Spirit, Creator and Sanctifier, and to the Virgin Mary, Help of Christians and Mother of the Church.

5.4 Prayers (collects) in honour of the three recent Beati

The following are the texts of the prayers (collects) approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship in honour of our three recent Beati. Their memorials for now optional, as is the custom on the basis of what is indicated in the acts of the Beatification, may be

celebrated respectively: 15 January, for B. Luigi Variara; 15 March, for B. Artemide Zatti; 7 July, for B. María Romero.

Here are the texts of the Collects (in Latin and English)

– For B. Luigi Variara, priest

*Deus, fons omnis bonitatis,
qui per mortem et resurrectionem
Filii tui mundum salvasti,
concede propitius ut,
per intercessionem beati Aloysii
presbiteri, passionibus Christi
per patientiam participantes,
tuae dilectionis veri testes
exhibeamur ubique. Per Dominum.*

O God, source of all goodness, who through the death and resurrection of your Son saved the world, graciously grant that, through the intercession of your priest Blessed Luigi, sharing with patience in the sufferings of Christ, we may everywhere bear witness to your love. Through Our Lord.

– For B. Artemide Zatti, religious

*Deus, qui in humilibus et parvulis
gratiae tuae magnalia mirabiliter
ostendis, te supplices exoramus ut,
beato Artemide intercedente,*

in fratribus infirmitate mentis et corporis laborantibus, vultum Christi clarius in dies intueri valeamus. Per Dominum.

O God, who in the humble and the little ones show in a wonderful way the great works of your grace, we humbly pray that through the intercession of Blessed Artemide, we may recognize in our brothers and sisters suffering in mind and body, each day ever more clearly, the face of Christ. Through Our Lord.

- For B. Maria Romero, virgin

Deus, Pater totius consolationis, qui populo tuo miserationis et gratiae documenta procuras, concede nobis ut, intercedente beata Maria, virgine, possimus et ipsi consolari eos qui in omni pressura sunt et in die iudicii inter benedictos advocari. Per Dominum.

O God, Father of all consolation, who show your people the signs of your goodness and mercy, grant to us, that through the intercession of the virgin Blessed Mary, we too may console those in any kind of trial and on the day of judgement be numbered among the blessed. Through Our Lord.

5.5 The new General Council

The 25th General Chapter in the elections held respectively on 3 April (for the Rector Major), on 5-6 April (for the Vicar and the Departmental Councillors) and on 8 April (for the Regional Councillors), elected the new General Council for the six year period 2002-2008.

We give here, for the official record, the composition of the Council:

Fr. Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA
Rector Major

Fr. Luc VAN LOOY
Vicar of the Rector Major

Fr. Francesco CEREDA
Councillor for Formation

Fr. Antoni DOMENECH
i ROMINAS
*Councillor for
Youth Pastoral Ministry*

Fr. Tarcisio SCARAMUSSA
*Councillor for
Social Communication*

Fr. Francis ALENCHERRY
Councillor for the Missions

Fr. Giovanni MAZZALI
Economer General

Fr. Helvécio BARUFFI
*Councillor for the Latin America
Region - Cono Sud*

Fr. Adriano BREGOLIN
*Councillor for the Italy
 and Middle East Region*

Fr. Joaquim D'SOUZA
*Councillor for the
 South Asia Region*

Fr. Václav KLEMENT
*Councillor for the
 East Asia - Oceania Region*

Fr. Esteban ORTIZ GONZALEZ
*Councillor for the
 Interamerica Region*

Fr. Valentín de PABLO
*Councillor for the Africa
 and Madagascar Region*

Fr. Filiberto RODRIGUEZ MARTIN
*Councillor for the
 West Europe Region*

Fr. Albert VAN HECKE
*Councillor for the
 North Europe Region*

Fr. Marian STEMPEL was appointed *Secretary of the Council* by the Rector Major with his Council, on 12 June 2002.

Some information follows regarding the Councillors who are joining the General Council for the first time.

– Fr. CEREDA Francesco,
Councillor for Formation.

Francesco Cereda was born at Veduggio con Colzano, in the

province of Milan, on 6 March 1951. After completing his studies in the salesian houses of Vendrogno and Chiari, he was admitted to the Novitiate at Missaglia, where he made his first profession on 16 August 1968.

After postnovitiate studies and practical training, he attended theology courses at the Seminary in Brescia and was ordained priest at Chiari (BS) on 24 May 1980.

He then completed his secular studies obtaining a degree in Mathematics at the University of Parma. He was then a member of the staff in the interprovincial postnovitiate of Nave (BS), until in 1987 he was appointed Rector of the salesian community in Parma. Provincial Councillor from 1990, in 1993 he was appointed Provincial of the Lombardo-Emiliana Province. When he had completed six years as Provincial in 1999, the Rector Major called him to be Superior of the Vice Province of the U.P.S.

Now the GC25 has elected him General Councillor for Formation.

– Fr. SCARAMUSSA Tarcisio,
*Councillor for
 Social Communication.*

Tarcisio Scaramussa was born on 19 September 1950 at Prosperidade, in the state of Espírito

Santo, in Brazil. A student in the salesian college of Jaciguá, his salesian vocation developed and he went to the Novitiate in Jaboaão, where he made his first profession on 31 January 1969.

Subsequently, after completing his philosophical and pedagogical studies and doing his practical training, he attended theology courses at Belo Horizonte. On 11 December 1977 he was ordained priest at Prosperidade, his home town. He obtained academic qualifications with a Licence in Philosophy and Pedagogy and another in Theology.

After ordination he was engaged in teaching and pastoral education work. In 1985 the Superiors gave him the task of being Rector of the house of Jaciguá (now Vargem Alta). In 1988 he became a member of the Provincial Council and in 1989 he was moved, as Rector, to the parish of "Cristo Luz dos Povos" at Belo Horizonte. In 1990 he was appointed Vice Provincial, a role he filled until his appointment as Provincial of Belo Horizonte, on 8 December 1996.

Now the GC25 has elected him General Councillor for Social Communication.

– *Fr. ALENCHERRY Francis,*
Councillor for Salesian Missions.

Born on 29 August 1950 at Thuruthy, Kottayam, in Kerala (India), Francis Alencherry attended the aspirantate of Bandel, where his salesian vocation matured. He then went to the Novitiate at Shillong. Here, at the end of the novitiate year he made his first salesian profession on 24 May 1969.

Having completed his philosophical and pedagogical studies and done his practical training, he studied theology in the "Kristu Jyoti College" in Bangalore. He was ordained priest at Thuruthy, his home town, on 18 December 1978. Subsequently he was in Rome where he obtained the Licence and then the Doctorate in Biblical Theology, at the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

Having returned to India he was for several years a teacher and then the Rector in the salesian theological studentate of Shillong. From 1995 he was in the "Auxilium Parish" in Kolkata (Calcutta), and on 20 December 1996 he was called by the Rector Major and his Council to become Provincial of the Salesian Province of Kolkata.

Now the GC25 has elected him General Councillor for the Missions.

– *Fr. BREGOLIN Adriano,*
Regional Councillor
for Italy-MOR.

Adriano Bregolin was born at Pegolotte-Cona (Venezia) on 16 October 1948. He attended the salesian aspirantate at Bevilacqua, and, attracted by the salesian vocation entered the Novitiate at Albarè (Verona), where he made his first profession on 16 August 1966.

Having completed his philosophical and pedagogical studies in the postnovitiate at Cison di Valmarino and done his practical training, he attended the theological course at the salesian studentate of Verona-Saval, and completed it at Trento, where he was ordained priest on 27 May 1978. He then continued his secular studies and obtained a degree in Modern Languages.

At Trento he spent the first years of his priesthood in the salesian house for vocational guidance where in 1983 he was appointed Rector. In 1986 he became a member of the Provincial Council and in 1988 he was appointed Vice Provincial, a position he held for three years. From 1988 until 1994 he was also Rector of the important house in Verona "Don Bosco". In 1990 he took part in the GC23 as the delegate for the

Province. In September 1994 he was transferred as Vice Rector to the salesian house in Padua. While there, on 22 May 1996 he received the appointment as Provincial of the "San Zeno" Province of Verona (IVO).

Now the GC25 has elected him a member of the General Council as Regional Councillor for Italy and the Middle East.

– *Fr. KLEMENT Václav,*
Regional Councillor
for East Asia – Oceania.

Václav Klement was born on 7 October 1958 at Brno, in what was then Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic), and has been a salesian since 4 September 1982, when he made his first religious profession, in the difficult times of underground activity.

Subsequently he was able to go to Italy, to Rome, where he completed his philosophical and pedagogical studies and then afterwards his theology. He was ordained a priest in Rome on 25 May 1986.

Immediately after priestly ordination, accepting a missionary call he left for Korea, where he learned the language and became fully involved in the salesian life and mission. In 1994 he was appointed Rector of the house of

Seoul - Dae Rim Dong. On 3 December 1996 the Rector Major and his Council appointed him Provincial of the "S. Korean Martyrs" Province of South Korea.

Now the GC25 has elected him a member of the General Council as Regional Councillor for East Asia - Oceania (a new group of Provinces created by the GC25 itself).

- *Fr. ORTIZ GONZÁLEZ Esteban, Regional Councillor for Interamerica.*

Esteban Antonio Ortiz González was born at Guayaquil (Ecuador) on 6 April 1946 and has been a salesian since 16 August 1964, when he made his first profession at Cayambe, where he had made his Novitiate. Having completed his philosophical and pedagogical studies and done his practical training, he attended the theology course at Quito, where he was ordained priest on 7 June 1975. He continued his studies and obtained a Licence in Pedagogy.

Rector of the house of Machala from 1982 until 1987, in 1984 he was also appointed Provincial Councillor, a role he filled until 1992. For one year (1991-92) he was responsible for youth pastoral ministry in the province, and from 1991 until 1995 responsible for the Salesian Bulletin in Ecuador.

In 1992 he was appointed Rector of the "San Domenico Savio" house in Guayaquil, a task he exercised until 1997 when - on 18 June - the Rector Major with his Council called him to guide the "Sacred Heart" Province of Ecuador.

Now the GC25 has elected him a member of the General Council as Regional Councillor for Interamerica.

- *Fr. de PABLO Valentín, Regional Councillor for Africa - Madagascar.*

Valentín de Pablo Masa was born at Castronuño (Valladolid, Spagna) on 26 April 1946 and has been a salesian since 16 August 1963, when he made his first profession in the Novitiate of Moherando. He then followed the normal formation course (philosophical studies and practical training in his province of Bilbao) and made his perpetual profession on 23 July 1969. He completed his theology course in the theologate at Salamanca, where he was ordained on 22 April 1973.

After priestly ordination he qualified - also obtaining an academic degree - in Youth Pastoral Ministry.

In 1974, accepting a missionary call he left for Mozambique where

he was engaged in pastoral work, but a few years later he had to leave Mozambique on account of a deteriorating political and social situation and returned to Spain. In Madrid he was sent to the Casa Don Bosco, then to the Pastoral Centre, and then for some years he was National Delegate for Youth Pastoral Ministry.

In 1993 he was able to return to Mozambique where he became Rector of the house in Maputo-Jardim. In 1996 he was given the task of Provincial Delegate for the Provincial Delegation of Mozambique dependent on the Province of Portugal.

He took part as an invited guest in the GC25 which elected him as Regional Councillor for Africa – Madagascar.

– *STEMPEL Marian,*
Secretary General.

Marian Stempel was born at Morag, Poland, on 23 November 1961 and has been a salesian since 21 August 1982, when he made his first profession in the Novitiate at Czerwinsk, in the Province of Warsaw (Poland). Having completed his postnovitiate studies and practical training, and renewed his vows in 1985, he was sent to Italy for theology studies which he undertook at the Salesian Pontifical

University in Rome and obtained the licence in Theology. He made his perpetual profession on 8 September 1988, at Turin, and was ordained priest at Plock, Poland, on 28 June 1989.

After priestly ordination and completing his studies he returned to Poland where he went to the Provincial house in Warsaw and was appointed Provincial Secretary (1990-1996).

In 1996 he was called to Rome, to the Generalate as the Secretary of the Regional Councillor for North Europe and at the same time translator of the Acts of the General Council in Polish. For three years he was also Vice Rector of the community. In preparation for and during the 25th General Chapter he was technical secretary working with the Moderator.

The Rector Major, with his Council appointed him Secretary of the General Council on 12 July 2002, an office he officially took up at the beginning of July.

5.6 New Provincials

The following are brief biographical notes on the new Provincials appointed by the Rector Major with his Council in the course of 2002 either in the session pre-

ceding the GC25 (under the presidency of the Vicar of the Rector Major) or in the two sessions of April-May and of June-July. They are listed in alphabetical order.

1. *BERGER John, Provincial of Calcutta (Kolkata), India.*

Fr. *John Aloysius BERGER* is the new Provincial of the Province of "St John Bosco" of *KOLKATA (CALCUTTA), India*, who succeeds Francis Alencherry, elected by GC25 General Councillor for the Missions.

John Berger was born at Hubli (India) on 11 July 1948 and has been a salesian since 24 May 1970, when he made his first profession in the Novitiate at Shillong. After philosophical studies at Sonada and practical training he made his perpetual profession on 23 May 1976. He then studied theology at "Kristu Jyoti College" in Bangalore, and was ordained priest at Calcutta on 15 December 1979.

Among the offices he filled after priestly ordination were Rector and Director of Novices in the Novitiate at Siliguri (1987-1996), and recently Vice Provincial since 1997. He was also Rector of the Provincial house, and in the last years Provincial Secretary.

He took part as Delegate in the GC25.

2. *BONATO Gianantonio, Provincial of Verona, (IVO), Italy.*

Don *Gianantonio BONATO* was appointed Provincial of the "San Zeno" Province with headquarters in Verona (IVO), for one year, since a process of unification of the two Provinces IVE and IVO is in progress and should be completed by 2003.

He was already Provincial of the West Venice Province (IVO) during 1990-1996.

He took part as Delegate in the GC25.

His *curriculum vitae* can be found in AGC 334, p. 67.

3. *de CASTRO Afonso, Provincial of Campo Grande, Brazil.*

To succeed Josef Winkler, in guiding the Province of "St. Alphonsus Maria de' Liguori" of *CAMPO GRANDE (Brazil)* Fr. *Afonso Pimenta de CASTRO* has been appointed.

Born at Nova Aurora (Goiânia, Brazil) on 26 July 1942, Afonso de Castro made his first profession on 31 January 1961 at Campo Grande, where he had made his Novitiate. He was perpetually professed on 31 January 1967, and completed his theology studies in the salesian studentate of São

Paulo and was ordained priest on 18 December 1970.

After priestly ordination he held a number of offices of responsibility: Rector in the houses of Alto Araguaia (1976-1979), of Campo-Grande-São Vicente (1979-1982), of Belo Horizonte-Parrocchia (1984-1990) and finally of Lins (from 1994 until 1997 and again from 1998). Between 1978 and 1984 he was also Provincial Councillor.

4. *COELHO Ivo Nicholas, Provincial of Bombay (Mumbai), India.*

Fr *Ivo Nicholas COELHO* is the new Provincial of "St Francis Xavier" Province of Mumbai (Bombay), India. He succeeds Fr. Tony D'Souza, who completed his term in office before the GC25 began.

Ivo Coelho was born in Bombay, India, on 15 October 1958 and has been a salesian since 24 May 1977, when he made his first profession at Yercaud, where he had spent his year of Novitiate. After studies of philosophy and practical training he made his perpetual profession on 14 May 1984, studied theology at "Kristu Jyoti College" in Bangalore and was ordained priest at Panjim on 27 December 1987.

From 1984 until 1988 he

worked in "Kristu Jyoti College" Bangalore; then for some years he was in Rome, completing his studies (obtaining a Doctorate in Philosophy); subsequently, from 1994 he taught in the postnovitiate of Nashik. Since 1997 he was Provincial Councillor.

5. *FERNANDEZ MARMOL Francisco, Provincial of CÓRDOBA, Spain.*

To succeed Felipe Acosta Rodríguez as guide of the "St Domenic Savio" Province of CÓRDOBA, Spain, has been called Fr. *Francisco FERNÁNDEZ MARMOL*.

Born at Doña Mencía (Córdoba, Spain) on 15 March 1959, Francisco Fernández Marmol made his first profession on 8 September 1978 at Sanlúcar la Mayor, where he had made his Novitiate. Perpetually professed on 15 August 1984, he completed his theological studies at Seville and was ordained priest at Córdoba on 20 May 1988.

He worked for some years in the formation community for theologians at Seville; between 1990 and 1996 he was Provincial Councillor; after a period at Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, from 1998 he was in the community of Antequera, of which he was appointed Rector in 1999.

6. *CODINA i GIOL Joan, Provincial of BARCELONA (Spain).*

To guide the "Our Lady of Ransom" Province of *BARCELONA (Spain)* Fr. *Joan CODINA i GIOL* has been appointed. He succeeds Domènec Valls i Ferrer, at the end of his term in office.

Joan Codina was born at La Cellera (Girona), Spain, on 26 September 1948. He made his Novitiate at Arbós, where he made his first profession on 16 August 1965. After philosophy studies and practical training he studied theology at Martí Codolar, Barcelona. Perpetually professed on 28 June 1972, he was ordained priest on 3 June 1978.

Among the offices held after priestly ordination are the following: Rector of the house of Ripoll (1984-1987), Parish priest and then also Rector of the house of Sant Adrià del Besós (1993-2001), Rector of Sabadell (since 2001). From 2000 he was also Provincial Councillor.

He took part as Delegate in the GC25.

7. *GIANAZZA Gianmaria, Provincial of the MIDDLE EAST.*

To succeed Fr Mario Murru as Provincial of the "Jesus Adolescent" Province based in Bethle-

hem (Middle East Province), Fr. *Gianmaria GIANAZZA* has been appointed.

Born at Cerro Maggiore (Milan, Italy) on 7 April 1943, Gianmaria Gianazza has been a salesian since 16 August 1960, when he made his first profession at the Novitiate of Chieri-Villa Moglia.

Leaving immediately for the Middle East Province, he studied philosophy (at El Houssoun, Lebanon) and did his practical training. Perpetually professed on 27 July 1966, he did his theology studies in Cremisan and was ordained priest on 20 December 1970 at Jerusalem. Pursuing his secular studies he obtained a degree in Arabic Literature.

He was given various offices of responsibility by the Superiors: Provincial Councillor (1982-1988), Rector of Nazareth (1984-1990), Provincial Economist (1990-1999) and finally, once again Rector of Nazareth (from 1999) and Provincial Councillor.

8. *HWANG Paul (Myeong Deok), Provincial of the Province of KOREA.*

Fr *Paul (Myeong Deok) HWANG* is the new Provincial of the "Holy Korean Martyrs", Province based in *SEOUL, South Korea*, called to succeed Fr. Václav Klement, elect-

ed by the GC25 Regional Councilor for East Asia - Oceania.

Paul Hwang was born at Wuan Rim, South Korea, on 1st March 1947 and became a salesian on 31 January 1968, making his first profession at Seoul, where he spent his year of Novitiate. After philosophical studies and practical training, and after compulsory military service, he made his perpetual profession on 29 June 1978. For theological studies he was sent to the studentate of Maynooth, in Ireland. He was ordained priest in on 26 September 1980.

He was Rector of the Provincial house in Seoul (Shin Weol Deong) from 1983 until 1988. He then spent a year in Rome at the UPS, where he obtained a diploma in Spirituality. Having returned to Korea, he was Rector in the two houses in Kwangju (first in the postnovitiate and then in the school). From 1990 he was Vice Provincial.

9. *LORENZELLI Alberto, Provincial of the LIGURE-TOSCANA Province*

Fr *Alberto LORENZELLI* succeeds Fr. Giorgio Colajacomo guiding the "St John the Baptist" Province with headquarters in *GENOA-Sampierdarena* (ILT).

Alberto Lorenzelli was born on 2

September 1953 in Argentina, at San Juan Matanza, of Italian parents, and has been a salesian since 24 September 1973, when he made his first profession at the Novitiate in Pinerolo (Turin). Following the normal formation course he made his perpetual profession on 15 September 1977 and was ordained priest at Genoa-Sampierdarena on 24 January 1981.

After priestly ordination, he carried out his educational and pastoral ministry for the most part in the large house of Genoa-Sampierdarena, of which from 1996 he was Rector. Since 1999 he had also been Provincial Councillor.

10. *MIGLIASSO Pietro, Provincial of the Special Circumscription of Piedmont-Valle d'Aosta.*

To guide the "Mary Help of Christians" Circumscription of Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta, with headquarters in Turin, at the conclusion of the mandate of Fr Luigi Testa, has been appointed Fr. *Pietro MIGLIASSO*.

Born at San Damiano d'Asti on 17 May 1950, Pietro Migliasso made his first salesian profession on 16 August 1967 at Missaglia (Como), where he had spent his year of Novitiate. After the normal formation course (postnovi-

tiate at Nave, followed by practical training), he did his theology studies at Turin-Crocetta. Perpetually professed on 05 September 1973, he was ordained priest on 1^o July 1978 at San Damiano d'Asti, his native place.

Having obtained a degree in pedagogy, he carried out his educative and pastoral ministry in various communities in Piedmont. Between 1997 and 2000 he was Rector of the house in Vercelli and from 2000 he was Rector of Borgomanero. From 1999 he was also Provincial Councillor.

11. *MORAL LAMELA Luis Manuel, Provincial of MADRID, Spain.*

Fr. *Luis Manuel MORAL LAMELA* is the new Provincial of the "St John Bosco" Province of *MADRID*. He succeeds Fr. Jesús Guerra Ibáñez, at the end of his term in office.

Born in Madrid on 13 October 1946, Luis Manuel Moral has been a salesian since 16 August 1964, when he made his first profession in the Novitiate of Mohernando. After philosophical studies and practical training, he made his perpetual profession on 22 July 1970 and studied theology at Salamanca, where he was ordained priest on 22 April 1973.

After priestly ordination, he carried out his ministry in the houses of Madrid-Fuencarral, Madrid-Atocha and Madrid-Provincial house. In 1988 he was appointed Provincial Councillor and in 1989 Provincial Economist, an office he held for nine years until 1998. From 1999 he was Rector of the house of Puertollano.

12. *NICOLUSSI Giuseppe, Superior of the Vice Province of the U.P.S.*

Fr. *Giuseppe NICOLUSSI* was appointed Superior of the Vice Province "Mary Seat of Wisdom" of the Salesian Pontifical University. He succeeds Fr. Francesco Cereda, elected Councillor for Formation by the GC25.

Born at Bolzano on 19 October 1938, Giuseppe Nicolussi, after having attended the aspirantate at Trento, went to the Novitiate at Albarè (Verona), where he made his first salesian profession on 16 August 1955. Responding to a missionary vocation, while still a cleric he left for Chile where he did his practical training and theological studies and was ordained priest at Santiago on 28 August 1965.

Having obtained a Doctorate in Theology at Louvain, he was a teacher and then Rector of the community of theologians in San-

tiago (1973), then Vice Provincial (1974) and Rector of the Provincial house. In 1978 he was appointed Provincial of Chile.

In 1984, at the end of the GC22 and the conclusion of his mandate as Provincial he spent some years at the Generalate as a collaborator of the Councillor for Formation. Having returned to Chile he was appointed Rector of the studentate of theology at Santiago-La Florida (1987). Taking part as Delegate at the GC23, in 1990, he was elected Councillor for Formation, an office in which he was confirmed for a second six years by the GC24.

13. *PALMANS Piet, Provincial of NORTH BELGIUM.*

Fr *Piet PALMANS* – on 15 February 2002 – was confirmed, for three years, as Provincial of the “St John Berchmans” Province with headquarters in BRUSSEL, North Belgium to which the Rector Major with his Council had called him on 24 January 1996.

His *curriculum vitae* may be found in AGC 357, p. 63.

14. *REYES Johnny, Provincial of VENEZUELA.*

Fr *Johnny REYES SEQUERA* is the new Provincial of the “St

Luke” Province with headquarters in Caracas, Venezuela, succeeding Fr. Bruno Masiero, at the end of his term of office.

Johnny Reyes, born at Caracas on 5 October 1952, made his first salesian profession on 31 August 1969 in the Novitiate of San Antonio de los Altos. After doing philosophical studies and practical training in the province he was sent to Cremisan, in the Holy Land, for theological studies. In the Holy Land he made his perpetual profession on 06 June 1976 and received the Ministries and the Order of Deacon. He was ordained priest in Caracas on 8 December 1979.

Among the offices he filled after priestly ordination were: Rector in Caracas-La Vega (1985-1994) and in Valencia-Don Bosco (1994-1999), Provincial Councillor from 1986 until 1992 and then from 1996 until 1999. In 1999 he was appointed Vice Provincial.

He took part as Delegate in the GC25.

15. *SANCHEZ CARRION Francisco, Provincial of QUITO, Ecuador.*

Fr *Francisco SÁNCHEZ CARRION* is the new Provincial of *QUITO (Ecuador)*, succeeding Fr Esteban Ortiz, elected by GC25

Regional Councillor for Inter-america.

Francisco Sánchez was born in Paltas (Loja, Ecuador) 21 April 1957 and has been a salesian since 24 January 1979, when he made his first profession at Rionegro, where he had spent the Novitiate year.

He made his perpetual profession 30-12-1984 – after the normal formation course – and was sent to Rome for the study of theology at the Salesian Pontifical University. He was ordained priest in Ecuador 19 August 1989.

Having returned to the Province he spent a year in the postnovitiate in Quito; then, between 1992 and 1997, he was Rector and Director of Novices at Cumbayá. In 1997 he was appointed Vice Provincial, an office he held until his appointment as Provincial.

16. *TEIXEIRA José Valmor Cesar, Provincial of Porto Alegre, Brazil.*

To lead the province of “St Pius X” PORTO ALEGRE (Brazil), at the conclusion of the six year mandate of Fr Marcos Sandrini, has been appointed Fr. José Valmor Cesar *TEIXEIRA*.

Born in Rio do Sul (Brazil, SC) 1^o March 1953, José Valmor Cesar Teixeira made his first salesian

profession 31-01-1971 in the Novitiate of Taquarí. Having completed his philosophical studies at Ascurra and done his practical training he made his perpetual profession 31-01-1977 and began theology. He was ordained priest 9 December 1979.

Having obtained a Licence in Philosophy and Sociology, he worked in the houses of the provinces. In 1985 he was appointed Provincial Councillor. The following year was sent to Rome to do further ecclesiastical studies and obtained a Licence in Church History.

Having returned to the province he was again appointed to the Provincial Council. In 1989 he was appointed Rector of Curitiba-Istituto; a year later he was appointed Vice Provincial, an office he held for six years (1990-1996). Between 1997 and 2000 he was again Rector of Curitiba-Istituto. From 2000 he was Rector of the complex work of Viamão (including the prenovitiate and the postnovitiate).

17. *VAN DER SLOOT André, Provincial of South BELGIUM.*

Fr. André VAN DER SLOOT is the new provincial of the “Immaculate Conception” province in

Bruxelles, South Belgium, succeeding José Jeanmart, at the end of his term of office.

André Van der Sloot was born at Etterbeek (Brabant, Belgium) 22 November 1944 and has been a salesian since 25 August 1964, when he made his first profession in the Novitiate at Farnières (Grand-Halleux). After completing the usual formation course (philosophical studies and practical training) in his own province, he made his perpetual profession 22-08-1970. For his theological studies he was sent to Lyons, in France. He was ordained priest at Liège 30 June 1973.

After priestly ordination he exercised his educative and pastoral ministry most of the time in the large salesian house in Liège, of which he was also Rector for six years (1992-1998). Between 1994 and 2000 he was Provincial Councillor.

He took part as Delegate in GC25.

18. WÖSS *Franz, Provincial of Vienna, AUSTRIA.*

Fr *Franz WÖSS* has been appointed to succeed Fr. Josef Vösl, as provincial of "The Holy Guardian Angels" of Vienna, AUSTRIA,

Born in Ulrichsberg, Austria, 29

January 1941, Franz Wöss made his first profession 15 August 1962 in the Novitiate of Oberthalheim. After philosophy studies and practical training he made his perpetual profession 27 June 1968. He studied theology at Benediktbeuern, and was ordained priest 27 June 1971. He completed his studies with a Licence in Theology and a Doctorate in Philosophy.

Since 1987 he has been parish priest in the salesian house of Wien-Stadlau, of which he has also been Rector since 1999.

19. ZANCANELLA *Ovidio Geraldo, Provincial of BELO HORIZONTE, Brazil.*

Fr *Ovidio Geraldo ZANCANELLA* is the new provincial of the province of "St John Bosco" of BELO HORIZONTE, Brazil. He succeeds Fr Tarcisio Scaramussa, elected by the GC25 the Councillor for Social Communication.

Ovidio Zancanella was born at São João da Serra (Brazil, MG) 11 September 1941 and has been a salesian since 31 January 1962, when he made his first profession in the Novitiate of Barbacena. He made his perpetual profession 13 January 1968 – after the normal course of salesian formation – and was ordained priest 27 January 1973.

After priestly ordination the Superiors gave him various responsibilities, including the following: Rector of Ponte Nova (1976-1981), of Niterói (1981-1987), of Vitória (1988-1993), of Cachoeira do Campo (1996-1997). Provincial Councillor from 1990 until 1996, he was appointed Vice Provincial in 1996, a role he filled until his appointment as Provincial. From 1998 until 2000 he was also Rector of the Provincial House of Belo Horizonte.

5.7 New Salesian Bishops

The following are brief biographical details of Salesian Bishops recently appointed by the Holy Father (one in October 2001 and four in 2002).

1. *Mgr. Ludwig SCHWARZ, Auxiliary Bishop of VIENNA (Austria).*

On 15 October 2001 the Holy Father appointed the salesian priest *Ludwig SCHWARZ* Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of VIENNA (Austria), assigning him the titular see of Simidicca.

Ludwig Schwarz, born at Bratislava (Slovakia) 4 June 1940, has been a salesian since 16 Au-

gust 1957, when he made his first profession at the Novitiate of Oberthelheim. After having completed philosophical studies and done his practical training he studied theology at Benediktbeuern (Germany). Having made his perpetual profession 27 June 1962, he was ordained priest at Benediktbeuern 29 June 1964.

From 1964 until 1971 he undertook specialist courses in philology and classical archeology at the University of Vienna and obtained his doctorate. From 1971 until 1978 he was Rector of the Interdiocesan seminary for late vocations "Canisiusheim" at Horn. In these years he was also appointed Vice Provincial and in 1978 the Rector Major gave him the task of Provincial of the salesian province of Austria. Having completed six years as Provincial of Vienna, he was called to Rome, to the U.P.S., where he held the office of Vicar of the Superior of the Vice Province and Rector of the house "San Giovanni Bosco". In 1993 he was appointed Superior of the Vice Province of the U.P.S., an office he filled for six years. While at the UPS he also taught Latin Patristics in the Faculty of Christian and Classical Literature in the University.

Returning to Austria in 1999, he was appointed National Director

of the Pontifical Missionary Society in Austria.

2. *Mgr. José SONG Sui-Wan, Bishop of São Gabriel da Cachoeira (Brazil).*

The Osservatore Romano of 24 January 2002 published the news of the appointment of the salesian priest *José SONG Sui-Wan* as Bishop of the Diocese of *SÃO GABRIEL DA CACHOEIRA*, called to succeed the Salesian Bishop Walter Ivan de Azevedo.

José Song Sui-Wan was born in Shanghai, continental China, 16 May 1941. He did his high school studies in the salesian aspirantate in Hong Kong. Moving with his family to Brazil he continued his studies in the salesian college at Lavrinhas, from where he went to the Novitiate at Pindamonhangaba, and made his first profession 31 January 1962. He pursued his philosophical studies in the studentate of Lorena, did his practical training at Lavrinhas, and then attended the course of theology at São Paulo. Having made his perpetual profession 31 January 1968, he was ordained priest at São Paulo 17 July 1971. He gained the Licence in Literature, History and Philosophy, – which he then studied in Rome at the Salesian University – and in Theology.

After ordination he was a valued teacher (of Portuguese and English) at Lavrinhas and Lorena, and was Rector of Cruzeiro (1979-1983), of Lavrinhas (1983-1988), of Campinas-San Giovanni (1992-1994) and finally from 1994, of Araras, until the present.

3. *Mgr. HERBST Karel, Auxiliary Bishop of PRAGUE (Czech Republic).*

The Holy Father has appointed as Auxiliary of the Archbishop of *PRAGUE (Czech Republic)* the salesian priest *Karel HERBST*, assigning him the titular see of Siccesi, Mauritania.

Karel Herbst was born in Prague 6 November 1943. He pursued philosophical and theological studies in the seminary of Litomerice and in the Faculty of Saints Cyril and Methodious in the same city (as far as was possible in those difficult times). Ordained priest 23 June 1973 and incardinated in the Archdiocese of Prague, he later entered the Salesian Society making his first profession 27-09-1975 and the following year (11-09-1976) his perpetual profession.

As a salesian priest he worked in several parishes, involving himself in pastoral work especially with young people and families. In 1984 he was called to be a mem-

ber of the Provincial Council. In 1990, with greater religious freedom he was able to join a community and was made rector and parish priest in Praha-Kobilisy (the parish of St. Teresina). For three year, 1997 to 2000, he was Spiritual Director of the archdiocesan Seminary of Prague. More recently he was parish priest of the salesian parish in Frsták (archdiocese of Olomouc).

4. *Mgr. Joseph Suren GOMES, Bishop of KRISHNAGAR (India).*

On 18 April 2002 the Osservatore Romano carried the news of the appointment of the salesian priest *Joseph Suren GOMES* as Bishop of *KHRISHNAGAR (India)*.

Born at Ashnabad (diocese of Dacca), India, 14 February 1944, Joseph Suren Gomes, after attending elementary school with the Salesians at Krishnagar, went to the aspirantate at Bandel (Calcutta) and from there to the Novitiate at Shillong-Sunnyside, where he made his first salesian profession 18 April 1965. He then followed the normal formation course, with philosophy studies at Sonada and practical training, followed by theological studies in the studentate of Bangalore. Having made his perpetual profession 24-

05-1971, he was ordained priest 21 December 1974.

After priestly ordination, he spent a year in Rome at the Salesian Pontifical University, studying pedagogy. Returning to India, after having worked for some years in the Bandel aspirantate, he was appointed rector at Cossipore (Calcutta) (1983-1985), then at Azimganj (1987-1993); and parish priest at Chapra (1993-1995). In 1995 he spent a year in Nepal. Afterwards he was rector at Krishnagar "Don Bosco School".

5. *Mgr. Luis Antonio SÁNCHEZ ARMIJOS, Bishop of TULCÁN (Ecuador).*

In the Osservatore Romano of 16-06-2002 the news was published of the appointment of Fr. *Luis Antonio SÁNCHEZ ARMIJOS* as Bishop of *TULCÁN*, Ecuador.

Born in Olmedo (diocese of Loja), Ecuador, 27 June 1943, Luis Antonio Sánchez made his first salesian profession 16-08-1963 at Cayambe, where he had made his Novitiate. He then did his philosophy studies at the Higher Salesian Institute in Quito and, after practical training, his theological studies at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador and also in the Catholic University in Santiago, Chile. Having made his per-

petual profession 01 September 1969, he was ordained priest in Quito 31 January 1975. Having obtained the Licence in theology he subsequently – in 1980 – obtained the Doctorate in Dogmatic Theology at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome.

Among the offices he held were the following: rector of the Postnovitiate at Quito (1981-1987 and again 1989-1991), Provincial Councillor (1986-1987), Vice Provincial (1987-1991), Provincial of Ecuador (1991-1997). After six years as provincial, and three at the Interprovincial Centre for Ongoing Formation at Quito (1997-2000), he had recently returned to the Postnovitiate in Quito as Vice Rector, Economer and teacher.

We also publish the news of the following pontifical appointments:

- Mgr. *Lucas SIRKAR*, S.D.B., formerly Coadjutor Archbishop of Calcutta (Kolkata), has been appointed residential Archbishop of the same see.
- Mgr. *Marcelo Angiolo MELANI*, S.D.B., formerly Bishop of Viedma (Argentina), has been transferred to the see of NEUQUÉN (Argentina).
- Mgr. *Jean-Pierre TAFUNGA*, S.D.B., formerly Bishop of Kilwa-Kasenga, has been transferred to the see of UVIRA (Democratic Republic of the Congo).
- Mgr. *Friedrich HEIMLER*, S.D.B., formerly Bishop of Umuarama (Brazil, PR), has been transferred to the see of CRUZ ALTA (Brazil, RS).
- Mgr. *Charles MAUNG BO*, S.D.B., Bishop of Patheingyi (Myanmar), has been appointed Apostolic Administrator “sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis” of MANDALAY (Myanmar).

5.8 Our dead confreres (2001 4th list and 2002 1st list)

"Faith in the risen Christ sustains our hope and keeps alive our communion with our brothers who rest in Christ's peace. They have spent their lives in the Congregation, and not a few have suffered even to the point of martyrdom for the love of the Lord... Their remembrance is an incentive to continue faithfully in our mission." (*Cost.* 94).

2001 – 4th list

NOTE: Since the AGC were not published in January 2002, the 4th list of the dead for 2001 is provided here.

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
L ANDRES John	Stony Point, NY	04-12-2001	65	SUE
P ARRIBA SANCHEZ Pedro de	Sevilla	18-12-2001	77	SSE
L AUDERO Mario	Blue Gate, Stony Point, NY	30-12-2001	76	SUE
P BARATTO Giovanni	Negrar (Verona)	02-10-2001	89	IVO
P BELICZAY János	Satu Mare (Romania)	19-11-2001	89	UNG
P BENSO Giovanni	Torino	31-12-2001	81	ICP
P BOMBARA Aldo	Torino	19-11-2001	87	ICP
P BOUBA Gerard	Kortrijk	12-05-2001	88	BEN
P CALLEJA ANTOLÍN Cecilio	Arévalo (Ávila)	26-10-2001	88	SMA
P CANTÙ Enrico	Arese (MI)	03-04-2001	88	ILE
P CECCHITELLI Domenico	Civitanova Marche Alta	09-11-2001	89	IAD
P COMPÈRE Henri	Saint Dizier	12-10-2001	78	FRA
P CORAL Umberto	Negrar (Verona)	06-10-2001	85	IVO
P COSTA Newton Luiz	Belo Horizonte	07-06-2001	74	BBH
P DAJAO Firmo Chito	Cebu City	04-02-2001	47	FIS
P FARAON Giorgio	Los Teques	09-11-2001	59	VEN
L FRIGO Stefano	Fara Vicentino (VI)	27-10-2001	78	ICP
P GABRYEL Marian	Kraków	01-12-2001	81	PLS
P GIANOLA Pietro	Roma	09-12-2001	78	UPS
P GIANOLI Primo	Milano	02-10-2001	88	ILE
P GRIGGIO Antonio	Negrar (Verona)	27-12-2001	84	IVO
P GUZMAN LEAL Roberto	México	11-06-2001	83	MEM
P HERNÁNDEZ RUIZ Rafael E.	Caracas	21-10-2001	73	VEN
P HRYNYSZYN Vladimir	Roma	30-12-2001	78	IRO
P IRIMIA Edelmiro	Mendoza	19-12-2001	82	ACO
P JURAS Marian	Rumia	21-09-2001	68	PLN
P KOCHANIEK Kazimierz	Kietrz	29-12-2001	68	PLO
P KUDLA Teodor	Messina	24-11-2001	82	ISI
P LARIO Manuel Tomás	La Plata	05-10-2001	87	ALP

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
L LARKINS John Edward	Port Pirie	26-10-2001	55	AUL
P LAURENT Maurice	Caen	03-10-2001	89	FRA
P LAUTERWASSER Gustav	Neunkirchen	01-01-2001	89	GEK
P LE COCQ Eugène	Caen	27-10-2001	88	FRA
P LORENZINI Giacomo	Torino	29-10-2001	92	ICP
P LOUIS (MONICHI) Angelo Joseph	Bronx, NY	16-09-2001	85	SUE
P LUPO Tiburzio	Torino-Valdocco	06-10-2001	100	ICP
<i>Fu per 12 anni Segretario del Consiglio Superiore</i>				
P MARIN Mario	Formia (LT)	26-12-2001	89	IRO
P MASKOLAITIS Pedro	Macas	17-06-2001	93	ECU
P McCAMBRIDGE Patrick	Liverpool	18-11-2001	69	GBR
P McKEAN John	Bolton	16-10-2001	89	GBR
P MEREU Giovanni (Pinna)	Lanusei (NU)	20-12-2001	85	ISA
S MOLINA PARRAGA Victoriano	Sucré	26-11-2001	30	BOL
L MONACA Carmelo	San Benigno Canavese	12-12-2001	78	ICP
L MONTECCHIO Arnaldo	Torino	27-11-2001	89	ICP
P MURPHY John	Bronx, New York	23-10-2001	87	SUE
P MURRAY Thaddeus	Engadine	25-11-2001	77	AUL
P NIEBLA Juan	Sevilla	23-12-2001	88	SSE
P ODDENINO Pietro	Torino	18-11-2001	84	ICP
P OLIVIERO Antimo	Caserta	08-12-2001	77	IME
P OLIVINI Pietro	Torino	31-12-2001	89	ICP
P ORAZEM Franc	Trstenik	07-12-2001	90	SLO
P PEPLIŃSKI Tadeusz	Czaplinek	23-09-2001	44	PLN
L POVELATO Vitorio	Schio (VI)	25-11-2001	84	IVO
P PRADUROUGH Emilio	Gerusalemme	12-10-2001	81	MOR
L QUINTERO IGLESIAS José	Lugo	06-12-2001	92	SLE
P RECLUTA Aldo	Castelfranco Veneto (TV)	12-12-2001	86	IVE
L REZZARO Igino	Varazze (SV)	16-12-2001	80	RMG
P RIGGI Giuseppe	Messina	03-12-2001	75	ISI
L ROCCHI Giovanni	Cuiabá	29-09-2001	68	BCG
P ROTA Vincenzo	Chieri (TO)	15-10-2001	85	ICP
P SANIT Lulitanon Andrea	Banpong	17-11-2001	84	THA
P SANTIUSTE ARCE Maximiano	Santander	30-12-2001	70	SBI
P SCHIAVARELLI Giuseppe	Taranto	30-12-2001	90	IME
P SLANINKA Jan	Gerusalemme	19-11-2001	84	MOR
P THOMAS Valéry	Hardinghen	22-12-2001	87	FRA
P TOPPO Benjamin	Kohima	18-06-2001	53	IND
P URBAN Feliks	Lubin	20-11-2001	63	PLO
P VEIGA Raúl	San Isidro (Bs. As.)	10-12-2001	78	ABA
L WILLIATTE Pierre	Grentheville	16-12-2001	92	FRA
P WOLEK Tadeusz	Bystra	02-12-2001	68	PLS

2002 – 1st list

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P ABAD BUSTAMANTE Fernando	Caracas	30-06-2002	75	VEN
P ADAMSKI Tadeusz	Poznań	12-04-2002	82	PLO
E ALAGNA FODERÀ Michele	Marsala (TP)	10-01-2002	88	–
<i>Eletto Vescovo nel 1967, fu per 14 anni Vicario Apostolico di Rionegro (Amazzonia, Brasile) e per 7 anni Vescovo di São Gabriel da Cachoeira (Amazzonia, Brasile)</i>				
P ALESSANDRINI Gabriele	Viterbo	16-07-2002	77	ILT
P ANGELUCCI Cesare	Roma	26-02-2002	80	IRO
P ARIONE José Víctor	La Paz	27-05-2002	77	BOL
P ARROYO GARRE José María	Montevideo	19-08-2002	81	URU
L ARROYO VEGA Santiago	Aibonito (Porto Rico)	19-05-2002	93	ANT
P BAGGIO Emilio	Arese (MI)	05-09-2002	88	ILE
P BAVA Andrea	Torino	04-02-2002	95	ICP
P BEALESSIO Michele	Cuneo	31-05-2002	89	ICP
P BIAN Yves	Les Ponts de Cé	13-02-2002	90	FRA
P BIANCO Angelo	Torino	30-03-2002	88	ICP
P BIEGUS Piotr	Peremyshlany (Ucraina)	04-07-2002	58	PLS
<i>Fu Ispettore per sei anni</i>				
L BISSOLO Angelo	Castello di Godego (TV)	11-08-2002	87	IVE
P BLANCO ARRIBA Juan Antonio	Mision, B.\C. (Canada)	18-12-2001	67	SMA
L BOEYKENS Jozef	Hoboken	04-05-2002	94	BEN
P BOHNEN Laurent	Heerlen	19-08-2002	87	OLA
P BONALDI Ettore	Clusone (BG)	24-07-2002	87	ILE
P BONGIOANNI Egidio	Torino	11-07-2002	85	ICP
P BONILLA Juan	Bogotá	01-02-2002	98	COB
P BORGHI Carlo	Torino	15-04-2002	82	ICP
L BORGO Andrea	Torino	07-01-2002	81	ICP
P BORGOGNO Luigi	Torino	21-04-2002	79	ICP
P BOTÍ PASCUAL Rafael	Barcelona	08-03-2002	84	SBA
P BRENNAN Joseph	Dublin	17-03-2002	87	IRL
P BROCARDIO Giuseppe	Torino	08-08-2002	86	ICP
P BROUWERS Jules	Wilrijk	07-01-2002	84	BEN
P BRUZZO Diego	Sondrio	26-02-2002	85	ILE
L CABRERA MENDOZA Raúl	Saltillo, Coah.	19-03-2002	57	MEG
P CALLIARI Ferruccio	Cuorgnè (TO)	19-01-2002	81	ICP
P CALLINI Giuseppe	Novara	05-04-2002	88	ICP
P CARRARO Allegro	Trieste	24-02-2002	89	IVE
P CARRASCO MOSCOSO Antonio	Córdoba	22-03-2002	74	SCO
L CARRERA FERNANDEZ Ubaldo	Ávila (Spagna)	15-02-2002	75	SMA
L CARTER Joseph	Farnborough	25-02-2002	77	GBR
P CASETTA Filippo	Torino	27-03-2002	81	ABB

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
L CASSETTA Gabriele Giuseppe	Roma	14-08-2002	73	IRO
P CASTELLI José Raúl	La Plata	14-05-2002	70	ALP
P CATALDO Alessandro	Roma	02-07-2002	92	IRO
P CATTÀ Javier	Locarn (Francia)	15-05-2002	61	ECU
L CHAROWSKYJ Jan	Roma	05-08-2002	80	IRO
P CHAVARRÍA Guillermo	Tegucigalpa (Honduras)	11-02-2002	94	CAM
P CHESINI Enrique	La Plata	11-08-2002	87	ALP
P COMPOSTA Dario	Roma	19-07-2002	85	IRO
P CREMONESI Guerrino	Treviglio (BG)	16-06-2002	86	ILE
P CRESPI Luigi	Torino	11-07-2002	74	ICP
P CRUCCAS Oreste	Cagliari	29-01-2002	72	ISA
P DAL POS Paolo	Lima	05-07-2002	85	PER
P D'AMATO Sebastiano	S. Arsenio (SA)	30-06-2002	69	IME
P DAUNER János	Budapest	28-01-2002	86	UNG
P DAVIE Joseph	Glasgow (Scozia)	03-02-2002	70	GBR
P DE BONIS Salvatore	Roma	03-01-2002	82	IRO
<i>Fu Ispettore per 18 anni</i>				
P DE BONO Vincenzo	Sliema (Malta)	25-01-2002	78	IRL
P DE MONTE Costantino	Campo Grande	27-07-2002	85	BCG
P DE SANDOLI Gioacchino	Bari	06-08-2002	82	IME
P DEBRAY Friedrich Karl	Wien	05-05-2002	92	AUS
L DEFILIPPI Angelo	Torino	10-04-2002	67	ICP
P DEL GIUDICE Settimio	San Isidro (Bs. As.)	22-02-2002	91	ABA
L FEIST Wilhelm	München (Baviera)	16-01-2002	100	GEM
P FERRARESE Nello	Venezia-Mestre	17-04-2002	92	IVE
L FONSECA FONSECA Salvador	Guadalajara	24-04-2002	74	MEG
L FRÉMEAUX Émile	Caen	22-03-2002	90	FRA
P FUMAGALLI Antonio	Lugano (Svizzera)	15-03-2002	85	ILE
P FUSKA Frantisek	Pezinok	05-04-2002	86	SLK
L GAMBA Carlo	Fatuma (Timor Est)	18-07-2002	83	ITM
S GARCIA Nelson Arley	Matundo (Mozambico)	15-01-2002	29	POR
P GAREGNANI Ambrogio	Torino	12-07-2002	77	ICP
P GÉBEL André	Toulon	26-07-2002	89	FRA
P GERICHIEVICH Romano	Garda (VR)	02-05-2002	89	IVO
P GEROSA Leone	Sesto San Giovanni (MI)	09-04-2002	98	ILE
L GIL PAZ Eladio	Árevalo	22-08-2002	70	SMA
P GIOSA Michele	San Isidro (Bs. As.)	07-06-2002	86	ABA
P GRAF Anton	München	20-07-2002	65	GEM
L GRAÑA GUTIERREZ Mateo	Montevideo	26-08-2002	77	URU
P HAITZER Albert	Pogrzebien	27-06-2002	63	PLS
P HERNANDEZ CASADO Luis	Las Palmas de Gran Canaria	12-03-2002	93	SCO
L HIBINO Gregorio Minosuke	Tokyo	02-12-2001	86	GIA

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P HOEY John Patrick	Lansdowne (Sud Africa)	14-03-2002	83	AFM
L HÖGLINGER Ignaz	Unterswaldersdorf	03-04-2002	81	AUS
P HUTA Jozef	Banská Bystrica (Slovacchia)	01-03-2002	71	SLK
P JORNET FONT Luis	El Campello (Alicante)	29-05-2002	86	SVA
P JURCAK Martin	Trstenik	18-06-2002	94	SLO
P KAISER Jozef	Mannheim (Germania)	06-08-2002	74	SLK
<i>Fu Ispettore per 12 anni</i>				
P KATONA József	Budapest	13-02-2002	88	UNG
L KESPRET Ian	Madras	17-05-2002	81	INM
P KILCULLEN James	Dublin (Irlanda)	12-08-2002	82	AFM
P KLINGER Attilio	New York City	03-05-2002	73	SUE
P KUCIŃSKI Stanisław	Kielce	04-04-2002	80	PLS
L KUSY Jozef	Fatunaga	14-04-2002	92	ITM
P LADRILLE Guillaume	Kanabala (Congo R.D.)	13-02-2002	88	AFG
P LESNIAK Albin	Kraków	05-05-2002	89	PLO
P LEWKO Marian	Lublin	20-05-2002	65	PLN
P LOBATO Gregorio	Città del Messico	15-08-2002	47	MEM
P MAESTRO Pio Adalgiso	Campo Grande	12-09-2002	83	BCG
P MAGNANI Maffeo	Torino	18-08-2002	73	ICP
P MAMET Marian	Miedzybórz	29-08-2002	71	PLO
P MANDEVILLE Gerard	Kortrijk	10-07-2002	87	BEN
P MARCHISIO Michele	Torino	27-07-2002	89	ICP
L MASA Felice	Brescia	03-03-2002	86	ILE
P MATTEI Enrique Eugenio	La Plata	16-08-2002	73	ALP
P MAUSER Helmut	Polling (Baviera)	21-02-2002	67	GEM
P MELLEN József	Budapest	23-04-2002	89	UNG
P MELONI Valentino	Torino	28-02-2002	86	ICP
P MERLO PICH Vincenzo	Cumiana (TO)	12-01-2002	88	ICP
P MERTA Jan	Przemysl	23-02-2002	89	PLS
P MIKULÍK Frantisek	Mesto Albrechtice	01-02-2002	88	CEP
P MILAN Giuseppe	Castelfranco Veneto (TV)	15-05-2002	83	IVO
P MONTEIRO Valerian	Bombay	27-02-2002	74	INB
P MORO Giovanni	Beppu-Soencho	14-03-2002	88	GIA
P MOTATTO Luigi	Torino	19-03-2002	83	ICP
P MUNARI Angelo	Torino	18-08-2002	85	ICP
P MURPHY Cornelius	Prestwich (Manchester)	23-08-2002	82	GBR
P NARSILIO Gesualdo	Madras	09-05-2002	91	INM
L NATHAN Jeyaraj	Pondicherry	20-08-2002	41	INM
L NUNES Agnel	Chennai	02-08-2002	62	INM
P NÚÑEZ Primitivo	Guadalajara	08-08-2002	70	MEG
P O'DEA Louis	Manzini (Swaziland)	24-05-2002	82	AFM
L OLIVARES Raúl	Santiago de Chile	25-02-2002	80	CIL

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P OLIVATI Aurelio	Este (PD)	17-03-2002	92	IVO
L ORDÓÑEZ PABLOS Silvano	Arévalo	29-03-2002	63	SMA
P PACHECO Agustín	San Justo (Bs. As.)	05-07-2002	92	ABA
P PADOAN Giuseppe	Negrar (Verona)	01-08-2002	88	IVO
P PAOLI Pio	Castello di Godego (TV)	24-03-2002	86	IVE
P PAPA Francesco	Catania	09-02-2002	92	ISI
P PAPES Antonio	Roma	10-01-2002	79	IRO
S PATERNINA Jorge Elías	Medellín	24-03-2002	24	COM
P PAVLIN Stanko	Hong Kong	11-06-2002	85	CIN
P PELLIZZER Francesco	Monteortone (PD)	15-03-2002	78	IVO
P PÉREZ Domingo	Barcelona	03-12-2001	92	SBA
P PINTARIC Stefan	Radenci (Slovenia)	08-07-2002	89	FRA
S PINTO da COSTA Lourenço	Cremisan - Betlemme	13-07-2002	29	ITM
P POLÁK Andrej	Horna Lehota (Slovacchia)	07-07-2002	77	MOR
P POMBO Nelson	Cuiabá MT	21-02-2002	90	BCG
P POMIANOWSKI Roman	Lublin	08-04-2002	67	PLE
P PONS Marcel	Toulon	22-04-2002	88	FRA
P PÜRINGER Augustin	Mieders (Tirol)	18-03-2002	67	AUS
P QUENNEVILLE Ronald	Reddale (Ontario)	19-02-2002	75	CAN
L QUEZADA LUCERO Luis Samuel	Santiago de Chile	16-04-2002	74	CIL
P RFAŁKO Antoni	Olsztyn	09-02-2002	64	PLE
L RAKELS Jan	Halle	06-07-2002	90	BEN
P RAVASI Luigi	Civitanova Marche	07-08-2002	80	ILE
P RAYAPPAN Pathiaraj	Yercaud	25-01-2002	32	INM
P RIVERA José Atilano	Ayagualo (El Salvador)	26-07-2002	89	CAM
P ROBIÑO Agostino	Bahía Blanca	04-01-2002	67	ABB
P ROLFO Francesco Enrico	Santiago de Chile	25-07-2002	78	CIL
P ROMO GUTIERREZ Salvador	Tijuana	30-01-2002	61	MEG
P ROSSI Francesco	Torino	31-03-2002	83	ICP
P RUBUANO Luigi	Pedara (CT)	02-06-2002	93	ISI
P RYBKA Józef	Oświęcim	09-07-2002	81	PLS
P SANCHEZ ROMO Antonio	Madrid	26-02-2002	68	SMA
L SEBASTIAN Paul	Shillong	07-05-2002	87	ING
L SENECA Lino	Belle Glade (Florida)	19-02-2002	90	SUE
P SIMCIK Josef	Zürich (Svizzera)	26-04-2002	72	ILE
L STERNAL Stefan	Stupsk	05-05-2002	85	PLN
P SZYDEŁKO Jan	Poniatowice	28-01-2002	67	PLO
P TASSAN Nicola	Beppu	09-12-2001	87	GIA
P TAUCHER Gyula	Budapest	18-07-2002	89	UNG
P TAVANO Romeo	Torino	05-05-2002	85	RMG
P TROCCOLI Ugo	Roma	02-02-2002	35	IRO
P TROCHIM Jacek	Kidderminster (Inghilterra)	04-07-2002	66	PLE

NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	PROV.
P TURATI Antonio	Como	29-04-2002	91	ILE
P UTEL Carmelo	Campo Grande	30-06-2002	79	BCG
P VAN BRIEL Albert	Kortrijk	22-01-2002	85	BEN
L VAN DER LOOP Herman	Apeldoorn	17-04-2002	74	OLA
P VAN DORST Antoon	Nijmegen	25-07-2002	78	OLA
P VANDEN BERK Frans	Hechtel	24-06-2002	80	BEN
P VECCHI Juan Edmundo	Roma	23-01-2002	70	RMG
<i>Fu per 18 anni Consigliere nel Consiglio Generale, per 6 anni Vicario del RM e per 6 anni Rettor Maggiore</i>				
L VIDAL VERDÚ Tomás	El Campello (Alicante)	22-05-2002	89	SVA
P VILLALBA Antonio	Bahía Blanca	04-03-2002	64	ABB
P WÓJCIAK Zygmunt	Marszałki	05-04-2002	74	PLO
P YAMAMOTO Bernardo Katsumi	Beppu (Oita)	06-01-2002	70	GIA
P ZANFURLIN Pietro	Mogliano Veneto (TV)	04-05-2002	77	IVE
P ZARCARO Salvatore	Pedara (CT)	02-08-2002	92	ISI
P ZERZÁN Josef	Prepychy (Rep. Ceca)	04-01-2002	94	CEP
P ZUÑIGA PASCUAL Antonio	Callao	30-04-2002	85	PER







